



THE INTERCESSORS' QUARTERLY LETTER

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COUPLES, THEIR JOYS AND DIFFICULTIES

Dear Brother and Sister Intercessors,

We are tremendously happy when we are called, as a couple, to lower the paralysed man on his mat right in front of Jesus, who was in Capharnaum, surrounded by a great crowd looking to be taught. Nowadays, the mat is laden with the difficulties and joys of so many couples and priests who have entrusted themselves to our intercession. Today more than ever, they need, and we need, arms which raise to the heavens. As members of the EIAI (International Team for the Intercessors), we wish to share this with you, who have also responded to this wonderful call. The joy of the wedding feast quickly turns to tragedy if the wine were to be lacking. "Do whatever he tells you." "Fill the jars with water." The Lord looks after us. Let us not falter! Let us pour more water in the jars, spread more joy in our families, bear more stretchers to before Jesus, so that there will be less pain for humanity. "Ask and you will receive." Today, let us present to our Father the difficulties and joys of all couples throughout the world!

Paco & Olga Garrido-Cid, EIAI

Responsible Couple for the EurAfrica Zone

THE SPIRITUAL LETTER OF FATHER PAUL-DOMINIQUE MARCOVITS, O.P.

A SECOND CONVERSION...



Life is just like that and we know it. There is a time for truly happy moments and a time for ordeals that we never wished to face. We could complain, but that is not helpful. It is better to look, if possible, to

the future, and seek to see how or what we are experiencing contributes to life, to love.

Father Caffarel will enlighten us. *«Avidity, lies, presumption, precipitation, so many defects that are more or less found in all types of young love. It is only with time, it is only when tested (and the test of time is not the smallest of tests) that the defects of youth are gradually corrected by love. Then, affirmed and confirmed, it enters into a new phase. The spiritual masters teach us that man in his quest for God must first purify himself during the first stage of the spiritual journey, that they call, "the purgative life." Only afterwards will he enter into the "illuminative life," where the stress will be put on, no longer the defects to be corrected, but on the progress to be made in love. This passage from one path to the other is called the "second conversion." This is a general law of love, of all love, and therefore of married love.»* (1)

In the course of a couple's life, love seeks to purify itself so that it can progressively become more vigorous and beautiful. There are probably prerequisite passages. The light or shadows can alternate up until the moment when a certain stability is established. The ordeals themselves can become fruitful because, freed from their weight, they show us that the love that is in us is stronger than we thought: it holds strong.

The ordeals also tell us that it is possible to love each other beyond everything else. Father Caffarel talks about a "second conversion." It becomes the strong foundation of life. Love and its joy develop. Tremors can still occur... The essential thing has been experienced and lived through and hope is there. We can get through the ordeal more serenely.

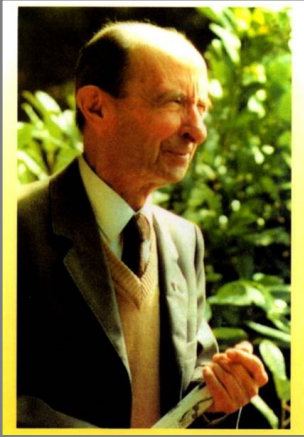
The Lord leads us therefore through our human love to one where his divine love comes to reside.

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.
Spiritual Counsellor to the Intercessors

(1) Father Henri CAFFAREL, *Amour qui es-tu?* Paris, 1971, Éditions du Feu Nouveau, p. 105.

FATHER CAFFAREL'S CONFERENCE TO RESPONSIBLE COUPLES OF TEAMS OF OUR LADY

OCTOBER 1958 AT THE PALAIS DE CHAILLOT, PARIS.



**WHEN A
MAN AND
WIFE PRAY,
THE
FATHER IN
HEAVEN
HEARS THE
PRAYER OF
HIS
BELOVED
SON.**

The Important Mo- ment for Couples: married prayer

“Let us start with the notion of Christian marriage. It is not only the reciprocal gift of the man and woman, it is also the gift, the consecration of the couple to Christ.

Henceforth, in this couple who in giving themselves to each other, open themselves to him, Christ is present; and this is why St John Chrysostom calls it a “little church.”

It is true that this presence already applies when two or three are united in the name of Christ (Mt.18:20), but in the couple's case, there is more and even better: a pact, an alliance in the Biblical sense of the word, between Christ and the couple.

What Yahweh used to say before, “*I will be your God and you will be my people,*” Christ now in turn says the same thing to couples. Thus linked to couples, present in the couple, Christ aspires to give thanks to his Father, to intercede with and through the spouses for the entire world...

The Important Moment for this Cult of Couples is precisely Married Prayer.

When that man and woman pray, it is the beloved Son's prayer that the heavenly Father hears, because in their heart, the Spirit of Christ inspires their feelings.

As long as one does not achieve those heights, one cannot properly seize nor promote married prayer.

Its necessity and grandeur can only be explained within the perspective of the marriage sacrament.

When Christ unites through his sacrament with a man and a woman, it is to create a sanctuary, and this sanctuary is the Christian couple, where Christ will be able to celebrate, with the couple, through the couple, the great filial cult of praise, adoration and intercession that he came to establish on earth.”

Source:

https://henri-caffarel.org/sites/default/files/FR/pensee/mariage/le_foyer_chretien_com-munaute_de_priere.pdf



PRAY FOR

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTIONS

April

Universal: For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.

May

Evangelisation: That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.

June

Evangelisation: That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to a solidarity with those who are most poor.

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS: HOLY MASS WITH THE RITE OF MARRIAGE

VATICAN, SEPTEMBER 14, 2014



In Chapter 21 of the Book of Numbers (21:4-9), we hear of the people of Israel's journey through the desert.

Jesus' love is strong enough to uphold a couple's love even when humanly this love is diminishing.

“At a certain point, *“the people became impatient on the way”* (Num 21:4). They are tired, water supplies are low and all they have for food is manna, which, although plentiful and sent by God, seems far too meagre in a time of crisis. And so they complain and protest against God and against Moses: *“Why did you make us leave?...”* (cf. Num. 21:5). They are tempted to turn back and abandon the journey.

Here our thoughts turn to married couples who “become impatient on the way”, the way of conjugal and family life. The hardship of the journey causes them to experience interior weariness; they lose the flavour of matrimony and they cease to draw water from the well of the Sacrament. Daily life becomes burdensome, and often, even “nauseating”.

During such moments of disorientation – the Bible says – poisonous serpents come and bite the people, and many die. This causes the people to repent and to turn to Moses for forgiveness, asking him to beseech the Lord so that he will cast out the snakes. Moses prays to the Lord, and the Lord

offers a remedy: a bronze serpent set on a pole; whoever looks at it will be saved from the deadly poison of the vipers.

What is the meaning of this symbol? God does not destroy the serpents, but rather offers an “antidote”: by means of the bronze serpent fashioned by Moses, God transmits his healing strength, namely his mercy, which is more potent than the Tempter’s poison.

As we have heard in the Gospel, Jesus identifies himself with this symbol: out of love the Father “has given” his only begotten Son so that men and women might have eternal life (cf. Jn 3:13-17). Such immense love of the Father spurs the Son to become man, to become a servant and to die for us upon a cross. Out of such love, the Father raises up his son, giving him dominion over the entire universe. This is expressed by Saint Paul in his hymn in the Letter to the Philippians (cf. 2:6-11). Whoever entrusts himself to Jesus crucified receives the mercy of God and finds healing from the deadly poison of sin.

The cure which God offers the people applies also, in a particular way, to spouses who “have become impatient on the way” and who succumb to the dangerous temptation of discouragement, infidelity, weakness, abandonment... To them too, God the Father gives his Son Jesus, not to condemn them, but to save them: if they entrust themselves to him, he will bring them healing by the merciful love which pours forth from the Cross, with the strength of his grace that renews and sets married couples and families once again on the right path.”

GENERAL INTENTION:

HOLY FATHER, WE GIVE YOU THANKS FOR GIVING US THE CONFIDENCE TO BRING BEFORE YOUR SON THE STRETCHERS LADEN WITH THE DIFFICULTIES AND ANXIETIES OF OUR COUPLES AND PRIESTS. ALREADY YOU CAN SEE THAT VERY OFTEN THE WINE OF JOY IS LACKING IN OUR LIVES. ENABLE MARY, OUR LADY OF THE HOME, TO INTERCEDE BEFORE JESUS SO THAT HE CHANGES THE WATER OF SADNESS INTO THE WINE OF HOLINESS; AND ENSURE THAT, AS INTERCESSORS, WE NEVER FALTER BEFORE YOU.



O God, who is at the origin of all families, and who wanted it to be a place of love and life, grant all families on earth that they may resemble the one that You gave to your Son.

THE INTERCESSORS

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<https://equip-es-notre-dame.com/en/communication-and-liaison/pray-with-the-intercessors>

KEEP WATCH AND PRAY

Françoise & Luc DJOKA FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICA SUPER-REGION



On November 17th, we were called by the Super-Region to become the Intercessors' Correspondent Couple for the French-speaking Africa Super-Region. We responded with gratitude to this nod of God's, who kindly wished to associate us with this lovely mission,

even if we believe that the task is enormous.

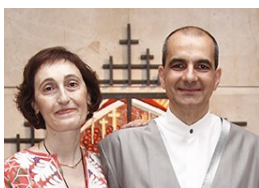
Having understood the challenge of the family today, we put in place an 'Intercessors' Team' made up of five couples, the only such one in our region. This Team meets once a month for an hour of adoration and intercession. Six couples coordinate the Intercessors' Movement in the six regions that are made up of the 16 countries of the Super-Region.

Rita & Joaquim PORTUGAL SUPER-REGION 2009 TO 2019



We found this service to the Intercessors to be a great help to us. It taught us to pray and made us feel close to so many suffering brothers, who were asking us for prayers as well as to so many Intercessor brothers, who always so ready to pray and who used to give us all their affection. We truly thank the Lord for enabling us to meet the Intercessors on our path.

Tiziana & Giuseppe ITALY SUPER-REGION



We joined the Intercessors in 2012, when we were called to service as the Responsible Couple for our Sector. It was then that we realised the need to receive

strength, hope and faith. And there's nothing more efficient than prayer to find all that! Since 2017, we are the Intercessors' Correspondent Couple for the Italy Super-Region.

As with every service, we realise that we receive much, much more than we can give. And yet, we do not ignore the necessary efforts to 'bring together' all the tasks to be accomplished, ranging from the purely bureaucratic aspects to the welcoming of so many requests for prayers that are entrusted to us.

It is a question of a continual quest, inside and out of ourselves, to bring at least a few answers to the existential questions that every human being asks. Being in close contact with 'such suffering' in all its shapes and forms is surely for us as a couple a true ordeal, that we often experience with great sadness in our hearts, and sometimes with the feeling of defeat.

But, courageously, we seek to remain strong in order to always be open to the hope that the resurrected Lord always gives us.

Maria Angeles & Urbano SPAIN SUPER-REGION



As Christians, in theory, we are all aware of the importance of prayer.

But we also live in haste, with a heavy work load in and outside the home, a lack of time... Do we really have no time or are the authentic priorities in our faith life not clear?

Being the Correspondents for the Intercessors in Spain has implied that we become more sensitive to the needs of others. It has entailed praying to the Lord for people whom we do not know, who are not close to us, but who enable the gesture of communion, the one that the Apostle Paul used to ask of the early churches:

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." (Ep 6:18)

Far from having achieved the prayer that we need in order to nourish our faith, we ask the Lord to help us to vanquish the barriers that we are unable to remove, so that He may be at the centre of our life, and that our prayer may be ever more sensitive and open to his will.