



Greetings from the Leading Spiritual Counsellor

My very dear Couples and Spiritual Counsellors,

I would like to begin my messages to you with this greeting.

I cannot hide the fact that when Clarita & Edgardo, our international Responsible Couple, invited me to accompany them as the Spiritual Counsellor for the ERI, I experienced great fear and tremendous doubt. It is not an easy task. And even more so, taking into account my own paucity and weakness and knowing so many brothers in the priestly ministry, spiritual counsellors in the Movement, who are much more capable and more filled with holiness and virtues than I. But, in the face of a call that offered itself to me as an invitation to prayer and openness to the Spirit, I thought that those who invite know whom they are dealing with. When I consulted my bishop, Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez, archbishop of Bogotá, and the director of the priests' association to which I belong, and when I meditated in the silence of my prayer, I concluded that if it is possible to serve, why not do so.



What I can offer to those who called me, and to the entire Movement, is my availability, my desire to be useful and my deep love of Teams of Our Lady. I believe in marriage as a sacrament of the Church and as a path to holiness; I have been a witness for more than 25 years to married life and to the journey of so many couples in the various teams I have accompanied. I have guided many young couples in the discernment of their love and their decision to get married in the Church. I have shared the joys and sorrows, the work, the conflicts and the efforts of married couples and the preoccupations of parents regarding the education of their children. I pray with many spouses who are believers and who desire the salvation of their offspring. To sum up, I have lived very closely to the deep and sacred mystery of married life. For these reasons, but with my uncertain capabilities and limitations, I am ready for the service that has been entrusted to me.

We are experiencing a peculiarly sensitive time for our Church. Pope Francis constantly reminds us of the call to holiness that has been addressed to us. The world in which we

live asks us for more and more connection to the divine. Christian marriage as a life project asks us to bear witness and be credible.

If we are convinced that our Lord Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life; if we share the sacramental truth that accompanies us since our baptism; if we believe in the call to be credible witnesses to Christ's love; if the desire to render visible God's mercy and compassion drives us; if we are committed to the care of the shared home that we inhabit; if we believe that there is a mission to which we must respond, then we will journey together so that life continues to flow and the humanity that we share can become something better every day.

To my brothers, the priestly Spiritual Counsellors and Spiritual Advisors to Teams, I would like to ask them for their understanding and support. We have been invited to accompany, encourage and serve the couples in our teams and may the Lord's grace strengthen our availability. May we be true witnesses of God's love and guides who share the demands of being part of a Movement that offers us the means for sanctification and experience for our ministry.

To the couples who have chosen to be part of Teams of Our Lady, I reiterate my wish to be of service. I encourage you to continue on this beautiful path to holiness, taking advantage of the concrete means suggested by the Endeavours that are truly effective aides enabling couples *"to progress with confidence in conjugal life in the way of the Gospel,"* as Pope Francis told us in his address to Teams of Our Lady (September 10, 2015). To widows and widowers who continue along the path of Teams, I thank them for their witness of being in communion with their brothers and sisters that they continue to offer.

To all, my fraternal embrace, my affection and my availability.

Ricardo Londoño Domínguez, Spiritual Counsellor to the ERI