



# TEAMS OF OUR LADY

## EAST PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

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## A letter from the East Province Responsible Couple

Dear Teams of the East Province,

Lenten greetings!

It seems like we have hardly been at home since our last newsletter (Advent 2018) to you. Just yesterday we heard proclaimed the beautiful Transfiguration story from Luke. Jesus taking his disciples up the mountain to pray. In what seems like a blink of an eye we will be on Mount Calvary. In our own life we spent 2 weeks at Christmas in ICU with our grandson and his parents. Tomorrow, we travel to Indiana to adjust care for Bob's mom (96). In between we had many joyful celebrations with Teams and their families as well as fruitful work meetings with leadership couples. The mount of glory and the mount of crucifixion...joy and sadness, life and death, they seem to be wedded.

On February 25th Teams throughout the world celebrated the 80th anniversary of the very first meeting in Paris, France of four couples and Father Henri Caffarel as the first Team meeting. We were delighted to be invited to a celebration of several Teams in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The Gaithersburg, Maryland 1 Team hosted this event with a beautiful Mass, refreshments and lively discussion. Two titles given to Fr. Caffarel are *prophet of marriage* and *prophet of joy*. We see why!

We are taking the occasion of Lent to ask you to review your Membership Responsibilities (Life in Teams) and the Endeavors



(Life in Christ). In order that there be greater understanding of the Endeavors, which are crucial to the life of the couple and movement, the ERI has published individual booklets on each of the endeavors. These are now being included in the packet for new teams that have been piloted. Copies for each team can also be requested to be kept in the RC binder. We will begin to highlight one of the endeavors in each of our subsequent newsletters. Today we will highlight the 6th endeavor *A Yearly Retreat*. We will follow each tutorial with some comments of reflection about that particular endeavor.

The Southern Province is hosting our National Conference in Navasota, Texas, called **Rekindle the Fire**. The Conference will feature our very own, Gaithersburg, Maryland 1 Team on Wednesday of the Conference in a beautiful witness of their journey together. Plan to attend the Conference and be inspired by life in Teams from this spiritually strong Team. Information has come out on the Teams of Our Lady website and periodically by electronic email to each Team in the United States. If you are not receiving these emails, please contact your Regional Couples.

With gratitude and prayers,  
Bob and Janie

#### **Endeavors** (Life in Christ)

1. Regular reading of Scripture
2. Daily period of meditation (individual prayer)
3. Daily conjugal (couple) and family prayer
4. Monthly Sit-Down with your spouse and Christ
5. Rule of Life: A private individual endeavor for improvement. This is reviewed regularly
6. An annual retreat.

#### **Membership Responsibilities** (Life in Teams of Our Lady)

1. Pray the Magnificat prayer (Lk 1: 46-56) daily
2. Attend the monthly meetings
3. Prepare monthly study topic as a couple
4. Make an annual contribution for the growth and sustenance of Teams, equal to one day's wages
5. Annual Team evaluation and commitment
6. Read the Teams of Our Lady newsletter
7. Show hospitality to other Teams
8. Attend Sector, Regional, National and International events whenever possible
9. Teams couples in leadership positions should make every effort to attend an extra Mass each week.



## Celebrations of 80th Anniversary of the First Team Meeting

On February 25, 1939, the first team meeting of a Team of Our Lady took place in Paris. The International Leading Team (ERI) invited team members from all over the world to celebrate the 80th anniversary of this historic meeting of Father Henri Caffarel with the first group of couples, discovering together a new dynamic, a new way of living more fully, the love of God in their lives as people united by the sacrament of Matrimony. Many teams celebrated this event, either on the anniversary date or as close to this date as possible. Some of these joyous celebrations are documented in these pictures:



*On Monday, 25 February 2019, representatives from 7 teams in the Mid-Atlantic Region met at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Derwood Maryland. The celebration began with a special Mass, followed by shared memories of how their own Teams started, and ended with snacks and a celebration cake. The longest-meeting team began 50 years ago and the newest team has had only one Piloting meeting.*



*Celebration by members and families of the Mount Vernon, New York 1, 2, and 3 Teams of the Portuguese-speaking Sector in the Metro Region.*

*Celebration by members of the Newark, New Jersey 1, 2, and 3 Teams of the Portuguese-speaking Sector in the Metro Region.*





*On Sunday, February 24, the Rockville, Maryland 4 Team (Maryland-West Sector in the Mid-Atlantic Region) celebrated. This team was formed from several older teams; it includes members who have been in Teams of Our Lady for over 50 years.*

*The Falls Church Virginia 2 Team (Mixing Bowl Sector in the Coastal Region) celebration. This team was formed 53 years ago and includes one of the original couples.*



*On March 1, the Henlopen Delaware 1 Team (Delaware Sector in the Mid-Atlantic Region) met to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the first Teams meeting.*



## Why the Annual Retreat? by Janie and Bob Mericksko

Obedience! Obedience to the Teams of Our Lady Movement and the Father's will.

Let us explore why the Movement puts forward this endeavor to couples. "The retreat allows us to revitalize our personal spiritual life and our conjugal spiritual life, to make God first again in our lives. The retreat enriches the sacrament of our marriage and brings us back to the source of our love. It encourages us on our path to holiness." (page 25 in *The Retreat*) It is to the year as daily prayer is to the day.

Although Bob and I had made retreats before, they were necessary for us. The first together was right after our engagement. We felt compelled to set aside time away from routine to think, pray and discuss. The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist were key in this weekend, along with silence and listening to God. The other retreats we participated in were youth retreats for high schoolers. We still availed ourselves of the Sacraments, but we were staff.

It was really after our first child and joining Teams of Our Lady, that the annual retreat commitment happened. In the unfolding year of piloting we knew that we were supposed to go on a retreat every year thereafter. We had a child; we didn't want to leave her. The date was set for the weekend retreat; it was going to happen. We had all kinds of excuses in our heads, but our other Team couples, who had far more children than we, were going. We made arrangements for care and went. Now, 43 years later we are still going on retreat as a couple and most of the time as a Team. It was however in obedience to the Movement we were "studying" that we attended. Our study told us of the benefits of retreating, so we put our trust in the Movement's invitation.

Now we attend the annual retreat in obedience to the Father's will. How else can we discern His will? Prayer is not enough. In a sense, we are making time for life. We go away to rest and ask the question: Are we living God's plan for us at this time? Each year it is different. Sometimes we leave with answers to questions; other times we leave in a peaceful unsettledness, that there is more "work" to do in our spiritual place, either as an individual or as a couple. But, that is what the other Endeavors of Teams of Our Lady are for, aren't they? It is so important to see this Endeavor related to the other Endeavors in our life. That is how we can present an honest picture of ourselves.

The Old Testament has examples of "retreat". Genesis 2:2 has God as part of creation, resting on the 7th day. The book of Exodus has Israel wandering in the desert for a 40-year retreat. In the New Testament we see the Master himself taking time away.



Fr. Eric Hollas OSB says, "A couple things seem remarkable. First, the pressure on Jesus was relentless, but he still stepped aside for rest and prayer. He was careful to carve out time for the things that provided balance in life. He was not willing to sacrifice a full life for the sake of a crowded calendar."

Father Caffarel encourages us, as he did those early couples: "We devote too much time to ourselves and so little to Christ." "Our chief sin is not being hungry enough for Him. Let us be eager to spend time with Him!" (Retreat at the Cenacle, February 1944)

Comments from attendees of a recent team retreat:

*"It was a wonderful chance to reconnect with old friends. It was a beautiful setting to inspire the soul. Fr. Bill was an inspiring and entertaining leader with many words of wisdom."* Joan

*"Ditto. How can I improve on Joan's thoughts? It is invigorating to be with these fine Catholic couples."* Pete

*"A special time to spend the weekend with current and former teams members in deep sharing."* Bob

*"I came filled. I emptied. I filled with joy."* Janie

*"Our retreat gave us a glimpse and a moment in the Kingdom of Heaven that is at hand. We always enjoy our gathering with teams to share and encourage each other."* Reyes

*"A time to relax and reflect. A time to connect with the team at a deeper level. A place to feel unburied and not worried."* Rosemary

*"Something Essential' happened to our Team during our annual retreat. We reflected on Jesus pulling Peter from the water when Peter did not trust. When we need to discern the "essentials" in our lives, we allow Jesus to pull us from the water. Personal prayer, reflection and sharing with others help us in this process. Renewing the Teams' friendship with Fr. Bill, our Retreat Master, was an essential part of the weekend."* Edie

## Coastal and Mid-Atlantic Regions' Lenten Day of Reflection

Over the years we have been invited and attended various days of recollection in different sectors of the country. It seems that Fall and Lent are good times for this spiritual event for Team Couples. The following pictures are of one such Day of Recollection. On March 9, the Coastal and Mid-Atlantic Regions jointly sponsored a Lenten Day of Reflection. Sector Responsible Couples Deacon Dave and Carol McCaffrey (Mixing Bowl Virginia Sector) and Ron and Bev Stoner (Delaware Sector) registered and greeted Team members. Insightful presentations by Professor John and Mrs Claire Grabowski provided thoughts to ponder and wonderful discussion material for small group gatherings. The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist were part of the day.





### Upcoming Event — National Conference

- Early registration will offer 7 family cabins
- Conference registration includes conference t-shirt for two adults
- Family friendly: child care provided (minimal cost for children under 13 years of age attending)
- All meals are included with room cost
- Meet other Team members from across the USA
- Celebrate Mass daily... enjoy some quality time with spouse and family
- Book early... space is limited

**Don't miss out on the fun! Plan your family vacation now for July 16-19, 2019.**

**TEAMS NATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
 July 16-19, 2019    Camp Allen - Navasota, TX

**Family Friendly - Kids Program**

**Rekindle the Fire**  
*on the Trail to Holiness*

**David Kaufman - Christian Entertainer**

**Cardinal DiNardo**

**Marriage Celebration**

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Opening Mass at 4 p.m. Dinner David Kaufman - Christian Entertainer Lighting the Fire with Smore's Bar	Breakfast Morning Prayer Bishop Joseph Strickland Small Group Discussion Dancing - Texas Style	Morning Prayer Msgr. Chester Borski Cardinal Daniel DiNardo - celebrates Mass 4pm Marriage Celebration!!!	Morning Prayer Mass Send off