



# 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,

It is with great hope and steadfast prayer that we greet you this Advent Season. We write on the eve of Loretta Favret's Funeral Mass—*The Celebration of Life*, and anticipate the Anniversary of the Team Charter (December 8 1947). We smile at both celebrations with grateful hearts. Father Caffarel and Andy and Loretta are but a few of the many spiritual counselors, spiritual advisors, and couples, who have established and served the Teams of Our Lady Movement.

*"Emmanuel! Emmanuel!  
 His name is called Emmanuel.  
 God with us, renewed in us.  
 His name is called Emmanuel!"*  
 (a children's song)

Advent calls us to quiet contemplation: the time to sit, stay, and wait; the frenzy of the world calls us to shop, bake, and party. Advent truly is a time for finding our way, giving us a glimpse of our destination. What is our destination? Are we citizens of the world or do we find our birth and destination as citizens of heaven?

On the first Sunday of Advent, we sang "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul!" Moments later we heard St. Luke's warning, "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life..." Do we lift up our souls to carousing and drunkenness? Hardly! Do we lift up our souls to the anxieties of daily life? YES, we must confess we do. So, how is it that we so easily do that throughout the day and not lift our souls to God throughout the day?



Each year God gives you the most beautifully wrapped gift. You are told that inside is what is most precious to Him. Joyously unwrap the box and take off the lid! Gaze with great anticipation into the box. See with surprise and delight your own face reflected from the mirror in the bottom of the box. Look into your eyes, sit, stay, and wait. How precious you are to Him!

Perhaps we ought to lean into this business of our life on the road, not trying to run away from it but honestly examining it and placing some silence in its midst. Certainly we have the genius of the Endeavors as guide and fellow companions on the journey with our own team. But, is this enough? In our 41 years in Teams, we have never met a Teams couple who was not grateful for “Teams” in their life. We wonder how many more couples who seek a deeper meaning to life as a couple, could benefit from knowing about Teams and being piloted. We all must therefore develop the heart of service to Teams. The Lord has many more blessings that he wants to give you, and it is at the service of Teams in your Sector. Certainly you don’t have to look hard in the life of Andy and Loretta to excuse them from service to Teams; instead they welcomed and embraced all that was asked of them.

We ask Father Caffarel for courage, counsel, and the energy to discover more deeply our responsibility in Teams. He has never failed us. Each day, we conclude our couple prayer time with the Canonization Prayer for Father Henri Caffarel in which you are included: *“God our Father, we invoke the intercession of Father Caffarel for strong Teams and Leadership/Service Couples.”*

With gratitude and prayers,  
Bob and Janie



*Thank you Andy and Loretta.*



## Reflections on Fatima from the East Province Spiritual Counselor

I have returned after a wonderful trip to Portugal where I attended the twelfth International Gathering of Teams of Our Lady (Équipes Notre-Dame) in Fatima from July 16 to July 22, 2018. I have wanted to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima for many years, so I was very happy when this opportunity came up. The theme of the gathering was “Reconciliation: A Sign of Love.” Nearly 9,000 Team Members came from 80 countries. We completely filled the little town of Fatima. Every hotel room was taken. Some even had to stay in private homes.

The opening night of the conference featured a word of welcome and blessing from Pope Francis, who sent a message that looked at the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The Holy Father hoped that all of the participants would relax in the Father’s loving “hug,” be reconciled with each other, and join in the celebration of the return of the Prodigal Son. We listened to some wonderful meditations each day based on this Parable by Archbishop José Tolentino Calaça de Mendonça who was recently appointed by Pope Francis to be the Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church.

Another highlight for me was a presentation by Sister Angela de Fatima Coelho da Sousa on the Fatima Apparitions. Sister is well qualified to speak on this subject as she was appointed the Roman Postulator for the canonization of the little shepherds Francisco and Jacinto. Pope Francis canonized them on May 13, 2017. They made history in that they were the first child saints to be canonized who were not martyrs. Now she has been appointed vice-postulator for the Beatification cause of Sister Maria Lucia de Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart, OCD (1907-2005), cousin of Saint Francisco and Saint Jacinta and the third visionary of Fatima. Sr. Angela is an effective communicator of the message of Fatima to men and women of the twenty-first century. She remarked that we can experience God through Our Lady. Fatima is a school of faith with the Blessed Mother as our teacher. Between 1916 and 1929 the three children held fast to the instructions of Our Lady, never deviating from the stories that embodied their teachings. They lived her message loyally. Through them we know the love the Blessed Trinity has for us. Sr. Angela also related that despite the difficulties of our time, God always continues to walk with us. Yet God also entrusts us to the welfare of our brothers and sisters. We cannot turn our back on the needs of others. It is essential that we do as Our Lady wishes. As Cardinal Ratzinger teaches, Our Lady is our model for Christ. She appeals to all of us to pray the Rosary. We must trust her in the Rosary, for it transports us to join her and mold us. Mary leads us directly to her son Jesus Christ.

A third highlight for me was a talk by Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the recently created Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. He began his talk by looking at developments over the past fifty years. Blessed Paul VI wrote that we needed to consider how the environment affects the people who live in it. Paul VI called this natural ecology.

Saint John Paul II took this thought and developed it further. John Paul wrote that every human being lives within a personal environment, which he termed “human ecology.” Pope Benedict XVI took this a



step further still when he remarked that people also live together and hopefully in peace. This is social and peace ecology. Finally, Pope Francis has remarked that all of these ecologies work together and become integrated human ecology. Three points that really struck me were his remarks that without God we revert to paganism, an attack on God is an attack on humankind, and finally when human dignity is degraded, this leads to a culture where humans are used. From there we move to a culture of death.

While participating in the conference, I was also very moved by a presentation by Father Jacinto Farias, former Spiritual Counselor to the ERI (Leading Team for Teams of Our Lady) who talked about “Experiencing God’s Compassionate Justice.” He reminded us of the need always to care for our neighbors and the people on the fringes of society. We must imitate God in everything we do and be indifferent to no one. In addition, when we give to others in a significant way, we may then have a true encounter with the Lord. In the parable of the woman who was caught in the act of committing adultery and was about to pay the consequences of her sin, Jesus saves her by directing this admonition to her accusers, “Let the one who has never sinned cast the first stone.” Jesus kneels and begins to write on the ground with his finger. He does not stop to castigate the woman. He does not rant angrily at her. He does not stare at her with eyes that are filled with blame and hatred. Instead, He turns His gaze away from the woman and, in doing so, He gives her respect. Jesus forgives her and saves her from being stoned to death. Her life is saved because of the mercy of God. She may then return to her husband, even with her shame, who will forgive her. Together they can then reconcile and become true followers of Christ. They may become members of the community of Jesus, and their vision of justice will be a merciful one. Particularly in modern society, mercy does not always relate to justice. Often today’s judicial system operates with a set of laws that must be followed “to the letter.”

This system of justice is decidedly different from the system of God. With God, mercy is given even when we are not deserving of it. We must question the morality and ethics of a judicial system that hands down punishment without the presence of mercy. Love, alone, is capable of the sensitivity and empathy that lead to true merciful justice.

Pope John Paul II reminded us that God has a compassionate heart, and we can never forget this. We, as humans, who are full of preconceived attitudes and selfish perceptions, are incapable of merciful justice. Only God has this capacity. God, like the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, is all-loving. His love is so great that even when we make poor judgments that hurt Him, He, like the Father, is able to open his arms to embrace us in an outpouring love like no other. His mercy leads to justice. Indeed, His forgiveness of our sins—His pardon—is the most perfect form of love. In pardoning us, as sinners, He shows us the most perfect form of love. We can never forget this! We sin. We hurt ourselves. We hurt others, but God is our loving Father who sees us as His beloved children whom he loves completely. God will forgive us. Only God can show us mercy and total love. His mercy brings us salvation. His loving embrace is one of mercy. Keeping this in mind, we can never forget to place God in the very center of our lives, for the love of God transforms everything.



Father Farias concluded his talk by reminding us that as we leave Fatima for the outside world, we must hold fast to the knowledge of God’s infinite love for mankind. We must strive to show that love every day.

Father John Dillon



*In addition to being the Spiritual Counselor for the East Province, Father John Dillon is Pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Derwood Maryland and Spiritual Counselor to two teams in the Mid-Atlantic Region, Gaithersburg Maryland 1 (Maryland-West Sector) and Silver Spring Maryland 6/12 (Maryland-East Sector).*

## Upcoming Changes to the Teams Piloting Process

by Jorge and Noélia Sousa

For several years we have wanted to extend the Piloting period from 5+ meetings (two books) to one year of time and using one book for the whole year. The piloting process will call for the Piloting Couple to accompany the new team for the minimum of twelve piloting meetings. We are the only Super Region in the world doing less than a year piloting and some SRs, such as the French, requires piloting for 2 years, and even considered 3 years. We believe that less than one year piloting is insufficient to teach the Teams’ rule, pedagogy and methods and to instill the spirit and mystique of our Movement. We understand that it will require more effort of the Piloting Couple but we have seen and experienced that short cuts may expedite the process but lead to weaker and faltering teams. We ask you for your support and prayers for the success of this new process.

The new Piloting Books and RC Books will be ready for distribution by the beginning to middle of February 2019.



*Noélia and Jorge Sousa are the Responsible Couple for the USA Super Region.*



## **Walking the Path of the Great Call to Marriage** by Josiane and Yannick Allepot

Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of "the wedding-feast of the Lamb." Thus, marriage is of primordial importance not only in the order of creation, but also in the order of redemption. In instituting it and in raising it to the status of Sacrament, God proposed to those whom He calls to this 'great mystery' a path to holiness, a path to Him.

Unfortunately, our response and our correspondence to this great call is so often frustrated by the imperfections of our wounded nature and the difficulties arising from sin. To help us in walking the path, the Church proposes that the celebration of this Sacrament of service should be preceded by careful discernment and assiduous preparation (pre-Cana). Those who really take the time and invest themselves in this preparation reap precious dividends.

However, as we quickly come to realize in the concreteness of life as a couple, love is much more than a feeling. It is a densely textured act of willing the good of the other and demands from us, that the 'I do' of our liturgical celebration not only echoes throughout our days together, but is deliberately and willingly spoken and repeated in every conversation we have together and in every action that we take. Because this echo is so often overtaken by trials, boredom, routine and the feebleness of our natural being and of our will, it gets harder as time goes for the couple to hear it, to deliberately speak it in its actions and to keep the flame of love burning.

### **Teams of Our Lady**

Some 70 years ago, a response to the need to tend the marital flame, came with the formation of a lay movement designed to enrich marriage spirituality: Teams of Our Lady (Teams). Since then, Teams has grown to become an international lay organization recognized by the Holy See under the Pontifical Council for the Laity and is now present in 90 countries.

We joined Teams eight years ago. Although it is hard to quantitatively measure the impact of the Team on our relationship as a couple, it is certain that the Team has helped and sustained us in the different dimensions of our life: conjugal, familial, spiritual and ecclesial. Since as Christians we are called to live our faith in community, Teams linked us to other couples and families who, with us, share a desire to progress in faith and communion, in the Church.

### **Sharing Our Joys and Sorrows**

Each monthly meeting is a communion in simplicity and fraternity. Around a lightly garnished table, we pray and discuss a chosen theme. We invite each other to courageously engage on the path that the Lord traces for us. It is a place of exchange, listening, and prayer. It is a place where we recover our strength to



live as well as possible our professional, civic, social and parish commitments. We share our joys and our sorrows. We learn to attentively listen.

We come to realize that we all share somewhat common anxieties and together we find the help of the Holy Spirit. We benefit from the listening ears of other couples/parents, of their experiences, and of their prayers. The daily family prayer, the reading of the word, the yearly couple retreat, and the monthly sit-down are, among other things, the spiritual exercises that Teams calls, the endeavors. These endeavors are available to us in order to help us grow in our spiritual life; in our life as a couple, and to thrust us into the fullest of the grace of our sacrament of marriage. Practiced in faith and humility, they do not fail to reveal in us the Divine imprint; to awake its calling and to overflow us with mutual charity.

If it often said that family is the microcosm of society and its most ideal building block. Christian parents must also be reminded that their relationship as a couple is the heart of the family. Anything that will vivify the relationship of the couple will enriched the life of the children and of the entire family. In helping us to live our faith, Teams contributes to evangelize us, our family, and, by extension, our society.

At a time where a lot of what is heard in the secular world tends to challenge the view of the family held dear by the Church, Teams reminds us that little is gained by entering the deafening Babel-like debate of the eternal antagonists (liberals vs. conservatives) in which extreme ideas are proposed and unattainable ideals imposed. Teams, rather, invites us to live our faith in the concrete circumstances of our life, recognizing our imperfections; walking the path of our great call in the companionship of other couples and depending solely on the supernatural help of God. This is a humbling and enriching experience.



*Yannick and Josiane Allepot are members of the Adelphi Maryland 1 Team in the Maryland-East Sector of the Mid-Atlantic Region.*



## First East Province Service Team Meeting

by Janie and Bob Mericsko

The first East Province Service Team meeting was held May 25-27, 2018 and hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Couple, Mark and Anne Ehrick. The USA Super Region was divided into Provinces due to Team growth and the desire to serve couples more at their local level in both training and Teams support.

We would like to share with you two of the several goals from that meeting and the results. The first goal had to do with the once very vibrant Metro Region. For many years that region has suffered from lack of service couples. This resulted in the lessening of local gatherings for sharing and support and the loss of communications with former Regional Couples. We spent the past year updating the Metro rosters and joyfully found steadfast support in both prayer and financial contributions for the Teams Movement. Sadly, through both telephone and email conversations, we discovered Teams that disbanded years prior and members who had died. We heard the voices of desire to reinvigorate the Metro area with leadership support.

Two of the super-stars of that area are Nilson and Mariola Marques who have tirelessly and for many years established, guided and supported Portuguese Teams in the Philadelphia and Metro area. (We will highlight them in a future newsletter.) We have asked them to accept the role of Metro Regional Couple, which will require the use of their skills and energies toward helping us merge all the Metro teams under a single leadership. They have most humbly accepted. Currently, the Marques are titled "Acting Metro Regional Couple," while we work on some consolidating of the English-speaking Sectors in Metro. As soon as this is done, they will be installed as Regional Couple.

The second goal was to have a College meeting in the Fall. This did not happen. We are most grateful to our Regional Couples and to Father John Dillon and Deacon Clark and Doris Glenn, our prayer couple and mentor for their loving support in prayer and advice.



## The East Province Service Team



*Father John Dillon (East Province Spiritual Counselor) sharing a story during a lunch break. Mike and Patti Bernardi (New England Regional Couple) are on the right; Janie Mericsko is on the left; and Mike Hoffman has his back to the camera.*



*Emily and Mike Hoffman (Lake Erie Regional Couple)*



*Ed and Gilda Cadeaux (Coastal Regional Couple)*



*Anne and Mark Ebrick (Mid-Atlantic Regional Couple) hosted the East Province Service Team meeting.*

*Doris and Deacon Clark Glenn (East Province Prayer Couple) provided Team hospitality for Bob and Janie Mericsko (East Provincial Couple)*





## Upcoming Events — 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
- Registration to open mid-January 2019
- 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

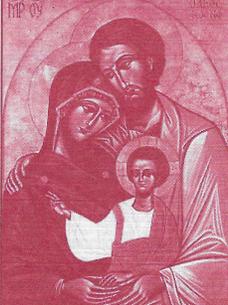
Marriage Celebration

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



☆☆☆☆☆ 5-Star Reviews

**Memories of 1996 National Conference  
Emmitsburg Maryland**



# MAGNIFICAT

**UNITED STATES TEAMS OF OUR LADY**

Quarterly Newsletter  
Vol. 15, No. 4, October 20, 1996



## Emmitsburg Memories

**T**ake a bow, Ed and Edie Reinsel! What a conference! So well put together from start through finish! 165 couples, 125 beautiful children, and 20 chaplains attended. Our guests from abroad were an added honor: our International Chaplain, **Father Cristobal Sarrias**; our International Leading Team's Responsible Couple, **Igar and Cidinha Fehr**; thirty year members **Mr. & Mrs. Joseph DuBois** from France. Great Britain was represented by its Regional Chaplain, **Father Anthony Smithwick**, **Tim and Kath Barnard** and **Martin and Angela Wills**.

Some memories snuggled into our memory bank warm our hearts.

- **Father Frank Kordek's** Friday morning Mass held in the glass chapel in the Grotto woods. "Examine your hands...reach for the hand of your spouse..."
- The gregarious **Bishop David Foley** walking up and down the aisle, warmly greeting our families and couples.
- **Bill and Judy Dinges'** electrifying talk on Teams...so well put!
- **Bob and Liz Maxwell's** session on centering prayer, "You can't do it in less than 20 minutes a day."
- **Bob and Marie Wallace** attending lovingly to the sacristy needs at each Mass. On skit night, **Bob** saying, "I don't want to spoil you."

- **Paul Sloan** and the show-stopping "Rising Moon"! "Betty, how many went to Hollywood the last time we did this?"
- All the precious children busily playing the wash boards at the square dance.
- **Father Bob Leonhardt**, **Terry Briggs**, **Frank Ambrosino**, **Tim Faylor**, and **Dick Ruemenapp** doing their thing to the square dance music!
- **Cindy Fehr** giving her speech in English that took hours to prepare.
- **Father Peter Ryan**, in his wheelchair, God bless his heart, joining us for a day.
- The sage **Favrets** holding court as only they can on their recent gift to Teams, a new study topic for older teams..."The Best is Yet to Be."
- The warm and smiling Portuguese families who chose to come and be with us.
- Our young Polish/Toronto couple who have started 14 teams and drove for hours just to attend when they could, Saturday evening and Sunday morning...so inspired by the Holy Spirit!
- Beautiful children with loving parents at every meal, every Mass, and the ice cream social. Children peeking out of strollers, backpacks, following that piped piper herself, **Janie Mericksko**.
- **Janie** leading with every inch of her body as the children did their "crying" skit!

**Rest in Peace  
Rev. Henri Caffarel  
1903 - 1996**

- The exquisite and melodic voice of **Ann Krauss**. Soloist and cantor **Daiva Miller**, the choir and other musicians gave inspiring additions to the liturgies.
- The **Shiffers**, first to greet us and last to give out key deposits on Sunday as we piled our belongings into our cars.
- "Beatam, Beatam" being led in our final moments by the senior **DuBois** from France. This Teams International Song rings in your ears long after you've left an International Teams event.
- A call from the Ireland Regional Couple and a touching letter from the **Hobans**, our liaison couple from the Leading Team, wishing us God's blessing on the work of this conference on our hearts.

We believe the Lord did this through all of you, committee heads, visitors, chaplains, couples, children, and especially **Ed and Edie!**

In Christ and Mary,  
**Bob and Pat Verhelle †**

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## Photos of 1996 National Conference in Emmitsburg Maryland

