

Teams of Our Lady

Magnificat

USA NEWSLETTER - FALL 2024

Torino 2024

13th International
Gathering of Equipes
Notre-Dame

also inside

First USA-SR Couple to Serve on ERI

Holts Begin as Liaison Couple
for Transoceanic Zone

New USA Super Region Team

Thank You for Your "Yes"

Duomo di San Giovanni Battista
(Cathedral of St. John the Baptist) in Turin
with the Chapel of the Holy Shroud and
the tomb of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati



Farewell from the Holts



There are many circumstances in life that our perspective makes a huge difference on how we see things. Take the old adage of the glass and whether it is half full or half empty. The simple answer is that both are technically true but each reveals something about those reporting the status of the glass. Should we not rejoice in both personalities; those that see what remains or is still ahead and those who see what we have already experienced, enjoyed or appreciated?

However, aren't we, as children of God, challenged to look even deeper than both these perspectives? Thinking deeply, the glass is always completely full. When the liquid stops, air fills the rest. When we are thirsty, we don't even think about or notice the air, but where would we be without the air we breathe? This is one way to think about God's blessings. We may be particularly aware of one form of blessing that God gives us and may be oblivious to others that are constantly present.

In Teams, we can use the Endeavors and the Sacraments to see the larger and deeper picture of the blessings God has in store for us if we open ourselves and our perspective to Him.

We are excited for the US Super Region. We thank Greg and Melanie for allowing us to share our thoughts in this article. We have been blessed by the hopes, thoughts and prayers of those in the larger Movement, and we encourage each of you to exercise care for the Movement's future. We will continue to pray for you all.

Most of all when you are asked to serve Teams, whether serving as Responsible Couple for your team, sharing your story at an information meeting, piloting a new team or in any other way, trust in God's blessings and say yes like Mary did when she was approached with God's plan. Her yes continues to overflow for all generations. May we be wise enough to have the same response. Think about the full glass in addition to water you receive. God's blessings are always more abundant than we can see and even imagine. Your Spouse, your Team and the Movement need your yes. May we all realize God's abundant blessings and please Him in our service.

T.J. & Ellen Holt, *Transoceanic Zone Liaison Couple, Kingwood TX 06*



Greetings from the Gehrts

Greetings fellow Teams members in the USA Super Region! We have given our "fiat" to serve as your next Responsible Couple for the USA Super Region. We officially assumed this leadership role from T.J. & Ellen Holt on July 14th in Turin Italy during a beautiful Mass concluding the ERI College Meeting. T.J. & Ellen then, just 6 days later, gave their "yes" to serve as the Transoceanic Zone Liaison Couple for the ERI. We couldn't be more excited for them!

During our nineteen days in Italy for ERI College Meetings, the International Gathering, and a Shrine Tour with fellow USA Team members, we were busy trying to take in as much information as we could. The days were packed, and the nights were short, leaving little time for processing and reflection. Now that we are home and have had time for prayer, contemplation, and silence, we have reflected on the doors that God puts in our path that offer us an opportunity to learn, grow, and encounter Him in different ways. Some doors may be beautiful yet misleading and some doors may be rustic yet promising. Through prayer and contemplation, we can more attune our eyes, ears, and heart to discern the doors that God wills us to open to encounter him more fully.

Becoming the Responsible Couple for the Super Region was not something we ever had in mind for ourselves. We were not searching for this door! When asked to discern this role, our easy and immediate response was "no", "we are too busy", and "we are not qualified". However, we soon realized that this was our own resistance and not God's voice. We prayed and discovered a new door that continued to be placed in front of us. As the disciples on the Road to Emmaus said, "were our hearts not burning" when Jesus appeared to them, our hearts were also burning with a love and support that we could not ignore.

As we begin this new service role, we are humbled, excited, and anxious all at the same time. We see many new doors ahead of us, and we need to discern which ones to open now and which ones can wait. We are focusing on where God wants to lead this Movement each day and trying to serve the needs of the base Teams first. We kindly ask for your patience, prayer, and support.



Greg & Melanie Gehrt, *USA Super Region Responsible Couple, Cypress TX 01*



From Our USA Spiritual Counselor



Dear **Teams of Our Lady**,

I pray that everyone is enjoying the summer with family and friends. I had the opportunity to attend the **International Gathering of Teams of Our Lady in Turin, Italy** in July. What a beautiful experience to witness the **Universal Church** coming together from the ends of the earth as the body of **Christ** witnessing to others the vocations of marriage and priesthood and religious life. The theme for the conference focused on the **Road to Emmaus**, fraternity, and friendship. Like the disciples on the road to **Emmaus** who encountered Jesus along the way, we too should always be prepared to encounter **Jesus** in our daily lives. Our hearts and minds must always be opened to receive **Jesus** and most of all to respond with a generous heart and not be afraid.

The disciples did not recognize **Jesus** until he broke the bread. As followers of **Jesus** and faithful **Christians**, we can recognize **Jesus** in a more profound way than the early disciples. We have many

examples of **Saints** who have gone before us and left us a glimpse into the knowledge of seeing **Christ** in the other and being another **Christ** for others as well.

A couple of things stood out for me during the international gathering. First, during the celebration of Mass, everyone prayed the **Our Father** prayer in their native language. This was a beautiful and powerful moment of the liturgy. One Bishop commented, "We come from all over the world, yet no one is a foreigner." Second, during the meals at the hotel (breakfast and dinner), many languages were spoken at the dinner table. Everyone felt welcomed and the fraternity and friendship were heartfelt. I enjoyed meeting people from all over the world and hearing about their involvement with **Teams of Our Lady** and the impact it has had on their lives.

As you begin the new formation and study with your fellow Teams, I pray everyone will open their hearts and minds to receive all that the Lord has to offer you and in return, to have the courage to respond generously with gratitude and love.

Peace and many blessings!

Fr. Elias Lopez, USA Super Region Spiritual Counselor

Thank You Super Regional Teams

OUTGOING	TITLE	INCOMING
T.J. & Ellen Holt	USA Super Region RC	Greg & Melanie Gehrt
Fr. Elias (Eli) Lopez	USA Spiritual Counselor	Fr. Elias (Eli) Lopez
Jeff & Denise Standley	Secretariat	Jeff & Denise Standley
Steve & Glynis Sturm	Finance/Treasurer	Rick & Carol Fishbune
Jim & Deb St. Louis	North Province RC	Mark & Patty Conway
Mike & Beatrice Towns	South Province RC	Fabio & Camila Cristino
Dave & Carol McCaffery	East Province RC	Joe & Michelle Lawler
Robin & Colette Quinn	West Province RC	Luie & Ana Nunes
Greg & Melanie Gehrt	USA NTWC RC	Josh & Christina Loeffler
Jeff & Rachel Marek	<i>Magnificat & Print Media Couple</i>	Larry & Carolyn Audije
Larry & Judy Wagner	Prayer Couple	Art & Cathy Beccard
Paul & Monique Harris	Friends of Fr. Caffarel Liaison Couple	Paul & Monique Harris
Jack & Mary Pulick	Intercessor Liaison Couple	Jack & Mary Pulick
Roger & Lynn Porzig	Webmaster / Technology Couple	Larry & Mary Kay Kuchta
Kevin & Michelle Campisi	Materials Couple	Nick & Joannah Landry
Alexandre & Erica Gruer	Translation Couple	Rafael & Ana Laura Gaiao
Bob & Janie Mericsko	Historian Couple	Bob & Janie Mericsko
John & Jamie Hay	Social Media / Digital Media Couple	George & Roxi Aguayo
	Technology Support Couple	Dave & Patricia Matteson
	Recording Secretariat Couple	John & Cheri Huston



Teams Of Our Lady International Gathering

Turin, Italy July 15-20, 2024

TORINO 2024
13^o raduno
internazionale

Opening Ceremony



Mat & Katherine Aschenberg (*Denver CO 02*) carried the USA flag for Opening Ceremonies of the International Gathering! Eighty countries in all were represented in a truly inspirational ceremony. Trinidad and Tobago also participated and are now a part of the USA Super Region.



ERI College Meeting July 11-14



The annual ERI College meeting was focused on the International Gathering and the concluding announcement of the incoming ERI. At the final Mass of the College, the handover ceremony occurred which transitioned the USA - SR Responsible Couple from T.J. and Ellen Holt to Greg and Melanie Gehrt.



New ERI Couple

T.J. & Ellen Holt are the New Liaison Couple for the Transoceanic Zone for the ERI, International Leading Team. They are the first couple from the USA to serve on the ERI. We are witnessing Teams history!



General Fun and Fellowship





Liturgies

We experienced five beautiful liturgies during the Gathering. Each day was an incredible site with over 400 priests, bishops, and cardinals gathered around the altar for Mass including our very own Father Eli!



Expo

Thank you to Nick & Joannah Landry (Kingwood TX 17) as they not only coordinated the Expo, but all the details related to the Gathering for the USA Super Region. Thanks to all who brought the candy that made our USA booth a huge hit!



The USA Super Region welcomes Trinidad and Tobago who are now attached to our Super Region. Trinidad and Tobago will have the opportunity to participate in College meetings, trainings, and other events in the USA. We look forward to our collaboration with them.



9-Day Shrine Tour After the International Gathering, July 20-28



The 9-Day Shrine Tour after the International Gathering – 30 pilgrims on the journey were in awe of these holy sites and relics, but more importantly were able to enjoy fellowship, mutual help and sharing with one another!

ERI Training in Oropa July 20-23



Thank you to the five couples who represented the USA Super Region at the ERI training in Oropa after the International Gathering. They were able to attend sessions presented by the new ERI to broaden their view of Teams and service to the Movement!



General Fun and Fellowship



Mixed Teams



The opportunity to share in Mixed Teams with couples from around the world was an amazing experience. Having dinner conversations with couples from all over the world deepened our vision of Teams worldwide.

—Steve and Lori Hesse
East Texas Region Responsible Couple, Spring TX 01



We came home with a deeper understanding and love for each other, our God, our Mother Mary, the Church, and Teams. It was awesome-inspiring to be with so many couples and priests from around the world committed to strengthening the marriage sacrament and the covenant with God we all have within the sacrament and as individuals. Highly recommend attending any Teams event- from a sector event in your diocese, to regional, province, super regional and international events when you have the opportunity. The time and expense to attend will be rewarded to overflowing.

Jim and Sarah Martinec
Raleigh NC 04

We are so grateful to the Lord for allowing us to attend this event! It was amazing to meet so many couples and priests from different countries, speaking different languages, but with the same beliefs and vision of living a better life in our marriage and families.

We are highly motivated to share the ideas with our Region. We had spiritual, entertainment, and relaxation time. It was especially memorable as we gathered together at the Eucharist talking the same language of love.

Carlos and Gaby Contreras
Coppell TX 04S, North Texas Region Responsible Couple

Participating for the first time was incredibly exciting, enriching, and transformative for us! Feeling the magnitude of our movement and spending these days with 7,500 people who share the same goals, faith, and love filled us with hope for a better world. It showed us that we are many and capable of addressing the challenges in our society, giving us the strength and energy to continue working for our movement and our faith. We hope and pray that all couples in the movement can experience this at least once in their lives!

Camila and Fabio Ruggiero Cristino
Miami FL 01S, South Province Responsible Couple

It was an unforgettable experience we will treasure forever. We see this as a miracle, that after so many years, so many couples and priests from so many parts of the world believe in what Fr. Caffarel started with only four couples, and is still growing. It is a blessing for so many. We pray for all couples and priests that are part of Teams of our Lady and also for it to reach the younger generation.

Blessings to all, and thank you to those who worked hard to put such a big event together.

Vilma and Alejandro Gonzalez
Carrollwood FL 09S

Piloting Survey Results

Earlier this spring, the USA Super Region launched a survey to solicit feedback on the 12-month piloting process and materials that have been used the last few years. The intent was to gather feedback to determine what has worked, and to evaluate what may need to be changed/ revised.

We are excited to report that we received survey results from 118 couples! We were overjoyed and extremely appreciative of each and every response that was received. We have taken the last few months to thoroughly read and understand each couples' responses. We are taking these to prayer to best discern how the Holy Spirit would like to guide the piloting process in the USA Super Region. These results will be further discussed with the USA Super Region Team throughout this next year.

We believe that everyone can agree that a strong piloting process is necessary to start a new team. As Fr. Caffarel states in the Charter, ***"A new Team must be started with care. If the beginning is made too hastily without a thorough explanation of the purpose and the methods of the Movement, almost certain failure can be expected."*** Every new team must start with the same foundation to understand the pedagogy, mystique, and charism of Teams of Our

Lady. A beautiful history of the Piloting process in the USA is documented in this issue of *Magnificat* for your education and

enjoyment. Successful piloting is how the Movement began in the USA and is paramount to the success and growth in the coming years.

From Chart 1, 85% of the respondents felt that the piloting materials helped them develop a closer relationship with their spouse and 84% with their fellow team members. This is encouraging and desired.

Of the twelve topics currently presented in the current Pilot Book "Beginning a New Team", Chart 2 indicates that "communication and sit down" and "conjugal and family prayer" were considered the most helpful. The "Teams Charter"

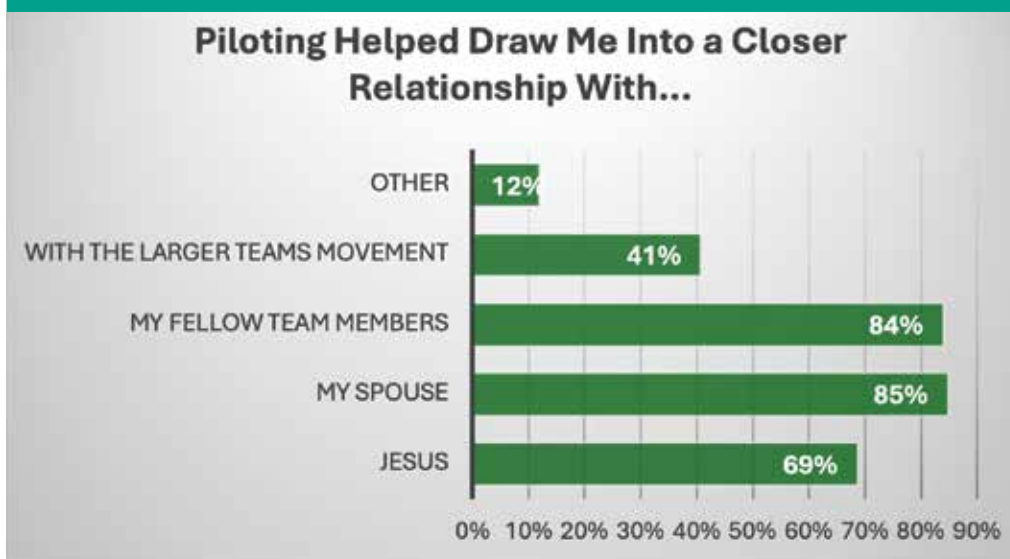
"I am just so touched by the commitment of the two couples who piloted our Team. They traveled far distances every-other-month just for our meeting. It gave me a deep appreciation for them and for the whole Teams movement. What a gift!"

"I really enjoyed our piloting year, and we miss our pilot couple! They were great role models, and helped us to set realistic expectations. At first I felt overwhelmed by all the endeavors, but they reminded us that the goal is progress, not perfection!"

was ranked as one of the lowest in terms of most helpful.

During the piloting process, the pilot couples and the leadership in USA Super Region often field questions about the Charter, its history and its relevance to present day teams. The Charter is critical to understanding the foundation and purpose of Teams established by Fr. Caffarel. The Charter can be likened to the Constitution of the United States followed by a Bill of Rights and Amendments that have made the United States what it is today. Fr. Caffarel submitted the original Charter to Rome in 1947. It has been slightly revised and updated over the years but is still true to Fr. Caffarel's original. Terminology is different from country to country depending on language, translation, and customs. Per the

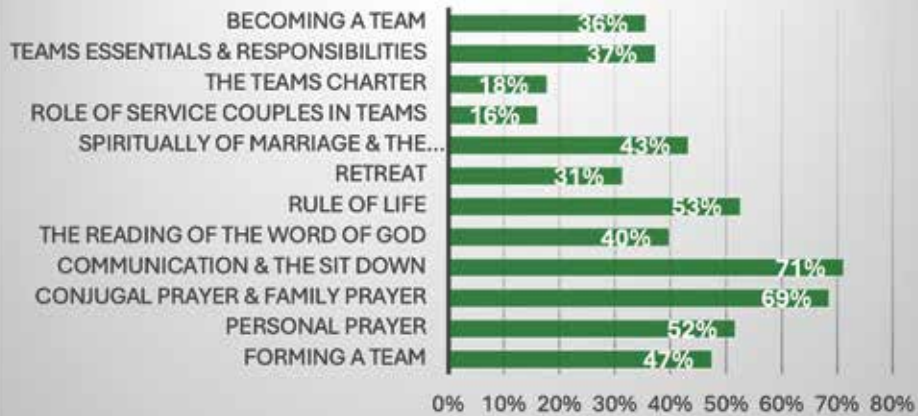
Chart 1



"We have been together for 18 years. We recently re-piloted due to adding a new couple to our Team. We lost 3 members, so this couple was filling in a gap. The re-piloting material gave us an opportunity to reset our focus and our purpose."

Chart 2

Piloting Book Topics Most Helpful



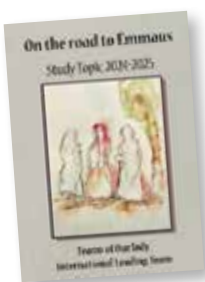
vision of Fr. Caffarel, our Movement has a unique mystique and pedagogy that both support and drive each other. It is paramount that each couple understand the premise and backbone of the Movement that is the Charter.

This above thought goes hand in hand with the desire to shorten the piloting process from 12 months. In keeping with the current schedule of many teams within the USA as well as the yearly format of many teams throughout the world, we are studying ways to revise the piloting process to 10 months. There are many teams throughout the world that meet 10 times a year and take two months off in the summer for vacations and family activities.

Overall, there was excellent feedback gathered from this survey. Please note that every comment is being taken seriously. There will be much time, thought, and prayer put into evaluating how the current piloting materials were developed to date and how they can be further updated to sustain growth in the Movement for years to come while respecting the vision of our founder, Fr. Henri Caffarel. We look forward to sharing updates with you in the months ahead. 🙏

"I think the piloting process was a great way for our Team to get started. We learned what Teams of Our Lady is about, we learned about how to have a meeting and the importance of the different parts of the meeting (highs and lows, scripture reflection, deep pooling, sharing on the reading, etc.) so that we get the most out of it. I don't think that would be possible, or at least not as effective, without a pilot couple to walk us through."

New Study Materials!



We are excited to announce the new 2024-2025 study topic published by the ERI, ***On the Road to Emmaus***.

The new study topic is printed and available for distribution. Copies are available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Thank you for everyone

who pre-ordered copies. There are printed copies still available at materials@teamsofourlady.org. When placing an order, please order for your entire team, not individually. Once all printed copies are distributed, the study topic will only be available in PDF version.

Order your print copies now!



Welcome New North Province Couple



Teams reached the United States in the late 1950s. It has grown to all the continents and over 90 countries thanks to all the Pilot Couples through the years. We want to thank Jim & Deb St. Louis for their years of service as the North Province Couple. We personally appreciate their leadership and friendship and hospitality.

Please see the pictures of the transfer of the North Province Icon and other North Province materials. We are Mark & Patty Conway the new North Province Responsible Couple. We have been in teams for 20 years and previously served as an Information Couple, Pilot Couple, Sector Couple and Regional Couple. We look forward to meeting many of you during our 5 year term. We hope many of you will prayerfully consider serving as a Pilot Couple. It is a true blessing.



Mark & Patty Conway
North Province Responsible Couple
Des Moines IA 06

Do You Remember Who Piloted You?

We were piloted by Allen & June Wilwert 20 years ago and we are eternally grateful to them. Some of you may be called to share the gift of Teams with other new Teams couples like our Pilot Couples did for us years ago. The blessings of practicing the Endeavors in our sacramental marriages with our spouse and a Team of 5 to 7 other couples and a priest originally began in 1938 in France by Fr. Henri Caffarel. Our Teams could only be formed if an experienced couple was willing to share the Piloting process with us and the group of couples who wanted to form our Team. We in the North Province need new Pilot couples. Please contact your Sector Couple, Regional Couple or Provincial Couple if you feel called to serve as a Pilot Couple. It is a very rewarding role. ✨

As Father Caffarel stated below, Piloting is a way to spread love:

“Whenever couples practice mutual help and fraternal love, their hearts grow little by little until soon their love reaches the home, their neighborhood, their country, until their love reaches the furthest shores.”



Morning of Reflection

The Des Moines Sector had a morning of reflection on February 17, 2024 at Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Church in Ankeny, IA. The morning started off with adoration followed by a light breakfast. Deacon Mark & Maria Campbell (*Des Moines IA 31*) spoke on “Eucharist & Marriage. Over 60 team members attended the event.

Bismarck ND 01



On the Feast of the Holy Spouses at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck on January 22nd. Our entire team attended the Mass which was celebrated by The Most Rev. David D. Kagan, Bishop of the Bismarck Diocese. Following Mass we celebrated with pizza!

'Something's Afoot' in the North Province



How are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" – Romans 10:14-15

How beautiful are the feet of Pilot couples who bring the good news of Teams to places where there are no Teams! As we reflect on the past three years as Responsible Couple for the North Province, we are grateful to the spirit-filled couples who have generously given of their time to support Teams in previously unserved areas. All four Regions in the North Province have started Teams in at least one new area, as described below.

Jim and Deb St. Louis, St Louis MO 03, Former North Province RC

North Central Region

North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin



Two Teams in Detroit Lakes, MN, were piloted by Jan & John Klocke, Responsible Couple for the North Central Region. The first Team in Bismarck, ND, recently completed piloting and then promptly formed Team 2, piloted by Dennis & Charlene Prindiville, and is soon to start Team 3 to become a Pre-Sector! A new Team in Waukesha, WI, was piloted by Anders & Marie Hendrickson, formerly of Fargo, ND. Glory to God for bringing Teams to these areas!

Lake Michigan Region

Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois



The first Team in the Chicago, IL, area has recently formed. Many thanks to Rick and Andrea Rader, the Responsible Couple for the Region, who oversaw the establishment of this Team.

Central Region

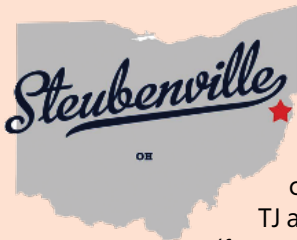
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Colorado



A new Team was established in Marshalltown, IA. Many thanks to Mark and Patty Conway, the Responsible Couple (formerly) for the Region, and now for the entire North Province. Four of the six couples from the new Team attended pilot couple training and now they are preparing to start two new teams to become a Pre-Sector. And the gift goes on...

Midwest Region

Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee



Two Teams formed in the town of Steubenville, OH. The first Team was co-piloted by two couples, Jim and Deb St. Louis, (formerly) Responsible couple for the North Province, and TJ and Ellen Holt, Responsible couple (formerly) for the USA Super Region and now for the Transoceanic Zone. The second Team was co-piloted by Mike & Lisa Maurer and Bob & Barb Doran of Granville OH 01 in Granville, Ohio.



Couples throughout the United States are hungry for the good news of Teams of Our Lady. Our process of formation is personal, generous, and hospitable, ensuring each new Team gets off to a strong start, which is especially important in areas where there is not yet a Sector to support their growth. The Movement always needs Pilot couples who are willing to bring the good news. Among the many other benefits of piloting, it makes your feet look GOOD! 🙌

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
Jim and Deb St. Louis

South Province

West TX/New Mexico
North TX/Oklahoma | East TX
Louisiana/Arkansas | Southeast



As we travel to Turin, we say goodbye as South Province couple and a send a big welcome to Fabio and Camila.

It has been a blessing and honor to have served in this capacity. We treasure all the friendships we have made and thank all those who have helped us in our journey.

Passing the leadership to Fabio and Camila, we know you are in the best

of hands (theirs and God's). Please keep them in your prayers and prayerfully consider how you can support them and the Teams movement. If you hear the call, remember, "God does not call the equipped -He equips those He calls."

May our dear Lord bless you and keep you. Love,

Mike and Trice, *Houston TX 02*, Former South Province RC

We are deeply moved to take on this new role within the Teams of Our Lady! We accept this mission with great humility, joy, and love, eager to dedicate and offer a bit of what we can to this movement that gives us so much in life!

The most challenging part will be replacing such special people as Mike and Trice, who have taught us so much and, more than that, welcomed us with special affection. We hope that every couple within the Teams always feels this bond that unites us all—a brotherhood, a warm embrace that only fraternal love can provide. May God empower us and use us as instruments of His peace always!

We count on all of you, members of the Teams, because we are always a team, learning, growing, and walking together toward conjugal holiness! Join us on this journey!

With a strong and affectionate embrace,

Camila and Fabio,
Miami FL
01S, South Province RC



New Teams Welcome Celebration in Louisiana



A New Teams Welcome Celebration (NTWC) was held in early March at Plaucheville, Louisiana with about 25 couples attending. It was a wonderful day with a Team's gumbo theme filled with great discussion, prayer, food, and community. Plaucheville is a very small town in central Louisiana on fire for Teams of Our Lady with five new teams.



How wonderful to have a visiting "many years" Team from North Louisiana (Monroe Team 8) pictured with Father Martin Laird at Plaucheville. Their experience added greatly to our discussions.

Teammates having fun with the team-building exercise!



Presenters doing a "First Line" dancing entry for the Team's build a gumbo theme



Sector Meeting in San Antonio

We held our first Sector meeting in San Antonio. A 3-hour gathering at our parish faith formation gathering room. Couples brought food & drink & their kids. We had about fifteen couples and five children in attendance.

Father Rodolfo, our parish priest, did a fantastic job with his talk on Sacramental marriage. We seated the couples so that various Teams were represented at each table. The format of the overall meeting was that of a regular meeting with the highs & lows about their Teams.

Orlando Portuguese Team



Welcome to the first Portuguese-speaking Team within the Southeast Region! Orlando received the blessing of a new team

composed of Brazilian couples that have been piloting since April 2024. It is the start of the third language inside the Region that already embraces English and Spanish-speaking Teams.

Annual Couples Retreat

Pre-Sector Orlando hosted an amazing retreat from February 16-18 for Teams in Orlando and other areas at the San Pedro Center in Orlando. It featured seven speakers and a Sit-Down exercise. They had a blessed time with 14 couples and priests, including members of the Palm Coast Team. Special thanks to Allie and Anthony Cota and their team for organizing the retreat!



Celebrating Life in Teams



Jack and Mary Pulick (*Palm Coast FL 01, center in blue*) have been in Teams for 54 years, beginning in New York. They brought the Movement to Palm Coast, FL over 17 years ago. Three July wedding anniversaries and one 70th birthday was celebrated.

We also celebrated and thanked God for bringing Jack back to all of us! One month ago, Jack suffered a sudden cardiac arrest. He went without CPR for five minutes, and with the help of his neighbor and loving wife, the EMT's and great medical care, Jack has made an amazing recovery!! We are truly blessed, and they want to thank all their family, friends, and Teams families around the world for the prayers and support. We prayed, God listened, and we are ever so thankful! This is your USA Intercessor Liaison Couple.

Miami Sector Movie Day



Miami Sector on March 16, organized an event at the Movies! The Sector invited Teams to watch the movie *Cabrini* together, a wonderful history of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, the patron saint of immigrants. Thanks to Michell and Elmer Gunther, Sector Couple for organizing!

Jacksonville Piloting



Wonderful team of seven couples, with Fr. Jason Trull as their Spiritual Counselor, and Mary Kay and Larry Kutchta as their Pilot Couple. They celebrated their Information Meeting a year ago which brought them to Teams of Our Lady!

New Team 17 in Charlotte, South Carolina

Charlotte Sector welcomed Charlotte Team 17 as they finished their piloting year. Four of five couples gave birth during the past year, so there were lots of infants at their meetings to hold and love – and baptisms to celebrate! There are now 18 children at their family Teams activities! What a wonderful addition to the Charlotte Team families. They give a big thank-you to Mary Ann and Jim Kirchner for piloting them!

After their re-commitment meeting Marie (and Jose) Martin commented “Thank you all again for the beautiful team and journey together. Yesterday was a special night. I’m so grateful for all the time and prayers shared. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for Your presence! What a treasure to gather with all of you. So happy to continue this journey. Praying for all of our couples and families. Praying to be more consistent with endeavors and continue growing as a couple closer to Christ. God bless you all abundantly.”



Father Stephen Vaccaro Helping to Build Teams in Virginia



Here in the Loudoun Sector in Northwest Virginia, Teams of Our Lady is growing. In looking for reasons, never underestimate the impact of one person. Father Stephen Vaccaro brought his enthusiasm for Teams from suburban Burke, Virginia to more rural Winchester, Virginia when he was transferred a few years ago. By sharing the many benefits of Teams, including “you’ll find godparents for your children!”, Father Vaccaro has been instrumental in starting four Teams in Winchester in four years. So many young couples with growing families are experiencing spiritual growth thanks to Teams. The pastor and both parochial vicars at Sacred Heart are spiritual counselors for the Teams, so although Teams is not a parish-based organization, it does have a strong parish presence in the one parish in Frederick County. Admitting to his competitive nature, Father Vaccaro hopes to help start the most teams in the Arlington Diocese. He has just a few more to go before beating his friend and rival Father Scalia.

Submitted by Janet and Tom Broderick, Leesburg VA 02, Loudoun Sector Couple, Coastal Region

Brand New Teams Form in Glen Allen

What do you do when you move and there are no existing Teams accepting new couples? You start your own.

Our parish at Saint Michael the Archangel Catholic Church (Glen Allen, VA) enthusiastically supported an Information Meeting in February of this year. Deacon Andy Malone provided a wonderful overview of Teams for the sixteen couples attending. From the Information Meeting, two teams of six couples were formed (not counting ourselves as the pilot couple). We were blessed to have a Spiritual Advisor and Spiritual Counselor join as well. Both Teams are growing in faith and learning the endeavors during this first year. We are thankful for the couples and clergy who followed the Blessed Mother’s example and said “yes” to Teams of Our Lady. With the Holy Spirit’s help, more Teams will form.



Simpsonville, SC Sector Retreat 2024



Love Is Not Made Within Marriage: It Is Celebrated! was the theme of the May 25-26 retreat for Teams and Friends of the Simpsonville SC Sector. The retreat was held at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church. The retreat was organized and coordinated by Team Greer VA 015, RC Daryl and Alberto Flores, and their Spiritual Advisor Deacon Bert Chavez.



New Friendships Made in Turin

Getting to know our Teams of Our Lady friends after a small group workshop. Ana & Remy are from Poland, Camille & Michael from CA, and Joe & Michelle from MA. Front (l to r): Anna, Camille, Mike, Remy Back: Joe, Michelle.

Simpsonville, SC Sector Picnic 2024



The Simpsonville SC Sector enjoyed a wonderful picnic, organized and coordinated by Responsible Couple Claudia and Tomas Quiroz and their Simpsonville SC 08S Team. A great time was had by all. They enjoyed delightful social events and delicious food.



NE Team Wilbraham 04 Summer Picnic in July

Back (l to r) are Michael Bernardi, Joe Lawler, Mike Ferris, Rob Murner & Tom Rossati; Front row Patti Bernardi, Michelle Lawler, Celeste Ferris, Christine Murner & Donna Rosati.



We say a bittersweet farewell to you as your previous West Province Couple. We served the awesome West Province for four years now and have gained so much from the experience!!

We have learned much about the Teams

Movement, met so many beautiful couples on this journey to Christ, and traveled many miles to support your Regions and Sectors! Meetings, Gatherings, and phone calls covering so much will be greatly missed! Our journey to Christ that continues will be a lifelong Endeavor, keeping the Teams Movement close to our heart!! If we have failed you in any way, we apologize and ask that you forgive us. If we have helped you in any way, we ask that you continue the Teams Movement in your own way and prayerfully consider leadership roles if you are invited. We will always keep the West Province in our prayers!

Our Lady Queen of Teams pray for us!

Robin & Colette Quinn

Hanford CA 06, Former West Province RC

Surprise! This is the word we would use to describe the unexpected phone call asking us to take on the leadership role as West Province Responsible Couple. It was the furthest thing from our minds, and yet we felt very small and humbled to be asked. After taking it to prayer, the Holy Spirit was continuously leading us to say "Yes!" Like Mary, with her Fiat, we too saw how important it was to say yes. First, we would like to thank all the work that Robin and Colette Quinn have done for the region. They have done an amazing job! May God continue to bless them and their family. We are nervous for this new undertaking, yet our hearts are filled with love, enthusiasm, and joy, and we are eager and ready to serve. We look forward to helping and supporting Teams in any way we can. Through the endeavors and responsibilities, Teams has been a very important guide in steering us on the right path to Christ. We are looking forward to meeting and getting to know you. We are all in this together, growing spiritually in our marriage and intimacy with Christ. We ask for your continued prayers, for God's grace, and Mary's intercession as we journey together.



Luie and Ana Nunes

Turlock CA 12, West Province RC

"A Season of Revival" Regional College Held in the Northwest

Sector Couples and Team Responsible Couples met with Regional Couple Rich & Karen Hanson to inspire a revival of the Teams Movement in the Northwest Region. Couples shared what Teams of Our Lady Endeavor meant the most to them and how it impacted their journey to Christ. Held at St. John the Baptist Church in Milwaukee Oregon, Fr. John Maxwell, Pastor and Team Member, shared the importance of Teams in today's society. In addition to the many opportunities to share with each other, prayer was also a part of the day, concluding with Mass. Those who were available also enjoyed dinner together after Mass.



Anne Zielsdorf shares with the college her Endeavor experiences.



Portland Teams stepped up to the challenge and hosted all out of town couples. One couple, Pat and Lee Baur hosted three couples. Thank you all host couples!!

From left to right: Megan & Scott Fleischman, Nicole (& Victor photographer) Sanchez, Lee & Pat Baur. Seated: Joshua & Laura Shoemaker.



Karen and Rich Hanson, Northwest Regional Couple, make the presentations interesting!

Sectors Gather for Retreats During Lent



Turlock Sector Retreat

Turlock Sectors 2, 3 & 4 combined efforts to host their annual Retreat in Three Rivers, California. "The Spirituality of the Endeavors" was the theme with over 20 couples attending. Fr. Manuel Sousa, previous Super Region Spiritual Chaplain also attended the Retreat. Dr. Anthony Lilles, Retreat Master, teaches at St. Patrick's Seminary and has worked in spiritual formation for decades.



Fresno Sector Retreat

The Fresno Sector also held their annual Lenten Retreat at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Three Rivers, California. Father Dan Avila, Sector Spiritual Chaplain, presented "I Am With You Always", explaining how couples experience the Gift of the Eucharist. Saturday night Social of the Retreat challenged couples to attend in 70's attire. This Sector Event is well attended!



Ken & Liz Zelsdorf take a turn leading a station at the candlelight Stations of the Cross.



Liz Zelsdorf, Melissa Cunha, and Lisa Lawrence as Charlie's Angels...a good time was had by all!



Roberto & Gabby Couto, William & Kate Baumann model their 70's attire.

Sector Event a Success! What better way to mix & mingle than to play Bunco?!

A Bunco Potluck was held by Fresno Sector in April at Holy Spirit Catholic Church Hall. The April showers did not keep couples away! Everyone shared together during the pot luck meal, then went on to play Bunco!! Biggest winners and biggest losers were tallied. The event was popular and fun!



Robert & Cynthia Garza, Kimberly & Mark Foster, and Kelsie & Thomas Quinn enjoy camaraderie between potluck and Bunco play.

Family Camping in June Big Lake, Greer, Arizona



Phoenix Team 5 enjoyed a Family Camping Trip as their Social Event! A great way to renew Team Spirit as well as vacationing with family!



Phoenix Team 6 Retreat

Phoenix AZ 06 had a wonderful retreat in April at St. Gabriel's parish in Cave Creek, AZ.



Monthly Sit Down with Your Spouse and Christ

As couples committed to Teams of Our Lady, we mustn't forget about our need to focus on the six endeavors of the movement. As Teams of Our Lady tells us, "The endeavors are attitudes to awaken within us and not merely tasks to be accomplished." Let's have an attitude of awakening and focus on the Monthly Sit Down for this issue.

The Monthly Sit Down is our opportunity to come together with our spouse and discuss where we are going on our path to holiness together.

"And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it?" Luke 14:28

It is vital that we sit down regularly and look closely at ourselves and our marriage. We need to recall the ideals that brought us together and pray to God for guidance going forward. The sit down necessitates not only talking but active listening marked by sincerity and love. We are asked to approach each sit down with loving acceptance and an attitude of openness to listen to the heart of our spouse.

To begin a sit down, come together, face each other, and start with prayer. You may want to



hold hands while opening in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your hearts and words. If you enjoy reflecting on Scripture together, begin each sit down with Scripture. Once you have opened in prayer, then you can each begin to share on any pressing topic in your life while your spouse actively listens. You each may choose to reflect on your current family life and discuss and pray for each child individually. You may also need to discuss any issues you have with aging parents and how to address them. Finally, don't forget to pray for each other and close in prayer.

Intimacy in a sit down allows the opportunity for healing through the building of mutual trust. A sit down allows us to deepen our understanding of ourselves and our spouse. A sit down helps us remember that none of us are perfect and that we are navigating this life together on our path to holiness.

As author and poet E.E. Cummins said "Every human person is a mystery that must be learned slowly, reverently, with care, tenderness, and pain...and is never learned completely." The monthly sit down gives us the opportunity to learn even more about our spouse through intimate sharing and active listening. Endeavor to sit down with your spouse each month! ✨

“ Approach each sit down with loving acceptance and an attitude of openness. ”



Sit-Down Outline

- Read scripture together
- Pray together
- Individual sharing and listening
- Discuss your marriage
- Discuss and pray for each child (or family member) individually
- Wrap up
- Concluding Prayer

From the Archives: 60 years of Piloting in the USA

Bob and Janie Mericsko, Historian Couple



Did you ever wonder how Teams came to the United States? It is important to look back and reflect on the commitment and dedication of these early teams and understand how they were formed and piloted.

Although the Teams Movement originated in France in 1938, it wasn't until December 1963 that an English version of the Charter was published. Formal piloting for Teams of Our Lady in the USA

followed shortly. However, seeds had already been planted prior by faithful, energetic European Teams couples who worked and lived in the United States for several years.

In his 1976 article for the *Magnificat*, titled *The Teams of Our Lady Come to the U.S.*, Andy Favret wrote, "It's not possible to pick a place and a date and say, 'That's where it all began.' Nevertheless, during 1958 three separate seeds began to germinate at widely different locations in the United States. Each of these initiatives would lead to the establishment of a new team — and additional teams would eventually form in each area: Los Angeles, California; Washington, DC; and Boston, Massachusetts." This piloting was done with the encouragement of France, but without the supportive English-translated piloting documents.

Many items have been generously donated to the USA Teams Archives; among them are "The Charter of the Teams of Our Lady" and other piloting-related materials covering four time periods:

- Booklets titled "Monthly Letter to New Teams" (*translated 1966-1969*) and "Study of the Charter" – The Study booklet is undated but is assumed to be from the same time period as it was published jointly by the International Teams Movement in Paris, France and the first U.S. Secretariat in Alexandria, Virginia. A Pilot Couple, termed "the temporary Responsible Couple" led the initial meetings (usually four or five) until the new team elected a Responsible Couple. Letters had been published to allow a new team up to two years before their formal Commitment Ceremony. The Pilot Couple transitioned the newly formed team to the support of a Liaison Couple (Father Caffarel's idea) to answer any questions and to maintain connection to the Movement.
- Booklets titled "Letter to New Teams" – These booklets, published by the International Teams Movement in Paris, France, are also undated, but assumed to be from the early 1970s since the "Letter to New Teams No. 5" gives Teams statistics as of January 1972. Again, a Pilot Couple attended the first meetings until the new team



elected a Responsible Couple. Letters had been published to support a new team one year before their formal Commitment Ceremony. A Pilot Couple transitioned the newly formed Team to the support of a Liaison Couple.

- "Meeting Together in Christ's Name" (often called "the Blue Books") from the mid 1970s – Each numbered booklet packet holds five documents: Study Theme (on white paper), Getting to know the Teams of Our Lady (on green paper), Believing and Living (on yellow paper), Prayers for the Meeting, and Some Suggestions for the Coming Month (both on blue paper). These booklets were designed for a two-year study.
- The current Piloting material, "Meeting Together in Christ's Name, Beginning a New Team" (first published in June 1993) and "Meeting Together in Christ's Name, A Guide for the Piloting Couple" (first published in April 1995) – This material is designed for a one-year study with a Pilot Couple at each meeting. Because it is important to know about the founder of the Movement, "Father Caffarel Prophet of Marriage" is encouraged for the second year of study.



The early Piloting meetings with new teams in the United States were devoted to studying the "Charter of the Teams of Our Lady". In the Appendix to *Pilot Couples and the Chaplains*, in the "Monthly Letter to New Teams No. 1" (1967), the Leading Team wrote "...take great care during the first meetings to insist on the introduction to the Charter...It is very important from the very start to be absolutely agreed on fundamentals."

Piloting has always had at its foundation "The Charter of the Teams of Our Lady". As stated on page 12 of "Guide to the Teams of Our Lady" (2018 Edition), "The founding principles of the Charter were drawn up to preserve faithfulness to the original inspiration of the Movement and to offer teams some firm proposals. Today we are able to see the effects of creating the charter and to appreciate how essential it was for the Movement's growth and development".

The Charter has become our common heritage. Today, inspired by the same ideals for Christian marriage, and using the same methods to accomplish it, thousands of couples throughout the world, speaking different languages and coming from different cultures, discover through their marriage the richness of a deeper love of God." ✨

Please save the history of your own base team, your sector, your region, and the Team events that you attend. If you have materials that we should add to the history of the US Super Region, please contact us, Janie & Bob Mericsko at Historian@teamsfourlady.org.



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With a new USA Super Region team comes a new mailing address. Please update your records for all correspondence, including donations,

with the new mailing address for Teams of Our Lady in the USA. You could say this is our new "office" for Teams, a small mailbox inside our local UPS store.

Thank you for your cooperation!

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Houston, TX 77065

Website updates

coming soon!



Each couple will need to log in and verify their personal information and update any donation information when the changes go live.

Look for these new features!



Note

Our webmaster@teamsofourlady.org email address has changed to technology@teamsofourlady.org. Please direct all website and technology questions to this new email address.