



Newsletter

Teams of Our Lady

Irish Region

**Visit by Faye and Kevin Noonan from
Leading Team (ERI)**



Winter 2022

Issue 131

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With Regional Team and with Bishop Denis Nulty and Brendan and Rosemarie at Carlow Cathedral



From the Regional Couple

Dear Friends in Teams,

Kevin and Faye Noonan, the Liaison Couple for the Eurasia Zone (of which Ireland is a member) have just completed their visit to Teams in Ireland. They gave the Regional Team a few insights into the letters

written to all the Teams by the ERI (International Leading Team). The letters are published four times a year and are written by different members of the ERI each time. Usually there are two letters, one from the Spiritual Counsellor and one written collaboratively by two of the couples. This October we have three letters, one each from Fr Londoño, Spiritual Counsellor, Clarita and Edgardo Bernal, the ERI Responsible Couple and from Paola and Giovanni, the ERI Secretaries. As you can imagine, there are lots of writing styles and various languages of origin across the 8 couples on the International Team, so you might find some easier to read than others. We give a brief taster here of the theme of the letters of October 2022 about how we can “be church”. We include the links to the full letters below.

Fr Ricardo Londoño in his letter, refers to Pope Francis and his encouragement that we, the baptised “... become more and more aware of what we are and what we are called to be... He wants the whole Church to assume its mission of being a sign and an instrument, and to go out to bear witness to God’s love, rather than being inward-looking”. <https://equipes-notre-dame.com/en/letter-of-october-2022/>

Paola and Giovanni write “we are not alone, and we must not leave others alone in becoming bearers of the Gospel, because it is the communion of the Spirit’s gifts that enables the Church to progress in faith. This is not a path given once and for all, but it is the fruit of ... life lived every day. It is capable of generating a new culture, a new way of looking at the world...of finding one’s place in an ever-changing society”. https://equipes-notre-dame.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ERI-LETTER-OCTOBER-22-Paola-y-Giovanni-_EN.pdf

Fr Caffarel, as quoted by Clarita and Edgardo in their letter, was convinced that God's gift of Teams has come to us “in the Church and through the Church” and as such could not be seen as a personal discovery and even less as a gift for the enjoyment of ‘our individualistic self’. https://equipes-notre-dame.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ERI-LETTER-OCTOBER-22-EDGARDO-CLARITA_EN.pdf

As we know, society can be a lonely place for those trying to live the gospel. Fr Caffarel (1977) described the couples of the Teams of Our Lady “...Because they are aware of their weaknesses and limitations, because they experience daily, how difficult it is to live up to the Christian ideal in our modern world, because they have unflinching faith in the power of fellowship and mutual help, they have decided to form themselves into Teams.” Together as Teams, we know we can count on the grace of Christ and not on ourselves to fulfil our mission in the church and the world.

It will be a great joy to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Charter of Teams of Our Lady this 8th December. Hopefully we can deepen our understanding and appreciation of the Charter and learn to live it better this coming year. We encourage you to read it as individuals, as a couple and as a Team.

Finally, may you be blessed in your Advent preparations and celebrate Christmas with joy!

Brendan and Rosemarie



From the Regional Chaplain, Fr. Richard Sheehy

I write these words in the dying days of the month of November. In keeping with the natural rhythm of the year, November has been a month where we have remembered our deceased loved ones, and parishes around the country have celebrated beautiful and moving liturgies in remembrance of parishioners who died during the previous twelve months. These celebrations connect us in a very tangible way with the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ and reveal the power of good liturgy to bring healing and comfort at times of loss and suffering. As Covid did in its own way, they remind us too of the significance of being part of a faith community, as we discover that even in the midst of sadness we are not alone, we are carried by the faith and prayer of the wider community.

On 8th December Teams around the world are invited to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the granting of the Charter of Équipes Notre Dame in 1947. It is a timely opportunity for members of Teams to read the Charter and its subsequent revisions, to link in anew with the vision and spirit of Teams. While the language (though helpfully updated in the later revisions) may read a little dated to our 21st century ears, the Charter provides a fascinating insight into the aims of the founding couples and offers food for reflection and discussion. At the outset they affirm a desire for their love, strengthened by the sacrament of marriage, to give glory to God, and for their activities to be '*a collaboration in his work in the service of mankind*'. Conscious of individual limitations, they also proclaim '*unflinching faith in the power of fellowship and mutual help*'.

In future reflections I hope to touch on some other themes of the Charter but for now I will simply highlight its emphasis on the centrality of prayer. *It is not enough to know God...there must be a personal encounter with God. Members of Teams help one another to pray...with and for one another.* Giving sufficient time to prayer, especially at the beginning of the meeting, shapes the whole dynamic of the meeting, whereby '*we deepen our friendship, acquire a common spirit and grow conscious of the presence of Christ among his own*'.

Today, Christians in the western world celebrate the First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of a new liturgical year. May Christ be born again in our marriages, our homes, our communities and in ourselves: in our joys and tribulations, our opportunities and disappointments and particularly in our outreach to those who are suffering. *Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!*

Fr. Richard Sheehy

Diary of a Regional Couple

Linking with the Super-Region:

Visit of Transatlantic SR Couple, Paul and Annette O'Beirne 23-25th September.

Visit of Kevin and Faye Noonan, Leading Team (Eurasia Zone) Liaison Couple, from 18-24th November 2022.

Linking with the Region:

September: RC Day 2022 at Avila, Dublin 4.

October/November: Zoom meetings with new Communications Team for the Region.

November: Zoom meetings with outgoing and incoming Treasurer couples.

November: Regional Team Meeting with guests Kevin and Faye Noonan.

Linking with the Sectors:

Promotion in the Sectors of Transatlantic and Polish Newsletter and their requests for contributions.

Promotion of visit by Kevin and Faye to members in Galway, Mullingar and Dublin.

Meeting of Kevin and Faye Noonan with Bishop Denis Nulty, Chair of the Council for Marriage and the Family and Team Chaplain to Team in Piloting (Carlow/Portlaoise).

Are you up to date Winter 2022?

Upcoming International Events:

21-23rd April 2023: GB Regions: Teams re-gathering, Swanwick, Derbyshire, UK.

Outline programme: Friday: Evening dinner, prayer and social.

Saturday: Speakers, workshops, discussions, evening prayer, dinner and social.

Sunday: Speakers in am. Mass in afternoon.

More details to follow. Save the dates!

15-20th July 2024: International Meeting of the Teams of Our Lady, Turin, Italy "Let us go with a burning heart". More details to follow. Save the dates!

Visit of Faye and Kevin Noonan

We were blessed to have the opportunity at the last minute of having Faye and Kevin Noonan, our liaison couple on the Leading Team of Équipes Notre Dame to dine with us and their hosts John and Bernie Healy.

We have known Kevin and Faye for many years having met them during our time on the ERI when they had responsibilities in Teams in Australia.

During the evening together we had great catch up on news and all they had encountered since our last meeting, especially the death of Kevin's Dad while they were in Europe on Équipes Notre Dame visitations and meetings.

We had a lot of sharing about our Movement and the blessings it has brought and continues to bring to all our lives. We all looked back and were grateful for the gift of meeting regularly and sharing on our faith life, our married life and family life. Kevin and Faye told us how meeting with Bishop Denis Nulty and hearing his conviction about the importance of Teams for married couples, the Church and families, was very heartening.

They found all their meetings in Ireland, with Regional Team, Sectors and the hospitality offered to them by couples across the country to be a delight. It gave them an overall picture of the Movement and the new outreaches such as Marriage Masterclass and Facebook inputs, which are reaching to thousands of couples across the world.

An important observation from Kevin and Faye is how the spiritual dimension of Church is growing strongly in most of the southern hemisphere and Asian parts of the world. These are also the areas that Teams happen to be actively growing in recent years.

As the evening went on, we came to the discussion about the upcoming Charter celebrations. In the course of conversation Kevin and Faye shared how the first pages of the Charter give us quite clearly 'THE WHY' of Teams of Our Lady', while the following pages give us 'THE HOW'! We then got into discussing whether when approaching couples to join a Team, we might do well to share 'THE WHY' at first and wait until a little later to share on 'THE HOW'. This seemed to make sense to us all and could be a good way to open up the conversation with couples or priests who might see the purpose or ideal of Teams and so be drawn to join.

We wish Kevin and Faye every blessing in their International work and thank our Regional and Sector couples for organising such a fruitful trip for them in Ireland.

John and Elaine Cogavin

'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who herald peace and happiness...' Isaiah 52:7

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed Faye and Kevin into our home on their recent visit. Hospitality is one of key features of Équipes Notre Dame. We admired them giving their time so selflessly to work for the future of Équipes Notre Dame. It was great to have the time and opportunity to help facilitate this mission. It was also an opportunity to see something of the greater organisation of Teams. We got a glimpse of the work that goes into running this worldwide organisation. We got an appreciation that everyone has a role to play from Kevin and Faye on the ERI to ourselves simply providing accommodation. We are part of God's plan in keeping this movement alive.

Bernie and John Healy



75th Anniversary Mass celebrating
Teams of Our Lady's Charter
On
Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Thursday, December 8th at 7pm

St. Cronan's Church
Brackenstown
Swords, K67 FK22

Celebrant: Bishop Denis Nulty
All welcome

Directions:

From the M50, merge onto **M1**(direction Airport, Belfast)

At **junction 3**, take the R125 exit to Ashbourne/Swords

At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto R125

At the roundabout, continue straight to stay on R125

At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit and stay on R125

At Pinnock Hill Roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto Dublin Rd/R836

After 650m, turn left onto Church Rd

After 260m, turn left onto Brackenstown Rd

St. Cronan's Church, Swords will be on the right

Around the Region

Dublin

The Dublin Sector had its Annual Outing on 18th September 2022. The venue, originally planned for Farmleigh Estate in the Phoenix Park, had to be changed at short notice, owing to the closure of Farmleigh on 17th and 18th September due to State business. Instead, we met in the grounds of Malahide Castle and were blessed with lovely weather for the afternoon. There was a great turnout for the gathering – with members from numerous teams in the sector, which included the *Zoom* team and Tandem teams. We even had representatives from the Mullingar Sector! An enjoyable time was had by all.

The following weekend, the Responsible Couples' Day was held on Saturday 24th September at Avila Retreat Centre in Dublin. This was the first Responsible Couples' Day in person since 2019. There was a good attendance and the Super-Regional Couple, Paul and Annette O'Beirne attended.

Brendan and Rosemarie opened on sharing the gift of teams with new couples. This was followed by a brainstorming session moderated by Anne and Mark O'Leary.

Marie and PJ Finn from Dublin 40 spoke on the role of the Responsible Couple.

Paul and Annette O'Beirne gave an update from the Super-Region and International News.

Billy and Ann Hyland, who were finishing their term as Regional Treasurer Couple, were thanked by Paddy and Jacinta Quigley for all their work on behalf of the Region over many years.

An interactive session on the Endeavours took place in the afternoon and the session concluded with mass celebrated by Fr. Richard Sheehy, Regional Chaplain.

Mixed team meetings were hosted by Pat and Carmel Cunneen, Martha and Kevin Wade and Paddy and Jacinta Quigley. All reported lively evenings.

The next item on the Sector's calendar is the Annual December 8th Mass. This year, our Annual Mass celebrates the 75th Anniversary of the Charter of Teams of Our Lady, presented to the Movement by Fr. Henri Caffarel, on 8th December 1947. Mass to celebrate the 75th, and of course to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, will be at 7pm on Thursday, 8th December. It is kindly being hosted by St. Cronan's Parish, Brackenstown, Swords, Co. Dublin (our Regional Chaplain's parish). We are delighted that Bishop Denis Nulty will be the main celebrant.

Please feel free to invite others along to the Mass, especially couples who may be open to deepening their relationship with each other and with God – couples who might benefit from the great gift of Teams. Mass will be followed by light refreshments afterwards in the Parish Centre. Everyone is encouraged to bring along something to share with a cup of tea / coffee. (Tea / coffee will be provided.)

Another date for the diary: The Sector's Annual Retreat for 2023 is currently being planned for 25th March 2023. More details to follow nearer to the time.

Meanwhile, we were delighted to host Faye and Kevin Noonan (Responsible Couple for the Eurasia Zone) for dinner on 23rd November 2022. It was a great honour to enjoy their company for the evening and hear about their long involvement in Teams at all levels. It was also great to welcome them, later that evening, to a meeting of the Dublin Sector Team.

Course with the John Paul II Institute

We were delighted to learn a few months ago that we had been selected to attend a course being run by the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences, in Rome, in collaboration with Équipes Notre-Dame (Teams), Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Amour et Vérité (the marriage support ministry of the Emmanuel Community) and the Community of Loreto.

The course was in response to Pope Francis' plea: "The Church needs you".

The first weekend of the course was held in Rome from 21st to 24th October 2022. There were 23 couples in total attending the course – 7 from Teams, 6 from Worldwide Marriage Encounter, 7 from Amour et Verite (the marriage support ministry of the Emmanuel Community) and 3 couples and a priest from the Community of Loreto. The couples came from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, and Oceania – representatives from 20 different countries. The other 6 Teams' couples were from Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Lebanon, Poland and Spain. The course was preceded by a presentation by one couple from each movement about their own movement.

Apart from being asked beforehand to have read *Amoris Laetitia*, we were unsure what to expect from the weekend course. We presumed that there would be a lot of lectures – but were surprised to discover that it was much more interactive than we expected. After each input, mixed-movement groups were formed to discuss and share from the couple experiences of life and our movements. This group work was the best part of the two-day course. We came away from these groups recognising that we were all working from the perspective of our own movement's charism, but with a greater realisation now of working for one and the same mission: supporting marriage and family life.

The tutors on the course – Professor Philippe Bordeyne and Professor Vincent Leclerq – made everyone feel very welcome and at home. One of the tutors' inputs (which referred to the four "pillars" of Church life) was particularly striking to us. It prompted us to reflect on Teams and how the Movement might be evaluated to establish how well it measures up to each of the four pillars: Communion, Witnessing, Service and Prayer. Specifically, it was highlighted that:

"Service, communion, and witnessing are three manifestations of the same reality: the Church as sacrament of salvation, mystery of communion and mystery of mission. Emphasis can be placed on one or the other, but each must be inhabited by the other two."

"There can be tension between them, but they cannot exist separately without affecting the mystery of the Church. Communion that does not open to service for the sake of witness leads to the death of communities. Service that is not rooted in communion (and particularly in the Eucharist, the sacrament of the unity of the Church, is no longer witness.) Witness that is not rooted in communion is only propaganda, and witness that is not lived in service is not received. Communion, witness and service are gifts of God and tasks to be carried out: gifts of God which are received in the sacramental celebration and tasks which, in order to be accomplished, require of the Christian a profound spiritual life"

There were times for prayer (including Mass) during each day, with Mass on the final day at the tomb of Pope St. John Paul II to mark his feast day. This was followed by an audience with Pope Francis – when it was wonderful to have the opportunity of greeting the pope individually, highlighting, in our case, that we were from (in his words) green Ireland!

The course continues with a monthly *Zoom* meeting until May 2023 and weekly preparation by each couple in advance of the monthly sessions. The 7 Teams' couples have all agreed to meet separately (by *Zoom*) in advance of each course day. The final days of the course will be held at the Holy House of Loreto in early July 2023.

We will keep you updated as we progress! In the meantime, we would welcome any comments or questions about the course and would also welcome your ongoing prayers for the success of this Church initiative.

Anne and Mark O'Leary

Mullingar

Responsible Couples' Day:

We enjoyed the RC day. The venue was ideal and we would personally like to thank the Regional Team., especially Rosemarie and Brendan, for their help particularly with the endeavours section of the day. Mullingar was represented by 3 couples.

Going Forward:

The Mass to reintroduce Teams to Mullingar was held in St Paul's Church Sunday 20th November and it was celebrated by Bishop Michael Smith along with Fr Phil Gaffney, our Administrator. Bishop Michael is chaplain to Team 1 since the start of the movement in Mullingar. We thank Fr Phil for his fantastic encouraging homily to promote the Teams.

Thanks to Joe and Assumpta for their help in handing out leaflets after Mass and to all the Team members who attended the Mass and helped to promote the Teams by chatting to people in the church. This small step will be ongoing.

Kevin and Faye Noonan dropped by for a visit to Mullingar on their way back from Galway; it was lovely to see them and we wish them every blessing in their lives and their work for Teams.

December Mass:

We will celebrate the Teams' Charter at our 8th of December Mass in the Cathedral at 7.30 pm and afterwards we hope to have a long awaited get together in the Greville Arms Hotel.

RIP:

Sincere sympathy to Anna Marie and her family on the passing of her husband Dr Oliver Leavy (Olly). Olly will be missed and remembered by all in Mullingar Sector and in particular by his friends in Team 1 together with their chaplain Bishop Michael Smith. We thank them for the gift of Teams.

May Fr Gerry Cassidy rest in peace. Our condolences to his family and to the Belfast Sector.

Dr Oliver Leavy RIP (Team 1)

Dr Thomas Oliver (Olly) Leavy was a great and gentle man, who will be sorely missed by his wife and family and the very many people whose lives he touched in his work and his community. We in Mullingar Team 1 were privileged to have shared the numerous team experiences with him, since he and Anna Marie heeded the suggestion of his relative Fr Christy Fox to set up the first team ever in Mullingar in 1978/79. Each one of us has memories of how Olly impacted our lives by the different ways he acknowledged his deep faith in Jesus Christ, shared practical wisdom about family life and child rearing and enjoyed discussing particularly sport and music. His sense of humour was infectious and could brighten any encounter. Both Olly and Anna Marie were lavishly generous and hospitable and sitting around the big square table in their home was always a joyful experience no matter how difficult or challenging the circumstances. Some months after his eightieth birthday, Olly decided that the monthly participation in team meetings had become too much for them as a couple but they remained happy to join us for occasional festivities. We are all very thankful to have shared their company for so many years and were blessed to have enjoyed a lunch together earlier this year.

Ni bheidh a leithéid arís ann. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Mullingar Sector

Galway

Our Advent season began very well. The Galway Teams met with Kevin and Faye Noonan in a lovely gathering. Kevin and Faye are from Canberra, Australia. They are members of the International leading team and are responsible for the English-speaking countries. Marguerite and Stephen O'Neill hosted the meeting. Fr. Ciary Quirke led the Eucharist Celebration. We listened to an interesting overview of the Team movement worldwide. However, we were reminded that the essence of Teams is the sharing of food and the sharing of ourselves. The Teams were appreciative of this special occasion.

Media attention on the abuse by some clergy attaching to the institution of the Church has been again to the fore recently. This subject has occupied some time at our Team meetings. This brings up questions for our Christian faith in our culture. Perhaps it was timely for Team B (Galway) that the new study topic for this year (starting Sept 2022) is Joan Chittister's book "In Search of BELIEF". The book focuses on The Apostles Creed. Each chapter deals with a specific aspect of our Christian faith. We may get some answers to some of todays faith questions. However, as the author suggests hopefully, we may enter more fully into the mysteries of our Christian faith. At Team level and at Diocesan level Teams have been involved in the Synodality programme. This certainly is a "sign of the times" and we patiently await the outcomes of the Synod in 2023.

In Galway we have had several excellent talks given by Father Michael Conway (Professor of Faith, Maynooth College). The talks were on the faith journey which is the subject matter of the Synod. Faith is a two-way matter of giving and receiving. In the old world of the Church there was little of this exchange. Faith-life is a mutual exchange. Certainly, in our Team Meetings we do give witness to the values of "encounter and exchange" as Fr. Michael mentioned. This happens in the personal sharings of our Faith journeys at our Team meetings. It is interesting to recall that the founder of our movement Fr. Caffarel in a letter used these same words "encounter and exchange". He used the words in connection with a heart-to-heart talk (a giving and receiving) whether it is with our spouse, our team couples or with God in prayer.

We would ask for your prayers for Eddie Lloyd who is in a Nursing Home.

The Team Mass for the Feast of The Immaculate Conception is being held on Wednesday 7th December at 7pm in Croí Mhuire, Galway.

Anne and Jack Hutchinson



Anne and Mark O'Leary with Kevin and Faye at their home

Fr. Gerry Cassidy 1940-2022

Fr. Gerry Cassidy died on 24th November, 2022 following a short illness. He was Regional chaplain from 2002 to 2016. He was diligent in attending meetings and gatherings and was involved in the discussions leading to the setting up of the Transatlantic Super-Region in 2006.

We plan an Appreciation and Tribute in the next issue.

Extract from The Irish News (Belfast) November 26th 2022.

Fr. Cassidy was ordained in 1973 and ministered for almost 50 years. He spent 13 years as a member of the Clonard Community, which included time working with Fr. Gerry Reynolds in ecumenical ministry. In 1984 he joined the staff of Corrymeela as a Christian education worker. He moved to St. Gerard's in 1993, where he served two terms as parish priest. In 2019 he returned to Clonard.

Clonard rector Fr. Peter Burns said Fr. Cassidy's ministry at St. Gerard's was "very much a ministry of presence"

Former Presbyterian Moderator the Rev. Ken Newell, said "He will be remembered affectionately by many within the Catholic and Protestant traditions as a genuine and quiet peacemaker who built bridges of friendship in Christ across the prevailing emotional, political and religious chasms of a deeply wounded community. We thank God for the gift of his life and the witness of his ministry".

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal. (At the right had of God may his noble soul be).

Paddy and Jacinta Quigley



A multicultural team

Stan and Sophiya from Ukraine (little David and baby Veronika), Padraig and Ingrid (Pilot couple), Ireland/Romania, Bishop Denis Nulty, chaplain, Amanda and Tom, Brazil/Ireland, baby Elijah.

Prayer Intentions

For those who have died:

Declan Kennedy, husband of Deirdre, Belfast

Oliver Leavy, husband of Anna Marie, Mullingar

Fr. Gerry Cassidy, Belfast

For those who are ill:

Eddie Lloyd, Galway

Intercessory Team

The Region's Intercessory Team continues its intercessory prayer on 1st Tuesday of each month (from 11am to 12 noon).

Since the last newsletter, another new intercessor has joined the team – bringing the total number close to 20 (doubling the original size of the team). There are still more vacancies on the team!

We would encourage you all to submit your intercessory prayer requests directly to Pat and Carmel Cunneen – who co-ordinate the intercessors. Prayer requests can be for other Team members or for people or situations not associated with Teams.

Anne and Mark – on behalf of the Intercessory Team



Teams of our Lady participants at the course run by the John Paul II Theological Institute in Rome.

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We would like to receive contributions for the Spring Newsletter by Sunday 3rd April.