



Newsletter

Teams of Our Lady



Irish Region

The Teams Charter 75th Anniversary Celebration

Spring 2023

Issue 132



Inside

[Regional Couple](#)

[Appreciation](#)

[Regional Chaplain](#)

[New Treasurer
Couple](#)

[Team 43 Retreat](#)

[Around the Region](#)

[Prayer Intentions](#)

Pictures taken following the mass of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, at St. Cronan's Parish Church, Brackenstown, Swords, Co. Dublin, in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Charter of Teams. The principal celebrant was Bishop Denis Nulty, chaplain to the Laois/Carlow team. Concelebrants: Fr. Paddy Dundon, Sector Chaplain, Fr. Gerard Young, chaplain, Team 25, and Fr. Adriano, Kilcock parish.

From the Regional Couple



Dear Friends,

At the World Meeting of Families last year, we met many Ecclesial Movements and groups active in Marriage and Family Life. As Movements and groups we sometimes inhabit our own space and have little communication with each other, or worse still, see ourselves as competitors. Many of our predecessors in this role, had a vision that the Marriage Movements would work more closely together. The Movements, like members of an orchestra, each have different instruments and tone; when we bring our contribution to the Lord, we know He multiplies the refreshment for ourselves and those we are called to serve. There have been so many examples of this in recent months and we want to play our part in furthering this collegiality.

The closing event for Dublin Teams in 2022 fell on an icy December 8th. A particularly enriching aspect of the evening hosted by Mark and Anne, Sector Couple and their Sector Team, was the presence of invited guests from various Marriage Movements - Couples for Christ, CANA, Marriage Encounter and Retrouvaille. It was an opportunity to celebrate and share the richness of Teams of Our Lady on such a special occasion.

Later in January a friendly meeting of couples was hosted by CANA in Leopardstown, Dublin. There were couples from Marriage Encounter, Nazareth Community, Retrouvaille and Teams of Our Lady in attendance. We enjoyed the opportunity of hearing Martin and Mary Moran share their insights on marriage and family life as well as being able to make connections and share faith and joy together as married couples from diverse groups and Movements.

A St. Valentine's Day celebration was also hosted by CANA in Dalgan Park, Navan, Co. Meath. Five Teams couples and four couples invited by Teams joined the celebration. The evening attracted an attendance of more than 20 guest couples and was a beautiful chance for us as Teams couples to support a sister Marriage Movement and to benefit from some of their ideas for marriage enrichment.

The National Synodal Journey is also providing new opportunities for collegiality, no matter which part of the orchestra we belong to! Mark and Anne O'Leary and ourselves are keeping in touch with the work of the National Synodal Steering Committee as representatives of Teams of Our Lady. We encourage you to continue the synodal journey through your parishes and dioceses in order to bring the richness of your Teams witness to the table. We will keep you apprised of any update we receive arising from the ERI submission to the International Synodal Process.

We look forward to joining the GB Teams at their weekend Gathering in Swannick 21-23 April. Many of you will be known to the couples there, both personally and from your contributions to the Transatlantic and GB Regions Newsletters! These are much appreciated and build the unity between us across the Transatlantic Super-Region.

As we approach the final days of Lent and Holy Week, we draw your attention to the beautiful ERI letters March 2023 <https://equipes-notre-dame.com/en/letter-of-march-2023/>

In conclusion, we pray your Lenten journey has been blessed and we wish you and yours a joyful Easter celebration!

Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin

Appreciation

Billy and Ann Hyland retire as Regional Treasurers.

Billy and Ann Hyland from Galway 1, told us of their intention to retire at the Responsible Couples' Day last year. They remained in "the wings" to guide and support the Regional Team and their successors Paola and Paolo Batori, until the beginning of this year.

Their work for the Movement in Ireland in this role, has been faithful and generous, serving two terms as Treasurer Couple over many years.

We are indebted to them for their service as Treasurers and for their contribution to the work of the Regional Team. We wish them health and blessings into the future. Go raibh míle maith agaibh!

Pat and Carmel Cunneen retire as Regional Responsible Couple for Intercession.

We wish to thank Pat and Carmel Cunneen from Dublin 25, for their work in re-establishing and pioneering the Intercessory Ministry in Ireland. Their considerable effort raised the profile of intercession here as an international ministry for Teams of Our Lady, in which Ireland can play its part.

We thank Pat and Carmel most sincerely and pray they will be blessed as they continue as Intercessors.

Intercession takes place on the first Tuesday of the month. If you would like to join this ministry or request prayers, please email breros7@gmail.com

Diary of a Regional Couple. December – March 2023

Mission within the Movement:

Linking with the Super-Region:

Co-ordination of contributions for the GB and Transatlantic Newsletters

Zoom meeting with Regional Couples from the Super-Region 30th March 2023

Linking with the Region:

Regional Team meeting 25th February 2023

Support for Communications and Intercessor Teams

Appointment of Regional Treasurers

Linking with the Sectors:

Liaison meetings

Mission towards the Church:

Presentation: "The Vocation of Marriage" for The Samuel Programme held in Navan, Co. Meath. Samuel is a programme of training in discernment for young people. This invitation came from the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal who met Teams of Our Lady at Youth 2000.

SAVE THE DATE! - SAVE THE DATE! - SAVE THE DATE!

Upcoming National Event

7th October 2023 Responsible Couples' Day 2023 Avila, Morehampton Road, Dublin 4.

Upcoming International Events

**21-23rd April 2023 GB Regions-Swanwick, Derbyshire, UK.
Teams regathering**

**15-20th July 2024 International Gathering - Turin. Italy.
Theme: "Let us go with a burning heart"**

10,000 delegates are expected to travel to Turin from all over the world for this meeting which takes place every 6 years! The Transatlantic Teams (GB, Ghana, Ireland, Malawi, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago and Zambia.) have been allocated places for 35 couples/70 persons and 5 spiritual counsellors. The cost is expected to be €500- €600 pp which includes hotel accommodation, meals, and conference registration. Cost of flights are in addition to this.

Final details of cost etc by email in the coming months.

SAVE THE DATE! - SAVE THE DATE! - SAVE THE DATE!



A Word from the Regional Chaplain Fr. Richard Sheehy

As I write these words, we have just entered Holy Week, a week that invites us to reflect more closely on the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It goes without saying that central to our Christian faith is the person of Jesus, but how often do we take time to reflect on the meaning of his life, ministry, and death? Holy Week provides an opportunity to do just that. It is an invitation to journey with Jesus as we relive the events of his last days in Jerusalem. The liturgies of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to the Easter Vigil, with their different themes and moods, invite us to do this as a community of faith. What we are focussing on is not so much the suffering of Christ but the love which radiates through it.

Jesus' whole life and ministry has been about drawing people into relationship with God. In revealing God's faithful and unconditional love, Jesus also offers a model for all human relationships, and especially for marriage and parenthood. The cross is the symbol of the total self gift which is the foundation of all love.

Late last year one of my nieces became engaged. She is the first of my nieces and nephews to take this step, so there was great excitement in the family. I have never presumed that any of my nieces or nephews would get married in church. So I was surprised at my own delight when my niece asked if I would celebrate the marriage ceremony. I realise that it is not so much the actual ceremony that I am excited about as the fact that it opens the door for me to get to know them both better and to have a faith conversation with them that might otherwise not take place. There is an opportunity to engage with them in the planning of the wedding ceremony, so that it reflects the values and beliefs they hope to live by.

Immediately following the exchange of the marriage vows, the couple are invited to pray the *Prayer of the Newly Married Couple*. While a particular form is proposed, I invariably invite couples to compose their own prayer, which they read together on the wedding day. It encourages them to reflect on the journey on which they are setting out and what it is they are asking God to help them create together. It might be worthwhile for a couple who are approaching a significant wedding anniversary similarly to compose a prayer, perhaps giving thanks for the many graces received which have enabled them to meet the joys and challenges of marriage and family life.

Wishing you and your families the blessings and joy of this Easter season!

Introducing new Treasurer Couple



Dear friends, we would like to introduce ourselves and to thank you for the opportunity you gave us to serve Teams of Our Lady Ireland as regional treasurer couple.

We are Paola and Paolo from Italy. Since we got married in a little church in the green valley of Assisi 25 years ago, we undertook a long journey. First, we moved to Milan, north of Italy, then, we spent 14 years in London where our two children, Aurora and Tommaso, were born. Finally, we crossed the Irish channel in 2016.

God has been very generous with us, particularly so when He made us encounter Teams in Ireland.

What is the role of a treasurer couple in a movement that supports couples along their journey towards Holiness? How can we help find the right balance between the earthly dimension (need for funding) and the spiritual essence of the movement?

We have just a tentative answer for now, while we continue to pray for God's graceful guidance. The treasurer couple are the custodians of your generosity and should help the regional team to put the seeds of your generosity into fertile soil.

The goal is to support all couples of our movement and, with God's grace, being able to share the gift of Teams with new couples in the present and the future.

Seeds planted in the past brought great fruits: expansion projects like the Marriage Masterclass and Tandem, constant engagement within the region via RC and sector retreats and our newsletter, and contribution to the Super-Region to support the broader movement.

We thank all past treasurers who helped the movement keep the gift of teams accessible to all existing and prospective couples. Special thanks to William (Billy) and Ann Hyland for their impeccable service and generous guidance in the transition period.

Please, keep us in your prayers. God bless.

Team 43 retreat to reflect on the Charter



Team 43 gathered in Muintir Mhuire community (www.muintirmhuire.ie), Ballybutler East Cork, for our first retreat held on Saint Patrick's weekend. The main topic of the retreat was to reflect upon the Teams of Our Lady Charter in light of its 75th Anniversary.

A weekend programme was devised allowing flexibility, as the Holy Spirit led. We joined the scheduled morning and evening prayer of the community. As we all deal with our personal crosses, we embraced also those we found in the community. Witnessing the love of Muintir Mhuire community in supporting their guest(s), gave us the opportunity to see some of Fr Caffarel's teachings in action. The community prayer in the chapel seemed to channel God's love on earth.

It seemed that it was Divine Providence that Muintir Mhuire should be our chosen location, as even the Magnificat was sung during their evening prayer! We also sang songs to the sound of our own guitar during the retreat and it meant so much to meet and share our faith over an extended period of time.

Meals were shared in the chalets we stayed in, walks to the stunning local beach and weeding the grotto were all group activities. It was a challenge to distinguish weeds from flowers at times!!

We shared our faith journey and grew in our understanding of the purpose of Fr Caffarel's intentions for Teams. The importance of Fr. Caffarel's vision for couples to be servants and also in service to the church was explored. We were reminded of the dangers of becoming like Pharisees and our main speaker, a member of Muintir Mhuire, reflected that in her talk in which she suggested "checklists" for Christian living.

The future direction for our Team was discussed and for the Movement at large and especially its relevance for the times we are in if we live according to the guidelines set out by Fr. Caffarel.

We met a new couple who were interested in Teams and they will join us for our next Team meeting. We said our goodbyes feeling renewed and hopeful, looking forward to including the new couple in our next meeting and going forth in His Grace and blessings.

Yours in Christ, Team 43

Around the Region

Dublin

Two Sector events have taken place since the last edition of our Regional Newsletter: the Annual December 8th Mass and the Annual Retreat.

December 8th – 75th Anniversary Mass

The Annual December 8th Mass for the Sector was held in St. Cronan's Parish, Brackenstown, Swords. Celebrating the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and also the 75th Anniversary of the Teams' Charter, the Mass was very well attended – despite the particularly cold weather on the night and the location (being a bit further away than previous years for a lot of Teams' members). The celebrant was Bishop Nulty and Mass was followed by light refreshments, which the bishop also availed of, despite having a long drive home afterwards.

We are particularly thankful for the bishop's presence on the night and especially for his sharing of his personal insights in relation to Teams. In addition, we are very appreciative of our Regional Chaplain's generosity in making his parish church and parish centre available for the celebration.

The Mass was also attended by couples representing other marriage movements: Cana Ireland, Couples for Christ, Marriage Encounter and Retrouvaille – all of whom had received a personal invitation.

Annual Retreat

The Annual Retreat was held this year in Dalgan Park, Navan, on 25th March – the Feast of the Annunciation. Starting at 10 a.m. (with registration from 9.30am) and finishing with Mass for the Feast Day, the retreat was presented by Fr. Adrian Crowley (from Mulhuddart Parish). Basing his inputs, for each of the three sessions, on his many years spent in Peru, Liberia and the Philippines, Fr Adrian made extensive references to the Teams' Charter – which was really wonderful, especially given that we are celebrating its 75th Anniversary.

At the end of the first session, Fr Adrian asked each of us to spend time on our own, as individuals, in God's presence and allow Him to speak to us during that time. At the end of Fr Adrian's input for the second session, he asked each of us to spend time with our spouse expressing thanks to him / her for all that we have experienced together in marriage. After the third session, Fr Adrian asked us to go off in groups of couples (about 5 couples in each group), and share (for a few minutes for each couple) how we have really benefitted from being involved in Teams.

After the groups had shared, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the church from 4pm until 5.15pm. During this time we were all also able to avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and were blessed to have 4 priests available for this: Fr Adrian, Fr Paddy (our Sector Chaplain), Fr Richard (our Regional Chaplain) and Fr Sean (Columban Fathers). The day concluded with the celebration of Mass for the Feast of the Annunciation at 5.30pm, celebrated by Fr Adrian and concelebrated by Fr Paddy.

Throughout the day, we were also blessed to have been able to enjoy the wonderful grounds which the Columban Fathers have at Dalgan Park.

The Sector Team would welcome any feedback from retreatants who may not have had an opportunity to complete one of the forms on the day (owing to Mark and Anne's delay in distributing them!). We would really value your comments, remembering that feedback received from the retreat in 2022 helped us in planning for this year's retreat. The feedback forms asked for your views in relation to: 1) Retreat cost / Venue / Duration / Comfort; 2) Retreat structure and time allocation for each part: Presenter's inputs / Communal prayer / Individual and couple reflection time / Sacramental time; 3) What resonated most with you / what highlight you are taking away.

The retreat was attended by 73 retreatants – representing 14 of the Sector's 16 base teams. The total also included 11 members from Mullingar Sector and 3 guest couples – whom we were really delighted to welcome to the retreat.

The Sector Team invites suggestions, from Teams' members, of potential topics for consideration by the Sector Team for future retreats.

In conclusion, well done to the Team which organised a minibus to bring some couples to Dalgan Park – the same minibus, we understand, which had appeared in Brackenstown on December 8th for the Annual Mass!

Annual Sector Outing – Date For Your Diary

The next event being planned for the Sector is the Annual Outing. This is currently proposed for Sunday, 17th September 2023, from 2pm. The likely venue will again be Malahide Castle, Co Dublin. A reminder and full details will follow nearer the time.

Anne and Mark O'Leary

Mullingar

December Mass celebrating the Teams Charter:

We celebrated the Teams Charter at our 8th of December Mass in the Cathedral at 7.30 pm. Fr Phil gave a wonderful homily drawing from the charter to promote the movement. The Mass was well attended and supported by Team members and afterwards we had a long awaited get together in the Greville Arms Hotel.

We in Team 3 are blessed to have had Fr Frank celebrate Mass in St Camillus Killucan on the 16th December; we feel that Christmas begins for us all at this very special Mass every year.

Bishop Michael:

We pass on good wishes to Bishop Michael Smith who celebrates the 60th Anniversary of his priestly Ordination. A native of Oldcastle in County Meath, Bishop Michael Smith was born in 1940. Following education at St Finian's College, Mullingar and the Pontifical Irish College, Rome, he was ordained a priest in 1963. He was subsequently ordained an auxiliary bishop of Meath in 1984 and coadjutor Bishop of Meath on 10th October 1988.

Bishop Michael has been Chaplain to Team 1 in Mullingar since 1979. The original Team members were: Fr Michael Smith, Anna Marie and Olly Leavy, Patsy and Kevin O'Grady, Laura and John Smyth, Dolores and Liam Corcoran, Peggy and Aidan McTiernan, Paddy & Ann Hanly.

Anne Marie and Olly had retired from Teams prior to Olly's death last November; Kevin died over 19 years ago and Laura and John moved to Athenry from Mullingar in 2021. Team 1 are still meeting monthly.

Retreat:

8 Team members from Mullingar joined the Dublin Sector for the annual retreat. As always we were warmly welcomed and enjoyed the incredibly uplifting day facilitated brilliantly by Fr Adrian Crowley. The retreat was very well attended and the venue was perfect. Also commented on was "how great it was to meet Dublin Team members after a long number of years" We thank Mark and Anne and everyone involved for all their work ensuring that we all felt very much a part of the special day.

We send our condolences to:

Betty (Team 3) on the death of her beloved sister Josie and we remember Michael whose anniversary occurred on 26th March.

Brendan on the death of his mum Marie Gavin.

We also remember: Faye Noonan's brother John

Sr Dymphna O'Beirne, sister of Paul O'Beirne (Super-Regional Couple)

Liam O'Connell (Dublin 25)

Michael McKinney

Pierpaolo Dondio's father.

We pray for all who have lost loved ones, all who are ill at this time and those who have asked for our prayers. We keep in mind all the young people who have received their Confirmation. May the Holy Spirit guide them throughout their lives.

Mullingar Sector

Galway

We cannot believe that the year is slipping by so quickly. Looking in our “rear view mirror” we see the 8th December meeting of our teams as just a short time ago. It was a beautiful and fulfilling meeting. We had an excellent turn out. We shared our food and ourselves. It was particularly gratifying to have some young people present, Edwardo (12) and Guillermo who added to the evening with their presence and their sharing.

Spring season followed. Team 2 travelled from Galway to Sligo. Our Team is now split geographically between Galway and Sligo. It was lovely to experience the green shoots of spring in the countryside. This gave us a sense of renewal optimism. Our study topic is the Jane Chittister book “In search of belief”. We studied Chapter 3 which has as its focus the “fatherhood of God”. According to the author “Language creates our thoughts and our thoughts create who we are.” We had a good exchange of ideas on this chapter.

In the city of Galway, we celebrated the annual festival of Faith. This is the annual Novena to “Our Lady” (6-14th March). It was a blessing to see congregations of people come together after 2 years of Covid. This event was certainly a “sign of the Time” in that of the nine Novena sessions one homily was given by a priest and another by the new Bishop Michael Duignan. The other seven homilies were given by lay people, male and female. Everyone comes to this festival for his and her own reasons. If we can suspend our judgements and allow ourselves to be open to the Holy Spirit the Novena can bring grace and healing to our lives.

One off-shoot of the Novena was a talk give by former Bishop Brendan Kelly the following week. The theme was “The church today. Where we are and where we are going”. The answer suggested by Bishop Brendan is that the centre of where the Church is today is in the person of Pope Francis. Perhaps in our times of uncertainty it is a grounding to focus on the words and deeds and vision of Pope Francis.

Please continue to keep Eddie Lloyd in your prayers.

Congratulations to Marguerite and Stephen O’Neill on the birth of their first grandchild, Emily, in Australia.

Jack and Anne Hutchinson

A gentle Reminder

If you or your team have not sent your contribution for 2022-2023 please contact the Treasurer Couple. Email thebatoris@gmail.com

Prayer Intentions

For those who have died:

Liam O'Connell, husband of Patricia, Team 25

Michael McKinney, son of Liam and Eileen, Belfast

The father of Pierpaolo Dondio, Team 36

Paul Howard, son of John and Margaret, Team 40

Marie Gavin, mother of Brendan, Team 38

Máire Ní Mhaolmhichíl, sister of Seán Mistéil, Team 42

Sr. Dympna O'Beirne, sister of Paul O'Beirne, SR Couple

For the living, for whom prayers were requested:

Eddie Lloyd, Galway

We draw your attention to the ERI letters for March:

<https://equipes-notre-dame.com/en/letter-of-march-2023/>

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We would like to receive contributions for the Summer Newsletter by Sunday, 4th June
