



Newsletter

Teams of Our Lady

Irish Region



From the Regional Couple



Dear Friends,

You will be aware that the International Leading Team (ERI) write to the membership each quarter. Their letters are published in full on the international website, www.equipe Notre-Dame.com

The most recent letters draw our attention to a rich resource which will help us to grow in our Christian Formation. Here we share some highlights with you:

“The importance of Christian Formation for Couples in Teams”

At the recent Synodal discussions many of us articulated the need for “formation” of the laity.

Fr Caffarel, many years earlier, shared his concern that Team couples should seek ongoing and lasting formation. He used to say: *“I beg you, never stop training. If the activity does not allow you to continue your formation, that activity will cause you to become lost”*. (Friends of Father Caffarel Newsletter, 11, July 2012, p. 5)

We read from the ERI couples,

“It is important to emphasise that Christian formation is not simply the integration of what others pass on to us in terms of knowledge. It is also something that is born in the depths of each of us, to live the gift of faith more fully, in a free and mature way.”

“The Movement encourages formation not only on the specific issues of marriage, its sacramentality and its path of sanctification, but also in the ongoing invitation to the growth and strengthening of the entire Christian life of each member of the team.”

Fr Londano writes:

“A believer in Christ must be someone who knows **Sacred Scripture**, who reads it, meditates on it, and who delves into its meaning and interpretation. The faithful must have a basic knowledge of the **Doctrine** that can be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and should always be attentive to the official documents that the Pope and church leaders regularly offer us (**Encyclicals, Apostolic Exhortations, Constitutions, Messages, Letters, etc.**)”

Winter 2023

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Fr Londano continues:

“The Movement, through the ERI, has made useful tools available for the formation of its members. Several years ago, a Satellite Team developed a **platform of Christian formation**, containing various biblical and theological themes, these are offered on the website, <https://endfc.equipes-notre-dame.com/> ”

Many Team members are already nourishing their faith through ongoing formation, accessed from an array of sources, online and face to face. However, we suspect that many Team members are not aware of this *additional* treasure trove of formation material, tailored to our needs and sitting quietly on the international website!

Each distinct course (called a “hostel”) stands alone and includes such themes as Sacraments, The Old Testament, Spirituality (including marital spirituality). We are invited to click on the website, open a course and see what it offers, as individuals, couples, or Teams.

The foundation of this formation is “that you may bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples”. John 15:8

Advent is upon us. As we prepare for the birth of Christ, perhaps some of the material on this website could nourish us on our journey to Bethlehem and beyond. Team RCs could highlight this resource and encourage their Team to explore it.

We thank you, each one, for your ongoing support and warmly wish you a blessed Advent.

Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin

These letters are written by Fr Londano (Spiritual Counsellor to ERI) and two of the liaison couples Mariola and Elizeu Calsing (Brazil) and Bernadette and Sylvestre Minlekibe (Eurafrican Zone).

Activities of your Regional Team: September-December 2023

Mission to the International Movement: Super-Region

Collaboration with Super-Regional couple in arrangements for International Gathering in Turin 2024.

Regional Couple meeting with Super-Regional Couple following RC day.

Annual financial contribution to the Super-Region.

Provision of Statistics to the Super-Region.

Mission within the Region:

Sharing news from the Super-Region with Sector Couples and Teams.

Regional Team meetings 23rd September (Pre-RC Day) and 11th November 2023.

RC day 7th October 2023

Outreach to couples interested in forming Teams in Cork. Preparation for Piloting.

Outreach to engaged and newly married couples interested in forming a Tandem Team. Preparation for Piloting.

Zoom Meeting with Parish Sisters in Waterford to provide support to offer Tandem Teams there.

Mission within the Sectors:

Piloting of a new Team in Belfast.

Outreach by Zoom to geographically dispersed couples. Invitations to join a virtual/in person Team depending on location.

Support celebrations for birthday of Teams and honouring of Fr Caffarel on December 8th 2023. Encourage Teams to incorporate outreach to couples and clergy in the parishes, as integral to this event.

Support ongoing work on new website.

Liaison with Responsible Couple for Intercession.

Mission towards the Church:

Maintenance of links with representatives of other Marriage Movements by invitation to 8th December Mass.

Planning for and promotion of Marriage Week 12th-18th February 2024 by the Base Teams.

Responsible Couples' Day 2023

The RC Day was held at Avila, Dublin 4, on the first Saturday of October 2023. The programme, peppered throughout with beautiful moments of prayer, offered presentations from couples. They shared their rich experience on prayer and the role of the Responsible Couple. There was animated sharing on the endeavours in small groups with valuable insights shared for the benefit of all.

We heard from Paul and Annette, our Super-Regional Couple, about the wider movement, their recent visit to Brazil for the College of Teams, and the invitation extended to all to the International Gathering in Turin 2024. They presented each RC with a gift to remind us that God is present in our sacrament of marriage. His presence gives the spousal relationship supernatural strength to endure. “A cord of three strands is not easily broken”. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Mark and Anne shared the “Marriage Catechumenate”, a Vatican document which highlights that preparation for marriage is a process which begins in the family home and extends past the wedding day into the newlywed years. This document has significant implications for the practice of “marriage preparation” in the church today and affirms the role of experienced couples in accompaniment of young couples, both before and after marriage.

The RC day continued with updates from the Regional Team.

The evening Eucharist was a joyful celebration, sharing gratitude for the gift of God among us, for Teams and for each other, as well as a moment to remember those to whom we owe so much, who have gone ahead of us. For some, the experience of eucharist was prolonged that day around the table at Paddy and Jacinta’s home. We broke the bread of our lives and the Word of God together, gaining further nourishment for the year ahead.

The regional team welcomes feedback about the RC day.



A Word from the Regional Chaplain Fr. Richard Sheehy

Last Sunday we celebrated the feast of Christ the King, a feast that marked the closing of the liturgical year. Given the awful events in our city a little over a week ago, the Gospel for that Sunday could not have been more timely, reminding us of the shared dignity of every human being: *'in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it to me'*. (Matt. 25:40).

This Sunday we begin a new liturgical year, as we enter the season of Advent, a season that calls us to live in hope and expectation. The focus of that expectation is the God who entered human history in the mystery of Jesus Christ and who longs to come to birth in our lives. The prophet Isaiah, and later John the Baptist, call us to live in a state of readiness so that, like Mary, we may welcome Christ into our hearts and our homes.

I suspect Advent resonates with couples who have become engaged and are preparing for their wedding in the next year or two, and for their future married life. The joy which they anticipate gives them energy for the myriad preparations involved, including attending a pre-marriage course. One couple said to me recently that the course gave them time to discuss subjects that they would never get round to discussing because their lives are so busy.

Advent resonates too with couples expecting a baby, especially when the first trimester has been successfully negotiated. The sense of joy and expectation increases as they reach various markers and begin to recognise their baby's features on the scans. For all of us Christians, the beauty of Advent lies in the mystery of a God who chooses to come among us in the most vulnerable way imaginable... as a child. As we progress in our life together in Teams, we become more aware of both the joy and challenge for couples of parenting. For many parents, as for Jesus' mother Mary, pain and anxiety is often part of the price for love. May Mary be our model and inspiration so that with a child's heart, imagination and trust, we welcome God-with-us in Jesus Immanuel.

Of course, we cannot think of the message of Advent without thinking of the families in Israel who long for the release of their loved ones who have been kidnapped, or of the Palestinian families, whose homes have been destroyed and whose children have been killed or maimed by bombs and falling masonry. We can only pray for a more lasting ceasefire and a future of peace founded on justice and respect for all in the land of Jesus' birth. As we gather around the crib, may we remember too those who do not have a roof over their heads in our own towns and cities, and may our response be compassionate and practical.

To end on a note of thanksgiving, let us give thanks for the beginnings of new Teams in both Cork and Belfast and pray for the success of the new Tandem programme for engaged couples due to start on Saturday 9th December. May the Lord visit your home with love and peace this Advent and Christmas and renew his blessings for all your loved ones in 2024!

Tribute: Yvonne Little

We wish to share with you about Yvonne Little who died this summer on the week of her 80th birthday, as a result of a serious stroke.

Yvonne and Leonard joined our Team about 4 years ago. They had known about the Movement but had never before been asked to join a Team. When we invited them to join Team 21 they had no hesitation. Very soon they came to understand the methods of the Movement and to build trust with all of us members who will now miss her presence and sharing.

Yvonne was a gentle, caring, fun-loving woman, a proud mother and a professional florist. She was very active in the parish most especially in the Gospel Choir, always eager to help, one you could always rely on. In losing her we have lost a faith friend, Leonard his beloved wife and their six children a wonderful mother and grandmother. We wish to offer all of them our sincere sympathy on such a great loss.

John and Elaine Cogavin

Tribute: Joe Kelly

We the members of Team 21 share with you the loss of our beloved member Joe Kelly at the great age of 94. Joe went home to God in October after a short illness during last summer.

Joe and Annette, his wife of 67 years had been members of the original Team with Michael and Marie Martin since 1981. Throughout all these years Joe had always been a voice of wisdom around the table at meetings. He was an attentive listener to whoever was sharing and was always able to bring words of hope, consolation, advice and encouragement when invited to. He was always open to sharing deeply on the endeavours particularly on his prayer life and encouraged us to do the same. We shall all miss him greatly.

As new members to this Team in the early 80's, at the invitation of Father Tim Hurley R.I.P. we found the meetings to be of huge help to us in understanding our marriage as the vocation to which we had been called. Looking back we are so grateful to have had this opportunity of listening to and sharing on faith with others like Joe in our Team. It has enriched our lives enormously.

Both Joe and Annette have been aware of environmental issues long before they became headlines. Joe as a beekeeper, qualified to the highest level and Annette as an avid gardener. Our study of '*Laudato Si*' was therefore an affirmation of their passion about nature as God's gift to the world.

We hope and pray that Joe is now resting in peace. To their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, we extend our sincere and heartfelt sympathy.

John and Elaine Cogavin



Tribute: Fr. Paddy Dundon CSSp

“Ah no, don’t go. Stay” Fr. Paddy would say. Lying in bed, those final weeks, his window just above the river Poddle in Kimmage, Paddy would continue, “Tell me about your time in Chestnut Road, or Belmont Avenue, or Earlsfort Terrace.” For sure, Paddy listened to you when you spoke. And he remembered.

When the children in Brazil wanted to speak to him, they would stand outside his room and clap hands. This he remembered.

He remembered, at a lecture in Earlsfort Terrace, a future Archbishop of Dublin opened a window to complain about noisy workmen. When one of those workmen gestured with two fingers in the air, he closed the window saying, “I think they want us to go to room 11”. At an exam, he faced three Professors across a baise-covered table. After explaining the times it would be OK to work on a Sunday, one Professor asked “Ah yes, but what about giving scandal?”. Paddy quipped, “Do you want me to move on from when it is OK to work on a Sunday to the subject of scandal?” This he remembered.

When it was Paddy’s turn to select a passage of Scripture for our Team meeting, he chose Mk. 14.7

“For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish, but you will not always have me”.

Fr. Paddy, you were a wonderful inspiration and friend to Team 11. May you rest in peace.

Rory and Patsy Buckley

Dublin Sector Team:

Fr Paddy Dundon was chaplain to the latest Sector Team for the past three years. He was a very loyal member of this Team, actively contributing to all our meetings. He enjoyed this regular participation and was very helpful during Sector liturgies and retreats. He was a great advocate for Teams, and participated in annual RC meetings, Retreats and 8th December celebrations on numerous occasions since returning to Ireland after his life on the missions. He also attended some International Gatherings of Teams.

Team 27:

Fr Paddy’s first encounter with Teams was as a chaplain to a Team in Durban in South Africa. On his return to Ireland following his life on the missions, he immediately contacted Teams in Ireland, and we in Team 27 had the privilege of having him as our Spiritual Director for a number of years. He was generous in how he shared his faith with us, guiding us with his insightful explanation of the Gospels, always in a gentle manner. He also loved the social aspect of our Team, and took a genuine interest in the family lives of all our Team members. Fr Paddy was very much a “peoples person”, attending sport, theatre and cinema on a regular basis.

A life well lived in the Service of God. May he Rest in Peace.

Donal and Katriona O'Keeffe

We first encountered Fr. Paddy at the International Gathering in 2006 at Lourdes. He had recently returned to Ireland from South Africa, where he had been a Teams Chaplain. He had previously ministered in Brazil and was delighted to be part of the Irish group at the Gathering. He became a Teams Chaplain and over the years was diligent in attending all Teams events, including RC Weekends, 8th December Mass and Retreats. He was gentle and smiled a lot. At his funeral mass at Blackrock College, where he had resided since he returned to Ireland, it was remarked that he was much admired by students and his daily mass attracted many followers in Ireland and abroad. Since 2021 he had been Sector Chaplain in Dublin. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal (May his noble soul be at the right hand of God).

Paddy and Jacinta Quigley

Tribute: Fr. Ken Payne

We first encountered Fr. Ken in 2003 at Rome, during the first gathering of Regional Couples from around the world. We met at breakfast one of the mornings and became friends right away. Our friendship continued throughout the years and we looked forward to his Christmas letter, which always included a personal message. He was born Anglican but converted to Catholicism around the time he was at University.

He was involved in the discussions which led to the foundation of the Transatlantic Super-Region and became its first chaplain. The Super - Region met for the first time at the International Gathering at Lourdes in 2006. Fr. Ken had a leading role in the first Gathering of the Super-Region at Swanwick in 2007 and again at the second Gathering in 2010. In 2009 he came to Dublin for a “Deepening Weekend” held at All Hallows.

He attracted many couples into teams, including couples from mixed Christian traditions. For many years he was involved with Missionaries of the Poor, which aids the very poorest in Jamaica, Nairobi and the Phillipines. His philosophy of life had unwavering compassion for the poor and the outcast. He was the author of many books on religious themes and emphasised the centrality of prayer.

It was a privilege to have known him. May his gentle soul rest in peace.

Paddy and Jacinta Quigley.



Tribute:

Antony Denman

Antony Denman, who has died, with his wife, Janet, were the second Responsible Couple for the Transatlantic Super-Region (2011-2016). They came to Ireland for each RC Weekend and were well known to many Teams members in Ireland. In 2014, the Super-Region gathered in Ireland for the first time, which coincided with the celebration of 50 years of Teams in Ireland. Antony and Janet led the Gathering, along with the Super-Regional Chaplain, Canon John Udris. Canon John led Antony's Funeral Service on Monday, 13th November at Northampton Cathedral. Antony was a member of the United Reform Church and he and Janet were close to inter-church couples. He was a kind, gentle person, with a quiet sense of humour. He and Janet made a huge contribution to Teams over many years, culminating in

their term as Responsible Couple for the Super-Region.

We were privileged to know him. May Antony's gentle soul rest in peace.

Paddy and Jacinta Quigley

Youth 2000

Youth 2000 is a Catholic youth organisation that organises faith festivals, retreats, prayer groups and other events for young people aged 16-35 across the island of Ireland.

Their Summer Festival was held in August from Thursday – Sunday and again this year, Teams of our Lady, had a stand to distribute information leaflets. PJ and I were asked to help on the Sunday morning and as the stand was not too busy as most of the young people had stopped by in the preceding days, we were free to wander over to the gym where the talks and prayer sessions were being held. There were 630 people attending with most of them sitting on the floor listening to a talk on Living the Christian Life. Then the Rosary started, while confessions were on-going with a constant stream of youngsters heading to the priests sitting around the periphery of the gym.

We were so moved by the reverence and respect shown by the people there during the Rosary and Adoration that followed. The closing Mass, which was celebrated by the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore – Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, was a joyful and spiritual occasion with everyone participating, singing the hymns, and responding enthusiastically. It was just so uplifting to see so many young people being so involved in a Mass that they had prepared for and were taking part in.

We noticed their respectful attitude towards each other, displaying kindness, patience, and understanding in their interactions. And when we spoke to them, they expressed how wonderful the weekend had been. We were inspired by them.

One speaker mentioned that he met his future wife at Youth 2000 many years ago and they were there for the Mass with their seven young boys. We heard about five engagements in the past year, where the couples met through Youth 2000 so Teams of our Lady, being there was very fortunate as it was an ideal opportunity for young people to learn about the movement.



All in all, it was an experience for both myself and PJ to be among so many faith-filled young people.

Marie Finn

Prayer Intentions

For those who have died:

Frank Cunneen, brother of Pat, Team 25

Toni Phelan, sister of Fr. Bill Fortune, Team 21

Jim Jordan, husband of Lynn, Belfast

Joe Kelly, husband of Annette, Team 21

John Pierse, brother of Patsy Buckley, Team 11

Fr. Paddy Dundon, chaplain, Team 11 and chaplain, Dublin Sector

For the living, for whom prayers were requested:

Eddie Lloyd, Galway

Around the Region

Dublin

It was with great sadness, that we learned a few weeks ago of the death of our Sector Chaplain, Fr. Paddy Dundon, C.S.Sp. We remember his contributions to our Sector Team meetings with fondness.

The Sector's Annual Outing for 2023 took place on Sunday, 17th September. Unfortunately, the advice to all attending to bring sunglasses and sun lotion seemed to be misplaced, or mis-typed! The advice should have read: bring your umbrellas and wellies! However, despite the inclement weather, a good time was had by all who attended – in the welcome shelter of the Avoca Restaurant at Malahide Castle, where we commandeered two large tables! We look forward to next year's outing in either type of location (outdoors or restaurant)!

Meanwhile, the next item on the Sector's calendar is the annual December 8th Mass, to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the closing of the year during which we celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the Charter of Teams of Our Lady.

The Mass, at 7.30pm, is being hosted by the Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Foxrock, Dublin 18. We are delighted that our Regional Chaplain, Fr Richard Sheehy, will be the main celebrant.

Tea and coffee will be served afterwards, accompanied by light refreshments supplied, we hope, by all in attendance!

Anne and Mark O'Leary

Annual Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Friday, 8th December, 2023 at 7:30 pm

in Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Foxrock, Dublin 18

Mullingar

RC day:

We enjoyed the RC day and we would like to thank the Regional Team for their dedicated work and personal help to us on the day. Mullingar was represented by Richard, Pauline, Margaret (Team 3) and Mary (Team 4)

8th December Mass:

Mass for the feast day of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady will be celebrated in the Cathedral on 8th December at 7.30 pm by Fr. Phil Gaffney. All are welcome and we are looking forward to seeing Rosemarie and Brendan Gavin, our Regional Couple, who are joining us for our Mass. We will have a cuppa after Mass in the Harp room in the Greville Arms Hotel.

International Marriage Week, February 7th to 14th 2024:

During the above dates we hope to celebrate International Marriage Week. Any suggestions you may have would be greatly appreciated. Please contact us at 0857539293

Fr Ciary Quirke:

The Mullingar Sector sends best wishes to Fr Ciary on his retirement from Teams and we wish him every blessing in the future.

Our heartfelt Condolences to:

Pat Cunneen on the death of his brother Frank

Fr. Bill Fortune, Chaplain to D21, on the death of his sister, Toni Phelan

Lynn Jordon on the death of her husband Jim, Belfast 2

Team D11 on the death of their Chaplin Fr. Paddy Dundon

We remember with love all our family members who have died. May they rest in peace.

We wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing in 2024.

Pauline and Richard Sheridan



Responsible Couples' Day at Avila, 7th October 2023

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We would like to receive contributions for the Spring Newsletter by Sunday, 17th March