



Newsletter

Teams of Our Lady

Irish Region



Responsible Couples' Day



Winter 2024

Issue 139

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Responsible Couples' Day, 19th October, held at Avila Carmelite Centre, Donnybrook.

Above: Handover of responsibility -

Paul and Annette O'Beirne, Responsible Couple for the Trans-Atlantic Super-Region, Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin, Responsible Couple for the Irish Region, Paola Bianchi and Paolo Batori, incoming Responsible Couple for the Dublin Sector, and Mark and Anne O'Leary, outgoing couple, Dublin.

From the Regional Couple



Dear Friends, it is our joy to greet you through the pages of this Winter Newsletter. The recent months have been full of life. The sharing of the first fruits of Turin and the enjoyment of the Responsible Couples' (RC) day in October, have been highlights for the Teams.

The RC day marked the end of three years of generous service of Richard and Pauline Sheridan, Mullingar Sector Couple and of the Dublin Sector Team and the Sector Couple, Mark and Anne O'Leary. We offered both couples our heartfelt thanks on your behalf at the RC Day. Also appreciated were Liam and Eileen McKinney, Belfast 5, who served faithfully in the role of Literature Couple for many years.

The Movement here currently needs several people who will take a turn (not make a lifetime commitment!) to work on various projects together. There is a need for youth and experience, and no one serves alone! Those who serve as part of a Team experience working together as an enriching and joyful experience. It is wonderful to see the Teams Movement grow in its capacity to do new things for couples and for the glory of God. Please contact us for details.

“We must believe that through our persevering work, the Lord who looks on us with love as he calls us, will awaken and increase in us the “gifts” which he has given us to share.” (ERI 1993)

Responding to the call, Paolo and Paola Batori have graciously accepted to serve as Dublin Sector Couple for the upcoming three years and will tell you more about their Sector Team within. Many thanks and congratulations to each one!

Thanks are also due to Deirdre and Martin Duff, Team 19 Dublin, who have graciously accepted the role of Literature Couple.

A new newsletter from the Leading Team will be coming to your email. They offer this as an easier way to keep in touch with Teams activities internationally.

The celebrations of the Teams Charter and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception for Teams around the country will be a wonderful opportunity to gather in prayer and friendship. Enjoy the celebrations and be sure to take some photos for the next newsletter!

Finally, as we continue our pilgrimage through Advent, we pray that our hearts will be prepared so we can reach out with longing to receive Jesus from His Immaculate Mother this Christmas.

Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin.

Fr. Richard Sheehy, Regional Chaplain



I am writing these words on the eve of the season of Advent and on the day where we had our last Regional Team meeting of the year. Today marks the close of the liturgical year, and tomorrow the beginning of a new one. It is a day too when we are beginning to grasp the significance of yesterday's general election vote and perhaps already get a sense of what combination of parties and/or independents might make up the formation of the next government. We can only pray that the country gets the government it needs for this time.

The past year has been very unsettling on the global stage: the war in Ukraine escalating and threatening to become a wider and more dangerous conflict; the ongoing destruction of Gaza presenting a humanitarian disaster affecting mostly civilians; while the plight of over one hundred Israelis held captive for nearly fourteen months is unimaginable. The outcome of the COP 29 climate change conference which ended last week is underwhelming, though, as one commentator put it, at least world leaders are meeting and agreeing something!

This time is also an appropriate moment to look back on a year in Teams and to contemplate the future of Teams. Looking back, it has been a year of significant moments and there is much to celebrate. At the excellent Responsible Couples' Day in Avila in October, which was very well organised and attended, we celebrated 60 years of Teams in Ireland. A couple of weeks later I happened to be visiting Bernadette Blayney, who along with her late husband, John, was responsible for introducing Teams to Ireland, and by happy coincidence discovered that it was her 95th birthday. She was delighted to hear of the 60th celebrations and looks forward to seeing the video that was made. The anniversary will be marked again at the Mass on the 7th December, which will be celebrated by Bishop Paul Dempsey in the church of St. Agnes, Crumlin.

For many of us, as I wrote in the previous issue, the highlight of the year was undoubtedly the International Gathering of Teams in Turin in July. For most of us, it was a first time connecting with the international dimension of the movement and it was a joy filled occasion, which sent us home with a great lift and the sense that we are a small part of a much larger family in Christ.

Sadly, this past year has seen the death of a number of Teams members, and our hearts go out to their bereaved spouses and families. Some teams have also had to break up, because of declining numbers, which is a bereavement in itself. On the other hand, new Teams are being piloted in both Cork and Belfast, and please God they will flourish. The Dublin Sector Team, led by Anne and Mark O' Leary recently completed their three-year service, and I want to thank them for their hard work and innovation at so many levels to make the gift of Teams available to others. We wish the new Sector Team, under the excellent guidance of Paolo and Paula Batori (already the Regional treasurers) every blessing as they over the baton. Pauline and Richard Sheridan recently completed their term as Responsible Couple for the Mullingar sector, and we thank them for the warm spirit and excellent contributions they brought to the Regional Team gatherings, as well as feeding a hungry chaplain!

Expansion and communication seem to be key themes for Teams at this time: finding new ways of reaching out to engaged or married couples, at a time when fewer couples are celebrating their marriage in a church setting.

The younger members in Teams are drawing our attention to the importance of social media as a means of reaching younger people today, so that the significance of Christian marriage and the support offered by Teams becomes part of the online conversation. Congratulations also to the team involved in recently upgrading our Teams Ireland website! The recent Tandem information evenings and the presence at the annual Youth 2000 retreat and Pure in Heart conference help bring the gift of Teams to a wider audience of young Christians. It is to be hoped that marriage week in February will provide fresh opportunities for members of Teams to introduce teams at parish level. As we thank God for the vocation of marriage and for the gift that Teams has been in our own lives, may we have the courage and the generosity to want to share this gift with others.

In the meantime, may I wish you all the joy and hope of this Advent season, as we await anew the coming of the Lord. Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus!

Richard

Hugo Gallagher - a tribute



Hugo Gallagher was born at his home on Inch Island, Co Donegal in August 1945. At school, when drawing the map of Ireland, the most important spot to put into the map was Inch, situated in Lough Swilly! It is between Buncrana and Derry. Hugo was youngest of seven children. After Inch primary school, he continued his education with the Christian Brothers at 'The Brow of the Hill' in Derry.

Hugo was adamant he wasn't going to emigrate like his older siblings. Graduating from UCD and Queens, he spent some time teaching, transferred to the Civil Service and worked in the Departments of Education, Labour and Agriculture. He had huge interest in everything Irish, sport, politics and, of course, an Ghaeilge. His Inch, Burt & Fahan parish, was the only pocket of hurling in Donegal. They won many hurling All-Ireland trophies. He was very proud of his family history in hurling, including his grandfather's art of making the *camán*, the forerunner of the modern hurley.

Mary, Hugo and their young family moved to Leixlip, Co Kildare in 1979. They both were very involved in their parish. He volunteered in many roles, including Reader, Sacristan and cleaner, to mention just a few. In 2018 they made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land along with other members of the Leixlip Parish. In the summer of 2023, they celebrated 50 years of marriage with a family holiday in Italy. They were members of Teams of Our Lady for over 20 years, enjoying the International Gatherings to Lourdes and Fatima, and many outings with Teams. He was a man of faith with a deep love of Scripture, sharing generously at Teams meetings.

Hugo was proud of his family and of walking his three girls, Olive, Deirdre and Éadaoin up the aisle. Mary & Hugo felt blessed with their in-laws: Áine, Dan, Liam & Colm. With his gentle love of family, sport, interest in Irish history and culture, Hugo will be greatly missed by all the family, including 11 grandchildren.

Ba é an Laoch agus an Giolla Mear ag gach duine é. Hugo will be long remembered by his friends in Team 32 as being the essence of goodness, sincerity, kindness, with a sense of humour and an interest in all things 'Donegal'.

Bhí Hugo, Máire agus an clann croí-briste nuair d'éag a mac Tomás

i Mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2020. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis agus anam dílis Thomás.

'Ní imithe uainn ach tamaill romhainn.'

Cormac McHenry - A tribute



We are coming up to the anniversary of Cormac's passing, dearly beloved husband of Barbara. Cormac departed this life on 22nd December 2023. Paddy and Jacinta, Cormac and Barbara, Pat and Carmel, were in the Team 25 starting line thirty-five years ago (We had other team members on that journey, including Patricia O'Connell and her husband Liam, decd.). Cormac was the 'eldest' of Team 25 and proved from early on a great store of 'living and parenting' advice. Both Cormac and Barbara were counsellors with CMAC (Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, now ACCORD), which added to the charism of Team 25. We applied ourselves well to the Teams of Our Lady charism. We listened attentively to one another. We thanked one another for our contributions to the meeting. We apologised if we interrupted unnecessarily ('Please', 'Thank you', 'I'm sorry').

Cormac was an avid and experienced sailor, manifested in his rising to Commodore rank in his sailing club. He travelled solo across the Atlantic, and was in our prayers many times during that period.

He reached a crisis of faith in his journey some two decades ago. The team rallied round, declared their love, their ardent desire that Cormac would 'stay the course', which indeed he did. This refreshed our zeal to love, accept and forbear. Cormac continued in the spirit of Teams fully, which was a source of joy to all. We all enjoyed the 'twinkle in his eye', his dry wit.

Thank you, Cormac.

Lives of great men all remind us

We can make our lives sublime

And, departing, leave behind us

Footprints on the sands of time

Henry Longfellow

Team 25

Prayer Intentions

For those who have died:

Ursula Long, wife of Gerard, Team 11, Dublin

Activities of the Regional Team: September 2024 – November 2024

Mission to the International Movement

October: Liaison with the Super-Regional Couple to facilitate their visit for the RC Day

Mission within the Region:

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

Mission within the Sectors:

Ongoing liaison and support for the new Team in Belfast.

Complete Piloting of Team 1 Cork and liaison with Team 2 Cork.

Invitations of couples to roles of service in the Movement and facilitating transfer of responsibility.

Liaison with the Responsible Couples of Teams in Mullingar.

Mission towards the Church:

Archbishop Eamonn Martin on behalf of Accord NI invited Teams to a meeting of Marriage and Family Movements in Belfast called “Enriching the Conversation” to explore how we can all work together in support of marriage and family in the Church.

Sharing the gift of Teams of Our Lady and Tandem Teams at a monthly prayer meeting of “Pure in Heart”. Pure in Heart is a youth-to-youth ministry, which shares the truth, beauty and meaning of human sexuality through growing in faith, hope and love together. More details at pureinheart.ie

In collaboration with an Ecuadorian priest in Avila, two presentations on Teams of Our Lady were made during Mass for the Ecuadorian community in Avila and for the Hispano-American community in St. Saviour’s Dominican Church, Dublin. An information meeting at Avila followed where couples experienced a Teams meeting.

Couples who sought to discover more about Teams of Our Lady via the website and Facebook have been introduced to welcoming Teams in the Dublin Sector on a “Come and see” basis.

Turin – Communion – Filipa and David Reis

Presentation made at the Responsible Couples' Day, Avila, 19th October

As we gather here today, let us reflect on the profound meaning of communion. The act of sharing bread and wine is not merely a ritual, but a powerful symbol that speaks to the very heart of our faith.

In Turin we were reminded that the breaking of bread is Jesus' "indelible sign and hallmark". It was in this simple act, described in the Gospel of Luke, that the disciples on the road to Emmaus finally recognised the risen Christ. Their eyes were opened, not by a grand revelation, but by the familiar gesture of sharing a meal.

This recognition was not merely about identifying Jesus physically. It was about understanding the deeper significance of his presence, about connecting the dots of their experiences and seeing the pattern of God's love revealed in their lives. The breaking of bread, then, is a symbol of awakening, of coming to see the truth that was always there, but hidden from our view. It invites us to look beyond the surface, to see the sacred in the ordinary, and to recognise the presence of Christ in the faces of those around us.

In Turin it was highlighted the importance of gratitude in the context of communion. The very word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek *ekkaristies*, meaning "thank you". This reminds us that communion is not about fulfilling an obligation, but about receiving a gift. It is about acknowledging our dependence on God and on each other, and expressing our thanks for the abundance of life we have been given.

But communion is not confined to the walls of this church. It is a way of life, a call to extend the spirit of sharing and gratitude to all aspects of our lives. It is about recognising the needs of others, just as Jesus did, and offering ourselves in service, just as he washed the feet of his disciples.

So, as we partake in this communion, let us do so with open hearts and minds. Let us be mindful of the symbolism of the breaking of bread, and let us allow it to transform our lives, both within and beyond these walls. Let us be a people of gratitude, of service, and of love, reflecting the true meaning of communion in all that we do.

Turin 2024

Joan and Sean Kinsella



You will all have seen the photos in the last newsletter and hopefully many of you will have experienced the wonderful contributions made at the Responsible Couples' day by nine of our fellow travellers. I was so impressed with the contributions that there were times I wondered whether we were at the same conference. It is always good to reflect back and see what were the contributions that stood out for us and what effect did the conference have on our lives and in our Teams.

For Sean and myself, I think what stood out for us were the mixed team meetings.

We have never experienced international mixed meetings and it was a joy for us to get together with six different nationalities. One of our couples were French/Polish living in Poland. We also had a Brazilian couple, a Lithuanian couple and an English couple who had started out being a mixed religion Roman Catholic and Church of England. So you can see the variety of both culture and nationality. On top of those differences it was so humbling to hear their experiences of the war in Ukraine and how that affected their lives living as they did just over the border. Nothing like the small day to day concerns we have in Ireland. However, at the root of our discussions there was the commonality of our experiences, what had brought us to teams, what kept us in teams and the importance of our faith beliefs in our lives.

We had never experienced such crowds, such diversity of language, such heat and such openness. If there was one issue that we had, apart from the poor translation, it was the absence of quiet time for prayer and meditation in conducive surroundings.

It is hard to take everything in and huge congratulations are due to the International Leading Team and the Italian Team for the organisation and of course to our own Brendan, Rosemarie, Mark and Anne and all our fellow travellers.

Message from the new Dublin Sector Team

Dear friends... the new Dublin Sector team was formed during Summer and the handover was blessed by the Lord during the Mass that concluded the Responsible Couples' day in October. We would like to thank you all for your trust and are very grateful to the previous team for their work and support. Special thanks go to Anne and Mark for their continued serving leadership and precious guidance during the transition period.



The team (featured in the picture) had its first meeting on November 17th and made some good progress on the organisation of two important events:

The December Mass to be held in St Agnes' church, Crumlin, on the 7th at 7 pm.

The Sector retreat to be held at St Columban Missionaries in Dalgan Park, Navan on Saturday 22nd March 2025. **SAVE THE DATE!**

We also had an initial discussion about the 2024-27 Pastoral Plan and are scheduled to meet again on December 15th as we think we need much more discernment and to share a few more thoughts, before defining the path for the years to come.

Firstly, we would like to thank you all for having nurtured the Charism of Teams in Ireland for 60 years and for making it available to any Christian couple who want to share their journey with the best companion we can imagine: Our Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, we will propose ways to progress with the evangelisation but, at the same time, are aware that the future success of our outward expansion rests on a gentle inwards renewal of the movement.

Father Caffarel said in words addressed to the members of the International Leadership Team in 1981: *"There is no true renewal if one is not faithful to the original charism. Renewal of the Movement can only be achieved by deepening the charism which is a gift of the Spirit. As such, it cannot be manipulated. To renew the Movement, one must join in the internal growth of that charism. It is not necessary to look elsewhere. It is as if, after having found a fountain with abundant water, when it seems to us that it is beginning to run dry, we go to look for water elsewhere. What we have to do is to go deep where the vein of water is sure to be found".*

This group look forward to working with all teams to facilitate the formation of **Talent Communities**, aiming to identify sources of new energy, to connect couples of different teams who share the same passion and, what's more, to channel that passion and energy to make Teams stronger and more appealing to both existing and prospective couples.

What does **Talent** mean to us? We want to see this concept with spiritual lenses (Matthew 25:14-30, The Parable of Talents), instead of limiting its meaning to a secular one. As a result, we propose to nurture **Music** forming a TOL Music Community but also to promote **Prayer** supporting the Intercessory Community. As we aim to encounter God, as a movement, we want to thank Him for the gift of **Young Families** and to endure our faith embracing the **Sorrow** affecting some of us and find ways to transform it into new light and hope. As said, these are just initial steps of a long journey we seek to do with you all, under the protection of Our Holy Mother.

Let's pray to the Holy Spirit to find the strength to follow the Word: "*For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*" (Matthew 25:29). And "*Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.*" (Matthew 13:8)

We look forward to serving Teams, always grateful for your support and guidance.

Please, keep all of us in your prayers.

Paola and Paolo for the Dublin Sector team

Teams in Cork

A big welcome to two new teams in Cork!

These teams can trace their origins to an information meeting held in Pope's Quay, Cork, in October 2023, which was presented by Rosemarie and Brendan and Paola and Paolo.

Some of the couples were piloted by *Zoom* and others were part of "in person" piloting which took place during the past year.

The first Cork Team, based in Youghal, has had its first two monthly meetings during October and November. The members of this Team are: Anne and Paul (Responsible Couple, and previously members of the *Zoom* Team), Cindy and Elliot (previously members of the *Zoom* Team), Trish and Paul (new to Teams), and Binci & Joshy (new to Teams) and Fr. John (who is also new to Teams).

The second Cork Team, based in Cork City, has just completed the pilot programme, which took place in the Dominican Priory in Pope's Quay. The team is due to have its first Teams' meeting on Friday, 20th December. The members of this team are: Sinead and Barry (Responsible Couple), Joanne Eoin, Grace and Kamil, Catherine and Diarmuid, and Fr Colm (Dominican).

Both teams will be celebrating together on 8th December when they meet for Mass at 11am in St Mary's Church, Pope's Quay followed by a "cuppa" afterwards.

Please remember all the couples and both chaplains in your prayers.

Mark and Anne O'Leary

The Intercessors

Your invitation to become a prayer intercessor

The account of the healing of the paralytic in Luke (5: 18-25) really sums up the role of intercessor: We bring our family, friends and others in need of prayer to Jesus in faith as the friends of the paralytic did, and indeed, like the paralytic those we pray for often need others to ‘bring’ their needs to Jesus.

Intercessory prayer has been part of Teams since the foundation of the movement and each region has a team which dedicates prayer time every month to those in need of prayer. The commitment is not very onerous: one hour of prayer on the 1st Tuesday of the month, officially from 11 – 12 noon but alternatively at any time of the day that suits or on a later day in the month if necessary. Your prayer may of course be accompanied by fasting. The intercessors continue to keep the list of prayer requests in their prayers then for the rest of the month. Please consider getting involved! Email Anne and Sean Dooley at teams.intercessors@gmail.com **to be added to the Intercessory Team.**

And of course, anyone wishing to add **petitions** to the list can have them added at any time in the month by emailing teams.intercessors@gmail.com

Dublin Sector Outing - 15th September



The sector outing was held on a sunny afternoon at St. Endas Park, Rathfarnham



Responsible Couples' Day



Turin 2024



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We would like to receive contributions for the Spring Newsletter by Sunday, 6th April