



# Newsletter

## Teams of Our Lady

### Irish Region



#### From the Regional Couple

Dear Friends,

We love moving into brighter Spring days and Eastertide. Have you noticed how the sunshine brings the bees out? They fly from flower to flower to sip the nectar and pollen. While collecting these, they are covered with pollen and inadvertently transfer pollen from one flower to another, facilitating plant reproduction and nourishment.



Not surprisingly, the humble bee suggests how fruitful our endeavour of personal prayer can be when it is renewed by the Holy Spirit, who is the “Lord and giver of life”. As God draws us to drink deeply of His love, we contemplate His goodness and find praise and thanksgiving well-up in our hearts. We find nourishment as we linger in his presence, recalling like the Virgin Mary, the great things He has done. We can further ponder the truth of his word in scripture and leave our prayer time laden with the pollen of His love for one another, seeking opportunities to share it.

In a letter titled “THE FRUITS OF CHARITY” Fr Caffarel writes about our teams

“There must be no limit to the growth of love for one another in our teams. When couples practice mutual help and love one another, little by little their hearts expand and gradually their love goes out beyond their homes to their neighbourhood, to their whole country, even to the ends of the earth.”

May your Easter season be blessed and your Teams be filled with new life.

Brendan and Rosemarie.

**Spring 2025**

**Issue 140**

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## News on the Newsletter from the Regional Team

As you know, postage costs have escalated greatly in recent years. Sadly, the cost of continuing to post the Newsletter has become unsustainable. In order to be good stewards of your annual contributions, the Regional Team have agreed some practical changes to cut costs while maintaining and enhancing communication in other ways.

In consultation with the longstanding Newsletter Editors, Paddy and Jacinta Quigley, the Regional Team have agreed:

If you still wish to receive the bi-annual newsletter by post, you are invited to send a personal email request to [newsletter.tol.ie@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.tol.ie@gmail.com)

A Spring and Autumn newsletter will be published, in print and on the website. You will be invited by email, to read the newsletter when it is published.

The newsletter will be printed on a A5 page (half size), which will reduce the postage costs significantly.

This Spring Newsletter is the final one to be posted to you, in the existing format.

The newsletter is just one way we can communicate with each other.

Another way is through the beautiful new website <https://teamsireland.com> / Newsletter items can be read on the “Blog” page. Have you logged on yet? When you do you will be able to see the photo and see news of the recent Annual Retreat at this link <https://teamsireland.com/news-2/>

Emails from the responsible couples from the Sector and Region sharing news of the Movement and of upcoming events. Your responses and acknowledgement of these are always welcome!

Finally, two-way communication is best of all. We look forward to hearing from you too!

You might send us a reflection on your Teams experience, your efforts on the endeavours, a few lines on how faith sustains you in your marriage, family or parish. You can also ask a question. The possibilities are endless! Please use the address above [newsletter.tol.ie@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.tol.ie@gmail.com) or even better, log on to the website <https://teamsireland.com/>, click Home, follow the drop down menu to Contact where you can send your contribution under “Ask us about...”

## New Teams Website

<https://teamsireland.com/>



## A Word from the Regional Chaplain Fr. Richard Sheehy

I begin writing this on Laetare (Joy) Sunday, which marks the midway point through our Lenten journey. In just two weeks' time we will celebrate Palm (Passion) Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week, when we commemorate in our liturgies the passion and death of Jesus Christ, particularly the three days of the Easter Triduum (*Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday*), and express our faith in his resurrection and presence among us through his Holy Spirit. Today is also Mothers' Day, so a special opportunity for us to acknowledge with gratitude the unique place mothers (whether living or deceased) have in our hearts and lives.

It was a privilege to attend the recent annual Teams retreat organised at Dalgan Park by the new Dublin sector team. It was clear from the outset that much prayer and planning had gone into the arranging of the day, as we were met at the door, given our name tags and ushered into a room where fresh tea and coffee awaited us. It was encouraging to see such a large attendance and to be greeted by the sight of faces both familiar and new.

With Italian flair and good humour, Paolo and Paola, our hosts from the sector team, ushered us into the main room, welcomed us and, without further ado, handed us over to the main presenter of the retreat, Rosemary Lavelle.

Rosemary has years of experience working in the Dublin diocese, training parish pastoral councils and coaching parent leaders in parish Confirmation programmes. Currently, she presents parish workshops on The Godly Play, as well as conducting retreats for various groups. Rosemary brought all that pastoral expertise to our day in Dalgan Park, along with her own deep spirituality which she generously shared, and her experience as a married person and mother of four adult children. She led us through a gentle but thoughtful day which integrated story, song, wisdom, small group reflection, fellowship and prayer.

We had the opportunity to meet and mingle over coffee breaks and lunch and to go for a walk in twos and threes, where we were invited to share something of our own recent journey with one another. The retreat concluded with adoration, Sacrament of Reconciliation and the celebration of Mass, during which couples were invited to renew their marriage vows. A newly formed music group from among Teams members provided music for the liturgy, and many couples stayed around for a social time immediately following the Mass.

It was great to see so many Teams members there from some of the other sectors, and especially to see so many new couples, including some who were simply invited as guests to 'come and see'. I came away with a great sense that the efforts of both sector and regional teams to expand the movement through Tandem and through encouraging individual teams to periodically host a couple or chaplain, who are interested in finding out more about Teams, are beginning to bear fruit.

In recent weeks, parish representatives from across the Dublin diocese have been attending meetings preparing for a Synod of the Irish Church which will take place next year. The process began in 2021 when the Irish bishops announced a five-year process leading up to a general assembly in October 2026. People probably remember that consultation meetings were held at parish level in 2022, at which they were invited to list what were their many hopes and concerns for the future of the Church in Ireland. The fruits of these meetings were gathered first into a diocesan document which in turn was integrated into a national

document, which became the Irish contribution to the universal Synod in Rome. The Irish document, Synthesis of the Consultation in Ireland for the Diocesan Stage of the Universal Synod 2022-2023, highlighted baptism – belonging – co-responsibility – lay ministry- abuse – youth –women –sexuality and LGBT+ issues and faith formation as key themes.

Since the conclusion of the Synod of the universal Church in Rome last October, the way is now clear to prepare for a synod of the Irish Church. The purpose of the current round of consultations, which bring together clergy, chairs of parish pastoral councils, and parish synodal animators, is to reflect on the themes raised in the earlier consultations and to identify pastoral priorities to be brought forward to the national Synod next year. These will also form the basis of a national pre-Synodal assembly this October. Separate to the parish consultations, the Irish Bishops' Council for Marriage and the Family is coordinating the response from marriage movements and agencies, which include Teams of Our Lady, in this phase of the synodal journey.

Wishing all Teams members a blessed Holy Week and every Easter joy as we prepare to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and his new life among us!

### **Prayer Intentions**

#### **For those who have died:**

**John Guy**, husband of Mary, Team 13

**Fr. John Byrne**, Chaplain, Team 11

**Anne Siung**, Dublin

## Save the dates:



**June 7th, 2025:** Knock Eucharistic and Marian Shrine, Co Mayo.

### Teams of Our Lady Pilgrimage for the Jubilee Year of Hope.

Teams together at the 40th All-Ireland Rosary Rally, for a day of prayer and inspirational speakers. Find a bus from your area on <https://allirelandrosaryrally.com/bus-info>

**October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025:** Avila Carmelite Centre, Dublin 4.

### Team Gathering Day (formerly Day for Responsible Couples)

Open to Responsible Couples and Team members who want to dive into the Teams year with renewed strength and purpose. Further details later.

## **Message to all Responsible Couples from Marie and PJ Finn, Registration Couple**

As we approach our year end, we would like to remind all Responsible Couples of their final task for the year.

During your May/June Team Meeting, could you please select a new RC for next year. Perhaps, like rotating the location of your team meeting each month, you might do the same with the RC, thus taking the “decision making” out of the selection. As well as the name of the new RC, can you send contact details that have changed in the past year, names of new members or names of those who are no longer attending your meeting. Also please confirm if your chaplain is still the same.

Please send to [mkeeganfinn@gmail.com](mailto:mkeeganfinn@gmail.com) as soon as possible as the register must be updated by August 31 to facilitate the organisation of the RC weekend.

God bless,

Marie and PJ

### **Activities of the Regional Team: November 2024 – April 2025**

#### **Mission to the International Movement:**

Teams Ireland has been invited to bid to host an ERI meeting in Ireland 2027 or 2028 - Liaison ongoing with the Super-Regional Couple.

#### **Mission within the Region:**

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

Invitation to Teams to host events for Marriage Week, to make the spirituality of Teams better known in the local community.

Invitation to Team members to avail of faith formation opportunities in their parishes in conjunction with Charis Ireland.

#### **Mission within the Sectors:**

Ongoing liaison with the new Teams in Belfast, Cork City and Youghal, Co Cork.

The Dublin Sector Team hosted a very successful Annual Retreat.

#### **Mission towards the Church:**

Two couples from Teams of Our Lady participated at a Bishops’ Council for Marriage and the Family (CMF) meeting at Curryhills, Prosperous, Co Kildare. The meeting hosted by Bishop Denis Nulty gathered couples from Marriage Movements and organisations to plan ways of implementing the 2022 Pastoral Guideline regarding Catechumenal pathways for Married Life (Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life)

Two Teams couples are currently serving on the Bishops' Council for Marriage and the Family  
A Tandem Team of 6 joyful couples is being piloted.

Radio Maria Ireland's outgoing Priest Director, Deacon Don Devaney, hosted an interview with a Teams couple. Radio Maria were keen to celebrate International Marriage Week by promoting Teams of Our Lady.

Members of Teams of Our Lady participated in the Spring Gathering of movements and ecclesial groups, hosted by the CMF, as part of the ongoing synodal journey of the Catholic church in Ireland.

Teams of Our Lady gratefully accepted an invitation to be guests of honour at the Youth 2000 Mass and Valentine's Ball in Gorey, on February 15th this year.

## **Annual Retreat – A Thank You Message**

Dear Friends in Teams,

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who participated in the retreat, "Hope Does Not Disappoint." Your presence, reflections, and shared experiences enriched our time together, making it a truly grace-filled day. To those who were unable to join us, please know that you were in our thoughts and prayers. We trust that the fruits of this retreat will extend to you as well, as we continue to walk this journey of faith together.

The reflections below are drawn from the feedback shared by participants. They aim to capture the spirit of the retreat for the benefit of all. While we have sought to reflect the collective experience, we apologise if we have not fully expressed every individual insight or sentiment.

### **Summary of Feedback**

The retreat was a grace-filled experience, filled with moments of deep reflection, prayer, and fellowship. Participants were profoundly touched by the theme of hope - rooted in Christ, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and shared within the community. Many were reminded that hope is not merely an abstract concept but a lived reality, found in scripture, prayer, and the love of God poured into our hearts.

The presence of music, especially the prayerful singing, added depth to the retreat, creating an atmosphere of contemplation and praise. The gentle and heartfelt guidance of the presenter was deeply appreciated, with her personal stories, references to scripture, and insights into the sacrament of marriage resonating with many.

Small group discussions provided a sacred space to reflect on scripture, share personal experiences, and find encouragement in one another's journeys. These conversations reinforced the beauty of community, where faith is nurtured, and struggles and joys are shared. The opportunity for quiet reflection, adoration, and the celebration of the Eucharist helped participants draw closer to God.

The retreat rekindled a desire to seek hope in everyday life, to notice the presence of the Holy Spirit, and to say "yes" to God's call with renewed trust. It was a time of mutual encouragement, reminding everyone that we are never alone on this path - we walk together, supported by faith, prayer, and the love of God.

Whereas the overwhelming feedback was extremely positive on all counts there were a small number of respondents who highlighted areas of improvement for the future regarding sound quality, location and level of content.

Yours in Christ,

Paola & Paolo, on behalf of the Dublin Sector team

## Opening up... like flowers in Spring!

Hello everybody!

We - Pierpaolo and Ilaria - are currently involved in Teams of Our Lady as the Regional Expansion Couple and are always thinking of ideas to promote Teams in Ireland; so, we look around us, taking ideas from other couples in Teams Ireland or from other countries - but we also simply like to go back to the origins of Teams, that are ever so meaningful and resourceful. And we find great encouragement in Fr. Caffarel's exhortation to host with an open heart: "*to contact and welcome, with a fraternal heart, couples from other teams*", when the occasion arises (from the Charter, Obligations of Teams' couples).

It may well be seen as our "6<sup>th</sup> endeavour", so we would like to invite you and your teams to always keep in mind if during the next few months, you may welcome a couple for a "Come and See".

We did it last September and we wanted to share this experience with you.

During the previous months, we had come in touch with a couple who were interested in joining Tandem, the younger version of Teams; but Tandem wasn't available in the short run, as we hadn't reached the minimum number to form a team. However, the couple having expressed the desire to grow in faith and get in touch with similar-minded couples, we thought that at least we could let them experience the refreshing atmosphere of an evening with a TOL Team! So, we decided that we'd invite them to our first feasible meeting – that was September 2024, our very first meeting back from the holidays!

But since our Lord sends his graces abundantly, just before the summer we came to meet a lovely Presentation sister who was interested in knowing more about Teams, since she was from China and there is no Teams presence there. So it is that we invited her too, and Team 36 was graced with 3 visitors on the first meeting of our "new" year! Which was ideal also from an organisational point of view, because it gave the Responsible Couple the opportunity to go through the ropes of what Teams of Our Lady is, revise the endeavours and explain on what basis we choose the study topic. Our guests felt welcome and they blended in in our pooling effortlessly. It was, needless to say, a joyful and enriching evening, that reminded us what wealth there is in sharing whatever we have. And Teams of Our Lady has a lot to offer, for all the parts involved! (And if you want to know how it ended, YES, the couple is now one of the 6 couples that are part of the recently formed Tandem team!)

So, here are a couple of ideas that we'd like you to consider in order to promote Teams, so that our movement may be more widely known and accessible to other couples who may benefit from it:

### 1. Invite a couple/possible chaplain to a "Come and See" in your team

We encourage you to renew the commitment to invite a couple to one of your regular Teams meetings, so that they see what it means to be part of Teams. And we would like to prompt you to... extend the invitation! Look among your circle of friends and extended family and community, and invite at least one married couple or a priest/nun or lay chaplain to one of your Teams meetings.

**Consider relatives, school and work acquaintances, a new couple in your parish, or a priest, nun or religious person** who may be open to the role of chaplain. In our experience, those who receive the invitation truly appreciate it! And also, let us not underestimate the vast outreach that a priest, nun, deacon or lay chaplain may have among the people and groups they lead/advise/preach to. Go invite, open your homes and your team to possible new friends! (and let us know how it goes)

## 2. Increase visibility in your parish

To help make *Teams of Our Lady* more visible to priests and parishioners, would you be willing to introduce the movement in your church? You can speak with your parish priest about promoting *Teams*, and if possible, present it during Mass. The presentation is brief—just 2-3 minutes—and we will provide all the materials you need, including leaflets, posters, and a short speech to read from the altar. If you prefer, we would be happy to come and give the presentation ourselves once you have arranged it with your priest.

If you have any other idea, please let us know: we look forward to hearing from you!

And if you want to tell us about your own Teams' story of a "Come and See", or of **hospitality in a wider sense**, please go ahead and share it in the newsletter. It is so uplifting and encouraging to hear how people welcome other people in their lives!

God bless you,  
Pierpaolo and Ilaria

## Update from the Dublin Sector Team

The Dublin Sector team met 3 times since the last newsletter to organise and plan several social and spiritual events, as well as to develop a common vision for the sector. We are very grateful to the Holy Spirit for His guidance and to all couples of the movement for their support. Below an update on some activities:

**Evangelisation:** We see a strong energy within the movement and note very encouraging signs from new couples in terms of interest in joining Teams of Our Lady (see table). We highlight the fact that two long-term existing teams are exploring the possibility to merge to reenergise the spiritual core of such strong teams. A new TANDEM team was formed and 3 young couples are waiting to start the second one. Two chaplains and four couples have joined existing teams, recently. And more to come... We are grateful to the Lord for such a vibrant energy in the evangelisation efforts and pray the Holy Spirit to guide us and all members involved in such a generous act of love.

### Evangelization efforts in the Dublin Sector

NEW members or activities	2024-25
Come & See	12
Come & See (work in progress)	5
Chaplains who joined existing teams	2
Chaplains waiting to join existing teams	2
Couples who joined existing teams	4
Couples waiting to form new teams	0
Couples who formed a TANDEM team	6
Couples waiting to form a TANDEM team	3

October 2024 - year to date

### **Social night for RCs:**

The Dublin sector organised a social evening for Responsible Couples, in February, to strengthen the sense of community and collegiality. About 30 people had good conversations about Teams and more, while they enjoyed a drink and a slice of cake in a very welcoming environment.

### **2025 annual retreat:**

What a wonderful day! The annual retreat at St. Columban Missionaries in Dalgan Park was filled with joy and fellowship. The theme was “Hope does not disappoint” and 84 participants enjoyed three enriching sessions delivered by our speaker Rosemary Lavelle. Prayer, reflection, and group sharing contributed to what was a transformative day. We were blessed by the participation of five young (non-member) couples and some of them accepted our invite to a “Come and See”. One of the highlights of the day was the renewal of vows all couples had during the concluding Mass. We praise the great work and support of the Music Community and thank all members involved in the organisation of the event. A heartfelt thank you to all the participants who made the day special with their presence, sharing and friendship.

**Marian Reflections and Chants on Sunday, May 25<sup>th</sup> – Save the Date!** The Dublin Sector Team invite you to a special evening of reflections and chants in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patron of Teams of Our Lady. This will be a beautiful opportunity for prayer, contemplation, and songs as we come together in celebration. Further details will be shared by email in the coming weeks. Please, mark your calendars - we look forward to seeing you there!

**Outing and Family Day on Sunday, September 14th – Save the Date!** Please, mark your calendars - we look forward to seeing you, your family, and friends, at our annual picnic. Further details will be shared by email in the coming months.

We are grateful for your support and guidance.

Please, keep all of us in your prayers.

Paola and Paolo, on behalf of the Dublin Sector team



Some of the attendance at 7th December Mass with Bishop Paul Dempsey



Photo taken after mass at retreat



Rosemary Lavelle leading the Retreat on  
22nd March at Dalgan Park



Members of the Teams Music Community at Mass on 7th December at St. Agnes Church, Crumlin.

Pat Seery, Bairbre Hand, Eamonn O'Dea, Filipa Reis and Maureen Seery. Jacinta Quigley was absent owing to illness.

Dear friends in Teams,

We write to say “goodbye” as Editors of “The Newsletter”. After fifteen years we feel it is time to hand over to a younger generation.

It has been a great pleasure for us to serve Teams in this way and we have very much enjoyed the experience. Over the years we have had the opportunity of giving the news updates, commenting on the various gatherings, attending conferences and welcoming new ideas and Teams, not to mention all the photographs we took and included. It has been a joy to meet so many of you on our journey, and to gain so much from the experience.

Rosemarie and Brendan have kindly agreed to succeed us and we wish them well in this role. We are grateful to them for their support and kindness over the years.

We wish God’s blessing on you all.

Paddy and Jacinta

Newsletter Editors: Paddy and Jacinta Quigley

[paddyandjacinta@gmail.com](mailto:paddyandjacinta@gmail.com)