

“Return to the Source”

Regional Responsible Couple and Team Gathering Day 2025

“An Unforgettable Day in Ireland with Teams of Our Lady,”  so said the Facebook (FB) post on the Equipes Notre-Dame International FB page.

It continued “Alberto and Mercedes have had the honour of participating in the “Teams Ireland RC Gathering Day” under the theme “Return to the Source,” accompanying the Teams in Ireland for a day filled with faith, fraternity, and renewal.”

Thank you, Mercedes and Alberto, but without doubt, the privilege was all ours!

Let’s remember the wonderful day we shared.

Mark and Anne opened the day with a prayerful meditation in the style of Fr Caffarel who taught that God awaits us at every moment. “The God of immense majesty and infinite tenderness awaits me, calls me, makes himself a beggar for my presence... Prayer is being present to God present.”

After a beautiful time of prayer, there were inspiring witnesses from Team members on how they have learned to make the Endeavours what they are, “concrete points of effort.” Couples generously witnessed to the immense richness of the endeavours in their lives and encouraged us to start again when we lose focus.

Paul and Annette O’Beirne, on their fourth and final visit as RC of the Super Region brought their unfailing warmth, together with an update on news from the Trans-Atlantic Super Region and the International Leading Team. In anticipation of the end of their service in January, Paul and Annette were appreciated for their solid guidance and generous leadership over those years.

In the mid-morning Marek and Eva held a practical session to guide our use of the new Teams website, with encouragement for all of us to log on at least once weekly, to subscribe in order to receive news; to check the Events and Blog pages and to learn more about the Movement in Ireland. They reminded us that news from the Base Teams may be sent with a nice original photo, for publication via the contact page.
<https://teamsofourlady.ie/>

Mercedes and Alberto, the Responsible Couple of the Leading Team, (ERI), were very gracious guests, mingling with the delegates throughout the day, dispensing gentle encouragement and sage advice.

Mercedes and Alberto, the Responsible Couple of the Leading Team, (ERI) spoke to us passionately about hope, in their keynote address in this Jubilee Year of Hope.

They drew attention again to Fr Caffarel's words from 1970, reflecting the hope God deposits in the human couple.

"God said, Christian couple, you are my pride and my hope." They shared "their deepest conviction that the Teams of Our Lady are a hope for the couple and the family."

They challenged us to examine how we live the endeavours, how we prepare for our meeting, how we notice the signs of hope in small and big things in the life of the couples and chaplains of our Movement.

(The full text of the Alberto and Mercedes' presentation can be accessed separately in the blog.)

There then followed a formation session, on the "Role of the Responsible Couple" with slides and a short break out session. Rosemarie and Brendan highlighted that this role is an indispensable service of love. Each couple takes their turn to be the RC and to experience the nourishment which comes from this service. (The presentation slides are available from the Regional Couple, on request.)

During a convivial picnic lunch, new Team members were welcomed and long-standing friendships were renewed. The delightful presence of a baby boy was such a joy, as his parents begin their service as RC of the new Team in Belfast. Another young couple treated us to the joy of meeting their two young children who were quietly taking everything in. Following lunch, each couple were invited to have a "Sit Down" before re-gathering for the afternoon programme.

Despite the hour, there was certainly no desire for a post prandial nap, as the dynamic service couples from the Regional Team, spoke in turn. Initially, the Tandem couple, Ilaria and Pierpaolo spoke about the ongoing outreach to young engaged and newly married couples called "Tandem Teams". <https://www.tandemteams.ie/>

The outgoing Treasurers and current Dublin Sector Couple, Paola and Paolo then shared how the annual contribution has both a material and spiritual dimension. Read more here <https://teamsofourlady.ie/news-2/>

The Regional Team proposed an exciting mission for every Team across the country during next International Marriage Week, 7-14 February 2026, leading up to the feast of St Valentine. We know mission is integral to our life in Teams, and this is a practical opportunity to reach out to others with the good news of marriage and of Teams. The RC's request your assistance with this initiative.

Áine opened the Remembrance book and spoke of the importance of keeping the record of those who have gone before us. During the Eucharistic celebration the book had pride of place before the altar, as prayers were offered for deceased Teams members and loved ones.

The Couples and Chaplain who served on the Regional Team 2021-2025 were appreciated warmly by name, as Brendan and Rosemarie celebrated the many members who collaborated with the Team in various service roles during this time.

Paul and Annette marked the end of the service of Brendan and Rosemarie Gavin as Regional RC with thanks; and prayers for their new appointment from January, as incoming RC for the Trans-Atlantic Super Region.

The highlight of the day was the Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Denis Nulty, Chair of the Council for Marriage and the Family of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. After communion, Bishop Denis performed the commissioning ceremony for Mark and Anne as the new Regional Responsible Couple and for Fr Richard Sheehy, as the incoming Chaplain for the Trans-Atlantic Super Region. Lighted candles and aprons symbolised the transition of service. The music community assisted by Alberto on the organ, accompanied the celebrations with melodious singing and music, helping us to express our joy and thanksgiving for this beautiful and unique occasion.

We leave the final words to Mercedes and Alberto and thank them sincerely for their presence with us.

“Everyone was truly lovely. A day of deep communion, formation, and shared joy that reminds us of the beauty of returning to our sources as married couples and teams. Thank you, Ireland, for your hospitality and witness!” 