

Equipes Notre-Dame

# **GUIDE TO THE LIAISON COUPLE**



**International Leading Team (ERI)**

July 2017

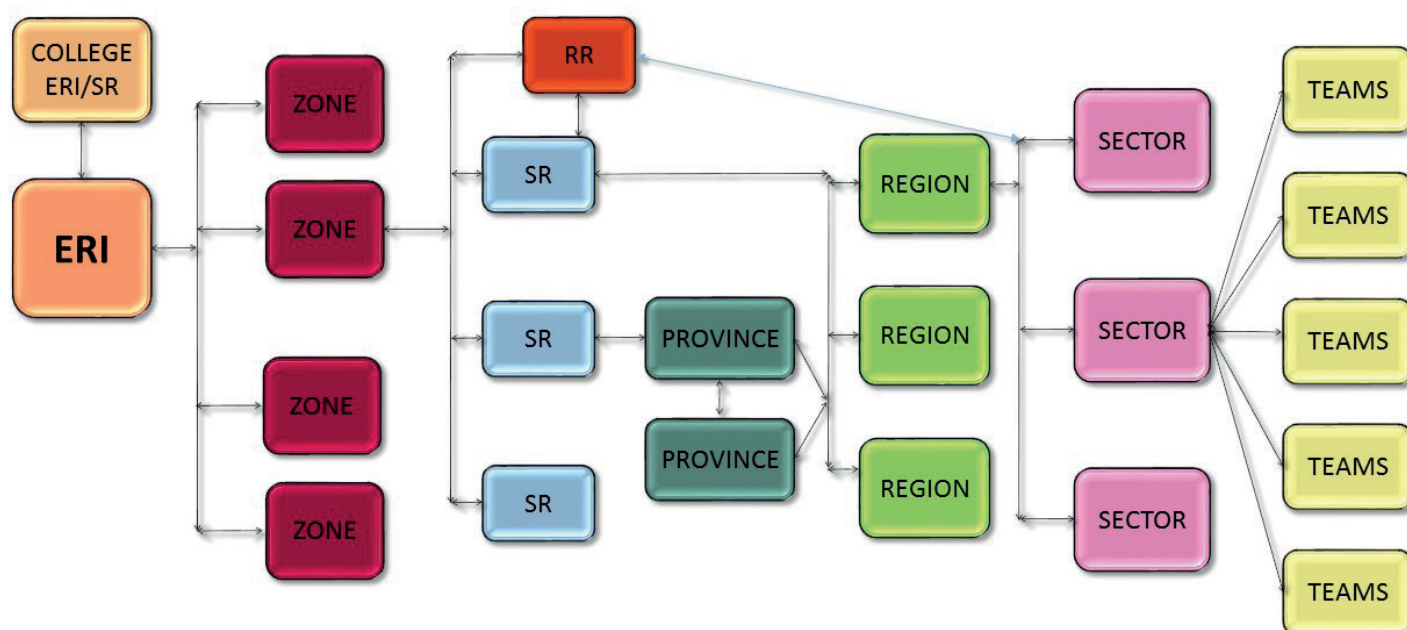
# The spirit of liaison

The concept of liaison in the Teams of Our Lady is the service of communication between those in responsibility in the Movement and the team members and vice versa. It is a collective responsibility. The aim pursued by everyone is to enable each team member to follow Christ better.

The mission of liaison is to help embody this beautiful and noble purpose and to reinforce the sense of belonging to the Movement. It exists throughout the whole structure.

The Movement comprises unique people, with different mentalities, types of spirituality and experiences. It is not a question of standardising, but rather harmonising all these individuals and sensibilities into a common approach to progress.

The necessary preconditions for the success of liaison are reciprocal listening, trust and motivation. The vitality of Teams relies on this.



## The origins of the Liaison Couple

An excerpt from one of the earliest Teams' Letter, n° 3 :

*“At the beginning and up until 1947, every month Father Caffarel gathered together in his small office in Paris for supervision the few Responsible Couples of what were beginning to be called “Caffarel Groups.” The effect on spiritual life attracted more and more couples...*

*When the “Caffarel Groups” developed in Belgium, Father Caffarel put some couples in charge there, ones that were less housebound than others, in order to follow the growth of these distant young shoots. It was the first prototype of the Liaison Couple...”*



1947 was the great turning point with the promulgation of the Charter and the Teams becoming the “Teams of Our Lady.” The Teams sprouted up all over the place and it was necessary to help them live out their spiritual life, hence the necessity for a bond running both up and down through the organisation. This led the creators of the Movement to increase the ways of transmission: Liaison couples, Sector couples, Regional Couples... In the Movement, it was

necessary that everything was achieved through the warmth of human contact and fraternal friendship.

The Liaison Couple therefore was born out of the development of Teams. In order to bring the teams closer together and since Father Caffarel himself could not undertake this mission, he set up Liaison Couples to ensure that there was close contact between the teams and the source of the Movement.



## Liaison Couple, a spiritual mission



Sent by God through the mediation of the Sector Couple, the Liaison Couple participates in the general responsibility of the Movement by helping couples always to respond better to Christ's call, "Come, follow me."

The Liaison Couple responds to a call and makes themselves available to the Lord in the service of Teams:

*"You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."* Jn 13:13-14

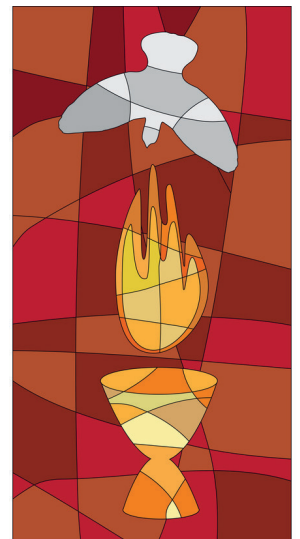


One of the key parts of the Liaison Couple's mission is prayer and listening to the Word.

*"Be fully committed to listening to the Word of God. His Word awakens, alerts, stimulates the heart. And from a heart that is alive springs forth prayer."*

Father Caffarel

The Liaison Couple implores the Holy Spirit to give them the grace to carry out their mission to the best of their abilities, because they are the bearers of the spiritual message of the Teams of Our Lady. During the time of their mission, they will carry in their prayers the team members who have been entrusted to them.



The Liaison Couple is there to inject the necessary lifeblood to give life and strength to the team by relying on Christ, by listening and showing how the methods proposed by the Movement can help the team on their path of faith.

## The role of the Liaison Couple

*“The Liaison Couple is the Movement, the agent of unity, of charity... It is the link, the factor of unity in the small mystical body that are Teams. The more teams have a sense of the Movement, the more they will have a sense of the Liaison Couple.”*

Teams' Letter, N°3



The aim of liaising is to promote communication and activity and to ensure that all teams are closely linked to the Movement and also between themselves. Liaison ensures the transmission of life vertically (teams with the Movement) and horizontally (between teams).

Liaison is a service rendered to each grassroots team and a service rendered equally to the Sector. Indeed, liaison enables the Sector to know about the vitality of the grassroots teams, their needs and difficulties and thereby plan activities, formation sessions and revitalisation.

Experience has shown that no team can live for long isolated and cut off from the larger community of the Movement...

Liaison is essential for the building of a spirit of unity and for the development of a feeling of belonging to Teams of Our Lady.

Liaison is based on a relationship of trust and fraternity.

## Practical notes

### N° 1

#### The Liaison Couple and the Sector

The Liaison Couple is part of the Sector Team. In the case of large Sectors, their presence could be restricted to three meetings in the year, with one at the beginning and one at the end of the year. In all cases, it is their responsibility to have a good knowledge of the Sector's priorities, the life of the Movement, the orientations and the topic of the year.

They should read the Teams Newsletter and regularly look at the websites as well as the various Teams Facebook pages.

**The Sector Couple will ensure the obligatory formation of the Liaison Couple that should be given within the schedule of formation plans put in place by the Super-Regions and Regions.**

The Liaison Couple's mission is to inform the Sector Couple of :

- the teams' experience, interesting experiences to be shared with others,
- their reactions to the Movement's orientations and those of the Sector in particular,
- their needs and expectations,
- changes in the team members' situations: arrivals, departures, various events...

The Liaison Couple's mission is to inform the teams of the projects and priorities of the Sector and the Movement.

Cases of great difficulty in a particular Team must be dealt with directly by the Sector Couple, helped by the Liaison Couple and the Spiritual Counsellors of the Sector Team and the grassroots team.

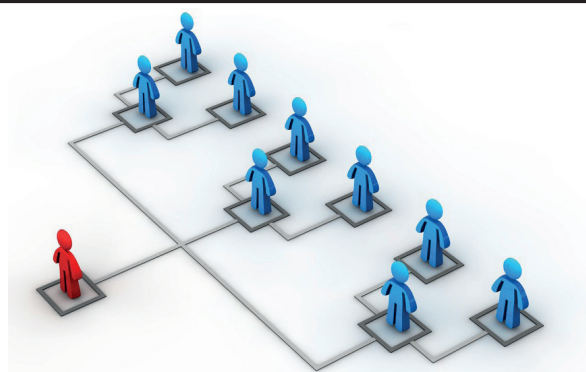
The affairs of the Sector may require discretion and so the Liaison Couple will respect the principle of confidentiality demanded by Teams.



## Meeting with the Responsible Couples of the teams.

At the beginning of the year, the Liaison Couple must schedule time to meet and exchange with the Responsible Couples of the teams they liaise with in order to inform them of the Sector's agenda for the year and to raise awareness of the proposed activities and to invite them to participate in them in a constructive manner. During this meeting, the Liaison Couple :

- ▶ Invites the participants to reflect on everything concerning their responsibility, based on the experience of their respective teams.
- ▶ Encourages them to take care of each other in prayer.
- ▶ Explains the life of the Sector and the Movement in general.
- ▶ Convince them of the importance of fraternity and dynamism within Teams and that they are the guarantors of this.



The link can only work if the Liaison Couple establishes warm and regular contact with the Responsible Couples.

Father Caffarel paid particular attention to this point :

- *You do not inhabit a movement of spirituality, you adhere to it... An adherent or member of a movement refuses to have the soul of a tranquil profiteer. Paying the subscription is not enough. Complaining when a decision bothers them... Breaking away from the others, having a "take it or leave it" attitude, this all seems obnoxious.*
- *They do not place themselves at the front of the movement—like a tenant in front of the proprietor... but they know themselves to be and want to be members of a "whole"...*
- *A movement that is alive is a movement that is being built every day, thanks to the action of each one of its members. Each person, on the building site, assumes their own responsibility, according to their capabilities, resources, time and generosity...*

Editorial - Teams of Our Lady - December 1965

### N° 3

## **Links to be created with each responsible couple of a team.**



- ▶ Make an appointment with each Responsible Couple of the team to talk about the history and life of their team.
- ▶ Talk with the Responsible Couple of the team to see how they intend to render service to their team.
- ▶ Invite the Responsible Couple of the team to call upon the Liaison Couple during the year to share the difficulties encountered on the path and consequentially share the successes.
- ▶ Suggest regular contact by phone or email in order to follow and understand how the team works during the meetings and outside as well.
- ▶ Schedule a date to visit the team.
- ▶ Request the Responsible Couple of the team to write up a short summary of what happened at each meeting. This is especially important for the final meeting of the year. The

Liaison Couple is the recipient of these summaries.

- ▶ Ask the Responsible Couple of the team to attend all Sector activities with their team. A personalised email or phone call to the Responsible Couple before each event is advisable.
- ▶ Advise the Responsible Couple of the team to regularly read the Teams of Our Lady Newsletter and to consult the Super-Region or Region's website as well as the International website in order to give the Team members information about what is going on in the Movement.



For a Team that is at the end of its Piloting period, it would be a good idea to ensure the transition with the Piloting Couple so that the new team can progressively become independent. This transition will be done in agreement with the Sector Couple and the Piloting Couple. A joint participation of the Piloting Couple and the Liaison Couple at one of the first meetings of the new team will facilitate this process of support and accompanying.



## Visiting a Team

*“If Christians get together in teams, it is above all in order to constitute a collective response to the desire for the love Christ asked of Christians: we get together to live Christ’s true love, the true love of others, for as long as we can.”*

Madeleine Delbr l

It is advisable to prepare for this meeting with the Responsible Couple of the team.

Prayer will be an important part of the meeting in order to be together under the Lord’s gaze.

The Liaison Couple should orientate the sharing/pooling in a constructive manner in order to show that this is the high point of the meeting, where spiritual mutual help can be best practised. They will remind the Responsible Couple of the team that it is up to them to run this part of the meeting concerning the Endeavours throughout the year.



*“The Charter demands a minimum of sharing in order to kindle trust, initiate openness and break our selfish defensive reflexes. Indeed it demands that each couple says, in all honesty, if they have observed over the past month the endeavours that fall to them as a result of the Charter.”*

Henri Caffarel

Benevolence, listening, and sensitivity will be necessary in order to make this meeting a moment of communion and fraternity. During the sharing time at the beginning of the meeting, the Liaison Couple, once they have properly introduced themselves, listen with great attention to what each couple has to say about themselves.

The Liaison Couple will testify in the most practical way to their wish to follow Christ, to the difficulties they encountered, to the help provided by their team and to the pedagogy of the Movement.



The Liaison Couple will make the most of this encounter to see how the orientations of the Movement are perceived and received, how the pedagogy initiated by Father Caffarel and the mystique that is the cement of Team are experienced.

The mission of the Liaison Couple is more in terms of advice rather than judgment. If observations need to be made about the way the meeting is run, it is advisable to talk about it after the meeting, and only with the Responsible Couple of the team.



**During the team meeting, the Liaison Couple must :**

**Listen  
Convey  
Encourage  
Act**

**with  
with  
with  
with**

**Discretion  
Simplicity  
Joy  
Efficiency**

## The Liaison Couple

What they should be	What they should not be
	
<b>An active and energetic Couple</b> They work to ensure that there is a good relationship between the teams, the Sector and the Movement	<b>A passive couple</b> Who lets the teams they liaise with be numbed by routine, living in isolation and cut off from the Movement
<b>A friend who listens and accompagnies</b> With humility, but with firmness, they accompany the team members on the Lord's path without judging, thanks to the pedagogy of Teams	<b>A rigid couple</b> Who demands accountability, is judgmental, keeps everyone on the straight and narrow, coldly applies the Movement's guidelines and considers themselves to be superior to the other couples
<b>A guarantor of Teams' unity</b> They are the benevolent guardians of the Spirit of the Movement in union with the Church. They know how to explain the rules and demands of Teams without offending, but without compromising on what is essential	<b>A simple "inspector"</b> Who does not personally show the strength of the founding charisma and neglects the idea of belonging to a community
<b>A prayerful couple</b> They know that they are bearers of a spiritual message and draw their strength from prayer. They entrust to the Lord the team members that they liaise with	<b>A mere relay of information</b> Who is happy enough to pass on information over the phone or by email without ever taking into account the experience of the teams they liaise with