



Equipes Notre-Dame



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As you know, the XII International Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady will be held in Fatima from July 16th-21st, 2018. This exceptional event, held every six years, incited us to seek the reasons why Father Caffarel decided to hold the first Gathering of this type back in 1954. We found an editorial published in the Monthly Letter to the Teams of Our Lady, in January 1954, where he explained why he wanted the Team members to be able to make this pilgrimage.

"A NECESSARY GESTURE"

It is one of the joys, the pride of our generation to have, if not discovered, at least become aware of the Christian grandeur of Marriage. Conjugal love, paternity, maternity, procreation, the couple's mission, do not mere evoke for us the realities on the earth, but also the sacramental realities, meaning the human realities transfigured by grace, bearers of grace, all of which speak of divine realities.

I have just said that it is one of the great examples of pride of our generation. Yes, and it is justified in a sense: we have sought, we have found, we congratulate ourselves on finding. But sometimes there is a note of naivety and self-sufficiency in our pride. We have found, yes, but because God has given. We ought not congratulate ourselves, but instead we ought to thank God.

For a long time now, I have dreamt of a great gesture to be accomplished by Christian couples, by which they would publically express to God their gratitude for belonging to this time in which his light has been granted.

This gesture will be our pilgrimage to Lourdes on June 5th, 6th and 7th.

A gesture of gratitude to God, "giver of all gifts." But also, a gesture of gratitude to the Church.

Too influenced by an individualistic education, we sometimes find it difficult to convince ourselves that God's gifts come to us only in the Church and through the Church—what St Cyprian translated as "No one can have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother." It must be understood that his treasure of marriage was not sought out in foreign lands, but precisely in the inexhaustible treasure of our mother, the Church. We received it from her hands.

We have no right to keep it to ourselves, as misers and profiteers. Since we received

from the Church, then the Church must be the first beneficiary. Our gratitude must not only be lip-service, but also, a gift of ourselves.

A gift of ourselves, an ardent and deliberate desire to put our couple in to the service of the Church

- to make our children the Church's
- to offer the Church with readiness those that God might call for "the highest service"
- to work with all our strength to transmit what we have understood of marriage to so many couples who do not know this and who await it
- to share in its missionary task, beginning with our parishes.

You ask me, why Lourdes? Because it is a Marian Year. Because our Teams are under the patronage of Mary and absolutely want to have her as the witness and guarantor of their gratitude and their promise.

(Henri Caffarel)

Therefore, just as Father Caffarel wished sixty-four years ago, let us pray and prepare for this pilgrimage that will lead us in a little over a year to Fatima, that it may be a true gesture of recognition towards God, who has given us the gift of the treasure of marriage.

FATIMA 2018 [3]

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