



Timeliness of Father Caffarel's thought

Tó and Zé Moura Soares

Marked by the way God has looked at Father Henri Caffarel, founder of our Movement, throughout his life, we celebrate today with great emotion this moment dedicated to him. We recognize we are **heirs to a rich heritage of Christian commitment and testimony**. The Teams of Our Lady recognize, with especial gratitude, the seeds of holiness that the Lord poured out on many couples of the world through His servant, Father Henri Caffarel.

Father Caffarel's mission, has been since the beginning of Teams, based on the desire to give others the joy of entering the light of God: "The essential thing is to seek Christ." For him, married Christians are seekers of God, and must learn, as Christ did, how to serve God in their lives and in the world. Holiness, accompanied by conjugal love and the love of Christ, is the vocation of TOL's couples.

The Movement owes Father Caffarel a lot : he has given couples the deep meaning of the sacrament of marriage, he has enabled them to discover the value and the wealth of small Christian communities and he has shown them a path of contemplation in their busy lives.

Teams of Our Lady do not passively watch the amazing acceptance of Father Caffarel's thought in the world, but follow closely the wonders of couples of different languages and cultures who praise the Lord for the graces received in their couple and in their family, **who through conjugal spirituality are led on the path to holiness**.

In the same context, Father Caffarel shows us that the sacrament of marriage, where the active presence of Christ is deeply rooted, is an essential element of the construction of the Church. He even considers the couple, united by the sacrament of marriage, **a Church cell**. Consequently, where a Christian couple lives, the Church begins to live.

We want to underline the importance of Father Caffarel's intuitions and thoughts in the formation and development of the Teams of Our Lady throughout the world, mentioning six moments that marked the Movement's life:



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1938 – "**Let us seek together**" This was Father Caffarel's response to the invitation made to him by four young French couples in order to live their love in the light of their faith.

1945 – Father Caffarel founded "L'Anneau d'Or" (The Gold Ring), a magazine of conjugal and family spirituality, which at the time was a milestone in marriage and family matters.

1947 – Elaboration and promulgation of the Charter with TOL's founding principles: to be faithful to the original inspirations of the Movement and to make concrete proposals to the teams. The Charter is **the reference document**, essential for Teams growth and development.

1950 - Teams expansion beyond the borders of France leads to the decision of making the **Teams of Our Lady an International Movement**.

1973 – Father Caffarel decides to retire from his position within the Responsible Team, being replaced by a couple, Marie and Louis d'Amonville, who assume the responsibility for the Movement

1987 – Father Caffarel's last speech at a meeting organized by the Teams of Our Lady took place in Chantilly, at the commemoration of the Charter's 40th anniversary. He made a speech entitled "**The Founding Charism of the Teams of Our Lady**", where he appealed to an effort of Fidelity but also challenged Team members to be creative, keeping their faith in the Church to really become a **«Renewal Yeast»**.

Driven by the Spirit who instills in us the strength to help the Church to recognize **the timeliness and universality of Father Caffarel's thought**, the Teams of Our Lady must continue to spread his work in order to abbreviate the Cause of canonization of our founder.

Isn't the testimony of Father Caffarel the reason why we meet again today, and are gathered here?

Encouraged by the way our founder loved the Movement, let us rejoice and encourage one another to leave here stronger as children of the same Father, brothers of the same Risen Lord, with the belief that there is much to do in the world around us.



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Finally, we would like to say that we are sure that if Father Caffarel was present among us, he would exhort the couples of the Teams of Our Lady to continue on their **path to holiness** in this hectic yet wonderful world where we live.

United and driven by the same spirit, "let us seek and walk together ..."