



IIIème Rencontre Internationale des Responsables Régionaux
Roma 6-11 Septembre, September, Setembro, Septiembre, Settembre 2015

The INTERCESSORS

8th September 2015

Dear Friends,

A big thank you to Tó and Zé and all of you for welcoming us here. It is not without emotion that we again find ourselves at this International Meeting of Regional Couples initiated in 2003 by the International Leading Team whom we had the honour of serving with. That year we experienced a beautiful meeting with Saint John Paul II and so many great and beautiful things with some of you and some of your predecessors.

We are here to speak to you about an urgent matter: **To develop at the heart of our Movement Intercessionary Prayer and increase the number of Intercessors.**

1. The Beginning of the Intercessors

Our founder Father Caffarel placed prayer at the highest level of human activity and thought that a Movement of married spirituality like Equipes Notre-Dame could not do without prayerful people.

In 1956, Father Caffarel became very concerned about the difficulties encountered in Christian marriage. He appealed for volunteers for what became a great chain of prayer having its particular intention to intercede for marriage and the family. Let us read again this proposition, full of spiritual ambition and concrete wisdom: *“Apart from the fact that our world lacks prayer terribly, two deeply held convictions are at the origin of this idea that I submit to you:*

The first: *long time in prayer alone is the way to arrive at deep prayer.*

The second: *prayer at night is invaluable in the eyes of the Lord. “Could you not spend one hour with me”, the Lord asked his apostles.*

I therefore propose to those among you who believe to discern in my appeal an invitation from God, to commit to spend one hour in prayer, one night each month.

That they pray: ...for every family, and most especially for those who particularly depend on them.

Then in March 1960 by his Appeal to some Volunteers:

One appeals for Volunteers!

I send out therefore an urgent appeal for some volunteers:

I hope that every night, without discontinuity,

Couples will succeed one another in prayer.



IIIème Rencontre Internationale des Responsables Régionaux
Roma 6-11 Septembre, September, Setembro, Septiembre, Settembre 2015

Father Caffarel had this very beautiful and deep intuition to make this appeal to people who would pray in the night for the Movement, for the Couples, for the Sacrament of Marriage and for the intentions of the world, connected with all those who pray in the world (monks, religious and others....).

Those first to pray at night were Teams couples who had become Intercessors, following a visit to Brazil and Columbia in 1977, of Louis and Marie d'Amonville then the couple responsible for Equipes Notre-Dame. The Intercessors have for their vocation, for ministry, to pray for Christian couples as they journey through the years, reaching out to other prayerful people who are not Teams people or to single persons. Alleluia!

“The prayer of the Intercessors is nothing other than the prayer of Christ himself, otherwise it would be nothing, it would not exist. The prayer of Christ aroused in them by the Spirit of Christ.”

Father Henri Caffarel

2. The Intercessionary Prayer and the Movement of Equipes Notre-Dame

At present we have about 4,000 committed in the world, principally in Latin America and in Europe, but also in the Middle East, in Africa and in Asia.

Our animation team is in communication through linked intercessor couples in the world, each representing their country and sometimes many countries of their continent. (See chart). It is important that the intercessors develop and rejuvenate themselves.

The image that exists of intercessors being older people must change. It is 50 years since they started and all of them were young. We now need the young to join us. We must be numerous, the world has need of our prayer, marriage has need of our prayer, family has need of our prayer...

“Behind this window, someone is praying and interceding for couples, families, priests....Why not you? In the entire world of men and women, united in Christ, a relay team exists night and day in one chain of prayer. Let us rejoice.”

3. What is Intercession?

Intercession is a natural momentum of the Christian and must become like regular breathing and is necessary to the life of prayer. The prayer of intercession is a prayer which asks of us to bring our prayer as near as possible to the prayer of Jesus, *“His power to save is utterly certain, since He is living for ever to intercede for all who come to God through Him.”* (He 7, 25)

In the prayer of intercession, *“Nobody thinks of their own interests first but everybody thinks of other people’s interests instead”* (Phil. 2, 4), even praying for those who have done them harm. (St. Etienne) The intercessor knows no boundaries.



III^{ème} Rencontre Internationale des Responsables Régionaux
Roma 6-11 Septembre, September, Setembro, Septiembre, Settembre 2015

Through intercession we participate in God's project for the world. *"I have been looking for someone among them to build a wall and man the breach in front of me...."* (Ez 22, 30.)

4. How to intercede in prayer.

The Father calls us, we also, to prayer of intercession:

In Romans, 8: 26-27: "The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God."

The great family of intercessors deeply linked to Equipes Notre-Dame invites everyone to respond to this hope in three ways, namely:

Prayer, fasting and the daily offering of one's life are the three possibilities proposed to the intercessor:

- **THE COMMITMENT TO ONE HOUR OF PRAYER DURING THE NIGHT**, on a fixed date and where possible during the night (**those who fast**)

"At the beginning of your spiritual life, you discover that prayer is necessary; as you progress, you see that it is essential to the life of the Spirit in you. But if you are initiated into the mystery of prayer for others, you understand that it is one of the greatest responsibilities that God has ever given to mankind". (Jean Lafrance, Sentences sur la prière).

Let us explore prayer.....

Intercessors who commit to spending one hour of prayer make a note of a particular date in the month, at a fixed hour of the day, if possible during the night: this is essential in order that one is assured of the 'permanence' of their prayer.

One must not hesitate to invoke the Holy Spirit, who intercedes for us.

It is an hour of intense communion with the saints. The Christian prayer is always a Prayer in Church, even if one is physically alone.

- **THE COMMITMENT TO A DAY OF FASTING EACH MONTH**, also on a fixed date (**those who fast**),

Was it by chance that the Lord started his public life by fasting, similarly to that of Moses and Elijah, these great figures of intercession: forty days and forty nights in the desert!



III^{ème} Rencontre Internationale des Responsables Régionaux
Roma 6-11 Septembre, September, Setembro, Septiembre, Settembre 2015

Let us explore Fasting... Let us hear what Father Regamey told us regarding fasting: ***“For all the faithful, fasting must be one of the most normal methods to give strength to the prayer of intercession.”***

- **THE OFFERING OF OUR DAILY LIFE**, its challenges, its joys or its prayer;
This is for those who are able to make a regular commitment. (those who offer)

Let us explore Offering.....

We are all called to make of our life “an offering pleasing to God, for the good of the world”; but why offering?

“Pay attention! To offer one’s suffering, is not to resign oneself to them: we must fight our hurt and that of our brothers.” Jean Massin in “The Scandal of the Cross”.

Let us not be limited, only to offering our challenges and our sufferings:

“It is good also to offer to the Lord when life is beautiful, great, agreeable and happy and therefore, not only our difficulties and sadness. Saint Paul told us: ***“In all things, let us give thanks.”***”

5. To create dynamism and unity across the world.

- **Through prayer:**

To create unity between all the intercessors in the world Father Paul Dominique Marcovits composed the Prayer for Intercessors (in May 2011). This prayer gives a very strong link between all of us, in Communion with all the Church, with whom we share and unite in our love for the Lord and for all humanity.

- **Through the organisation at the heart of your Regions and Super Regions**

From a true team of animation of intercessors linked to you.....(not only an isolated couple without being linked to the Movement of END) in every country in the world:

- To bring the message of Father Caffarel on Intercessory Prayer.
- To animate the Intercessors and the circulation of the Letters.
- To receive and distribute the prayer intentions.
- To develop and rejuvenate those praying, those fasting and those making offerings.
- To keep in communication with the international animation team.
- To provide communication and development on the web-sites of END.
- Etc...



III^{ème} Rencontre Internationale des Responsables Régionaux
Roma 6-11 Septembre, September, Setembro, Septiembre, Settembre 2015

Communication is assured by the Letter of the Intercessors of which we have just celebrated 30 years in 2008.

The intentions are immediately addressed by mail to the International Intercessors and they are able to be transmitted equally to the International Communication couples by post, by telephone or by e-mail.

A Web-site... (www.intercesseurs.org) exists in 5 languages and the development of new communication: posters, flyers, a logo has been designed a few years ago to rejuvenate our image and facilitate communication.

An application on Smartphone and Android is already available in the French language and we are working on spreading it into other languages...Thank you to the Super Regions for helping us in this great work. It only needs the translation and installation to bring the project to fruition.

- **By the call to Intercessory Prayer:**

Intercessory prayer is a response to the call of Christ giving his life for us:

“Love one another as I have loved you.”

6. Conclusions

We renew this ‘Urgent appeal for volunteers:

“I wish that every night, without a break, that couples would succeed one another in prayer...”

“That they pray for spiritual food for our Teams, for the couples and the sacrament of marriage, for the great wishes of the Lord for his Church and for all of humanity that they would intercede for our intentions for all”. “That, during this hour, these volunteers would pray for the Movement, but also for every couple...that they pray steadily, in union with all those great persons who pray during the night...”

“TO INTERCEDE, IT IS TRULY TO ALLOW GOD TO ACCOMPLISH IN US, WITH US, HIS PLAN FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL HUMANITY.”

Father Henri Caffarel