

FATIMA LETTER
FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LEADING
TEAM
TO ALL TEAM MEMBERS IN THE WORLD

Dear Teams Members and Spiritual Counsellors of Teams of Our Lady:

At the conclusion of this 12th International Gathering, we have a heart full of joy and we wish to continue and reproduce all that we experienced in these intense and enriching days. Each of us is "infected" with the immense richness of our charism of married spirituality, of living the mystique of unity with Christ which brings us together in the midst of the richness of our diversity, of the joy of walking together, of fidelity to our ethos. We carry in our hearts the grace of having felt in **"Reconciliation, a sign of love"** the profound meaning of our divine lineage and its bounty.

What we experienced in this intense week, but at the same time was all too short because we did not want it to end, cannot be left as a mere memory, but as a source of light that through our efforts we will continue to nourish and demonstrate, multiplying it in our normal surroundings for all those who could not live this grace directly.

Now is the opportune moment in which we can, with an open and willing heart, transmit the insights that have led us to the conclusion of this journey and to the beginning of another new phase, and that will serve as an inspiration to begin to write a logbook of the new route that we will begin to follow, in harmony with the Church's steps, in fidelity to our origins and in the mysticism of our total adherence to Christ and to Mary, our Mother, who leads and encourages us.

In the world of yesterday and of today, there have always been lights and shadows. In contrast to the shadows that lurk, today there are also many lights and signs of hope that we are called to communicate because **"Nobody lights a lamp and then covers it with a basin or puts it under the bed. You put it on a lampstand so that those who come in may see the light. " Luke 8: 16.**

The route for our life plan propounded by TEAMS is a path that identifies with that perfect grace that was granted to us; the charism of Married Spirituality. It is travelled by us, imperfect men and women who, in our adherence to that gift, possess and manifest our own strengths but also our great weaknesses, because we too are bearers of lights and shadows. So we must never lose the capacity for discernment and self-criticism. As Pope Francis reminds us, if we make the analogy with our TEAMS family: **"there is no perfect family, but we must not be afraid of imperfection, of fragility, not even of conflicts"**, in that we can never lose our mysticism or our sense of collegiality to discern His will.

If there are shadows around us, it is not because others cause them. It is because we are not radiating enough light to scatter them. That is why today more than ever, the Teams of Our Lady have a specific role and a duty that we must take on. Paraphrasing Pope Francis in Evangelii Gaudium No 171: Today the Church and the world need us, TEAMS married couples, who, because of our formation and our experience of accompanying others, know the

processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience and obedience to the Spirit, so that together we can protect the sheep that are entrusted to us from wolves who would scatter the flock.

During the Movement's last few years, we prepared ourselves to **"BE"**, to understand the richness of our sacrament and our conjugality, forming ourselves, consolidating our faith, and **"SEEING"** and becoming aware of the missionary role demanded by the Church. This chronology of journeying together is the same as that running through the life of discipleship, which has a logical order that we should not change. The **"BEING"** as Christ - on the basis of a new truth that commences with the experience of encounter, leads us to **"SEE"** life with the eyes of Christ and this evangelical stance will take us, if we permit it, to live, or in other words to **"ACT"** as Christ.

Avoiding the risk of falling into the spiral of repetition, if we remain anchored by turning on our own axis, this new period in the life of the Movement starts from this 12th International Meeting and follows the same dynamics of growth as that of the disciple. The General Orientation that we propose today and that will guide our journey will continue to be an **invitation to act**, specifying our **Vocation and Mission** and bringing to life the call that says:

"DO NOT BE AFRAID, LET'S GO..."

This it will be illuminated by two biblical texts that will accompany us on this stage of the journey:

"Have no fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and give you help " Isaiah 41,10. A promise that encourages us to take that step that separates us from our assurances but at the same time clothes us with authority that does not come from us but from acting obediently and trusting in Him who calls us and whom we want to imitate.

And the second ***"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Exodus 3,5*** that will allow us to remember always that in the "departure" that we undertake, we are not superior to anyone else but simply instruments of God's mercy, so that all the ground that we tread, all the realities that we face, will be addressed as holy places of evangelization where God is present even in those difficult circumstances that we cannot comprehend.

Since we walk with the Church at our departure, we will further solidify this spirit and this new missionary dynamic to which Pope Francis invites us. Always with the purpose of aiding discovery and living the true nature of human love - discerning, welcoming and accompanying through our attentiveness and always faithful to our charism.

In this conversation we will have as a support and reference the new **Vocation and Mission** document that, at the dawn of the third millennium, the International Responsible Team has delivered at this meeting with a vision of the past, present and future of our Movement, so that we can:

1. Discern in our environment the challenges that we can respond to as a movement,

“And this is my prayer, that your love may grow ever richer in knowledge and in insight of every kind” Philippians 1:9

By taking on this action, the real meaning of mission in the Church and in the world, with a clear conscience we can see that our goal, to which our charism leads us, is not only the cultivation of married spirituality and the sacramentality of marriage which, of course, we must not stop working at because it is our essence and the true "catalyst" of our sense of mission, but also the promotion of a conscience and a missionary spirit in each member, in each team.

Spirituality is not synonymous with passivity, nor is spirituality built isolated from the world. In the recent Apostolic Exhortation "Gaudete et Exsultate" the Holy Father Pope Francis expresses it clearly: (GE 26). *"It is not healthy to love silence while fleeing interaction with others, to want peace and quiet while avoiding activity, to seek prayer while disdaining service. Everything can be accepted and integrated into our life in this world, and become a part of our path to holiness. We are called to be contemplatives even in the midst of action, and to grow in holiness by responsibly and generously carrying out our proper mission."*

With this purpose, and without any impairment of freedom and personal initiative of team members, TEAMS are called to seek, support and encourage, not by isolated initiatives but through our organizational structure and animation and specific programs of accompaniment to couples in situations caused by the world of today. That is our strength and that is the concrete contribution that we can make to the Church and the world today.

2. Provide a new impulse and a new spirit in the diffusion of the Movement according to the changing realities that we need to identify.

Simon answered, “Master, we were hard at work all night and caught nothing, but if You say so, I will let down the nets.” Luke 5: 5

In the context of the New Evangelization, it is important to make the riches of Christian marriage known in as many countries as possible. In TEAMS we know to what extent the pedagogy of the Teams of Our Lady and the experience of our life project enables the man/woman relationship to evolve positively in any geographical context. In this quest for expansion, with the effort and perseverance of everyone, wonderful fruits have been obtained. We cannot stop planning and working without forgetting two key words: **multi-culturism** and **enculturation**. Firstly, to recognise that we are different, we think differently and come from different cultures that we must comprehend and accept. Secondly, mindful of our education and without losing fidelity to our origins, these must be taken and adapted to each culture from the point of view of their thinking, their expectations, their needs and pedagogy and all the influences that did not form us. Also our field of mission in spreading the Movement should look to the

south since the angel of the Lord told Philip to "***Start out and go south on the road that leads down from Jerusalem to Gaza. (This is the desert road).***" ***Acts 8, 26*** without falling into the temptation of quality or quantity, so that all the marriages in the world, whatever their condition, situation and origin, may know the gift and grace that has been entrusted to us.

3. And always practise "the art of accompaniment"

"Finally, be united, all of you, in thought and feeling; be full of brotherly affection, kindly and humble." 1 Peter 3: 8

The word "accompany", as Pope Francis insists, is the key to our looking outward. As stated in the Vocation and Mission document, *TEAMS are already initiated in this skill that implies acceptance, listening, compassion, encouragement, patience, discernment, reciprocity We are called by the Church to accompany especially during those moments of greatest fragility: the path to a firm and lasting commitment; the first years of married life; times of crisis and difficulties; complex situations derived from failures, abandonments and misunderstandings.* Every day we need to "specialise" more in the skill of accompanying all the realities that, from our specificity of married spirituality, enable us to contribute to the Church, which today needs, more than ever, trained missionary disciples, a field in which Teams of Our Lady will never cease to concentrate its efforts.

As always in our actions, let us entrust ourselves to Mary, our Mother, intercessor and guide on the path that leads us to be, as Holy Mother Teresa longed for, that pencil in the hands of God, that writes what He desires.

So be it,



To and Ze Moura Soares

Leading Couple 2012-2018



Clarita and Edgardo Bernal Fandiño

Leading Couples 2018-2024