

## **CARDINAL FELTIN WRITES TO US :**

In the Church, as in civil society, every association is led one day to express its nature, its objectives and its methods in the form of Statutes. There is advantage in not doing it too soon so as not to be confined to too narrow a mould that would hinder a necessary evolution and adaptations. But one must, however, give oneself as soon as possible a framework that will guarantee that development takes place along the right lines and which will eliminate any hesitation and discussion on the distinctive character of the grouping. In the Church, new institutions are first approved by the local bishop, and thereafter by the Holy See, if the latter deems it appropriate.

As you learned from the last Monthly Letter, the Statutes of the Teams of Our Lady have just been submitted to Rome where they are being studied. They had previously been approved by His Eminence Cardinal Feltin, by a letter of great importance which you will find below. This document of capital importance defines with vigour and clarity the characteristics of our Movement. It deserves to be read and meditated upon by each one of you and studied at your team meeting. Our place in Christianity could not have been more clearly defined.

The line of conduct is very clear, it is up to each one of us to be faithful to it.

Henri Caffarel

Having witnessed the development of the TEAMS OF OUR LADY in France and in the world, and being aware of the spiritual growth of its member couples, I welcome this opportunity of expressing my thoughts to the leadership of the Movement.

As bishop of the place where it was founded, and after having studied the statutes that were submitted to me, I have pleasure in informing the Leadership of the Movement that I approve them. They are the fruit of a long experience that has shown how much an administrative framework, that is both firm and flexible, can favour the growth of charity and the radiating influence of couples.

May all members remain faithful to the original inspiration and to the characteristics of the Movement: spirituality, supra-nationality and lay leadership.

1- The Teams of Our Lady are and must remain a movement of spiritual formation.

The reason for their existence is to help their members to discover the demands and the greatness of their vocation as baptised Christians and to help them, by the statutes and structure of the Movement, to “strive towards the perfection of the Christian life in the context of their married and family life”, according to the words used by Pope John XXIII last May in his address to the thousand pilgrim-couples of the Movement.

Being a 'school of perfection', the Teams of Our Lady are not to be classified among movements of Catholic Action, nor among family movements. They must rightly have the ambition of being a breeding ground of militants who, in accordance with the individual vocation of each member, will take part in large numbers in the life of Catholic Action and in the good works approved by the hierarchy. They will involve themselves in their worldly occupations anxious to be Christian witnesses and to establish a social order that is in conformity with the teaching of the Church.

2 – Their objective of spiritual formation justifies the ideal of supra-nationality of the Teams of Our Lady. There are no frontiers to the spiritual life and this great spiritual and supra-national fraternity of couples in a unique movement, established in more than twenty countries, is a valuable witness within Christianity as well as a great hope.

If this supra-nationality is not to be an illusion and is to remain at the level of the charity of Christ, there is need of both strong leadership and of a loyal spirit of discipline from leaders and members of the Teams, otherwise the movement would be weak in the face of the temptation that threatens all spiritual groups, to turn to active involvements. To yield to this temptation would be, for the Teams of Our Lady, a denial of the reason for their existence.

3 – It is fortunate that leadership at all levels is provided by lay people.

This is truly in keeping with the promotion of the laity, so strongly favoured by the Holy See for the past thirty years. The priest who, according to the statutes, helps the Sector Couple, has the mission both to give spiritual animation and counsel to the couples and to provide a link with the bishop of the diocese.

In view of the doctrinal and spiritual responsibility implied in its role, the International Leading Team has, as its leader, a priest appointed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris. This role has up to now been exercised by Father Caffarel, founder of the Teams of Our Lady. The approval that We grant to the Statutes provides Us with the opportunity to confirm Father Caffarel in his role and to confirm Our total approval of the spiritual and doctrinal contribution that he makes to the Teams of Our Lady, as well as for the wisdom with which he and his collaborators lead them in a spirit of absolute submission and faithfulness to the Bishops and to the Holy See which has never failed.

Approval given in Paris, on the 25th of March 1960

Signed : Maurice Cardinal FELTIN  
Archbishop of Paris