

ERI Letter – Spring 2016

What a wonderful example of Christian faith we have in Pope Francis. He lives, as far as is possible, a simple life in tune with the lives of ordinary people, and he communicates God's message using everyday language that everyone, Christian or not, can understand. In the three short years since he was elected, he has visited Catholics across the world and stepped out in trust to all Christians and peoples of other religions.

As teams members we should aim to emulate the Pope's wonderful missionary example. Father Caffarel (echoing the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*) encourages us to "discern the signs of the times" that at the present moment give us little to gladden our hearts. We may feel that there is little we can do as individuals, but we can use the practice of the endeavours, particularly prayer and the rule of life, to reach out to those who do not understand the blessing of married spirituality or have no hope due to the present state of the world.

The Charter requires us to be "missionaries of Christ everywhere". This instruction was reinforced by Pope Francis in his address to the regional couples in Rome 2015 when he said "...I wish, indeed, insist, on this missionary role of Teams of Our Lady." We can all aspire to do this in our homes, our workplaces and among all those we meet. We can now however, reach further afield. Modern media allows us to make contact with people in other countries and continents so that we can give support and advice and join our prayers to theirs. As Liaison Couple for the Eurasia zone, we rely heavily on email, Facebook and Skype to remain in contact with our team members. We can offer prayers for the return of normal weather patterns on Malawi, rejoice in the Mardi Gras celebrations in Trinidad and offer advice and encouragement to our members in India who face difficulties as a minority religion in that country.

As missionaries of Christ, our zone is working to introduce Teams of Our Lady to two distant countries that are not yet part of our movement. As we write, plans are being made to expand into Ghana and Timor Leste. Robert and Mary Jones and their spiritual counsellor, who live in England, have been working with a monastery in Ghana prior to travelling there to bring the good news of Teams of Our Lady to nearby parishes. In Australia, Bren and Sue Milsom are working with the Timorese ex pat community in Darwin as a springboard for a visit to Timor Leste. Other zones have their own missionary projects. All of these are funded by the annual contributions made by team members from across the world. In this way, each one of you is being a missionary for Christ and for Teams of Our Lady. We thank you for your generosity and ask you to pray for the success of these projects and for those team members who are stepping out into the deep (Luke 5; 4) in emulation of Pope Francis.

Helena and Paul McCloskey
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