



Teams of Our Lady

Satellite Team - Training

**TRAINING IN THE
TEAMS OF OUR LADY
A PATH**

NOVEMBER 2008

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INTRODUCTION

Being conscious of the necessity of training for the team members of the whole world, this document has been developed with the aim of helping help the responsible couples of Super-Regions and Regions to perform their responsibility. It also seeks to strengthen the unity and the identity of the Teams of Our Lady.

A common core of the essential elements of training, which could compose the common inheritance of all the Teams, is proposed in this document. It should constitute a useful benchmark to reflect on the initiatives of formation, as well as an encouragement to improve it.

This document neither wants to impose common standards on the team-members across the whole world nor to bring them all onto a single common path. Each Super-Region or Region directly attached to the ERI could carry out its own common core, adapting it to the local needs.

The structure of this document includes three main parts:

1. Necessity and importance of training
2. Objectives, manner and characteristics of training
3. Analytical description of the different types of training.

1. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING IN THE TEAMS OF OUR LADY

“The Christian marriage is a way of love, happiness and holiness”, (Love, Happiness and Holiness, Father Olivier).

Training in the Teams of Our Lady seeks to follow the breath of the Holy Spirit and to offer the couples a method that will help them to grow in their spiritual life, to form them in conformity with the image of Christ.

The couples of the Teams of Our Lady also have the responsibility to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ to the couples of the whole world, in order to help them in their path towards holiness.

In order to appropriately fulfil this mission, the couples should be well prepared by receiving a solid and ongoing training. In this way, they could transmit their experience to other couples.

The Teams of Our Lady are conscious of the receipt of a particular charism to progress in couple towards holiness. They are committed to offer the riches of this gift to the couples who so desire.

“Training” aims at initiating this process of transmission-testimony of the charism.

1. 1. A SUPPORTING TRAINING

Training in the Teams of Our Lady should provide an answer to the couples who wish to deepen their faith and continue along the way of holiness of married couples.

The Teams of Our Lady should answer the following needs:

- **FAITH and LIFE:** Deepening the life of faith and the topics concerning the life of the couple, the family, the Church and society.
- **Teams METHOD:** Knowledge and thorough application of the Teams methods.
- **SERVICE:** Call, support and training of couples and teams of service who carry out the Services necessary for the life of the Movement.

Our founder, Father Caffarel, said frequently: *“The key is to go to meet Christ. The aim of the Teams of Our Lady is to know God better, to serve Him better and to love Him”.*

The first instrument of training is the Holy Spirit, and all couples who receive it offer an important contribution to the enrichment of other couples according to their charism and their vocation.

The whole life of the team in all its various aspects, the practical application of the Endeavours and the instances of Community meeting, are occasions of training for the couple. They constitute a school to follow Christ.¹

For all these reasons it is undesirable to propose an academic teaching received from outside, cold and detached from the actual life of the teams.

On the contrary, training should rather help and support the couples on their path of Conjugal Spirituality, by means of the methods proposed by the Movement Teams of Our Lady.

2. OBJECTIVES AND STYLE OF TRAINING

2. 1. COMMON THREAD

« As a spiritual movement, its only objective is to help its members to deepen their spirituality as married couples, to enable them to find the path to holiness and conversion within small communities of Church».²

¹ Teams of Our Lady., «The Second Wind », Lourdes 1988: «Discover the Lord's presence within the married couple and live in fraternal charity with other couples: this is what the Teams of Our Lady proposes, this is how they want to give thanks to God and bear witness in the World».

² ERI, *Positions of Responsibility in the Teams of Our Lady*, May 1993.

The organization of ongoing - training should meet a certain consistency and take into account the continuity and the gradualism that exist in the life of the couples and the teams.

The common thread of training in the Teams of Our Lady is an axis that links all types of training. This common thread should ensure couples the possibility to deepen their Conjugal Spirituality in a coherent, permanent and progressive way on their path to holiness.

It is possible to distinguish two levels of ongoing training:

- **GENERAL LEVEL: Support to deepen in faith** – This level is common to all, men and women: **the vocation to love**. The vocation of the Christian couple is a call to live their conjugal love in faith, hope and charity.
- **SPECIFIC LEVEL in the Teams of Our Lady**: It refers to team life:
 - o **To progress the application of the Teams method.**
 - o **To cultivate the spirit of Service within the Movement.**

These two levels join in a path of holiness for the person and the couple.

2. 2. OBJECTIVES

The Movement of the Teams of Our Lady offers a general and specific support to the couples who wish to follow this path towards holiness. The objectives to be pursued are:

A. GENERAL LEVEL: TO HELP TO LOOK FURTHER INTO THE LIFE OF FAITH

The training activity of the Teams of Our Lady will help the spouses to deepen their life of faith as a couple, leading them to the encounter with Christ, particularly to:

- Listen, contemplate and pray together the WORD, to live fully the richness of the Sacraments, and especially the Sacrament of Marriage.
- With the help of the Holy Spirit to discern the signs of the times, to seek to live the GOSPEL, and to be forever in communion with the Church.
- Participate actively as a couple in the life of the CHURCH and to act in an open and dynamic manner in the world.

B. SPECIFIC LEVEL

B.1. TO PROGRESS IN THE PRACTICE OF THE TEAMS METHOD

The training activity of Teams will help the couple particularly to:

- Discover and live the charism of the Teams, emphasizing its mystique and mission.
- Understand the importance of commitment as a couple.
- Look deeper into the various aspects of its principles, discovering its riches.
- Be open-minded in personal relationships and share the way of following Christ with other couples in the team and the Movement, offering and accepting mutual help

with simplicity and humbleness.

B.2. TO CULTIVATE THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE IN THE MOVEMENT

In all phases of training, it is necessary to cultivate the spirit of service, first expression of love, in its various forms to:

- Encourage each couple to contribute in an active and creative way to the life of the Church, according to their specific qualities. That also means learning to be available to serve the Teams. And beyond that service, team members should discover that everything they have received from the Movement should be placed at the service of the Universal Church.
- Journey in a very special way with those couples called to carry out the necessary services to the Movement, in other words, by helping them to understand the value of this service and supporting them in its implementation.

2. 3. STYLE OF TRAINING

« *The Teams of Our Lady is a school of formation for married couples. It aims not only at deepening the knowledge of our faith, but at cultivating human and Christian understanding, by using reason and heart in seeking a closer coherence between faith and life* ». (The Second Wind, 1988)

Training refers to the documents of the Teams of Our Lady and to the documents of the CHURCH. It is committed to clearly relating these documents to their common origin, namely to the Word of God.

Training in the Teams of Our Lady is not only a training « *ad intra* » remaining inside the couple that receives it, but also a training « *ad extra* », oriented to the charity that spreads out from the couple and contributes to sharing and mutual help (material and spiritual).

Training in the Teams of Our Lady should be ongoing because it supports the couples during the different stages of their lives.

The characteristics of this training are as follows:

A. A TRAINING EMBODIED IN REALITY

This training should challenge and help each one of us to understand God's will in relation to the couple and their family.³ This will not be possible with a simple transmission of ideas. It is necessary to show through testimony and teaching how the vocation to love is embodied in the reality of the couples own lives.

³ END, «*The Second Wind*», Lourdes 1988: « This training represents a challenge to us, helps us to interpret God's intention for our family and invites us to adjust our married, family and professional life based on the values of the Gospel to understand the Christian meaning of the labour of men and women in God's plan ».

All instances of training (days, sessions and gatherings) should take as a model the team meeting, by creating a powerful environment of prayer and sharing.

B. A FLEXIBLE AND GRADUAL TRAINING

The training should be adaptable to:

- The various stages of married life.
- The different educational levels.
- The different cultures and ways of expressing faith.

Training should be gradual and patient. It should respect the time necessary for each couple to progress on their path without losing its essence.

C. A TRAINING BASED ON EXPERIENCE

It is a training model based on « experience – in life ».

In this training, priority is always given to the interpersonal relationship, without forgetting the communication of knowledge. It is necessary to forget the image of the «teacher-trainer», who organizes a series of activities with groups.

This training is based on the dynamics of the team meeting, during which the members not only share their knowledge but also their experiences. Therefore, training is a place of renewal of spiritual life. The team goes through different stages of spiritual growth and adequate assistance should be provided for each one of these stages.

Witnesses are needed rather than teachers. This training is based on the personal testimony of those who train and support. They do not communicate content outside of their own family life. The couples transform themselves into guides for other couples, by giving authentic testimony to the way they live their vocation in everyday life.

D. AN INTERNATIONAL TRAINING

The Movement is international and based on a perspective of communion. For this reason, it proposes guidelines and major points for reflection. The purpose of these points is to help the couples to live fully the methods and the spirit of the Charter in a dynamic, charitable and faithful way, always focusing on the Unity of the Movement.

It is necessary to avoid any radicalism which would tend to standardize, dilute and even eliminate the characteristics of each culture. Furthermore, it is necessary to avoid excessive diversification which would isolate and separate teams from the rest of the Movement, making them strangers to each other, risking factional impoverishment and disunity.

3. TYPES OF TRAINING

« *The Teams of Our Lady offer to the married couples a path that gives them the appropriate means to achieve a genuine encounter with the Lord at every stage of their life and to commit themselves to follow Him* » (*The Second Wind*, 1988).

It is for this reason that the Movement should promote training and support for each married couple to discover and develop their own vocation.

It is possible to consider three categories of training:

- **INITIAL Training:** « initiation into the life » of Teams.
- **ONGOING Training:** « team life ».
- **SPECIFIC Training:** for Responsible Couples.

Continuity between **Initial** Training and **Ongoing** Training should be ensured, because they follow each other in time.

Specific Training applies to a limited number of people, depending on the services they provide.

3. 1. INITIAL TRAINING

* **General Principles**

Initial Training, as previously seen, is based on testimony. It aims at transmitting the Project of the Movement, namely a deepening of the sense of the Sacrament of Marriage through mutual help in the team. It presents a path of love, happiness and holiness.

The Initial Training should always include the most important principles and objectives of the Teams method, essential for the unity of the Movement.

The techniques used, the method employed and the documents utilized should be adapted to each place, culture and to the local historical circumstances that are in perpetual evolution.

The concern of loyalty to the Founding Charism, to the Mystique and to the Methods of Teams is, however, fundamental particularly when starting up new teams.

Finally it is necessary to take care to thoroughly integrate new teams into the Movement and the Church.

The main **objectives** of this training are:

- To form couples in the Teams method and help them to follow its principles.
- To support couples on their path in the Sacrament of Marriage, by the experience of living in a small community: the team.

Although Expansion and Information are fundamental activities in the Teams, they should not be regarded as types of training, but as essential activities prior to Piloting. The training of Information Couples will be treated in the chapter on Specific Training.

* Types of Training.

- **PILOTING.**
- **NEW TEAMS GATHERING.**

* Objectives of each type of Training

1. PILOTING

This stage of training is fundamental and essential. This is the initiation period of life as a team. It aims at conveying to the couples and the Spiritual Counsellor a basic knowledge about life in Teams, its method and its organization, with the help of a Pilot Couple.

The specific objectives of Piloting are:

- To permit the deepening of the Sacrament of Marriage and love in the couple.
- To convey and promote the experience of the Teams method.
- To practise community life in the team through fraternal welcome, praying together, general sharing and mutual help.
- To encourage the integration of each team into the Movement.

The pace and duration of Piloting vary according to the degree of knowledge and adaptability of the couples to the proposals of the Movement regarding its charism and methods.

Piloting should last between one or two years. If, during the piloting, the Pilot Couple considers that it is necessary to improve the catechetical knowledge of the couples, it must submit a proposal to the Sector to allow an extension of the Piloting period in order to enable the study of a topic which helps the team in this sense. In any case, the Pilot Couple must support the team until the end of Piloting.

The Super-Regions have at their disposal documents such as «The Pilot Couple», as well as «Piloting Cards» recently approved by the ERI. These documents contain the subjects that must be covered during the period of Piloting and which will be used according to the specific needs of each Super-Region.

Piloting of teams must be supported at Sector level, but each Region should be continuously informed about the ongoing progress of the groups being piloted. It is indeed an essential phase for the future life of the teams and their integration into the Movement.

« Specific training in married spirituality and the fundamental methods of Teams is carried out with the support of a Pilot Couple. It is important that Piloting follows a basic pattern common to the whole Movement, to ensure that the Teams of Our Lady, as a supranational Movement, develop on the same basis » (The Second Wind, 1988).

2. NEW TEAMS GATHERING

This gathering is mainly aimed at couples whose teams are near the end of Piloting or have just finished it. During a weekend, couples will have the opportunity to clarify all aspects of the Teams method, discovering at the same time a more complete vision of the

Movement. The participation is opportune, necessary and advisable.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To enable an encounter with the Lord, in couple and team.
- To promote gatherings with other teams.
- To review completely the methodology of the Movement in a stimulating way.
- To celebrate the commitment in the couple and the team.
- To celebrate joyfully the welcome and integration of the teams into the Movement.

These gatherings should be attended by approximately 30 couples. They are guided by a team of trainers chosen due to their adequate profile for this type of training.

This kind of meeting, which marks the end of Piloting of the teams, already exists in many Super-Regions showing very positive results.

« What has been learned and assimilated could be consolidated by a training session after Piloting with couples of different teams » (The Second Wind, 1988).

3. 2. ONGOING TRAINING

* General Principles

Ongoing training is aimed at progressing and supporting the Teams couples on their path to holiness during the various stages of their lives.

This training is carried out in these three fundamental ways:

- A)** As a path to holiness as a couple in everyday life.
- B)** Through team life and mutual help within the team.
- C)** By training sessions and gatherings at Sector, Region, Super-Region or International level.

A) Marriage is the masterpiece of God, with a single essence, which is love. In order to live faithfully as a couple, it is necessary to have the help of the Lord.

It is important and essential to encourage the spirituality of the couple, through daily mutual conjugal help, conjugal prayer, the sit-down, the annual retreat and the sacramental life.

Thus in marriage, husband and wife help each other mutually and grow together, by making the best of the differences and complementary characteristics of the couple.

B) Team life is formative in itself. The couples and the Spiritual Counsellor share their path and form each other in their own team. The most significant instances of this spiritual formation are the retreat, the study topic, the sharing and the communal prayer.

The spiritual retreat is an encounter as a couple and an encounter of the couple with the Lord. The retreat offers an opportunity for the couples to get away from the normal rhythm of an overloaded and restless life for two or three days in order to reflect, draw

breath and rebuild strength. It is an oasis in the desert, where one can drink the fresh water of the Spirit.

It is important to choose the study topic in collegiality because it should match the particular situation of the couples. It should help them to deal with the specific circumstances of their lives. The right choice will allow team members to broaden their horizon into the dimension of the Movement, the Church and the world where everyone is called for service.

Sharing itself has also an important value in training because it provides an opportunity to check the path of each couple and to share in the team difficulties and the progress already achieved. It is the moment when one better understands the role of the Endeavours, in the light of common experience.

Finally prayer represents a training experience “par excellence” because, in the encounter with God, in His truth, the person surrenders to His action and becomes profoundly transformed. The team meeting should be a small school of prayer: one should therefore pay great attention in order for the prayer to be sincere, spontaneous and simple.

C) The Training Sessions and Gatherings organized by the Sectors, Regions, Provinces and Super-Regions constitute instances of training. During these sessions / gatherings, the training is not confined to academic talks. In fact, the talks given by specialists are inserted into a context of general reflection, prayer, testimonies and exchange of experiences. It is sometimes an opportunity to deepen the various aspects of the method, or to introduce useful elements for a better knowledge of the heritage of faith and of the current world. Thus, the couples are helped in their understanding of the path to which God calls them.

As far as possible, it is important that these gatherings keep to the structure of the team meeting with moments of communal prayer, listening to a testimony or a talk and a moment when the couples exchange ideas on a subject, in the light of their experience. Thus, the knowledge among the couples of different teams is facilitated. In addition it facilitates the exchange of ideas and experiences. In organizing such gatherings, it is desirable to call to service a maximum number of team members in order to make them conscious that service is necessary, normal and beautiful.

In support of these three fundamental ways to conduct training there exist several means that help the couples in the flow and the exchange of ideas and experiences:

- Teams Newsletter.
- Web site.
- Study topic.
- Teams Documents
- Orientations of the Movement
- Schools of Prayer, etc.

Especially, it should not be forgotten that the experience obtained from personal meetings and direct exchange of testimonies are the ones that educate profoundly.

The development of projects of activities for the following year by the teams of the Super-Region, Region or Sector is a very important task. The methods that proved to be effective in the past should not be abandoned, but it is also very important to pay careful attention to « **the signs of the times** » in order to modify the program according to need, if

that proves to be useful for the couples.

It is a time to practise collegiality and pay attention to the significant and urgent needs of the couples on their path to holiness.

It is not sufficient « *To deepen our knowledge of our faith, but also to learn to exercise human and Christian discernment, using our hearts as well as our minds, in our search for a greater coherence between our faith and our life* » (The Second Wind, 1988).

Indeed, this understanding is fed by various sources which could help the teams to mature on their path.

The main **objectives** of ongoing training are:

- To deepen the liturgical, catechetical and missionary dimensions of the Christian vocation.
- To promote knowledge of the charism, the mysticism and the methods of the Teams, in order that teams couples might live their Sacrament of Marriage in a better way.
- To deepen the topics concerning life as a couple, the family, the Church and society, trying to discern the signs of the times, with the aid of the Holy Spirit.
- To encourage couples to take up their mission in the Movement and in the Church.

* **Types of Training**

The following list is only a reference to all the types of ongoing training actually existing. Each Super-Region or Region will develop those most suitable to their particular characteristics.

The main types are:

- **TRAINING SESSIONS:**
 - o Level 1 (Faith and Life)
 - o Level 2 (Vocation and Mission)
- **GATHERINGS FOR “NEW BREATH”**

* **Objectives of each type of Training**

1. TRAINING SESSIONS

These training sessions are intended for couples who already have some experience in the Church and the Movement. They offer the team couples an opportunity for deepening their Christian faith and improving their knowledge of the Teams Movement. These sessions should be regarded as fundamental and essential in the training of couples.

They can be divided into two levels, to allow progression in successive stages. That way seems to be more instructive and more effective.

1. a. - Level 1 (Faith and Life)

The catechetical and missionary aspects of the Christian vocation are treated in a general way. This is a basic evangelization which affects the history of Salvation. ***This means to be a Christian couple.***

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To reflect on communication with the Lord, as a couple and in the team.
- To deepen knowledge of the organization and the method of the Movement (Endeavours, Team Meeting, Sharing and Communal Mass).
- To exchange lived experiences as a couple and as a team for mutual enrichment.

1. b. - Level 2 (Vocation and Mission)

Having presented the foundation of Love and talked about God's plan (level 1), it is now time to talk about doctrine and pastoral service. ***This means to be a Movement and to be Church.***

The specific objectives are as follows:

- « To be Church »: To strengthen ties with the Church based on doctrine and service.
- To reflect on and deepen understanding of the fundamental ideas of the Movement, such as its charism, mysticism and structures.
- To deepen the sense of mission of Teams as communities of love, sharing and mutual help.
- To formulate and offer a perspective on the apostolic mission of a Christian couple in the Movement, in the Church and in the World

2. GATHERINGS FOR DEEPENING THE CHARISM AND THE METHODS

These gatherings are necessary and advisable, because they strongly contribute to training. They should permit the couples to deepen their faith and to share their life experiences as a couple and as a team.

These meetings should aim at training and could be organized at several levels (Sector, Region, Province and Super-Region). They aim to unite and motivate the couples, through instances of meaningful prayer, training and exchange of experiences.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To rediscover the essence of the methods proposed by Teams and to revitalize team life.
- To go back to the source by reflecting on the Charter, on the thoughts of Father Caffarel and on the document « The Second Wind ».
- To make the orientations of the Movement known in order to better follow and live them.
- To practice and celebrate collegiality and the unity of Teams.
- To deepen and understand the sense of the internationality of the Movement.

3.3. SPECIFIC TRAINING

* General Principles

The objective of this training is to prepare couples who have been called to serve the

Movement, either as responsible couples or as trainers. In order to be able to accomplish a mission or to assume responsibility, it is necessary to receive training. Each type of specific training is designed to accompany and support those couples called to service in the Movement.

There is specific formation for each service, all comprising three basic principles:

- **Responsibility of the couple:** These are couples who are called to service. They do their best using their qualities in order to be faithful to the mission received and to show creativity at the same time. Judgement, decisions and tangible actions are shared by the couple: these must be prepared and discussed during the "Sit down", in an atmosphere of listening and prayer.
- **Collegiality:** In all services, analysis of problems, understanding and decisions should not be entrusted to a leading couple but they must be shared in collegiality. A couple performing a service should not impose anything, but work to promote consensus among the team members.

It is necessary to consider collegiality in both horizontal and vertical directions. The decisions are taken with the service team (Sector, Region or Super-Region) but the most important and difficult subjects are approached fraternally, with higher levels of responsibility.

- **Period of Service:** A couple who performs a service should be aware that, once the service finishes, another couple will continue the same service. This couple will have a different sensitivity. The rotation of services ensures a more global vision and enables the Teams community to be enriched by the talents of each person.

The main **objectives** of this training are:

- To inform the couples in the Movement about the spirit of service and responsibility.
- To formulate and offer a perspective on the apostolic mission and evangelization for a couple in Teams.
- To provide the specific knowledge necessary to accomplish the tasks and to check the means of delivery, in order to preserve the spirit and the unity of the Movement.

This training should be offered at the beginning of the service, whenever possible.

However, participation with the service teams (Sector, Region, Province and Super-Region) should be an opportunity of training. Nevertheless, one should avoid these teams becoming a mere vehicle for information exchange or a pure formality.

* **Types of Training**

The following list is only a reference to all types of training that could be done in this field. Each Super-Region or Region will develop those which seem the most suitable to their particular characteristics.

The main types are:

TRAINING OF INITIATION AND LIAISON COUPLES

- Training Sessions for Information Couples
- Training Sessions / Gatherings for Pilot Couples
- Training Sessions for Liaison Couples

TRAINING OF RESPONSIBLE COUPLES

- Training Sessions for Responsible Couples in a Team
- Training Sessions for Sector Couples
- Training Sessions for Regional Couples

INFORMATION FOR SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS AND TEMPORARY GUIDES

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

– Preparation Sessions for the Teams of Trainers for:

- Training of Pilot Couples
- New Teams Gathering
- Training for Levels 1 and 2

- Preparation sessions for the Teams of Couples on Mission in Teams.

*** Objectives of each type of Training**

1. TRAINING OF INITIATION AND LIAISON COUPLES

These types of training must be received before the beginning of the service:

1. a. Training Sessions for Information Couples

It is necessary and advisable to prepare the Information Couples sufficiently. Indeed, during the information meeting, being the first contact for the new couples, they will reflect the image and the spirit of the Movement.

This training should be offered at Sector or Region level, so that it can be adapted more easily.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To present the general concepts of the principles of Information, Dissemination and Expansion of the Movement.
- To present and discuss the contents of an Information Meeting.

There is a document approved by the ERI available, « The Information Couple ».

1. b. Training Sessions / Gatherings for Pilot Couples

Piloting of a team is one of the most important and satisfactory missions that the Movement can confer on a couple. Indeed, this couple will help a team of couples to start a life in community and to practise the method of the Teams. Thanks to this Piloting, the team will be able to discover that marriage is a path of love, happiness and holiness.

The Training Session is intended to suitably prepare future Pilot Couples for their mission and is therefore fundamental and essential.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To reflect on the vocation and the role of the Pilot Couple.
- To present the general concepts of the principles and organization of Piloting.
- To reflect on and assimilate the fundamental concepts of Information, Piloting and Liaison in the Movement.

Gatherings of Pilot Couples who are already on service should be organized from time to time at Super-Region or Province level. These seek to unite the couples through meaningful instances of prayer, exchange of experiences and by specific training concerning the tasks they have to carry out.

It is a way of supporting the Pilot Couples in their particular activities, while conveying to them the most important elements of Piloting. At the same time, the Super-Region will receive information from the Pilot Couples on how they live their service and the main difficulties they find.

There is a document approved by the ERI available, « The Pilot Couple ».

1. c. Training Sessions for Liaison Couples

Liaison is the most worthy, the most apostolic, the most evangelizing and the most important task to develop communion between couples and to form communities. This is the means by which the Movement becomes a « Team of Teams ».

Liaison is essential for forming a spirit of community and unity, to give a sense of belonging to the Movement and fidelity to its objectives and founding charism.

Among all the liaisons existing in the Movement, the most important and fundamental is the one between the Sector and the teams.

For that reason, the formation of Liaison Couples in the Sectors is fundamental and essential for the good performance of the teams.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To provide and discuss a set of concepts on the principles of Liaison.
- To reflect on the vocation and the role of the Liaison Couple.
- To detail and discuss the responsibilities and tasks of the Liaison Couple.

There is a document approved by the ERI available, « The Liaison Couple ».

2. TRAINING OF RESPONSIBLE COUPLES

2. a. Training Sessions for Responsible Couples in a Team

This training is fundamental and essential and should be done at Sector level, during the meetings at the beginning and at the end of the period, where the Liaison Couples who comprise the Sector Team are present, and the Responsible Couples of each Team are invited.

At the beginning of the period, both the importance of the task of the Responsible Couple in guiding each team's performance and the need for Liaison with the Sector should be stressed. The teams feel linked with the Movement through the Liaison Couples. The Liaison Couple should establish personal contact with the Responsible Couples of the Teams they link. They should communicate Sector information and the schedule of activities during the period.

In another meeting at the end of the period, an assessment of the teams and the activities of the Sector will be evaluated.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To encourage Liaison between the teams (Responsible Couple) and the Sector (Liaison Couple).
- To emphasize mutual understanding between the Liaison Couple and the Responsible Couples of the teams they link.
- To detail and discuss the responsibilities and tasks of the Responsible Couple in a Team.

The Super-Regions or the Provinces could organize Gatherings of Team Responsible Couples, where the training component should be considerable. These gatherings seek to encourage the Responsible Couples of a Team, by meaningful instances of prayer, exchange of experiences and specific training concerning the tasks they have to carry out. These also represent an opportunity to convey the main orientations of the Movement to the team members, through their respective Responsible Couples.

There is a document approved by the ERI available, « The Team Responsible Couple».

2. b. Training Sessions for Sector Couples

The Sector is a community of teams. More than a mere administrative structure, it consists of couples who put their talents and their gifts at the service of the Movement.

The Sector is the first level of a larger community, the Teams of Our Lady. It is central to organization and animation. The main role of the Sector is to ensure that Liaison between the teams is performed correctly and to encourage their contact with the Movement.

This training must be carried out at Super-Region or Province level. It is fundamental and essential for the proper performance of the Sector and its teams.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To reflect on the call to service and on the performance of responsibility.
- To detail and establish the role and tasks of the Sector Couple.

- To make the Sector Couples aware of the need and importance of animation and Liaison of the teams, as well as the Dissemination and Expansion of the Movement.
- To make known the main orientations of the Movement.

It could be useful to organize training gatherings from time to time for the Sectors, at Super-Region or Province level.

These gatherings seek to reveal the importance of animation, Liaison, training and Dissemination in the proper functioning of the Sector and its teams, through meaningful instances of prayer, training and exchange of ideas and experiences with other couples of the Sector Teams of other Regions.

It is also an opportunity to reflect and share on the way that collegiality and the exercise of responsibility should be lived out, and to convey the orientations of the Movement.

There is a document approved by the ERI available, « The Sector Couple ».

2. c. Training Sessions for Regional Couples

A Region consists of several Sectors, normally geographically close to each other. Its role is mutual help and coordination. It is a place of communion with and communication between its Sectors.

The Region is the first level of responsibility where the importance of the Movement is felt and understood, its internationality and the need for loyalty to the founding charism of Teams.

The training of Regional Couples is fundamental and essential. It should be carried out at international level (International Formation Gathering or Formation by Zones, led by the Zone Couple and by the Super Regional Couples).

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To reflect on the call to service and on the performance of responsibility.
- To detail and establish the role and the tasks of the Regional Couple.
- To establish that the Region is a place of communion with and communication between the Sectors and sharing on this topic.
- To make known the main orientations of the Movement

There is a document approved by the ERI available, « the Regional Couple ».

3. INFORMATION FOR SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS AND TEMPORARY GUIDES

It is fundamental and essential to offer specific information about the Teams of Our Lady to the new Spiritual Counsellors, before their entry in the Movement.

It is very difficult to gather together several Spiritual Counsellors for an Information Session because the teams do not begin their Piloting at the same time. It is therefore desirable that the Sector Couple or the Pilot Couple meet the Spiritual Counsellor who will support a new team.

At this meeting, the Pilot Couple will explain the charism, the method and the organization of the Movement. The Spiritual Counsellors could then help the couples to live

fully their Sacrament of Marriage. The Pilot Couple should therefore define very clearly the role of the Spiritual Counsellor in the team and indicate their specific tasks, mainly regarding the preparation and contribution to the team meeting.

The document « The Priest – Spiritual Counsellor », approved by the ERI, should be handed over at this meeting.

The possibility also exists to organize days of reflection and exchange of ideas for the Spiritual Counsellors. At these they could exchange their team experiences among themselves and with Couples in senior roles of responsibility within the Movement. They would also become aware of the objectives and the current orientations of the Movement.

4. TRAINING OF TRAINERS

The Movement needs to have well prepared training couples to impart their knowledge and experience in these main types of training. These training couples may eventually need general training on the Movement in addition to specific training on the topics that they will need to address.

The couples and the Spiritual Counsellor who will guide the training of trainers should have considerable experience of the Movement and a very good knowledge of the topics to be covered. In many cases, this task is carried out by the Super-Regional Team.

It is therefore necessary and advisable that teams of trainers (two or three couples and a Spiritual Counsellor) are established for a period of up to three years. In fact, it is necessary for them to take time to create a strong team spirit among themselves.

The training of the Sector Couples should be given by the Super Regional Team, and the training of the Regional Couples should be given at International level. The training of training couples for these two levels of responsibility was not considered necessary to be covered in this document.

Only those regarded as the most important have been covered.

4. a. Preparation Sessions for the Teams of Trainers for:

- **Training of Pilot Couples**
- **New Teams Gathering**
- **Training of Levels 1 and 2**

4. b. Preparation Sessions for the Teams of Couples on Mission in Teams

The trainers should receive a similar training to other teams of trainers. But the Teams of Couples on Mission inside the Movement should be prepared to conduct training, in or outside their Super Region and therefore have a very clear idea of the Internationality and Unity of the Movement.

These Teams of Couples on Mission could lead the training either on site or remotely, by using video, DVD, e-learning, etc. They should also rely on the document « Couples in Mission ».

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To reflect on and convey the concepts and tasks of training in mission.
- To communicate the importance of internationality, by emphasising the need to preserve unity and fidelity to the spirit of the Movement.

- To impart techniques of communication and group dynamics.
- To provide data for remote training.

4. TRAINING FOR THE SUPPORT OF ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE TEAMS OF OUR LADY

Teams couples must be prepared to participate in apostolic activities outside the Movement.

In many Super-Regions, team members have an important role in Pastoral Care of the Family, in this way conveying the riches of conjugal spirituality to other couples.

« Today, it is necessary to start from a different reality, lack of basic Christian formation, which requires a catechesis of initiation in conjugal and community fields, in addition to proper religious training » (the Second Wind, Lourdes 1988).

Very often, it seems to be necessary to provide a catechesis of initiation to the couples before entering the Movement. This « pre-Piloting » is practised in some Super-Regions when the couples have no concept of community life, are not engaged in the Church and do not have a life of prayer.

These groups of couples are guided by coordinator couples belonging to Teams (they are called “Community Experiences” in Brazil and in Hispano-America; “Tandem Teams” in France and “Teams on the Way” in other Super-Regions).

In some Super-Regions, community experiences are provided along with Initial Training, and during their own activities within the Movement.

The specific objective of this pre-Piloting is to promote a basic catechesis and to give couples an opportunity to advance on their path of faith within small communities (groups of 8 to 12 couples).

Some movements originating from the Teams of Our Lady, require the help of team members to support their groups (youth of the Youth Teams of Our Lady; centres for Marriage preparation; divorced and re-married couples, etc).

It is very important that team members are available and well prepared by adequate and ongoing training, in order to help other movements, participate in Pastoral activities and in this way actively contribute to the enhancement of the Kingdom of God.

5. CONCLUSION

The objective of this document of training is to present the different types of training in the Movement in a clear and simple way.

It is easy to understand the importance of proper training in the spiritual life. This opens a path and allows us to appreciate the wealth that we discover in the Sacrament of Marriage and in community life. The « **treasures** » discovered in this way encourage couples to give testimony and to put themselves at the service of the Movement.

A fundamental precondition for truly loving the Movement is to know it better.

Among the various types of training presented, some are defined as « fundamental and essential », while others are « necessary and advisable ». It is not always possible to offer the latter ones in certain Regions and Super-Regions.

Each Super-Region could design its own types of training according to its means and particular characteristics. Sharing a rich heritage on training does not imply that everyone must develop it in the same way. Internationality and collegiality should be present in this dynamic path of training.

This training plan follows a common thread which permits continuity in supporting the couples, ensuring their formation in faith and spiritual life, while educating them and deepening their knowledge of the Teams method and by offering them training for service. It is a path similar to that of the couples in their teams.

And finally, let us take the words of the founder of our Movement, Father Caffarel, who in 1959 raised the question as follows:

« Let us see, are the Teams of Our Lady a movement of initiation to the spirituality of marriage and family? So that, if it is a movement of initiation, do its members leave it once they are already initiated, like a child who does not remain in kindergarten all his life? And indeed, we sense the danger for the Teams of Our Lady to become “adult nurseries”. Or is our Movement a movement of perfection? The answer at that time at the Teams of Our Lady gathering in Rome was that the teams should of necessity be at the same time a movement of initiation and a movement of perfection. A movement of initiation is more straightforward than a movement of perfection, since the latter requires rules to allow those who are part of it to progress on the path. »

This document on training integrates the two main stages, **initiation and perfection**, which are part of the life of the Teams of Our Lady: « Thus just as it is necessary to start from the beginning, it is also necessary to help those who want to go further ». ⁴

⁴ Cf. H. CAFFAREL, “*The Constituent Charism*”, 1987.