

**INTERNATIONAL LEADING TEAM
BRASILIA LETTER
TO THE TEAM MEMBERS OF THE WORLD**

Dear Team Members and Spiritual Counsellors:

Following the Gathering in Brasilia, the first to be held outside Europe, and in the spirit of the internationality of our Movement, we are sending this letter to all of you, Members of the Teams of Our Lady.

For those who were in Brasilia and were fortunate enough to participate and live the great Celebration of our Movement, we are certain that this profound experience will lead you to **“DARE TO LIVE THE GOSPEL”**.

For those that could not be present, the International Leading Team (ERI) would like you to hear this voice that resonates in all our hearts, and by the power of *Love* you make *"flow streams of living water"* (Jn 7:38) in this world that boldly asks us *"to go and do likewise"*.

At the end of this International Gathering in Brasilia, which was a time of immense happiness, we want to share with each of you some reflections that come to mind, so that they become an inspiration for the next stage, in which we want to move forward in obedience and faithfulness to the Lord, with the rhythm and feeling of the heart of the Church. We know that it is in obedience that we live freedom, and in fidelity that we live love, because fidelity is the victory of love over time, transforming us into proclaimers of freedom.

«On the last day, the great day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out: “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink!” As the scripture says, “From his heart shall flow streams of living water.” He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive» (Jn 7: 37-39a)

This text from the Gospel invites us to contemplate the mystery of Christ, as the **source** from which we must always draw water to quench our thirst for the peace and happiness that we all desire, but that cannot be achieved solely through our own efforts.

The general orientation **“DARE TO LIVE THE GOSPEL”** is a challenge that will lead us to be:

I. Couples immersed in Christ’s love

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink!”

(Jn 7:7b-38a)

1. Return to the source

In the coming years, as Teams couples, we are invited to renew this effort to return to the origins, to the mystery of Christ and of the Church. It is in this great love that we find our reason for being.

This invitation to the couples of the Teams of Our Lady to return to the source must be achieved in faithfulness to the *Founding Charter* (1947), by revisiting the inspiring texts about the charism, mystique and pedagogy of our movement – based on three fundamental pillars: Life Orientations, Endeavours and Team Life – and, more recently, on a desire for creative fidelity, so well expressed in the *Second Wind*.

We are all mobilized for this journey to return to the origins, so that living conjugal spirituality, the axis of our life, is always more fruitful in these times of great change in today's world, changes that are a challenge. So we have to Dare to live the Gospel in fidelity and in consistency of Faith "*embracing the values and needs to the extent that they can be assimilated and always linked to the Founding Charism*" (Father Caffarel – Chantilly speech; May 1987).

Based on a conjugal and family spirituality, we can move towards a deeper rediscovery of the *sense of faith*, which in Pope Benedict's words means, an adherence to God, whose love we recognize in the story of our lives, as individuals and as couples.

2. The relationship between man and woman – which in the Teams of Our Lady, is enlightened and strengthened by the *grace of the sacrament* – is lived *in and with the Lord*. It is important to accept the differences between the spouses, not only in their psychological and emotional complementarily, but also by taking into account the personal differentiation (sexual) inscribed in God's mind, who "created man in the image of himself, male and female he created them (Gen 1:27), as we read in Scripture: "*God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good*" (Gen 1:31).

In Christian marriage we celebrate the redemption of man and woman also with regard to the dynamics of their emotions and passions.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit and with the help of grace, it is possible to move from *a passionate love towards the dynamics of a self-giving love*.

For a Christian couple, the spouse is the nearest and main priority. Each spouse is continually called upon to be a "*good Samaritan*" to the other, basing their life on the other and serving the needs of the other, rather than spontaneously following one's own desires and individual projects for one's own enjoyment.

In any Christian state, especially in marriage, it is only possible to live holiness by following the logic of the cross, that is, self-giving love, and giving life to one another.

Our greatest challenge will be to live our married relationship – always driven by love and self-sacrifice – which must be a witness to couple and family life.

At Chantilly, Father Caffarel noted: "*Love and self-sacrifice are the two sides of the coin, no love without self-sacrifice, and a self-sacrifice which is not a self-sacrifice made out of love is a self-sacrifice which is impossible in practice*", because only a self-sacrificing and faithful love is genuine. And Father Caffarel continues: "*...conjugal life has very great riches but can also be very demanding*".

II. Couples: Welcome and care for mankind

“From His heart shall flow streams of living water” (Jn 7: 38b)

3. The Teams Movement, whilst remaining a *movement of spirituality*, should not only deepen conjugal spirituality, but also radiate it out to those problematic situations that many men and women face today and fail to solve. All its gifts and charisms are awakened and given by the Holy Spirit for the common good, for the promotion of unity, charity and holiness, in order to shine, as a visible sign to the world.

As Father Caffarel said, when addressing the Teams couples and recalling his meeting with Pope Paul VI (1968): *"I am fully convinced that you immediately understand that you are not only the recipients, but rather the messengers to those thousands of couples... that the Pope asked us to keep present in our thoughts"*.

4. As living communities, Teams should be a Movement that gives reasons for hope to the new generations so that they are not afraid to take the risk of celebrating their love *in the Lord* (1 Cor 7). Marriage is a *grace* and a *mission*.

In his editorial in the first issue of the Monthly Letter, entitled "The Success of Charity", Father Caffarel told us: *"Fraternal love is exceptionally fruitful. Around him and under his influence, evil retreats and the desert begins to bloom"*.

As far as fraternal love can lead us, there is an urgent need to help couples in difficulty, as well as those couples that have failed in love and sought a second chance. (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, numbers 80 a 85).

There is an urgent need to bear witness to everyone that the only word that makes sense is that of forgiveness. However complex the human situation, however hard the human heart, the heart of God is different, it is greater than ours (cf 1 Jn 3: 20).

Another important issue for all teams, although at different times, is the ageing of couples. The spirituality of the Movement should be a valuable aid for people and couples to grow old with dignity and live the grace and charism specific to each stage of life.

It is important that Teams couples are fruitful in the dissemination of a culture of presence and solidarity to all those going through serious difficulties. To be the oil of consolation, trying to live *charity in an inventive way*, by helping those who are in difficulty to live their lives to the spirit of the Gospel and the feeling of the Church as best they can.

III. Couples: Going out into the world each day to serve the Church

"Jesus was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive» (Jn 7, 39)

5. In this day and age, the Teams Movement should exhibit signs of hope, looking confidently at both the present and the future, because we know in whom we trust and that our lives are in God's hands; that our names, since baptism, are recorded in the Book of Life. The call to holiness as a couple, as the particular grace and charism of the Teams of Our Lady, should also be lived as a mission, requiring fidelity to the *Endeavours*, especially *conjugal prayer* and the *sit-down*.

Mission will be reflected in the readiness and openness to the feeling of the Church and its most immediate pastoral needs, such as the task of new evangelization for couples and families, the gospel of holiness lived out in the vocation and mission of the sacrament of marriage.

The Teams Movement should train and prepare couples to send them out on mission into the world, witnessing their vocation as Christian couples.

In this way, Teams couples will feel alive and active members of a large community, the Church, which transcends all borders, because it is made up of Christian couples from all continents, all races and cultures, who together compose and perform the divine symphony of love.

Conclusion

Illuminated by the light of this Gathering in Brasilia, we hope the movement increasingly grows in spiritual riches, strengthened by your energy and becoming bolder with your service.

We, the Teams of Our Lady will remain united and faithful to our Charism, but we will also remain open to the world and to the signs of the times, with a new ardour, new vigour, and new impetus.

Couples of the Teams of Our Lady, let us be beacons of hope in the Church and in today's world and let us be leaven to the new generations that believe in Life, by witnessing that the Sacrament of Marriage is a path of Love, Happiness and Holiness.

Let us entrust ourselves to Mary, our Mother, who will guide us to go and do the same as He did.

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