



Equipes Notre-Dame
Challenges on the Road

Tó & Zé Moura Soares



We all know that the exuberance of love, in which we experience strong emotions, gives us tremendous energy and leads us to accept a new path courageously and without any hesitation.

The International Gathering at Fatima in 2018 ought to be, for all Teams members, a high point of renewal and enthusiasm, not only for ourselves as couples, but also throughout the whole Movement.

We must not miss this opportunity to progress and respond to the challenges that the world throws at us and to the guidance that the Holy Father gave us when he received us during our Rome Gathering in September 2015.

The pace of our lives sometimes causes us to delay our progression.

Without a mature love that leads us to embark on a risky undertaking, it is not easy to move forward; nevertheless, those who love are capable of anything, overcoming obstacles beyond the horizon of the simple initial enthusiasm, accepting the potential difficulties that can be substantial and unmistakable.

We are aware of the obstacles that may emerge on our path, however, it is always necessary to remember our initial enthusiasm in order to experience the conversion that will bring us closer to Jesus.

When Jesus called the twelve apostles to Himself in order to send them out two by two, He gave them the power to resist evil and asked them to take nothing with them on the road, “... wear sandals, but not to take a second tunic.” (Mk 6:9)

Jesus calls us two by two and we trustfully allow ourselves to be led, and, through the gaze he casts upon us from afar, He calls to us so that we allow ourselves be drawn to Him.

Our path to Fatima will be the culmination of a long journey. It will enable us to put aside all that hinders us in order for it to become an opportunity to transform our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. Thus, we will be ready to receive the Lord's mercy.

In our couple and family life, we know full well how important the daily gaze of trust, that our spouse gives us, is.

Will we ourselves be able to do the same every day, to be full of tenderness, consistency and generosity towards those who wish to be present, but who cannot be, for economic, social or even spiritual reasons?

For those of us who can get to Fatima with modern transport, may we enjoy this journey with a profound sense of conversion.

We would like the steps along the way to be made in union with Mary, who is there at home in her house. She holds out her hand and helps us enter the Sanctuary.

"Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste." (Lk 1:39) Just like Mary, may we discover a new way of living, with tenderness and affection, and thus realise our vocation, our mission, with joy and readiness, so that we may daily recognise Jesus' presence in the world, and in our own story.

May she open our hearts and make us always mindful of our needs as a couple and of all those who suffer *"by going out to others in order to reach the peripheries of humanity... above all the poor and the sick."* (*Evangelii Gaudium*)

At Fatima with Mary, we can celebrate and exult in joy because she entrusts us to Jesus and he has "shown the power of His arm" and has accomplished marvels.