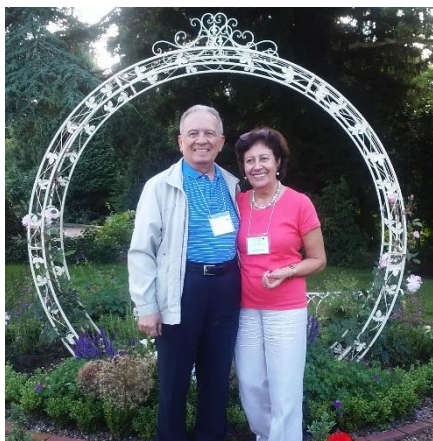


Equipes Notre-Dame

## The Joy of Meeting



“Even if the Holy Door closes, the true door of mercy which is the heart of Christ always remains open wide for us.” The Jubilee year of Mercy was a very special moment in the life of the Church. A new hope that awoke in our hearts propels us henceforth towards our brothers. **“Wonderful challenges open up before us,”** and that is every Christian’s mission.

Our mission as the Responsible Couple for the Central Europe Zone—a zone that looks like a puzzle—teaches us that **going beyond our differences will enable us to grow together tremendously.** During this current year, we visited

most of the Super-Regions and Regions attached to our Zone, as well as the isolated Sectors. These contacts underlie our commitment to be more attentive to their cultural specifics and to their traditions. Being welcomed in couples’ homes, praying together, tasting the dishes specific to the country and having exchanges with family members (parents and children) are incomparable experiences and sources of mutual joy. This was an exceptional opportunity that highlighted the cultural relevance of the charism and pedagogy of the Teams in different countries.

We arrived in Belgium on April 22nd to attend the national gathering on the theme of “Living and Experiencing the Gospel with Joy.” A welcoming and friendly evening at the Responsible Couple’s house with other Team members was a relief to us after the long hours spent waiting at Brussels’ airport, just a few days after the attack there. The Spiritual Counsellor and Responsible Couple ran a wonderful day for the 600 participants. The launching of Tandem Teams, in collaboration with the France-Luxembourg-Switzerland Super Region, brought new energy to the Belgium Super-Region’s activities.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, we went for the first time to Mauritius; a paradise on earth. Our wish to meet Team members from different ethnic groups came true thanks to the kindness of the Responsible Couple and Spiritual Counsellor, who organised for us to stay each night with one of the Responsible Couples of each of the 3 Sectors. The meetings with the Spiritual Counsellor, the Team members from the Sectors and the visit of Monsignor Piat, now Cardinal, were occasions for openness and sharing of experiences as Team members. The Mauritians are working on the expansion of the Movement in the Seychelles and the island of Rodrigues.

Another area that lends itself well to the expansion of the Teams is Eastern Europe. The new Super Region of Poland-Central Europe, created in September 2015 in Rome, is making progress. The 200 Teams of the 3 Regions benefit from a solid structure and a Team life that is coherent with the charism of the Movement. During our visit at the end of September 2016, we spent lovely moments with the Responsible Couple as well as with the Super Region Team and, in particular, with the Responsible Couple for Slovakia. Great efforts are being made to expand the Movement in Poland's neighbouring countries (Belarus, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Czech Republic and soon, Latvia). The Super Regional Responsible Couple exchanges visits with the other Super-Regions and Regions and are a further example of openness to internationality.



What is the news from Lithuania? In the past 2 years, the number of Teams has gone from 4 to 16. The Responsible Couple sees the solidarity between Team members as a lifesaver when it comes to the children's education, especially since they themselves have 6. The Team members have a constant worry: how to raise their children according to human and Christian values in a society that is adrift due to a lack of values.

November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> saw us pack our suitcases and head to Paris. The theme of the Gathering with the 3000 Responsible Couples from the France-Luxembourg-Switzerland Super Region was "Marriage, a path for mission, a path of joy." It was amazing! The Endeavours' workshops were very well attended and the talks were remarkably profound. We shared a time of personal prayer with Elisabeth Saléon-Terras, Father Caffarel's assistant, and it was a foretaste of heaven! The Super-Region breathes internationality and To and Zé's talk about "The International Dimension of the Teams of our Lady" consolidated this attitude.

With the same aim, of reinforcing the international character of the Movement, the International Leading Team (ERI) will meet in March 2017 in Munich.

The Teams Movement glimmers in the Middle East, whether in Beirut, Amman, Abu-Dhabi or Dubai: 20 Teams in total from Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar participated in training sessions organised by the Responsible Couple of the Lebanon Region.

As for the Teams in Syria, half the Team members have already left the country and the majority of the Teams have broken up. We hope to visit those who remain on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in Latakia.

Dear Team members, we give thanks to the Lord for the brothers and sisters that He has given us. We marvel at the diversity and beauty of God's family, to which you too belong and we look forward to meeting you again at the International Gathering in Fatima from July 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

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