

Years of Intense Brotherly Love

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Extracts from the Golden Ring, N°S 87-88.

May-Aug 1959 – A Thousand Couples in Rome

In the years between 1940 and 1945, friendship between the couples, stimulated by the joy of discovering things together, grew in the first group. In the grave atmosphere of the war years, they discovered more deeply the demands of Christ's love. In one form or another, hardship visited every home and the material deprivations were not the cruellest. The absence of fathers, death... In such circumstances, **the essence of charity is mutual help**, the material and moral aid brought to a brother in Christ to help them respond completely to God's wish, to properly fulfil their human and Christian mission. Those who experienced those years of intense brotherly love retain a certain nostalgia for this time, mainly because with an easier life, mutual help often has a tendency to disappear.

The Charter – The Mystic of Mutual Help

The obligations of mutual help are between spouses, between couples, between teams. Mutual help is another name for charity. *“Carry each other's burdens,”* St Paul wrote to the Galatians, *“and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”*

- *Mutual help between spouses* is one of the essential aims of marriage according to Pius XI in *Casti Connubii*.

Mutual help must be obvious every day. The obligation for the spouses to have a monthly conversation, that we call the “Sit-Down”, ought to be considered in the light of spiritual mutual help. Husband and wife together and under the gaze of God, seek to determine his thoughts and wishes for their couple so that they can fulfil them. Who can count the amount of couples, who owe their human and spiritual balance to the practice of the “Sit-Down”?¹ Couple prayer, family prayer and studying a topic together are all Endeavours that have already been discussed and are other means for spouses to mutually help each other.

- *Mutual Help between Couples* is the *raison d'être* of the Teams of Our Lady

¹ Cf. *Human Hospitality, the Ministry of Hospitality*

Remember this passage in the Charter: “*Aware of their weakness and of the limits to their strength, if not of their good intentions, because they experience daily how difficult it is to live as Christians in a pagan world, and because they have unshakeable faith in the power of fraternal mutual help, they have decided to form a team.*”

All moments and every part of the monthly meeting are orientated towards this brotherly mutual help. They include the Meal and the General Sharing, where the team members share their news, their joys, sorrows, successes and failures, where they ask for advice or help, the **Sharing on the Endeavours, the cruel and beneficial moment where each team member explains how they respected the obligations of the Charter.** Prayer and the exchange of views should also be seen in the light of mutual help between couples... But you know very well that mutual help cannot be limited to the means of mutual help that we have just examined. It must be tailored to the needs of the team members. We are all aware of couples that it has saved, materially and morally.

- *Mutual help between teams.* Our Movement is a team of teams.

Thus older teams help newer ones, which are created at the other end of the world by sharing their experience with them. On the other hand, **the whole Movement takes advantage of the example of each team, of the apostolic dynamism of those in Brazil, of fraternal friendship** which, in Mauritius, has made the team members triumph over racial prejudice etc. The testimony of a Belgian couple, who offered up to God the death of their small child, was read out during a retreat and helped comfort a Swiss couple, who were going through a similar ordeal.