

Teams of Our Lady
International Responsible Team

Pilot Couple Manual

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Équipes Notre-Dame

The International Responsible Team does not authorize
no group of couples who are not admitted to the
Movement to name “TEAMS OF OUR LADY”

This document is for internal use by the
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Summary

Presentation	5
Introduction	7
Zero Meeting	11
Meeting 1 Working as a Team Within the Teams of Our Lady (Tool).....	15
Meeting 2 Building Community by Listening to God and Others.....	21
Meeting 3 Walking With Christ as a Team	25
Meeting 4 Radiate as a Team: Mutual Support and Testimony.....	29
Meeting 5 Sacrament of Marriage and Marital Spirituality	33
Meeting 6 A Love That is Built Through Dialogue ...	39
Meeting 7 A Conjugal Love That Aims at Happiness and Holiness	43
Meeting 8 A Team Within a Church Movement ..	49
Meeting 9 A Team Within an International Movement	53
Meeting 10 Or Review Meeting	59

Presentation

The following piloting books (Pilot Couple and Couple in Piloting) represent the response to a request made by the vast majority of Super Regions (SRs) and Regions attached to the ERI (RRs) at the international college held in Fatima (Portugal) in 2018.

The couples responsible for the SRs and RRs expressed, on this occasion, the need to revise and update the piloting booklets on the aspects inherent to the charisma, pedagogy and mysticism of the Teams of Our Lady (TOOL), making these booklets, in their language and communication, simpler and more attractive, thus providing tools to support the formation and expansion plan of the Movement in the countries where it is present and active.

To this end, the International Leading Team (ERI) has created a Satellite Team, made up of couples of different nationalities and cultures, as required for this type of project or service to the Movement.

This Satellite team started its work with a review of the fundamental concepts of piloting as an initial and essential stage of formation in Teams of Our Lady, as well as with an extensive survey - a real X-ray - of the situation of piloting in all SRs and RRs.

As it could not be otherwise, these Piloting booklets reflect, on the one hand, the needs expressed by the SRs and RRs and, on the other hand, the multiculturalism of the Teams of Our Lady, present in more than 90 countries in 2022, with couples and spiritual advisors from very diverse backgrounds and origins, thus revealing a cultural and religious

richness that must be taken into account from the very beginning of the Piloting stage in the Movement.

This stage is therefore essentially an initial formation for couples entering the Movement, concerning the pedagogy and life proposal of Teams of Our Lady.

Piloting is a specific formation for living conjugal spirituality and is carried out with the help or accompaniment of a Pilot Couple, following a methodology common to the whole Movement, in order to guarantee that the Teams of Our Lady, as an international Movement, develop on the same basis, strengthening unity in the context of this great plurality of realities and situations.

After the piloting period, it becomes necessary for the couple to deepen the meaning of conjugal spirituality through witness and the study of topics that deal with conjugal love, Christ and the Church.

With this new piloting project, we are trying to recover as much as possible of the material contained in the manuals and experiences of the different SRs and RRs of the Movement.

ERI hopes that this Manual will be used in all the SRs and RRs, in order to achieve maximum fidelity to the charism and mystique of the Teams of Our Lady. It is however possible, if necessary, to adapt it to the current needs of couples, especially the youngest.

It does, however, contain what the International Piloting Team considers essential for piloting in the different realities of SRs and RRs, both in terms of content, and in terms of the method used to develop each meeting.

Finally, the ERI alerts you to the need to maintain, throughout the piloting phase, loyalty to our Movement, taking into account the expansion that is taking place, either through the increase in the number of team members or through the opening of new borders.

This requires its leaders, at all levels of service, to preserve unity and fidelity to its founding charism and mystique.

International Responsible Team - ERI

Introduction

Dear Pilot Couple:

This manual is intended to help you in your very special mission within Teams of Our Lady. It is an important mission, a call from Christ Himself, as piloting is part of the initial formation of the couples who join our Movement.

As the Teams of Our Lady guide states (7.3.2.1), the Pilot Couple, which accompanies the new team until the end of the piloting, transmits to the couples and to the Spiritual Counsellor/Advisor, “the knowledge, spirit and methods of the Movement in a gradual way, explaining its pedagogy in the different phases”.

It should be emphasised that piloting as an initial formation aims to transmit the charism and mystique of the Movement, deepening the meaning of the Sacrament of Marriage - presenting it as a path of love, happiness and holiness -, of mutual aid in teams based on the commandment of the love of Christ and of the team that meets in the name of Christ to nourish its faith.

The service of the Pilot Couple is that of accompanying couples in piloting, which reveals closeness, welcome, prudence, capacity for understanding, reverence to the Holy Spirit, respectful and merciful listening.

In this accompaniment, the human and Christian witness of the Pilot Couple is something that will mark the lives of the couples in the Team. To accompany is to be in a humble position of service to others,

to those who are searching for their path, the meaning of their life and the way to their human and Christian vocation.

In this service, it is essential to keep in mind that it is a question of evangelizing, of forming a community of disciples, in short, of structuring a community of disciples of Jesus Christ, animated by the same faith and united by the same commitment to create the conditions for couples and their families to live in a truly Christian way. It is a community that gathers in Welcomes, family environments, fraternal places of welcome, where bonds of friendship, fraternity, mutual aid and discernment on its mission as a school of holiness are forged.

The vocation of the Pilot Couple is therefore to help other couples in their communal experience of faith, so that their spirituality is deeply linked to the Church and the world.

In order to fulfil their vocation and mission, the Pilot Couple must be intimately linked to what the Gospel of Jesus Christ proposes to the Church, so that it can lead each one to a life full of communion and holiness.

The Teams of Our Lady Movement, deeply Christocentric, is a Church movement that wants to be close to these couples and to walk with them, so that they may find in this ecclesial community a fraternal place of welcome, participation and communion, of help to grow in their conjugal spirituality.

The base team of our Movement is a small ecclesial community which is governed by certain “norms” or methods to bring its members to Christian perfection in their married and family life. As Father Henri Caffarel said: “The Teams of Our Lady have as their essential aim to help couples to strive for holiness: no more, no less”. A holiness that is born of daily fidelity to the Gospel, as Father Caffarel insists.

Father Caffarel used to compare the base teams to a group of mountaineers. The whole group has decided to climb a mountain together. Each member knows that he can count on the collaboration of the others in the common effort. It is inconceivable that in the middle of the journey they would leave behind a companion who is tired. To leave him behind would be to lose him and, in any case, it would be a betrayal of the group’s tacit commitment.

In a team, it is fundamental that everyone is committed to climbing together. The same climber’s rule is implicit in the starting point of a team - in its piloting, that is: “When I fall asleep, wake me up; when I am tired, support me; when I fall, lift me up”.

It is important to keep in mind throughout the piloting phase that the Pilot Couple is not the “owner of the team”: it is a coach. It should act as a coach for a sports team, helping and preparing the players to develop their skills, to play with tactics and strategies, but in unity. So that the team can continue its journey with the support and accompaniment of other couples in the Sector.

This initial training of the team couples - as you will see in the Couple's Piloting Manual - includes the most important principles and objectives of the pedagogy of Teams of Our Lady, which are essential to the unity of the Movement. The techniques used for the animation of couples, the pedagogy employed and the materials used can be adapted to the place, culture and historical dimension of the Teams of Our Lady in the region, which is constantly evolving.

And never forget to repeat to couples: the Gospel does not say “when two or more are gathered together”, but “when they are gathered in My name, I will be in their midst”. This is the promise of Jesus Christ, and this is the reason and the mystic of team meetings: “gathered in the name of Christ”.

Dear Pilot Couple: help make the base team a place of God's presence, an open space to live daily the Gospel of life, marriage and family, and a witness to rejuvenate our Church and our Teams of Our Lady Movement.

Zero Meeting

Dear Pilot Couple:

The Teams of Our Lady (TOOL) Movement is filled with hope as it entrusts these couples to you to form a Piloting Team. Consider that this group of couples is a rough gemstone entrusted to you to be cut. Building a team is a labour of love. A team that deviates from the pedagogy proposed in the manual will be prone to crises and may go astray. It is necessary to take care of it with extreme affection and attention. You will be the first link between the team and the Movement and the message to be conveyed must be one of enthusiasm and joy. Be relaxed and calm, without showing anxiety. The couples will follow a path and the knowledge of the Movement will be passed on, little by little. Do not pretend to be masters, but only more experienced brothers who will help them to follow an unknown path, which you will make attractive and captivating.

More than words and teachings, they will learn from the radiant testimony you will transmit with your own team experience. Today, couples need witnesses rather than teachers. And if they believe in teachers, it is because they are also witnesses.

Our Lady, Mother and Patroness of TOOL, will take care of this team as beloved children to whom you will give your best.

1. YOUR ROLE AND THE ATTITUDES TO ADOPT DURING THIS SUPPORT

First of all, carry your responsibility, this team and each of its members in prayer. The Holy Spirit will be at your side to guide the couples who commit themselves and to witness to what you are experiencing.

- ◆ Recognise that everyone is on a journey.
- ◆ Be true to each other's successes and weaknesses.
- ◆ Take into account the stages at which the different couples are: evangelization, catechesis and deepening...
- ◆ For some, a church life is quite remote; for others, this church life is more intense and will allow to move faster on certain issues, such as the Endeavors.
- ◆ Ensure that couples create a close relationship with the Spiritual Counselor (SC) or Spiritual Advisor (SA) and introduce them to the charism of TOOL.
- ◆ Take care of your training and to this end carefully read the piloting documents proposed by the Movement.

2. OBJECTIVE :

To meet: the aim of this first meeting is simply to bring together all the couples, with the SC/SA and the pilot couple, for a first contact.

3. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING:

- a) Agree with all the couples and the SC/SA, in the most personal way possible, on the day, time and place of this first meeting. This meeting should preferably take place at your home: it is a way of showing your sense of hospitality. Only in exceptional cases, when you as the pilot couple are not able to organise this meeting at your home, can it be decided that this meeting will be held at the home of one of the couples.
- b) It should be a simple and very informal meeting, but it is essential that all are present. Where the presence of a priest is not possible, due to the lack of priests in some areas, the Movement

plans to use Spiritual Advisors, such as seminarians in advanced stages of study, deacons, religious men or women, or well-trained lay people.

- c)** If possible, prepare a simple meal yourself, which will serve as an example for the rest of the team life. Couples in the piloting team should not be asked to bring food for dinner at this zero meeting. This meal should be eaten after the group presentation, thus facilitating communication between all.
- d)** Start the meeting with a simple prayer for the team, either a spontaneous prayer or a formal prayer (Hail Mary, Our Father, etc.).
- e)** Organize a round table for a personal presentation, mentioning the most common elements, such as surname and first name, profession, date of marriage, number of children, parish to which they belong. This is not the time to get to know each other in depth, nor to talk about their expectations, the reasons why they have chosen to join the TOOL, personal and couple projects, difficulties, etc. Do not use the expression “Sharing”, which will be presented at the first monthly meeting, but the expression “Round Table”.
- f)** After your personal presentation, explain that your mission is to accompany these couples in the knowledge and experience of community life within a Team of Our Lady (TOOL) in order to help them grow in their love and in their faith. In this phase called Piloting, they will gradually discover the pedagogy of the Movement, during 10 monthly meetings. It is important to specify now that at the end of the piloting you will no longer be part of the team and that it will continue its journey with the CS/AS and the support of the Movement. The team will therefore never be left on its own.
- g)** Explain that the presence of all the couples and the SC/SA at these meetings is essential and that they take place, in principle, once a month, in turn, in the home of one couple of the team. This monthly meeting takes place according to a pattern that they will discover and put into practice little by little. To ensure that the meeting is not disrupted by young children, it is recommended that they are looked after at home, by grandparents or by friends during the meeting.
- h)** Be attentive and available to everyone.

- i) Agree with the couples, on the date, time, place and duration of the next meeting, who will be in charge of the meal (either everyone brings a dish to share, or the host couple prepares the meal...), etc. Note down full names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses, birthdays, including wedding dates, which can be useful in creating an atmosphere of friendship. You will then distribute this list to all team members.
- j) Give the booklet of the first meeting to the new team members (or the manual for the whole year if this is the formula chosen by the Movement in your Super Region or country) and give recommendations on its use, asking that they read it at home and try to prepare well, as a couple, in writing for this meeting. Point out that at this next meeting they will have the opportunity to introduce themselves in more depth, as suggested in the handbook they received.
- k) This zero meeting should not be too long.
- l) After these instructions, invite them to share the meal, leaving them free to start living as a team and getting to know each other a little better.
- m) After the meal, the SC/SA is asked to say a prayer of thanksgiving for the launch of this new Christian community, giving his or her blessing to the couples and their families (Final Blessing).

Meeting 1

Working as a Team Within the Teams of Our Lady (Tool)

Dear Pilot Couple:

What a beautiful mission awaits you: to lead these couples to discover the riches of a Team of Our Lady (TOOL). We hope that your work will be sustained by prayer and the joy of serving our Movement.

During the piloting period, which will last for 1 year (10 meetings), the experience of team life will be acquired through an inductive method and through repetition. Therefore, at the end of each part of the meeting, it is recommended that you make a short summary of the experiences that have taken place.

On the other hand, it is not necessary, during the first meetings, to explain in detail how each part of the meeting will be conducted (just explain how a team meeting is conducted, giving only a general idea). The intervention of the pilot couple should focus on the reactions of the couples to the Movement's proposals.

These couples will learn by doing, so beyond the theoretical teaching, you will need to focus on the characteristics and conditions in which a gathered group gradually becomes a community of people who are pursuing the same goal and recognize that alone they are not able to go very far.

They discover that they need the support, the mutual help of others and that they can be welcomed at the stage they are at, as a couple and as Christians, and that they are, at last, ready to join forces to understand the beauty of their sacrament of marriage in the light of faith.

In short: “team building”. The life of a team is a journey. At each meeting, steps will be taken which will be articulated and completed throughout this period of piloting and then throughout the life of a TOOL. It is a pathway travelled by couples meeting as a team, ready to hold hands, and with the support of a SC/SA.

To do this, you will ensure that:

- ◆ the welcome is warm;
- ◆ couples respect their differences;
- ◆ a bond of friendship is established and unites the couples and the SC/SA in growing together in mutual knowledge.

You must consider that couples know little or nothing about the proposal of the TOOL Movement and you will help them to discover the wonder of participating in and belonging to a TOOL. Above all, it will be up to you to transmit your tenderness and attention, your enthusiasm for team life and to bear witness to your experience as a couple united by the sacrament of marriage.

It is advisable to emphasize the reason why the meetings are held at the couples’ homes. This explanation can be found in the Handbook for Piloting Couples.

During these first meetings, you will encourage and give everyone the opportunity to express themselves and open their hearts. Above all, you will show patience and reassure the couples that the learning process is gradual and that each one will discover the appropriate rhythm for their growth.

1. OBJECTIVES

- a) Developing bonds. The main objective of this first meeting is
- to create bonds of friendship;
 - to respect each other’s differences and overcome inhibitions etc. so that everyone feels very comfortable;

- to awaken the couples to the value of helping each other by putting their gifts at the service of all;
 - to awaken a sense of truth within the team.
- b)** Accept the rules - Make sure they are committed to the team. This means being present at every meeting, respecting the agreed timetable, carrying out the tasks proposed to them (preparing the meeting, preparing the meal...), and finally, accepting the rules necessary for community life, without which the group can stray from the path and enter into crisis.

As far as the structure and flow of the meeting is concerned, the proposal made in this chapter does not correspond to anything immutable, but only to a suggestion. The five parts of the meeting, as they are experienced, can take place in a different order, according to the needs and reality of the Team. For example: the meal can be placed in the middle and not at the beginning of the meeting, just as the other parts can be placed in a different order. However, during piloting, it is recommended to follow the same sequence from one meeting to the next, to facilitate learning. It is also your responsibility to act as a timekeeper to ensure that all parts of the meeting are covered and that the meeting ends on time.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING:

This first meeting is proposed in this order:

a) Welcome by the receiving couple

Make sure that the receiving couple gives the team members a warm welcome and maintains a happy atmosphere.

The symbolic gestures of welcome (which can be a song, a message, a short prayer) should be treated by you, according to the local culture, and not presented as a universal proposal that everyone should follow.

b) Shared meal (as agreed)

Time for couples to talk freely. The meal should not be too long and conversations are informal.

c) Sharing

At this first meeting, the couples and the SC/SA retrace their spiritual

journey and express their desires and expectations in joining the Movement. You will only stress that at each meeting they will have the opportunity to get to know each other better and that this is one of the characteristics of the TOOL proposal. In the manual for piloting couples, questions will be suggested to serve as a starting point for the sharing. Emphasize also that this is about learning to listen and pay attention to others, not about generating discussion or debate. Remind them of the need for absolute confidentiality in team discussions.

If the meeting lasts less than 3 hours, it is possible to start the sharing before the end of the meal, otherwise not all the following points can be covered in sufficient time.

3. PRAYER

This is the time when the team begins to experience prayer as a team. Remind them that it is God who speaks to us through his Word and that each person's prayer should be a personal response to God, not an explanation of a text to others. Suggest that they share what the text has inspired them to do, a phrase or a word that has touched them. To make it easier, it is a good idea for you to begin the prayer to set the tone for the couples.

After this prayer, you should encourage the couple to pray for each other over the next month, showing that they can also help each other through prayer.

4. STUDY TOPIC

The piloting manual will contain a topic for reflection for each meeting, that each couple in the team should read and study at home, with some questions that will lead them to reflect and explore the topic further. During the meeting, the reflections and experiences of each couple are shared and you will ask them to share the strengths and any questions that have arisen and the conclusions they have drawn. You will reaffirm at the conclusion of the first proposed study topic, the elements that are indispensable for creating a team as a community gathered in the name of Christ (this is the fundamental characteristic of the TOOL).

This part of the meeting needs to be prepared as a couple, ideally in writing, so that you don't have to search for what each person is going to say while the others are talking.

5. PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Give instructions for the next meeting, setting the date, time and place. Ask the couples, during this month, to experiment with taking some time to listen to the Word of God. They can freely use the Bible, some liturgical books or the electronic means available (don't mention yet the Endeavors: Listening to the Word of God).

Distribute the booklet for the second meeting; invite the couples to read it during the month, before the meeting, to study it together, exchange ideas and take notes on what they discover or think is important or on points or doubts they would like to clarify during the meeting, etc.

Explain that the booklet or Handbook for Piloting Couples contains "Additional texts" for further study. Suggest and strongly encourage its reading by the couples, explaining that it is an opportunity to discover and deepen the knowledge of the topics dealt with during this meeting.

Also explain that in order to ensure the proper conduct of the meeting, it is customary to entrust the facilitation of the meeting to a couple from the team, in turn. A preparatory meeting should therefore be held between this facilitating couple and the pilot couple and, if possible, the SC/SA. In particular, during this meeting, you can decide together on the issues to be discussed during the meeting.

End the meeting with a prayer from the Church Liturgy, as the team is in communion with the Church, and ask the SC/SA to give his or her blessing (final blessing).

Meeting 2

Building Community by Listening to God and Others

Dear Pilot Couple:

Unlike the first meeting, couples are expected to come today knowing a little more about what to expect and having prepared in advance to participate in the discussions of this second meeting. Normally, the atmosphere should be more relaxed this time and you should help them to feel more at ease by your warm attitude, whether on arrival, at the table or throughout the meeting. This does not exclude always remaining demanding as to the respect of the good listening of others during the Sharing and in the discussions. Remember to remind them at the beginning of each part of the meeting what is going to happen and how (you can review what was mentioned about this in the previous chapter of this manual: Meeting 1).

1. OBJECTIVES

- a)** Raising awareness: Listening to the Word of God - The objective of this second meeting is to raise awareness among couples of the importance of listening to God, especially listening to His Word, in order to know Him better, to meet Him and to build a deep and personal love relationship with Him.

- b)** Raising awareness: Listening to Others - Similarly, it is about raising awareness about listening to others, especially members of their team. This should be reflected in all parts of the meeting, through your attitude, your gaze on the speaker, your attention to ensuring that each person can express themselves and above all be listened to. When they see you doing this, they will soon adopt the same listening attitude as you.
- c)** Introduce the role of the Host or Animation Couple: it is desirable that a couple leads the meeting, assisted by the pilot couple. It is preferable that this facilitating couple is different from the couple who receives and prepares the table and the meal and is partially unavailable. This Host Couple can prepare the meeting with the Pilot Couple. Only the presentation of a part of the Team meeting and of the Endeavors are presented by the Pilot Couple, who also answers questions on these topics.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

This meeting is proposed in the following order.

a) Welcome

Take advantage of this joyful moment of warm welcome to enhance the role of the facilitating couple who, for the first time, will be called upon to lead the meeting.

b) Meal

Coincidentally, at this meeting, the meal is also the part of the meeting to be presented. You can use this presentation to highlight the meaning of the fraternal meal as part of a shared life.

c) Sharing

Some couples may still be reserved and should be invited to participate in the sharing. Encourage the shy ones, showing them that to form a community they need to know each other and make themselves known. This will happen as the level of trust between team members increases.

d) Prayer

The Gospel text chosen for this second meeting is the Parable of the

Sower (Matthew 13:18-23).

To listen to and understand the Word of God, is to be the good soil that receives the seed and bears fruit.

A prayer is not normally a study of a Gospel text, and it is not normally the time to raise a question about the understanding of the text, which can be asked after the prayer has ended.

After the reading of the Word, invite everyone to say their prayer, which is a personal response to God and not to others. If someone does not wish to speak, invite them to say a simple “Amen” to indicate that they have spoken and that others are not waiting indefinitely for them to speak.

e) Study topic: A Listening Team

As with any other topic, couples have very different life experiences. It is therefore very important that everyone speaks from their own experience of listening to the word of God.

Encourage those who are not very familiar with the reading of the Word of God, to begin by attending regularly, in order to taste the fruits. If some are well advanced on this path, they should be encouraged to express themselves in depth in order to encourage others to persevere on this path themselves. It is important that each team member knows that progress in this area is gradual and that any failures should not discourage them. Emphasize the importance of helping each other, even on a spiritual level.

It is important that they understand why and how God speaks to us, and why and how we should listen to His Word, while trying to identify what the difficulties might be and how to overcome them.

Do not hesitate to share honestly with them your own experience of listening to the Word of God (your difficulties, your successes, your failures...) They observe you and see in you a model. Be true, you will never disappoint them.

After listening to the Word of God, move on to listening to others, because it is through others that God speaks to us, especially through the members of our team. It is important to rediscover the attitudes of good listening: listening, being attentive, welcoming, respecting.

Make them understand that this quality of listening will accompany them throughout their life in the team and that it is a necessary condition for the success of their meetings.

For those who have not read the Complementary Texts proposed with each topic, encourage them to read them to go deeper in their search and desire to know more.

f) Presentation of a part of the meeting: the Meal

Show them the importance of the meal in the meeting: it is a fundamental time of intimacy whose aim is to strengthen the bonds of friendship (we must know each other on a human level in order to be able to move forward together on a spiritual level). Do not hesitate to insist on the fact that the meal must be simple.

g) Presentation of the Endeavor: Listening to the Word of God

Listening to the Word of God is not a matter of one day or one week, but of every day of our lives. It is one of the Endeavors that the movement invites us to live every day. Mention also, from now on, that if listening to the Word of God is regular and well lived, it will undoubtedly lead us to the prayer of the heart, without dwelling too much on this point or on prayer, which will be dealt with in another meeting.

h) Preparation of the next meeting

Usually, towards the end of the meeting, concentration wanes and instructions for the preparation of the next meeting are sloppy. Take time to read carefully with them what they have to go through in the next month and what they have to prepare for the next meeting. Explain to them the importance of preparing their written sharing, their answers to the topic questions of the third meeting and their participation in the spiritual sharing about their experiences of listening to the Word of God during the month. In some Super Regions, it is expected that answers to the study topic questions will be sent in advance to the facilitating or host couple. In other cases, this is optional.

i) Magnificat

Invite the SC/SA to share with the couples the spiritual content of the Magnificat. Then explain to them why each team prays the Magnificat (the movement prayer) at the end of each meeting.

Meeting 3

Walking With Christ as a Team

Dear Pilot Couple:

The call of Christ is simultaneously a personal call and a call addressed to each couple.

As far as the personal call is concerned, the members of the new team are probably at different stages: for some, Christ is not yet someone; for others, faith is similar to morality; for others still, faith in Christ is very distant (childhood or catechism).

But for each couple, their presence at this start of team life is a true and sincere step: a real desire, the importance of which you can underline, to respond together to the call of Christ.

“Let two or three be gathered together in My name, and I am with them” (Mt 18:20).

“You are the body of Christ and each of you with a part to play in the whole.” (1 Cor 12:27).

God also speaks through the responses of other team members to this call.

1. OBJECTIVES

- a)** To walk as a team with Christ: this is the great objective of this 3rd Meeting.

- b)** To walk with Christ is to hear and become aware that each person is called to respond personally and as a couple to the call of Christ.
- c)** Discover that the team is like a hiking rope to which each person attaches his or her carabiner, hence the mutual support. All team members are responsible for the spiritual growth of each couple. The couples want to be guided by Christ and bring his message to the world.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

The couple hosting the meeting in their home creates a friendly and caring atmosphere so that each couple feels that their presence is wanted and even desired.

Each couple is also invited to be open and welcoming to others.

b) Meal

Since the meal is a time for sharing bread and life, its simplicity encourages mutual listening. And everyone is called upon to express themselves.

c) Sharing

Recall what was said at the first meeting so that everyone feels comfortable. While one speaks, the others pay attention.

Personal differences should not be seen as obstacles but as richness and challenges that can strengthen the team. Everyone speaks about themselves, with confidence and freedom, without hiding who they really are.

A golden rule prevails within the Movement: the absolute secrecy or confidentiality of team sharing. What is shared during the meeting must never be disclosed outside the team. This is not a time for discussion but for listening.

At the end of the group discussion, note the positive elements to better build the next ones.

As the Guide to TOOL clearly distinguishes between the time of the meal and the time of the sharing, it is recommended to keep them well separated. However, you may want to tell the new team that it

is possible to start sharing during the meal if the meeting is too short to cover all five parts. This is not an ideal solution, but it is accepted in some Super Regions.

d) Prayer

In the joy of addressing the Lord together, let us think of highlighting this privileged moment with a sign placed in our midst: a candle, a picture, an icon...

The text chosen is the Gospel of John 15:12-17.

Remind them that after the reading of the Word, each person's prayer should be a personal response to God and not to others. It is not a study of a Gospel text. The Word we hear touches our hearts in different ways.

Remind everyone that they can say the prayer that this text inspires in them out loud, or repeat the phrase or word that most caught their attention.

e) Study topic

The aim of the discussion is to implement the conditions for the team's journey with Christ. You can also express yourself on the topic.

Emphasize the importance of Christ in our lives and the help that the team can give.

From the proposed questions, take only one or two if time is short. Let them express themselves and at the end of the topic, limit yourself to a summary. The SC/SA can also speak as any member or intervene in conclusion.

Suggest that they read the supplementary texts, if they have not already done so.

f) Presentation of a part of the team meeting: Prayer

The part of the meeting called Prayer includes listening to the Word, meditation, intentions and the concluding liturgical prayer.

Focus on team prayer.

This part of the meeting aims to show the importance of prayer in the team meeting and how it is conducted. It is the center and heart of all team life. It is a personal response to the Word of God, it is worship, thanksgiving but also a time of asking.

For prayer intentions, it is important that the moment chosen to express them is chosen by the team: either at the end of the team prayer, or at

the end of the meeting before the Magnificat, the common prayer of the Teams of Our Lady, in communion with all the members of the movement. Do not forget to recall the meaning of liturgical prayer. It is a sign that this small cell of the Church belongs to the Church of Christ. Emphasize the meaning of this unity.

g) Presentation of an Endeavor: « Meditation », “Personal prayer”, “Talk with God”

It takes a lifetime to discover prayer!

Father Caffarel, the initiator of the Teams of Our Lady, wrote entire pages on prayer and proposes a method summarized in this chapter of the manual. This method is of course neither restrictive nor obligatory. It is only a path, a direction that each person is free to take.

The TOOL proposes to “set aside time each day for a real «heart to heart» talk with the Lord”, “personal prayer”, “meditation”. (What is a Team of Our Lady - 1976 - Endeavors).

h) Preparation of the next meeting

Invite couples to :

- ◆ prepare together in writing their participation in the sharing;
- ◆ read the next study topic and prepare as a couple in writing the participation in the exchange on the topic. If a couple in the team finds it difficult to prepare the topic on their own, they can also prepare it with another couple or the host couple;
- ◆ continue to listen to the Word of God;
- ◆ discover and take time for prayer every day.

i) Final Prayer and Blessing

Magnificat.

Blessing by the Spiritual Counsellor or Spiritual Advisor.

Meeting 4

Radiate as a Team: Mutual Support and Testimony

Dear Pilot Couple:

May God continue to enlighten your work and service to the couples in the piloting team. It is essential that at this 4th Meeting the main issues contained in the objectives below are presented as the result of a community life based on mutual support and witness. Always remember that the Christian community is gathered in the name of and inspired by Jesus Christ and helps its neighbor to become a witness to others. The relationship in the team is different from the relationship in other human communities. It is based on love, which is a reflection of the love of God. Couples need to be aware of the characteristics of God's love. Sharing spiritual growth is a form of support for all participating couples. Talking about discoveries, difficulties and ways of overcoming them is a help to everyone on the path of spiritual growth. Mutual aid is one of the pillars of the mysticism of the TOOL. The members of the team strive to fulfil the four conditions of brotherly love: giving, receiving and - more difficult - asking and knowing how to say no. Mutual aid is practised in various dimensions: marital mutual aid at the different stages of marriage, mutual aid on the path of holiness, mutual aid in prayer, mutual aid in deepening the faith.

1. OBJECTIVES

- a) To show that the team forms a community of Christians who love each other, practice brotherly mercy, and help each other materially and morally, following the recommendations of St. Paul: “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2).
- b) To show that a team that forms a community of couples who truly love each other and help each other in the search for God and in the service of others becomes a witness for others.
- c) Introduce the time of sharing and begin the initiation to sharing on two Endeavors, listening to the Word of God and personal prayer.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

Please be attentive so that the welcome is always warm.

b) Meal

The meal is always preceded by a prayer.

c) Sharing

Ask whether the couples have managed to prepare together for the sharing, whether they have agreed on what they want to share and whether this has been difficult. Remind them of the importance of discretion in building a community.

d) Prayer

The New Testament texts chosen for this fourth meeting speak of mutual love: Jn 13:34-35, Lk 6:36-37, Gal 6:2.

Faith comes from listening. Ask the Holy Spirit to help the team members listen carefully to the Word of God and strengthen their faith.

Remind them that after reading the Word, each person’s prayer should be a personal response to God and not to others.

e) Introduction to Sharing on the Endeavors

The couples, for the first time, will be invited to share their attempt to

put into practice the two Endeavors presented previously: listening to the Word of God and personal prayer. As the functioning of this sharing has not yet been explained, it is important at this stage to receive the testimony of the pilot couple and to talk about the discoveries, difficulties and ways to overcome them.

f) Study topic

The topic of the meeting is to show that the team in formation should be a community of couples who truly love each other and help each other in the search for God, ready to serve and witness to others. And the team meetings should be a place to experience God's love and to radiate this love to others.

The questions proposed are intended to share the experience of brotherly love and to ask ourselves whether our married love is in the image of God's love.

Invite the couples to try to answer the questions in their handbook.

g) Presentation of a part of the Team Meeting: Introduction to Sharing

Explain what sharing is. Remind them that each team member is at a different stage of their spiritual life, developing at their own pace. Sharing is the key to the common effort of spiritual care and creates a path for the conversion of the community. Sharing takes place in an atmosphere of prayer and fraternal listening. Sharing builds community.

Sharing has two essential functions:

- ◆ In the community, the team accompanies, supports and motivates its members in the practice of the Endeavors;
- ◆ In community, the team deepens the experience of three attitudes of life proposed by the TOOL:
 - the persistent search for the will of God,
 - the search for the truth about oneself,
 - the experience of sharing and communion.

h) Preparation of the next meeting

Invite couples to :

- ◆ prepare together in writing their participation in the sharing;
- ◆ prepare for sharing on the Word of God and personal prayer;
- ◆ read the next study topic and prepare in writing for the couple's participation in the discussion on this topic;
- ◆ continue to listen to the Word of God;
- ◆ discover and take time for personal prayer every day.

i) Final prayer and blessing

The meeting concludes with the specific prayer intentions expressed by each team member, if not done during the Prayer (cf. 4).

Magnificat.

The Spiritual Counsellor or Spiritual Advisor gives a final blessing.

Meeting 5

Sacrament of Marriage and Marital Spirituality

Dear Pilot Couple:

We are entering the heart of our charism: the Conjugal Spirituality proposed by the Movement to Christian couples united by the Sacrament of Marriage. You, the Pilot Couple, can be of great help in presenting this fundamental topic by relying on the testimony of your married life.

So, you will guide the couples of this team less by theories than by sharing the rich and marvelous paths that your sacrament of marriage and marital spirituality have led you to take. Pass on to them, with deep joy, the discoveries you have already made, the riches you have experienced as a couple thanks to the means and proposals of our Movement.

1. OBJECTIVE: TO PRESENT THE RATIONALE FOR TOOL

During this 5th meeting, you will present to the couples, in a more explicit way, what constitutes the spirit and the rationale for the Teams of Our Lady. Spouses are called to find God at the heart of their married love. This is the particular charism of Teams of Our Lady, which rests on two fundamental pillars: the sacrament of marriage and marital spirituality.

On the sacrament of marriage, it is likely that couples have some idea of its meaning but probably not all know it in depth.

As for the spirituality of the couple, this is undoubtedly an area with which they are still unfamiliar. Both are at the heart of the TOOL Movement, which helps couples to become aware that their human love, fragile and subject to so many adversities, can count on the grace of Jesus Christ to overcome its limitations and infirmities.

Human love, divinized by the sacramental and saving action of Christ who walks alongside the couple and reveals to the spouses that this love, so ardently desired, brings them closer to God. Married love draws from the source of God's love and constitutes its other face.

On the other hand, it is spirituality that will lead the couple to live their marriage more fully, each assuming the commitment to look after the growth of the other, living exactly the human realities proper to their state as a couple, according to the evangelical ideal of the couple. There is nothing in the love between the man and woman united by the sacrament of marriage that cannot be imbued with the love of God who is its source.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

Make sure that this first moment of the meeting encourages each couple to feel completely at ease and welcome. A good welcome ensures that a meeting takes place in an atmosphere of fellowship, mutual respect and support.

b) Meal

Try to reinforce the Christian meaning of a fellowship meal. Ensure that there is a spirit of sharing and simplicity. Help couples understand that tasting food is not enough to bring satisfaction to the heart: we must also hunger and thirst for the encounter, take pleasure in being together, give and receive the affection of brothers and sisters who are together.

c) Sharing

Know and be known in order to love the other more deeply. Do not get tired of repeating the fundamental attitudes to establish a deep relationship and gain trust.

We cannot be satisfied with superficialities that end up hiding each one's truth.

Help couples to practice being real, to leave behind the natural masks at the beginning of a team life and to experience the mutual respect and trust that leads to opening the door of one's heart, without fear of blame, destructive criticism or misunderstanding.

d) Prayer

As the prayer time is one of the 5 parts of the monthly meeting, remind the team that they are meeting to welcome God's love, to share this love and to carry it outside the team. This encounter with the Lord is therefore fundamental to establishing a spiritually favorable climate for the meeting to take place. In this regard, read once more, and remember what has been written about prayer in the Couples in Piloting Manual (meeting 3, especially point 5).

Encourage the host or facilitating couple to be creative in solemnizing this moment with a religious symbol or even with a song whose words are in keeping with the central topic of the meeting (the sacrament of marriage and marital spirituality).

The text proposed for this time of listening to the Word of God is the famous hymn to love from St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians. It presents couples with many virtues and behaviors that encourage and increase their capacity to love each other according to God's plan. These are practical suggestions for each couple in their daily lives which, if assimilated, will gradually strengthen the bonds of unity, understanding and charity in the couple.

After the meditation, prayer intentions can be expressed, unless the team decides to do so at the end of the meeting.

The proposed liturgical prayer is taken from the Song of Songs. Recall that liturgical prayer aims to enliven the sense that the team is participating in the life of the great Church of Christ, of which each is a member. This text, an epilogue to this book of the Bible, contributes to the purpose of this meeting by placing love at the heart of the couple, the very object of the sacrament of marriage.

e) Sharing on the Endeavors

At the previous meeting, couples were introduced to Sharing and, since the beginning of the Piloting, they have reported, without being told,

on their practice of certain Endeavors, which should now be presented to them as a commitment to be realized and lived in a more systematic way. As the Piloting is based on repetition, in this sharing, couples should be invited to share the exercise and experience of the following Endeavors: Listening to the Word of God and Prayer. And in the next meetings, the other Endeavors will be progressively included in the sharing, as they are presented. During this Meeting 5, they will discover Conjugal Prayer as an Endeavor (cf. point 9.1) and will be encouraged to put it into practice during the following month. It is therefore important to deepen this moment, so that they become familiar with sharing and with each of the Endeavors, which constitute the backbone of the pedagogy and the means made available to them by the Movement.

f) Presentation of a Part of the Meeting: the Study Topic

It is necessary for couples to become aware of the importance of ongoing Christian formation for their growth. In general, they are not accustomed to devoting time and effort to studying or deepening topics concerning their faith or to training to strengthen their married life. Progressing in this deepening is also part of our Movement's proposals to team members, so this discussion on the topic requires prior reflection by the couple.

Emphasize that this is not an academic study but a reflection and discernment on their own marital and family life, to better apply what they have discovered. It is not a question of developing theories, nor of writing a treatise on the subject. Hence the importance of the topic being prepared together beforehand and by the couple, who will exchange ideas on the questions raised and draw conclusions or points of improvement for their own lives.

If the team wishes, and especially to meet the needs of one or the other couple, the study of the topic can be done by two couples together. This formula has already been used in several countries and has shown good results: it promotes team unity, facilitates the study and makes it more attractive and less academic. However, make it clear that this is not an obligation, but merely an option.

g) Study topic: The Unsuspected Richness of the Sacrament of Marriage

As mentioned above, this is a fundamental topic for couples to understand the charism of Teams of Our Lady. In point 7 of the Piloting

Manual, the part of the meeting entitled “Study topic” is presented, with several guidelines. Help the couples to put them into practice in the discussion.

Start this discussion by highlighting, for example, your discoveries and the conclusions you have drawn from them in your life as a couple. The SC/SA may also intervene to overcome possible disagreements, correct misinterpretations and point out fundamental aspects of the topic that have not been well understood or clarified.

Encourage the more timid to express their views, reflections and discernment. Value the participation of each person so that it may be a time of formation, of growth in faith and in married life, especially during this meeting directly centered on the meaning of the sacrament of marriage and the various aspects of married spirituality, the original proposal of our Movement.

h) Presentation of Endeavors: Conjugal Prayer and Family Prayer

Introduce this new Endeavor to be put into practice by the couples in this team. The priority is conjugal prayer, which does not exclude family prayer. Remind the couples that each Endeavor is linked to the others and forms a unit that promotes the growth of the couple. This is a daily commitment for couples who are invited to live it. There is no set formula for how to pray as a couple or the best time of day to do so. Advise couples to engage in this daily appointment. Of course, at the beginning there will be difficulties: lack of time, lack of respect, lack of training... Generally, the couple will start with simple prayers, but little by little they will discover the benefits that this prayer brings to their life as a couple and as a family. In this way they will find their own way of praying, feel more at ease and make this meeting a channel through which God's graces will flow into their lives. This is an area where you, as a Pilot Couple and with your own experience, can provide guidance on how to live this Endeavor.

i) Preparation of the next meeting

Give the instructions for the next meeting, setting the date, time and place where it will take place, and also the date of the preparatory meeting with the facilitating couple. You can also give other instructions or mention events or meetings in the Movement. As mentioned in the zero meeting, do not miss the opportunity to announce dates of

future birthdays, anniversaries or other events that could be communicated in order to strengthen the relationship of the couples in the team.

Invite couples:

- ◆ to prepare together in writing their participation in the Sharing;
- ◆ to read the next study topic and prepare in writing for participation in the discussion on the topic;
- ◆ to continue to listen to the Word of God, to take a time of personal prayer each day and to try to pray together (Conjugal Prayer);
- ◆ to prepare together the sharing on the three Endeavors listed above.

j) **Final Prayer and Blessing**

Magnificat.

Blessing by the Spiritual Advisor or Spiritual Counsellor.

Meeting 6

A Love That is Built Through Dialogue

Dear Pilot Couple:

Communication and conjugal dialogue are essential in a couple. Their absence is, without doubt, one of the main causes of the fragility of contemporary couples.

1. OBJECTIVE: LEARNING TO DIALOGUE

The aim of this meeting: marital dialogue. Love is built through dialogue and listening to each other.

One of Father Caffarel's intuitions to support dialogue within the couple lies in the Sit Down.

Initially, the couple should be shown that it is essential to take time to breathe together. During these times when listening to each other is fundamental, the need to learn to speak in truth, to dialogue in a true and profound way, will emerge.

The core of this meeting is about marital dialogue.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

A good welcome has several ingredients: the preparation of the place,

the joy of those who open the doors of their homes, the enthusiasm with which we arrive, but also the words we say. Encourage everyone to give their best to enrich this meeting.

b) Meal

The meal is convivial. The meal should be a moment of grace where the team experiences the joy of being together, celebrating, feasting and praying.

Let us begin the meal with a prayer and blessing of the CS/AS.

c) Sharing

As the dominant topic of the meeting is dialogue and listening to each other, re-emphasize the listening attitude during the sharing. It is about getting a better understanding of what other team members are experiencing.

d) Prayer

Let's think of highlighting this special moment with a sign placed in our midst: a candle, a picture, an icon...

You can also begin with a song or an invocation to the Holy Spirit.

Then a member of the team (CS/AS or host) reads the Word of God.

Each person then expresses the prayer that this text inspires in them out loud. Or repeats the sentence or word that caught their attention the most.

Place prayer intentions at this moment or at the end of the meeting.

Liturgical Prayer: the SC/SA may conclude with a psalm or other prayer of the Church.

e) Introduction to Sharing on the Endeavors

Having proposed at the previous meeting to continue to listen to the Word of God, to practice Personal Prayer and to try to include Conjugal Prayer, you invite each couple of the team to share on these Endeavors (successes and difficulties; contributions and benefits for the couple, deepening of the Faith and Love within the couple...).

You, the pilot couple, will in turn be able to express yourself on these benefits and difficulties and encourage them to persevere.

f) Study topic: Love built through Dialogue

During this meeting, you will help each couple to become aware of the need for marital dialogue: it is essential to take time breathing together. Referring to the Complementary Text 7.1 by Father Gilles Renaudin, recall the three fundamental laws of any dialogue and then let the facilitator or host couple organize the discussion on the questions asked.

g) Presentation of an Endeavor: The Sit Down

Built on the sacrament of marriage, the relationship between husband and wife has its source in Christ. The team members will gradually learn to build on their faith in the sacrament of marriage. It is God who created man and woman for each other, with their similarities and differences. It is He who leads them. They will only achieve lasting happiness if they remain in the dynamism of God's creation: a love that is received as a free gift and that will deepen over the course of a shared existence, made up of mutual attention, of giving and receiving that is always renewed. This is why this conjugal dialogue, called the Sit Down, takes place in the sight of God.

Ask each of the couples why it is so important for them to have moments together (see the topic with its questions). How do these moments build their relationship?

Then introduce them to the Sit Down, which is not a settling of scores between two people but a time of dialogue between three people, the couple and Christ, in the sight of God. This meeting takes place every month. Introduce the specificity of this time of a three-way dialogue and explain the method developed by the Teams of Our Lady.

Testify about the importance of this time for you and especially about what the expression "in the sight of God" means.

h) Preparation of the next meeting

- ◆ Each of them should continue to make time for listening to the Word of God, Personal Prayer and Conjugal Prayer.
- ◆ Above all, offer them the opportunity to experience a Sit Down in the sight of God. For a first Sit Down, for example, as a couple, take the necessary time to retrace a few stages in your marital history.

Discuss what attracted you and made you enthusiastic about each other. Is that enthusiasm from the beginning still there, has it faded or grown?

How did God enter into your marital history? Is he still present in it?

- ◆ Explain that in the next meeting there will be a time to share these different points experienced as a couple.

i) Final Prayer and Blessing

Magnificat, prayer intentions.

Final blessing offered by the CS/AS.

Meeting 7

A Conjugal Love That Aims at Happiness and Holiness

Dear Pilot Couple:

In previous meetings, important steps were taken by this team in formation. The Movement thanks you for your dedication. At this Meeting 7, the study of the topic and the presentation of the Sit Down will allow you to make couples understand the immense possibilities they have to build their happiness and to take the path of holiness to which they are all called.

1. OBJECTIVES

a) Discerning Conjugal Love

Initially, the purpose of this meeting is to allow couples to go further in their discernment about their conjugal love. They will discover (or rediscover) that their Sacrament of Marriage is a path of love, happiness and holiness. This love, which has its source in the love of God, is the foundation of their marital happiness and of their call to holiness.

b) To present the essentials of the TOOL pedagogy

In a second step, introduce them to the essentials of the pedagogy of the Teams of Our Lady, in particular:

- ◆ its three key features of graduality, personalization and effort;
- ◆ the “Endeavors” which are an essential characteristic of the Movement and one of the mainstays of its pedagogy.

c) Introduce “The rule of life”

In a third step, introduce them to one of the Endeavors: “The rule of life”.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

Having already passed more than halfway through the Piloting, the team’s affirmation of love is showing very noticeable and concrete signs. At the time of the welcome, you can ‘x-ray’ this progress and highlight two or three important aspects of this community welcome and how it has made everyone feel comfortable, loved and respected, and above all committed to each other.

b) Meal

Encourage them to discover the Christian meaning of the meal and the taste of what will really nourish them, for example, the joy of being together, sharing food, living with fellow travelers.

c) Sharing

Remind couples that this part of the meeting will allow them to get to know each other better.

d) Prayer

The Gospel text chosen for this 7th meeting is taken from John’s Gospel chapter 15, “Jesus the true vine” (Jn 15:8-14): Jesus loves us, let us abide in His love, His joy will be in us. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for those one loves. True joy and happiness are given by Christ, the source of our love.

e) Sharing on Endeavors

In an atmosphere of prayer and fraternal listening, invite the couples to share their spiritual journey, their experience of the various Endeavors already presented. Encourage them to share their

experience of the Sit Down, to talk about their discoveries, the difficulties they have encountered and the joys they have experienced. Let them discover, through your testimony and those of other couples, that this time of sharing is a source of mutual help and progress, that the difficulties encountered, particularly in the experience of the Sit Down, are natural and that they will soon overcome them.

In team life, we become companions on the road to holiness.

f) Study topic: Marriage, source of happiness and path to holiness

Many of our contemporaries, and many young people among them, think that marriage is an obstacle to love, which, in their opinion, should remain unfettered. As a result, they fear that they will not find happiness after a certain period of marriage.

The role of our movement, of which you are the spokesperson, is to show young couples that happiness is quite possible in Christian marriage and that this happiness, like love, is built up and deepened as the days go by.

“All conjugal acts, from caresses, affection, embraces and kisses, to the bodily gift of self, contain an incomparable sacramental density” (Brother Ivo Theiss - SA of Mafra, Brazil).

Encourage them to distinguish between temporary pleasures and the moments of communion, deep joy and happiness that they can give to each other, including the carnal and sexual side of love (you can talk about the sacred side). They need to rediscover and appreciate the small pleasures of their life as a couple and not chase the illusion of an idyllic happiness, free of any commitment, effort or responsibility.

Encourage them also not to give up in difficulties and suffering, because overcoming adversity together can also be a source of great happiness.

Another part of this topic, “holiness”, seems to be a more difficult subject to deal with because the notion of holiness is, for some couples, less tangible than the notion of happiness.

Start by clarifying with them and with the support of the SC/SA what holiness means for the laity and especially for married couples. They will discover that they too are called to holiness and that Christ himself

makes this call to them. They will know that their conjugal love, lived in their daily lives as ordinary couples, can be their path to holiness. They will gradually become convinced that they are sanctified by their marriage and not in spite of it, their sacrament of marriage being the guarantor of their love, the source of their happiness desired by the Lord as a path to holiness.

Insist on the role of each spouse on their journey to holiness, for they must understand that each is responsible in some way for the holiness of the other: great will be their joy in knowing that one may well be the cause of the other's sanctification.

Finally, the two notions of happiness and holiness should not frighten or discourage them by their demands, for they have their whole life as a couple before them to perfect them and live them gradually, accompanied by the grace of Christ, their companion on the way, and by the couples in their team.

g) Presentation of the pedagogy of the Teams of Our Lady and of an Endeavor

◆ Reminder on the pedagogy of the TOOL

At this stage of piloting, introduce the couples to the essentials of movement's pedagogy so that they can fully grasp why they have learned and experienced what they have over the past few months.

Explain that, to comfort and encourage them on their journey, the movement proposes the following guidelines in its pedagogy:

- Progress must be gradual, remaining patient with oneself and one's partner;
- The journey is personal: each couple progresses in their own way and at their own pace;

◆ But gradualness and personalization must be accompanied by effort, without which there can be no real progress.

Then introduce them to the three pillars of the TOOL method:

- ◆ Life orientations;
- ◆ Endeavors;
- ◆ Team life.

Most of these topics have already been addressed in one way or another at previous meetings. Now it is a question of taking them up again, showing that they form a whole, explaining their coherence and the thread that links them: they form the solid core of the TOOL pedagogy. Don't forget that you have many tools to develop this subject in the virtual media made available by the Movement, on its website, in many documents and even on the training platform.

◆ Presentation of an Endeavor: "The Rule of Life"

As a variation on the topic of effort, show them how the rule of life, one of the Endeavors proposed by the Movement, is a palpable means that can help them to progress in the areas where they feel they need to move forward.

Above all, explain to them how to choose and apply the rule of life:

- The Sit Down, or the end of a retreat can be opportunities to choose a rule of life;
- Write down your rule of life;
- Choose a concrete rule;
- Change it when progress is achieved or a new need arises;
- We must not be discouraged when the same rule of life seems to impose itself on us every month, because with God everything is possible.

h) Preparation of the next meeting

At the end of the meeting, don't rush this point. Take the time to give them your advice and guidance.

Invite couples:

- ◆ to prepare together in writing their participation in the Sharing;
- ◆ to read the next study topic and prepare in writing for participation in the discussion on the topic;
- ◆ to continue to listen to the Word of God, to take a time of Personal Prayer each day, to pray together (Conjugal Prayer), to do the Sit Down and to start choosing a Rule of Life;

◆ to prepare together for the sharing of the five Endeavors listed above.

i) Final Prayer and Blessing:

Magnificat, prayer intentions

Final blessing

Meeting 8

A Team Within a Church Movement

Dear Pilot Couple:

Father Caffarel shows us in his writings that it is not always easy to truly love the Church. Loving Christ is much easier. He is more attractive and shows great mercy. He is a flawless person and easy to love. But the Church lives with human misery: it has its faults. This meeting invites couples to remember that they are members of this Church, to respect it and to truly love it. A team cannot continue its journey if it is distanced from the Church of Christ.

1. OBJECTIVES

a) Raising awareness of belonging to the Church

The aim of Meeting 8 is to present the team as a small community inserted in the global TOOL movement and in the Church and the consequences of this double membership. The Movement encourages its members to deepen their love for the Church and to become active members of the people of God through mutual support.

b) Answering Calls

Within the TOOL, married couples are invited to respond to the Church's calls for a new evangelisation based on human love and family life.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

Just as we are happy to be welcomed into the TOOL base team, we should be equally happy to be welcomed into the great family of the TOOL which is spread throughout the world and which has an organization at the service of the development of the movement and the support of the teams. Let us make sure that our team does not close itself off like a ghetto.

b) Meal

Remind the team that, following the early Christian communities, the meal brings the team together and invites us to share our lives.

c) Sharing

Check whether the couples managed to find time to prepare together for this sharing, whether they agreed on the points they wanted to discuss. Remind them of the importance of listening and being discreet in team building.

d) Prayer

St Paul's letter to the Romans (Romans 12:9-13) encourages us to adopt a Christian attitude towards God and our neighbor: to love, to live in hope, to live in truth, to be fervent and persevering in prayer and to be welcoming.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit for the light and the capacity to open us to the Word of God, so that it may enlighten us, transform us and guide us.

e) Presentation of a part of the Team Meeting: Sharing on the Endeavors

Clarify this point by outlining the three life attitudes to be adopted and the role of spiritual support in the team.

The Endeavors describe and reinforce the three attitudes of life, adopted to move progressively towards a more Christian way of life. These attitudes of life are: the persistent search for God's will, the search for the truth about ourselves, and the experience of encounter and communion with God. The sharing of the Endeavors is an important moment of spiritual support in the team. The members accompany each

other in observing and implementing specific Endeavors and mobilizing themselves to practise them honestly.

f) Sharing on the Endeavors

Moving immediately into practice, you will invite each couple in the team to share their experience of the Endeavors over the past month. During this meeting, you will invite them to share on the following two points: What impact have the Endeavors had on your relationship with God and your loved ones?

What were the difficulties, if any, encountered and the benefits?

g) Study topic

Today's topic invites us to be aware of the implications of belonging to Teams of Our Lady and to the Church.

The TOOL Charter of 1947 clearly defines what teams are and are not: "The teams are not a place of refuge for self-righteous adults, but a formation of volunteers who want to serve others. No one is obliged to join or stay. However, anyone who joins must honestly abide by their rules."

Rather than stating a list of obligations, you will draw on your personal experience to point out the riches that the Movement brings and the conversions to which it invites us in all aspects of our lives.

h) Introducing an Endeavor: The Annual Retreat

At this meeting, the last of the Endeavors, the annual retreat, is presented. Present its purpose, meaning and fruits, not hesitating to draw on your personal experience.

The annual retreat is one of the six Endeavors offered to members of the Movement. Father Caffarel encouraged the simultaneous participation of the husband and wife. The retreat is a form of response to God's invitation to stop and reflect on what really matters for us as a couple: to meet the One who loves us and calls us, Jesus Christ, who is our only Lord. It is also a time to come together to reflect on our personal lives and our marriage and to make plans for the future.

i) Preparation of the next meeting

Invite each couple to :

- ◆ prepare together in writing their participation in the Sharing;
- ◆ prepare for sharing on the Endeavors;
- ◆ read the next study topic and prepare together in writing their contribution to this future exchange;
- ◆ suggest the name of the couple in the team who could become the team leader and be elected at the next meeting.

Explain the role of the team leader at this time.

Each team is led by a Responsible Couple, elected for one year by all team members. At the next meeting, each person will be asked to vote for one of the team couples. Emphasise the importance of this choice, as the chosen couple will lead the destiny of the team during the coming year. Ask your couples, during this month, to pray for this choice and to reflect deeply on the couple best prepared to fulfil this role. The criterion for choice should be prayerfully inspired and informed by the Holy Spirit. This is the only level of responsibility where the choice is made by vote, but no one must stand for election. Explain that the SC/SA will count the individual votes and announce the chosen couple, without revealing the number of votes received.

j) Final Prayer and Blessing

Magnificat

Prayer intentions if not expressed at the end of the prayer (cf 4).

Final Blessing

Meeting 9

A Team Within an International Movement

Dear Pilot Couple:

A point to be stressed during the Piloting is to make couples understand that each one is responsible for the continuity of the Movement, which is achieved by generously responding to its calls. In this sense, the first step is to become aware that being a member of a team is not only being part of our base team but participating in the big family of the Movement.

Even if you have already given some guidance on the subject at the last meeting, pay particular attention to the process of electing the first Responsible Couple, so that everything is done in the search for what is best for this team.

1. OBJECTIVES

a) Developing a spirit of belonging to the Movement

We are approaching the end of the Piloting and the main objective of this meeting will be to make the couples share an even stronger feeling of belonging to a Movement which gathers team members spread over the 5 continents.

b) Developing a sense of internationality

Internationality, with its various cultural and linguistic characteristics, should not be perceived as involving differences that drive us apart but as generating complementarities that enrich us. Thus, the teams are never isolated. They form a harmonious whole, united around the ideals arising from the conjugal spirituality experienced within the TOOL Movement.

c) To transmit the spirit of service to the different levels of responsibility

The organization at the different levels of responsibility of the Movement, from the international to the Sector, is entirely at the service of the teams. It is necessary to instil in the hearts of the couples in piloting, the spirit of service that permeates the whole Movement and this cooperation in solidarity, preparing them to accept the commitments that the Movement will ask them to assume throughout their journey.

d) Electing the Responsible Couple for the team

In a very special way, at this meeting, a fundamental step will be taken for the continuity of the team: the choice of its first responsible couple. This choice must be guided by the notion of what it means to participate in a Movement of international scope, by the awareness of the value of service as a generous gift for the good of the brothers and sisters of the team, and above all by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who grants the gifts and the formation necessary to carry out this mission.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

This meeting provides a new opportunity to make the meaning of welcome explicit. To bring couples to experience the joy of being part of a Movement spread over the five continents. Welcoming is also a form of acceptance of service to one's team and to the Movement as a whole. As this meeting includes the election of the future Responsible Couple, everyone will welcome this mission with joy.

b) Meal

Although piloting couples have already received a lot of information about the meaning of the meal, remember its characteristics, such as simplicity,

the pleasure of the one who brings a dish, the joy of sitting at the table with real friends, and the reference to the Christian meaning of the meal.

c) Sharing

As more experienced members, you have seen a good evolution of this time of sharing. Nevertheless, observe carefully whether there are still couples who limit themselves to sharing superficial things and find it difficult to let themselves be discovered. Or, in the opposite direction, who tend to show too much intimacy. Encourage them to be sincere and real in expressing their problems and expectations.

d) Prayer

The text proposed for meditation is the well-known Gospel of the washing of the feet. The evangelist St John is the only one to place this episode in the context of the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Pope John Paul II, on the 12th World Youth Day, 21 August 1997, gave an exhortation that can be applied to this moment in the life of the team, when he said: “Today you too are called to commit yourselves in this way: by agreeing to follow Christ, you are proclaiming that the way to perfect love is through the total and constant gift of yourselves”.

As a suggestion, you can ask the spiritual counsellor or spiritual advisor to guide or conclude the prayer by underlining the meaning of service in Teams of Our Lady. Always emphasize that the moment of prayer is one of the 5 indispensable parts of a TOOL meeting and includes listening to the Word of God, meditation, intentions (which can also be placed at the end of the meeting) and concluding with the choice of a liturgical prayer which links us to the Church of Christ.

e) Sharing on the Endeavors

Encourage the sharing of the Endeavors in their life experience: what has helped each person, especially in awakening them to put concrete attitudes into practice?

Give an example of how you have managed to open up a little more to God's love.

What good have you discovered in yourself, or what do you need to change to bring your life face to face with the truth of Jesus?

How could you be more open to meeting your team members?

How can we make ourselves more available to help our fellow team members in a fraternal way? Encourage individuals/couples to talk about the progress and difficulties they have experienced in living the Endeavors, and the spiritual mutual help they have experienced during this special time of the team meeting.

f) Study topic: a team embedded in an International Movement

In line with the objective of the meeting, bring your own experience and testimony of service, showing how it has also strengthened your life as a couple and made you grow in the love of God. Highlight more specifically the form of collegial work in the Sector, the composition of its team and the duration of the mandate; in short, make couples aware of this free and temporary dedication and encourage them to commit themselves to the service of the Movement.

On the international aspect, mention the number of teams in the world and refer to the TOOL Guide for any further information.

g) Election of the Responsible Couple

Although the study topic of the meeting already contains elements of reflection on the meaning of service and an explanatory text on how to proceed with the election has also been inserted, it is advisable to highlight this act, to precede it with a prayer to the Holy Spirit or a short exhortation from the SC/SA and to ensure that sufficient importance is given to this choice.

You will be able to give more practical explanations of what the couple in charge is responsible for doing, both administratively and in terms of their responsibility for the good direction and spiritual animation of the team. A Guide published by the Movement, entitled “The couple in charge of a team”, can serve as a support in the exercise of this mission.

h) Preparation of the next meeting

Give instructions for the next meeting, including the date, time, location and date of the preparatory meeting.

Also give other instructions or mention events or meetings of the Movement. As mentioned in the zero meeting, do not miss the opportunity to announce dates of birthdays, anniversaries, or other events that could be communicated to strengthen the relationship of the couples in the team.

Do not forget that the next meeting will mark the end of the Piloting and that it will have the particularity of being a “review” meeting. Explain that, at the end of each year, each team holds a meeting to assess the trajectory of the whole year (what has been well developed, what needs to be corrected or improved...) and to renew its commitment to continue during the following year. Therefore, this assessment will take place at the final meeting of this Piloting phase.

Encourage couples to :

- ◆ prepare their participation in the review together in writing;
- ◆ reflect on their level of participation in the life of the team;
- ◆ continue the implementation of all the Endeavors over the coming month;
- ◆ prepare a specific evaluation of this piloting period, highlighting what went well, what did not go well and possible proposals for improvement.

i) Prayer for the Canonization of Father HENRI CAFFAREL

For several years, the Movement has been working on the process of canonization of Father Caffarel. The proclamation of his sanctity will be of great value so that Christian marriage is increasingly understood and valued in our Church. It is up to each team member to commit themselves to this cause by intensifying their prayers so that this day may be hastened by the Lord’s mercy and that, especially in their homes, they pray for this intention.

j) Final Prayer and Blessing

Magnificat

Prayer intentions

Final blessing.

Meeting 10

Or Review Meeting

Dear Pilot Couple:

The review meeting is a particularly important milestone. It allows the team itself to assess the progress made, the points acquired and those not yet fully mastered. The Movement also uses this assessment to learn lessons in order to improve future piloting. The most important thing is that these couples have received a solid formation and a good knowledge of the TOOL proposal, which encourages them to continue their journey with the TOOL. We are counting on you, the Pilot Couple, to make an honest assessment.

1. OBJECTIVES

- a)** Draw up a collective assessment of the progress made during the piloting period.
- b)** Write a report to be shared with the couples, the Sector Couple and the future Liaison Couple.

2. OUTLINE AND PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING

a) Welcome

This is the last meeting of the Piloting group. Make sure that the welcome is warm, so that everyone is fully involved in this particular meeting. You may

wish to highlight some of the team's characteristics, achievements, efforts so far in the different areas or other points that may stimulate them. It would be appropriate for the opening prayer to be addressed to the Holy Spirit.

b) Meal

It should be emphasized that at every meal, material bread, bread of friendship, bread of mutual knowledge and many other breads are shared, turning the team members into a family sitting around the table giving and receiving God's love.

c) Sharing

As this is a debriefing, it will be more oriented towards an analysis of how the couples experienced and felt about this part of the meeting.

d) Other guidelines for the smooth running of the debriefing

- ◆ This meeting should be experienced as a "team sit-down" with a true and lucid discussion. With great respect for each person, it is up to the pilot couple to gather the expression of the joys and difficulties encountered by each member of the team and each couple, and to answer any questions about the Movement.
- ◆ At the end of this assessment, you will invite each couple to express their desire to continue within the Movement. You will encourage them in this sense by reminding them that this Movement does not bring together Perfect People but couples who wish to progress with others on the path to holiness.

If the answer from either of them is no, you will try to find out what they are looking for.

- ◆ The journey of discovery of the Movement normally ends with a new team and new team members weekend (New Teams Meeting) in which the entire new team participates. This is an important moment because it allows the new team members to discover members of the big family of the Teams of Our Lady. Emphasize this point.

Depending on the Super-Region or Region, this stage at the end of the piloting period may take different forms. For example, some ask new team members to commit to respecting the Charter or to solemnly confirm their desire to remain within the Movement.

Indicate the practical arrangements proposed by your Super-Region for this weekend and, in conjunction with the new team Responsible Couple, ensure that a date is set.

- ◆ Give each couple the Guide to the TOOL, which includes the Movement's charter, and remind them of its origin and function (see the Manual for Couples in Piloting). Also give them a general idea of the content of the documents annexed to the TOOL Guide 2018. And you will invite them to refer to them to deepen their knowledge of the Movement.
- ◆ To mark the sending of the Responsible Couple on mission, the pilot couple can hand over a lighted candle or any other object symbolizing spiritual responsibility.
- ◆ Also mention that the new team will have to choose a topic for the following year. This choice is more or less framed according to the Super-Regions or attached Regions.

According to the practices and instructions given by your Super-Region, you will help them make this choice by listening to their expectations and directing them to the available materials that are offered by the Movement. The Responsible Couple should ensure that this choice is made early enough to be able to order the necessary materials before the first meeting of the next year.

e) Final words from the Pilot Couple

This is the last team meeting you will attend. Encourage the continuation of this team by highlighting the great development they have experienced both as a community and as couples. Also thank them for their care and companionship throughout this Piloting.

From now on, in addition to a Responsible Couple, they will be supported by a Liaison Couple belonging to their Sector and by the Movement in general.

Define with them some basic elements for the resumption of the team life in the next year, such as the date and place of the next meeting, the couple in charge of preparing and leading it, and all the useful things to possibly keep a link during the holiday period and the resumption of the team life.

To the Responsible Couple, do not forget to indicate, if possible, the

date of the Annual Meeting of Responsible Couples or the date already scheduled for the Sector meeting.

f) Final Conclusion and Blessing

Magnificat.

Prayer intentions.

Final blessing.

