

THE BULLETIN



OF FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

LIAISON BULLETIN N° 12
January 2013

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL
49 RUE DE LA GLACIERE
F-75013 PARIS
www.henri-caffarel.org

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EDITORIAL

‘You also go and work in my vineyard’
(Mt 20,1-6)



Tó & Zé Moura-Soarès
The new responsible couple in the International Leading Team (ERI)

In his assessment of the First International Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady in Rome, Father Caffarel said:

‘You know by experience that when children grow up, new problems emerge.’

It is just the same with the Movement. We need to realise that new phases arise and consequently, new crises. In order to figure out a solution, we need to continually discern the nature of our Movement.

Today, after the Eleventh International Gathering and in terms of a preliminary assessment, we can affirm that all these Gatherings have given a new impetus and vitality to our Movement. Furthermore, the more we discern, the more we realise that the Teams of Our Lady are an urgent necessity for the Church.

We are also currently celebrating the 50th anniversary of Vatican II, one of the greatest events for the Church and one in which Father Caffarel placed so much hope. He wrote about this in his article, ‘A revival of marriage for a revival of the Church,’ *The Golden Ring*, n°105-106, May-Aug 1962, pp. 178-190:

‘The Council will be a source of new vigour for the Church in its divine mission,’ said the Pope.

‘A Christian couple is a fraction of the universe that has become the Kingdom of God. For their children, parents are the shepherds whose mission is to lead them ‘via straight ways’ to ‘the sources of life’ and to encourage Christian order and charity in this ‘ecclesiuncula’ that they are in charge of.’

As we remember this and as we open our eyes to the immensity of the Lord's vineyard and to the multitude that He calls, we wonder:

Who are the workers of the last hour in today's world?

Father Caffarel too was worried and wondered who would be the members of the Teams of Our Lady when he wrote an editorial entitled, '*Builders or Tenants*'.

Getting back to the parable...

The workers of the last hour can be considered in different ways, but it is best not to limit the choice for it is unimportant to decide who exactly the workers of the last hour are. At a deeper level, it is true that we are all workers of the last hour, but we are also all Jesus' distinguished guests.

God saves us with his Grace and not through our dignity. The most important thing is in fact to reply to the invitation.

We too have been invited to be builders and not tenants in this Movement that has spread so much grace in the lives of couples. We will be builders if we assume, as members of the Teams of Our Lady, the responsibility that is ours, depending on the particular characteristics and talents of each person, but above all thanks to the generosity and love that are intrinsic in our vocation.

There is no room for laziness, because there is much work to be done in the Lord's vineyard.

The landowner reiterates his invitation:

'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

This is our vineyard; this is the mission to which we have been called.

Jesus wants us just as we are at whatever moment He calls us, so that we may be his '**workers**'.

It is in this parable that Jesus said '**So the last will be first and the first will be last.**'

Paris, October 2012

Tó and Zé

FEEDBACK FROM BRASILIA



XIth International Gathering of the
Teams of our Lady
Brasilia 21 – 26 July 2013

"Father Caffarel" Day
in Brasilia 2012

Father Caffarel' Chalice

Father Jean Voisin

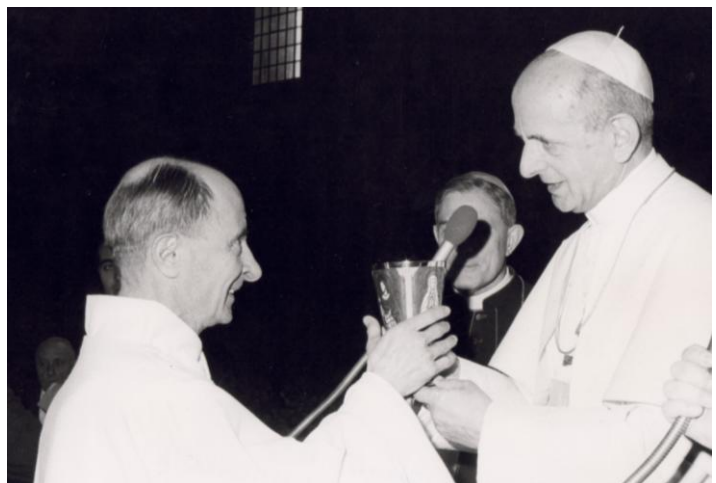
This chalice is in my possession because Father Henri Caffarel was my father's first cousin.

I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of an object, but I must admit that it is very precious to me and I brought it to Brasilia where it was used for the Eucharist celebrations.

Four figures are to be found on the four sides of the chalice: Christ (*lux mundi*, light of the world), Mary, St Peter (key) and St Paul (sword).



Beneath the foot is Paul VI's heraldry. This is because this was the Pope's personal chalice and he gave it as a present to Father Caffarel in 1970 at the Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady in Rome. It's amazing to think that both of them are now on their way to beatification!



I cannot begin to describe what an immense grace it is for me (and for all those who have used it) to celebrate the Eucharist with such a chalice. I give thanks for this grace.

**Father Henri Caffarel,
Man of the Encounter**

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits , o.p.
Postulator for Father Caffarel's Cause



Intervention by Father Marcovits - Brasilia 2012 (Extracts)

Allow the postulator for Father Caffarel's case to remind you that everything started here in Brazil. It will be my way, as well as that of the co-postulator, Marie-Christine Genillon, of showing our gratitude towards the Team members of this country. In 2004, the International Responsible Couple of Teams, Gerard and Marie-Christine de Roberty and the International Spiritual Counsellor, Mgr François Fleischmann visit the Team members in Brazil. They notice that not only is there a bond between them and Father Caffarel who came to visit them three times, but that there is a real "presence" of the Teams' founder. A saint is first and foremost, somebody who is "alive" and upon whom everyone calls today, to live and go through life's hardships. That is why the Teams asked the Archbishop of Paris, Archbishop André Vingt-Trois, to open the case for their founder. Father Caffarel is alive for us. He has to become alive for all. Team members are not allowed to keep him for themselves: Father Caffarel has to shine in the Church and beyond...

What is the goal being pursued? The good of the couples and of those who want to pray. The aim is to show that marriage is Good News for those who love each other and that prayer is a source of life and love. Fr Caffarel's life and personality, his teachings passed on through his books, the organizations he founded, are of such wealth, that all this has to be shared with everyone.

Father Caffarel is a man of encounter. Let us make it clear that he was never the one who went looking for those encounters which shaped his life; they were imposed upon him.

God came first. You know the story that summarizes his whole life. “At age twenty, in just an instant, Jesus Christ became someone for me. Oh, nothing spectacular. On that far-off day of March 1923, I realised that I was loved and that I loved and that from now on between Him and me, it would be for life. It was all over.” (Jean Allemand, Henri Caffarel, a man seized by God, END edition, p.14). The Lord imposed himself upon him. It was his joy, his life. That is the first encounter. All is centred on the love God reveals to him: he is loved by God, he loves God, all is settled. “It was all over,” as he says himself. All his life will be built on that reciprocal love between God and him.

Father Caffarel’s other two determining encounters are similar, they are always God’s work: the encounter in 1939, with the couples asking him to lead them on the road to holiness, to whom he replies: “Let’s go search together”; and the encounter in 1943 with the widows asking him to lead them on this new path, to whom he also replies: “Let’s go search together”. When the Lord appears to someone, it is to entrust them with a mission: do good for others. Father Caffarel would like us to experience the love of God. Essential mission!

Father Caffarel has had “come and follow me” written on his tomb. And it was that way. The Lord led His servant’s life so that he was at the disposal of that love revealed to him at the time of his vocation in 1923: love in marriage, love stronger than death in widowhood.

.../...

God is at the root of Father Caffarel’s life. He concentrates on Him, he organises everything around the encounter with his Lord. He might have seemed demanding... (he loved to say: “be demanding, you will never disappoint”); sometimes, he seemed too serious (except with the Brazilians, as he could not resist their good mood!); he ate little (which is unthinkable for the French!)... Our founder is not, therefore, a perfect mummy. But he always was a man of encounter.

.../...

Father Caffarel loved the Church passionately. He was a priest of the Diocese of Paris. The archbishops of Paris have always understood and supported his work. It is the previous archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, who gave him the title of “prophet of our times”. In that way, he showed the potential of Father Caffarel’s ideas which had put forward

marriage as “a way to holiness”. Father Caffarel was in profound harmony with Pope Paul VI. When in 1970, Father Caffarel came to Rome with more than three thousand couples, the Pope gave a long talk on marriage, which elated the priest and the team members, as they found in it the beautiful conjugal spirituality by which the team members lived. On that day, the Pope presented Father Caffarel with a chalice, which his nephew, Father Voisin, has lent us for the gathering: it is a small part of Father Caffarel which will visit Brazil once again.

.../...

To lead the others to God is the main thing for him.

../...

He writes to a friend: “What I would like, my dear friend, is that when you go to pray, you have the strong feeling that you are expected: expected by the Father, by the Son and by the Holy Spirit, expected by the Trinitarian Family. Your place is always ready: remember, in fact, what Christ has said: ‘I will prepare a place for you’.” (Henri Caffarel, In the Presence of God, One Hundred Letters on Prayer, Parole et Silence, Paris, 2000, p. 9) So many people have described Father Caffarel before the Blessed Sacrament, sitting on his little prayer bench. Everything is still: he remains within God.

.../...

Let me now give you some specific news on the progress of the investigation into the cause for Father Caffarel. It was opened on 25 April 2006 by the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, at the request of the Teams Movement who, for this purpose, formed the “Association of Friends of Father Caffarel” and it is the International Leading Team (ERI) that is responsible, particularly Maria Carla and Carlo Volpini.

Since the opening, the Episcopal delegate appointed for this investigation, Mgr. Maurice Fréchal, former Archbishop of Pau, has received numerous testimonies most of which were presented by myself, postulator, and by the vice-postulator, Marie-Christine Genillon. He also received the report from the theologian censors who examined the correctness of Father Caffarel’s faith. He finally received the report from the historical commission that examined the accuracy of information relating to the life of Father Caffarel.

The vice-postulator has classified all the records relating to the cause. Mgr François Fleischmann, former international Spiritual Counselor, has scanned nearly three thousand pages, editorials in journals and various texts

and, as chancellor for the diocese of Paris, has authenticated a considerable number of documents...

We believe that this diocesan inquiry will be completed by the end of this year 2012. The body of work will be sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. This will launch the second part of the path under the responsibility of a new postulator, Father Angelo Paleri, Conventual Franciscan, postulator general of his Order and team member of Equipes Notre-Dame. Myself, I will have to write the “positio”, that is to say, the synthesis of the inquiry that demonstrates the holiness of Father Caffarel. The official appointments will be given in 2013.

Just understand that an inquiry for a cause requires time and work and is performed according to strict rules. But if I tell you all this is for the following purpose:

Father Caffarel will be beatified, God willing...But also if you want it! If you ask the Lord! The Church will then recognise this fact. For this, there are three steps required:

- *First read and meditate on the writings of Father Caffarel about marriage and prayer. To know him is to love him and is to put oneself in his school.*
- *Then, live the beauty of your marriage, helped in particular by the Charter: marriage is a path to holiness. The holiness of your life will also demonstrate the holiness of Father Caffarel who has led you.*
- *Finally, frequently say the prayer that asks for the canonisation of Father Caffarel. Ask, ask the Lord for graces and a miracle, a sign of the presence and intercession of Father Caffarel for us. A miracle always flourishes among a people who request all the graces.*

In conclusion. A canonisation, the first stage of which is beatification, is for the good of the Christian people and of human society. We believe that Father Caffarel’s message of love and prayer should be known by everyone. Father Caffarel was given to us by God, we must make him known to couples and anyone seeking the Lord. We cannot keep such a treasure for ourselves. Talking about Father Henri Caffarel is to evangelise men and women in search of happiness.

Henri Caffarel's Wood

Planting of trees for “ Henri Caffarel's Wood ”

Gabriel & Chantal de Marsac



We left for Brasilia, happy to go and see how the ‘seeds’ of the Teams of Our Lady planted in the Brazilian population during the various different trips Father Caffarel made to this huge country were doing.

On the afternoon of the second day of the Gathering, a tree-planting ceremony was scheduled on a plot of land located close the conference centre where we met for lunch and team meetings.

We thought we would simply go and watch!

Holes had been dug in the red and dusty soil. We knelt down with many other Team members and we ended up actually planting the saplings after we had watered their roots.





The solemn blessing of the planted trees was pronounced by Father Marcovits who underlined the significance of this plot as representing the three times Father Caffarel came to Brazil.

A commemorative plaque will be installed shortly.

Undoubtedly this ceremony is a way in which to further embed in South America the intuition that a few couples and Father Caffarel had all those years ago, an intuition that has allowed so many couples throughout the world to hold on and endure over time and to deepen their love. We hope that in a few years some couples will come and sit beneath the shade of these saplings in order to talk to each other in-depth and to recharge their batteries!



Testimonials from Brasília 2012

A Young French Couple

Claire & Rémi Ploton
Equipe Saint Jacques

Let us begin our testimonial by introducing ourselves.

Our names are Claire & Rémi Ploton and we are both twenty-nine years old. We got married religiously in August 2010 having lived together beforehand for several years. We do not have any children yet.

We found out about the Teams of Our Lady from Rémi's parents and also through some friends who were already members of a Team. While we were preparing for our marriage, we felt a calling and decided to join the Teams of Our Lady in September 2010. We belong to the Team called Le Puy 23 (St James' Team).

As a young couple and as very young Team members we decided to participate in the Gathering in Brasilia 2012. Our decision to attend was not automatic. There were two stages to it. Firstly, we felt called to go; similar to the calling to join the Teams and we discussed this with our Team members. Secondly, we hesitated to confirm this calling. For various reasons, we

almost gave up on this project. Naturally, we shared our doubts with our Team members who reinvigorated us and gave us a double mission to accomplish: to bear witness to the faith and the life of our Team at the Gathering and to experience the Gathering to the full so that we could take home in our suitcases all the energy and good news received there. Thus we left for Brasilia with much enthusiasm and a couple of precise goals.

Once we arrived, we quickly got caught up in the ambiance there. We were lucky enough to begin our Brazilian stay with a few days visiting in the company of other French Team members. Very quickly and rather naturally, despite the fact that we were not at the Gathering itself, we started to pray together and to celebrate the Eucharist. This was the spontaneous testimony to a common desire to live our faith fully in our daily lives. Afterwards, the first evening was an opportunity to take into account the friendly side of the Gathering as well as the hospitality of our hosts.

It is true that despite everything, we have some regrets as we reconsider this wonderful experience. Indeed the mixed meetings between Team members really enabled us to discover the everyday life of Teams throughout the world. But we would really have loved to talk and exchange longer and more in depth, because the conversations we had every day there were so very rich. Similarly, the intense rhythm and scheduling of every day there left little time for private prayer or even just 'time out'.

But then again, this Gathering was not a silent retreat! It was the most perfect occasion to open up to others and particularly to Team members from the whole world.

That is why we will surely never forget the opening ceremony with the procession of flags and representatives from so many of the world's countries and the way the representatives from countries that are currently in conflict (Libya, for example) where it is difficult to live the Christian faith on a daily basis were singled out for special applause. The opening ceremony made us understand and realise the international dimension of our Movement that is not merely centred on a Team or a Sector. It also reminded us how important it is, living in the comfort that we do, to live and 'dare to live the Gospel'.

Father Timothy Radcliffe's conferences every morning on the parable of the Good Samaritan set us up for the day. We recognised ourselves in the modernity of his remarks that echoed in us, just like on the day we decided to join the Teams of Our Lady movement, like a new way to practise our faith in the ever-present aim of journeying a little bit closer to the Lord.

A last indelible moment in the midst of all these highlights was the public Act.

Before we never would have imagined doing a Sit-Down right in the middle of one of the main squares of the Brazilian capital, surrounded by thousands of people. The magic of the moment allowed us to be together there, so close to each other in the midst of a crowd of people and to share in this very special moment the two of us together, but also all together with the others.



We were delighted to be able to share all these wonderful moments and highlights not only with our Team members at home upon our return, but also, along with other couples from the Sector who also were in Brasilia, with a large part of our region.

Today we give thanks to God for the Teams of Our Lady, for allowing us to live through such a tremendous experience as a couple, for all the rich and interesting people we met and we try to bear in mind the 'rule of life: namely to dare to live the Gospel'.

Claire & Rémi Ploton

A Young Brazilian Couple

Tatiana & Rubens Coimbra
Équipe 55



One day, after we had given a testimonial on our ‘life as a team member’, at an annual Gathering of Responsible Couples, friends of ours told us, visibly moved, *“If Father Caffarel had there today and if he had heard the story of your life, he would surely be very happy...”*

This sentence, so simple and yet so deep and intense, is imprinted in us in an indelible manner. And every since, at every step forward, at every success, at every problem to be resolved, the voices of those friends and of Father Caffarel resound in our ears and in our hearts.

We did not have the privilege of knowing this man and yet he is so close and so present in our family’s daily life. In the end, his proposition for married life as articulated by the Teams of Our Lady represents a way that we chose and believe in, one that we have been following since the beginning of our marriage.

When our spiritual routine weakens, we remember that during a time of crisis within the Movement, he decided to intensify the demands and so we intensify our Endeavours. When our Team life is superficial, we recall his advice, *“If your service to the Movement hinders your Team life, stop everything and return to the source.”* When the social transcends the spiritual at Team meetings, his words help us find the right direction, *“In Teams of Our Lady, it is necessary to aim for the essential things. Exchanging points of view, solid friendships, material and moral help, all that is not the primary aim. The essential thing is to seek out Christ.”*

He transformed our life like that of so many other couples and priests who, with their words and testimonials, inspire us and help us by multiplying their heritage of love and fidelity to Christ.

There is not a shadow of doubt but that it was he who led us to fulfil the function of presenters at the XIth International Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady in Brasilia in July 2012. Thus we were privileged to participate intensely in the culminating moment of his work over the past 74 years. Almost 8000 people from more than 50 different countries experienced this huge Pentecost, this limitless fraternal love and were able to show to the world the true value of marriage.

Despite the fact of undoubtedly being centre stage, we really felt all the affection and joy of everyone who came up to us, kissed us, photographed us, hailed us and thanked us. More than once, we imagined in the depths of our soul his penetrating but kindly look, while he said,

“I am happy, very happy...”

A French Couple of “Old Team Members”

Joseph & Danielle
Le Puy-en-Velay

Forty years after Father Caffarel’s third trip to Brazil, here we are on our way to the XIth International Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady.

Firstly, this was an opportunity for us to discover this huge country, endowed with tremendous riches and carried along by the dynamism of its young and mixed-race population.

From the mists of Rio de Janeiro—yes indeed, it’s winter in July in Brazil—to the majestic rumble of the Falls of Iguazu, from the colonial architectural treasures of Salvador de Bahia to the colourful and aromatic market of Cachoeira, we could feel the heartbeat of the country in movement and could appreciate the tremendous hospitality of the inhabitants.

We experienced moments of discovery and amazement all the more appreciated because right from the start a simple and joyful fraternity sprung up between the Team members from all corners of France.

And then we arrived in Brasilia, an enormous town located in the middle of nowhere in accordance with the desires of a visionary president. It was there that we journeyed for 5 days, from Jerusalem to Jericho with the Good Samaritan, that we dug a little deep and understood a little better the message of this Gospel that we thought we knew inside out!

We were indeed carried along by the momentum of all those Team members who had come from all over the world and by the enthusiasm of our Brazilian hosts (ah! remember the vigorous applause after the Gospel!)



We were so lucky to be able to take advantage of Father Radcliffe's conferences that were not only so stimulating and so concrete, but also couched in such British humour! We were delighted to be able to participate in the ceremonies that were so beautiful, so prayerful and so full of song!

Through the testimonials of various people, the breath of the Spirit open to the world, invited us to welcome the small flame called Hope so that we could return to our respective countries, filled with joy and recognition for this time spent with other Christians.

Throughout the duration of the Gathering, we were able to confirm the accuracy of Father Caffarel's intuition. Across the world, Teams of Our Lady allow couples like us to deepen the grace of the sacrament of marriage. And the methodology of the Movement is such that, on the Esplanade of Ministries for a huge Sit-Down, or in the noise of the Exhibition Park for our mixed meetings, words were uttered in truth, lives were exposed in confidence, instantaneously and beneath the gaze of God.

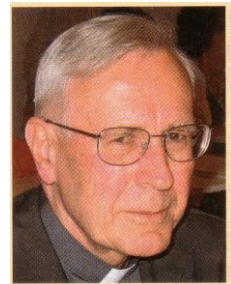
It is winter with us now, but the impetus of Brasilia is still in our hearts.
And the goal remains "DARE TO LIVE THE GOSPEL"

Joseph & Danielle

THE CAUSE FOR CANONISATION

On the Road to Sanctity

Mgr François Fleischmann
Former Spiritual Counselor of the ERI



How does a cause for canonisation work? It is important to stipulate that if in the beginning we are thinking about beatification, it is because the end goal is canonisation.

The Holy See has set up a rigorous procedure that we have learnt to follow, once we were convinced that Henri Caffarel deserved it. The bottom line is to bring together the maximum amount of elements of appraisal that are then submitted to the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints and ultimately to the Holy Father.

The first step in the procedure took place in the diocese of Paris. The Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel instigated the affair by designating a postulator and asked the Archbishop to open the Cause. The Archbishop in agreement with the Conference of Bishops of France and especially the Bishop of Beauvais (because Father Caffarel died in his diocese) decided to open the Cause. A decree to this effect was published in Lourdes in September 2006 on the occasion of the celebration of the tenth

anniversary of Father Caffarel's death. Cardinal Vingt-Trois approved of the nomination of the postulator and vice-postulator and created three distinct entities: a diocesan commission of inquiry, a historic commission and a commission of expert theologians.

The work of these three authorities began simultaneously because it was very important to begin hearing the evidence of contemporary witnesses as to Father Caffarel's role as a 'Servant of God'. The diocesan commission is presided over by an Episcopal delegate, Monsignor Fréchart, archbishop emeritus of Auch. A 'promotor of justice', generally a priest, assisted him by making sure that all the right questions were asked, that the right procedures were followed, especially during the questioning of the witnesses or the expert historians. A notary ensured that all the acts and witnesses' depositions were transcribed and confirmed.

Several dozens of witnesses have now been heard. These witnesses were either presented by the postulator or were summoned by the diocesan delegate himself. The expert theologians have submitted their reports. Their role was to check that nothing in Father Caffarel's writings was in contradiction to 'the faith and tradition' and to put together a spiritual and intellectual portrait on the basis of his written works. The commission of three historians established his biography and checked that nothing had been forgotten in the archives concerning the life and work of the Servant of God. The diocesan commission, once finished their work, will then ask the postulator to read the petition and put together any question he deems necessary.

The diocesan inquiry hopes to wrap up in the coming months at which point this first stage of the procedure will be solemnly closed in order to transfer the petition to Rome, if the Archbishop of Paris agrees. It is important to note that the inquiry is 'informative' and is not supposed to issue a judgment.

Once the petition is in Rome, a postulator living in Rome and a vice-postulator will have to put together a hefty document, called the "*Positio*", which sums up the petition. The aim of this document, written under the direction of the reporters of the Sacred Congregation, is to examine the 'heroic nature of the virtues' of the Servant of God and also his reputation of sanctity. In other words, they need to see if on the one hand, in his life as a Christian and as a priest in his ministry, Father Caffarel was a faithful model and on the other hand to see if there is a sustainable influence, if his memory is still alive, if he is prayed to, without a premature cult being instigated.

The “*Positio*” will be submitted to the theological Consultators for their vote and then it will be passed on to the Cardinals members of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints. If their conclusions are positive, they present the project for a decree on the heroic nature of virtues to the Holy Father. If the Pope issues a favourable decision, then the Servant of God becomes ‘Venerable’.

The question of a miracle remains, since the Pope needs signs from heaven to confirm the sanctity of a believer. If an unexplained healing occurs after Father Caffarel’s intercession has been requested, then the diocese in which the healing occurred opens a double inquiry led both by a commission of expert doctors and by a diocesan commission. The results of the diocesan commission are sent to Rome, where Vatican experts and a plenary assembly examine them. Once again, the Pope will decide as to whether or not the miracle is accepted. If he consents, the way is open for beatification.

If another miracle is recognised as occurring due to the intercession of the Blessed man, then canonisation would be possible.

The time frame for this procedure is difficult to evaluate, but it will probably take several years.

The whole procedure is indeed complicated and exacting, but it is up to us to confide this petition and the sanctity of Henri Caffarel to the Lord.

**Prayer for the Canonisation
of the Servant of God
Henri Caffarel**

God, our Father,
You planted deep in the heart of your servant, Henri Caffarel,
a fountain of love which bound him totally to your Son
and inspired him with a wonderful capacity to speak of Him.

A prophet for our time,
he revealed the dignity and beauty of the vocation of every person
in the words Jesus addresses to each of us: “Come follow me”.

He made couples enthusiastic about the greatness of the sacrament of marriage,
the sign of Christ’s fruitful love for the Church and of His union with her.
He showed that priests and couples
are called to live a vocation of love.
He was a guide to widows: love is stronger than death.
Prompted by the Holy Spirit,
he accompanied many Christians on the path of prayer.
Seized by a devouring fire, he was a dwelling place for you, Lord.

God, our Father,
through the intercession of Our Lady,
we ask you to hasten the day
when the Church will proclaim the holiness of his life,
so that people everywhere will discover the joy of following your Son
in accordance with their particular vocations in the Holy Spirit.

God our Father, we invoke the intercession of Father Caffarel for.....
(indicate the particular favour being sought)

**Prayer approved by Monsignor Andre Vingt-Trois – Archbishop of Paris.
“Nihil obstat”: 4th January 2006 – “Imprimatur”: 5th January 2006.**

*In the case of a particular favour obtained through the intercession of Father Caffarel,
contact: The Postulator,
Association "Les Amis du Père Caffarel"
49 rue de la Glacière – F 75013 PARIS*

2013 A YEAR OF FAITH



Archives

Father Henri Caffarel :

Know how to ask for Faith

Father Caffarel always asked couples to ceaselessly go back to the Gospels, to follow Christ in their daily lives and to know how to ask for faith, so that they could become a 'community of living faith'

*Here are some excerpts from the **Golden Ring** magazine that encourage us to understand Christ's thinking.*

Golden Ring, n° 117-118, 1964

Excerpts from "Listening to the Good News"

A Community of Faith

By means of faith, a couple, just like an individual, positions themselves vis-à-vis Christ. It is their reply and their adhesion, not only intellectually, but also by means of their entire being, their whole life to God's call.

By means of a living faith, a couple begins to understand a little more deeply every day Christ's point of view about God, the world and its events. And also about all the problems raised by daily life: fertility, education, money, hospitality, the demands of the Church and the city... Only an assiduous, intelligent, humble and loyal meditation of the Gospels allows us to begin to understand Christ's thinking, to acquire his mentality. Bravery is

necessary because the Gospels can be frightening; we fear that we will be ousted from our positions, our routine and our relative intellectual and material comfort.

One of the first results of coming into contact with the Gospel is that it changes your point of view. Then it makes you *react* in your daily life and in conformity with the norms of the Gospels and this is the logical outcome. These norms can often run the risk of making things difficult for a couple in relation to its circle of friends, of setting up contradictions, oppositions or even worse, ironic smiles. The wise will become upset, and the wise will perhaps be a mother-in-law, a brother, or a colleague at work... The couple's strength will reside in the certainty that they have set their foundations on the word of the Lord.

This faith that makes one see and act according to Christ's precepts is a seedling, easily choked by the pressure of the ambient mentality or by the 'wisdom of the world' that is insidious. There is only one way to brave the danger and that is to ceaselessly return to the Gospels—follow Christ, in thought, in the Gospel in order to follow him, to observe his precepts in everyday activities. It also means accepting that you are a person of little faith and therefore asking for faith. Gradually, through the Gospels, Christ will become part of the couple's point of view and will make them discover everything He knows about the Father and his love for mankind. **The couple will become a *community of living faith*.**

Golden Ring, n° 56, April 1954

Editorial, "We're suffocating!"

"Your Christian families make us suffocate! The more they are Christian, the more the air is unbreathable." How many times have I heard this comment from non-believers or semi-believers!

"I totally agree! (And they look at me amazed. They had thought to shock me). But don't add the bit 'the more they are Christian....'"

It is true that many couples believe that they are really Christian, but in fact they only partially experience Christianity. The whole religion is reduced to practicing virtue. The sacraments themselves are only a way of achieving it. How much energy they spend acquiring and safeguarding their virtues! They are also devoted, imperturbably devoted: anyone can knock on

their door at any time! They are concerned about ‘commitment’ and ‘bearing witness’ (they’ve heard enough about it for the past twenty years!) But, above all, it is so true they are totally boring. And if no one refuses to admire them—because there is greatness in such a kind of life—no one has any desire to imitate them.

The French poet, Péguy’s words come back to me when I am in their presence, “*Morals were invented by puny people and Christian life was invented by Jesus Christ.*” Indeed, all religious life, if you are not careful, is subject to the laws of deteriorating energy. And so, soon all that is remembered of Christian life is just Christian morals. And Christian morals themselves soon are reduced into a sort of natural moral that turns you into austere and inflexible puritans. In such an atmosphere, of course you literally suffocate!

Christianity is not primarily about morals. It is not the cult of a God of moral obligation or a faceless divinity, it is a religion—and not just any religion, or simple service to a distance God. There is life with God, *a community of love* with him. “*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.*” (Apoc 3, 20) “*Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. Anyone who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.*” (John 14, 21) Even more than a community, Christian life is *communion*. Through faith (meaning a living, vibrant faith) Christians are in communion with divine thought; they participate, according to theologians, in the knowledge that God has of himself. And through love and charity, they love God with God’s very Heart. They are associated with the act through which God loves.

But there you are, we are so very used to all these formulae learnt off by rote in catechism, that nothing astonishes us any more!

And yet there are Christians who take these supernatural realities very seriously and who live by them.

Their faith is a passion for knowledge—of God and his thoughts. They endeavour to keep this passion alive and in progress through the meditation on the divine Word and through the attention they pay to what God wants to tell them in everyday events. Their young and alert faith becomes permeated with the ‘endless riches of Christ’. Its happiness shines through and is well expressed in these words from St John, “*And we know and rely on the love God has for us.*” (1 Jn 4, 16)

They work at loving God—all love is work or labour before being a possession. Gradually this love becomes the source of all their acts, it becomes the reason for living. “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (...) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*”

The moral of these Christians—because they do have morals, just not those of puny people—is the radiance of divine life, of the Love that dwells within them. It is to be found in Christ’s exhortation, “*Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (...) Be merciful as your Father is merciful.*” And St Paul puts it this way, “*Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children.*” (Eph 5, 1)

With these Christians there is no risk of suffocation. They are not imprisoned in moralism or legalism. They are free, free with the freedom of children of God. They make you want to want God! With them, you breathe in a breath of fresh air, the fresh air of God.

Golden Ring, n° 62, April 1955

Editorial, “Why are there so many failures?” Excerpts

.../...

We witness so many joyful departures so full of promise in life! And then, twenty years later, only failure...

.../...In the same way as a physical organism wastes away when its vital needs are unsatisfied, so too will a frustrated spiritual organism present similar symptoms...

.../...

In order for our love of God to remain alive, we need faith and a living knowledge of God, “And what is eternal life? It is *knowing* you, the only true God...”

Now the best way of having a living faith is to let oneself be permeated by the word of God that is living and creative. The Word, present for us in the mighty acts of God, the *Magnalia Dei*, has the power to awaken everything in us that is capable of admiration and worship. The Word makes our hope spring forth and by revealing the infinite love of God to us, makes the flame that Christ came to bring on Earth blaze in us.

It is not surprising that divine life (faith, hope and love) declines and is extinguished in those who forget to listen to their God who speaks to them!

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Postulator :

Father Marcovits, o.p.

Vice-postulator :

Marie-Christine Genillon.

Director of publication :

José Moura-Soarès

Editing Team :

Jacques & Marie-France Béjot-Dubief

THE FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

Law 1901 Association for the promotion of the Cause
of the canonization of Father Henri Caffarel

49, rue de la Glacière - (7^e étage) - F 75013 PARIS

Tél. : + 33 1 43 31 96 21 - Fax.: + 33 1 45 35 47 12

Courriel : association-amis@henri-caffarel.org

Site Internet : www.henri-caffarel.org

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