

# THE BULLETIN



# OF FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

LIAISON BULLETIN N° 5

July - August 2009

*Please note : In order to avoid confusion with the "Teams Letter,"  
"The Letter of Friends" of Father Caffarel is now "The Bulletin of Friends"*

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL  
49 RUE DE LA GLACIERE  
F-75013 PARIS  
[www.henri-caffarel.org](http://www.henri-caffarel.org)



## CONTENT

- Editorial : Father Caffarel's message on prayer  
    Maria-Carla and Carlo Volpini.....p. 4
- The Postulator's Report : Meeting with Pope Benedict XVI  
    Father Paul Dominique Marcovits, o.p.. .....p. 6
- State of the Advancement of the Cause  
    Marie-Christine Genillon ..... p. 8
- 2008 Association Financial Statement  
    Philippe Deney..... p. 10
- Archives : Article by Father Caffarel (« Anneau d'Or », 1964)  
    Marriage and the Eucharist ..... p. 12
- My encounter with Father Caffarel: A master of spiritual life  
    Father Roberto De Odorico..... p. 17
- Association of Friends of Father Caffarel,  
    Members of Honor..... p. 20
- Membership Renewal Form  
    To renew your membership for 2009.....p. 23

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **Father Caffarel's message on prayer**

Maria-Carla and Carlo Volpini



### ***The Kingdom of Silence***

*"Let us suppose that during mental prayer you are inclined to remain silent and immobile, close to the God whom you do not see, but whom you are sure is there. Words seem superfluous, far less explicit and true than the silence of your being, offered to the Lord's gaze. After concluding your mental prayer, you are at peace, and as though renewed. Then search no further. The Holy Spirit has introduced you into the kingdom of silence. »*

(H. Caffarel, Being Present to God : Letters on Prayer, n.83,  
Translated by Angeline Bouchard, ©1983)

Because we live with continual noise, we've lost the habit of silence. We've especially lost the ability to sense the voice of silence. Sounds of life drown out the voice of our inner being, so we must listen for it very carefully and with complete focus.

Being constantly subjected to life's noises has caused us to lose the habit of dialoguing with God. In fact, we've no sooner put ourselves in His Presence when we immediately begin an inner dialogue which often is limited to a monologue. In reality, we are generally ready to ask, but rarely ready to listen.

Sometimes we are afraid of the silence: we want to fill every moment with things and with words. If we have nothing to say, we think that it is because we don't know how to pray or to how to be with God.

It is completely the opposite: to be in the presence of God, in silence, is to be with God.

We might say: If the Lord is "God of Time and Father of Life," and if the Eternity which predates our birth and which will continue after our death is His alone, and if his Presence reveals itself in a constant yet invisible way in our daily lives - throughout history and in our own little life stories, then it is only in these brief moments and bits of silence amidst life's noise that we may come to know Him and to hear Him.

So, it is truly within this silence that we may encounter the Lord. A silence which does not lock us into immobility or passivity, but which gives us a foundation to worship, live, and act.

Father Caffarel understood this and he still teaches it to us today.

## The Postulator's Report

### Meeting with Pope Benedict XVI

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits , o.p.



Wednesday, January 28, 2009. Rome. Meeting of regional leaders from the all over the world. We were three hundred Team members, from all the continents. We attended an audience with Pope Benedict XVI. The magnificent “Aula Paul VI” is filled and everything proceeds according to schedule, with much joy and simplicity. At the end of the audience, the Pope, as is his habit, comes to greet the people who are in the front row of the assembly. First he greets the Iraqis, then the Togolese....

It was at that moment that the Pope approached Teams' international leading couple, Carlo and Maria Carla Volpini, and the international spiritual counselor, Father Angelo Epis. An exchange began and the postulator for the cause of the beatification of Father Caffarel, Father Marcovits, was then presented to the Pope. A bit emotional at being there, I had thought beforehand that I must be brief and state the essential. So I said, “Very Holy Father, Father Caffarel, it is: ‘marriage is a path to holiness.’” He responded: “My Father, where is the cause now?” I said, “The cause is instructed in Paris and it is moving forward.” Benedict XVI raised his arm: “But it is very important!” And I responded, “Yes, Very Holy Father, for marriage!” End of conversation. He continued greeting others in the front row.

I left there happy, blessed! The essential had been said. Teams and all the men and women who are associated with this cause received great encouragement there. For Teams, it was like another presentation to the Church following the one made to the Archbishop of Paris, Msgr André Vingt-Trois, who opened the cause. But, beyond this encouragement, there is a mission. We

ask for the beatification of Father Caffarel not for our own pleasure but above all so that the person and the thoughts of Father Caffarel may be known by the Church and by the world. The sacrament of marriage, brought to light by Father Caffarel as a path of life with God, is good news for us. How can we keep such a God-given treasure to ourselves? As Benedict XVI said, “It is very important!”

*(You may write him by postal mail, at the Association’s address, or by e-mail at: [postulateur@henri-caffarel.org](mailto:postulateur@henri-caffarel.org))*

**State of the Advancement of the Cause,  
of the work of postulation,  
of the theologians and historians  
and of the Diocesan Commission**



Marie-Christine Genillon,  
Vice-postulator

Here is some news on the state of the advancement of the Cause during the year 2008-2009. In fact, you were not given a report in the last bulletin.

During the year, the postulator and the vice-postulator have met seventeen new witnesses. They have also been given still more names of those who knew Father Caffarel, but the numbers of names coming in is starting to taper off. They will meet with them after the summer break. They very much hope to receive reports from witnesses who are not French-speaking; as well as simple personal accounts, alive in the spirituality of Father Caffarel, which attest to his reputation for holiness.

They are continuing the work of documentation: Marie Christine Genillon has gone through new files addressed to the postulator. She has gathered together and made a list of almost all of Father Caffarel's conferences, and Monsignor François Fleischmann has converted most of them to electronic format.

Various associated tasks are underway to complete the documentation to be presented to the historians who are currently working at the office of the Secretariat of the ERI (International Leading Team).

The theologians have received the essential published works of Father Caffarel. All the non-published documents will soon be assembled in order to be sent to them, electronically reproduced on paper or on CD.



Many people are working to put together files to be sent to the Diocesan Commission for study. In October 2008, the Commission reconvened to hear witnesses and was able to complete more than a dozen interviews with important witnesses during this past year.

So the work continues, with each participant in the advancement of the cause conscientiously and devotedly committed to achieving our goal.

## 2008 Association Financial Statement

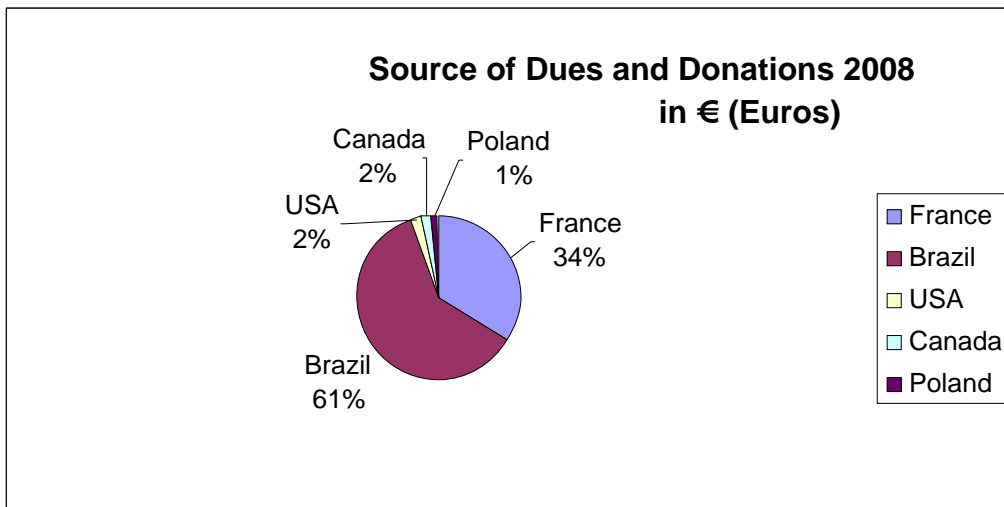
Philippe Deney  
Treasurer



As of December 31, 2008, the income and expenses of the Association were as follows :

<b>Expenses</b>	Budget	Actual
• Travel for witness testimony	5,000 €	2,697 €
• Office Expenses	1,000 €	1,354 €
• Postulation Team	15,000 €	7,888 €
• Secretariat reproduction assistance	10,000 €	5,618 €
Total	31,000 €	17,557 €
<b>Income</b>		
• Membership Dues	9,000 €	11,975 €
• ERI Subsidy	10,000 €	0 €
• Donations	3,000 €	1,237 €
• Fundraisers		1,734 €
Total	22,000 €	14,945 €
<b>Loss</b>	9,000 €	2,612 €

For the first year expenses exceeded income, which was comprised mainly of membership dues and donations. Even so, the actual expenses were less than budgeted. There are two main reasons for this. The Postulation Team did not function at 100%, especially since the Theologians and the Historians began their work later than originally planned. Also, a part-time secretary (Patricia) was not hired until September, although her wages were budgeted for all twelve months in question. Please note also that the total actual dues and donations were 10% higher than budgeted: 13,212€ actual, versus 12,000 € budget. Taking this information into account, it was decided not to request the annual subsidy from the Teams of Our Lady International Team and in the future to reassess it annually according to the advancement of the cause.



Most of the dues and donations for 2008 came from the two countries with the greatest numbers in terms of the presence of Teams of Our Lady: Brazil and France. Other countries have begun to get organized in 2008 and have appointed Association correspondents. This, we hope, will allow us to increase the number of members and their support for the cause. In fact, it is essential to be able to show that many people all over the world are attached to the person of Father Caffarel and hope to support our efforts.

It is therefore important that each member consider renewing your annual membership and recruiting new members. That is why you will find a form in each bulletin for becoming a member or for renewing your membership, which we invite you to send to other potential members.

## Archives

Father Henri Caffarel :

### Marriage and the Eucharist



*In connection with the orientation for the year: “Marriage, a sacrament for the journey”, suggested by the France-Luxembourg-Switzerland leading team, we have chosen this extract from the May-August 1964 special number of the Anneau d’Or, entitled: “Marriage, a way to God”*

*In view of the length of this article, we took the liberty of making a few cuts (indicated as follows: .../...).*

### **THE EUCHARIST “BUILDS UP” THE COUPLE**

Thanks to the graces it gives to each partner in a marriage, the Eucharist already contributes powerfully to the enrichment of your love between husband and wife and of all your family life; but it does so in a still more direct way by virtue of its unifying power, a power that earns it the name of “sacrament of unity”.

### **The Eucharist “builds up” the Church**

A little girl that I knew once said to her mother on the morning of her first communion: “I believe that Jesus will eat my soul”. Her child-like intuition, was singularly right; it tallied with Saint Augustin’s word in his “*Confessions*” when he attributes the following words to Jesus: “*I am the food of the strong; believe and you will eat me. You will not assimilate me to yourself, like your body’s food, it is you who will be assimilated into me.*”

We must acknowledge that Christians generally look at it differently. They imagine that the Eucharist is like our earthly bread of which we each receive a piece and go away. We do not take Christ to our individual homes. He refuses to be a party to our individualism. The sacrifice that he renews in all places and in all times is in order to unite his disciples in the one Church. Is it not rather baptism, you might say to me, that binds Christians to Christ and, therefore, unites them? This is only partly true. Saint Paul taught clearly to the Romans (Rm 6) that the true purpose of baptism is to make the recipient die to sin by being immersed in the death of Christ so as to live of a new life. It is true that, by this very fact, the baptised is then united to Christ, but it is the Eucharist that will complete this union. By the Eucharist, Christ binds himself ever more tightly to those who are baptised and transforms them, little by little, into what he is. By this very fact, having gathered them into himself, he unites them to one another. In this way, he fulfils the mission the Father has entrusted to him: “*to gather into one the dispersed children of God*” (Jn 11: 52). The Eucharistic communion creates the Communion of Saints, that is to say, of Christians, and makes of them one Mystical Body.

To teach the faithful about their unity in Christ brought about by the Eucharist, the Fathers of the Church liked to comment on the symbolism of bread and wine. Just as bread is made from numerous grains of wheat and wine from numerous grapes transformed into a unity, so the Mystical Body is made of numerous human beings brought into unity thanks to the Eucharistic Body of Christ. Saint Thomas said boldly: the Eucharist “builds up” the Church.

.../ ... Today, I would like to show you the role that the Eucharist plays within the cell of the Church that is the couple.

.../ ...

Why involve the Eucharist? Is it not the sacrament of marriage that unites a man and a woman and which contains the necessary graces for the deepening and sanctification of their union? If you ask yourself this question – and I understand that you should ask it of yourself – linking marriage with baptism can enlighten you. The latter makes a huge community of all Christians; but to be affirmed, to become alive, to grow, to reach perfection, this unity has an imperative need of the Eucharist. It is not enough to exist,

one must also take food so as to live and grow. The sacrament of marriage, for its part, unites a man and a woman ; but, for as long as it is deprived of the Body of Christ, their union will remain anaemic, without resistance and vitality. On the other hand, if it has recourse to the Eucharist, it will acquire cohesion, newness of love, dynamic growth and holiness; and will blossom and become a community of love and a communion of life.

Therefore, by its power to unite, the Eucharist “builds up” the couple just as it “builds up” the Church. It does so, not only in an indirect way by the graces it provides to each spouse, but directly in completing the union that the sacrament of marriage has created.

.../ ...

Jesus referred to the Eucharist when he said: “*The New Covenant in my blood*”. This covenant between Christ and the Church is renewed and celebrated at every mass. But it is also the covenant between Christ and individual Church communities, and therefore between Christ and the couple. Furthermore, when a husband and wife receive communion together, the covenant established between Christ and the couple on their wedding day is “re-actualised”, reactivated, renewed. Of course, when I speak of receiving communion together, I am not necessarily referring to communion side by side but to a spiritual togetherness. It is a matter of intention; but the more fulfilled this intention is, the better it obtains this strengthening and renewal of the covenant between Christ and the couple.

To say that the Eucharist tightens the bond and covenant between Christ and the couple is also to say that it inserts the couple more deeply into the Church. This is because we do not find Christ without finding in him all his brothers and sisters, the whole great community. It is true that, by the sacrament of marriage, the couple became a “cell” of the Church, but every time that the couple receives the Eucharist, the bond between the small and the great community becomes closer and the life-giving exchange richer. In the Eucharist, the couple acquires a more deliberate will to be at the service of the Body of Christ and to contribute both to its edification and to its up-building.

United to Christ, grafted into the Church, the couple lives of the life that Christ communicates to his Church. This life is charity. The inexhaustible source of charity is the Eucharist. In a couple fed on the Eucharist, all expressions of love (conjugal love, paternal and maternal love, filial love and fraternal love) become gradually purified, renewed, fortified and sanctified. But charity is not only a gift from God; it is also a human activity. It is not enough to receive this gift, we must also put it into action once we are back at home, each in his/her proper sphere and all together. We must remember Saint Paul's precepts: "*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus*" (Ph2: 5). "*Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in charity, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a flagrant offering and sacrifice to God*" (Eph 5: 2). "*Become slaves to one another through charity*" (Ga 5:13b). "*Let all that you do be done in charity*" (1 Co 16: 14).

Active charity between husband and wife, and more broadly between all members of the family, will bring about their union, their "communion" in Christ. This is not to be confused with getting on together or with a purely natural closeness. It is a divine action; it is the ultimate goal that a couple pursues in the home and in the Church; it is the action of the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity. It is creating in the family the "communion of saints" for which Christ prayed to his Father when he had just instituted the Eucharist: "*Father...may they be one as we are one...that they may all be one as you, Father, are in me and I am in you...that they may become completely one*" (Jn 17).

.../ ...

Allow me to suggest to you a prayer to ask God that the Eucharist may "build" your marriage, build your unity. It is the admirable post-communion prayer for Easter. Why not say it together when you have just received communion and you are side by side in church,?

*"Lord, put your spirit of love in us who have just been fed with the Pascal sacrament; may your love give us all one heart."*

## THE COUPLE LIVES ON THE EUCHARIST

If there is a reason why Christ makes his sacrifice present on the altar, it is so that you might offer it and associate yourselves with it; it is so that each one of you should open yourself to its sanctifying grace and so that, together, you allow him to make your union closer and more spiritually alive. But to remain at this point that we have reached would be to misunderstand the ultimate effect of the Eucharist. When all is said and done, the reason why Christ makes his sacrifice present on the altar, is so that he might become present and alive *in us*. What we celebrate in church has to be lived out in our daily life.

The act by which Christ offered himself once and for all on Calvary expressed the deepest state of his soul, the essence of his interior life, his joyful, permanent and ever lasting gift of himself to the Father. The reason why Christ renews this action at mass, that he invites you to participate in it, is that he wants his sacrifice to penetrate to the physical and spiritual depth of your marriage, so as to create in you also a permanent spiritual state of offering to the Father. Furthermore, it is so that you would let him relive his sacrifice in your marriage. You see, therefore, that Christ's sacrifice must not remain exterior but interior to you; the offering that you make of his sacrifice must not be a transient action but a habitual disposition: a life.

.../...

The couple fed on the Eucharist is as distant from a state of euphoria as they are from some tragic state, from hedonism as from Puritanism... An authentic Christian couple who feeds on the Eucharist have the mentality of the saved.

.../...

*"You will be my people and I will be your God"*, said Yahwe to the Hebrews. Christ who died and rose again says the same to the Christian couple. But for them, as for the Hebrews journeying in the desert, this "God with them" is a God who *becomes their guide* and who continuously leads them forward. ... But they have to follow.

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My conclusion will be brief, just one sentence: Marriage is an admirable invention of Christ so that the Eucharist may be experienced as a pair.



## **Testimony**

### **My encounter with Father Caffarel :** **A master of spiritual life**

Father Roberto De Odorico,  
Parish priest.

The first time I met Father Caffarel was on Easter Sunday. It was the sixth of April, 1980. I was taking advantage of the Easter holidays to experience the Triduum in the communities and monasteries of the Parisian Zone, in order to learn about its centers of pastoral activity.

I had been a priest for four years. I immediately recognized that I was face-to-face with a true master of spiritual life, a great connoisseur of the teachings handed down by the Tradition: he knew about the experiences and the thoughts of Christians who had lived in deep communion with God according to the spirit of the Gospels. He clearly outlined the Christian specificity of his way of viewing God, of being in communion with Him; he knew how to speak of forgiveness, of conversion, of prayer, etc.

I jealously guard the seven pages of notes taken in a journal during a long discussion with Father Caffarel. The first part concerns prayer as it is experienced during the weeks of prayer at Troussures: purpose, content and also method with which the weeks were organized, step-by-step. The second part of the discussion concerns the life of the Church, as it was at that time, fifteen years after the conclusion of Vatican Council II. I knew for certain that I had successfully captured the very heart of the nature, development and maturity of Christian spiritual life. I remained so awestruck by all this, that I decided right away that I wanted to personally experience a week of prayer organized by Father Caffarel.

Therefore I returned to Troussures from August 4th through 10th in that same year, 1980. There is an entire notebook containing the lessons I received

during the prayer meetings, the meditations, and the conferences of those unforgettable days.

I returned to Rome with a fair amount of bags of books, among them one which contained the well-known book “Being Present to God: Letters on Prayer.” The Ancora editions had published half of them in Italian, in October 1963, with a selection of 50 of the 100 letters, but the book had been out of print for a long time. It seemed important to me to make this book available to the Italian public again, and this time in its entirety. In a letter dated December 29, 1980, the director of the editions “Feu nouveau“ declared the rights of translation open, and therefore available, and she invited me to look for a good editor prepared to circulate the book widely. But that would prove to be more difficult than we expected. Among the many developments, there was the matter of a contract already signed by a big publishing house which was later torn up by the director, because Father Henri had asked to be allowed to approve the text before it could be published.

I always held on the dream of this publication, and finally, it came true in February 2008, two years after the opening of the cause of beatification in Paris.

While I worked on the translation, I sometimes looked at a photo of Father Henri and asked him to control the text himself, directly “from above,” so that his thoughts might be free of false interpretation.

I am happy now, because a part of what I received from Father Henri on spiritual life and on prayer life has succeeded in reaching many more people.



## Association of Friends of Father Caffarel

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<sup>1</sup> E.R.I : International Leading Team of the Teams of Our Lady

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Danielle WAGUET, collaborator and executor of Father Caffarel’s Will

**Postulator:**

Father Marcovits, o.p.

**Vice-postulator:**

Marie-Christine Genillon.

**Director of publication:**

Carlo Volpini

**Editing Team:**

Marie-France and Jacques Béjot-Dubief

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*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<sup>e</sup> étage) - F 75013 PARIS

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

Email address: [association-amis@henri-caffarel.org](mailto:association-amis@henri-caffarel.org)

Internet Website: [www.henri-caffarel.org](http://www.henri-caffarel.org)

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**A LA CAUSE DE BEATIFICATION DU  
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  - o Member / Benefactor : 25 € or more

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