

# THE BULLETIN



## OF THE FRIENDS OF FATHER CAFFAREL

BULLETIN N°25  
January 2020

ASSOCIATION DES AMIS DU PÈRE CAFFAREL  
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## EDITORIAL

Edgardo & Clarita Bernal Fandiño  
(*Responsible Couple, International Leading Team*)



### ALIGNING OUR FEELINGS

Dear Friends,

This edition of the Bulletin of the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel, the first of the year, coincides with the beginning of the new year 2020, where we wish each of you numerous blessings and a path of faith that will lead us every day, through the intercession of Mary, Our Mother, to be a faithful reflection of Christ's love in the environment in which we live.

The Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel comprises numerous members, both religious and lay, Team members and others, all sensitive to our Founder's message. Created in 2005, the aim of this association is to promote the cause for canonisation of Father Caffarel, to spearhead actions to enable his thinking, personality, spirituality and theology be better known and of course, to financially support the work of this cause.

With respect to movements, although Father Caffarel put great importance on the fact of belonging to a community and was convinced of the strength of mutual help along the path of faith, he was quick to point out the danger of confusing the sense of belonging with the true goal that unites and gathers us together.

In our service as the International Responsible Couple of Teams of Our Lady, we constantly immerse ourselves in the writings of this wonderful prophet of marriage. Several days ago, our attention was drawn to the message that Father Caffarel addressed to participants at the Teams of Our Lady training days in the Salle Pleyel, Paris, November 26 & 27, 1961. At the end of these two days, Father Caffarel challenged the participants saying,



***“Before we all leave, I have a question for you: what are you going to remember and take away from these two days?”***

***A new fervour, a greater enthusiasm? I hope so, but the essence is not there.***

***A better knowledge of the Movement, a greater attachment and devotion to Teams of Our Lady? I hope so too, but I do not hesitate to repeat, the essence is not there.***

***Great gatherings of Christian movements are more harmful than useful if their only outcome is that their members become more closely involved and attached. They are only justified if the fervour that they arouse, if the attachment they consolidate are finally a more fervent love of the Church and a stronger attachment to the Church.”***

At that time, Father Caffarel wanted every participant at those two days of training and formation to leave with a greater understanding of the Church, a stronger love for it and a more precise vision of the great event that was in preparation throughout the year that preceded the Second Vatican Council. With the laity as the active protagonists, Pope John XXIII hoped for a rejuvenation and a renewal of the Church of Christ, a renewal that involved also a new stimulus for Christian marriage throughout the world.

Father Caffarel told them, ***“As children of the great Catholic family, your feelings must be united and aligned with those of the Father of the family,”*** referring of course to Pope John XIII, the earthly father of that great Catholic family.

Fifty-nine years have gone by since, the world has undoubtedly changed, but for us Catholics, no matter what our charisma is and that of the Movement that encourages us, the problems that Church faces continue to be a threat that we can only tackle by **“aligning our feelings”** with those of our dear Pope Francis, by closing ranks around him to contain the outside currents that seek to destabilise the Church, as well as the currents within that seek to discredit his authority.

The renewal of the Church, that Pope John XXIII so desired and upon which Pope Francis is concentrating his efforts today, is seeking to be more daring, with greater insight, to become a Church that is closer, a merciful and supportive Church of all the realities that need to be healed, ensuring that Christ’s message reaches the confines, the existential peripheries and it is

there where each one of us has to measure up to the circumstances and answers that are expected of us.

May this be a very real goal for this year that is beginning, where we entrust ourselves to the protection of Our Mother Mary in order to be docile instruments to the will of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who unites us and summons us.

So be it.

Edgardo & Clarita Bernal Fandiño



**Benvenuto Tisi  
The Holy Family**

*A Word from  
The Editor of the Cause*

***Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.***

*Editor of the Cause for Canonisation  
of Father Caffarel*



One day, someone pointed out to St John Paul II that he canonised a lot. He replied that he was only obeying God, because “It is God who makes the saints.” Indeed, we know that the 20<sup>th</sup> century had more martyrs for Christ than all the preceding centuries. We also note that this century of iron, war and de-Christianisation has seen the birth of numerous saints, as if the Lord wanted to show us that the world is not just the kingdom of evil, but above all a land of hope. The parable of the wheat and the chaff describes very well the atmosphere in which we live: evil seems to grow amongst us, but holiness resists and is strengthened. It is in this context that the Apostle of marriage, the master of interior prayer takes his place. In order to give hope to those who move forward with difficulty, the Lord gave us Father Caffarel as a guide.

Asking for the canonisation of Father Caffarel is therefore a response to the Lord: He gave us an apostle and it is up to us to make him known so that the greatest number of people can discover his thinking, his wisdom and live by it.

Obviously, there is the work on the writing up of the cause and this is moving forward. But it is up to all of us to ask God to give us a saint recognised by the Church and that a miracle occurs through the intercession of his servant Henri Caffarel, thus showing his holiness.

Several files that have been sent to the Roman postulator highlight the fact that the Lord intervenes through Father Caffarel’s intercession. God does

indeed send *graces* for the good of those who pray by invoking Father Caffarel: a healing occurred, peace is made between people, an attachment to the Lord is strengthened... We can thank the Lord for these graces. But the *miracle* has not yet clearly appeared.

It is in this climate of insistent requests, in this gradual entreaty, in this desire to see Father Caffarel's message of love and prayer spread, that the Lord will answer our expectation and this miracle will occur that will open the path to beatification.

As editor of the cause for Father Caffarel, allow me to say that I have no doubt but that the Lord will answer us in a positive way. The world so needs to encounter a witness to God's tenderness, to listen to a priest moved by the love of God. But we must continue to ask, to ask... In doing so, we accomplish a fundamental mission in this world.

Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, o.p.  
Editor of the Cause



**Serving**

## News from the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel News from Brazil

In August 2018, we became the Responsible Couple for the Cause for Canonisation of Father Henri Caffarel in Brazil as well as being the Correspondent Couple for the Association. Our names are Afra & Hubertus (Beto) and we live in Brasilia. We have been married for 46 years and have been Team members for 30 years. We have two daughters and five grandchildren.

Here is some information about the main activities in the Brazil Super-Region for the first semester of 2019, where the main goal was to make Father Henri Caffarel's thinking better known and to promote his cause for canonisation.

Annual encounter of Team Responsible Couples: at all the encounters a video on the cause for canonisation or a presentation of Father Caffarel's thinking was shown.

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, anniversary of the first Teams' meeting, the Brazilian Teams held their monthly meeting, and thereby remembered and honoured the special moment.

Monthly Letter: The Monthly Letter is an ideal means to spread and promote the ideas and the Cause, and during this period, the following topics were treated in the Letter: Father Caffarel's ordination; the first Team in Brazil; Father Caffarel as a prophet of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Other Activities. One Region organised the Rosary to be recited for Father Caffarel and his Cause for Canonisation.

During the Spiritual Counsellors' Gathering, Carlos

Mertendal gave a presentation entitled, "Father Caffarel and Interior Prayer (Oraison)," and Father Geraldo Hackman spoke on "Father Caffarel's Theological Influence."



*Father Caffarel  
with Pedro &  
Nancy Moncau in  
Brazil, 1957)*

Afra & Hubertus (Beto)  
Correspondent Couple for the  
Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel in Brazil

**Serving**

News of the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel

### **Henri Caffarel – A Prophet of the 20th Century**

In 2001, Almira de Sampaio Pinto Saraiva (a member of Team 3, Sector B of the São Paulo Region) wrote a thesis entitled “Henri Caffarel, A Prophet of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” in order to obtain a Masters in Moral Theology from the Pontifical Faculty of Our Lady of the Assumption in São Paulo. The work, based on Father Henri Caffarel’s theological thinking, began with a brief analysis of the various periods of the Church since Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903), during which a gradual openness towards the laity appeared. This openness was more officially recognised with Vatican II.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the foundation and consolidation of different movements where the laity were the key players. In this world that lacked spirituality, Teams of Our Lady was founded by Father Henri Caffarel and four couples, and the great innovation there was the recognition of the importance of married spirituality.

In 1996, at the requiem mass celebrated for Father Caffarel, Cardinal Lustiger, called him “a prophet of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.” He used this title, because two questions marked and orientated all Father Caffarel’s works throughout his life: the first was the life of couples, family life and human love and the second had to do with the love of God and private interior prayer (*oraison*). These two preoccupations coalesced into a single intuition: the seeking of holiness. This kind of quest is as useful for couples in Teams of Our Lady as it is for people who dedicate themselves to private interior prayer (*oraison*).

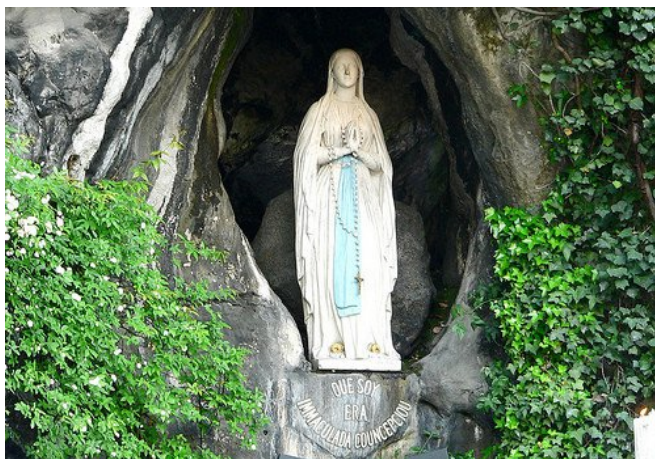
The first chapter of the thesis presents the historical and biographical context of Henri Caffarel, who lived his whole life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was a century marked by great events that he experienced intensely, the two great world wars and the Second Vatican Council, which he attended as an ardent advocate of the sacraments and sacramental morality.

The second chapter follows with the analysis of ten editorials [taken from *Lettre mensuelle des Équipes Notre-Dame, Monthly Letter of Teams of Our Lady*], ten letters [*Lettre sur la prière* and *Nouvelles lettres sur la prière*, not translated into English] and six articles [*Propos sur l'amour*, translated into English as *Love and Grace in Marriage*] written by Father Caffarel. His style varied according to the aims of the text. When he was writing an editorial that had a catechetical goal and one of formation, his language included references that were often rigorous and demanding. When he was writing letters, he used colloquial speech where the emotion was palpable and where he sought to be a friendly spiritual counsellor. His literary talent as a writer and poet was readily obvious when he wrote articles and prayers.



The third chapter analyses three documents that are of fundamental importance for the Teams of Our Lady movement. “*Ecclesia*” [Brazil, 1957] is a document where the operative word is to be found in its title, and where he analyses the Church from three angles (The History, Mystique and Mystery of *Ecclesia*). This document is a true ecclesiological treaty for married laity. The “*Chantilly Conference*,” (translated into English) given for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movement, is an analysis of the movement’s evolution since its beginning, with an emphasis on the founding charisma. *The Spiritual Testament* [Brazil, 1972] is a talk that deals with the essential points for the life of Teams of Our Lady, and proposes six topics that ought to be carefully thought about and reflected upon.

The fourth chapter deals with the text entitled, “The Highest Function,” [Mary and her vocation] written by Father Caffarel, where he proposes a way of studying the various stages in Mary’s life, showing that each one of them reveals an essential law concerning the spiritual growth of Christian life and of the people of God. In this chapter, the Marian name given to the Teams of Our Lady movement is corrected, because in truth, it is a movement focussed on Christ and placed under the protection of Mary, our mother and guide.



*1954, 1<sup>st</sup> International Gathering of Teams of Our Lady at Lourdes  
Teams are dedicated to the Virgin Mary.*

The fifth and last chapter demonstrates the great influence of St Paul in the life and work of Father Caffarel. This chapter was not initially part of the work, but over time, the research revealed the presence of Pauline theology. In accordance with Pauline requirements that emphasised the educational role, Father Caffarel taught, educated and formed couples through his editorials and various other writings.

There is a desire in all the chapters to show that for Father Caffarel the sanctification of couples through the sacrament of marriage, that is the founding charisma of Teams of Our Lady, is possible and worthwhile.

***Afra & Beto Slegers,  
Correspondent Couple in Brazil  
For the Association of the Friends of Father Caffarel***



## FATHER CAFFAREL'S ARCHIVES

### Father Henri Caffarel's Talk Given in São Paulo in 1962

*Hereafter is a translation of a talk given by Father Henri Caffarel in São Paulo in 1962; it is an excerpt from a book entitled, "Fazer E Viver. Eis o Desafio," ('Doing and Experiencing. Here is the Challenge,' untranslated in English) written by Maria Regina & Carlos Eduardo Heise, that is currently in the process of being copy-edited in Portuguese. Our gratitude goes to Afra & Beto Slegers, the Correspondents of the Association of the Friends Caffarel for the Brazil Super-Region for bringing it to our attention.*

*"It's not about how much you do, but how much love you put into what you do that matters." (Saint Teresa of Calcutta)*

*We want to dedicate this chapter to the complete transcription of a talk that Father Henri Caffarel gave at Santa Cruz College in São Paulo, in 1962, during his second visit to our country. It seems to us that this talk originated in Mother Teresa's citation mentioned above. The interest that it raised, the seeking out of the few copies that were duplicated and, above all, the importance that it represents for a better understanding of the ideal of Teams of Our Lady led us to publish it in its entirety.*

*This talk that had a great impact at the time is still relevant. It was a talk given to Liaison Couples and to Pilot Couples. But it is very valuable for all Team members, whether they are Liaison or Pilot Couples or not. Despite it*

*being a classical talk for the “formation” of these couples in particular, it is of great interest for each one of us Team members.*

*We would have liked to have annotated and highlighted different parts, but that could have partially distorted the author’s wishes. Nonetheless, let us draw your attention to two aspects, amongst many others, that stand out in this text.*

*The first is the emphasis that Father Caffarel gives to the verb “**to want.**”<sup>1</sup> Our Movement is made up of couples who want, who seek, who ardently desire. It is not for amateurs, as he said, but indeed for mature couples who are aware of their choice.*

*The second and not the least important aspect (according to us) is in the way he emphasises the understanding of “**the spirit**” as opposed to pure “**legalism**”, to “**doing**”, to “**accomplishing**” the rules, methods, pedagogy, rather than “**experiencing and living them**” and above all, with “**love.**”*

*We truly hope you enjoy reading this text and that you reap the benefits from it, as was the case for us.*

## **THE IDEAL IN TEAMS OF OUR LADY**

When a driver sees, on the right-hand side of the road, the warning on the road sign at the next crossing, they slow down and pay more attention. I wonder if we ought not to reproduce such a warning on the first page of the Teams of Our Lady brochure, that is given to people who might be interested in the movement.

Joining Teams of Our Lady is dangerous. And it is the Charter that currently represents the danger.

In the beginning we did not have a Charter. In fact, another danger threatened the Team members. The danger that threatens every movement in which there is a spirit, a mystique, but without the obligations<sup>2</sup> that help to live out and experience this spirit and mystique.

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<sup>1</sup> “People (whose interior and exterior sense are alive) can find satisfaction in situations that others consider to be an obligation or a boring duty. They do not need to do; they want to. They are aware of the thorns, but concentrate on the roses.” John POWELL, *Para Viver em Plenitude*, Editora Crescer, 4<sup>a</sup> edição, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Endeavours.



Today, thanks to the Charter, Team members feel that they are supervised and supported by the obligations/Endeavours. The danger would be to empty the obligations of their spirit. There are even couples who become attracted precisely by the idea of finding a rule in our movement.

What is to be feared is that the practice of the Rule becomes a goal, an ideal, a ceiling and that the Team members come to think that Christian perfection only consists in purely and simply respecting the obligations, which explains the easiness and possibility of attaining perfection by means of some effort, which explains the self-satisfaction, good conscience. The feeling of being a “just one”... Who does not see the danger in this state of mind?

Recently, I received a letter that proves that such a danger is not imaginary. It was from a couple who were 45 years old and who were of great human and spiritual maturity. This is what they wrote, “Furthermore, we are going to leave Teams of Our Lady. We felt stifled: we got the feeling that it was a closed world concentrated on the small problems of certain kinds of people from a certain background, of a world that did not want to see the true demands of the evangelical ideal... and following the Charter some days became a hypocritical screen that easily made us feel self-satisfied, leaving our eyes and ears closed to the problems of today’s society.”

More than once, as I have travelled through France, have I heard criticism of Teams of Our Lady: they have been accused of being closed, of making up a “clan of just and good people,” a “sect of pure people.” I am sure that the majority of Teams do not deserve this accusation. However that does not stop me asking myself the following scary question, “Will our Teams of Our Lady form Christians or will they produce Pharisees?”

## *II — How can we prevent this danger?<sup>3</sup>*

Although I am extremely conscious of the danger than threatens us, I must confess that I sometimes called into question our conception of the Movement.

Sometimes I wonder if it would not have been better to leave those six thousand couples without a Movement. Maybe they would have been great sinners, but undoubtedly they would have been more humble.

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<sup>3</sup> In the original text, paragraph ‘I’ is missing.

Sometimes I wonder if we ought not have settled for a Movement that would give a demanding mystique, an ideal to be attained, one that would be possible to get closer to, but that we could not achieve completely. The advantage of this would have been to always maintain a beneficial worry in our minds.

Or again, I wonder if couples ought to only stay for a few years in Teams. That would awaken in them the desire for an ever more Christian life; the guidelines for sanctification in secular life and in marriage would be offered to them, then the Team would disband. You do not spend your whole life in the seminary.

But in truth, I do not believe that the solution is to be found in innovations. The antidote to the danger that I analysed is to be found in the Charter. The first part of the Charter answers this question, Teams of Our Lady- Why?

Sometimes, we call this beginning of the Charter the preamble. I propose that we give up this name. Indeed, what is a preamble? The dictionary says, *"What is said or written before, in order to announce what comes after. The preamble of a decree, a law, the preface in which the legislator sets out the purpose of the new regulation."* A preamble to the Charter would specify the purpose of the Charter.

Yet, the first pages of the Charter are truly pages from the Charter and are not a preamble. The first part and not a preamble. The main part that defines the *raison d'être*, the purpose, the aim of Teams. The other parts define the means to reach this aim. Naming it in the preamble would run the risk of neglecting it. We do not always read the preface of a book. The preface is not the essence of a book.

This first part is undoubtedly the least original part and yet I insist that it is the most important. The least original. Fortunately, I would say, because it is dangerous to seek originality in this area. Indeed, the aim of this first part is to present a summary of Christian perfection for all Christian couples. Any couples' Movement that aims to lead its members to an ever more Christian life could fearlessly adopted this summary of married Christian spirituality.

What is original in our Charter is the means adopted to achieve the purpose that the first part shows us. Yet, it must be said that that this first part is the most important part. Without it, we could have all the rest, the means could be known, but the means would not guide or orient. We would have a car, but would not know the destination to reach and then the means



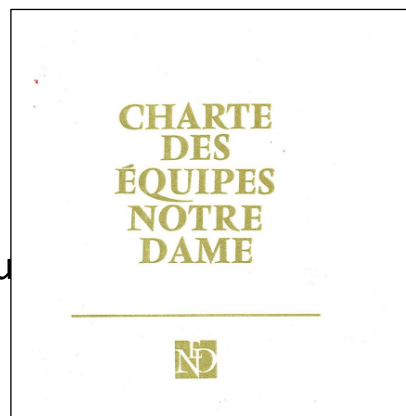
would become an end, and holiness would be nothing more than the perfect practice of the means. We fall back into the danger we perceived. Thanks to the first part, the means are oriented towards the perfection of Christian life and protect us from making them into the purpose.

### *III — An Annotated Reading of the First Part (of the Charter)*

#### *A – General Comments*

In the thirteen first paragraphs of this first part, the verb *“ils veulent”* (*“they want”*) appears eight times.

Actually, to be more exact, this expression is replaced twice by a synonym, but that is only because of literary scruples. Once, *“they intend”* is used instead of *“they want,”* and another time, *“they agree to serve without hesitation.”*



They want is very important. They proclaim: we cannot attain or manage to do ... but we are striving towards, we are determined to manage to do it. This word challenges the attitude of those who believe that they have managed, are up-to-date, are settled. This word challenges self-satisfaction. This word that appears like an insistent refrain is an admission of helplessness; if we strive towards something, it is because we have not yet arrived nor managed to do it. It is the secret spring that motivates everything that is done in Teams.

Note that it does not refer to a vague intention—the proverb says that the road to hell is paved with good intentions—but expresses a deliberate, voluntary, vigorous tension. *“They want”* and not *“They wanted”*; today they want. The tension that these terms express must never falter because the goal towards which one strives can become closer, but is never attained, because it is a question in essence of *“being perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect!”*

Whoever in Teams renounces progress, thwarts the fundamental commitment expressed by the words *“they want.”* Whatever the spiritual altitude reached, you must always strive towards more. What makes a being worthy is not the altitude they reached, but the momentum, the tension that moves them. This is what this word from the first part of the Charter expresses.

## *B – Layout of the First Part*

I have numbered the paragraphs of the first part of the Charter from 1 to 16 and I invite you to do the same.

### *1 – Personal Christian Life (paragraphs 1- 4)*

*“They intend to fulfil their baptismal vows.”*

For a Christian, the commitment of baptism is the fundamental commitment of their existence. All other commitments are nothing more than modest means to help fulfil this primary commitment: the scout’s promise, religious vows.

*“They give themselves unconditionally to Him.”*

This means renewing the commitment of baptism. For those who love, there is only one way of giving oneself, *unconditionally*. Whoever imposes a condition leaves the order of love and enters that of negotiation.

*“They are determined to live for Christ, with Christ, and in Christ. »*

*“For”* designates the aim: I work to earn money, I work for my children. The goal to reach is to reach Christ. In all acts. This does not prevent me from having an intermediary end as long as I am not in contradiction with Christ. I can work for my children, but that does not stop me from working for Christ.

*“With,”* in the company of, beside, in collaboration with. Christian life is a life together with Christ.

*“In,”* because of, *“Just as (...) I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.”* Christ will be the source of all my acts; he will be the soul of my soul.

*“They agree to serve Him without hesitation.”*

To love means doing the other person’s will, it means cooperating with their work, it means serving them. In our language, the word ‘serve’ does not contain the richness of meaning that it has in the Bible. Serving here means cooperating in the worship of God, with his work. This is the Messiah’s great title, “The Servant of Yahweh.” It is the title to which Mary aspires, “I am the Lord’s servant.” It is in this sense that the sentence I have just read, *“They agree to serve Him without hesitation,”* must be understood.

*“Members of Teams of Our Lady intend to fulfil their baptismal vows,”* but they also will receive another sacrament, marriage. And they intend to live and experience it in fullness.

### *2 – Couples’ Christian Life (paragraphs 5-9)*

*“They acknowledge Him as Lord and Master of their home.”*

This little cell of the Church, called the home, as John XXII reminded us in Rome, has Christ as its head. The father and mother are nothing more than Christ's representatives. Lord of their home: see in the word, "Lord," the biblical sense that amounts to "God." Christ tells couples the same thing that God in other times told the Jewish people, "I will be your God and you will be my People."

*"They base their family life on His Gospel."*

The Charter is the "fundamental rule," it is the dictionary definition. It is neither the code of good conduct, nor the code of good education, it is the Gospel that must be the Charter of the home, that everything must refer to. The Gospel, that little book that is a cause for anxiety, that frees from any desire to settle down and from any threat of self-satisfaction.

*"They want their love, sanctified by the sacrament of matrimony, to give glory to God,"*

Just as a masterpiece is the artist's glory.

*"To bear witness to men that Christ has redeemed love,"*

Thank you to those who seek to recognise it, "But then, love really exists!" Yes, the Christian home proclaims, because Christ came to save love.

*"and to atone for sins against the marriage bond."*

So many couples live and experience only ordinary, impure and unfaithful love. Teams' couples want to add a supplement of love, purity and fidelity to their homes to make up for the terrible deficit of love in so many other couples.

3 –Service to the Church (paragraphs 10-11)

The Christian home wants to be a cell of this great body that is the Church. But be careful that it does not become a cancer. Cancer refers to those cells who live to the detriment of the whole body.

*"They aim to be missionaries of Christ at all times and in all places."*

Mission is one of the great words of Christianity. The Father sends his Son among men, he bears a mission. Christ sends his apostles. The Church sends every Christian, every couple. And note the phrase, "*in all places.*" Indeed, it is at work, in moments of distraction, in public transport, in union activities, politics etc. that Teams of Our Lady members must consider themselves to be in service, bearing a mission and being constant in prayer.

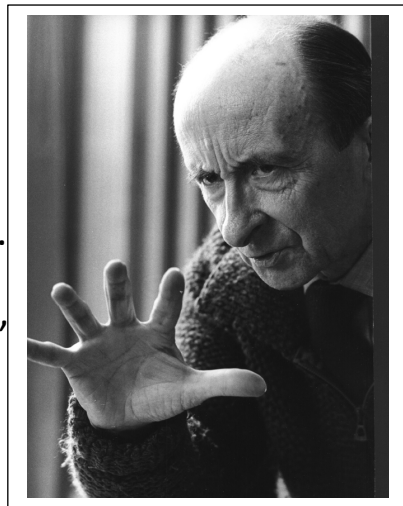
*"They wish to express their devotion to the Church by being always ready to respond to the requests of their clergy and bishops."*

Anxious to be called to cooperated with the hierarchy and the priests for the advent of the Kingdom, Teams' couples must be "always ready." But beware, this does not exempt them from being discerning in their devotion. It would be a mistake, under the pretext of devotion, to neglect the essential values of religious and human culture, the deepening of their conjugal intimacy and the faithful fulfilment of their duties as parents.

#### 4 – Service to the City (paragraphs 12-13)

Avoiding serving the City, or assuming temporal functions under the pretext of having an interior or apostolic life would be a lack of understanding of one's responsibility as a lay Christian. This is why the Charter states, *"They strive to be competent in their professional calling and daily work."*

From the worker to the statesperson, one must want to be perfect in their profession. Christ was undoubtedly the best carpenter in Nazareth.



*"They desire to turn all their activities into a collaboration with God in His work and in the service of mankind."*

The Charter therefore invites us to consider the temporal functions in their highest sense. It is not just about making a living.

Here then is the Christian ideal of the couple, presented in four paragraphs—Personal Christian Life, Couples' Christian Life, Service to the Church, Service to the City—that members of Teams of Our Lady want to achieve, or more precisely want to strive for. It is easy to see how unjust the accusation is of those who claim that in Teams of Our Lady we only think of marriage. This first part of the Charter clearly demonstrates our ambition to discover all the requirements of Christian life, to form an integral Christian.

Since we feel weak before this ideal, we rely on mutual support between couples; it is even, in a certain sense, the *raison d'être* of the Movement, hence the last sentences of this first part of the Charter.

#### 5 – The Purpose of Team Life (paragraphs 14-16)

*"Because they are aware of their weaknesses and limitations, because they experience daily how difficult it is to live up to the Christian ideal in our modern world, because they have unflinching faith in the power of fellowship and mutual help, they have decided to form themselves into Teams."*

#### *IV - Conclusion*

I was telling you that the best antidote against the danger of self-satisfaction for us is this first part of the Charter that lays out before our eyes the goal to be achieved. I believe that you are now convinced of this after the analysis that I have just given.

I cannot however hide my concern from you. It comes back to me insistently in the form that I described in the beginning: are our Teams going to form true Christians or produce Pharisees? It is a permanent danger, because we always run the risk of losing sight of the first part of the Charter in order to only see the obligations.<sup>4</sup>

There is an example in the religious history of humanity. A century before our era, frightened by Hellenic influence and the infiltration of Greek paganism, which threatened the purity of Israel's institutions and Jewish consciences, some deeply religious Israelites founded a spiritual movement. They were heirs to the great prophets. Like them they refused to make peace with the pagans and did not hesitate to face martyrdom. They multiplied the obligations in order to support their religious life, to find the means to reach a more perfect religion, they fervently hoped for the Messiah's arrival.

And when Christ came, they were the most impervious to his word, becoming his worst enemies. Christ was at his hardest with them, *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean."*

What is the explanation for this tragic failure? It is because they forgot the mystique, since they only preserved the obligations from their Rule. They fulfilled these obligations and were happy with themselves, and considered themselves to be righteous and in no need of a Saviour. When he came, they crucified him.

This tragic story could become the story of any spirituality movement: if our rule, if our Charter does not succeed in making us acquire an acute awareness that we are sinners, unable to save ourselves, it runs the serious risk of turning us into Pharisees, the people cursed by Christ.

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<sup>4</sup> Endeavours.

I can offer you an infallible test to check whether the evil of Phariseeism has already contaminated you. After a few years in a Team, do the couples have the feeling that they are sinners, vulnerable and threatened, more so than when they entered the movement? Are they afraid? Do they despair of themselves? Do they turn to Christ the Saviour with a greater hope than before?

The only way for your Teams, the only way for each couple to escape this danger is to compare life itself often to the first part of the Charter. Then they will become fully aware of the distance that separates them from perfection; then they will be unable to stop renewing the will to reach this perfection; then they will be able to count on the grace of Christ and not on their own selves.

May the Virgin Mary, to whom we pray together every night, obtain for all Team members the grace of graces: that of being humble, or in more biblical terms, of being “poor in spirit.”

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Canon Henri Caffarel

## 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*

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- And I(we) remit the annual dues of:

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