



Testimonial XII International Gathering of Equipes Notre-Dame
Fatima, July 16th-21st, 2018

My participation in the XII International Gathering of Équipes Notre-Dame constitutes a very significant gift of grace. With thousands of couples from very varied cultures and languages I experienced the apostolic dimension of the Catholic Church that is called to be more and more united and holy.

Numerous moments in the programme, illustrated and illuminated by the parable of mercy, by the Father of tenderness (Lk 15:11-32) renewed us in forgiveness and reconciliation, as a great sign of love.

This gathering confirmed Father Henri Caffarel's style and wish, when in 1954, he wrote, *"It is one of the joys, one of the proudest chapters of our generation to have, if not discovered, at least realised the grandeur of the creation of marriage."* The whole programme of prayer, meditation, friendliness, meeting was demonstrated in this great Gathering of gatherings.

Indeed, under the protection of the Virgin Mary of Fatima, we heard testimonials of thousands of Team members to the beauty of marriage and families. Marriage and the family as a precious gift from God, and at the same time, a vocation and mission specific to human beings.

Just like Pope Francis, we experience joy, *"The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church."* (AL 1). We thank God most deeply for Équipes Notre-Dame, for their positive attitude and their propositions to renew the conjugal and family pastoral in the face of the difficulties and challenges that today's couples and families have to tackle and overcome.

Magnificat!

Braganza, December 29th, 2018, Feast of the Holy Family

José Manuel Garcia Cordeiro
Bishop of Braganza-Miranda