

### From the Regional Couple



Winter in Canberra is rolling into spring and we hope that you have all enjoyed a winter without too much illness and warm hearts, if not warm fingers. Anna and I have been “knee deep” in renovations and even with all proceeding well we are ready for completion to arrive quickly.



We have had many positive responses to our first newsletter, thank you. It's also time to bring you up to date with what your Regional Team has been up to and where we have progressed to, with respect to our aims

Just to recap, our aims as Regional Couple, are twofold, to strengthen the couple within the individual Team, and through that Teams as a whole. Secondly, to reach out to newly married couples and offer them the gift of Teams. As you may recall we have four main themes of endeavor through which we will be focusing our efforts. These were described as “Our Purpose” in the last Magnificat, and I intend to use them as the topic structure for bringing you up to date in this newsletter.

***\*Raise awareness of the strong common voice of the faithful within Teams.***

This particular endeavour has been a common theme throughout other Teams and the Melbourne Conference was a very good example of Teams coming together in a common voice. In particular, Fr Brennan gave us a step through of the German Bishop's response to the Synod on the Family and an analysis of that input against Pope Francis' “Evangelii Gaudium.” Interestingly, I don't think one would find to large a disparity between their input and any other Teams Region. But it does highlight the potential influence of Teams. More can be read about the outcomes of the Teams Conference in Melbourne, on the Oceania website.

Closer to home Anna and I, with Faye and Kevin Noonan, attended a meeting to meet the new Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Archbishop Christopher Prowse. We quickly discovered that Archbishop Prowse has been a spiritual advisor in Teams in past days and is therefore no stranger to the movement and its principles. Suffice to say His Lordship was very welcoming and supportive of Teams in his Archdiocese and some of the ideas discussed will be covered later in the newsletter.



***\*To discuss our capacity for enhancing our Team and Teams relevance within our community***

An interesting observation has been that we in Teams are so comfortable in our faith-rich environment, in our practice of spirituality and mutual faith development, that we talk about Teams in the terms of “married spirituality.” Our present day society and future generations are not necessarily on the same vector. So what? We believe the missing ingredient for younger couples is connection; real connection at an inner human level and a means to gauge one's own experiences in life and to be able to value them in mutual development.

To that end, we are attempting to encourage all of us to discuss how this can be achieved, at not only the couple level, but also at the Team and Regional level. Our capacity for enhancing Teams relevance within our community relies not only on our being able to express our experience of Teams in the language of today's

community but also to bring that experience to others. Piloting provides us, in a very practical way, with not only the experience to verbalise what Teams means to us but also a way to demonstrate Teams to others through a journey of guided self-discovery. Hence our recent email letter of request to you all, to consider being a pilot couple. We also attached a small document with this email called "Choosing to pilot a new Team." We would ask you to give this important aspect for Teams considerable heartfelt consideration.

***\*To explore ways in which we can all work together to lead and develop this strong common voice and spirituality (by drawing on the key elements of Teams).***

Developing a strong common voice requires a very essential ingredient and that is to have a common voice. We intended to start this by visiting each team on their respective Teams meeting night. We have managed to get to two Teams meetings, the second of which was a combined meeting for two Teams, thanks to an invite to join them for the evenings. Anna and I enjoyed the opportunity to be able to get to know the couples better and exchange ideas and thoughts. It was certainly an experience we valued. The realization has struck home that we were rather hopeful in expecting to share a Teams meeting with each Team in the Region, this year. We have not waned from this intent but we are developing a sense of reality around achieving this task.

As this is taking more time than expected, we have asked each couple in our Regional Team to take on a Team or two and act as liaisons with you. The objective is to keep in touch and open up a conduit for information and support across the region. Also we hope that this will be an avenue for you to participate in the direction and development of our region and Teams in general. The idea is to open up from our individual Team family into a Teams community, which has a sense of active interaction.



As mentioned earlier our meeting with Archbishop Prowse led to a very informative discussion. An idea aired at the meeting was that of celebrating a "marriage" day at the Cathedral. As well as a mass to celebrate the day, it would also encompass an event after mass where the public can interact with representatives from the many organisations involved in the support or development of marriage. It was noted that we already have a Valentines Day event and the two are intended to remain mutually exclusive.

***\*Develop a foundation and direction for renewal (formation) of our individual participation in our Teams for the period ahead.***

Another idea discussed revolved around spreading Teams to the regional country areas. The objective is to foster community on the foundations of the Teams approach. The intent would be to take piloting of Teams into Yass, for example, so as to provide a means for spiritual and marriage community support and growth in country areas. This is an idea which we think has great merit and we are considering this activity to be a downstream task of the present piloting of teams in Canberra; growth from each bit of progress but taken one step at a time.

It has been interesting to observe that with each step we try to take in strengthening and growing Teams in our region, the fundamental parts of the Teams process are each a foundation block for filling a need in our community. Teams is a point of leverage which can be applied to develop community, experience a sense of spirituality in our lives and build relationship out of a solid inner belief. For example, using Teams' capacity to be inclusive of spiritual advisors in the married couple life experience leads directly to a better understanding by the Church of what it means to

be married and what it takes, sometimes from a personal level, to make marriage work. This is something the Archbishop wants his priests to understand and experience through Teams. In order to foster more involvement by his parish priests he has given his full support to, wherever possible, encourage providing teams with spiritual support and for the priests, a social involvement at a married couples level. This I believe fits in well with the intent of the Holy Father to increase understanding of family and married life.

As you may be aware the Oceania Team is undertaking a Teams Formation Retreat in Melbourne from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of August. This retreat is aimed at couples from all regions in Australia and is sponsored by the individual regions. The aim is to develop in the attendees a sense of the capacity and the capability of Teams and what it can offer to the community and married couples in general. We are hoping for a small article on the outcomes of the Retreat in the next newsletter. We pray for every success to this excellent venture.

Yours in Teams

*Anna and Tony*



## **Instalment 2 of the Regional Formation Day Content**

Anna and I hope you find these next two topics as useful as the last. We've had a lot of positive feedback and were gratified to hear that the last topics were so useful to our Team members. These next two, also from the Formation day content, follow on from those in the last Magnificat. The process for using the content is the same and is self-explanatory. The twist, as you'll see, is in topic 3. So I hope you've kept notes along the way. Enough said follow the plot.

### **Introduction to Topic 2 - Endeavours**

I read last years Teams Oceania magazine again recently. There were quite a few things that struck a chord with what we have been thinking. One of these was 'The Teams Movement and its Beginnings in Australia' by Max and Stephanie Charlesworth in consultation with Greg Armstrong. On the last page, I underlined this sentence –

*....the opposite danger to too much centralization is that of dispersion, dilution and dropping out.*

So, how do we avoid that? We need to be generous with our time and energy in the local movement and we need to strengthen our individual Teams. And here I'm going to quote from an article by Penny and Peter Cahalan, from SA Teams –

*Strong groups have a clearly defined purpose or meaning and a practice or action that is clearly related.*

What is the purpose of Teams? Here's a little gem that I dug out of a hardcopy of a booklet published by the Australasian Super Region in 1999 –

*Developing a spirit of prayer and an ability to communicate,  
Expanding our self-knowledge,  
Learning to respect others and to affirm their worth,  
Increasing our desire for communion with those around us,  
All these, thanks to the methods of Teams,  
will lead us to be a...hope-filled presence in the world.*

I'm sure we could all contribute our own ideas on the purpose of Teams, but our aim today is to strengthen our Teams, by taking another look at the Teams practises that define us; Sharing and the Endeavours. We have already spoken about Sharing and now we're going to look at the Endeavours. Once again, I'm going to quote from a Teams publication:

*The strength of a Team is reflected in its attitude to the Endeavours, as these shape and constitute the Teams way of life. Experience has shown that the difference between the development or decline of a particular Team is the willing acceptance of the Endeavours.....*

Why have a list of Endeavours? Well, otherwise, not much happens. Broad guidelines are liable not to get off the ground unless applied in some specific ways. This is your challenge. What are some specific approaches to the Endeavours which will work in the very individual nature of your Team?

# Leader Guide for Discussion Groups – Topic 2

## Guiding the Sessions (Time allowed 30 mins)

Focus on structuring your time to cover both **Discussion** (20mins) and **Reflection** (10mins). Discussion component is a group activity.

**Ensure you record the key points** (need them in Feedback session).

Reflection component is on the discussion and is a couple activity.

**Ensure couples advised to take notes** (they'll need them later!)

A presenter is nominated from your group – “it does not have to be the discussion leader”  
Use the record of key points to guide the feedback given to the assembly.

## Topic 2 – Endeavours

### The Endeavours

Listen	Listen regularly to the Word of God.
Personal prayer	Set aside each day a time of quiet encounter with the Lord.
Couple/family prayer	Pray together as a couple and if possible, as a family
Sit-down	Find time each month for an in-depth dialogue between husband and wife.
Rule of life	Adopt a rule of life and review it monthly.
Retreat	Make a retreat each year as a couple.

### Questions you may wish to consider as a guide or aid to discussion.

What is their purpose?

Which Endeavours do you have the most success with? Why?

Which Endeavours do you have the most trouble with? Why?

How could you apply your success with some Endeavours to the ones you have trouble with?

Can you think of a time when words from the Bible were particularly relevant?

Do you have trouble finding quiet time for prayer & deep discussion with your spouse? Do you think your life would be better if you could?

## **Introduction to Topic 3 - *My Plan for the year.***

“Strong groups have a clearly defined purpose or meaning and a practice or action that is clearly related to that.” Through sharing we find that meaning and purpose. Through the endeavours we have the way to practice and action that.

Today has been about exploring two core fundamentals to Teams which we believe are essential in strengthening the couple and also your Team. By reflecting on all you have heard and contributed we now want you to go to a quiet spot again and as a couple;

1. Look at how you as a couple and your Team use and do the sharing and the endeavours.
2. Identify what could be done to improve sharing as a couple.
3. Identify how this can be tied into living the endeavours and the formulation of your rule of life.
4. What do you feel might or does stop you from doing (2) and (3) above?
5. Draw up a skeleton plan of what you might do to implement these improvements.
6. Add notes on how you might overcome the “bumps in the road” you identified at (4).
7. Do the same for your Team.
8. Spend the sit down over the next week or so to fill in the detail on your couple and Team plan (We would suggest they are probably the same).
9. Make it a year plan and keep your notes as a reference.

We suggest you might consider the components of your plan to be your rule of life throughout this year and use sharing and the endeavours to bring your plan to life.

During the year the Regional Couple will call on you to see how things are progressing. We will use your notes and plan, as a means of review and discussion to refresh your spirit along the journey.

### **The Task –**

*Work as a couple.*

*Discuss, Reflect and Develop a key points of action for renewal and strengthening.*

# Leader Guide for Discussion Groups – Topic 3

## Guiding the Session (Time allowed 35 mins)

Feedback is to yourselves for the Couple outcomes and in your capacity as RC, to your Team.

## Ensure you record all key points.

These will act as a reminder or checklist to help you along the path.

The Regional Team will also use your work today as a way of assisting your progress.

## Topic 3 – My Plan – Rule of Life

1. *Reflect and discuss how you as a couple and your Team use and do the sharing and the endeavours.*
2. *What do I feel can be improved?*
3. *How can I achieve the improvements?*
4. *What will stop me from achieving?*
5. *Make notes on how you might overcome the “bumps in the road”*
6. *How can I overcome them?*
7. *Discuss your approach for doing this.*
8. *Make a plan. - Draw up a skeleton plan of what you might do to implement these improvements and include your thoughts on how to overcome the bumps.*
9. *Do the same for your Team.*

## Using the endeavours:

10. *Spend “the sit down” over the next few weeks or so to fill in the detail on your couple and Team plan. (We would suggest they are probably going to be the same).*
11. *Make it a year plan and keep your notes as a reference. (A step approach is best as it facilitates time to encourage the doing and practice to strengthen the improvement.)*
12. *Identify how these steps can be tied in with the endeavours and your rule of life (Use the endeavours as a support to bringing into practice these step changes and the Rule of Life as the guiding focus to bring the improvement into your daily living.)*
13. *As RC, bring the “Team Plan” to your Team. (You may wish to follow steps 10 to 12 in the Teams environment or you may consider using your work today as a basis for taking the Team on the same journey.)*

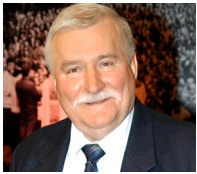
And finally Decide to **DO IT**.

## Can one person make a difference?



On December 1, 1955 an African American woman called Rosa Parks, a seamstress, was travelling home on a Montgomery City bus. During the trip she was asked to give up her seat for a white person. She was arrested under the laws of segregation, known as the Jim Crow laws, for not giving up her seat. The long and the short of it was that she appealed her conviction and thus formally challenged the legality of segregation.

At the same time a local civil rights group called the Montgomery Improvement Association organised a boycott of the bus company. Their leader was Martin Luther King Jr. Later when Martin Luther King Jr was asked what inspired him he said, "Rosa Parks".



Separate to the issues in the USA, a young Polish unionist called Lech Walesa in 1988 challenged the establishment when against expected odds he won a debate about Solidarity as an approach to handling the issues in communist Poland. The final outcome was dramatic: the largest Soviet "satellite" in Eastern Europe achieved a non-communist head of government. When asked what inspired him Walesa said, "Martin

Luther King".

Originally a supporter of Gorbachev, Yeltsin emerged under the perestroika reforms as one of Gorbachev's most powerful political opponents. On 29 May 1990 he was elected the chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet. On 12 June 1991 he was elected by popular vote to the newly created post of President of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (SFSR). In all Yeltsin remained in office from 10 July 1991 to 31 December 1999. It is reputed that when asked what inspired him he said, "Walesa and Solidarity".



Every encounter in life has a reason and an affect, we just don't always know why or what!

God Bless