

OCEANIA NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021/22

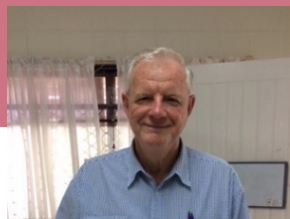


Loving God of Families.

Thank you for your continued presence with us in 2022.
As we see and face ongoing pain and loss give us strength and
hope that an end to this pandemic is in sight.

We ask for your gentleness, patience, creativity and energy as
we reach out and nurture within our families, our teams and our
world.

We make this prayer through Mary to God our loving parent,
incarnate One and Spirit of Truth.



FR. GARY WALKER - OCEANIA SPIRITUAL COUNSELLOR

The image of Mary and Jesus, mother and child, is beautiful. We have pondered paintings of Mary and Jesus through the centuries from the early Christian times to the present. Paintings reflect more than words, they are to be savoured and reflected upon; we try to discern what the artist is trying to say to us about the subject.

I was brought up with devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at school. Our image in the newsletter is different and reflects the changing view of Mary these days. Our Lady of Perpetual Help is formal, the image of Mary in the newsletter is flowing with colourful motifs in the background suggesting Oceania art.

The Church is now universal.

The mother and child show the acceptance of local culture and values especially since the Vatican Council, about 60 years ago, encouraged people to express their faith according to their own norms and cultural values.

Therefore, this painting of Mary and Jesus shows how we see Mary and Jesus differently according to our own heritage but we still express the same faith in Mary as the Mother of God.

Our paintings of Mary have mostly been portraits of a calm, not placid, woman, one whom we can approach in confidence, a woman who is welcoming and understanding, one who has experienced the joys of life and its sadness, even its tragedies.

The International Teams study topic on Mary has been a work of our local understanding of Mary: who she is and what she has done.

It will be interesting for us this year as to exchange our insights and thoughts about her role in the life of Jesus and our lives.

I look forward to it.

(The Study Topic will be available to all Teams members in September 2022)



WELCOME PETRA BALL AND TERRY MCDEVITT INCOMING OCEANIA COUPLE

Petra Ball and Terry McDevitt married in 1991 and have been in an Adelaide-based Team since early 2001. They were expecting their third child at the time and know how enriched their couple and family life has been as members of Teams. “The deep friendships, support and spiritual insights that are the hallmarks of our Team are valued by all of us – but of course, that is the experience of anyone in Teams” says Petra. “Our kids have grown up now, but our marriage journey keeps going – Teams is an integral part of it”.

Petra and Terry have enjoyed their earlier leadership roles, saying the Templestowe formation/retreat they attended in 2014 was a great guide to deeper Teams life and the wider Movement and provided support for their taking on a Sector Couple role and coordinating on various Teams events in SA over the years. They were SA NT & WA Regional Couple 2019-2021, then accepting the nomination to the Oceania Responsible Couple role for 2022-2026.

Petra works to raise awareness of the rules that aim to limit suffering in armed conflict, international humanitarian law. Terry is a former health worker, and for the last 20 years, has taught philosophy, religion and wellbeing to young people in Catholic and Independent schools.



FAREWELL FROM CHRIS AND JOHN DIGHTON - OUTGOING OCEANIA COUPLE

As we leave this role of Oceania Couple after five years, there are many things we are grateful for, including:

belonging to a movement that values love between couples; a willingness to grow with our partners with the help of a Sit Down and Spiritual Reflection; to express our own sadness and stress to our own Team and know that we can trust them and that we have their support; to be witness to the couples in our Team who have sadness and troubled times and know that they trust us; that we share our food, our prayer and our laughter; that we belong to an international movement where we can meet with Teams couples across the world and feel an immediate bond and comfort; that we are small communities within the church that have much to offer.

Thanks to the Oceania Team we have been so fortunate to be with over the past five years: Angela and Ron Waanders, Anna and Tony DiPietro, Marnie and David Watts, Fr. Bob Wilkinson, Susie and Tim Jones, Fran and John Whelan, Cath and Bob Dixon, Genevieve and Tim Power, Petra Ball and Terry McDevitt, Meuris and Claude Gonsalves, Jane and Phil Bretherton, Helen and David Gill. Thanks to Oceania Liaison Couples Sue and Adrian Fordham (Philippines), Bren and Sue Milsom (Timor Leste) and Penny and Peter Cahalan (NZ). Thank you to Penny Cahalan (newsletter editor), Anne and Kevin Taylor (website) and Bren Milsom/Peter Cahalan (facebook) for your communication support.

Thanks also to the Eurasia Zone Liaison Couples, initially Helena and Paul McCloskey and then Faye and Kevin Noonan. We want to particularly thank Fr. Gary Walker, the Oceania Spiritual Counsellor, for his guidance and wise words when needed using his skilled humour. A support team like we had is a joy and a blessing.

We also thank those Regional Couples who are completing their four years in the role – Genevieve and Tim Power (ACTNSW) and Cath and Bob Dixon (VicEast).

Our communities need teams. We hope and pray that we can all find ways to build the enriching and powerful movement.



WELCOME TO JO AND CHRIS ADEY SA/NT/WA

We began our Teams life when we joined SA Team 12 in 2003.

Since then we have done the usual rotation through the Responsible Couple role, but it was the Oceania formation/retreat in Melbourne in 2016 that opened our eyes to the wider Teams movement. Because of this we felt comfortable accepting the role of Sector Couple for the East-West sector in South Australia in 2018. It was with some excitement and trepidation that we then accepted the role of Regional Couple for SA/WA/NT. During 2020/21 we began re-establishing Teams in Darwin, with the support of Bishop Gauci.

We are parents to Dan, Jono and Julz [aged from 35-41] and grandparents to 8 'grandies'. We began our working lives as teachers: Jo in the state primary school system and Chris in Catholic secondary schools. However, we both moved out of education, with Jo working as a receptionist/administration at Uniting Communities, and more recently, catering. Chris went back to uni to become a physiotherapist before retiring at the end of 2016, to take up babysitting of our younger grandchildren 4 days a week!

JO AND CHRIS ADEY CONTINUED...

On a more personal level, Jo enjoys cooking, quilting, Sudoku and has re-discovered cycling. Chris enjoys crosswords, running and cycling. He also returned to [Aussie Rules] goal umpiring in 2017 and plans to continue for the foreseeable future. We are looking forward to the next four years, to their challenges but also their rewards, and we see the growth of Teams in our Region as one of our priorities.



WELCOME TO ROULA AND JOHN TANNOUS ACT/NSW

We have four children, Chris, Celine, Jacob and Jayde and have been married for 19 years. We met in Lebanon. John was born and lived in Australia. During his young years he turned back to the Catholic Church and felt a calling for the religious life, so he travelled to Lebanon. He entered the Lebanese Maronite Order to start his novitiate and after three months he felt that this was not the reason he was called to Lebanon. My (Roula's) brother was at the same monastery that John was placed in. Cutting a long story short I was introduced to John by my brother and he asked me to show him Lebanon as he was alone and could not speak Arabic. With hesitation I did, and well one month later John made up his mind that the religious life was not for him so he left the Order. John felt it was not his calling and we started dating. One year later after travelling from Lebanon and Australia we got married in August 2002.

We have been part of Teams Oceania for 15 years. We are part of Team Grace.

We have also been the Responsible Couple for the Sydney Sector team for the past two years and are now starting a new Team in our local parish. This year in 2022 we have been selected to be the NSW/ACT Regional Couple.

A benefit we gained from Teams is it helps us to communicate better as a couple. We have also been blessed to have met Team members across Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines at the Oceania formation/retreat in 2019. Meeting Team members across Oceania has been a blessing to know we are all likeminded people wanting to have a marriage rich in spirituality, which brings us together united in deepening our faith in the graces and living the sacrament of marriage.

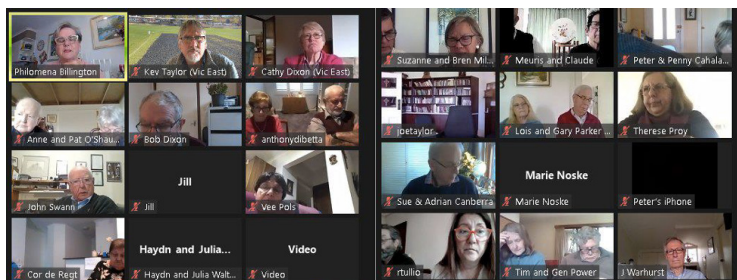
OCEANIA GATHERING SEPTEMBER 2021



It was great to see so many people join into the Oceania Virtual Gathering on September 18. It was an incredible and concerted effort by the ACT/NSW Region and the Oceania Team to plan and present a great event. Thanks to all those involved on the day by presenting, coordinating, and ensuring that the IT worked.

For you who attended, and for others who weren't able to participate, we are attaching a link below to the Oceania Website. We have had many requests following the Gathering from members wanting to listen to the presentations again and have a closer look at the photos displayed on the day.

Go to the Teams Oceania website and select "Oceania Gathering" to view recordings of the guest speakers, the welcomes and the opening and closing Liturgy.



OCEANIA TEAM MEETINGS IN 2021

The Oceania Team met twice in Adelaide during 2021 in April and December. It was fortunate that some members could come in person - Gen and Tim from ACT, and Cath and Bob from Melbourne and Jane and Phil from Bendigo. The other members - Fr. Gary, Meuris and Claude and Helen and David joined through Zoom. It was the best we could do in these COVID times. In the December meeting we were fortunate that Faye and Kevin Noonan, Liaison Couple, were able to join the Team in Adelaide with special guest Mons. Frank whom they picked up in Bendigo.

REFLECTION ON TRAVELS TO SA IN TIMES OF COVID! FROM CATH AND BOB

Picture this: two cars join the queue moving across the Vic/ SA border heading towards Adelaide. The second car (with a couple from Bendigo) is quickly waved through, but they cannot move because the car in front, having come from a level 3 COVID area, has many more hoops to jump through.



That evening the Oceania Team has gathered in the garden of the Adelaide home of Chris and John Dighton. As the sky darkens into night the Team is entertained by VicWest couple (Jane and Phil) telling the story of the hold up at the

border by the difficult car whose occupants were arguing with the authorities about the terms of entry. Those occupants were us, Cath and Bob from VicEast. This is another moment of great laughter.

We are spending this evening, the first part of the twice-yearly Oceania meeting, enjoying a pizza, sharing our lives, our concerns, and our hopes and dreams for Teams in each of our regions, united in faith and our common understanding, experience and language of Teams. There is a moment when the sacredness of this evening's experience strikes us all. There is a moment of silence, as we look around the group, making eye contact with each other and allowing the Spirit that has drawn us together to be honoured with gratitude. "Who would not want to share this with others?" says one of our group.

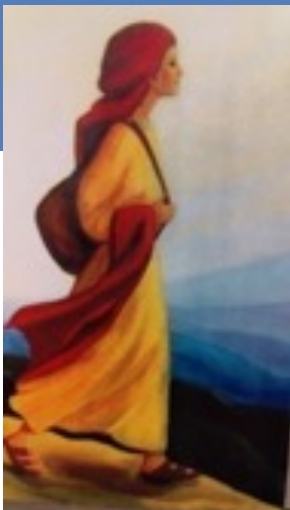
As Teams members we **know** what it is to be nurtured and sustained by the unique charism that Teams creates and evokes. And it **is** worth sharing.

However, we are also facing a time of discernment when we need to read, again, the signs of the times. As Pope Francis has said, we are facing a change of era, not just an era of change. The language and practices of Teams may not be speaking so directly to the experience of couples today. We believe that there is a hunger for nourishment and exploration and support of relationship and spirituality, just as there was when we joined Teams. But how that hunger is met could be very different now. How does Teams in the 21st century and in a secular country like Australia look?

Within the VicEast region many of our members are being widowed or dying, or no longer have the capacity to participate fully in Teams meetings. We are frequently blessed by hearing of the richness, joy and support that Teams have provided to members over their many years of involvement, and it is usually with deep regret and sadness that a Team makes the decision to withdraw or close down.

What is this telling us? We have experienced something very special from this wonderful Teams movement. What is the next instalment?

Bob and Cath Dixon



INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOPIC

The Oceania Super-Region was given the task this year to develop the International Study Topic for 2022-2023 – the first time in our history. A group of Teams people from around Oceania have done an amazing job to create a very good document based on the theme “Like Mary, clothe yourself with the word of God”.

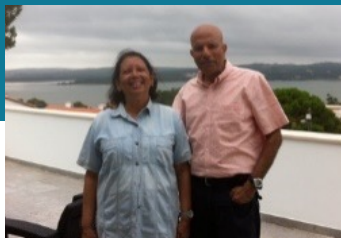
They all chose a chapter to write and attended online meetings every month to discuss progress and feedback. The meetings set up by us were guided by Faye and Kevin with feedback to meet the expectation of the ERI. We want to thank: Fr. Gary Walker, Allison and Michael Golden, Carol and John Laslett, Vee and Rene Pols, Rachele and Gabby Tullio, Brother Mark Needham, Jane and Phil Bretherton, Rose-Marie Prosser, Penny and Peter Cahalan, and editors Cath and Bob Dixon. They all created a document full of spiritual inspiration, information and challenge for teams to use all over the world during 2022/2023 after the final document is released in September 2022. Thanks as well to the guidance of the ERI Team.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

The 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops has as its theme: For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission which will be held in three stages.

The ERI has asked Teams Oceania to be involved in the first stage by responding to the ten theme questions. Our responses will then be sent to the ERI and collated into a broader response document from END. Thanks to **Jane and Phil Bretherton** who have accepted the role of coordinating our responses requested by May 2022.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGIONS



MEURIS AND CLAUDE GONSALVES QUEENSLAND REGION

Our annual Charter Mass & dinner in November was well attended and, as usual, both the mass and dinner were well enjoyed by all.

Mass was con-celebrated by three of our Spiritual Counsellors Fr Gary (Oceania), Fr Fadi (Maronite) and Fr Rafael. A special inclusion at mass was the singing of the Hail Mary in Arabic by some of the ladies of the Maronite Team.

At the dinner we heard a very descriptive sharing by one of the Maronite Team and how Teams operated in Syria amidst the hard times that many in the Maronite Team have been through. Through a Q&A session we discussed how Teams in the region were faring.

Many Teams especially in the Brisbane region are functioning as expected with much activity. Although a few Teams do not come together at Teams functions due to travel and ill health, it is encouraging to know they do meet when all is going well.

The Oceania Gathering Day was very well attended (via Zoom) and the preparation for the event was also very beneficial with a great deal of discussion on the theme.

Although, the Queensland Region is not much expanded, within the interior & outskirts of the Brisbane region, we will endeavour to go out and preach the Good News in ways possible under the circumstances. We are also discussing amalgamating Teams with few couples to give them more strength and support, thereby getting in new ideas and sharing.

Our next function is a Gathering/Formation Day, which we will hold on February 13. To help celebrate Valentine's Day there will also be an online Oceania-hosted mass for the Eurasia zone at 5pm Queensland time on the 13th. The mass can be viewed live or anytime afterwards and details and the link to join this event can be found on the Teams Oceania website and Facebook Page.



**CATH AND BOB DIXON
VICEAST REGION**

THE ADVENTURE OF MY WALLET

In September 2019, as we were en route by train from Berlin to the south of France to commence our Camino, Cath and I had to cross Paris from one major station to another using the very crowded Metro. Due to some clever manoeuvres by a group of four big blokes and my own lack of awareness, my wallet was stolen out of the small bag I had hanging in front of me. They unzipped the bag, removed the wallet, and neatly zipped it up again. When they all jumped off at the next station, I immediately sensed that something was wrong. We tried to report the theft to the police but they weren't interested; they said their computers were down. I lost €250 in cash, several credit cards, and everything else in my wallet. Naturally, I cancelled the cards straight away, but even in that short interval, less than an hour, attempts were made to use them. Fortunately, they had been rejected by the banks concerned.

A couple of hours later, by which time we were on the fast train to the south of France, I received an email from a man named Jerome who said he had found my wallet in the street and offered to meet me to return it.

THE ADVENTURE OF MY WALLET CONTINUED ...

He assumed it had been stolen because it had no credit cards or cash in it. But it did have an old business card of mine, which was how he contacted me. I replied saying I had already left Paris, but that I would get back to him to let him know what I had decided to do.

Even while I was speaking to Jerome, the idea of contacting the Teams headquarters had already entered my head. I knew that they were located in Paris, so I sent them an email from my gmail account and received a reply from a woman named Patricia who used my Teams email address! So clearly she had checked up to see if I was who I said I was – a very wise thing to do these days. Yes, she said, she would be happy for Jerome to bring the wallet to the office and look after it until we could decide what to do next. I emailed Jerome again and, next morning, he travelled on the Metro to the Teams office where he gave Patricia my wallet. I had asked Patricia to give him a reward on my behalf, perhaps €20, which I would repay in due course. She emailed me to say that Jerome had come, and that she was now looking after the wallet. She said she had given him coffee and a croissant but no money. They had a good conversation, and he had told her that he was a graphic designer and that he had once lived in Japan when he was a student.

Some days later, I received an email from Jerome, saying “I just arrived at my studio and I have the lovely surprise to discover a mysterious big box on my desk—with inside a beautiful bonsai tree!” This was Patricia’s doing, of course. I had nothing to do with it. I wrote to her to thank her and to ask her how much it had cost for the bonsai and the courier to get it there so that I could repay her.

She replied saying that when Jerome had visited the office, “he talked at length about Japan and the bonsai seemed ideal to me. As for the cost, I would like you to donate it during your journey to people who seem to you to be in need.”

Who would have thought that the theft of a wallet would be a good news story? In my view, the goodness and kindness of Patricia and Jerome, neither of whom has ever met me, far outweighs the bad news of the theft itself and the inconvenience that it generated. I am very grateful to them and very moved by their kindness.

What happened next?

In October, just a few weeks after the theft, Faye and Kevin Noonan, the Liaison Couple for the Eurasia Zone, attended the ERI meeting in Paris. Patricia gave them the wallet, and they brought it home to Canberra, then took it to the Oceania meeting in Brisbane in November, where they gave it to Maureen and Bernie Parker, who were standing in for us as Vic-East Regional Couple because we were still on our Camino. Maureen and Bernie brought it back to Victoria and reunited me with my wallet at the next meeting of our Regional Team! It was only then that I realised that a few other valuable things had gone missing, principally my driver’s licence and my Melbourne Cricket Club membership card, both of which I had to pay to replace. From the point of view of the remaining contents, it probably wasn’t worth the trouble of getting it back, but then I wouldn’t have this beautiful story to tell!

Patricia Chapellier retired at the end of January 2020 after serving in the International Secretariat of the Teams movement, based at 49 rue de la Glacière in Paris, for about 12 years.



JANE AND PHIL BRETHERTON VIC-WEST REGION

We are already nearly halfway through our four-year tenure as Regional Couple.

In spite of the challenges of lockdowns and restrictions there has been an ongoing sense of connection in the VicWest Region over the past few months. This was largely due to the successful September Oceania Virtual Gathering which engaged many participants from across our region.

Unfortunately due to declining health, mobility and number of members, two Teams are no longer going to be formally part of the Teams movement after 2021: one each in Wodonga and Bendigo. They will continue their lasting friendships and are grateful for the support they have received over many decades. On Thursday November 10 we held our Bendigo Remembrance Mass to pray in solidarity with family of Team members who have died. As part of the liturgy we prayed a blessing over Michelle and Harry Verbeek who have diligently and faithfully been our Leading Sector Couple for over eight years: more than twice the required time in the role.



A gathering of the Oceania Team was held in Adelaide in the first week of December. It was an excellent meeting where the challenges of ageing Teams and Teams membership were discussed at length with a plan to develop a new strategy into 2022 and beyond. How should we respond as a faith community?



GENEVIEVE AND TIM POWER ACT/NSW REGION

We have come to the end of our four-year term as ACT-NSW Regional Responsible Couple. Over this time we have enjoyed

getting to know many couples in the Oceania Region – and from whom we have gained so much. We particularly thank Chris and John for all the support they have provided to us over the years. We are thankful for Roula and John Tannous agreeing to replace us as the ACT-NSW Regional Responsible Couple – we wish you all the best.

We are immensely thankful for all those that provided assistance with developing and conducting the 'Virtual' 2021 Oceania Team Gathering – 'Teams Supporting Couples: Connect, Communicate and Commit'. We are particularly thankful to Sue and Adrian Fordham who took on the role of coordinating the Gathering and to those that provided technical and other support such as Bob Dixon, Kevin Noonan, Kev Taylor, John Laslett, David Gill, Nathan Ahearne and many others. The Gathering material can be accessed at <http://www.teamsoceania.com.au/cherry-services/teams-oceania-gathering/>

JIMMY AND BEBE AND SUE AND ADRIAN PHILIPPINES SECTOR



HOW ARE WE IN THE
SECOND YEAR OF THE
PANDEMIC?

UPDATES FROM TEAMS-CEBU, PHILIPPINES - NOV. 2021

While the first year of the pandemic affected some Teams members in Cebu Sector, Philippines, the second year was worse. In the first year, few members got affected with the virus; thankfully these were mild cases and some were asymptomatic.

In August of this year 2021, which was considered as the second wave of the pandemic here in the Philippines, some members and their relatives contracted the virus. Roger Vasay of Team 3 was one of those with severe symptoms. Genna & Butch Redulla, of Team 2 (also Sector Couple) and their family members were also affected with the virus. While Genna's case was moderate, the children had only mild symptoms, Genna's father and Butch were critical and had to be rushed to the hospital. Worse, there were no available hospital rooms so they had to be ferried from one hospital to another. Fortunately on the second day, a mother of one of their children's classmate who was a head nurse of a smaller hospital was able to secure a room. Butch eventually got well and is now recovering; however, Genna's father died. Ian Ramos of Team 3 and his brothers and sister in-law also contracted the virus and were able to recover. Wyll Cortes of Team 1 also had the virus and has also recovered. Team's members reached out to the affected members with our prayers and assistance in whatever form we could.

Teams, however, tried its best to keep the movement going amidst these difficult times. As September 8 was supposed to be our Charter anniversary and we could not gather physically, we had a virtual rosary instead, attended by most Teams members. At present, Team 1 is having regular monthly virtual meetings, Team 5 also does so but not regularly.

The other Teams were encouraged to do so but were constrained for some reasons. Thus, on September 12, we had a general crossroads meeting attended by most Teams members. It was a good avenue to update the sector how each family is doing and coping with the virus crisis. It was heartening to know that though some had experienced downsides like job retrenchments, most are faring well. Others even professed that the pandemic had brought their family members closer to each other as they got to spend more time together. They also got to pray together and attend Sunday Mass virtually and are now regularly physically attending Mass. Those affected with the virus even had positive realizations that their children truly care for them as they did their best even beyond their expectations to take care of their sick parents.

The Oceania Teams Virtual Gathering last September was like an insulin shot for a diabetic Teams member, as it was invigorating. It was facilitated very well by Phil and we were amazed by the very efficient technical support that brought us to breakout sessions just in a second. Seeing some members from Australia and New Zealand, whom some of us had met in earlier physical gatherings and some had been our gracious house hosts, was also very reassuring that indeed Teams is still going strong! However, we wished that the Gathering Day could have been longer.

For the whole rosary month of October we had a weekly virtual rosary using the text revised for the pandemic. We scheduled the weekly rosaries in varied days so as to be able to complete all the mysteries- joyful, sorrowful, glorious and luminous. It was also good as we got to have informal chit chats before and after the rosary. As for the Advent Recollection, we are still choosing between virtual or physical sessions.

Our Oceania Liaison couple- Sue and Adrian Fordham -as always have been very supportive to our sector, monitoring us through continual emails and video calls. With the marked reduction of daily cases and opening of most businesses, Teams- Cebu, Philippines is still very hopeful of a better pandemic free year ahead.

FOLLOW UP FROM SUE AND ADRIAN FORDHAM LIAISON COUPLE FOR THE PHILIPPINES

Since the above update from Jimmy Suico of the Cebu Sector on how the Cebu Team members have fared during the second wave of the pandemic, Cebu City was directly hit on December 16 by the severe Category-5 super typhoon Odette (internationally referred to as typhoon Rai). This area of the Philippines experienced, heavy rain, violent storms and strong winds up to 250kph, resulting in houses being damaged, fallen trees, flooding, road closures and landslides. Electricity poles and wires were strewn across roadways and power could not be restored until early January, raising great fears of household fires with so little water accessible and this occurring in a very dry period - there were a lot of fire alarms sounding, even nine days later on Christmas day. As a result, there were long lines of people and vehicles queuing for fuel, portable water and ATM machines. Cell phone and internet services were very scarce and unreliable.

Despite all the surrounding damage and loss of utilities, the spirit of Team members remained strong throughout the typhoon, and in the time leading up to Christmas and New Year.

As an indication, here are several comments made recently to us by Cebu Teams friends:

- "The children were scared when the wind got stronger with its loud howls. It was like a horde of zombies howling and banging on our doors and windows. We had to joke around to ease the children a bit."
- "Though the situation is difficult, we are never miserable. We are enjoying the new experience. The kids play traditional games and sleep early. Our place is quiet, we have time to watch the sky at night....."
- "We spent Christmas and New Year in the dark but that didn't dampen our celebration. Our Christmas tree was still up, we prepared a nice little meal for both occasions. We hope our kids have learned resilience, patience, simplicity, compassion, and most of all to be more prayerful"

One month later, the Filipinos are still coping with the continuing impact of Odette while also facing the spread of Omicron.

We ask that your thoughts and prayers remain with our Team members in the Cebu Sector their family and friends as well all the Filipinos who have been adversely affected by Typhoon Odette.



PENNY AND PETER CAHALAN NEW ZEALAND LIAISON COUPLE

We were delighted to hear of the appointment of Bishop Steve Lowe (Bishop of Hamilton) as the next Bishop of the Auckland diocese. Teams Oceania is extremely grateful for his support of Teams in the Hamilton diocese. It's been crucial to the spread of the movement into Auckland also.

We offer him our best wishes. He has been called to be a servant of the people of God on the North Island at a hugely difficult and often divisive time. We wish him well and will pray for him in his new role.

We have tried to keep in contact with the Sector Couples in New Zealand (who suggest they be named Teams Aotearoa) via Zoom sessions. It would be lovely to be able to meet again in person - next year maybe! Below is a message from Jan and Tony Baker, Sector Couple for Mt Maunganui.

JANUARY MESSAGE FROM A NEW ZEALAND TEAM

Our Team 2 has been going well. We have met regularly and our Team is very enthusiastic and keen to get together. We are blessed to have been joined by Fr Carl Telford and Fr Prakash often at our meetings. We had a most enjoyable Christmas get together, also with Team 1 joining us. Primila and Gus D'Mello celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary joined by the Team couples and both priests (who said Mass) which was very special.

We are going to organise a day's retreat for our Team early the year, plus we hope everyone will celebrate "World Marriage Day" with us on 13 February 2022 at 7.30 pm. They are invited to join an intentional session to enrich relationships... from the comfort of home! We hope people will get their wine + cheese and tune in for a live talk by Megan and Nahum Kozak of Lighthouse Relationships sponsored by the Catholic Network of Marriage Educators - catholicmarriage.org.nz

Jan & Tony Baker

Editor's note: A richness of offerings! The Oceania mass coincides with the NZ-run event. Happily the mass can be watched any time afterwards.



BREN AND SUE MILSOM LIAISON COUPLE TIMOR LESTE

There is nothing that focuses the mind as acutely as a serious health challenge. Last week I was felled by a serious heart attack and saved to continue God's work by the skill of the ambulance officers and the nurses and cardiologist, I am a lucky person in a lucky country.

As the Pandemic rolls into its third year and takes a terrible toll, we reflect on the difference between our lives and those of our Timorese friends.

Our travels in Timor began with Catholic Mission in 2011 and took us back many times cementing many lifelong friendships and being taken into other families. We had always hoped to be able to introduce Teams of Our Lady to East Timor, and with tentative steps taken over 2018, 2019 with agreement from the Timorese Bishops and initial information meetings, our first tentative Team formed in Lacro, with three to four couples.

In Timor, lockdowns over 2020, 2021 to protect the population have meant much loss of income and opportunity for an already poor country.

We have lost friends and family of friends who supported us and our Mission.

A baby boy, Ignacio, born in April 2020, first child of Veronica, lost his mother three days after being born. He is being raised by his Aunt, Idalina. Veronica commenced the Cuiati Craft workshop, in our Sister parish, Ossu, where much of the colourful Tais cloth we have used in fundraisers, and the prayer focus at our Teams celebrations, has been made by the village women.

Bishop Bascilio do Nascimeto, Bishop of Baucau passed away in October from a heart attack, similar to mine - he was seven years younger than I, and a supporter of our efforts to bring Teams to Timor. This week past our friend Flori, who has travelled and translated for us many times in our travels there - lost his much loved Dad, Carlos. Carlos was 64 - 14 years younger than me and had been ill for some time. A trip to hospital for very basic healthcare was four hours on the back of Flori's motorbike from Samalete.

As I live again - today, our thoughts sadly are with Flori's mum Theresa and Flori and his family in East Timor.

Going forward, Sue and I hope to be able to continue the Mission of Teams in Timor, one day, and we ask your prayers for friends of Teams in Timor and this intention.

PETRA BALL AND TERRY MCDEVITT SA/NT/WA REGION



Amid the continuing disruption and pain of the pandemic, a highlight of recent Teams activity was the Annual Advent Mass. In 2021, it was once again held under the magnificent Moreton Bay Fig at The Monastery in the Adelaide foothills on Kaurna country.

Father Tony Egar, spiritual counsellor to the SA NT & WA regional team and who lives at the Passionist Monastery, had kindly made the arrangements. Tony was, unfortunately for us, still in Tasmania due to travel complications and was not able to attend the mass which was celebrated by Teams members Mons John Swann and Fr Charles Lukati in his absence. A special part of the annual Mass is the retelling of the Advent story by Teams members and their families.



Mons John Swann, member of Team 7 and former Spiritual companion to the SA NT & WA regional team, blesses East West Sector Couple Rachele and Gabby Tullio; Southern Sector Couple Jan Lawry and Tony Roach; new SA NT & WA couple Jo and Chris Adey; new Oceania Couple Terry McDevitt and Petra Ball; and Ann Fanning 2022 Responsible person for Team 7



Chris and John Dighton receive a thanksgiving blessing for their service as out-going Responsible Couple for Oceania



Teams members and family bring to life the Nativity

GETTING CLOSE TO THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT FROM YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN



There is something special about meeting someone face-to-face. It creates a personal bond that words cannot replace. As the state borders opened up, we were fortunate to meet with the Oceania Team in Adelaide in December. It was a special meeting given the long periods of border closures

over the past two years and it was Chris and John's final meeting. We were also able to spend time with the incoming Oceania Responsible Couple, Petra Ball and Terry McDevitt. We covered a lot of ground in our discussions, but more importantly, we were able to do it in a calm, easy-going and trusted atmosphere. We could discuss the reality of our lives in Teams over a glass of wine, and the tyranny of distance melted away.

At an international level, we have a similar challenge. Lockdowns have prevented our usual liaison with other countries, and even many of the formal meetings have been cancelled. Fortunately, technology has helped enormously. Over the past two years, we have been working more closely through bi-monthly meetings of the Super Regional Couples in the Zone. Through these meetings, we are now supporting each other in developing new international initiatives.

Here are some that might interest you:

- At the beginning of the pandemic, we commenced a series of international online English-language Masses. These have been extremely popular for Teams members around the world. The Syro Malabar Mass from India was unforgettable! Next month, the international Masses will continue. This time, it will be around Valentine's Day, celebrated out of Brisbane by Fr Gary Walker, the Oceania Spiritual Counsellor. YouTube and Facebook links will be available shortly.
 - In late February/early March, we will host a meeting of all the Regional Couples in the Eurasia Zone. The meeting will quickly break up into small groups, so couples from different countries can get to know each other personally. The objective is to share ideas and make lasting connections.
 - For some time, we have been working with the Ireland Region and their Marriage Masterclass initiative. It is based on a simple idea of couples and Spiritual Counsellors sharing short video presentations about the realities of married life. The international English-speaking teams have been generous in offering personal video testimonies. The project has received significant interest worldwide with 17 000 Facebook followers at one stage.
 - Last year, Oceania organised what is possibly one of its best conferences, despite the ravages of COVID. It was wonderful to see couples from the countries of the Oceania Super Region come together in such a personal way, for a combined event. It was also wonderful to see other countries, such as Great Britain, offer practical help in arranging a big online event.
- As we look forward to a new year, but with the shadow of COVID ever present, we can still be close to others. From an international perspective, perhaps the pandemic has already taught us some important lessons that we indeed live in a small world. Teams offers us an important opportunity to experience the values of an international movement in close and personal ways.
- Prayers and blessings, Faye and Kevin Noonan

FRIENDS OF FR CAFFARAL NEWSLETTER

[Excerpt] The drafting of Father Caffarel's cause, the Positio, is nearing its end. We hope that before the summer of 2022 everything will be handed over to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. After which will come a time of waiting, as the Positio is read by the theologian-consultors and then by the cardinals, before, on the advice of the latter, the Pope declares Father Caffarel Venerable. Then, a miraculous healing must be recognised. We will have to be patient and often recite the prayer for his beatification.

You can find this and other [Friends of Caffarel](#) newsletters on the Teams Oceania website.

EXCERPT FROM ERI NEWSLETTER FARBUTNEAR 9 CLARITA AND EDGARDO BERNAL ERI COUPLE



ENTERING CALM WATERS: "Only trust in God can transform doubts into certainty, evil into good, the night into a radiant dawn." Pope Francis.

Dear friends of the International College family of the Teams of Our Lady: With this issue we complete the ninth edition of [#farbutnear](#). In the midst of the turbulence of the pandemic and in the absence of face-to-face meetings, this newsletter came to replace the usual newsletters sent after each ERI meeting. These earlier communications allowed the International College to be participants in all the issues discussed at the meeting. [#farbutnear](#) was an instrument for the International Responsible Team and the International College to be closer to everyone in these times in which life has changed radically. It supported us with the strength of a community that prays together and is interested in the welfare of each of its members.

Today it is with great joy that we can tell you this edition returns to the character of the original newsletters. After the ERI was prevented from meeting in person for two years (the last meeting was held in Paris in October 2019), last month we were finally able to hold (from 9th to 16th October in Mexico City our fifth meeting in person. In normal circumstances this would have been the tenth of this ERI.

As we have reiterated throughout these nine editions, we do not feel victims of the circumstances of this pandemic that has changed all our plans. We feel blessed to have been able to overcome them, and after the storm and turbulent waters we have been through lately, to begin to see that we are entering calmer waters.

We don't want to be unconscious triumphalists or deluded optimists. We want to have a balance between the awareness that there is still some way to go to get back to normality, and the desire to work hard to bring a dose of hope. With confidence, we will continue to abandon ourselves to the providence of the Lord. As Pope Francis said in the quote at the beginning of this editorial, this is the only way we can transform doubts into certainty, evil into good, and the dark night into a radiant dawn.

Informally, and before concluding the editorial introduction to this edition of [#farbutnear](#), we want to tell you that the Mexico City meeting was truly a rebirth of service for this ERI. We do not say this because we have not worked hard during these two years without meeting, but because no virtual meeting, no matter how good the technology used, can match the richness of the embrace that welcomes; the smile that opens the heart; the non-verbal language; the tears that bare the soul in the sharing; the camaraderie around food; the intimate Eucharist; the shared prayer; the discernments in an atmosphere that is created by isolation from the noise of daily life; the collegiality that is born of oneness with the Spirit; and the moments of feasting and celebration.

Let us ask the Lord, who has accompanied us in the boat during this storm, through the intercession of Our Mother Mary, and with the help of his Spirit, that we may overcome the obstacles that still stand in the way. We pray we may soon reach the calm waters we have longed for, and that we may all meet again to work in Assisi. In the setting where St. Francis lived, the motto of the next meeting of the Regional Couples will be "And he entrusted his goods to them..."

For the rest of this newsletter and all the other news from the ERI go to the Teams Oceania website and select "Newsletters".

VOCATION AND MISSION OF TOL COUPLES: CALLED AND SENT FR. RICARDO LONDOÑO, SPIRITUAL COUNSELLOR OF THE ERI

Those who have chosen to join Teams as part of their Christian married life, commit themselves more strongly to a life of witness and apostolate. In addition to the formation of their own family and their dedication to the integral growth of their children, couples in Teams are called to participate in the mission of the Church, especially in those realities that concern marriage and family life. Each couple must seek and find the environment in which they can serve in their parish or diocese. This is to discover those pastoral areas where they can be present as baptised, married team members.

Throughout this year, which Pope Francis wanted to dedicate to *Amoris Laetitia*, it is very important to not lose sight of what he presents to us about those human situations in which couples feel fragile, sick, and wounded. It is there, in these complex, difficult and often painful environments, that this commitment can manifest itself most visibly. There are: young people in love who need to know the beauty and grandeur of sacramental life; young couples preparing for marriage; married couples seeking accompaniment; couples in crisis of various kinds; those who are separated or divorced;

couples in a new non-sacramental union; people with difficulties in their sexual identity; and so on. These are situations that yearn for a compassionate and merciful presence.

To read more of [this article](#) go the Oceania website and select "Newsletters"



**Equipes Notre-Dame
Oceania Super Region**



OCEANIA TEAM MEETINGS IN 2021

OCEANIA SUPER REGION TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

JANUARY 2022

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