



## **Teams of our Lady Oceania Newsletter # 1, 2023**



*Virgin of Kyiv  
12<sup>th</sup> Century Icon from Ukraine*

Warm greetings, blessings and best wishes to all in the Oceania and global Equipes Notre Dame family. We reach out through this newsletter to nurture treasured relationships, share recent news from throughout the Super Region and inform you of upcoming events in 2023 and 2024 that we hope will be exciting and of interest to you.

As we embrace the Lenten season and continue our plans for the year ahead, we are mindful that the past Christmas festive season for many may have been a time of loss and loneliness. We trust you have personally experienced the peace and love of the season, and special time with your family, friends, and community.

We are mindful of the extreme climate events in many parts of Oceania and further afield. Our thoughts are with our flood affected Australian and Auckland based Teams members and the communities too of Syria and Türkiye after the catastrophic earthquake. Our Virgin of Kyiv image above is familiar to us the world around and

one year after the war in Ukraine started, we hold in our prayers those suffering the impacts of war. We know many will also be committing to material support for people affected by these tragedies.

In this newsletter we share developments from Regions near and far, welcoming of new members and new Teams, and the farewelling of faithful old friends. There is also news from the International Leading Team, an update on the Oceania Study Topic for 2023, and an invitation to register expressions of interest for the International Gathering in Turin in July 2024.

We hope there is something here for everyone, reminding us again that we are people of gratitude, hope and optimism. We thank Father Gary Walker, Oceania's wise Spiritual Counsellor who takes us continually to the heart of Teams' charism. There are short reports below and we thank all on the Regional Team, Liaison Couples and others who work so hard to help Teams flourish in Oceania. We firmly believe that our Movement, through Mary and the Holy Family, and with a heritage and generations of faithful service, continues to offer great gifts to marriages, our Church and our communities.

Petra Ball and Terry McDevitt

Responsible Couple – Oceania Super-Region – [teams.petraterry@gmail.com](mailto:teams.petraterry@gmail.com)

## **NOTICE BOARD:**

**International Gathering, Turin, July 15-20, 2024 – Calling for Expressions of Interest**



“Come to Turin and experience TEAMS’ spirit in colour and language - all in a blend of married spirituality - sharing the love from across the seas. Experience TEAMS’ meetings from far-off nations and discover its global reach. We have been to two International Gatherings and look forward to Turin.” *Claude & Meuris Gonsalves*

Oceania has a generous number of places allocated to us, so please give this your full consideration. We know how significant our base Team is in our life and this is a wonderful, once every six years' opportunity to absorb and experience the international dimension of Teams – after all, there are around 14,000 teams in the world!

***International Gathering costs are yet to be finalised, but are expected to be around AUD1,100 per person for the six days in Turin, plus flight costs and tour options. Info on optional tours will be available later this year.***

***The Oceania Team is keen to support attendance and is in a position to provide some limited financial assistance across the Super-Region. Please contact your Regional Couple if you wish to learn more.***

***All Expressions of Interest\*\* are to be sent by June 30 to our Turin 2024 Coordinating couple, Meuris and Claude Gonsalves, at [lehigons20211@outlook.com](mailto:lehigons20211@outlook.com).***

\*\* Please note that Expressions of Interest do not lock you into going, they simply support our planning.

### **Upcoming Oceania Meetings**

The Oceania Regional Team meets virtually once a month, and face to face twice a year. We are looking forward to being in Brisbane the first weekend of June 2023 and in late October in Adelaide. The October meeting is set to be very special as it will overlap with the 15-member International Leading Team (ERI) also gathering face to face in Adelaide. The Oceania Regional Team is looking to arranging the opportunity for Oceania Teams members to engage with the ERI – face to face and virtually. Plans will be shared as they progress.

### **2023 Reflection Focus and Resource**

A stellar group of Oceania Team members has worked to produce a reflection guide that supports Team members' spiritual focus and growth. Inspired by the life and experience of Mary, Team members can expect to find [this resource on the Teams Oceania website](#) shortly. Heartfelt thanks to every member of the writing team and to Bob Dixon for his editing work.

### **Call for Translators \*\***

A message from the International Leading Team (ERI):

Dear team members, in the coming months we need to increase the number of volunteers to help translate documents. The work of the satellite teams, the materials for the next international meeting... everything needs to be translated so that we can all benefit from this richness. The more people we have, the more sharing there will be and the less burden on everyone. The idea is to translate from one of the official languages (Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian) into English. If you are willing to help, please send us an email with your abilities, your country of

origin, from which language you can translate: Alberto and Mercedes:  
[cr.communication@equipes-notre-dame.com](mailto:cr.communication@equipes-notre-dame.com)  
with copy to Paola and Giovanni: [cr.secretariat@equipes-notre-dame.com](mailto:cr.secretariat@equipes-notre-dame.com)  
Thank you very much to all of you. We need you.

**\*\* Note from Faye and Kevin Noonan, Eurasia Zone Liaison Couple:** *We've found DeepL has been a game changer. Translators no longer need to retype the entire document word for word. They just need to review a first draft translation. It's no longer the onerous task that it was in the past. A knowledge of the original language is still important to ensure the translation is meaningful.*

### **Treasurer (couple) for the Oceania Regional Team – Seeking Interest.**

Helen and David Gill have served the Oceania Region in the Treasurer role for a number of years and are finishing at the end of June 2023. We are grateful for this important contribution to the workings of Teams, thank them sincerely - on behalf of the whole Super Region! - and wish them well as they turn now to other things. Accordingly, we are looking for a person/couple with skills in this financial space – professional accounting qualifications not mandatory – to step into the role. If you are keen to learn more about the role, please contact David and Helen directly on [Dgill7@bigpond.com](mailto:Dgill7@bigpond.com) to learn more.

## **Regional Reports**

### **Philippines**

The Cebu Sector after great difficulties due to the pandemic and typhoons is now going through a phase of stabilisation and has resumed usual activities. Following the Annual Charter Mass in September 2022, a schedule of activities was undertaken in the remainder of 2022, including a Formation and Information Day in November, Advent Recollection, & Christmas party with all the families in December. The involvement of the Piarist priests from their local parish as spiritual counsellors has re-commenced after two years.

On 30 October a Commissioning Ceremony for the new Sector Couple, Elma and Frederick Tan, was held over Zoom. Elma and Frederick had attended a Templestowe Formation weekend in 2019 and have been Team members since the founding of Cebu Teams in 2000. This event also provided the opportunity for members from Oceania, on behalf of the International Teams Movement, to thank all previous Sector Couples, including 4 Sector Couples who could be present during the ceremony.

The Cebu Sector considers it highly beneficial and important to continue to streamline e-communication to maintain relationships with Teams across the Oceania Region. The participation of Cebu Team members in the 2021 virtual Oceania Gathering attests to this, as was their virtual involvement in the 2022 Templestowe Formation Gathering and virtual Eurasia Zone - and regular liaison meetings.



*Cebu Teams fun at Christmas Time*

Sue & Adrian Fordham

## **Aotearoa/ New Zealand**

A great deal has been accomplished in recent years and there is enthusiasm and on going support for the development of Teams in Aotearoa. For example, Regional Couple Jan and Tony Baker held a successful info night in their parish and a new team has started piloting. There are challenges but ongoing efforts to support six existing Teams, & get more teams going in both Auckland and Tauranga. A further aim is to see Wellington grow by one or two more teams.

The leadership group has extended to include a couple from the Hamilton team, making it four couples. There was a very successful Retreat held in November and several NZ couples also participated along with the Liaison Couple in the pre Christmas Virtual Oceania Team Meeting in December. These developments and closer connections between the Oceania Regional Team and the NZ Teams leadership builds better opportunities for sharing, learning and growth.

On a very practical level, thanks are extended to Helen and David Gill who assisted with banking queries and accounts set up – facilitating the easier possibility to contribute annual memberships.





*The three NZ couples, Rick and Linda, Julieta and Oliver and Anna-Maria and Jerome were integral to the successful Templestowe retreat in August 2022*

Penny & Peter Cahalan

## Queensland

Our annual retreat in September '22 was interactive and well received, despite dismal weather. Later in the year the Charter Mass & dinner hosted by the Maronite 'Joseph' Team at St Maroun's was another highlight.

A group of new couples have expressed their interest in Teams and being piloted in 2023, which is exciting. Pleasing too, but in a different way, is that some widowed members of older Teams meet for coffee and a chat if they do not go to a Teams' meeting, demonstrating the ongoing strength of the spiritual, social and relational dimension of the Movement.

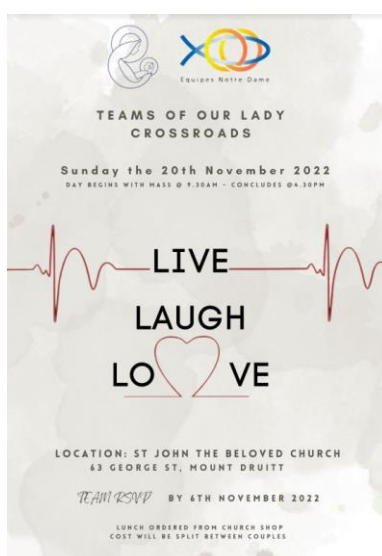
At our Formation Day in early Feb 2023, the rest of the events for the year are conveyed. We are sad to inform members we lost Graham Benson in 2022, a long time member of Teams, and offer our support and condolences to his family. Last year also saw the Golden Jubilee marking 50 years of Oceania Spiritual Counsellor Fr Gary Walker's ordination as a priest in the Columban Order, a wonderful achievement – congratulations once again, Gary!

Meuris & Claude Gonsalves

## NSW/ACT

Below we share some of our Regional news, but first want to mark the very sad news of Gary Parker's sudden passing on Saturday 18 February. Gary and Lois, current ACT Sector couple, have been greatly involved in Teams' life over many years, working very hard and presenting most recently at our ACT Sector Formation just a weekend before. Our prayers and deep condolences go to Lois, the Parker family and all those who will grieve his loss. Rest in Peace, Gary.

Much has been happening in our Region, and the feedback was great from the couples who attended the Templestowe Formation Retreat in Sept 2022, including Joceline and Ghassan from Sydney. The NSW and ACT newsletter was sent out in October. In Sydney a 'Crossroads' event was held in November with the topic being 'Live, Laugh, Love' and there is a Crossroads planned for Canberra in 2023.



In Sydney we have two new teams formed from 'St John the Beloved' Maronite Parish. Discussion is also underway with couples to form another new team from St Charbel's Punchbowl in 2023. Sydney Teams families hosted a very productive Oceania Team meeting, held in our home in November. The Regional Team literally had a taste of our Lebanese hospitality, but expressed the concern that there might have been more eating than meeting. Not a chance!

Roula & John Tannous

## Vic West

We have been active in our Region and in various Oceania working groups such as communications, and website. In June we collated & submitted a response to Pope Francis' Synod in Rome on behalf of Oceania. A Teams West Newsletter was distributed in September, and the decision was made to exclude flood affected Teams from subs in 2022. These floods in Victoria interrupted the plan to hold

Regional gatherings in NE Vic, with teams in Echuca, Mooroopna and Shepparton being impacted. The North East gathering is now anticipated to be held in March 23, and will be led in part by the Monas and Murrays, both couples having attended the August 2022 Templestowe Retreat and Formation weekend. We were saddened to learn of the recent passing of Laurence Mona's sister in PNG, may she RIP.

We are working towards growth in our immediate region with upcoming opportunities to be offered in 2023. We shared information and promoted the [Marriage Master Class initiative](#), along with strategies for growth of Teams in our region discussed at Templestowe.

It was pleasing to be able to meet Vic East members in August at Templestowe and discuss the future of Teams in Victoria. We know efforts continue in Vic East to navigate a path to establishing a different kind of leadership model that nonetheless works for Vic East and the wider Teams movement.

This year saw sad news with the death of two Team members: Pat Goggin and from Team 3 in Bendigo, Gay Hanrahan, both much missed. A short, but important inclusion here regarding Pat; Pat is survived by his wife Marguerita and together they were the first Super Regional Couple for Australasia/Oceania from 1997-2001. They also chaired an Australian based Satellite Team, supporting Movement work on the topic of Mission. They made a huge contribution to the work of Teams and generously supported Teams financially at a time of need.



*Marguerita and Pat Goggin*



A highlight of 2022 was the celebration of Mons. Frank Marriott's 60 years of Ordination & Priestly Ministry with Mass in the Cathedral in Bendigo and his recognition and OAM in the Honours List.

Jane & Phil Bretherton

## **Vic East**

A successful, well attended Vic East Virtual Gathering was held in February 2022 with a keynote from Fr Chris Gleeson with good use of breakout rooms, and discussion about future governance preferences and options for the region. Thanks are extended to Bob and Cath Dixon and other Vic East members who organised and ran the event.

Facilitated by a reflection and discussion held during the 2022 annual Charlesworth Lecture, the process of consultation around a new model of leadership in Vic East continues. In February 2023, a governance discussion paper was sent to all members and a good response received.

In other Vic East news, Ron Stobaus (Anne and Ron, Vic-East Team 17) was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Honours list this January for services to athletics. Congratulations on this special recognition, Ron.

On behalf of the Vic East working group.

## **SA/ NT/ WA**

### **SA Activities**

Jo and Chris attended the Templestowe Retreat and Formation weekend along with two couples from Darwin: Cathy and Matt and Clarisa and Paul. Both couples enjoyed the weekend and were grateful for the invitation, providing them with new insights into the wider Teams movement and the opportunity to meet couples from interstate and NZ.

In October the Region held its biannual Retreat at Wirrina Resort, south of Adelaide, with 40 participants. The facilitator was Passionist Fr. Tony Egar, our Regional Spiritual Companion, whose theme focussed on linking Pope Francis' "Let us Dream", with our lives inside and outside Teams. The feedback was very positive.





*Snapshots from the October '22 Retreat*

Southern Sector Couple, Jan Lawry and Tony Roach have come to the end of their term and we thank them very much for their three years of service in the role. Thanks also to our new couple Jacci and Lloyd Templeton – who we are looking forward to working with.

We have been active in the marketing space, meeting with the Director Catholic Communications for the Adelaide Archdiocese, with a view to having information about Teams included on the official website. A 'flyer' was prepared and approved by the Vicar General and is now included on the Diocesan Website under "Marriage".

There are a few new initiatives in Adelaide that bring us hope and anticipation on the "growths" front and we look forward to sharing more news with you regarding these in due course.

### **Northern Territory**

Chris spent a week in Darwin in September, meeting with existing Teams and couples interested to see if Teams is for them. It is exciting to think that there may be a third new Team forming in the NT and we are grateful for the energy and outreach of existing members.

### **Western Australia**

We plan to spend some time in WA in the New Year and will use contacts we have to approach ministers, parishes, & couples to hopefully expand the WA Teams' footprint.

## **Eurasia Zone Report**

A highlight in recent times has been celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Teams Charter. The meeting of the International Leading Team (ERI) in Paris last December coincided with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The date 8 December 2022 held special significance in the history of the movement as it was 75 years since the Teams Charter was promulgated by Fr Caffarel.

To celebrate this milestone, Mass was arranged by the Teams in France at St Augustin's Church in Paris. This is where Fr Caffarel first proclaimed the Charter in 1947. It was a very moving experience for us to be in this same place 75 years later, reflecting on the legacy of Fr Caffarel. We remain very grateful for the charism we have received through Fr Caffarel, expressed in the Charter.



*International Responsible Couple, Clarita and Edgardo Bernal, St Augustin's.*

At a talk given in Brazil in 1962, Fr Caffarel gave some important insights into the development of the Charter:

*".... The first part of the Charter ... define[s] the raison d'être, the purpose, the aim of Teams [the 'why']. The other parts of the document define the means to reach this aim [the 'how'].. What is original in our Charter is the means adopted to achieve the purpose .... Without it, we could have all the rest, the means could be known, but the means would not guide or orient."*

Faye and Kevin Noonan – Eurasia Zone Liaison Couple

## More on the International Teams Movement....

Following this reflection from Kevin and Faye, we suggest a visit to the [Teams International website](#). Here, among other interesting items, you can read recent letters to Teams members from a number of the International Leading Team, including the complete version of Spiritual Counsellor Ricardo Londoño Domínguez's letter, from which the below is extracted.

*"... Francis, the successor of John XXIII, has endeavoured to make the Second Vatican Council visible and active. He wants the baptised to become more and more aware of what we are and what we are called to be. In a permanent process of discernment, he wants the whole Church to assume its mission of being a sign and an instrument, and to go out to bear witness to God's love, rather than being inward-looking.*

*As Teams of Our Lady, members of the Church, we must recognise ourselves, in a special way, in the every-day invitations and calls to be signs and instruments of unity in the midst of a fractured and divided world.*

*The unity of Christian spouses, born through the sacraments of baptism and marriage, must be the beginning of this path of unification. Each Team, in its role as a small community, must live the mystery of unity in Christ to become a sign and instrument of intimate union with God and humankind. The Movement as a whole must reflect this same reality.*

*Hence, our reality must be framed within the context of what the whole Church is called to be, to signify and to reflect. May the Holy Spirit, source of unity and holiness, walk with us in this purpose."*

### Teams International Intercessors

We share this short excerpt from the latest newsletter from the Teams' Intercessors network. It references the very important occasion that was 8 December 2022 and is a lovely sharing of the kind of spirit that motivates and animates the global group of intercessors.



[Last] year on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, Teams of Our Lady celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the founding Charter of the Teams' movement. A very beautiful ceremony took place in Paris, in the presence of Father P.D. Marcovits and the International Leading Team. The 24 hours of Intercession throughout the world supported this event in and through prayer. The Intercessors united to entrust to Mary all the prayer intentions that they carry in their hearts. Deo gratias!

Thanks to Meuris and Claude Gonsalves, an Oceania based Intercessor couple - and Regional Couple for Qld – who shared their newsletter with us. If you, as a member of, or couple in Teams, are interested to know more about the activities of Teams Intercessors, please contact Meuris and Claude on [lehigons20211@outlook.com](mailto:lehigons20211@outlook.com)

**And that, here on page 13, is the end of Newsletter #1 2023.**

**We will send out shorter and sharper communications – especially around the completed Learning Resource and 2024 International Gathering – stay tuned!**

**On behalf of your Oceania Team, our very best wishes, and continued commitment, love and prayers**

## **Oceania Team**

Spiritual Counsellor, Fr Gary Walker Columban Father based in Brisbane  
Regional Couple Qld: Meuris & Claude Gonsalves  
Regional Couple NSW & ACT: Roula & John Tannous,  
Regional Couple Vic West: Jane & Phil Bretherton  
Vic East: Interim group  
Regional Couple SA/NT/WA Joanne & Chris Adey  
Treasurer role: David and Helen Gill  
Liaison Couple Philippines: Sue & Adrian Fordham  
Liaison Couple New Zealand: Penny and Peter Cahalan  
Liaison Couple East Timor: Sue and Bren Milsom  
Website support: Kevin and Anne Taylor  
IT: Kevin Taylor, Adrian Fordham, Phil Bretherton, John Tannous, Kevin Noonan  
Oceania Super-Region Responsible Couple: Petra Ball & Terry McDevitt  
**Please visit [Teams Oceania Website](#) to learn more or [contact those listed](#)**

### **Useful links & resources**

Teams International [www.equipes-notre-dame.com](http://www.equipes-notre-dame.com)  
Teams Oceania [www.teamsoceania.com.au](http://www.teamsoceania.com.au)  
Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/teamsoceania](https://www.facebook.com/groups/teamsoceania)  
Marriage Master Class [www.facebook.com/groups/2594017577554772](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2594017577554772)  
The Plenary Council & Bishop's Synod; [www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au](http://www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au)  
Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform; [www.acccr.com.au](http://www.acccr.com.au)

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