

Newsletter of the ACT-NSW Region

November-December 2018

From the Regional Couple.....

Over the last few months we have continued to be impressed with the way our two Sector Teams have managed their responsibilities of leading the Teams in their respective areas. We have appreciated attending their planning meetings and have really enjoyed engaging with couples attending organised events such as the Sydney Sector Cross Roads in October and the Canberra Sector Charter Mass in December.

In November, we attended the Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn Marriage Formation Meeting which facilitates discussion with the marriage ministry organisations in Canberra, and a Concerned Catholics Public Workshop on discussing input to the Plenary Council.

In relation to TEAMS development, we have had a meeting with Fr Christopher de Souza (Vicar General) and Sr Catherine Ryan (Chancellor – Ministries) of the Parramatta Diocese and they have advised us to contact the five Deans early in the New Year. Fr Christopher has suggested that we focus on one or two Deaneries initially and present at one of their gatherings early in 2019. We also had a very useful meeting with Fr James Antony of the Corpus Christi Parish in South Tuggeranong.

We thank everyone for your support and generosity during 2018 – together we have achieved quite a lot over the last 9 months. It seems that 2019 will also present us with many challenges and opportunities.

May the Peace of Jesus, the compassionate love of God, and the Gifts of the Spirit be yours this Christmas season and throughout this coming year.

Genevieve and Tim Power
ACT/NSW Regional Couple
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News from the Sydney Sector Couple

Dear Brothers and Sisters Teaming with Christ,

From all Sydney Teams to all Oceania Teams and with the upcoming of the Advent season, we would like to extend our best wishes of joy and prosperity, and ask God to shower all the couples and their families with His grace and love.



Genevieve and Tim Power with Sr Marie Antoinette Saadeh (Mother General of the Sisters of The Holy Family), who spoke at the Crossroads Meeting on Accompaniment

Sydney Teams year 2018 was marked by the focus on reaching out to other parishes. Two new Teams from within the Melkite church have already joined us, and a third Team from Saint Charbel parish is well underway for a fresh start next February.

On the 21st of last October, Sydney Teams joined together in their Crossroads Day. It was marked by a reasonable

attendance (eighteen couples) and a nice and friendly atmosphere, especially that it was an opportunity for the new couples to meet with us for the first time. The theme of the day was inspired by the vision expressed during this year's Fatima international gathering and the call to the Teams movement to reach out to the wider Christian communities.



Michel and Denise El-Samara with Sr Margaret Ghosn (OLOL Principal), who spoke at the Crossroads Meeting on Vocation and Mission

The topics of the Crossroads day were about “Vocation, Mission and Accompaniment”. And we were blessed to have two prominent Sisters from “The Holy Family” congregation giving us the talks and the workshop guidance.



The 2018 Crossroads Meeting of Sydney Team

Looking forward to next year, our Charter Mass day will be held on the first Sunday of February. We take this opportunity to ask God, once again, to guide us and to accompany us in our efforts to fulfil His will and witness to His kingdom.

Sister Rose Therese Tannous, spiritual counsellor to four of our Sydney Teams, has been reappointed to Lebanon. She will be leaving us around end of January. Although her absence will be much regretted and her charism missed, we do understand God’s call and wish her all the confidence, belief and inspiration in her never-ending mission.

God bless the Teams of Our Lady and Merry Christmas

Denise and Michel El-Samra

Sydney Sector Team

News from the Canberra/Queanbeyan Sector Couple

There are 9 Teams in Canberra /Queanbeyan Sector including a new Team being piloted by Anna and Tony Di Pietro. The couples in this new Team are at different stages of life, from those with small children to some with grandchildren. By all accounts it is going very well.

Many couples from the sector came together to celebrate the end of year Charter mass on the 1st weekend of December and new RCs were commissioned.

Things to look forward to for the start of next year are:

- **The Formation Day on the 17th February**, probably to be held at 'The Gathering Place', Dickson

- The theme will be 'Vocation and Mission' - the document given to the Teams of Our Lady by The International Responsible Team, Fatima, July 2018 (it is available on the website)

- We'll also have some time set aside to discuss the Plenary Council submissions

- * *Just a reminder, **individual Teams submissions to the Plenary Council** need to be given to Tim and Genevieve Power by the end of February

- **Family Picnic/BBQ (Late Feb/early March)** Bring the kids/ grandkids, details will be sent via RC's

Peace and Blessings to you all this Christmas xx

Sarah and Mark Stooove

Canberra Sector Team

Annual Team Retreats as One of Our Endeavours

Two Canberra Teams held their annual Team Retreats at The Gathering Place in Dickson this year. The Gathering Place is a great venue for Team Retreats and Sr Lorraine who manages The Gathering Place, with assistance from Meryll, is available to facilitate these Retreats on a wide range of topics, tailored to meet the needs of individual Teams.

Reflections from Canberra Team 11 at Their Annual Retreat

The Gathering Place at Dickson has its own distinctive message of welcome and reassurance, crafted over the years by Sister Lorraine and her colleague Meryl. They have become friends of Team 11, and we have been richly blessed each time we've spent a day with them – most recently on 28 October.

We reflected and prayed together in the chapel, under Lorraine's and Meryl's gentle guidance, we scattered in the shady places of the garden and walked the maze, we filled the dining room with meal-time conversation, and by the time our tea things were washed and stored away our spirits had been renewed.



The core of our reflection was provided by Tim Winton, who has become another friend and guide for our Team. His 2015 book *Island Home: a landscape memoir* has a concluding essay "Paying respect" which is a remarkable tribute to Australian landscape,

Aboriginal understanding of country and the visionary Ngarinyin lawman David Banggal Mowaljarlai. In our Team we are continuing to learn from this essay.

Another resource for our retreat day was the recent book by Gerard Windsor, *The Tempest-Tossed Church*. Sister Lorraine found something of a kindred spirit there, as I had. There's a passage in this book (on pages 11-12) which I imagine applies to the renewal of the Gathering Place itself, originally a Brigidine convent in the classic mould. It describes how in the nineteenth century, autocratic bishops railroaded the nuns into running the school system the bishops wanted; but after the handing over of schools to professionally trained staff, the remaining handfuls of nuns "gave themselves over to what, in so many cases, had been the vocation originally envisaged by their founders". God bless them!

Alex and John Evers
Team C11

Reflections from Canberra Team C4-5 at their Annual Retreat

A Teams retreat is an opportunity to 'reflect on life in the presence of the Lord' (Guide



of the Teams of our Lady, 2008). A quiet place set in nature is conducive to such reflection. Team C4-5, whose members live in Canberra's north, were fortunate in finding the ideal place for our 2018 retreat in the heart of Dickson: *The Gathering Place*, a retreat and spirituality centre with a contemplative focus. Our retreat day began with

Mass celebrated by our spiritual adviser, Fr Bernie, who is the Parish Priest at St Brigid's, wonderfully located adjacent to the centre.

Guided by facilitators Sr Lorraine Gatehouse and Merryl Bollard, we then reflected on our interior *sacred space*, helped by spending time in the physical sacred space of the centre's beautiful garden.

Our day included short presentations on the art of graceful conversation and the couple sit-down (the latter photographically illustrated by the 4000 plus couples simultaneously having their sit-down at the International Teams Gathering in Fatima, Portugal, earlier this year).

Among the special moments of the day was a blessing given by Fr Bernie for our married lives and a renewal of our marriage vows.

Helena and Roger Paul
Team C4-5

Father Hilton Roberts – An Anniversary to Celebrate



Ted and Margaret Frawley (past ACT/NSW Regional Responsible Couple) with Fr Hilton Roberts

Father Hilton Roberts celebrated his 60th Anniversary of Ordination with Mass and a Luncheon at St Matthew's, Page on 1 December. His mother was the only member of his family at his ordination in Rome in 1958 – for this anniversary he had several of his sisters and extended family attending. There was a good turn up of people to help celebrate this important occasion, including members of TEAMS. Fr Hilton was a very strong supporter of TEAMS in Canberra and a Team Spiritual Advisor for many years. We wish Fr Hilton a very happy and long retirement.

We are honoured to have Fr Hilton as a member of our Teams Movement.

Thank you Fr Hilton and May God Bless you!

Teams are Contributing to the 2020 Plenary Council

Some Teams in the ACT/NSW Region have been preparing submissions to the 2020 Plenary Council, which can provide the basis of a Teams Regional Response to the Bishops call for submissions by the end of February 2019. Teams can also submit their individual submissions directly to their Archdiocese.

Below is the submission from Team C4/5 in the Canberra Sector, which followed quite passionate and robust discussion at a recent Team meeting.

1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?

The Church contains a diverse range of people holding different views and attitudes, so we need to be open to one another and to seek the good that is in each of us.

Having recognised this, we then need to:

- Become really informed of the issues and problems addressing the Church, to read broadly, and to listen and be open to the views of others, and to consider the way forward and be open to change. Have the courage and strength to discuss issues with others.
- Actively build up our community where we are practising our faith into a strong Christian supportive one, by building knowledge of our faith and encouraging everyone to support fellow parishioners – there are various Lay Groups and Movements as well as Programs available to assist in undertaking this.
- Persevere as Teams of Our Lady couples and be more involved in our respective Parishes, to place more emphasis on our spiritual development (e.g. daily scripture readings, daily individual and family prayer) and to set an example for our families and others.
- Throw away the small differences between our denominations and regenerate the ecumenical thrust across our faiths.
- Support our Priests and Bishops – to help them to move forward through these difficult times and lead us in growing our faith.
- Understand the equality of women and men in our Church and to take steps to open up roles for women, both in the decision making and practise of our faith.

2. What questions do you have about the future of the Church for the Plenary Council to consider in 2020?

- Various outcomes from Vatican 2 have been good for the Church – however there are others, such as collegial government, which have not been implemented and the displacing from prominence of the concept of ‘The People of God’ is also a displacement of the co-responsibility for the gospel and the Church by all its members.

- We would like to know what bold initiatives that Bishops should introduce to ensure the Church has a future – for example, ensuring that local decision making is implemented. What is the Spirit saying to the Universal Church about getting the right balance in the relationship between the universal and local Churches where it is perceived that undue superiority of the universal Church is to the detriment of the role of the local Church?
- What is the Bishops' view on women participating more widely in the Church – for example, as acolytes and deacons?
- How best can our Bishops advance the issue of voluntary priestly celibacy whereby celibacy is taken as a voluntary vow by those priests who wish to lead a celibate life and not be a necessary condition for a life-long vocation in the priesthood? Married priests would have a greater understanding of the life of married couples and how best to support their married spirituality.
- Is the co-existence of various groups and movements within the Church actively accommodated and promoted to parishioners? It appears that the importance of ongoing formation of couples/families in the faith has been forgotten as has the formation of Priests and Religious in their understanding of marriage/married couples/marriage spirituality.

3. *Please share a story of your experiences of your faith or the Church to give context to your responses to Q1 and Q2*

- The above responses are from 5 couples of a Canberra based Team of Our Lady (TEAMS) which has been operating since 1983. We have all found that TEAMS has helped couples develop their relationship and faith through listening to the word of God, engaging in personal and couple prayer, having as a couple a monthly sit down, attending a monthly meeting (with a liturgy, sharing over a meal, discussing a study topics), and journeying with other couples. This has given us a close solid Catholic community and regardless of the many challenges facing the Church, we have managed to stay with the Church.

Has Your Team Made a Submission to the 2020 Plenary Council? It is still not too late!

