



EQUIPES NOTRE-DAME  
TEAMS OF OUR LADY  
EQUIPOS DE NUESTRA SEÑORA  
EQUIPAS DE NOSSA SENHORA  
EHEGRUPPEN E.N.D.  
أخويات عائلات مري

Bogotá, 31 March 2020

Dear Couples, Spiritual Counsellors, and Spiritual Accompaniers of Teams of Our Lady:

As we write the introduction to this study theme, the whole world is experiencing a situation of unprecedented anxiety and fear due to the uncontrolled spread of the coronavirus pandemic. It has already affected thousands of people on five continents and has claimed many victims, including many members of our beloved movement. We turn to the Lord and to Our Mother Mary, intercessor, to guide and protector us on our journey. We pray for comfort to those who have been affected, for relief from this unending scourge so the world can quickly regain its calm, and for solace for those who have lost loved ones and have seen their economies severely affected. Life goes on, and our journey of life in the movement leads us to a new beginning of the year in the European calendar, which begins in September and ends in July of the following year.

Today, we have the great joy of presenting to the movement this study theme for the year 2020-2021, entitled "Marriage, a sacrament of mission". The Super Region France-Luxembourg-Switzerland has been entrusted with the drafting of the theme, at the request of the ERI. The Super Region relied on the help of the Dominican Father, Dominique-Raphaël KLING, spiritual counsellor of the END movement in the city of Bordeaux. He did this in collaboration with, among others, Marie-Josèphe and Pierre Huzar, the couple responsible for the study themes in the SR FLS, and of course, Catherine and Christophe Bernard, the couple responsible for the Super Region. We express our gratitude and appreciation to them for this contribution which will help us to know more deeply the thoughts of our founder. This work is in line with the Life Orientations of the Movement, which now continue for the third year after the Fatima meeting, this time with the focus "Marriage, a sacrament of mission".

There is a theological audacity in this year's life orientation and study theme, by giving it the title "Marriage – A Sacrament of Mission". We usually consider that the best example of the Sacrament of Mission is the Sacrament of Confirmation, where God confirms in us the work that began with Baptism, by consolidating our Christian strength. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "Confirmation perfects baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which the Holy Spirit gives to root us more deeply in our divine filiation, to incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in word and deed. (CCC no. 1316). This grace that we receive from God is an individual grace.

When we, together within the ERI, established the Specific Life Orientation for 2020-2021 "Marriage, a sacrament of mission" together with its associated study theme, we did not even think about the concept of a literal interpretation that would lead us to affirm that marriage

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is strictly a Sacrament of Mission according to a traditional theological understanding of these words. What we want to arrive at, from the perspective of the TEAMS OUR LADY and the thinking of our founder, is that a couple who accepts their conjugal experience as a sacrament of the Church, is a couple who not only lives conjugality in Christ, but also becomes a visible sign of God's love. That is to say, its mission is fundamentally oriented towards witness. This has a transforming effect that only the human couple can achieve through this specific sacrament. We must not forget that in the mysticism of the Teams of Our Lady, the witness of life is one of the fundamental pillars that allows us to reveal our charism in the environment in which our life develops.

It is from this perspective that the study topic should be approached. We, the Teams of Our Lady, have read many of Father Caffarel's writings, but perhaps we should now go to a further level in understanding his theology. This is why we wanted to work on this particular theme with the SR France-Luxembourg-Switzerland. The study topic contains a wealth of documentation covering the work of our Founder and how he looked at the reality of Christian sacramental marriage. We will now have the privilege of knowing and integrating this into our formation process.

When we think of the theology of marriage, it is impossible not to think of the theology that comes from the writings of our founder. He saw Christian marriage, in its totality as a sacrament. It has both a missionary perspective and a path of holiness, and we are called to both in the Church and in the movement today.

Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger described Father Caffarel as a prophet of the 20th century. Since then, we have become accustomed to hearing many similar descriptions of him as a prophet of our times, a prophet of marriage, etc. Hidden in each of these statements is a feeling of admiration for the timeless character of his thoughts. These thoughts have a topicality and relevance that never ceases to surprise us. In this exciting journey, which will take place during eight meetings and a review meeting, we will explore the irrepressible missionary force that emanates from the sacramental couple. We will be able to find the convergence that exists between the thoughts of our founder and the thoughts of the Church of today, and in particular, the thoughts of Pope Francis. It is a marvellous opportunity we have in this precious document to know more deeply the theology of our founder who was ahead of his time and revolutionised the role of the Christian couple in the Church, highlighting their missionary character.

Sometimes, reading Father Caffarel is not easy because the depth of his writings require a special disposition and extra effort. May this be an excellent opportunity to take advantage of all the richness that emanates from his thoughts. By making an effort of preparation and study by the whole team, together with the Spiritual Counsellor, this study topic uncovers a diamond mine that shines in all its facets.

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If, at the end of this study, you have grown in admiration of the fruitfulness of this wonderful man; and you have awakened a desire to deepen your knowledge of his prolific work; and you better understand the particular missionary vision that always captivated him about the human couple and the experience of the sacrament of marriage; then the goal of the authors and of the ERI will have been achieved.

May it be so.

Clarita et Edgardo Bernal-Fandiño  
Couple Responsable International

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