

MY DEAR TEAM MEMBERS,

In my previous letters to you, the background theme over the years has been concentrated on two Endeavours touching on the spirituality of our movement. Namely, the *Sit-Down* and *Married Prayer*. I hope that all of you have managed to internalise these two points and that you have put them in to practice, because in truth, they are terribly important for your growth as couples as well as for your growth within a *Team*, since the Team is a community whose spiritual and human life develops in direct proportion to each couples' commitment to be faithful to the methodology of holiness that is characteristic of our Movement. In the current conditions of our society and the Church and in the context of the celebration of the extraordinary synod on the family and new evangelisation, our Movement's contribution is essential and the Church expects much of us, so that it may be the catalyst and the efficient sign of hope for the world, a hope that is truly concrete and alive.

Today, I would like to draw your attention to the importance of *personal* or *individual prayer*. Personal prayer is truly the *breathe of the soul*. Father Caffarel set the example, since he himself devoted a large amount of his day to prayer and he was in the habit of saving three months of the year for meditation and prayer, because he knew that if his life was not well anchored in prayer, his spiritual and apostolic life would be seriously compromised. Jesus told us that we ought to pray ceaselessly and the liturgy also invites us to raise our hearts to God: the opening dialogue to the Preface of the Eucharistic prayer, *sursum corda! Habemus ad Dominum! Lift up your hearts! We lift them up to the Lord!*

According to Tertullian (160-220), a Christian ought to recite the *Lord's Prayer* at least three times a day: morning, noon and night. St Therese of the Child Jesus was so moved by the prayer that she was not able to go beyond the opening words of the *Our Father!* Have we ever managed to fathom the depths of what it means to have the possibility of addressing God as a father, in the same manner as Jesus does, he who introduced us to this Trinitarian intimacy?

That is why in this letter, I urge each of you to cultivate the spirit of prayer, by setting aside a moment in your daily life when you can speak to God in the intimacy of your soul. Sometimes people regret that they are not eagerly awaited in their prayer. St Augustine had a very interesting explanation for that. We are not expected or awaited either because we are *bad*, or because we ask for *bad things*, or because we ask *badly*. Following in Jesus' footsteps, let us restrain ourselves and only ask that we not be led *into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. (Mt 6:13) In the end, we ought to ask the Lord to deliver us from *sin*, the single bad thing that can happen to us! Ultimately, let us ask the Lord that his will always be done, because we do not know whether health or sickness, life or death is better for us. Let the Lord make the decision and let us ask for the grace to see a *sign* of his visit to our house in everything!

I beseech the abundance of God's blessings upon you during this time of grace, given over to the synod on the family, the catalyst of hope and peace. My very personal greetings to each and every one of you!

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