



## Talks of Teams of Our lady on the Spirituality of Marriage

### Presentation of the Lourdes Document

Following the Gathering at St James of Compostela in 2000 and during successive meetings of the International College, the International Leading Team (ERI) has initiated a work of reflection on various aspects of the life and spirituality of the couple and on the sacrament of marriage as it is lived out by team members in the midst people of our times. It was a question of going deeper into the charism of our Movement and of its mission.

Super-Regional Couples made their contributions to this work of reflection during the meeting of the College at Houston in July 2001 and at Melbourne in July 2002. Regional Couples were consulted prior to their gathering in Rome in January 2003. In the course of this memorable meeting, attended by almost three hundred participants, several conferences given by experts enabled further progress to be made in this work of reflection. It also received the support of Pope John Paul II who welcomed us and gave us a remarkable talk.

These stages of in-depth reflection have led the International Leading Team, together with the International College, to draw up and present some orientations that will be given to participants to the Lourdes gathering. To help teams to adopt these orientations and in order that their prayers and reflections may be enriched by them, ERI are offering three study topics largely based on the work of the College at their various meetings.

It seemed a useful idea to make available to team members the texts of contributions made at the above meetings of the International College. They are the fruits of the work of research done by the Super-Regions of the various continents, complemented by the teachings received at Rome in 2003. The document you have in your hands contains the texts to which the study topics offered by the International Leading Team often refer. You will thus be able to progress further by going directly to the texts quoted in the study topics.

\* \* \*

The meeting of the International College at Houston in 2001 had as its general theme the orientation given at Santiago of Compostella in 2000: **“To be a Christian couple today in the Church and in the world”**. Nine Super-Regional Couples had put together the study topic on that theme, having consulted Vatican II on the subject of the couple in the People of God.

The following year in Melbourne, we were influenced by Pope John Paul II’s message marking the beginning of the second millennium. The general theme of that meeting: **“The couple lives out the Covenant in Christ”**, was developed on the basis of the Biblical text: *“Put out into deep water...if you say so, I will pay out the nets...they left everything and followed him”* (Lk 5: 4-11). Some reflections on the meaning of the Church complemented this work.

The Rome meeting in 2003, coincided with the centenary of the birth of Father Henri Caffarel. It was natural to call to mind his legacy. The invited speakers - university lecturers or members of Teams - looked again in depth at various aspects of the Christian life of couples united by the sacrament of marriage. The audience granted to participants by Pope John Paul II, with his stimulating message, was the high point of the meeting.

The document we have given you mirrors our Movement in its diversity. You will recognise throughout this volume the cultural differences in approach that are its richness. A glance at the references given by several of the authors shows that they were each inspired by sources familiar to them in their own language. This leads us to express our deepest thanks to Teams translators who have made possible the production of this document in the principal languages spoken in the Teams of Our Lady as well as to all those who contributed to its composition.

We hope that you will recognise in this collection of texts a witness to the deep experiences of the various regions of our Movement and a reflection of the living faith shared by couples and Spiritual Counsellors. We offer you this document as a sign of hope in the pursuit of the mission so powerfully launched by our founder, Father Henri Caffarel.

The International Leading Team

--o0o--