



Intercessors Talk Fatima 2018

"God our Father, You sent your beloved Son to save the world who, seated at your right hand, does not cease to intercede for humankind. Carried by the Spirit, we want to unite ourselves with his prayer for the salvation of all. "

Dear friends, we are very happy and moved to have the opportunity to speak to you today here in Fatima, in this place where the Virgin Mary came to meet Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta. These children, chosen by Mary, became intercessors and shared her message with the world: Do not be afraid! Pray always! Offer, accept, endure...for the conversion of sinners. The heart of Mary is entirely focused on the Trinity.

Our prayer of intercession has its roots in this Trinitarian relationship, this mysterious and powerful dynamic that unites the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Through Christ:** the only mediator, the Intercessor, He who is the way, the truth and the life, we are called to live in the presence of God, his Father. God keeps coming to us to renew this union with Him. So we turn to Him to bring our prayers, our requests, our doubts, our hopes, our fears, and also our thanksgiving. We are all intercessors, presenting to the Father, through the Son and in communion with the Spirit, the intentions entrusted to us, in total trust and abandonment to His mercy. And we believe that God *hears* our prayers and *leans* toward us, whatever our request and our situation.

It is in this trust in the merciful Father that Father Caffarel, in 1960, aware of the dangers threatening the family and the Christian couple in the world, made an urgent appeal for "watchmen" to stand up and pray. His concern was that the Movement of Teams of Our Lady, then in a period of rapid growth, would stay strong! That this growth "would not come at the expense of strength" as he said. He believed that Teams of Our Lady needed an "extra portion of prayer", for the foundations of the movement to be solid.

His deep union with Christ urged him to ask the team members with great insistence to root their couple and their life in prayer. Thus a movement of "watchmen" was born, later called the "Intercessors", within Teams of Our Lady. Here is what he wrote: "*Pray for the Movement, so that it fulfils with generosity and truth the mission assigned to it in the Church of Christ*". The watchmen, then



the intercessors, are for Teams of Our Lady "the keel of the boat": prayer is a source of balance.

Father Caffarel therefore asks that "*volunteers commit themselves to an hour of night prayer once a month, husband and wife together if possible*". This is his request. These are his words. And the intercessors today, with humility, conviction, and confidence, strive to answer this call.

For 58 years the intercessors have evolved, while maintaining the principle of a commitment and a continuous chain of intercession. Each conscious, of his **personal responsibility**. The intercessors are convinced of the importance of this prayer, to support, humbly but with confidence, Christian couples. They pray especially for members of Teams of Our Lady, who are committed to live in truth the vocation, their mission: a marriage in Christ.

The Intercessors offer three possibilities for commitment:

- An hour of monthly prayer, on a fixed date, if possible at night;
- One day of fasting per month, also on a fixed date;
- The offering of one's daily life, trials, joys, sorrows, illness ... when one cannot make another commitment.

The Movement of Intercessors is a **path to holiness**: not a search for perfection, but a path, with detours, falls, trials, hopes. We ask the Lord's help to remain faithful to our commitment as an intercessor, in trust in Our Father in Heaven. To fulfil our service out of love for Him and for others is our only ambition.

Aude: This prayer of intercession places us like children, like the children of Fatima, in the arms of the Father. We place our requests before him. And we truly believe that the Father welcomes them. That's all. The rest does not belong to us. But if we strongly believe in this welcome from the Father, we cannot sit idly by!

This commitment to intercessory prayer plunges us into the **grace of our sacrament of marriage**. It took me a long time to get used to night prayer, and it's still a fight. But every time I get out of bed, at 2am, to go with Olivier to place the prayers entrusted to us before the heart of Jesus, I give thanks for this special hour in the month, which unites us, Olivier and I, in the same spirit of confidence



and surrender to the Lord. It seems very little, a small hour at night once a month, but we feel it bears a lot of fruit **for the unity of our couple**. This little time helps us to live every day in a "spirit of intercession" from one month to the next: it opens our hearts to more compassion, more attention to the challenges of today's world and of the Church.

Olivier: I joined the intercessors almost 24 years ago. I liked to pray at night during retreats and I thought I could try to do it more often than once or twice a year. When I visited the Intercessors stand at a Gathering and Jean-Michel Vuillermoz asked me to get involved, I found it appealing. I did not know if I could do it ... He told me that only time would tell, that it was not easy for anyone. A treasure was hidden behind this commitment. A wonder I did not suspect. My whole life of prayer has been transformed by this rhythm of monthly meetings, which, in fact, structure all other moments. Very quickly I understood that this appointment was to be maintained by a daily prayer, during which I also carry the intentions of the month, and all those entrusted to us. It remains a fight and a journey with multiple falls. But I offer them, I find another moment when I did not manage to pray on the chosen date, my commitment is sometimes even more present in the failure ... and here I am again! And what a joy when Aude joins me to pray at night!

The Intercessors form a **prayer chain** around the world: currently nearly 4,000 intercessors in 30 countries, on five continents. They welcome the prayer intentions entrusted to them by members of Teams of Our Lady by post or by e-mail and offer them once a month, in a night time or daytime prayer, in the fast or offering of their life, to the Father. They know that they join other prayers and that others will take over after them.

We feel associated with the **great prayer of the Church**, with the monks, the nuns, who take turns day and night to pray. And we also feel compassion for all the suffering people around the world in hospitals, prisons, camps, with the homeless, refugees, or those at home but in despair ... all these people who do not sleep and who suffer.

To organise the links between the intercessors around the world an International Team has been created. It is made up of 3 couples, supported by a spiritual advisor: Father Paul-Dominique Marcovits, and in connection with Teams of Our Lady thanks to the Responsible Couple for the Intercessors (this year we worked



Rassemblement International – International Gathering – Encuentro
Internacional - Encontro Internacional – Raduno Internazionale

Fátima 2018

Equipes Notre-Dame

16-21 Juillet – July 16th-21th – 16-21 de Julio – 16-21 Julho – 16-21 Luglio

with Georges and Mahassen Khoury whom we thank from the bottom of our heart for their accompaniment, their affectionate presence and their deep faith).

Each Teams of Our Lady Region and Super Region has assigned a couple for the Intercessors: these 18 couples, some of whom are here today, are and will be supported by their Super Regional Responsible Couple of Teams of Our Lady who will be eager to help them gather, especially at the gatherings, the prayer intentions coming from members of Teams of Our Lady.

As you can see, the primary mission of the Intercessors is to **welcome the prayer intentions entrusted to them**, especially those of the members of Teams of Our Lady. These are passed on at gatherings or sent to administrators who have offered to coordinate the prayer requests. We also have a web app and a dedicated website. Prayer requests are then redistributed to the intercessors who commit to pray for them. We truly believe that our heavenly Father welcomes them. The rest does not belong to us.

A "Letter of Intercessors" is distributed every three months, in 7 languages, which makes it possible to connect intercessors from all over the world. This allows us to widen our prayer to the great intentions of the Church, in union with Pope Francis.

"To intercede is really to let God fulfil in us, and with us, his plan to save all men. The concern for the salvation of others is one of the most serious responsibilities He has ever given to men" Father Henri Caffarel.

Intercession is not a matter of words but of heart to heart, of true compassion and offering. We come to the Father to present our requests with humility, with a confident heart and filled with love for our neighbour. What counts is not our will but God's for each of us, **in the mystery of the communion of saints**.

Let's pray together the Intercessors' prayer:

"God our Father, you have sent your beloved Son to save the world: now sitting on your right hand, he never ceases to intercede for humankind, and we carry with him the Spirit to unite with his prayer for the salvation of all.

May priests and couples be faithful to their commitments in the service of communion in the Church by radiating the love you have put in their hearts.

May your children around the world discover the happiness you give and live with respect, dignity, joy and peace.

God our Father, through the intercession of Our Lady and all the saints, help us intercessors to perform our service out of love for you and for love for our neighbour."