



WELCOME 15 JULY 2024

MONS. ROBERTO REPOLE ARCHBISHOP OF TURIN

Dearly beloved, the Church in Turin welcomes you with great joy on the occasion of your 13th International Gathering. It is a meeting that you have awaited and prepared for throughout the world, an appointment that in Turin is engaging in affectionate hospitality many married couples, their spiritual counsellors and also the local Church, which is praying with you and for you.

Beyond the great appreciation for your commitment, I would also like to welcome you, personally, with a thought that looks back to my city of Turin: it is the city I love, made up of families, of adults, old and young, of men and women who aspire to a full and fulfilled life. At the forefront of my thoughts is the desire of these families for joy, but also the realisation that the desired joy is not always realised, indeed, unfortunately, the families of our time struggle more and more to experience the beauty of marriage. Why?

You represent an answer to this question. Your movement testifies that there is a possible and joyful way for couples: it is the Christian life. Where Christ is missing, oxygen is missing. And that is why you care for the spiritual dimension with mutual love: for the fundamental need of every couple, not just to look into each other's eyes, but to look upwards, to the origin of life and love.

Some people today smile at Christian anthropology on the family, as if there were an advantage in breaking up the family institution and spreading less stable forms of life. The culture of our time mistrusts 'forever' love, but in the end this culture produces endless loneliness. When the Teams of Our Lady were born in the 1940s, none of this existed, and perhaps today you too are questioning yourselves about the times that have changed, about the new words and examples that need to be offered, about the very forms and method of your Teams. We really must all question ourselves.

Certainly, in the second half of the 20th century, the temperature of the Christian faith in civil society has changed a great deal, and it is above all on this that we must question ourselves. Once upon a time, when membership of the Church was almost taken for granted, there was in some groups of believers the habit of devoting a lot of space to critical discussion, even with regard to how to live in the Church. Pass me the expression: criticism of the Church could almost become a fashion. Today there is still a need for an intelligent approach to faith and Church membership, but we must ensure that it is not old-fashioned and anachronistic. Today, young people - those who question themselves - ask above all that we help them to structure the reasons for their faith, to keep the faith in a world where as Christians one can be a minority, to cultivate an evangelical life that resists the idolatries of the dominant culture. This could also be the mandate of the Teams of Our Lady.

Dearly beloved, I simply hand over to you this brief sharing of my thoughts. I hope you have occasion to reflect on it, but above all I wish you days of recharging your lives at this International Gathering. And at the conclusion of the Gathering, when you return to your homelands, let us make a commitment to pray for one another and to support one another in proclaiming the Gospel, which knows no boundaries.

To all of you my welcome, my affectionate encouragement and my blessing,

+ Roberto Repole  
Archbishop of Turin