

TEAMS OF OUR LADY – CANADA

NATIONAL GATHERING 2026

“RETURNING TO THE SOURCE”

PRESENTATION: OPENING ADDRESS

SPEAKER(S): FABIANA ALBANEZ & MARCELO SILVA

DATE / SESSION: AUGS 21 – 5PM

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Good evening, everyone,

For those who don't know us, we are **Fabiana and Marcelo**, and since July of last year, we have had the privilege of serving as the Responsible Couple for the Canada Region.

We have been married for 22 years and are blessed with two daughters and a son. We are part of **Toronto 3 - Our Lady of Grace**, and we joined Teams of Our Lady in 2008.

It is a great joy for us to welcome all of you to the **2026 National Gathering of Teams of Our Lady in Canada**.

And this is a very special year for us.

We are here in Montreal, where Teams of Our Lady first began in Canada **70 years ago, in 1956**. And we are gathered here at **Saint Joseph's Oratory, one of Canada's most important Catholic pilgrimage sites**.

Coming back here to celebrate 70 years is very meaningful. We are not only celebrating the history of the Movement in Canada, but also all the couples, Spiritual Counsellors, and Advisors who, over these 70 years, have lived their vocation through Teams of Our Lady.

From those first Teams here in Montreal, the Movement has grown across the country. Today, we have **90 Teams and nearly 1,000 members** in Canada.

And now, 70 years later, we have come together in this same city to celebrate, to give thanks, and to look ahead.

This year also gives us another very special reason to celebrate: the Church has recognized **Father Henri Caffarel as Venerable**.

For all of us in Teams of Our Lady, this is an important moment. It reminds us of the gift Father Caffarel gave to the Church and, especially, of his deep belief that **marriage is a path to holiness**.

Our theme for this Gathering is **“Returning to the Source.”**

And the Gospel that accompanies us says:

“Remain in me, as I remain in you.”

John 15:4

For us, this is really the heart of these days.

With everything that fills our lives—work, children, family, responsibilities, and all the demands of everyday life—it is easy to lose sight of what is most important.

So this weekend is an opportunity to stop for a moment and return to the Source.

To return to Christ.

To return to our vocation as couples.

To remember why Teams of Our Lady is part of our lives.

And to remember that we are not alone on this journey.

We are especially happy and grateful to welcome members of the **ERI (International Leading Team): Mercedes Gómez-Ferrer and Alberto Pérez**, Responsible Couple of the ERI; **Father Augusto García**, Spiritual Counsellor of the ERI; and **Ellen and TJ Holt**, Liaison Couple for the Transoceanic Zone.

Thank you for travelling to Canada and being with us for this very special celebration. We are looking forward to everything you will share with us during these days.

We are also very pleased to welcome **Bishop Christian Rodembourg**, **Monsignor Makarios Wehbi**, our Regional Spiritual Counsellor, **Father Gilles Surprenant**, and our dear **Louise and Yvon Boucher**.

Thank you all for being here and for sharing your reflections, your experiences, and your lives with us.

And to everyone who has travelled from different parts of Canada, and to those who have joined us from abroad—**welcome!**

It is wonderful to see so many of us together.

We also want to take a moment to thank all the people who have worked behind the scenes to make this Gathering possible.

Our Regional Team, Sector Couples, volunteers, translators, and everyone helping with registration, hospitality, music, liturgy, communications, the youth program, and so many other areas have generously given their time and energy.

We know that everyone has busy lives, and we truly appreciate everything you have done.

And we also want to share something with you: **we are not event professionals!** We have simply done our best, with a lot of love and dedication, to prepare these days for all of you.

If something doesn't go as planned, or if there are any difficulties along the way, **we take responsibility and sincerely apologize**. But for everything that goes well, **we give thanks and praise to the Lord**, because we know that all the good that comes from these days is ultimately His.

Thank you for your understanding, your patience, and, most of all, for being here with us.

And, of course, we want to thank **all of you** for making the effort to be here.

Over the next few days, we will pray together, listen, learn, share, and celebrate.

We hope this will be a time for us to reconnect—with Christ, with our spouse, with our Teams, and with the larger family of Teams of Our Lady.

And when we return home, we hope to take something from this Gathering with us—not only memories, but a renewed desire to **respond to God's call** and to keep Christ at the centre of our lives, our marriages, our families, and our Teams.

Seventy years ago, the first Teams in Canada began here in Montreal.

Today, we are here to celebrate that journey.

And we are also here to continue it.

So, once again, **welcome to Montreal, and welcome to the 2026 National Gathering of Teams of Our Lady.**

We are very happy that you are here.

Our Lady, Queen of Teams, pray for us.