

TEAMS OF OUR LADY – CANADA

NATIONAL GATHERING 2026

“RETURNING TO THE SOURCE”

PRESENTATION: COUPLES' TESTIMONY

SPEAKER(S): LOUISE & YVON BOUCHER

DATE / SESSION: SATURDAY, AUGUST 22 – 3:00–3:30 PM

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: FRENCH

Dear Friends of the Teams of Our Lady in the Canada Region,

First, we would like to thank Fabiana and Marcelo for giving us the opportunity to serve the Canada Region today and to reconnect with friends with whom we have built a friendship—and even a love—that continues to grow despite the distance that separates us.

We stand before you today with great humility, not to tell you how to succeed in married life, but rather to share how good the Lord has been to us. We are also a little nervous because we are not accustomed to writing out our talks. Usually, we jot down a few notes to make sure we do not forget anything and then speak more freely. We therefore ask for your kind indulgence.

Introduction

We both come from modest families where we learned the fundamental values of family love, sharing, service, and, of course, the Christian faith.

We are both 76 years old and will celebrate our 56th wedding anniversary on September 5.

We were introduced to Teams of Our Lady in 2001, which means that we have now spent 25 years within the Movement.

More recently, on April 28, we celebrated the 35th anniversary of Yvon's ordination as a permanent deacon.

We had two daughters: Suzanne and Isabelle. Isabelle passed away on October 17, 1988, at the age of 14, and Suzanne passed away on November 7, 2025, at the age of 52. We will return to these significant events later.

We are also blessed with two grandsons: Christophe, age 27, who is autistic and lives in a supervised apartment, and Zachary, age 23, who is a university student.

This brief overview sets the stage for the testimony we would like to share with you today.

Our journey

Today, we would like to reflect on the influence Teams of Our Lady has had on our life as a Christian couple, even though the Movement entered our lives only during the second half of our journey together.

We firmly believe that life itself prepared us for this encounter with the Movement. Through our upbringing, it felt natural to make ourselves useful to society. As a result, we became involved in many activities and ministries: parent committees, parish suppers, sacramental preparation programs, and more.

Some commitments were especially significant: the journey toward the permanent diaconate beginning in 1985, and our involvement with IRIS Estrie, an organization serving people living with AIDS, which began in 1988 and continued for 25 years.

What motivated us to join this organization was Isabelle's medical history. Shortly before her fifth birthday, she underwent surgery to replace her aorta and aortic valve, a procedure that required a blood transfusion. Given the context of the AIDS crisis at the time, we wanted to better understand the advances being made in medicine, and this led us to become actively involved.

As a deacon, my ministry was often more social than strictly religious, particularly through the founding of the Parish Social Ministry Committee in 1996, in collaboration with our pastor and a dedicated group of volunteers.

Three events stand out as especially meaningful in my ministry: blessing the marriage of our daughter Suzanne and baptizing our two grandsons.

As we write these lines, we realize how faithful we have remained to our commitments. Louise worked as a hairstylist for nearly fifty years, while I spent about forty years working as a butcher and meat department manager.

As the theme of this gathering reminds us:

"Let Us Return to the Source."

For us, the spirituality and pedagogy of Teams of Our Lady can be summarized in three key themes: **Endeavors, sharing, and service.**

Endeavors are like road signs on the highway of life, helping us travel in the safest and happiest way possible. They guide us through detours, bad weather, and even the occasional breakdown or flat tire along the journey.

Among them, the one we found most difficult to embrace—and ultimately the most essential—was the **Sit-Down**.

During the busy and often hectic years of our active lives, it was not easy to set aside time to meet in the Lord's presence and, using the monthly topic as a guide, speak honestly to one another. There were times when we postponed the exercise because our worries took center stage in our conversations, rather than entrusting them to the Lord.

Over time, we came to understand that practicing the Endeavors is much like developing an athletic skill: improvement requires practice and perseverance.

Taking time is both difficult and essential. We need time to revisit our daily lives, our relationship with one another, our relationship with God, with our family and friends, with others, and with all that life places before us.

Above all, we need to place the Lord back at the center of our lives.

Prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments are all essential ingredients in that journey.

One day, Louise remarked that her spaghetti sauce no longer tasted like her mother's. It has lost that special flavor that makes you want a second helping. I suggested that I make the next batch myself. To everyone's surprise, it tasted exactly like her mother's sauce.

How was that possible, given that I am hopeless in the kitchen? Quite simply, I followed her mother's recipe. I also added two ingredients I had learned to use while working in the butcher shop to enhance the flavor. Meanwhile, Louise had gradually developed the habit of adding a little of this and a little of that—whatever happened to be in the refrigerator.

Life can be much the same. The basic recipe is found in Scripture. It is up to us to carefully choose the ingredients that will enrich its flavor in our daily lives.

Prayer has played a decisive role in helping us choose those spiritual ingredients needed to become better Christians and better human beings.

After the Lord's Prayer, the prayer that has touched us most deeply is the Serenity Prayer, made famous by Alcoholics Anonymous:

“Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

You will better understand later in our testimony why this prayer occupies such an important place in our lives.

Sharing and Service

Speaking of sharing, we would like to tell you about a challenge we encountered while serving as a Sector Responsible Couple, a challenge that we later learned existed in many sectors: the annual contribution.

Many team members had become accustomed to giving only the minimum requested amount because they did not fully understand the importance of supporting the international growth and mission of the Movement. It was easy to contribute when it benefited the local Sector or Region, but the international dimension often felt distant.

We therefore tried to explain the broader impact of these contributions—not only their financial benefits but also how they made it possible to invite speakers and organize events that would otherwise have been difficult to offer.

We know how important sharing is within our team meetings. To share who we are and what we are living is to allow the Lord to touch another person's heart through our own experiences.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux once said:

■ “To love is to give everything.”

We might dare to paraphrase her by saying:

■ “To share is to give of oneself—whether through money, time, or simply through our humanity.”

From our very first years in Teams of Our Lady, we were called to serve by helping prepare Eucharistic celebrations at Sector events. We have always continued to respond “yes,” whenever possible, to the services entrusted to us, and we continue to do so today, even as we gradually slow down.

Over the years, we served first as members and then as leaders of the Sector Team, and later as members and leaders of the Regional Team, always supported by our base team.

This brings us to the role of “chance” in our lives.

We were invited to assume responsibility for the Region because the couple originally expected to undertake this service faced serious health challenges. We are not sure whether there was no other option, but Regional Responsible Couple Ginette and Martin Bergeron came to visit us and asked whether we would replace them.

What a surprise! Since they were close friends, we assumed they had simply come for coffee.

Filled with uncertainty, we turned to our secret weapon:

■ “Lord, grant me serenity...”

We sought the advice of the spiritual counselor serving at the time, Mgr Louis Coriveau, and his response led us to say yes:

“God does not call the qualified; He qualifies those whom He calls.”

Those four years became an extraordinary gift.

As an additional blessing, the Movement gave us the opportunity to accompany two teams in Granby, friendships we would never otherwise have experienced.

And speaking of chance, we once heard this definition on Radio Ville-Marie:

“Chance is the cloak God wears when He wishes to go unnoticed.”

We remember that period of our lives with deep gratitude because, far from being a cliché, we truly received much more than we ever gave.

The Year 2025

For us, the year 2025 was particularly challenging.

It began in 2024 when we learned that Louise would require surgery for an aneurysm of the ascending aorta. In August, her cardiologist informed her that the procedure would take place soon. As we all know, “soon” can be a very relative term, and for us it suggested a matter of weeks.

The operation finally took place on March 3, 2025.

Those months were spent living between concern and confidence, impatience and hope.

Thankfully, the surgery was successful, despite a difficult week of delirium in intensive care unit.

We would especially like to thank the Intercessors who accompanied us through their prayers and love. We firmly believe their spiritual support influenced not only the operation and recovery but also the profound sense of peace and trust that sustained us throughout that time. It was an extraordinary source of comfort.

Returning to the chronology of 2025:

- On January 11, our friend Estelle, with whom we had purchased our duplex, died from a pulmonary embolism following a procedure to unblock veins in her legs.
- On January 30, a cousin whom I regarded as a sister—because she had lived with my parents for several years—died from a ruptured aneurysm in a hospital parking lot.
- On September 25, my nephew called to tell us that his father was gravely ill. The next afternoon we spent time with him, and shortly after returning home, we learned about his passing. What a gift it was to have shared those final moments with him.
- On October 21, our daughter Suzanne was admitted to the hospital for what we believed was a lung condition, which ultimately proved to be a serious heart problem. She passed away on November 7, 2025.

The sorrow of losing Suzanne was accompanied by profound gratitude. We were blessed to walk beside her throughout her two-and-a-half weeks of hospitalization and to share in each decision, treatment, and intervention proposed by her medical team, all within an atmosphere of serenity and trust.

The day before she died, she was placed in a medically induced coma because the next procedure would have been too painful. She therefore departed peacefully, spared the trauma of consciously experiencing the final separation from her loved ones.

We truly feel sustained by a special grace that enables us to live this experience with peace and serenity.

What might have become a devastating year instead became a year of gratitude and thanksgiving. Looking back over the past fifty-six years, we recognized the Lord's presence throughout our lives, especially during the most difficult moments.

People often express amazement—and sometimes we do as well—at the way we have been able to live through these experiences.

There is only one answer:

We feel carried by a greater grace than ourselves.

We are reminded of the familiar image of the footprints in the sand, which teaches us that the Lord never abandons us. He places on our path the people we need to sustain us when life becomes difficult.

We would also like to thank all of you for your prayers, which surely brought us tremendous support and strength.

Conclusion

We hope that, through this testimony, we have been able to offer at least a small witness to hope.

We give thanks to the Lord for every person He has placed on our path, and especially for Teams of Our Lady.

Borrowing from a phrase often used in advertising, we could say that thanks to all of you, we are proud to stand before you today and humbly describe ourselves as an **"improved product."**

Thank you for listening all the way to the end—without falling asleep!

Louise and Yvon