

Couples need to set aside time to talk each day, papal message says

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY – Going to Mass together and setting aside time each day to talk to each other are two simple practices that can help Catholic couples strengthen their marriage and be examples to others, said a papal message.

Pope Benedict XVI “invites Christian couples to be ‘the gentle and smiling face of the church,’ the best and most convincing heralds of love sustained and nourished by faith,” said a message to the participants in the international meeting of the Teams of Our Lady.

The group, a movement for Catholic couples started in France in 1938, was meeting in Brasilia, Brazil, July 21-26. The papal message to the couples was signed by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state.

While pressures on married couples have increased since the movement’s founding, the message said, members continue to be committed to proclaiming, “not only in words, but also through their lives, the fundamental truths about human love” and how it is a reflection of God’s love for humanity.

The movement helps couples recognize the grace of the sacrament of marriage and encourages them to attend Mass together, Cardinal Bertone said. It also gives them “simple and practical ideas to daily live an embodied spirituality for Christian spouses.”

One of the key ideas, he said, is “the ‘sit down,’ that is to say, a commitment to setting a regular time for personal dialogue between the spouses, in which each presents to the other, with all sincerity and in a climate of mutual listening, the issues and topics most important to life as a couple.”

“In our world, so marked by individualism, activism, eagerness and distraction,” Cardinal Bertone wrote, “sincere and constant dialogue between the spouses is essential for avoiding the emergence of misunderstandings that grow and harden,” and which can cause irreparable damage.

“Cultivate this precious habit of sitting down beside each other to talk and listen so that you understand each other,” he said.

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