



Dear all,

We are Mercedes Gómez-Ferrer and Alberto Pérez, the new International Responsible Couple. We have been married for 33 years and have three sons, the two eldest are already married and the youngest still lives at home with us. We have one grandchild and expect twins that will be born around Christmas. We live in the city of Valencia, Spain, where we work. Alberto is a music teacher at a public high school and Mercedes is a professor of Art History at the University. We share many things we enjoy doing together, such as cultural trips, music, sports, and excursions. We are grateful to our children for the understanding and support they have always given us in everything we undertake, and were happy they were able to accompany us in Turin. Just like Mercedes' parents, who were the ones who taught us what it means to live in Team of Our Lady and have been a constant example of dedication and fidelity to the movement. Our base Team is Valencia 101, with which we began our Team life 33 years ago, as we started the piloting the same year we got married. Our Team that has sustained and supported us throughout all these years. At the same time, we have had the great fortune to collaborate in many activities in the Teams as trainers, pilots and responsables at different levels in our sector of Levante, Murcia region and at the SR Spain. In this last stage, we served as the communication responsible couple on the ERI.

Our service as the new responsible couple of the ERI will develop in the following years, from Turin 2024 until the next international gathering in 2030. We are accompanied by an extraordinary team that is willing to work and, most importantly, to love the movement, each one in the mission entrusted to them. From the first day they said "Yes", we are immensely grateful to them. They will introduce themselves in the upcoming letters and will share with everyone the mission they have been entrusted with. We could tell you many things about this mission, for which we have chosen the orientation: "Called To Live In Communion." We invite you to re-read the Turin Letter, in which we developed this orientation a little further for the next six years.

Indeed, if we want to summarize in a few words what we feel, we can tell you that we love the Teams and believe they are a grace from God. This call to service is for us a call to live in truth and depth the charism that Father Caffarel once intuited and which remains even more alive than ever. The Church and the world need couples united by the sacrament of marriage to testify that love sustains us, gives meaning to our lives when Christ walks with us. That

love strengthens our marriage, helps us to meet others, to give ourselves wherever we are needed in response to his vocation.

In all our presentations as responsables, we have wanted to echo the words of Father Caffarel written in the April-May 1957 letter to the team leaders:

"You are in charge of the members of your team. You feel, and want to be responsible for their human and Christian development, you only have to work. Give to them. Give yourselves. Even if you were the least capable, you have infinite things to offer, because what they need first of all is not your goods, but yourselves. And this is the most difficult thing to do. To give oneself, to be always available for others is difficult and tiring. Available, no doubt, to provide material service but, above all, a much higher service, which consists of offering an attentive, understanding, motivating heart, which instills confidence, which knows how to tell the truth, which dares to demand." Monthly letter April-May 1957, Fr. Caffarel

This call motivates us and makes us go out of ourselves, despite our difficulties. It helps us to focus on several important dimensions for our mission: availability, attention, understanding, motivation, trust, truth, and demand. It is a call that makes us recognize our weakness and our infinite need for others and for God. It is a proposal that encourages us to pray together and offers us an opportunity for the conversion of our heart. Responding with even greater love, to all the love received.

Making our own the words of the song, "may your Spirit embrace our whole being, make us docile to your voice, transform our whole life," grateful in advance for your welcome and asking for your prayers, we send you a strong hug, united in communion.

Alberto Pérez and Mercedes Gómez-Ferrer

International Responsible Couple