

Vol 54 • No. 6
October, 2001



Christian Family Movement

Symposium identifies challenges to marriage and family, church response

by Lauri Przybysz

The symposium, "Marriage and Family Life: Enduring Truths, Changing Realities," brought together U.S. Catholic Church leaders committed to supporting and improving family life. The event was held in **Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia**, August 15-18, 2001, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* (*On the Family*).

The five day meeting was held in conjunction with the yearly meetings of the **National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM)** and **Natural Family Planning (NFP)**. It was sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committees on Marriage and Family and for Pro-Life Activities.

The Christian Family Movement was actively represented at the meeting by National Presidents **Peter and Jane Buchbauer** of **Winchester, Va.**, National Secretary **Lauri Przybysz**, who also coordinates marriage preparation and enrichment for the Archdiocese of **Baltimore**, and former Executive Directors **Gary and Kay Aitchison** of **Ames, Iowa**. CFM has been an active member of NACFLM and was honored in 1993 by the organization with a special citation for its vision and service to families.

During the symposium CFM's representatives participated actively in the question and answer sessions as well as in the break-out sessions as the opportunities arose. Kay and Gary spoke on the need for participants in family ministry to address the issues of hurting families. Gary, as permanent deacon, also served at the closing liturgy with the bishops. Jane spoke on the ability of CFM to reach families with information on the teachings of the Church on social justice while providing an effective model for supporting family life and encouraging social action at the local and national level. She and Peter received many inquiries from family life ministers in attendance about CFM programming and implementing what CFM has to offer within their dioceses.

Pope John Paul II sent a written letter of support and thanks to the organizers and participants, encouraging them to develop good marriage preparation to help couples appreciate the value of the church's teaching about personal maturity and responsible procreation.

The symposium highlighted the synod of bishops on family life

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Presidents' Perspectives

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer

"If we could get our act together, we'd be dangerous."

These were words spoken by **John L. Carr**, Director of the Department of Social Development and World Peace for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, at the Symposium: *Marriage and Family Life: Enduring Truths — Changing Realities*. These words are a truth and a challenge.

If we, all the faithful, could get our act together, and work as one, to promote the Gospel, to strengthen marriage and family, to support life at all stages, to reach out to the poor and needy, we would be dangerous. And that's just what we need to be.

As we face a new century, one filled with messages of relativism, of individualism, of materialism; a new century when the prevailing culture does not share our core Gospel values, does not promote

marriage and family and actively seeks to undermine it; a new century where people are too busy to help others, too busy to work on problems in their relationships, too busy to pray, we need to be dangerous. For in the balance lies our families, our faith, our hopes and dreams of a better world for our children.

This is a call to action! For if we do not take the time and effort, and utilize our gifts as spouses, parents, lay leaders, clergy, businessmen, consumers, opinion makers, we will not prevail against the prevailing culture which trivializes those things which are important to us all.

And that is what is wonderful about what we do in CFM. We observe the world around us, judge what we see in light of the Gospel message and act to change it for the better. Whether it is a small act done within the marriage relationship or

within the family, or a larger act impacting the community or church around us, we are at the forefront, in our daily lives, of being proponents of faith, family and marriage, life and service to those in need. We can effect the marketplace, public opinion and elected officials. The extent to which we can succeed is dependent upon our working together within CFM and within our communities. For CFM is not just about families, it's about social justice and the new evangelism. It's about living our faith, not just talking about it. It's about taking the time and effort to reach out and help someone else, to care about someone other than ourselves. It's about being Christ's hands and feet and mouth in today's world.

And, if we could get our act together, we'd be dangerous. Let's be dangerous!

Vatican Conference on the Family

The Pontifical Council for the Family is holding a Theological-Pastoral Congress on the theme: "Familiaris Consortio, Yesterday and Today, on its Twentieth Anniversary," November 22-24.

Toni and Lily Gauci, International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM) delegates to the Vatican and European continental couple have been invited to represent ICCFM at this congress.

Married Couple to Be Beatified

The Congregation for the Causes of Saints made the surprise announcement this summer that **Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi** (1880-1951) and **Maria Corsini** (1884-1965), a couple from Rome, are among the future blessed.

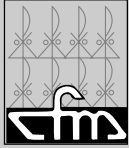
The husband was a deputy-general attorney of the Italian state, and worked for Italy's rebirth after the Mussolini era and World War II.

Maria Corsini was a professor and writer on educational topics, and member of several associations, including Women's Catholic Action, an organization founded under similar principles to those of CFM.

Three of their four children attended the ceremony, held in the presence of **Pope John Paul II**.

Referring to the couple, **Cardinal José Saraiva Martins**, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, said that they "made their family an authentic domestic Church, open to life, prayer, witness of the Gospel, the social apostolate, solidarity with the poor, and friendship.... Intimately united in love and Christian ideals, they walked together on the path of holiness."

Published reports indicate the beatification date is October 21.



ACT is published up to eight times a year by the Christian Family Movement, a national network of Action Groups, dedicated to "improving the quality of family life by reaching out."

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CFM news articles and photos welcome. Subscriptions are free to members and \$8.00 for non-members.

Want to touch base with CFMers from around the country? Join CFM's e-mail exchange by contacting cfm-exchange@cfm.org

Parent to Parent
by Mary Lou Gorman

Ways to Teach Self-Discipline



Today, with credit cards so easy to use, and commercialism running rampant on our computers, TV's and phones, our children do need to be taught self-discipline. Every parent knows that we need to work hard for the money spend and we need to say no to many things today that go against our values. So it's very important to teach our kids self-discipline.

Here are seven ideas to help you work on building self-discipline in your children.

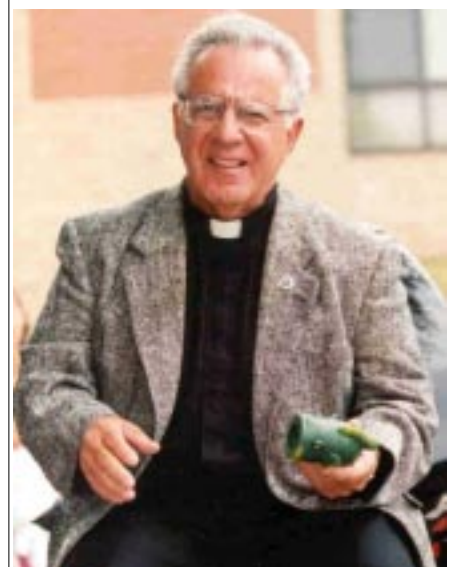
1. The hardest one to do is saying no, and following through by not giving in to whining and tantrums. Give your child a reason, but be firm.
2. Teach them the value of saving. Have saving banks available. Work with them on things to save for.
3. Give them ways to earn money so they learn the value of work.
4. Have family rules for spending money. What others have should not be an influence.
5. Help them make good choices. Help them recognize what will wear out fast or break easily.
6. Teach them to pray that they are making good decisions. If you pray about big family decisions, this will catch on.
7. Remind them of good health and safety habits when you use them and when they go out the door.
8. Lastly, give them limits to test their self-discipline.

Father Sam Palmer "Retires"

After 44 Years as a priest, **Father Sam Palmer** has officially retired as associate pastor of St. Pius X Church, **Urbandale, Iowa**. He served as CFM national chaplain 1985-90 and Internaitonal chaplain 1989-95.

His parish presented him with a new boat and motor, an appropriate gift for a priest who has taken seriously Jesus' call to be a fisher of men.

To begin his retirement, Father Sam attended the International CFM conference in **Brazil**. He will continue his retirement by leading the second Covenant Experience Team at St. Pius.



God Is In Our House

2002 CFM Convention to be held in Miami, Florida

by Bob and Anne Tomonto

Amid the excitement of a new CFM year, the South Florida CFM community is preparing for the 2002 National Convention. The theme is "God Is In Our House" and the Convention will be held at St. Louis Catholic Church from July 4 - 7, 2002. St. Louis parish was recently recognized as one of the 300 best Catholic parishes in the US by **Paul Wilkes**, author of the book entitled *Excellent Catholic Parishes, The Guide to Best Places and Practices*. St. Louis offers a dynamic parish community built around a large parish complex.

CFM will have many opportunities to build community. Hotel accommodations are available at a Quality Inn situated very close to the parish. The hotel is conveniently located close to restaurants, malls, and a major grocery store. The hotel and parish are located approximately 20 miles south of the Miami International Airport.

The program includes keynote speaker **David Thomas**, well-known to CFM as a pioneer in developing a theology of Family Spirituality. He is co-director of The Bethany Family Institute in High-

lands Ranch, Colo. and Carmarthen, Wales. He's been married 34 years to Karen and is the father of seven children ages 33 to 8 and 75 foster children.

The program committee is offering a dual-track program focusing on Couple Spirituality and Survival Skills for Healthy Families. In addition, an exposure program is being developed to share with CFM families the diversity experienced through the richness of the Latin American, Haitian and immigrant communities who call South Florida home. Social activities include a theme dinner with Caribbean music, and a picnic/barbecue at a private beach used by CFM families over the years.

For more information, please contact **Bob and Anne Tomonto** via e-mail at vicepresident@cfm.org. Stay tuned for more information in next issue of ACT.

—Symposium, continued from page 1

in 1980, the Year of the Family. The meeting had discussed ways to assist families in living their mission in the face of rapid social change. Published a year later, *Familiaris Consortio* focused on the four tasks of the Christian family:

1. To form a community of persons,
2. To serve life,
3. To participate in the development of society and,
4. Finally, to build up the life and mission of the church.

As a result of *Familiaris Consortio*, many pastoral initiatives have been undertaken to support marriage and family. The U.S. Bishops issued *A Family Perspective in Church and Society* in 1987, which guided parishes in making all that they do supportive and sensitive to the needs of families. It called for programs and structures in every-

day parish life that would bring families together rather than pull them apart, such as families serving Mass together, family-friendly schedules for religious education and family-sensitive work policies, among others.

Speakers at the Symposium

included **Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Ph.D, Delores R. Leckey and Michael G. Lawler, Ph.D.**

A link to the document, *Familiaris Consortio* is on the CFM web page, www.cfm.org

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Co-director of the National Marriage project of Rutgers university cited these statistics during her presentation at NACFLM:

- 4 in 10 marriages end in divorce. Catholics have the same ratio.
- Divorce has doubled since 1960.
- One third of births are out-of-wedlock.
- The number of absent fathers has doubled since 1960.
- A majority of couples live together before/between/after/or instead of marriage.

Whitehead said, "We are moving to a family culture of low commitment/high turnover relationships, a trend similar to what we are seeing in our economic and business culture."

She cautioned families to balance the needs of the adults and children. Too much emphasis on one or other makes a more fragile marriage. Also, with older age of first marriage becoming the norm, young adults need help with how to live their longer singleness.

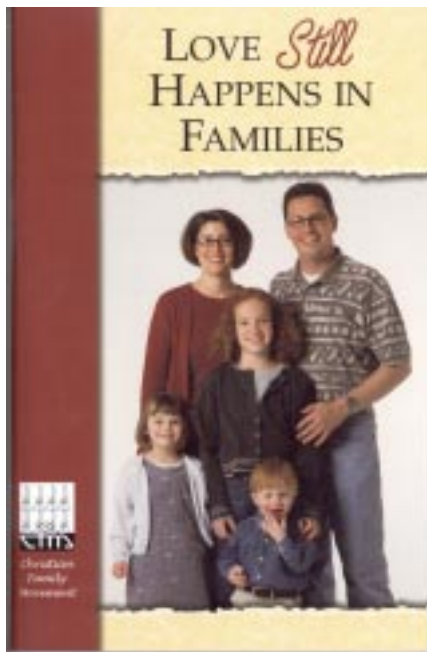
New Program Book Engages Families

by Margie Murchan

Love Still Happens in Families expands on the themes of an earlier program of family home meetings CFM published in 1974. The new book includes adult meetings in addition to four meetings which can be used by families in the home or in small groups. The topics of these meetings—honesty, self-respect, anger and forgiveness—are perennial issues for families in all stages of development.

The family night meetings are meant to establish closer family ties and foster Christian values within families. The meetings begin and end with prayer and include activities and discussion designed to help children understand the meaning of the value or concept under review. The authors intend these meetings to be used as a starting point for further communication and understanding.

The remaining meetings explore topics which are very pertinent to families at the beginning of the 21st century: "How



Much Is Enough for Our Children?," "Teaching Morals and Values to our Children," "The Gift of Fatherhood," and other equally important topics.

Margie Murchan, program chair for the national CFM board, served as editor. She is a family counselor in private practice in **San Jose, Calif.** and a member of CFM since 1978. Meetings were developed and critiqued by action groups from across the country.

Twenty-seven years ago the preface of "Love Happens in Families" stated families were "a viable and necessary part of the social and spiritual order." They are no less so today. This year's inquiry book will provide an rewarding starting point for enhanced communication and understanding both within and among families.

Copies of the book are available from the CFM office.

A "Family Meeting" in Michigan

by Theresa Kaye, Harsens Island, Mich.

St. Lucy CFM, St. Clair Shores, Mich. followed an action suggestion in the Jubilee program book and watched *Entertaining Angels* together, after previewing the film and deciding it was appropriate for "double digits" (ten years and up).

Five families gathered, read some selected reflections, answered the questions and sang (banged, blew and marched) along to "Amazing Grace." After the nine little ones adjourned to the playroom for some cartoons, the group watched this very intense film on Gospel living and the realities of the poor, sick and homeless. The discussion which followed was rich. It was good to be together as families, for our children to see what we do at a meeting, and

for them to hear the Gospel message and join in the struggle of being faithful to do what God asks of us. It was good for us to hear their insightful comments and to see their joy and innocence as they sang/played. Handouts on the lives of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin were good background to the meeting

As actions following this meeting, the group made pillows and bags which they filled with toys for children who were forced to leave their homeland. In April we delivered them to Freedom House in Detroit where we learned a great deal about our war-torn world. After our visit, we invited the residents to leave the city for a

day and picnic with us on Harsens Island. In June, forty-four CFMers and twenty shelter residents met for a day of fishing, swimming, tubing, biking, relaxing in the hammock, sunning on the dock, playing volleyball, eating our fill, roasting marshmallows, jumping on the trampoline and listening to our favorite music.

St. Lucy's CFM families meet twice a month. Once to reflect and discuss how to better live out the Gospel and a second time to take some action. This action was part of our Jubilee Pledge "to teach across boundaries of religion, race, and ethnicity... to pray for greater justice and peace...to protect human life...to serve those who are poor and vulnerable."



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

A time for families, a time for hope

Get out a candle. Light the candle as a family. That was the advice I heard from Cardinal Roger Mahoney on CNN, in the evening following the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. Terrorists live in darkness, the Archbishop of Los Angeles was explaining, as he suggested the simple but powerful statement every family could make: Light a candle as a family. Let the children see the hope that is in that light. Cardinal Mahoney urged people to light a candle at home, and put one in the front window. Along with the symbol of light and hope there should be a time spent together as a family, he said. The first few hours following the airplane crashes into the World Trade Center and into the Pentagon left many people numb. During those first few hours, one of the only things that occurred to many people was to pray—and to pray not alone, but with others. Throughout the nation, school children gathered, churches were opened, and people gathered in public places to pray. The World Trade Center was a symbol of the power of money. The Pentagon is a symbol of the power of the military. In southwestern Indiana, the first place people gathered in large numbers was the Four Freedoms Monument — a symbol of American strength and depth. Throughout the nation, other gatherings were held in public places. Each

such gathering itself was a symbol of unity, as religious leaders and members of a wide range of faith groups came together for a common purpose. At that gathering of Christians, Jews and Muslims, one minister spoke to me with blunt eloquence: “I’m really without words,” he said. “I’ve been wondering as to what I should think, and at this time, I can’t think of anything better or more appropriate than

*The events of the day
filled me
with sadness...
The prayer gathering
gave me hope.*

[what I was asked to do], to pray to God.” In Evansville, Ind., Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger prayed: “Help us not to reduce each other to objects or things or issues of hatred or bitterness or anger. Help us to stop the bullying, the violence in our own homes, in our schools, in our communities, for such violence only breeds violence.” I hope what I heard in the city where I live was replicated in cities everywhere. Prayer service partici-

pants offered a kind of litany, each adding a new thought, a new hope, a new need, a new reason for confidence in God. They led the group in prayers for the victims, for the families, for the nation, for those who were seen cheering and rejoicing over the American tragedy, for all of us sinners, for an end to the hatred we pretend exists only in others. The events of the day filled me with sadness, mixed with some anger too and a desire for retribution. The prayer gathering gave me hope. Every time I remember the towers on fire in New York, I hope I remember our own Four Freedoms monument on the banks of the Ohio, and the prayers that were offered there. And when clouds of smoke darken the sky, I hope I remember the cardinal’s advice: Light a candle. Let the children see that there is hope in that light.

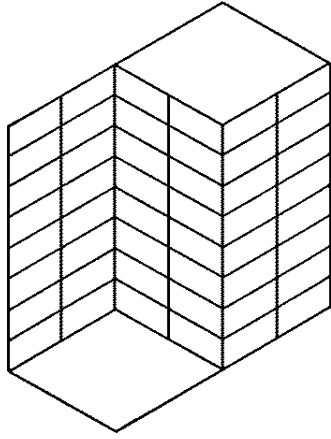


There is a time appointed for everything, and a time for every affair under heaven. That’s what it says in Ecclesiastes 3. The time for terrorism must be never.



Spend time with your family. Light a candle together. Discuss your hopes and your fears, your faith and your confidence. Pray for all who are injured by hatred. Pray for the removal of hatred from your own heart. Give blood for those who need it. Give love to your neighbor — everyone needs it — even the one who is not like you.

Paul is director of communications for the diocese of Evansville, Ind.; and editor of the Message, the diocesan newspaper. His weekly column Taking the Time to Make a Difference is syndicated in a number of diocesan newspapers. Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.



Idea Exchange

What does your CFM group do to keep members active in CFM for a long time?

(Thanks to Reenee Galanis, St. James CFM, Arlington Heights, IL for the question.)

This question was such a challenging one that we didn't receive many responses. So I asked a few friends from CFM to share their candid comments. This is a sampling of what I heard:—Ed.

I wonder whether in some places the more experienced CFM couples drop out because it's the only way to avoid leader burnout. At [Our Lady of the] Wayside (Arlington Heights, Ill.), group leaders serve a maximum of two years and the section leader couple serves for one year, succeeded by their assistant couple. Once you have served two years as a group leader, you may be invited to serve in another capacity (treasurer or leadership trainer, etc.) but not as group leader. Section leaders are given a beautiful gift at the end of their term, and from then on are invited to all future opening Mass-and-dinner events and end-of-the-year leader potlucks. (It's very rare for former section leaders to drop out: Those potlucks are awesome!)

On the end of the year questionnaire, we ask for feedback about individual events and the "mix" of events and for suggestions of couples who might appreciate an invitation to join CFM. When people don't "re-up" for the following year, the membership chair couple phones and asks why. Usually, the reason is something like "All the high school games and events are on

Friday nights." Probably it would be a good idea to call these couples personally a few years later and see whether their schedules have changed.

Every group needs a good mix of maturity and energy. It's important for the leaders and the members to let one another know they are valued, that they have an important contribution to make, that the group wouldn't be the same without them.

It's important for the leaders and the group to take CFM seriously, not skimp on prayer, not softpedal actions, not take readings lightly. When the spirituality of CFM is trivialized, people who have joined for the sake of growing in faith and effectiveness are disappointed. Also, there is nothing like too much alcohol to ruin a meeting. One glass of wine or beer at the beginning, maybe another at the middle, and coffee at the end. That seems to be a good pattern. [CFM groups in some areas don't serve alcohol at all.]

When something is valuable, people know, and they stay with it.

Next month's question:
People are so busy these days, so over-committed. How do you persuade them to join CFM?

◆◆◆
 As long-time members we stay because CFM:

- exposes our children to faith and action in Catholic Church
- gives us contact with other families who want this Christian life
- has been a life-changing experience for individuals, spouse, parents

◆
 We were able to find church again in CFM, and find

- a different kind of peer pressure (positive)
- a small group within the larger church
- an extended family

◆
 CFM is great for children because

- it gives children good example through CFM actions
- it empowers families to effect change, and
- it includes children, without being "child-centered."

◆
 CFM has provided networking with other families who have the same values. It is our experience of authentic Christian community.

—Lauri Przybysz

SPOTLIGHT

Linda McClure reports their CFM groups painted the interior of the convent at Holy Trinity Parish in **Bloomington, Ill.** this summer. "Some of those rooms looked like they hadn't been painted in 30 years," she said. The parish provided the paint and CFM provided the labor. Linda and her husband Mike have been parish leaders for the past three years.

St. James CFM in **Arlington Heights, Ill.** hosted a Kickoff Party and Bunco Night on Sept. 8th. **Mark and Patti Ivers** and **Scott and Kim Imhoff** are leaders.

Joe Farwell at Our Lady of Wayside in **Arlington Heights** reports they have adopted a motto for this year. "Make it meaningful and keep it simple." They employ e-mail for routine announcements to simplify leaders' meetings and leave time for discussion.

Mary and John Moosbrugger, Hartsville, S.C. lead a group that comes from a widely scattered area. They travel up 1 and 1/2 hours for monthly meetings. The group typically gathers on Sunday afternoon at 2:00 pm for a family activity (e.g., a ballgame), followed by a meeting and potluck supper. Recently they had a campout the night before a meeting. The Moosbruggers first joined CFM when they lived in the Chicago area.

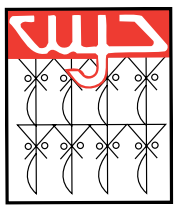
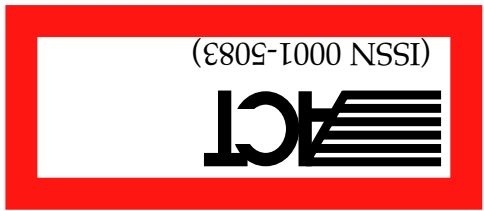
St. Pius X Parish in **DesMoines, Iowa** will host their second Covenant Experience Weekend in October. **Dave and Donna Langer** are the weekend organizers. **Kimberly and David Schmidt** are parish leaders.

*Moving?
Don't forget to notify CFM of
your new address.*

Dan Thomas reports that St. Lawrence Martyr parish in the Redondo Beach/Torrance area of **Los Angeles** is starting their 2001-2002 season on Saturday September 29th with a "Casino Night and Auction" for all their returning and new CFM families. Dan and his wife, **Noreen**, and **Greg and Brenda Argano** are taking over the leadership spots from **Paul and Helen Limburg** and **Katie Gleason**. A new website, www.stlmcfm.org, has just been developed. (Ed. note: If you have a CFM website, please let us know your web address.)

Andy and Mary Simons, contact couple at Immaculate Conception Parish, **Fulton, IL**, reports that member **Phyllis Jones** (80) is trying to start a third group. "She has a lot of energy and is enthusiastic about CFM. She keeps us all motivated." Phyllis first joined CFM in 1951.

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