



Vol 56 • No. 1
February 2003

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Christian Family Movement

A Boy who Shows There is a God who Cares

by Jane Leingang

After three years of waiting to conceive, **Joe and Mary McHale** were excited when Danny was born. At his six-month checkup, doctors broke the news that he had a disease that would likely take his life before he was two. Thanks to good medical care, and the prayer and support of a caring CFM community Danny is about to celebrate his third birthday, confounding medical experts. His mom, Mary McHale says, "Danny's been a miracle since day one."

Danny suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy, the leading genetic killer of children under two. One in 40 people carry the autosomal recessive gene that causes it, and one in 6,000 children are born with SMA each year. Most children diagnosed with the disease die within six months.

Joe and Mary had just joined CFM, and their group at St. Joan of Arc, **Danville, Calif.**, rallied around them. In addition to meals and other forms of physical support, CFM organized prayer vigils. Mary recounts she "came to a sense of peace" as a result of the first vigil. "I knew it was going to be okay. It was like a huge boulder came off our shoulders."



Danny McHale (center) with friends

For the first ten to 15 months, the couple took one day at a time. "We just said 'Thank you God for another day with Daniel.'"

In an effort to help find a cure for SMA to help Danny and others like him, the McHales have raised over \$100,000 for research in the last three years. CFM held a pancake breakfast that raised \$10,000. In 2001, one parishioner had a concert and auction in his backyard that netted \$7,000. This past year the event brought in \$17,000. In each of these events "the CFM group has pitched in and been the backbone of it," Mary said.

As his third birthday, February 11, approaches, Mary said, "We're

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Presidents' Perspective

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer

Signs of faith and fidelity

As the funeral procession stopped at the cemetery, Bart jumped out of the car he had ridden in, onto the frozen path, quickly heading to the vehicle in front of his. Opening the rear passenger door he gently helped his Marie out of that car as she gingerly tried unsteady steps on the same frozen ground. As she got her bearings on Bart's arm, they softly, naturally kissed—a simple expression of gratitude and affection.

Peter walked up behind them and seeing the simple gesture, commented, "Isn't that nice, after all these years!"

"Fifty-eight years," said Bart.
"Fifty-nine!" said Marie.

In our modern mindset of disposability, that is a testament to love. In his legal practice, Peter has a lot of opportunity to see the sadness that comes of modern disposability. Asked, "What do you think the problem is?" he will often give a one word answer: selfishness. We haven't done a very good job, as a society, of espousing the virtue of selflessness—caring for others more than for oneself, be they spouses, children or community. But that is not what this column is all about. Let's go back to Bart and Marie.

Bart and Marie are friends of ours from church whom we have known since shortly after arriving in Winchester 20 years ago. They came to Winchester with a young family from Brooklyn long before we did. They have shared their joys and trials with us and with the

parish family in a loving example of marital permanence. And they are not alone.

This column is dedicated to the wonderful examples of marital love and fidelity we have all seen in our families, in our churches and in CFM. We have had the good fortune to work with and get to know many of our longtime national CFM leaders whose lives have been dedicated not only to making their own families work, but to helping the CFM family thrive for fifty-plus years. Our son has written about the experience he had at Notre Dame in 1999 with **Ann and Jerry Prete**. They were a wonderful example of the joy that can come of the work of marriage. **Phil and Mary Lou Gorman, Kay and Gary Aitchison, Harry and Bernice Opila, Ray and Eleanor Ensroth, Sue and Wayne Hamilton, Bob and Irene Tomonto, Rolly and Isabel Leroux, Jim and Bonnie Quinlan, Ed and Sheila Osterhaus** and many, many others have been, and continue to be, examples to be followed in their dedication to each other and their families.

Make no mistake (ask any veteran spouse) it is clearly a lot of work to make a marriage succeed and a family thrive. We all come into these unions with various and sundry plans, goals and ideas, not to mention quirks, hang-ups and idiosyncrasies. Diamonds in the rough, we must take it upon ourselves to help one another on the path to heaven—an awesome, sometimes overwhelming responsi-

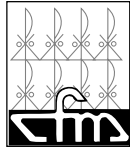
bility. That is why it is so very important to have a strong support team behind our marriages. For us, CFM has been one of the beams of that support structure. The friendships that we have made, the relationships that we have nurtured have become an extended family to us. We provide each other with the help, prayers and understanding needed to achieve our goal.

Our CFM community has sought and provided various enrichment opportunities for our marriages and our families. CFM has embraced the Covenant Experience as a modern method of parish-based marriage enrichment. Covenant Experience views marriage in the context and support of parish life, recognizing that healthy marriages bring forth healthy families which sustain and expand the parish family.

Thank God for those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith in the value of marital fidelity. Thanks to them for all of their sacrifices.

Commitment is not a concept to be taken lightly. Fortunately, many good and dedicated people have modeled commitment for us in their lives. In this month, when we celebrate love, let us always remember those whose example of love we have witnessed and learned from in our time.

Peter and Jane Buchbauer, CFM Presidents, live in Winchester Virginia. Their children are Joseph, Peter, Michael and Maria.



ACT is published up to eight times a year by the Christian Family Movement.

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

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CFM's Mission

- ◆ to promote Christ-centered marriage and family life;
- ◆ to help individuals and their families to live the Christian faith in everyday life; and
- ◆ to improve society through actions of love, service, education and example.

Parent to Parent

by Mary Lou Gorman

Rules, Rules, Rules



Yes, children and parents need rules. Whether both parents work outside the home, or a parent is at home, rules need to be thought about, communicated clearly, and enforced. That's easy to say, but, of course, hard to do. It takes a tremendous amount of energy to raise kids today. Rules help to make things easier. Working parents need to ask caregivers for their routines. Caregivers in the home need to know your rules. Communication is important with *all* caregivers regarding mealtimes, snacks, nap times, bedtimes, television, and discipline. Set up a conference each week to discuss these things to see how they are working.

Both parents need to discuss routines and rules. More parents

argue over bedtimes and house rules than is necessary. If you talk these issues over and reach a compromise when the children are not around, you are better off.

Having good routines and schedules are half the battle of raising kids. Then *consistency* will make your life more bearable.

Plan some time during your busy day to have the whole family together and talk over routines and rules. Say a prayer at this time, asking God's help to set and keep good rules and to build a happy family life, full of love and service toward one another.

Mary Lou and Phil Gorman have four daughters and fourteen grandchildren. They have been members of CFM since 1953.

California Priest Receives Hillenbrand Award

Monsignor Michael Lenihan, pastor emeritus of St. Lawrence Martyr parish in **Redondo Beach, Calif.**, received the **Reynold Hillenbrand Award** for outstanding service as a CFM chaplain on November 16 at the annual "Thanksgiving Feast" of the CFM group there.

National presidents **Peter and Jane Buchbauer** and national chaplain **Father Donald Conroy** were on hand to present the plaque to Monsignor Lenihan. Section leaders **Dan and Noreen Thomas** and **Greg and Brenda Argano** said that Monsignor Lenihan had shown outstanding support for the CFM group in his parish during his 21 years as pastor at St. Lawrence. In turn Monsignor Lenihan noted that he drew a great deal of support for the parish from the CFM group which was impor-



Monsignor Michael Lenihan

tant in developing an active base of involved parishioners over his years as pastor.

The Hillenbrand Award is named for the first national chaplain of CFM, Monsignor Reynold Hillenbrand of Chicago. Hillenbrand was key in setting the program agenda for CFM during the formative years of the movement in the 50s. In addition he worked with chaplains across the country to develop leadership for the movement.

In Memory of Jerry Prete

by Joe Buchbauer

□
In 1999 I attended my fifth and most meaningful CFM national convention at Notre Dame University. As many CFM families know, the convention is a time to come together as a family and reflect on our Christianity, an act of faith. But for those of us under the age of 21, the convention is a time to make friends, catch up, hang out, and have fun. At Notre Dame in 1999, something unexpected happened to me.

I can hardly remember a time without CFM in my life. In 1983, when I was a baby, my family moved to a new town, and my parents looked for a way to become active in the church and community and make some new friends. This is when they were introduced to CFM. Over time they became even more involved in CFM and in 1990 we attended our first National Convention in Holland, Mich. I was 8 years old and it was amazing. We got to stay at college dorms and I made a ton of friends from around the country. This pattern repeated and every year I looked forward to seeing my old friends and planned on making new ones.

In 1999 it was different. Most of my friends didn't attend the convention and I was one of the oldest kids in the group. The coordinators asked me if I would like to act as a shuttle service driving some of the older participants across campus to the different events. At first I hesitated: this meant giving up on tons of fun. Little did I know the experience that I was about to have. On the first day I was told to go to the front desk of the Morris Inn and ask for

Jerry and Anne Prete. My parents said I knew who they were but I couldn't remember. As I waited, I started to get a little nervous. I wasn't really sure what driving people around was going to be like and these people were complete strangers. As they walked up to me I relaxed. Jerry Prete shuffled

Longtime CFM supporter Gerald "Jerry" Prete, 82, died November 10, 2002 in Chicago, Ill. Jerry and his wife Anne have been members of CFM since 1950 when Pat and Patty Crowley organized a group at Our Lady of Angels parish there.

As a result of his CFM involvement. Jerry gave up a career in sales to work for Catholic Charities. His interest in housing for the indigent elderly led him to work on several federal housing grants for senior citizens, which resulted in the building of 30 apartment complexes for the elderly nationwide. One of those located in Chicago bears his name.

From the mid 50s to 1995 the Pretes operated the Alverno Bookstore which they established when they observed that the needs of the CFM community were not being met by existing stores. Many who attended CFM conventions at Notre Dame or St. Mary's will remember their display and Jerry's smiling face under his rakish beret.

slowly as his wife Anne held onto his arm. I introduced myself and we headed to the first event. Throughout the week I was the

personal driver to Jerry and Anne and slowly my admiration and respect turned into friendship. As we drove around I learned about how they had become involved with CFM. I talked to them about my experiences, and they talked about their children and grandchildren. At the end of the week I was sad to leave my new friends just as I had been at earlier conventions. But this time I felt like I took something away from the convention that I would never forget. I learned what it was to truly love. Jerry and Anne Prete loved each other; they loved their family, and they loved CFM. At the end of the week they thanked me for escorting them to the events, but I was the one grateful to them for the most amazing CFM experience of my life in the time that we shared.

Over the past several years the Pretes have returned to my thoughts. I would often pray for their health and their family. And I hoped that they were doing ok. I wrote about the experience meeting them for college entry essays about a meaningful experience in my life. Most of all I took their stories, their faith, and their love with me everywhere in hope of one day affecting someone's life just as they had affected mine that one week in the summer of 1999.

On November 14 I was deeply saddened to find out about the death of Jerry Prete. I prayed for him and his family, and I reflected on what he meant to me. I will never forget Jerry and Anne Prete, the two best friends I could ever have met at a CFM convention and I thanked God for the opportunity to experience their love.

God Bless Jerry Prete.

Joe, 20, is an architecture student at the Catholic University of America.

Service Team Gains Insights from California CFM

The Service Team visited St. Lawrence Martyr parish in sunny **Redondo Beach, Calif.** in mid-November, met their vibrant CFM federation and honored their retiring pastor for his long-term support of the movement. Local leaders **Dan and Noreen Thomas** along with **Greg and Brenda Argano** organized the weekend so that the national visitors had maximum exposure to the CFM community. A highlight was meeting Jan Lauterjung, who helped establish CFM at the parish in the early fifties.

On Friday evening November 15, the team met with long time CFMers and group leaders from St. Lawrence Martyr parish for dinner and a frank discussion of the CFM community there. The service team gained valuable insights from the California group.

On Saturday the focus was on upcoming projects. One project that is moving forward is the development of an enrichment program for leaders.

The program will be piloted this winter in Chicago and refined for presentation in the summer following the board meeting in Winchester, Va.

Other topics included an orientation video, and development of a overarching structure for inquiry module topics.

The evening concluded with the service team attending the annual "Thanksgiving Feast." This massive potluck was attended by most of the 112 CFM families with their children. **Peter and Jane Buchbauer** and **Father Don Conroy** started the evening with

the presentation of the first Reynold Hillenbrand award to **Monsignor Michael Lenihan**, retiring pastor.

In addition to the Buchbauers and Father Conroy, service team members attending the meeting were executive directors **Paul and Jane Leingang, Evansville, Ind.**, vice-presidents **Bob and Anne Tomonto, Miami, Fla.**, secretaries **John and Lauri Przybysz, Severna Park, Md.**, and treasurer **Terry Smith, Des Moines, Iowa.**

Most of the service team was able to attend the vibrant 8:30 am celebration of Mass on Sunday before heading for the airport back to family and job responsibilities. Jane Leingang said, "We were tired, but refreshed by the ideas and experiences we had had."

Danny

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living in hope, rather than in despair." The McHales feel like they have to share the news that God is working in their lives.

In the time since his diagnosis Danny has received physical therapy to help him maximize his abilities. The McHales make sure he has medical care from people who believe in treating him for the future, not just taking care of him until he dies. They also believe in the power of prayer.

Recently Danny's condition has been reevaluated. His current prognosis is that he will live into his teens, and possibly 20 years. "He's just a miracle kid. He can hold a marker. He learned to count to ten in French in one week. He has a great sense of humor." One thing

that has made a big difference in his life is his power wheel chair. The person who fitted him for his chair said he was the youngest person he had ever worked with. Mary said, "His independence makes a big difference in his attitude. He's a kid with a weak body, but a smart brain."

Mary keeps in touch with a network of friends who pray for Danny. She sends an e-mail newsletter to about 250 people who each send it to ten or 20 friends. People around the world pray for Danny. Strangers frequently tell Mary, "We're praying for your son." Mary muses that "Maybe this is God's mission for Danny, to let people know there is a God who cares."

"Danny's favorite place to go is church," Mary says. "He likes to

hang out with his friends." Danny and the journey of his family have been a big part of the faith community at St. Joan of Arc. "We don't want to be treated as a pity case. We want to be treated as ordinary people having ordinary lives in extraordinary circumstances. We love being Danny's parents."

One incident that sums up the last three years is an exchange Mary had at a CFM camping trip this past summer. When she introduced herself as Danny's mother, the child responded, "Is he the boy who used to be sick?"

For more information about SMA visit the Families of Spinal Muscular Atrophy web site, fsma.org.



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Seeking Truth and Goodness

Pope John Paul II met with representatives of the International Catholic Union of the Press not too long ago, according to a report by the news agency, ZENIT. The pope posed a question, then shared some thoughts.

The question was, "What does it mean to be a professional journalist who is Catholic?" The first answer was, "Quite simply, it means being a person of integrity, an individual whose personal and professional life reflects the teachings of Jesus and the Gospel."

That answer applies to all professionals, I thought, as I read more of the story.

"It means striving for the highest ideals of professional excellence, being a man or woman of prayer who seeks to give the best that they have to offer," the pope explained.

That answer applies to everyone, too, I thought, but then he got more directly into the topic.

"It means having the courage to seek and report the truth, even when the truth is inconvenient or is not considered politically correct," he continued. "It means being sensitive to the moral, religious and spiritual aspects of human life, aspects which are often misunderstood or deliberately ignored.

"It means reporting not only the misdeeds and tragedies that take place, but also the positive and uplifting actions performed on behalf of those in need: the poor,

the sick, the handicapped, the weak, those who are otherwise forgotten by society," he stressed.

"It means offering examples of hope and heroism to a world that is in desperate need of both," the pope added.

That's what we all need to do, I thought. This is advice for all of us who profess to be Christians as parents or leaders or just as the grown-ups in our community. It is advice for children and young people, too.

A parent must live a life of truth so that there is no gap between "what I do" and "what I say."



As a member of a family, each of us is called to be a person of integrity.

A parent must live a life of truth so that there is no gap between "what I do" and "what I say."

I can't help but think that truth is more readily found in the very young, in the child who often tells more about home life than the parents would like to be revealed.

Growing up too often means learning to put on the values of what is acceptable in society and in many times and places, society accepts and expects racism and fear of what is foreign.



If professional journalists are called to report not only the misdeeds, but also what is uplifting, then so too are all of us called to "report" to our families what we experience in the world around us.

If all I bring home is an experience of evil, I have failed to report the truth of God's world to my family. If I cannot bring home an eye-witness account of hope and heroism among God's people, then perhaps my eyes have not been open enough to the truth around us. Or perhaps I have merely turned away.

Yes, there is corruption, even among those who publicly profess lives of healing and helping. It may be "only human" to fall to temptation; it may be "only human" to point out another's failing. But we are no longer "only human" because now we may "share in the divine nature," as it is promised in the first chapter of the second letter of Peter. That letter continues with a framework for action for each of us in our own profession or path of life, for each of us in our own set of family relationships.

"[M]ake every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love."

If we can do that, we can make a difference, within our families and in the larger community of our one human family.

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.

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz

Seeing with Eyes of Love



A couple we have known since their marriage recently told us that we had given them good advice. They had a rocky start, she just finishing high school, he not finishing at all. The young couple struggled, encouraged by two sets of good parents, but responsible for their own bills. They got a break from the grandmas with babysitting now and then. For years, they made do with second-hand furniture and old cars. Together they built a successful business and raised two sons. Now, 25 years later, they were telling us that the advice we gave was precious. What advice? (We couldn't recall.)

She said, "You told us to make a list of ten things we admired and respected about each other. We did it, and we have practiced looking

for those things in each other all these years." This couple, whose marriage beat the odds, surprised us by adding: "We found out that we could help each other be someone we still admire today."

In the recent movie *As Good As It Gets*, Jack Nicholson's obsessive-compulsive bachelor confesses his love for Helen Hunt's sensible waitress: "You make me want to be a better man!" She has seen in him qualities that are strong and good, and her vision of him challenges him to grow and improve. She has faith in him.

The fictional and the real couple express one of marriage's blessings: The power of loving appreciation and encouragement to bring out the best in a person.

When we view our marriage with the eyes of faith, we can see God's hopes and dreams for us. By appreciating and believing in our spouse, we can share a vision of them that is positive and strong. With our spouse as our chief fan and promoter, we can be inspired to rise to the occasion. Love calls us to see our lover as God sees--and loves--him or her, and love also calls us to recognize what is admirable in ourselves.

As the successful couple told us, this mutual appreciation must be practiced to be effective.

Observe:

What qualities do you see in yourself that are admirable?

Judge:

How can I grow in admirable qualities?

Act:

Make a list of qualities you love about your spouse, then share lists.

Michigan Couples Experience Training in Prayer

by Eleanor Ensroth

For six weeks this Fall, nearly sixty couples attended a "Couple Prayer" series presented at St. Lucy's Parish in **St. Clair Shores, Mich.** by **Deacon Bob Ovies** and his wife **Kathy**. The weekly meetings began by looking over the daily readings that the couples would be using in their private home couple prayer sessions throughout the following week.

After this brief review, groups of four or five couples met around tables for discussion of the upcoming week's work and the input from Deacon Bob and Kathy, who shared many new and interesting techniques for use in "couple prayer."

Couples were very open to discussion on how God affected their lives. "Couple Prayer" is not a substitute for family prayer, but enhances the intimacy of marriage..

The St. Lucy couples, including many CFM couples, found this "couple prayer" tool very helpful in creating a closer relationship with one another and with God. The daily readings are very short but related to many areas of daily life. Most couples found that about a half hour was comfortable for this important daily routine which encouraged deeper insight to one another's thoughts and feelings through prayer.

Read to each other the beautiful love poetry of the bible's *Song of Songs*, a passionate study in mutual appreciation and admiration of two lovers.

"More delightful is your love than wine! Your name spoken is a spreading perfume...how rightly you are loved!" (1:3-4)

Lauri and John Przybysz live in Severna Park, Md., and are the parents of six children. Lauri is coordinator of marriage preparation and enrichment for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

SPOTLIGHT

Lauri Przybysz reports that St. Jane Frances CFM, **Pasadena, Md.**, gathered presents to send for the Single Men's Christmas Party at the archdiocese center, Our Daily Bread. The group got shirts, socks, hats, gloves and other warm items for the men at the center. Now in its third year, the group has grown to 7 families of various ages and types, many of whom joined after entering the Church through the RCIA.

Vicki Rowlands, Geneseo, Ill., writes, "We just finished a little project in our group at St Malachy's. We adopted a family with 4 kids and got the kids Christmas presents. After we bought them we had a meeting with all the kids from our group and had a little party while we wrapped all 24 presents. Afterward we said a prayer of thanks. It was a great time for us."

Richard Palamidessi, at Queen of Apostles parish in **San Jose, Calif.** reports that CFM activities were highlighted in the bulletin for Holy Family Sunday. "We support, what we lovingly call 'Donut Duty' each Sunday after the 9 am mass. We are active in support of the parish dance, picnic, the Lenten soup supper and, of course, the parish Easter Egg Hunt every Easter Sunday."

Linda McClure at Holy Trinity, **Bloomington, Ill.**, reports that "Our group is doing fine. We meet on the first Saturday of the month, and have started *Evidence of Faith*. We had an advent prayer service and potluck in late November. Our associate pastor came and blessed everyone's advent wreath."

Our Lady of Wayside CFM in **Arlington Heights, Ill.** organizes a special Thanksgiving Day Mass

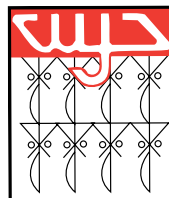
and Agape celebration on Thanksgiving Day each year. In addition the group collected \$2470 towards providing an inner city parish with turkeys for Thanksgiving Day.

Robin Matthews reports that their CFM group at St. Joseph in **Auburn, Calif.**, went caroling at a local senior center with their children. "It was great. People are really excited about the group." It was the first outreach activity for this group that started last year.

Colleen Kiesel, leader at St. Peter and Paul, **Haubstadt, Ind.**, reported her group went "Christian Caroling" last fall. Because of an over abundance of activity during the Christmas season, the group decided to take their children to visit parish shut-ins early in the fall. They brought cookies and sang for the elderly they called on.

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(ISSN 0001-5083)



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