



Vol 56 • No. 2
March-April 2003



Christian Family Movement

Around the World with CFM

Phil and Mary Lou Gorman, Palatine Ill., discuss their experience and perspectives with ACT editor Kathleen Miller

When newlyweds **Phil and Mary Lou Gorman** joined CFM in 1953, the movement was only four years old; and they were beginning their careers, Phil as a social worker and Mary Lou as a teacher. During the past fifty years, their marriage and family life have been enriched and their horizons have broadened thanks to CFM. From their unique professional vantage points, as well as their involvement in parish and community life, they have observed changes in society that present new challenges to CFM. They are members of St. James CFM, Arlington Heights.

ACT: How did you happen to join CFM?

Mary Lou: We had just moved to St. Jerome's in **Rogers Park** [a neighborhood of **Chicago**]. We were living in public housing just after the war and we met CFMers at the parish Christmas party. At that time, there were two sections, each with eight to ten groups.

ACT: That's a lot of people!

Mary Lou: And we were active! We discussed social justice and politics, marched for peace.

Phil: The emphasis was on action, greeting your neighbors, knowing your legislators, building community.

Mary Lou: Observe, Judge, and Act

had great impact on our lives. CFM meetings weren't like any other social activity.

ACT: What was unique about CFM in the early days?

Phil: There were four actions following each meeting, two spiritual and two social.

Mary Lou: Different groups met different evenings during the week so that priests could attend all the meetings and families could trade



Phil and Mary Lou Gorman

babysitting. Families got to know one another's children. I think the priests got more out of CFM meetings than we ever imagined.

Phil: Priests were silent listeners until "chaplain's remarks" at the end. —continued on page 4

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Presidents' Perspective

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer

Lenten Sacrifice for Marriage and Family

As a child I remember approaching Lent with the notion of giving something up. The kids would each share what he or she had decided to "give up" for Lent. The emphasis was sacrifice—giving up one thing for the sake of another. As I reached adulthood, the emphasis often changed. "Don't dwell on the negative," I heard. Make your sacrifice a joyful one by doing something that you otherwise might not have done." As I reflect on these two notions of Lenten preparation, my thoughts go to marriage and family life in our nation, communities, and parishes and realize that both notions can conspire to build up marriages and families—not just in Lent, but all year long.

Not long ago, a colleague asked me what I thought was the biggest problem facing the American family today. "Is it busyness and the frantic pace of life with our over-

commitments? Is it materialism and the constant pursuit of more things? Is it the relaxation of moral norms resulting in the diminution of the sanctity of life, of marriage, of sexuality?" Upon reflection, it is all that and more, summed up in the simple term, *selfishness*.

Selfishness is what causes marriages to break up. Selfishness is what causes families and children to suffer. Selfishness is what leads to domestic violence, materialism and casual attitudes to sexuality and life itself. It is when one person places himself or herself above and beyond the needs of his or her spouse and his or her children, that marriage and family life is imperiled.

I recently had an opportunity to discuss this with an acquaintance. Giving the feeling a name—selfishness—was all it took to get her to re-evaluate her decision to divorce

her husband. Nobody wants to be called "selfish," so speaking that word forces each of us to step back and reflect on whether our decisions and actions are for my immediate benefit or for the long-term good of my marriage and family.

It is easy to rationalize. It is easy to take what really is my problem and redefine it as a marital problem or family problem. It is easy to deceive oneself and others about true motivations. So we need to be vigilant, in our own relationships and with others, to be honest about what we feel and what issues are presented. We need to face problems, not run from them. We need to be honest with ourselves and others to make sure we can clearly see our motives, particularly where marriages and families may suffer the consequences of our decision.

So this Lent, let's "give up" selfishness and adopt a listening heart, a generous spirit, and a thirst for God's wisdom that defines what is truly good and truly important. Let's take the affirmative step of trying to put our spouse and our children's needs first. If we can do it for 40 days, we may establish a habit that's good for a lifetime.

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

In Memoriam

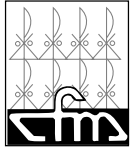
Jacques Meert

1902-2001

We recently were informed that **Jacques Meert** died on August 3, 2001 at age 99. Jacques Meert was a close associate of **Canon Joseph Cardijn** and helped to establish the Young Christian Workers in 1925 along with **Fernand Tonnet** and **Paul Garcet**. Meert served as Secretary General of YCW from 1925 to 1934. Tonnet and Garcet died in **Dachau** in 1944, but Meert survived to carry on the effort of YCW. After World War II he ran the

YCW headquarters in **Brussels**. He began ten years of service to the movement in **Africa** in 1954. In 1963 he formed the Worldwide Movement of Christian Workers and became its Secretary General. He collaborated with **Marguerite Fievez** on the first biography of Cardijn.

CFM implements Cardijn's method of Observe-Judge-Act in the environment of the family.



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*



Focusing on 3 H's

As I struggled with parenting, I knew I couldn't do everything. I finally decided that I needed to focus on the qualities I wanted to instill in my children. Among these are three that start with H: hope, health and happiness

Hope

A gift of hope was a top priority. I knew that if my children had hope they would pull through, no matter what their problems turned out to be. They needed a strong faith in the Lord in order to develop hope. They needed a good self-image to get them through the hurts in life. And they needed to learn to be charitable in their words and deeds. My mother always said, "If you can't say something good about someone, don't say anything at all." To have hope for all the good things in life, you need to teach your child to be a good person. Of course you do this through your own good example.

Health

Good health was another of my priorities. Teaching your child to eat the right kinds of food is important. When you tell them, as you are preparing a meal, why you include fruit, vegetables, grains, etc., you will impress on them the importance of eating right. Good health is not just a gift from God. It takes healthy meal planning and healthy snack planning as well as exercise. Taking good care of our

bodies starts when we are children, and the smart parent works on this. If we want a child with a well-balanced disposition, we need to feed them at regular times, and feed them a well-balanced diet.

Happiness

Bringing happiness into a child's life, the media suggest, is as easy as giving them everything they want. But we know that wise parents seek a balance of yes and no, and that discipline does bring happiness as a child grows. In real life, we can't have everything we want. It's important to teach our children that having material things does not bring lasting happiness—building a good social life with lots of friends, sharing what you have with others, seeking and finding the beauty in nature, caring for and loving those around you, and participating in the adventure of knowing God are what bring real happiness into our lives. When your children are feeling discouraged, teach them that prayer, good music and being gentle with themselves will turn around their unhappiness.

As I said before, we can't do it all; but if we work on these three things, there's a good possibility of raising well-adjusted children.

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

—Gormans, continued from page 1

Phil: The Archdiocese was divided into regions. Leaders met monthly downtown.

ACT: When did you get involved at the national level?

Phil: We joined the national board as Expansion Couple from 1985-89, and then succeeded **Jim and Bonnie Quinlan** as Area 8 reps.

Mary Lou: We loved the conventions, especially Notre Dame. Our kids met kids from all over the country.

Phil: The best part was feeling, "Every child is a child of every parent."

Mary Lou: CFM helped us build values in our children's lives like doing things for others.

Phil: When our daughter **Laurel** joined CFM, she introduced herself at the first meeting saying, "I've been in CFM 23 years: I was BORN into CFM."

ACT: I've heard you say that CFM helped you to see the world.

Mary Lou: The Archdiocese sent us and **Harry and Bernice Opila** as its representatives to the World Assembly of Families in **Rome**. At a CFM convention, we met a couple from **New Zealand**. Later we went there on our vacation.

Phil: In **Australia**, we met with the assistant family life director in **Sydney**. It was the first she heard of CFM.

Mary Lou: International conventions took us to **Avila, Spain; Merida, Mexico** (on the Yucatan peninsula) and **Malta**.

Phil: In **Malta** we met a woman from **Prague**, and when we took our round-the-world trip in 1991 we accepted her invitation to visit. That time we did make it to **Bangkok**, and we met **Elma and Nop Muangkroot** [current ICCFM presidents] who gave us a wonderful tour. In **Singapore** we met **Dennis Chua**, [an-

other CFMer).

ACT: How do you think CFM changed with Vatican II?

Mary Lou: For one thing, CFM become more oriented to parish ministries and less to community action.

ACT: What do you think caused the decline in membership?

Phil: One reason was the book on race. It was more than some people were ready to handle. But don't forget, there are now many possibilities for action and service besides CFM.

Mary Lou: CFM gives lay people experience and training as leaders. Then they get tapped for other service. CFM was and is a catalyst.

ACT: What do you see in the future?

Phil: The church must put more emphasis on the family. Vatican II taught us how to be church: involved, not passive. Now we need to transform our culture.

Mary Lou: Our top priorities now need to be saving marriages and helping parents be good parents. We need to bring young couples into a community that talks about values. We also need to understand the cultures of families and the world.

Phil: There are plenty of organizations, but CFM is one of very few focusing on families. We live in a "me-world." I don't think people are aware of current studies that tell us, for example, "If you are unhappy, getting divorced won't make you happy."

ACT: You two have been incredible ambassadors for CFM in the Chicago area.

Mary Lou: We've gotten great satisfaction going to parishes, telling about CFM, and seeing it grow.

Phil: The most important activity in our life, besides raising kids, is CFM.

Book Review

by Jane Leingang

On-the-Job Spirituality: Finding God in Work by Marianne E. Roche, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002, \$10.95, 68 pages.

A friend says he envies me because my work allows me to devote my time to things that really matter. He says he has never had that feeling. I do feel lucky I've never had a job I considered sheer drudgery. I have worked in a library, I have been a teacher, I worked at a newspaper and I now work for the Christian Family Movement. Yet as I look back, some of my jobs might have seemed drudgery to other people. Marianne Roche's slim little volume is about attitudes toward work.

While some of us work in circumstances that test our morality, what generally makes work burdensome is our attitude towards it. Roche asserts that, in itself, work is good. Before the fall, Adam worked: he was given charge of the garden. She concludes that work itself is not a punishment for sin, but a chance to bring the life of God to the world, Roche explains as she begins her ruminations. "Human work, whether for pay or not, is our call to creation, incarnation and redemption in this world." In her book she proposes a way to see the spiritual side of even the most mundane tasks.

Roche writes, "Because all of our work is from and about God, it is all about love and compassion. No matter what the task, we can bring love of God, others and ourselves to it. The work of the Lord is not limited to family, friends, charities and parishes. It is alive and flourishing in the marketplace as well."

—continued on next page

Lent is central to our spiritual life as a Christian family. How can a Christian family observe Lent? How does your family observe the Lenten Season?

In the past, we often thought of Lent with a parish focus, as a season of the Church year leading up to Easter. The five weeks of Lent proper and Holy Week do have a special place in the Church's liturgical cycle.

Now, as a consequence of the renewed liturgy following Vatican II and the recently revised Liturgical Norms, Lent has become a very special place for spiritual development in diocesan, and especially parish, communities.

On Ash Wednesday, people flock to get ashes on their foreheads as a sign of penance. At Sunday Masses, we witness the solemn scrutinies of catechumens and we hear wonderful Lenten readings. Finally, the grand climax of our faith unfolds in Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil. Holy Saturday with its ancient and elaborate rites of the Easter fire, the baptismal water and the great Easter proclamation focuses us on

—Book review, continued from previous page

The book is divided into four parts. The first part, "Work as Prayer," discusses the value of work. "Overcoming Personal Barriers" discusses attitudes such as fear, anger and stress that make work difficult. "Confronting Cultural Opposition" brings up topics such as views of success, power, and ethics. The last section, "Creating a Personal Spirituality of Work," returns to the theme of the first section and invites the reader to integrate the ideas presented into a personal vision of work. The chap-

From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy



Lent in the Home

the celebration of the central mystery of our faith, Christ's saving action of dying and rising for us.

However, what do we in the domestic Church do? How do we as a family get involved? The Christian family, our household of faith, often misses a great opportunity when, in the late winter and early spring, we fail to take advantage of the great Lenten and Easter moments for renewal, reconciliation, and celebration in the home.

In the apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, our Holy Father Pope John Paul II has emphasized that the Christian Family is itself a "little Church." It is a center of prayer and saving grace, of mission and ministry in the name of Christ within the total Church community.

ters are short, generally four to five pages, and conclude with reflection questions.

Marianne Roche is an attorney with degrees in religion and business administration. She began her spiritual search into the meaning of work after experiencing disillusion in her work as a corporate, securities and regulatory lawyer for financial institutions.

Her book is a challenge to think about the work we do in a new way. I plan to pass it along to my friend. It might help him get a new perspective.

Rituals, learning experiences and family gatherings throughout Lent can become means of spiritual renewal and growth, so this can be for you a wonderful season of grace.

Follow Christ in his five great roles of Prophet, Teacher, Priestly Mediator, Servant Leader and Risen Lord by reflecting on scripture together once a week. Relate what you read to today's world and your own family.

Have your own family Stations of the Cross on Friday evening after a meager meal. Contribute the money saved to the traditional Lenten offering or Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl.

As a family, allow some time for preparation at home, and then go to the communal reconciliation service at church. Then do something to help others. Consider serving in a soup line, visiting seniors or homebound shut-ins, or planting a "Resurrection Garden" in your yard or nearby park.

Opportunities are many. Seize the moment and grow as a family. Become more deeply alive in Christ throughout the Lenten Season.

Father Conroy is president of the National Institute for the Family in Washington, DC.

Book Review: 8 Spiritual Heroes

by Jane Leingang

8 Spiritual Heroes: Their Search for God by Brennan R. Hill, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 333 pages, \$14.95

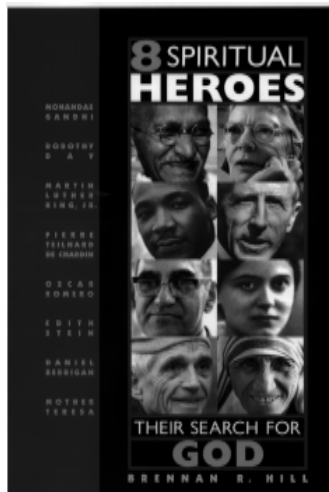
This interesting volume profiles five men and three women of recent history who have shown exceptional courage in following God's spirit into dangerous territory. Their stories are compelling. They challenge us to be more daring on our own journey.

Each chapter focuses on one individual, revealing how that person grew in the spirit through life experiences. While we know much about some of these people, Hill adds telling details and puts events in historical context. In doing so he affords the reader new insight into the lives of his heroes: Mohandas Gandhi, activist Dorothy Day, theologian and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Archbishop Oscar Romero, philosopher Edith Stein, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., anti-war protester Daniel Berrigan and Mother Teresa.

There is a lot of variety in this list, but Hill identifies common threads that run through these lives in the book's final chapter. The list of patterns is illuminating. All had supportive parents. They all sought a relationship with God and found it often in unlikely places. They traveled varied, often torturous, paths to reach God, but each ended the search in finding the "God who is present within" each one of us. All had a sense of trust in God's providence. Many rejected the dominant message of the culture to find a truer Christian call. Many were committed to a path of non-

violence to bring social change. Solidarity with the poor was a key value to most.

These heroes were loyal to the Church, but also realized the limitations of those who lead the Church. They understood that the "Church is not God." They often



paid the price for dissent by being isolated or silenced by the Church. Prayer was central to lives of all of them, although they were not spared the pain of feeling the absence of God at times in their lives.

There are those who would argue with Hill's choices.

Gandhi was not Christian, although Hill's biographical essay maintains Gandhi studied the New Testament and was drawn to the teachings of Jesus in formulating his ideas about non-violence.

The reputed sexual indiscretions of Martin Luther King Jr. have tarnished his memory in recent years. Hill concentrates on King's

Be a Peacemaker

- ◆ Respect others. In the face of words of hate, we can escalate our words of kindness towards others.
- ◆ Listen. In the face of escalating anger, we can escalate listening non-defensively and not respond in kind.
- ◆ Forgive. In the face of cries for revenge, we can escalate our willingness to forgive others who have hurt us.
- ◆ Be courageous. In the face of acts of hate towards Muslim and Arab people, we can escalate our courage and stand by them. We can pray with them daily, especially on Fridays. And in the face of cries for more war, we can courageously and lovingly offer a different perspective.

—*The Families Against Violence*

early spiritual formation and his leadership of the Black community in the 50s and 60s in his essay. He includes King's own answer to the accusations that surfaced during his lifetime.

Daniel Berrigan is still living and his actions in protesting the Viet Nam war are perhaps the most controversial of any of the figures included. Berrigan's criticism of Church figures that seemed harsh at the time sound somewhat different in the wake of the sex scandals of the present day.

The cumulative effect of the life stories in this well written book is powerful.

Building Christian Community: CFM from RCIA

When you move to a new city, where do you start making friends? If the city has CFM, you're home free! The National Office can put you in touch with the closest CFMers, who will welcome you to their group or help you start a new one. But what if your new city doesn't have CFM?

John and Lauri Przybysz, long-time CFMers and National Board members, were in just that situation, but they knew what to do. They volunteered to help with the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults program at their new parish, St. Jane Frances parish, in **Riviera Beach, Md.**, as sponsors and teachers. Families joining the Catholic church through the RCIA are welcomed into the faith community in the Easter season. John and Lauri had been part of the RCIA leadership team in their former parish, and knew that it is an excellent place for newcomers to make new friends and make a significant contribution to the parish community. They also remembered that many families they met in RCIA in Pittsburgh had joined CFM.

Throughout the process of initiation, which takes a year or more, people enjoy the fellowship of other participants, sponsors, and parish team members. They have the pleasure of knowing others better and being known themselves. In the RCIA process, those interested in joining the Church approach the Easter sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist in the company of a small Christian community. Candidates for full communion (baptized Christians joining the Catholic Church) and catechumens (those seeking baptism) witness to the community that faith is alive and well in their midst.

In the best cases, the whole

parish, not just the RCIA team and sponsors, participates in the process by including the soon-to-be Catholics in parish life and mission.

As Easter approached, the Przybyszs invited the RCIA candidates and other team members to consider starting CFM. Today the seven families in St. Jane's CFM group include several newly-baptized Catholics and current and former team members, as well as parish families active in other parish organizations. The group is very diverse, with families of all ages and sizes. From time to time, the teens of the group join in the



L-R: Tom, Margaret & Michelle Nappi; Mary Seidel; Matt, Alice & Josh Tuder; Ollie & Lori Snyder; Irene & Dave Dunphy; Tony Seidel; Monica Przybysz; Megan Nappi; Lauri Przybysz (seated).

Adult members not Pictured: John Przybysz, Sharon Brodt.

adult conversation, and everyone gains a fresh perspective.

Although regular RCIA sessions end for the newly initiated (neophytes) soon after Easter, their faith journey continues throughout life. In this final and on-going stage of Initiation, called mystagogia, the new members are meant to discover by experience the meaning of the sacraments they have received. Every Christian, whether baptized as an infant or joining through the RCIA, is called to "unpack" the mysterious gift of faith God has given us. Often, new church members get lost in the larger parish once their RCIA group

disbands. Although we see each other at Sunday liturgy and at other parish activities, those who have experienced the RCIA miss the closeness they developed as they prepared for the sacraments. CFM is one way to continue to experience the benefits of Christian community, and also helps new Christians, and old ones too, put their faith into action.

CFM at St. Jane's now meets every three or four weeks. Members have made casseroles for the local soup kitchen, provided warm clothes at Christmas for a shelter, and visited a city parish to experi-

ence another style of worship. The members help one another and create "extended family" for each other. The group loves passing along the "sacred CFM candle" to the next hosting family, as suggested in *Evidence of Faith* this year. They have also enjoyed piloting rough-drafts of chapters for future CFM programs.

The next challenge they face is sharing the gift of CFM with other St. Jane's families. Since a new group of RCIA candidates joins the Church each Easter, CFM at St. Jane's expects to gain new members as well.



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Who would you be?

An "ice-breaker" is what many people call it. I recently read about the exercise used by a Presbyterian church group to get committee members talking to each other and maybe even revealing something about themselves to the others in the group.

The opening question was simple: If you were a tool, what would you be?

One man said he'd be a hedge trimmer, because he likes to keep things neat.

One woman said she'd be an extension cord, because she liked to connect people.

You get the idea. Others in the group named the tool they would be: a trouble light, a tape measure, a weed whacker, a roto-rooter.

Some tools ought not to be named in such circumstances because they conjure up less than wholesome ideas. "Stud finder" is a useful tool, but probably not a name to claim at a church group. "Dado" is a wonderful woodworking tool, but maybe not enough people know what it is.

Double meanings and unfamiliar names should be avoided. So should a tendency of mine to make sarcastic references about other people. I have to restrain myself from thinking of the names I could call some people I know. He's a post hole digger, I thought, a man who constantly tries to punch holes in the solid ground of my reasoning.

It's amazing or maybe at least amusing to think about how we refer to tool-images in a lot of ordinary life. We talk about "sharpening" our skills, as if they were metal-edged cutting instruments. We "hone" our ideas to put the best edge possible on them. We "dig ourselves into debt."

We "hammer out" a compromise and "nail down" an agreement.



Jesus used tools and other images, too, to describe those who followed his teaching. You are the light of the world, the lamp that people do not hide under a bushel basket.

You are the salt of the earth.

He also told us the qualities we should have not only so that we ourselves will be blessed, but also to help build the kingdom of heaven here on earth.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



Take the time today to evaluate your own gifts and skills, to get to know yourself better. Are you among the tools that are used to measure and shape the house of God?

Which of the Beatitudes can you rightly claim for you own? Are you a peacemaker? Are you one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness? Are you merciful?

If you have children, ask them to describe themselves in terms that might be fun as well as revealing.



Lest we forget the words of Jesus, though, let us always remember that the hidden lamp lights no one's way. The hedge trimmer does no good on the shelf. An extension cord, coiled neatly on a peg makes no useful connections.

Make peace in your family. Or work for peace in the world.

Show mercy to one who has hurt you.

Discover God's gifts in the lives of your enemies.

We are called to help build the kingdom: to examine the world around us, to judge what we see in the light of Gospel values, and to take action to make a difference.

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.

They say that when a man marries a woman, he thinks, "She's the one I've been waiting for. She'll never change."—and she always does. And a woman looks at her man, and thinks, "He just needs a little work; after we're married, I'll help him change"—and he never does.

The truth is that both men and women will change as time goes on: Biologists tell us that every seven years we have totally replaced all the cells in our bodies with new ones. Our ideas, politics, interests evolve over the years. While research shows that personality tendencies (like introversion/extroversion) remain fairly constant throughout our adult lives, we do change. Personal change and growth can become issues in marriage because we develop at different rates. We hope our spouses will change for the better: become more patient; stop unhealthy habits; spend more time with the family; work less—or more; go to church more—or less, talk more—or less. We are all works in progress.

Change sometimes doesn't happen fast enough to suit us. Your beloved may be oblivious to your dissatisfaction. If he or she doesn't realize their need to change something, a loving spouse can gently ask for change. However, nagging, cajoling, and arguing get us nowhere and can make us even more miserable. Successful couples recognize that the only person you can change is yourself.

Drs. Susan and Phil Robison, marriage counselors who specialize in helping couples who are in business together (www.CoupleBiz.com), recommend enlisting your spouse as your partner in self-change. When we are willing to change some behavior, telling our spouses about our plan

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz



"I'll Change and Grow ... After You!"

to change, and enlisting their support can provide energy for growth in intimacy. Our spouses, no matter what personal faults or issues they may have, will appreciate our efforts (They've been hoping we would!).

The Robisons suggest some questions to ask yourself, as you are contemplating change:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the change for you and for your spouse? Be sure to describe the costs of the change. Example: Spending more time together might mean spending less time with the children.

How can you describe the change in terms of your behavior instead of your spouse's? Example: If you would like fewer arguments, stop arguing back.

How will you keep track of the changes so you can measure your success? This step will help you minimize your tendency to generalize that your spouse "always or never" does something. You might make notes or hash marks on your calendar or planner.

What if your self-change strategy doesn't light a fire under your spouse? Despite your hopes and personal improvement efforts, suppose he or she is resistant to or unable to change. This is where the most powerful—and paradoxical—

tool of marital change is at your service—acceptance. When partners show each other love and acceptance they respond quicker to each other's changes.

Be ready to support any effort your spouse makes toward change, no matter how tentative or incomplete it is. If he or she discloses a desire to change, be ready to help and not hinder the process. It may be that professional help is in order, but your role as helpmate is indispensable. You are the one who loves your spouse the most.

Every loving is a dying—a dying to my own time, comfort, convenience, wants, needs concerns, interests. Every loving is a dying to self-interest and self-aggrandizement in an act of generosity and self-giving. Every loving is a dying to egoism, a dying to 'I' in order that two "I's" become a "we." Every loving implies acceptance of the other, single-heartedness, mutuality and giving and taking without keeping score.

—**Kathleen Hughes**,
*Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of
Sacrament*, Liturgy Training
Publications, 1999

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

The CFM group in **Gilbert, Ariz.**, had a fourth annual "Birthday Party for Baby Jesus". The event included a potluck picnic at a local park. The group brought new baby items as gifts to donate to a home for unwed mothers called Maggie's Place. Earlier in the year they had an annual garage sale to benefit a local charity.

The Diocese of **Pittsburgh** promoted CFM with a December mailing that highlighted the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Family, which falls on the Sunday between Christmas and New Year's Day. **Maureen Wood** is family life director.

Gary and Carole O'Neill are working to start a CFM group in their new parish, St. Joseph in **Key West, Iowa**.

Eric and Amy Kehl are leaders of the new group at St. Paul parish in **Tell City, Ind.**

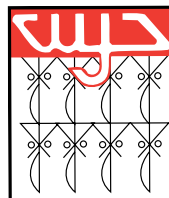
One of the CFM groups at Our Lady of the Wayside, **Arlington Heights, Ill.**, led by **Sean and Patty Reilly**, planned and conducted a prayer service for peace open to the parish.

For many years, the CFM families at St. Lawrence Martyr parish at **Redondo Beach, Calif.** have provided 200 bologna sandwiches several times a month to the Brothers of Charity for distribution to the needy. This year members have begun to join others from the parish in the distributing the sandwiches to the homeless on the streets of Los Angeles. **Greg and Brenda Argano** and **Dan and Noreen Thomas** are section leaders.

Isabelle Leroux died in **Ottawa** in December after a long illness. Isabelle along with her husband Rolly became executive secretary of CFM in **Canada** in 1971. In 1977 they succeeded **Patty Crowley** as presidents of the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements at its third General Assembly in **Manila**. They organized the fourth assembly, which was held in 1980 in **Rome** following the bishop's synod on the family that resulted in the document *Familiaris Consortio*. Their term of office ended in **Guadalajara** at the General Assembly in 1983. In 1989 the Leroux were appointed by **Wayne and Sue Hamilton** to serve as liaisons to United Nations in **New York**. Their service was recognized at the General Assembly in Malta with the Cardijn Award.

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