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IN THIS ISSUE

Presidents' Perspective 2
 Parent to Parent 3
 Chaplain's column 5
 Taking the Time 6
 Your Marriage 7
 SPOTLIGHT 8



Christian Family Movement

Grassroots Input to National CFM Direction

Service Team meets with Iowa Leadership, Illinois Session This Month

The Service Team traveled to **Des Moines** November 14, 15, and 16 to visit with local leaders, soak up the Iowa sunshine and confer about upcoming projects for CFM. Board members **Dave and Donna Langer**, together with secretaries **Terry and Jean Smith** worked with



Among the 80 CFMers of all ages was the Clark family

leadership at St. Francis of Assisi parish in **West Des Moines** and St. Pius X in **Urbandale** to put together the meeting. **Father Sam Palmer** from St. Pius concelebrated with St. Francis pastor **Msgr. Edward Hurley** at the parish 4:30 Mass on Saturday. St. Francis leaders **Mary and Dan Buscher** and **Julia and Jim Roegiers** made arrangements for a potluck meal after the celebration. About 80 CFMers of all ages attended. Those present were from

St. Pius and St. Francis, and Holy Trinity in **Des Moines**. St. Cecelia in **Ames** and St. Bernard in **Omaha, Neb.**, were also represented. After the potluck, **Father Sam Palmer** was recognized for his contributions as a CFM chaplain with the Monsignor Reynold Hillenbrand award. **Jane and Paul Leingang** made a presentation on **Cardinal Joseph Cardijn** and his message for CFM today.

The board set direction for the 2005 CFM conference in Chicago at their meeting. They also discussed the leadership training and membership development initiative that is currently underway. Plans for the upcoming ICCFM gathering in **San Jose, Calif.**, in July 2004 were discussed. Leaders of CFM USA hope to meet with the leadership of our Spanish speaking counterpart, MFC immediately before that meeting. The next scheduled board of directors meeting is Feb. 20-22 at Divine Word International, **Techny, Ill.**

Leaders in **Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana** are invited to meet with the board for an evening of reflection and enrichment on Feb. 20 at Holy Family Parish in **Inverness, Ill.**



Presidents' Perspective

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer

Valentine's Day

Diamonds, hearts, flowers. These appear to be the predominant images of Valentine's Day. But how can those things properly express love. They are only things.

We are hampered by the English language to only have one word for love. As a result, we love the Yankees, ice cream and our spouse and children. But are all these emotions identical? Do you really love your favorite sports team like your wife; your favorite dessert like your husband? Of course not!

So what is true love, the love we should celebrate on Valentine's Day? Is it the love of a man who works two jobs so his wife can stay home to raise the children? Is it the love of a woman who, weary from a long day's activity, gets up to comfort a child? Is it the love of a child who comes running down the hall or stairs when mommy or daddy comes home from work? Is it the love of a son or daughter who takes the time to help with an elderly or ailing parent? Is it the love of a spouse who laughs at marginally funny jokes but cannot think of any place he or she would rather be? Is it the love of one who gives everything for the happiness and to meet the needs of another, whether spouse, or parent or child?

True love is all of this. It is a love that stretches its arms as wide as one can. It is a love that empties oneself. It is a love that gives all for someone else.

True love cannot be repaid with diamonds, hearts and flowers. True

love does not need to be repaid. It needs to be reciprocated. It needs to move from the material to the spiritual.

One cannot express love with things. One can express love only with the gifts of oneself; with the gift of time, the gift of being, the gift of one's entire self.

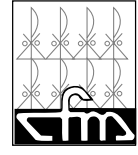
This Valentine's Day, resist the Hallmark card, the chocolate heart and even the diamonds from

*One cannot express love with things.
One can express love only with the gifts of oneself.*

DeBeers and the flowers from FTD. This Valentine's Day, find a way to give yourself to the one who has tried to love you perfectly and sacrificially.

St. Paul said it best in I Corinthians 13. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. It is what Christ gave to us. It is what we owe to those made in his image and likeness. Let us begin to share this love, this Valentine's Day, in our own homes with the persons Christ has blessed us with – our spouses, parents and children. Now that would be a happy Valentine's Day!

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



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

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.



Father Sam Palmer honored by CFM

Father Sam Palmer received the **Monsignor Reynold Hillenbrand Award** for outstanding service to the Christian Family Movement as a parish chaplain at the leaders enrichment evening held at St. Francis of Assisi parish, **Urbandale, Iowa** on November 15. Vice-president couple **Bob and Ann Tomonto, of Miami, Fla.**, presented the award before a gathering of CFM families from Iowa and **Nebraska**.

Father Sam was involved in CFM at 12 parishes over his 44 years as an active priest and still serves as chaplain of the CFM group at St. Pius even in retirement. "I learned much about the struggles of family life and the difficulties that families have including Christian values in their lives in the midst of secular world" by participating in CFM.

Parent to Parent

by Mary Lou Gorman

Faith, Courage, and Trust



Today our pastor spoke about how we here in the United States, a country dedicated to Mary, need to think more about faith, courage, and trust as we go through life. I got to thinking of how, as families, we need to work on placing our trust in God.

Ask God for courage as we teach values again and again, even when our kids seem to ignore us. It takes an extreme amount of courage today to fight all the bad examples we see on TV and in the movies. Our children are absorbing all that they see and hear, and we must be the ones to point out how destructive some of the media examples can be. Then as parents we must trust that what we say and do makes an impression.

Family gatherings can help in our struggle against peer pressure. Volunteer your home for more extended family celebrations. It takes work and money to do this, but I know in our family it's the same people who have the parties while others sit back and just enjoy them. Be the doer, because it will pay off in the long run as children become involved in traditions and find more love and understanding with family. Turn off the TV at these celebrations and have family discussions that will increase our children's faith, give them courage to face today's problems, and build trust in the fact that their family loves them.

Being a parent takes faith, courage, and trust; but with God's help we will raise children who will bring about a better world.

Family Camp Outreach Ministry at a Crossroads

Would your group like to help a great project continue? For nine years, CFMers from Ann Arbor have hosted week-long family camp in Carrollton, Ohio, for needy families from New York, Buffalo, and Detroit.

More than 100 people, including volunteer families and guest families, enjoyed the camp this August. The program includes daily Mass, a living rosary, swimming, boating, campfires, and a great fiesta talent show; and volunteer families are paired with inner-city families for daily discussion and activity sessions and the evening meal each day.

The program guidelines call for volunteer families who are Catholic, open to forming a friendship with an inner city family, and willing to work with others to lead small groups.

Holy Family Ministries, a non-profit organization formed by CFM, raises \$10,000 to \$15,000 each year to run the camp and provide transportation and camp registrations for the guest families.

Program leader **Karen Stein** said that each year the coordinators trust the Lord for finances: She wishes a CFM group or two would

"adopt" this ministry. There is a "fantastic young music group, terrific at sharing their faith" and \$1000 would make it possible to have "great music at Mass and a couple of praise and worship nights," Karen said.

To help Holy Family Ministries offer the camp in 2004, contact the Steins at steink@aaps.k12.mi.us.

To find out more about the camp, visit the Holy Family Ministries Page of St. Francis of Assisi parish website, <http://www.stfrancisa2.com/socialministry/holyfamily.htm>.

In Memory of Madelyn Bonsignore

Madelyn Bonsignore, co-chair of the CFM programming committee from 1960 to 1966, died on Thanksgiving Day at the University of Virginia Medical Center in **Charlottesville, Va.**, where she was visiting family.

Madelyn and her husband **Joe** led the committee in writing the 1964-65 program *Encounter in Politics and Race*, one of the most controversial books ever published by CFM.

Joe characterized his time in CFM "as the greatest thing in all

book, many CFMers confronted their prejudices and acceptance of racial stereotypes. Madelyn was among a group of CFMers who marched in **Selma, Ala.** Daughter **Judith Bonsignore** recalled, "She always said she wanted people to see middle-aged white ladies on the line." Although all CFM groups did not accept the book, for those who did participate, the effect was life-changing.

The program committee that had shepherded the book formed lasting bonds. **Bernard and Mae Daly, Toronto; Dan and Mary Maher, Joliet, Ill.;** Episcopal priest **Father Don and Margaret Jones, Bloomington, Ind.;** Augustinian **Father Ed Hamel, Olympia Fields, Ill.;** **Charles and June Smith, Erie, Penn.;** and **Father Tom Maher, Chicago,** renewed acquaintance at a CFM conference in the late 80s and held annual reunions starting in 1996.

June Smith recalled Madelyn "with love and admiration. She was amazing." Smith went on to say, "She was so smart; and she was compassionate. Madelyn and Joe were a great example of a marriage: two people who were quite different but loved each other enough to make both the individuals and the combination exceptional. She accomplished so much with regard to Joe and their children, and used her talents to make the world more humane." Joe and Madelyn were married for fifty-eight years.

The Bonsignorens were also instrumental in implementing the ecumenical thrust of CFM and assisted in adapting a series of meetings from the introductory CFM book, *For Happier Families* for the Episcopal church. Joe and Madelyn had also served as president couple of the **Chicago** federation from 1959 to 1961.



Joe and Madelyn Bonsignore

our lives. We tried to exemplify what we had learned in CFM through what we did in later—Madelyn especially. There are so many things it taught us."

Madelyn was committed to her ideals. Along with being mother to six children, she was the first laywoman to serve on the Chicago Archdiocesan School Board. She was active in the Democratic Party, first in **Illinois** and later in **Virginia** where she had lived for the last 33 years. After she ran an unsuccessful race for Illinois State senate in 1966, she was appointed by then-Gov.

Otto Kerner to the Illinois Commission on Human Relations. Her career in publications and editing was capped by service as publications director for the League of Women voters from 1971 to 1983.

As a result of the 1964 CFM



*It just opened up
a whole new light."*

Betty Stephens Camp of Evansville, Ind., remembers the "race book." "It had a huge impact on the rest of my life. It made me a lot more tolerant. It was exciting to be part of it. I felt like we were doing what we were supposed to do—changing the world a little bit in the right direction."

During that year Betty and her husband, **John Stephens**, met several black families and became personal friends with some of them.

"People thought we were strange because we had Black friends," Betty reminisces. One of their friends at the time said, "We came over to see you, but we saw this big black man standing on your porch, so we didn't come in." Betty recalls, "I think we came to see Black families as people like everyone else. We have a lot more in common than we realized."

Betty's children remember too.

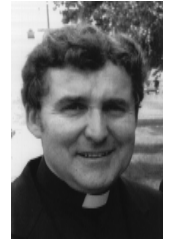
One of them, **Jane Hackert**, is a member at St. Benedict parish today. She recalls a picnic she attended as a child. The group had decided to have an integrated picnic and instead of having it in a private home, they chose to have it in a public park. The children played together and had fun, black and white together. She also recalls an evening when one of the Stephens' friends cooked pigs' ears for them. It made a lasting impression on her to be in social situations with Black families in that time of racial tension.

As Betty said, "It was a very much of an awakening to go through those things. It just opened up a whole new light."

From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy

Marriage: Its Future and Our Responsibility



The recent actions of the Massachusetts Supreme Court and other activities in support of the movement to identify same-sex (homosexual) unions as the legal equivalent of marriage have put this issue at the center of discussion and controversy.

In response to this state of affairs members of the Christian Family Movement are necessarily challenged as members of the Church community and as members of society to take a stand. However, before we can successfully defend marriage as a unique union between a man and a woman, we need to understand this complex issue.

I would therefore encourage CFM groups everywhere to set aside at least one good session in the first part of 2004 to explore this issue, discuss it using the OJA process and see the implications the movement for legalizing same-sex unions has for the total society as well as for the Christian community.

Thirty some years ago when I joined CFM as a chaplain I never thought in my wildest imagination that such would be the issue we would face one day. Yet, here it is and we have a deep responsibility to address it.

This needs to be done in a way that is compassionate toward homosexuals and still upholds the absolute importance of the sacramental marriage as divinely instituted. This is a covenant designed to be a faithful, exclusive, lifelong partnership of a man and a woman joined in an intimate

communion of life and love. In this union man and woman are equals and form a relationship that is unique. Moreover, this union involves their whole selves— body, mind and spirit. In this way the spouses' sexual differences and complementarity—how they complete one another—is the natural basis for parenthood and is intrinsically oriented toward having children.

As far as the state is concerned this institution is crucial for the begetting and education of responsible future citizens. Thus the law gives married couples certain benefits that they can better carry out this function on behalf of society.

Christians (and others such as Jews and Muslims who hold to that importance of marriage between a man and a woman) seem to be caught in a bind. Believers are often criticized by certain gays and others if we hold to the message clearly enunciated by Jesus. This teaching was expanded on by Saint Paul and the early church as well as in recent documents of the Second Vatican Council and the present Pope.

We, moreover, should be able to articulate our beliefs and values in this regard without appearing to be anti-gay.

To assist local CFMers in discussing this vitally important issue, especially the sacramentality and complementarity of marital love, several resources exist. One of these is the recent U.S. Catholic Bishops document entitled "Between a Man and a Woman," which is done in a positive Q and A style.

Some others include writings by Pope John Paul II especially "Familiaris Consortio," which is his message on marriage and the family in the modern world, and his series of talks on the nature of human sexuality and the "nuptial meaning of the body."

The opportune moment is here for all of us to come to greater understanding and clarity if we are to successfully defend marriage. Even more, we now have to be able to go on the offensive in a way that is not "offensive," but will truly win the hearts and minds of our fellow citizens.

Obviously, this is not an easy thing to do! Because of the tremendous media power of the present gay rights movement, many think they must be "open" to same-sex unions or be branded reactionary.

This is not a reactionary position. Rather it is grounded in sound human wisdom as well as divine revelation.

The truth, goodness and beauty of marriage are essential to the future of society as well as the church. Our task is to defend and promote marriage anew in an age that has been confused by specious and false reasoning in the name of progress and liberation.

For the documents cited, see the USCCB (www.usccb.org) and Vatican (www.vatican.va) websites. A meeting on this topic is posted on the CFM website, (cfm.org).

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



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Routines and when to break them

The local daily newspaper usually arrives at our home around 6 a.m. But that hasn't been the case in recent days. Bad weather and mechanical problems are being blamed for the series of delays and one missed delivery.

The morning is just not the same.

We used to have a morning and an evening paper, but the evening paper was halted a few years ago. The evening paper offered competitive coverage of local events and a different editorial viewpoint. I read it faithfully, and I still miss it.

On recent days, when the morning paper was not available, a few magazines helped me keep my morning coffee routine. Then I paid more attention to the birds at the feeders in our backyard.

And now, in reflection on those past few days, I have started to examine the sources of all the "information" that pours into my home each day.

I'm not intending to catalog all the broadcast news reports, the newspaper, the mailbox full of catalogs and a few letters, and the plastic bags hanging on the knob of my front door. I am thinking about a greater reality than what is portrayed in everyday media.

◆ I am greeted by the light of day. Darkness will not prevail, we are promised. Each day, even cloudy or foggy ones, bears witness to this truth of our redemption.

◆ On the morning after a new snowfall, early light outlines a thousand stick figures in the snow, where songbirds have searched for food. All of nature proclaims the urgency of life.

◆ Branches move on the tree outside my window. Warm air rises from a register, to give me comfort from the cold outside. No electron

A break in the routine can be an occasion of grace. And we really don't need an ice storm or a power outage to make it happen.

microscope or particle accelerator is needed, to wonder at the forces of nature invisible but powerful, somehow secret but revealed, like the breath of God.



Light and life and breath these are the words in the heart of the universe to be read by those who have the eyes to see them.

A passage in Acts of the Apostles (chapter 17) describes St. Paul's preaching in Athens, where he found an altar inscribed, "To an unknown god."

What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and

earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. . . . Yet he is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your poets have said,

'For we are indeed his offspring.'

When Paul started talking about the resurrection, though, a lot of his listeners walked away. Others wanted to hear more. Some became believers, including Dionysius and a woman named Damaris and others with them.



The break in my everyday morning activity was the occasion of a kind of retreat from the routine. I guess I could say, I "fasted" from my usual diet of information, and became more aware of truths much more important.

I am reminded of a time when we had a power outage at home, when we had young children. We sat together, in a room illuminated by candles, with no television to distract us. When the power came back, the lights went on, and everyone was a little sad.

A break in the routine can be an occasion of grace. And we really don't need an ice storm or a power outage to make it happen.



Take the time to examine your habits and routines as a family. What do your children learn from you about what really matters?

Take the time in the coming months to fast from the ordinary. It will 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.

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz

Spiritual Disciplines for Couples



Christians over the years have learned that certain practices help keep the heart turned toward God. A “spiritual discipline” is taking an aspect of life and turning it toward God. When practiced faithfully and regularly, it becomes a habit that repeatedly brings you back to God and opens you up to what God is saying to you. Married people don’t live in monasteries, so we put our own “worldly” spin on the traditional “disciplines.” The following practices are tools to help us cooperate with the Spirit in the task of remaking us into better marriage partners.

- 1. Journaling.** While we can keep a written account of our conversation with God or the events of our lives, recording our thoughts privately and then sharing them can develop deeper communication: Write letters and email thoughts; use the PAIRS daily temperature reading, marriage encounter dialogue prompts at www.wwme.org, start or refresh a photo album, or videotape a joint project.
- 2. Pilgrimage.** Together, visit your childhood homes, schools, and playgrounds. Spend time with elder relatives and hear their stories. Holiday visits to families can become deep learning experiences. Go to your local cathedral or shrine together. Pilgrimage is a way God gives us to answer that yearning to physically travel to discover God and the truths about ourselves.
- 3. Fasting.** Fasting focuses our attention on what we really need to survive, and turns our thoughts to God. Turn off the TV or computer one hour early and go to bed for a massage. Give up needing to have the last word. Change unhealthy habits, such as swearing, smoking, credit buying, or abusing drugs or alcohol.
- 4. Quiet Time.** Spend time individually, pursuing an activity you love but your partner does not. Develop a hidden talent. Renew and develop a same-sex friendship. Turn off the radio and think about the future on your drive to work.
- 5. Keeping Sabbath.** Play and laugh together. Join a bowling league or card club. Avoid entertainment that degrades human dignity. Establish a tradition of Sunday breakfast after church. Cut out unnecessary work on Sundays and do something fun and relaxing. Go on a married couples’ retreat weekend.
- 6. Prayer.** Create and pray a special grace before meals. Call each other at the end of the workday and share one intention for your partner to pray on the way home. Say the rosary together at the start of a car trip. Make a running list of what you are thankful for.
- 7. Worship.** Go to church together. Create decorations for the current holiday season and display them. Hold hands and pray for each other before going to sleep. Meet for a walk at dawn and greet the new day with gratitude.
- 8. Service.** If you don’t have children or are empty nesters, baby-sit a child together for a whole day. Take a teenager to the museum. Serve together at a soup kitchen. Plant and work a garden together. Begin to donate a part of your income to a favorite charity. Sponsor a needy child abroad. Take your parents shopping or out to lunch.
- 9. Self-surrender.** Turn away from selfishness. Defer to one another. Give your partner the biggest and best portion. Eat healthy; take vitamins. Create a better budget. Accompany your partner to one craft show or fishing trip—any activity that you would rather avoid—and look at it through his or her eyes. (*Ancient ascetics used a bed of nails.*)
- 10. Reconciliation.** Practice conflict resolution skills and learn the Active Listening Techniques of PREP (www.prepinc.com). Identify one strength of your family of origin; forgive one weakness. When you are wrong, say, “I’m sorry; please forgive me.” When you are right, don’t gloat. Take a marriage communication inventory, like REFOCCUS (www.foccusinc.com).

SPOTLIGHT

Anna and Ken Kieliszewski, Palatine, Ill., won use of a 2 bedroom/2 bath condo that sleeps six for the week of July 31, 2004 at Sunterra Resorts Polynesian Isle, **Kissimmee, Fla.,** in the fall membership contest. Every member who recruited a new member for CFM between July 1 and November 30 was eligible for the drawing. St. Thomas of Villanova has 26 paid member families after a year of development by a core group of four couples. **Kate and Kevin O'Connell** have been the lead organizers. Congratulations to the Kieliszewskis and thank you to all those who responded to our challenge to recruit new families for CFM.

Gloria Cain reports, the "Baby Boomer" CFM group from **Ames, Iowa** helped

BirthRight in Ames by repainting their office. They also purchased and installed smoke detectors for a single mom wishing to set up a day-care program in her home and purchased Christmas gifts for her three children.

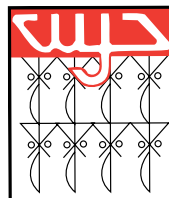
Mary Robertson, Menomonee Falls, Wisc., reports, "On November 16th, we had a "Stump the Parents" saints game. Each child got up and presented some "clue" about their saint and the parents tried to guess who they were. (Parents could not guess their own children!) Each clue got a little easier until finally the parents guessed who it was. It was a fun game and we learned some interesting facts about the saints, like some dropped out of school!"

The members of St. Gabriel CFM group in **Poway, Calif.,** have been participating in efforts to help those affected by the recent fires near San Diego. Three St. Gabriel parishioners lost homes, and Poway is next to **Scripps Ranch** which lost 300 homes, so there is much to do. In addition to contributing clothing and household goods, many individuals have been helping clear home sites so that construction can begin. The group is exploring ways to help Whispering Winds Family Campground rebuild. St. Gabriel's has taken a group to the camp annually for many years.

Shirley Cockerham from **Nevada, Iowa,** died on December 13. Shirley and her husband, **Irv,** represented Iowa and Nebraska on the national board for a term in the 80s and 90s.

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