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Christian Family Movement

Homemade Disciples

Upcoming Program Book

Highlights Overlooked Dimension of the Church

What do families and the Church have in common?

A great deal, according to the bishops of the United States in their 1994 document on the family, *Follow the Way of Love*:

What you do in your family to create a community of love, to help each other to grow, and to serve those in need is critical, not only for your own sanctification but for the strength of society and our Church. It is a participation in the work of the Lord, a sharing in the mission of the Church. It is holy.

Early Christians recognized the family as the church of the home. It was however overshadowed by the development of the institutional church and the hierarchy. The understanding of family as the domestic church was recovered at the time of Vatican II and its meaning has been explored by theologians since then.

The 2004-2005 program book, *Homemade Disciples*, will lead us to examine our understanding of what families are called to do by Christ, and of how we nurture each other's faith, educate, serve one another, welcome the stranger, affirm life and act in justice. In other words, how our daily life is "a true expression of the Church."

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Editor **Lauri Przybysz** is looking for good photographs that would illustrate the chapters of *Homemade Disciples*.

If you have clear, high contrast photos showing families in settings of education, celebration, prayer or other forms of interaction that you think might work in this publication, email copies to Lauri at secretary@cfm.org or mail to the national office.



Presidents' Perspective

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer

Days of Remembrance

We are approaching the annual celebrations of Mother's Day and Father's Day. And as I reflected upon these days of remembrance, I thought about other people who have meant much to my development as a person and as a Christian; specifically, the good sisters who taught me in grades K-8 at St. Aloysius School in Ridgewood, Queens and the good brothers and sisters who taught me in grades 9-12 at St. Francis Preparatory School in New York.

Recently I was invited to a meeting of a small group of lay persons spearheading a "National Religious Appreciation Day" to thank and honor and remember and pray for the religious and clergy who helped form us as individuals and as Christians.

I still remember the Dominican sister, in her full habit in the mid-1960s, who would sneak me into her classroom and hide me from my teacher when I was in kindergarten. I enjoyed the game she played with her colleague, as did my classmates and her students. I remember the sister who prepared me for my First Penance and First Communion, how inspired I was and how close to God I felt as I received these sacraments for the first time. I remember the sister who taught me during much of my middle school years. She was not aloof and unapproachable, but a friend and welcoming presence. My fellow middle-school scientists and I named our science fair hamster (occupant of our model rocket payload) Allison, in her honor. I recall the Franciscan brothers who helped me discern my gifts and

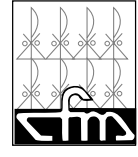
talents and the proper use of them. To this day, it is my high school, not my college or law school, to which I owe the greatest debt and to which I send an annual contribution.

These women and men dedicated their lives to live out a vocation different from our own. But in many ways, they played an important role in our development as our parents. Who stopped to say thank you? Who told them how great an influence they were?

A National Religious Appreciation Day sounds like a good opportunity to reflect upon the sacrifices of so many—sisters, brothers and priests—who faithfully lived out their calling of love of Christ and love of his children. In a time when the papers and airwaves highlight only the few who have violated their trust, breached their duty and harmed those committed to their care, maybe the time is right to recognize those who were faithful, true and holy.

This Mother's Day and Father's Day, remember those spiritual moms and dads, the sisters, brothers and priests who helped form your lives and your faith. A National Religious Appreciation Day is an idea whose time is overdue. Maybe you should act to recognize and thank those in your life and in your community.

For more information about a National Religious Appreciation Day, contact Bart Donovan at (540) 888-4212 or bartdonovan@earthlink.net.



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

Want to touch base with CFMers 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.

Parent to Parent

by Mary Lou Gorman

It's People That Count



All parents want to make their children happy. How do we do this and still discipline them and teach them values? My philosophy has always been to keep reminding them that it's "people not things" that keep them happy. Today we give our children so much and kids want so many material things. They need to be reminded that videos and CDs and toys won't keep them happy. They can't give them smiles and hugs and compliments. Only people can do this.

Jesus wants us to be happy but he also wants us to love our neighbor. He did not make "things" his big priority. He worked with *people* to get his message across.

Children need to be reminded that being charitable to others and helping others will bring them more happiness than a toy. Joy comes from people. What a great

world this would be if all people remembered and practiced loving one another.

It seems today that most parents feel pressured to get their children involved in organized sports. Parents must be prepared to deal with children's disappointments, since not every team wins; and many parents and children take scorekeeping very very seriously. To be chosen to play on a team is an honor, but many kids suffer from being on the sidelines, and often parents bring their own personal issues to their children's playing fields.

Why do we put ourselves or our kids in these situations when there are so many other arts and activities to be enjoyed? Not every child benefits from athletic competition. Not every family benefits from a schedule dictated by athletic programs. Not every parent finds

watching team sports an expression of "quality time."

With all the stresses on families at this time in history, it is necessary for parents to scrutinize the sources of stress in their households and to make a conscious decision to make people, not things, the priority.

Here are three ways you can keep your child happy:

1. Give lots of hugs, smiles and compliments.
2. Teach your child to love his neighbor and family by helping them.
3. Let him know that loving God and taking time to pray will always bring him solace.

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

Leaders of CFM from **Chicago** and **Wisconsin** met with the national CFM board of directors on Friday evening, February 20, at Holy Family Parish in **Inverness, Ill.** for a presentation by national secretary couple **Lauri and John Przybysz, Serverna Park, Md.**, on next year's program book, *Home-made Disciples*.

Using household objects that reflected their life as parents of six children, the Przybyszs detailed the ways that ordinary family life is

holy. They quoted from the document of the U.S. bishops, *Follow the Way of Love*:

A family is holy not because it is perfect but because God's grace is a work in it, helping it to set out anew everyday on the way of love.

During the evening participants had time to reflect with each other on how their family life has shared in the mission of the larger Church. **Tom and Laura Toussaint, Lisa and Joe Guerrero, and Curt**

and Maureen Rosenwinkel are the leadership team at Holy Family. The chapter used the presentation as their February meeting. Holy Family will be the site of the 2005 CFM convention.

The board of directors met on Saturday and Sunday at Divine Word International to conduct business for the movement. The board discussed the progress of next year's book, plans for the 2005 Chicago convention, and multimedia membership support materials under development.

A MAN WITH A DREAM

by Irene and Bob Tomonto

We first met **Dulce and Jose (Pepe) Casanova** at a Covenant Weekend some years ago. They were a quiet couple who came to all the follow up meetings and who joined the "older couple" CFM group that we served as interim leaders.



Pepe Casanova

At one of these meetings, Pepe, an architect, shared that he had a dream to build a community center in Little Havana for neighborhood children. Over the years, Pepe occasionally mentioned that he was speaking to community leaders, or talking to folks about funding. Then one day this past winter, Pepe shared that his community center was completed and invited us to the dedication. The invitation read: "The Honorable Mayor Manny Diaz, The City Commissioners, The City Manager, and The Parks and Recreation Department cordially invite you to attend the official dedication ceremony of the Jose Marti Community Center Wednesday, January 28, 2004.

When we arrived in the vicinity of Jose Marti Park, we were stopped by police barriers. A parade was passing by: students from the local schools, cheerleaders, baton twirlers, a band, and a Cuban dance group. Ahead of us was a van carrying horses for the mounted police. All were headed to the dedication of the new community center.

As the official ceremonies began, the mayor and many local politicians spoke in both English and Spanish to the near 300 people gathered, all taking credit, I might add, for the project.

The band played the Star Spangled Banner, and then the crowd proudly sang the Cuban national anthem. The children

danced, cheered and twirled. The band played.

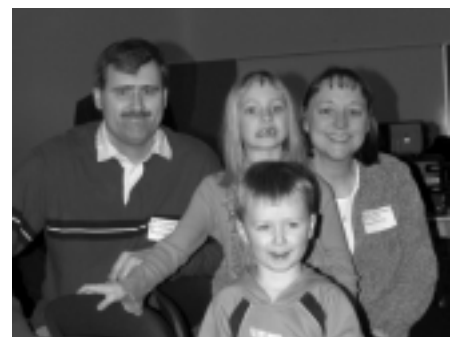
After the ribbon cutting, Pepe gave us a tour of his 12,000 square foot, fully paid-for \$1,900,000 community center. The center includes an arts and crafts room, a gym with a ballet barre and exercise mats, an exercise room with machines, a large all-purpose room with tables, ping pong and a kitchen, three classrooms and a state-of-the-art computer room that will be furnished and manned by Miami Dade Community College.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, a smiling Pepe pulled out the plans he was carrying under his arm: plans for his next community center to be built in another park a few blocks away. He walked over to the mayor and showed him the new plan. Then he grinned at us and said, "I was just planting a seed." For Pepe this was not just a job: His work is a vocation to bring hope to the inner city of the immigrant.



Anna and Ken Kieliszewski, with their children, Amy and James, members of St. Thomas of Villanova, Palatine, Ill., attended the enrichment evening at Holy Family. They were the winners of a stay in Kissimmee, Fla., in the recruitment contest held last Fall.

(Amy is showing off the space recently vacated by her first lost tooth.)



From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy



Marriage in Crisis: A Wider Perspective

Marriage continues to dominate the headlines in our newspapers and in the electronic media news hours. These stories have been mostly about the issue of legalizing homosexual (gay) marriage as a human rights issue. Little is said about the value of the family or the value of having two parents of the opposite sex to children's development and maturation. Little is said about the tremendously detrimental effects in societies where marriage has been thrown out under the aegis of a secular state.

All this aside, there is much more to the present marriage crisis than the issue of gay unions and marital status and privilege. Many other factors have contributed to the present crisis and continue to influence the controversy.

In the days after the Second World War through the beginning of mid-sixties cultural revolution things were different. Standard television fare, including "Leave It to Beaver," presented family life in terms of a married-couple with Dad working in an office and mom managing the home.

Various economic and cultural factors brought changes to the picture.

The child IRS tax deduction or subsidy was kept static while inflation eroded its value. More and more mothers took on outside work for various reasons: desire to use education to influence the broader society, need to offset necessary expenses, desire for a higher standard of living.

Today, married-couple households comprise only 50.7 percent of the population, compared to about 80 percent in the fifties. Stay-at-home moms are only 10 percent of overall families. Single adults will soon outnumber and become the majority in American households. One third of all children are now being raised in single-parent households. Many unwanted children never find a true home.

Much of this data is cited in studies by the Population Reference Bureau and by the "State of Our Unions" annual report from the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University. These and other analyses of marriage and family life

The current shift away from marriage in the last half century has no precedent in all of human history.

in the United States and North America consider a complex set of social, cultural and economic factors.

David Popenoe, co-director of the National Marriage Project, points out that the current shift away from marriage in the last half century has no precedent in all of human history. It is happening in all of the industrialized Western countries; and many Asians, Africans and other more traditional societies view the trend with deep concern.

To better understand how we as members of the Catholic church

and the Judeo-Christian community can get a handle on the deepest values we intuitively recognize and by faith know, we must consider the greater context. All the factors contributing to the decline or threat to stable heterosexual married life and family living should be viewed together as interrelated. This avoids a mono-causal theory. Only by knowing these factors can we have a correct "diagnosis" of what ails marriage; only by a correct diagnosis can we see all the dimensions that must be addressed to renew marriage and support family life before the decline overwhelms society.

Dr. Popenoe is not fatalistic nor should we be. He says: "To say that marriage is on the ropes is too strong, but it certainly is weakening." We in the Christian community need to wake up. We Catholics believe that marriage is instituted by the Creator as a sacramental reality or sign of the love of God and his Kingdom. We must work actively to reverse the present trend.

We CFMers can use our Observe-Judge-Act process and do a session using the excellent data and insights from the "State of Our Unions" report as well as Catholic social and theological sources. The sources for a thorough diagnosis are available; let us avail ourselves of these resources and act to transform society on behalf of the only solid basis for any lasting culture.

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

The best job in the world

This is another in the series, "You've got the best job in the world!"

That comment, about my job, came from a friend, after I told him some of the stories I had heard during an interview with a missionary. My friend was envious of my opportunities to meet interesting people and to ask them questions.

Ordinarily, a person just can't ask another about personal decisions, a spiritual awakening, or other things that really matter.

Recently, though, I had the immense privilege of listening in on the personal stories of three people, who shared details about their vocations at a Serra Club luncheon.

◆ **Kristel Riffert** is the Catholic Campus minister at the University of Evansville. She is a lay person, a wife, and the mother of two college-age students.

"I really do believe that I was summoned by God to this vocation, she said.

"It is in finding our vocation that our restless hearts find peace," she said.

◆ **Sister Marie Ann Singer** told about her restless yearning to work in the missions. With all due respect for her home town, she said she looked up one day to see how big the sky was, and she knew, "I wasn't meant to stay in Cleveland."

She didn't. This slight woman in the simple habit of the Little Sisters of the Poor explored old

cities in **Algeria**, sat in St. Augustine's chair in northern Africa, learned French and Arabic—and refused to leave the old people in her care when "bullets were flying and bombs were dropping" during a civil war in Congo. She told of waking up each day and wondering if she would live to see night fall.

*It is
in finding
our vocation
that our restless hearts
find peace.*

"I didn't choose any of this. I just said 'yes' to the Lord," she said.

◆ **Benedictine Brother Gabriel Hodges** told of asking once if he could join the Church—and of being told, "No." But he kept listening, trying out the calling he heard. He considered the Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church. He pursued a career in food service, working at several hospitals.

He became a Catholic in 1995, a diocesan seminarian shortly after that, and then requested entrance into the Benedictine monastery at **St. Meinrad Archabbey**.

His food and faith images blended as he advised young people that God has multiple gifts for each of us. "God gives us a big

basket of candies. Stick your finger in one. Put it back if you don't like it."



Not everyone listens to the call. In Acts of the Apostles, chapter 28, St. Paul quoted Isaiah: "For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them."

St. Paul added, "Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."



Take the time to acknowledge occasions when you have not listened.

Reflect on your vocation, how you heard the call, and how you responded.

Tell your story to a child, someone in your family, or if they won't listen, tell a stranger.

Then, listen to the story of another.

Invite someone to explore the life of a priest or religious. Or help a couple prepare for marriage.

Help a young person to search for the true peace that settles restlessness, to look at the vast expanse of the sky God gave us, or to stick a finger into a new piece of candy.

And consider this: If you have responded to God's call, and if you make or take the opportunity to tell your story, and your involvement helps a young person respond to God's call, then it is you who truly have the best job in the world.

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 appears in a number of diocesan newspapers and on the CFM website. Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz

Headship Never Includes Abuse



“Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph.5:21-25).”

Many couples heard this reading at their weddings. While many husbands understand this call to mutuality and equal authority in marriage, others believe in what is generally called “headship.” **Dr. James Healy**, Catholic family life minister, defines biblical headship this way: “In relation to his wife, the husband is called by God to provide the spiritual leadership and to have the final say when necessary, in decision making. Further, the responsibility of the wife is to accept and respond to this leadership role of her husband.” This long-standing understanding is being reevaluated today.

Husband headship can have a dark side. Religion has often been misinterpreted to say that women must submit to their husbands even if they are abusive. Abused women often say, “I can’t leave this relationship. The Bible says it would be wrong.” Abusive men often say, “The Bible says my wife should be submissive to me.” They distort the biblical text to support their right to batter.

In their recent statement, *When I Call for Help*, the **United States Catholic Bishops** condemn the use of the Bible to support abusive behavior in any form. They state clearly that a correct reading of Scripture leads people to an understanding of the equal dignity of men and women and to relationships based on mutuality and love. “Beginning with Genesis, Scripture

teaches that women and men are created in God’s image. Jesus himself always respected the human dignity of women.”

Men who abuse often use Ephesians 5:22, taken out of context, to justify their behavior, but the passage (v. 21-33) refers to the mutual submission of husband and wife out of love for Christ. **Pope John Paul II** reminds us that “Christ’s way of acting, the Gospel of his words and deeds, is a consistent protest against whatever offends the dignity of women.” In his teaching on *The Theology of the Body*, he says that the overall message and thrust of the Gospels is calling men and women to a new kind of equal partnership. He references other places in Scripture where women are required to be veiled in church, not permitted to speak at public services, and limited to asking questions of their husbands in private. When did you last hear someone suggesting we return to following those rules, even though they are clearly in Scripture?

In *A Daring Promise: A Spirituality of Christian Marriage* (Crossroad, 2002), **Richard Gaillardetz** explains that Christ calls husbands to “exercise headship as humble service:” “The consistent biblical testimony regarding Christ’s headship is that it was not one of secular lordship, but rather one of self-effacing service (‘The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve’). Jesus demonstrated what he meant by headship when he washed the feet of his disciples on the night before he died. He teaches

us the true leadership that married couples can show to the world.

These behaviors should not be a part of the way husbands and wives relate to one another:

- ◆ Using intimidation: destroying property; smashing things; abusing pets; displaying weapons
 - ◆ Using emotional abuse: putdowns; namecalling; humiliation
 - ◆ Imposing isolation: controlling what you do, who you see and talk to, where you go
 - ◆ Using children: threatening to take the children away; using the children to relay messages
 - ◆ Using economic abuse: Preventing you from getting or keeping a job; making you ask for money; not letting you know about family income.
 - ◆ Employing coercion and threats: Threatening to leave or commit suicide, involving you in illegal activities.
- (Source: Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth Minnesota, 218-722-4134)

The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides crisis intervention and referrals to local service providers. Call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or 800-787-3224 (TTY). E-mail assistance is available at ndvh@ndvh.org.

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.

Maureen and Tom Conrad, CFM leaders at St. John Vianney in **Bettendorf, Iowa**, report that their group has increased to 45 families this year. One new group is made of widows and widowers. The group hosts a potluck for new parents once a year.

Javier and Marcella Benitez report that their group at Nativity Parish in **Hollywood, Fla.**, holds a diaper drive in April to benefit two local charities. They usually collect several van loads of disposable diapers. They also hold a yard sale to benefit two charities, one of which is in India.

Bill and Julia Thompson's group at St. Gabriel in **Poway, Calif.**, went to see *The Passion of the Christ* together. Group members **Rick and Mary Lou Lien** invited everyone over

afterwards for discussion and dessert. St. Gabriel CFMers are also selling fair trade coffee to benefit the charities their group supports.

Andrea Hill reports that The St. Thomas More CFM group in **Glendale, Ariz.**, held a family Advent night this past winter. They explained the significance of the wreath and showed participant families how to conduct a short prayer service at the dinner table around the wreath. The evening also featured an original crossword puzzle pertaining to the St. Thomas parish community.

On Jan. 31 Sacred Heart CFM in **Winchester, Va.**, opened its annual game night to teens. The night of fellowship and friendly competition is an opportunity for members to meet those of other groups. **Gary and Cindy Simmons** are leaders.

Kathryn Wotta reports that St. Margaret of Scotland in **St. Clair Shores, Mich.**, held a special marriage Mass on Valentine's Day. Married couples renewed their vows, and enjoyed looking at one another's wedding albums at the reception that followed, while their children played in the nursery.

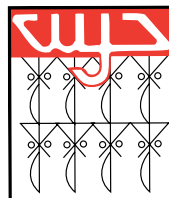
Larry and Margie Murchan report that their group in **San Jose, Calif.**, looking forward to hosting families attending the ICCFM world assembly in July.

The International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM) will meet July 28-August 1, 2004 in **Santa Clara, Calif.**, on the campus of Santa Clara University.

Register for the conference on line at www.iccfm.org.

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