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Coming Next Month: Conference Highlights

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Christian Family Movement

2005-06 Program Book Nourishes Personal Friendship with Jesus

In our hectic lives, how can we develop a closer friendship with Jesus?

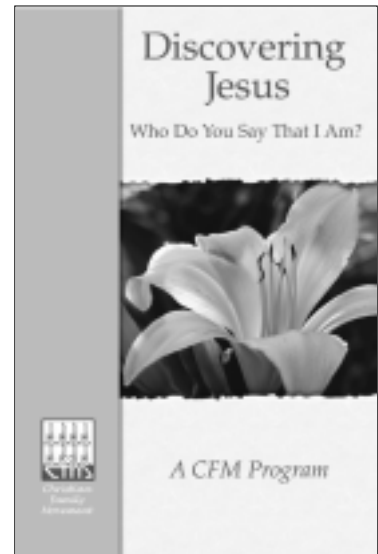
CFM's new program for 2005-2006 *Discovering Jesus: Who do you say that I am?* is designed to explore how a deeper relationship with Jesus can enrich our family life. It is an attempt to help us pray better and to listen better to God. Many CFMers have expressed a desire to learn more about their faith. We will go straight to the source: the Gospel according to St. Mark.

We will look to the Gospel in light of the events in our personal and social lives, and look at our lives in light of the "good news" of the Gospel.

Among the topics will be healing and reconciliation within the family, sacrifice and trust, injustice and legalism as illuminated by the Gospel and reflected in life today. There were and there are social sins which grind life out of people. Jesus invites us to be part of his mission.

Through this program year, we will come to know Jesus in his laughter and sorrow, in his pain and in his joy, where he is crucified

and where he is risen. In our turn, perhaps we shall answer in a new way that searching question "Who do you say I am?"

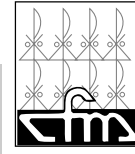


The original draft of this book was written by Carol Borre Toussaint, Arlington Heights, Ill., a member of CFM for 24 years. She holds a Master's degree in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University, Chicago; and a Certificate of Lay Ministry, Archdiocese of Chicago. The book was edited by Lauri Przybysz, Jane Leingang, and Peter Buchbauer.



Presidents' Perspective

by John and Lauri Przybysz



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

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Credentials for leadership



Incoming Presidents **John and Lauri Przybysz** present their credentials in Christian Family leadership: 3 daughters, 3 sons, a daughter-in-law, 2 sons-in-law, and 5 grandchildren, gained during 32 years of marriage.

Front (l-r): Dave, Monica, Lauri, Rosemary Piraino, Andrew and Beth McKenna, Sarah, Maria, and Melissa Przybysz. Rear: John, Chris and Max Piraino, Tony, Thomas and Dan McKenna, and John Jr.

As we begin to serve the Christian Family Movement as President couple, we ask for God's mercy and blessing on CFM. May our Movement always be worthy of Christ, whose name we bear.

The Lord has richly blessed us through the friends we made in CFM and the help we received in raising six children to be decent human beings. Now it is time to give back.

Regular readers of ACT already know **Lauri** through her monthly column on marriage. It is my favorite column. When it comes to marriage, I am married to an expert.

We have always believed that children are a blessing from the Lord. They are a treasure. They make us wealthy.

Seventeen years ago, when **Monica** was a baby, she was

fussing in church during Sunday Mass. So I took her to the back and did the Daddy/Baby dance, patting her back.

One of the ushers came and told me, "She is priceless! She is worth a million dollars. I mean it, a million dollars!"

The thought came, "I guess you can call me 'The Six Million Dollar Man.'"

Thank you to our outgoing Presidents, **Peter and Jane Buchbauer**, for their four years of service. It is an honor to succeed them and all their fine predecessors.

Our goal for CFM is to raise up a new generation of young leaders, in touch with the needs of today's young families.

Please pray for all of the Directors of CFM.

We don't just believe in miracles, we depend on them. —**John**

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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



Teaching about Service to Others

Certainly, we in CFM are very aware of service to others, but we must remember to teach and remind our children of its importance. Many groups encourage actions that include our children, like raking leaves for seniors, making sandwiches for soup kitchens, sharing with the work in money-making projects and doing environmental clean-up jobs. Children need to be encouraged, at every age, to do these sorts of things. The stewardship process is an ongoing necessity; and if it's practiced when kids are growing up, they will be better stewards as they get older and independent.

Our young children need the modeling; our middle-school children need to feel the satisfaction one gets from helping others. Our high school children should be

encouraged to go on a mission trip to understand the plight of those who are less fortunate than they are. Our colleges have many projects for those who have been *brought up* to share the responsibility we have for the needy.

Older children can become caregivers just like adults. We have a granddaughter who checks on a senior in her neighborhood and walks her dog. Adults should encourage small acts of kindness so children can become aware of them. Letting them help prepare a meal for a new mother or a sick family will encourage this kind of behavior.

Communication is the very best way to teach children to give service to others. Talk in the car or around the dinner table about acts

of service you see that children can do. Sometimes, when parents quietly send contributions by check to worthy causes, children aren't aware of the generosity of their own families. As you discuss family budgeting with your children, remember to include a discussion of your tithing or other decisions to share your resources.

Remember if you don't make them aware or share yourself as models they will never feel that wonderful satisfaction you get from helping others. Love thy neighbor was what Jesus taught and what better way to love him than to give him service?

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



St. Louis Parish, Miami, Fla., recently hosted its sixteenth Covenant Weekend. For information about the Covenant Experience, visit www.thecovenantexperience.com.

FAQ: Frequently-Asked Questions of New CFM leaders

<p>Q. What are the benefits of being a CFM leader?</p> <p>A. Many leaders discover that working together to lead a CFM group strengthens their marriages. Praying with and caring about other families leads to insights and provides perspective for family decisions. Contact with the priest-chaplain for the group helps build a stronger relationship with the church. The experience of leading discussions and projects builds skills that can be shared in the workplace and community.</p>	<p>delegate responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice and encourage leadership potential in members. • Encourage members to help one another (e.g. babysitting, filling in for one another, lending camping equipment, helping in emergencies). • Encourage and challenge, but do not pressure members to take action as a result of the discussion. 	<p>Q. Where do CFM dues go?</p> <p>A. The national office offers resources to existing groups, assists leaders with advice and counsel, helps new groups form and coordinates such communication methods as the website, <i>ACT</i>, and <i>Contact</i>, the leaders' newsletter. The National Board (all volunteers) meets twice a year to plan conferences, develop program books, and coordinate interaction with other organizations, such as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers. A small portion of dues helps support the International Confederation of the Christian Family Movement. Many groups collect local dues for social events and local projects.</p>
<p>Q. How can we recruit new members?</p> <p>A. Personal contact, especially husband-to-husband contact, is highly effective. Publicity in the church bulletin is nice too. In conversation, it is not necessary to <i>explain CFM</i>. Just say: "We are a group of people/married couples, who meet to talk about things of interest to parents/married couples. The group is warm and friendly. We think you would be an asset to it." A pot-luck supper is a good way to begin a new group or welcome new members.</p>	<p>Q. Are the leaders supposed to be experts on the topics?</p> <p>A. No. The leaders facilitate the group, serving the members by providing a framework. Leadership of a CFM group is not so much a matter of giving direction as one of noticing needs and serving in response.</p>	<p>Q. Should CFM groups decide on service projects at the beginning of the year?</p> <p>A. Trust the method. Action is an outgrowth of the tension which gradually builds between the observes and judges over a period of time. Members need time to learn to bring in facts and time to develop skill in judging. Activity can be meaningless if it is simply imposed by the group leader. Action will come. Trust the method.</p>
<p>Q. What does the leader do besides lead meetings?</p> <p>A. Pray for the group, and serve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-view the meeting in the book and take advantage of resources offered to leaders. • Make sure each member knows when and where each meeting will be held and what the topic will be. • Phone any absentees and let them know how they can join with the <i>observes</i> or <i>action</i> before the next meeting. • Welcome the opportunity to 	<p>Q. Should leadership be rotated from meeting to meeting?</p> <p>A. No. Generally groups gain stability and trust when the same leader couple serves for an entire year. In some local areas, leaders serve for two years, leading a different group each year.</p>	<p>Q. How are kids involved in CFM?</p> <p>A. Activities which allow the children of the members to become friends is valuable. The homes of other CFMers become extensions of their own families and a community of shared values.</p>
<p>Q. How often do CFM groups meet? Where?</p> <p>A. Most meet monthly or every two weeks during the school year at members' homes, and many stay in contact informally during the summer.</p>	<p>Q. What about refreshments?</p> <p>A. Keep them simple and inexpensive, such as coffee and an inexpensive dessert served very informally after the meeting.</p>	
<p>Q. What is the best group size?</p> <p>A. An average of four to seven couples at a meeting generally allows lively discussion and active participation.</p>		

FAQ

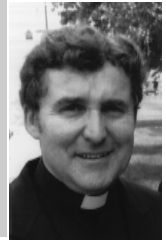
Q. What motivates people to join CFM?

A. Faith, friendship and fun.

- **Married couples** need to do something together as a couple.
- **Single parents** appreciate the support of a group.
- Most couples want to **improve their marriages**, and most families want to improve the quality and style of family living.
- Adults have a need for **companionship and acceptance** which can be met in a small group. Families separated from their extended families by job transfers, families stressed by the challenges of nurturing preschoolers and/or teens, all sorts of families can benefit from sharing their lives with other families united by faith and Christian values.
- **Newcomers** to a community have a special need to sink roots and to know some people well.
- Families benefit from **networking** with one another to learn about community resources and opportunities for service.
- Many parents feel stress in terms of the **spiritual vision** of their marriages and families. They seek reassurance that they are not losing sight of their original goals and ideals.

From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy



Finding Jesus: Good Spiritual Nourishment for CFMers

We can look forward to a wonderful resource for the 2005-2006 CFM fall program year.

Discovering Jesus: Who Do You Say That I Am? will meet the needs of CFM groups and individuals hoping for spiritual nourishment and intelligent conversation. In these days when many are attempting to get their "spiritual understanding" from *The DaVinci Code*, this CFM program responds to the deep desire many express to get to know Jesus and the Scriptures better.

A short overview presents us with an interesting range of biblical understanding and contemporary application.

The subtitle is Jesus' own question put to Saint Peter and is the central drama in Mark's Gospel. The ten well-written and recently edited chapters begin with the mission and call of Jesus to the apostles. This helps us to begin to understand our own deeper call and discipleship and to answer the invitation to follow Christ more purposefully in the 21st century.

The biblical insights from Mark, a co-worker with Peter in the first generation of the Church, are compellingly presented. Each of the ten chapters uses the CFM inquiry format. Yet this resource can be read and studied by couples or individuals wishing to have a good source

for their own spiritual development at home.

I recommend that this book be used *both* as a CFM program book and apart from the ten meetings in other types of reflection and study sessions. Understanding Jesus is central to Christian life. We live in an age of spiritual challenges and we need to take time to nourish the spirit with solid resources like this.

I would also recommend that you use this marvelous little book with other theological and spiritual resources and Bible study aids. In the back of *Discovering Jesus* are several suggested resources. I especially recommend Father Raymond Brown's works and another title mentioned there: *Into the Abyss of Suffering: A Catholic View* by Kenneth Overberg, S.J. A number of good Catholic commentaries on the synoptic Gospels are also available on the Internet.

In our fast-moving and often superficial society we need substantial food for thought and spirit. Here CFM has published a winner.

The idea of walking with Jesus through Mark's Gospel from his earliest call to this earth-shattering death and resurrection offers exciting fare for our spiritual journey this fall, winter and spring.

Father Don Conroy is President of the National Institute for the Family in Washington, DC., and Pastor of Holy Family Parish, Latrobe, Penn.



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Witness to a series of surprises

We didn't know what to expect when we walked toward the designated street corner, Jane and I. We were looking for a white Ford van with a roof rack, and a guy named Wayne.

We found the corner, and we found two other people already there, waiting for Wayne just as we were.

It was the beginning of an extraordinary vacation—with camping and hiking, incomparable views of Yosemite National Park and the companionship of total strangers.

Before long, there were a dozen of us, counting Wayne, who stowed our assorted backpacks on top of the van. We left San Francisco, and quickly began to get to know our traveling companions. There were many surprises along the way.

The first was that Jane and I were the only Americans on the trip. During the four days we spent together, we sorted out each other's names and homelands.

The range of countries represented was another surprise. If this were a television show, it would be totally unrealistic—a camping adventure for a woman from Tasmania and four other Australians, a pediatrician from London, a German scientist now residing in Switzerland, a young man and his mother from Uzbekistan, and the two of us from Indiana.

Our driver spoke with a strong trace of his British origin. The Australians sounded a lot like they

sound in the movies. The young Uzbek was a brand-new graduate with a journalism degree and good use of nine or 10 languages; his mother spoke only Russian.

Our ages ranged from the mid-twenties to the mid-sixties, another surprise. Before we met them, we had some early concern that everyone would be very young and very fit. (We were right about the

*To the others ...
We were the surprise,
Jane and I —
a happily married
couple.*

second part. They were all in great physical condition—including 65-year old Raisa who hiked a seven-mile steep mountain trail outfitted in ordinary street shoes.)

Another surprise—quite a pleasing one—was that everyone found Yosemite to be just jaw-dropping wonderful. An Alpine hiker, a real Outback adventurer, and the rest of our world travelers could pause in awe at the beauty of the mountains, the waterfalls, the rushing streams and the quiet sequoias.

Somewhere in the middle of this incredible adventure, we discovered from the others that there was another surprise. We

were the surprise, Jane and I—a happily married couple. I hope we bore witness to the possibility of love and fidelity—and that our presence together was the only preaching that was required.



It can be frightening to realize that other people are watching you, yet each of us as Christians is called to bear witness to the presence of Christ in our lives, so that all the world may learn of God's goodness.

In John's Gospel, Jesus tells his listeners that John the Baptizer "was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light." (John 5:35)

Jesus goes on to say that his own testimony "is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me."



Who, in your experience, has been for you "a burning and shining lamp?" What was illuminated in such light?

When have you been called to bear witness to your faith?



Take the time to help your children find "a burning and shining lamp" that will light their way to the truth of our faith.

Support those who make a life-long commitment of love.

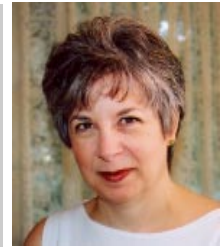
Be faithful and make a difference.

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 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

"It's a Mystery"



One of the hardest Christian beliefs to wrap our minds around is the idea of the Holy Trinity. Anyone who has tried to explain the Three-in-One to children or adults can tell you that it's hard to make sense of it. Still, while there are many things Christians disagree about, you don't hear people arguing about the Trinity today. We just take it as a matter of faith. What does this core belief have to do with our daily lives, our family concerns, and with our journey together in marriage?

In a homily on the feast of Holy Trinity, **Bishop Thomas Gumbleton** of **Detroit** made the connection clearer for me ("Peace Pulpit", *National Catholic Reporter*, June 5, 2005). He said, "We can't fully understand three persons in one God, but we know immediately that God is a God who loves, reaches out to others from the Son and the Holy Spirit and that there's a mutuality. There's a community of life, a communion of life within God. That's God's image for us—that we have to reach out in love."

Another modern writer, **Richard Gaillardetz**, makes the specific connection between the Trinity and married spirituality: "The true wisdom of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is that God *is* communion and therefore is discovered whenever and wherever we give ourselves over to the life of communion" (*A Daring Promise*, Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002).

When I recall that I am made in the image of God, I am reminded that my spouse is too. We have been

taught that we are united in a mission to bring each other to heaven, and hopefully lead others there too. If we're going to be like God then we have to relate to others—especially our spouses—with mutuality, with respect, with love, with caring. And we have to be quick to forgive, slow to anger, rich in kindness. As Bishop Gumbleton reminds us, "God is a God who is totally merciful, and that's probably harder to believe for many of us than that God is one God in three persons."

*It is in
their relationships
that people
will discover
how close
God has been
to them
all along.*

It is our experience of loving, day by day, that makes us the puzzle of the Trinity ring true. The faith with which we approach the puzzle of the Trinity is the same kind of faith which we needed to say "I do." Loving each other, for better and for worse, leads us into the deepest of mysteries: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.... No one has ever seen

God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us...God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them (1 John 4:7-8, 12).

How do we respond to this connection we have with God and one another? First of all, we respond with gratitude and try to waken faith within ourselves. But then we have to try to be like God. At the end of his letter to the contentious church at Corinth, the apostle Paul urged, "Mend your ways. Strive to be perfect. Encourage one another. Be of one mind. Live in Peace." It is in their relationships that people will discover how close God has been to them all along: "Then," Paul says, "the grace of Jesus, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit will be with you forever."

Therefore, we have to be people who love, who give of ourselves. Just as Jesus poured himself out in love for us, we have to keep on reaching out in love for one another. Let us pray that we will continue to grow in love, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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.

St. Cecelia CFM in **Ames, Iowa**, serves coffee and donuts after Sunday liturgies. They also participate in the Tuesday night meal ministry to the homeless and poor with contributions and assistance. **Gary and Kay Aitchson** are leaders.

Sheila Osterhaus reports that their group at St. Bernard's in **Omaha** made cards of welcome for the persons who went through the RCIA process as an action following the meeting on hospitality in the program book *Homemade Disciples*.

ABC Prime Time Live has dropped plans to air a segment on family life in America featuring **Matt and Sharon Farinholt, Winchester, Va.**, which was featured in February's *Spotlight*. ABC informed the Farinholts a new executive producer is "taking the show in a different direction"

from the course set previously. The segment had brought together a gay couple, an co-habiting couple and two couples living in traditional Christian marriage along with all the couples' children for a discussion of the nature of family life and values.

John and Bobbie Mieczkowski replace **Steve and Jill Carroll** as leaders at St. Edith in **Livonia, Mich.** Co-leaders will be selected in the fall.

St. Gabriel CFM in **Norwood, Penn.**, helped organize a discussion group on bioethics with their pastor and other small faith community leaders in their parish. They used the discussion and video program "Playing God" by Group Publishers as a starting point for discussion, supported by other resources. Cloning, stem cell research, euthanasia were a few of the topics under discussion. **Billie**

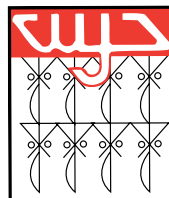
Kilman reports "the sessions were very beneficial in explaining the ethical issues involved and the Church's teachings."

The response to the **Phil and Mary Lou Gorman** Membership Development fund created in February has been outstanding. We are nearing our goal and expect to take full advantage of the \$5000 match offered.

Gary and Kay Aitchison, North America representatives to the International Conference of Christian Family Movements, report that **Erwin and Nora Lopez** of **Van Nuys, Calif.**, have recently been installed as Presidents of the Movimiento Familiaris Christiano-LA (Spanish-speaking CFM in **Los Angeles** and **Las Vegas**). Their e-mail address is shenlyo@yahoo.com.

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