



Vol 59 • No. 2  
March-April 2006

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## Christian Family Movement

### Feeding Hungry Hearts

by Nicole Rogers Schmirler  
Pewaukee, Wis.

Our story begins September 2003 with a simple phone call. Our CFM family was seeking to put our commitment to social justice into action by using the gifts God has given us to serve our community.

We had an objective in mind: "To improve society through actions of love, service, education and example," and when we decided to partner with another organization, we found that there were many opportunities available in our area. We decided to research the possibilities.

One of our members, **Leanne Witzel**, contacted Prevention and Protection of Abused Children, Inc. (PPAC), a local agency that offers support services and prevention programs to enhance and strengthen families. This appeared to be a good fit for us.

As a trial-run, we prepared and served a meal for the Parenting with Depression group, which meets twice monthly. It went well. We decided to do a few more meals. Those went even better. We continued our efforts for the remainder of the year, which proved to be a huge success. For us, it was fairly simple; but the benefit to the group was

dramatic, as attendance increased. At first, we served twelve; then thirty; then more. Attendance continues to increase.

We were touched when people thanked us. We smiled at a little girl's excited "I don't like the lasagna but I like the carrots!" We appreciated a mother's look of gratitude: it had taken every ounce of energy for her to attend the support group that night. Most participants of the Parenting with Depression group did not respond in words, but our presence and theirs made a silent connection.

Small acts of kindness can make a world of difference for someone facing great adversity and fighting life-long battles.

What began as a simple phone call has turned into a relationship that extends beyond CFM. Through St. Anthony Parish's Human Concerns Committee, this volunteer opportunity is now open to the entire parish.

Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). We are called as Christians to

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## Presidents' Perspective

by John and Lauri Przybysz

### Feeding the Hungry

Feeding the hungry brings peace to the world. It is easy to observe this in your own home, since one half of all fights in families occur in the hour before dinner. Hungry people are irritable and quarrelsome.

Sometimes I have helped feed the hungry in Baltimore and seen the same effect. People standing in line are nervous, upset, fidgety, and anxious. But once the food is served, everyone calms down. There is an outbreak of peace.

During Christmas vacation, my daughter **Monica** and I went to **Mexico** to serve at the Franciscan mission in **Guaymas**, where a soup kitchen serves lunch every day to about 125 hungry visitors. Our Lady of the Fields parish of **Millersville, Md.**, sponsored our group of 20 missionaries. For nine days we helped the regular staff prepare, serve lunch, and clean up.

Most of the lunch guests were regular customers, so we got to know them from seeing them everyday. One day I ate lunch with a guy named Mario who showed me his scars. Shot 5 times by a mugger. The doctors cut him from belly button to sternum and three-quarters way around to his spine. Very impressive. He was lucky to be alive.

Another regular showed up drunk before noon every day. The chief cook, a lovely lady named Juve, told me he was a drug addict, "But he has a really good heart. He

is actually very sweet." He was gentle. Many days I passed him on the streets and said "Hello, Amigo."

The manager of the soup kitchen is a saint named Jesus, who



*Chewy manages the Meson de Jesus soup kitchen, feeding his hungry brothers and sisters in Guaymas, Mexico.*

everyone calls by his nickname "Chewy." Every day at noon Chewy asks the men to take off their sombreros for prayer. He delivers a one-minute exhortation, then prays for the benefactors, the sick, for people to be set free from addiction, thanks God for the food, those who cook it, those who serve it, and leads the group in the Our Father. Then he goes to the head of the line, imitates a baseball umpire,

and shouts, "Play ball."

Most of the guests are homeless alcoholics. But after lunch, as they are leaving, many will pause at the door, turn around to face the dining room, and make the Sign of the Cross. One man told me, "Chewy is my pastor."

Jesus told us that on judgment day, "the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink'" (Matthew 25:34-35). And "whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). Lord, I want to be in that number.

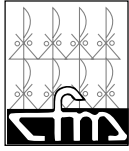
The Christian Family Movement Action Groups at St. Lawrence Martyr parish in **Redondo Beach, Calif.**, have the custom of making bologna sandwiches every month at their meetings. Because they have so many members, these CFMers contribute about 1,500 bologna sandwiches to feed the poor of Los Angeles every month. Good work!

People want to do good. They want to help the poor, but most people don't know how. In CFM groups, families work together to plan ways to take action to change the world for the better. Movements that endure, like the Knights of Columbus, the Boy Scouts, or the Shriners, find that these actions of service to others are essential to recruiting new members. People are attracted to the opportunity to serve those in need.

The Christian Family Movement must continue to "Be doers of the word and not hearers only." (James 1:22) Never underestimate the value of bologna sandwiches.

- John

*John and Lauri Przybysz live in Severna Park, Maryland, and have been active CFM members since 1980. They are the parents of six children and five grandchildren.*



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.

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



### On Peace

How often do you talk about "peace" with your children? Perhaps if we talked about peace more often we would have less fighting in our families. We say "Peace be with you" at Mass, but how often do we do it at home, and do we work toward peace?

Keeping *aware* that peace is needed all over the world is a good project for a family. Peace must start first in families and then be extended to the rest of the world. Teach your children that peace means learning how to get along with all the cultures of the world. It means caring and understanding

**—————**  
*If we don't care for  
our brothers and  
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with others  
around the world?*  
**—————**

how people can get along. If we don't care for our brothers and sisters at home, how can we ever promote peace with others around the world?

Here are some ways we can work on promoting peace at home and around the world.

1. Create a peace corner in your home. Have a candle and peace prayer there. After dinner, have the family say a peace prayer or simply end grace before meals with "May peace be with us."
2. Say "Peace go with you" when your children leave for school.
3. Discuss world news with your older children and emphasize the need for peace.
4. Talk about your "Time Out" place. Remind children that it is a place for peace.
5. Add a peace prayer to your children's night prayers.
6. Find videos and see movies that promote peace, not violence.
7. Watch TV programs that create peaceful situations.
8. Always remind children to pray for peace.

Perhaps if families work on peace it will catch on around the world.

May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

*Mary Lou and Phil Gorman, Arlington Heights, members of CFM since 1953, have four daughters and 14 grandchildren.*



*Pewaukee, Wisc. CFM enjoys a family picnic each summer.*

*Saint Margaret of Scotland CFM group, St. Clair Shores, Mich., celebrated Epiphany with a meal, prayers, songs, games and a secret Santa gift exchange.*

*(Right) A fountain flowed Belgian (Cardijnian?) chocolate.*

*(Below) Father Ron DeHondt, pastor, led singing with his guitar.*

*Photos courtesy of Steve Semrau.*



*—continued from page 1*

act, serve and educate. As part of our CFM mission, we both seek to promote Christ-centered marriage and family life, and to help one another live the faith each and every day. I believe that Jesus not only calls us to serve, but also to serve as role-models (priest, prophet and king) for our children. As they see us serve others, our children will come to believe deep in their hearts that this is the way to live.

## *How to Remember CFM in Your Will*

After providing for their families and loved ones, supporters of the Christian Family Movement may want to put the CFM Foundation in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this movement. Bequests are free of estate tax, and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government. You can give needed support to CFM by simply including the following words in your will:

I give, devise, and bequeath to the Christian Family Movement Foundation, P.O. Box 925, Evansville IN 47706-0925, (insert amount being given here) to be used to support the ministry of CFM.

A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name CFM as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living.

It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

## OBSERVE

### *A Dirty Little Secret: Pornography and Children*

#### Internet Safety and Child Protection Act Fact Sheet

by Third Way ([www.third-way.com](http://www.third-way.com))

The Internet Child Protection and Safety Act, introduced by U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas and U.S. Representative Jim Matheson of Utah, will make porn sites off-limits to children, add a 25% excise tax on the sale of online pornography, and beef up law enforcement efforts against child pornographers and sexual predators.

This legislation is, in part, a response to a July 2005 report released by Third Way, a strategic center for progressive ideas. The report found that the Internet is awash in a growing ocean of pornographic material that often targets children. Among key findings:

- ◆ One out of every eight websites is pornographic and there are 420 million pornographic web pages.

- ◆ The online porn industry generates \$12 billion in annual revenue—roughly equal to that of the three major television networks combined.
- ◆ 97% of Internet pornography sites now run on an honor system known as the “porn standard.” If children simply assert that they are over 18, they get access to the sites.
- ◆ The largest group of online viewers of pornography is kids between 12 and 17. The average age at which children are first exposed to online porn is 11 years old.
- ◆ Revenue estimates from child pornography range from about \$200 million to more than \$1 billion per year.
- ◆ 20% of children (10-17 years old) receive unwanted sexual solicitations online. Parents are

unaware their children are sexually solicited online 49% of the time.

- ◆ During one six-week period, according to researchers monitoring the Web, 140,000 child pornography images were posted to the Internet. Approximately 20 new children appear on pornography sites every month—many kidnapped or sold into sex.
- ◆ Because online pornographers earn advertising revenue by the page-view (making it highly lucrative to attract all types of viewers), many operators salt their porn sites with words like Pokemon and Disneyland to draw in kids.
- ◆ 60% of teenagers personally know how, or personally know someone, who can disable and reinstall adult site blocking software.

*Four CFM couples were among those honored recently with the Bruté Society Award for contributions to parish life from the Diocese of Evansville, Ind. (Simon Bruté was founding bishop of Vincennes which is now part of the Diocese of Evansville.)*

*From left, Allen and Judy Bradley, Tim and Brenda Born (Corpus Christi Parish), Paul and Jane Leingang, and Jason and Karen Blue (St. Benedict Parish).*





## CFM Member Profile

### Tom and Mary Kay Halpin

**Tom and Mary Kay**, parents of **Colleen(9), Patrick(6), Claire (4), and Nicholas (5 months)**, are leaders of St. Vincent de Paul parish CFM in **Omaha, Neb**, and members of the National Board.

They joined CFM in 1989.

Tom works as Project Manager for a natural gas pipeline company, and Mary Kay is a stay-at-home mom.

ACT asked a few “personal questions,” and these are their responses.

#### What’s your favorite book?

*Tom: Shoeless Joe* by W.P. Kinsella.

*Mary Kay: The Robe* by Lloyd C. Douglas.

#### What’s your favorite Bible story or Biblical character?

*Tom: I like Peter, because he kept trying and kept the faith despite mistakes and failures.*

*Mary Kay: The story of the rich young man (Matthew 19:16-30) is my reminder to stay focused on serving God and others, not on accumulating possessions.*

#### Tell us one thing you especially love about your mate.

*Mary Kay: Once Tom makes a decision, he moves forward and doesn’t worry about the “what ifs.” He keeps me focused on things we have control over and doesn’t expend energy on the things we can’t control.*

*Tom: Mary Kay is very selfless for the sake of our family.*

#### What is your greatest hope for your children?

*Tom: We want to help our children love God and embrace the salvation we have all been promised. Saints Colleen, Patrick, Claire and Nicholas... what more could we want?*

*Mary Kay: I want them to know and love Jesus and to lead lives grounded in faith. If they have this foundation, everything else will be taken care of.*

#### What’s your ideal vacation?

*Tom: Anyplace as a family having fun... where my cell phone doesn’t work!*

*Mary Kay: I’d love to return to Ireland, and take the children with us.*

#### What attracted you to CFM?

*Tom: The prospect of sharing our faith with other couples in similar situations in life.*

*Mary Kay: Steve and Nicole Vandervoort (St. Clement’s-Chicago) offered to drive us to our first meeting in 1989 when we had been married about one year. That night, we were ready to back out but too embarrassed to call the Vandervoorts. The rest is history!*

#### Of the benefits you’ve received from CFM, what stands out in your mind?

*Tom: Wonderful friends and spiritual growth.*

*Mary Kay: Friendships with people I would not otherwise have had the opportunity to get to know.*

#### CFM is always “observing” the world around us. What’s your key “observation” about contemporary American culture?

*Tom: You can’t turn on the TV without being bombarded with devilish enticements. Also, everyone is in a state of hyper-activity: too much doing, not enough *being* a family.*

*Mary Kay: Having kids now I am much more aware of all the inappropriate images and messages in the media. I feel like I have to always be on my guard regarding what my kids read, listen to and watch.*

#### What’s your key “observation” about contemporary Christianity / Catholicism?

*Tom: There appears to be a general lack of catechesis and understanding of what the Church truly teaches and why.*

*Mary Kay: I think dismay about society’s declining moral values is producing renewed respect for Catholic and Christian values. Many of us are realizing there is a whole lot more to learn about our faith... and what a fascinating journey it is!*

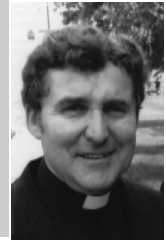
#### What’s your key “observation” about CFM?

*Tom: Anyone who has joined CFM loves it. We are challenged, however, to find ways to get people to try it!*

*Mary Kay: CFM is wonderful because it builds faith, families and community. It supports and strengthens marriage and family life. It provides a framework for serious discussions with my spouse and other CFM members, and helps me work through big issues and ideas while grounded in our beautiful faith.*

## From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy



### *Easter Compassion: Ministering to Grieving Families*

In the apse high above the altar in Holy Family Church where I am pastor is a dramatic and very large stained glass window focusing on the crucifixion. The grieving Mary Magdalen kneels at the foot of the cross while the ever-faithful Saint John the apostle and the sorrowful mother Mary stand on either side. It is especially poignant to look up at this scene during Holy Week. Then, as the sun shines through it on Easter Sunday, the mystery of the young Jesus' death and resurrection again touches the hearts of the faithful.

As I prepare this column I am reminded of the importance of ministering to the bereaved families and friends of those who die, especially the young who die prematurely. This week I conducted the funeral of a young mother of two very young children. She was a nurse whose car crashed on an icy road as she drove to work at a hospital. Her mother lives in our parish; she lived not far away. Today, in a cemetery on a wind-swept hill, her family and friends wept.

A few months ago we buried a young man from our parish who was killed in a motorcycle crash with an oncoming car just minutes from his home. His grieving mother and father are regular participants at Mass on Saturday evening. I see the toll this young death has taken on them.

Also, all across the United States, families are receiving sad news from the Middle East that a son or daughter has died in Iraq or Afghanistan. This sad news comes too frequently and we need to better minister to these families.

While we come to expect the death of the elderly which we have great numbers of in our parish, we never can really prepare for the deaths of the young and the middle aged.

This Lent and Easter, as we reflect on the meaning of the passion and death of the young

*We... expect the death  
of the elderly ...  
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prepare  
for the deaths  
of the young*

Jesus, I am trying to discover a way we can, as CFM families, reach out to the families of the bereaved and grieving, especially of the young. Beyond the funeral and immediate time surrounding their deaths there is a need in every parish of an ongoing ministry. It is needed for those who grieve family members who have passed away during the past year, and quite possibly beyond, as they try to cope with great loss.

Perhaps CFM might help the local church to find a better way to minister to the needs of parents, siblings and others who have sustained a recent loss. Beyond the funeral home visit, kind card and funeral Mass we need to consider how we can help our parishes continue to share God's healing love with families a month, six months and within the year following such great losses and life-shattering events.

We know that the grieving process takes months if not years depending on the circumstances. A ministry to the bereaved and grieving might involve a variety of approaches, perhaps small groups or home visits or other care and outreach.

In the Easter Season we have an opportunity to console and help bereaved families. As we observe the deaths around us, particularly of the young, we are called to make a judgment in light of Gospel values and then to act.

Reading the signs of the times, as Vatican II has said, we can live our faith by not letting these families in grief be forgotten.

What creative ways might we think of that will reach out to those in need?

*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



## Doing nothing?

I have a decision to make. It's a trivial thing, maybe, but nonetheless, it is unavoidable.

Just the other night, the driver's side power window in my car stopped working. I have to decide now if I will accept this inconvenience as just another problem on a long list of problems associated with an old high-mileage car. Should I try to fix it myself? Should I take it to a professional for repair? Or should I do nothing and let it be?

If this were a new car, there would be no hesitancy on my part. I'd have it repaired.

But this is an old car, with its own peculiar traits. One of the doors can only be opened with a key. Another door can be opened only with the electric power button (after you push it three or four times). The sound system is good, but the air conditioner failed a long time ago.

On a hot summer day, an open window makes non air-conditioned driving almost comfortable. But at this time of year, I don't need to open my window, not for comfort, at least. Not for fall and winter, and maybe even early spring.

There are no toll booths in the immediate area, and I won't be taking this car on any long trips—so I won't need to be throwing money through this window.

I haven't yet decided on what to do, but I have reached a conclusion that carries over for me into a

wider area of my approach to the larger world around me.

My conclusion is simple: Doing nothing is one of the choices I have. Doing nothing is in fact a decision. Doing nothing is not doing nothing.



The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 comes to mind. The priest and the Levite saw the half-dead robbery victim along the road, but they passed him by. Doing nothing in this case is not doing nothing. It was a decision, maybe even an understandable one, not to "get involved."

*Not making a decision at all may be worse than making a poor one.*

Making a poor decision is one thing. All of us, in our human nature, are subject to such errors. Not making a decision at all may be worse than making a poor one.

I can't help but think of the warning given in the third chapter of the Book of Revelation: "I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."

Take the time to reflect on the inconveniences you have accepted in life. Maybe cars and appliances and mechanical things have suffered from various failures over the years. When has your level of tolerance increased? When have you said, "Enough is enough!" in this regard?

What inconveniences and failures has society accepted? Examine your city or neighborhood for signs of society's minor failures, the ones people will accept.

When is it acceptable to close your window to a call for help? When is doing nothing a conscious decision to turn away from God's people in need?

Holidays and seasons of the year seem to stimulate our good deeds – to give to clothing drives in the cold months, to share food at Thanksgiving, to visit nursing homes at Christmas time. Take the time today to help provide clothing on a sunny day, shelter for the homeless during nice weather, comfort and companionship for those who are lonely throughout the year.

If you can't fix the problem yourself, then consider working with an expert, who can put your concerns together with the efforts of others, in order to make a difference.

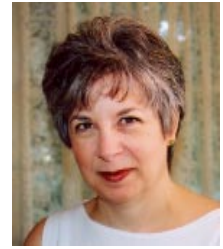
Doing something for others is a good decision. Doing nothing is not doing nothing. Doing nothing is a decision that must never be acceptable in the life of a Christian family.

*Paul is director of communications for the Diocese of Evansville, Ind.; and editor of the Message, the diocesan newspaper. His weekly column Taking the Time to Make a Difference is syndicated in a number of diocesan newspapers and appears on the CFM website.*

*Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.*

# Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz



## Do Your Part for Marriage

Have you seen the billboards, “Marriage Works!”? Public officials and church leaders are calling for everyone to reinvigorate the institution of marriage. The U.S. Catholic Bishops made marriage ministry a major priority at their recent planning meeting. Marriage education and divorce intervention programs are becoming increasingly available. This public education effort reminds us that marriage is more than a private emotional relationship, especially when children are involved.

Community leaders are right to be concerned. Statistics show that communities where lasting marriages are common have better outcomes for children, women and men than do communities with high rates of divorce and unmarried childbearing. Families held together by two dedicated parents working in partnership tend to prosper. Stable and dedicated families based on healthy marriages are good for the whole society.

While church and state are gearing up to work on marriage, each couple can increase the number of happy, successful marriages by paying attention to their own relationship. Think of it as your public duty!

Reinvigorating your marriage can be fun! Focused attention is a good way to start. One way to do this is to set time to be together.

Many good resources are available that can guide your reinvigoration project. Here are a few suggestions.

- ◆ **Enjoy a special movie together.** Make a date to watch *The Story of Us*. A reflection and discussion guide can be found at [www.smartmarriages.com](http://www.smartmarriages.com). The discussion guide authors suggest that you watch the entire movie first and then talk about it, using the questions in the guide.
- ◆ **Read a book together.** Choose a current novel or non-fiction book and talk about your reactions. Some books include discussion guides. Or read poetry to one another.
- ◆ **Do a Marriage Enrichment program together.** Work through the new book, *12 Hours to a Great Marriage: A Step by Step Guide for Making Love Last*, by marriage education experts **Howard Markan, Scott Stanley, Susan L. Blumberg** and others (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004). The authors offer practical suggestions for a great relationship, such as positive ways to express concerns and short quizzes to explore your expectations.
- ◆ **Play together.** Join a new recreation group together, such

as a bowling league or card club. Establish a tradition of Sunday breakfast after church.

- ◆ **Get away together.** Go on a married couples’ retreat weekend. Plan a night at a nice hotel, even if your anniversary is months away. If you cannot spend a night away, take a day trip for dinner at a country inn, or picnic at a park.
- ◆ **Pray together more.** Some couples enjoy praying the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours ) together. 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. Pray the rosary together as you start a car trip.
- ◆ **Make Marriage Renewal a CFM group action.** Encourage all the couples in your group to embark on a reinvigoration effort. Sponsor a marriage enrichment event in your church.

Marriage and family enrichment is at the heart of our Christian Family Movement.

*Lauri and John Przybysz live in Severna Park, Md., and have six children. Lauri is coordinator of marriage and family enrichment for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.*

**Kathryn Wotta** of St. Margaret of Scotland in **St. Clair Shores, Mich.**, reports their group will be volunteering at Capuchin Services in **Detroit** on Holy Saturday, April 15.

"We will be packing family food boxes (a big box of a variety of foods) on a 'assembly line' of CFM families, parents and kids. Each person will put an assigned food in the box and pass it down the line. We will also work in the clothing bank at the other side of the room. We will eat lunch at the soup kitchen so we can meet and socialize with the regular guests.

"This will be the first time we eat lunch at the center and it should prove to be a learning experience for both children and adults in our group. Our group volunteered twice last year and enjoyed it much, and of course, learned both about the poor and about teamwork."

CFM has completed raising funds for a \$5,000 matching grant to the **Phil and Mary Lou Gorman** Membership Development fund. Many thanks to those who have contributed to this effort at improving membership services. The **Patty Crowley** Leadership Development Fund stood at \$2,819 on Jan 30, 2006. Thanks to those who have contributed to this effort to train leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*CFM is a classified as public charity under 501 c(3) regulations. Contributions to CFM are tax deductible.*

**Cindy Simmons** reports that Sacred Heart, **Winchester, Va.**, had their annual game night in January. In the next few months each of their groups will either visit a nursing home or a low-income day care center.

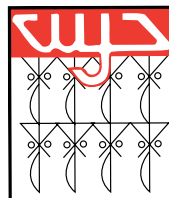
Groups visiting the day care center will bring needed supplies. Their children will also have a chance to play with the program participants. Paper towels, crayons, paint brushes and paper are some of the frequently requested supplies.

Groups visiting the nursing home will have a chance to interact with residents. Bingo is a popular activity. On March 11 all groups are invited to help out at a local clothing bank and food pantry. CFMers will clean the kitchen and organize clothing donations. This project is an opportunity for adults and children to work together.

**John and Melissa Przybysz** are starting a new CFM group in **Herndon, Va.** The group will draw from several area parishes.

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