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Christian Family Movement

CFM: Families Learning by Example

by Nicole Rogers Schmirler
Pewaukee, Wis.

“And they lived happily ever after” is part of every fairy-tale from *Cinderella* and *Snow White* to *Cars* and *Happy Feet*. Many marriages begin with fairy tale illusions. But then daily life and reality set in; jobs change, children come along, finances shift, and date nights become infrequent. Let’s be honest: once such realities intrude, changes happen. “Happily ever after” is not a bad thing. In fact, most of us seem to be striving for it. But how do we get there?

“CFM is a great tool to have in our toolbox,” say **Steve and Teresa Karolek, Pewaukee, Wis.** Through CFM, they have met couples they admire and emulate as they work to make their marriage happier and stronger. “We look to couples who have been married for a long time and try to understand what they are doing to keep their marriage alive and their family life secure and happy,” explain the Karoleks. Among these have been **Ann and Jerry Fons** and **Dan and Sue Heinritz**.

For example, when the Heinritz’ celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary in 2005 by vacationing without their children, their only goal was to connect with one another. They didn’t make plans or list expectations: they simply got into their car and traveled.

The Karoleks have noticed that their role-models have traits in common: “They are devoted to the community and they include their children alongside them as they serve others. They keep positive attitudes in the face of ongoing adversities and challenges.”

The Fons family, for example, participates in an annual church mission trip. They find sponsorship, serve the poor during the trip, and thus teach their children to appreciate different cultures and to value justice. In recent years, they have worked on an Indian reservation in South Dakota. Steve and Teresa have noticed how the Fons family integrates their faith with service to the church and community in a positive and cheerful way.

The Karoleks have followed the example of other CFM families to strengthen their relationship with their own children. Steve and Teresa make it a daily practice to communicate with their children and explain to each of them that their opinions and contributions, no matter how small, are important. They enjoyed hearing how Dan Heinritz has enhanced father-daughter outings by making a game of devising different routes to the youngest daughter’s favorite restaurant.

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Presidents' Perspective

by John and Lauri Przybysz

CFM: Part of a Larger Mission

As Lent approaches, let us focus on our mission as CFMers. Our mission, as we state it, is noble: To promote Christ-centered marriage and family life; to help individuals and their families to live the Christian faith in everyday life; to improve society through actions of love, service, education, and example. In our efforts to spread CFM and keep the movement healthy, it is good to recall that we are not in this mission alone.

CFM is a movement, but the essence of our movement is the larger movement of the Holy Spirit to transform the world into the kingdom of God. The whole Church is reawakening to this essential mission. In the only formal message that Pope John Paul I gave, he said, "We wish to remind the entire Church that its first duty is that of evangelization...If all the sons and daughters of the Church would know how to be tireless missionaries of the Gospel, a new flowering of holiness and renewal would spring up." Archbishop Wilton Gregory put it this way in 2003, "The Church's primary mission of evangelization, which is our personal mission, cannot begin in doubt and despair. Those who are called to evangelize and, indeed to re-evangelize our society must be a people of hope." This larger Movement, the "new evangelization" -- of which CFM's movement offers one "method" -- Observe, Judge, Act: Family Style --, is called Evangelization. It is not a matter of

being a Movement that happens to have a mission but rather a mission entrusted to us as a lay movement of disciples of Jesus Christ. CFM is a movement of disciples making more disciples, to change the world.

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John Przybysz, Jr. with Sarah and Maria. John and his wife Melissa are leaders of a CFM group in Herndon, Va.

Recovering a sense of how our movement is connected to the mission of Jesus is crucial for refreshing our spirit on a profound level. What do you witness to as a CFMer in your parish or community? As we know, people are more willing to listen to witnesses because in their witness they teach. In your church community or at home or at work, you are part of the larger move-

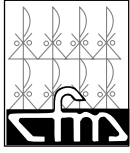
ment, evangelization. At the core of the mission we participate in is our own personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ that brings life to our mission as workers, parents, spouses, and church members. No activity, no CFM meeting or action, can take the place of this personal encounter. This personal encounter is the evangelical force capable of changing anything. We need to continually renew and savor this personal encounter with Jesus. This encounter leads to conversion, conversion leads to discipleship, discipleship leads to mission. Mission is a consequence of discipleship. Let us have a missionary spirit, expressed through our membership in CFM. Every Christian who is truly going to be a Christian in the total, most profound, and most perfect sense of the word must be a missionary, must be an evangelizer, and must be a proclaimer of the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Christian Family Movement is a means by which families can do their part of this great mission.

Yes, brothers and sisters, it does not matter what task we have in the Church. As baptized, we are disciples of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. May we all embrace what the coming Lenten season is all about and, in openness to the Holy Spirit, celebrate our identity as disciples and missionaries of the Gospel.

Come Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth.

John and Lauri

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.



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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.

Parent to Parent *by Mary Lou Gorman*



Children and Personality

Each child has a unique personality, and one of your biggest challenges as a parent is to help your child to develop his personality in a happy and healthy way.

My heart goes out to the parent whose child is a loner, one who has a hard time making and keeping friends and perhaps comes home and cries because of this.

*My heart goes out
to the parent
whose child
is a loner.*

The loner needs to have his self-confidence built up. Do and say everything you possibly can to help your child develop his own resources. Open your home so they can invite children they like to come over. Plan outings they can invite a friend to join. Get them into activities that they like so they can come in contact with other children who share their interests. Remind them to do nice things and say nice things about others. Above all, don't let them sit home and feel sorry for themselves.

Then there is Mister or Miss Personality. Such children may need to be reminded not to exclude other children from social circles. Insist that he or she think of oth-

ers and their feelings. Talk to them often about this and remind them how good they will feel if they are able to help another child. Get them to encourage their friends to get involved with acts of charity and worthwhile projects that help others and bring happiness to old and young. This type of child can do a lot of good when encouraged in the right way.

Some children need more quiet time than others. Some can easily do more than one thing at a time and others can't concentrate when there are distractions. Some learn visually, some orally, some by observing others, and some by experimenting on their own. Even prayer styles are related to personality.

There are many different personalities in this world, and if we teach our children to recognize this they will become better citizens and neighbors. The loner may need more encouragement and the "personality kid" might need to learn to be more charitable. Of course, bringing Jesus into all of this is important. He is the "light of the world" and his actions proved it. His love for each of our children is even greater than our own, and for each one he has designed a particular unique vocation that will be enhanced by a particular personality..

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

—continued from page 1

“Encouraging respect and positive attitudes and interactions within a family reinforces that our children are valuable members of our family and community,” explain the Karoleks. CFM has provided camaraderie and friendship; practical opportunities to learn about and live the Christian faith; and exposure to others’ thoughts, ideas, and good example.

Pat and Robin Hafey of Poway, Calif., value CFM’s support through 31 years of marriage and five relocations. The Hafeyes describe one of their CFM role-models, **Don and Pat Kirby of Fremont, Calif.**, as paragons of Christian kindness. “This couple welcomed a pregnant teen to stay with them



Pat and Robin Hafey have been part of the CFM family since 1979. They currently are members of the St. Gabrielle’s Parish in Poway, CA group and are on the CFM National Board. They have three children, Mike (29), Jessie (27) and son-in-law, Mark, and Joe (19), and one grandson, Eaben (9 months). Pat works for Procter & Gamble and Robin is a teacher of small children and parents.



Jerry and Ann Fons have been members of CFM since 1993. Jerry is an executive coach and Ann is youth minister at St. Anthony on the Lake parish in Pewaukee, Wisc. Ann is also liaison to the parish staff for CFM and together they are small group leaders. Jerry and Ann will celebrate their 25th anniversary in 2007 and have three children. Steve and Teresa Karolek, CFM parish organizers at St. Anthony, consider Jerry and Ann role models.

over the holidays...their sense of humor and practical faith blessed us all that Christmas,” say the Hafeyes.

Another role model the Hafeyes remember is one they met early in their marriage, **Manuel and Alice**

Dutra. “Each Saturday night they’d go dancing . . . they were respectful towards one another, watched out for their partner and made time to have fun together.”

When they lived in Arizona, the Hafeyes met **Bob and Linda**

Rasmussen of Glendale, who organized CFM hikes and camp-outs to the Grand Canyon, as well as projects through Habitat for Humanity. “They gave us the opportunity to connect with other CFM families that have similar values and to serve others.”

The Hafeyes explain that CFM assists them in tuning into their faith, to their relationship with one another, and to their commitment to family, friends and the community. They also value how their interactions with their role-models has contributed to their growing in love, honing a strong Catholic marriage, and affirming the Christian call in valuing people and community above possessions.

Like the Karoleks, the Hafeyes believe that meeting CFM role models has taught them a great deal about family dynamics: “We’ve had these [role-models] to share our joys and challenges with. They have been reminders that there are many stages of life and none of them will last forever,” said Robin Hafey.

Dear CFM Members,

The National Institute for the Family is developing a "Family Resource Handbook." We invite your contributions, and would be pleased to acknowledge your family. (You may remain anonymous if you wish.)

We are looking for family activities and traditions that have been successful for your family. Perhaps it was challenging, educational, renewing, enjoyable or inspirational. It enhanced your family life.

Categories include:

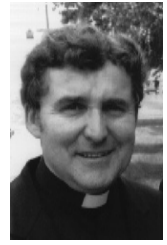
1. Special projects, e.g., helping the environment; peace and justice work; reaching out to those in need; volunteering for worthwhile causes, etc.
2. Mealtime traditions..
3. Family traditions from your heritage.
4. Family prayers and blessings.
5. Saramental traditions.
6. Holidays and holy days.
7. Gift giving and sharing with the needy.
8. Interacting and connecting with grandchildren.
9. Family gatherings.
10. Family forgiveness and reconciliation.
11. Building Christian Communities, e.g., within your own family, neighborhood, church.
12. Family rituals.
13. Family support through the life cycle (esp., in hardship, sickness, death, etc.).
14. Other.

Please describe your experience, and outline what others could do to share a similar experience. Include your family name and address. (Note if you wish anonymity.) Send or email your responses to office@cfm.org. Thank you on behalf of families everywhere.

—Father Conroy

From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy



Observe Before You Act!

The story is told that after **President Herbert Hoover** left office he vacationed in a small Canadian village. A hotel clerk asked, "Are you any relation to the G-man **J. Edgar Hoover**?" When Hoover said no, the clerk then asked: "Well, then how about the Hoover who makes vacuum cleaners?" "No" was the reply. To the surprise and amusement of the President, the clerk commented: "Oh, no harm done. We do get a kick, though, out of entertaining relatives of real celebrities." How often, in daily life, we fail to recognize the obvious!

Even more: in our spiritual life we often don't recognize that Christ is in our lives! If we want to recognize the truth, to discern God's will for us, and to focus our ministry to bring about his kingdom, we CFMers have a method. That method has an essential first step.

We don't just say: "Judge and Act!" Not at all. We say: "Observe, then judge (discern and decide), and finally act." Unless we deal with "truth," namely, the reality of what is going on about us, we cannot do what God wants of us as we apply Gospel values to change the world for the better.

We don't always we see what God wants of us right away because our vision is clouded. Misguided do-gooders are not helping the "kingdom come." A vital area of action to consider these days is our public life and complex social

issues. We can easily miss the point and more easily slide into either naïve fundamentalist solutions or, on the other hand, un-Christian worldly choices.

Consider these areas to *observe*:

- *Sports and entertainment*: Do we recognize how subtly we are tempted to spend our precious time and energy wastefully, especially on Sundays, when some go to "practice" instead of church?
- *Education*: Are we merely preparing ourselves and our children for a "high-paying" career or is our primary focus on successfully living a Christ-centered life which involves our vocation?
- *Politics*:: Do we understand how as Christians we must discern the truth amid media hype and spin in order to challenge legislators to promote society's common good?

To get an answer that makes real Christian sense and transforms our world we need to be able to observe accurately our life circumstances. Like the fellow that was looking for the wrong "Hoover," we too could be looking for the wrong "Christ"—one of our own making or another's delusions.

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



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Of Times and Tides

They call it “the season.” It’s the time when people from “up north” flee the cold and the snow to swell the population of Florida and other warm-weather areas.

We live in a world full of seasons and rhythms, some fast, some slow, some secular, some religious, some based on the weather, some based on the days of the week or the parts of the day.

Traffic and weather information are repeated on all-news radio “on the ones” or “on the eights” or on some similar pattern every 10 minutes every hour.

Tides come in and tides go out — in the oceans of the world — and also, it seems, among immigrating populations of the world.

Sergio Aguilera, the Mexican Consul in Indianapolis, recently provided a page of immigrant admission data for the United States, showing a kind of tidal movement of peoples over the centuries.

Millions of European immigrants arrived in each of the decades from the 1840s through the 1920s. More than eight million arrived in just the first decade of the twentieth century.

The tide of immigrants is now arriving from the Americas— millions of people arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, with 3.6 million in the 1980s and almost 4.5 million in the 1990s.

In our world of 10-minute radio news cycles, it may be difficult to sit back and examine the global seasons of centuries. But during our

season of Lent, perhaps this is the time to make such an examination.



Lent may seem to be slow. But in Great Britain, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor examined the season of Lent itself, and concluded that the Church does not intend for it to be “interminable.” Last year, on Ash Wednesday, according to

“What we should give up is whatever stops us doing that extra thing.”

the news agency, Zenit, the cardinal said, “Lent, in a sense, ought to pass like a flash with a sense of desperate urgency.”

Lent “is a time of intense focus,” he said. “Lent is a Christian way of expressing the brief life we live here on earth, a life of probation without a moment we can afford to waste.”

The cardinal quoted St. Paul, “We beg you, once again, not to neglect the grace of God that we have received. Now is the favorable time. This is the day of salvation.”

The time between Ash Wednesday and Easter is extraordinarily important, “because it prepares us for the new life which we celebrate

at Easter. And that new life is the path to our eternal salvation.”



Cardinal Murphy-O’Connor offered some advice:

“So if people ask me what they should do for Lent, I am inclined to say, on this Ash Wednesday, you should not try to do without something, but to get something done as if your eternal salvation depended on it.”

To be more specific, he said, “Each one of us should spend more time in prayer during these 40 days; some time in reading a Lenten book about how better to follow Jesus Christ, and some exercise which involves care for others, perhaps a visit to someone less fortunate than we are. What we should give up is whatever stops us doing that extra thing.”



Whether Lent seems interminable to you, or passes like a flash with a sense of urgency, now is the time to make a difference.

Now is the time for you and your family members to reflect on the seasons and rhythms that affect your life, for good or for ill.

Now is the time to care for others—taking time for a family meal, giving way to a commuter caught in the same hour of rushing home, or welcoming immigrants who have left homelands in search of a better life.

Now is the time to make a difference.

Paul is director of communications for the Diocese of Evansville, Ind.; and editor of The Message, the diocesan newspaper.

His weekly column Taking the Time to Make a Difference is syndicated in a number of diocesan newspapers and appears on the CFM website.

Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz



Bigger Than Both of You

Sacramental marriage is not just a private affair between the bride and groom; rather it is a reflection of God's permanent and constant love. Brides and grooms often miss this fact. In my role as Archdiocesan marriage preparation coordinator, I often answer calls from couples who want to have their wedding in a location other than a church. It is very fashionable to get married on a beach or in a park or on a roller coaster. These locations may significant meaning for the couple, but they miss the deeper sacramental connection. I patiently explain how the whole church community, which includes their relatives, friends, acquaintances, needs to witness the creation of the new marriage that is the foundation of family life within the Christian community. I try to help young couples see how their marriage creates the domestic church. Plus, the bishop doesn't allow it. I hope that someday they will know what I was talking about.

Even after many years, you may wonder if you are up to the job of creating the foundations of church and society. Still, we believe that when people see your marriage, they are supposed to be seeing a reflection of Christ's love for the church. It's a tall order. How can two people, which all of their faults and frailties, dare to enter into a union that claims to mirror the love that God has for his people? God's love is permanent

and lasting, while our love for each other or for God can ebb and flow, sometimes nearly flickering out in the tough times. Is God asking too much of married couples?

If it were just up to us, yes! However, if we focus on God's role in our marriage, we will see where our strength really comes from.

We can take a lesson from the covenant God made with his people Israel. In the biblical story of salvation, we learn about God's unfailing love for a people he chose from among all the other peoples of the world. God and Israel entered into a covenant relationship: "I will be your God and you will be my people." In this alliance God made with them, Israel was the weaker partner, continually wandering away and chasing after other gods they found in their neighborhood. They got distracted from their relationship with God and focused on comfort or power or wealth. They built and lost whole kingdoms in the course of their journey of faith. God continually brought Israel back to himself, continually forgave and taught the people how to keep their part of the covenant.

In the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus, our image of a wedding is expanded to help us understand how God's love is for all people. We see in Jesus' presence and actions during the wedding feast of Cana, a foreshadowing of

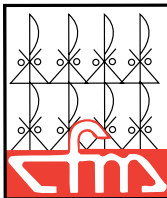
the eternal heavenly banquet. In the whole story of salvation history, God gives us hope in our own great adventure in marriage. On our wedding day, we received the terms of the covenant. God promises to help us hold onto the love and unity that we experienced on that day, the bond that God was making between him and us. God is the stronger partner in our covenant, and we can rely on him. He wants us to succeed. The whole church—and indeed the wider world—has a stake in your marriage.

ACT

- Start a hospitality ministry to newly married couples, welcoming them and including them in parish activities.
- Reflect on the presence of Jesus in your marriage as you read about the wedding feast of Cana (John 2: 1-11).
- Read more about the dynamic relationship between God and Israel: *Deuteronomy 7; Hosea 2; Jeremiah 31*; and, for a classic story of God's love and faithfulness, *Song of Songs*.

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.

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SPOTLIGHT

David and Iris Patten write, "Our CFM group from St. Anthony in **Nanuet, N.Y.**, recently held a garage sale. The proceeds were given to Birthright, a group that works for pro-life in our county. Last Christmas we discussed doing something to promote Christmas this year. Two of our members designed and ordered and paid for magnetic car signs with the word CHRISTmas surrounding the Holy Family. They've been distributed locally."

Mary Kay Halpin wrote this fall, "I just wanted to share with you that **Tom** and I have now done Chapter 1 in this year's book four times and will do it a fifth time this coming Saturday. We've done Chapter 2 three times. I want to commend all of the writers and the editors for this book...although

we've repeated these chapters numerous times with different groups, each discussion has been different and interesting!

"By the way, the reason for the repetition is that we've attended the first meeting of each of the three new groups and demo-d CFM for the Mom's group, plus attending our own meeting. We won't continue to attend everyone's meetings! We are mentoring one of the three new groups and have other couples mentoring the other two." **Tom** and **Mary Kay Halpin** are leaders at St. Vincent de Paul in **Omaha, Neb.**, and members of the national board.

St. Mary CFM in **Johnson City, Tenn.**, ordered brochures for a January membership push. **Ed and Donna Leeds** are heading this group that had 25 member couples last year. The Leeds are transplants from **Poway, Calif.**, St. Gabriel Parish and started CFM in their new parish.

It's a small world. Executive Directors **Jane and Paul Leingang, Evansville, Ind.**, led a pilgrimage from the diocese of Evansville to **Rome** for the canonization of **Mother Theodore Guerin**, founder of St. Mary of the Woods College and the Sisters of Providence in Terre Haute, Ind. They were not surprised to meet former CFM president couple **Wayne and Sue Hamilton** at the festivities since Wayne is on the college board of trustees. They also met former CFM board members **Frank and Pat Gacnik** from **Arvada, Colo.**, in the Pantheon while sightseeing in Rome. The Gacniks were on a tour with CFM chaplain **Father Don Conroy** and had extended their time in Rome at the end of their trip.

St. Leonard's Parish in **Berwyn, Ill.** is beginning a CFM group. **Tom and Beth O'Neill** are among the organizers.