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Christian Family Movement

How Much Is Enough? *Rethinking the Concept of Tithing*

by Julie Hanlon Rubio, St. Louis, Mo.

In a recent cover story of the New York Times Magazine, philosopher Peter Singer argues that we have within our reach the resources we need to end poverty. If those with excess would simply give away a reasonable amount of their income, we would have more than enough to meet the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 set by the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. Why should the rich give? Singer asks us to imagine we see a child drowning. To save her, we would have to ruin some new shoes, but obviously, the girl's life is more important than shoes. We are faced with analogous dilemmas everyday. Will we buy the new shoes or save a child's life?

Despite the radical implications of his argument, Singer suggests not that we forgo new shoes forever, but only that we give out of our excess. He offers specific guidelines for the top ten percentage of American earners. The top .1 percent who make 1.1 million dollars a year or more would give away 25-30 percent of their annual income; those who make \$275-to 1 million, 15-20 percent; those who make at least \$92,000, 10 percent. If Americans alone were to follow these guidelines, we would, according to Singer, have more than enough to cut the number of people

living in extreme poverty in half, provide primary schooling for all the world's children, cut hunger in half, and more.

When I read this article, I thought, "Where have all the Christians gone? Isn't it strange that an atheist is calling Americans (most of whom are Christians) to care for the poor? Isn't it odd that he recommends a form of tithing, an ancient practice found in the Hebrew Bible as well as Christian tradition?"

But how many of us have heard about tithing lately? Probably not many. Most Catholics (who give away an average of 2 percent of their income) hear their parishes using the language of stewardship to encourage support of the church, not the poor. Most Protestants (who give an average of 3 percent of their income away) hear similar language, although a few denominations still expect members to tithe.

What happened to tithing? It's a complicated story. Certainly, it is prominent in Hebrew Bible, in which the Israelites are enjoined to pay a tithe to support the priests and the poor (Deut. 14:22-28, Tobit 1:7-8). In the New Testament, Jesus criticizes some Pharisees for

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Presidents' Perspective

by John and Lauri Przybysz

Help Your Parish Offer Marriage Enrichment

Here's a practical idea to help people stay happily married. In partnership with your parish, your CFM group can facilitate an easy and fun experience that will minister to marriage – yours and others.

There is no better way to encourage a healthy, growing

Your CFM group can give couples the nudge they need to get together – just the two of them.

marriage relationship than having dates! But who makes time for dates anymore? Sponsor a "Dates" program and help couples make time for each other and learn skills for happy marriage at the same time. The Dates help married people maximize their vocation, learn new communication skills, and share their joys with each other and with their peers.

Your CFM group can give couples the nudge they need to get together—just the two of them—for a rewarding and enjoyable evening in the company of the one they

love best – at little or no cost to the parish!

Married couples gather at church for a short (20-minute) presentation on a variety of topics. Then, they leave and enjoy a Date of their own choosing, with the help and encouragement of their parish family. They also learn about CFM from you!

The Dates program might begin with an inspirational prayer in the parish gathering space, beginning at 6:30 on a Friday night or after Saturday evening Mass.

Next, a short (20 minute) presentation – Use *10 Great Dates* by Claudia and Jim Arp, a right-out-of-box marriage enrichment program available from www.marriagealive.com Couple workbooks provide talking points designed to infuse the date with new vitality.

OR -- Create your own presentations by a guest speaker/couple, parish staff, or a video selection. The theme could be learning a skill to practice or an idea to explore. Provide talking points for the date.

Then, each couple continues the evening at their own favorite spot!

Parish volunteers could provide babysitting on-site (A good youth service project!).

CFM Mentioned in Bishops' Report

The Christian Family Movement is cited in the recently published report on focus groups on the topic of marriage that were held for the U. S. Bishops' Pastoral Initiative on Marriage.

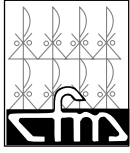
In the section of that reported on ways the Church support marriage, the report says,

Focus group participants were asked how their parish and diocese support married couples and what more could be done. In general, participants did not see the parish as a source of direct support for marriage; that is, their parishes do not sponsor marriage enrichment activities on a regular and ongoing basis....People praised Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, Christian Family Movement and similar movements and organizations, although these are not parish based.

It should be noted that among the groups mentioned CFM functions primarily in parish settings.

The complete report on the results of the focus groups as well as complete plans for the initiative can be found on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website, www.usccb.org <<http://www.usccb.org>> .

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*



Teaching Children to Care

Children today seem to be so wrapped up in themselves. As parents, it should be our duty to work on getting children to think of others rather than always of themselves. First of all, we must be examples to them by showing them we care for our relatives', friends' or neighbors' needs. Good example is a necessity.

—
*...encourage
your children
to send their
grandparents
a note or give
them a call once
in a while.*
—

If a relative is sick or has had an accident, encourage your children to write to them, visit them, or take them a care package. Relatives should be top priority on our care list as they are "family."

Good friends should come next on our care list. Question your children about their friends. If one is sick, encourage them to call or write to cheer them up. Help your children be aware of classmates who don't seem to have any friends. Perhaps they can be friends to them. Children of other cultures can be slow to make friends, perhaps because of a language barrier. Make your child aware of this problem.

Being a caring neighbor is very important today when so many moms work. Take the time to get to know your neighbors. Perhaps there is some way your children can help them. Our granddaughter got to know an elderly lady who needed someone to walk her dog and buy her groceries. Kady helped her and the woman was so very grateful. Many times, elderly neighbors just need something from the drug store: if we don't ask, we don't know their needs.

Children especially should be made aware of how much their grandparents love to see and hear from them. As a parent, encourage your children to send their grandparents a note or give them a call once in a while. It will put a smile on their grandparent's face and your child will be learning to care about someone besides himself.

Wouldn't this be a wonderful world if we all learned to care for one another as Jesus did? Of course, he made the lame walk and the blind see. We can't do that, but any little bit of caring we do will make us more like him. If children start at a young age to care, they will continue to do so all of their lives. So as parents, let's do all we can to encourage them.

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

—Rubio, continued from page 1

being concerned with tithes on every small thing but neglecting weightier matters like justice and mercy (Mt. 23:23). He also presents a more radical message with regard to money. There many instances in which Jesus calls someone who wants to follow him give up possessions (Mk 10:17-31, Lk 19:1-10), tells parables that uphold giving to the poor (Lk 16:19-31, Lk 10: 29-37), and casts doubt on the ability of the rich to be saved (Mk.10:17-22, Lk 18:18-29) All of this raises serious questions about the compatibility of riches with Christianity.

On the other hand, Jesus does not counsel all of his followers to give up possessions, he is charged with being a “glutton and a drunkard” because he seems to have frequently celebrated at dinner with friends (Mt. 11:19), and his ministry clearly relied on the sustaining wealth of some members (Mt. 1:8-3). Still, it is important to losing sight of the extensive critique of wealth Jesus advanced, even if specific guidelines are rarely given.

The early church fathers were mostly unified in denying that tithing was obligatory for Christians. Instead, they exhorted their listeners to make voluntary offerings to their bishops and the poor. Some claimed that money was owed to the poor. St. Caesarius (470-543) argues, “Tithes are demanded out of justice; whoever refuses to give them violates another’s property. And if he gives no tithes, how many poor will die in his region! For how many murders will he appear responsible before the eternal judge!” In addition, the fathers identified Christ with the poor, often citing Mt 25: 31-46. Ambrose contended, “If you have superfluity, give it to the poor and you have dried the feet of the Lord.”

But *how much* did the early church fathers expect their listeners to give?

Most called their listeners not to radical renunciation but to a modest way of life that would set them apart from their neighbors. Augustine says:

You look at what others have not done rather than at what God commands you to do. . . . You pay no attention to how many poor persons are beneath you; you want only to be above those richer than yourselves. . . . No attention is paid to the hardships of the innumerable mendicants; not a glance is cast on the masses of poor who stand behind but all eyes are cast on the few rich who stand in front.



In medieval times, the church would return to tithing as a reasonable sacrifice. The language of tithing was common as theologians and pastors again urged believers to give to the church, forgetting tithing’s historic connection to the poor. In addition, as church and state became more entangled, tithing was associated with corruption. By the 18th Century, most countries had outlawed it. Since that time, for good reason, Catholics have in their social teaching tended to talk more about charity than tithing.

Why go back to tithing? Certainly, I would not advocate reinstating a tradition of giving 10 percent to one’s parish, as few churches give even 10 percent of their own resources to the poor. Whereas the Hebrew Bible advocates a practice

of that combines the provision of adequate support for religious leaders with support for the poor, today, giving solely to one’s church would not serve the same purpose. We need a more flexible notion of tithing. Families might consider donating a portion of their income to charities that help the poor in addition to the percentage they donate to their local church. The concept of percentage remains helpful, as studies show that those who give using a percentage (versus a fixed amount or whatever they can) tend to give more. A percentage would also help families discipline their spending, so that they would not find their needs and wants devouring all disposable income.

For the majority of Christians who earn \$92,000 or less, giving 10 percent would require a certain level of sacrifice, a willingness to question the lifestyles common amongst one’s friends, a commitment to look honestly at the things they spend money on and discern whether or not they are truly valuable, given the good the money spent could do elsewhere.

The choices of Christian families to tithe could have an enormous impact on the world. The problem of poverty is immensely complicated, and no one is naïve enough to think that tithing alone can solve it, but it is a key part of Christian response that recognizes abundance as a gift to be shared and links belief in Christ to concern for the poor. Christians should be the first to acknowledge their responsibility for the world’s poor and the first to adopt a practice committing them to trade some of their luxuries for lives.

Julie Hanlon Rubio is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at St. Louis University, and the author of A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family (Paulist Press, 2003. She and

CFM International Plans World Assembly

Preparations are advancing for the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (IC-CFM) Tenth World Assembly and Fourteenth General Assembly to be held in Fatima, Portugal at the Paul VI Pastoral Center July 25-29. The theme of the meeting is "The Legacy of Fatima to the Family: Spirituality and Sacrifice." Delegates from 30 countries are expected. The meetings will employ the Cardijn methodology of Observe, Judge, and Act (OJA).

North America is responsible for the first of five panel discussion on various aspects of the theme. The complete agenda is available online at www.iccfm.org. CFM-USA president couple **John and Lauri Przybysz** will open the North American panel with a presentation on family prayer.

In addition to the Przybyses, **Gary and Kay Aitchison, Ames, Iowa, Paul and Jane Leingang, Wayne and Sue Hamilton, Naples, Fla., Pete and Carolyn Broeren, Pittsburgh, Penn., and Father Don Conroy** are delegates from CFM-USA for the meeting. President Couple **Erwin and Nora Lopez** will represent the Movimiento Familiar Cristiano (MFC) –Los Angeles along with three other couples and two chaplains from that organization. The MFC-USA is also expected to send representatives. **Juan and Teresa Rodriguez of Houston, Texas**, are president couple and **Father Rafael Davila**, also of **Houston**, is Spiritual Assessor for the MFC-USA.

In preparation for the assembly, questions for discussion are being forwarded to group leaders across the country and distributed

A CFM Seder

by *Jeanette Ligouri,*
Wood-Ridge, New Jersey

The CFM families of Assumption Church in Wood-Ridge, NJ look forward their annual Passover dinner commemorating the Last Supper in April.

Our group uses our school's kindergarten tables, which are low enough to allow the participants to sit on the floor during the meal. Each family brings pillows to sit on and a carafe for wine.

I prepare the dinner: roast leg of lamb, Mid-eastern vegetables with rice, couscous and spinach salad. We have matzoh and red wine, which are important to the liturgy; and for dessert enjoy baklava, a pastry which consists of mainly nuts and honey. I assemble the ceremonial foods: egg, bitter herbs (parsley), salt water, haroset (a mixture of apples, nuts and wine) and horseradish.

to the members of the cfm-exchange electronic mailing list. Groups are welcome to use these questions for the subject matter of their March and April meetings. Responses to the questions must be received in the national office by May 15 to be included CFM-USA's contribution to the assembly discussions. **Antonio and Maria Celeste Moniz**, president couple of the Christian Home Movement, a member organization of the ICCFM, are charged with compiling data from member organizations for use during the assembly.

A recent addition to the program is a presentation by four members of the Cardijn Commu-



We eat and read by candlelight and follow a Christian adaptation of the Seder that reflects the meaning of Holy Thursday.

Our Chaplain reads the part of the Father and we ask the participants to read the other parts. [Editor's note: There is a ritual for a Passover Seder in the CFM book *Seasons of the Spirit*; call the national office to order a copy for \$7.]

My husband and I started this tradition at home, so that our young sons would get the full understanding of Holy Thursday through participation. It has now turned into a wonderful CFM family tradition that we all look forward to every year.

nity International (CCI). **Cardinal Joseph Cardijn** is the Belgian priest who originated the OJA methodology. All member organization agree to use this methodology as an integral part of their activities.

2007 is the 125th anniversary of the birth of Cardijn in 1982 and the 40th anniversary of his death in 1967. CCI is celebrating this year as International Year of Cardijn and is planning to release a book about Cardijn on July 24. In addition, CCI is sponsoring an international Cardijn symposium to be held in **Chennai, India** in early November 2007. This is the first time ICCFM has connected with this Cardijn-inspired organization.

Longtime National Board Members Recognized

The CFM winter board meeting at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in **Omaha, Neb.**, marked the end of an era. Two long-time member couples were honored as their terms of service ended: **Gary and Kay Aitchison** and **Terry and Jean Smith**.



Gary and Kay Aitchison

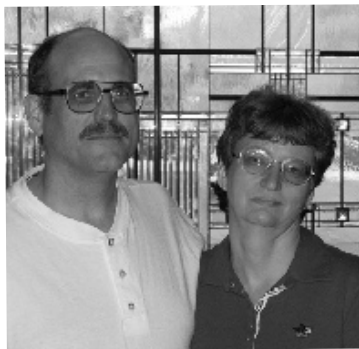
When the board meets next July in **Redondo Beach, Calif.**, Gary and Kay Aitchison will not be among them. While they continue on the ICCFM secretariat and may visit the board meeting in that capacity, their service on the national board of CFM-USA draws to a close after 35 years.

Gary and Kay attended almost all of the twice-yearly gatherings of the board during their thirty-five years of service. Gary and Kay began service to CFM as area 10 representatives for **Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska** and **Kansas**. They advanced to National Secretary in 1976 and in 1979 became vice-president under president couple **Bob and Irene Tomonto**. They assumed the presidential role in 1981 at the same time as they assumed the role of running the office as executive directors. In 1985 **Wayne and Sue Hamilton** became president couple, but Gary and Kay carried on as executive directors until 2001.

Kay says, "We will continue to be involved in CFM through

our small action groups. We have always believed that they are the most important part of CFM. That is where individuals and families grow and are changed and where parish and community action take place. Sometimes we lose sight of that. We will always be available to support and serve the board in any way that we can."

Gary and Kay will continue on in marriage ministry. "As a diaconate couple, we are currently in charge of family ministry, marriage prep and baptism prep at our parish." In addition to their service to ICCFM, the Aitchisons continue to lead CFM at their parish and Kay is a frequent author of CFM meetings. She has an article in the most recent issue of *Family Perspectives Journal*.



Terry and Jean Smith

Terry and Jean Smith have been national treasurers since 1999 and representatives for **Iowa** and **Nebraska** on the national board since 1995. They are CFM leaders at their parish Holy Trinity in **Des Moines, Iowa**. In addition to their duties on finance, their special interest has been programming. Jean is currently program chair, a task which is quite daunting. Jean is passionate about providing relevant material that will stimulate good discussion leading to action for CFM groups.

Among their services to the board has been contacting local leaders to get regular updates on parish activities. They were exceptionally faithful in this service. "I will truly miss them on the board and owe them a personal debt of gratitude. Especially since I have been running the national office, I have been aware of how faithful they are. They are truly someone to count on, always following through when they take on a job. Whenever the board was given the task to find out what the members were thinking on a particular topic, the Smiths were always the first with their complete report," said **Jane Leingang**.

Kay Aitchison commented, "The Smiths have been very faithful to CFM. They have given a lot both to our area CFM and to the national movement. They have made CFM a way of life for their family."

John and Lauri Przybysz noted, "We deeply appreciate Terry and Jean's guidance in financial and program matters and we have enjoyed their friendship. They have also been leaders in their local CFM, continually inviting new members and partnering with **Fr. Sam Palmer** to keep CFM vital in the Des Moines area."

The office of national treasurer is one of the most demanding services to CFM. Handling the finances for what is essentially a small business is not a minor task. **Paul Leingang** said, "The Smiths handled their duties graciously and diligently and we are happy they will be able to hand this task off now to **Tom and Mary Kay Halpin, Omaha, Neb.** Jane and I hope they can enjoy a well deserved rest."

Recently I had the joy of attending the 50th Anniversary celebration of a couple I had met forty years ago, when I was a young priest working with CFM and they had been married only ten years.

Well there's a saying "The proof is in the pudding!" Yes, I had met Bob and LaVerne Sober when I was a young assistant priest at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, when I was just two years ordained.

They had a young family. Now they have seven grown children. Bob is retired from his career at Westinghouse, but he and LaVerne are as creative as ever in doing the Lord's work.

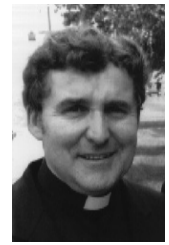
At the anniversary celebration Bob (being his usual outgoing self) spoke up in front of the whole assembly of some 50 or more people. He said he was glad to have me there and he wanted to tell me and them something I probably didn't know. He piped up: "You saved our marriage!" Then he proceeded to tell how this came about.

It seems that one day when I met with Bob and LaVerne, when I was Director of Christian Family Ministry for the diocese, I explained to them that we needed a couple to help with organizing and presenting the Pre-Cana sessions in Greensburg. I then went on to ask them if they would be willing to go to Cleveland, Ohio, for a special training program for presenting couples.

Well, Bob and LaVerne thought they didn't really want to go, because they thought they were not qualified. Bob said that they were having problems communicating. Also, LaVerne had cried every day for the past year or so because she didn't think things were working

From the National Chaplain

by Father Donald Conroy



"The Proof is in the Pudding"

for them in their marriage. However, instead of telling me this they decided to take up my offer and go to the training program for couples far away in Cleveland.

They got there and found other couples like themselves. Moreover, LaVerne said they learned about the stages of marriage—the different periods of development that most every married couple goes through. She said this was a revelation to her and Bob, especially when it came to the "Disillusionment Stage" that every marriage goes through when the "Honeymoon Stage" is over and reality sets in.

They came back from this training and put the communications tools they had learned into practice. From that time on through all the ups and downs of marriage Bob and LaVerne not only applied these new insights but they shared this wisdom with many other couples. Moreover, they realized that Christian Marriage is a Sacrament. All of this commitment and practice made a difference.

Of course, they presented this new understanding at the Pre-Cana or Marriage Preparation. However, applying their CFM "Observe, Judge, Act" to their parish, they got an idea of starting a new type of program. They observed young couples like themselves as the first child came along and who were struggling in their marriages. They

saw how this affected the equilibrium of the marriage.

They said let's try something new for couples at the time when a couple prepares for the baptism of their first child. Now this wasn't the usual baptismal prep class. It included a presentation on that but it involved helping the couple assess where they were at in their own development as a couple and as a family. This helped these couples face the disillusionment and other stages of marriage. It taught them how to deal with each other as well as the children. And it helped them see Jesus present in their relationship!

Yes, the proof is in the pudding! We see Bob and LaVerne today as peaceful and radiant grandparents and loving spouses. God works in our lives if we're willing to take the risk and made the commitment. His grace works in our daily lives. Years later, as a priest, I see that the power of God's grace works everyday miracles in our lives thanks to the openness of couples willing to let His life-giving Spirit into their marriages.

Ed. note: Bob and LaVerne Sober were ACT editors from 1985 to 1989.

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

They know who I am

I think I have the only 1985 black convertible Toyota Celica in Evansville. That's not bragging or complaining, just an observation.

On a recent morning, our daily newspaper did not arrive, as it usually did, before 6 a.m. It did not arrive by 7 a.m., or even later.

When I telephoned the newspaper office to ask, "When the heck will we get our morning paper?" the person who answered the phone called me by my first name. That's not a surprise, since I know that many businesses have Caller ID. But after she had explained that the printing presses had mechanical failures overnight, she asked me to say "Hello" to my wife, Jane.

The truth is, no action of an individual can ever be completely private or anonymous. I have to realize that I can't drive down the street and cut somebody off, or express my irritation, without the very good chance that the other driver will know who I am.

I ought not to call the newspaper and use offensive language – which I am glad I avoided — because the person on the other end of the phone may not only know who I am, but also be a friend or acquaintance of my wife, who used to work there.

Evansville is not New York or Los Angeles, of course, but we do have more than a couple of

hundred thousand people in the metropolitan area. It just seems like only a few of them drive down the same street as I do, and only a few of them go to the same grocery store as I do. And even though a lot of them get our daily newspaper, there's still a good chance a random phone call will connect me with someone who knows who we are.



In chapter 8 of the Gospel according to St. Mark, we read about Jesus who somehow used seven loaves of bread to feed four thousand people.

Then Jesus met a man who was blind. After "putting spittle on his eyes he laid his hands on him," and the man said he could then see "people looking like trees and walking." Jesus touched him a second time, and he could see distinctly.

After those events, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Messiah."

Jesus came to be known among his disciples and among the crowds, because of what he said and what he did. And after his death, he was recognized in the "breaking of the bread."

How do people recognize you?



In many ways, our world seems to have encouraged as much anonymity as possible. We have separate living areas for each child in houses many times larger than our parents had. We have private access to the world wide web. And we always seem to have the same temptation Peter had on the night Jesus was betrayed: to say we don't know Jesus, and to try to slip away and just be part of the crowd.

Take the time to reflect on the people whom you recognize in everyday life — those whose names you know, as well as those you know because of their words and deeds.

Take the time to reflect on how you are known — in your family, in your neighborhood or beyond. How does recognition affect your behavior?

Take the time to examine your attitudes about a person you know by race or gender or the car he drives or the place she works — and ask yourself if you really know that person by name.

Help a child to be recognized for an accomplishment. Support a friend who stands up for a religious conviction. Get to know someone from another race or creed or social condition.

You will make a difference.

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

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

Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz



Is There Marriage in Heaven?

What happens to our marriage at the end of life? Does the adventure continue? We have often pondered this question, particularly when we hear again the story from the gospel of Mark: One day, some Sadducees presented Jesus with the unlikely case of a woman who was successively the wife of seven brothers, asking him whose wife she would be after the resurrection. Jesus answered: "When they rise from the dead they will neither marry nor be given in marriage but will be like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25).

Does the death of a husband or wife, which brings about the legal end of a marriage, also bring with it the total end of communion between them? Does something of that bond which so strongly united us on earth remain in heaven, or will all be forgotten once we have crossed the threshold into eternal life?

Capuchin **Father Raniero Cantalamessa**, preacher to the Pontifical Household, offered an answer in a recent homily that is worth pondering.

Interpreting this saying of Jesus wrongly, some have claimed that marriage will have no follow-up in heaven. But with this reply Jesus is rejecting the caricature the Sadducees presented of heaven, as if it were going to be a simple con-

tinuation of the earthly relationship of the spouses. Jesus does not exclude the possibility that they might rediscover in God the bond that united them on earth.

This confirms what we have suspected all along. Our lives together to this point have testified to how our love has stood the test of

"In the passage of time into eternity the good remains and evil falls away..."

time. Our personalities, our ways of loving which we carry into eternity. Our spouse has played a most important part in shaping who we are. We hear at every funeral liturgy: "Life is transformed, not taken away." We have a hard time believing that death, which did not hold onto Christ, could nullify our marriage. In the lively concept of heaven expressed by Fr. Cantalamessa, marriage does not come to a complete end at death but is transfigured, freed from the limits that mark life on earth, as also the ties between parents and children or between friends will not be for-

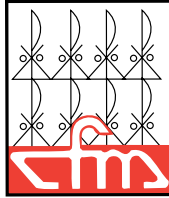
gotten. In this respect, marriage as we know it will not continue. It will be better.

But what about those who have had a negative experience of earthly marriage, those for whom marriage has been a hell of misunderstanding and suffering? Fr. Cantalamessa reassures us, "In the passage of time into eternity the good remains and evil falls away. The love that united them, perhaps for only a brief time, remains; defects, misunderstandings, suffering that they inflicted on each other, will fall away." Even if we have several spouses in our lifetime, the love we shared will endure without conflict or jealousy. All will be healed and forgiven. Our love is perfected in the presence of the Author of Love.

The love that unites us is an experience of God's eternal love for us. We can be confident that which was truly love and self-surrender between husbands and wives, being objectively a good coming from God, will not be dissolved. So, be patient. Whatever our shortcomings and faults, or those of our spouse, we have faith that our marriage will truly be "made in heaven."

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

Ames, Iowa, CFM at St. Cecilia participated in The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on December 10 in memory of children who have died. **Paul and Cathy Brustowicz**, who were part of Ames CFM for several years asked the Ames Federation to participate and the request was sent out over CFM-exchange mailing list to offer others a chance to participate. Shortly after Paul Brustowicz transferred to New Jersey with his job, son **Brian** died in a car accident. CFM board members and Ames leaders **Gary and Kay Aitchison** wrote to say, "Paul and Cathy have continued to remember Brian in many ways but especially they find support in The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting."

CFM presidents **John and Lauri Przybysz** were guest speakers at St. Anthony of

Padua/Most Precious Blood parish mission in **Gardenville, Md.**, in October. The mission was based on the papal encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*. The Przybyszes spoke on the topic "Exploring the Gift of Sexual Intimacy."

Karen Wheeler reports that CFM members at St. Lawrence Martyr Parish in **Redondo Beach, Calif.**, are planning to attend a docent-led tour of the Cathedral of the Angels in Downtown **Los Angeles** on March 10, 2007. Adults and children age 6 and up will carpool together and get some insight into the art and architecture of the new archdiocesan cathedral.

January 20th the St. Vincent de Paul CFM group, **Omaha, Neb.**, had its first annual Family Fun Night at church. Games and fun in the school gym and cafeteria followed a potluck supper. 52 adults and 67 children attended. **Mary Kay Halpin** writes, "It was lots of

fun! I'd say at least 30 of the children were under 6 years old!" Mary Kay and **Tom Halpin**, leaders at St. Vincent's, hosted the national board of directors meeting Feb. 16-18. The board will have a chance to meet members of their group after Mass on Saturday evening.

St Bernard parish, **Omaha, Neb.**, held an Epiphany party where they collected canned goods for the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry. At the party the group decided how to distribute the money raised at their fall fundraiser. Most of the money went to Heifer International, an organization that works with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth. The group donated enough to purchase a water buffalo, a hive of bees, and a sheep. The group also made a donation to the parish and to Catholic Relief Services. **Ed and Sheila Osterhaus** are group leaders.