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Christian Family Movement

ICCFM: A Prophetic Voice for Families

by Nop and Ela Muangaroot, Bangkok, Thailand

We are proud to have been Presidents of the ICCFM, a Confederation built on prayer and action, gifted with compassion and a prophetic voice.

The themes of our World Assemblies the past 20 years prove that we are visionaries and trailblazers on issues affecting families.

Firstly, ICCFM champions the rights of the poor:

- 1986 **Chicago, USA:**
Families: The Voice of the Poor and Suffering

We questioned the oppressive economic and political systems which defy social justice.

- 1998 **Thailand:**
CFM Renewal 2000: Christian Families Committed to the Humanization of All Families in the World

We addressed the dehumanization of families especially in the Third World.

- 2001 **Maceio, Brazil:**
Ethics of Life in Globalized and Excluding World

We deplored the irony resulting from globalization which, instead of spreading the wealth, marginalized the poor even more.

Secondly, ICCFM thinks ahead of the times:

- 1989 **Avila, Spain:**
Families: Mystery and Reality, Hope of the Third Millennium

This early, we already anticipated that families must prepare to face the millennium.

- 1995 **Malta:**
Towards a Global Community, Visions for the Journey

We looked forward to the benefits of a universal brotherhood in the age of globalization.

- 2004 **California, USA:**
Family: Artisans of an Evolving Society

We admitted that technology has changed human life irreversibly and that families must be ready to face the unknown and rapid changes of a post-modern world.

Thirdly, ICCFM recognizes that stewardship of the earth is in the hands of families:

- 1992, **Merida, Mexico:**
Families of the Earth: Creating New Covenants in a Changing World

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Presidents' Perspective

by John and Lauri Przybysz

CFM YouTube... You Too

CFM is on YouTube. This is one more way to spread the mission of CFM, especially to young families. All of the videos can be seen at www.YouTube.com/CFMtube.

CFM has a recruiting video titled, "Welcome to CFM!" that can be useful when people ask, "What is CFM about?" **Beth and Dan McKenna** emailed the link



Beth and Dan McKenna enjoy hiking with their family.

to people who responded to their advertisement in the St. Francis De-Sales bulletin. Beth said it was very helpful in starting CFM in **Purcellville, Va.** We like the video because it is authentically us. It is real CFM.

An earlier draft of the recruitment video is also uploaded to YouTube, titled "Introduction to CFM." It tells a great story, but the still pictures are too still. They lack the "Ken Burns" pan-and-zoom feature that brings images to life on the tube.

The "Mothers Day Tribute" was the first big hit. It tells the heart-

warming story of **Jerry and Kathleen Pflug** and their fifteen children. "Trust in God. Give Him what belongs to Him. He will take care of you." This was my first video with Pinnacle Studio software, full of pan-and-zoom motion.

Lively music, interesting images, and fast-paced narration help "CFM World Assembly in Fatima" hold the attention of a YouTube audience. It tells the story of the International CFM meeting last summer. This one got fan mail from **Malta**, "excellent video ... really great."

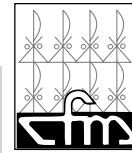
Our wonderful Webmaster, **Andy Pozdol**, has embedded these videos on www.cfm.org. Visitors to our homepage can watch them without ever leaving our site.

You can help make CFMtube successful. Send photos of CFM in action to president-at-CFM.org. Your kids would love to see themselves on the web. Put videos of your activities on disk and mail to 101 Idlewild Rd, Severna Park, MD 21146.

Want to try your hand at creating your own CFM promotional videos? Contact John for ideas and technical suggestions. He doesn't claim to be an expert, but will be happy to share what he has learned.

Swing into action. You, too, can use these tools to spread the good news.

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



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

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

CFM's Mission

- ◆ to promote Christ-centered marriage and family life;
- ◆ to help individuals and their families to live the Christian faith in everyday life; and
- ◆ to improve society through actions of love, service, education and example.

Sometimes time seems to move slowly, and sometimes time flies, but one piece of advice older people often give to young parents is, "Treasure this time: it goes by so fast."

When our children are young, it seems they need constant care and attention, and they do. At the same time, we need to put God first in our lives, to nurture our marriage, to do the work that God has called us to, and to take care of our own health.

In order to meet the demands of our little ones on our time, we need to pay attention to where our time goes. Often, our telephones and computers take time away that we might spend listening to our children.

Our school age children may be away much of the day, but when they are at home they need our time. We need to know how they think, who their friends are, where

they are going, when they'll be home, whether their homework and chores are done, and whether they are taking appropriate responsibility for themselves and their siblings. Teaching sharing, trust and love all take time and communication. Sometimes it's hard to repeat over and over how to get along, how to be responsible for their things, what must come first before playing video games. Being a good parent is the hardest job there is in life. It takes time, patience, and lots of talking and listening.

Pray that God will help you say the right things to your children. Then pray that they will listen, take good advice to heart, and someday become good parents themselves with you as their best role model.

A persistent parent is a good parent. Parents who make time to listen to their children will never be sorry they did.

Mary Lou and her late husband Phil Gorman, Arlington Heights, joined CFM in 1953. The family includes four daughters and 14 grandchildren.

Parent to Parent

by Mary Lou Gorman



Giving our Children the Gift of Time



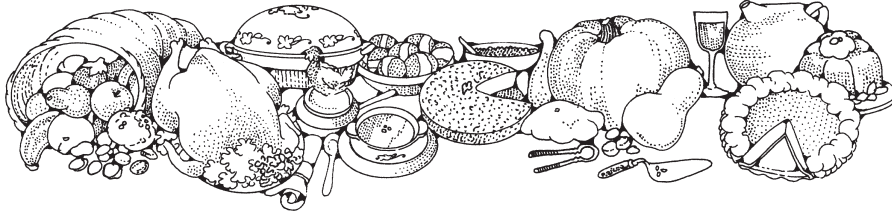
A casino night is St. Lawrence Martyr, Redondo Beach, Calif., CFM's traditional kick-off event. From left to right: Herman Villorio, Alida Wells, Michael Landoch, Mark Stofila, Angie Landoch, Rey Rojo. Read more about this year's event at St. Thomas in Spotlight on page 8. (Photo courtesy of John Poprac.)



Family Activity Corner

by Anna Kieliszewski

Giving Thanks with the Family



On the last Thursday of November, our nation gathers to celebrate "Thanksgiving." For many of us, this is the time to prepare the feast and gather the family together to thank God for all the gifts we have been given.

The original regular observance of Thanksgiving (according to the Wikipedia web-site) in the United States was held in 1621. It was an autumn celebration of food, feasting, and praising God with the Plymouth settlers and the Native Americans. It was a three day celebration with much emphasis on praising God.

But how much is "God" a part of our Thanksgiving celebrations today? Have we moved it to more of a secular gathering where the family happens to meet or do we spend time together in prayer being thankful for all our blessings?

One tradition that many families keep is to have each person go around the table and state what they are thankful for in the past year.

One family has a special table cloth. On it each person traces their hand print and then writes next to it the year and what they are thankful for. This serves as a wonderful

memory each year of all the blessings the families have received.

How about a special prayer? Do you do the standard "Bless us O Lord" quickly or have you found one that takes just a few more minutes? Need ideas? Go to www.americancatholic.org and check-out the multitude of prayer opportunities.

As we reference the feast of "Thanksgiving", remember that "Eucharist" also means thanksgiving. Last year when I taught our son's second grade religion class, I brought in some "Thanks-a-lot" Girl Scout cookies. Each of these has the word "thank you" listed in different languages. We then talked about Jesus' gift to each of us and how every time we receive Communion we are thankful to him for his presence in our lives and this special gift.

Maybe your family could even attend your parish Thanksgiving liturgy. How about inviting the members of your CFM community to join you? Take time to gather and say "Thanks!"

Ken and Anna Kieliszewski, parents of two children, have been members of CFM at St. Thomas of Villanova parish, Palatine, Ill., since 2003.

Christian Family in our Midst

by Robin Hafey
Ramona, Calif.

In his classic book, *Improving Your Serve* (Word, 1981), **Charles Swindoll** observed how alienated people are from one another these days. There aren't many neighbors who talk over the backyard fence any more. We occupy common space, but have few common interests. The "well-manicured front lawn" is the modern day "moat" that keep others at bay. "Hoarding and flaunting have replaced sharing and caring." In our busy, busy lives, we rush by one another and on to the next thing on our agendas. This is the way of the world today.

I picked up my Bible and read Acts to learn about the way the Christian community lived back at the start:

The whole congregation of believers was united as one...one heart, one mind... they shared everything ... not a person among them was needy. The Holy Spirit was with them, strengthening them.

Acts 4: 32, 34

As your new CFM year begins remember, we are God's FAMILY!

He calls us to be there for each other! The joy that comes from that kind of connecting is so wonderful! Look for ways to be present to others---supportive and willing.

This is YOUR community! Pray for one another, reach out to those needing encouragement or possibly drop off a meal to a family in the midst of a tough time. These are things that bring us closer to one another!

This is *not* just one more thing "to do"... this is *your* Christian Family!

Change is a fascinating topic. Two events recently caused me to reflect on the nature of change and on how it affects CFM as a relevant movement in the church and in society today.

The first was when I was invited to celebrate a 50th high school reunion Mass for the class of '57 at Saint Joseph High School in **Natrona Heights, Pa.**

The second occasion was reading a newly-published book on the nature of social trends in our changing world.

As I prepared for the reunion, I thought back over the past half century to what has occurred to the class of '57 graduates now in their 60's. They were teenagers before the great changes of the 1960's. Theirs was an adolescence when life was considered in retrospect to have been rather idyllic.

I went to the Internet to find out that in their graduation year of 1957 several interesting events occurred. **Dwight D. Eisenhower** began his second term as President of the United States and **Rachel Carson**, author of *Silent Spring*, was raising the importance of environmental issues before Congress. Also, that year the Russians were to launch a satellite called Sputnik, the Ku Klux Klan was very active in the South with its anti-racial exploits and **Elvis Presley** was appearing on television on the **Ed Sullivan** variety show. Seeds of change were definitely in the air.

The Catholic church in the United States was responding to the growing number of baby boomers with new schools. The Church also had a plethora of vocations to priesthood and religious life. Those were the post-World II years when much seemed hopeful and possible

From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy

Change for the Better



as families expanded and the inter-generational family was still intact. Those were the years when Mass was still celebrated in Latin, but some in CFM were discussing the new liturgical movement and the possibility of Mass in the people's language. Also, CFM was reflecting on **Pope Pius XII's** encyclical on the Church (The Mystical Body of Christ) as the Movement grew in awareness of the Church's social teaching on transforming human society. Yet the yearning for change in a static society, which put a great emphasis on conformity, was just beginning to manifest in small ways.

I know of what I speak. I was a teenager in those years. I was in the seminary and started my college education in the autumn of '57. Only eight years later I was ordained in the middle of the 1960's when Vatican II had just completed its third session. By then we were into an agonizing war in Southeast Asia and **John F. Kennedy** had been assassinated. By then the hippie culture was in vogue and change was on the fast track. In the past half century we have seen changed on a magnitude never imagined. With the impact of TV and the Internet, the coming of the American space program, and the rise of a new global economy we have continued to experience the increasing momentum of change.

Sometimes for the good, other times for the bad -- the winds of change have swept through our lives transforming them and our world.

The book *Microtrends*, by **Mark Penn** and **E. Kinney Zalesne** (Reed, 2007), has a revealing subtitle: *The Small Forces Behind Tomorrow's Big Changes*. Yes, back in '57 it would have been hard to think of how the civil rights movement would become so powerful or Sputnik would result in a revolution in space and education. Or that **Elvis Presley** would so greatly impact the music and culture of a whole generation or more.

The anti-war movement, the environmental movement, the liturgical movement and the Christian Family Movement all began with small groups of people getting together and organizing for change in the '50s and '60s.

The new research in *Microtrends* points to the small but significant movements for change in the society today within religion, education, business, family life and global relationships.

It would behoove us to take note of these "small forces" as they begin to surface. Then we can prepare for the future. It's coming at us fast. Is CFM preparing or are we lulled by the drone of the media and comfortable in our homey little cocoons? We have much to offer as the 21st century unfolds.

Father Donald Conroy is National Chaplain of CFM. He lives in Indiana County, Pa., within the Diocese of Greensburg and is active in hospital, family and parish ministries.



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

The Work of Human Hands

A friend of a friend quit his job. He left a position full of responsibilities and decision-making demands, and went to work at a factory job where all of his duties and tasks were clearly defined.

His decision made me wonder about what is really happening when we “go to work.”

More than a century ago, “Catholic Action” and “Worker Movements” began to arise in Europe and the United States, as Christians sought to affirm the dignity of work in an increasingly industrial world. The Belgian priest, **Joseph Cardijn**, even referred to a factory machine as a worker’s “altar.”

In 1905, **Pope Pius X** wrote that, “The field of Catholic Action is extremely vast. In itself it does not exclude anything, in any manner, direct or indirect, which pertains to the divine mission of the Church.”

The mission of the Church is to sanctify the world. Work need not be “churchy,” he was saying. The everyday, ordinary work of human hands can be holy—not only for our own good “but also for the extension and increase of the Kingdom of God in individuals, families, and society; each one working according to his energy for the good of his neighbor by the propagation of revealed truth, by the exercise of Christian virtues, by the exercise of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.”

A century later, leaders of Italian Catholic Action organizations heard from Pope John Paul II that work is an activity that “needs to be redeemed.” When we work, we realize our own humanity, said **Pope John Paul II**. Our work forms us, and in a certain sense, creates us, he said.

The pope pointed out that “Jesus was a man of work and that work enabled him to develop his humanity.”

The mission of the Church is to sanctify the world.

Work need not be “churchy,”

I remember with great pleasure the moment I introduced myself some years ago to someone in my new home town of **Evansville**. He recognized my name and said, “Oh, you’re the writer.”

I know that some people say that we are “human beings” and not “human doings”—but the fact is, our work in some way does define us.

I don’t know what a scripture scholar would say, but this idea comes to my mind – that Jesus at age twelve in the temple told his mother that he must be about his father’s business, and then he went

home and worked as a carpenter.

Or as Pope John Paul put it, “the work of Nazareth constituted for Jesus a way to dedicate himself to the ‘affairs of the Father.’” He added, “the work of the Creator is prolonged” through work.



Our work site is not made holy by imposing something overtly religious upon it. Our work site is in fact holy because the work of redeemed humanity is holy.



“What makes a life great is not the entity of gain, nor the type of profession, or the level of the career,” said Pope John Paul. We are worth infinitely more than the goods we produce or possess.



Take the time today to examine your work life. Do you work for riches? Do you work for your own good, the good of your family and the good of society?

If you are a person with responsibilities and decisions to make, are workers treated equitably and fairly?

In particular, in these times of increased migration of peoples, the challenge is to examine the working conditions of immigrants. Are we providing opportunity or exploitation?

And finally, just as work is holy, so is a day of rest and celebration. We are, each of us, called to continue the work of creation—and just as certainly, to rest from our labors and to reflect on the goodness of our world.

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

His weekly column Taking the Time to Make a Difference is syndicated in a number of diocesan newspapers and appears on the CFM website. Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.

—continued from page 1

Fifteen years ahead of **Alan Gore's** *An Inconvenient Truth*, we examined how God has made families stewards of the earth. We took the role seriously and pioneered in environmental protection on the family level.

Definitely our history is a source of great pride in being ICCFM, an encouragement for us to persevere in attaining our vision for the families God has placed in our care.

...As Past Presidents looking back on our cherished experience of the last six years, we feel our hearts overflowing with gratitude to all of you, ICCFM members, for your total commitment, magnanimous dedication and persistent effort in the service of families. You have been a source of joy and an inspiration. We have been privileged to meet many of you in person, to witness and admire the benevolent work you are doing for families, especially the disadvantaged. Through the years we have learned to love each other more dearly as members of God's family, united for a common cause.

To acknowledge what you have meant to us, to describe with absolute honesty how you have enriched and exalted six years of our lives, we echo the sentiments of Saint Paul in a letter to his beloved Thessalonians: "It was your faith that encouraged us. . . How can we thank God enough for you, for the joy we have in His presence because of you?" (1 Thessalonians 3:7-9)

The immense happiness and the real blessing have been truly ours.

—Excerpted from the farewell letter of outgoing ICCFM presidents **Nop and Elma Muangaroot**. The complete text of the letter is available on the CFM website at <http://www.iccfm.org/news.html#sep2007>

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz



Making the Time for Your Marriage

My coworker juggled two armloads of files and equipment as we waited for the elevator at the end of the day. "Working hard," I commented sympathetically. "Another presentation tonight and tomorrow," he sighed. "I may end up in divorce court! This group can only meet on weekends, and the project is critical..." My friend spoke for many of us. We are pulled in so many directions—and usually not toward each other. Our precious time is spent on other things—important things—besides our marriages.

We say, "Soon. Soon we'll slow down and spend more time together." Actually we have always been challenged to make time for our spouse.

Each season of life brings very worthwhile commitments that can distract us from that person we vowed to love and honor all our days. When we are newly weds, we soon have to decide how much time to spend with treasured friends from our single days. Our families of origin make claims on us, and we have to negotiate with them and each other how much time to spend with them. When children come along and take over our lives, new moms must take care to pay attention to new dads. In those days, it can be difficult to remember that we are lovers first and parents, second. As we advance in careers and community activities, so many essential

events demand our presence. In middle age, our older parents need us, and our hobbies beckon us. It can be easy for couples to lose touch and discover they are strangers. There will never be a time that we won't have to intentionally choose to nurture our marriage.

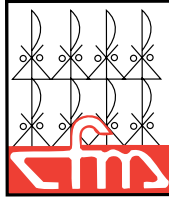
When we make time for our relationship, we are tapping into the Source of the grace of the sacrament of marriage. Only God can make time. The Bible tells us God sets the time for birth and the time for death, for planting and for uprooting the plant, for sorrow and for joy, for silence and for talking. God makes the time, but it is given to married couples to use it wisely to be their unique version of the sacramental sign of God's love.

*What have you done
for your marriage
today?*

*What one change
can you make in
your busy schedule
that will make
a difference?*

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

Former board member **Debby Weidner** has formed a new CFM group at Holy Innocents parish in **Duvall, Wash.** The group of seven families had their first meeting on September 22.

Pete and Jan Letourneau report that Our Lady of Wayside, **Arlington Heights, Ill.**, has increased its membership to 112 families this year. The group met for its annual lasagna dinner on September 14. This event features a prayer service planned by one of the groups that make up the OLW chapter and allows the many couples in this chapter pray together and to socialize beyond their small group.

This chapter has selected three organizations to support this year: Bear Necessities Pediatric Cancer Foundation, CEDA Northwest (a community orga-

nization aimed at helping individuals achieve self-sufficiency), and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. **Dave and Pam Heiss** and **Tim and Colleen Quenan** coordinate the effort.

Father Don Conroy took advantage of a visit from president couple **John and Lauri Przybysz** and executive directors **Paul and Jane Leingang** to organize an information night at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Newman Center. Father Conroy was recently assigned to nearby **Ernest, Pa.**

Elizabeth and Dan McKenna are starting a new CFM group in **Lovettsville, Va.** The group had a barbecue to meet each other in September. They had their first meeting on October 7. The group was able to arrange for two babysitters to watch their twelve children. They had feared that the cost would be a challenge for the group, but

the mother of the babysitters turned down an offer of higher pay because she wanted her girls to view the job as service. Beth and Dan are pictured on page 2.

St. Lawrence Martyr, **Redondo Beach, Calif.**, had a casino night for its adult members on Saturday, September 22, 2007 as kickoff for the year. The group collected school supplies for needy children in addition to having a great time. This large chapter involves its members in many charitable activities and opportunities for service. **Ron and Denis Geltz** and **John and Mary Poprac** are co-leaders. See photos on page 3.

CFM member and *ACT* contributor **Nicole Rogers-Schmirler** writes that she is currently involved in helping to create a transitional living shelter for victims of domestic violence.