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Christian Family Movement

The Refugees of Malta

by Judy Pozdol, Arlington Heights, Ill.

They come on dilapidated and overcrowded boats, hoping to reach a point of freedom and opportunity on our shores. Too often, the danger of the high seas puts them in mortal danger. We grieve for the souls that are lost when their boats overturn or break apart. Our hearts ache when a pregnant mother perishes, because two souls are lost instead of just one.

- Lily Gauci, Malta

While attending the ICCFM World Assembly in **Fatima, Portugal** this summer, **Andy** and I had the opportunity to hear first-hand from delegates from around the world. Surprisingly (or perhaps not!), the delegates from other countries brought up many of the same issues that concern us as Americans and as members of CFM-USA.

One of the topics that came up over the course of the five-day World Assembly was immigration. It is well known that people from all over the world come to America to seek a better life for themselves and their loved ones. Some come legally and others risk their lives to slip through our borders illegally. This past year, the volatile issue of immigration has generated debates on the rights of these immigrants to have access to education, health

services, and employment. It is often easy for Americans to overlook the fact that our country is not the only nation in the world that is struggling with issues surrounding immigration.

During one of the open forum discussions, **Lily Gauci**, a delegate from the tiny Mediterranean island nation of **Malta** described the devastating effect immigration is having on her country. Malta, at 122 square miles, is less than twice the size of Washington, D.C. Malta joined the European Union in May 2004, and as such, became the southernmost point in the European Union. Lying 58 miles south of **Sicily**, it is also only about 140 miles north of **Libya** in Northern Africa.

Proximity to the African coast makes Malta an attractive goal for refugees from **Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia** and **Sudan** trying to make their way to a better and more stable life in the European Union. These refugees come illegally, crowding themselves onto makeshift boats and risking their lives in hopes of reaching the safety of the Maltese shoreline without drowning or being caught by authorities and sent back.

When I heard Lily's impassioned plea for help from fellow

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Presidents' Perspective

by John and Lauri Przybysz

New Initiatives to Expand the Positive Impact of CFM

Christian Families are engaged in a great mission to change the world for the better.

Your families are holy, not because they are perfect, but because God's grace is at work in them. You are the face of Christ to your neighbors. For many of them, your domestic church is the only church they see.

The Domestic Church is real church. Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them." (Matthew 18:20) In the church of the home, "Momma" and "Papa" are the spiritual leaders.

We especially want to encourage young parents. You are doing something important, something with eternal consequences. Thank God that you are young and strong, because the work is hard. But children do grow up, faster than you think, and the day will come, Lord willing, when you will see your reward as full-grown decent adults.

The Christian Family Movement continues to organize families throughout the USA for enrichment, friendship and action.

CFM families are dedicated to making a difference in their own families and in their communities. Here are some highlights of things we are doing:

Keeping in Touch

The new CFM Animators are making the connection from national CFM to local leaders. ACT Newsletter has reported how members are finding simple yet effective ways to make a difference.



"Thank God for good moms," say Colleen and Patrick Halpin. Mary Kay is Treasurer of CFM-USA.

Easy to Start CFM

New groups are getting started using the nifty Starter Kits we introduced last year. This Kit is designed to help one interested couple invite three other families to try CFM for six Introductory meetings.

Share CFM

Invite, Invite, Invite! Keep sharing CFM with new families throughout the year. You may add new members to your group at any time. It is more important to spread CFM than to stay in our comfort zone with a few friends.

Caring for Marriage

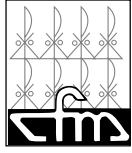
CFM is enthusiastically participating in the U.S. Catholic Bishops' National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage. Our new program book on challenges and benefits of marriage in society will be published in Summer 2008.

Building for the Future

A Family Retreat at **St. Meinrad's Archabbey in Indiana**, July 13-16, 2008, for current and prospective CFM leaders. Please consider bringing your family for three enriching, low-cost, and enjoyable days.

The Christian Family Movement is here to help and support you. By the grace of God, together we will be faithful to our mission.

John and Lauri Przybysz live in Severna Park, Md., and have been active CFM members since 1980. They have 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.

Parent to Parent

by Mary Lou Gorman



Do Manners Count?

Manners are not just "please" and "thank you." Those phrases are easy to teach, and of course we need to be persistent with them. The manners that count most out in the real world are respect and kindness toward other people. These qualities are very hard to teach. Respect and kindness begin at home, and require constant attention if they are to develop.

First, children must see their parents being kind and respectful to one another. Example isn't enough, though. Parents must also encourage the children to be kind to their brothers and sisters. This is not easy. Children all have different personalities. But I do believe that parents need to be consistent.

When unkindness occurs, the parents needs to intercede: Separate those in conflict; praise the children when they resolve conflicts. If conflict persists, help the children take a breather, think things through, listen to one another's points of view, analyze what happened during the conflict, and then work on apologies.

Of course there are many other ways to teach kindness and respect. For example, opportunities arise when an alert parent can make a timely suggestion, such as:

- to allow another to take the first turn

- to hold the door for someone else
- to clear others' dishes
- to share a treasured possession
- to handle with care what belongs to another
- to include others in their play
- to pick up what someone else has dropped
- to say kind things about another person
- to refrain from trying to top someone else's story
- to refrain from bragging
- to avoid interrupting when someone else is talking.

Parents need to pay attention to what is going on with their children, so they can be alert to opportunities. If you want your child to be a success, you must make sure he learns courtesy. He'll find that life will be happier.

I've often used the phrase, "Think before you act" to remind children that hasty cruel acts will only loose them friends and soil their own reputations.

Yes, being a parent is not easy, but when we teach kindness and respect to our children we are helping to build a better world., hold the door for another, clear others' dishes,

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

Sustaining Marriage in the Post-Vatican II Catholic Parish

by Julie Hanlon Rubio

Very few Catholic married folks are slackers; everyone I know is busy. When they meet each other, they are on the sidelines of soccer games, working booths at parish festivals, bringing yet another side dish for a school party, running to the store to buy birthday treats for a child's class, borrowing chairs for an extended family gathering, chaperoning a field trip, dashing to the hardware store to pick up something for a home repair project, gratefully sinking down in a pew at Mass, hoping the children won't be restless.

In the midst of this busyness, people yearn for a slower pace, deeper friendships, and more time to simply *be* with their spouses and their children. Busyness distracts us from the nagging awareness of a certain emptiness in American suburban life, a sense that life is less than it ought to be. I believe that this emptiness is paradoxically connected to low expectations for marriage—low expectations explicitly contradicted by the Catholic tradition.

Why are most middle class Catholic families unaware of and/or unready to embrace the high expectations of contemporary Catholic theology of marriage? An obvious place to turn is the parish.

If American middle class culture is at odds with the Catholic vision for families, parishes should be places of refuge where an alternative way of life is nurtured.

Two-thirds of all Catholics are registered parishioners and most

attend their local parish. Parishes are ideally placed to form families in Christian values. If the culture is working against marriage, the church should be building it up. However, my research on Catholic parishes leads me to believe that most are not supportive of marriage, at least not supportive of the kind of marriages to which Catholic have been called by **Pope John Paul II**: marriages marked by love, life, service, and prayer.

If American middle-class culture is at odds with the Catholic vision for families, parishes should be places of refuge.

If parishes are to support distinctively Catholic marriages that strive for communion inside and outside of the home, and to help families overcome the problem of emptiness, they must question much that they have taken on as they have traveled from the margins to the center of middle class American life.

First, parishes should actively encourage upwardly mobile Catholics to reflect critically on the pace of their lives. What is the proper place of work in life? How much activity is too much? If Christian families are to be sustained, unhurried time together is crucial. Communion between spouses doesn't happen when spouses are too busy to pay attention to one another. Parents and children need time for conversation and play. When children

routinely join multiple sports teams each season, when activities and homework consume most available free time, churches have a responsibility to help their members let go of certain middle class assumptions about what makes a good life.

Second, parishes and pastors should be encouraged to develop ties that bind parishioners more closely in community. Without strong community, Catholics lack a place to be nourished and challenged in ways that will help them stand apart from the excesses of American middle class life. Instead of offering activities that focus on entertainment, parishes might encourage parishioners to share skills, start babysitting co-ops, visit the elderly, mentor young married couples, or start a community garden. My colleague **David Matzko McCarthy** writes that a wedding binds a couple closer together and binds the two more closely together in the church. How much more should the parish bind couples together and bind them to their friends in Christ. This is not going to happen if parishioners only see each other at dances, trivia nights, sporting events, and parish carnivals. They need ways to serve each other and come together around common interests more significant than their own good.

Third, when parishes ask a lot of parishioners, it should be for worthwhile endeavors. Central to parish life should be the development of small faith-sharing groups where married couples and single parents can reflect on the struggles of living a counter-cultural life.

Without such explicit reflection in community, it is unlikely that Christian marriages will look much different from others. However, because only a small percentage of Catholics participate in groups like these, parishes need to offer other outlets for shared spiritual experience and reflection, and it is crucial that these events receive more attention than other sorts of activities than typically consume the time of parish families.

Fourth, service to the poor should be a hallmark of parish life. If parishioners' energies are not tapped out from social activities and sports, they may be more available for real service--not just a once or twice a year delivery of food baskets or presents, but ongoing commitments to people in need.

What a community does with its time, people, and money says who it is. If they want to shape the lives of contemporary Christian families, parishes must embody and practice the Christian tradition in a rich variety of ways and not simply offer more of what middle class American culture values. If parishes take up this challenge and strive to become places of serious transformation, the families that spring from Christian marriages will have a fighting chance to become what they are called to be.

This article is drawn from a paper Julie gave at a conference on marriage sponsored by Boston College's Church in the 21st Century project in September 2007.

Julie Hanlon Rubio is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at St. Louis University. She and her husband **Martin** have three sons.



Family Activity Corner

by Anna Kieliszewski

Easter Story Cookies



Though Easter is the earliest it can be this year, there is still time to pray during Lent and to reflect on the meaning of the Resurrection.

Our activity this month is making "Resurrection Story" cookies the evening before Easter.

Ingredients

3 egg whites
1 cup whole pecans
1 tsp. Vinegar
A pinch salt
1 cup sugar
A zipper baggie
A wooden spoon
tape • Bible

First, preheat your oven to 300 degrees. This is important so the oven will be ready at the end of the recipe.

1. Place pecans in zipper baggie and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. *After Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by the Roman soldiers. Read John 19:1-3.*
2. Next, let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl. *When Jesus was thirsty on the cross, He was given vinegar to drink. Read John 19:28-30.*
3. Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. *Jesus gave His life to give us life. Read John 10:10-11.*
4. Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. *This represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin.*

Read Luke 23:27.

5. So far, the ingredients are not very appetizing. Add 1 cup sugar. *The sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know and belong to Him. Read Ps. 34:8 and John 3:16.*
6. Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. *The color white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3.*
7. Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto wax paper covered cookie sheet. *Each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. Read Matt. 27:57-60.*
8. Put the cookie sheet in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. *Jesus' tomb was sealed. Read Matt. 27:65-66.*
9. GO TO BED! *We may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed. Read John 16:20 and 22.*
10. On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. *The cookies are hollow! On the first Resurrection, Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. Read Matt. 28:1-9*

Happy Easter!



From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy

Caring for Creation: CFM and Stewardship of the Earth

The human family and your family depend on the Earth for life's sustenance. Air and water, food and energy are natural resources that daily sustain us and on which we depend for our very lives. We are earthlings!

As the industrial era is coming to an end, we now have entered the unpredictable developments of the new age of information technology. We also enter a time when the Earth itself as a living and thriving reality with all its complexity is being impacted as never before by one species—humanity.

Science and economics are showing the effect of what we do as a community of human beings. We have a greater and greater impact on the vital functions of the Earth. The whole discussion about global climate change—often called global warming—is the most obvious case in point.

Environmentalists, who have warned us for years about how we treat the natural habitat of which we are part, are being proved right in many respects. In my book *Earth at Risk*, which I co-authored with Dr. Rodney Petersen (published by Prometheus Press in early 2000), I noted this along with other ways we humans are affecting what has been called the natural world. But from a religious point of view we can call it "creation." In that book the dialogue between religion and science was outlined and discussed.

Yet we have to get beyond discussion to practical ways in which we can do something about "caring for creation."

Today this human footprint is all the more evident. Even many politicians that used to deny the science or down play these issues are taking a second look. We all must observe the facts being verified by the vast majority of the world's scientists on the human factor in causing global climate change. Then it's important to go beyond science and make judgments based on important values. Here we must be enlightened by both reason and faith.

Somehow many religious people have overlooked this reality and the moral responsibility involved in being stewards of the Earth. But what does the Bible and Catholic social teaching say about this subject?

At a youth rally in Italy this past year and in another audience at the Vatican in 2007 Pope Benedict XVI called for an alliance between human beings and the environment in order to safeguard God's creation. The Pope focused on the nature of our moral responsibility and how to teach the young to have an understanding of morality by focusing on this area of ethical concern.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Pro-

ocol concerning the misuse of substances that damage the ozone layer and cause grave harm to humans and the eco-system of the planet the Holy Father commented: "Over the last two decades thanks to the international community between politics, science and the economy, important results have been achieved with positive repercussions on present and future generations."

Then he concluded: "It is my hope that cooperation may be intensified in order to promote the common good, [social] development and the protection of creation, reinforcing the alliance between man and the environment, which must be a mirror of God's creative love, whence we come and towards which we are proceeding."

Before the present pope came to the chair of Saint Peter, his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, made some major comments on our Christian duty to be environmentally responsible. In his famous 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year)* John Paul made abundantly clear our social and ethical responsibility regarding caring for God's creation and saving the God-given resources of the Earth for the common good.

In 1995 in *Evangelium Vitae (On the Gospel of Life)* the Holy Father also emphasized that our *responsibility for life* connects with our responsibility towards the environ-

ment. In several papal statements (called Apostolic Exhortations) on the church in America (1999), in Asia (1999) and in Oceania (2001) in conjunction with major meetings with bishops he spoke to the issue. He made it very clear that ecological preservation and reducing harmful consumption are important Christian responsibilities.

Add to this the wide range of statements from many bishops' conferences in Australia, the Philippines, Lombardy in Northern Italy, Canada and the United States we have abundant witness to the importance of our caring for the environment.

The question at hand is how to make this practical in our own community, in our own neighborhood and in each household. The family is a powerful force for environmental education and change. The future of the family and of the planet is entwined.

CFM's Observe-Judge-Act approach to social issues can be the key to getting families to overcome the present trend toward global warming and other environmental disasters affecting our health, our economy and our planet's life-support systems.

To get more information we can refer to several written sources as well as to some very helpful insights on the Internet. This spring and summer as you enjoy the natural world out of doors, you and your family can be God's instruments for renewing His wonderful handiwork. The family itself will benefit and all of the human family will be blessed if you take action in "Caring for Creation."

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.

—Malta, cont. from page 1

Christians and from other EU nations, I was jolted to full attention. I had heard about the African refugees living in broken-down refugee camps on Malta from **Aaron Lurth**, a good friend of our daughter, who spent the Spring 2007 semester studying in Malta. While in Malta, Aaron and his



Aaron Lurth

fellow students travelled weekly to one of these camps to teach English. They were warned that these visits could be dangerous because there have been a few isolated disturbances, which cause the Maltese people view the refugees with suspicion and distrust. But Aaron and his companions found educated, middle-class African people who were eager to apply themselves to learning English, in the hope of bettering themselves so they could become self-sufficient and transition to better lives on the European continent.

These refugees don't like being dependent on the meager resources of the Maltese any more than the Maltese like having them there. They are sent into the most inhospitable regions of the tiny,

rocky island; areas that the Maltese themselves won't inhabit. At least one of these camps is on the banks of a stagnant, mosquito-infested backwater. Shelter comes in the form of a surplus military tents or abandoned warehouses; but there are few other options available to the refugees because Malta is the second most densely populated nation on earth, with a population of over 400,000. Forced by EU laws to provide temporary sanctuary for thousands of refugees, the Maltese struggle to utilize the limited resources of their rocky island to the best of their ability.

Aaron, a talented photographer, was granted permission by the Red Cross to photograph the camps in the hope of raising awareness of the refugee situation in Malta. He has applied for a Fulbright grant to create a photo-documentary of conditions in the camps and hopes to return to Malta this summer and begin by shooting photos in one of the all-male camps. There are also camps made up of all-women and a few that are made up of families. Ultimately, he would like to create a documentary and present lectures on college campuses and other forums.

Although this young man is not a member of CFM, he is demonstrating the power of the Observe-Judge-Act method. As members of Christian Family Movement in America, as well as members of the International Confederation of Christian Family Movement (ICCFM), my hope is that we pray for the success of Aaron's project and offer any support we can to the Maltese to aid the refugees.

Judy Pozdol and her husband Andy (the CFM webmaster) are members of CFM at Our Lady of the Wayside, Arlington Heights, Ill.





Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Do What You Have to Do ...

This kid that I met one time, I think he was the first Protestant person I ever met. I remember vaguely that he thought of himself as a “public” in order to distinguish himself from me. I was a kid about the same age who went to the Catholic school.

He asked me what I thought was a really odd question. I figured it out later, but at the time he asked it, I was really stumped.

He asked me, as I recall, “Is it true that you have to eat certain kinds of sandwiches on certain days?” “No,” I told him.

Of course, at that time, Catholics were not supposed to eat meat on Friday. But I didn’t make the connection between what we weren’t supposed to do with what someone thought we had to do.

We didn’t have to eat certain kinds of sandwiches, not even on Friday, I thought. We could eat egg sandwiches, peanut butter sandwiches, fish sandwiches, cheese sandwiches, even salted radishes on butter bread sandwiches.

If he had asked me, “Is it true you have to go to church on Sunday?” I could have told him, “Yes.” Going to church on Sunday was something we have to do. But I knew for sure that my religion did not require me to eat a particular kind of sandwich.

I don’t recall much else of that conversation. The other kid said he didn’t have to eat certain kinds of sandwiches on certain days, either — so I guess we had our first ecumenical break-through.

Nonetheless, we never got around to any other questions — in part, I’m sure, because I didn’t feel very comfortable talking with a Protestant anyway.



There’s been a lot of talk in recent times about the “Catholic identity” of schools and other institutions. Many comments though

...the central experience of Catholic Christianity revolves around Food...

are not very different from what I heard in my childhood encounter. Identity in the minds of many seems to boil down to just two things – what you have to do and what you aren’t supposed to do.

The letter of the law, though, often says little about the intention of the one who is following it.

“Going to church” should mean more than mere physical presence in a church building. Even if the church is full, there may be people there who are empty inside.

A lobster dinner on Friday is not much of a penitential experience for most folks. I wouldn’t mind it at all if lobster was some-

thing I had to eat. A liverwurst sandwich might be your favorite – but it would be plenty of penance for me.

It should not be surprising that this line of thinking has returned once again to food. For the central experience of Catholic Christianity revolves around food – the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ truly present in the form of bread and wine.

In the Eucharist is where we find our identity. That is truly what we have to eat.

And the truth is too, that “going to church” is only half the story. It is only in “going from church” that we do what Jesus requires us to do.

In his first encyclical, Pope Benedict XVI said it this way.

“The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity. These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable. For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being.”



Take the time to reflect on what makes your family to be a Christian family. If anything is lacking in what you see, compared with what you ought to see, do whatever you have to do 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



Live in Hope

I see my friend, a family life minister, just a few times a year. Each time we meet, she reports wistfully that her two adult sons don't have any plans for marriage to their long-time girlfriends. She's longing for grandchildren. She is not alone. Many parents of young adults see no weddings on the horizon. The number of Church weddings has declined more than 30 per cent in the past ten years, a rate similar to that for civil marriages. Why are young people, even those from Christian families, shying away from marriage?

The generational trend away from marriage seems to be based on fear of the unknown. What if we end up like so many of our friends? How can we know that we will still be in love many years down the road? What if I get my heart broken? These fears are paralyzing the next generation and robbing them of the hope they need to risk marriage and commitment.

The world needs a renewal of hope, and the world needs marriage to show that hope is alive.

In his new book, *Christian Marriage: The New Challenge* (Liturgical Press, 2007), **Dr. David Thomas** is optimistic about the future of marriage: "While marriage is going through some difficult times, it will survive. It is part of the hope that is the substance of faith." Christian marriage is part of what

Pope Benedict calls "the Christian project," in his recent encyclical, *Spe Salvi* (*Saved by Hope*).

Each Christian is called to be a person who thinks of others first, and married people live this vocation intimately with our spouses and our children. The hope that we have in Christ allows us to enter a partnership in which, as Benedict

... *The person
of hope
lives
in the moment
with the knowledge
and trust
that all of life
is in good hands.*

Henri Nouwen

says, "we escape from the prison of our 'I'" and find fulfilling love.

*Consider how his words
apply to your marriage:*

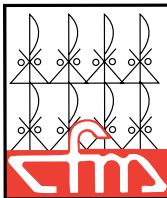
- *Christians should never limit ourselves to asking: how can I save myself? We should also ask: what can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise?"*

- *No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do, and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better or for worse.*
- *The true stars in our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light...but to reach him we also need lights close by—people who shine with his light and so guide us along the way.*

Christians are Easter people, people who have hope that life will conquer death, despite all evidence to the contrary. The same hope that guided Jesus' followers as they journeyed into the uncertain future also sustains your marriage. As **Henri Nouwen** says, "The person of hope lives in the moment with the knowledge and trust that all of life is in good hands." In your marriage, you cannot know exactly what your future will look like, but you have promised to go there together.

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

Jean Smith reports that Holy Trinity CFM in **Des Moines** had a Family Prayer Day February 17. The program included a potluck and a craft project.

The CFM board met at St. Thomas of Vilanova parish in **Palatine, Ill.**, February 22-24. After the Saturday evening parish Mass, local CFM families joined the board of directors for a "Western Extravaganza" of square dancing, food and fun. The board met Friday evening and all day Saturday and concluded their meeting midday on Sunday. **Kevin and Kate O'Connell**, leaders of the St. Thomas CFM, group leaders **Anna and Ken Kieliszewski** and **Danny and Barbara Howell** hosted. The Kieliszewskis are members of the board.

Tony and Lily Gauci, ICCFM representative to the United Nations committee for the family which meets in **Vienna**, report that they attended a meeting convened in **Rome** for UN-recognized non-governmental organizations with Catholic connections. The theme of the forum, which was held November 30 through December 2, 2007, was *The Holy See and Catholic Inspired NGOs: Impact, difficulties and challenges in the international sphere.*

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertoni, Vatican Secretary of State, gave the opening address. Among the issues discussed at the meeting were immigration; abortion laws; humanitarian challenges in India, Africa and South America; and financial accountability for UN aid. **Pope Benedict** addressed the group December 1 and presented them with copies of his recent encyclical, *Spe Salvi (Saved by Hope).*

Wilbur and Juanita Hooker were elected in January as MFC-LA president couple. They succeed **Erwin and Nora Lopez**. The Hookers are natives of **Honduras** and have been members of MFC-LA for 13 years.

JoAnne Mullen-Muhr of St. James CFM, **Arlington Heights, Ill.**, was one of the 2007 Chicago Archdiocesan Christifideles honorees for demonstrating "a personal ministerial renewal and responsibility for the Church's life at the parish level."

Former Archdiocese of New York federation leader and national board member **Eileen Fitzgerald** died January 24, her 60th wedding anniversary, in Cooperstown, N.Y. Her husband, **Gerry**, survives. She also leaves seven children, 17 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. The family has suggested that gifts in her memory be given to CFM. May she rest in peace.