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# LINK LAZO

*Bulletin of International Confederation of  
Christian Family Movements*



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## MESSAGE FROM ICCFM PRESIDENT-COUPLE

### Wilma and Pip Cua



A Blessed New Year to you dear co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord! The year 2020

promises to be a challenging year for our mission work especially after our fruitful visit to Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru. And subsequently with our meeting in Los Angeles, CA with Wilbur & Juanita Hooker, the current president-couple for North America.

We thank the Lord for all the blessings that He has bestowed on our families and the ICCFM. Let us continue to ask for His blessings as we continue to bring the Good News to every family in the world.

As we start facing the challenges of the New Year, let us review and focus on the following plan of action that we laid down during the General Assembly in Morelia, Mexico on July 16, 2019, viz:

#### **1. Formation-**

Formation of members is key to a strong and vibrant membership in MFC-CFM. This is achieved through the regular bi-monthly meetings of the members.

#### **2. Expansion-**

We need to expand the presence of MFC-CFM to other countries where it is not present. In countries where it is present, we have to go and reach out to more dioceses and parishes.



#### **3. Advocacies-**

Our voices must be heard on issues that affect life and the family. To remain silent is not an option. Like St. John the Baptist, let us denounce the evils that threaten to undermine and destroy our families.

#### **4. Use of social media-**

We can harness the power of the social media in our evangelization work. This can be an effective tool in evangelization.

#### **5. Finances-**

It is about time that ICCFM as well as the continental and national leadership build up their finances in order to accomplish more in building stronger and happier families in countries, dioceses, parishes and communities.

#### **6. Coordination/networking among continents and countries-**

We are one big family and we can achieve more by working together as one team bringing Christ to other families and communities.

Additionally, our beloved Bishop Gerardo A. Alminaza, our International Chaplain, has said that we should (1) promote priestly vocation in the families (2) bring our mission to our brothers and sisters in the peripheries and (3) start caring for the environment which is our common home.

Thank you and let us all have a Blessed and Fruitful 2020 Year in the mission.

**Pip & Wilma Cua**  
**ICCFM President-Couple**  
**2019-2022**

**MESSAGE FROM ICCFM CHAPLAIN BISHOP  
GERRY ALMINAZA**



As we look back these past six trying months, we are grateful to recognize the hand of God that links our lives together as Christian Families. We are blessed to have this opportunity - due to long quarantine periods - to see our lived experiences during this pandemic through the eyes of God and to learn a lot from them. Let me share two short stories to help us in our reflection: First, back in the days when Germany was divided, a huge wall separated East and West Berlin. One day, some people in East Berlin took a truck load of garbage and dumped them on the West Berlin side. The people of West Berlin could have done the same thing, but they didn't. Instead they took a truck load of canned goods, bread, milk and other provisions, and neatly stacked

them on the East Berlin side. On top of this stack they placed the sign: **\*EACH GIVES WHAT ONE HAS. \***

Second, imagine you are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere. Why did you spill the coffee?

"Because someone bumped into me!!!" - you might answer. Wrong! You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup. Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea.

**\*WHATEVER IS INSIDE THE CUP IS WHAT WILL SPILL OUT. \***

As you prayerfully read and reflect through the pages of our LINK please bear these in mind:

**\*EACH GIVES WHAT ONE HAS. \***

**\*WHATEVER IS INSIDE THE CUP IS WHAT WILL SPILL OUT. \***

They are both saying the same thing - expressed in different ways. What have we acquired over the years of our formation in our families, schools and parish communities? Team spirit or pull-down architecture? The culture of sharing or throwaway culture? When life gets tough, what spills over? What's





in our cup? Our family life provides the cup, WE choose how to fill it. During this pandemic there might have been many occasions when we got shaken and rattled and whatever was inside us would have come out.

I pray that through this present issue of our LINK we are able to surface the good in us, how the vicissitudes of life have formed and revealed Christ in each one of us, how much **SENSE of UNITY, BELONGINGNESS** to our **FAMILY** and **APOSTOLIC SERVICE** have been developed among us. Here too we hope to find our many **LESSONS** learned: how **CONCERN** and **CARE** (1) for **OTHERS**, especially for the **EXCLUDED** or **MARGINALIZED** in our communities, (2) for **PRIESTLY VOCATION**, and (3) for our **COMMON HOME** have grown in our families and in our Movement.

Whatever helps and encourages **COMMUNION, SYNODALITY**, the so-called **CHURCH OF THE “WE”** is most certainly **PLEASING TO GOD**, glorifies God and gives **JOY to ALL!** For this is indeed God’s plan and what Jesus, Our Lord and Good Shepherd, prayed for: **“THAT ALL MAY BE ONE!” (John 17:21)**

Devotedly yours in the Holy Family of Nazareth,



**MOST REV. GERARDO A.  
ALMINAZA, D.D.**

Bishop of San Carlos, Philippines

ICCFM Chaplain

## VICE-PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

June -2020

As committed Catholics, within today's world, we face challenging situations, challenges that we face not only as Catholics but as families and as individuals. Inside the CFM we carry a conjugal spirituality that becomes familiar and then community, which sisters us with any CFM member brother of the world, yet so that this spirituality will end up solidly cementing, it is only achieved if there is a sincere and frank conversion to God, which leads us to say from the heart: *"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* (Mt 22, 37)

This response involves us to keep in mind that **God is the first to be answered to** with service in our apostolate, and secondly to the leaders who have called us to serve. It also leads us to transform in response to our family and our leaders, especially our Pastor Bishops of each place and not stop to do our rightful good or to denounce some injustice. *"This is what you must say, encouraging or arguing with full authority; no one should despise you."* (Ti 2:15)

Therefore, not being silent and inactive before the challenges of the world is already a challenge. Today the situation during the Coronavirus pandemic, we see on the one hand with sadness that there has been death of several CFMers, or family members, or friends, health care providers and many more, but known that

*"If we have died with him, then we shall live with him."* (2 Tim 2:11). The Faith we



have makes us feel less afraid of death, because it gives meaning to know that there is an eternal life to which God calls us.

Another challenge is that many people have been out of work, others goes out to work with the risk of contagion, even with the care recommended by the Institutes of Health. At the same time, it is observed that people are still at risk because it is not within their reach, to have the information to make them understand, or they do not have the means to access good health care, or because they do not know the disease, or some take this disease for granted, until we finally infect each other unintentionally. Let us remember the words of Jesus: *"... In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have overcome the world."*

(Jn 16, 33)

It is difficult for children and older adults, always stay at home and with little social coexistence, by nature we are social beings. This test forces us to **search and discover opportunities** to accompany them and somehow lead us to the



reflection that we are destined for God and share it, to seek how to live together more frequently, more than before, with new means, new forms, with cleverness and joy.

In several countries, **CFM groups are working with virtual meetings in response to the challenge created by the pandemic to pursue our evangelization efforts.**

(WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, Viber, GoToMeeting, Teams, etc...)

Our movements have to help the church in the evangelization and salvation of each person, in our case, we focused on families.

God has blessed us in this Apostolate for the Family – the CFM - because He has been right to call us to serve Him, at this point in time. And to reach by his mercy, one day be in the book of eternal life.

Let us also remember and thank the people and couples who in the past and in the present, have been at the forefront or behind the scenes of the CFM and those who have participated in its establishment, because of them, we are here today.

Looking for a lesson, we hear that the statistics is that every 100 years there is a pandemic, and perhaps a few of our generation remember this. It may be suggested to, introduce within the family traditions at a certain frequency and date, to remember these situations that we lived and of the people who gave their lives, unsung, Bishops, Priests, Religious, CFM members, Brothers, Doctors, Nurses, etc., so that the succeeding generations

will know how these situations happened, value the transcendent, and remember how the challenges in the family could be faced, in order to create bonds and achieve a Spirituality of Communion both between families and between the **generations, in itself**, value more our **Faith**.

For example, in Mexico the day of the “deceased faithful” is celebrated annually by remembering those who have died from our

families, it could be an occasion to add this memorial; by doing what Pope

Francis tells us in *Amoris Laetitia* that a society without history has no future (cf., AL 192, 193).

God who gave us his Son when it was the precise time and to his Mother Mary, we asked her to intercede for us, as well as the many Saints who have given their lives, for today with satisfaction and joy to say we are **Catholics**.

We ask for your Prayers to God for the Confederation, these are transcendent and essentials, and know that you are helping in the mission to shore up the Movements to care for the families that God has entrusted to us.



**Sergio and Dora Treviño**  
**Vice-Presidents of ICCFM**





**CONTINENTAL PRESIDENTS OF NORTH AMERICA.**

**Wilbur and Juanita Hooker**

I. As a Continental President we have participated in different and important activities of the North America Movements in the period January to June 2020. We will mentions some and others were canceled by Covid 19.

II. Also in January 2020 to February 2020, we were working on everything necessary to have a place and host the members assistant to the Extraordinary Assembly that would be held on July 21 and August 1 and 2 of 2020, and which was cancelled because of the pandemic (Covid 19).

III. We had the first meeting on November 4 2019 in Los Angeles with Pip & Wilma Cua (Presidents of ICCFM), Sergio & Dora Treviño (Vice Presidents), and Rene & Amparo Pronstroller (Secretary of Unity, Co Responsibility). Our spiritual Advisor Father Nelson Trinidad also attended the meeting as well.



IV. On January 12<sup>th</sup>- 2020 we participated on the electoral commission team to elect new Presidents for CFM- Los Angeles 2020-2023

We would like to congratulate Oscar and Cecilia Aviña as a new President of CFM of Los Angeles 2020-2023.



V.

CFM-USA National Winter Board Meeting  
January 24<sup>th</sup> – January 26<sup>th</sup> 2020



The National Winter Board Meeting of the CFM-USA was held in Redondo Beach, California on January 24<sup>th</sup> – January 26<sup>th</sup> 2020







We attended this meeting on January 25th 2020 invited by Brian and MaryAnn Thelen President of the CFM-USA



During the meeting CFM-USA two main topics were discussed:

1. Forecasting and developing the upcoming activities for 2020.
2. Planning the growth and improvement of CFM



CFM-USA Board of Director VI. On June 23 2020, we had a meeting with all Presidents of North America. We had the presence of the Bishop Jorge Rodriguez who shared with the group a



beautiful message to reflect on during these difficult times. In addition, he reminded us of a few words that Pope Francis has mentioned in regard to the pandemic:

Have we learned something from the pandemic? It is important for us to reflect about this experience.

We thank everyone for attending the meeting.



We mentioned as a MFC/CFM we have to change and cannot continue to be the same or have the same life style, and should reinvent ourselves.

Bishop Jorge Rodriguez invited the participants to reflect, that we cannot live the same lifestyle pre -pandemic. The CFM/MFC needs to adapt to the new virtual meetings. The technology will bring us a great opportunity to reach out to others. He mentioned there is a potential to discover how to evangelize.



Meeting via zoom with the Presidents of NA.

**MESSAGE FROM GUILLERMO AND MA. ELENA NOVELO**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ of the ICCFM.

Definitely that for everyone this year has been and is atypical. After a time of surprise and thinking that this would happen soon, the stage of adapting our daily life and reinventing ourselves in every way has followed, to get ahead in this new reality that confronts us and forces us to create, to invent, to search for plan B.

Our apostolate has not been the exception, we are sure that each of you have experienced this surprise, concern and uncertainty, moments full of unanswered questions, but that little by little with the help of the Holy Spirit they are clarifying.

One of the objectives of the Formation Secretariat is to support organizations in the generation of their processes, structures and training materials, promoting the exchange of materials for mutual growth.

We know that each of you, leaders of the Movements, make the maximum effort in these times to keep their members

motivated and integrated and we know the activities that you have had online and through the platforms, which have been successful.

"When fishermen cannot go fishing, they mend and prepare their nets, to have a great catch when the good weather comes."

We invite you to read and meditate on Sacred Scripture daily because in it is the light, the guide, the strength to continue in the entrusted mission, to work on the formation and training of its leaders, who are the strong arm of your team, adapting their



courses to this virtual reality and not tire of insisting that they take them.

Changes are difficult for all and it is difficult to move from what we have already studied and tested, but this will lead us to greater achievements for the Glory of God.

From the hand of God and the Blessed Virgin, we will leave strengthened and renewed to continue working with courage in His vineyard.

A fraternal hug  
Ma. Elena y Guillermo Novelo  
Formation Secretariat





## MESSAGE FROM EDGAR AND CINTHYA MONTALVO

Dear Brothers and Sisters in CFM, the Secretariat of Unity, Co-responsibility and Finance, West, cordially greets you with the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ. We also invite you to continue with the Mission to be the **Love** that illuminates our journey to announce and live the joy of love in the family in our countries.

One of the objectives of the secretary is to live unity in and out of our much-loved Christian Family Movement. We certainly live this brotherhood every Sunday as the great Catholic family we are, this time we take the opportunity to remind them and continue to invite them to come together as ICCFM in our "Monthly Mass" (1st Sunday of the month), which is promoted through the different platforms of the



ICCFM, as well as social media. Fam. Miguel Ángel y Alina Cespedes Zabala de Santa Cruz de la sierra Bolivia

What is the Monthly Mass? It is simply that, on the First Sunday of each month, you consecrate your Mass for all the families that make up the ICCFM, from wherever you are, from your home, your

community, your parish, your diocese, your country or continent. In some places, they are organized and all are connected at the same time and thru the website for the Eucharist. In some other places, a schedule is assigned for Mass, i.e. the Mass of 10:00 Hrs will be by the families of the ICCFM, no matter where you are; each of you knows how you can organize to live this celebration of Unity as ICCFM. We would love to know how you celebrate the Eucharist, you could send us, photos, the link of the Eucharist, etc. And so we make a great photographic gallery of how each of you lives the Eucharist as members of the ICCFM and fosters Unity outside and within our group.



St. John the Baptist Parish, Cuitláhuac Sector, Diocese of Córdoba, México

Some of the other objectives of the secretary are co-responsibility and finance, no doubt that with the current state of affairs that our world is in, we have practiced for the most part these two actions, we have been responsible for maintaining a healthy, safe and reliable





environment for every member of our family as well as for our neighbor. There is no doubt that every ICCFM family will have beautiful, unusual, funny, amazing and even overwhelming and possibly regrettable experiences of how the pandemic transformed our lives, that is, being co-responsible for our actions, words and thoughts we have all endured this situation.

We would love for you to share at least one of those experiences, we invite you in three or four lines, to share with us some of what you have lived, learned or experienced at this stage of your life as a person, couple, family or even as a society.

Of course, as we transition to the new normal, we need to adjust our finances and this is where our third goal of finance comes in. We must add that during this time, we are being tested in the way we manage our resources, such as food, toiletries, common spaces and our general economy.

Within our much-loved Church, as well as within our local CFM, we know that we are co-responsible for bringing our monetary offering to the Church and our \$1.00 dollar to the continental team and to ICCFM. We certainly know that these are times when every resource must be taken care of to the fullest, so we thank each of the CFMers who made their best efforts to contribute \$1.00 which serves to carry

out the projects established always with the aim of continuing to expand the gospel of marriage and the family throughout the world.

Thank you wholeheartedly for your solidarity with the continental presidents and the ICCFM.

It has been a pleasure, writing this message and being able to communicate it through the internet, may God bless you always, thank you very much for the time borrowed.

We leave you our email, where you can send us your photos or experiences, as well as ask for reports from our bank account:

- Photos of how you live the ICCFM Monthly Eucharist.
- Your family experiences of the new reality. (Three or Four Lines, with your anecdote)
- Or submit your contribution to the ICCFM. (\$1.00 per year, but may be monthly, quarterly, or 6-monthly depending on your family situation.)

Cinthy Arcega C.

Edgar D. Montalvo

Secretariat of Unity, Co-responsibility and Finance

[secexunity@iccfm.org](mailto:secexunity@iccfm.org)





**DEAR AMAZON: SUMMARY OF THE POPE'S EXHORTATION IN 4 POINTS**

At the beginning, the Pope explains that, with this document, he seeks to "express resonances" that the Synod provoked in him.



Twenty-eight cardinals, 29 archbishops, 62

residential bishops, 7 auxiliaries, 27 apostolic vicars and 10 prelate bishops, 21 non-bishops, including diocesan and religious, participated in that meeting. In addition, some experts on the subject have been invited and there are 55 auditors; and representatives of different native peoples and indigenous ethnic groups.



In it, the Holy Father divided into chapters the four

great dreams that he has for the South American region: a social dream, a cultural dream, an ecological dream and an ecclesial dream:

**A SOCIAL DREAM**



I dream of an Amazon that fights for the rights of the poorest, of the

native peoples, of the last, where their voice is heard and their dignity is promoted.

Our dream is that of an Amazon that integrates and promotes all its inhabitants so that they can consolidate a "good life". Colonizing interests that continue to expand legally and illegally - logging and mining have been expelling and cornering indigenous, riverside, and Afro-descendant peoples, which has encouraged the most recent migratory movements of indigenous people to the peripheries of the cities.

National or international companies that damage the Amazon and do not respect the rights of native peoples to the territory and its demarcation, to self-determination and prior consent, must be given the names that correspond to them: injustice and crime.

The Pope recalls that, for the Amazonian peoples, human relationships "are permeated by the surrounding nature." For this reason, he writes, they live as a true "uprooting" when they are "forced to emigrate to the city." The last part of the first chapter is dedicated to "Damaged Institutions" and "Social Dialogue".

The Pope denounces the evil of corruption that poisons the State and its institutions. And he hopes that the Amazon will become "a place of social dialogue", first of all, "with the last." That of the poor, he warns, must be "the most powerful voice" in the Amazon.



## A CULTURAL DREAM

I dream of an Amazon that preserves that cultural richness that highlights it, where human beauty shines in such different ways.

“The issue - says the Pope - is to promote the



Amazon, but this does not imply colonizing it culturally, but rather helping

it to get the best of itself. That is the meaning of the best educational task: to cultivate without uprooting, to grow without weakening the identity, to promote without invading. Just as there are potentialities in nature that could be lost forever, the same can happen with cultures that have a message not yet heard and that today are threatened more than ever.

For Pope Francis, it is urgent to “take care of the roots”. Citing “Laudato si” and Christus vivit, he underlines that the “consumerist vision of the human being” tends to “homogenize cultures” and this especially affects young people. The Pope asks them to “take charge of the roots”, to “recover the damaged memory.”

The Exhortation then focuses on the “intercultural encounter.” Even the “supposedly more evolved cultures,” he observes, can learn from the peoples who “developed a cultural treasure by being linked to nature.” Diversity, therefore, is not “a border”, but “a bridge”, and it says no to a “completely closed indigenism”.

Finally, it emphasizes the importance of “incorporating the perspective of the rights of the peoples”.

## AN ECOLOGICAL DREAM

I dream of an Amazon that jealously guards the overwhelming natural beauty that adorns it, the overflowing life that fills its rivers and forests.

Caring for people and caring for ecosystems are inseparable, this becomes particularly



significant where “the jungle is not a resource to exploit; it is a being, or several beings with whom to relate.” The wisdom of the original peoples of the Amazon “inspires care and respect for creation, with a clear awareness of its limits, prohibiting its abuse.”

For the Pope, it is urgent to hear “the cry of the Amazon” (47-52). Remember that planetary balance depends on its health. There are, he writes, strong interests not only local, but also international. The solution, therefore, is not the “internationalization” of the Amazon, but rather that “the responsibility of national governments” must grow.

By listening to the native peoples, he stresses, we can love the Amazon “and not just use it”; we can find in it “a theological place, a space where God shows himself and summons his children.”





## AN ECCLESIAL DREAM

I dream of Christian communities capable of surrendering and incarnating in the Amazon, to the point of giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features.



The Church is called to walk with the peoples of the Amazon. The missionary task, if it wants to develop a Church with an Amazonian face, needs to grow in a culture of encounter towards a 'multifaceted harmony'. But for this incarnation of the Church and the Gospel to be possible, the great missionary announcement must resound over and over again.

To do this, the Pope develops a series of proposals, among which we highlight:

- **The values present in the original communities must be “gathered in evangelization”.**

Given the poverty of so many inhabitants of the Amazon, inculturation must have a "markedly social perfume." At the same



time, however, the social dimension must be integrated with the "spiritual" dimension.

- This inculturation, given the situation of poverty and abandonment of so many inhabitants of the Amazon, it will necessarily have to have a markedly social perfume and be characterized by a firm defense of human rights.

- Francis exhorts all bishops, especially Latin Americans, "to be more generous", guiding those who "show a missionary vocation" to choose the Amazon and invites them to review the formation of priests.

- Priests are needed, but this does not exclude that ordinarily permanent deacons - who should be many more in the Amazon -, the religious and the laity themselves assume important responsibilities for the growth of the communities and that they mature in the exercise of these functions thanks to a suitable accompaniment.

- The Pope dedicates his own space to the strength and gift of women. It recognizes that in the Amazon some communities have survived only "thanks to the presence of strong and generous women." However, he warns that "the Church should not be reduced to functional structures." If this were the case, in fact, they would only be given a role if they had access to the Holy Order. For the Pope, the clericalization of women must be rejected, accepting instead the contribution according to the feminine way that prolongs "the strength and tenderness of Mary."

Edgardo y Melba Caballero  
Secretariat of Communication and  
Projection

*Fuente: <https://desdelafe.mx/noticias/la-voz-del-papa/querida-amazonia-resumen-de-la-exhortacion-del-papa-en-4-puntos/>*



**CFM in Latin America Light for Families in Times of Pandemic**  
**Alicia y Marcos Quiñonez**

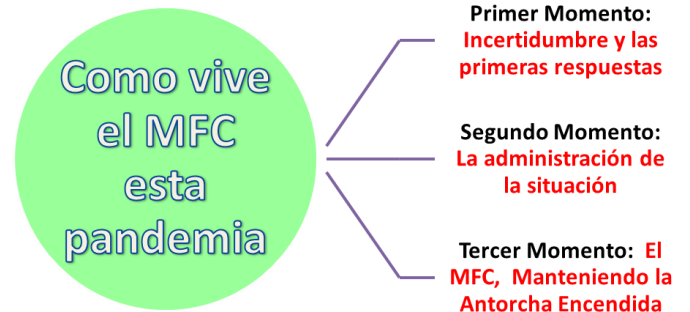
The health crisis generated throughout the world, also affected the Christian Family Movement and its evangelizing apostolic action, this time of pandemic, has surprised us, we were not prepared, we are of the new generation who did not know about isolation, staying at home for State provisions. Just as various governments have reacted quickly, others a little slower, the CFM in the various countries had a similar behavior.

The Christian Family Movement, at the Latin American level, we can identify that it had three very different moments in this time of pandemic:

- **First Moment: Uncertainty and the first responses**
- **Second Moment: Managing the situation**
- **Third Moment: The CFM, Keeping the Torch Lit**

In the **First Moment** the uncertainty was constant in the minds of all the members, a moment for which we were not prepared, we had not foreseen, we had not imagined shook us. The Latin American priest is accustomed to the very close contact of brotherhood, whose experience and way of evangelizing is person to person, family to family,

organized in small basic teams of up to five or seven couples, between ten and fifteen young people, five and ten responsible mothers, and the natural conformation of all the members into small basic teams organized around a parish. In general, frequent physical contact and permanent communication.



The first responses were palliative and prudent, the Latin American CFM sent to those responsible in each country its statement in which it recommended them to be prudent, avoid physical contacts, respect the quarantine already in force in some countries and above all manage the situation in a responsible manner and avoid being responsible for the contagion of our CFMers brothers and sisters by holding face-to-face meetings.

The specific recommendation was: Stay at Home! The representatives of the CFMers in the different countries had the first, in Paraguay, the CFM suspended its National Assembly for the election of new officers, recommended not to meet in groups, until receiving the corresponding recommendations.



In Mexico, eleven videos were generated on the Dialogue, covering all aspects of the dialogue, a wonderful material that was distributed to the entire CFM in Latin America. Many other responses came from other countries.

It is the time for the suspension of face-to-face masses, basic team meetings but also technology-based responses.

The lights that we have gained from this period are: family prayer, the strengthening of the domestic church, time for family dialogue, virtual chains of rosaries, online adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, virtual masses, among others.

During this time, all face-to-face activities are canceled, the MFCLA suspends the Youth Bolivia II Mission in March; Zonal Meeting of Zone II in Panama in April, visit to Costa Rica in May, participation of ENAJO Mexico in July, FAC (Art and Culture Festival) MFC in Brazil in July, Assembly in Paraguay, Assembly in Argentina in October, ELAJO in Costa Rica, October, Assembly in Bolivia, November. And the different countries also suspended their face-to-face activities.

The **Second Moment**, in which there was already a panorama that the pandemic would not last for a short time but would remain, and with more time for reflection, the administration of the situation is given part of the CFM in the different countries, the correct and adequate responses, on a

more permanent basis, moving from the situation of containment to that of permanent action, the basic team meetings were reactivated. In a virtual way, with the limitations that it implies, the training materials were adapted to be carried out through the different technological platforms.

Lectures on various family and current affairs multiplied. It is a time of great enlightenment for our leaders giving answers to the situations presented.

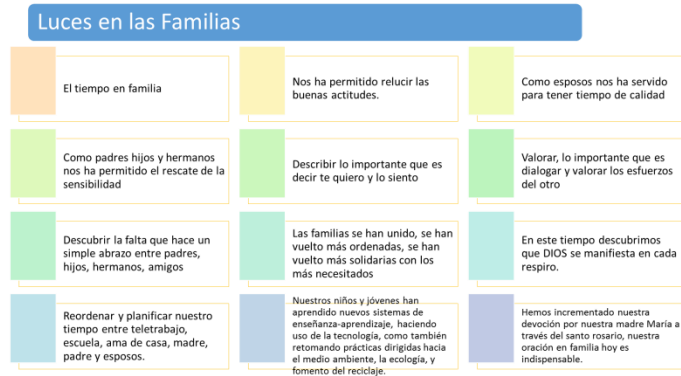
The light of this time is the adaptation of the MFC materials to be able to develop online training activities through platforms. The activities at the training level did not stop.

The **Third Moment** we call “The CFM, Keeping the Torch Lit,” a time of adaptation to the situation of the pandemic, while respecting all health protocols, the CFMers, faithful to their missionary vocation and in accordance with their vocation of movement, did not stand still, overcome the initial moments of uncertainty and contention of their members, they move on to the decisive action of continuing with all the activities of the CFM, they undertake training, look for new members, stages are closed and new ones begin.



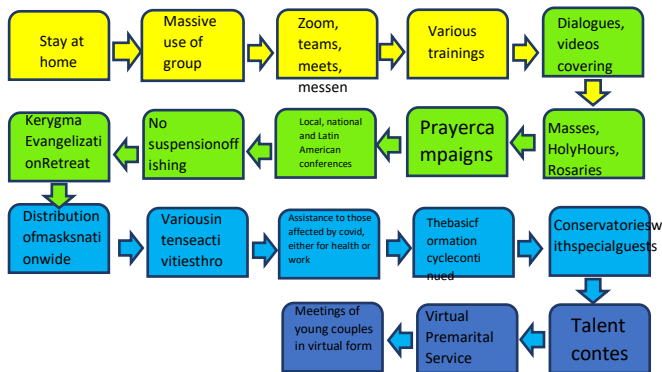


The lights of the CFM in this period are its evangelizing action continues. The CFM in action.



During this time, we identified the concrete actions that the CFM had, distinguishing between the institutional ones and those of the members. The institutional actions are all those that were arranged by the different coordinating teams of the CFM, be it at the Latin American level, country, diocese and parishes.

**Concrete actions**



We can maintain that CFM is a light for families, at all times, and especially in this time of the pandemic. It is a movement



that had the inspiration of God incarnate in Father Pedro Richards, who from the beginning is light and continues to shine in families.

His apostolic action remains through time; we hope to always be a light, and to keep up the Lighted Torch of the CFM bequeathed by our founder.

At the CFM we understand when we say **"LET'S KEEP THE MFC TORCH ON"**.

*"It means each CFMer must be a light where he is, must be one like Christ, must be a servant in image of Christ. Profuse in prayer and works. "*

*The flame of the CFMers in the service\_ must give light and heat.*

*Our action is not simply limited to looking for and training those in training.*

***Our true mission is to help each CFMer have a rewarding life experience in the Lord. As Saint Paul said: "I no longer live me but Christ lives in me. "Every CFMer with an experience of God in his life.***

*Alicia y Marcos Álvarez  
PRELA 2017-2021*

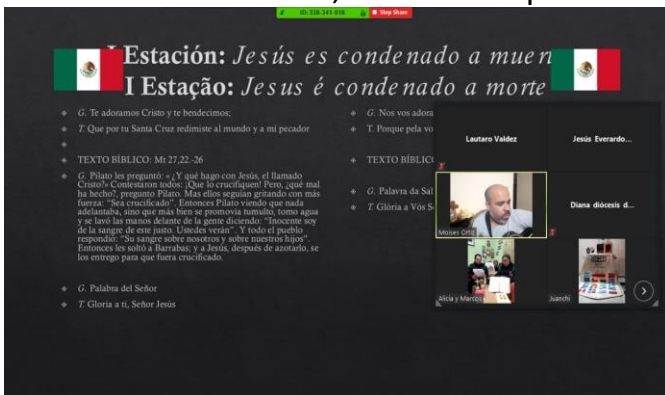
**YOUTH VÍA CRUCIS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CFM (10-04-2020)**  
**Juan Gabriel Sosa**



On April 10, 2020, on Good Friday, the Latin American CFM family met virtually to spiritually walk the path that Jesus made to Mount Calvary while carrying the Cross.

Thirteen countries, together with the Secretariat for Latin America, meditated in the fourteen stations on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, updating it on the reality of each member country of our beloved movement.

Without a doubt, it was an unforgettable experience to have relived the last hours of our Lord Jesus' earthly life as a family, until, suspended on the cross, he shouted his: "consummatum est", "it is accomplished".



Pope Francis teaches us that "We feel close to Christ who suffers, one who shares our journey to the end. There is no cross in our life, small or big, that the Lord does not share with us." This is how God used this hopeful message so that our young Latin Americans, Juan Gabriel Sosa, Byron Koying and Jesús Hernández were inspired by it, thus projecting the first Youth Via Crucis within the Latin American MFC with the presence of the youth of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, each country sharing a season in a very special way, promoting spirituality throughout the continent.

In this way we culminate a meeting reflecting on the path that the Heavenly Father walks with us in our daily life carrying the cross, an instrument of death but also of new life, which unites earth and heaven, north and south the east and the west and all of Latin America, as in an embrace.



**Juan Gabriel Sosa**  
**Young Latin America Coordinator**  
**SPLA 2017-2021**





## MFC IN BRAZIL, ITS HISTORY AND WALKING.

In 1955, during the International Eucharistic Congress, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the path of the presence of the Christian Family Movement in Brazil began. A path of commitment to families and the transformation of the unjust structures of our society.

The presence of Archbishop Hélder Câmara was fundamental for the first impulse of this birth. Following the enthusiasm of Archbishop Hélder Câmara, faithful to the apostolate of the gospel, the CFM's charism focuses on its mission of promoting the constitutive values of the family, which is to be "a formator of people, an educator in the faith and a promoter of the common good" (Cf.: MFC: Knowing, Loving, Caring, p. 11).

That is why, during the sixty-five years of our movement, many challenges were launched to carry out this missionary impulse. In Brazil, as in all of Latin America, the historical reality marked by

deep social inequalities and the exclusion of thousands of families from the basic means to maintain the dignity of life, the CFM in its journey is close to the evangelical prophecy of not separating faith and life, because, according to the word of Jesus of Nazareth, "I have come so that all may have life, and life to the full" (Cf. Jn 10:10).

We are a prophetic and liberating movement, without ever neglecting the demands of life and the commitment to transform the exclusionary structure lived in Latin America. Participating in the work of the CFM is not just being able to join in a social group, having rules and obligations to fulfill. Participating is a commitment. And commitment leads us, necessarily, to a transforming action.

"Humanizing people from the family" (Cf. : Idem, p. 11) should serve as a beacon to illuminate the actions promoted jointly by the local member that make up the structure of the CFM. We are a grassroots movement. And that implies that we are a movement on the way to building the





kingdom of God and his justice. This is your mission.

We are followers of Jesus, who faced the unjust structures of his time, being judged, condemned and murdered by those who did not want a profound change in their heart, rejecting the proposal of Jesus, which is based on the experience of love and sharing, without excluding anyone.

Accepting this challenge is also joining the liberating spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. Driven by the charism of service and unrestricted welcome, the CFM in Brazil seeks, with this, to contribute to the establishment of a "new heaven and a new earth" (cf. Apc 21, 1-4). The CFM must be a seed in the earth for the emergence of another way of inhabiting the planet, so violated by the culture of consumerism, individualism and the irrational exploitation of Mother Earth.

The foundation of all the prophetic and missionary action of the CFM is based on the living commandment of the Love of God, "free, faithful, humanizing and giving to others" (Idem, P. 12). This is how Jesus loved and this is how the path of CFM must be built. Otherwise, we will be just another social group far from the evangelical charism of love and dedication.

Faced with so many challenges, the CFM charism proposes a following of Jesus committed to the demands of families in

their concrete realities. In its ethnic, social, economic, cultural pluralities as is the reality of our Latin America.

Understand that we are at the service of humanization and the construction of the common good for Family Humanity, in harmony with all the beings that inhabit our Common House. The search for unity in diversity makes us a movement on the way, a mission, being faithful to the reception and respecting the differences.

Our greatest gratitude to the Amerindian peoples, who teach us to respect and love Mother Earth and all the beings that inhabit her without distinction. Inspired by the evangelical charism, we welcome all families, as God welcomes us. And also our gratitude to all those who make up this wonderful CFM from north to south of this immense Brazil.

Let us continue to be inspired by the light of the liberating love of Jesus of Nazareth. May his life inspire us to continue casting on earth the hope of a more just and fraternal world for all humanity and all the diversity of life that inhabits our Common Home.

*National Coordination of MFC Brazil*

*Bibliographic reference:*  
**- MFC, Knowing, Loving, Caring.**  
*Conselho Director Nacional,*  
*Gestão 2013 - 2016.*



## Super meeting in Los Angeles, California

CFM at St. Lawrence Martyr parish in Redondo Beach, CA, hosted the Winter National Board



meeting, January 25-26, 2020. On Saturday evening, they held a "Super Reunion" that brought together past and present members from around the area, with families and couples representing infants to



octogenarians.

CFM has been active at St. Lawrence Martyr Parish for 63 years. Many of these long-time CFMers still meet regularly for breakfast and



socialization, maintaining lifelong friendships. New families are joining, and



there were lots of sharing about how CFM has changed lives. Past-presidents Mary and John Poprac organized a great weekend.

The National Officers and Board of Directors



of CFM-USA traveled from Virginia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Iowa, Nebraska, and Pittsburgh, to pray, report on actions, work on future programming, encourage local CFMers, and strategize how to engage more people in spreading the Movement to more young families.

During the Board meeting, North American Continental Presidents, Wilbur and Juanita Hooker, who live in Los Angeles, and Bishop George Rassas of Chicago joined the meeting, which was held at the parish center.

On the morning before they started their board meeting, the National Board Members served breakfast to 215 guests at St. Francis



Center. [St. Francis Center's](#) mission is to feed,





serve and walk with the poor as a

community of hope in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. The center offers a variety of programs for the homeless and extremely low-income individuals and families from the neighborhoods in and around downtown Los Angeles, including serving meals, pack lunches, food pantry services, health and hygiene programs, summer youth camps and case management.

After the Board Meeting, Past Continental



Presidents, John and Lauri Przybysz, enjoyed meeting with friends who are the past and current leadership of MFC Los Angeles.



## Responding to the Covid Challenge

President Couple, Brian and Mary Ann Thelen, shared this message of hope and encouragement to all the members: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLeGLzIuvqE&t=29s>

## Effects on Our Personal and Family Lives:

- No in-person Mass for 3 months – reopened at beginning of June
- Working from home the past 3 months (so blessed to still have job)
- Limited seeing of our families and always outdoors (see photo below)
- Helping our elderly parents
- Shut in – Michigan, the home of Presidents Brian and Mary Ann Thelen, had one of the most stringent shutdowns in the country

Sadly, CFM leader Pepe Zuniga, of Ann Arbor, MI, was a victim of the coronavirus.



## Offered Training.



CFM-USA offered Zoom training sessions for

leaders to learn more about using online media platforms to meet virtually. They also encouraged people to try meeting outside and with social distancing. We collected some links of platforms for online meetings





gatherings safe.  
**United in Prayer.** Recommended members pray the 'Our Father' together at 8:30 PM EST to be in solidarity for those suffering due to the pandemic.

### Special Programs to Respond to the Signs of the Times

The first half of 2020 has been marked by both the Covid pandemic and unrest in our communities about racial justice issues. We observed that our members needed to pray and learn about these critical issues impacting their families, so our program committee wrote some special meetings. Because these issues have become so urgent, we made the meetings public and free for anyone to use.

**Covid Times.** The program committee produced five meetings on applying the CFM Social Inquiry Method to the Covid Pandemic:

- *Responding with Faith to Covid-19* - [PDF file](#)
- *Recovering from Crisis Mode* - [PDF file](#)
- *Responding to the Needs of All* - [PDF file](#)
- *Growing through Suffering* - [PDF file](#)
- *Live without Fear* - [PDF file](#)

**Racial Justice.** As a service to the community, CFM-USA produced a meeting, **Overcoming Racism**, in light of violent events in 2020. [PDF file](#)

### National Board Meet Virtually

The National CFM Officers and Board held their Summer Board Meeting by Zoom, June 13-14, 2020, in lieu of the planned meeting in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The officers and directors covered a packed agenda, and even had some on-line fun. Bishop George Rassas joined the call to pray and reflect on the current social challenges.



### Social Justice: 2020 Program Theme

The annual program book, *Love in Action*,

reflects on the Seven Themes of Catholic Social Justice, is a journey to remind us we are called to be Christ in today's world. CFM-USA prints one program book each year.

Our CFM method teaches us to **observe** the world we live in, **judge** situations in light of the example Jesus gave us with his life and to take **action** to make our family, community, and the world one that reflects the love of God for all. Our CFM groups are a wonderful source of friendship, faith, and support for families. We endeavor, through our actions of love, to make our CFM a source of justice for all.



## View Videos About CFM-USA

"The Community of CFM" - Message from National Chaplain Fr. Louis Golamari <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpsP9M48rXo>

For more videos, visit our CFMTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cfmtube/videos>



## New Mailing Address

Our National Office has moved to Maryland. Lauri Przybysz will continue the work in the National Office as part of her duties as Executive Director.

- New Address: P.O. Box 1477  
Severna Park, MD 21146
- Office phone: 800-581-9824.  
Email Lauri at [director@cfm.org](mailto:director@cfm.org)

## We Have a New Look!

We worked with a Catholic marketing team on a new strategies and ideas to expand our Movement to more dioceses. As part of this planning, we developed these messages for promotion: "Living the Gospel Together" and "Families following Jesus at home, at church and in the world."

Our new CFM logo uses a traditional symbol for the Holy Trinity. In the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement we pray, "Holy Trinity, you are a family. We believe you wish

our families to reflect your heavenly community."

The initials of the Christian Family Movement



"CFM" are formed from these interlocking circles. This symbol serves as a powerful icon pointing to the key mystery of the Christian faith, the Holy Trinity, as well as the call for the family to be an image of the love and unity, found perfectly in the Triune God.

## Our Bishops' Call Us to Action for Prayer, Safety, and Peace

Across the nation, our bishops have issued positive statements about how Catholics must respond to the key issues that have impacted families. Their words have guided our actions, projects, and program writing this year.

Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued two statements that are good examples of this guidance:

**About the Covid pandemic,** Archbishop Gomez said, "God does not abandon us, he goes with us even now in this time of trial and testing. In this moment, it is important for us to anchor our hearts in the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Now is the time to intensify our prayers and sacrifices for the



love of God and the love of our neighbor. Let us draw closer to one another in our love for him, and rediscover the things that truly matter in our lives." [Full statement.](#)

**About the protests about racial justice**, he said, "We should all understand that the protests we are seeing in our cities reflect the justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who even today experience humiliation, indignity, and unequal opportunity only because of their race or the color of their skin. It should not be this way in America." Full Statement

#### **4th. Internal Apostolate and Finance January 2020**

Monthly Training and Informational Event, happy to have the membership and formation of Father Eder Tamara.



**January 2020**

Presidential Election for Trienium 2020-2023



#### **5th. Internal Apostolate and Finance February 2020**

Monthly Training and Information.



#### **Spiritual Advisers Appreciation Dinner February 2020**



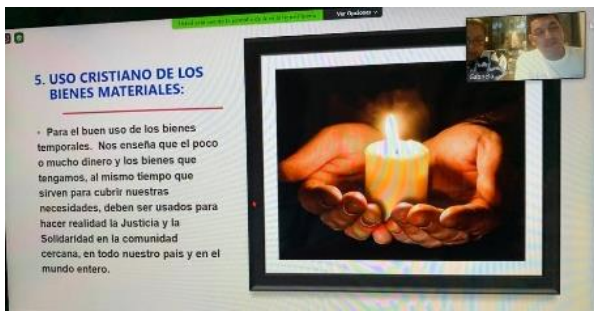
#### **Meeting of Lent San Junípero Serra Parish February 2020**





**Culmination Meeting  
March and April 2020**

MFC-LA did not stop among the Pandemic and continued their Meetings and Events via Virtual.



**Voting Meeting for New Leaders  
May 2020**

MFC-LA did not stop among the Pandemic and continued their Meetings and Events via Virtual.



**Archdiocesan Encounter Triennium  
2020-2023**

**June 2020**

Change of Service

Outgoing Presidents:

Enrique and Vicky Curiel  
Triennium 2017-2020

Incoming Presidents:

Oscar and Cecilia Aviña  
Triennium 2020-2023



## The ICCFM represents the families of the world at the UN

Laura Lucía Carrillo

The United Nations (UN), born in 1945 after the Second World War, has become the largest international organization with the greatest impact in the world. The UN has as its central mission the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly of its member states. At present, its membership includes 193 countries committed to work towards achieving the goals proposed by the organization.

In 2015 the UN launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), proposing an agenda that leads the path to ensure the world's sustainable development through 17 goals and 169 objectives. The goals include good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality and reduce inequalities, among others. It is important to establish that each country that ratifies its membership at the organization acquires the responsibility to work towards the sustainable development agenda.

## Sustainable Development Goals (www.un.org)

Since 1989, the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM) acquired a special consultive status in the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) branch of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The ECOSOC is located at the heart of the UN system; the main entity that coordinates economic and social activities. In addition, it functions as the central platform to encourage debate and decision making, according to best practices, in order to achieve the world's sustainable development taking into consideration the economic, social and environmental dimensions.



## January 2014, ICCFM Extraordinary Assembly in Queretaro, Mexico.

Currently, there are 5,451 NGOs registered at the ECOSOC. The ICCFM's status is vital as it provides the opportunity to have a voice and vote within the ECOSOC-UN, to represent the real needs of the families, to propose and



encourage the implementation of projects and strategies that develop and strengthen them; as well as to advocate for the dignity of each person, the value of human life and the complementarity of men and women, just to mention some.

Above all, the ICCFM, along with other catholic and christian registered organizations under the ECOSOC, become the counterweight to those organizations that don't share our ideals and values; even more, their objectives are completely opposite to ours advocating for a culture of death, abortion, gender ideology and other current trends.

To this day the ICCFM has participated in some international conferences in person and online, without voting yet. Likewise, with the effort of previous UN delegates, it has maintained its special consultive status by submitting a report for the ECOSOC every four years, providing the evidence of the work that is being carried out in the best interest of families and the development and strengthening of the society.



## **The ICCFM team working on the development of the report to ECOSOC 2013-2017**

In 2021 a new edition of this report will be produced, and to capture a real picture of the work that the ICCFM is doing worldwide, it will be vital that each country shares with us those projects and initiatives with social impact that have been generated so these could be incorporated in the report (e.g. COVID-19 support, distribution of manuals and books in rural areas, social support inside and outside de movements, etc.).

As UN delegates in New York and Vienna we still have a long way to go before the family is recognized as core element of the society.

At this time, we are seeking greater participation at international conferences and to begin exercising our right to vote in representation of all the families and members of the ICCFM, as well as building alliances with other NGOs that share our mission and values. We ask Saint Therese of Lisieux to walk at our side and intercede for us on this journey.

If you have any concerns or you would like to share more details about your projects, you can contact us via e-mail.

Laura Lucila Carrillo  
UN Delegate at NY  
[un-ny@iccfm.org](mailto:un-ny@iccfm.org)





## CFM AFRICA - COVID19 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FAMILY IN AFRICA

**Compiled by: Margaret and Mike Moyo**  
**CFM Continental President Couple (Africa)**

### **Introduction**

The year 2020 is witnessing a new beginning of life in Africa due to Covid 19 which



started in Wuhan, China. At the start of it, it was like a fairytale that would not affect Africa as many viruses before had started elsewhere and had been contained in those localized areas with few external impacts worldwide. Even Ebola which was and may still be in Africa was generally localized.

### **Current Situation of Covid – 19 in Africa**

Covid 19 in Africa generally appeared and was felt strongly from February, 2020. At first the belief was that this was a local virus in China and would not spread and have impact as it is to date on Africa, its economy, culture, family and on religious gatherings. Covid 19 when its pangs started coming, despite Governments warning its people about how deadly the virus was; it was at first by many local people mistaken that it would only affect the affluent who travelled from place to place and that its spread would be amongst only those but the story has proved different. It attacks anyone regardless of status of the person.

As at 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2020, out of 215 countries in the world, over 17,241,322 confirmed cases, 10,829,256 recovered from Covid 19 and 672,364 deaths. In Africa there are 2 countries - South Africa and Nigeria at number 5 and 47 respectively that are amongst the top fifty countries with the highest number of deaths from Covid 19. In Africa, CFM is active in Malawi, Cameroon, Nigeria and Uganda. In effort to reduce and combat the pandemic, Governments in compliance to standards of WHO guidelines on Covid 19 has introduced a number of restrictions. Some of the measures include social distance, constant washing of hands, no handshaking and wearing of face masks.

Other measures include lockdowns, restrictions on gatherings of people limited to a maximum of 100 seating or standing at spacing of a minimum of 1 metre apart, closure of educational / training institutions. These measures are indeed beneficial but have also brought along their own impacts on the economy and society.

### **Negative and Positive Impacts of Covid - 19**

Africa is rich in cultural cohesion and society believe in making merriment together where crowds of people gather to celebrate and dance in enjoyment. This includes religious celebrations. Covid 19 has brought about a “new” and strange way of life. People can no longer shake hands or hug and culturally this is a strange action which does not show affection between friends and society.

Lock downs have affected many families who depend on daily family operations to source



food at their table. Economically, this has affected everyone including Central and Local Governments who cannot collect tax revenues. In turn public service delivery has suffered. Due to lockdowns employers have found it difficult to generate revenue and have resorted to scaling down their operations resulting in job losses which ultimately have impacted on families.

School closures, whilst, in a positive sense have helped stop the spread of Covid 19 in schools and to the youths on the one hand it has not helped on learning. Continued learning has been restricted extensively. Almost 90 % of families in Africa especially in rural areas do not have internet facilities and hence e- learning where it is available is regarded as privilege of the few. Even those few have difficulties to access it since internet costs are generally high. School closures have also affected idleness among the youths and increased numbers of pregnancies and early child marriages.

In Malawi, for instance, a number of district youth nets have reported a high number of pregnancies among school going girls who are now in their homes due to Covid 19 closures.

In terms of other restrictions such as social distancing, many churches virtually closed their doors and any prayers were being done in homes. Some Christians have taken to laziness and entirely do not go to church as yet. Of particular interest and peculiarity was the 2020 Holy Week and Easter celebrations

which for the first time in living memory was celebrated in a “somber mood” (no usual exclamation of Hosanna on Palm Sunday and Alleluia on Easter Sunday). The restrictions on the numbers that can be accommodated in a church for Holy Mass celebration meant that church services had to be increased in number several times and effectively overstretched the clergy who are already very few on the ground.

Despite some of these adverse impacts on the family and society, a number of positives can be deduced from the measures that Governments introduced as a way to combat the Covid 19. These include:-

Bringing families (parents and children) to stay together at home and pray together.

Challenging parents to take seriously their role of educating their children in such unusual situations.

Helped families, society and nations to embrace hygiene seriously (constant washing of our hands) to reduce virus/disease transmissions.

Realization that the World is one global village created by God that whatever affects one part of the world is for us all to take action. We are all called upon to act in unison and address the same concern if that concern is to be resolved in its entirety.

Until to date, there is no known cure for Covid 19 in spite of the numerous scientific knowledge. It is probably a message to us all that we have to turn to God for solutions (Ephesians 2: 8-9).



## THE COVID-19 EXPERIENCE AFRICAN REGION (CFM Cameroon)

**Compiled by:**

**Dr. Mbencho Andrew Tazi and**

**MrsTaziNjimoh Bertha**

**Diocesan Couple President, Family Life Apostolate - Kumba Diocese.**



The corona virus pandemic (covid-19) started off in faraway China (Wuhan) like some fairy tale. From Cameroon on social media, we heard and watched to our greatest disbelief and shock, this wicked virus carry out a mass slaughter of people in China, Europe and U.S.A. Many Cameroonians suppressed panic consoling themselves that it is a white man's disease that had nothing to do with Africans. Yet almost every Christian Family Movement member has had the terrible misfortune of losing a colleague, friend or relative in the last five months. Council authorities were instructed to provide land for many burial grounds or graves. These exist in every council area today in Cameroon.

### **DISBELIEF AND NONCHALANCE**

Though Cameroonians watch the pandemic take away the lives of millions of people in Europe and America, many doubted the veracity of the existence of this deadly

monster in Africa. Some capitalized on the fact that the African gene is too strong, and the African sun too hot for the corona virus to resist. With this conception, despite serious sensitization from government, media organs, NGOs and other agents, a large number of Cameroonians up till date continue to manifest a degree of nonchalancethat is not only unhealthy for the society, but annoying; especially to those who are conscious of the stakes. Many go about either without their face masks or wearing them under their chins. They ignore rules on social distancing and very often talk into other people's faces with no qualms. Social gatherings and funerals of hundreds of people are still being organized, ignoring the government measure that bans assemblies of more than 50 persons .The general concept is, "it is God who will protect us from this deadly disease". I, however, strongly believe that God helps those who help themselves.

### **GOVERNMENT PLAN OF ACTION**

Cameroonians started feeling the heat of the COVID-19 pandemic when on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Government, among other measures, started insisting on the need for people to limit movement; wear face masks and maintain social distancing. She closed down her borders; closed down schools; barred drinking sports, hotels and restaurants from operating after certain hours of the day. The institution of these measures was the state's first step towards combating a giant that was about to devour the whole world; a step that sent signals to Cameroonians that the future was going to be bleak except people adjusted their lifestyles and become more disciplined.





After these measures were made public, Government went ahead to put COVID-19 isolation and treatment centers in most main towns in the country. They maintain the 3-T policy, whereby they test, track and treat carriers of the virus. Testing centers have been set up in every nook and cranny in the country -even at district levels.

### **MODERATING THE MEASURES**

Despite the fact that we were expecting Government to come up with even more severe measures such as:

The closure of non- essential businesses in markets in order to decongest the markets.

The ordering of a complete lockdown of some highly infected towns.

And conducting a serious follow-up to ensure that the COVID-19 preventive measures are respected every where at all times.

Rather, Government relaxed some of the measures already taken e.g. the re-opening of bars, hotels, restaurants, and schools.

### **PREVENTION/ TREATMENT**

Cameroonian traditional and modern medicine practitioners had the rewarding challenge to produce a cure for the embarrassing virus. There are local herbs and other concoctions believed to be very instrumental in the treatment of COVID-19.

At individual levels, people use varied traditional herbs and concoctions to prevent and/or treat the disease. Some of such treatments include;

Drinking the following in syrup/solution/tea form: Ginger, garlic, lemon, eucalyptus leaves, Artemisia tea, neem leaves, Aloevera, kenkeiliba, fever grass etc.

Taking medication to boost immunity:

Vitamin C, Zinc, Vitamin D

Inhaling vapors from a hot pot of a variety of boiled plant leaves and barks of trees.

Meanwhile modern medical practitioners advise patients under quarantine to take vitamin C, vitamin E and Aspirin; an egg, and 1.5 liter of water a day; as well as meals that are warm. They also request them to remain under sunlight from 15-20 minutes a day.

### **STIGMATISATION**

In Cameroon, all COVID-19 infected persons are either put in isolation in a treatment center or advised to go on self-quarantine. Meanwhile, all persons who die from the pandemic are buried almost immediately in a public cemetery by state officials or by the military. As a result of the absence of funeral honours and traditional burial protocol, the following tendencies are often manifested:

1. State authorities refuse the transportation of COVID-19 corpses from one town to another.
2. Some infected persons refuse to accept that they are COVID-19 infected. Families of infected persons refuse to accept that their relations are infected.
3. Family members fight against the burial of corpses of their relations by the state. They believe that burial by state agents in a public cemetery humiliates the deceased and prevents him or her from having a befitting burial from the family.
4. Some people avoid going to consult at the Government Hospital because they believe every little malaise in the Government



Hospital is often unnecessarily linked up to COVID-19, a disease they just hate and don't want to be associated with.

## LESSONS LEARNED

A number of lessons have been learned from the horrible pandemic-covid-19:

While the COVID-19 pandemic has pulled some people closer to God; it has at the same time further weakened the faith of many church goers who now use the pandemic as an excuse for not going to church.

For people to be safe, they need everyone's collaboration: we would be better protected if we all maintain the prescribed social distance; if we all wear our masks in public places; if we all wash/sanitize our hands; if we all stay home as much as possible.

It reminds us that we are all connected and something that affects one person has an effect on another. It calls our attention to the fact that as God's creatures the social boundaries that we put up amongst ourselves have no intrinsic values as this virus breaks all those barriers.

It reminds us that we are equal, regardless of our culture, religion, financial standing, occupation or fame. This disease treats us all equally.

It highlights the importance we should attach to our health. It rebukes those who have been living on junk food, and that a healthy outside starts from the inside. From educative talks in Christian Family Movement

meetings many members now practice healthy eating habits.

It reminds us of the shortness of life and the need to live spiritually connected to our creator.

It reprimands us on the modern greedy tendency of amassing wealth. The Corona virus with its lockdowns and instant killing, reminds us that what we really need in life are just the basics (food, water, medicine).

It has forced us back into our houses, strengthening the family as a unit and calling our attention to the fact that we need to rebuild long neglected family relationship.

It equally reminds us to keep our egos in check – that no matter how evolved and scientifically great the world may think of itself, it can be brought to a standstill in a matter of seconds, especially if it fails to acknowledge the origin of its greatness which is God, our Creator.

It also tells us that life is a cycle, and that after every difficulty there is always ease. Hopefully, this is just a phase in the great cycle. We do not need to panic; this too shall pass.

Whereas many see the COVID-19 pandemic as a horrible disaster, others see it as a great corrector. It has come to remind us of very important lessons the world has neglected. It is therefore, up to us to learn them and then try to sit up.



**COVID 19 AND ITS EFFECTS ON FAMILIES  
AND CFM: THE CASE OF ZOMBA DIOCESE  
(CFM MALAWI)**

**By Andrew & Doreen Ussi,  
President Couple, Zomba Diocese**

The pandemic which has befallen the world and Malawi inclusive has brought with it adverse impact on families and Christian Family Movement as an institution.



In Zomba Diocese which is under the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), individual families were not allowed to congregate with others in church and church groups for a period of one month from April up to May. Although families were encouraged to pray at home, they were missing the communal prayers and the Mass. Sacraments could not be administered. The spiritual life therefore suffered starvation. Prayer life was weakened particularly for those who pray well when in a group.

We also have in mind families who are used to attending daily morning masses. Due to Covid this was not possible and was demoralizing. There was a feeling that the church has abandoned them in time of need.

Economically, families has suffered a lot since income from businesses has gone down following partial lock down of government offices and other institutions that are key in distribution of wealth. Some of those in employment particularly teachers in private schools had to go on half pay or no pay at all.

The Christian Family Movement at all levels in the Diocese has been hardly hit by the pandemic. Firstly, the annual calendar of events had to be suspended. It is painful to note that when the pandemic began to make inroads in Malawi, CFM in Zomba Diocese had just started preparations for an Annual General Assembly (AGM), the first under the new executive committee. The AGM was crucial for the growth of the movement and was to take place first weekend of July 2020.

This was not possible anymore as all preparations were halted. The Diocese had also to cancel all the retreats that were scheduled to take place in all Deaneries during the Lenten period. CFM groups have not yet resumed meeting since April. This has grossly affected the lives of the groups both spiritually and financially. The financial impact on the families has spilled over to the CFM groups. Members have not been able to pay subscription because they are not meeting. That motivation to pay the subscriptions has gone down. Groups are failing to hold fundraising activities due to restrictions on gatherings.

In short, COVID-19 has negatively affected both families and the CFM spiritually and financially.





## CFM ASIA - Report of Asia Continental CFM January to June 2020

By: Lukose & Anita Vallatharai



### CFM Continental Asia President-Couple

The Pandemic has slowed down CFM activities across Asia – none of the member countries had live masses or group activities during this period. Executive committee meetings and monthly meetings, wherever it was held, were done over Zoom.

The reality of CFM in Asia is that Christians constitute a tiny minority, except for the Philippines. And, even within the Church a lot more needs to be done to increase visibility, awareness and membership of CFM. We need to share the enrichment we have gained through CFM with other families.

### ACCFM Website

The ACCFM website has been updated with the help of Integro in Bangalore. Please do visit the website: [www.cfmasia.org](http://www.cfmasia.org)

### Meeting with ICCFM Team

On 11<sup>th</sup> July we had a Zoom meeting of Asia Continental CFM country Presidents with the ICCFM team. It was lovely seeing each other and exchanging news. Each country

President spoke about the situation before lockdown and after lockdown.

### Sri Lanka

We had planned a 5-day visit in June to Sri Lanka which had to be cancelled. CFM has spread to 3 new Dioceses besides Colombo - Anuradhapura, Galle and Kandy. The booklet “We Believe in the Family” which was prepared by CFM Thailand under the Evangelical Solidarity Project, was translated into Sinhalese language, and is now being translated into Tamil for the use of the new cells in Kandy.

The monthly wedding anniversary Mass followed by sharing of experiences was being held regularly before the Lockdown.

Rev. Fr. Ernest Portuhota, the Founder Chaplain of CFM Sri Lanka (he helped start the first group on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1967) passed away at the age of 88 on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020. CFMers will miss him dearly.





## Singapore

Their dynamic Chaplain Fr. Bruno, MEP, was posted back to France last Dec and Fr. Dominique, MEP, also from France is the new Chaplain.

They held their AGBM and election on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 by Zoom because by Government policy they must elect a new Treasurer every year.

Due to Covid, nothing much is happening in their Programs for the Youth and the Elderly.

Singapore has been given charge of expansion of CFM to Malaysia. But due to COVID they haven't been able to travel to Malaysia for follow up.

## Thailand

Fr Bunsong, former national chaplain, animated a 4-day residential program PRH ("Who am I?") for the CFMers of Chaiyaphum province.

A team of CFMers led by Fr Somchai Phongsiriphat, Vicar General, Diocese of Nakohn Ratchasima along with national President Michael Sukeewat visited the Head Buddhist Monk of the province to wish him for the Visakha Day which is the most

important festival of the Buddhists commemorating the birth, enlightenment and death of Lord Buddha. It is celebrated by everyone in Thailand with great enthusiasm.

The sole English CFM group has a new President couple – Alex and Shubha Joseph – expats working in Bangkok.

## The Philippines

CFM Philippines started a weekly Radio program CFM-SE Naga on Radio Caritas. They invite guests from all walks of life to share their faith experiences through casual and spontaneous conversation. These are people who share the same CFM Mission - to be evangelized and to be evangelizing.

In May 2020, as part of their Spirituality of Stewardship (SOS) Program, they kicked off Project Damayan giving financial aid to 246 families in 8 dioceses who were financially affected due to lockdown and COVID.

## India

In January 2020 CFM Bangalore had their annual Family Day celebration. Outreach program was conducted at an orphanage run by Holy Cross sisters where training was given on personality development. CFM Bangalore collected Rs one lakh for the relief work done by the Archdiocese in supplying food and other essentials to economically backward families who were struggling during the lockdown. The monthly Intercessory Prayer Group meets via Zoom. It is organized by a different group each month. CFM Goa members made it a point to recite the Divine Mercy chaplet at 3 pm every day for the victims of corona virus and doctors,



nurses and health workers. The President couple spoke to Deacons at the seminary about the need for CFM in parishes so that when they are assigned to a parish they will promote CFM.

In May 2020 the new Enquiry Booklet based on the book “We Believe in the Family” was published for the use of CFM India for the next one year.

In July a special Mass was relayed on the Redemptorist Media Centre YouTube channel for the intentions of all CFMers. Rev Fr Xavier Sanjivi was the main celebrant.

An issue of the national newsletter Family Trove was published in August 2020.

### **ICCFM**

We participated in the two sessions of “An Hour Together in the Mission” organized by ICCFM along with the country Presidents / other country representatives.

The country Presidents have also contributed their Reflections on the Pandemic for the book which is being compiled by ICCFM as a reminder of this phase of our lives.

The one idea that comes out strong in each reflection is that people the world over have come closer to God during the Pandemic.

In these times, many a naked truth has also come to the surface like the horrific living conditions of the poor and the migrants and

upheavals on every front including loss of income and jobs and the attendant misery and hardship.

People have also come to realize that life on earth is temporary and shoring up wealth in this world has little meaning. This realization has helped many families to improve their prayer life. Like St Paul says in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, we too can say ‘When we are weak, then we are stronger in Christ ‘.

The pandemic did not catch God by surprise – He is always in control. But it is God’s way of drawing our attention to the need for spiritual enrichment. He wants us to invite Him back into our lives. He no longer wants us to be sitting on the periphery. He wants us to come in to his fold so that our sins can be cured along with the virus.

When God allows a crisis there is always a spiritual purpose attached to it. Salvation History in the Bible is full of it. So nothing takes God by surprise, not even Covid 19. We as CFM/CFSM families must use this period to experience love, forgiveness and compassion and forge stronger relationships within families and outside families, which could be the starting block for evangelization of self and community.

Dear friends, let’s turn the ambience of Covid around, into a positive experience expressed through our common bond as Christians who love one another as Christ loves us.





**CFM INDIA Activities**  
**1<sup>st</sup>JAN 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup>JUN 2020**

**By: Judith & Richard D'Souza**  
**National President Couple**

**CFM Expansion plans**

CFM India visited various parishes in Bangalore in the months of January 20 and February 20 and met with the Parish Priests in an effort to start new parish-based CFM groups. The parishes were Ascension Parish, Resurrection Parish and Sacred Heart Parish.

With an aim to form new groups at parish level, the CFM Bangalore Task Force formed for this purpose organized an initiation program. We soon hope to have new families join us and enjoy the benefits of CFM.

**Family Day Celebration - Bangalore**

The Annual Family Day Celebration was held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The day started with mass celebrated by Rev. Fr Edward of Dream India Network (DIN). The mass was followed by an oath to recommit to the value of CFM.

support the projects undertaken by D.I.N. The day ended with fun games and a sumptuous lunch. It was a day well spent together as a large family.



**Mass for the Aged, Sick & Differently Abled in Mumbai**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020 the aged, the sick and the differently abled made their way to our church to worship together at the Mass that was celebrated especially for them and organized by the Christian Family Movement (CFM) of Mumbai. They came in wheelchairs, with walkers and walking sticks, faces alight with hope and anticipation, many of whom were brought in by our members



Fr. Edward appealed to the members to and volunteers.



## Pro-life day celebration for differently abled children

Members of CFM Bangalore acted as volunteers in the Pro-life day celebration organized by the Family Commission of the Archdiocese of Bangalore, by supporting in designing posters, T-shirts and participating in the event to help the disabled.



## Outreach Programs

CFM Bangalore has chosen to reach out to the children of Sathgamaya an orphanage run by the Holy Cross Sisters. The first activity was conducted by our youth on Personality Development in the month of February. Sessions on personal safety was scheduled for the month of March.

CFM groups from different regions in India and CFMers in their individual capacities or as members of other



organizations are reaching out to the needy during these trying times when people have

lost jobs, have no work, no savings and no money. Food, provision packs and medicines were provided from donations collected.

## Intercessory Prayer Group Sessions

Every month each group takes the initiative to organize a prayer session.

Specific Prayer intentions from members are requested for are raised in



prayer. Since the onset of the Pandemic IPG meetings have been continued using ZOOM.



## Archdiocese of Bangalore Pastoral Council

We are happy to report that recently the Archdiocese of Bangalore has invited the Christian Family Movement to be a





member of the newly constituted Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. The first meeting was chaired by the Archbishop of Bangalore His Grace Rev. Peter Machado. The role and responsibility of the Family Movement was discussed.

### **ALPHA Program being conducted at Sacred Heart’s Church - Bangalore**

Meanwhile we, in the name of CFM India, continue to spread the “Word of God” and help people on their faith journey by conducting our FOURTH “Alpha Program in Sacred Heart Church, Richmond Town, Bangalore. Unfortunately, this program had to be discontinued due to lockdown.

### **ONLINE Group Meetings using “Zoom” & ‘WhatsApp Video”**

Since CFM groups are unable to meet in person, meetings are now being conducted using “Zoom“, “WhatsApp” and other means using the Internet. It is encouraging to see older members getting tech savvy so as to be able to attend the meeting, participate in the discussion and connect with group members online.

### **ICCFM “ZOOM” Prayer Meeting**

We were also privileged to attend the ICCFM “Zoom” meeting and connect with CFMers on a global level.



We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well. We can honestly say that we have never experienced an event with such a drastic impact on how we live and work as the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, we must do the right things and be prepared to take steps beyond what we’re typically required to do.

### **CFM SRI LANKA REPORT** **1<sup>st</sup>JAN 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup>JUN 2020**

#### **VISIT GALLE DIOCESE**

On 20th January 2020, Rev.Fr.Sunil Kumara Peiris (CFM Chaplain), Dayani + Hector Peiris (President couple), and Ujitha + Ranil Pinto (Secretary couple) visited His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe – Bishop of Galle Diocese and explained the vision and mission of CFM.

Galle is in the southern coastal area of Sri Lanka and the smallest Catholic community among the dioceses in Sri





Lanka. We did the first lesson of the 12 lessons development training program in Balapitiya parish on 04th February 2020.



**His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe - Bishop Galle Diocese and Ujitha + Ranil Pinto (Secretary-Couple)**

### **CALLED TO ETERNAL REST**

One of the founding chaplains of CFM Sri Lanka and renowned Catholic priest Rev. Fr. Ernest Poruthota has passed away on 16th June 2020 at the age of 88.



The first CFM cell was initiated in Sri Lanka on 1st April 1967 under the spiritual guidance of Rev. Fr. Oscar Abeyratne and Rev. Fr. Ernest Poruthota,

priests responsible for Lay Apostolate and Youth Affairs of the Negombo deanery.

Rev. Fr. Poruthota's guidance and motivation given to the pioneer couples helped in no small way to make the CFM, what it is today. He loved CFM till the last day of his life.

May his soul rest in peace.



### **IT'S MOVIE TIME**

CFM organized five programs by using Christian movies such as "FIREPROOF" & "WAR ROOM" with the assistance and guidance from the Family Apostolate Services Center.

### **EXPANSION PROJECT**

CFM Sri Lanka is working towards the expansion of its cells in the Colombo diocese and other dioceses in Sri Lanka. They have started the 12 lessons development training program in Thibbatugoda, Kossina (substation of Thibbatugoda parish), Bandarawatte, Adiambalama, Walanagoda, and Beruwala parishes in the archdiocese of Colombo.



**CFM Colombo president couple Dayani & Hector sharing their family life experiences in Holy Family Church in Kossina & St. Isidore's Church in Thibbatugoda Parish**



**FUND RAISING PROJECT**



In February 2020, our members in Katunayake cell did a food stall as a fund raising project to cover the expenses and it was successful and helped them to develop their team spirit.

**MONTHLY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MASSES**

Organizing monthly wedding anniversary masses followed by fellowship and sharing of experiences in their married life by the couples. Most of the CFM cells have this anniversary masses in their respective parishes.



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## The CFM Philippines Stewardship Journey

### I: Spirituality of Stewardship (SOS) Program

By: Drs. Ben & Linda Famador

#### Spirituality of Stewardship Chairpersons

On August 17, 2019, the CFM Philippines decided to take up again the Spirituality of Stewardship (SoS) into its program. The joy of renewal was so overwhelming that on the same meeting, a Stewardship Committee was formed among the Officers tasked to develop and implement a Stewardship Program.

A workshop was held on September 21, 2019 on the relevance of the Spirituality of Stewardship to the CFM Mission of Family Evangelization. This was attended by the officers of the CFM and CFMers from three dioceses. There was a unanimous approval to adopt SoS as a means to accomplish the CFM Mission and Vision in the years ahead. Many expressed to pledge their time, talent and treasure to the CFM. A similar workshop

during the 35th CFM Biennial National Convention on October 25-27, 2019 in Subic, Zambales attended by more than 400 of its members, echoed the same sentiment.

The CFM Stewardship Program envisions a community of Christian families witnessing to Christ's call to Stewardship as a way of life. To achieve its vision, it shall continuously evangelize the CFM members on the Spirituality of Stewardship and to enable the members to use their time, talent and treasure, through the various programs and advocacies of the organization.

In the same meeting, the officers and members of CFM Philippines offered their financial pledges in monthly, quarterly and annual basis to the CFM Stewardship Fund. It was a moving ceremony, led with a prayer, each offeror placing his/her pledge in an envelope into a box in front of a crucifix. The presence of the Holy Spirit was very much felt. This act by the leaders of the CFM is testimony that when leaders become living





witnesses of stewardship, the members will be willing followers.

The Formation Committee is given the task of giving the evangelization talks and workshops. The plan is to start from the top (National Officers, Area Vice Presidents and Diocesan Directors), then down to the units of the various parishes. The first of these talks and workshops was scheduled on May 21, 2020.

However, this was stymied by the COVID 19 pandemic.



## II: The SOS "Damayan Project"

By: Attys. Alex & Pia Lacson  
CFM Project Damayan Chair-Couple

On March 15, 2020, the Philippine government declared the first lockdown in Metro Manila due to the spreading infections caused by the Covid19 pandemic.

A month later, this lockdown was extended to cover various provinces and key cities and municipalities in the country.

Due to the lockdown, businesses and offices were ordered closed, as people were ordered to strictly stay home. The entire national economy was practically put on a halt, as even the smallest of enterprises and the most basic of services were also stopped. The most seriously affected were those low-income families who have no savings and relied merely on their daily wages or earnings.

On May 1, during the Board of Directors meeting of CFM Philippines, via ZOOM teleconferencing, the idea of making a nationwide inventory of financially-challenged CFM families, or those who were adversely affected by the Covid19 pandemic, and the possibility of forming a "Damayan Project" for them, was discussed.

**In Filipino, "damayan" means to care for and help one another, especially in times of crisis.**

On May 6, the Spirituality of Stewardship (SoS) Committee, with the approval of the Board of Directors, took up the challenge of exploring the idea of forming a "Damayan Project".



From May 6 to 15, an inventory was conducted in all twenty-two (22) dioceses where CFM Philippines has chapters and units. A list of 252 CFM needy families was compiled nationwide. These are families of drivers (pedicabs, tricycles, jeepneys), market vendors,



construction workers, farmers, and “no work no pay workers”. Most of these families were just earning around P5,000 (US\$100) or less a month.

These families were from 8 Dioceses -  
 - 25 families from San Jose, Nueva Ecija; 10 from Iba, Zambales; 38 from Pangasinan; 41 from Pampanga; 68 from Malolos and Meycauayan, Bulacan; 4 from Pandacan, Manila; 22 from Cagayan De Oro; and 40 from Zamboanga City.

Our Area and Diocesan Leaders have been helping these families together with their respective parishes and dioceses, but the assistance was difficult to sustain. Recognizing the plight of these needy families, the SoS Committee, together with the CFM

National Board, formed a "CFM Damayan Project" to help them.

We wanted those 252 families to feel that we are a family in CFM, that they have brethren in CFM who will help them in times of crisis.

Thus, on May 23rd, we sent out a letter to all CFM Units and their family members nationwide, and asked for donations for the needy families.



At the end of our donation campaign period, we generated a total donation of P366,700.00, coming from 72 donors, for the Damayan Project.

On June 23rd, we distributed a financial subsidy of P1,500.00 (US\$35.00) to each of the 252 adversely affected families. To complete the subsidy, we added P2,300.00 from our SoS Fund to the donated amount.

Our Area and Diocesan Leaders, who distributed the financial subsidy, submitted to the SoS Committee the Receipt and Liquidation Report, as signed by all 252 family beneficiaries with their phone numbers. A spot audit was performed by calling up a number of beneficiaries to verify if they really received their subsidy. A number of the



beneficiaries sent videos and pictures showing us their gratitude and appreciation for our assistance in this time of pandemic.

On July 1st, we sent out a personalized Thank You Letter to all our 72 donors whose donations, kindness and generosity have made the project successful.

We believe that our CFM Damayan Project was a huge success, as it was able to help the needy family members of our community.

May our Lord be glorified with loving generosity and kindness of the members of our CFM Philippines community!

### **CHRISTIAN COUPLE'S WAY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**By Jorge and Josie Santamaria  
ICCFM Secretariat of Formation Orient**

There is no happily-married couple that does not experience conflict. Conflict may take the form of disagreement which may be minor or serious. If minor, the difference is easily settled. There is no conflict that is not solved by love. Love is shown by mutual respect and humility as expressed in the following behaviors: attentive listening, showing understanding by paraphrasing what the other partner said and reflecting back his/her feelings, praying together before they start their conjugal dialogue, and leaving the decision to God. They can even express "I love you's" before they start their dialogue.

**CAUSES OF CONFLICT.** The following can predispose and lead to conflict: personality differences, difference in perception or interpretation of a situation, difference in values or priorities, in interests and preferences, and others.

In Mark 3:24-25, Jesus said to His disciples, "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand." We know about the conflict between Peter and Paul about circumcision and eating of meats, or between Paul and Barnabas which resulted in their going separate ways. This, too, can happen to a marriage if a couple cannot resolve their conflict. What breaks up the relationship is not the presence of conflict but their failure to resolve their conflict successfully.

**ATTITUDES IN CONFLICT SITUATION.** There are five attitudes in a conflict situation: win-lose, lose-win, lose-lose or no win, compromise and win-win. In win-lose, a spouse insists on "my way". In lose-win, the spouse is self-sacrificing and yields to the one with the win-lose mentality, but he/she may still harbor resentment and even anger towards the other. In lose-lose, both decide not to talk about the issue and merely "sweep under the rug" their disagreement. The issue is likely to crop up again in the future because there was no closure. Compromise is a low form of win-win where the couple agrees to have a quick middle ground solution that partially satisfies both of them.





**THE WIN-WIN APPROACH.** This is the best way of resolving conflict. One spouse seeks to know the needs of the other and to express his/her needs also. He/she uses the skills of attentive listening, paraphrasing what was said and reflecting back to the other the feelings of the latter. For example, the husband says, “Honey, you are saying that it is very difficult for us to have any saving because prices of everything have gone up. My position is that we save at least 10% from my take-home pay every payday or twice a month. We need to have savings in case there is an emergency”. He waits for the reaction of the wife. When she does, he listens attentively. Then, he says, “OK, I see your point. Will you be agreeable to at least 5%?”

1. Mutual agreement, not to argue for one’s viewpoint but to bring their issue before God;

2. They hold hands and pray together to bless them with what God wants. “Not my will or his/her will but Your will, Lord.”

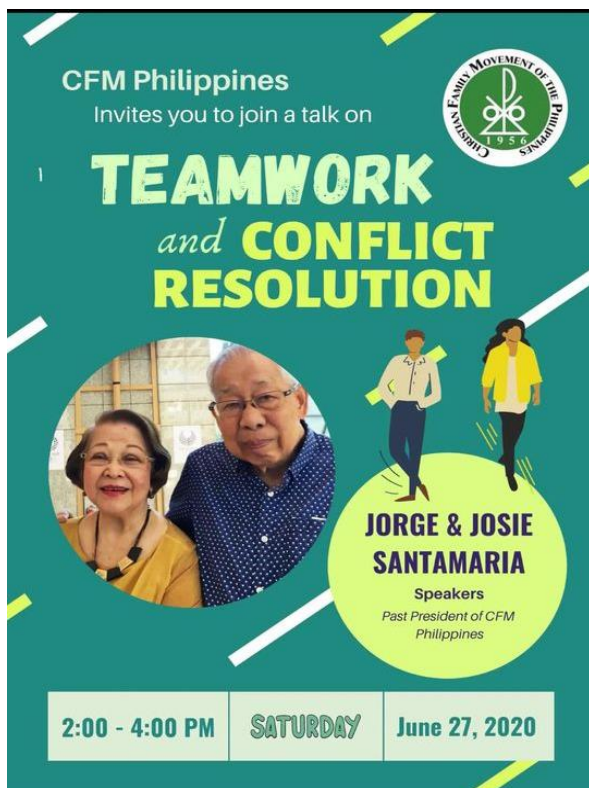
3. They ask for God’s blessing to discern His will.

4. They pray to God to make His will be known to them. The answer may not come at that moment. They may decide to have time for discernment. They do this individually.

5. When they decide that the time has come for them to express their discernment, they come together to pray and then listen to each other.

Almost always, the product of their discernment is the same. God had spoken the same message to them. This process of conflict resolution results in a stronger& loving relationship between the couple and move them closer to God.

Try it and may God bless you\*\*\*\*\*



The win-win solution requires a Christian couple to do the following steps in conflict resolution:



## 2020: THE YEAR THAT WAS

By: Elliot & Grace Kam

ICCFM Communication Secretariat Orient



We were looking forward with anticipation and excitement for the year 2020 as we completed our 2-year term of office as CFM Philippines President-Couple on December 31, 2019.

Many milestones were anticipated to happen and one of our “bucket lists” will be fulfilled this year at last!

On January 6 was our 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, my sister-in-law Dr. Tess Rodriguez will celebrate her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on April 19, followed by a double celebration in May, the college graduation and birthday of our youngest daughter, Angeleen. Then, on July 20<sup>th</sup> will be the birthday of Grace and on August 10 the 75<sup>th</sup> birthday of my eldest brother, Edward Jr. On Sept. 6, will be the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of our eldest daughter, Kathleen, and we intend to visit her again in Japan.

And to cap all of these will be our European trip in October as part of our wedding anniversary celebration. My two working girls, Kathleen and Charleen, promised to foot the bill for the said trip.

But to our dismay and apprehension, COVID-19 struck the Philippines in February and all the preparations (and excitement) were put on hold. Grace cancelled her trip to Cebu City; Angeleen was not able to march for her graduation ceremony as it was cancelled too.

We contented ourselves with “food delivery” during Angeleen’s and Grace’s birthdays as restaurants were closed. My brother, Edward Jr. and his wife postponed their trip as no airlines were flying to the Philippines due to the pandemic. We just greeted Kathleen on her birthday via Viber.

Our normal lives started to become “abnormal” when the government imposed a total lockdown in Metro Manila and in most parts of the Philippines on March 15. People were ordered to stay at home, especially the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions, and only essential workers and medical personnel were allowed to go out.

We observed: wearing a mask, social distancing and frequent washing of hands during the quarantine period. Fortunately, my niece in Hongkong sent a box of N95 masks in January when Taal Volcano erupted and ash fall reached Metro Manila

My daughters started “Working from Home” from March 15 up to the present. Although they have undergone “swab test” in anticipation of going back to work in the office, it never happened because of infection among co-workers.



Grace worked from home and at the bank on a weekly basis alternately, but when she thought she came in contact with an infected person, she had the “swab test”, fortunately, it was negative.



But, as the home quarantine extends to 7 months and Covid19 cases were rising, we were worried when we will be back to the “new normal”. We continue to pray for our family, relatives and friends affected in one way or another by this pandemic especially those who succumbed to the virus.

This pandemic is a “game changer” so to speak. The Philippine economy may take 2 to 3 years to recover with millions of Filipinos out of work and a lot of small and medium companies out of business.

The CFM Philippines and its programs were, also, affected. The Encounter programs slated to be conducted at CFM Nazareth

Home have been cancelled and the quarterly Board of Directors and committee meetings were now done via ZOOM. Even the “Ala Una ang Pamilya” in Manila and the “BuhayPamilya” in Naga City radio programs are being aired through Facebook instead of CFMer anchors going to the station in person.

Despite all the worries, anxieties and fear caused by this virus, there were some “positive” (no pun intended) things that came about to our family and to CFM Philippines. CFM units now conduct their meetings virtually. While other employees lost their job during this pandemic, our youngest daughter on July 1. We have more family-time together as Grace and our 2 daughters are working at home most of the time. We tuned in to You Tube for the Sunday masses.

Full of humility and gratitude, we trust in the Lord to never abandon His people who have suffered much during this time. May God continue to protect everyone from this virus and help us regain our normal life soon.





**CFM EUROPE - Continental Events**  
**January to June 2020**  
**Balazs and Krisztina Menesi,**  
**President Couple CFM Europe**

After verifying (in late 2019) which countries were



active in CFM in Europe, visits were planned to those countries (Italy, Malta, Sweden etc.) from January 2020.

Unfortunately, all trips had to be canceled due the COVID pandemic.

The European Congress planned for June 2020 was also canceled because of COVID 19, as well as the Priest Encounter planned to be presented by Msgr. Gerald Alminaza during the days before the Congress. Both events were postponed to June 2021.

During the lockdown, in spring 2020 the [cfmeurope.eu/](http://cfmeurope.eu/) and [mfceuropa.eu](http://mfceuropa.eu) continental websites were set up. News, contact, and formation materials are offered for download in English and Spanish.

Every crisis involves danger and risk, but also a chance for growth. This pandemic has blocked so many good initiatives – and yet it is a situation which can help us get closer to God and to our families.

In order to give some help with this, CFM Europe offers an outline for one/two group meetings to share about the pandemic, entitled “How to come out of the pandemic as better persons than before”. It is available in English and Spanish on the [cfmeurope.eu](http://cfmeurope.eu) website. Sharing about it might be a positive experience with good fruits for CFM groups.



## CFM/FIRES Hungary

**Norbert and Bernadett Dévényi**  
**Balazs and Krisztina Ménesi**  
**Presidential Team CFM/MÉCS Hungary**  
**January to June 2020**

### **February 2020**

The traditional CFM/MÉCS Lenten Day in February was attended by 350 people (couples and kids). A great reunion of CFM families from all over the country.

### **March to June**

All meetings, reunions, and Encounters were canceled due to the pandemic.





**CFM ITALY**  
**Rosario Pignalosa – Danila Pompilio,**  
**Presidents CFM Italy**

The first half of 2020 was characterized, as unfortunately known, by the Coronavirus pandemic, which has plagued the whole of humanity, claiming thousands of victims.

Italy was one of the countries most affected, as well as among the first, by this scourge and had to run for cover with drastic measures to contain the contagion. From March onwards, in fact, it became necessary to close all commercial activities that did not supply essential goods and services; it has become of primary importance to limit travel to those that are truly indispensable and cannot be deferred; it was necessary, with extreme suffering, to limit interpersonal interaction, with the so-called "social distancing", which prevented even the mere gesture of shaking hands. Last but not least, for us Christians, there is the painful impossibility of reaching and attending churches and parishes for the celebration of the Eucharist.

This scenario, however, in our country, was only outlined from March onwards, allowing the normal conduct of daily activities for the months of January and February. It was in that period, in fact, that the commitments and appointments of the Christian Family Movement were concentrated, which, here in Rome, carried out its program of fortnightly meetings with the families who, from time to time, prepared and organized hospitality.

When, at the beginning of March, the national government launched the

generalized lockdown measure, after an initial period of shock and disorientation, the most varied initiatives and activities were born to continue to stay in contact and to ensure the celebration of the Sacraments, in full compliance with current regulations.

The priests improvised themselves as directors and streaming experts, in order to broadcast the celebration of the Holy Mass online; through smartphones, video messages of closeness and solidarity have flourished and multiplied. The Christian Family Movement itself did not miss its members videos in which the need to trust in the Lord and to remain united in prayer was expressed. Until, precisely with regard to prayer, video meeting platforms came to our aid by organizing common prayer meetings. In fact, on more than one occasion, we made an online appointment to pray the Holy Rosary all together, to exchange ideas and opinions on the serious moment we were experiencing and not to definitively lose any form of interpersonal contact.

The health situation, at the end of spring, seemed to improve, so much so that, in Italy, the stringent measure of the general lockdown gradually eased, until it disappeared in mid-May.

It was then, therefore, that, with extreme joy, we finally began to be able to go to the Sunday Holy Mass, we immediately reorganized the meetings of the Christian Family Movement in attendance, completing the program of the 2019/2020 Pastoral Year.

It was certainly a very difficult semester, at least absolutely unusual, but never, not even





for a moment, have we lost trust in the LORD, aware that his ways are not our ways and that from him will always and only gestures of love and of goodness.

**Malta – Gruppi Familji Nsara Malta  
Pastoral Year 2019 – 2020  
by Helen and Carmel D'Amato,  
National President Couple of Malta**

**2019**

Gruppi Familji Nsara has a membership of about 400 couples (gathered in 37 different groups) who meet once a month in the various parishes around the island. Each group has a leader couple and a chaplain for spiritual guidance. Each month the groups follow a distinct scheme that is prepared by



the Formation Commission within the Central Committee. This year's scheme were based on suggestions made by the members themselves who requested that the schemes should address the various challenges that families in Malta are facing today.

The Central Committee meets regularly once a month to organize a number of events. During this year, the Chaplain and the President Couple together with the District's couple embarked on visiting the various groups during their monthly meeting. We

also issue a quarterly newsletter that is sent to the members through the leader couples.

Our Pastoral year starts in October. We invite members for an evening seminar and a social gathering afterwards. Our National Chaplain says mass to mark the occasion. The keynote speech was delivered by Prof Rita Borg Xuereb, and the topic that she addressed was the sanctity of life from Conception to Natural death. Abortion is still illegal in Malta under all circumstances; however, a big debate is presently taking place for the introduction of abortion as a women's right.

On the first Saturday of Advent, members are invited to join the seminarians at the Archbishop's Seminary for mass and the blessing of the advent wreath. This gives us a good opportunity to meet with the Seminarians who will potentially be our future Chaplains. After the ceremony we share food and drinks that the members themselves would have voluntarily brought with them.

We launch the schemes for the following year. The Schemes are prepared by the Pastoral Formation Commission supported also by the members of the Central Committee. The Schemes for 2021 will focus on 12 Parables and how these can be applied today in our married life.

On Saturday before Christmas, we organized a mass, which is celebrated by our Archbishop at St John's Cathedral, for our members to celebrate the Holy Family. During this month we also organize a full day



event to include a Christmas lunch for our members and their families.

## 2020

In January we organized a full day seminar for our leader couples to enhance their leadership skills within our groups. We had two keynote speakers and even workshops.

The First Saturday of Lent is also a fixed appointment in our Calendar. We organize a mass for members and our National Chaplain invites us to reflect on our spiritual well-being in preparation for Easter.

This was our last public event because of Covid 19. Unfortunately, we had to cut short all our prepared events, visits to the groups, visits to parishes and, even worse of all, our groups stopped the monthly meetings. The Central Committee kept meeting virtually and encouraged members to continue meeting virtually through the various platforms available.

We are aware that some of the groups did take up the challenge and started meeting virtually. We tried as much as possible to stay in contact with our groups through emails and through our quarterly newsletter. We continued working on the Schemes for 2021 even though we know that we might not be able to go back to our normal routines at least for the first few months of 2021.

We also launched our Pastoral year through a Webinar and the topic chosen was “Priscilla and Aquila today”. Our

intention is to step up our efforts to organize our usual events using webinars and thus keep contact with our members as much as possible.

## MFCC/SWEDEN

**Ana María Silva – Sergio Trincado,  
Presidents Sweden**

### Activities for 2020 January-July:

1. Monthly meeting with the communities of Tyresö, Arboga and the Women's Group: January-February 2020 (after which the Mission was closed). There were readings of the Happy Family themes for Tyresö and Arboga.

Women's Group held a meeting where different topics related to women and their life as Catholics in Sweden were discussed.

2. MEC continued with its program of weekly meetings on Tuesdays, talks to the community on current topics of interest to families and marriages, on the last Tuesday of the month.

Celebration of Valentine's Day on 14th February, with Bingo, the traditional MEC party with their families and finally the family party with the community at Lake Tyresö in June

Then the Pandemic started, and the activities were stopped, we just continued with the virtual meetings.



**FR. DONNON MURRAY, OFM**  
**Requiescat in Pace**



The ICCFM has lost a true friend and great mentor—a faithful and tireless promoter of the F.I.R.E.S program of Fr. Gabriel Calvo. Fr. Donnon died on May 29, 2020 in Tokyo, Japan. He was 89 years old.

A native of Olyphant, Pennsylvania, Fr. Donnon was received into the Franciscans in 1950 and ordained priest in 1956. In 1958 he volunteered to serve in the province's new mission field in Japan where he lived for more than six decades.

For almost 50 years, Fr. Donnon was involved with Marriage Encounter (ME) weekends. ME is for couples who are interested in learning how to deepen their relationship and union with God, with one another, their children and extended families. ME is a part of the

FIRES program designed by Fr. Gabriel Calvo. FIRES stands for Families, Intercommunication, Relationships, Experiences, and Services.

Fr. Donnon traveled worldwide as a team priest for Marriage Encounter. His efforts in helping couples strengthen their relationships were widely known and respected. Fr. Donnon expanded FIRES throughout Japan, as well as to countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe. He brought to many countries not only ME but also Family Encounter, Self Encounter, Sons and Daughters Encounter (SADE), Eucharistic Encounter, and Priest Encounter.

When he introduced for the first time in the world the two-day Eucharistic Encounter program in Hungary in 2008, he said:

*“Everywhere in today’s world people rediscover the significance of the Eucharist. Fr. Calvo was reading the apostolic letters by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, when he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to*







*create a new Encounter program about the Eucharist, which is the only true source of strength and the sacrament of love and unity. While his earlier programs were meant for particular groups of society like the youth or the married, the message the Eucharistic Encounter, which is the message of unity, is for everybody."*

On October 19 and 20, 2013, Fr. Donnon introduced the Eucharistic Encounter in the Philippines with CFMers and their families and friends in attendance. We were lucky attendees of this encounter program. It was the first time we met Fr. Donnan in person.

When Fr. Donnon came to Bangalore in Oct. 2015 for the ACCFM Conference, he conducted " Sons and Daughters Encounter

Program for the Youth. We also had a chance for a brief but very inspirational encounter with Fr. Donnon.

He introduced the Priests' Encounter on June 20-23, 2016 for priests at Bago City, Negros Occidental, Philippines. No less than our ICCFM Chaplain Bishop Gerry Alminaza was in

attendance. After the event, we met Fr. Donnon again for a short talk and to bring him to the airport for his departure back to Tokyo. Little did we know that it shall be our last encounter with Fr. Donnon.



He was a true disciple of Jesus and with his gentle and humble nature built on Love and Service.

We will miss him dearly.

*Pip and Wilma Cua*  
President Couple





**An Hour Together in a Mission: June 27th, of 2020, topic: “Covid 19 Pandemic: Challenges & Opportunities in Family Evangelization”, speaker Bishop Gerry Alminaza**

ICCFM Plenary meeting  
Please join us in:

**“An Hour Together in the Mission”**

- What:
  - ☐ Holy Rosary
  - ☐ Talk by Bishop Gerry on “Covid-19 Pandemic: Challenges & Opportunities in Family Evangelization.”
- When:
  - ☐ June 27, 2020 (Saturday), 9:00 PM Manila time.
  - ☐ Via Zoom: [https://bit.ly/27-Jun-2020\\_ICCFM](https://bit.ly/27-Jun-2020_ICCFM)

COUNTRY/PAYS	CITY/CUADAD	TIME/HORA
PHILIPPINES	MANILA	21:00
MEXICO	MONTRENEY	09:00
INDIA	BANGALORE	20:30
HUNGARY	BUDAPEST	15:00
MALAWI	LEONSOUE	15:00
PARAGUAY	CIUDAD DEL ESTE	09:00
USA	LOS ANGELES	08:00
AUSTRALIA	SYDNEY	23:00



Pip & Wilma came up with this idea of holding a series of formation talks/recollections to encourage the MFC-CFM leaders to continue in the mission amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. The first of such talks took place on June 27, 2020, via zoom, with no less than Bishop Gerry Alminaza, the ICCFM Chaplain giving the talk.



The talk was preceded by the recitation of the Holy Rosary with each decade led by the continental presidents. Bishop Gerry delivered his talk in English but this was translated to Spanish by Edgar Montalvo for the Spanish audience.

For the closing prayer, Edgar & Cinthya led the prayer “Oratio Imperata against Covid-19.



Here is the text of the talk by Bishop Gerry—.



**“Covid 19 Pandemic: Challenges & Opportunities in Family Evangelization”**

**I. Introduction**

Just 2 days ago before the conference the long-awaited updated Directory for Catechesis was released in the Vatican providing guidelines for the Church’s mission of proclaiming the Gospel through catechesis and evangelization. It was drafted under the direction of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. It was approved by Pope Francis on March 23 - the liturgical memorial of Saint Turibius of Mongrovejo, a 16th century saint who gave a strong impetus to evangelization and catechesis.



The new Directory seeks to highlight the close link between evangelization and catechesis. It underlines that every baptized person is a missionary called to find new ways of communicating the faith with commitment and responsibility.

In this regard, the new Directory proposes three major principles of action: Witnessing, Mercy and Dialogue.

The new Directory containing over 300 pages, and is made up of 3 parts divided into 12 chapters.

1. the formation of catechists
2. the catechetical process
3. the catechesis in parishes, schools, ecclesiastical movements, and other Church associations.

**II. Family Evangelization**

Definition of Terms:

\* Evangelization

- \* Family Evangelization
- \* New Evangelization
- \* Catechesis



Evangelization - initial proclamation of the Good News (kerygma) that leads one to encounter Christ and prepares one

for baptism.

Pope Francis captures the core message of this kerygma in Christus Vivit:

- \* "God who is love".
- \* "Christ saves you".
- \* "He is alive!".

Family Evangelization - proclamation of the Gospel by word and life in the Church of the Home.

New Evangelization - new not so much in content but in terms of audience, fervor, methods, and expressions.

Audience: Generation X (41-55), Y (26-40), Z (8-25), Alpha (1-7) and their context: the digital culture as entwined with the ongoing globalization.

- lapsed Catholics and in irregular situations
- youth
- poor
- persons with disability
- prisoners
- other Christians and faithful of other religions

Fervor: "Zeal for your House consumes me!" - includes our common home.

Methods: synodal, participatory, communal, dialogical, listening, digital, unconventional, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue

Expressions: social media platforms, arts and music.

Catechesis: the process of maturing in Christian faith - faith that does justice - integral faith.

III. Challenges and Opportunities in Family Evangelization brought about by the Covid-19 Pandemic.



### 1. Challenges:

- \* To observe Social Distancing and Mass Gathering Prohibition while being evangelized and evangelizing families.
- \* To cope with Loss / Decrease of Family Income in ways consistent with the Gospel.
- \* To maintain and improve Internet Connectivity for mutual support and formation.



### 2. Opportunities:

- \* To maximize increased family time together for family faith formation and prayer (even daily online masses)
  - \* To embrace parents' greater responsibility to form their children at home.
  - \* To guide the family on the proper use of Digital technology.
- ### 3. Both challenges and opportunities:
- \* To slow down and develop contemplative stance in life.
  - \* To see the poor and those in peripheries.
  - \* To care for the common home - ecological conversion and fight consumerism - less is more.

These are but starters and never at all meant to be exhaustive...

Thanks you.

Bishop Gerry



**Pip and Wilma Cua.**



Greetings of peace, joy and love to everyone!

We started January 2020 by putting up the WhatsApp application for the integration and strengthening of the ICCFM plenary team as it embarks on its mission to “Go to the deep and put down the net” (Lk 5:4). It was met with open mind and enthusiasm, confirming the group’s “joint mission and cooperation”, finding it a blessing to be in touch quick and easy, and referring it as a new group forum for information in the new year.

WhatsApp turned out to be very useful, practical and effective medium of communication. And it became very providential as the Covid-19 pandemic struck early in the year.

While we were readying to meet in a General Assembly (Extraordinary) in Los Angeles on July 31- August 3, 2020 with the Continental Presidents and ICCFM officers, and past Presidents, the deadly pandemic persisted causing worldwide health crisis. Travel was stopped, restricted, or controlled in varying degrees, locations and circumstances; thereby affecting the mission visits to different CFM/MFC areas. The General Assembly (Extraordinary) was thus put on hold.

Notwithstanding the pandemic, we have three great news:

- a. The ICCFM is now officially listed in the Directory of Associations in the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life of Vatican. The Directory lists only the international associations of the faithful and other ecclesial realities formally recognized or

erected by the Dicastery. ICCFM is recognized!

- b. Our Asst. Chaplain, Fr Alex was appointed as the parish priest of Saints Elizabeth & Zachary (parents of St John the Baptist) Parish, Roma. What a great promise for MFC Rome!
- c. We invited the members of the plenary team and national presidents and officers to contribute an article/essay sharing their thoughts and experiences about the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic has greatly disturbed and impacted our lives including our family apostolate that it needs to be recorded for posterity. We are thankful for the kind and positive response from you as we continue to receive these articles and essays.

We thought the pandemic would end soon and things would get back to normal, but Covid-19 continued to worsen with no sign of let-up. But while we have to keep ourselves and family safe and sound, the mission continues. Nothing can separate us

from the love of God and our commitment to the mission.

A series of meetings via ZOOM per Continent was scheduled starting July. As a prelude to these ZOOM meetings, we launched on June 27 the “An Hour Together in the Mission” as a formation tool for members during the pandemic. Our Chaplain Bishop Gerry Alminaza gave the maiden talk with topic “Covid-19 Pandemic – Challenges & Opportunities in Family Evangelization”.

We shall continue to give you updates in the next issue of this Link/Lazo.

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## Prayer of Consecration to the Virgin of Guadalupe

Blessed Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, Mother of the true God by whom we live. In these moments, like Juan Diego, feeling “small” and fragile in the face of illness and pain, we raise our prayers and consecrate ourselves to you.

We consecrate our peoples to you, especially to your most vulnerable children: the elderly, children, the sick, indigenous people, migrants, the homeless, those deprived of their liberty. We turn to your immaculate Heart and implore your intercession: obtain for us from your Son health and hope.

May our fear turn into joy; may your Son Jesus be for us strength and serenity in the midst of the storm; May our Lord raise his mighty hand and stop the advance of this pandemic.

Blessed Virgin Mary, "Mother of God and Mother of Latin America and the Caribbean, of North America, of Europe, of Asia, of Africa and Oceania, Star of renewed evangelization, first disciple and great missionary of our peoples", be the strength of the dying and consolation of those who mourn them; be a maternal caress that comforts the sick; be the company of the health professionals who take care of them; and for all of us, Mother, be presence and

