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India CFM welcomes the world for 11th World Assembly and 15th General Assembly in Goa

In a part of the world where Christians are a vital minority, Christian families from around the world were challenged to “live their Christian calling to the hilt,” to evangelize other families, “to promote values and to attract others to family values,” and to be moral agents of change.

The 11th World Assembly of the International Conference of the Christian Family Movements was held in Goa, India, September 10-13, 2010. CFM India welcomed over 150 participants from other areas of Asia, along with North America, Latin America, Europe and Africa.

In India, these participants from other continents observed a world of cultural influences vastly different than their own experience, but found much in common: the worldwide reality of socio-economic, demographic and technological challenges to the family today; the common concerns across continents about how the family as Domestic Church practices and propagates our Christian faith, and the everyday vocation of the family to instill morality and influence the world around us.

Conference liturgies each day were coordinated by the several continental representatives, discovering our cultural differences while celebrating our common faith.



Incoming President Couple Gary and Kay Aitchison receive flowers from outgoing President Couple Esilda and William Cheng at the close of the 15th General Assembly in Goa.

Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao and Bishop Agnelo Gracias were present at the opening celebrations. Archbishop Ferrao is ordinary of the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman. Bishop Gracias is auxiliary bishop of Bombay and Chairman of the Family Commission of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI). Opening ceremonies on Friday included a welcome address by the CFM president couple of India, Cyril and Carmen D’Souza, a welcome address by William and Esilda Cheng, ICCFM president couple from Panama; and an invocation from the ICCFM Chaplain, Father Jose Majedas, OSA.

The conference site was the Community Centre in Taleigao, Goa, where participants met for liturgies, presentations and common meals and entertainment.

Bishop Gracias commented on the theme of the conference during his remarks at the opening ceremonies. After reviewing church teaching on family life, he brought to mind some of the challenges of life in India in an age of call centers, modern media and globalization. In his conclusion, he challenged the participants to “become an evangelizer to other families.... chiefly by the witness of its life as members live their Christian calling to the hilt.” He expressed gratitude for the powerful force that CFM had been in India in its 50+ years of existence there.

Asian presentations on Saturday were focused on “Solidarity and Action of the Family in the World,” and included discussion of the role of the family amidst diverse beliefs and cultures and the problems of migrant families.

Jesuit theologian Father Michael Amaladoss said that the effect of globalization has not been to promote democracy, but rather, domination and fragmentation. The distance is growing between the haves and the have-nots and cultural and religious pluralism are not always peaceful. He said the role of the Christian family – and in fact, the role of all families – is to promote harmony and to be in mission. All families are on mission, he said, to promote values and to attract others to family values.

Father Amaladoss said in the past, the Church imposed itself on other cultures, which were to be conquered and suppressed. This is not the case today. He said the real enemies of the Church are Satan and Mammon; others are not enemies but allies.

“Every authentic prayer is of the spirit,” Father Amaladoss said, describing the gathering of Pope John Paul II at Assisi with leaders of Christian and other faith traditions.

Father Amaladoss spoke about the common citizenship of Christian families in India, as an example: how Christian families relate to other families as neighbors, helping each other to



Gary and Kay Aitchison with the organizing committee for the ICCFM meeting in Goa, India.

celebrate Christmas and Diwali. Families support each other, help each other in times of tragedy, and acknowledge that the word and spirit of God are active in all.

Father Amaladoss is Director of the Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in Chennai (Madras) and Visiting Professor at Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi.

European presentations later on Saturday were focused on the sacrament of Matrimony and the impact of science and culture – including same-sex marriages and genetic engineering.

Vladimír Ďurikovič, longtime president of CFM in Slovakia, discussed the challenges of science and technology – of gene-splicing and asexual reproduction. He spoke of the dehumanizing effect of this technology. A woman can be reduced to pure biological function. A woman can be the twin sister of her mother, representing a radical rupture of parent-child relationship.

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They discussed how Christian families have an opportunity and an obligation to help in welcoming migrant family members, and also in supporting family members left behind. The spiritual reality is that we are all pilgrims. As society becomes more and more secular, the family is a witness to the spiritual and physical reality of the relationship of God and the human family. The Christian family attracts others to God and to the Church through its example. The

After each panel, participants gathered in language groups to discuss the topic from their own experience. Ideas expressed in each group were reported to the assembly.

An archive of the presentations can be found at www.iccfm.org and www.cimfc.org (Spanish) by following the assembly link from the front page. The resolutions adopted at the assembly



family is not only the object of evangelization, but the agent of evangelization. Families are co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord.

The position of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops regarding immigrants was outlined:

- *Persons have the right to pursue opportunity in their own land*
- *Persons have the right to migrate to other lands to support themselves and their families*
- *Sovereign nations have the right to protect their own borders*
- *Refugees and asylum seekers should be protected*
- *Human dignity and human rights should be respected regardless of the status of documentation*

Monday presentations by leaders from Latin America focused on the importance of Christian families in the increasingly secular society, how the sacraments form the family, and how the future of the family depends on the families of today.

can be found under the heading “Our activities.”

Following the World Assembly of Families, delegates from the continents met to elect officers during the 15th General Assembly of the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements.

Gary and Kay Aitchison of Ames, Iowa, in North America, were elected President Couple of ICCFM.

CFM India arranged a wonderful event, with warm hospitality, opportunities to explore Old Goa with visits to historic Christian sites related to St. Francis Xavier and to 16th century Portuguese explorers.

Cultural experiences during the conference also included presentations of music, costume and dance depicting holiday traditions. A dinner and dancing evening on a party boat was among the highlights.

Best of all was the opportunity to greet old friends and make new ones, bringing families of the world together. It was an uncommon

opportunity to share what we hold in common as

Christian families throughout the world.

ICCFM is represented at International Congress on the Evangelization of the Family

The Sixth World Meeting of Families, sponsored by the Pontifical Council for the Family, took place in January 2009 in Mexico City. Among the conclusions of that meeting was the urgent need to promote the family's social and ecclesial role.

This resulted in the launch of an initiative focused on "The Family, a Subject of Evangelization" which culminated in an International Congress in Rome, November 25-27, 2010. The goal of the congress was to identify and present the experiences of a variety of programs, from throughout the world, that evangelize families.

Delegates from 30 different countries attended the congress and 29 projects were presented. Gary and Kay Aitchison were invited to be among the presenters. Their project related to grandparents learning to be



Gary and Kay Aitchison with Ennio Cardinal Antonelli, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family after their presentation in Rome.



ICCFM Congress participants:
Front: Nop and Elma Muangkroot - Thailand, Gary and Kay Aitchison - USA,
Back: Jorge Carrillo and Rosalinda Campos - Mexico, Lily Gauci - Malta, Bishop Laszlo Biro - Hungary, Tony Gauci - Malta, Ricardo and Lucia Araujo Castro - Mexico.

agents of evangelization. The presentation showcased a 6-meeting small group program entitled "The Grand Adventure, a New Call to Grandparenting."

This program brings grandparents together in small groups to explore the many ways that God calls them to serve their families and society. The themes of the six meetings include: 1. The vocation of grandparenting; 2. grandparents are blessings and anchors who add stability to the family; 3. grandparents are models and mentors to their grandchildren; 4. grandparents are carriers of faith, traditions, morals and values; 5. grandparents are links between the past and the future; 6. grandparents are the wisdom generation.

The program is available on-line from The Christian Family Movement in the U.S. Contact the CFM National Office to order

Chaplain's Remarks

Having a Home -- Leaving the Nest

By Father Bill Young

We have wrapped up our celebration of the Easter season and the gospel for the 6th Sunday of Easter (Jn 14:15–21) impresses upon us the fact that we are not orphans and that the Paraclete will send us out to others. As members of the Christian Family Movement we need to be enriched with both these revelations. In our meetings, prayer and family life, how can we Observe, Judge and Act in the light of this Easter revelation?

In this Gospel passage, which is part of his farewell discourse, Jesus assures us that he will not leave us orphaned. His impending departure will not leave us bereft of his love. We will not be homeless and will not need to be cared for by strangers. But what of all the real orphans in our world? The number of children worldwide who have lost parents is estimated at 133 million. The aid group SOS Children's Villages reports that every day 5,760 more children become orphans. In sub-Saharan Africa some 15 million children have lost their parents to the AIDS epidemic. Millions become orphans because of national and international conflict and natural disasters. Yes, to meet their needs for security, home, education, healthcare and law is truly a daunting task. Frequently sprinkled throughout the Hebrew Scriptures are reminders to take care of orphans, who are usually linked with widows and foreigners, the most vulnerable in the society (e.g., Ex 22:21–22; Dt 24:19–22).

Jesus also promises to send “another advocate” to be with us always. The Greek word

parakletos, “Paraclete,” has a rich array of meanings. It literally means “called to the side” of another. Its legal sense is more like “advocate” or “defense attorney.” It can also refer to a helper, mediator or intercessor, someone who appears on another's behalf.

Another meaning is “comforter,” as expressed in the Sequence for the feast of Pentecost, when we sing of the Holy Spirit “You of all consolers best” and ask for rest, refreshment and solace.

What is paradoxical is that the consolation provided by the Comforter is not always the sort that wraps us in a warm, fuzzy cocoon and allows us to remain there forever. It is more like the loving nudge of a mother bird pushing her fledglings to take wing. As the theologian Timothy Radcliffe, O. P., puts it, “this is what the Holy Spirit does, thrusting us out of our ecclesiastical nest into mission.” In order to be able to be thrust out, the Consoler gives us the assurance that we are never abandoned. We have a home in God, who draws us ever more deeply into mutual indwelling. “You are in me and I in you” (14:20).

The first reading gives us a glimpse into what results when disciples make their home in Christ and allow the power of the Spirit to be unleashed. Philip, fleeing persecution, becomes fearless enough to go into the region of Samaria and proclaim Christ. His intrepid venture among a people previously thought to be enemies impels Peter and John also to leave the nest in Jerusalem and to continue Jesus' mission to the lost and forgotten. John the evangelist depicts



the mission to Samaria as begun by Jesus himself when he spoke with a woman at the well, who brings her townsfolk to believe in Jesus as Savior of the world (Jn 4:4–42).

Jesus does not want to leave anyone orphaned. He is the embodiment of a motherly God who never forgets her children (Is 49:15) and a fatherly God who protects orphans and widows (Ps 68:5). Just as parental love at its best is unconditional, so too is God's love. Divine love has been revealed in God's gift of the Son (Jn 3:16). Our human love of God is expressed in

the keeping of the Commandments. As Fr. Raymond Brown points out in his commentary on John's Gospel, "Love and keeping the Commandments are actually two different facets of the same way of life. Love motivates the keeping of the Commandments, and indeed love is the substance of Jesus' Commandments" (Jn 13:34). Although some translations of John 14:15 and 14:21 seem to imply that God's love and the sending of another advocate are conditioned by our human response, the focus is actually on the mutuality of the love.

For reflection and prayer

- 1) How do you make your home in Jesus?
- 2) Is the Spirit trying to nudge you out of the nest?
- 3) Are you open to the Spirit leading you to the orphaned ones who need to receive God's love through you?

Latin American Report



The Third MFC Latin American Encounter of the Youth was held on July 2-5, 2010, in Barranquilla, Colombia, on the theme "The Youth, Transformers of Reality." Pictured are MFC Latin America Vice Presidents Carolina and Yorguin Gomez, President Couple MFC Latin America Luis and Marthica Pinilla, Nadia Bolaños and Marco Landaverde, both leaders of the Youth Movement



Youth engaged in team building activities during the meeting in Barranquilla.

Highlight Argentina

Monona and César Viale, National Coordinators announced that seven dioceses conducted Marriage Encounter weekends on the same weekend in May, the 27th-29th. This was truly a remarkable occurrence and a sign of the vitality of the movement in Argentina.

Karina and Juan Carlos Battaini along with Gloria and Sandro Suoni, National Coordinators for the Secretariat for the Engaged, announced that the first Engaged Encounter was conducted April 30 and May 1 in the Archdiocese of Corrientes. Twenty six couples participated.

North American ICCFM Report

By John and Laurie Przybysz

CFM-USA Opening New Office in Omaha, NE

Effective June 20, 2011, the CFM office will be moving from Evansville, Indiana, to Omaha, Nebraska. Mary Kay and Tom Halpin, long-time members of CFM and current national board members, have taken on the new position of Member Services Director for CFM. As a

result of this move, CFM has a new mailing address and phone number (see below). We say thank you, goodbye and congratulations to Missy and Paul Parkison, who served the movement as the Executive Director couple for the past few years. We wish Missy well in her new job with the University of Southern Indiana!

The new CFM address is PO Box 540550, Omaha, NE 68154. The new phone number is 800.581.9824 and new fax is 888.354.1094. The email address remains the same: office@cfm.org

North American Chaplain Father Don Conroy Honored by CFM-USA

At the Winter Board Meeting in Miami, Father Don Conroy was presented with the Msgr. Hillenbrand award for his years of service to CFM. Father Don served as CFM-USA chaplain 2002-2009. He lives in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and is active in hospital, family, and parish ministries in the Greensburg Diocese.

ACT Newsletter Goes Green – Now Published Exclusively Online

The National Newsletter of CFM-USA, ACT, has been around as long as CFM and has evolved as CFM has evolved to reflect changes in U.S. families, the U.S. Catholic Church, and American society. Volume 1, number 1, dated October, 1946, was printed as “A Quarterly of Adult Catholic Action” in Chicago, Ill. With ACT online, readers can click on links that will provide information beyond that contained in an article and can access resources on CFM’s website as ideas are sparked by something in ACT.

CFM-USA invites ICCFM members to share their news of CFM in their countries through ACT newsletter. Please share what your group is doing – along with a picture or two – with our ACT editor, Donna Richard-Langer: act-editor@cfm.org

CFM-USA is on Facebook! Friend us at “Christian Family Movement-USA”

New President Couple elected for Los Angeles MFC

The newly elected Presidents of MFC in Los Angeles, (2011-2014) are Geremias and Rosario Morales. They are scheduled to take office on June 12, 2011. Outgoing presidents, Juanita and Wilbur Hooker said, “We are thrilled with the results, because we are sure that with the help of God, they will continue working by the families and the objectives of the MFC. They are a very spiritual couple and given to the services to the



families. Currently, they are looking for the couples that will be part of their

team. MFC-Los Angeles Presidents Morales can be reached at moralesmfc@yahoo.com

MFCC-USA XV National Conference in Houston, Texas, July 22-24, 2011

Presidents Juan and Teresa Rodriguez continue to lead the growing MFCC in Texas and surrounding states. They have also been communicating with Spanish-speaking couples in Canada who want to grow MFC in their new home. MFCC offers many services to its members, including Marriage and Sons and Daughters Encounters and leaders’ training.

Visit their new website at <http://www.mfcc-usa-nacional.org/>

See and hear the conference song at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APgOit_pYVo

CFM-USA 2011 Program Book, Saints: Friends of the Family, available in July 2011.

Each member of CFM-USA may choose a program book for use at the group’s meetings. In this 10-meeting Christian Family Movement inquiry program, members will get to know some of these “friends of the




family.” By following their examples of prayer and self-sacrifice, may we discern our gifts and use them for God in our everyday life. Meeting themes include: Called to Holiness - St. Francis de Sales; Saints Begetting Saints - St. Monica

and Bl. Louis and Zellie Martin; Courage of Conviction - St. Thomas More; Christian Unity - St. Peter and St. Paul; American Pioneers for Christ - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. John Neumann, and St. Theodora Guerin; Praying With the Saints - Sts. Teresa of Avila and St. Francis of Assisi; Loving the Leper - St. Damien; Raising Boys - St. John Bosco; Saved in Hope - St. Josephine Bakhita; Responding to God - St. Mary and St. Joseph .

Special Program for Grandparents: The Grand Adventure, available now from CFM

ICCFM Presidents Gary and Kay Aitchison have designed a program just for grandparents. The Grand Adventure: A New Call to Grandparenting is a six-Meeting Grandparenting Program. The



Grand Adventure was created in response to an observed need in today's society to make better use of the grandparenting connection in family life. The program was inspired by and modeled from the many dynamic and committed grandparents who share their time, talent, gifts and charisms with their grandchildren. CFM members may request this book as their group's annual program or use to host a new group as a parish action. Available electronically only. Try Chapter One free by clicking [here](#).  (288kb) To receive Chapters 2-6, please [contact the CFM National Office](#). All six chapters are free for current CFM members. Cost is \$10 for non-members.

CFM Winter Board Meeting

The CFM National Board was treated to a special evening of food, fellowship and reflection on Friday, March 4th, 2011 at the home of our president couple, Bob and Anne Tomonto in Miami, Florida. This propelled us into a weekend filled with planning, decision

making and recognition at the Winter Board meeting.

The planning was directed at the future operation of the National Office and Member Services Director. The transition plan is underway for opening the new CFM office in Omaha, Nebraska, with board members stepping in to cover many of the responsibilities.

The Board of Directors elected two new couples, Dan and Beth McKenna, Lovettsville, VA and Jule and John Ward, Chicago, IL. The Board will meet again July 30-Aug 1, 2011, in Chicago. Donna Richard-Langer and Dave Langer were elected Secretaries.

Recognition was given to current board members who will complete their terms: Paul and Jane Leingang and Dan and Noreen Thomas. The board expressed appreciation for the two years of excellent work that Missy Parkison provided as Executive Director and wished her success in her new job at Southern Indiana University.

The board also took part in the events at the Festival of the Poor during the weekend, sponsored by Saint Louis Parish in Miami.

CFM remembers two supporters

Father Peter Bowman -- A great supporter of CFM, chaplain of the Chicago Federation in the 70s, and a pastor at St. James in Arlington Heights for seventeen years where he promoted CFM and helped it grow was Rev. Peter Bowman. He passed away in April 2011 after a long illness and will surely be missed.

Monsignor Michael Lenihan -- Monsignor Michael Lenihan passed away on Wednesday, March 25th, 2011. He was pastor at St. Lawrence Martyr Parish in Redondo Beach, California for 22 years where he enjoyed promoting and participating in CFM. Monsignor Lenihan was the first recipient of the Reynold Hillenbrand award in 2002 due to his support and love of CFM. He is missed by everyone in the St. Lawrence Martyr community.

Report from Europe

The 6th European Congress of CFM, was held in Hungary in July 2009 at the Benedictine Archabbey of Pannonhalma with the theme "The renewal of Europe through the spiritual renewal of families." 560 persons attended, from newborn to the elderly, while the great majority was married couples in their thirties, with lots of children. The day event was attended by representatives of ten countries: Spain, Italy, Slovakia, Portugal, Malta, Norway, Thailand, Japan and the United States. Members of CFM groups arrived from many towns Hungary and beyond the border. Instead of organizing a customary conference, the organizers offered a meeting spent in a brotherly, joyful atmosphere. Their work was assisted by 150 volunteer helpers including young people who after approximately 250 children and organized playful activities for them, according to their different age groups. The main talks were presented by Msgr. László Bíró, Hungarian Bishop Family, and by renowned professionals. An indication of the atmosphere of this Congress can be taken by viewing a 3 minute videoclip made with photos taken during the event, found at this address:

<http://www.mecsnapok.hu/interjuk/eloadasok/Pannonhalma2009/Pannonhalma2009-slideshow-V2.wmv>



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Country Highlights:

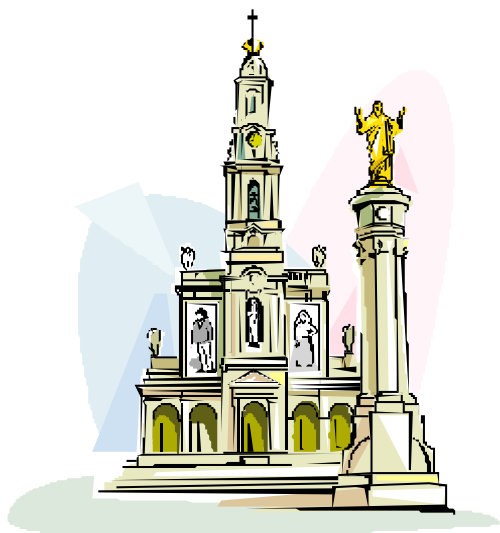
Croatia The overall family situation in Croatia has changed for the better in many aspects through widespread educational and pro family work that was done during the period of relative freedom of action from 1966 and these efforts have intensified after we were freed from communism in 1990. One important aspect of that educational work was the successful efforts to defend family values not only on religious grounds, but, also on other grounds, such as justice, honesty, true love, quality of life, joy in life, a constructive attitude, creativity, human dignity, the value and importance of every human being, scientific research, especially into the human nature of unborn children, developing a clear and concise vocabulary for spreading these values, etc.

Hungary This year marks the 15th anniversary of MECS (CFM/FIRES) Hungary. Our service has two branches: on the one hand, a growing number of parish-based groups of married couples, on the other, FIRES programs regularly offered to any young people, engaged and married couples, individuals and even priests. Since the very beginning, when the first CFM group started and the first Encounter program was presented, we have been encouraged by Msgr. László Bíró, Bishop for the Family, and assisted by some great and committed couples.

Today there are over 100 parish-based CFM groups in Hungary. They work in almost all regions of our country, in 10 regions led by 10 couples. The groups consist of 5 to 8 couples each. They usually meet monthly to pray together and share their opinions on different

topics related to their lives and faith. The groups use printed booklets, which contain detailed outlines for 10 monthly meetings each. These booklets are devised by a board of couples and revised by priests so their contents are absolutely in line with Church teaching. Many groups have their priests, too, but for many, a priest is very rarely if ever available. We consider personal contacts a key issue in CFM, therefore the only way for group leaders to receive the booklets for their groups is by attending their regional meetings held twice a year.

Malta In Malta, some 460 CFM couple members are organised in 55 different groups spread out in more than half of the 70 parishes in the diocese of Malta and in one other group in the sister diocese of Gozo. CFM couple members hold regular monthly formation, reflection and discussion meetings in these small groups. The central committee of CFM Malta also holds monthly meetings to coordinate all activities. Its main task is to keep contact with the different groups meeting in the various parishes, offer guidance to the leader couples and chaplains, organise two spiritual meetings and four social activities yearly at national level and offer Marriage Encounter as an “outreach activity” addressed mainly to non-member couples.



Portugal As usual, the opening session of national activities took place in Fatima on September 2011 with the leaders of MLC (CFM)

in attendance. Its purpose was to prepare the general theme for this pastoral year: “Christian Families reflect on the Church’s Social Doctrine, based on Pope Benedict’s XVI’s Encyclical Caritas in Veritate.” Examining, evaluating, and acting is the method used at the meetings to lead a Christian life and share it with others. Each team usually holds a monthly meeting for faith sharing.

Christmas, the Family Feast and Founder Day (13th March) were the main events we celebrated. Rejoicing, reflection and prayer were the main goals of these events. Weekend spiritual exercises for couples were held in several dioceses. “Rethinking the Church’s Mission” was the theme of a national meeting held in Coimbra (26th February), in accordance with a document published by the Portuguese Bishops Conference.

Next year the Movement will celebrate its 50th anniversary. We are preparing the publication of two books to celebrate this anniversary: one describing the MLC history and a second one containing the all the documents used at the meetings. A national celebration will be held in Fatima during a pilgrimage to the sanctuary.

The evaluation of these activities will take place at the end of June.

Romania This group has almost 30 active members who hold monthly meetings discussing different topics; this year the topic was Love and Forgiveness. There are already two parishes involved in CFM in Oradea, and Radio Maria broadcasts monthly shows in which these topics are also discussed. The current Vicar - Father Mihai Valentin Tegzes – has translated and is still translating a number of books on the Christian family in support of CFM.

Spain CFM youth members from Madrid will be participating as volunteers welcoming pilgrims from all over the world to World Youth Day from August 16th to 21st. The CFM of Madrid, Spain, has obtained permission to use the Parish of Santa Ángela de la Cruz, Vicariate



VIII of the Diocese of Madrid, to provide lodging to all CFM youth members who wish to stay there. This lodging arrangement will enable CFM youth members to share their faith experience, tour the city of Madrid together, and celebrate the spirit and mission of our movement.

Moreover, the group have obtained official approval for a proposal for a World Youth Festival called “Rooted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, and Confirmed in the Faith within the Family.” In addition to the main events to be presided by the Pope, this festival will be a unique opportunity to provide information on different Catholic movements and religious congregations, as well as many cultural activities related to the Catholic faith.

Slovakia Slovakian CFM had its 40th Anniversary and the 25th Anniversary of publication of the two periodicals “Family Community” and “Family” in 2009. The Conference “Family in Service to Families” was held in 2009 and was attended by 250 participants, among them four bishops.

Congratulations to Vladimír Ďurikovič who was named Knight Order of St. George Great by Pope Benedict for his service with CFM.

Also the Forum of Life recognized the Christian Family Movement in Slovak Republic for its work in the protection of life.

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