

## Greetings for the New Year 2013: Remember that your family is a holy family

### To the Families of ICCFM:

We wish you and your family many blessings. We look to the Holy Family of Nazareth as a model for our families and ask ourselves how we can become holy families in a secular world that shows little support for Christian families? How can we relate our family life to a family that lived 2,000 years ago?

Christ chose to be born and grow up in a human family. It is easy to imagine that life for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph was all peace and harmony, but they too were a real family faced with the hardships of the society in which they lived. Although, they may have known serenity and peace, they knew economic hardship and hard work as well. They lived in a time when disease, persecution, poverty and death were realities. They knew both joy and sorrow. In a sense, their lives were not so different from our own.

To belong to a family and truly be part of it is holy. To commit oneself to marriage is holy. To give tirelessly as a parent is holy. To live within a family of diverse personalities is holy.

Families are holy when they follow the example of the Holy Family. They are holy when they do the work of Jesus. We are holy families when:

We welcome the stranger — when we welcome a new baby or new daughter- or son-in-law into our family or invite an aging parent, a foster child or exchange student into our home.

We feed the hungry — when we work, shop and prepare meals, day-in and day-out, for our family; when we take a meal to a sick neighbor, or reach out with our family to feed others who are hungry and in need.

We give drink to the thirsty — when we wearily stum-



**Kay and Gary Aitchison, ICCFM Presidents**

ble out of bed night after night for the baby's 2 a.m. feeding or give a thirsty child a drink of water in the middle of the night.

We clothe the naked — when we work long hours at a demanding job to provide a family income, we are working to clothe the naked.

We care for the sick — when we walk the floor with a sick baby, sit at the bedside of a sick child, care for an ill spouse or take care of the needs of an elderly parent.

We visit the imprisoned — when we take time to listen or show empathy for a child, spouse, parent or other who needs our compassion.

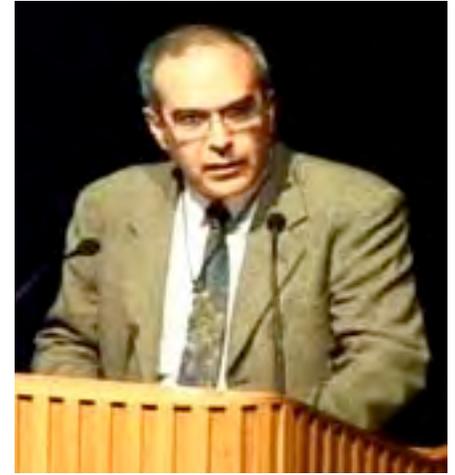
Families are holy when they teach their children to love God, to love themselves and to love one another.

May this year be a time when we as ICCFM families commit ourselves to becoming holy families by following the model of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

*Gary and Kay Aitchison, ICCFM Presidents*



# World Assembly in Bucaramanga, Columbia: June 28-July 1



**Colegio La Salle in Bucaramanga welcomes ICCFM to the World Assembly. Dr. Fernando Pliego Carrasco, a well-known social scientist, speaker and author and the one who inspired the the Assembly theme — will be featured.**

Preparations are being made for the upcoming World Assembly to be held June 28-July 1 in Bucaramanga, Colombia. Planning is proceeding under the direction of Luis Carlos and Marthica Pinella, ICCFM Continental Presidents for Latin America. Jorge and Rosalinda Campos, Vice Presidents of ICCFM, and Nop and Elma Muangkroot, representing ICCFM presidents Gary and Kay Aitchison, met with the planning committee in November to review the arrangements. In addition to Pinellas, Continental Chaplain Father Hoover Cajicá, Alvaro and Claudia Díaz and SPLA Advisers Carlos and Yolanda Sarmiento are part of the leadership team.

The conference theme is “Christian Families: Finding our Voice in a Global World.” The committee is taking their inspiration for the conference from the work of Dr. Fer-

nando Pliego Carrasco, researcher at the Institute for Social Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. His research on family life covers 13 countries in Asia, Europe, North America and South America and contains concrete statistics on specific challenges faced by families in these societies, a great starting point for the conference.

Dr. Pliego Carrasco is a well-known social scientist and was among the presenters at the 7th World Meeting of Families in Madrid last year. He is author of the publication, *Family and Welfare in Democratic Societies*.

Colegio La Salle in Bucaramanga is the conference venue. Conference sessions will be held in a newly renovated 750-seat auditorium with modern audio-visual facilities. The

college is centrally located and has a beautiful natural setting surrounded by mountains. There are bright and spacious facilities for meals and activities.

The hosts are planning tours of the surrounding city and countryside with additional cultural activities to make the visit to Bucaramanga memorable.

Cost for the meeting will be \$280 per person if staying with a host family. Costs will be \$350 per person with hotel accommodations. A small fee will be assessed to cover additional expenses. The fee is expected to be under \$10 per person.

The ICCFM website has an agenda for the meeting posted at <http://www.iccfm.org/conv2013.pdf> Registration materials are posted on [www.iccfmassembly2013.org](http://www.iccfmassembly2013.org).

## **Images of Bucaramanga**

*Come see the steeples and spires.  
Come meet the people.  
Come away with a renewed spirit.  
We are “Christian Families: Finding our Voice in a Global World.”*



# A brief history of ICCFM Meetings

## PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATIONAL ASSEMBLIES

**1974** Tanzania, June 16-30

Pat and Patty Crowley, Presidents

**1977** Manila, Philippines, November 24-December 2

Pat and Patty Crowley, Presidents

## ICCFM WORLD ASSEMBLIES

**1980** Rome, Italy: November 16-December 2

Rollie and Isabelle Leroux, Presidents

*Coordinated with the International Center of Family Studies*

**Subject:** A response to the Synod on the Family

**1983** Guadalajara, Mexico: July 21-28

Rollie and Isabelle Leroux, Presidents

**Subject:** A study of base communities and a theology of poverty

**1986** Chicago, Illinois, USA: August 10-12

Manuel and Cecelia Samaniego, Presidents

**Theme:** "Families—The Voice of the Poor and Suffering"

**1989** Avila, Spain: September 7-10

Manuel and Cecilia Samaniego, Presidents

**Theme:** "Families: Mystery and Reality, Hope of the Third Millennium"

**1992** Merida, Mexico: October 29-November 2

Wayne and Susan Hamilton, Presidents

**Theme:** "Families of the Earth, Creating New Covenants a Changing World"

**1995** St. Paul's Bay, Malta: August 29-September 3

Wayne and Susan Hamilton, Presidents

**Theme:** "Towards a Global Family: Visions for the Journey"

**1998** Bangkok, Thailand: July 28-August 2

Avaro and Margarita Rivera, Presidents

**Theme:** "CFM Renewal 2000: Christian Families Committed to the Humanization of All Families in the World"

**2001** Maceio, Alagoas, Brazil: July 25-29

Jose and Margarita Pich, Presidents

**Theme:** "Ethics of Life in a Globalized and Excluding World"

**2004** Santa Clara, California USA: July 28-August 1

Nop and Elma Muangkroot, Presidents

**Theme:** "Family: Artisans of an Evolving Society"

**2007** Fatima, Portugal: July 25-29, 2007

Nop and Elma Muangkroot, Presidents

**Theme:** "The Legacy of Fatima to the Family, Spirituality and Sacrifice"

**2010** Goa, India: September 10-14, 2010

William and Esilda Cheng, Presidents

**Theme:** "The Family in the Emerging Global Entity"

**2013** Bucaramanga, Columbia: June 28-July 1

Gary and Kay Aitchison, Presidents

**Theme:** "Christian Families: Finding our Voice in a Global World"

**Giron** is a charming colonial town nestled within the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga. The first town founded by the Spanish in the area, Giron maintains its character with its white colonial buildings and cobblestoned streets.

Bucaramanga's population, meanwhile, has grown steadily since the early 19th century. And since the 1960s, Bucaramanga has expanded rapidly into neighboring locations. Along with Giron, other cities now part of this thriving metropolitan area are Piedecuesta and Floridablanca. Bucaramanga has become the 5th largest economy in Colombia.

A city tour of Bucaramanga is one of the expected Assembly activities.



# Canonization cause promoted for Joseph Cardinal Cardijn

A decision to seek canonization of Joseph Cardinal Cardijn (1882-1967) was agreed to at a recent meeting of Cardijn Community International (CCI) in Manila this past fall. Joseph Cardijn pioneered the cause of the youth, workers and lay participation in the Church. ICCFM employs his SEE, JUDGE, ACT method.

The CCI conference, "Vatican 2+50: A Cardijn Perspective," examined the spirit and decisions of Vatican II in the light of Cardijn's contributions. The conference was held October 11 through 14 in Manila, Philippines. CCI members, representatives from the IYCS, IYCW and other organizations from different countries attended.

A working group was formed to study the issue of canonization and start the process. CCI released a prayer to support the cause and requested that all Cardijn movements make this prayer a part of your daily reflection. They also ask support in their efforts to promote the cause of Canonization of Joseph Cardinal Cardijn, the founder of the International Young Christian Workers.

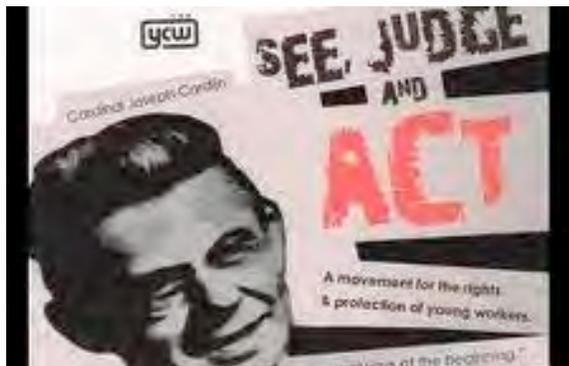
A detailed life sketch of Cardijn can be found at [www.josephcardijn.com](http://www.josephcardijn.com).



## About the Cardijn Project

The Cardijn Project is a Cardijn Community International initiative that aims to place online texts and testimonies relating to the life and work of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, founder of the International Young Christian Workers movement.

Over 25 original Cardijn documents are available online in English including many of his most famous speeches. A number of classical photos of Cardijn has been published. More will be added in the future.



The Cardijn Project welcomes personal testimonies, letters, photos, even films, and any other original documents or primary sources that relate to his life and work. The Cardijn Community International is a lay apostolate network of people working towards sustainable development which aims to promote Cardijn's spirituality, vision and methodology.

A detailed life sketch of Cardijn can be found at [www.josephcardijn.com](http://www.josephcardijn.com). To read Cardijn in the original French, please go to [www.josephcardijn.fr](http://www.josephcardijn.fr).

### PRAYER FOR CANONIZATION OF JOSEPH CARDINAL CARDIJN FOUNDER OF THE INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS

Heavenly Father,  
you are the source of every good thing  
that comes unto us.  
We are thankful to you  
for the gift of Joseph Cardinal Cardijn  
to the world at large.

Cardinal Cardijn was a champion of workers  
who are co-laborers with you  
in re-creating a new world  
where love, equality and justice  
will reign in the spirit.

He toiled all his life  
for the empowerment of the workers  
so that they may move  
from being powerless to be powerful  
with your divine help.

We, the present and former members  
of the Cardijn movements  
and those who have accepted  
or having known Cardijn's spirituality,  
vision and SEE-JUDGE-ACT methodology  
seek your divine intervention  
to declare the apostle of the workers  
a saint of the Holy Mother the Church.

This we ask you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Chaplain's column

### Can We Become God's Dreamers?

On the boring and uncomfortable ride to Bethlehem what could have filled the hours and the days of a young couple better than their daydreams and fantasies? So many recent twists and turns in their lives had put them on this road. Until recently things seemed pretty simple and uneventful. They knew pretty much what to expect in their lives from what they could see in the lives of their families and neighbors in that small village. Their daydreams and fantasies were pretty much filled with the humdrum material of their daily lives. They really must have thought: "What could really be different or unexpected from what we see around us?"

But then there was that angel's visit to Mary and that dream of Joseph's. That really gave them something unexpected and very different from any of the couples around them -- and even from any other couple in the world, but that would only dawn on them little by little. Was something new opening up for them? Did they have any idea where it would lead or what they would find along the way? Oh, then there was that Roman edict that would further uproot them, but, unbeknownst to them, also stretch their lives and expectations.

Could this young couple on their way to Bethlehem, however, have possibly thought that their very personal dreams and fantasies were rooted in God's dream for them, for their people and for all of us? Yes, because the prayers they had learned, the Scriptures they had heard in the synagogue and their whole religious attitude and way of life were continuously filling their hearts and minds and shaping some of the deep foundations of their dreams and fantasies. Such dreams were not only about themselves, but also would affect the child they were expecting.

Could Mary and Joseph, and later on Jesus, have been thinking in any way like this? Well, certainly not with our modern mindset and understanding of depth psychology, but we moderns might hope that something like the following, but expressed in their own way, was running at some deep level inside them:

Once upon a time, a long time ago, at the beginning of creation, whenever and however that happened, God had a dream, perhaps many dreams, that he wanted to bring to fulfillment in the universes and worlds that were coming to be. Whatever forms God's dreams and fantasies take, probably a bit different than ours, they are part of that divine



process of goodness, beauty and love. The universes and galaxies and planets, even our little blue orb of earth, were all meant to express in a whole new way the boundless mind and heart of the creator, though within the limits and possibilities imposed by the material world. When we humans appeared upon the earth God's dream for us never faded or disappeared, despite all our rejection, sinfulness and waywardness. God's choice is always for what is positive, beautiful, loving and forgiving. The prophets of Israel never tired of proclaiming this. God focused his dream on his chosen people of Israel and wanted everyone in the world to get caught up in his dream through them and to continue to spread it until absolutely everyone became God's dreamers.

Mary and Joseph knew this in their bones and down into the depths of their souls. It was so simple and evident to them, even if not always clear in the circumstances of their lives. They didn't need a psychoanalyst to tell them that their daydreams were rooted in God's dream. They could not foretell the future because of this, but it certainly must have led them to shape their future and that of their child in ways that would bring God's dream to life in their real flesh and blood world, despite the sometimes conflicting religious, political and economic realities of their world.

Like Mary and Joseph and Jesus our daydreams and fantasies are virtually everywhere, floating in and out of our consciousness. Sometimes they are flickering along the borders of awareness, sometimes extended and complex scenarios. Sometimes fantasies come to us sponta-

neously, other times we are seeking them. Sometimes they tap into the mythic stories of our culture, sometimes they are very personal to us. Sometimes they may be realistic or close to future planning, other times they are escapist and bear no relationship to the circumstances of our lives.

As we begin a new year and create the future, having lived with Mary, Joseph and Jesus during Advent and Christmas, will we continue to let our fantasies and fantasizing become more central to our lives-- like they did. It will affect who we are and how we live and will seep into

all our choices and behavior. I have read, "Fantasies, by definition, subvert the status quo and therefore always have a potential impact on the future, sometimes in the direction of radical change."

As we Observe, Judge and Act this year, can we let our fantasies help us to be more aware of God's dream and how our day-dreams can stir us up with the desire for change, the desire to keep God's dream alive, creative and challenging for ourselves, our families and neighbors and for our world?

Like the Holy Family, can we become God's dreamers.

*Fr. William Young, SSS,  
ICCFM International Chaplain*



## ICCFM Country Members and Affiliates

### AFRICA

Angola  
Cameroon  
Central Africa  
East Africa  
Ghana  
Malawi  
Nigeria  
Uganda

### Members

Families: c. 2,578  
Priests: c. 25

*Following are reports from the continents that were submitted for publication in the Winter 2013 issue of LINK/LAZO.*

### AFRICA CONTINENTAL NEWS

CFM in Africa may seem to be dormant to others around the world since information about its activities is not shared amongst its members on the continent and with the rest of the world. We are happy to inform you that the movement is functional!

As continental presidents couple we have been searching for information which could lead us into establishing the existence of the movement on the continent. It is pleasing to note that despite the absence of formal structures associated with CFM as an organization, we have come to learn that families in countries like Ghana, Uganda and Burundi have family groupings that carry out activities much

in line with what CFM members do. We have established that CFM was introduced, in countries such as Ghana, but that lack of continuity in terms of leadership has affected quality and growth of the movement. We are hopeful that with the help of Cornelius and Julie Debpuur of Ghana, Rev. Geoffrey Ndegijimana of Burundi and Rev. Fr. Eddie Kanyike of Uganda (serving in Malawi) more interaction among and within families of these countries will be possible.

The situation is totally different in Malawi where we come from. CFM in Malawi was introduced in 1966 and since then the movement has grown from humble beginnings to a force

worth reckoning. The movement is organized from parish level, deanery level, and diocesan level to national level. The structures are well supported by the church with most parish priests taking the role of chaplains. Families meet every month and their activities, following the SEE, JUDGE and ACT method, have impacted immensely in transforming the lives of many. Membership has continued to grow and by the end of 2011 the number had reached 2578 families!

We intend to build on what is already on the ground by encouraging already organized CFM groups to support the upcoming ones. In addition, it is our wish and desire to come up with a strategy of taking the movement to areas (countries) where it does not exist.

*Andrew and Bernadette Simango  
CFM Continental Presidents Couple for  
Africa*

## ASIA

Hong Kong  
India  
Japan  
Philippines  
Singapore  
South Korea  
Sri Lanka  
Thailand

### Members

Families: 1,370  
Priests: c. 70

## ASIA CONTINENTAL NEWS



**Emma and Mel Ricafrente lead one of the sessions, *above left*. *At right*, CFM India leads the singing at the closing Mass.**

The International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM) held its 9th Continental Asia conference on Oct. 25 to 28 at the Betania Retreat House in Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City.

The event theme was “Mission of Asian Christian Families in a Globalized Society.”

The conference reviewed CFM/CFSM (Christian Family and Social Movement) membership and leadership development, formation processes and outreach so as to better respond to the challenges of a globalized world.

The four-day activities started with a seminar at the University of San Jose-Recoletos open to the public. The seminar dealt with Domestic Violence and Anger Management and featured president-elect of CFM Philippines, Pip and Wilma Cua, who are both lawyers, and Com-

modore Roger and Dr. Naty Dayan, a clinical psychologist.

Among the invited guests for the opening ceremony was Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia.



**Farewell lunch—What a feast!**

## Thailand Report

CFM Thailand has 4 affiliated groups: the CFM, the Family Life Promotion core group, the Marriage Enrichment Seminar graduates who form groups, and the Bishop-mandated Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC groups) in 4 dioceses which have clusters of Catholic communities. The social actions include:

- Spiritual and corporal works of

mercy when there are special Church celebrations and when the need arises.

- No permanent social actions exclusively by CFM, but CFM members in different capacities and affiliated with other groups organize the usual social action services driven by emergency, natural disasters, seasonal celebrations, personal occasions, etc. Thai

people are very generous and they readily donate and volunteer to help when the need arises.

- Continued growth and effectiveness of the Family Life Promotion Seminar (Thai version of the Marriage Encounter) – This program continues to be popular, even among purely Buddhist couples, especially those whose marriages are threatened.

## Singapore Report

CFSM in Singapore has turned fifty. The celebrations climaxed in November 2012. The build up to the 50 years started a few years back through the themes for the year to help focus their activities.

- 2008 — Parenting Skills
- 2009 — Finance
- 2010 — Education
- 2011 — Vocation & Values

The jubilee year theme is, “A Family of Talents.” The CFSM has compiled a year book for the families. Each family through the year book can reconstruct the family tree and track their ancestry. Through this activity the CFSM aims to help families, especially the young renew present relationships and over the generations.

Donald Sng and Esther Lee, Singaporean President couple, report the CFSM is focusing on developing youth.

In 2009, youth were invited to participate in the Annual General meeting, formation talks and a CFSM overseas trip. The youth voiced their concerns and contributed by performing skits during formation sessions.

In 2009, CFSM created a youth Facebook account. The Facebook account brings youth together and instils good Christian values. Positive videos and other items of interest are posted for their information. The account is also used for invi-



**Esther Lee and Donald Sng, President Couple, Singapore** tations to CFSM events.

Last year, Bryan Shen (a Singaporean missionary stationed along the Cambodia-Thailand border) organized a retreat for the youth.

Next year, CFSM will review its relevance in the fast changing Singapore Society and see how CFSM can continue to contribute in the building of the Church in Singapore.

## Philippines Report

CFM Philippines is the largest in Asia. Besides being the largest it is also the most active and vibrant.

At the biannual convention held recently the CFM at the National level has resolved:

A. To address directly with long term action the nagging problem of membership decline.

B. A set of resolutions that will trigger major paradigm shifts.

C. The focus on our programs: Stewardship of Service, Youth and

Families of Overseas Filipinos

The ongoing activities are:

- Children’s Catechism classes
- Participation in Family cell & Diocesan Pastoral Council
- Adoption of a Priest in the Clergy

home

- Mass for the sick, old and disabled
- Sports event for underprivileged
- Visit to Orphanages
- Interfaith marriage group
- Outreach to Diya Foundation for the mentally challenged
- Seminar on Human Trafficking
- Couple's retreat
- CFM Activities: Picnic, Carol singing, Family Day etc.

We seek to develop through a comprehensive, continuing our development plan, which includes specific growth targets per year per program per area per diocese:

1. Stewardship of Service, Youth and Families of Overseas Filipinos as major growth centers
2. A strong advocacy program to develop a new image of strength, relevance and reliability for CFM.

vance and reliability for CFM.

3. A Structure that responds to the needs of the strategic programs
4. Building management capability, strategic orientation and a culture of purposeful change
5. Financial stability

The end result is: To Build A Better, Bigger and Bolder CFM.

## India Report

Despite the challenges of language, varied culture and distances the CFM in India moves on. In the forthcoming year they plan to:

- Have more interaction between the CFM families within

a region and with those of other regions.

- Greater expansion of the CFM movement in the region and in surrounding cities .
- Youth Groups to be started in the regions.

## Sri Lanka Report

### Percy Silva: In Memory

Percy Silva, founder of CFM in Sri Lanka, died on December 3, 2011. Percy is remembered as a leader in the development of the lay apostolate proper to families.

At his funeral Hector Peiris, president of CFM in the Diocese of

Colombo, and other CFM leaders spoke in appreciation of his leadership.

A highlight of his service to CFM is the active role Percy played in organizing the 4th Asian Continental Conference of CFM/CFSM, which was held in Sri Lanka in August 1997. The

conference coincided with the 30th Anniversary of the founding of CFM in Sri Lanka.

Percy and Agnes Silva initiated and founded CFM with eight other young couples in 1967. May the Lord comfort his family and may he rest in Peace.

## EUROPE

Croatia  
Czech  
Republic  
Hungary  
Italy  
Latvia  
Malta  
Portugal  
Romania  
Slovakia  
Spain

### Members

Families: 4,330  
Priests: c. 405

## EUROPE CONTINENTAL REPORT

### 7th European Family Congress

The Christian Family Movement in the Slovak Republic hosted the 7th European ICCFM Family Congress with the theme "Culture and Morals of the Family in a Globalized Society" under the skillful direction of Dr. Vladimir Durikovic and Maria Durikovicova and with the valuable assistance of their talented organizing team. Some 250 people from numerous countries all over the world, such as the Slovak Republic, the United States,



European Family Conference begins with Parade of Nations

Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Thailand, Japan, Poland, the Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, Italy, and Sweden, attended the four day international congress which was held from August 29th to September 1st last year in Trnava, the Slovak Republic.

In the words of the Congress organizers, "The aims of the congress were three-fold: To present dynamic development, current meaning, new tasks and perspective trends of family in ever-changing cultural, moral and ethical environment of globalised society; to strengthen fundamental family values of unity, love, life, forgiveness, faith and freedom while respecting all members of your own family, members of other families and all members of society; and to encourage all members of family, espe-

cially children, to be creative and responsible, to be able to show solidarity and to participate in a mutual dialogue."

Some 35 contributions were presented at the Congress which dealt with the diverse challenges facing the modern family, with a special emphasis on the negative impact ongoing social trends continue to have on family life and on the Christian education of young children. Three bishops, doctors, psychiatrists, politicians, members of religious orders, journalists, philosophers, parents, teachers, psychologists, and experts on family issues provided valuable insight into a wide range of family issues.

A final declaration was issued at the end of the Congress which offered

a vigorous defense of Christian marriage and family life.

Gary and Kay Aitchison, Presidents of the ICCFM, gave a talk on the topic "The Christian Family Movement in the Culture of the World." Dr. John and Lauri Przybysz, Continental Presidents of the ICCFM in North America, discussed "The Growth of the Virtues in the Formation of Disciples."

Robert and Mary Carmen Kimball, Continental Presidents of the ICCFM in Europe, spoke on the topic of "Providing Spiritual and Material Support to Immigrant and Needy Families."

Lastly, Professor Antonio Manuel de Andrade Moniz, Country President of the ICCFM in Portugal, reflected on the topic of "Family and Society in Crisis: Cain versus Abel."

## **ICCFM in the Vienna NGO Committee: *Families in a politically correct world***

We are Csaba and Gréta Horváth from Hungary, married for 11 years, parents of four children (Dávid 10 years old, Eszter 9 years old, Bendegúz 6 years old, Sebestyén 3 years old). Gréta has her primary degree in geography, she is now at home with the children. I (Csaba) studied management and work in the field of European co-operations.

At the end of summer 2010 Balázs and Kriszta Ménesi, leaders of the Hungarian MÉCS (CFM/FIRES) approached us with the question whether we would be willing to represent ICCFM in the UN's Vienna NGO Committee for the Family, as Tony and Lily Gauci from Malta, working for ICCFM for many years, wanted to retire. After some hesitation we accepted this assignment and were finally delegated to the Vienna Committee by Gary and Kay Aitchison.

The Committee meets twice a year, usually early November and early May, so the meeting on 11/12/2012 was already the fifth we took part. Since the beginning we have been not only ordinary participants of the NGO Committee on the Family, but also elected members of the board, as Tony and Lily were. The membership of the Committee is very mixed, those few who regularly represent their organi-



zations (in theory there are lot more members than that) come with different backgrounds, there are only a few Christians, even fewer who openly stand for Christian values. Among them is a couple from Croatia, Marijo and Darka Živković, representing the Family Center from Zagreb.

Gréta and I have been searching for our role in the Committee since the beginning, but also the role of the Committee in the United Nation's work. The morning session of the meetings usually go by with a more or less interesting presentation of some researcher--the last one was purely about research methodology and the enumeration of institutions where the young researcher has worked. Other topics in the past have included violence in the family, governmental family/parent support systems or the relations within the father-mother-child triangle. Member organizations report about their activities, the treasurer about the financial issues, the secretary about the web statistics of the Committee's home page.

A topic that has often been raised in the past few meetings is the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (20 years IYF). In the 2012 November meeting

Gréta and I finally thought that the Committee would make something meaningful: Marijo Živković made a proposal about the consensus what the family is - at least we should know what we celebrate at 20 years IYF. Throughout the world several family models exist, besides one mother and one father with children there are broken families, others include more than one father or mother, or male male or female female parents. Some of these models have roots in other cultures, others have gained acceptance in recent years throughout the world, but there is one model that is accepted as family independent of cultural, political or religious background: one man and one women united in love, with (the wish to have) children of their own.

The indignation that followed Marijo's proposal is hardly imaginable. Committee members shouted how discriminating the definition was (no definition was proposed, just a consensus on the smallest denominator), the secretary said our committee would lose its credibility in the eyes of the US if it would only turn out that this topic was on the agenda. The chairman asked Marijo to bring the proposal to the agenda of the next meeting because members were in a hurry to catch their airplanes or trains. Later in the board meeting he confessed he would probably try to persuade Marijo that this should rather not be a topic, because it has been raised before and experience showed that it was impossible to find a common definition. Gréta and I were struck. We think it is only in God's hands to judge people, not ours, and

## Spain Report

At their recent annual national assembly, the MFC in Spain, which is present in 30 Spanish dioceses, approved the five major goals for the new academic year 2012-2013.

These goals were approved by the assembly members: Emphasize the role of spirituality in family life and the im-

portance of personal commitment to the MFC and the Church; Promote the CFM in other Spanish dioceses; Respond to the serious social challenges facing Christian families and the Church; Gain a more profound knowledge of our faith; and the Setting up of the Small Children and Youth Service in those dioceses where it does not already exist.

even though there are family models we personally disagree with, Jesus loves those people as anyone else independent of their behavior and inclinations. However, even if we accept that differences exist, the consensus Marijo was speaking about would help to preserve a value that is accepted by all people. It is not about discriminating other people, but about supporting those families that are unbroken, raise children and are the roots of our future.

On the way back home Gréta and I asked ourselves why these people were at the Committee? To attend a meeting with a presentation that would be no reason alone to come to Vienna? Or to be able to say that they are part of the UN? Do they know what they represent? Why is the family important for them? And what is our role there? Marijo told us, in the decades they have participated at least they have reached that some anti-family organizations left the Committee or became inactive (among them ones that are usually considered to be pro-abortion). Unfortunately obstruction is not only a tool to prevent negative values to break through, as our experience shows Christian values can also be vetoed.

We ask God to give us the gifts of



**Gary and Kay Aitchison stand with Gréta and Csaba Horváth from Hungary, new representatives of ICCFM in the UN's Vienna NGO Committee for the Family.**

discernment and strength, to be able to see how we can represent Christian families the best and act in the Vienna NGO Committee whenever it is possible. We now see that it is a huge task that we can only cope with His help. Probably it takes some more time to find out what we can actively do in the Committee, but in the meantime we shall defend our values with love and understanding towards other people. We ask for the prayers of all ICCFM members for our work at the Vienna NGO Committee.

Of these five major goals, the two most pressing goals are the need to respond to the serious challenges to the family and to the Church posed by society and the setting up of the Small Children and Youth Service (SCYS) in those dioceses where it does not already exist.

In regard to the first objective, the Service of Family Orientation and Solidarity drew up an ambitious plan to help suffering families, called “Family, you are not alone”, with concrete actions to assist needy families both inside and outside the CFM. For these actions to be effective, families with grave difficulties, such as serious illness, acute economic problems, unemployment, insurmountable personal conflicts within the families themselves, social discrimination, etc., must be quickly identified. Another important aim is to raise CFM members’ awareness of the considerable number of afflicted families living in their midst and their responsibility to help alleviate their suffering by providing the necessary resources to assist those needy families in overcoming their difficulties.

Another important objective was the creation of the Small Children and Youth Service in those dioceses where it does not already exist. This Service is one of the four major services that

the MFC in Spain operates. The other three are: Promotion, Marriage Encounter and Family Orientation and Solidarity. The Small Children and Youth Service helps children to live their faith in a family which acts as a domestic church and a sanctuary of hope for society. Consequently, these young children and youth must be prepared to discover their personal vocation, which in most cases will be married life.

The SCYS has prepared materials for the 4 different age groups which it serves. To celebrate the Year of Faith, several materials have been published as a continuation of “Youcat, Part I”, which are centered on the section on “what we believe”. These materials have been designed for four distinct age groups: children under age six, children six to twelve years old, teenagers from thirteen to sixteen, and seventeen years and up. This service is also organizing a family pilgrimage to Saint Francis Xavier Castle located in the Spanish province of Navarre, which is sched-



**Delegates from Spain at the European Family Congress**

uled for March 2013.

Finally, the MFC in Spain has just published a book entitled: *The Path of Faith*, which aims to assist its readers to attain “a renewed conversion to the Lord Jesus and to the rediscovery of our faith.” This book consists of eight chapters: *The Door of Faith; Jesus Christ, God’s Gospel to Mankind; What do we Believe?; A Personal Encounter with Jesus is Essential to the Catholic Faith; We Have Good Reasons to Believe in God; Our Faith Unites Us with Christ; Some Fundamental Aspects of the Catholic Act of Faith; and Catholics Believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.* This book can be purchased from the Spanish publisher CCS.

## News from MLC/Movement for a Christian Home — Portugal

On October 7, 2012 MLC held our national congress in Fátima to elect a new President Couple and a new Financial Council for the coming three years. Once again we were elected by twenty four of the twenty eight delegates present at the congress.



special reference to the following ones:

1 – Reinforcing the link among families, their priests, and representatives of the Family Institute.

2 – Organizing the Movement International Committee, which now include

Portugal/Madrid-Spain/Cabinda-Angola. We have developed a permanent link of information among the groups

working in these countries, mainly by writing emails to one another, sharing experiences, projects and specific difficulties, mostly cultural difficulties in the case of Cabinda-Angola. We thank Our Lord that the representative of the Family Institute working with our families has had a great experience of Africa, which is absolutely needed.

3 – Promoting a general open debate on the national inquiry in 2011/12, first in small local groups and then in larger

## LATIN AMERICA

Mexico  
Costa Rica  
Honduras  
El Salvador  
Cuba  
Guatemala  
Panama  
Colombia  
Venezuela  
Republica  
Dominica  
Ecuador  
Peru  
Argentina  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
Chile  
Paraguay  
Uruguay

### Members

Families: 69,636  
Priests: c. 300  
Youth: 30,000

## NORTH AMERICA

Canada  
United States  
CFM  
MFCC  
MFC-LA

### Members

Families: 6,350  
Priests: c. 100

diocese groups in order to reinforce the family members' awareness of the Movement identity, in its regional and national features and diversity.

4 – Making a real national effort to welcome more young families to the Movement by personal direct invitation, by spiritual retreats, by feasts and celebrations, by promoting regional meetings to discuss with them the main social, economic, cultural and religious difficulties of our society today.

## LATIN AMERICA CONTINENTAL REPORT

### World Assembly in Bucaramanga

Latin American leaders are preparing for the upcoming World Assembly to be held June 28-July 1 in Bucaramanga, Colombia. Planning is under the direction of Luis Carlos and Marthica Pinella, ICCFM Continental Presidents for Latin America. *Please see more on pages 2 and 3.*

### In Memoriam

**Cecilia Samaniego** died on July 28, 2012. She and her husband Manuel were presidents of ICCFM from 1986-1989. They held many leadership roles in Venezuela's CFM, including National Presidents from 1977 through 1981. Among their notable achievements, Carmen and Manuel Samaniego sought and received Vatican approval for the work of ICCFM in 1986 from the Pontifical Council For the Family.

**Selma Amorim** passed away on December 4, 2012. Helio and Selma Amorim were among the founders and early leaders of the ICCFM and were ICCFM Vice Presidents while Wayne and Sue Hamilton were president couple from 1989-1995. They were instrumental in the development of MFC in Latin America. Helio and Selma would have celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on December 14, 2012.

## NORTH AMERICA CONTINENTAL REPORT

### North American CFM

CFM-USA is the English language organization in North America. The annual summer board meeting was held in South Bend, Indiana the weekend of July 20 - 22, 2012. The attendees included CFM representatives from Illinois, Maryland, Florida, Southern California, Iowa, Nebraska, Virginia and Michigan. The Board members and their families had the opportunity to tour the University of Notre Dame and reflect on the rich Catholic traditions that mark this university. The tour of the Basilica and Grotto and the shared history of the university by a Notre Dame student emphasized the importance of the Blessed Mother to our faith.

The Board discussed the current action book "Acting on Faith: the Acts of the Apostles and Today's Christian Families." The Board also

5 – Creating a Solidarity Fund to help the most needed families in the Movement.

All these program points have already started being implemented and are moving forward, step by step.

May Our Lord and Our Lady of Fátima be with us and bless our work. May they also bless all of you and your own families.

*António and Maria Celeste Moniz  
MLC Presidents for Portugal*



**Laurie and John Przybysz, North American Continental Couple**

developed the outline for future actions books; reviewed communication and promotional materials for CFM; reviewed membership activities and the financial outlook of CFM. Board

members shared about actions they have ongoing in their immediate areas, and what direction they would like to encourage CFM to move in the future. In February 2013, the Board will meet and elect new officers and board members to lead the movement.

Local leadership development is a priority for CFM-USA. Local leaders receive monthly Encouragement and Support for Leaders by email, with topics such as Group Event Coordina-

## MFCC—USA Report

Presidents of MFCC-USA, Tony and Loly Layton sent this message to LINK:

We realize how important it is to visit the areas of the US in which we have membership and to have constant communication with the leaders. These visits and communications build solidarity and confidence among the leaders to do the job together that the Lord asks of us.

On September 15, 2012, we had a meeting with the National Board couples in Sunland Park, New Mexico, to discuss the strategic plan for the 2012-2013 cycle. Our National Spiritual Advisor, Father Juan Rogelio Gutierrez, was with us, and we were honored to have Bishop Oscar Cantu present.

On 10 and 11 November, we met with the National Secretariat couples. Father Juan Rogelio gave the leader couples a very inspiring retreat on the importance of marriage, during which he urged us to remain united as leaders in this great ministry of the Movement. Each Board couple also

tion, Establishing Expectations for your Meetings, and Building Group Cohesion.

CFM-USA has developed a “Starter Kit” to help new groups start up in locations that do not currently have CFM. These kits are sent all over the country, including Alaska and also to Canada. The Starter Kit includes information to give to the local bishops and pastors about CFM.

At the invitation of the United

States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), two CFM couples attended the Marriage Building Summit and the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers in Dallas Texas in July.

CFM-USA is updating its website, [www.cfm.org](http://www.cfm.org), which is a central resource for promotional materials, membership forms, and online donations, as well as a library of online meeting materials.



Members of the MFCC—USA Secretariat pose for a group photo in 2012.

engaged in dialogue that has helped us further the commitment we made to serve the Lord. The retreat also motivated us to continue the work plan of our Movement in every state of the United States (USA). Our goals are: to strengthen, unify, extend and standardize.

May God bless you and may the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph accompany you always.

## MFC-LA Report

The board of the Christian Family Movement of Los Angeles is composed of eight couples each of which implements various functions all focused on the goal of the CFM. We currently have a membership of 520 duly registered partners.

As Presidents we are increasing our efforts by better responding to families

in their path towards evangelization, and promote the renewal of the Mission of the Church in our activities in this year of faith, as our beloved Pope announced.

To concretize these efforts each year we carry out the following:

- A course of preparation and retreats that are intended to give the necessary tools to our parish leaders

to achieve the objectives of the CFM.

- Each month we have a mini-retreat of training that is aimed for all the leaders of our 20 parish areas. This is carried out in order to educate them and inform them; in addition to maintaining proper communication with everyone. At the same time, they inform us of the status of their areas. These mini retreats always have the

presence of a spiritual advisor, being a priest or a deacon; and other times, a professional psychologist as duly authorized by our Archdiocese of Los Angeles. This also includes the training of the spirituality of CFM, grounded in the SEE, JUDGE and ACT method.

- We present four Marriage Encounters a year.
- We also present two Marriage Re-encounters which aim to give continuity to the experience in their Marriage Encounter.
- We carry out pre-marital talks, aimed at couples that are preparing for marriage. These talks are conducted once a month and as a service to the

community.

- We publish four newsletters a year, which aim to educate and inform our membership of all our activities and events; in addition to promote our liturgical experience.
- We carry out a dinner for all our spiritual advisors, with which we thank all their efforts and support of our CFM. We also celebrate a mass of the Holy Family with all our families of the CFM.
- As a way of sharing time with our members, we carry out an annual picnic, a dance to welcome new members, and a dance for the youth.

The most recent and new event that was held was a celebration with all the

coordinators and treasures of each parish and also a potluck with couples that experienced Marriage Encounter. We have enhanced and updated the web page so that all memberships have access and a way to be informed. We have also created two manuals to support the second and third levels respectively. These manuals draw on Church documents which enrich each issue of formation of our CFM families.

Finally, we are forming leaders with whom we meet once a month in order to open more parishes. Our goal is to open three to five parishes before ending our service in June 2014.

*Geremias y Rosario Morales  
President Couple MFC-LA*

*LINK/LAZO publishes reports from groups using the Cardijn method of Observe-Judge-Act, actively participating in ICCFM. Thanks to all the contributors!*

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