



# LINK

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**Link-Lazo**, published annually by the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM), is distributed to members as part of the membership. Link-Lazo includes worldwide news on activities of ICCFM.

The ICCFM Mission is to promote, encourage, and help the Christian Family Movements so that the organizations and their members live their human and Christian vocations and bear witness to the essential values of the family, based upon the faith as announced by the Gospel and proposed by the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Confederation shall support the expansion of the Christian Family Movement in those countries where it is established and will try to establish it where it does not exist.

For further details contact:

### LINK-LAZO

president@iccfm.org

### Editorial Board

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## V World Meeting of Families invites ICCFM

The *V World Meeting of Families* in Valencia, Spain, convened by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and coordinated by His Eminence Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, invited the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements to participate in a "Panel on the Family" at the *V WMF International Theological-Pastoral Congress* on July 7, 2006. ICCFM presidents Nop and Elma Muangkroot spoke on "The ICCFM Mission and the New Evangelization," referring to the New Evangelization explained by Pope John Paul II and expanded on by Pope Benedict XVI.



### FIFTH WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

The V WMF from July 1 to 9, 2006, drew almost two million people and explored the theme, "The Transmission of Faith in the Family," which was reiterated by Pope Benedict XVI at the Concluding Eucharist, "Faith, then, is not merely a cultural heritage, but the constant working of the grace of God who calls, and our human freedom, which can respond or not to his call. Even if

no one can answer for another person, Christian parents are still called to give a credible witness of their Christian faith and hope. They need to ensure that God's call and the good news of Christ will reach their children with the utmost clarity and authenticity."

In their address at the *Theological-Pastoral Congress*, the Muangkroots identified CFM service as



Left to right: Cardinal Polycarp Pengo, Panel Moderator; Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family; Elma and Nop Muangkroot.

the realization of the New Evangelization's missionary action (see transcript on page 2). Conveying the ultimate ICCFM vocation, the Muangkroots concluded: "As CFM mem-

bers we have always made a priority of spirituality and missionary service, prayer and action, rendered in diverse ways, according to the needs of the families we serve."

## X World Meeting of Families and XIV ICCFM General Assembly

Gathering of CFM and affiliated movements combine pilgrimage to Fatima Shrine

The X World Assembly of Families and XIV ICCFM General Assembly will meet from July 25 to 29, 2007, at Salão Bom Pastor Hall, Fatima, Portugal, convening the Christian Family Movement and affiliated family groups from almost thirty countries. They will explore the theme, "Legacy of Fatima to the Family: Spirituality and Sacrifice," using the Cardijn method of "Observe-Judge-Act" to seek direction and fortitude from Our Lady of Fatima, so that the ICCFM will strive harder to attain pertinence in



Bispo de Leiria Fatima

these difficult times for families.

His Grace Monsignor António Marito, Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, states, "In Fatima, Mary revealed herself as a 'cloud of mercy that carries the anguishes and hopes of the whole world.' She invites humanity, threatened and injured by its contempt of both man and God, to a conversion of heart to the Gospel of Mercy, uniquely capable to heal its wounds . . . Placed under Mary's protection, families will experi-

(SEE PAGE 15 >)

# THE ICCFM MISSION AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

(ICCFM Presidents' Speech, V World Meeting of Families)

Concerned about the modern world's rapid changes that threaten Christianity, Pope John Paul II calls Christians to a renewal: "I wish to invite the Church to renew her missionary commitment . . . I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization . . . No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples." (Redemptoris Missio)

Pope Benedict XVI, then His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, adds that "we are obliged to find new ways of bringing the Gospel to all . . . we must use new methods . . . of making the voice of the Lord accessible and comprehensible . . ." (The New Evangelization)

In short, we are invoked to find new approaches of bringing the Gospel to everyone, using ways adapted to modern times.

## ICCFM Spirituality in Christ

Pope John Paul II says, "The New Evangelization is not a matter of merely passing on doctrine but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the Savior . . ." Cardinal Ratzinger adds, "To proclaim God is . . . to teach how to pray . . . This is why . . . communities of prayer are so important."

CFM members, in our regular meetings at each other's homes, are praying communities, aspiring for that intimate union with Christ because it is only through Him that the process of Observe, Judge and Act will be realized. As Pope John Paul II summarizes, "Holiness must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition of everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation in the Church."

## ICCFM Missionary Calling

Pope John Paul II rejoices in "the rapid growth of 'ecclesial movements' filled with missionary dynamism," as the CFM is. Particularly in Latin America and in Asia, the CFM works to evangelize all families by giving priority to the formation of basic ecclesial communities in all levels of society. CFM missionary action has also provided help to poor and disadvantaged families, such as low-cost CFM medical centers in Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras and India; livelihood training and low-interest loans in the Philippines, India and in some Latin America countries. In Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, the CFM administers adoption programs, recognized by the government. CFM families provide foster homes for children during the adoption process, which could entail a long wait.

## ICCFM Social Responsibility

The New Evangelization points out two ideals that are an integral part of the CFM mission: "The proclamation of the Kingdom of



Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II

God," expounds Cardinal Ratzinger, "is also the proclamation of justice, the proclamation of our responsibility."

CFM members throughout the world have demonstrated indefatigable courage in their social mission. In Latin America, with Brazil as a laudable example, CFM members are militant champions of the poor against social injustice. In Singapore, Portugal, Malta and the USA, the CFM works for the well-being of migrant workers and refugees. Like a fitting counterpart, the CFM Solo Parents' Group of the Philippines provides material and spiritual support to spouses



Nop and Elma Muangkroot

left behind by migrant workers. In Australia and in Sri Lanka, CFM members have successfully advocated family rights and influenced legislation by launching letter-writing campaigns. CFM members joined other pro-family groups in Australia in writing to senators and representatives, preventing the proposal of a bill on homosexual marriages. CFM Sri Lanka, as a family organization, wrote to government and religious leaders, including Buddhist monks, and with their united efforts, prevented the passage of laws on abortion and the legalization of prostitution.

## ICCFM Inter-Religious Dialogue

One positive outcome of lay participation in missionary work is pointed out by Pope John Paul II, "The commitment of the laity to the work of evangelization is changing ecclesial life, while particular churches are more willing to meet with the members of other Christian churches and other religions, and to enter into dialogue and cooperation with them."

CFM members in non-Christian countries are involved in inter-faith activities. For example, the Bishops Conference of Japan permits non-Christians to celebrate weddings in the Catholic Church, a popular trend among couples who want a Western ceremony. The requirement is that the couple attends a Catholic marriage preparation course, such as the Engaged Encounter. In both Japan and Thailand, the Marriage Encounter is open to all religions, and sometimes more than half of the participants are non-Christians. Many conversions have resulted from this religious experience.

## ICCFM Evangelization of Cultures

In its missionary activity, the Church becomes involved in the process of enculturation, defined by Pope John Paul II as "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through the integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."

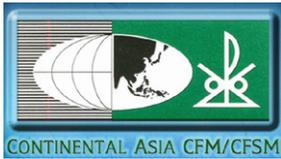
CFM values cultural rites that have become part of Catholic religious rituals because they enhance spirituality. In the African Mass at an ICCFM World Assembly, for example, a painted, half-naked warrior, carrying a spear, challenges each Mass-goer with questions before allowing him to enter the Church. The cultural significance of the confrontation is to test the person's faith.



# CONTINENTAL CONVENTIONS

## VII Continental Asia CFM Conference

■ Mel and Emma Ricafrente, CFM Asia Continental Presidents



One hundred and ten members of Christian Family Movement, the Christian Family and Social Movement and other Catholic Family Movements from Australia, India, Macau, Malaysia, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Singapore met from June 16 to 18, 2006, in St. Francis Xavier Major Seminary in Singapore for the VII Continental Asia CFM/CFSM Conference. The theme of the conference was "The Challenges Of Being Family In Asia Is A Joyful Mission."

The Conference enabled participants to learn from each other the tribulations and challenges that come with the different stages of economic development



Continental Asia Presidents Mel and Emma Ricafrente, India National Chaplain Fr. Socorro Mendes, Thailand National Chaplain Fr. Bunsong Hongthong and Continental Asia Vice-President Francis Colaso

and social policies. More importantly, the participants realized that Christian values which do not change with development, trends and time are the anchors of the fundamental institution of humanity which is the family.



Three CFM Singapore couples giving personal testimonies



Representatives of nine Asian countries with their flags



H.E. Archbishop Nicholas Chia of Singapore, center, with Thailand delegates



Father Andre Christophe, second right, CFM National Chaplain, at Plenary Session



CFM Singapore President Francis Mane and Continental Asia Vice-President Francis Colaso

## V European Congress of the Christian Family Movement

■ Enrique and Teresa Alonso, CFM Spain Presidents

The Christian Family Movement of Europe met in the Spanish locality of Cheste (Valencia) from July 5 to 9 2006, to celebrate its V European Congress and to be united with the V World Meeting of Families which enjoyed the presence and teaching of Pope Benedict XVI.

We value very positively the participation of the European Congress in the development of World Meeting of Families. We registered as delegates to the Meeting and accommodated our program for it, participating in its main activities. We consider this participation a grace of God that heightens the sense and the ecclesial life of the CFM and its love and fidelity to the Holy Father and his teaching.

The theme of the Congress was "25 years of Familiaris Consortio" to commemorate the 25 years of the Apostolic Exhortation in which Pope John Paul II, in the

beginning of his pontificate, drew a pastoral itinerary for the growth of the Christian family. We value again the significance of the Exhortation in the fertile path of the pontificate of John Paul II in the promotion of marriage and the family.

We proclaim the family born of the marriage between a man and a woman for all life and open to the birth of new lives. We want to live and to diffuse the virtues and values of the family based on that marriage and to defend the social and political environment in that model of family.



Congress participants



Plenary session



Enrique and Teresa Alonso, Congress Chair Couple



The youth of MFC



MFC Spain Presidential Team



The Spanish delegation with their flag



# Writers around the world

This issue of Link presents thinkers and writers from each continent who have constantly inspired the ICCFM through the years.

## ASIA



by Mark and  
Theresa Tan,  
CFMS Singapore

### National Happiness Index

Some 15-20 years ago we used to say that in a Michael Jackson concert, the audience in the front rows stood up in order to get a better view of Michael's



Anthony, Alice and Augustine Leung  
send greetings from Hongkong.

deft footwork. Their action forced those seated, in the rows immediately behind, also to stand up in order to get a view. Those in the back rows have to resort to standing on their seats so that they can see something. Instead of enjoying themselves most of those in the audience paid a lot of money to stand on seats and see nothing. It was regularly cited as an example of "raising the bar" by a few selfish ones, to the detriment of many.

All of us know of parents who deliberately move the family to live in certain neighborhoods in order that their children get into a "good school" district. Other parents ignorantly join this one-upmanship, only to log long hours, overwork themselves, and to overpay the property developers of the residential properties near these schools. They clamor to put their children into a community of highly competitive (not necessarily better quality) parents and children. They become parents who have much less time for their children simply because they have to work harder and longer hours to earn that much more to pay for the dubious privilege. They have to abdicate their life's mission as the first

educators of their children and hand it over to strangers who may or may not be teaching their children the correct things, and may or may not be posted or promoted away to another school the next day, the next school term.

They had wanted the best for their children, but by their actions they are essentially looking down the wrong end of the telescope. They end up getting a raw deal for themselves and for their children. What is worse, they raise the bar for many, who unthinkingly ape them, in disadvantaging their children and themselves.

About 2 years ago, I elected to retire from a Company where I was working for more than ten years, and for the last six years or so, was the Group's General Manager. Since then, I have refused to consider taking on any management or advisory positions particularly in businesses organized for profit.

I made one exception, though. About a year ago, my brother-in-law became ill, and doctors prescribed a rather a protracted course of treatment. He chose me to assist his wife to run his substantial business. I did it for six months, and when he recovered enough to return, I turned down an invitation to stay to help run the operations. I handed the business back to him and went back to my retirement.

By the standards of many I would be condemned as not having enough competitive drive, as shirking work, as being an irresponsible waster of (management) talents, by not working (for the good of the national economy).

A few years before I retired, I was regularly challenged by insurance and investment advisors to commit myself to certain long-term financial plans—to ensure that I will be able to "maintain my present life style" after I retire. Armed with a lifetime of CFMS formation, I was able to smile and ask—what made them think that I, or anyone else, would want to maintain the kind of wasteful, stressful life style of a "road warrior" that I was then leading?

I was contented with what I had, and as a discerning Christian, I have opted for a simpler lifestyle. I still refuse to seek the unhappiness of many, by comparing myself with those who have more.

A few weeks ago, on New Year's Eve, I took my grandchildren to watch the fireworks ushering in the New Year. We had access to an office in a high floor in an office block with a view of



The Jubilee Mass is celebrated by Commission for Families Chairman Bishop Agnelo Gracias (center) flanked by National Chaplain Father Socorro Mendes (left) and longtime CFM Chaplain Fr. Nascimento Mascarenhas (right).



Mumbai delegates present a short skit showing how CFM can help solve marriage relationship problems.



A year earlier in Mumbai, the CFM National Board decided to hold the Golden Jubilee celebrations in October 2006 in Goa.



National Presidents Cyril and Carmen D'Souza and Bishop Agnelo Gracias present delegates with a souvenir with the Golden Jubilee logo.



Bangalore participants act in a humorous play depicting families before and after joining the CFM.

the fireworks. After the fireworks, while waiting in line to get out of the crowded car park due to a traffic jam in the roads outside, I chatted with the night security guard, an old man who evidently is a re-employed retiree. He was very anxious to volunteer the information that he was

working because he needed the money. It was obvious that he was not a happy person.

It was then when I realized that if I, and everyone else in my age group, had elected to remain working in paying

## National Happiness Index

(←FROM PAGE 4)

positions, we would have raised the bar to a level where he and others who need a job would not have a chance to find paid employment. We could have contributed in some miniscule amount to raising the national economy, but will we contribute to the nation's happiness index? I doubt it.

When asked "Now that you are retired how are you keeping busy?" I would reply in mock indignation. "I have retired. Why should I be busy?"

However, usually for their edification, I would explain that I do the things I like, such as reading, painting, spending more time with my wife, my friends, and my grandchildren. I also enjoy cooking, DIY work around the house, and other housework / chores. It had taken me a long time to educate

**Doing things with your own hands is rewarding. Satisfaction from such work is more durable because it requires application and attention.**

teach my wife to do the latter with some regularity, as and when we feel like it, but not to be subjected to the tyranny of any weekly or monthly schedule. Doing things with your own hands is rewarding. Satisfaction from such work is more durable because it requires application and attention.

Take car washing. I wash my own car. I wash my wife's car. I like to do it weekly. I do it in the common car park. I have been doing it for decades. It is manual labor. It gives me the satisfaction of instant results. It is therapeutic. I like it. With my pail of water, washing cars, I have become an institution in our condominium. By my example many other car owners also wash their own cars without being ashamed of it, though some able-bodied men still make their maids do it for them. To this day I am undecided if I have raised the bar for other car owners—or lowered the bar of social snobbery.

Doing what we like, even work that does not figure, not counted at all in GDP numbers, nor "the Economy", contributes immensely to our national happiness index.

In the final analysis, the sole and only *raison d'etre* of governments is to provide happiness for the people they represent. Many governments



*In a CFM National Convention a year earlier, members met to plan the Golden Jubilee Celebration.*



*CFM Asia President Mel Ricafrete, ICCFM Presidents Nop and Elma Muangkroot and CFM Philippines Presidents Nora and Roger Panlasigui open the Exhibit of CFM Activities.*



*National Chaplain Monsignor Manny Gabriel shares an inspiring homily.*



*CFM Philippines Founder Teresa Nieva is the source of light to all delegates, starting with Sony Sison, Pepe Lugay and Anne Meilly.*



*National Presidents Roger and Nora Panlasigui stop to watch the entertainment program.*



*Awards Night is graced by Her Excellency Philippine President Gloria Macapagal. Others in the picture are Nop Muangkroot, Monsignor Manny Gabriel, Teresa Nieva, Nora and Roger Panlasigui and Elma Muangkroot.*

could not "see the forest for the trees" and blindly believe that making their citizens acquire more material wealth is synonymous with more happiness.

Having realized this, some forward looking governments have commissioned their economists to

search for some ways to measure National Happiness.

They have not found a reliable way.

However, they have found a few which are definitely not. After getting out of poverty, the acquisition of more material wealth does not bring more

happiness. Similarly, actions that raise the bar in the competition for social status and material wealth may bring happiness to a few, but these actions conversely generate a lot more unhappiness for a lot more people—a net loss in any measure of National Happiness.

## ● EUROPE

# In the Mediterranean grave

by Tony and Lily  
Gauci, Malta



Many families around the world are barely able to survive. Some don't even have basic sanitation, and others have nothing to eat. When one looks at photos of these people, one sees breathing skeletons. Persecutions due to religious and political beliefs are never ending.

Some of these poor, stricken people try to escape from countries like Africa. With the little savings they have, they

**For how long can humanity endure this inhuman situation and deal with this unending tragedy of suffering nations?**

embark on packed, un-seaworthy boats to Libyan shores and cross to Europe. If a good wind allows them to arrive in Libya, Libyan hawks take every cent they own and put them on a small boat, destination Europe. Some manage to land on a European shore, but hundreds of others end up in the "Mediterranean Grave" when rough seas batter their small boats. Some manage to survive by holding on for hours, hoping that a passing ship will pick them up.

This scenario is a continuous tragedy happening in the Mediterranean all the year round.

The CFM, being a Family Movement,



Three hundred people celebrated the X Jubilee of CFM/Fires Hungary



Special guests (from left) Nop and Elma Muangkroot, Lily and Tony Gauci and H.E. Bishop Laszlo Biro



▲ Sharing of lived experiences by priests and families



◀ Children and teenagers had their own programs



Leaders and chaplains of MFC in Navarra with National Presidents Enrique and Teresa Alonso

cannot just sit back and watch this tragedy. Almost everyday boatloads of these illegal immigrants arrive in Malta or are rescued miles away from shore by Maltese police. After some months in detention, they are allowed to leave their camps, and at this point, members of the Maltese CFM help by renting a house for them and providing them with food. The Catholic Church also contributes, but the bulk of the cost is shouldered by the government.

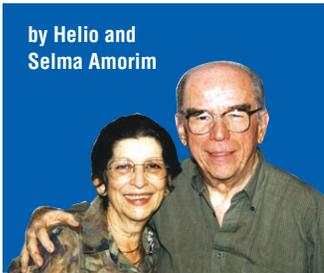
Lily and I represent the ICCFM at the U.N. Headquarters in Vienna. Recently we attended a seminar on how banks can help the very poor in Africa, and we strongly affirmed that these deprived people need help,

pressing the idea that these pitiful Africans should be given the rod to catch fish, not just money in their hands. Because of civil wars and poverty, the African poor are in very difficult circumstances. We also suggested that the richer countries, especially the European Union, should study the situation carefully and take the matter to the U.N. Assembly in New York if necessary.

This African tragedy has been going on for years, with daily news of hundreds of illegal immigrants landing in Europe and hundreds of others buried in the Mediterranean Grave.

For how long can humanity endure this inhuman situation and deal with this unending tragedy of suffering nations?

## LATIN AMERICA



by Helio and Selma Amorim

### The Eucharist

In the fight for justice, living to share what one owns, what one is and what one knows for the increase of communion among all men, the Christian looks for inspiration and discernment in the personal encounter with Christ, who is made present in the bread and wine shared and served at the common table.

The Eucharist is, thus, the sacrament of sharing and communion. The bread and wine were rightly chosen by Jesus to symbolically represent the fruits of the land and of nature and the products of the work of men that should be distributed among all and not consumed by a privileged minority.

The humanity that God wants necessarily supposes this sharing, *so that all may have life and life in all its fullness*. Thus is a true communion among all men and women established throughout the world. In the celebration of this central sacrament of life of the City of God, Christ is not made present in the mere bread and wine, but in the *communal* bread and wine. At the table of this sharing of bread and wine, committed Christians in their daily life participate in the allotment of the benefits offered by nature and generated by human work.

The essence of being a Christian is summarized in the commitment to sharing and communion (common union), celebrated in that sacrament that feeds such exacting character. Therefore, it makes no sense to participate in the Eucharist without the experience or the effective spirit to live what is celebrated in it, a question of coherence.

The rite of communion is of extraordinary wealth, a sensible, visible and eloquent expression of what it signifies. The grace of God that gives it efficacy is actualized in a renewed

(SEE NEXT PAGE ⇐)



Zonal Encounter I, El Salvador



Zonal Encounter II, Colombia



Zonal Encounter III, Brazil

## The Eucharist

(←FROM PAGE 7)

spirit, so that the Christian shares, more and more, his goods, his talents, his knowledge and his time, his own being (body and blood) with those who live in inhuman situations. Moreover it feeds impetus and enthusiasm in his fight in favor of more justice and solidarity in social relations and in social structures.

**Jesus made it to the radical limit in sharing His body and blood so that all may have life in abundance.**

The Eucharist is a communal sacrament, the celebration of unity among all men and women committed to sharing their material, intellectual and spiritual goods, time and knowledge, even the giving of their own if others need them, even though this may require a renunciation to privileges. It is not considered, therefore, a sacrament reduced to a mere spiritual food for the soul, separated from the body and from human realities, without reference to the effective commitment of sharing.

Jesus made it to the radical limit in sharing His body and blood so that all may have life in abundance. He expressed His real and effective commitment to leave and to distribute bread and wine, elements of daily life with powerful symbolism: bread and wine



*Latin American Youth Encounter, Panama*



*Latin American Day, Colombia*



*MFC Honduras Presidents Santos and Ondina Roque*



*VIII Anniversary, MFC Honduras*



*Peru Latin American General Assembly, Peru*



*ICCFM VP William and Esilda Cheng and grandchildren*



*CFM Chile and CFM Thailand Chaplain Fr. Bunsong Hongthong*

are goods of nature and fruits of human work that must be distributed

to all men. And He told us to do it always in His memory. Thus did the

first Christians: first they shared their goods among themselves and

later in their houses they broke bread at the domestic table, in the

primitive and faithful form of the Eucharistic celebration.

## NORTH AMERICA

A few words about Father Sam:

# Taking the time to make a difference



by Paul and Jane Leingang

These are words I don't want to write. These are thoughts I don't want to acknowledge. Father Sam Palmer is dying.

\*\*\*

Father Sam is a friend, a chaplain, a priest whose ministry has helped to shape the Christian family in the United States and throughout the world. He has served as chaplain for the Christian Family Movement (CFM) in the United States and for the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM).

When I try to recall when I first met Father Sam, I have to stop and think. It seems as if I have known him all my life. That's the kind of person he is. In fact, though, I first met him in the 1970's, when my wife and I worked with him to plan liturgies for a CFM USA National Convention.

Father Sam started CFM groups in his parishes, wherever he was assigned in the Diocese of Des Moines. He didn't do that for the sake of awards or recognition, but he received what he deserved—the highest honors given by the Movement he loves.

In 2003, Father Sam received the Reynold Hillenbrand Award for outstanding service to CFM USA, and a year later, the Cardijn Award for

outstanding service to the ICCFM.

Over the years, my wife and I have talked with him, prayed with him, traveled with him, celebrated with him, laughed with him, and eaten pizza together. He has given us advice and comfort.

Father Sam was a parish priest, most recently at St. Pius X Church in Urbandale, Iowa. He retired in 2001, after 44 years in active ministry.

"Retirement" is a misnomer, of course. Father Sam just goes from one beginning to another, from one ministry to the next.

\*\*\*

Father Sam has Lou Gehrig's Disease, something he has known about for several years. In late December 2005, though, he moved into Mercy Hospice.

The headline in a Des Moines Register feature story brings a thousand words into a single sentence: "Retired priest comforts others from his hospice room."

He has a room in the hospice that is large enough for 20 people to come for Mass. Here is part of the Register story by John Gaps III.

"Sitting on the bed to his left, which was temporarily used as a pew for the service, was a woman filled with pain and anguish. Her face, hollow from lack of sleep, sported eyes that were pink and puffy from constant tears."

The woman "had come to Mercy Hospice to be with her dying mother . . . who was too sick to attend Mass."

At the end of Mass, Father Sam turned to the daughter and simply asked, "What can I do for your mother?"

When she told Father Sam her mother had already been anointed, he promised, "I'll look in on her later."

The writer pointed out that Father Sam was "very much still the parish



Dear to ICCFM: Father Sam Palmer

**At Easter, it is time for each of us to examine where God has brought us and to see that life is full of beginnings.**



Gary and Kay Aitchison, CFM North America Presidents celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on August 4, 2006.



Father Donald Conroy, CFM USA Chaplain



CFM USA thanks Gary and Kay for 35 years of service



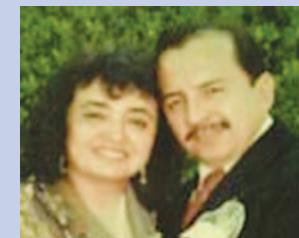
John and Lauri Przybysz, CFM USA Presidents



Juan and Teresa Rodriguez, MFC USA Presidents



Fr. Rafael Davila, MFC USA Chaplain



Erwin and Nora Lopez, MFC Los Angeles Presidents

priest, now looking after an ever-changing flock of souls who only stick around for an average of about a week. . . . So each day he has left on this

earth, Palmer deals with life the best he can."

And then the writer saves the last

(SEE NEXT PAGE⇨)

A few words about Father Sam...

(←FROM PAGE 9)

words of the story for Father Sam: "There's a level of frustration, but this is where God has brought me in my life."  
\*\*\*

At Easter, it is time for each of us to examine where God has brought us and to see that life is full of beginnings.

Father Sam will continue to look in on me, too, somehow, I know, from a hospice room in Iowa or from his next new home.

Some words are uncomfortable, but they should not be unspeakable. Not if we truly believe in the resurrection.

Here's to you, Father Sam. To life!



Pictures from the last CFM USA and MFC USA National Conventions.

## OCEANIA

## Family in Society

by Leslie and Carmeline Sammut,  
CFM Australia



My wife Carmen and I were invited to represent Australia at the VII Asian Continental Christian Family Conference held from 16-18 June 2006 in Singapore. Other representatives came from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Macau, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Australia. The Conference, with its theme "The Challenge of Being a Family in Asia is a Joyful Mission," focused on the strength of Asian families with Christian attributes and values, as they face the increasing challenges posed by globalisation.

The keynote speaker was Archbishop Nicholas Chia of Singapore, who spoke about "The Asian Christian Family in a Changing World." He began his address with a description of the long history of Asia's civilised social living, noting that most Asians still live and practise their old distinctive traditions and cultures as "Asians," different from Americans, Europeans and Africans.

In Singapore and some other Asian countries, the institution of the family has not changed to the extent that it has in other parts of the world. The extended family remains very common and much appreciated, and receives recognition and support from

both society and government. In fact, when we attended Sunday Mass we were very impressed that the church was packed with families, young and old, who followed the Mass with great attention and devotion.

The Archbishop during his talk warned us not to be complacent about the present position of the family since its rights had to be fought for, defended and institutionalised. Because of modern communications, the world is rapidly shrinking into a "global village" and thus impacting on societies and families economically, socially, culturally and even technologically, the Archbishop said.

Everything in the institution of the family, as we know and understand it, is being assailed from all sides. Its hard won rights are under threat, hence we must be actively engaged to keep abreast of developments, respond to these and be ready to defend the family's rights. We have to educate parents to avoid what is happening in many European countries, formerly strongholds of Catholicism and strong defenders of the family, which today are almost facing extinction.

In China, because of the one-child policy, the family as we know it is disappearing from society with the result that most children have no uncles, brothers, sisters or cousins. The movement of people from rural areas into cities, across national boundaries and even across oceans has been detrimental to the structure of the family in such countries as the Philippines.

The following are some of the conclusions arising from the many workshop discussions:

- Society and the world need us. As parents we have to be able to see the developments early, review them in the light of our faith and then respond as parents and citizens.

**The only sure way to free ourselves from these pressures is not by trying to change the system (an impossibility), nor by withdrawing into isolation, but by living out our Christian values in the world.**

- Parental education and training in Gospel values and the social teachings of the Church are essential.

- We all lament the failure of Catholic schools to pass on the faith to our children. Bishops must help.

- We need to be less preoccupied with material goods and focus more on

the intellectual and spiritual.

- The gap between the haves and the have-nots is a grave injustice and a failure in our duty of Christian stewardship of our talents, resources and goods, all of them gifts of God.

- Preoccupation with acquiring more comfort, luxuries, possessions and consumption does not bring inner peace and can contribute to the breakdown of the family and other relationships.

- The only sure way to free ourselves from these pressures is not by trying to change the system (an impossibility), nor by withdrawing into isolation, but by living out our Christian values in the world.

For us it was a really joyful experience. We learnt a lot in our meetings with many young couples from the other participating countries, sharing and discussing experiences with each other. We felt part of a wider international family with common aims, problems, worries, difficulties, good times and bad times.



Leslie and Carmeline with National Chaplain Fr. Charles Portelli.

## The ICCFM Mission and the New Evangelization

(←FROM PAGE 2)

### Conclusion

Pope John Paul II believes that the New Evangelization is essentially directed towards "entering a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians . . . respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time." Providing a shining

example of the missionary calling, the Holy Father describes the main orientation of his papacy, "The Lord and Master of history and of our destinies has wished my pontificate to be that of a pilgrim pope of evangelization, walking down the roads of the world, bringing to all peoples the message of salvation."

As CFM members we have al-

ways made a priority of spirituality and missionary service, prayer and action, rendered in diverse ways, according to the needs of the families we serve. We have struggled to emulate our Pope John Paul II's pilgrim spirit, going out among the poor and devoting our savings to attend ICCFM Continental and World Assemblies in different

countries.

Our ultimate ICCFM vocation is to be able to proclaim, like St. Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles: "So I become all things to all men that I may save some of them by whatever means possible. All this I do for the Gospel's sake, in order to share in its blessing." (1 Corinthians 9: 22-23)

# Address to the European Parliament on World Family Day

ICCFM Chaplain Monsignor Charles Vella  
May 26, 2006

Historically the family has always been under threat because it demands a life-long commitment of love, built on the unselfish giving of one's self to another, yet selfishness and individualism are characteristic of human nature. Without endorsing nostalgia for the traditional family, I feel that we are renouncing essential family values. British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks claims that we have created an *unsustainable* situation, "assisted by birth control, by abortion, by new schemes of work and liberation from law and restrictions regarding relations." In fact, I may add, the destruction of the family has become the parameter of social progress and freedom.

I come from the island of Malta, a microstate which constantly strives to uphold family values. Our principles of lifetime marriage commitment and of reverence for human life in all its stages have their roots in the Christian faith, brought to Malta by the Apostle Paul in 60 A.D. Although exposed to the same crises facing nuclear families in Europe today, Malta spares no effort in promoting the values of the natural family, based on the heterosexual union of man and woman, through which children are born.

Malta is considered a laboratory in its endeavors to promote the psychological, social and spiritual growth of families through prevention, education and remedial counseling. This family mission was started fifty years ago when our vision was opened to the coming social changes, and we founded the Cana Movement. It was not an easy task, for the country was not ready for innovations. But we never feared to be avant-garde and to meet challenges. Today the Cana Movement is considered as a pioneer in natural family planning, sex education, marriage preparation, marriage counseling and providing support to persons in difficulties.

Development, social change and moral values go together in Malta without negating the interests of the family. *Industrialization, tourism, the media, technology and education are all positive elements, used to promote the public good.* "The case of Malta," University of Oxford's Professor Hayles writes, "proves that it is not necessary for the economic changes which have taken place in Europe in the last decades, to produce also a change in the values which accompany them. While Malta has fully participated in economic development, it has maintained at least in the field of family and of religion its adherence to the traditional values." The same cannot be said for the rest of Europe, where the institution of marriage and the family is being suffocated by many pressures.

In my eight years in the Council of Europe's "Family and Ethics Commission," I have not seen many legal, social or human endeavors to strengthen the family. There has to be a union of nations, Christian or not, which sees a vital need to promote a network of good family life based on total love, self-giving, lifelong commit-



ICCFM Chaplain Msgr. Charles Vella

ment, fidelity, begetting and caring of children. As John Paul II states, "The promotion of family life and its protection is not the prerogative only of the Christians."

"Europe," writes the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "will no longer be Europe if the fundamental cell of marriage and the family disappears or will be changed in its essentials . . . Monogamous marriage, as the fundamental structure of the man-woman relationship, is at the same time the cell for the formation of the community of the State. It has given . . . Europe its particular identity and its particular humanity." However, he deplores, "We all know how marriage and the family are threatened: from one side we have the emptying

of their indissolubility through various forms of easy divorce, on the other side the spreading of cohabitation between man and woman without the legal form of marriage."

The pitfalls and causes of the family's threatened situation are the following:

1. Individualism, which has produced the "me" generation;
2. Collectivism, which does not see the family as an autonomous unit with intrinsic rights but as a collection of individuals subject to society's intrusion;
3. Consumerism, in which "having" rather than from "being" is the ideal of happiness;
4. Sexism, in which sex is divorced from love, commitment and, above all, procreation.

How can we promote happy and lasting families in Europe, aside from just legislating sound social and economic policies favoring the family?

We often hear that we are living in a post-Christian society, that now religion is just a private option and should not enter the public sphere. This statement is erroneous for, whether we admit it or not, religion is not "dead." The rise of an assertive Islam speaks for itself, and Mother Teresa of Calcutta always saw a great hunger for God. Even in our "old, tired Europe," religious belief is spreading among the young, although science and technology are

# A noble leader

by Kay and Gary Aitchison,  
ICCFM North America



Patty Crowley is a Christian Family Movement icon. She and her husband Pat were among the founders of the CFM in the United States. They carried the Movement over the country in their travels and eventually to many other countries.

Patty was a tireless worker for the CFM cause and a model and inspiration to those of us who knew her. We remember once giving a CFM workshop in a city near by and receiving a call from Patty just as we were to begin our presentation. She had heard that we were speaking on behalf of CFM that day and called to encourage us. We barely knew Patty at the time and were honored by her support. She knew the importance of affirming, supporting and encouraging. That was one of her gifts. She also challenged those in leadership to do more – to reach out and to share CFM with new developing families.

She had a restless spirit that kept CFM moving.

Pat and Patty were beacons of hospitality. Their apartment on the 88<sup>th</sup> floor of the John Hancock Building in Chicago was always open to others. Over the years they welcomed a myriad of foreign students who lived with them and their five children. They taught us a great deal about hospitality.

Patty was widowed at the age of 61 when Pat died in 1974. She and



Patty's young family

Pat had been a fantastic team. Now, being a woman alone, she took her outreach in a new direction in which she reached out to other women in all walks of life. She opened her home to women's groups and explored women's issues. She began spending one night a week working and sleeping at a shelter for homeless/battered

women. And she began a regular routine of visiting incarcerated women. She continued all of these activities

**Patty was CFM at its finest and she truly challenged us to live the gospel message in all that we do**

well into her declining days. Even in the last months of her life, she sat in her wheelchair and wound rolls of yarn for these women to use in their knitting.

Patty died late in 2005 at the age of 92. She was an inspiration to all who knew her. Patty was CFM at its finest and she truly challenged

us to live the gospel message in all that we do.



Patty in later years



Last visit with Patty: (from left to right) Gary, Kay, Patty, Elma, Nop

## Address to the European Parliament on World Family Day

(←FROM PAGE 12)

also posing ethical questions. The family is at the centre of all these challenges and cries out for support, especially from political leaders. Definitely it already has the support of religion, which brings God to the home and makes the family "a domestic church."

The Canadian novelist Douglas Coupland in his book *Life After God* makes an honest confession, "My secret is that I need God—that I am sick and can no longer make it alone." We can apply his cry to all of Europe: in the space

*of fifty years, we have seen the de-Christianisation of Europe, which has emptied many families of the human and the spiritual dimensions based on values, spiritually impoverishing especially the youth.*

*If we want to strengthen families, we need to affirm human values through religion. This means we have to uphold veritas, truth, in all our political reasoning. This Parliament can serve humanity only through the service of truth. Only in truth can we discover the values upon which to form an honest*

*political conscience. To uphold truth the European Union should not pass legislation which runs against the values of the family and of human life, such as the legalization of abortion, stem-cell research with fetal tissue, euthanasia, etc.*

My final proposition to this Parliament is to give precedence to the family because the future of mankind depends on it. The time has come for the European Union to form a dynamic "network" of representatives from all member states and to institute, as the United Nations

has done, an "International Year of the Family," an ACTION PLAN based on our common fundamental values to support the family through human and social policies.

While counting dearly on your love and support for the family, I conclude with a quotation written 2255 years ago by Chinese politician and poet Lu Bu We:

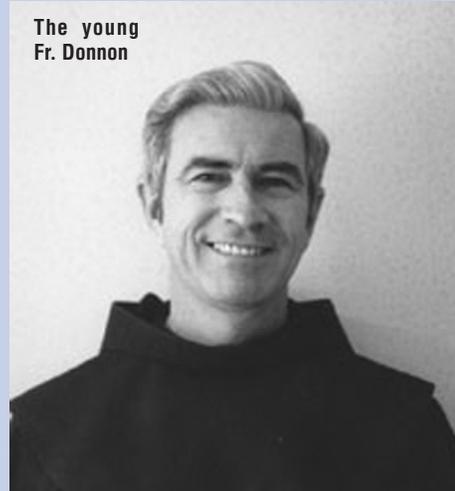
If the person is well,  
Then the family is well.  
If the family is well,  
Then the State will be well.

# Fr. Donnon Murray's Golden Jubilee

Rev. Fr. Donnon Murray, O.F.M., celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood in two countries which are home to him. Born in Pennsylvania, USA, Fr. Donnon was ordained in 1956, and just two years later, volunteered to serve in the Franciscan's new mission in Japan. For the past 28 years Fr. Donnon has been serving the FIRES programs, not only in Japan but throughout the world.

FIRES founder Father Gabriel Calvo and his team were special guests at the celebration in St. Patrick's Church of Fr. Donnon's home state. Jose Hernandez is Fr. Calvo's administrative assistant and Tom and Trudy Ryan are his advisors as a married couple.

Balazs and Krisztina Menesi from FIRES Hungary specially flew in for the commemoration in Japan. They remarked, "The hospitable, warm, loving atmosphere during the celebration is almost indescribable. It was wonderful to hear how the Encounter experience has resulted in deep conversions, better marriages, more united families in all these Japanese people's lives—the very same fruits we have experienced in Hungary through the FIRES programs introduced by Fr. Donnon himself."



The young Fr. Donnon



◀ The "Golden" Fr. Donnon



▼ USA celebration (from left to right): Jose Hernandez, Tom and Trudy Ryan, Fr. Donnon and Fr. Calvo



Japan celebration: Fr. Donnon (center) flanked by Balazs and Krisztina Menesi with FIRES Japan members



Fr. Gabriel Calvo, FIRES Founder



H.E. Bishop Laszlo Biro of Hungary



Balazs and Krisztina Menesi



SADE Hungary



FIRES Hungary

# New Continental Presidents of MFC Latin America



Jorge and Rosalinda Carrillo

**Rosalinda and Jorge Carrillo Campos**  
 Querétaro, México

**Thirty years married with three children:**

- Marco Eugenio married to Miriam with one son, Isaac
- Ana María y Ruth.

**Profession:**

- Rosalinda: Chemical engineer, Associate Professor of the Secretariat of Public Education for 26 years
- Jorge: Mechanical engineer, Administrative Technician in Mexican Petroleum for 28 years

**Working in the CFM for 28 years participating as:**

- Coordinators of basic team formation
- Coordinators of zonal promotion
- Secretaries of various diocesan areas
- Diocesan presidents in Querétaro
- National secretaries of the region
- Representatives of the Diocesan Secretariat for the Lay Apostolate
- Members of the Family Network Counsel of Querétaro
- MFC Latin America Presidents for the years 2006 – 2009
- Volunteers in civic associations outside the MFC

## X World Meeting of Families and XIV ICCFM General Assembly

(←FROM PAGE 1)

ence the power of prayer and the conversion of families through the primacy of grace and holiness.”

Conference Chairpersons Antonio and Maria Moniz, with the support of Sister Maria de Fátima Castanheira and Sister Alice Cardoso, representatives of the Cooperadoras de la Familia founded by Monsignor

Joaquim Alves Brás, have worked arduously for the past two years to prepare this international meeting, which provides an opportunity for all ICCFM countries to exchange ideas, share experiences and liturgies with families and clergy who are involved in family evangelization throughout the world.



Fatima Planning Meeting

## IN MEMORIAM

**FATHER SAMUEL PALMER** Father Sam Palmer was ICCFM Chaplain from 1989 to 1995. He was a staunch supporter of the CFM throughout his priesthood and received the Cardinal Cardijn Award for extraordinary service to the CFM at the 2004 ICCFM World Assembly in California.



Father Sam Palmer

**NOHEMY CASTAÑEDA** Nohemy and her husband Ricardo were National Presidents of MFC El Salvador and National Secretaries of FIRES.



Nohemy Castaneda

**SAN JUANA FIGUEROA** Juanita and her husband

Mario were active Presidents of MFC USA and were instrumental in the Movement's expansion during their terms

**BERNADANE PETERSON QUINN** Mother of CFM North America Representative Kay Aitchison, Bernadane was a holy and accomplished woman whose fortitude was a source of inspiration to all who knew her.



San Juana Figueroa



Father Oswald Dijkstra

**FATHER OSWALD DIJKSTRA** Fr. Dijkstra brought the CFM to Bangalore in India and actively served the Movement all his life.

**PHIL GORMAN** Phil and his wife Mary Lou were CFM National Board members from 1985 to 1999 and later served as expansion directors for the Movement.



Phil Gorman

# ICCFM Secretariat 2004 - 2007:

With grateful hearts



**Nop and Elma:** We thank you very much for serving the ICCFM with us.



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Msgr. Charles Vella,  
Malta and Italy



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Panama



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Rosalinda Carrillo



**North America Continental  
Presidents** Gary and Kay  
Aitchison, USA



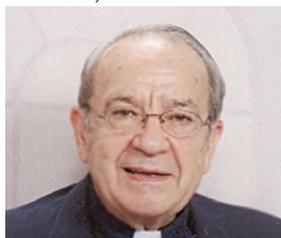
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