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Link-Lazo, published biannually 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.

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World Assembly of Families and ICCFM General Assembly

Participation of all CFM and affiliated countries expected; to explore marriage role in an evolving society



World Assembly Chair Couple Gary & Kay Aitchison

Specifically, the Assembly will reaffirm the value of marriage and the Christian family in the critical examination and redirection of society's shift in a technological era. This international meeting on marriage and Christian life features a presentation on the works of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn; speakers on marriage theology and family sociology; a discussion-action dialogue methodology; a reality exposure experience; an opportunity to exchange ideas, share experiences and liturgies with families and clergy from all parts of the world. There will be simultaneous translation in both English and Spanish.

Conference Chairpersons and North American Continental Presidents Gary and Kay Aitchison and the Conference Program Committee led by Wayne and Sue Hamilton have asked the participants to prepare in advance

The 9th World Assembly of Families and 13th General Assembly of the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM) will meet July 28 - August 1, 2004, at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, CA, USA, convened by members of Christian Family Movements (CFM) and affiliated family groups from over forty countries, who will explore the theme, "Family: Artisans of an Evolving Society," using the Cardijn methodology of "Observe - Judge - Act" to discern the true meaning of authentic partnership in marriage between spouses and with God and the family's role in meeting the challenges of a society being transformed in a post-modern age.

their observations on the following topics:

- In your country, what are the cultural-specific reasons that people marry?
- What is the role of marriage and family life within the culture of your country?
- What is the impact of Christian marriage on your culture?
- What impact do government, church and culture have on marriage and family life in your country?
- What do you think marriage and family life will be like in the future?
- What is the true meaning of Christian marriage?

From San Jose, local site Chairpersons Andy and Martha Maurer write, "After many months of planning and teamwork, it is our sincere pleasure to announce the availability of the ICCFM 9th World Assembly website (visit iccfm.org or

cimfc.org) which provides registration, travel and lodging information. To obtain lowest possible airfare and provide sufficient time to secure U.S. visa documents, we encourage you to register early and apply now for all travel paperwork. San Francisco Bay Area MFC and CFM organizations are serving together on the Assembly local site committees to make your stay a lifelong memory!" (SEE PAGE 11)



Conference Site Chair Couple Andy and Martha Maurer

2003 CONTINENTAL ASSEMBLIES

Putting 2001 ICCFM World Assembly resolutions into action

XIII LATIN AMERICAN ENCOUNTER

July 3 – 6, 2003

Santo Domingo de Heredia, COSTA RICA

Theme: *Let Us Make of the CFM the House and the School of Communion*

Post-Encounter Declaration by President Couple William and Esilda Cheng

- The MFC, evangelizing and forming through its principal means and major treasure, the base teams, maintains that members who have completed formation, as trained and committed laity, give their service to the Movement or to related civic or religious organizations.
- When the main MFC objective is offering services, neglecting to promote the creation of new base teams risks losing the Movement. On the other hand, the more base teams are given formation, the more members will be able to involve themselves in MFC services with MFC charisma. A manifest difficulty is the lack of coordinators or trainers for base teams because the few committed people are old and work in other services. When these people are gone, will the MFC become just a pretty memory? The urgent task that the MFC dedicates itself to the creation of new base teams.
- Opportunity to serve must be given to young people. A complaint stands that older, long-standing MFC members resist changes and

new methods and do not support young couples, being distrustful of their competence, often making their work difficult or impeding their development. More often, though, members long committed to the MFC are persons of energy and ability, adaptable to new situations, respectful of young people, open to consult with them and always ready to support their spirited work.

- Each country is exhorted to commemorate the MFC LATIN AMERICAN DAY on the first Sunday of October with a grand program. On this occasion, a special collection of a dollar per person will be made. The program must be planned beforehand so that the celebration will be truly meaningful and beautiful.

IV ICCFM EUROPEAN CONGRESS

July 17 – 29, 2003

Zagreb, CROATIA

Theme: *The Family as a Successful Life-long Community*

Resolutions Presented by Past President Couple Tony and Lily Gauci

- Believe firmly that faithfulness and stability in marriage are not only a religious value but also a benefit for society and a gift for humanity.
- Appeal to civil authorities and international organizations to defend and promote life values as opposed to divorce, free love,

abortion, euthanasia, contraception, artificial fertilization and programs of immoral sex education.

- Encourage Christian couples to proclaim the Good News of marriage and the family by living their vocation as a communion of life and love, in mutual self-giving and openness to children.
- Encourage Christian families of Europe to promote the Continent's reunification, living the faith and hope of this challenging opportunity in history and giving witness of their Christian identity by promoting Christian values and helping provide for families in need.
- Acknowledge that since love is not always easy and daily life has its problems, Christian couples shall foster family prayer and awareness of God's presence in their homes.



Chair Couple Francis and Carmel Colaso (standing and seated left) during the Asian Conference

VI ASIAN CONFERENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT

September 19 – 21, 2003

Bangalore, INDIA

THEME: *The Christian Family: Challenges of the Present Times*

Resolutions Presented by Past President Couple Dennis and Fanny Chua

- To participate more meaningfully in CFM activities in order to discern and fulfill our mission as Christian families and thus inspire others to join the Movement.
- To strengthen our own CFM families by actively demonstrating our love and commitment and by establishing meaningful family practices, including joint prayer and CFM-oriented family dialogue.
- To encourage our children to develop a profound trust in Jesus Christ and to respond actively to God's call to a priestly or religious vocation if it comes. →



THE SPLA TEAM. SPLA Secretariat (seated) Yolanda Wong, Elma Muangkroot and Marcela de Arco. Standing are (from left) Emilio Yong, Yabel & Alberto Hernandez, Nop Muangkroot, Esilda & William Cheng.

Ruby Wedding Anniversary

ICCFM Representatives to the Vatican and to the UN and CFM Europe Past Presidents Tony and Lily Gauci celebrated their Fortieth Wedding Anniversary in a grand manner. What's their secret for such a stable and loving union? What are their reflections on this momentous event?

"On your request we try and give our experience of forty years married life, not to show any great achievement but just to say that it is possible to live a married life in a life-long commitment. This of course we haven't done through our own merits but with daily prayers, time for communication, and trust in the love and help of God.

Like everybody else we had our ups and downs and sailed through rough and calm seas. However love in married life is a miracle which is renewed and strengthened everyday through hot and cold. So it was only right and just to celebrate with a Thanksgiving Mass in the National Sanctuary of Our Lady, where we were also married.

Forty years ago there were only the two of us, but now we were joined with five children, five in-laws and nine grandchildren, all adding to the happiness of the day."



Tony and Lily Gauci at their wedding on September 1, 1963.



Tony and Lily at their 40th Wedding Anniversary.



The Gauci clan.

- To increase family welfare activities and include other services such as FIRES under the aegis of the CFM and to cooperate with similar associations and movements for greater solidarity in fulfilling our related missions.
- To help strengthen community-based programs such as Basic Ecclesial Communities in member countries where applicable, for which CFM units will share experiences, training materials, methods and techniques.
- To actively network with like programs and resource centers, both within and outside the CFM, so as to share resources and build capacity in such areas as discussion papers, faith formation, conscientization and other topics and activities.
- To identify critical social issues that impact the family in the local context, act as catalysts and instruments of change, actively responding as a CFM group where appropriate, and thus also strengthening the Movement,
- To develop action plans, with appropriate organizational and review mechanisms, in order to implement the above resolutions, taking into account local realities.



L-r MFC/USA Presidents Mario and Juanita Figueroa, ICCFM Pres. Elma & Nop Muangkroot & North American Presidents Kay & Gary Aitchison. At the back is MFC Chaplain Fr. Davila.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

Presented by President Couple Gary and Kay Aitchison in 2001

- Recognizing that education is a fundamental human right and taking into account the diverse educational levels of its members, MFC/LA will re-establish a portable library to include a wide range of books which target literacy, various skills and self-development.
 - CFM/USA will write and distribute an inquiry meeting on the fundamental right to education.
 - CFM/USA wrote and distributed an inquiry meeting on "A Christian Response to Violence," in direct response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA.
 - CFM and MFC will investigate the possibility of developing a leadership formation program.
- The three groups will work together to support the **2004 ICCFM World Assembly** to be held in the USA.

Impressions on the “Pastoral” Visit made by SPLA to Central America and Mexico

by William and Esilda Cheng

We thank God to allow us, once again, to be His instruments, taking us joyfully to Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico: Enrique and Graciela Alvarenga, Vice-Presidents in charge of Formation; Alvaro Rivera, Zone 1 Coordinator; and William and Esilda Cheng, Presidents. We covered all the route to Guatemala by bus. Afterwards, thanks to the contribution of Mexico, we the Chengs continued by airplane for our pastoral visit to that country.



Pastoreo SPLA Pastoral Team, from left, Alvaro & Margarita Rivera, Chico and Chela Alvarenga, William & Esilda Cheng & Tomas & Mabel Porras

We were welcomed with much affection by the CFM brothers of each country visited, where we met leaders in many places and members of the base teams. This visit presented us with the opportunity to know how the CFM works in each country: its achievements, difficulties and expectations, but above all, to share personally with brothers who expressed their

commitment, love and conviction that the work with and by the family is worthy, realized through our dear Christian Familiar Movement. The manifestations of joy for our visit were many, and it was very enriching for us to know their culture, customs and forms of work.

In some countries the Alvarengas had the opportunity to work with leaders and base teams, giving formation workshops in areas where they were solicited. We were in a grand gathering in El Salvador, where they offered a great tribute to Father Gabriel Calvo, founder of the Marriage Encounter. At this event almost 8,000 adults, 2,000 young people and many, many children participated.

In Mexico we had the opportunity to meet with the CFM brothers of the DF and bordering dioceses, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Leon and Zelaya. Our pastoral visit culminated here, participating in its National Assembly in the city of Querétaro, where, as culminating point, they chose the new National Presidents for the next triennium.

This is a very small summary of what has been a marvelous experience for us. We have not wanted to mention the name of any person from the countries visited because there were many whom we knew. We solely want to exhort them to continue working with the same generosity and love. We thank them for their welcome and attention, and we love them very much.

JOHN PAUL II AND CONJUGAL SPIRITUALITY

With the 25th anniversary celebration of the Pope's election, many reports and comments have appeared about his enormous pastoral activities. The amount of work has not only been large but also very profound. Few aspects affecting the life of Christians have not been studied and reported through his writings, audiences or trips

One particular item we would like now to emphasize that perhaps has not been recorded. That consists in the big importance the Pope has given to Conjugal Spirituality.

John Paul II has never stopped insisting Christians should pray. Only recently he recommended again the prayer of the Rosary

specially for married couples and families.

Last year, when he Beatified together, for the first time in history a married couple: Luigi & Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, the Pope emphasized: “both understood how to lead an extraordinary life, rich in spirituality, based on the daily Eucharist, at the same time with the devotion to the Virgin Mary, which they would praise with the holy Rosary every afternoon ...”

In the discourse to “Equipos de Notre Dame Movement” (20-01-03) held in Rome on occasion of the 100 anniversary of its founder Fr. Henry Caffarel, the Pope after enhancing the call to Saintliness through married life (Lumen Gentium, 11) says “your Movement has its own pedagogy,



José and Margarita Pich

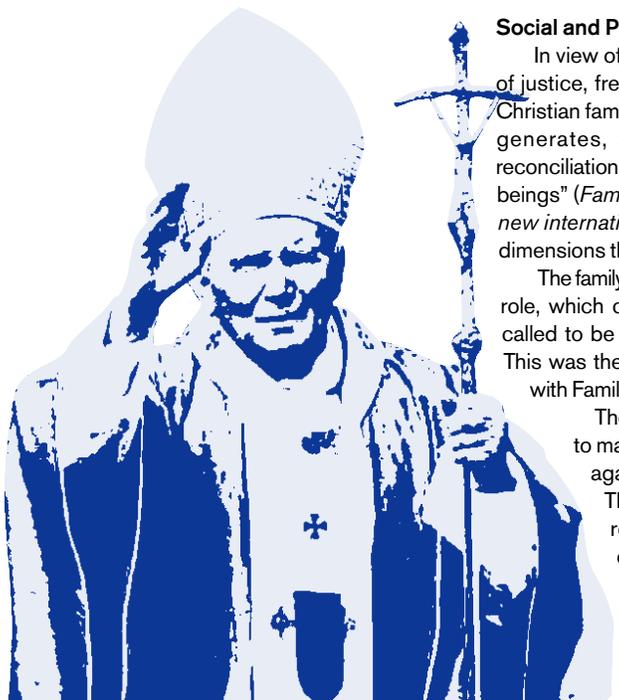
based on specific points of effort, that help you to grow together in Sanctity. I invite you particularly to develop personal, married and family prayer...”

Finally the Pope in his talks, audiences, trips etc several times makes reference to Familiaris Consorcio which as a kind of foundation chart for the Family.

José and Margarita Pich

THE FAMILY IN THE PAPACY OF JOHN PAUL II

Alfonso Cardinal López Trujillo
President of the Pontifical Council for the Family



Social and Political Tasks

In view of the enormous, dramatic problems of justice, freedom and peace in the world, the Christian family “constitutes an inner energy that generates, spreads and develops justice, reconciliation, fraternity and peace among human beings” (*Familiaris Consortio* 48). He called for a *new international order* in view of the worldwide dimensions that characterize social problems.

The family that is aware of its social and political role, which constitutes a *good* for humanity, is called to be the heart of the civilization of love. This was the theme of the First World Meeting with Families in Rome in 1994.

The Pope’s emphasis has been striking to make the systematic, planned hostility against the family and life understood.

This is destroying the social fabric and reducing the hopes of peoples who cannot confidently expect a future worthy of man. Before the phenomena of the progressive deterioration of the family through iniquitous laws, John Paul II’s teaching speaks out like a critical

conscience shaped by the Gospel and, at the same time, invites us to fight for everything that truly humanizes man. This is a grave responsibility for politicians.

Democracy cannot be transformed into a dictatorship of parliamentary majorities that turns its back on the true good of society. This is a kind of “political truth” that is imposed arbitrarily. The Pope recommends respect for the spirit of the law. “This means that laws, whatever the areas in which the legislator intervenes or is obliged to intervene, must always respect and promote human persons - in all the variety of their spiritual, material, personal, family and social needs. Hence a law which does not respect the right to life - from conception to natural death - of every human being, whatever his or her condition - healthy or ill, still in the embryonic stage, elderly or close to death - *is not a law in harmony with the divine plan*” (John Paul II, Discourse during the Jubilee of Government Leaders, Members of Parliament and Politicians, 4/11/2000).

- From the address of His Eminence Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo to the College of Cardinals on the 25th year of the Papacy of the Holy Father

SINCERE APPEAL FROM THE ICCFM PRESIDENTS

With genuine affection we invite you to the **9th World Assembly of Families and the 13th ICCFM General Assembly**. For our Confederation which is built purely on benevolence and commitment to family service for the love of God, the best inspiration and support we can give each other is our physical presence. It is when we pray and work together with love that we generate a spiritual energy that will drive us to persevere and find greater joy in our service.

Our theme, “Family: Artisans of an Evolving Society,” is an affirmation of our special vocation in matrimony—indispensable to God’s plan for creation. We are artisans because as husband and wife we form, in a joint handiwork with



God, the shape of society that is constantly evolving. As authentic partners in marriage and with God in creation, we must manipulate the technological era’s blessings as well as its

assaults, with awareness and vigilance, to make our families God’s instruments for a positive cultural change in the world.

Please come to the **World Assembly** so that together we can explore the significance of our role as co-creators with God, gain a deeper appreciation of our vocation and thus strive with greater fervor to fulfill our divine destiny. It is indeed a great marvel to contemplate and comprehend that we are God’s artisans and that He counts on us, Christian families, to promote His kingdom on earth through all obstacles—because we work with Him and have received His promise that He will be with us “until the consummation of the world.”



News Around the World

AFRICA

From Uganda Presidents Cornelius and Mary Margaret Masiga

(Written to Special Representatives Wayne and Sue Hamilton)

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your letter announcing the 2004 ICCFM World Assembly in San Jose, California. Passing on this information early is indeed of great help to give us ample time to prepare for the Assembly. You mention that you intend to re-establish communication with CFM'ers throughout Africa. We therefore wish to inform you that our daughter Nasirumbi Gorreti has allowed us to use her e-mail address (gnasirumbi@yahoo.co.uk) to make communication not only cheaper but also quicker. As she has been doing most of our CFM secretarial work, she understands it well. We appreciate your letter and we promise to improve our communication with you.

From Cameroon and Ghana

Aloysius and Winifred Ateh and Sr. Mary Neville informed Wayne and Sue Hamilton that the CFM is flourishing in Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province of Cameroon. The Atehs are succeeded by John and Marianna Fondzenyuy as Provincial President Couple. Wayne and Sue also received a letter from Anthony Kamoto of Malawi saying that CFM is still active in the Navrongo Parish in Ghana.

From Felix and Clara Chindime of Malawi

My husband and I are members of CFM at Chilinde Parish, Lilongwe. We joined the organization last year and we are vice-treasurer couple. The reason for writing is that CFM does not seem to grow in the Lilongwe diocese, and we have taken several steps to remedy the situation, but they are small steps. Since you have been in CFM for 30 years, are there any ideas you can give us?

Thanks for the invitation to the World Assembly. I have just noted that our President Couple Pontino and Theresa Moyo are missing these interesting news and stories. Please note their e-mail address so that you can update your mailing list. mmoyo.scdp@malawi.net

ASIA

From Anthony and Alice Leung of Hongkong

(Written to Joe and Charito Hilario)

We received a warm reception in Seoul. The representatives of CFM Korea



Family Movement in Hong Kong

mentioned their relationship with CFM Philippines in their introduction. It was very stimulating for our future development of the Family Movement in Hong Kong, China. We will keep in touch with them.

From David and Aloma Lobo of India

(Written to Francis and Carmel Colaso)

The meeting at our home was lively, interesting and full of promise. Fr. Donnon



Family Movement in Korea

Murray explained the FIRES approach which works on the Heart and makes changes through the Head. He mentioned the dramatic impact FIRES is now making in Japan with many conversions. Bringing FIRES to India could revitalize the CFM, leading to evangelization as is happening in Japan. Fr. Donnon's suggestion for launching FIRES in India is to have it under the auspices of the CFM as a means of growth and apostolic action. May we hand over to you the minutes of this meeting and the final decision to take FIRES forward as you deem fit.



Joe and Charito Hilario of the Philippines

From CFM Asia Vice-Presidents Francis and Carmel Colaso of India

Now that the Asian Conference is over, we should seriously implement the resolutions to carry on the momentum to make the CFM truly vibrant. This goal requires the cooperation of all members and the emergence of new leadership. Like a relay race, the baton has to be passed on to the next runner. We therefore earnestly appeal to all CFM'ers in the country to do some serious thinking and make concrete proposals to revitalize our Movement. We pray that God will continue to guide and inspire us to carry the Movement forward in the manner He chooses.

From Agnel and Anette D'Cruz of India

We were invited by Bishop Agnelo Gracias, Chairman of the CCBI Family Commission, to attend the meeting of the Family Apostolate. We learned from the reports what exactly the Family Apostolate is doing in the various dioceses, and we are convinced that the CFM has its part to play in this process of bringing awareness and help to families.

From Joe and Charito Hilario of the Philippines

We are part of a process of making work plans for our diocese, parishes, ministries and movements. What we intend to accomplish is "to make beautiful music together." In the business world, the essential elements for this "music" are called "disciplines," which include a shared vision, systems thinking, a mental model, personal mastery and team learning. Do these disciplines apply to the Church? After studying them carefully, I happily discovered that Jesus and His disciples applied them in their mission. May we work together in putting the above disciplines into practice. More information at www.iccfm.org.

From Roger and Naty Dayan of the Philippines

CFM Philippines held its 27th National Convention on November 14 -

16, 2003. In line with the thrust to expand and strengthen the church of the poor, the theme "CFM in Basic Ecclesial Community" was chosen. A continuing education program was offered after the Convention on such topics as CFM and the Family Code, Humor Therapy, Counseling Skills for Parents with Troubled Children and others.

From Ike and Nene Moreno of the Philippines

Thank you for the information on the World Assembly. We are really interested in experiencing an international assembly for an opportunity to learn about other families besides Filipinos. I am praying that a "miracle" will happen so that we can make it

In Manila we talked with CFM National Presidents Rolly and Josie Mesa. We are in the same boat in terms of problems, especially with regards to our declining numbers. Because we are very few, we really cannot fully achieve our plans and can do only so much. We experience discouragement from time to time, but thank God, we haven't succumbed to it.

From CFM National Presidents Basil and Merine Wijeratne of Sri Lanka

As we suggested at the Asian Conference, we must do something to take the CFM and its services to other countries in Asia. The FIRES program must be



L-r Susil & Shirani, Fr. Donnon Murray, Nishadi and Kalpa

introduced. We pray that the ICCFM will think about this seriously.

Please send us an official invitation to the ICCFM World Assembly. Please also send to Fr. Susil Sunawaldena because he will definitely attend the Assembly.

From Susil and Shirani Gunaratna of Sri Lanka

In July CFM Sri Lanka conducted the OME and the SADE. We also held a one-and-a-half-day encounter for widows, separated spouses, divorcees and unmarried elders, to give them strength and encouragement and fill them with love, joy and happiness.

Our effort to stop legalizing prostitution

and the opening of red light districts has been successful. It was an uphill task as the Minister for Internal Security and Christian Affairs was for it. We wrote an article in the *Catholic Messenger* detailing the evils that would happen if prostitution were legalized. After the article, the Minister stated that the government has no intention of legalizing prostitution and that he would do everything to oppose a bill on it if brought to the Parliament.



MFC Continental Chaplain Fr. Jose Majadas

LATIN AMERICA

From Emilio and Yolanda Wong of Panama

About our ENA, Encuentro Nacional, we had around 250 persons, 70 were young people of both sexes. It was very active and also very tiring. We talked about the four pillars of Formation, Spirituality, Promotion and Solidarity, using almost the same method of discussion as in Costa Rica. At the end we tried to make the participants committed to work for the Lord and the MFC. The National Presidents have to report the results at the next meeting of the MFC National Board.

From Marco Antonio and Elvira Sic of Guatemala

(Written to Andy and Martha Maurer)

We are the archdiocesan presidents for Marriage Preparation of the MFC and take care of 14 parishes with 60 instructors. We wish to attend the World Assembly and want to know if we can already confirm our participation and if other couples may also



Carlos and Griselda Bordon of Paraguay

attend. If there is some type of invitation for us here to acquire American visas, please write us at divulgacionmfc@intelnet.com and let us know how to participate and how



ELA PARTICIPANTS praying and praising together

to return the website registration form and see if we could be hosted with a Spanish-speaking family.

From Tales and Theresa Silva of Brazil

It was very kind of you to make such encouraging comments on the Maceió Proceedings. Actually both the English and the Spanish versions have been ready for over a year, but we lack money to make copies for all the participants and to cover postage costs. If we get financial support in time to send the Proceedings before the World Assembly, we may consider the possibility of doing so.

The San José World Assembly Organizing Committee is doing a very good job. We've had access to all the materials on the net. May God help the families of all those participating in it to take a step forward towards the Kingdom here on earth.

Until yesterday we would have been able to say that Carlos and Magda were fine, but we came to know Carlos had angina and has been hospitalized since last Friday. We called them today and he feels okay now. Magda is still very active and we admire her strength and positiveness. She still has difficulty using the computer—that's why they haven't gotten in touch with you.

We've been very involved in the CFM activities. On March 6 and 7 there will be a regional meeting here in Salvador with representatives of the four states of northeast Brazil where the CFM exists, and we've been busy preparing for it.



Luis and Marthica Pinilla

From Reynaldo and Yudi Ballon of Peru

What joy and peace after reading your message. The past year I made greater efforts to gather information. Starting from

the Maceio World Assembly, then in ELA and now at the threshold of the next World Assembly. I was assured when you sent LINK and since then have not stopped communicating. On February 13 - 14, we had the National Encounter in Lima, physically present to each other as you said. On February 19 we will have a meeting of the Central Team with a change of leadership. We gave a talk under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the joy of the Father who will be with us until the end of time.

We have already registered for the World Assembly and have requested for lodging in the house of MFC brothers. Now we are doing the visa transaction. We will fly from Lima to Los Angeles and from there go by land to San Jose to the guesthouse that God has arranged for us. How enthusiasm grows at the call of the Lord!

From Carlos and Griselda Bordón of Paraguay

With satisfaction we received LINK, and your e-mail cheered us even more. We wish to say that how little your opinion, we take it seriously. We continue our work of formation among MFC couples. In June we had our traditional San Juan celebration when most MFC members of the archdiocese gather. It is a moment of brotherly encounter that unites us and gives us the opportunity to demonstrate the artistic talents of our members. There was a folklore festival and a variety of native foods. How lovely it would be if some day you could come here—it would be an unforgettable experience!

From Father Eleuterio Cuevas of Venezuela

With deep joy we read your message sent to presidents and chaplains of MFC Latin America. From Venezuela and as a priest I send you my brotherly greetings and prayers before the Lord, for your well-being and peace as a couple, for your nuclear family and for all the MFC families throughout the world whom you represent.

From Jorge and Estela Banuls of Zone 3

The next Sunday we will be celebrating the MFC Latin American Day, an opportunity in which we will all be united in the Spirit to give thanks and to ask for strength in the task of the MFC. It is a very propitious occasion for having you and William and Esilda present in our prayers. May the Holy Family

of Nazareth bless you.

From Ricardo y Nohemy Castaneda of El Salvador

(Written to Father Gabriel Calvo)

We ask the Lord day by day many blessings for you and your ministry. We wish to share with you that all the preparations for that great day are ready and most important is the spirit and prayerful atmosphere in our communities for the success of your arrival. Already confirmed are delegations from Central America, like William and Esilda Cheng, MFC Continental Presidents, who will come with their SPLA team.

From Tere and Jesus Martin del Campo of Mexico

We are Tere and Jesus Martin del Campo of Jalisco and we are proud to belong to the MFC. We are responsible for the coordination of a deanery that is part of a diocese with 163 affiliated families. Today we take the audacity to write you since we think that for us the MFC is an organization that is worthy of preserving, and as you are international presidents,



Ricardo and Nohemy Castañeda of El Salvador

we wish to express our profound gratitude for all your work signifies for the families of the world. Thanks and march forward!

From SPLA Secretary of the Youth Tomás and Mabel Porras

What a joy to receive your letter that makes the MFC one family all united in love! Thanks for your lovely memories of Costa Rica and of our dear Alvaro and Margarita, our source of inspiration and commitment to this apostolate. They already know we are preparing the first Latin American Encounter of the Youth in El Salvador in January, God willing. This is a dream of Mabel and mine. If we want to save the family, we must integrate many

young people into our Movement, that it may be truly family and not just the married couple. Then all can see with the help of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary, joyful youths in families integrated in love. As said well by our Fr. Pedro Richard, it is our obligation to look for sanctity for all families in the world, until not one family remains unevangelized. It is a hard task, but with apostles like you, the Riveras, the Chengs and others, we are going to achieve it.

From Lucy and Jorge Calvo of Argentina

Regarding the World Assembly of Families in California, if the complicated economic circumstances in Argentine allows, it would enchant us to fulfill the promise of Esilda and William and be there. But, in addition to economic difficulties, Argentines have an enormous bond to travel to the USA because of the visa. Therefore it would be very useful to deal with this subject directly in the USA. For example, to be summoned to participate in the World



Santos and Ondina Roque of Honduras

Assembly of Families, to make that presentation in the Embassy, would facilitate the processing and delivery of the visa. Very many thanks for imploring blessings for all. Receive a warm hug in the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Oscar and Lita Silva Gilabert of Peru

Thank you very much to be in contact with all of us. Hopefully the USA will give Oscar and me our visas to attend the World Assembly of Families because it is extremely difficult to obtain it in Peru. We hope that from North America they will send invitations to us. Tell them, take care, OK?

From Santos y Ondina Roque of Honduras

It is a great joy to send you this short message, to greet you with much esteem. We always remember you and we wish to be again with you the next year in the USA. Until then.

From Luis Carlos and Marthica Pinilla of Colombia

Receive a special greeting in the Holy Family of Nazareth. Thank you very much for your voice, for letting us know that from so distant a world you also endeavor to make families happier with your work



MFC Paraguay National Presidents Francisco and Vicenta Servin.

of pastoring. In Colombia we have an institution for the formation of Coordinators of Base Teams which is doing much good because empowered pairs desire to make a more active apostolate, and work has already begun with women as head of the home, widows and the separated. With respect to the young people, we have an active movement and will already hold in June the V National Encounter of the Youth. With a special greeting we take our leave.

From Jose Manuel and Marigel Arnaud of Mexico

The past November in Querétaro, in the presence of the President of the Commission of Mexican Bishops for the



Lucy and Jorge Calvo of Argentina

Family Apostolate Msgr. Rodrigo Aguilar and our Latin American Presidents William and Esilda Cheng, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Assembly elected Mario and Floriana Núñez Corzo as MFC Mexico Presidents for 2004-2007. They collaborated in our National Team as Secretaries of Formation, have been married 37 years and have three children. Mario and Floriana will assume the presidency at the XVII MFC National Encounter in Oaxaca on April 16-18, 2004.

EUROPE

From Jiri and Ludmila Ludvik of the Czech Republic

Thank you for your message concerning the World Assembly. We wish to participate, but it depends on some sponsoring we are looking for. We would like to share with all CFM members our recent experience. In the frame of the IYF 2004, we have organized, together

with the National Center for the Family, an art project for kids called "A Page From our Family Chronicle." This project is now successfully running in the Czech Republic, and therefore we recommend it to other national CFM's. Please, if you find it interesting for other CFM groups, could you be so kind and spread it by e-mail? (Find it at www.iccfm.org)

From Balazs and Krizstina Menesi of Hungary

The last six months of 2003 saw a rapid spread of the FIRES program in Hungary and Ukraine. Hungary had a Priest Encounter, a Marriage Reencounter and an Engaged



L-r Wayne and Sue Hamilton, Father Ken Weare, Carolyn Broeren, Kay & Gary Aitchison

Encounter. Ukraine held a Sons and Daughters Encounter, an Engaged Encounter and an Original Marriage Encounter. Attached are some pictures of these momentous events. (See FIRES Pictorial)

From Vatican and UN Representatives Tony and Lily Gauci of Malta

In 2003 we visited Zagreb a few times to prepare for the European Congress. We also attended the Annual National Meeting of CFM Italy in Prato, Sicily, with ICCFM Chaplain Msgr. Charles Vella. As Board Members of UN NGO, we attend the Board Meeting in Vienna which included seminars and workshops.

From Antonio and Maria Moniz of Portugal

Lily and Tony have just reinforced the idea that Fátima would be an effective site for the next ICCFM World Assembly. Our sisters from the secular institute are delighted about the idea. They will give us an extraordinary help and support as they always do. Soon we'll give you more precise information about accommodations and meal prices and some interesting tourist places around Fátima and Lisbon.

From Agustin and Paqui of Spain

Receive an affectionate greeting from the MFC of Cartagena. May Jesus guide you in the great task you are doing.

From Armando and Josefina Dominguez of Spain

How is the presidency of the Confederation? We haven't received the last LAZO, so please send us a copy. Our love and best wishes.

NORTH AMERICA

From Wilfredo and Martha Melendez of MFC USA

We continue working with Fr. Orlando Corrales and had five Marriage Encounters in 2003—two in Connecticut, two in New York, and the first Encuentro Conyugal in Ontario, Canada, for Latin American immigrant couples

from Colombia and El Salvador on December 5 - 7.

From Father Orlando Corrales of MFC USA

I am a CFM Spiritual Director in three states: New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. I met Wilfredo and Martha Melendez in 1998 and they spoke to me about the CFM. Their love and testimony touched my



Wilfredo and Martha Melendez with Fr. Orlando Corrales (center)

heart and thus I am trying to help in this great work of God.

We are carrying out excellent work with some couples who are very involved in this noble family mission. The crisis of values, the culture of money and materialism are affecting our families. With the shortage of priests, we cannot reach out to our communities, so we need to foster a mature leadership in our couples.

From ICCFM Treasurers Pete and Carolyn Broeren

We received a donation of \$ 1,801.00 from Mario and Juanita Figueroa of MFC USA for the \$1.00 per family contribution to the ICCFM. We also received a \$1,000 donation to the 2004 World Assembly from them. Many thanks to MFC USA.

From ICCFM Special Representatives Wayne and Sue Hamilton

Jose and Margarita Pich visited us here in Naples a week ago. They were visiting some friends in Miami and drove over to see us and have lunch. They are looking forward to the World Assembly as well.

From CFM North America Presidents Gary and Kay Aitchison

Forwarded to you by separate email is the policy and procedure for assistance with delegates who feel that they need a specific invitation to the Assembly in order to facilitate a visa. We are happy that the schedule for the World Assembly meets with your approval. We wish to suggest that time be set aside at the Saturday morning General Assembly for each national president couple to report on their country actions, limited to five minutes. Fr. Ken Weare could assist you as emcee of this part of the program since he is in charge of the OJA process for the World Assembly.

We are now in the process of sending worldwide e-mails promoting the

Assembly to any and all that we have an email address for. Letters are being mailed to others without e-mail addresses.

OCEANIA

From Leslie and Carmen Sammut of Australia

(Written to Gary and Kay Aitchison)

My wife and I are running a CFM group Victoria, Australia. Our group never seems to grow bigger but we have been going for over ten years. We have a very good Chaplain, Fr. Charles Portelli. Sometimes have about 15 couples at the meeting.

As you said in your email, we pray that "our Christian Family Movement will continue to enrich and bless families throughout the world" and we also pray "for peace in our lives, peace in our families, peace in our communities and peace in our world."

From Nonoy and Minda Arriola of New Zealand

We wish to thank you for LINK and to inform you that we have a new address. As far as we know, we are the only CFMers in Auckland, New Zealand. Most of the CFMers are in Wellington.

Presently, I (Nonoy) am a minister of the Eucharist in our parish. Minda teaches at one of the early childhood schools here. When we left the Philippines, we had had about two decades of experience in the Marriage Encounter as member of the Ecclesial Team, aside from being a member of the Pre-Cana Team. We have also attended the FIRES Marriage Encounter.

Message from ICCFM Chaplain Msgr. Charles Vella



I associate myself with your thoughts and greetings. I offer every first Sunday Mass of the month for ICCFM as we have very many spiritual and human needs to pray for. My prayer this year is the following:

"Father of all mankind, bless all my brothers and sisters on earth! Strengthen in love all those who love you; in patience all those who suffer; in faith all those who believe; and in hope all those who hope."
(Johann Michael Sailer)

I wish to dedicate this year's Christmas message to "Friendship." Friendship is a human and spiritual gift of God and it brings happiness. Psalm 33 is a favorite of mine: "I am a man who wants life and desires joyful days". My best friend is "Oh, Jesu, mi dulcissime. Oh, Jesus, my loving friend, brother, companion: it is to You I wish to bring all my friends."

As friends you will be happy to know that on December 8, 2004, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, I will celebrate in Malta the 50th Anniversary of my Ordination to the Priesthood. I do hope my friends and relatives everywhere will join me in the celebration of the Jubilee Mass.

How is it there is no proposal for the spiritual renewal of ICCFM? It is our VISION and our MISSION, besides the organization. I think our concern should be evangelization in this secular world. On the feast of the Epiphany, a great feast in Milan where we have the relics of the Magi, my thoughts are towards evangelization, to make Christ manifest in and to the world, especially as Prince of Peace. It is through Him that we can find strength for the future of the ICCFM.



Fires Founder Fr. Gabriel Calvo



Priest Encounter in Hungary



El Salvador Reunion



Marriage Encounter in Hungary



FIRES Philippines



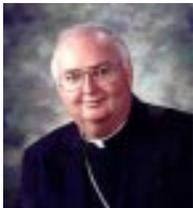
Engaged Encounter in Ukraine



Sons and Daughters Encounter in Ukraine

SPEAKERS AT THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF FAMILIES

Most Reverend Patrick J. McGrath, Bishop of the Diocese Of San Jose, California, USA will welcome the ICCFM



Worldwide Delegates to the United States and to the Diocese of San Jose in an opening address during the Parade of Nations on Wednesday, July 28th. Bishop Patrick Joseph McGrath became the second bishop of San Jose upon the retirement of Bishop Pierre DuMaine on November 27, 1999. Bishop McGrath was born June 11, 1945 in Dublin, Ireland where he attended Catholic schools of the Sisters of the Holy Faith and Marist Fathers. He entered St. John Seminary, Waterford, Ireland in 1964 and was ordained to the priesthood in Waterford June 7, 1970 for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. In 1977 he earned his doctorate in canon law at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

In 1979, Bishop McGrath became Officialis of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and was appointed Rector and Pastor of Saint Mary Cathedral in 1986. Ordained Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco on January 25, 1989, he then served the Archdiocese as Vicar for Clergy, Moderator of the Curia and Vicar for Parishes. On June 30, 1998 he was named by Pope John Paul II to be Coadjutor to the Bishop of the Diocese of San Jose and was formally received into the diocese at a Mass of Welcome on September 17, 1998.

Paul and Jane Leingang, Executive Directors of the Christian Family Movement in the United States, will deliver the



keynote address which will discuss the philosophy and values of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn. This will help the delegates to understand his work and to be familiar with the basis upon which the Assembly will study the theme on marriage and family in the modern world. Paul and Jane have prepared an essay document for study in English and Spanish that appears on the Downloads web page.

Dr. Frank Sicius, historian from St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida, USA, will discuss the historical and sociological



evolution of marriage and the family to the present day as suggested by the theme statement in the announcement. He is an author of many publications. Frank Sicius was born and raised in Kellyville, Pennsylvania in the Philadelphia suburbs. He received his doctorate from Loyola University of Chicago in 1979 and since that time has been teaching American and modern European history at St. Thomas University in Miami. Within those parameters Frank has taught classes on American Catholicism, Spanish Colonial Catholicism, and Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement. Frank's specialty is American Catholic social history and he has published numerous articles, contributed a number of chapters to books and published two books of his own on various aspects of the Catholic Worker Movement. His particular emphasis has been on the Catholic Worker's message of peace. Emphasizing its message

for peace within the family, and the community. Frank is married to Isabel Valenzuela and they have three girls, Laurie-Anna, Paulina and Lucia.

Dr. Julie Hanlon Rubio, from St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA will speak on the subject of her latest book



which is entitled "Christian Theology of Marriage and Family". In her book she discusses how, in a changing society, family contributes to community. This is directly associated with the theme of the Assembly. Her book will be available in March 2004. Dr. Rubio will hold a book signing for her book at the Assembly. Dr.

Rubio is currently Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics at St. Louis University, where she has taught courses in marriage, religion and society, and social justice since 1999. She earned

her M.T.S. from Harvard Divinity School in 1991 and her Ph.D. in Religion and Social Ethics from the University of Southern California in 1995. From 1995 until 1999, she taught part-time at California State University, Long Beach and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Her articles on family ethics have appeared in Theological Studies, the Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics, INTAMS, and The Living Light. Her first book, A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family, was published by Paulist Press in 2003. Current research projects include an assessment of family leave policies at Christian universities and an attempt to move beyond the liberal-conservative divide on contraception. Dr. Rubio lives in St. Louis with her husband and three sons.

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NEW ICCFM CONTINENTAL PRESIDENTS

CFM Europe: George and M'Louise Sammut of Malta

Married for 23 years, George and M'Louise have two sons: Karl, 22, and Andrew-Joseph, 19, both in university. George and M'Louise have been active CFM members for over 20 years. In 1995 they became part of CFM Malta's Central Commission for the spiritual formation of members, and in 1996, they succeeded Tony and Lily Gauci as CFM Malta's National President Couple. During their two terms as National Presidents, they represented CFM Malta in various ICCFM continental and international conferences. In 2002 they were appointed Secretary Couple of the Council of Cana Movement Malta, and last August 2003, they were confirmed as Continental President Couple for ICCFM Europe. Both George and M'Louise are still working fulltime in the Maltese government's Education Division.

CFM Asia: Melito and Emma Ricafrente of the Philippines

CFM members since 1972, Mel and Emma are also involved in other national and local church



CFM Europe President Couple George and M'Louise Sammut with European Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Joseph Mizzi (center)

organizations as well as non-government organizations. They are active in the family life apostolate which includes family counseling, family enrichment programs, pro-life advocacy and basic ecclesial communities (BEC). They also work on cooperatives, lay leadership training and environmental protection. Married for 33 years, they



CFM Asia President Couple Mel and Emma Ricafrente

are blessed with five children and five grandchildren. Both are chemical engineers and have served in the government academia and in private industry but now run their own respective businesses with some of their children. In family life, profession and apostolate, they have one constant, immutable guide: "God's plan should prevail!"

UN Secretary-General's Message on the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004)

While families have always been the essential social unit in all societies, the observance of the International Year of the Family in 1994 drew worldwide attention to the issue as a fundamental issue of policy. Governments and actors at all levels – local, national, regional and global – were encouraged to support the well-being of families through a range of policies, programmes and strategies.

Ten years later, it is time to take stock, and to determine whether the situation of families

has improved. This is not necessarily something that can be done at a global level, since the situation of families varies so greatly from country to country. Thus, during this anniversary year, I urge Governments at local and national levels to assess gains, setbacks and obstacles, and to consider what more can be done on issues of direct concern to families, such as poverty, the spread of HIV/AIDS, migration and the ageing of societies. The Secretariat, for its part, has undertaken a study on the situation of families in

all regions of the world.

Families themselves play a vital role in our work for development and peace. It is my hope that the observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year will be an occasion when all partners – Governments, the UN system, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises – come together, reaffirm global commitment to the well-being of families, and work with determination towards that vital goal.

IN MEMORIAM

Madelyn Bonsignore - Madelyn and her husband Joe were very influential in CFM USA in the sixties and early seventies when they were leaders of the Program Committee.

Lina Lugay – Lina and her husband Pepe were former CFM Philippines National Presidents and represented the Philippines at several ICCFM World Assemblies. At present Pepe is still an active CFM leader.

Claire Clancy – Claire and her late husband Basil led CFM Ireland for several decades and contributed substantially to the early development of the ICCFM.

www.iccfm.org

Visit the ICCFM website!