

ICCFM World Assembly XII to meet June 28 - July 1 in Bucaramanga, Colombia

Marthica and Louis Carlos Pinilla, the presidents of ICCFM in Latin America, announced that the ICCFM 12th World Assembly and 16th General Assembly will be held in Bucaramanga, Colombia. ICCFM Presidents Gary and Kay Aitchison said the theme is “Christian Families: Finding our Voice in a Global World.”

The gathering is scheduled June 28, 29, 30 and July 1, 2013. Planning details will be forthcoming as the time draws near.

Flight information

Palonegro International Airport (Aeropuerto Internacional de Palonegro) is located in the town of Lebrija, 30 kilometers west of Bucaramanga, with access to international and domestic flights.

About Bucaramanga

Colombia is a republic with 32 departments (states) and a Capital District, Bogotá. Santander is a department of Colombia, located in the north central part of the country. Its capital is the city of Bucaramanga.

Bucaramanga is the sixth largest city in Colombia, with 1.2 million people in its metropolitan area. It is located on a plateau in the Colombian Andes, at an altitude of about 3,100 feet. Bucaramanga’s climate is moderate, with temperatures between the mid-60s and the mid-80s, 75 degrees Fahrenheit being the average.

Bucaramanga has over 160 parks scattered throughout the city and has been given the nicknames “La Ciudad de Los Parques” (“City of Parks”) and “La Ciudad Bonita de Colombia” (“Colombia’s Beautiful City”).

Nearby sites of interest

The Parque Nacional del Chicamocha features colonial buildings, cultural opportunities and history, as well as eco-



A view of the Parque Nacional del Chicamocha

tourism and adventure sports. A cable car provides a dramatic crossing of Chicamocha Canyon.

San Gil, located between Bucaramanga and Bogota, is an urban, educational, industrial and tourism center. Features include an ecological park and adventure sports such as canoeing, mountain climbing, rappelling, caving, biking and motocross.

Barichara, with its white stone walls and wooden gates, is known as “el pueblito mas lindo de Colombia,” the prettiest village in Colombia.

Curití is the place to learn of the indigenous life of this region and its legacy, to see handicraft displays and to visit Indian burial grounds. Visitors may also explore nearby gypsum caves.

Socorro, about 75 miles from Bucaramanga, is the cradle of the independence movement in Colombia, where the Communards Revolution of 1781 against Spain began. Visitors will find colonial buildings, stone walls, historic churches and other buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries.



Year of Faith

... to include good works, 'joyous rediscovery of the faith'

In his Apostolic Letter, *Porta fidei*, Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed a year of Faith.

The year will begin Oct. 11, 2012 on the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, called by Blessed Pope John XXIII in 1962. It is also the twentieth anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, promulgated by Blessed Pope John Paul II in 1992. It will conclude on Nov. 24, 2013, the Feast of Christ the King.

Porta fidei, the "door of faith," (*Acts 14:27*) "is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church," said the pope. "To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime."

The door of faith is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church

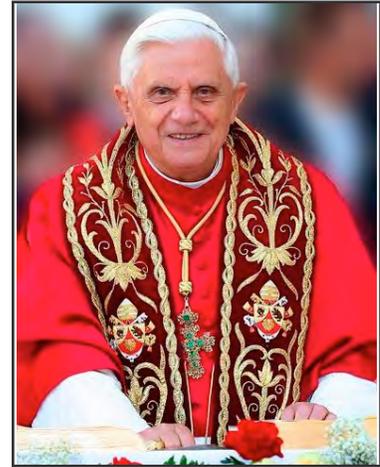
In his letter, the pope said, "Ever since the start of my ministry as Successor of Peter, I have spoken of the need to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ."

He said he wants this year "to arouse in every believer the aspiration to *profess* the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope. It will also be a good opportunity to intensify the *celebration* of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist . . ."

He said the Year of Faith will also be "an opportunity to intensify the witness of charity."

He quoted the letter of Saint James. "What does it

profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled', without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."



During the Year of Faith, in cooperation with the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, various ecumenical initiatives are to be planned, aimed at "the restoration of unity among all Christians" which "is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council."

At the conclusion of this Year, there will be a Eucharist celebrated by the Holy Father, in which a solemn renewal of the profession of faith will take place.

During the year, dioceses and other church entities will be promoting study opportunities, Lenten penitential celebrations and other observances.

Pastors are encouraged to give more attention to the documents of Vatican II and the faithful are encouraged to read *Porta fidei*.

"Every initiative for the Year of Faith should be designed to aid in the joyous rediscovery of the faith and its renewed transmission," said a statement from the Congregation for the Faith.

YEAR OF
FAITH
October 2012 — November 2013

BELIEVE
Feed the hungry
PRAY
Give drink to the thirsty
CELEBRATE
Clothe the naked
PROCLAIM

Chaplain's column

How good and how new the Good News really is

Mary the evangelist

When we celebrated the feast of the visitation on May 31 the gospel passage from St. Luke (Lk 1:39-56) was about the visit of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. Mary the young teenager who had just conceived Jesus made the journey to her older relative Elizabeth, who, even though beyond childbearing age, was also surprisingly pregnant. God's creative word had come through the angel Gabriel, first to Zechariah and through him to Elizabeth and then six months later to Mary. This divine word not only sparked the conception of new life in the two mothers, but it broke into our world and our human lives with the good news that God is with us in a way we never anticipated.

When today, with our knowledge of the immensity of our universe and all its galaxies, we see our own little blue orb of earth floating as a speck in the Milky Way and we imagine in faith the creative and loving word God spoke to these two women, infinitesimally small creatures like ourselves, we begin to get a glimpse of how good and how new the Good News really is. How much better could that word be than to come from the heart of God? How much more new could it be than to spring from the very source of everything?

In the small intimate gospel portrait of one mother greeting another we are invited to discover and to learn to be good news and to speak good news to everyone around us. In this gospel encounter we witness the first instance of Christian evangelization, of Christ's Good News for us and our world. God had been whispering this news in many different ways since Adam and Eve, especially through the prophets of the Old Testament. When the divine Word became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth God would speak more clearly. In Mary's greeting to Elizabeth the Word of God broke into real human speech, in fact, into family speech, as a familiar, loving greeting. Was not Mary intuitively practicing Observe, Judge, Act in her personal and family situation?

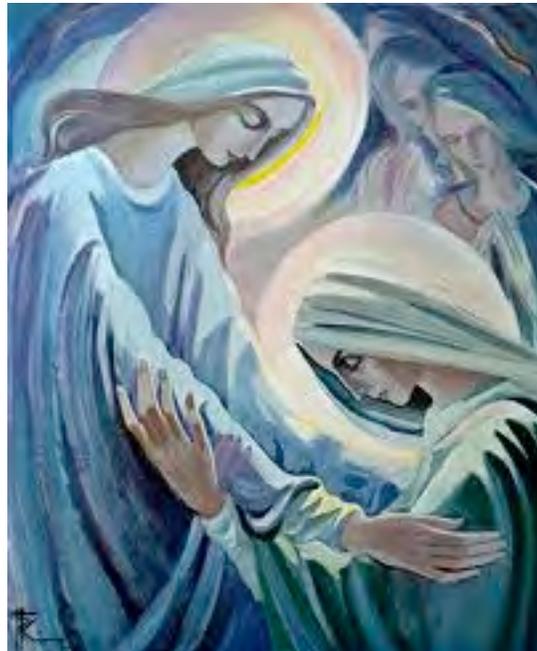
The good news of Mary's unborn child was carried by the voice and words of his mother through Elizabeth to her unborn John, who "leaped in her womb" as he was stirred by the excitement of knowing that the salvation of all was really going to happen and he was already in its vanguard. All of this happened not on a mountaintop or in a royal court or in a great city or among the political or religious elite, but between two unborn children nestled within their peasant mothers. God almost always begins at the bottom of the ladder/level/heap, etc., however that may be measured, because there he finds hearts and souls that are attuned to him and sincerely open to the stirring of his Spirit.

Their human and religious experience had brought them to place their most basic trust in his loving presence to them, something far beyond what can be trusted in our material and even human world.

Mary and Elizabeth are certainly these kind of people, apparently among the lowliest to worldly and human eyes, but at the top with those whose souls and spirits are nurtured and strengthened by being an intimate part of God's dream for the world. For any of us, I think, God's kingdom, his dream for the world, will be brought about by those who are entranced by his dream, sensitive to its appeal and constantly strengthened by his Spirit, which

He sends out (cf. Gen. 1:2) to undo the gnarled web of our wayward desires and passions and to fashion us and our world into the beautiful form of his original vision. Should that seem strange to us? Given what we experience within ourselves and in our world, is it not the Marys and the Elizabeths who are our models for this evangelization?

In our Gospel passage, the unborn Jesus speaks a greeting through Mary and from Elizabeth we hear that in response the unborn John "leaped for joy." What transpired here? What power, what life, what good news was carried in that greeting? The simple, affective word of Mary pierced deep within and infused John with a joy that literally swept him up. Elizabeth recognized what was happening and voiced her surprise as "and how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment



the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.” The greeting was absolutely good news, because it was proclaimed by someone “who believed that what was spoken to [her] by the Lord would be fulfilled.” It was not a trick or promotion or external appearance but came from deep within and was carried to fulfillment by the Holy Spirit.

That beautiful spirit-filled scene may seem so distant from our lives, our families and the human race as a whole. Mary and Jesus and Elizabeth and John, however, were just as human in that moment as we are in the moments of our daily lives and families today. In addition, that same Holy Spirit is also in us and is constantly inspiring us to help bring about God’s dream for all of us and our world, but our fears, pride, desires, sinfulness, self-centeredness and even stubbornness dull our sensitivity to the breath of the Spirit which is constantly trying to find a way to surprise us, enlighten us, even shock us back into the original vision of God. There is good news to be given to others, but sometimes we’re too bored or distracted to get excited about it like John the Baptist was. Yet every day in our lives, in our families, in our work, even in our leisure, opportunities of the Spirit, possibilities of good news, are no further away than a simple greeting, a word of comfort, a touch or embrace, a gesture of compassion, a show of support, a bit of time or patience. We may not achieve the same effect that Mary’s greeting had on John the Baptist, but any good news that we offer to another is, in one form or another, conveying a possibility for the Spirit to break through even all the obstacles we may put up and to open someone else or a situation to be “re-newed” — even



if they do not leap for joy every time.

Mary’s response was to lift her soul and her voice in her Magnificat, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,” and to give us at least three suggestions of how we might see some opportunities the way she did. (1) “He has shown the strength of his arm” reminds us that we do not have to depend entirely on our own puny strength, but we can summon up resources that may have previously seemed to be beyond our vision and our strength, if we tap the lively faith which we not only profess in church but really try to live by. (2) “He . . . has lifted up the lowly” recalls the anawim (“the lowly”) of the Old Testament, who in a sense were the apple of God’s eye because their hearts, souls and whole selves were really centered on their creative, loving, forgiving and all-embracing God. (3) “He has filled the hungry with good things” which brings us face-to-face with what kind of hunger do we have and which good things will fill the deep yearning and emptiness within us.

Should we not let this touching gospel scene spark some reflection on how we can improve our Observe, Judge and Act to be more in line with what Mary did so naturally and which proved to be just the thing that turned an intimate family moment into lively evangelization, joy-filled good news. Do we not have many such moments in our families, work, conversations and relationships? Can we step forward to be evangelists as simply and naturally as Mary did?

Father Bill Young
ICCFM Chaplain

Report: ICCFM membership increased during 2011-2012

In a message to ICCFM leadership, Gary and Kay Aitchison announced that there has been an increase in worldwide membership in 2011-2012.

Membership is spread across 48 countries in 5 continents. There are 82,187 families, 900 priests and religious and 30,000 youth participating directly in the family life movements of the ICCFM. In addition, there are hundreds of families who support the movement but are not included in the count. Much of the growth in the movement is related to increased numbers of families and youth participat-

ing in Latin America. The size of the movement is largest in Latin America followed in order by North America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

The International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM) is a confederation of organizations and movements of Christian families. CFM/MFC supports families, helps them to grow and empowers them to reach out in action to their brothers and sisters in Christ. For more than 60 years, the Christian Family Movement has been a beacon to families throughout the world.

ICCFM Country Members and Affiliates

AFRICA

Angola
Cameroon
Central Africa
East Africa
Ghana
Malawi
Nigeria
Uganda

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

ASIA

Carmen and Cyril D'Souza report that the 9th Asia Continental Conference of CFM/CFSM will be hosted by CFM Philippines Thursday 25th October to Sunday 28th October 2012 at Betania Retreat House of Religious of the Virgin Mary Congregation, Lahug, Cebu City, Philippines.

Asian CFM meets every three years in the year preceding the ICCFM World Assembly. The last assembly was in Raiburi, Thailand.

The theme of the meeting in Cebu City will be announced at a later date.

ASIA

Hong Kong
India
Japan
Philippines
Singapore
South Korea
Sri Lanka
Thailand

Bangalore CFM acts on topic of Human Trafficking

Bangalore CFM sponsored an awareness program about human trafficking presented by the organization Justice and Care and INSA-India (International Services Association) on April 22 at Ascension Church in Bangalore.

According to D'Souza, "Some committed to actively participating in the raids, some to donating to the cause, some to praying." Posters and other types of literature were available for participants to take and distribute appropriately.

Human trafficking is reported to be the third largest business in Bangalore. The program, which was open to all interested persons, was well attended and the crowd overflowed the room set aside for the presentation.

D'Souza also reported that CFM Bangalore has an intercessory prayer group that will be updated on prayer concerns around this issue. Some attendees committed to organizing programs on trafficking in other parishes or institutions

Local president Judith D'Souza told us that the event was organized and sponsored by the senior CFM group in the city. Participants were encouraged to take some form of action as a result of their new awareness.

CFM Bangalore is scheduled to hold elections at its annual meeting on July 29.

Judith and Richard D'Souza's term as president couple ends at that time.

EUROPE

Croatia
Czech
Republic
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Malta
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Spain

EUROPE

Hungary 2012: MECS (CFM/FIRES)

After celebrating the 15th anniversary of MECS in 2011, our service has continued faithfully.

Today about 120 parish-based CFM groups work in Hungary in 12 regions led by 12 couples. The couples use printed booklets with detailed outlines for 10 monthly meetings each. The booklets are devised by a board of couples and revised by priests. The group leaders receive the booklets at their regional meetings

held twice a year. Regional leader couples also meet twice a year. This spring they also attended a spiritual weekend presented for the MECS leaders with Bishop Janos Szekely, auxiliary Bishop for the Budapest-Esztergom Archdiocese.

MECS regularly presents Fr. Gabriel Calvo's FIRES (original Encounter) programs with the help of 10 organizer couples and four priests. Father Calvo's programs are for teenagers, en-

gaged and married couples, individuals, and priests, both inside and outside of CFM. These programs are the main source of new young couples joining CFM and starting new groups, especially the Engaged Encounter, organized six times a year, with an attendance of about 120 young couples per year.

Many couples and groups find us also through the internet. We have two websites available in English and Hungarian: www.cfm.org.hu and www.fires.hu

With the assistance of the Hungarian CFM/FIRES team, all of the books and booklets by Fr. Gabriel Calvo

have been made available on the internet through the FIRES website. The English, Japanese and Spanish translations of the books can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.fires.hu/download.php>.

The valuable online resource includes:

- Face to Face: a practical workbook for married couples
- Hand in Hand: a marriage preparation workbook for engaged couples
- Family Energy: a guidebook for families to release the energy of love
- Within and Beyond: a unique guidebook for discovering oneself
- Dialogues for Sons and Daughters: outlines for meetings of young people

- A book on the history of Marriage Encounter
- A booklet describing most of the programs devised by Fr. Calvo
- A collection of testimonies of people from all over the world for whom the experiences set forth by Fr. Gabriel Calvo have brought joy and given new meaning to their lives.

Ambitious plans are being made for a MECS pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy, to the shrine of Saint Padre Pio in October of 2012.

*Balazs and Krisztina Menesi
President couple
MECS (CFM/FIRES) Hungary*

Portugal: CFM celebrates fiftieth anniversary

CFM Portugal (the Portuguese Christian Home Movement) is celebrating its 50th anniversary. It was founded by the Portuguese Father Joaquim Alves Brás in 1962.

This celebration has included several events, but mainly a pilgrimage to Fatima on the 20th May, which was organized by all the founder's institutions: the Family Co-operators' Secular Institute, Santa Zita's Work, Family Co-operation Centres (of children's education) and the youth movement, Hope Focus. There were about 2000 people.

The main theme of the jubilee was "Family, discover yourself in your essential task: communion and testimony". The lecture was given by Msgr. Augusto Cesar, emeritus bishop of Portalegre/ Castelo Branco at Paul VI Hall. There were several performances of music, folk dance, ballet, theatre and two couples' testimonies.

Two books were also edited: *História do MLC: 50*

anos ao serviço da Família, da Sociedade e da Igreja and Família. 50 anos de partilha, estudo e oração, (a collection of the the main support texts of the Movement month meetings).

In the past three years the MLC has established a new unit in Cabinda, Angola. MLC members lead monthly meetings and gather in pilgrimages to some of the Portuguese sanctuaries and celebrations during special religious and family traditional feasts such as Christmas. MLC guidelines for new units have been prepared. It also organizes sessions for young couples who are preparing to get married.

CFM (MLC) Portugal has integrated several national movements that also work for the family.

Antonio & Maria Moniz
MLC – Portugal

Gruppi Familji Nsara (GFN)

Groups of the Christian Family Movement in Malta

The year 2011 was a special milestone for Malta's Gruppi Familji Nsara (Christian Family Groups). The 450 members who comprise the 56 different GFN groups celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Groups' foundation.

The GFN is part of the Cana Movement founded by Msgr. Charles Vella with the aim to help persons prepare for marriage, to help couples and families grow in life, joy and stability and

to stand by couples and individuals when they are facing difficulties in marriage. The mission of the Cana Movement is to present marriage as a relationship that is lifelong, faithful and open to life. GFN groups were a natural introduction into Cana 40 years ago. GFN is present in 37 parishes in Malta and its sister island of Gozo.

It goes without saying that 2011 witnessed a new effort to introduce the

Groups in parishes still lacking their presence. Contact was made with no less than 14 parishes, with four taking an immediate initiative to form new groups. For logistical reasons, a couple from the Central Committee was specifically appointed to co-ordinate this task.

Preparation for the yearly handbook to be used starting in January 2012 during the Groups' monthly meetings

was, as always, an important priority. Formulated against the 40th anniversary backdrop and spearheaded by the Spiritual Formation Commission, Skemi 2012 was launched during a social event for Lead Couples in December 2011. The main theme presented for the year is actually GFN Malta's own identity statement, namely: "We bear living witness to God's love for us when we live to the full our call in marriage." Apart from the usual monthly scheme of meetings, Skemi 2012 also includes a schedule of regular prayer to be followed by the couple at home, and an outline plan for a spiritual retreat to be followed by the group.

2011 also saw national meetings during Lent and Advent, with the former laying special emphasis on discussion about the introduction of divorce legislation in Malta. In the light of this, GFN Malta issued a statement to the press promoting marriage's indissolubility. The Groups also participated in a related Family Festival held in May in favor of

family life and Christian marriage.

The year's highlight and climax was definitely the High Mass in the packed Co-Cathedral of St John in Malta's capital, Valletta, on Saturday 15th October, commemorating GFN Malta's 40th anniversary. The main celebrant, Archbishop Paul Cremona O.P., was assisted by, amongst others, GFN Malta's National Chaplain Father Joseph Mizzi and Assistant National Chaplain Father Carmel Mercieca.

2011 also marked the end of the Central Committee's three-year term, Tony and Miriam Sammut having served two consecutive terms as president couple, nominations for committee seats were entertained. By December, Cana Movement's Council had screened the nominations received and James and Marica Chappell from the Grupp Sagra Familja (Holy Family Group) of Dingli were appointed new President Couple by Archbishop Cremona.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Tony Gauci of Malta on January 26.

Tony and his wife Lily were tireless workers for the ICCFM in Europe and throughout the world.

They were past members of the ICCFM Secretariat, served for many years as NGO representatives for ICCFM to the U.N. and were vibrant leaders in Malta.

Tony and Lily's positive impact on families was enormous. Their work will continue to ripple out to untold thousands of families in the years to come.

Tony will be greatly missed by his many CFM and ICCFM friends. May he rest in peace and may the Lord and his angels bring comfort to Lily and their children.



TONY GAUCI

Spanish CFM

Reaching out with 'Families for Families'

Spanish CFM has a groundbreaking social program called "Families for Families" to reach out to needy families to provide a wide range of services based on the approach of welcoming, listening to and assisting distressed families in a loving way. This CFM Service has assisted hundreds of poverty-stricken families in Spain which is in the throes of a terrible economic crisis with high unemployment which has resulted in more than one million Spanish families with all their family members unem-

ployed.

When a needy family is identified, Spanish CFM members contact the family to determine its needs and alert the local chapter of the Catholic Charities and the appropriate public social services. Local CFM members are also informed and asked to provide all available material assistance. In the case of illegal immigrants, Spanish CFM members inform the family of their legal rights and the public services to which they are entitled and assist the family members in

doing the necessary paperwork in order to have access to the necessary public services and obtain residency permits. Some Spanish CFM members provide free Spanish language courses and private tutoring to immigrant children to enable them to attend the local schools, thus helping them to become more integrated into Spanish society. Other CFM members provide material, legal and spiritual support to needy families with members in prison, who have no source of income.

The latest publication by the Christian Family Movement in Spain

‘PREPARÁNDONOS PARA EL AMOR CONYUGAL’ (HANDBOOK ON CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD)

The Christian Family Movement in Spain has always been especially concerned about the adequate preparation of couples for marriage and parenthood. Members of the Christian Family Movement have been giving marriage preparation courses for more than forty years in many Spanish dioceses.

The Papal exhortation “Familiaris Consortio,” and the “Family Ministry Directory published by the Spanish Catholic Church” explicitly underline the serious need to prepare couples for marriage.

This publication of the Christian Family Movement in Spain aims to assist future spouses in becoming committed husbands and wives and responsible parents according to the Gospel teachings, so that they might live their vocation to married life to the fullest and teach Christian values to their children.

The book is unique for several reasons. Firstly, six married couples and seven chaplains, all members of the Christian Family Movement in Spain, have worked closely to contribute valuable insights into marriage and parenthood based on their rich pastoral experience. This handbook will prove extremely useful not only to couples preparing for marriage, but also to recently married couples and those involved in the Church family ministry, who wish to delve more deeply into the meaning of the Sacrament of Marriage and its profound relevance in the modern world.

This marriage handbook also provides answers to nineteen key issues regarding married life and parenthood such as: “Why should we get married?” and “Why should we get married in the Catholic Church?” These issues go to the heart of Christian marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood and they should be discussed by couples preparing for marriage and subsequent parenthood. Emphasis is placed on the need to love and be loved, which are the essential elements

World Meeting of Families held in Milan:

Pope says, ‘family life is the first and irreplaceable school of social virtue’

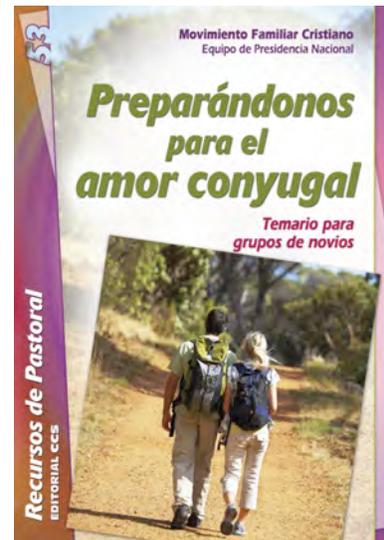
Rosalinda Campos and Jorge Carrillo, vice-presidents of ICCFM, were present at the 7th World Meeting of Families held May 30 through June 3 in Milan, Italy. Members of the Christian Family Movement from Costa Rica, Argentina, Mexico, El Salvador, Peru, Spain, Honduras and Ecuador also attended.

Taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the World Meeting, representatives of El Salvador, Argentina, Mexico and Spain attended a meeting of ICCFMers organized by the president couple of Spain. A married couple from England who is working towards the establishment of the Christian Family Movement in London also attended. The Carrillos agreed to send them materials to help them in this task. Gary and Kay

of all happy marriages.

Like all the materials published by the Christian Family Movement in Spain, this handbook is designed for discussion groups, personal reflection and a fruitful dialogue within the couple itself.

Each chapter of this book should be read individually and then discussed by the couple prior to their meeting with other couples.



The questions at the end of each chapter refer to the most important issues covered in that chapter and they will assist the group moderator in channeling the discussion in a way that best benefits the couples who participate in the group discussion.

Each of the nineteen chapters begins with a Bible passage related to marriage or parenthood that lends itself to personal reflection and subsequent group discussion. A chaplain can play a useful role in this group discussion by responding to any questions raised by the couples on the meaning of the Bible passage or specific Church teachings.

The book, which is already in its second edition, has been published by the Salesian publishing house in Spain, Editorial CCS, www.editorialccs.com, and distributed worldwide.

Maria Rosa Maria and Ramon Bernácer
Country President Couple of the Christian Family Movement in Spain



Aitchison, worldwide presidents of the ICCFM, sent their greetings to the group. The group also had time to become better acquainted, pray and take many pictures.

The meeting consisted of three main events: a pastoral theological congress, a festive and testimonial gathering, and a closing Mass. The theme for the meeting was “The Family: Work and Celebration.” There was also a “Family Fair” with vendors of books and other materials available during the meeting.

At the International Pastoral Theological Congress, key themes related to the family were touched upon. More than 100 presenters spoke – bishops, pastoral workers, academics, and other experts – presenting a realistic picture of the challenges of family life. There were ten keynote lectures and 26 panels at the main venue with additional work at the parishes across Milan and the region of Lombardy.

On Saturday, June 2 there was a “Feast of Testimonies” at Bresso Park. This meeting was organized around five questioners: a seven year old Vietnamese girl asked the pope about his own experience of family, a couple from Madagascar contemplating marriage who shared their fears about the lifelong aspect of marriage, a family from Athens, Greece who expressed their fears for the future of their family in this time of economic crisis, a family from New York with six children who questioned the pope about the balance of time between work and family, and a Brazilian psychotherapist and his family who asked the pope for

a sense of hope in the face of all the pressures that families face.

On Sunday, in his homily during the Mass closing the 7th World Meeting of Families, with more than one million faithful present, Benedict XVI told couples to remember that, despite the difficulties facing the vocation of marriage in these times, love “is the only force that can truly transform the world,” the love that exists in marriage “is fruitful, for yourself, because you want and do good to each other, experiencing the joy of receiving and of giving.

“God created humans male and female, with the same dignity, but also with complementary characteristics, so that the two are a gift to each other, they value each other and conduct a community of love and life. Love is what makes the human person an authentic image of God.

“Before you is the testimony of so many families, indicating the ways to grow in love by maintaining a constant relationship with God and participating in church life, cultivating dialogue, respecting the other’s point of view, being ready to serve, being patient with the faults of others, forgiving and asking forgiveness, overcoming possible conflicts with intelligence and humility, agreeing on the educational orientations, being open to other families, caring for the poor, being responsible in civil society.

“All these elements build the family. Live together with courage, with the assurance that as you live in mutual love and love for all, with the help of divine grace, you will become the living gospel, true Church.”



The pope announced that the next World Meeting of the Families will be held at Philadelphia, PA, USA in 2015. Pope Benedict plans to attend. Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput announced that the archdiocese anticipates a meeting of 60,000 to 80,000 people rather than the larger gatherings that have been seen at other Family Meetings. The archdiocese is facing financial constraints at the present time. It announced earlier in the summer that it had suffered a \$12 million loss in the last fiscal year.

Additional information about the World Meeting of Families can be found at www.es.catholic.net and www.family2012.com.

LATIN AMERICA

ESTABLISHING BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD

Latin American president couple Luis Carlos and Marthica Pinellas report that the 25th Latin American General Assembly was convened in LaFalda, Argentina on October 30th, 2011 with the theme “FOR THE UNITY OF THE MFC IN LATIN AMERICA.”

In a report to Gary and Kay Aitchison, Luis Carlos and Marthica said, “We told you that we are missionaries in Chile and proceeded to Uruguay on June 7. We have been on mission to Central America in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica. We also visited the MFC in Venezuela. On June 15 we left for Mexico and we visited the Dioceses of Monterrey, Queretaro, Aguas Calientes and Chihuahua.”



LATIN AMERICA

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

These visits help in establishing bonds of brotherhood in the community. The Pinellas talked to the groups about the structure of the MFC in Latin America and Latin American MFC's commitment to the ICCFM. "We speak to them of Resilience by which we mean the practice of being remade. We also encourage participation in our Evangelical Solidarity Project in countries that already use it and promote it in those countries who will adopt it." The ob-

ject of this project is to apply a new form of evangelization and training within MFC, committed to the principles and vision of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The movement's leaders seek to promote a new commitment to MFC, capable of responding to the demands of our time. MFC members are committed to solidarity, spirituality, education and promotion of the movement. In addition, they challenge family disintegration in modern society.



Luis Carlos and Marthica Pinellas stand in the center among leaders at the Latin America General Assembly.

NORTH AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA

Canada
United States
CFM USA
MFCC
MFC LA



USA Board members and their families gather for a group photograph at the 2011 Summer Board Meeting at the Cabrini Center, Chicago.



Family Life Ministers invite CFM to marriage-building summit

The National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM) invited CFM-USA to participate in the Marriage-Building Summit of National Marriage and Family representatives to be held July 24-25, 2012 in Dallas, Texas.

CFM was invited because of our “long history of working on strengthening marriage within the Church and have given a great gift to society and the Church by their work.” Secretary couple Dave Langer and Donna Richard-Langer of Iowa and ICCFM North American couple John and Lauri Przybysz of Maryland will attend.

The Summit is being convened with the assistance of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee and staff of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. The purpose of the gathering is to bring together organizations that have been working in marriage and family ministry or “Marriage Champions” to discuss ways all the groups can work together to build up marriages. The organizations are asked to identify how their efforts overlap and find ways to collaborate for the common goals of helping marriages succeed and influencing societal structures that impact marriage as an institution.

CFM-USA has adopted a new logo. The new image artfully incorporates both an image of the Holy Family and a silhouette image of a mother, father and children.

Local CFM action groups work with Knights of Columbus in Maryland to help build an addition on the neighborhood food pantry. *Below left*, Ian Morfeld and Tom Nappi cut a sheet of plywood. *Below right*, Ian Morfeld and Tom Nappi work at the site.



At the Winter Board Meeting, March 2012, Bishop Rassas encouraged treasurers John and Mary Poprac, California, and Illinois representative Ken Kielisewski to continue the work of CFM for families.

MFCC presidents visit states of all members

Encourage families to service: Levanten, Animen, Motiven

Tony and Loly Layton, have completed one full year of service as national presidents of MFCC and they report they have traveled to all the states where MFCC exists. MFCC serves approximately 5,300 families of many different Hispanic nationalities.

At this time, MFCC is present in Washington, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Texas, Iowa, Mississippi, Alabama, Washington DC, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Each state is generally structured as a region, however, large states like California and Texas

have multiple regions.

The national spiritual director of MFCC is Padre Juan Rogelio Gutierrez, from the Diocese of Brownsville, and Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu from the Archdiocese of San Antonio represents the MFCC-USA at the USCCB. Both have been aware of the movement from childhood. Padre Juan Rogelio's parents are still active and Bishop Cantu's mom is also active with a group of single moms within the MFCC-USA.

Tony and Loly say they "strive to encourage our members to enjoy

the service of the Lord by using the letters "**LAM**". In Spanish they represent, "**Levanten** (lift up), **Animen** (encourage) y **Motiven** (motivate)". We feel that lifting, encouraging and motivating each other can bring about an attitude of love and compassion and be for us the example of our patron saints, the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They are our inspiration and our models: Jesus, for His Love and giving His Life for our salvation; Mary, for being obedient and faithful to the Lord; and Joseph, for his commitment in caring for the family."

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

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