



CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT INDIA NEWSLETTER

First Issue

Mumbai

January 2005

(For Private Circulation Only)

Dear Fellow CFMers,

The year 2004 was a fruitful one for the Christian Family Movement in India. CFM-Bangalore introduced the Sons & Daughters Encounter (SADE) into our country under the expert direction of Fr. Donnon Murray, ofm, of Japan. The programme was a great success and much appreciated by the young participants and their parents. It remains for CFM-Bangalore to continue this initiative by extending the programme to others.

Mumbai continues with its many and varied action programmes. CFM-Orlem has expanded its membership, so that the future of the Movement is alive with the promise of good things to come. While observing the condition of family life today, Mumbai must continue to consolidate and expand while keeping the Movement vibrant and attractive to young couples, who are most in need of support groups like the CFM.

Goa recently hosted the National Board Meeting. CFM-Goa continues steadfastly with its work for families on the parish, diocesan and national levels. May their plans for the future bear abundant fruit.

It would be in the tradition of the CFM to remember the many families who have suffered the loss of their loved ones, homes and livelihood to the tsunami that devastated countries in Asia, including Negapatiman in S.India. Give generously in cash and kind through your parishes or to responsible collection agencies for the rehabilitation of these unfortunate people. An older couple who are associated with the CFM in Orlem experienced the horrors of the tsunami in Velankani where they went on pilgrimage to spend Christmas in prayer and thanksgiving. It was terrifying. They came through alive and unscathed with the Lord's help, but the memory still haunts them.

We are including in this issue (though late), ICCFM President Couple Nop and Elma Muangkroot's Christmas message to CFMers. The message, with its call to prayer and action, remains current. Do read the message in toto.

As we journey through 2005, let us resolve to take our mission to families seriously – not only when we have the time, but all the time. As Christians, we pray daily: "Thy Kingdom come". In our hands is the CFM, an instrument that can help us make this Kingdom come on earth. This is what Christ calls each of us to do. The CFM equips us with a powerful tool, the Observe-Judge-Act, which will help us in this work. The CFM group can become a formidable unit with couples supporting each other and working together to make the world a better place for families to live in. It is always easier to fulfil a mission when we act together as members of a group than when we act alone.

With this issue, we come to the end of our term as Editor Couple of the Newsletter. Nirmal Raj of CFM-Bangalore takes over from us. Do write in your news to him in future.

May the CFM be a harbinger of love, joy and peace to all our families and to the many families in our neighbourhoods in 2005.

- Agnel & Anette D'Cruz

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT COUPLE, DECEMBER 2004

Dear ICCFM Members,

Another Christmas is here—time to remember that God became man, that Jesus was born, sharing in our humanity as we share in His divinity. In our last World Assembly we affirmed this gift of divinity in us, in the family where life is generated. Now that we celebrate the birth of Jesus, how can we radiate more brilliantly His divinity that is also ours?

When we commit ourselves to the CFM, we select the CFM way to attain salvation: through prayer and action to promote God's kingdom to families within our scope. Are we always fully aware of this covenant?

We have further strengthened our CFM calling by instituting the ICCFM because in our togetherness, Jesus will be in our midst. It is to our international togetherness that we appeal for action this Christmas, that we may become more worthy of our CFM vocation.

When we started our second term as ICCFM Presidents, we proposed the following activities to revive or to promote at the international level:

- ICCFM World Prayer Day
- Exchange home stay for CFM youths (short visits)
- “Adopt-a-unit” project (financial support to help underprivileged CFM units)
- More conscious integration of CFM actions in our jobs

Kindly consider each item seriously and offer your help. We earnestly need support or all these plans will just remain plans forever. If you are able to coordinate any of the projects, please volunteer so that we can start it right away, even on a small scale. The work involves creating the working plan, promoting the project, keeping record and following it up. If you have easy e-mail access and are willing to give the extra time to serve, you can lead and coordinate the project. Please hit “Reply” and offer your kind assistance!

For a start, as a Christmas offering before the year ends, we would like to revive ICCFM World Prayer Day. Is there anything more divine than prayer, being one with God? Let this World Prayer Day be the special action of the ICCFM, that we may all experience Jesus more strongly in our midst.

The Feast of the Holy Family, the first Sunday after Christmas, would be most fitting and easy to remember. This year the Feast of the Holy Family is December 26. Please let us pledge our Mass and other prayers for the intentions of the families we serve and of the ICCFM. If you are able to make a special celebration at this short notice, kindly write about it and send pictures!

We are grateful for your dedicated work of the past year. We pray that we may be able to bring dignity to more families by fostering social justice diligently in our See-Act-Judge work of evangelization. Finally, we thank God for the year 2004 which convened the World Assembly of Families and brought us together to advance the ICCFM mission. We thank Him for the blessings of happiness, health and healing among our members. We also thank Him for the heavenly reward given to our loved ones whom He has called to eternal life. May CFM expansion be God's will in 2005 and may He help the ICCFM start meaningful international projects!

Let us remember the ICCFM World Prayer Day on December 26!

Love,
Nop and Elma Muangkroot

FIGHTS & FORGIVENESS IN FAMILIES

On the 3rd October, '04, Rev Fr Peter D'Souza, C.Ss.R., who was invited by the CFM, conducted a programme on this subject, which was illuminative, illustrative - with plenty of examples - interesting, simple and understandable and yet very practical and do able.

Approximately 100 odd people- attended the talk. This comprised mostly couples. A few came with older children, and a few came without their spouses. The session ran from 4 to 8 PM. It was a lively session punctuated by a refreshment break and open discussions.

We started with a prayer in song. Coincidentally, it was the prayer adopted by the early CFMers and which we use at every meeting – 'you are the hands of Christ .. you are the feet of Christ..'. Fr Peter then began with the positive and negative effects of family conflicts on family life. He went to describe how proper understanding and reconciliation can promote family communion, personal growth, peace and harmony at home. We were asked to recall individually the time of day we were most grumpy and what coping mechanisms we used to deal with conflict at that time. We then discussed our answers with our spouses/ families. We also took up questions relating to how our prior family history affected the way we dealt with conflict; what issues caused most conflict in our family; how we could henceforth resolve some of these conflicts; ways we could say sorry to each other; agreement on methods to resolve conflict like time-out before decision making, family meetings, etc.

We then moved to methods of resolving conflicts, through listening and proper expression of feelings. When fighting 2 things need to be taken care of - the actual problem to be solved and the feelings you have towards the other person, i.e. the relationship. The unanimous view was that the relationship was way more important than the actual problem, and if this was taken care of the problem tended to get sorted fairly easily.

Identifying and taking ownership of our feelings is important in developing our relationship with others. However, this should be properly expressed. Statements should 'I feel mad when you....', rather than 'You make me feel mad'. Practicing an assertiveness technique, while expressing negative feelings, would help to a large extent, in resolving conflicts. For example, 'I feel X, in situation Y, when you do Z'. Responding by accepting the other person's feelings, (called validation) would help to a large measure in resolving that persons hurt feelings and the conflict - was another technique taught. You may not agree or understand but accept those feelings as being valid and this goes a long way in taking the tension out of the situation. These processes of continually checking out each others feelings, about the solution proposed, which is acceptable to both, help in finding mutually satisfying solutions. If each party feels listened to and acknowledged then often a solution is arrived at which could often surprise both.

Some other ideas and concepts expressed

It helps to have some basic ground rules about fights

Stick to the subject. It doesn't help to bring out all the simmering resentments and un-forgiven wrongs that you have been storing up.

Don't call each other names or be abusive

Try to use "I" statements rather than "you" statements.

Sharing how you feel rather than what you think helps your partner to understand you better. Remember to listen. An argument should be two sided. Give your partner the courtesy of listening to their point of view and feelings.

Your face and body language can communicate as much as your words, so be aware that your partner will be reading them as much as hearing your words.

Try to stay close to each other, even holding hands! Look at each other. This helps you to remember your relationship and how special you each are to each other.

Try not to run away, even if you want to cry, or feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. It's important to finish the fight, even when it's painful.

Saying Sorry - Usually in a fight you will both have things to say sorry for. It's not a sign of weakness to admit you're wrong. If you receive an apology, forgive your partner, and make sure they know they have been forgiven.

Forgiveness isn't a feeling. It is a decision. Lack of forgiveness imprisons you. Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself

To summarise, I need to:

- Share what I perceive,
- Share what I feel and
- Share what I would like you to do

To help resolve conflicts, build understanding and reconciliation should be our inspiration not only in our families, but in all our relationships. The world would be a better place because of our efforts.

Thank you Fr Peter for a very informative and useful programme. We plan to put it to good use in our lives.

*- Dominic & Jocelyn Lobo,
CFM-Orlem, Group IIIa*

A FAMILY RETREAT

Five families of the junior CFM group went for a Family Retreat to Atma-Darshan, Centre for Spirituality and Counseling, at Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (East) from 1st Oct – 3rd October, 2004.

It was not the kind of spiritual retreat that one would expect; it was more towards a holistic approach to family life, where parents and children come together for an encounter through sharing, dialogue, prayer and recreational activity. What struck us first was the serenity of the Ashram. It is a beautiful place with acres of greenery, just the perfect setting for some serious meditation and relaxation. Kids and baggage in hand we arrived at this beautiful location ready for our dose of spirituality. We were pleasantly surprised when we were greeted by the rector, Fr Jose, himself. After settling in our rooms, Fr Jose met each of us and presented the agenda for the retreat. The retreat encompassed both spirituality and topics dealing with family situations.

The agenda included Meditation, Praise and Worship, Holy Mass, Adoration, Healing and Forgiveness and sessions which dealt with topics on:

1. Salogenic (happy people) and Pathogenic (unhappy) people and their characteristics.
2. Causes of break-up of families
3. Functional and dysfunctional families and causes for the same
4. Family conflicts, types of conflicts, causes of conflicts and healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with conflicts
5. Models of Family

The above sessions were conducted by the Atma-Darshan team and a lay couple. All the above sessions were interactive and we bonded wonderfully as we were able to share our personal experiences with each other. On the last day, a Mass was celebrated in which the children were the main participants. They sang beautifully and enacted a small skit. The Mass was unique as spouses washed each other's feet and their children in turn washed the feet of their parents. This gesture was so humble but it signified that we truly and deeply loved one another. The retreat ended after each family decided on an action plan of how they would enrich their family life by focusing on one or two activities. This action plan was written on a postcard and offered during the offertory. We returned home after a truly divine experience with plans to go for a follow-up session after 6 months.

The retreat affirmed the family as the basic social unit, and emphasized effective communication, good relationships and spirituality as important to a happy family life.

We urge CFM families to attend such retreats. Families outside of Mumbai could find similar facilities in their areas. In Mumbai, interested families can contact:

The Programme Director, Atma-Darshan, Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400093.

*- Catherine & Ossie Pereira
CFM-Orlem, Group IIIa*

CHALLENGE OF THE CALL CENTRES

This programme was organized by the Christian Family Movement in St Anne's School Hall on 28th November, 2004.

BPOs (Business Process Outsourcing), better known as Call Centres are the current and most happening phenomenon in the country. Many young people are jumping onto the band wagon and many of them are doing very well. Young people in Orlem too are finding lucrative jobs in Call Centres, which are situated nearby.

What exactly is a Call Centre and how does it function? Why are youngsters joining Call Centres and giving up other avenues of work and industry? The CFM decided to conduct a programme to understand a Call Centre and the challenges one faces while working with a Call Centre.

The resource persons for the programme were:

1. Mr Manuel D'souza, HRD head of Intelenet (BPO)
2. Ms Shenaz Siganporia , Corporate Trainer
3. Dr Perpetua Miranda, Sociologist
4. Dr Eshita Mandal, Psychologist
5. Dr Sharad Oza, General Physician

Angelo Pinto, a CFMer, welcomed the speakers. Mr. Manuel D'souza began by explaining to the audience what a BPO is and the processes involved, the advantages as well as the

disadvantages. He gave us an insight into Intelenet through a powerpoint presentation. He spoke of the benefits given to the employees, the training, career growth and development, the best compensation in the market and most importantly how a BPO has reduced the unemployment level in the country.

Ms. Sigantoria then took over and explained to the audience the kind of training involved for the employees of Call Centres. As a Corporate Trainer she has been training employees of various Call Centres, not only for the job requirements but also for values. The value system engrained in children comes from their family background. If the value systems are strong, working in a Call Centre will have no adverse affect on them. Parents should have faith in their children, ensuring support and a strong family base.

Dr. Miranda then spoke about the psycho–socio effects of working in a Call Centre. She described in length the health, mental and social problems one faces when working with a Call Centre. The high salary that one earns at a young age can lead to many behavioural patterns which are not socially acceptable. Health is also at a high risk considering the irregular shift hours, the monotonous job, constant talking on the phone, can lead to health problems like eye strain, digestive disorders, throat hearing impairment, headaches, back problems, hair loss, etc. Youngsters are now getting addicted to smoking, drinking, pub-hopping to handle the peer and work pressures. 30 – 40% leave their jobs within a year and the major reason people are quitting is because of the inability to handle the pressure and stress. You lose your identity as you are talking to foreigners and assuming a different identity. Young people join with enthusiasm, but after a while they are disillusioned as a lot of hard work is involved and the job is not as glamorous as it is made out to be, despite the high salaries earned. It could also lead to strained relationships between husband and wife, parents and children.

However, parents should be aware and inculcate values before taking a decision to send their children to work in a Call Centre.

Dr. Mandal talked about how individuals working in Call Centres need to balance their lives if they decide to continue working there. They can do this by meditation, yoga, attending stress management programmes, maintaining a healthy diet, exercise and more importantly creating a good supportive family and friends circle. An individual needs to interact with family & friends more frequently, get plenty of rest and take short breaks during work. Human beings are social animals and need to have a good social life.

Dr. Oza talked about how people working in Call Centres have no time for conversation with others. They give up their studies and are not willing to pursue further studies as the money is good and this gives them a lot of freedom.

After the speakers made their points the audience was invited to ask questions. One of our youth who worked in a Call Centre was given an opportunity to answer some of the queries thrown by the audience.

The BPO industry is here to stay. We leave it to you to decide. The choice is yours.

- Catherine Pereira
CFM-Orlem, Group IIIa

JOY & HOPE

One of the decisions taken at our last Study Day was to become acquainted with the Documents of Vatican Council II, particularly those that were relevant to the lives of the laity and family. Fr. Austin Norris of our parish agreed to give us a brief yet incisive look at some of the Documents. On the 20th August, 2004, CFMers and parishioners were taken through “The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World”(*Gaudium et Spes*) and on the 18th September we looked at “The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People” (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*).

Both the talks were very enlightening helped us realize the importance of the role of the laity in the Church today. We are no longer expected to “pay, pray and obey”, but are called to become aware of our own very special mission. The Church needs to get involved in the affairs of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. This can only be done through the efforts of the laity who have access not only to the religious, but to social, economic, cultural and other areas which are not within the purview of the Church.

The Pastoral Constitution commences with an in-depth analysis of the world situation and goes on to examine the dignity of the human person, the community of mankind, human activity in the universe and the role of the Church in the Modern World. It also expresses concern for the dignity of marriage and family, the proper development of culture, economic, social and political life, the fostering of peace and establishing a community of nations.

The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People teaches that every baptized lay person – no matter who – is competent to be an apostle in Christ. Every member of the laity at every stage of their lives is called to be an apostle. If the laity does not take its apostolate seriously, the work of Christ will never be done. “It is the Lord himself, by this Council, who is once more inviting all the laity to unite themselves to him even more intimately, to consider his interest as their own (cf. Phil. 2:5), and to join in his mission as Saviour. It is the Lord who is again sending them into every town and every place where he himself is to come (cf. Lk 1:1). He sends them on the Church’s apostolate, an apostolate that is one, yet has different forms and methods, an apostolate that must all the time be adapting itself to the needs of the moment; he sends them on an apostolate where they are to show themselves his cooperators, doing their full share continually in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord their labour cannot be lost (cf. Cor. 15:58).

We invite all CFMers to read and get acquainted with these Documents which throw light on our own mission to families, described as the apostolate of like to like.

- Agnel & Anette D’Cruz
CFM-Orlem, Group I(a)

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

For years on end, we tried in vain...
 But despite all our efforts and pain...
 The CFM did not increase in numbers,
 It continued with its meagre members.

But soon a dynamic CFMer
 Took it on her to increase the number;
 21 couples responded from far and near,
 All thanks goes to our Cynthia dear.

She's one who really gives of her best
 Until goal fulfilled, she does not rest .
 Ever ready to go that extra mile
 With her most enchanting smile.

Even empowered the handicapped
 But about it never yapped.
 A living example for us to follow,
 Start today, why wait for tomorrow?

By an Orlem CFMer

UPDATE FROM THE REGIONS

Bangalore: The AGM was held on the 8th August, 2004 at the Nava Spoorthi Kendra. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by the National Chaplain, Rev.Fr.Jose Fonseca. After Mass there was a short coffee break and fellowship. During the AGM which followed, the members were informed about the activities and progress of CFM Bangalore. The house appreciated the efforts of the Executive Committee in bringing up the SADE programme for the youth and introducing a new group consisting of young married couples. Later on a game of housie was conducted for the adults while the children were entertained with humourous games. A sumptuous lunch was served and CFMers had an opportunity to socialize.

Presently, there are 11 groups in Bangalore consisting of 68 couples and 12 singles with a total of 148 members. These groups hold regular monthly meetings at which they discuss papers prepared by Fr.Jose Fonseca. These are much appreciated because they are based on current local issues.

CFM-Bangalore is planning to combine the Family Day in January, 2005, with a picnic, so that all CFM families and children can have an outing-cum-meeting and socialize.

Goa: There are 3 groups with 19 couples in Taleigao, Porvorim and Mercês. These groups meet regularly with their Chaplains in attendance. CFMers and families take an active part in parish liturgical, catechetical and pastoral activities.

The Taleigao group conducted an Aids Awareness Programme and organized a Career Guidance Day for the youth of the parish. About 50 youth and their parents attended.

CFMers attended meetings organized by the Diocesan Family Service Centre (DFSC), the Diocesan Centre for the Lay Apostolate and the Diocesan Pastoral Council in which they are actively involved.

At the Regional Meeting of CFM-Goa on the 27th August, 2004, at Jesuit House, Fr.Socorro Mendes, Regional Chaplain spoke on “Nourished by the Eucharist – CFM empowered to Build and Strengthen Families.” There was a Bible Quiz for children on this occasion.

With the DFSC, CFMers organized the All Goa Value Based Family Programme on the 11th September, 2004, at the Bom Jesus Basilica in Old Goa.

CFMers have participated and net-worked with the activities carried out by Catholic associations/movements from time to time.

Three CFM couples with Chaplain Fr.Socorro Mendes attended the Sixth CFM Asian Conference in Bangalore in September, 2003.

CFM-Goa hosted Fr.Bunsong Hong Thong, and Nop Muangkroot from Thailand during their two day visit to Goa in September, 2003 .

Mumbai: In their various actions, CFM in Mumbai tried to implement the resolutions of the 6th Asian Conference.

In August & September, 2004, CFM arranged talks on the Post-Conciliar Documents: “Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World” (*Gaudium et Spes*) and “The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity” (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*).

On the 24th & 25th September, Group III, led by Cynthia and Angelo Pinto organized a CFM Expansion Drive. CFMers spoke at every Mass giving their experience of the CFM and how it has helped them in their family lives. 38 couples registered to join the Movement.

On the 3rd October, Fr.Peter D’Souza, CSM, conducted a programme on “Fights & Forgiveness in the Family”, organized by CFM for its members and parishioners. There were 70 participants.

10th October was Information Night to introduce the new couples to the Movement.

23rd & 24th October – CFMers sold items for the Prayatna Income Generating Scheme.

“The Challenge of the Call Centres” was organized on the 28th November.

9th January, 2005, was Family Day. It was an enjoyable social evening for CFMers and their families.

On the 13th January, the annual Mass for the Sick, Aged and Disabled was organized by the CFM.

On the 26th January, CFMers conducted Sports for the Lourdes Tamil School. 200 children and their teachers enjoyed the event, replete with games, prizes and refreshments from funds donated by CFMers and well-wishers.

Besides the above actions, on the parish level CFMers are involved as Sector Animators, Youth Animators, Sunday School and Confirmation teachers.

One of the junior groups continues to have family meetings in which the children participate.

Each of the older, experienced CFM groups have undertaken to tend and animate a new group, so that the new members grow into the Movement.

OUR QUIET CORNER

TO MY GROWN-UP SON

My hands were busy through the day,
I didn't have much time to play
The little games you asked me to,
I didn't have much time for you.

I'd wash your clothes, I'd sew and cook,
But when you brought your picture book
And ask me please to share your fun,
I'd say "A LITTLE LATER" son.

I'd tuck you in all safe at night
And hear your prayer, turn out the light,
Then tip-toe softly to the door,
I wish I'd stayed a minute more.

For life is short and years rush past,
A little boy grown up so fast,
No longer is he at your side
His precious secrets to confide.

The picture books are put away,
There are no childrens' games to play,
No goodnight kiss, no prayers to hear,
They all belong to yesteryear.

My hands once busy, now lie still,
The days are long and hard to fill,
I wish I might go back to do
The little things you asked me to.

By Alice Chase