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**CFM**

**AND THE**

**PRIEST**



# **CFM AND THE PRIEST**

by Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A.

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# CFM AND THE PRIEST

## Introduction

There are many ways by which a priest becomes a Christian Family Movement chaplain. He may be assigned the work by his pastor, or if he is the pastor he may inherit it from his predecessor with other spiritual and material responsibilities. He may stumble into it when a married couple take the initiative and ask him if he will be the chaplain of a group which they would like to form with his permission. Or he may have thought out—in theoretical fashion in the seminary and now through experience—the needs of the parish and have concluded that the formation of a unit of the Christian Family Movement in this particular parish is a pressing necessity.

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This booklet is directed to priests who have been assigned to or who have voluntarily assumed the role of CFM chaplain. It is an effort to answer some of the questions which pose themselves in this new form of pastoral endeavor. It is an attempt both to orientate new chaplains and to widen the horizons of and further challenge experienced ones. This booklet is not the cataloguing of the opinions of a single chaplain, but the culling and synthesizing of the experiences of chaplains throughout the country over the past fifteen years. *CFM and The Priest* is a companion volume to *A Guide to CFM*. An effort has been made to avoid as far as possible any duplication.

In an appendix we have included short readings to introduce the reader to authorities and sources.







## **The Chaplain is a Spiritual Guide**

By vocation a parish priest is not one given to armchair philosophy or specialization. Of necessity he is a general practitioner. He uses a pragmatic rule of thumb dealing with parish organizations: "What will it do for my parish?" He has not been assigned to the care of souls for the universal church. Canon law and his Ordinary have limited his jurisdiction to a geographic area and a specific group of people.



"What can CFM do for my parish?" It is the common experience of pastors to be enthusiastic about CFM simply on the basis of what it has done for them as pastors. After a year the couples become the parish workhorses. They head up the parish societies when other parishioners demur because of lack of time and interest. They lead in financial drives when it comes to doorbell ringing and in giving according to their ability. Their telephone numbers are on the same rectory pad with the insurance agent, the boiler repair service, and the chancery office numbers. YET IT CANNOT BE INSISTED TOO STRONGLY THAT BEING THE RIGHT ARM OF THE PASTOR IS NOT THE RAISON D'ETRE OF CFM. GIVING ASSISTANCE TO THE HARRIED PARISH PRIEST CAN BE INTEGRAL BUT IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO CFM.

If the priest takes this limited view of CFM, he will approach it with a paternal attitude. He will attend their meetings, pat the heads of members' children, and in general "be nice" to them. If he fails to see CFM in its totality he will fail to challenge them. If they are spiritually and intellectually undernourished, they may become hesitating and unwilling servants.

### *the art of arts*

The Christian Family Movement is an answer to a modern pastoral problem. A priest is a CFM chaplain only because he sees it as a means to fulfilling his pastoral vocation. An ancient classic work on pastoral theology is St. Gregory the Great's *Liber Pastoralis Curae*. The bishop according to St. Gregory is to be a physician of souls. This is what he calls "the art of arts." The priest participates in the bishop's work of spiritual physician when through CFM he practices his healing arts. The chaplain's role in CFM is to give specific expression in present historical circumstances to the counsels of St. Gregory through a medium that is adapted to our times.

8 The pastoral vocation includes many roles to be played or tasks to be performed. Every priest gradually establishes his own hierarchy within the framework of his life. A group of forty priests in an annual meeting in England agreed that priorities should be established in the following order: 1) liturgy, by which they meant ministry within the church building; 2) visiting; 3) lay apostolate; 4) instruction of converts and engaged couples; 5) social activities; 6) societies. One may well question this precise order, but experienced CFM chaplains would generally agree. While subordinating their part in CFM to the liturgy, they would place it at least on the level with instructing converts and teaching catechism and a number of levels above the purely administrative duties of keeping a plant solvent and in shipshape. They insist on the intimate tie-up of the priest's role as CFM chaplain and his mission of spiritual paternity.

### *St. John Vianney*

The Cure d'Ars is held up to priests by Pope John and his predecessors as the model pastor. Yet the Cure was not a CFM chaplain. The truth is that the Cure had no need for CFM in his nineteenth century rural parish of some three hundred people. With a total of sixty households, he needed no convent of sisters to teach the children. He needed no Legion of Mary to visit families. He needed no IBM or multi-colored census cards. He could teach the children himself, visit the homes personally, and carry a spiritual progress report of each parish-

ioner in his head. He did not need CFM because the evils of the day as he saw them were clearly defined: drinking, objectionable dancing, and immodest dress. By sheer force of his spiritual leadership and his direct approach with the saloon keepers, he was able to close the four taverns. His denial of absolution in the confessional was effective. Since the majority of his people were illiterate and mass media communications were still unknown, there were no outside influences undermining his sway over their minds. Ars, had one voice—the Cure's, which waxed eloquent and undisputed for an hour at Sunday Mass.

### *a modern Cure*

The Cure today as an urban pastor would do well to average seven minutes in the pulpit exclusive of announcements, letters, and appeals. The confessional would provide no social control over his flock in an era when people can shop around for a confessor. If he attempted to close a movie house for showing indecent pictures, his efforts would have one of three probable results: he would either be an advertising medium for the owner, reinforce the public image of the Church as a pressure group, or at best, transfer the business to a more distant theatre. He would find that in this age of discussion flowing from democracy, people resent the authoritarian approach which was accepted by a tradition-orientated rural people.

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The priest today knows that the pastoral techniques of another century are not geared to his problems. He may not be able to give a sociological analysis of the evils of society, but he knows that they are not as simple as alcoholism and immodest dress. In the face of his inability to define the problem and cope with it, he is tempted to take a defeatist approach and stay sheltered in the rectory away from the wicked world and wait there for the phone to call him to the bedside of an ailing parishioner, or await the summons to the parlor to bless a rosary or give an instruction. When this kind of retreat

is made, the rectory has become a fire station with someone always on duty to deal with disaster, a fortress keeping the clergy in and the laity out, or at best a monastery sealed off from the world.

It would seem at first blush that the modern urban priest who wants to pattern his life after the Cure's would have to do some creative thinking about his ministry if he wished to have the effectiveness of the Cure. If his prayer and ascetic life had the intensity of St. John Vianney, undoubtedly the Holy Spirit would give him the insights or bring him in contact with the books or the people who have them, so that an effective urban pastoral approach would be a reality. Are we projecting our own thoughts too far when we maintain that if the Cure were a priest in a twentieth century parish he would be a CFM chaplain?

### *more work for the busy priest*

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One of the serious objections a hard working parish priest has to CFM is the demand it makes upon an already overcrowded schedule. The minimum time demanded of a chaplain is attendance every two weeks at a meeting which runs about an hour and a half. The chaplain also spends another hour every two weeks in preparing this meeting with the couple that is to lead it. How can the busy parish priest justify this expenditure of time with a half dozen couples when he has been assigned to be spiritual guide of a thousand families?

**The only justification is that he is training six or more couples to be apostles. It is the justification we offer for Our Lord's spending three years of His life in the company of twelve very ordinary men when he could be preaching to crowds.** It is the justification which the Church offers for confining young men to a seminary for from four to sixteen years. It is the justification which large corporations offer for the expensive training courses they give to bright young men. In an era of specialization the parish must institute its own training program for promising members.

Another common objection to CFM is that it is "saving the saved." First, the objection implies that there is a saturation point in the spiritual life, that the love of God is not subject

to the laws of growth. Secondly, it implies that God is more interested in the quantity of people loving Him rather than in the quality of love. Thirdly, it is like saying to a successful football coach, "No wonder you had a good team last year. You took the most promising athletes. Try to beat Army with the fellows who can't do push-ups." CFM usually starts with the families who are at the core of the parish because these are usually the people capable of getting it rolling, and the only ones the chaplain knows well. Experience teaches us that these very people show tremendous growth in the spiritual life as a result of their participation in CFM. Fourthly, as CFM expands in a parish, the number of core families increases or, in the language of the objectors, more souls are "saved." Fifthly, the objection denies that a parish needs a training course for lay leadership.

While the essential role of the priest as a spiritual guide is timeless, the expression it takes in a particular culture at any moment in history must be timely. The priest in fulfilling the role of CFM chaplain gets to the heart of his priestly vocation. It is not to be regarded as something nice for one who has the time or interest, or too highly specialized for the average priest. It is nothing more than a modern form of the age-old pre-occupation of priests, the "care of souls."



## **The Family Apostolate**

Just as a young man leaves home to go to a Maryknoll Seminary because he believes that it is through a missionary life that he can best fulfill his destiny, which is to be a saint, so a person in CFM should in time see his vocation as union with God in and through this family apostolate. There is no sanctity for the layman without his witness in the lay life to which he is called, and there is no lasting witness unless there are deep roots in the divine life. Just as in the real order grace and nature are never separate, so also are the apostolate and sanctity joined in holy wedlock.

### *lay apostolate as old as the church*

It is important to understand the nature of the lay apostolate in order to situate the priest's relation to the apostolate of the Christian family. In a sense, the lay apostolate is as old as the Church. There have always been a lay people helping the clergy, or, vice versa, clergy helping the laity in the apostolate. Because the problem of the Church at the time of the Council of Trent was to build or re-build the ecclesiastical structure, the emphasis in the Church during the past 300 years has been on the clerical side of the Church. The whole work of the Council of Trent was a re-emphasis and re-establishment of doctrine and of discipline in the structural aspect of the Church. After Trent the Church had to deal with Jansenism, Gallicanism, rationalism, and modernism. These were attacks at the very life of the Church. The Church was in such a defensive position that it was actually in retreat from the currents of the world. By and large, special consideration to the growing importance of the layman was sidetracked.

All the modern emphasis on the lay apostolate, therefore, comes to us priests as a new thing—a sort of new revelation. Leo XIII pleaded with bishops and priests and the laity that the laymen take a responsible part in their world. And of course,

in that day this world was the new Republican regime that came about as a result of the French Revolution. And Leo XIII pleaded that these regimes be recognized and that the people cooperate with them. He pleaded also that the labor movement be recognized, and finally he worked to save the family from disorganization.

## C.A.

The result was European Catholic parties, Catholic labor unions and Catholic family associations. Since then, we know that Pius X put the emphasis on a deeper spiritual life because because he saw that the message of Leo XIII was not very easily accepted, by either clergy or laity. So he emphasized the liturgical renewal, participation in Mass and the sacraments, and it is he who first popularized the word "Catholic Action."

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Pius XI defined Catholic Action and promoted it most ardently. Pius XII in a certain sense enlarged the whole concept of the lay apostolate and continually pleaded and addressed lay groups, men and women, to take their part in economic and political movements. He addressed professional groups of doctors, engineers, journalists, midwives and others to urge them to full participation in the work of the Church. Pope John in his inimitable way has continued this tradition. In his talk to the garbage collectors of Rome he accentuated the value of pedestrian occupations.

### *modern pressures for a lay apostolate*

The restoration and adaptation of the lay apostolate in our times has resulted from sociological conditions as much as from theological tracts or papal exhortations. On the local level, pastors are forced increasingly to consider the possibilities of lay assistance. The bishop informs a pastor that no assistant is available for his burgeoning parish; mother provincial informs him that there is no possibility of adding another sister in the Fall. Besides the encouragement of vocation to



the clerical and religious states, there must be an effort to enlist the layman in work that will free the priest for his purely spiritual tasks. In the past priests have performed such roles as recreational director, substitute school-janitor and sexton, chauffeur for vacation schools, fund-raiser, bookkeeper, architect. These are tasks for which there should be an abundance of lay volunteers.

Even in the priest's spiritual ministrations that get to the core of his priestly vocation he needs lay helpers. He needs groups like the Legion of Mary, which visit families and individuals whom the priest cannot reach. He needs the CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) to assist him in his teaching mission.



The layman helping the pastor carry out his pastoral duties is an important part of the lay apostolate. Without this lay effort, the saving work of Christ's Church will be hampered. There is, however, another and wider area for the lay apostolate. It is lay life itself for which the layman, and not the priest, has a primary responsibility. One might conceive of the lay role of priest's helper being dispensed with or mitigated by an increase in religious vocations, but no increase in the number of priests can lessen the layman's importance in the world of work, the family, recreation, political, and international life.

### *the layman's mission field*

The "Employees Only" sign over the entrance to the industrial world reminds the priest that here he is an intruder or at best a guest, but never a citizen. Inside, the layman is supreme. This is his citadel. Here he makes decisions in his own right. Yet this industrial world belongs to Christ and must be restored to Him. It must reflect His truth, justice, and love. In a sense, it must be "redeemed."

Historically, this problem was ushered in with the industrial era and the rise of democracy. This development came about at a time when the Church was at its weakest, a time when the teachings of Karl Marx were going unchallenged and were stealing the initiative from the Church. Education in the West, once under the control of the Church through the medieval university, was becoming mass education, taking place, to an ever greater degree, outside the sphere of the Church's influence. Tremendous advances in the social and technical sciences were being made without the guiding presence of the Church and with only a token contribution from it.

Every parish priest knows that something has happened to the family. He has had the frequent experience of being called to the rectory parlor or a parishioner's home to meet one or both parties of a shattered marriage which began with the promise of never-ending bliss. So grave has the problem become that large parishes may some day employ lay counsellors to assist the priests in marriage counselling. The increased demand for counselling services by married people points to deep-rooted illness that must be analyzed in terms of change in the family as an institution and of change in the other institutions which affect the family.

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### *the autonomy of the layman*

Today the world recognizes the legitimate autonomy of our modern secular or lay society, but it fails to see that it must be animated by the spirit of Christ. The hierarchical Church has no competence or mission to direct the affairs of the temporal order. It does have a mission to witness to truth and justice. The teaching Church proposes no solutions to purely technical problems. The spiritual and temporal orders can be bridged by lay people, who have membership in Christ's Mystical Body and citizenship in this world. People who can legitimately pass the "Employees Only" sign, whether in a factory, a brokerage house, a TV station, or a government office, or people who open the door of a home or apartment without knocking, form what Pius XII called, "the front ranks of the Church."

The priest, therefore, must respect the autonomy of the layman in his proper field of responsibility. And it is the laity who are

responsible in the domestic area—the area of the family. The clergy in this context are assistants to this great effort of the Church to make the world safe for Christian living. It is the laity who, like John the Baptist, must level the hills and fill the valleys so Christ can come in the person of the priests and bishops to sanctify the world.



The priest and people must work together, but they are responsible for different spheres of action. When it is insisted in this booklet that the priest remain in the background, that he allow the layman to take the major role in the meetings, for example, it is not a trick to involve the layman in the group. It is his rightful place, and he must be taught to assume what is his. The initiative belongs to the laity in the temporal order, even in the work of the apostolate.

### *the family apostolate*

The Christian Family Movement embraces every aspect of lay life. It is obvious that a family apostolate must concern itself with relationships within the immediate family; for example, husband-wife and parent-child relationships. Likewise it should concern itself with such subjects as family prayer and family play as well as child discipline. There are some who think that CFM should confine itself to these limits since civic, political, and economic affairs only remotely concern the family. It would leave an inquiry on mental health to the Mental Health Society, racial problems to the local Catholic Interracial Council. Why should a family movement extend its boundaries beyond the frontiers of the home?

First, CFM is not coextensive with the family apostolate. It is only one movement within the total family apostolate of the Church. It does not attempt to specialize in any area of family life. It leaves specialization to other groups; for example, pre-marital education to the Cana Conference, and the advocacy of breast feeding to La Leche. Second, CFM believes that sancti-

fication of the family in the modern world demands an awareness on the part of the family of all the institutions outside the family which have a bearing upon it.

This approach does not eliminate the need for Mental Health Societies and Interracial Councils. It actually contributes to them by making people aware of their existence and aims. The concentration of the spiritual life to ones own family appears quite simple and attractive, but it is quite naive and ostrich-like to consider it a total family spirituality in the face of the complexity of modern family living. It supposes that a couple can seal off the world from their family life like a Poor Clare Monastery does for its cloistered nuns.

The Catholic family is a part of a neighborhood relationship with the other families in the building, the block or farm community. If the family zealously goes about its round of pious practices and ignores the concerns of the neighborhood, the members of the family are bad neighbors and to that extent bad Catholics. If the family prays together but never shows concern about the needs of the parish, its members are, by the same token, bad parishioners.

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CFM as a family apostolate forms concentric circles around the family unit. Like the rings formed in the water when a stone is thrown they vary in intensity. The first concern or the first ring of the CFM apostolate is the relationships within the immediate family. The second ring is concerned with the neighborhood and parish. The third circle is concerned with the myriad influences on the family beyond the local confines of home, street, and parish.

### *the chaplain's role*

The breadth of the Christian Family Movement apostolate raises questions in the minds of many priests, on first consideration. How can a priest ever be expected to be an expert on

such subjects as prenatal care, the Landrum-Griffin Labor Law, and the implications of the population explosion in the East? How can a parish priest be a walking encyclopedia of papal and episcopal teaching on modern social problems? Obviously the ordinary priest cannot be expected to be an expert on these subjects. His seminary course was restricted to scripture, moral and dogmatic theology with only a smattering of sociology, economics, and Catholic social teaching.

CFM depends upon the chaplain primarily for doctrinal guidance. Yet doctrinal guidance within the framework of the family apostolate demands more of the chaplain than a passing acquaintance with economics, politics, and international affairs and something less than the comprehensive knowledge of an expert on the problems of our day.

The minimum that can be asked of the chaplain is that he have a sensitivity to these areas of lay life and begin a reading program on these subjects as they appear in the CFM programs. First and foremost on that reading is the doctrine of the popes who articulate Christ. Once he sees the inner connection between lay life in all its ramifications and life in God, he will gradually acquire the background to be helpful to couples who are searching for sanctity and an apostolate through their daily lives.



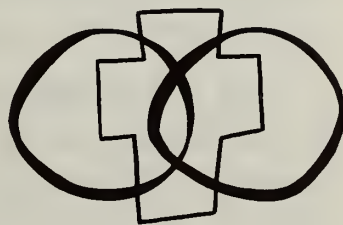
## **Some Characteristics of CFM**

### *CFM is a training school in the christian life*

Bishops and priests are always talking about the role of the laity in the world, but it cannot always be taken for granted that they are aware of the dimensions of the herculean task of preparing even one layman to be an effective witness in a world not simply pagan but exasperatingly complex. Because CFM faces up to the complexity, it must provide a training that is of necessity demanding and intensive.

Intensive training demands selection. CFM works with the couples who are willing and capable of receiving and using such training. It is limited in extension by the other demands on the time of the chaplain. CFM does not specifically train apostles simply for the family, the parish or the business world. It offers an integrated approach to all of these areas. Eventually some of the couples may become specialists in one or another of these areas.

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### *CFM is couple-centered*

CFM is dedicated to the task of training married couples for total Christian living. It is not open to husbands or wives as individuals but as couples. Should a partner die, however, the survivor is encouraged to retain membership.

The stresses and strains of life in our frenetic society have a tendency to pull a couple apart as the years go on. While they share bed and board their lives together can be superficial

to the point of seldom experiencing together their joys and sorrows. CFM considers it essential to the training that both husband and wife be present at each meeting so that they may share with each other the experience of the apostolate. CFM demands that couples not only attend meetings together but that they prepare them together and accept common responsibility for apostolic action.

The fact that one evening every two weeks a couple will have to put their family in charge of a babysitter must be weighed against the advantages that will come to their children as their parents come to live and love together at increasingly deeper levels of life.

### ***CFM is parish-centered***

CFM began with group membership drawn from parishes scattered over an entire city or area. Growth and effectiveness demanded that ultimately it be developed in the parish. The parish offers proximity to the meetings, a greater sharing of common problems, a greater facility for sharing experiences between meetings, a vehicle for concerted action within the neighborhood and parish, and above all, a claim to the spiritual assistance which the pastor or an assistant has to offer. The parish is an already existing spiritual unit to which parishioners have made a commitment. In joining a parish CFM group couples are strengthening their ties with the parish and intensifying their own share in parochial life.

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CFM is particularly interested in centering the lives of its members around the parish altar. The liturgical life of the parish is the subject of many meetings. CFM members are eager to implement the Instruction of the Holy See on active participation at Mass. CFM seeks ways, also, to assist the Home and School Association (PTA) and other parish organizations achieve the purpose for which they were founded.

It is a mistake, however, for a pastor to exploit the willingness of these generous people by assigning parish chores to them of which others are capable and willing to do. CFM is an educative process which helps its members discover problems of lay life and the solutions to these problems. Clerical interference with this process can have only disastrous effects.



### ***CFM is community centered***

Because CFM is centered in parishes the people usually live in the same general neighborhood and almost always within the same political community. CFM members look upon the neighborhood as a missionary looks upon his territory as a sector of the Lord's vineyard. CFM's first approach to the neighborhood through its initial meetings is one of service. This requires more than a nodding acquaintance with the people on the block or apartment building. It demands the embrace of Christian love.

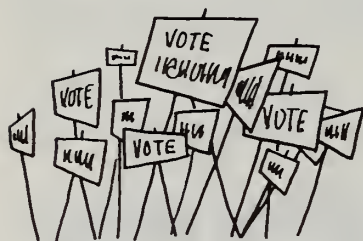


CFM knows that each family has a great stake in the neighborhood. The family rosary is not sufficient to protect the children and adults from the possible pernicious effects of un-Christian ways of living; neither is it an adequate way of bringing Christ's love to the neighborhood. If the charity of CFM couples is to extend beyond the walls of their homes, the logical place to begin is with a consideration of what one's block is like, what goes on in the schools and playgrounds, and how effective are the local city services. CFM couples are concerned not only with an institutional approach to local needs but also with the personal needs of the neighbors. In every neighborhood there is the distraught wife who must be listened to, the aged who need our kind attention, the sick mother of a brood of children, the couple who cannot go out together because they cannot procure a babysitter. The catalogue of human needs that only loving neighbors can fill is endless. A few CFM couples filled with this love could make the neighborhood an ante-room to heaven.

### ***CFM is civic-minded***

Why should a family movement concern itself with politics? Should it not leave politics to the professional politicians? The modern state has taken a paternal interest in the family. Be-

cause of the impersonality of our economic system and unpredictability of the business cycle, legislatures and government agencies have taken over many of the functions of the family. The government has entered into the fields of housing, aid to dependent children, insurance programs of all kinds, and sundry programs which since pre-historic man were considered the prerogatives of the family or clan and the common bonds of family living.



One may argue whether the government has done too much or too little for the family. But one is faced with the reality that in modern society for weal or woe politics and the family are locked. CFM as a group does not envision aid to a particular party or picking slates of candidates, but rather introducing couples to the interconnection of the family and politics. Beyond this the members are on their own politically.

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### ***CFM is concerned with economics***

The reasoning behind CFM's concern with economics is similar to its concern for the neighborhood and politics. In our economic society many families do not have a sufficiency of things necessary to rear a family, and many do not have security. In the United States, for example, many wives and mothers must work, and many men must have two jobs to make ends meet. Pius XI said that a layman's sanctity, and even his salvation, may often be linked to economic life.

### ***CFM is world-conscious***

CFM does not limit itself simply to our national concerns. It is interested in such subjects as the United States, foreign aid, foreign students, and lay missionaries. No one is so naive to think that CFM can do the job of the State Department in foreign affairs or the United States Secretary of Labor in

economic affairs. Yet in these areas which are seemingly remote from the warmth and intimacy of the family circle a family apostolate must at least apprise its members of these wider world problems and awaken their sense of responsibility to them. Changes in economic, political and international life will be made by businessmen, politicians and diplomats, but they will be made in response to an enlightened and articulate public.

### ***CFM is based on small groups***

CFM groups are limited in size. The size is limited to the number that makes for a good discussion. Experience in group dynamics places the optimum somewhere between four and seven couples. The meetings are usually in each other's homes by rotation.



In a home, people are so much more at ease than in the rectory parlor. It is this voluntary, friendly and relaxed setting that is so conducive to the acceptance of new ideas. All the counselling experts insist on this kind of atmosphere. However, local circumstances may dictate that the parish hall or rectory would better suit a particular group. Such decisions should rest with the group.

Six couples meeting fortnightly for a year or two and discussing and living intimately the deepest convictions in their lives will gradually bring about a group solidarity. Apart from the apostolic effects of the meetings this group cohesiveness is one of the greatest by-products of CFM. Catholic education through our schools and pulpits teaches truths by which we must live. However, they cannot apply them as well as a small group nor can they give the emotional support of the small group in living them. CFM applies these truths above all to their own lives, and through the group it offers mutual support in living by these newly formed convictions. For the generality of people the small group seems a demand of our times for apostolic training.

CFM is a modern device for Catholics to preserve and apply their faith in a pluralistic society. In a typical American neighborhood we have every strain of belief and practice. Every family seeks to be like the "typical" or "ideal" modern American family. What agents create this type or "ideal?" Chiefly two: Madison Avenue's ubiquitous advertising and the pressure of what everyone is doing and saying in each family's social circle. The Catholic family has little protection against this form of secularism unless it has the support of other couples who are actively concerned with what is both hostile to and what is congenial to the ideals of Catholic family life.

### ***CFM fissions***

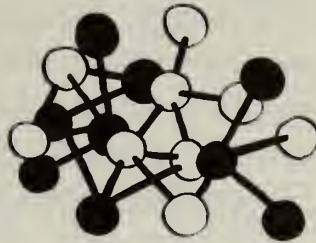
CFM usually starts in a parish unostentatiously. Either the chaplain will contact the initial couple or one or two couples will agree on whom to invite and make the contacts. A personal visit to the couple's home is more effective than a phone call. The length and type of explanation one gives to a prospective member will depend on the person's capacity to grasp the message and our ability to transmit it. Some recruiters are satisfied with the couple's acceptance of the invitation. Others feel that the greater understanding which is reached before one begins the faster will be the progress. All agree, however, that the experience of the initial meetings teaches many things which cannot be communicated through a conversation.

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There is no preparatory course of instructions as we have for converts. The first group simply begins with meeting one in *For Happier Families*, following the printed instructions as they proceed. As the months go on the couples begin to explore a new way of life. They look at themselves, their spouses, their children, the other couples in the group, the chaplain and their neighbors with better fitting lenses. It is simply a re-assessing of established human relationships in terms of the gospel teaching on love.

The re-discovery of the implications of love in terms of everyday living awakens the idea of CFM as an apostolate. The chaplain should help them see from the beginning that CFM is not a social outlet—enjoyable evenings of likeminded

people, but is a dynamic movement of the Church which extends its membership with interest and love to other couples.



After a few meetings the chaplain should help condition the group to the fact that this group, the first in the parish, is a nuclear group which is expected to form other groups while retaining the present one. The normal procedure is for each couple after six months or a year to take the initial steps to form a group which will follow the identical pattern of meetings of the original group. Each couple then will retain membership in the original (section) group and be a part of and assume responsibility for a new (action) group. Since this demands one more meeting every two weeks for the leadership group, some couples will feel they cannot manage the time. Such couples eventually will leave the section group and join an action group.

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The section group functions as an executive committee tying all parish CFM groups together. Without it the chaplain would be the link between all the groups, and CFM to that extent would be destroyed as a lay movement. Just as there is a connecting link between groups in a parish so we have a diocesan federation to tie together all CFM groups in the diocese. CFM is not "organization happy." It is primarily interested in the development of members and uses only the minimum organizational structure to support it.

### ***CFM is a school of sanctity***

One of the major reforms of the Council of Trent was the legislation for seminaries. The primary aim of the Tridentine seminary is to form priests in holiness. Everything is ordered to making it a school of sanctity. The studies necessary for the ministry are to be fitted into this overruling purpose. CFM must be seen in terms of a calling or a vocation. It must be

seen as the providential means for these particular couples to achieve sanctity. Without this conviction couples will eventually either drop out or drag their feet. CFM is a school of sanctity for couples. Because CFM believes there is no sanctity for couples without involvement in temporal concerns, it introduces people to all areas of lay life, trusting that they will eventually assume responsibility for them to the degree of their competency and opportunities.

## **The CFM Meeting**

What most people want, notwithstanding their complaints to the contrary, are rules. But who can set up rules for CFM, since CFM is a social movement designed to help couples cope with changing situations in their daily relationships. If anything, CFM proves to couples that Christianity for the layman cannot be tightly structured as it is for the monk or cloistered nun. Eventually CFM does help people to construct for themselves and their families a kind of loose framework or structure for their lives with a built-in facility to respond to change.

### *few rules*

CFM as an organization has only a minimum of rules. Whatever rules CFM does adopt must be construed only as provisional. It is explained thus: "On the basis of experience this is what we have found best. We shall operate this way until we find a better way." CFM is a response to the inability of many existing Catholic institutions to deal realistically with change. If CFM in response sets up a rigid system, it is making the mistake it set out to correct.

CFM's introductory meeting booklet, *For Happier Families* and other literature seemingly set down minute prescriptions, e.g., "scripture discussion, fifteen minutes." These instructions are guides for beginners. Beginners, like children, need the security of ironclad rules. When they have been through a number of meetings they gradually understand the structure and purpose of each part of the meeting.

It is the better part of prudence for both beginning couples and chaplains to follow the suggestions that are offered on the basis of fifteen years of experience. Experienced couples and chaplains, on the other hand, are encouraged to work out with the approval of the local officers controlled experiments which might offer changes in the form or content of the meeting.

If CFM canonizes its present form it will take the shape of an unchanging monastic rule, ill-suited as a guide in dynamic surroundings.



### *meeting format*

The CFM meeting has five major parts. The first is a discussion of a short passage from *scripture*. The second is a discussion of some aspect of the *liturgy* or a related doctrine. Thirdly, we have the *report*. This roughly corresponds to a business meeting where reports on actions are made, and where old and new business are reported on or introduced. Next is the *social inquiry* followed by the *remarks of the chaplain*. A more detailed explanation of the structure of the meeting can be found in Chapter III of *A Guide to CFM*. In this chapter we shall confine our remarks to the scripture, liturgy, and social inquiry.

30

### *scripture*

The logical place to begin a CFM meeting is with the scripture. The reason for putting the scripture discussion at the beginning of the meeting is to provide an atmosphere for the entire meeting. Couples arrive at a meeting after a busy day at work or a battle, eventually won, to get all the small children in bed without being late for the meeting. The questions and discussion should not be rushed. People need time to make the transition from the stresses and strains of daily living to the peaceful contemplation of some scene or words from our Lord's life.

It is expected that both couples and chaplain have previously read and pondered the passage. The selections, particularly in the introductory booklet, teach some of the most elementary lessons of Christianity which we cannot assume people know. People get to know Christ in a surer way by talking about Him.



In the beginning this proves to be a novel and thrilling experience. Christ had been for them a Person whom they heard about from the pulpit or through the blacked-out slide of a confessional. Now, in CFM, Christ becomes someone familiar, discussed with like-minded people in the congenial and familiar setting of a neighbor's living room. Under these circumstances, our Lord's words have a truer ring and a more pointed application.



### *pondering God's word*

The scripture discussion is a form of mental prayer. In a religious community a superior reads from a book at meditation time to create a dialogue between the author and each member of the community with the hope that it will lead to an intimate conversation with God. In a CFM meeting the people learn how to do this in a way that comes easily to them—talking the matter over with friends. This experience should help couples to learn mental prayer or conversation with God.

31

“What we are trying to do through the scripture,” says Monsignor Hillenbrand, “is to probe into the meaning of the words. We are trying to know Christ, to hear his words, to see his actions, and this is to see God; to see the goodness of God and the power and the wisdom and the beauty of God, in Christ. As He himself says ‘Phillip, he who sees Me, sees the Father,’ so that we are glimpsing God when we glimpse the human life of Christ.

“Through the scripture discussion we become aware that Christ lived the incident for me and He had something in mind for me. He wishes to form a part of His image in me through this incident, some fraction of His own image or likeness in me. What we are aiming at is to get this better glimpse of Christ, and this in itself deepens our spiritual resources. Given the time and the circumstances, this will tell for action in the life of the lay apostle.”

### ***scripture actions***

In *For Happier Families* it is suggested that this part of the meeting terminate in a common agreement to perform an action which would be an application of the scripture lesson. This is not a denial of meditation on our Lord's life as an end in itself, but, in the beginning, actions are encouraged for psychological reasons.

Beginners might find some insecurity in the simple discussion of a passage and, on the contrary, a sense of accomplishment if they left with something to be done by the next meeting. Also, doing is a way of learning. It forces us to face a situation. This takes the scripture out of the clouds and gives it a street level reality. After the beginning booklet agreement on actions is not insisted upon lest it detract from the common action which concludes the social inquiry.

### ***liturgy***

The scriptures teach us our Lord's life and offer us His example, but the example of our Lord's life is not sufficient. "I have come that you may have life," said our Lord. This Christ-life, divine life, comes to us pre-eminently through the liturgy. The liturgy for the most part is something done in the parish church, not at a CFM meeting. Yet if CFM as an apostolic movement is dependent upon its members' sharing ever more in the life of Christ as God, their awareness of this must be heavily underscored. If CFM members are to be good parishioners and apostles or even grasp the message of Christianity, they must be indoctrinated in the mystery and worship of the Church.

In *For Happier Families* the whole gamut of the doctrine of the Mystical Body, the Mass, and the sacraments are covered summarily. The annual programs spell out the detail. This part of the meeting is purely didactic. Some chaplains feel that since this is strictly a learning effort and that a subject like the Mystical Body might be so novel to couples, they have no qualms about using the whole time to explain the matter. The majority opinion, however, holds that the learning process is best advanced by permitting the people to stumble a bit and then by gathering the loose ends together in the form of a summary or amplification.

CFM



THE CHRISTIAN  
FAMILY  
MOVEMENT

*International  
Student and Visitor  
Program*



WHAT IT IS . . . WHAT IT DOES . . . HOW IT WORKS



# International Student and Visitor Program

## WHAT IT IS



## THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT

CFM is an organization of married couples working together to promote happier family life through spiritual development, practical discussion and action. Groups of about six couples from the parish meet every two weeks in each others' homes. Discussions penetrate many aspects of family, social, economic, political and international life. The more than 5,000 CFM groups cooperate in



## **HOW IT WORKS**

In keeping with CFM philosophy, the program is administered at the grass roots level—at the parish and Diocesan Federation level. CFM groups keep in touch with college and university foreign student advisors, student organizations, Newman Club chaplains and others to reach the many students in their immediate area. They cooperate with other organizations such as the Diocesan Council of Catholic Men and Women, alumni groups, hospitality centers and others.

CFM also works with the Foreign Visitors Office of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the State Department in their international visitor programming.



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## WHY IT IS NEEDED

Each year between 80,000 and 90,000 visitors come to the U. S. for study, training, or orientation. Their length of stay generally varies from a few weeks to several years. Before the visitor comes to this country, he draws a mental picture (often distorted) of life in America from our motion pictures, television, and press. After he arrives he is in much the same position we would be as a visitor in his country. He is a stranger. He finds it difficult to make friends. He will take home with him a picture of this country as he saw it, a description of our people as he found them and an opinion of our culture as he was exposed to it. How accurate can that view be just from a college campus or an airplane window?

preparing an annual program through a coordinating committee.

## HOW TO JOIN

Interested couples should talk with their parish priest. If there is no group in your parish, he may suggest other couples who may be interested in belonging.

Before starting, see if there are other CFM groups in your diocese. They may help you start. The office of the Christian Family Movement Coordinating Committee has a list of the groups known to exist. Write CFM

Room 2233, 111 West Monroe St., Chicago 3, Ill.  
Telephone: RAndolph 6-2468

## WHAT IT DOES

### *Hospitality for College Students*

Because their stay will usually last several years, students are encouraged to visit often and feel that they have a "home away from home."

### *Housing*

Many CFM couples take a student into their homes for a school year in cooperation with the NCWC High School Exchange Program. Others open their homes to college students who are on scholarship but do not have funds available for food and housing.

### *Hospitality for Visitors and Dignitaries*

Many individuals tour the country observing technical practices in industry and government. Hospitality consists of an evening with a family, a home cooked meal, an exchange of personal understanding and perhaps the opportunity to attend

## PUBLICATIONS

FOR HAPPIER FAMILIES: An introduction to CFM containing twenty-five introductory meetings and information on how to start a CFM section. .75

ANNUAL INQUIRY PROGRAM: The annual Gospel-Liturgy & Social Inquiry. 1.00

CFM AND THE PRIEST: A Chaplain's Manual by Father Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A. 1.00

A GUIDE TO CFM: Successful methods and ideas for training leaders. 1.00

ACT: Monthly paper containing news of CFM. 1.00 per year

CFM, YCW, YCS: An explanation of the three related specialized apostolates. .25

CFM BROCHURE: What it is, how it works (3 min. reading time). cost 2c



# International Student and Visitor Program

## **WHAT IT IS**

The Christian Family Movement carries on a hospitality program for international students and visitors in many parts of the United States. An awareness of the need for this program resulted from CFM work in promoting happier family life and a better understanding of the problems involved in the community, nation and the world.

## **WHAT IT ASKS OF THE STUDENT OR VISITOR**

The hospitality program asks nothing more than that:

- Visitors accept our friendship and the opportunity to learn how we live.
- We have the privilege of knowing them and their homeland.
- We share the opportunity to promote good will on a person to person basis.



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## WHY WE ARE CALLED

We have a responsibility to see and act with the eyes and mind of Christ in promoting international understanding on a people to people basis. Hospitality promotes understanding. Understanding is charity and love. As the United Nations hungers for a world unity, Christ hungers for a united family of man. He is calling to us to share in this work. As citizens and Christians we have an obligation to promote charity and to "love one another as I have loved you."

## WHAT IT DOES

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Many individuals tour the country observing technical practices in industry and government. Hospitality consists of an evening with a family, a home cooked meal, an exchange of personal understanding and perhaps the opportunity to attend a parish or civic function.

### *Hospitality for Professional Groups*

When certain professional groups tour the country, CFM couples work together to schedule visits of technical and sightseeing interest, provide local transportation and arrange for socials. CFM usually arranges hospitality for such groups in several cities of their itinerary.

In each of these areas families try to give visitors an opportunity to see American family life as we live it daily. Emphasis is placed on normal family living rather than "pretentious entertainment."



CHICAGO FEDERATION

## Christian Family Movement

720 NORTH RUSH STREET

CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
1655 WEST JACKSON BLVD.  
CHICAGO 12, ILL.

For hospitality, students are  
invited to contact:

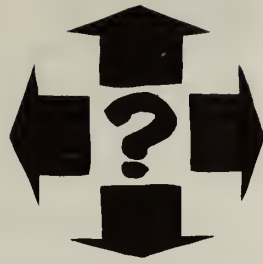
CFM HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

This leaflet is a service of the

## Foundation for International Cooperation

Sponsored by the Christian Family Movement for the promotion of  
international student, visitor, and cooperation programs.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT  
720 NORTH RUSH STREET CHICAGO 11, ILLINOIS  
1655 WEST JACKSON BLVD.  
CHICAGO 12, ILL.



### *the social inquiry*

The heart of the CFM meeting is the social inquiry. The other parts of the meeting prepare for it. Conceivably the scripture and liturgy discussions could be dispensed with and the essence of the CFM meeting be retained by simply having the social inquiry. One of the great contributions CFM is making to pastoral and ascetical theology is the linking of life in the world with life in God through the social inquiry.

Writers and preachers usually discuss this in general terms. They repeat St. Paul's dictum that "the will of God is your sanctification." But, what is the will of God concretely? How do we determine it? Does a priest tell us how to vote, what job to take, what car to buy, where to live, what stand we should take on foreign aid or the race problem, and whether to be permissive or authoritative in the raising of children? The will of God can be a glib phrase on the tongues of Christians who are working at cross purposes with the Church through ignorance of its social teaching.

33

People are told that they are growing spiritually by living according to their "state in life." But what are the specifics of this state? Actually, the layman must play many roles in life. He may be an efficient worker at the shop, yet a demon behind a wheel, a drone to his wife, a fuddy duddy to his children, a hail-fellow-well-met at the club and a die-hard isolationist in politics.

To find the will of God in each area of life needs sharp analysis. Because of the complexity of our civilization, an array of facts and wide experience are needed before a judgment is made. The practical judgment on what course of action to take can only be a here-and-now attempt to define a pattern of Christian action. A girl who was a senior in high school remarked: "I wish our Lord wrote a gospel on dating." She

wanted a neatly packaged formula for this aspect of her life. All that can be done for the girl is to give her a device which she can intelligently use in arriving at a specific conclusion about the thing to do, given the present dating patterns.

Because patterns of action change rapidly, the method of arriving at conclusions is very important. CFM's method is the social inquiry. Through it we can investigate each role we play to find out what the will of God is for us here and now, and what apostolic opportunities the situation presents.



### *the thrust into life*

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The social inquiry is the *piece de resistance* of CFM. It thrusts people into life. Since the desert fathers, Christians in the quest for holiness have wanted to withdraw from combat in the world. Even people in CFM want to use the scripture and liturgy discussion as protective cloisters by spending almost the entire meeting on them at the expense of the social inquiry. Congar writes trenchantly of this problem: "Lay people are called to the same end as clergy or monks—to the enjoyment of our inheritance as sons of God; but they have to pursue and attain this end without cutting down their involvement in the activities of the world, in the realities of the primal creation, the disappointments, the achievements, the stuff of history."

If the chaplain does not appreciate the legitimacy of lay tasks; unless he understands the Christian humanism of St. Thomas, he is going to produce schizo-Christians. He is going to have little patience with a social inquiry that is forever probing "worldly" affairs and not concerned with religion. The hydra-headed monster of Manicheism is forever raising its head under the holiest of guises.



## **observe**

The inquiry method of Catholic Action stems from Monsignor Cardijn and the YCW movement. It has three parts: observe, judge, and act.

The first, the “observe,” asks a series of questions about a factual situation. If the subject is neighborhood recreation, the members before the meeting, must do some on-the-scene reporting such as talking to parents about facilities and services, interviewing the park board or the local playground director to obtain detailed information about the situation. When members have compiled and assorted these facts, a realistic picture unfolds before the group.

This realism of the Observe was scored by Monsignor Reynold Hillenbrand at a CFM Convention: “The inquiry probes into our problems and therefore probes into life and keeps the whole thing realistic. If people have congratulated you upon the fact that you are ordinary people, not dilettantes, not people up in the clouds, this is not due only to the fact that you happen to be people like that by nature. It is because the movement has left you that way. The movement has reinforced the search for truth, for reality in you. It has made you more genuine people because it has so strictly rooted you in the problems of your life through the inquiry method.”

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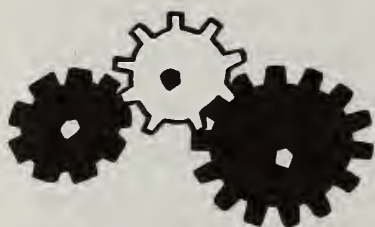
## **judge**

The second phase of the inquiry is the “Judge.” By means of a series of questions the facts are viewed through the lens of scripture, papal teachings, reason, and the testimony of experts, non-Christian as well as Christian. In the second inquiry in *For Happier Families* on the benefits of neighborliness, the first of two judge questions reads: “If Christ lived in your neighborhood would He be pleased with the way people knew each other?” This question could contain a fruitful twenty minute discussion. The people must recall the words, examples,

and parables of Jesus on charity, and then see how they apply to the particular observations which people have made during the past two weeks.

If the inquiry were on the subject of attitudes of people in a neighborhood changing in racial composition, the "Judge" might become extremely involved. What our Blessed Lord said about prejudice in the parable of the Good Samaritan and what the American hierarchy said in its 1958 statement are clear and unquestionable as statements of principle. But what should families do in particular circumstances? Here is where reason and the experience of the group have great weight. Here is where we must rely heavily on experts on race relations.

In quoting experts, their training and competence may be more important than whether or not they themselves profess Christianity.



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### *act*

The "Act," the third and final phase, terminates the inquiry. The leader tries to find a consensus of thought on some practical thing which can be done about the subject under discussion. The action must be something that is realistic and gets to the heart of the problem. The size or scope of the action is not the major consideration. The aim is to have each in the group commit himself to changing, by some effort, the situation which they all may have scored heavily as un-Christian.

If no action is taken in these circumstances, the group has become a discussion group. Discussion groups are excellent if their purpose is simply to discuss and learn, but when a CFM group discusses only, there is something dishonest about the meeting. In effect, they are telling themselves that they have faced up to an un-Christian situation when in actuality they ran for cover with verbal subterfuges. Yet allowance must be made for the occasional social inquiry in which no relevant action can be determined.

## **Preparing for Meetings**

In an average urban parish it requires no particular skill for a priest or a couple to gather six couples together to start CFM in the parish. The motivation for coming to a first meeting is seldom apostolic. People might come to get acquainted with other parishioners, to know the priests better, to acquire the status that comes with having a priest come to their home occasionally, to have an evening out together, or simply because they know somehow it is for the good of the Church. Most likely it will be some combination of these motives. With such mixed motives and a little encouragement from an apathetic chaplain, a CFM group could limp along almost indefinitely. Whether the Church is served by such groups is questionable. In favor of such situations is Chesterton's dictum that what is worth doing is worth doing badly. But such minimal performance is a pernicious example given to other parishes which plan to begin.

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A CFM group worthy of the name demands the loving care and attention of a chaplain who sees his job as cooperating with the Holy Spirit to form apostles for the Church. His immediate job outside the meeting is to prepare the couple that is to lead the next meeting. If CFM is starting in the parish, he has the unique opportunity and responsibility for helping them arrive at a genuine understanding of the basic concepts of the movement. During the first six months the chaplain should realize that his time is well spent in these preparatory sessions with the same six couples. It is these people who ordinarily will be the ones to expand the movement widely in the parish at a later date. If the foundation is not well laid, the superstructure may be forever shaky.



### *the time and place*

The chaplain should make it clear to the couples that a time should be set aside so that he can prepare the next meeting with the one who is assigned the responsibility of leading the meeting. In beginning groups the leadership is rotated so that the chaplain and the couple can get to know each other better and to discover the leadership ability of each. The preparatory meeting is either held in the priest's house or in the couple's home if babysitting poses a problem. If it is begun with a prayer, the Holy Spirit will be more surely present and set a tone to the meeting so that it might not become too casual and descend to chit-chat.

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### *scripture preparation*

In preparing the scripture with the couple, the chaplain should play the role he expects them to play at the meeting. He asks one of them to read the passage. Instead of using the questions in the book he might merely ask them what this passage means to them. He should give them time to form their answer and time to unravel it. After that he might ask a question or two that might bring out some aspect of the passage not pointed up or pull together what was loosely presented. He does not play the role of a biblical exegete. But if there is something not clear about the passage itself, he comments briefly upon it.

The chaplain must learn to use the Socratic method, drawing the couple out rather than telling them. This is extremely difficult for the chaplain who knows and loves the scriptures. He may want them to master the passage by listening to him, but he must be satisfied with their own halting efforts to grasp in their homely way some small part of it.



### ***liturgy preparation***

The liturgy part of the meeting does not terminate with an action. In preparing this section with the couple the chaplain cannot hope for more than that the couple grasp the kernel of the subject. The chief responsibility of the couple leading the meeting is to keep a lively discussion kindled and to the point. The final word on the theology of the subject must be left to the chaplain. Couples leading the meeting must be advised against using "Father said" in order to press a point.

### ***social inquiry preparation***

In preparing the social inquiry the chaplain asks the couple for their observations. If they fail to have prepared them, he should gently and firmly remind them of what is expected of them. If the couple is unfamiliar with the techniques of ferreting out the information, he should patiently give them how-to-do-it tips.

The subject matter of the inquiry dictates the type of observation. Some inquiries deal with neighborhood facts which can be picked up over a backfence conversation or a kaffeeklatch. For other types of inquiries, as in the fields of economics and politics, reading is a *sine qua non*. Still other types call for interviews with people in positions of authority. Most inquiries would probably call all these approaches to play with emphasis on one or another.

The judgment part of the inquiry deals with values. Ordinarily this is where the priest has the greatest opportunity for making his contribution. The level of his contribution will depend upon the type of inquiry and his competence on the particular subject. If the subject deals with the neighborhood or parochial relations he should find no difficulty. If the inquiry deals with a specialized field as the industry council plan or foreign aid, he should prepare himself by referring to books or consulting people unless he happens to be an authority on the subject.

With groups which have been in operation for some time it might be well to bring an expert to the meeting when the subject is a complicated one. The inquiry method presumes that the truth lies buried in the group and comes to the surface by the

pooling of the resources of all. It should be frankly recognized that meetings can be a pooling of common ignorance and have the effect of adding zeroes.

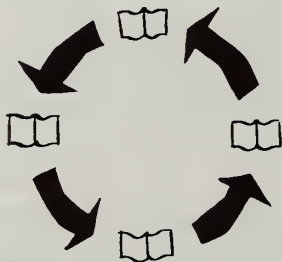
The preparation meeting should be used for bringing up matters that deal with the over-all welfare of the section. Such things as personality clashes, delinquent members, and matters that cannot be brought up before the group without embarrassment can be thrashed out. In a later chapter we shall refer to the possibilities of using this meeting to help the couple with their own spiritual difficulties.

### *multiple preparations*

When there are many groups in the parish, does the chaplain prepare each couple? The minimum should be to prepare the couple which is to lead the section meeting. Because the couples leading the action group are section group members, they will have previously gone through the meeting with the section.

Yet the chaplain should try to have direct contact with action group members. One way is to have a couple from each action group in the parish meet in the rectory and prepare the meeting with the chaplain in a group.

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We add, parenthetically, that rotation of leadership within the action group develops future leaders and gives the members a greater stake in their group. Experience will dictate when to start rotating and whether to rotate the entire meeting or simply the gospel and liturgy.

If there are only a few action groups in the parish and the chaplain is not pressed for time, he might well prepare more leader couples individually. Ultimately the chaplain is left to his own ingenuity and generosity to determine how many and in what manner he will prepare couples for leading meetings. Prudence cautions a chaplain not to try to do so much that he

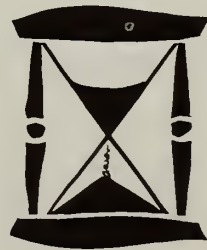
puts a strain upon himself and ultimately abandons the whole project as something too demanding. Budgeting time is an art.

### *the chaplain's role*

At the meeting itself the priest has his own unique contribution to make. The most obvious contribution is his presence. The presence of a priest at any parish meeting or function gives status to the work in the eyes of parishioners.

If a parish has a section with six action groups, this means there will be seven CFM meetings in the parish every two weeks. No parish priest can make CFM his total work. Since the section group acts as an executive committee, *the basic minimum would be to attend the section meeting regularly*. If possible, it would be good to be present for at least such action groups as he can fit into his schedule. A sociological study has shown that there is a direct ratio between the presence of the chaplain and the success of a group.

At the meeting the priest spends most of the time as a listener. Because this is not the role he plays most of the time, he may feel uncomfortable. Yet if CFM is to be a lay movement he must respect the discussion and democratic processes. The priest who comes to lecture will always be an obstacle to the group. The chaplain does have a speaking role in the meeting. After the scripture and liturgy, the chaplain can take a few minutes to comment on the subjects. If he has been attentive during the discussion, he will have a few valuable thoughts to share with them. If he has no contribution to make, he should say so and let the meeting proceed. Again at the end of the meeting the chaplain has an opportunity to speak. *Ordinarily his comments should be brief and always related to the apostolate.*



When a chaplain visits action groups infrequently, he could take the liberty of speaking at greater length than he might

otherwise. There is no rule of thumb about how long a priest may speak at a meeting. He must learn from experience and the reactions of the group whether the length of his remarks is promoting or hindering group discussion and the purpose of CFM.

The chaplain's comments should be encouraging even when he has adverse criticisms to make. However, if he continually tells a group that they are doing well when they are doing poorly, he will separate himself from the group. They will conclude that he does not understand their difficulties. He might have a comment on something that came up in the report or a project they are working on which is related to the parish. He might have something to add about the social inquiry. Never should it be a canned speech.

If the chaplain is alert during the meeting, he may find it a very great help to jot down a few notes as the meeting proceeds. Not only should his words be encouraging but they should always try to challenge the group and stir them from complacency. After the meeting concludes with his blessing, he should feel no obligation to join in the coffee hour. However, if he can afford to stay awhile, his relationship with the group will be strengthened.

If the chaplain is faithful to his role, he will have an unparalleled "listening post" for constructive comment on the life of the Church which will find its way into his sermons and talks.

## **Opportunities for Spiritual Guidance**

We began this manual by stating that the CFM chaplain is following the admonitions of St. Gregory in practising his spiritual arts. It cannot be too heavily underscored that the chief function of the CFM chaplain is to help people discover the riches of Christ and make these riches the impulse of their action. Yet we have talked only of the meeting. The meeting itself does for people what it would take an impossible number of hours for the priest to do with each individual.

Every chaplain who has sat through the scripture discussion of the introductory meeting has seen this spiritual group therapy at work. In the discussion the neophytes try to discover what the will of God is for them in their human situations. The group haltingly comes to the amazing personal discovery that the will of God is found in one's daily round of work and leisure. The next day as a truck driver patrols the roads and his wife changes the baby's diapers they will experience the joy of union with God through their routine tasks.

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### *developing through the group*

Through the group, many people can develop spiritually with a minimum of individual help. This is one of the reasons why we feel sure the Cure d'Ars would be a chaplain today. To make this statement is not to detract from the urgency of individual spiritual help which the chaplain gives to as many people as possible. It is merely underscoring the insistent demands of his other time-consuming tasks, and the little time he can squeeze out of a busy week for individual counsel.

Nor is group therapy a second rate substitute for individual help. In some areas of the spiritual life, the group can offer



greater help than a priest. For example, how can a priest help people to discover what is the charitable thing to be done in a neighborhood where other small children seem to be a harmful influence on one's own children? Only a discussion with parents in similar situations could help people through the complexities of conflicting obligations to one's own children, the neighbor's children, and the neighborhood.

### *couples help themselves*

In preparing for the meeting the couple is expected to go over the entire meeting with each other. As the years of married life go on, a couple tend to take each other, the children, the home, and all they have in common, for granted. Conversation has a tendency to descend to the trivial, except in moments of crisis. Couples, without being aware of it, can be growing apart.

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When a CFM couple discuss in the quiet of the evening when the children are in bed what our Lord means in a particular passage, they are really discussing with each other the deepest issues of life and getting to know each other again at ever deeper levels of their lives. This sharing of spiritual experiences gives mutual support to their spiritual strivings.

### *guidance through preparation*

Although it would be naive to think that all spiritual counsel emanates from those in Holy Orders, yet we must see the sacrament of priesthood as a God-given fountainhead and instrument of the Holy Spirit for spiritual guidance. Every priest has suffered the burden of the rectory parasite; the insecure woman, who by visit or phone is always asking what she must do in these particular circumstances. Yet the priest knows that well-balanced people who are capable of making their own decisions need his priestly counsel and encouragement for advancing in the ways of the Lord. The preparation of the

meeting with the chaplain offers a unique opportunity for the chaplain and a particular couple to get down to the realities of the spiritual life.

Without strain or pain the chaplain can use the scripture, liturgy, or social inquiry for a *cor ad cor* discussion. Couples, too, can be encouraged to use this time to bring to him their personal problems. A climate should be established so that problems can be aired without their being presented as Senate investigation cases. The chaplain should not hesitate to ask them about prayer, spiritual reading, offering Mass and participation in it. If the chaplain could meet with just one couple a week, that is, a different couple each week, for an hour and get down to the meat and potatoes of the spiritual life, one would find in a few years a revolution in an American parish.



### *chance opportunities*

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There are a number of ways for a priest to keep alive a fruitful dialogue with his CFM couples. When he reads a good article or book, he passes it on to someone or calls someone on the phone to tell them they have not lived until they have read it. This is a far more effective way of getting his people to read than lecturing them on the subject. When he calls to have Johnny serve a funeral, he asks Dad or Mom how the last meeting went. He sees John and Jane outside the Church and he asks them about their action group or the book he loaned them. There are myriad ways he can encourage and gently nudge couples along without revamping his already crowded schedule. In order to offer this casual but continuing help to the people in the action groups, he must know them and establish an easy rapport with them. If he can afford the time to stay occasionally for a short time for the coffee hour at the action meetings, people will feel that they can approach him easily at another time.

## *regular guidance*

So far we have not discussed the possibilities of CFM members receiving spiritual guidance regularly. It would be quite reasonable to expect them to have a regular spiritual guide or confessor after they are in CFM a year. The subject can be broached by the chaplain at a meeting and then taken up with individuals. The chaplain should in the beginning deftly make it known to them that he is available without their thinking that it is a requirement.

Spiritual guidance or counselling can be separated from the sacrament of penance. A priest whose schedule is predictable and not overloaded may be able to take on a number of clients. For the ordinary priest these extra-confessional clients will, of necessity, be limited. Also, to some this face-to-face approach may pose psychological difficulties.



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Most people must settle for something less than what is held up as an ideal. The confessional is available to all. Combining spiritual guidance with the sacrament of Penance has a number of advantages. The obvious practical advantage for the priest and lay person is the element of convenience. People know the hours for confessions. If the priest to whom they wish to go to is not there, they can receive the grace of the sacrament from another priest. There is no need of calling the rectory for an appointment and no need to send a telegram when an out-of-town appointment detains either party. On the priest's side there is no new demand upon his time. The time has already been allotted for the purpose by the pastor. People can learn from experience at what time there are the least people in the Church so they can talk at some length, for example, the Thursdays before the First Fridays.

The Church allows its children the freedom to seek spiritual help outside the parish. The chaplain may have some leads for them. They may find a confessor in a downtown church which is near work, or a neighboring church or monastery.



### *initiating the dialogue*

People should likewise be given a few tips on how to seek guidance. If an unidentified woman asks a priest in confession to be her spiritual director, he may be diffident to accept the request. If the same woman merely said, "Father, I am continually nagging my husband, could you help me?" she might get a hearing and gradually the area of assistance could be extended to all of life.

When a priest is asked to be a spiritual director, he is apt to think of all works on mysticism he has not read and of his personal limitations in living a deep spiritual life. If the same priest is confronted with human situations and particular spiritual problems, he may prove to be another Cure d'Ars. After the initial and favorable response it could be suggested that people identify themselves in subsequent confessions, "Bless me Father, this is Joe" or "This is a CFM wife," so the priest can tie one confession to another.

There is something about our American culture which inhibits a priest from speaking about God except from the pulpit or the emotion-choked funeral parlor. In the confessional he has the similar inhibitions about referring to God for anything more than warnings about future occasions of sin. Lay people who are interested in something more than absolution, a penance and a quick exit can, by asking for help, assist him over the hurdle which curtails his priestly ministrations.

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### *the skilled counsellor*

How does a priest go about helping a lay person along the paths of sanctity? One method is to deal with whatever difficulties the penitent or client brings to the visit. The priest tries to interpret these spiritual difficulties in terms of human nature, the Cross, and the sacramental and non-sacramental aids to increasing the divine life. He does not use the difficulties elaborated as springboards for his *ferverinos* on particular virtues and practices which could be as well played from a record. Rather, he listens attentively to locate the person's spiritual level and their needs upon which to build.

This is not a classroom procedure. It is the method parents use in training and teaching children. The lesson always begins

where the shoe pinches. Since the spiritual life is all of a piece, every difficulty in the spiritual life can be ultimately related to all the other aspects of it. A skilled counsellor over a period of time would draw all the time-honored means of sanctity into the discussion.

## **The Spiritual Life for Laymen**

CFM offers no new or sectarian spirituality. It merely points up for contemporary married couples what it considers of particular relevance in the scriptures and liturgy, and offers suggestions for implementing these truths in one's relations with God and fellowman.

It draws particularly from the teachings of St. Pius and Pius XII in the area of the liturgy. It has drawn from the American liturgical movement of the past two decades, from the accumulated experiences of priests and laymen who have dedicated themselves to the lay apostolate during the past quarter century. In this chapter we have sorted out under separate headings some of the points with which a spiritual guide should concern himself in helping to strike deep roots of sanctity in members of the Christian Family Movement who seek his counsel.

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### *spirituality of action*

The emphasis in CFM's "Yellow Book" is not on the intellectual virtues as much as it is on charity. It helps people to see new facets to problems and situations which they experience hundreds of times in a week. It helps them to discover with the help of others the Christian implication in these situations and turn the will through action to the good.

This is an appeal to the will rather than an intellectual one, and no apology need be made for it, provided it is understood that we are dealing with beginners in the spiritual life. Billy Graham is very much aware of this. He is never satisfied with merely thrilling an audience with an electrifying speech and having them articulate a few "Amens." He asks them to make "decisions for Christ," wherein they disclose their allegiance to Christ by stepping out of the crowd and into the aisle, thus making a public declaration of intention.

While we start with involvement in an action or project, the involvement must in time take on the substance of a cause outside ourselves to which we devote ourselves unselfishly. This dedication can have a transforming effect upon the entire personality.

Books on the spiritual life seldom treat this approach. Too often the person is regarded as a disincarnate spirit who is involved in the religious arithmetic process of counting acts of virtue. Dietrich von Hildebrand gives lie to this approach in a masterful sentence. "It is not from what we undertake with a view to our transformation, but from the things to which we devote ourselves for their own sake, that will issue the deepest formative effect upon our habitual being."



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Obviously, it is the quality of unselfishness and dedication to others that is the transforming power that flows from involvement or commitment. CFM members learn to be involved, not for the sake of involvement but for the good of others. They may, in the beginning, come to a meeting because they wish to make new friends, because they are tired of TV or for a multitude of self-centered reasons, but out of this real commitment can evolve. It is the necessary first step of an infant or of a person recovering from paralysis.

The chaplain or the spiritual counsellor must be forever helping couples to relate their activities in behalf of others to the love of God. When they are giving the cup of cold water, he must remind them it must be a disinterested or unselfish action done in the name of Christ and done to slake the thirst of the Christ. Action must be seen as fulfilling the injunction that we love in *deed* and in *truth*.

## ***“formation through action”***

It is contended in some quarters that the CFM formula of “formation through action” can lead to an activism which is a hollow form of doing for the sake of doing, what Pius XII called “the heresy of works.” These are indeed profitable warnings which should be thoughtfully and charitably heeded.

There are some who come to the apostolate by learning first to appreciate the divine life, the sacraments, and the Mass. The scholastic axiom, *action follows being*, certainly supports this position, as does the dictum: *one cannot give what one does not have.*

Great Christian lay people have become witnesses for the Church after they have come to drink deeply of the scriptures and tapped the wellsprings of the liturgy. After they have found the Christian sources of holiness the natural brilliance of their minds and their refined human instincts led them intuitively to Christian action. For them, the techniques used in the specialized movements would only have been a means of practising patience which they could have learned as well at home or in their professional life.

CFM is built from wide experience on the principle that for the generality of married people group support and an insistence on action motivated by love are proved ways of leading people to desire to reach for the heights of sanctity, the riches of the Christ-life. While CFM makes no apology for its emphasis on action, it claims no monopoly of the ways of helping people achieve union with God.

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## ***the social inquiry***

The social inquiry is both an instrument of social reform and personal sanctity. When we speak of the spirituality of action and formation through action, we are talking about the thrust of the Christian into life through the inquiry. The spiritual life of the layman is not a reality until he has made operative his belief in Christ in terms of his daily encounter in the world. This is why CFM stresses the social inquiry as a means of growth in the spiritual life. The prayer and sacramental life of the members must sustain and support them in the actions flowing from the social inquiry and eventually from all of life.

### *living a liturgical life*

The second strand in CFM's spiritual life-line is participation in the liturgy of the Church. Logically the liturgy comes first. Worship or loving God directly is first in the order of nature, but given our secular culture and the present state of liturgical participation it is hardly to be expected that people will gravitate to the altar immediately. CFM patiently takes people step by step to God's altar. CFM does not foster the liturgy primarily because it is a tool for action but because the public worship of the Church is the *raison d'être* of the Catholic.



52 A spiritual guide should be concerned with the manner and frequency of participation in the sacrifice and sacraments of the Church. In reference to the Eucharist the priest should help his clients understand that Mass with Communion is the normal thing. The frequency of daily Mass should be discussed. It should not be posed in such a way that a person who cannot come because of distance, work, or family will have a guilt complex about not going. If Saturday Mass can be added to Sunday's, people will find that a gradual approach to daily Mass is not such a chilling prospect. To what has been said in the last chapter about confession we add here that people should be encouraged to a regular reception of the sacrament of penance. Every two weeks should be a minimum.

### *the word of God*

A third requirement of the spiritual life is reading. For monk and layman alike the chief source is the Bible. With the recent scriptural studies inaugurating a renaissance in Bible reading, the priest who is alert to these currents has the necessary tools at his disposal. For example, Lupton's "*Guide to Reading the Bible*" offers a plan for lay people finding their way through the scriptures in a more meaningful manner than beginning with Genesis and wading through to the end.

Besides the scriptures and their commentaries, the chaplain or the spiritual guide should have on his fingertips a list of books which he has read and which may be of assistance to a person at particular moments of his spiritual growth. In suggesting books, as in sports, timing is of the essence. With a very few dollars of his personal money, a priest could invest in a small quantity of paperback spiritual classics like *This Tremendous Lover* or *Many Are One*. The priest will save in the long run by giving away paperbacks than by loaning hardcovers. The chaplain should inquire from time to time about a person's progress with a particular book. This can be another source for fruitful dialogue.



In ages past spiritual reading was confined to the Bible and its commentaries. While we can never depart from the Bible, the complexity of modern living demands that we keep abreast of current developments in theology or the applications of Christianity by scholars. *Commonweal*, *America*, *Ave Maria*, *Jubilee*, *Today*, *Sign*, *Cross Currents* and others can be called spiritual reading only in a wide sense, but each family should be encouraged to fit the subscription price of one of these into its budget. Furthermore, each couple in a group could subscribe to a different magazine and exchange them at meetings.

CFM people have "good" excuses for being poor readers. They are usually involved in a wide range of activities that leave little time for reading. The acceptance of this fallacy can be CFM's eventual downfall. Nothing is more apt in an apostolate that addresses itself to social change than the dictum: *Readers are leaders*. Monsignor George Higgins has said, "The biggest single need of the American Church is more lay people who read."

## *prayer*

There will be no apostolate unless there is at the basis of it people who have an intense prayer life. One of the chaplain's tasks is to teach people to pray. People understand prayer almost exclusively in terms of vocal prayer. Even here people need help, since they find that any formula of vocal prayer can become empty and mechanical. Distractions and aridity are common difficulties which a priest can handle quite easily.

Mental prayer is often presented as something entirely new, yet people pray this way without an awareness of it. When a person finds himself reflecting upon God and His mercies at odd moments during the day, he is engaging in a form of mental prayer. These reflections come even as distractions during one's work. The priest should help people have regular periods of reflection every day, instead of leaving it entirely to chance.

Mental prayer should not be presented as an involved methodical approach to God. The inherent difficulties of lovingly fixing one's gaze on God for any length of time should not be multiplied. Any way people can arrive at this loving conversation with God is a suitable way. Resolutions are not of the essence but, rather, the movement of the mind and heart to God.

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For lay people to move from the myriad distractions of work and home to the contemplation of the mysteries of Christ is not a simple feat of mental gymnastics. If mental prayer is tied to spiritual reading, the approach is easier and quite natural. This is the way of the liturgy. After a reading is finished in a liturgical service there is a pause during which a musical interlude is provided for. This gives the listener time to sort out and ponder what was read. This is the Church's traditional way of meditating.

The length of time for reading and meditating should be left to the individual to work out. When, during the day, people can find the time, must likewise be left to the individual. Busy people can find odd bits of time either on their way to or from work, during a long lunch hour, while the children are napping, or when the house is quiet after the children have gone off to school or have retired. Fixing a time and making



it habitual is necessary. It should be pointed out that there will be days when the best laid plans will have to be put aside for the unpredictable events in life. If one is so busy all day long doing God's will to the extent that he has not once found time for the usual prayer, he must be reassured that he was through his actions at every moment praying the Lord's prayer: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

### *a framework for living*

What can be done to work out an entire framework for one's life—a rule of life? The first principle is flexibility. "Never say never" is another way of expressing the same. Besides time for prayer, Mass, and reading there should be time for a couple to have serious conversation as well as time for attention to the needs of each member of the family. In no case can a chaplain tolerate a couple's placing their own family on the altar of sacrifice for the sake of other people's families.

When the individual goes over these human, spiritual, and familial requirements he will find out that there are limits to how far he can extend himself in the service of his fellow man. He must learn to say "no" to undertaking new obligations which cannot be undertaken without prejudice to prior ones. These are decisions which the layman must make and the priest must respect. Experience will teach the priest that lay people, without compromising their family commitments, achieve a greater capacity for tasks as the years go on. In the beginning they will need more time for themselves to put their spiritual houses in order. Likewise, the age of the person's family will determine how much outside-the-home activity is feasible.



### *poverty*

When people in upper income brackets take CFM seriously, they find the words of our Lord on poverty disturbing. If CFM

is interested in relieving people from material poverty, it cannot at the same time hold up material poverty as an ideal to its members. Also, some of what might seem superfluous or luxury items may be justified by necessary social exigencies. The apostle, to be effective, must identify himself as far as possible with his peers. Rather than material poverty, the chaplain should stress sharing or the stewardship of property. Actually the majority of people in CFM, like the rest of Americans, are heavily mortgaged, and probably spend a greater part of their income for babysitters in order to do the work of CFM than do people in similar circumstances.

Yet CFM must keep before its minds the almost universal material poverty of the world. The inequitable distribution of goods within this country and between this country and Asia must be painfully borne in mind. Most Americans in the face of the grinding and involuntary poverty of others are like the stranger, who while riding through the slums of an Asian city, wished he were enveloped by a London fog. The chaplain has the difficult job of prodding and nagging members to face up to worldwide responsibility while they enjoy the comforts of the American way of life.

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We can establish a rapport with our suffering brethren all over the world by our interest in the politics, economics, and cultures of these peoples. One's love for them can be shown by a willingness to pay taxes for foreign aid, by sharing homes with foreign students or visitors. We can find many ways of showing our love for people once we are aware of who, in concrete circumstances, our brother is.

### *mortification*

Emerson wrote a century ago that "things are in the saddle and ride mankind." In the last quarter century "things" have multiplied in such proportions that the average American Catholic has made a prodigious economic advance. This multiplication and availability of material goods and opportunities for social advancement demand unprecedented restraint in their use. In our religious vocabulary we call restraint in the use of material and spiritual goods by the dour, forbidding word, "mortification."

Restraint for the layman can be more difficult than renunciation for the monk. Mortification in the use of material goods and the senses has more relevance today for the Christian than at any time in the history of mankind with the possible exception of the days of Roman paganism. The chaplain must help people make affluence not a goddess but a docile servant.



The hairshirt, the discipline, and chains are not the tools of a penitential life for the layman today. Attendance at meetings, faithfully carrying out actions, making observations, and offering one's services cheerfully for the extra chores are ways of continuing the Passion of our Blessed Lord in one's own life. The work of CFM can be, at times, so demanding that nothing less than the carrying of the cross can be adequate motivation to continue. The absence of this motivation may sometimes be the explanation of apathy and dropping out. Eventually couples must see it in terms of St. Paul's shipwrecks, sleepless nights, fastings, and every manner of trial. Only in these terms can it be an exciting adventure after the Yellow Book fever or fervor has passed.

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CFM couples must eventually adopt the Open Door policy which teaches the spirit of penance to the entire family. The stability of their married lives and their proven generosity in the neighborhood will bring the lonely and poor in spirit to their door. Each guest should be greeted and treated as Christ. People in every neighborhood are searchingly asking St. Peter's question, "To whom shall we go?" In the ordinary course of events their way to Christ will be through the family who receives them as Christ for Christ.

To permit oneself to be imposed upon is probably the safest form of mortification. There can be little place for self since others are determining the disposal of our time and our resources. It is simply filling our Lord's injunction of going the extra mile.



## **Time for Reflection**

The American way of life stemming from our unprecedented type of industrial culture, offers more leisure hours per week than working hours to the mass of wage earners but in return demands a heavy toll in the form of ulcers, coronaries, and psychic problems. In our treadmill kind of life, there is little time allowed for silence, meditation, reflection or contemplation. Even the activities of CFM at times seem to add to our frenetic activity.

A few minutes everyday given to reflection, as necessary as this may be, cannot substitute for occasional longer periods during which the soul can ruminate and reach into hitherto unexplored empty caverns of the soul. Time is one of the elements necessary for spiritual experience. If Canon Law prescribes these lengthy periods for reflection for priests and religious lest they become dissipated by their daily routine, it is equally valid that lay people who share the apostolate with priests and religious should have these periods built into their lives.

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### ***couples retreats***

Happily, the number of retreat houses, seminaries, and colleges which provide facilities for laymen's retreats are steadily increasing. CFM is particularly interested in retreats for couples. A retreat is unlike a Cana Conference. The emphasis of the Cana Conference is on a re-examination of a married couple's love relationship. A retreat for couples has the same objective as a retreat for members of the same sex, namely, an examination of one's relationships with all of life, human and divine. The advantage for the couple making the retreat together is that both can make a fresh start together on the path of sanctity and in the weeks subsequent to the retreat they can discuss the conferences. The mutual support which is one of the reasons for marriage can be furthered by a couples' retreat.



The obstacles to a week-end away from home are quite formidable for most couples. We would be quick to write off a couples' retreat as a spiritual luxury which few couples can afford if we were not aware of how many couples in the course of a year manage to leave home for a weekend without their children, whether it is for a football game, a class reunion, a business trip, or a visit to a resort. The possibilities of CFM finding estates which could be used for inexpensive retreats and a system, as is already working in one archdiocese, of exchanging sitter services with couples making retreats on different weekends should be explored.

### *evenings of recollection*

Whether the weekend couples' retreat is a luxury item or not, the obstacles for the majority may well be insurmountable. The CFM evening of recollection has become the popular form of retreat. On the basis of obtaining available facilities there is no comparison with the difficulties of engaging a retreat house. Every parish has adequate facilities for an evening of recollection. If the evening of reflection is held in one's parish, no transportation problem is posed. The babysitter difficulty is diminished to the proportions of an evening out together. A parish CFM evening of recollection committee can reasonably set its sights on a one hundred percent turnout.

### *place*

Evenings of recollection or reflection are usually held on the parish premises. Many chaplains prefer a meeting room or hall rather than the church for giving the talks. This allows for a less formal approach, more after the pattern of a conversation than a sermon, wherein he can share his thoughts with them rather than labor for rhetorical effect from a distant pulpit. If the parish church is close to the room or hall in which the talks are given, the people can move to the church and pray before the Blessed Sacrament between the talks.

## *time*

The chaplain will ordinarily have a large part in planning the evening of recollection, but he should not impose a retreat schedule without consultation. A 8:30 to 10:30 period would provide for three twenty-minute or half-hour talks interlarded with short meditation periods. This would probably be the maximum time any group could arrange. Sunday evening has proved the most popular evening for this type of abbreviated retreat.

Although the chaplain consults on the details of the evening, he should never compromise on silence as a requirement. It should be as simple as: “no silence, no evening of recollection.” There is no need to find things for people to do between the talks, such as saying the rosary. The periods are for prayerful reflection. If the chaplain does not feel the people know how to use the time in meditation, the first talk might well be given on this very subject.

## *the retreat master*

The simple requirements for a retreat master are that he can be heard, that he has the ability to move an audience, and that he have a “feel” for CFM. The last requirement would eliminate many “name” preachers and by the same token make the local chaplain highly desirable. Since many like the fresh approach of a stranger, the local chaplain should be willing to make arrangements to exchange places with another chaplain in a different part of the city or diocese.

## *retreat topics*

The retreat talks should simply cover the traditional Christian themes in such a way that they show graphically their relevance to people engaged in an apostolate of couples. The conductor must remember that he is trying to deepen their spiritual life by challenging people who have already made more than the ordinary commitment of lay Catholics.

The mystery of God, the Mystical Body, the Mass, the divine life are subjects which get to the core of the objectives of CFM as well as of Christianity. These subjects are usually familiar themes to the listeners but unfortunately our religious teaching

in schools suffers from nominalism. Religious truths are concepts or terms to be learned and the great and wonderful realities are not vitally grasped and cherished. To translate these abstract truths into realities which touch the mind and heart, the speaker must penetrate the mysteries himself and try to present them in fresh but simple language.

Many chaplains shuffle their feet and bite their lips during a doctrinal discussion at the bi-weekly meeting, saving their brief remarks lest they inhibit discussion. During the evening of recollection the roles are reversed and the chaplain should feel at ease talking instead of impatiently listening. This is the supreme opportunity for him to unfold, for example, the liturgical themes which need a whole evening in themselves. He can play the role of expert without suffering guilt feelings, as he might at a meeting.



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### *how often*

It is suggested that every CFM couple attend two evenings of recollection annually. If a number of neighboring parishes join together for the evening of recollection the parishes could rotate arranging and hosting for the evening. Combining efforts is a great apostolic saving. Since there is no discussion or reporting the evening should not lose its effectiveness if seventy-five couples were present rather than twenty.

### *parish meetings*

A parish meeting differs in purpose from an evening of recollection. Parish meetings are usually held twice annually. They are held to introduce a new inquiry book topic or deal with a special parish problem. The parish meeting, unlike the evening of recollection, is an activity the chaplain leaves in the hands of the laity and merely makes himself available for consultation.



## The Federation Chaplain

The Christian Family Movement is a lay apostolic movement of the Church Universal. Each bishop has complete jurisdiction over CFM in his diocese. It can exist only with his approval, and should this be withdrawn it must vanish.

One reason CFM has prospered is that bishops have understood the mission of CFM in the Church as a lay apostolic movement. They have not tied it down with stringent constitutions, nor have they used it rigidly for specific ends, such as fund raising. They have understood that it must have a wide berth for initiative. Never have they conducted heresy hunts because lay people are discussing theology. Maybe it is because they somehow are aware that nearly all the heresies of the Church were started not by lay people discussing theology but by priests or professional theologians. Bishops have presided and spoken at national and diocesan gatherings and attended local meetings always with one objective — to encourage. In brief, CFM is trusted.

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On the local level, it is the chaplain who guides for the bishop. He does not assume that it will never make a mistake, but he does shield it from committing the Church adversely. For example, if he anticipates that a parish project such as a Sunday nursery will be a failure, it might be the more prudent thing to permit a group to learn by this failure. Responsibility demands elbow room for growth through failures. However, if CFM were to endorse a candidate for a political office, the chaplain would be quick to use his veto power. If a group were to take an action wherein they in effect would be representing the Catholic Church in a controversial matter, he would consult with his Pastor or the chancery office if he were not sure of the implications of the action. In these instances he is participating in the ruling mission of the bishop. In other phases of his work previously outlined, he is participating in the teaching work of his Ordinary and in sanctifying people.

The bishop of a diocese is a man of a multitude of cares. If he is to give CFM the care it deserves, he must appoint a priest to be his *alter ego* in matters pertaining to CFM. This priest is known as the federation or diocesan chaplain. With the rapid growth of the lay apostolate since the last revision of the Code of Canon Law, we have no written legal norms to guide the chaplain who must mediate between a hierarchial chain of authority and a lay movement which must use the democratic processes. What are of great help are the two addresses of Pius XII to the World Congresses of the Lay Apostolate in 1951 and 1957. If the diocesan chaplain conceives his work as that of a bureaucrat who issues directives like a commanding officer, he will bring CFM to a grinding halt. He can only learn the working out of this delicate relationship by "playing it by ear."

### ***federation officers***

The federation chaplain deals directly with the federation officers. (In *A Guide to CFM*, Chapter V, there is an explanation of the organization of a federation and the roles of the officers). The diocesan chaplain has a relationship to the federation officers which parallels the parish chaplain's relationship to the parish CFM'ers. He attends their meetings. If he has been appointed to the office because of proficiency as a parish chaplain, he will be sufficiently skilled in the art of guiding without the use of the heavy hand.

Besides being a consultant and the liaison with the bishop he is above all a guide of souls for the federation officers. Because they have been in CFM a number of years and have shown generosity and understanding, he should not consider that the work is complete. He must be forever challenging them to widen their horizons and deepen their vision.

### ***federation chaplain's responsibility***

Since CFM is a relatively new form of pastoral endeavor, priests must learn on the job. It cannot be presumed that the seminary adequately prepared them for the work. (This can be said without its being an indictment of the seminary). Many priests during their seminary years learned the theory and



techniques of Catholic Action. These priests need to exchange their practical experiences with their fellow priests and re-evaluate their earlier acquired theoretical views. It is up to the ingeniousness and unselfishness of the diocesan chaplain to discover ways and means.

Once an organization is efficiently structured, to the point that the diocesan chaplain feels there is no further need for concern about the education of priests, his house of cards will begin to fall. The federation chaplain must make himself available to all the priests of the diocese who want to discuss CFM with him informally. He must encourage priests to meet formally or informally when they can, even if he cannot be present. If the diocese covers a wide area, he should suggest names to the Bishop for the appointment of chaplains who would assume responsibility for regions or deaneries. Regional and deanery chaplains are in the best position to have luncheon or evening meetings for the chaplains of their area. In the ordinary course of events this should be the way the young priest learns from the seasoned chaplain.

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### ***chaplain's meetings***

Chaplain's meetings tightly structured like the couples meetings have never been enduring. In fact there is no pattern which can be offered on the basis of proven performance. One type of meeting proves successful for a time and then attendance drops off. A new approach then must be found. Finding ways of reaching chaplains through meetings suited to the present needs of the chaplains must be the pre-occupation of the diocesan chaplain. Unless the chaplains are continually deepening their knowledge and solidifying their convictions, CFM will never represent more than the enthusiasm of a few scattered priests and dedicated lay people. The CFM chaplains through these meetings must form a team. The isolated chaplain cannot fully develop without the support of a team.



### *the chaplain's study day*

A study day is a diocesan-wide form of chaplains' meeting. The study day is a formal attempt to indoctrinate and to discuss subjects related to CFM and particularly to the role of the chaplain. These should be held at least twice a year. A typical day would begin about 10:30 A.M. on a week-day and end about 3:00 P.M. These two lengthy sessions would ordinarily include a talk by an expert followed by floor and/or small group discussion. If the federation chaplain attends the national convention and is in contact with the parish chaplains, he will not find it difficult to choose topics and to know whom to invite to speak.

### *new chaplains*

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Special attention must be given to the young clergy. Many of the older chaplains had a hand in shaping CFM as it now exists. It is these priests who must cultivate the friendship of younger chaplains and share their experiences with them. Since the new chaplain, unlike the older one, may have inherited CFM as he did the Holy Name Society or Ushers Club, he may see in it no challenge and be satisfied with the routine performance he gives to other chores.

### *seminarians*

Since the seminary by its nature cannot offer practical experience in the lay apostolate, the diocesan chaplain should lend the assistance of his office to this aspect of the training of priests for the ministry. He should be in contact with the rectors of whatever seminaries, diocesan or religious, which are in his diocese and offer to arrange for a panel of lay people and priests on CFM. The chaplain should also make himself available to the seminarians of his diocese or city when they are home on

vacation. He can easily arrange for them to attend a CFM meeting or to meet with any priest or layman they may desire to interview.



### *bulletins*

If the diocesan chaplain has a mailing list of the chaplains, he could use it to keep the priests up to date on CFM developments. Even more important than the mere chronicling of events is the supplying of chaplains of reprints or mimeographed copies of articles or speeches which might be helpful for the chaplain. The federation chaplain must not limit his view of the education of priests to the learning of techniques. He must help them to see CFM in terms of the total mission of the Church and of the total responsibility and opportunity of the layman in our changing world.

### *dialogue*

In the dioceses where CFM is taking strongest hold, there is at the core of the operation a group of priests who meet with some regularity and discuss common problems. In some areas, priests wisely decide to meet on a wider basis than a particular apostolic movement, so they can deal with the broader aspects of the priesthood and in order that many who are not chaplains may be included.

If discussion on common problems has such a good effect upon lay people, is it not equally necessary for priests? If lay people continually need to re-discover their vocation in lay life, do chaplains have less need to examine their work? These meetings follow no single pattern. Some are in the form of lectures on recent developments in theology, scripture, or the sociology of religion. Some groups are primarily for discussion whether the discussion is structured tightly or loosely. The important thing is the dialogue or the vital exchange of ideas.

In every city there are priests who have greater insights than the average or have more time and inclination to read. These priests are invaluable to the Church, and there must be some medium through which they can communicate what they acquire. These very priests need the group as much as the others. Without the group the sage lacks a challenge. He may “blush unseen and waste his fragrance on the desert air.”

Such a group of priests is to a diocese or city what a healthy CFM is to a parish. They form a creative minority at work within an institution. They themselves may not make the necessary changes in the institution, but they are ceaselessly at work studying the situation, uncovering new facets, suggesting fresh approaches. Gradually those not directly involved in the group but in touch with members of the group see what must be done and take advantage of the climate the group has created, and the change is made.

Much more interesting than the history of political parties is the study of the creative minorities with which the sprawling, lumbering, stooped and bent parties have to deal and make peace. A great hope of the Church throughout history has always been in its creative minorities—initiating, suggesting, always obedient and never interested in personal conquest. The CFM chaplains in the United States are one of the Church’s most potent creative minorities. In these minorities lies a strong hope of the Church. The obverse is also true. When the prophets lose their vision, the people perish.

## **Outlines for Evenings of Recollection**

Each priest brings to the pulpit a unique personality. It is formed from a life of experience which no one else encountered. This is why a talk should be more moving and meaningful than a reading. Unlike the sophisticated huckster in TV commercials, the retreat master lives his lines. It is for this reason that seasoned priests have little patience with the possibility of adapting canned speeches or using another's outlines. The beginning chaplain, on the other hand, may feel the chore quite formidable and thus feel insecure without the props which outlines provide. It is with reluctance, therefore, that the following outlines are submitted.

### ***1. The Mystery of God***

1. A 1960 *Look* survey reports "all but three percent believe in God." There is more church going but hardly a deep religious revival.
2. Views of God: the Great Abstraction, the Taskmaster.
3. Who is God?
  - a) The method of scholastic theology is to study his perfections by way of negation.
  - b) A better method for our purposes seems to be to let God speak of God by way of the scriptures, e.g., Exodus 3.
4. "My ways are exalted above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts."
5. Without this exalted and profound notion of God, there is no consciousness of sin. Parents in teaching their children about God should be more concerned with teaching them about God than sin.

6. Reasons why people do not love God more:
  - a) They do not feel that they can be loved by God or man. St. Peter "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O'Lord." Our society breeds this feeling.
  - b) They fear the demands of being loved—its adventure and responsibility. Christ to Angela of Foligno: "It is no laughing matter that I have loved you."
7. What about our response to God's advances?
  - a) Our unwillingness to go the extra mile.
  - b) Our cringing from accepting new responsibilities as though we were to depend on our own resources.

*Reference: "The Meaning of God," in The Church Today, Suhard.*

## 2. Christ

1. We know God through seeing Christ.
  - a) "He who sees me, sees the Father."
  - b) Preface of Christmas. Through the visible we love the invisible.
2. If Christ walked the earth, it cannot be such a bad place. He loved His country to the point of weeping over it. He observed its rituals and customs.
3. Christ was more a man than any of us. He was not acting. He was really angry and compassionate. He was tender, strong, discouraged, patient. He suffered the discomforts of the body.
4. He was able to give free reign to His emotions because He had perfect control of them. Parents can hardly imitate His anger lest they punish unjustly. Children can hardly imitate Christ's friendship with sinners lest they be contaminated.
5. Christ became an apostle by reason of the Incarnation. He embraced humanity. Christian lay people must embrace all of the world they touch.



6. Lay people must not only “be incarnate” but they must be “redeemers.” “There is no redemption without of the shedding of blood.” Suffering is inescapable for the apostle or the Christian.

*Reference: The Salvation of the Nations, Danielou, Chapter 4.*

### **3. Divine Life**

1. “I have come that you may have life . . .” Point up differences between historic life of Christ and our possession of the Christ-life today.
2. The new life, supernatural life, sanctifying grace, the Christ-life and divine life are synonymous. Explain.
3. The impact of the new life in the world is not appreciated because we have lost the sense of the divine. Christianity has been reduced to a moral code — devitalized.
4. Explain how we are in St. Peter’s words “sharers of the divine nature.” Disney gives human life to a mouse through fantasy. God gives divine life to man in reality.

5. Implications for daily living.

*Reference: Of Sacraments and Sacrifice, Clifford Howell, S.J., Chapters 2 & 3.*

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### **4. Mystical Body**

1. Divine life comes through being grafted on to the Body of Christ.
2. One or more scriptural passages could be developed.
  - a) “I am the vine; you are the branches.”
  - b) “That all may be one as Thou Father in Me and I in them.”
  - c) “Members one of another.” “Christ is the Head; we are the members.”
3. The purpose of the Mystical Body.
  - a) the extension of Christ in space and time.
  - b) the fullness of Christ.
  - c) the adequate praise of the Father.

4. Our relation to the Mystical Body.
  - a) incorporation in Christ.
  - b) priesthood of the laity.
  - c) confirmation.
  - d) sacrament of matrimony.
5. The Mystical Body needs the world; the world needs the Mystical Body.
6. Pius XII says: "Christ *requires* his members." Each member in God's plan is irreplaceable.  
*Reference: The Living Christ, John L. Murphy. This book is a commentary on the encyclical.*

## 5. Mass

1. Mass is the action of the Mystical Body.
  - a) It is something not only watched; it is also something done.
  - b) "Because the Bread is one, we though many are one Body."
  - c) This union of the Mystical Body reaches its climax in the Mass (Pius XII).
2. Who are the "we?" We are the little child, the teenager, the young married couple, the old man, the student, the union man, the management man, the negro, the white.
3. The gift at Mass is tainted or enobled by the lack of or presence of generosity when I offer myself. I do not offer myself completely, if my life does not square with my offering. Sunday Mass and Monday work are related. A defect in our work makes our part in the Mass to that extent defective.
4. At the offertory our gift is bread and wine and ourselves. At the consecration Christ's gift is Himself and His whole Mystical Body (us).
5. In exchange for our work, our life, our love, we receive Christ. It is a banquet whose purpose is to bring us into a closer unity. It is necessary food for the apostle. The sacrament of love.  
*Reference: The Sacrifice of the Church, Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J.*

## 6. *Prayer*

1. Prayer is an essential element of the Christian life. If required by Church law for priest and religious, it is for like reasons necessary for the apostolic layman.
2. Prayer is an art. Apostles asked to be taught by Our Lord. The petitions of the Our Father can be used to point up the elements of prayer.
3. Prayer is a loving conversation with God. It can be also a communing without language as with lovers.
4. There is no one method. Each must seek his level and way of union with God.
5. Vocal prayers, family and private, are prayer *forms*. The prayer comes from the inward assent to the words. Families should have some originality in their prayer forms. Try to relate them to the Bible and the seasonal liturgy, but above all they must be meaningful to those who say them.
6. Meditation or mental prayer. Traditional ways to begin with a passage of the Bible or a commentary or a text from the missal. The next step is to ponder leisurely the words. The last step is a brief genuine movement of the will and heart to God.
7. Aids to prayer: a) recollection, b) detachment from creatures, c) spiritual reading, d) persistence.

*Reference: "Meditation as a Biblical Reading," Leclercq, Worship, October, 1959.*

## 7. *Fasting (suffering)*

1. "This kind is cast out only by prayer and fasting." Necessity of suffering from Christ's words and actions. "Ought not Christ to have suffered . . ."
2. The passion of Our Lord is redemptive and also an example.
3. Think of all the suffering in the world that is wasted because it is not accepted.

4. The Church is not the product of Madison Avenue. The history of the Church is the story of unending persecution, misunderstanding. CFM as an organization and its members as individuals should expect and embrace suffering.
5. Forms of suffering: physical ailments, fatigue, misunderstanding, detraction, calumny, difficult people.
6. Acceptance of our vocation in all its details is the greatest form of suffering. This is demanded for canonization.
7. The true Christian has a spirit of self-denial without a puritanical attitude towards fun.

## 8. *The Theory of Love*

1. Love is as necessary for living as food and drink. After the hungry two thirds of the world have their fill, their problem will be the problem of the well-fed American—loneliness, the feeling of not being loved.
2. We desire to be loved rather than to love.
  - a) Our culture puts emphasis on being lovable rather than on loving, e.g., charm schools rather than schools of service.
  - b) Love is wrongly considered as something that happens to us—falling in love. This denies that love is active and an art.
3. Love is an *attitude* toward life rather than toward an object. We love all people or we don't love any. If we love the least, we love all.
4. Love is basically a respect for the other person because he is a person, not because of what he can do for us. Do parents really love each other and their children, or do they use them?
5. Love demands service. Our service is specified by the needs of others. We give to those who need us most, not to the most grateful.
6. The CFM Yellow Book forces people to acquire the art of loving. When spouses learn to love people who were previously unlovable neighbors, they acquire a deeper love for each other.

7. The social inquiry is a technique for the practice of love.
8. Love is the badge of the Christian. "By this . . ." "God is love."

*Reference: St. Paul I Cor. 13. Also, The Art of Loving, Fromm.*

## **9. *The Layman is the Minister of Love in the World***

1. Christ is the light of the world.
2. Today's world is the world of
  - a) population explosions
  - b) race hatreds
  - c) mass production
  - d) threats from nuclear bombs
  - e) the alienation of man from society and himself.  
(loneliness)
3. The layman must be the Light of the World today.
4. Last Judgement scene Matt. 25. The examples Christ gave were not a complete enumeration of the ways we minister to the world. We must discover the applications for our times and opportunities. E.g., cheerfully paying income tax (included is foreign aid) is feeding the hungry. We shelter the homeless when we take an interest in urban renewal programs and city planning.
5. The Good Samaritan does not find people by the way-side bleeding. He binds other types of wounds by acts of kindness in the neighborhood, participation in union and management affairs, preparing his community for peaceful racial integration. Preventing wounds is of a higher order than binding wounds, although less glamorous without the blood and bandages, e.g., mental health societies, interracial councils.
6. "Come ye Blessed . . ." The life of heaven a community of praise and love which has its exemplar in the life of the Trinity.

## **10. *The Will of God***

1. "The will of God is your sanctification."
2. Growth in the spiritual life is not so much a conquest as a surrender.

3. Abraham sacrifices Isaac. Christ in His agony says "Not my will but thine . . ."
4. St. Paul's life is to let Christ shine through his. "I love now, not I, . . ."
5. The Little Flower felt incapable of doing anything great. Her greatness was in understanding the importance of the commonplace in God's plan.
6. The will of God is determined by the circumstances of life—all are providential.
7. Sanctity comes from the facing up to the realities of our present situation, unmasking ourselves and leaving our defenses drop. "Mankind cannot stand too much reality."
8. Our neighbors by their charitable and uncharitable remarks can tune us in on our true selves if we are not too sensitive and will listen. People pay \$25 a visit for this kind of help.

## 11. *Mary*

1. Life of Mary . . . Nazareth was an obscure town. She cooked, mended, swept the house with the most primitive appliances; carried water on her head. She was a woman of her times. Mary today might be going to a political meeting instead of a well.
2. Trip to Elizabeth—not afraid to work for someone in need.
3. Cana shows her concern for everyone.
4. The desire to be like the Mother of God means a willingness to suffer. a) her child was born after a long journey in a stable without friends; b) she had to move to Egypt without warning; c) her son left her at the temple at twelve and later left her permanently; d) He permitted her to see him die, e) He consigned her to John who had not time to take care of her because Our Lord commissioned him an apostle.
5. If you choose to follow Mary, you are choosing the path of suffering.







## Related Readings

EXCERPTS FROM

### Can a Layman Be a Saint?

JACQUES LECLERCQ

*At the outset it is well to recall that the Christian life is the life of Christ within souls, that Christian activity is not Christian in the strict sense of the word unless it is the activity of Christ in His disciple. In consequence, when a Christian works in a purely secular job, for example, as a butcher, the question is whether and under what conditions the exercises of this occupation can be the activity of Christ in His disciple.*

*In this context, then, a theologian would define a layman as one who takes the temporal order seriously. A man who establishes himself as a butcher so that he can talk religion with his customers is not taking the temporal order seriously. This is not true of a man who recognizes the need for a butcher in a certain place and sets up shop there in order to render service.*

*We can hardly conceive that a good priest should become a butcher solely to give good service to his customers. Priests who engage in similar jobs and prefer them to their proper sacerdotal work lack something precisely as priests. Considered in this way, the question of lay sanctity presents a serious difficulty . . . What is still sorely lacking are laymen who will "take a truly serious interest in the temporal order . . ."*

*Some such laymen there have been, but they did not have the religious formation needed to approach temporal questions with a Christian originality entirely inspired by the scale of values found in the gospel. The good Christian has always had the impression that he cannot be completely Christian, if he remained completely a layman.*

We have all known Catholic doctors who were extremely devoted to conducting pilgrimages to Lourdes but were little concerned about following the development of their science and even negligent in the care of their patients. We have known businessmen, too, who were exemplary in their religious practices but were engaged in questionable business affairs.

How seldom do Christian writers on social order do anything more than comment on papal teaching when it is the layman's role to go farther. He must search out concrete solutions to social problems in accord with the principles taught by the Church, but on a different level than that of ecclesiastical authority. Moreover, all the great masters of political economy have been non-Christian. Do we have to conclude from this that our Catholic faith kills inspiration and originality in this field of thought? . . .

Another example of the clergy's failure is in international problems. The absence of a developed Catholic opinion in regard to the wars and conflicts of our time is a disgrace. The work of the Popes has been and is important. But we still need to develop a Christian mind in these matters by the thorough application of moral teaching to these concrete temporal contingencies.

As long as priests believe that they ought to engage in temporal affairs and the laity believe that their holiness consists in imitating religious, the Church will never accomplish her work.

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Priests who devote themselves to temporal affairs, apart from teaching, are becoming more and more rare, and find less and less support for their position. The justification for such secular endeavors, of course, is the prestige which this work brings to the Church. But, to speak only of writers, it would be difficult to find a priest who could accomplish for the Church what Maritain, Claudel, or Chesterton have done . . . But not to lose sight of their vocation as priests requires exceptional supernatural virtue.

In our own day a great number of priests believe that they must labor wherever Christ and the Church should be present. Besides the priest-workers, many others have been led into secular work, e.g., of the press, the cinema, radio, etc. Fascinated by immediate results and impatient of the delay required to form the laity, they long to see the fruits of their labors. But this desire is not supernatural and leads astray a generosity otherwise pure and admirable. With the intervention of the Church in the priest-workers movement, we are again brought back to the question of the role of the laity.

The priest must form the layman; the layman must transform the world. The Church is Christ changing the world by changing the men in it. The Church must go to the world. And this she does through her laity who engage in the temporal order in itself and for itself, but in the light of a Christian vision of life . . .

### THE LAY SAINT

Thus to be a Christian is not only to have a creed. It is not only to give oneself to certain practices. It is to live in and by Christ, to think and act with Him, to react to every situation as He would.

The work of the Church has two stages: to transform souls by giving them grace; then to transform the world through those who are living in grace. The second step is the work of the laity accepting the responsibility which Christian laymen bear in the world. It is the layman who will show to the world the value of Christianity or the world will never see it. If so many zealous priests are still attached to the old idea that the priest ought to go every place where Christianity ought to be present, this is so because there are not enough laymen capable of carrying out their temporal responsibilities as Christians in the world.

We come now to the important question of this paper: Can an authentic layman be a saint? The Kingdom of God cannot reach its fulfillment on earth without authentic laymen. It is inconceivable, therefore, that the quality of being a layman is not in accord with sanctity. If the layman is dedicated to temporal affairs, his dedication is that of a Christian soul, living fully the supernatural life, impregnated with Christian values. If the authentic layman is so necessary for the Church, we must conclude that lay Christians who desire an integral Christian life have a lay vocation.

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All this is simply a return to primitive Christianity, to a laity composed of Christ's authentic faithful, to Christians who are such because they choose to be and who are prepared to suffer for their faith. The doctrine of the Incarnation can be fully realized only with the help of authentic lay Christians. The layman who arrives at complete Christian authenticity is a saint. The Church itself will realize true sanctity—one of Christ's attributes—if it has a group of authentic laymen at the side of authentic priests and authentic religious.

## **Pope John XXIII's encyclical on the missions**

*In our first encyclical we recalled the multiple grave reasons that make necessary today in all nations of the world the recruiting of laymen "in the peaceful army of Catholic Action with the intention of having them as collaborators in the apostolate of the ecclesiastical hierarchy." We have also shown our satisfaction with "what has been done in the past, even in mission territories, by these valuable collaborators of the bishops and priests," and we wish here to renew with all the urgency of the love that urges us, the admonition and appeal of our predecessor Pius XII concerning the necessity that all the laity in the missions collaborate actively with the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the apostolate . . ."*

### FORMATION OF LAY LEADERS

82 Catholic Action is an organization of laymen "with proper and responsible executive functions." Laymen then compose the directive cadre. This requires the formation of men capable of impressing on the various associations the apostolic drive and of assuring its better functioning. Such would be men and women who, to be worthy of being entrusted by the hierarchy with the central or peripheral direction of the association, must furnish the most ample guarantee of a most sound Christian intellectual and moral formation, by virtue of which they are able to implant in others that which they already have themselves with the help of divine grace. . . .

In attributing to schools this special and particularly efficacious task of forming leaders of Catholic Action. We certainly do not wish to lessen the responsibility of families or deny their influence, which can be even more vigorous and more effective than that of the school, in nourishing within their children the apostolic fire and providing a Christian formation always more mature and ready for action. The family in fact is an ideal and irreplaceable school.

EXCERPTS FROM

## The Lay Apostolate

**From An Address of Pope Pius XII to the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate, October, 1957.**

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The term "emancipation of the layman" is abused at times when it is used in a sense that distorts the true character of the relations existing between the "teaching Church" and the "Church that is being taught," between priests and laymen. Concerning these relations, let us simply note that the tasks before the Church today are too vast to leave room for petty disputes. In order to preserve the proper sphere of action of both priest and layman, it is enough that all should have a sufficient spirit of faith, disinterestedness, mutual esteem, and mutual confidence. Respect for the priestly dignity has always been one of the most characteristic traits of the Christian community; on the other hand, laymen also have rights, and the priest must recognize them.

The layman is entitled to receive from the priest every spiritual benefit, to the end that he might achieve the salvation of his soul and attain Christian perfection. (Canons 87 and 682.) In what concerns the Christian's fundamental rights, he may assert his demands. (Canons 467, 1; 892, 1.) The meaning and aim of the Church's whole life is involved here, as well as the responsibility before God of the priest and the layman . . .

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The exclusive consideration of the Church's social activity inevitably creates uneasiness. This activity is not an end in itself—either in general or in the Church—for the community is ultimately at the service of the individual, and not vice-versa.

History shows that from the Church's earliest days laymen have taken part in the activity which the priest carries out in the service of the Church, and today more than ever they must cooperate with greater and greater fervor "for building up the Body of Christ" (Ephesians 4, 12) in all forms of the apostolate, especially by making the Christian spirit penetrate all family, social, economic, and political life.

### THE SHORTAGE OF PRIESTS

One of the reasons for this appeal to the laity is certainly the shortage of priests, but even in the past a priest expected the cooperation of laymen. Let us mention only the considerable con-

tribution which lay Catholic men and women instructors, as well as religious, have made to the teaching of religion and, in general, to Christian education and the formation of youth. Think, for instance, of the Catholic schools of the United States. The Church is grateful to the laity for this contribution, for it was a necessary complement to priestly work. There still remains the fact that the lack of priests is especially noticeable today and threatens to become even more so. We are thinking especially of parts of Latin America, whose people and countries are undergoing rapid development at the present time. The work of laymen there is all the more necessary.

### THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE WORLD

Furthermore, aside from the small number of priests, the relations between the Church and the world require the intervention of lay apostles. The "consecratio mundi" is essentially the work of laymen themselves, of men who are intimately a part of economic and social life and who participate in the government and in legislative assemblies. In the same way, only the workers themselves can establish the Catholic cells which must be created among workers in every factory and bring back to the Church those who have strayed from her.

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In this matter ecclesiastical authorities should apply the general principle of subsidiarity and complementarity. They should entrust the layman with those tasks that he can perform as well or even better than the priest, and allow him to act freely and exercise personal responsibility within the limits set for his work or demanded by the common welfare of the Church . . .

EXCERPTS FROM

## Parents and Culture

**The following is based on a talk given by Sister Francis Borgia to a group of CFM'ers. Sister is vice-principal of Alvernia High School in Chicago.**

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*Thesis: Mr. and Mrs. Family are responsible for the cultural welfare of their children.*

*Objection 1: People concerned about being cultured are queer.*

*Explanation: Unhappily, it is true the word culture has come to be associated with a peculiarity of beard style or esoteric dress or arty club membership or leisured travel or some such sickness. Unhappily. But the word culture has a sound, virile meaning that should be restored. The loss of the meaning of the word has coincided with the loss of the reality.*

*The culture of a person is not a shellac or polish added as an afterthought. Culture is a quality of a person. It is the mark of a person who is living meaningfully, aware of values. The cultured person approaches life differently, establishes a different way of life from the mediocre or utilitarian or pleasure approach. The cultured person (whether he names himself so or not) enters into life more fully, loves more intensely.*

*In a sense the cultured person is making the most of his true humanness: living thoughtfully and working artistically. In the return to integrity, that wholeness disturbed by the Fall, the cultured person puts into right order his thinking and his making.*

*1) His thinking. Instead of merely using his mind to be informed, to devise plans for making more money, to work crossword puzzles and evaluate baseball players—all of which may have their rightful place in a healthy mental life—the cultured person also uses his mind to search out the meanings of things.*

*Man must divine the meanings of things before he can live fully, reverently, and freely. What is the meaning of freedom,*

love, work, creation, suffering, authority, woman, friendship, beauty? The uncultured person floats along, absorbing his system of values from the current "atmosphere."

2) *His making.* The cultured man is a true maker, not just a doer, not just someone who gets a job done as quickly as possible and gets as much out of it for as little as he can possibly put into it. A maker creates. The product made is what it ought to be, whether that product be a piece of furniture, a law, an English class, a goiter operation, or a symphony. When this quality of rightness is present in a thing made, beauty is there.

Note the difference in a home when a cultured woman is the heart of it. She has thought through with her husband what a home is, what the education of children is, what clothes and recreation and meals are. And when she can bring a craftsmanship in making a genuine community of minds and hearts as well as skill in making cheese souffle that doesn't taste like soap lather, "far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her."

It follows then that people who are concerned about being cultured and about the culture of their children are certainly not queer; on the contrary, as they become cultured they become more truly themselves.

86                   Objection II: It is more important for parents to assume responsibility for the holiness rather than the culture of their children.

Explanation: Certainly holiness precedes culture in worth. But holiness is first the work of God. It is for parental educators "to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian." That cooperation may too easily be seen in a very narrow sense, that is, seeing to it that children say their prayers, go to Confession and offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, checking sinful habits, helping to form right moral judgments, and the like.

But there is also a broader interpretation of cooperation. By helping a child to become cultured, we help him to develop a natural basis for sanctity. Instead of trying to coax or coerce him into a friendship with God, he is attuned and readied for actual grace. The cultured person is not automatically holy, but the cultured way is the "natural way for men to become holy."

Objection III: The responsibility for the cultural welfare of the child belongs rather to the school than to the family.



Explanation: Very frequently children see their parents as providers and correctors: providers of roof, clothes, meals, allowance, TV, and car: and correctors of emotional outbursts, moral lapses, and boorish in etiquette. Very rarely do they consider their parents to be educators or teachers. As a result both parents and children are cheated.

The school certainly should assume some of the responsibility for the cultural development of students and in this matter must often say, "Mea culpa." But the family has the prime responsibility and in this matter must often say, "Mea maxima culpa." It is in the free curriculum of rich family living that a child acquires that wealth of experiences, discussions, creative working and making, reverence for being, an alert sensory life—all of which are necessary for his cultural development.

The school may set up a curriculum to provide for a more systematic study and for the organization and clarification of understandings, but unless the family supplies the well-spring for this study it will be stifled.

EXCERPTS FROM

## Roots of the Inquiry

REV. JOSEPH M. CONNOLLY

At this late date the formula "observe, judge, and act" may assume the ambiguous position of a magical incantation. "You put your money in the slot and out comes your package neatly cellophaned" or "I guess we should keep it as a valued talisman handed over by those who started the specialized movements in Europe but it really has no practical application here in America."

Obviously the first attitude is dispelled whenever it is applied in practice because it inevitably leads to failure; but the second attitude has much more disastrous effects. If we reduce the "observe, judge, and act" technique to a mere traditional mumbo-jumbo, we have deprived the movement of its only valid reason to exist.

CFM is a process of formation or it is nothing . . . The movement is in reality an educational institution. The one instrument by which this educative or forming process is carried out is the "observe, judge, and act" technique . . . If the actual process is found explicitly in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas; if the fundamental basis of the "observe, judge, and act" technique is rooted in the human person; if in practice we see that it works in Asia, Africa, and South America, in mission territories as well as in older, more established regions; if it finds its counterpart even in current American ventures which are not Catholic; if it is explicitly adopted by the popes; if all of these are true, then it behooves us to obtain a better grasp of the process itself and to use it and not merely bow reverently at it every other week.

Let us look first at St. Thomas. In his treatise on the virtue of prudence, he says: "Prudence is right reason applied to action. Hence, that which is the chief act of reason in regard to action must needs be the chief act of prudence. Now there are three such acts. The first is to take counsel, which belongs to discovery,

for counsel is an act of discovery . . . . The second act is to judge of what one has discovered and this is an act of the speculative reason. But the practical reason which is directed to action goes further and its third act is to command, which act consists in applying to action the things counselled and judged."<sup>1</sup>

In this statement, St. Thomas sums up the whole scholastic foundation for the action of a human being as human and, of course, as Christian. As we know, mere action unguided by reason is capricious and can lead to shipwreck more often than to good. On the other hand, mere knowledge which is not reduced to action is sterile and, indeed, can lead to that flight to ivory towers which is more vicious than other forms of escapism.

It is possible for St. Thomas to discuss prudence in this manner because it closely follows the scholastic theory of knowledge. If we investigate this, we can see how "observe, judge, and act" is firmly rooted in the human person. According to scholastic philosophy, knowledge is not merely the passive reception of impressions such as the reception of ink by this paper. Rather it is the active process of the human person reaching out of himself to the objective reality in which he is immersed and drawing this reality into himself, first through the senses and then through the process of intellection.

Now we normally think of this process as happening in a classroom in which a professor teaches his knowledge and his students absorb it. Every teacher knows how frustrating this method can be as he literally wears himself out and is greeted merely by yawns. The intense joy he experiences when one student, with eye aglow, responds to his teaching and gives evidence of having learned something, clearly shows by its infrequency that this is probably one of the most hazardous ways to knowledge. The reason for this inherent weakness of the classroom situation is that the student is not fully engaged as a human person. The problems being discussed are not real to him. As he sees it, the link between his life as he lives it and this particular topic is tenuous, to say the least. Although we do regard the classroom as being rather tragic, in no manner of means are we to be interpreted as wishing to abandon classrooms in schools. They are a very necessary instrument for society and for the Church.

The real beauty of the "observe, judge, and act" technique is that it completely bypasses this impasse of the classroom. When a fellow is taught to observe, he is not looking for an

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1. S.T.,II-II, Q. 47, Art. 9, Corpus.

abstract, academic situation but a real fact of his life. This note of the "real" is the hallmark of the method. Things as they are, not as they should be, are the materials with which he works. Our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman about the one thing that was most real to her at that moment, "water." Then gradually He led her to more sublime things.

Now, when the person becomes aware of a thing or more specifically of a situation, he is then posed with the need but not the predetermined necessity of judging it. While interest is still at its peak, a further step is available. The new data can enter more fully into him or rather he can enter more completely into reality, if he then judges in the light of past knowledge and of principles. We see how personal this can become, how far removed from mere abstraction. The principles by which he judges are not merely verbal slogans or pious phrases, but rather the principles of Christ which, once they are accepted, become the reaction of a man as a person . . .

Actually, we do not need a vindication of the major technique of the movement. What we need is to understand it and to be true to it. It is not magic, but it is serviceable and will continue to be only if we are faithful to it.

EXCERPTS FROM

## Parish Life

*The parish is Christ. Simply and emphatically stated, that is the reason for the extraordinary importance of parish life and its place in this year's program. If the parish is not functioning as it should, Christ is hindered in His work.*

*We must constantly regard the parish as our Blessed Lord, as Christ set in the midst of His people, worshiping the Father, working for His people. Any other concept of the parish falls far short of the truth. A parish today does what Christ did in His day, or to phrase it more pointedly, Christ does today through the parish what He began in His own day. He did three things and He does three things: His work as priest, teacher, and ruler. He spoke of His priestly work when He said, "I am the Life," because this work meant giving divine life to people. He spoke of His role as teacher when He said, "I am the Truth." He said of His work as ruler, "I am the Way," because it is the function of a ruler, a shepherd to lead us along the way.*

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*In the parish these functions of Christ are shared by priests and lay people, each in their own degree. Every act you perform in the parish takes its significance from this: that you are helping to do precisely one of these works of Christ. It is this which gives your work in the Christian Family Movement its deepest meaning and its widest dimension.*

*In the liturgy of the Church, it is said that the altar is Christ. Since this is so, then the center of the parish is not the recreational facilities for teen-agers, not the organizations of parishioners, not the Christian Family Movement. It is not all the feverish activity that a parish may have. It is the really essential action of the altar, the Mass.*

*The parish is Christ, the altar is Christ, and, in a sense, the pastor is Christ, because with Christ he makes parish life possible. He teaches for Christ. He leads the people for Christ. We*

must have an appreciation of a priest as a priest, and we must not judge him by other standards. Divinely speaking, supernaturally speaking, the priest is nothing as a man. In the parish, he is Christ, doing the work of Christ, making the Mass and Sacraments possible.

The job, therefore, for the Christian Family Movement, as it is for all Catholics, is to assist the pastor in restoring the parish to what it ought to be. And that, primarily, means restoration of the Mass.

What impedes Christ more than any other single thing? It is the fact that there is so little participation of the lay people in the Mass. And the mere fact that we say there is a lack of participation by lay people indicates that this is a problem which should concern the laity. This is sufficient warrant for the Christian Family Movement to consider it.

Why does lack of active participation in the Mass obstruct our Blessed Lord? To put it very simply, at present our worship at Mass is not as human as it should be. We are trying to worship God like angels, with our minds and wills only. Our bodies are inactive, except that intermittently we sit, stand, and kneel. This is the largest single factor why such great numbers have left the Church, have discontinued going to Mass. It never was a truly human experience for them.

We must regard the parish, then, not just as a physician's office where you go when there is something ailing you. We must begin to regard the parish as a problem that has to be dealt with because, just like so many other things in the world, it has been adversely affected. To begin with, we have to see the parish as dramatic and exciting, as a living thing, because Christ is the Life and because the parish ought to be pulsating more and more with divine life. The parish is Christ in space and time. Christ in our time. Christ, in brief, working for His people through His people.

## EXCERPTS

### The Mystical Body

**The following is from an article on the Mystical Body Appearing in the 1959-60 Annual CFM Program.**

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Christ made people one with Him so that he could work through them. They are his hands to do his work, his feet to take him places, his lips to articulate him. He uses their hearts to love other people. He chooses to work through them because as God he appeals to their freedom, as He always did in his life. He chooses to work through them also because as man he has our instinct to share in things. He would, therefore, give people a sharing in the one lasting work in the world, His redemptive work. One reason why Christ needs lay people is the lack of clergy, but even if there were enough priests the laity would still have an indispensable role to play. What a layman can do, no one else can do because no one is ever in the same set of circumstances.

"It would be a misunderstanding of the Church's real nature and her social character to distinguish in her a purely active element, Church authorities, and a purely passive element, the laity. All the members of the Church as *We Ourselves* said in the encyclical, *The Mystical Body of Christ*, are called upon to cooperate in building up and perfecting the Mystical Body of Christ. They are all free persons and should, therefore, be active." (Pius XII, *Guiding Principles of the Lay Apostolate*, address to the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate, paragraph 14)

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"Today more than ever they must cooperate with greater and greater fervor 'for building up the Body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:12) in all forms of the apostolate, especially by making the Christian spirit penetrate all family, social, economic, and political life." (Pius XII, *Guiding Principles of the Lay Apostolate*, paragraph 17)

Christ has divided his work between the clergy and the laity. There is an immense area of work which he has entrusted to the laymen—the area of ordinary human life.

"The lay apostolate consists in this, that laymen undertake tasks deriving from the mission Christ entrusted to his Church."

". . . the apostolate of prayer and personal example should be referred to as an 'apostolate' only in the broad or improper sense of that term."

"The consecration of the world is essentially the work of the laymen themselves, of men who are intimately a part of economic and social life and who participate in the government." (Pius XII, *Guiding Principles of the Lay Apostolate*, paragraphs 25, 26, 19)

These areas, therefore, are marriage, political life, economic life, international life. These are the ordinary relationships of human living. And they spell out human communities: family, country, United Nations, and the necessary groups in economic life, which for the most part are not yet created. Add to this the fact that today the disastrous problems in the world are not in the area of the clergy but in the areas of lay life. Examples are many: divorce, apathy in voting, poverty, war.

A problem which discredits the United States before the world is our racial problem. This is disastrous because we are in a position of leadership. Often we do not treat others (negroes, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans) as fellow human beings or as fellow citizens. And we do not treat those who are Catholics as fellow members of the Mystical Body. Parents have a special responsibility. Children are born without prejudice; they acquire it, in large measure, from their parents.

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Pius XII said war is outmoded as a method of settling differences. Nuclear war is dreadful, beyond imagination. A father of the Church said "war is suicidal" (we kill members of our own Body). It is also fratricidal (we kill our brothers). Nuclear war could be justified, but we must with all our strength work to prevent it. The largest single hope for peace is the United Nations, as our bishops have said.

"A convinced Christian cannot confine himself to an easy and egotistical isolationism, when he witnesses the needs and the misery of his brothers; when pleas for help come to him from those in economic distresses; when he knows the aspirations of the working classes for more normal and just conditions of life; when he is aware of the abuses of an economic system which puts money above social obligations; when he is not ignorant of the aberrations of an intransigent nationalism which denies or spurns the common bonds linking the separate nations together and imposing on each one of them many and varied duties toward the great family of nations."

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