

CFC Foundation for Family and Life Statement on the Implications of the Clarifications raised by Bishop G. Reyes, Head of the CBCP Pontifical Commission on the Laity on the events that transpired in the meeting between/among the representatives of the CFC Global Foundation, the CFC Foundation for Family and Life, and the CBCP Investigation Body on Aug. 28, 2007

We are attaching herewith the full text of the official message of Bishop Gabriel V. Reyes, D.D., Chairman , CBCP Commission for the Laity, on the August 28, 2007 meeting with Bishop Pacana, Bishop Afable, Bishop Villena, and Archbishop Lagdameo, and the groups of Bro. Frank Padilla and Bro. Joe Tale.

The Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life (CFC-FFL) is very grateful to the good bishop for clarifying the events that happened in the August 28, 2007 meeting. We have not issued any statement until now while awaiting the official statement of the bishops.

Much has been said through news reports and opinion columns in papers in the past weeks. We therefore would like to emphasize the following points raised.

1. CFC's recognition as an International Private Association of the Faithful

“Only the Vatican through the Pontifical Council of the Laity has the authority over CFC in the national and international level. But every diocesan bishop has authority over it in its diocese. Each diocesan bishop has authority to deny permission to CFC to function in his diocese, even if the association is international.” (page 4, Sept. 6 , 2007, Letter of Bishop Reyes). Therefore, **both** CFC-FFL and CFC-GK need to get permission from the diocese. It still remains to be decided by each bishop whether they will recognize both CFCs, or just one, or even accept both.

The confirmation of the Vatican recognition of the association *Couples for Christ* **implies** that the said recognition is being given to the "generic CFC" or "spiritual body" known as Couples for Christ. It does not specifically refer to any secular institution or legal entity such as the Couples for Christ Global Mission Foundation, Inc., the Philippine corporation.

Corollary to this statement of the IC, that as the duly elected leaders of the community, they have the Vatican recognition, Bishop Reyes emphasized and reiterated in the meeting that the election of the IC was “*not done in the right spirit*” thus leaving much to question.

We in CFC-FFL, following and adhering to the original charism for which these statutes were developed, have as much right to this recognition as any CFC member all over the world. CFC-FFL is still CFC and its members remain to be Couples for Christ.

It is also important to note that Bro. Frank and Sis. Gerry Padilla, still remain members of the Pontifical Council for Family in the Vatican. Bro. Frank Padilla's name is registered as the head of Couples for Christ.

2. "the veering away of GK from the mission and vision of CFC"

CFC-FFL is equally gratified that the bishop dwelt in detail about the heart and core of the conflict which the International Council has repeatedly dismissed as "isolated" cases. It was pointed out to the International Council by the bishops themselves that, "although these cases may be isolated, they are important because they involve their top leaders in Gawad Kalinga and their mind-set can easily influence the members." (page 3, Sept.6, 2007, Letter of Bishop Reyes)

Bro. Frank Padilla expressed that these complaints have been raised long enough but the situation has remained the same. CFC-FFL is affirmed that Bro. Frank Padilla just exercised due diligence and vigilance in reporting about the "veering away" of GK. It is with this very spirit of Bro. Frank Padilla that he led the community through its 25 years, and has tried to protect from "veering away from the mission and vision of CFC."

CFC-FFL was formed as the last option when attempts at restoration from within the CFC structure through the restoration movement seemed impossible.

It is also important to note that the good bishops affirmed in their official statement that Couples for Christ together with its Ministries, was primarily founded to "build the Kingdom of Christ," not for just "building a nation." If Gawad Kalinga wants to operate more freely and more broadly than the mission/vision and nature of CFC will allow, then "let it be a civic organization or an organization with a mission/vision and nature different from that of CFC." (page 3, Sept. 6, 2007, Letter of Bishop Reyes).

The CFC-FFL is grateful that the bishops confirmed unequivocally that Tony Meloto's statement (Inquirer, "Bishops to Discuss Couples for Christ Split", page A23, Aug. 28, 2007), where he states, "GK is non-partisan. We do not take any side in building a nation in the same manner that we do not pass judgement on any corporation we engage."

We do not even ask them what their (corporations) products are as long as they want to help.” The statutes of CFC, no. 942, says, “**Couples for Christ** will conform to and support the orthodox Church teachings and stand on issues.” Receiving money from drug companies that produce contraceptives is against Church teaching and policy. Therefore, the CFC-FFL complaints, according to the bishops have been proven true. Given what tantamounts to a warning by the Bishops, it is reasonable to expect CFC/GK to immediately rescind its existing partnerships with said pharma companies that manufacture contraceptives.

3. Money Matters as an Issue

The CFC-FFL has never said that money matters were an issue in this conflict. The CFC-FFL has been specific in citing the need for proper governance, transparency, and accountability and not in the context of plain external audit, data of which is supplied and controlled by GK. There is a need to conduct both an internal and external audit and reconciliation of each and every disbursement with the number of houses promised each partner. This is cognizant to our call for stewardship.

We still have leaders making statements that money matters are involved in this conflict. Let it be stated now with finality, as stated in the bishop’s official statement itself that, “The group of Bro. Joe Tale was asked whether they had any complaints regarding financial anomalies against the group of Bro. Frank Padilla, and he replied, “None.” The group of Bro. Frank Padilla also had no complaint regarding financial anomalies against the group of Bro. Joe Tale.” (page 4, Sept. 6, 2007, Letter of Bishop Reyes)

4. On the Use of the Name “Couples for Christ”

The application of CFC-FFL at the SEC is being blocked and contested by CFC-GK through Bro. Joe Tale and is still up for deliberation at the SEC. CFC-GK is claiming that it has prior use of the name “Couples for Christ” as against CFC-FFL and that using the CFC name will confuse the members. What is not explained here is that the foundation organized by Frank Padilla in 1983 called Couples for Christ Foundation Inc. was the first to use the name “Couples for Christ, not CFC Global Foundation, Inc. which was registered only 10 years later in 1993.

It is very heartening to know that from the bishop’s official statement, “as long as the names are explained, it will not cause confusion.” It further states that, “In the Philippines we have Marriage Encounter and Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Mother Butler’s Guild and Mother Butler’s Mission Guild. The Franciscans have OFM, OFM

Capuchin, OFM Conventuals. In the Carmelites there are Order of Carmelites and Order of Carmelites Discalced. (page 5, Sept. 6, 2007, Letter of Bishop Reyes).

In the spirit of unity , love, and peace, and in appreciation of the statement of the bishops, CFC-FFL is requesting the group of Bro. Joe Tale to withdraw their petition at the SEC immediately so each group can move forward and carry on with their respective work and charisms.

It is the spirit of this statement issued by CFC-FFL to call on all its members to move forward and set aside the hurts, wounds, and rancor of the past. The work in the Lord's vineyard remains too vast and awesome and open to as many communities, including CFC-FFL and CFC-GK, taking on the call in fulfilling the great commission (Matthew 28:18). In the same spirit of love, peace and unity, we extend our warm and fraternal greeting to all our brethren within the worldwide Couples for Christ community. May God be praised forever.

In Christ through Mary,

Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life (CFC-FFL)
September 8, 2007