

FROM THE SERVANT GENERAL
THE WAY FORWARD IN CHRIST
(Part 3)

January 28, 2009

One and a half years after the restoration of CFC (from July 2007), on its third year (2007, 2008, 2009), CFC-FFL is well underway in pursuing its clear vision and mission. We are called to renew the family and to defend life. This is within the context of our overall mission of evangelization, with emphasis this year on God's divine mercy.

This was impressed upon me as I and my wife Gerry were privileged to attend and participate in 3 significant events in this first month of the new year. First we went to Mexico for the 6th World Meeting of Families. Then we participated in the 36th March for Life in Washington DC, USA. Finally we made a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, USA.

6th World Meeting of Families

This is the major event of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family, of which Gerry and I are members. It is mounted once every 3 years. In 2003 it was in Manila, while in 2006 it was in Valencia, Spain. There was a 3-day Theological-Pastoral Congress, where there were 9,000 delegates from 96 countries, including 20 cardinals, 200 archbishops and bishops, many clergy and religious, and of course lay people. This was followed by a festive meeting of families with 20,000 people, and a Eucharistic celebration on the last day. Normally the pope attends these last 2 days. However, for health reasons, this time he did not go to Mexico (the altitude was a problem). He did have a videotaped message.

Gerry and I were privileged to present a paper on "Couples for Christ in the Renewal of the Family and the Defense of Life" during the plenary. It was very well received. We also had the opportunity to interact with the Church hierarchy, among them Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State (representing the Holy Father), Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and many others.

The World Meeting of Families, with its plenary presentations, testimonies and other activities, highlighted our thrust for the family.

36th March for Life

After making a pastoral visit to our CFC-FFL brethren in Phoenix, Arizona, we were off to Washington DC, to participate in the 36th March for Life. The March for Life has been held since 1973, when the infamous Roe v. Wade legalized abortion throughout the USA. Since that time 50 million unborn children have been slaughtered through surgical abortions.

The event started with a Youth Rally and a Eucharistic celebration. It was a sight to see, with the venue packed with 30,000 people, including about 50 bishops, 400 priests and 500 seminarians. Then the march itself had 300,000 people, including the CFC-FFL contingent of 109 brethren. Our brethren were enthused, and promised to participate in the marches every year in ever increasing numbers.

The March for Life highlighted our pro-life thrust, our defense of the culture of life, our promotion of the gospel of life.

Divine Mercy shrine

Then Gerry and I were off to New Jersey, then to New York, to visit our CFC-FFL brethren there. But before these, we were able to make a pilgrimage with some of our brethren to the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. It was a blessed time, with very few people, with fresh snow on the ground, with the air cold but with a bright sun overhead.

We were able to attend the Eucharistic celebration, pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and kiss the relic of Sr Faustina.

This visit highlighted our new theme of Trust in Jesus for 2009, with the very important element of the Divine Mercy.

On the right track

In the midst of attacks on marriage and the family, in the face of the holocaust of the unborn, under the onslaught of anti-family and anti-life forces in the world, God continues to reach out to a world in darkness and sin. And God precisely raised CFC in 1981 for this task. The enemy almost succeeded in destroying CFC in 2007, but God raised a remnant, and has restored His creation to its authentic charism.

CFC-FFL continues to do its basic mission of evangelization, within the context of the renewal of the family and the defense of life. The events this January have affirmed our calling and work. We are on the right track.

Let us never veer away again. Let us move forward with the confidence that God anoints us, Jesus is with us, and the Holy Spirit empowers us. Let us trust in Jesus and always look to God's divine mercy.

Jesus, we trust in you!

God bless you all.

Your brother and servant,

Frank Padilla