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Chaplains' Manual

*Christian
Family Movement*



**TO TEACH.....
TO REPRESENT.....
TO SERVE.....**

families everywhere



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chaplain's manual

Rev. Gerard P. Weber

published by

**THE CHICAGO FEDERATION of the
CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT**

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✠ Samuel Cardinal Stritch
Archbishop of Chicago

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Foreword

A priest working in a diocesan chancery office, coming in contact as he does day after day with couples who are unhappily married, sees a very dismal picture. Much of the work he has to do is merely remedial, a matter of finding loop-holes for those who have made mistakes in the past, in the hope that they will thereby avail themselves of the sacraments and become practical Catholics. But there are always doubts and misgivings. He manages to validate a marriage, but wonders how ardently the newly restored Catholics will re-embrace the Faith in view of their past performances. He grants dispensations for mixed marriages in order to prevent a worse evil, but even as he does so he recalls the statistics and fears that in a high percentage of such cases either the Catholic party or the children or both may be lost to the Church. He wonders sometimes how all the patching up will ever manage to keep pace with the breakdowns which are occurring on all sides.

As chancellor of the Archdiocese of Chicago I have had this experience. I know that it is shared by priests who work in parishes everywhere. Much of the work of a parish priest, too, is purely remedial. And even in his positive functions such as preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments, and instructing converts the parish priest knows that the effect of his work will often be lessened by circumstances over which he has no control. Even while he preaches the ideals of Christian marriage and family life he realizes that housing conditions, the high cost of living, and modern social standards are working against his preaching. Even while he is absolving a penitent he knows that

the graces of the sacrament will have to do hard battle against a bad environment.

All priests in whatever kind of work cannot help feeling from time to time a sense of frustration. They realize how inadequate in many cases are the means at their disposal. They know that even the sacraments suppose the existence of a favorable social environment for their full effectiveness. They sense the need of a powerful, positive force working in the world to provide such an environment.

It was with distinct pleasure, therefore, that I accepted an invitation last year to address a group of men and women who belonged to an organization called The Christian Family Movement. Here was an organization with an eminently positive aim:—to restore Christian ideals in family life, and a remarkably thorough purpose:—to work on the environment in which families live, in order to make it easier for these families to be and to remain imbued with Christianity. I accepted the invitation anticipating an audience of perhaps a hundred. I arrived to find a large hall literally packed with men and women from all parts of Chicago and its suburbs. It was an amazing and inspiring sight. I had been well aware, of course, of the existence of The Christian Family Movement in Chicago. It had been in existence in the Archdiocese for several years. It had received the inspiration and blessing of His Eminence, Cardinal Stritch. It had been steadily proving its value to pastors in various parts of the Archdiocese. What amazed me that evening was the fact that the movement had grown in so short a time to such proportions, had penetrated the Archdiocese, had already trained a significant number of fully-formed lay leaders.

This marvelous expansion is still going on. It is the desire of His Eminence, the Cardinal, that The Christian Family Movement continue to grow and prosper in the Archdiocese of Chicago. It is my hope also that priests in other places as well will become more familiar with the work and see for themselves the results it produces. To that end this book will prove to be invaluable.

Right Reverend Monsignor Edward M. Burke.

CHAPTER 1

the christian family movement

A "good parish" is generally described as a parish which exhibits such signs of parochial health as a large attendance at Mass, general frequentation of the Sacraments, adequate financial support, active parish societies, and a good annual crop of converts. An IDEAL parish might be described as one which exhibits in addition to all these undeniable blessings a real participation on the part of the people in the total life of the parish. An ideal parish might be one in which the sanctifying and unifying influence of the Church penetrates beyond the walls of the church and school and rectory into the family and the working lives of all the people. It might be described as a parish in which the parishioners play an active and a vital part, have a deep sense of "belonging", and more than that, a realization of their obligation towards the parish as a whole and towards each other as members of the parish. Such a parish would be one of which the people think with pride and affection as THEIR PARISH; it would be a parish in which the priests know the people and the people know the priests, a parish in which priests and people work together on a spiritual and apostolic level. *In a word, the ideal parish might be described as a parish in which the Church*

is the very heart and center of a community, a parish which is itself a community.

Many priests, fully aware of this ideal and trying to work towards it, are faced at the outset with a basic obstacle—lack of interest on the part of the people. “How”, they ask themselves, “can the people be made to feel that they themselves have a stake in the parish, that it is their parish, that they should have a concern in all its problems?” The difficulty is very real, as can be seen from a single example—the case of converts. All convert literature stresses the fact that most converts are brought into contact with the Church by lay-people; yet the average layman regards the contacting of possible converts as the exclusive job of the priest.

The Popes in recent pronouncements have insisted, time and time again, that lay people must take a more active part in the Church if the world is to know Christ. Because the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ each member has a definite function to perform. But how many laymen know what that function is? Some priests fear that if the laity is given too big a voice in parish affairs there will be a return to lay trusteeism, which caused so much trouble in the last century. Actually the very opposite has been found to be true. The result of the study of the Gospel and of the doctrines of the Church has been to make the laity see the priest as God intends him to be, a spiritual Father. Cooperation with the priest in the work of the apostolate engenders a very deep respect for the priesthood itself and a far better understanding of the problems of the priest. Experience has shown that these people usually become the staunchest supporters of the priest in the parish.

inactivity of the laity

On the other hand, many priests realize that the layman's lack of interest in the welfare of the Church is impeding the growth of the Church, that the real internal difficulty which the Church faces today is not the overactivity but rather the inactivity of the laity in the apostolate. The docility of our American Catholics is admirable, but too often what passes for docility is a genuine

"religious inferiority complex." The most elementary question asked by a non-Catholic will usually elicit, even from Catholics who have received a Catholic high school education the all-too familiar response, "I'm only a layman; you'd better ask a priest." The single example cited earlier—the case of converts, is only one instance of this attitude. Actually, for the most part, the lay people still consider themselves merely passive members of the Church. In their minds it is up to the clergy not only to administer the sacraments, conduct religious services, and take care of all the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish but also to coach basketball teams, run dances, in short, to do everything.

The task which faces the Church in the modern world is, all hands agree, a gigantic task, differing in scope and depth from those which have faced her for centuries. Secularism, the prevailing evil of the day, has pervaded the press, the movies, the schools, political life, the trades and professions, even, and most disastrously, the home itself. As a result these institutions have been dechristianized to the point where they are deforming instead of forming Christians. The task of restoring all these things in Christ is the task which faces the Church today. It is the task of the Church,—not of the clergy alone, but of the Church—clergy and laity together. It is a task which the clergy is incapable of performing alone, in fact a task which in most of its aspects the clergy is incapable of performing at all. The press, the entertainment world, the industries, the professions, the family are not the proper field of the clergy. Priests can and must enunciate principles which apply in all these fields. But the



actual work of reforming these institutions will be done by those who live and work within them. There is, of course, an indispensable part which must be played by the clergy and by no one else, that of training apostolic laymen. But the job itself will be done by the laity or it will not be done at all.

The Catholic laity of today, therefore, occupy a much more important place in the Church than they have for centuries, as the last five Popes have never tired pointing out. Actually it is the place they have always occupied. The doctrine of the Mystical Body makes it clear that there is a division of work in the Church and a corresponding division of responsibility, and that in this work and this responsibility the laity have a very definite and peculiarly indispensable share. The fact that this has not been realized, or even recognized at certain periods in the past can be explained only on historical, not dogmatic ground. We modern American priests, accustomed to the era, now ended, in which our laity was a body of transplanted European Catholics living in an alien and often hostile environment, may have difficulty in making a mental adjustment to the present situation. But, however difficult the adjustment may be, make it we must if we are to accomplish the task at hand. Our people today need more than mere "service". They have a very definite, positive, aggressive role to play, and it is we who must prepare them for it. This doesn't mean, of course, that they are to do OUR work; it means rather that we must train them to do THEIR work, which we have had to do for them in the past. They will do it much better than we could ever hope to, precisely because it is their work.

small groups needed

There have been many suggestions as to how to interest the laity in the work of the parish without giving them the notion that they are to run the Church. Most of these suggestions have been good and have produced some results. The idea, however, that the laity should have an active part in the apostolic work of the Church is still strange to the laity themselves. Most of them need to be awakened to their mission in the Church. The question is how to awaken them. Rallies, lectures, sermons are by

their very nature incapable of accomplishing the slow, steady, gradual training of mind and will which is necessary in any preparation for the apostolate.

Small groups of ten to twelve people, on the other hand, have been found admirably suited to just this sort of formation. In such groups there is opportunity for each individual to "have his say", ask questions, and be influenced by the alchemy of the group. In such small groups, too, there is opportunity for each member to assume responsibility, to bring his will as well as his intellect into the training process.

what some men did

In 1942 a group of eight men from all parts of Chicago met to discuss whether there was something practical they could do in the parish apostolate. They realized that the young workers, the students, and other groups have an important part to play in restoring a full parish life. They realized also that all the ordinary parish organizations have a great deal to do in building up the ideal parish. They were searching for a particular apostolic work which *they* could do. Because they had different types of jobs they decided that the business world would not be their proper field of activity. They decided, therefore, that family life was their common ground and that they would do what they could to restore that one field of life to Christ. They worked out a simple formula for their meetings: some Gospel and Liturgy study to provide motivation, and a Social Inquiry¹ to lead to action.

In time their wives formed similar groups. Later it became apparent that husbands and wives could not work effectively on family problems if they continued to meet separately. It also became apparent that the proper field of action for such groups was their own parish. Therefore the groups combined and reorganized along parochial lines. When this was done, in 1947, the **CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT** was born.² In other

¹cf. glossary p. 56.

²In Chicago the movement was called **CHRISTIAN FAMILY ACTION**, both names refer to the same organization. We shall use the name Christian Family Movement (CFM) throughout the pamphlet even when referring to Chicago.

cities, such as New York and South Bend, Ind., a similar movement was simultaneously developing.

In 1949 ten cities, representing approximately twenty-five groups, sent delegates to Childerly Farm in Wheeling, Illinois, to exchange ideas and techniques. When a similar meeting was held in South Bend in 1951 it was reported that there were approximately 119 groups in 39 cities. Chicago has shown the most remarkable growth. In 1948 there were three or four groups of perhaps twenty or twenty-five couples. In June, 1951 that number had grown to fifty parish groups comprising in all about seven hundred couples.

accomplishments

Before the busy priest accepts an idea such as the Christian Family Movement he rightly asks what results have been produced and what results he himself can expect.

It is difficult to pin-point accurately the results of the Christian Family Movement. Much of the effort put forth so far has had as its object the Christianization of ideas. This is necessarily a slow process. Most of the actions performed by the groups are small, personal ones which have gone unrecorded. Unspectacular though they are, however, these small actions are by no means unimportant. The first objective of CFM is the training of its members. Repeated small acts of service, and the constant effort to extend one's influence, to change one's environment even in very little ways are vital for "training-through-action", which is the heart of the technique.

I. notable results

Nonetheless some notable things have been accomplished. The early formation and promotion of the Cana Conference in Chicago was largely the work of CFM. The men in the original group, studying various problems of family life, came to the conclusion that a better understanding of the psychology and ideals of marriage would contribute to happier marriages. Searching for some practical means of bringing about this understanding, they helped promote Cana Conferences which were a modified form of the "Family Retreats" such as had been given by the

Reverend John P. Delany S.J. of New York. In Chicago, Cana and CFM still work in very close cooperation, since CFM begins where Cana leaves off. (*Cana aims primarily at helping a couple to make their own home more Christian, whereas the aim of CFM is to create a community which will be a help, not a hindrance to families in living a Christian life.*)

The Pre-Cana Conference, in turn, was started by the women's groups as a practical way to help engaged couples make a better preparation for marriage.

The Christian Family Movement in South Bend has founded a school to help mentally retarded children. The idea caught on so well that the school is now a civic project in which the entire city is interested.

In the East, the men of Woonsocket, R. I. built a camp as a much needed recreational ground for factory workers. The family groups of New York persuaded certain doctors to give obstetrical care to families at very reasonable rates.

A number of groups have adopted the practice of making welcoming calls on newcomers in the parish, and in some parishes have organized clubs for young couples. There are other activities of this sort; but they are not the principle norm by which CFM should be judged.

II. *development of a christian spirit*

Equally important are the many small actions which initiate a Christian spirit among the people on a certain block or in a certain parish. The hundreds of small actions such as helping a sick mother, baby sitting for people who can't afford to hire a girl, encouraging other people to do the same sort of charitable things aid the development of a Christian spirit in a community.

This spirit of Christian community is actually beginning to grow in parishes in which CFM is more fully developed. People have become more friendly and cooperative. They are beginning to take a genuine interest in their parish and are proud to be a part of it. Moreover, in all parishes where there is a good CFM section the traditional organizations are benefitting. The members of CFM are normally members of these various groups and

their influence is quickly felt. The reason for this is important. In CFM these men and women are receiving a slow but steady training. (It is precisely this training of the laity which makes CFM and the other forms of specialized Catholic Action unique.) As their leadership develops they take an increasingly active and constructive part in parish organizations. In theory CFM has been compared to a central heating plant which makes itself felt in all the parish societies. Many a priest has discovered that the best "shot in the arm" for a Holy Name Society or Women's Club is a good CFM section in the parish.

III. *personal sanctification*

Finally, a very important and much more immediate result of CFM is the personal sanctification of its members. While it is true that the main purpose of CFM is the Christianization of a community, those who are engaged in such a work inevitably find that their own lives are being transformed in the process. While endeavoring to bring Christ into the lives of others invariably they discover that they have brought Him more deeply into their own.

CHAPTER 2

how to start a section

Experience indicates that the most effective way to start the Christian Family Movement in a parish is to assemble five or six couples and plunge immediately into the first meeting found in the booklet, "FOR HAPPIER FAMILIES."¹ In Chicago, when a new Section is to be started the chaplain or one of the couples notifies the Federation, and a specially trained couple is on hand for the first few meetings. This couple may spend about ten minutes explaining in a general way the meaning and purpose of CFM. The group will then begin the first meeting in the booklet. The visiting couple may or may not conduct the second meeting. They will skip the third meeting but will attend the fourth in order to answer questions and see that things are running smoothly. In places where there is no Federation or other Section² nearby it is best to assemble the people and that very night have one of the couples act the part of the leader and begin with the first meeting in the booklet.

¹The booklet which outlines CFM for the lay people and contains the first 13 meetings for new groups.

²cf. glossary p. 56.

aids to organizing a section:

1. If it is at all possible the meetings should be rotated among the couples' homes. This makes for an informality and friendliness that a parish meeting room may lack.
2. Refreshments should be no more than coffee and cake, coke or beer served AFTER the meeting. This will eliminate "keeping up with the Joneses."
3. At the first meeting the organizing couple and the chaplain should be there early to greet each couple and make each person feel at ease.



4. The organizing couple (or if no such couple is available, the chaplain) may give a short talk (no longer than ten minutes) explaining informally what CFM is. Technical terms such as "Apostolate", "Mystical Body", "Liturgy", "Inquiry Technique" should be avoided. The simpler the

talk the better it will be. The introduction to this booklet might form the basis for this talk.

5. The organizing couple (or, if none is available, some couple prepared by the chaplain) will then begin with the first meeting in the booklet, "For Happier Families."

The first few minutes are of vital importance. Everyone must see instantly that this is not going to be too intellectual too difficult or embarrassing. The questions should be simple and easy to answer. The questions in the booklet are meant to be a help to discussion and are not to be followed slavishly.

6. A simple action should result from the discussion. The actions in the booklet are merely suggestions and may be followed or not as the group wishes.
7. As regards the Liturgy section of the meeting, the chaplain and the group should decide whether to begin with a study of the Mystical Body or of the Mass. Both should be covered in time.
8. None of the couples will have made any observations for the Social Inquiry.³ Therefore before the Social Inquiry is begun it would be wise for the couples to determine just what constitutes their neighborhood—a block, an entrance way in an apartment building, a whole town. Then, because the observation part will be brief, they might discuss whether it is good to be friendly with the people who make up this neighborhood. The chaplain should not be astonished at any ideas expressed. He is not dealing, as yet, with formed Christians.
9. The meeting should be limited to one and one half hours. If it can be cut off when interest is high, all the couples will want to come back next time.
10. At the end the chaplain should say a few encouraging words, and explain why he does not speak during the meet-

³cf. glossary p. 56.

ing itself. He then gives his blessing, which concludes the formal meeting.



11. A secretary should be chosen at the first meeting to keep notes along the lines indicated in "For Happier Families," (p. 21), and to remind the group, at the next meeting, of the actions decided upon.
12. Even though a secretary records the actions, each couple should have a notebook in which they too record the actions for themselves.
13. If there is a Federation the organizing couple or the secretary should make sure that the Federation is notified of the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the people connected with the group.
14. The time and place of the next meeting should be set. Meetings are held every other week.

choosing a leader

In the beginning the couples take turns leading the meeting. After leadership has been rotated once or twice the chaplain,

having consulted the couples, selects a permanent leader.⁴ When a couple has been chosen to be the permanent leaders, the husband leads the Social Inquiry, but the other couples take turns leading the Gospel and Liturgy.⁵

recruiting of couples

The first practical problem facing a chaplain is how to recruit couples with whom to start. In some cases the priest himself will have to contact them; in other cases an interested couple will contact him. Ordinarily, the people choose the members of the group with the approval of the chaplain. Often the priest may suggest couples who live in a different part of the parish or who belong to a different crowd. Cana Conferences have been found to be a help in recruiting couples.

The chaplain should be consulted on all prospective members. Otherwise couples may be contacted which he knows are not suitable for this type of apostolate. On the other hand, the chaplain should pay serious attention to the suggestions of the lay people. Experience has shown that in choosing lay leaders, lay people are often better judges than the priest. After the Section has been organized for a time, it is good to make a general rule that the people themselves must do the recruiting, and that those who join the Section should first serve an apprenticeship in an Action Group.⁶

⁴By "leader" is meant a couple. The husband leads the discussion on the Social Inquiry and is usually the one referred to when the word "leader" occurs. Actually however, for a leader to be effective, his wife must work closely with him. She too has a share in forming the section members. She will have to do much of the routine work for him, such as making telephone calls to remind the members of the time of the meeting or of the actions to be done. She can say things or give hints during the discussion which he, as leader, can not. She can add suggestions or ideas when she sees that he is not putting an idea across. In fact, some couples prepare the meetings so well together at home that they both ask questions and work together in drawing out the other couples. The wife may be quicker than her husband to sense a mood or undercurrent in some statement, and she can bring it out into the open by a question or two.

⁵Either the husband or the wife may lead the discussion of the Gospel and the Liturgy. Sometimes the husband takes one and the wife the other.

⁶cf. glossary p. 56.

AS A RULE, COUPLES WHO HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF GENEROSITY AND WHO SEEM TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO INFLUENCE A FEW OTHER COUPLES ARE THE BEST CHOICE. ON THE WHOLE, COUPLES RECENTLY MARRIED OR THOSE WITH PRE-SCHOOL OR GRADE SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE THE BEST MATERIAL.⁷



A couple should not be ruled out merely because one or the other is not a "good" Catholic. If that person is interested and has some qualities of leadership he or she should be admitted. In time such a member will either become a good Catholic or drop out of the Section. Sometimes the faithful standbys in a parish are good material for CFM; in other cases they may be too engrossed in other organizations, or may have made too many "enemies" to be any longer effective. The mere fact that

⁷It would be most unwise to admit couples in the hope that "it will do them good."

a man does well as president of the Holy Name Society does not necessarily mean that he will be effective in a Section.

how to interest prospective couples

In trying to interest couples in CFM the chaplain should be brief, simple and down to earth.⁸ Experience indicates that disturbing literature is an ineffective way of interesting couples. Personal contact by the chaplain or one of the couples is usually most effective. The title of the booklet "For Happier Families" contains the key word for the sales talk, "Happier."

1. For a family to be happy each individual member must be happy. Each has certain needs—physical, psychological and spiritual, which must be satisfied in the family. A simple example: Any priest knows that a home in which the husband is not the head of the house is an unhappy one, unsatisfactory to both the wife and the husband.

2. A family cannot live in isolation. One of the most important factors for family happiness is a Christian atmosphere in the community, which makes it easier rather than more difficult to live a Christian life.

3. The married people themselves are best suited to discover how they are to live a happy life in a friendly neighborhood. They are the ones who are close to the problem, and they have the sacrament of Matrimony, which gives them the graces to solve the problems of their state of life.

4. From a practical viewpoint it is important for parents to know the people and conditions of the neighborhood. Their children will be formed by those people and that environment. Therefore good parents will want to make their neighborhood the best possible place for their children.

5. CFM is an organization which, on a very practical level, tries to determine the habits necessary to bring happi-

⁸One chaplain assembled three or four couples and talked to them for several hours. It took him months to get them all together again. Later he learned that each couple had secretly resolved to keep out of his way because he wore them out with talk.

ness to the people in a family and to the families in a neighborhood.

points to be remembered:

Perhaps it would be well to indicate a few points which the chaplain should keep in mind when dealing with CFM.

it is a LAY movement

The apostolate in a diocese is the care of the Ordinary. And the lay apostolate, therefore, because it is not autonomous but a sharing in that of the bishop, must be under his direction and in obedience to him. CFM is a lay arm of the Bishop in the aposto-



late to the family. To be effective as such it must be a LAY movement, directed by the LAY people, planned by the LAY people, and carried out by the LAY people. Hence the independent thinking of the lay people must be encouraged. The lay people work out with the priest the principles by which to judge a particular situation. They then apply this judgment to their own lives. In other words they are not merely "yes men" to Father, but ACTIVE collaborators in the apostolate. Only THEY are capable of initiating certain changes in their lives and in the community.

it is a CHRISTIAN movement

Because this is the CHRISTIAN Family Movement it must aim at Christianizing everything which affects the family. In this Christianization two extremes must be avoided:

- 1) A preoccupation with the purely spiritual which confines itself to sponsoring pious practices in the home and the neighborhood.
- 2) A preoccupation with the purely temporal which attempts to solve human problems while ignoring supernatural means.

Both temporal and spiritual means must be used. The family Rosary will not ordinarily banish strife and quarrels from a four room flat in which a couple and five children have to live.

it is a FAMILY movement

The couples should act together as couples. If there are five couples in a group there will not be ten units, but five—e.g. there will be five reports on actions taken. Husband and wife should talk over the Gospel, the Reports, and the Social Inquiry at home, and come to the meeting with their JOINT conclusions.

Too often people wish to spend a long time perfecting themselves and their own marriage before attempting to help others. If we were to expect self perfection before attempting to help others, not only would this help not be forthcoming but also self perfection itself would never be attained. The development of the individual couple comes in great part through its actions. They have a little, and they make use of this little for others. In time they will see more clearly the need for self improvement, realizing that they are not so effective as they should be. The group will at first tend to discuss their own problems—*their* children, *their* troubles, *their* financial worries. If the group follows this line two unfortunate things will happen:

- (a) very little will be done to change the environment.
- (b) the men will lose interest.¹

¹A man likes to keep things objective and somewhat impersonal. He does not want to have his family problems brought out into the open before others, and he feels uncomfortable when the problems of others are presented to him in too personal a way.

The Social Inquiry, properly used, will force the group to consider not their own problems but those of the families in the environment.

it is a movement dedicated to ACTION

This is an organization devoted to ACTION. Mere talk will not affect the world. Even though the group talks long and well, if it acts little it is a poor group. If, on the other hand, the discussions, though neither long nor learned, produce effective actions, the group is a good one. Priests, who are so used to talking things out "per longum and latum", often tend to judge a group as good if there is profound and interesting discussion.

The actions determined upon should be very simple, easy and feasible. Small actions should not be considered unimportant. An environment is conditioned by thousands of little actions done by various people. A community or an apartment building is friendly or unfriendly not because of some edict from on high, but because of the presence or absence of hundreds of little acts of friendliness and consideration. The little actions, all hitting at the same problem, performed by the groups all over the city and all over the country are bound, in time, to have their effect in changing an environment.

CHAPTER 3

the meeting and its preparation

The procedure used at both Section and Action Group meetings is as follows:

- 1) Opening prayer
- 2) Gospel
- 3) Liturgy
- 4) Reports
- 5) Social Inquiry
- 6) Remarks by the chaplain
- 7) Closing prayer

N.B. The chaplain should be present at the section meeting. He is not, however, a participant. His work is done beforehand, when he prepares the meeting with those who are to conduct the various parts.

the gospel

At every meeting the group discusses the appointed verses of the Gospel and applies them to their daily lives. The Gospel discussion is not an exegetical exposition. It is NOT necessary for the people to understand what each word means in the original Greek. All they want is a clear idea of the meaning of the passage, and a simple application of it to their lives. Very

simple discussion questions are given in "FOR HAPPIER FAMILIES" or in the INQUIRY BULLETIN.¹ An understanding of the application of the teachings of Christ to everyday life can have only one result—a decision to perform some action during the week to bring that ideal to fruition. The action should be definite and not too difficult. It does no good merely to resolve to feed the hungry, but to feed without complaint the hungry children playing in the back yard is something concrete, attainable, and Christlike.

the liturgy

The chief inducement to active work in CFM is proper motivation. This is furnished by the Gospel, in which we study the historical Christ, and by the Liturgy in which we study Christ living in His Church. The doctrines of the Church, when properly understood, have a great driving force, and many of them have a particular application today. Hence in the Liturgy section great emphasis is placed on the doctrine of the Mystical Body, an understanding of which will rouse in any Christian a desire to be apostolic. This desire is increased not only by the realization of the close union of all the faithful but also by the conviction that Christ will not ordinarily spread His Kingdom without the help of the people. The social aspects of the Mass, the Sacraments, and the doctrine of grace are stressed in the meeting, in order to provide deep spiritual motivation for the apostolate. Although this section of the meeting is called "THE LITURGY", the groups in Chicago do not confine themselves merely to a consideration of liturgical ceremonies and practices. Rather they use the word "Liturgy" to designate the study of the living Church and its doctrines as they appear in the sacramental and prayer life of the Church.

preparation of the gospel

The preparation of the Gospel and Liturgy affords the chaplain a fine opportunity to come to know and understand the

¹cf. glossary p. 56.

couples. Inasmuch as the leadership of these two parts of the meeting is rotated he has a chance to have a personal talk with each member at regular intervals.²

The tendency of the priest when he prepares the Gospel may be to dig up all the scripture commentaries available, read them to the person, or tell him to take them home and read them. Such a practice is a sure way to stifle interest in the Gospel study. It will result in the leader's launching into a lecture when the people do not hit upon the ideas developed by the commentators. Then the priest will feel impelled to clear up points which the leader has missed. It is not necessary that the people know all about the textual differences, the etymology, the derivation of sayings or customs. The essential thing is that having grasped the basic idea of what Christ taught they *apply* it to their lives.³

The chaplain in the preparation, and the leader during the Gospel discussion, can best bring out the lesson of each passage by asking two or three simple questions: e.g. "What is Christ trying to teach us by this story?" "How can we apply this lesson to our daily lives?" "How can we apply this lesson to the environment in which we live?" These questions rather than questions such as, "How much is a denarius worth?", should be the starting point of our discussions. After the priest has listened to the explanation given him by the couple or person with whom he is preparing the Gospel he may well ask a few questions to bring out some points which were missed. If a certain idea is not clear the priest might ask a question—e.g. "Is this the only idea you get from this passage?" Once in a while he may find it necessary to give a brief explanation of the meaning of some word or custom e.g. in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins,

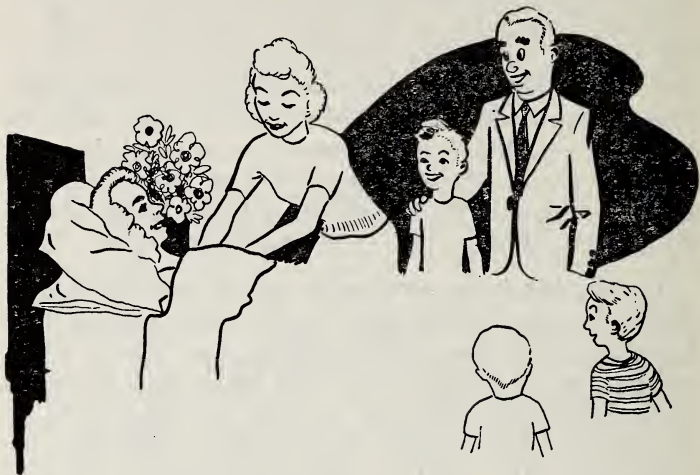
²Some chaplains prefer to have a different couple come in each time to prepare. Because this method entails the expense of a baby sitter, many chaplains go to the couple's home. Other chaplains prefer to have a different person come in each time—the men one time around, the wives the next.

³The pamphlet "THE CLOSED BOOK", written by Stewart Craig, published by the Grail, Field House, Eastcote, Middlesex, England and available at St. Benet's Library, 506 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, has helped many people to see how the Gospel stories can be put into modern language and modern applications drawn from the stories.

a little explanation of the marriage customs of the Jews helps the people to understand the story.

The action from a Gospel discussion may be of various kinds:

a) It may be the same action for each couple, e.g. "We will each take a half day to help Mrs. Jones, who is sick."



b) It may be a different action for each couple, e.g. in discussing the corporal works of mercy one couple will have a lonely person to dinner; another will visit the sick lady down the block; a third will write to a boy overseas.

c) At times each person may make a separate resolution. If humility is the virtue to be applied it may be hard to find one particular act that all can do to practice humility, but each person can resolve on some action which would be humbling to him and her. Each couple or person should write the resolution in a note book in order that it can be checked during the week and at the next meeting.⁴

⁴The time schedule should be observed closely. Because the Gospel is the most interesting part of the meeting the group will tend to spend too much time on it. For the first few meetings it is permissible for them to spend a little more than the allotted time on the Gospel, since they are learning to contribute to the general discussion. Some people make the mistake at first of thinking that the Gospel is the most important part of the meeting.

preparation of the liturgy

While discussing the Liturgy in the meeting the leader may be prone to forget to use the Socratic method and be content to give a little lecture. The couples say that they do not know enough about various doctrines or liturgical practices to be able to discuss them intelligently and fruitfully, and hence they are willing merely to listen. They exaggerate their ignorance. In reality they do have a large fund of knowledge acquired over the years from school, reading, and hearing sermons.

In the preparation of the Liturgy the chaplain will have to use great ingenuity to bring out this knowledge latent in the leader. If the questions are from a source book e.g. the Encyclical on the Mystical Body the couple should read the material beforehand and be prepared to answer the questions. If there is no source book the chaplain may have to rephrase questions several times in order to elicit some response from the couple. In no case should the chaplain allow the couple to remain merely passive. He must get them to answer all the questions they can, and give information only after he is sure that they have no more to give to him.

the reports

At every meeting a report is made by each couple on what they have done during the week. This report covers the following points:

- 1) Whether they performed the action drawn from the Social Inquiry of the previous meeting.
- 2) Whether they performed the Gospel action determined upon at the previous meeting.
- 3) Any situation or problem in their neighborhood with which the group could help, e.g. someone who is sick and needs a baby sitter.⁵

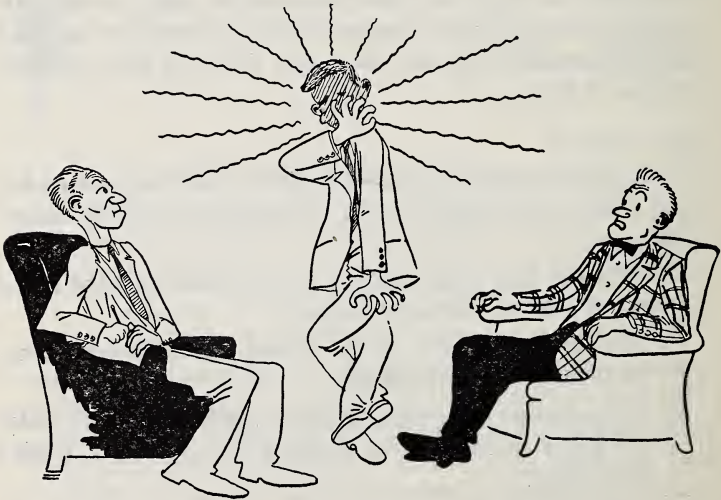
After a few meetings the leader should try to keep to the allotted fifteen minutes. In one section in which the Gospel discussion had been habitually getting out of hand, the leader resorted to setting an alarm clock, which rang after 15 minutes, ending the discussion.

⁵Some groups also report on attendance at Mass, reception of Communion, and spiritual reading.

Following the reports the leader makes any announcements he may have for the group. Actions previously determined upon and not yet completed are also discussed at this time.⁶ This part of the meeting should be as brief as possible.

why report?

Action is essential to the Christian Family Movement. Since the groups usually decide upon a common action which everyone is expected to do, everyone has a right to know whether the action was done. Each couple must keep track of the progress of the Section to see whether it is making progress. The only way this progress can be observed is by means of reports on actions done and not done. Moreover, people are encouraged by the example of others. If a man feels that a certain action is too difficult he may change his mind when he sees others doing it successfully.



⁶Occasionally the groups decide upon an action which can not be completed in the interval between meetings either because the action is a permanent project e.g. visiting newcomers or because the action requires a longer time to perform, e.g. organizing a married couples club. Normally the actions are completed before the next meeting.

Lest it be thought that such reporting might take on the nature of boasting it should be pointed out that reporting actually makes for humility rather than pride. What is expected is so great, and what is done is so little. Failure as well as success should be reported. There is a certain mortification in admitting failure. This in itself is a big factor in developing the spiritual life of the people.

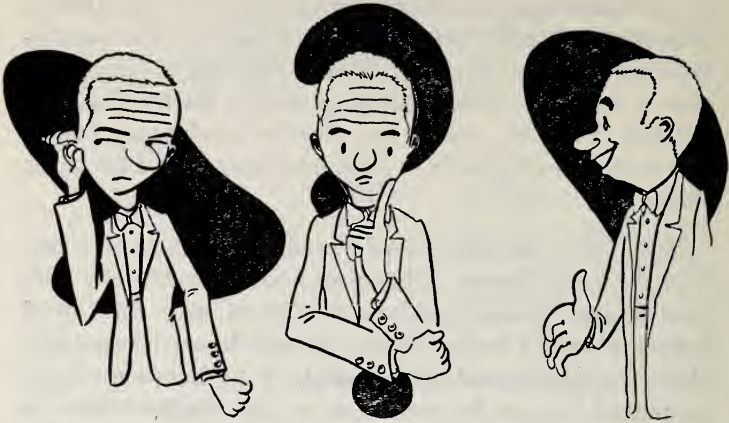
Most people can understand the need for reports on the action from the Social Inquiry. They may have more difficulty with those actions which derive from the Gospel, since the Gospel action is often of a personal nature. Even if the actions are somewhat personal it is good, when possible, to say just what was accomplished because the action may suggest similar actions to other members of the group. In any case, everyone should at least say whether or not he performed the Gospel action.

All these various actions worked out by individuals will in time help the group form a composite picture of a full Christian life. No one person can think of all the little ways in which charity should be practiced in the home; but four or five families together each telling their efforts to practice charity in their homes can arrive at a fairly complete picture of a home in which charity prevails.

Perhaps the simplest and best argument in favor of making a report is that it has worked with other groups. Many new groups object to it at first, but eventually come to see how necessary it is. Groups which do not make reports usually do little. Human nature being what it is, a visible checkup does much to encourage the weak and to enable the strong to do greater things.

the social inquiry

The most important part of the meeting is the Social Inquiry. If everything else goes poorly, and the Social Inquiry goes well the meeting is still a good one. If, on the other hand, there is a long and even fruitful discussion on the Gospel and Liturgy but a poor Social Inquiry the meeting is a poor one.



The Inquiry method of OBSERVE, JUDGE and ACT is not something new; it is merely the formalizing of the ordinary thought processes which are used time and time again every day. Whenever a decision has to be made one surveys the situation, judges it, and decides how to act. The more complete the survey and the more accurate the judgment, the better the odds that the decision will be a correct one. Hence it is important that the couples **MAKE ACCURATE OBSERVATIONS—NOT JUST GUESSES** on the subject of the Inquiry. If they have accurate and concrete facts to discuss rather than a surmise or a guess about conditions, they will have concrete situations to judge and a solid basis for a practical action. In their judging they will discover the general principles governing the situation and apply these principles to the facts gathered in the observations. On the basis of the facts and the judgment passed on those facts they will determine what action is to be taken.

Thus the general observation that mothers who are sick have difficulty getting help in their homes is not enough. Rather, the group should bring in the names of sick mothers who have no help, and should know the conditions resulting from this lack of help. In judging they will apply the corporal works of mercy involved in taking care of the sick, not to the sick in general, but

to the sick mothers they have observed, and will determine an action to help *those* mothers.

The observations must be concrete, and should whenever possible, include some knowledge of the causes of the situation and of its effects on the people or the neighborhood involved. Since making good observations is difficult, the group should discuss various ways of gathering facts. The work of observing should be done prior to the meeting.

The "Judge", while aimed directly at the facts observed, serves to form a Christian mentality in the couples of the group because they are learning and discussing Christian principles as applied to daily life. After following the inquiry method for several years the couples should have a well rounded Christian mentality.

Finally, the actions must flow **DIRECTLY** from the observations and the judgment. The actions should be concrete, practical, and easy to perform.

preparation with the leader

An indispensable prelude to a good meeting is the preparation of the Social Inquiry by the leader and the chaplain. Many leaders by dint of real interest and thorough preparation with the chaplain have led excellent groups even though their discussion techniques have left much to be desired. A few days before the meeting the leader, and his wife if possible, should see the chap-



lain to prepare the Social Inquiry. The leader should come armed with the observations he and his wife have already made on the subject and with their judgment of those observations. The leader presents these facts to the chaplain and tells what he thinks about them. The chaplain, using the Socratic method, does not lecture him but tries by provocative questions to help him arrive at a Christian judgment of the situation. The couples will have to do all the observing and all the acting, but they will get the principles by which they judge a situation and according to which they formulate their actions in great part from the chaplain. One of the chaplain's main tasks in CFM is forming the mentality of the leader in such a way that the leader begins to think according to the standards of Christ. The "judgment" in the Inquiry is therefore, of great concern to the chaplain. Again, he must remember not to lecture the leader or give him "pat" answers. Rather, he must encourage the leader to discover these principles for himself just as the leader expects the group to do at the meeting.

be an optimist

The chaplain should be hopeful and encouraging both in the preparation of the leader and in his remarks to the section members after the meeting. Many things will go wrong in the beginning; people will not live up to expectations; discussions will be badly handled; some members may drop out or become relatively inactive. The natural tendency will be to try to "pep up" the group by scolding or complaining. This is a poor technique. The mere fact that the couples are trying to help the Church and want to belong to an apostolic organization is reason for hope and optimism. If the chaplain looks closely he will find many little things to praise; he will see that many of the people are making progress both spiritually and intellectually, and that some problems are being solved, although they may be small ones.

spiritual direction

"Every true and lasting reform has ultimately sprung," wrote Pius XI, "from the sanctity of men who were driven by the love of God and men."¹ CFM is a work of reformation; it will succeed or fail depending on the sanctity of its members. The very technique of CFM provides a vehicle by which the necessary sanctification can be facilitated. The New Testament, the Liturgy and the "judge" part of the Inquiry properly used provide motivation. And the actions which emanate from these parts of the meeting build up by a slow but steady process the necessary virtues. The technique, however, does not work "ex opere operato". It supposes for its effectiveness a great deal of personal and individual direction on the part of the chaplain. The chaplain must inject an apostolic spirit into the leader and through the leader into the group.

A common objection couples raise to joining CFM is "How can I make the world Christian when I myself am not too good a Christian?" Such people think that they should put their personal lives in order first and then try to be apostolic. Is this a valid objection? Is it necessary to provide some form of Christian

¹Encyclical "Mit Brennender Sorge".

training for people before admitting them to CFM? No! **THE CFM TECHNIQUE ITSELF PROVIDES THAT FORMATION.** Perhaps the most unusual feature of CFM is that the sanctification of its members comes in great part through the actions they perform. Following the axiom, "Nemo dat quod non habet" the people give what little they can to their neighbors, and as they themselves advance in the knowledge and practice of real Christianity they give more to the people around them. This idea of formation through action should color all the talks and conferences the priest has with the members of CFM. It should determine the virtues and mortifications which will have to be emphasized. Because the action on the community results from the meeting, much of the couples' sanctification will come from the meeting itself.

Some of this formation which comes from the meeting is obvious: When a couple is discussing the Gospel and Liturgy they are talking about Christ and learning to live like Him. The same is true of the "judge" in the Inquiry. While the people are judging a particular situation in the light of Christian principles they are forming Christian convictions.

There is, however, a subtle training in virtue which comes from following the CFM technique. This must not be underestimated. If, for example, a couple prepares the meeting together in their own home, discussing the Liturgy, Gospel, and Social Inquiry beforehand they are learning to think together. If they have not been in the habit of talking over other problems they will learn from these discussions how to talk over ALL their problems. As their powers of observation are sharpened by gathering facts for the Inquiry they will notice mistakes others are making, and will become conscious of the same faults in their own lives. A man who had been spending too many nights away from home gradually came to the realization that he was neglecting his own family when he saw what effect the frequent absences of the father had on other families.

The classical way of learning a new language is to begin with a grammar and vocabulary list, to proceed from simple to com-

plex sentences, to understand why each word is used. Usually this method takes years to produce a good linguist. On the other hand, the army turned out thousands of men who learned to speak a language well in six months. This was done by making the men use the language from the first class. Often the soldiers did not know why they used a certain word or construction, but they knew they were using it correctly because they had heard it used that way by experts. Afterwards, if they wished, they could study the theory of the language; but they had learned to speak it first. This is the theory of CFM—spiritual formation through action. If the couples act like Christians in small ways, in time they will become mature Christians. A couple which has been faithful to CFM for several years has a right to expect that at the end of that time a great many of their ideas and actions will have become more Christian.

general spiritual direction of the group

One of the means by which the chaplain gives general spiritual direction to the group is a three to five minute talk following the section meeting. In these talks he should stress the necessity of daily Mass and Communion, the family rosary, meditation, etc. On one hand, the chaplain must be very careful not to push the people too hard. On the other hand he must not be afraid to broach spiritual subjects. In the beginning these talks should have as their subject the virtues which the group needs most. The chaplain, however, in all his talks should constantly stress these few ideas:

- 1) **THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL MOTIVATION.** Even though the couples are working on such material things as housing, playgrounds, baby-sitter service, recreation, etc., they must nevertheless be motivated by the love of Christ. If the people do not keep this in mind in all their actions, they will make little spiritual progress.
- 2) **THE COMPLETELY APOSTOLIC TENOR of CFM.** CFM is frankly missionary. It aims to produce once again an atmosphere conducive to Christian living. Many people today are pagan or semi-pagan even though they wear a Christian

label. CFM must help them to become Christian. This is done not only by the personal approach but by Christianizing the environment, i.e. recreation, education, work, family life, etc.

- 3) **THE NOTION OF SERVICE.** The chaplain must constantly remind the group that they serve Christ by serving others. This is done mainly through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The basis for this service should be explained—the Mystical Body.
- 4) **THE NECESSITY OF SOME SPIRITUAL READING.** Obviously the Bible and the Papal Encyclicals are to be recommended to all. The chaplain will have to exercise great care in recommending other books to the group.

In addition to the priest's talks there is a need for evenings of recollection and retreats for couples.² These are specifically geared to the apostolate and to the type of spirituality proper to married people. The priest must give a great deal of thought to the preparation of the material for these retreats and days of recollection since little has been written on the spiritual life as it applies to married people. Discussion with the couples themselves will be a great aid to the priest in clarifying his thoughts along these lines.

particular direction

A talk by the priest after the meeting, evenings of recollection, and an annual retreat do not suffice, however, in the training of an apostle. Some individual attention is needed. This is usually given at the time when the priest and the couple prepare the meeting.³

The priest will then be able to observe each member's progress and to make more personal the points stressed in his talks after the meeting. His attitude must always be one of encouragement

²The Chicago CFM Federation sponsors two week-end retreats a year for couples. However, because most couples can not leave their children for that long a time, evenings of recollection are held at regular intervals.

³At times it may be good to have the husband or wife alone prepare the meeting so that the priest will have an opportunity to talk to each individually.

and praise rather than criticism. The efforts of the people will not always come up to expectations. Nonetheless, the priest must take care to single out some point to be praised. People will respond to the encouragement of the priest, whereas they will be discouraged by his indifference or criticism. At this time the chaplain might also discuss any personal problems which might be brought up.

CHAPTER 5

action groups

Up to this point we have been speaking almost exclusively in terms of the leaders' group, or "Section". This stress on the Section is altogether necessary. The Section is not only the starting-point, the first objective in point of achievement—it is the basic unit of CFM. And the strength of the movement will always be determined by the strength of the Sections of which it is composed. The entire organization in any given city or town will grow in two ways from the Sections organized in that locality. The larger organizations—regional groups and diocesan Federation—will come into being only when there are enough Sections to make their establishment necessary. The other growth of the Section—the further penetration of the neighborhood must be initiated as quickly as possible. A Section is, after all, a group of leaders. Both their effectiveness in changing their environment and the success of their development as leaders demand that they exercise this leadership with someone. Each leader couple—i.e. each couple in the Section needs for the sake of its own formation an *Action Group*—three or four couples at least—with whom they meet regularly. They need this group, moreover, not only as a means of exercising their leadership, but



also as a means of extending their efforts in the neighborhood. The most striking feature of the specialized apostolate (of which CFM is a part) is the method whereby the influence of one priest can be multiplied, squared, and re-squared until it reaches into every corner of the community. The initial source of this influence is the chaplain's work with the leader of the Section. That initial training given to one couple is multiplied (say by five or six) at the Section meeting, where the leader continues the training with the couples who comprise the Section. But the really astonishing part of the whole process is that the multiplication does not end there. Each couple in the Section, is the head of another group of couples, an Action Group, which meets regularly, and repeats, in substance, the section meeting. The training given at the original meeting between the chaplain and the leader cascades down through the Section into the Action Groups until it has reached, by direct contact alone, thirty couples—or sixty individuals.

The Action Group, therefore, is a vital part of CFM. A Sec-

tion which has as yet no Action Groups must always be regarded as an embryonic Section. A Section in which there are some Action Groups but not the full quota must be regarded as not yet mature. Any couple which is unable or unwilling ultimately to form an Action Group is not good section material. Ideally Action Groups meet every other week. However, in the beginning they may be willing to meet only once a month or once every three weeks.

the action group meeting

The couple which recruited the Action Group leads the meeting. The husband always leads the Social Inquiry, but the wife may lead the Gospel and the Liturgy. The couple gets no special preparation for leading the Action Group meeting other than that acquired through their participation in a previous Section meeting. An Action Group begins with the booklet "FOR HAPPIER FAMILIES," but as soon as it has finished the booklet it should join in the Federation Inquiries.¹ The Action Group may or may not arrive at the same action as the Section, but as long as it is working on the same Inquiry there is no difficulty. At times the Section will decide on a large scale action which will require the help of the Action Groups. In this case the members will enlist the Action Groups in the project.²

The Action Group must not be regarded as merely the eyes of the Section—the fact finding organization. If the Section and Action Groups are working on the same Inquiry, however, the section member might very well find out from members of his Action Group what facts they might have which he could use at the section meeting.

Since the Action Group is the responsibility of one couple in the Section that couple should feel a great loyalty to it. Section members must regard the people in the Action Group as their first responsibility. All the points that make a good section

¹cf. glossary p. 56.

²In a parish in which all the section members have Action Groups, each Action Group can be made responsible for some project of the entire group, e.g. one Action Group is in charge of newcomers, another of the baby-sitter service, another of the Cana days, etc.

leader apply equally to the section members in relationship to their Action Groups.

the chaplain and the action group

The chaplain prepares the section meeting and attends it. But he does not prepare the action group meeting and does not attend every meeting. The leaders of the Action Groups receive all their preparation in the section meeting. This preparation consists in their having covered the material in some previous section meeting.

The chaplain should visit each Action Group at least twice a year, (oftener if it is at all possible)—in order to make the people feel that they are part of a recognized parish organization and to observe how section members conduct a meeting.

Experience has proved that the responsibility of running an Action Group is the best means of developing real leadership among the section members. Normally, the interest of the people in the Section will lag after a few months. If, however, they take on the responsibility of forming an Action Group they will either drop out or will become more interested. After the Section has been meeting for a time it should begin to list and to contact couples for Action Groups. The ideal situation would be for each couple to begin meeting with its Action Group immediately upon completion of the booklet "For Happier Families." In practice this rarely happens. Some couples find it easy to form an Action Group. Others, who find it more difficult, may take a longer time.

CHAPTER 6

function of the leader

A good Section is one which produces specific actions, has effective Action Groups; and is making some sort of dent on the pagan thinking of the neighborhood. A weak Section is productive of more talk than action, doesn't have Action Groups, and makes little or no impression on the people in the neighborhood. In most cases the difference between a good and bad section lies with the leader. If the leader understands CFM, and knows how to conduct meetings, the Section will work well; if, on the other hand, the leader does not know what he is expected to do the Section will flounder.

Christian ideas and ideals will be carried to the neighborhood by members of the Section and the Action Groups. The Action Group members will be trained by the section members. The section members will be trained by the leader in the ideas and techniques of CFM. The leader learns these Christian ideas and ideals from the priest.

attitude of the leader to the section

In dealing with the Section the leader can adopt various attitudes. He can:

- 1) DOMINATE it by virtue of his personality

- 2) DOMINATE it by virtue of what "Father" says
- 3) DOMINATE it by virtue of his authority as leader
- 4) GUIDE the members to participation, conviction and a sense of responsibility.



1) If his personality DOMINATES the Section, the Section is doomed to failure. It is expected that all the people in the Section will, in time, develop into leaders. This will not be accomplished if the leader is attempting to impose his will and ideas on them. They would then depend on him to suggest actions, to get things done, to shoulder the whole burden instead of thinking for themselves, acting on their own initiative, and accepting their share of responsibility.

2) If he DOMINATES it by being the mouthpiece for the chaplain the group will lose its character as an apostolic LAY group.

At times, while preparing the meeting the priest may be able to suggest certain actions to the leader. Even in this event, however, the leader should not come into the meeting and force these suggestions on the Section. The chaplain's suggestions can be used as a last resort when no one comes up with a practical action. But even when this is done, the leader should suggest the action as if it were his own, without mentioning the fact that the priest had suggested it to him.¹

¹On rare occasions some problem might arise in a parish which the pastor feels should be handled by the group. In these cases it is best not to hide a predetermined action under the guise of an Inquiry. The chaplain should come right out and say, "Here is a job the pastor would like you people to do."

The chaplain's main task, as has been mentioned above, is to aid the leader to a knowledge and appreciation of the principles by which he and the Section can make a Christian judgment of a situation. The people alone make the observations, and under the guidance of the leader they apply the Christian yardstick to the observations. Finally, because they actually live in the situation, they alone are competent to determine what action they should take to improve it.

3) Thirdly, if the leader tries to **DOMINATE** the group by virtue of his authority as leader, he will kill it. Most people resent those in authority telling them what to do. If they themselves are convinced of the necessity of an action they will act with alacrity and good will. If they are ordered to do something, they usually feel a bit of resentment. No one has developed into a leader by being commanded to be one.

4) It is vitally important that the leader *HELP* the people think for themselves. By adroit handling of the meeting he should help the couples to participate and to acquire conviction and a sense of responsibility.

EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT A GOOD LEADER IS ONE WHO, INSTEAD OF COMMANDING, DRAWS PEOPLE OUT AND HELPS THEM TO DECIDE TO DO THE CORRECT THING. The leader's role is to help the couples think out the great truths of life, express them in their own words, and apply them to their daily lives. This thinking, expression, and application is a group process. The Section talks over various ideas. As each member thinks of ways of expressing those ideas or of applying them, the other members add, subtract, or challenge. The result, then, is not the work of one but all the couples. Hence many points that an individual might miss are taken into consideration.

In conducting the meeting, the leader must remember that he is a catalyst, that his aim is to produce a reaction in the other members. He is not dealing with just a group, but with four or five couples, with eight or ten people who have individual as

well as social needs. It is his job to help each person satisfy these needs.

the leader develops the members

The leader should be developing the members of the Section so that they in their turn will become effective leaders of Action Groups. In order to do this he must look upon each member as an individual with many good qualities—despite a few bad ones. He must, therefore, be *friendly, courteous, willing to go out of his way to help members, generous and sincere in his praise of their efforts.*

If he is going to do these things while conducting the meeting, he **SHOULD NOT**:

- 1) Lecture
- 2) Debate
- 3) Contradict or interrupt
- 4) Discourage the member's contributions.



1) Should not **LECTURE**: The natural tendency will be for the leader to tell the people everything he knows. By so doing, he is denying the people their right to participate in the discussion and to determine for themselves the goal or action of the meeting.

The "loaded question" is a form of lecturing. A question with one or two qualifying clauses which contain the answers is really no question at all.

2) Should not **DEBATE WITH MEMBERS**. The leader must not enter into a debate with a member. He might lose the argument, thereby damaging his prestige as a leader, or he might win merely because of the authority he has as leader, and his effectiveness would suffer just as much. If a disagreement arises, he should play the role of referee rather than antagonist or protagonist. A good leader is one who makes sure that both sides of a question obtain a fair hearing without taking sides. Often he will have to encourage one side or the other in order to bring their arguments into the case; but this would not be considered taking sides.

3) Should not **CONTRADICT OR INTERRUPT**: People will often make incorrect statements. The leader should not be the one to correct them directly. Suppose some person says that all the people in his building are friendly, whereas the leader knows that certain families do not speak to each other. It would be bad tactics for him to say, "Tom, I don't agree that the people in your building are friendly." He would then have taken a stand against Tom, thereby jeopardizing his true position as a leader. The leader must always have a long range view in mind. Tom has made an incorrect statement. That is not too important in itself. If, by letting it ride, he is developing Tom's self assurance and independent thinking, he will, in the long run, accomplish more.

When someone is talking at too great length or off the point,²

²For example when a woman goes off on a long story of a personal act of service, she will tell how she met Mrs. Jones in the bakery shop, what Mrs. Jones was buying, who else was in the store, what the store keeper said, and finally get down to reporting that she carried Mrs. Jones' cake home for her. Sometimes, too, a person gets off the subject. In the middle of the

the natural tendency is to cut the person off. Such a tactic is bound to cause hurt feelings. The best thing to do in these cases is to let the group discipline the offender. After a while most people will realize that the meeting is important enough to be kept concise and to the point. When they arrive home the husband or wife usually will correct the one who was out of order.

It is the leader, however, who is responsible for the morale of the meeting. After the couples have been meeting for a time and their shyness in each others presence has worn off, the leader himself will be able to keep people on the subject and conscious of the limitations of time. When either one of the leader couple is the guilty party, the other can jokingly correct him or her; and if, later, someone else does the same thing, the same joking manner will minimize any sting. But in all cases the leader must be kind and diplomatic. In doubtful cases silence is safer.

4) Should not DISCOURAGE THE MEMBER'S CONTRIBUTION: Some leaders make the Inquiries a guessing game. The members are expected to guess the answers arrived at by the leader and the chaplain.

The aim of the Inquiry is to engender convictions in the minds of each member. This aim is utterly defeated if the member suspects that the answers are predetermined, that he is expected not to contribute but merely to agree. The precise value of an Inquiry is that it leads the individual to discover a truth for himself instead of having it handed to him by someone else.

make the meeting productive

In order to have a good meeting certain formalities ought to be observed. These are outlined in the booklet, "For Happier Families." The meeting should start on time. Too much time should not be given to any one part. The couples should prepare the meeting at home. Reports should be short. The leader should be exact in keeping to these formalities, but he must have great

Gospel someone may say, "I know that this is not too much to the point; but a friend of mine at the office is going out with a girl who was a Catholic but married a fellow in a hurry just before he sailed overseas. What can be done for them?"

patience with people who don't. The feelings of a person are more important than the formalities of a meeting.

The leader must not allow the meeting to drift aimlessly. He must make sure that everyone contributes his knowledge to the meeting. There will be people who are too quiet; therefore, he should be careful to address to these people questions which they will be able to answer, in order to help them overcome their shyness. Some will be too loquacious. Instead of calling on such a person first for a report or for observations, the leader might call on him last. If a person is not very interested, the leader might assign to him some definite responsibility. In order to be able to do this the leader and the chaplain must know every member of the Section, and should discuss ahead of time the approach to each.

hints for a good discussion

A group of people talking to the leader or through the leader will not have a good discussion. This sort of thing belongs, if anywhere, in the class-room. The leader's efforts should be to have the people, without his prompting, discuss, amend, and correct ideas presented in the group. He can sit back, note



various important ideas, and summarize what has been discussed and agreed upon in the group.

He will have to ask questions to start the discussion. The questions he uses will be found in "FOR HAPPIER FAMILIES" and in the Inquiry Bulletin, but these questions are not to be followed slavishly. These are starting points for discussion. For example, in the Liturgy section of "FOR HAPPIER FAMILIES" there is the question, "What are the gifts of piety, counsel, fortitude and fear of the Lord?" The leader can ask the question and then sit back and wait for the answer. When it does not come, instead of asking again or giving up he should try a new tack: "Do you think piety means going to Church or saying extra prayers each day? What qualities of the saints showed their piety? Is piety just a woman's virtue?" There are any number of questions he might ask. Suppose good discussion arises on the real meaning of piety. The leader should not break it off and try to get the couples to define fortitude. He should keep the discussion going. Perhaps he will never finish the questions in the book. No matter; the people will have been thinking on a profound Christian truth and will have been developing instead of reciting their lessons as they would do in the presence of a teacher. Questions should be simple and to the point.

The leader should encourage the people to back up their answers with reasons, especially in cases in which they have given stock answers without realizing what those answers mean. In other words he must assist them to take their answers apart and see why they answered as they did. Then they must put all the answers together in order to see the whole picture. Learning to do this takes a long time. The chaplain should not become discouraged if the people do not pick it up quickly.

light touch needed

Very often the light touch is needed to make a discussion interesting. A joke, a "wise crack," some banter—far from hurting a meeting, frequently help it along. THE PEOPLE MUST ENJOY COMING TO THE MEETINGS—must enjoy discussions. If the discussions are always on a lofty, serious

plane, interest will lag, and the men will fall asleep. As long as no one "clowns" throughout the entire meeting the leader and chaplain should welcome the light touch.

ten points for a good meeting

Donald Phillips, president of Hillside College, Hillside, Michigan lists ten points which improve communication between the leader and the members of a section.³

1. The section member needs a **SENSE OF BELONGING**
 - a. A feeling that no one objects to his presence
 - b. A feeling that he is sincerely welcome
 - c. A feeling that he is sincerely needed for his total self and not just for his hands, his money, etc.

A lone, individual is a destroyer of values. Most men when they feel out of place in a group will try to assert their importance by arguing, fighting, being against what everyone else is for. Others will take refuge in silence and they contribute nothing to the group—except an occasional criticism. A man will try to protect his importance and dignity any way he can when he feels he is being slighted. The leader must therefore be convinced that he needs every single person in the section to make it a success, and, what is more, he must convey to all members this conviction of their importance.

2) He needs to have a **SHARE IN PLANNING THE GOALS OF THE GROUP**. He will be satisfied only when he feels that his ideas have had a fair hearing.

3) He needs to feel that the **GOALS ARE IN REACH AND THAT THEY MAKE SENSE TO HIM**.

4) He needs to feel that what he is doing **CONTRIBUTES TO HUMAN WELFARE**—in other words that what he is doing is important, and, even though not spectacular, worthwhile.

³The seating arrangement can be a big help to the leader. All the people should be seated so that they can easily see the leader and all other members of the group. At times this is very difficult in a small living room. In this case the leader should pay special attention to those who are out of his line of vision, lest they drop out of the conversation.

5) He needs to **SHARE** in making the **RULES** under which the group operates.

6) He needs to know in some clear detail **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF HIM**, so that he can work confidently. The leader should know the capabilities of each person in the group, should see to it that no person is given more than he can do, and make certain that each person knows clearly what he is supposed to do.

7) He needs to have **RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH CHALLENGE**, which are within reach of his abilities, and which contribute to the attaining the common objective.

8) He needs to **SEE THAT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE TOWARD THE GOAL SET**.

9) He needs to be kept informed. What a person is not **UP** on, he may be **DOWN** on.

10) He needs to have **CONFIDENCE** in the leader.

In brief he needs at any given time to conclude: "**THIS SITUATION MAKES SENSE TO ME!**"

what did Christ do?

This entire section can be summed up very briefly. "We are trying to influence people for good as Christ did, and to help them to follow His methods of leadership." Christ never blustered or dominated a group by His authority. He very seldom reproved anyone. In fact, when He grew angry it was only with people who were deliberately trying to lead others into sin. Patience and meekness were His trade mark. Everyone who approached Christ, whether adulteress or saint, was treated by Him as a person of dignity and worth. Christ instantly established the common ground on which everyone could meet Him. With fishermen He talked of the sea and fish, with farmers He talked of the fields. They did not have to meet Him on His ground; He met them on their ground, and quickly won their hearts.

Christ listened to them. Even when He rebuked the Apostles, He did so gently and only after they had missed the point of His teachings for three years. A leader can do no better than read

the life of Christ, underline every passage which show Christ instructing people, and use those passages for his meditation.



One further point: The people in Action Groups will learn something of the CFM technique from their leaders who are in the Section. The people in the Section will learn it from the leader of the Section. The leader of the Section will learn it from the chaplain. In no case can it be taught by words. It is only learned by imitation. Therefore, this chapter might be re-read with the word "Chaplain" being substituted for "leader," and "leader" for "section member."

CHAPTER 7

the wide view

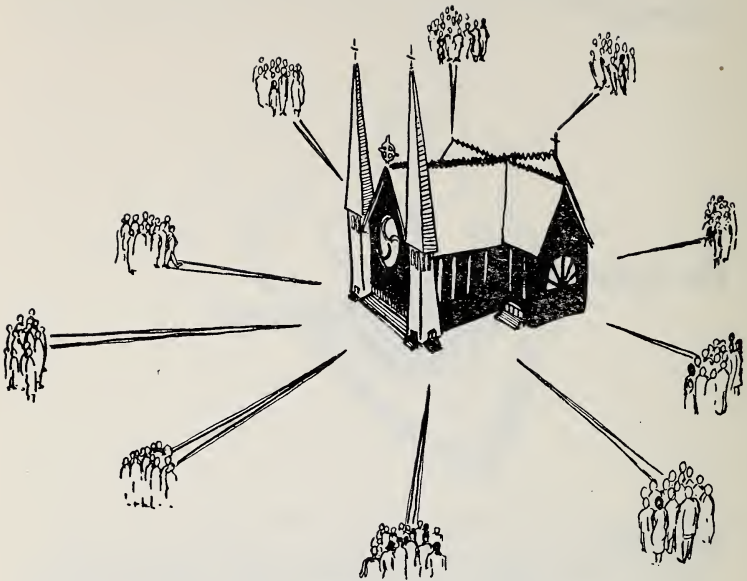
the parish

Since CFM is trying to establish the ideal Christian community the logical starting place is the parish, with its variety of people and problems. A parish is large enough to encompass a good cross section of people, and yet small enough to provide a practical field of operations. The inspiration of CFM must of necessity come from the Church, and the graces to take part in the apostolate must come from the altar. Therefore, there seems to be no doubt that the best grouping is along strictly parochial lines. Inter-parochial groups have been frustrated in their efforts to deal with problems because of differing circumstances in the different parishes. Such groups have had the great disadvantage of being spread out too thinly over too large an area.

The field of operation for a parish priest, is of course, the parish to which he has been assigned by the Bishop. It would be incongruous if he were to be chaplain of a group composed of couples which were not members of his parish.

the diocesan federation

Unless the chaplain is on his guard there is a danger that a



CFM group will take too narrow a view of the work to be done. At first the couples will tend to concern themselves only with problems directly connected with their own homes and families. If the Inquiry, for example, is on teen agers, and no one in the group has any teen age children the couples may want to omit this particular Inquiry even though hundreds of teen age children live in the parish. Later, as their view of the apostolate broadens they will see the need for working on problems which they find in their own parish, but may not realize their obligation to deal with those which are more pressing in other parts of the community. For example, if the parish is in a section of the city which has adequate housing, the group may not understand why it should be concerned with an Inquiry on housing. The couples must be trained, however, to think in terms of the entire Church, to realize that the Mystical Body is not made up of members of one parish alone, but of people throughout the world.

One of the chief means for bringing about this broader view

of the apostolate is the Diocesan Federation. Such a Federation is necessary TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES of all the sections in attacking common problems, TO PROMOTE UNITY AMONG THE GROUPS, and TO ACT AS SPOKESMAN PRESENTING THE FAMILY POINT OF VIEW. A Federation will be formed only after several Sections are operating in a diocese.

The Federation, therefore, gathers information from all over the diocese and makes up Social Inquiries. Because every Social Inquiry will not affect each parish Section in the same way, the chaplain and the leader will have to work over the Inquiries to make them fit the situation as found in a particular parish. The mere fact that the Inquiry as printed is not apropos does not mean that it should be discarded. For example, in an Inquiry on housing one Section may be looking for apartments, another may be trying to find rooms for people, a third may be taking action against landlords who are illegally breaking apartments into small kitchenettes. All Sections are working on housing at the same time, but each is attacking that phase of the problem which is most apparent in its own parish. Perhaps one Section will think of an action which all the Sections in a diocese can do, or of an action which can be set up on a permanent basis—e.g. rental service. But even if no such project develops, the mere fact that Sections all over the city are active in the same field will have an overall effect on the total environment.

What, then, does a Section do about purely local problems i.e. problems which are not the subject of a general Inquiry? Obviously the group can not ignore a problem such as the selling of liquor to minors. On the other hand it must not devote so much time to such a problem as to lose contact with the program of the Federation. As a matter of fact, action on such local problems can usually be decided upon at one meeting. Perhaps one person will be put in charge of seeing to it that the action is carried out, and it will be up to him to report on the progress he is making or to ask for help as he needs it.

federation activities

All the members of CFM whether in a Section or Action

Group, should attend Federation activities, because they will then see how many people are active in CFM and will acquire a sense of solidarity with other groups—a realization that hundreds of couples are interested in working on the same problems as they. These Federation activities are mainly study days and evenings of recollection.



The officers and regional representatives¹ also hold regular monthly or bi-monthly meetings to coordinate the activities of the groups and to discuss such things as Inquiries, the expansion of the movement, etc. The Federation publishes bulletins and pamphlets to educate and inform the membership. The finances necessary to maintain the Federation come from the dues of the members.

At present, cities which have CFM groups, whether they have a Federation or not, have formed a coordinating committee which plans a yearly convention, publishes a bi-monthly paper, "ACT," and outlines in more or less detail the subjects which all the groups in the country will use for their Inquiries.²

¹When a Federation has so many sections that the officers can not easily keep in contact with the various section leaders, regional groups of six or seven Sections should be established. In Chicago there are eight of these regions. The regional representative is the contact between the Section and the Federation.

²For complete information on this committee write the Christian Family Movement, Room 1808, 100 W. Monroe, Chicago 3, Illinois.

conclusion

A chaplain who is beginning the Christian Family Movement in his parish will find that he has many problems arising from the fact that CFM is new. This book has attempted to show how it works, but there are still many questions a new chaplain would like to ask, and there are many points an older chaplain would like to discuss. Hence the chaplains should meet regularly to discuss points of technique, problems of spiritual formation, and the application of dogma to the Family Apostolate.

The people can only progress in the apostolate as fast and as far as their chaplain. Even though he must learn to allow them to solve their own problems, even though he must keep quiet at the meeting, even though he must give them great responsibility in the work of saving souls, he is the heart of the movement. **THE CHAPLAIN** must train the leaders, **THE CHAPLAIN** must inspire and encourage them. **THE CHAPLAIN** must have the vision to give them.

glossary

THE MEETING:

Opening prayer.

- 1) **REPORTS:** Each couple tells whether or not they performed the action decided on in the Social Inquiry and Gospel discussion of last meeting. (10 Minutes)
 - 2) **GOSPEL DISCUSSION:** A Passage of Scripture is read and discussed and a practical application drawn from it. (15 Minutes)
 - 3) **LITURGY:** Some phase of Christian doctrine is discussed. (15 Minutes)
 - 4) **THE SOCIAL INQUIRY:** A situation in the community is OBSERVED, JUDGED, and ACTED UPON. (30-40 Minutes)
 - 5) **TALK BY CHAPLAIN:** A five minute talk is given by the chaplain followed by the closing prayer and chaplain's blessing.
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FOR HAPPIER FAMILIES (The Yellow Book)

A workbook for new groups, containing the first 13 meetings and an explanation of CFM.

INQUIRY BULLETIN: A Bulletin which comes out twice a year containing the program of the meetings for six months.

FEDERATION: The union of all the Sections in a city under a common group of officers.

SECTION: Five to seven couples in a parish who meet with the chaplain every two weeks and follow the outlined meetings.

ACTION GROUPS: A group of five to seven couples who meet regularly with a section couple and follow the outlined meetings.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT (CFM) (Called Christian Family Action (CFA) in Chicago). An organization of couples devoted to christianizing family life in a neighborhood.

