



FAMILIES IN THE HOLY SPIRIT RENEWING THE FACE OF THE EARTH

COUPLES FOR CHRIST (CFC) FACT SHEET, PART 1

Many inquiries and concerns about the recent separation from Couples for Christ of the group of Bro. Frank Padilla have surfaced, either through the Internet or during the meetings that our leaders have been holding with their members. The following are the most common questions. They are being answered here so that we will all have a common understanding of the situation.

ON THE CFC MANDATE

Has Couples for Christ lost Church recognition?

No. CFC has not lost Church recognition. In fact, during the dialogue between the CFC International Council and Bro. Frank's group with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) – Episcopal Commission on the Laity on August 28, 2007, its Chairman, Bishop Gabriel Reyes, categorically stated: **“In the light of this, the original CFC, with Gawad Kalinga as one of its ministries, retains its recognition as an international private association of the faithful, which was given by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 2005. It also retains its recognition as a national private association of the faithful, which was given by the CBCP in 1996.”**

The international recognition by the Vatican remains with the CFC which has Gawad Kalinga as one of its ministries (please refer to Section 11 of the CFC International Statutes). CFC also retains the national recognition by the CBCP.

CFC continues to be recognized in all the Dioceses in the Philippines. Some Dioceses in the Philippines, and other parts of the globe go so far as to **“... recognize only the original CFC under the leadership of Jose Tale”**. Some of these are the Archdioceses of Caceres, Naga, of Lipa, Batangas, of Arabia, of Durban, South Africa, of Nairobi, Kenya, of Mombasa, Kenya, of Taveta, Kenya, of Kampala, Uganda, of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and of Newark, New Jersey.

In Canada, Couples for Christ continues to be recognized in all the Dioceses where we are present. In the Archdiocese of Toronto, we have had the invaluable guidance of Fr. Mark Villanueva as our Spiritual Adviser for many years until recently when Most Reverend Richard J. Grecco, the senior Vicar General and Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto, upon the recommendation of Fr. Mark, appointed a new Spiritual Adviser for CFC Toronto in the person of Fr. Roselle Azares, who is also the Assistant Pastor at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Scarborough, Ontario.

Is CFC just involved in fundraising?

No. As a matter of fact, since 2003, we have had a standing policy in Couples for Christ that only one major fundraising activity per calendar year is allowed for each ministry in an area, and that the fund raiser should have Christian values and objectives, and must not conflict with existing federal, provincial, and local laws.

At the chapter level, minor fundraising activities may be held, such as garage sales, bake sales, and similar small and confined activities as long as the events do not conflict with or replace their evangelization and pastoral formation schedules.

Has CFC lost emphasis on spiritual formation?

Conducting Christian Life Programs (CLPs) and Youth Camps have always been the top priority for CFC Canada and its Family Ministries. We have consistently had a positive growth pattern in our evangelization efforts. Also, our pastoral formation programs further strengthen members' spiritual growth. CFC and its Family Ministries have always been vibrant and thriving in their community life.

We have also expanded our evangelization work by consistently supporting and sending missionaries to far-flung areas within the country, like the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and even venturing way beyond our borders, to Bermuda as well as various countries in Africa, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Benin and lately, Cameroon. Therefore the claim that CFC Canada has lost emphasis on spiritual formation is clearly untrue.

Has CFC split into two branches, namely, "CFC-GK" and CFC-FFL, or has CFC-FFL in Canada separated from Couples for Christ Canada?

No. CFC has not split into two branches. The registered name of our community remains to be **Couples for Christ** or **CFC**, and **not** "CFC-GK", a term coined by the new group who call themselves Couples for Christ – Foundation for Family and Life (CFC-FFL).

CFC is an international private association of the faithful **duly** recognized by the **Pontifical Council of the Laity in the Vatican**.

Gawad Kalinga, or GK, is one of the pillars of Couples for Christ. CFC has six other pillars, namely Evangelization and Mission, Pastoral Support, Family Ministries, Pro-Life, Social Ministries and Special Ministries.

On the other hand, CFC-FFL has chosen to separate from the CFC global family. It has separated from the **"original CFC, with Gawad Kalinga as one of its ministries"**. It has reportedly registered as a separate corporation in Ontario with its own set of officers and members, and with a separate governance and structure from that of Couples for Christ Canada.

Bringing glad tidings to the poor

ON THE GK ISSUES

What is the emerging relationship between CFC and GK?

CFC and GK are interlinked. GK is the child of CFC. CFC fosters and nurtures GK to achieve its mission of bringing glad tidings to the poor. CFC and GK are co-workers in God's vineyard, and both share the responsibility of providing a dignified life for all.

In the 2002 paper entitled ***Making A Place at the Table – A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God's Children***, the U.S. Catholic Bishops state that: “**The Gospel and Catholic social teaching place our service of the poor and vulnerable and our work for justice at the center of Christian witness.**” Furthermore, to cite the late Pope John Paul II in his book ***Novo Millennio Ineunte***, he says that “**Christians must learn to make their act of faith in Christ by discerning His voice in the cry for help that rises from this world of poverty.**”

GK is included in the major structural reforms that the CFC International Council is committed to implement. If it needs pruning and re-direction, then this will be done. In all of these, the Council will exercise the empowerment of the Spirit and will listen to the Word of God in order to follow closely what He wants for His people.

OTHER ISSUES

Is Bro. Frank Padilla the founder of CFC, as maintained by his group?

No. Couples for Christ was founded by the **Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon** (Joy of the Lord) Community as one of its outreach ministries in its work of evangelization and renewal. Frank Padilla, and his wife Gerry, were among the 16 couple-participants in the first CFC Life in the Spirit seminar conducted in June 1981, by Fr. Herb Schneider, who was the spiritual adviser of CFC for many years. The first leader assigned by Ligaya ng Panginoon to head Couples for Christ was Bro. Vic Gutierrez. (*Source: pages 9-11, and 97 of the CFC Silver Book.*)

Is Bro. Frank Padilla the holder of the charism of Couples for Christ since his name is mentioned in the Vatican decree recognizing Couples for Christ?

While the name of Frank Padilla, who was the CFC International Director at that time, may have been on the Vatican decree recognizing CFC as a private international association of the lay faithful, that recognition was not given to one man. It was given as an official recognition to a body of people involved in a Catholic, spiritual, and evangelical movement who have shown themselves worthy of a Vatican acknowledgement. Frank Padilla by himself could not have been given that recognition without the whole body made up of Couples for Christ members.

(part 2 to follow)

Bringing glad tidings to the poor