

# Dear Holy People of God

By Tony & Cathy Witczak & Fr. Emile Frische  
United States Secretariat Team

We wish you all a blessed and joyful Easter! We thank God for your faithfulness to the mission of Worldwide Marriage Encounter. What you do in your areas is so important to our WWME family. We are offering special intentions for your ministry and your family at this holy time of the year.

When we were selected as your US Team in February, our lives were suddenly changed. Bob & Joy and Msgr. Chuck passed along an avalanche of need-to-know materials and a pocket calendar with over half the remaining weekends in the year scheduled. Nevertheless, we do have another life, and we will share a bit of it with you. Our stories may help you to appreciate the joy we feel in accepting this awesome responsibility.

I am the lucky priest growing in relationship with Tony & Cathy. **I am Fr. Emile Frische.** I was born in Roermond, The Netherlands, and moved to New Zealand 5 years later. No, I didn't go alone! My Mum and Dad and 3 brothers came along. From about the age of 7, I wanted to be a priest. Fr. Gerry Haring, a Mill Hill Missionary priest had a great influence in my life, and I wanted to be like him. I applied to join the Mill Hill Missionaries - the English Missionary Society, founded by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan in 1866. I did my philosophy in Christchurch, New Zealand, and then traveled 30 days by boat to England to study theology. I was ordained in my home parish, St Francis Xavier, Whangarei, New Zealand, on June 20, 1970. My first appointment was to the Diocese of Miri, Sarawak, East Malaysia (on the island of Borneo.) I worked with the Kenyah, Iban, Sebop and Penan peoples--too short a space to tell those stories!! They were wonderful years the best years of my life. I had to leave Borneo in 1984 and was assigned to Mill Hill, London, as vocations' director. After 10 years in different ministries my Superior General asked me to come to the USA. Oh my, why would I want to come to the USA? Obedience would be one reason! Anyway, it was in 1998 that I was dragged to a Weekend in the New York City area. It was the best thing that could ever have happened to me. I had a great experience on the Deeper, and have never looked back. Being in Ecclesial relationship with various couples is the highlight of my priesthood. I come to see more clearly the power of our Sacraments in relationship - we are Church, Church on mission through relationship. Trialogue is very important and necessary for me, and I have that privilege 4 evenings a week. I'm looking forward to growing in my relationship with Tony and Cathy, and all of you.

**We are Tony & Cathy Witczak,** both from Wisconsin. Tony grew up there, but I spent 13 years in Mexico before I returned as a teenager. We met in 1964 at a migrant workers camp-Tony was the driver for the evening, and I was helping the seminarians in their ministry to the Mexican field workers and their families. There was an instant attraction because a few weeks later, we were talking about getting married. Tony was mature and spiritual, qualities that really attracted me, but his good looks and strong arms made him irresistible!

We were married in 1967-- our first daughter was born a year later. We changed jobs a few times and we moved a few times. Soon we had three little girls-Eileen,

Risa and Kara. We moved to the Louisville area in 1975, for a better job we thought would be a career move, but in retrospect we know it was God's way of getting us into Worldwide Country. At that time, there were no WWME weekends in Wisconsin. Our son Kyle was born in 1976. We were recruited for the weekend by a non-Catholic couple in Tucson while on a business trip. In August of 1979 we made our weekend at Mt. St. Francis in southern Indiana. The priest was Fr. Joe Supple from Atlanta. We still remember him..we were inspired by the way he and the couples worked together so closely. Fr. Joe chose the vows from the book of Ruth for the final mass. we couldn't keep the tears of joy from flowing as we recognized how much we loved each other and what a gift we had been given. have never been the same!

We became Louisville area leaders just a year and a half later. In 1983 we moved to Tampa-for a better job that soon disappeared and left me (Tony) unemployed. The instant family that WWME provided was helpful in carrying us through this difficult time. We were sad to move away, but we ended up in the Philadelphia area where we still live today. We made jokes about being banished from our hot tub in Florida to the cold winters in Valley Forge, but we were blessed to land in one of the strongest communities in the country. It is here that we finally put the "daily" in our dialogue. We have not missed since 1992. We share this not to boast, because we know that many of you have an even better record, but to attest to the value of making each other number one every day. It really makes a huge difference.

We are delighted to be serving with Fr. Emile in this new leadership responsibility. Building an ecclesial relationship can be challenging, but we know that it is also rewarding. It is the hallmark of our movement, the close collaboration makes us stronger as leaders and helps us to reflect the wonderful mystery that is our Church. We dialogue each Thursday and in our prayer as we begin, we think of you.

The help of many is required to accomplish the work of Worldwide Marriage Encounter. We value your efforts. We pray that laborers for the all the WWME vineyards throughout our country will be plentiful. May God's blessings be powerful in you and your families this Easter time. May you be filled with His Peace.

We love you  
Tony & Cathy & Fr. Emile  
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