

# Dear Companions on the Journey, A Love letter from our National Leadership

By Tony & Cathy Witzczak and Fr. Emile Frische

May the peace of Christ be with you all as you labor for God's glory! We hope that you and your family are enjoying a beautiful summer.

It has been several months since our first letter to you. Since then we (Tony & Cathy) both retired from our paying jobs. We also celebrated our fortieth wedding anniversary with friends and relatives. Fr. Emile Frische, whom we serve with as US Secretariat Team (USST), and Fr. Joe Voor, whom we served with as Community Pillar Coordinators, were both able to join us for the mass and the party. Our joy was multiplied by the presence of our family and so many of our companions on the journey.

Milestones are important, but it was difficult to find time to plan for and to enjoy them. The further along we get on this journey, the more detours and side roads we find to keep us busy. Worldwide Marriage Encounter across the USA is a vast and complex web of love. It requires untold hours of dedicated work offered by so many couples and priests. We are very grateful for all of you who give your time so generously! It has been a joy to get to meet many of you at the seven section selection processes we have been privileged to attend as your USST these past six months.

Having recently spent a weekend in Section 9, we have new respect for the sacrifices that many of you make regularly. We flew to Denver, and from there Tom & Katie Watson drove us about five hours to the middle of Kansas for the meeting. Some of the couples and priests had to drive eight or nine hours! Steve & Kathy Somnitz of Section 13 promptly informed us that the situation is the same in their part of the country. We are in awe of the commitment and dedication that fuels our road warriors!

We have started many new friendships across the country. The passion for our mission and for the Church that greets us wherever we go is inspirational. We are thankful especially to Leonardo & Angela Ramirez for inviting us to the Section 14 convention in Riverside where we were so warmly welcomed. It was a family experience, and the three of us grew closer in our ecclesial relationship as a result. We were amazed by the plays that were presented and by the beautiful family sharings, but it was the healing experience that really touched our hearts. It filled us with a deep joy in the gift that we have been given to serve as a trio for WWME and for our Church.

I, Fr. Emile, have been privileged to experience many new things in these past few months. Firstly, the jewel in the crown is the depth of our ecclesial relationship. Yes, this is a work in progress, but what a way to live and grow and be on mission! We are learning so much about each other, and the dialogue nights are another avenue to come to understand the giftedness of each one. What a blessing! What a gift! When we decided to take St. Paul as our model and patron for this year of our missionary journey, I don't think we quite realized what we were in for. The calendar was pretty full and the airports became more familiar. But, what struck me in all of this is the spirit of all the people we got to meet along the way. Wow, what a privilege! At all the selection

processes, at the Section 14 Convention, at the Interfaith Board meeting – we met couples and priests on fire with love for their sacraments and for the Church. The word MOVEMENT becomes reality – there is nothing static here, we are a people on the move, a church on mission. People becoming and being “Jesus alive in the world today.”

I'm taking a little detour during August to visit my Mum in Auckland, New Zealand. She is very excited. I am very excited. My brother Leon may not be very excited though, he has to drive my Mum to the airport at 3:30 am on a winter morning. I will have the use of a car during my time at home – the rector of the seminary in Auckland gave it to me. The cost? Come and talk to the seminarians about my ministry in New York. So, you pretty much know what they'll be hearing about! I wish I'd known about WWME earlier in my priesthood. I wish I'd had the privilege of an ecclesial relationship sooner in my ministry. These students will hear all about this. Keep them in your prayers please. I'm going to enjoy my time with my Mum. Each day we celebrate Mass at home – the two of us – we will pray for all the Modern Day Apostles here in the U.S. I thank you all for your love and your prayers.

You have our permission to share this letter with your communities. We are attaching our picture with the request that all of you who receive it please tape it to your bathroom mirror and pray for us each morning as you brush your teeth. We offer prayers before our dialogue each day for all of you who are the life of our movement, and we need your prayers also to be the best that we can be. May God be great in all of us!

We love you,  
**Tony & Cathy and Fr. Emile**

