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Marriage Week (7th-14th February)

The challenge for married couples:



The challenge for the Church is how to mark Marriage Week and to use the week as an opportunity to witness to the importance of marriage.

Marriage and Marriage week can be highlighted and supported in your parish:

- in the bidding prayers
- in the hymns chosen for that day
- in the Homily
- in a special blessing for married couples or an invitation to those

who prepare married couples to renew their commitment

- by inviting couples to a cheese and wine event with those preparing for Marriage
- by having a special cake and coffee after Mass to celebrate Marriage Week
- by displaying wedding photographs of those who were married in the parish in the last year
- by sending a card to all those who were married in the parish in the last year and inviting them to a celebration Mass.
- by highlighting the resources available for married couples
- by asking married couples to create the Prayers of Intercession for Mass
- just letting people know that it's Marriage Week!

For further information and ideas go to <http://marriage-week.org.uk>

If you have experienced a way of marking Marriage Week in your Parish, please share it with us.

A New Addition to the Family

A new child in the family is a great blessing. Friends and family congratulate the parents on the birth of their lovely infant. But in our society, the birth of a baby can, and often does, cause increased stress in a couple's relationship. Parents and grandparents often help but are not always around.

Organisations like Marriage Care recognise this and seek to help. What is our attitude to young parents in our community? Are we supportive? Do we offer to baby-sit? Do we say that we're happy to see them and their child/children in Church? Does your church have a Baby and Toddler Group? Do you support it?

At the next Parish Pastoral Council Meeting, ask the question, "What are we doing to support parents of young children?"

A Diocesan Guide to Organisations Supporting Family Life and Marriage has been sent out to all parishes and is published on

<http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/pastoralformation/marriage/2011-Guide-to-Orgs-Supporting-Family-Life-Marriage.pdf>

Grandparents

A **Grandparents' Pilgrimage** to Aylesford Priory is being organized by the Dioceses of Brentwood, Southwark and Arundel & Brighton on 14th July 2012. This will be a day for the entire family to honour grandparents, recalling the example of Jesus' own grandparents St Joachim and St Anne. The day offers every family a chance to pray together and play together.

Within our own diocese, the importance of the role of grandparents in passing on faith features in an article written by a grandmother of ten in the January 2012 issue of the '**Portsmouth People**' magazine.

Katja Babei, Monika Chmelova and Dave Hill, from the Diocesan Department for Pastoral Formation, are leading two sessions on **passing on the faith in families** called **Faith Filled Families**. The first of these will take place at the Immaculate Conception Hall, Portswood Road, Southampton SO17 3SB on Wednesday, 25th April 7.30-9.00pm. The second session will take place on Thursday 26th April at Christ the King Church Hall, Northumberland Avenue, Reading RG2 8NR, 7.30-9.00pm. For more information contact Katja Babei 01329 835 583 kbabei@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. To book a place at one of these sessions, contact Eileen Stephenson on 01329 835 583 estephenson@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or download the booking form at <http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/forms/faithfilledfamilies/>



The birth of a child
can significantly increase
stress in your relationship



... we can help

MARRIAGE care

Telephone 0800 389 3801
or go online at www.marriagecare.org.uk

Marriage Care is a charity operating across England and Wales with 40 counselling locations. We provide relationship counselling, marriage education and a telephone helpline.

Significant Wedding Anniversaries

The annual Diocesan Significant Anniversaries Mass and Reception will take place at 11.00am on Saturday, 16th June at St Bede's, Basingstoke for those celebrating their 25th, 40th, 50th, 60th and 60+ wedding anniversaries in 2012. Attendance is by invitation only, so if you are celebrating one of the anniversaries listed above, or know anybody who you think might like to attend, please contact Eileen Stephenson on marriagemass@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or telephone 01329 835 583.

Familiaris Consortio

Thirty years ago, on November 22nd 1981, Blessed Pope John Paul II issued *Familiaris Consortio*, an Apostolic Exhortation on the Christian Family in the Modern World. *Familiaris Consortio* has been described as the 'Magna Carta' for the pastoral care of marriage and family life by successive presidents of the Pontifical Council for the Family. It is the reference point par excellence for all those with a heart for families and a desire to serve them in the Church. It sets out the path by which families and the Church can come to appreciate more fully "the heart of the deepest truth" about family life.

To mark this anniversary, the Marriage and Family Life Project Office at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has prepared a multimedia online resource, revisiting the 1980 World Synod of Bishops on the Family in Rome whose deliberations inspired the content and structure of *Familiaris Consortio*, and looking at the impact of both the Synod and the document on the life of the Church in England and Wales. The multimedia online resource is at <http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Features/Familiaris-Consortio>

Acorn Christian Listening

'Just Listen'

Katja Babei is continuing to run 'Just Listen' courses in the diocese. The course, from the Acorn Christian Healing Foundation, provides an introduction to listening skills and offers foundational teaching on the value of listening to others, to God and to ourselves. The course will be of interest to anybody who wishes to improve their listening skills and may be of particular value to parish groups. Katja will be running a 'Just Listen' course on Saturday 3rd March at the Holy Family Parish Hall, Redbridge Hill, Millbrook, Southampton SO16 4PL, 10.00am-3.30pm and another on Saturday 23rd June at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church Hall, Douglas Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth BH6 3ER, 10.00am-3.30pm.

For more information, please contact Katja 01329 835583 kbabei@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
Booking forms will be available at www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/pastoralformation or you can book by contacting Eileen Stephenson on 01329 835583 estephenson@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Further courses

For those who have completed 'Just Listen' training, further courses run by trained Acorn tutors are available. Some of these courses focus upon specific areas, such as working with young people or with those who have been bereaved. There are plans for Acorn tutors to run **Listening for Life'** courses in Chandlers Ford, Christchurch, Basingstoke and Reading during the coming year. If you would like more information about these courses, please contact Katja. Alternatively, you can find out more at www.acornchristian.org/listening/

Bereavement Support

A day for those interested in how parishes might support bereaved people is being organised by the Diocesan Bereavement and Loss Group and will take place on Saturday May 5th at St Swithun's Parish Hall, Yateley, Hampshire GU46 6NH. For more information, please contact Katja Babei on 01329 835583 kbabei@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

And Finally

If you know anyone else who would like to receive this newsletter, please forward it to them.

If you have received this newsletter from a friend, and would like to receive it directly, please contact Gabriel Chevalier 01252 677176, gabriel.chevalier@ntlworld.com