



Marriage & Family Life Newsletter

November 2011

➤➤➤ Archdiocese of Southwark

Special points of interest:

National Marriage Preparation Conference

30th Anniversary of *Familiaris Consortio*

Marriage Prep News

Marriage Mass stats

Dementia

Domestic Abuse

Marriage MOT

MARRIAGE MASS 2012
JUNE 16, 3pm
St George's Cathedral

National Marriage Preparation Conference

The Episcopal Vicar, three co-ordinators plus three marriage prep facilitators from Southwark took part in this conference, which took place from 4 to 6 November in Hinckley, Leicestershire. Bishop John Hine welcomed the 200+ participants in his capacity as Chair of the Bishops' Conference Marriage & Family Life Committee, and the keynote speakers were Maynooth's Emeritus Prof. Fr Enda McDonagh, and Bishop Richard Moth.

Our Southwark marriage preparation programmes were amongst those showcased

From the Episcopal Vicar

Grandparents' Pilgrimage

On Saturday 16th July we celebrated the first Grandparents' Pilgrimage at Aylesford, the first of many, we hope. Plans are already underway for next year's celebration to be held again at Aylesford on July 14, 2012.

The pilgrimage was well attended and much enjoyed in spite of the wind and rain. It was a joint venture between ourselves and the dioceses of Brentwood and Arundel & Brighton together with the Grandparents' Association.

during the conference, and we did a presentation of what is very distinctive in our programmes, the importance given to the sacrament during our marriage preparation courses in all three pastoral areas.

All of us also benefited from attending workshops in various different areas which will help us in our work.

We also heard about exciting new initiatives which have a great deal of potential in schools and parishes, which we will tell you about in due course.

As mentioned, we hope to make this an annual event and invite other dioceses to join us.

Other events

We have had days of reflection for those who find themselves caring for someone with dementia, and for the publicising and promoting of CEDAR (Catholics Experiencing Domestic Abuse Resources). We have held a day for clergy on mental-health awareness, and bereavement courses both for those suffering the pain of the loss of a loved one and those wishing to minister to them.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you would like us to help with anything relating to marriage and family life in your parish, including input for parents and grandparents in passing on the faith.

We feel it is very important to continue giving ongoing support to married couples, and all those involved in family life, and thank you in advance for publicizing our events in your parishes.

With my very best wishes in Christ,

Fr Graham Preston

30th Anniversary of *Familiaris Consortio*

We are organizing an event, together with other dioceses in the South East region, to mark the 30th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio*. We are hoping to have as keynote speaker someone from the Pontifical Council for the Family in Rome, as well as a series of workshops and DVDs on aspects of marriage and family life. Put this date in your diary now: February 11, 2pm start, at our Amigo Hall next to St George's Cathedral. The event finishes at 5pm with refreshments, and then the vigil Mass at 6pm.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION NEWS

South West

At the time of writing, we have held 11 out of our 12 one-day marriage preparation courses scheduled for this year in the South West Pastoral Area – the twelfth takes place in November. As in previous years we have used four parish-based centres spread across our pastoral area (which consists of 65 parishes) so as to give a wide geographical spread for the courses, three at each centre: Croydon, Sutton, Wimbledon and Southwark. Each course is held on a Saturday. We present each course assisted by a team of married couples. So far this year 277½ engaged couples have completed courses. The half is explained by the fact that occasionally couples are living in different countries, usually Nigeria or India, and are only able to do their marriage preparation if they attend separately in their respective countries.

We don't usually allow an individual to attend alone but occasionally it's the only way both parties can do a course. We are on track to have given marriage preparation to a total of 300 couples by the end of this year. As in previous years, around 40 per cent of the couples attending our courses are getting married outside the UK. For 2012 we shall again be laying on 12 one-day courses at four parish centres. However, we are transferring our base in Southwark from a primary school in Surrey Docks parish to **Amigo Hall** next door to St George's Cathedral. The reasons are because of Amigo Hall's much better facilities and its greater capacity, which will enable us to increase the number of engaged couples we can accommodate.

South East

We published 12 dates for 2011 but ended up doing 3 extra emergency courses due to an excess of demand at certain key months of the year, especially the spring and early summer. In this way we have sought to meet the needs of all the priests who refer couples to us. We hope to repeat this pattern next year if demand again exceeds supply.

In 2012 we wish to offer couples who are both Catholic an additional module, which makes our provision fairer, as those in mixed marriages already have an evening just for them. We wish to offer the Catholic/Catholic couples extra catechesis on the domestic church.

We have been fortunate enough to recruit 4 new team couples and look forward to working with them next year in addition to our more experienced team members.

We will have prepared 265 couples altogether this year, in addition to 26 couples or individuals who did a one-to-one session because they could not attend an ordinary course through being alone in this country, or having children and no childcare, for example.



Kent

We increased to 5 courses in the Kent pastoral area this year and plan to add another one in 2012, bringing the total to 6. This has particularly helped the northern corridor, with the extra courses taking place in Dartford, which is also good news for the South East pastoral area, creating some extra capacity there. Courses have all been well attended (16 to 28 couples on each one). Our presenting team has also been boosted by an additional couple and a new priest.



Mass in Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage – June 2011

Breakdown by anniversary:

60th – 18 couples

50th – 65 couples

40th – 66 couples

25th – 60 couples

10th – 35 couples

1st – 15 couples

This year saw a large increase in the number of 40th anniversaries, and the longest married were Mr & Mrs Lane from Sidcup.

The total number of couples was 263, only one couple fewer than last year.

Numbers of family members per section:

60th – 37

50th – 83

40th – 120

25th – 91

10th – 48

1st – 5

The total number of family members was 386, nearly 40 more than last year. The Kellys from North Cheam were the largest family, 14 altogether. We feel the Mass provides a most important pastoral opportunity for lapsed younger members to experience church again.

Breakdown by pastoral area:

SE Parishes: 37

SW parishes: 31

Kent parishes: 18

SE jubilarians: 104

SW jubilarians: 117

Kent jubilarians: 42

SE family: 161

SW family: 192

Kent family: 33

Next year's date has now been confirmed:

JUNE 16TH 2012 at St George's Cathedral, at 3pm, with Archbishop Peter Smith as celebrant..

You may wish to announce the date to your parishioners now in order to give them ample notice, or put it in the diary for the Feast of the Holy Family, together with the date of the Grandparents' Pilgrimage in Aylesford on July 14.

ONGOING FORMATION OF PRIESTS DAYS

IT'S STILL ME, LORD – Exploring Spirituality and Dementia

Following the success of the half-days we have put on in Aylesford for those ministering to people affected by dementia, we are now offering a day specially for clergy through the Ongoing Formation of Priests programme on **Monday 11th June 2012, at the CEC.**

The programme will again include a showing of the film *It's Still Me, Lord...*

Domestic Abuse

Bringing together the expertise of professionals working in this field, we will hold a day specially for priests as part of the OGF programme.

Abuse of spouses, children and elderly relatives is a sad reality in every stratum of society, and priests cannot afford not to know how best to deal with it. Date: **Tuesday 6 March** at Emmaus, West Wickham.

Parishes with large contingents:
Thornton Heath – 12
Selsdon – 9
Addiscombe – 8
Welling – 8
Clapham – 7
Worcester Park – 7



All area co-ordinators would be more than happy to come to your parish to give your catechists some guidance regarding the ways the DVD can be used. The DVD can be used very successfully in parishes linked with sacramental catechesis.

We would also be very pleased to hear how the programme is being used in parishes and schools. Do let us know.

We are still available to support you with the Welcoming Programme which launched this initiative and with Passing on the Faith.

Archdiocese of Southwark

MARRIAGE PREPARATION DATES 2012:

DULWICH — January 20/21
WIMBLEDON COMM. — Jan 21

DARTFORD — February 3/4
BECKENHAM — Febr. 17/18
PURLEY — February 18

ASHFORD — March 9/10
WELLING — March 9/10
SUTTON GREEN — March 10
FOREST HILL — March 23/24
CATHEDRAL — March 31

DARTFORD — April 13/14
DULWICH — April 20/21
WIMBLEDON COMM. — Apr 21

CANTERBURY — May 4/5
BECKENHAM — May 18/19
SUTTON GREEN — May 19
SIDCUP — May 25/26

PURLEY — June 16
DULWICH — June 22/23

DARTFORD — July 6/7
CATHEDRAL — July 21

BECKENHAM — August 3/4
PURLEY — August 11

WIMBLEDON COMM. — Sept 8
DULWICH — Sept. 21/22

DARTFORD — Oct 5/6
FOREST HILL — Oct 19/20
CATHEDRAL — Oct 20

WELLING — November 2/3
SUTTON GREEN — Nov. 24

*For booking forms please
contact the relevant pastoral
area co-ordinators.*

All our Marriage Preparation courses are given by at least one couple and either a priest or a deacon (in some cases the deacon is one half of the couple!)

In the South-East and Kent pastoral areas, the Diocesan courses include a Friday evening as well as a Saturday.

Our contact details:

South West: Deacon Philip & Mary Pond (Selsdon Parish)
T: 020 8651 2477 E: philandmary@blueyonder.co.uk

South East: Lisette Blanchet Ball & Fr Tom Creagh-Fuller
T: 020 8690 9310 E: marriages @ tiscali.co.uk
Parish @ swoy.org.uk
Based at: FOREST HILL PARISH

Kent: Deacon Ray and Elizabeth Partridge (Hythe Parish) & Fr Liam Gallagher
T: 01303 873835 E: r.e.partridge@googlemail.com

Episcopal Vicar for Marriage & Family Life: Fr Graham Preston
T: 020 7237 2969 E: gpreston@googlemail.com
72 Paradise St, LONDON SE16 4QD
Based at: ROTHERHITHE PARISH

Marriage Enrichment

"It provided 'dedicated' time for looking at our marriage, away from the comfortable distractions of our usual routine."

That comment was made by one of the couples who attended a marriage-enrichment day held in October at St George's Cathedral. It was just one of many positive remarks made about the day, entitled 'A Marriage MoT'.

Organised by Southwark diocese's Marriage & Family Life team, the event was the first in a series of one-day marriage-enrichment days planned to take place in the diocese over coming months and years. Why 'MoT'? Well, it wasn't because couples were tested on their relationship.

The thinking is simple. None of us would expect our car to keep running smoothly and reliably year in and year out without an annual service and MoT test. Similarly, couples cannot expect their marriage to keep firing on all cylinders if they don't occasionally take some time to focus on their relationship and how it might be improved.

Presented by married couples, our Marriage MoT

does just that. It provides an opportunity for husband and wife to spend a day focussing just on themselves, free from the usual distractions of everyday life.

And as the couples who attended the first of these events, held at Amigo Hall, can confirm, it was an enriching and life-giving experience. As these comments make clear:

- It enabled us to focus on areas of our marriage that we take for granted.
- Helped us to reflect on topics that we needed to discuss.
- Great to have time together.
- We now understand that feelings are only signposts that we need to act on.
- Gave us a chance to think about how we communicate.
- Provided some practical guidance on how to address conflict.

More 'Marriage MoT' days are planned to take place at various venues across the diocese in the future so watch out for details of dates and locations.

