



## Portsmouth Diocese Marriage and Family Life Newsletter

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### Celebrating Marriage 2010

On Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup>, 128 couples from across the diocese who are celebrating 'significant' wedding anniversaries this year (25, 40, 50, 60+) gathered in St Bede's, Basingstoke, for a Mass with Bishop Crispian. The Mass, which was followed by a celebration, included the opportunity for the couples to renew their commitment to each other (pictured). More photos are on the diocesan website [www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)



In his homily, Bishop Crispian reminded the couples:

"Your married life is an invitation from the Lord to enjoy your lives together and truly to "go out and bear fruit"... In the Church, you are not simply married for yourselves; you are married for all of us and for all who live around you. You give us all the opportunity to see and experience – made flesh in yourselves – the love that the Lord has for each of us and for all his people. You show us what it means to lay down life for friends. You are witnesses to the Gospel so that when I – or any other preacher – want to talk about Christ's love for us, all we have to do is to point to you and say 'there you are; look at that.'"

The event was the second such Mass to be organised in the Diocese. The date for next year's celebration is Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June.

### Parenting Courses

Katja Babei, our Advisor for Marriage and Family Life, is beginning to implement parenting support and enrichment groups within the diocese. If you have any information about parenting programmes already running in the diocese, or would like to consider a parenting course in your own area, please contact Katja Babei on [kbabei@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:kbabei@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) or 01329 835583

### A Marriage Refresher

The Marriage Refresher Day continues to be rolled out across the Diocese with a further 'Day' planned in Reading on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Every couple who has attended, whether married for 2 years or over 40 years has been very supportive. The major disappointment has been that more couples haven't booked! Everyone who is married knows that even in a 'good' marriage there are trials and tribulations, especially at times of change. This is true even when the change has been sought, for example, promotion, having children, retirement, ordination to the diaconate. The course might be of particular interest to all who are in a position of leadership, and can therefore encourage others to take part.

We've asked couples why they don't go on a Marriage Refresher Day. Typical answers are "I / he / she would never go to group therapy or to be told what to do in our relationship!"

Unfortunately, these responses are based on a misconception. The course is for committed couples who want to spend a day just reflecting on their relationship away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. During the day, couples are encouraged to think



Poster\Booking form

and to share privately as couples how they are handling change, communication, conflict and marital spirituality in their relationship and there is positively NO group sharing.

Why settle with a good marriage when you can have a great one!

### **Catholic Marriage Preparation Survey**

The English and Welsh Bishops' Committee for Marriage and Family Life is running a survey in 2010 to gain insights in Catholic Marriage Preparation. The survey aims to reach all those who assist couples to prepare for their marriage immediately before the wedding, whether this is only a matter of completing the pre-nuptial enquiry forms or of providing a lengthier and more formal programme of preparation as well as the couples themselves. You should be taking part if you are:

- A priest or deacon who is seeing couples prior to marriage,
- A Marriage Preparation provider,
- A Couple who have been prepared for marriage.

Early results are attached.

[www.catholicmarriage.org.uk](http://www.catholicmarriage.org.uk) .

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### **The Catholic Grandparents Association**

The Catholic Grandparents Association is a group of people united by a belief in the importance of the vocation of grandparents. In order to support and encourage grandparents, they are establishing branches of The Catholic Grandparents Association in parishes across the country where grandparents can meet to pray, exchange advice and information and support each other both socially and spiritually.

What they do:

- Foster the vocation of Grandparents by promoting, encouraging, and supporting them in their vital work of passing on the faith.
- Bring Grandparents together at parish level through local branches to support and pray with, and for, each other.
- Encourage Grandparents and grandchildren to compose prayers for each other.
- Promote and distribute the 'prayer for Grandparents' composed by Pope Benedict XVI especially for them to encourage Grandparents in their vital role as faith transmitters.
- Organize annual pilgrimages to the shrines of Our Lady Knock, Our Lady Walsingham, and elsewhere in the world.
- Organize special 'Grandparents Days' in schools to help bridge the generation gap.
- Fundraise and offer practical help and support for Grandparents and grandchildren in need.
- Recognize and honour the parents of Mary and the Grandparents of Jesus, St. Joachim and St. Anne.

For more information and how to join go to [www.nationalgrandparentspilgrimage.com](http://www.nationalgrandparentspilgrimage.com)

### **Domestic Abuse**

In 2009, the Department for Pastoral Formation organised a day of Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. Another of these days is going to be organised to take place later on in 2010. Details will follow at a later date.

### **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](mailto:gabriel.chevalier@ntlworld.com)