



# *FAMILYWORKS*

*Newsletter of the Family Working Group*

*Number 4/2005*

***Wishing All Our Readers a Most Holy and Happy Christmas  
and a New Year of Many Blessings***

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### **WMF 2006 Valencia**

The 5<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Families has been extended to include, for the first time, an International Family Fair (1-7 July). This is described as a means of showing the 'gift of the family as a community of life and love and as a source of human joy'. It will also be an opportunity for Family Associations and Movements 'to show their identity, activities, projects and experience'.

Therefore, the entire Gathering will be from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July. The other activities include an International Pastoral and Theological Congress (4-7 July), a massive festive celebration of families on 8<sup>th</sup> July and the concluding Eucharistic celebration with the Holy Father on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has appointed two couples to represent them at the Congress and at the World Meeting. They are Pauline and Bernie Victory of Adelaide Archdiocese and Mary and Peter McPhee of Wagga Wagga Diocese. Bishop Eugene Hurley will accompany the Australian pilgrimage group to the Valencia gathering and travel details should be available very soon. He will also lead a seven-day pilgrimage after the WMF which will include Montserrat, Lourdes, Santo Domingo de Silos and Avila.

To help prepare spiritually for the WMF, the Valencia Archdiocese has prepared nine texts which are on the WMF website (<http://www.wmf2006.org/en/>) The latter has now had well over a million visitors and there have been 25,000 inquiries regarding accommodation. For further information, contact Ron & Mavis Pirola (<mailto:rmpirola@ozemail.com.au>).

### **Diocesan Family Councils**

Townsville Diocese is underway with its Family Council following the recommendation of the Bishops Committee for Family and for Life. The first reported activity was the promotion of inclusivity of those with disabilities, based on the guidelines in 'I Have a Story'. With regard to both disabilities and diocesan family councils, the Family Working Group promotes the concept that families not only have special needs but also special gifts and have an important role in evangelisation.

### **Notes from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference**

A revised version of the *Common Marriage Policy* has been adopted by the Conference. The document provides a non-proscriptive set of guidelines regarding marriage preparation. The revisions were presented by the Bishops Committee for the Family and for Life (BCFL) following input from the Family Working Group and the Catholic Society for Marriage Education.

Another document of the BCFL that was approved is entitled 'Marriage in the Catholic Church – frequently asked questions'. It is a set of 15 questions and answers in lay-friendly language and

summaries current Church teaching on marriage. These documents will be available on the Bishops website in the New Year.

### **New Resources**

*'Walking Together in Faith'* is a collection of resources for strengthening the teacher-parent relationship and encouraging a climate of faith in the home. It was developed and trialled in Broken Bay Diocese in 2003-4 and is published by The Story Source (<mailto:storysource@ozemail.com.au>).

*'It's Your Choice'* is a 4 part DVD series described as Values Based Sex Education in keeping with Catholic teaching. It is designed to equip young people with the knowledge and skills required to navigate the critical years that so powerfully shape their future. It comes with a Facilitators Manual and an introductory training DVD. Website: <http://www.choicez.com.au/>.

### **Good Connections**

*Keeping your sanity at Christmas-time!* How do we step back from the seasonal overdose of retail therapy? Focus on each other with gifts of service and appreciation – gifts that money can't buy – according to this month's edition of 'Smart Loving'. The latter is the E-newsletter of the 'Celebrate Love' program that presents seminars on sexuality and spirituality (<http://www.celebratelove.com.au/>).

*Family rituals.* We all sense that family rituals are important in passing on faith and values in the home. A recent study from Syracuse University (New York) provides objective evidence to support this: 'A Review of 50 years of Research on Naturally Occurring Family Routines and Rituals: Cause for Celebration' (<http://www.apa.org/journals/releases/fam164381.pdf>).

### **'We have a Story'**

A National Network for Disability and Spirituality has been established by the Bishops Committee for the Family and for Life, supported by the Family Working Group. The 3<sup>rd</sup> December, the International Day of People with a Disability, was a landmark day with a double launch: a newsletter ('We have a Story') and a parish resource kit. The latter is designed to encourage the full participation of people with disability in parish life. To subscribe to 'We have a Story', send an email to: <mailto:nndsnews@catholic.org.au> with the word "Subscribe" in the subject. A list of resources can be accessed at <http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/documents/200503106.pdf>

### **'When Two become One'**

Council for Marriage and the Family Melbourne had excellent feedback from the pilot program of a new Marriage Seminar called 'When Two become One' in November. The Project Officer Anne-Maree Quinn is looking to expand it and run it as a Marriage Preparation program in the New Year. Some of the Topics are: Introduction to Theology of the Body, Marriage and the Catholic Church, Marriage and Sacramentality, and Introduction to NFP. Look at the website in 2006 for details: <http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/cmfm/>

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