



FAMILYWORKS

Newsletter of the Family Working Group

Number 1/2005

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The Family Working Group is a group of married lay people who promote the concept of evangelisation through the family under the auspices of the Bishops Committee for Family and for Life. FWG Members are drawn primarily from delegates to World Meetings of Families. Current members are: Ron and Mavis Pirola (chair-couple, Sydney), Kevin and Margaret Andrews (Melbourne), Martin Ebdon (Canberra), Keith and Anna Linard (Melbourne), Harry and Madge Martin (Melbourne) and Glenn and Trish Mowbray (Canberra).

Living the Dream – Keynote Addresses

The following keynotes, a highlight of *Living the Dream*, the second National Catholic Gathering held last April, represent a rich resource on marriage and family:

- “Is the Family still the Basic unit of Society” – George Cardinal Pell
- “Passion and Pain: The Power of Family Love to Change the World” – Byron and Francine Pirola
- “The Importance of Marriage and Family” – Wade Horn
- “Journey in Love” – Glenn and Trish Mowbray
- “The Family: Graph of Humanity’s Future” - Bishop Anthony Fisher OP

Source – www.familygathering.com.au attached to the Conference Programme.

“The Importance of Marriage and Family”

In contending that marriage was the best institution that bound men to families and their children, Dr Horn, Assistant Secretary – Administration for Children and Families in the US Department of Health and Human Services, reflected his role as founder and past president of the National Fatherhood Institute. He saw the retreat from marriage as being a retreat also from responsible fatherhood and lamented father absence, quoting the situation in the US where on any given night four out of every ten children go to bed in a home where the father is absent. While separation, divorce, and having children out-of-wedlock bring it about, the social consequences can be enormous for children and families – including poverty, abuse, emotional and behavioural problems, adolescent suicide, and academic difficulties.

Dr Horn recommended three courses of action to help redress the above situation:

1. Send out more compelling messages about the critical role of fathers as disciplinarians, teachers and role models for their children,
2. Sponsor outreach and skill building programs for fathers, especially new ones, and
3. Do more to promote the importance of marriage to responsible fatherhood and how it’s good for children, adults and communities.

The current US Administration has supported marriage and family by increasing funding for marriage education, integrating support for healthy marriages into social service programs, adopting a versatile rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, and disseminating messages to discourage teen pregnancy. The belief that supporting healthy marriages will prevent many social ills has been expressed through 65 programs costing \$US47 billion per annum.

The hope to be shared is that by taking appropriate initiatives families can be strengthened, the hearts of children turned towards parents and the hearts of parents towards their children.

“I Have a Story...”

A new pastoral document aimed at helping people with disability and their families to participate fully in parish life is now available in a variety of formats – a printed booklet, an electronic version, as well as versions in Braille, large print and audio cassette. For details go to www.acbc.catholic.org.au.

The document, entitled “I Have a Story”, is an initiative of the Bishops’ Committee for the Family and for Life. It has been prepared by the Disability Working Party, convened by Trish and Glenn Mowbray in March 2002. Other members were Sr Jeanie Heininger sgs (Wollongong), Sr Veronica Hoey sgs (Melbourne) and Ms Trish Murdoch (Brisbane).

It was launched by the Committee’s Chairman, Bishop Eugene Hurley and by the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Francis Carroll, following Mass at St Christopher’s Cathedral.

“Consultation was undertaken last year in every state and territory to survey people with a disability, their families and friends on how parishes can promote participation – what barriers exist and good news stories that demonstrate active participation in parish life,” Trish said. “We received 357 responses from right around Australia and are delighted that the document has gone out to parishes where we hope that it will be taken up and brought to life within parish communities.”

The booklets were collated and packed by students with disability from the Black Mountain School in Canberra and people with disability and their families actively participated in the Mass and national launch.

“Meeting of Bishops Committee for the Family & for Life (BCFL) with Family Movements”

There was a warm spirit of enthusiasm as Bishops of the BCFL and leaders of Family Movements and Associations came together on Feb 14th at Randwick. It was a day for learning of each others’ charisms, networking and of looking ahead.

The BCFL was represented by Bishop Eugene Hurley of Port Pirie (Chairman) and Bishop David Cremin of Sydney. The Movements and Associations represented were: Alliance of the Holy Family International, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Catholic Engaged Encounter, Catholic Womens’ League, Celebrate Love, Couples for Christ, Focolare, Marriage Encounter, National Association of Catholic Families, Servants of Jesus, The NeoCatechumenal Way, Passionist Family Groups, Retrouvaille, Schoenstatt and Teams of Our Lady.

Discussion centred on the culture of marriage in contemporary Australian society. Possible evangelising strategies were discussed in the light of that culture, especially with a view to reshaping the culture to one that is more in tune with Gospel values. Bishop Hurley drew attention to the Year of the Eucharist and strongly urged all movements to use this time to foster a Eucharistic spirit in the home.

“Meeting of Delegates to World Meetings of Families”

The above meeting of the BCFL was immediately preceded by a weekend meeting of the Family Working Group to discuss plans for promotion of the concept of ‘evangelisation through the family’. On the Sunday, they were joined by other Australian delegates to previous World Meetings of Families and all participated in the above gathering of the BCFL and Family Movements.

Coming Events

MARRIAGEALIVE SEMINARS

A once-only chance to hear a presentation by David & Claudia Arp, authors of *10 Great Dates* and other books.

Melbourne – Saturday April 23, Melba Hall, Melbourne University. Inquiries (03) 9372 7560

Sydney – Tuesday 26 & Wednesday 27 April. National Christian Family Conference. Inquiries (02) 9847 3306

FIFTH WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

Historic Valencia, on the Mediterranean seaboard of Spain, will be the site of the V World Meeting of Families in the first week of July 2006. Australian pilgrims to previous World meetings (Rio de Janeiro, Roma and Manila) have found them to be deeply rewarding experiences of the universal Church. *Familyworks* will provide details of the Australian pilgrimage to Valencia as they become available. Please let others know of this major coming event and consider joining us.

“It is good that the family is the charism of your union. The family is a ‘school of love.’ Transmit to people your enthusiasm for marriage and the family! At present, society has a greater need than ever for healthy families that are capable of defending common values. If we strengthen the sacred institution of marriage and the family in keeping with the divine plan, love and solidarity will grow among peoples!”

(Address of Pope John Paul II to Schoenstatt families, Feb 2005)

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