

Just between Us...

Newsletter of the Bethany Family Institute
PO Box 2858 Wolverhampton
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In a world forever changed by the terrible reality of September 11th, we are pleased to include in this issue reports of last August's symposium on marriage: Enduring truths, Changing realities. If one message was clear from those few days in Washington it was that we don't give up on our values simply because the reality doesn't meet our expectations. Please God, we can apply that value to every aspect of our lives: living trustfully even when fear barges in, living peacefully amid the onslaught of violence, rebuilding and creating new life from the brokenness all around us.

Also on this topic we include the text of Fr Donal Lucey's sermon at the Leeds Diocesan Family Mass last October. It's a highly reflective piece on the one thing in life that really matters: family. Speaking of which, we pay tribute on page 14 to David Mackey of our Scottish office, the news of whose death filtered through to me on September 11th as I watched the terrorist attacks unfold. Truly too much pain in one day.

We celebrate the first volume of Just between Us with this issue. Another milestone and another new task: subscription renewals. If yours is now due for 2002 you will have received a slip in with this package. Otherwise no need to worry - just yet! We hope you will continue to support the work we do. We are also always looking out for people to write articles for us. Can you help?

This issue is a first production from our new surroundings in the Midlands. The last few months have flown by with plenty of changes, new experiences and many surprises. I'm thrilled to be back in my home town and for Bethany to be more centrally located!



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Visit us at: www.bethanyfamilyinstitute.com

Diary dates

Nov 22nd 2001	20th anniversary of Familiaris Consortio: The Christian Family in the Modern World
Jan 11th/13th 2002	ASDC weekend in Llandudno. Adults £55, children £35. Contact: Joan Hall at 85 Elmtree Road, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2EG, or tel: 0161 406 89946 or email: joanhO@tinyworld.co.uk
Feb 11th-17th 2002	National Marriage Week
Feb 23/24th 2002	Network of Marriage & Family Life Co-ordinators national meeting. Hinsley Hall, Leeds. With guest speaker: Dr H. Richard McCord, Executive Director, Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women & Youth, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
May 11th 2002	Bethany Seminar: Crewe
Oct 2nd-5th 2002	Rhythms of the heart: 22nd Annual Conference National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers. Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Kansas City, Missouri. Confirmed speakers: J. Glenn Murray, SJ & Arun Gandhi.

Questions.....

Do you have any ? Can you help answer some ?

We'd like to offer a regular exchange of useful practical information.....

For starters, we received this request and we would appreciate your help in making some recommendations.

Do you know of any good resources and/or programmes for preparing parents for the baptism of their baby ?

You can email or write us at the new address.....

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When I first heard about US plans to mark the 20th anniversary of *Familiaris Consortio*, I knew I had to be there - by hook or by crook. It wasn't just the list of distinguished speakers, though that was certainly a major factor, but also the chance to spend time with so many actual practitioners of family ministry—hundreds gathered in one place. Heavens above! What on earth could this be like? In the English and Welsh network we rarely exceed 30 when we gather. The other attraction was an anticipated plethora of resources to bring back and adapt for use here. I was not disappointed in the least but I have to say that the reality was a little different from what I expected.

Mixed blessings

In the first place, the symposium was organised by a partnership between the Pro-Life and Family Departments of the US Bishops Conference. This was a plus but it also meant that those who attended were not one and all involved in the same way with family ministry and indeed some had a rather narrow focus. So, I might start picking someone's brains for their experiences with 'seniors' and find out that they were specialists in natural family planning or some such! Nevertheless, I still learned a lot from conversations at the conference, both with people at the grass roots and those more well known for their research. (Within five minutes of checking in at the hotel I was shaking Scott Stanley's hand; sitting with Michael Lawlor during one of the sessions was another treat!) I certainly discovered from marriage preparation facilitators that they have much the same problem as we do in finding volunteers to help! But the main focus of the symposium meant that much of the input centred on theological and theoretical reflection on family, without too much being rooted in the practical and pragmatic realities of ministry.

K-Mart to the rescue

The agenda was so tightly structured that it would have been possible to hardly stray at all from the conference hall. Indeed there was very little time to view all the exhibits and displays without missing some of the main hall presentations. Thank God for tape recordings - resources are the practical tools of the trade so I simply 'bought' the speakers I missed. (NB: if you ever attend a US conference be warned that the exhibitors pack up a day before the event ends—so go and see what you want to, before it all disappears!) I particularly enjoyed the Elizabeth Ministry stand with its masses and masses of attractive gifts for new mothers, babies and young women. I would also have liked to bring more home from the Diocese of Omaha stand with its training manuals for facilitating FLM. As it was I had to buy an extra suitcase from K-Mart to bring all my freebies back safely.

Love letter to the world

But enough of this: what was actually said at the conference that might stimulate discussion here in the UK? As a committed proponent of *Familiaris Consortio* I found Dolores Leckey's metaphor for it as 'a love letter to the world' a tremendously useful starting point. (Leckey had attended the Synod on Family as a *Peritus* to the US Bishops) Without ignoring the difficulties faced by families, the document holds up a standard for family life where respect, forgiveness, love, hospitality etc are practiced. How many other church documents might qualify for this description and doesn't this behove us all to make FC more widely known?

Fabric of Marriage

In contrast, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead (Co-director of the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University, N.J.; speaker and writer about family and child well being) spoke of recent changes in family lives, painting a bleak picture of the damage caused by marital breakdown. She posed a number of questions which concern us all: How do we reach out to family diversity while upholding moral norms? How do we strengthen the social fabric surrounding marriage? It's not enough, she said, to teach conflict resolution techniques, communication skills etc. How can we make society more hospitable to marriage? Her advice was to use the trends to *inform* our thinking, but not to *deter* us from seeking solutions.

Integration not Isolation

John Carr, Director of the Department of Social Development and World Peace at the US Bishops Conference was one of the more amusing speakers. He was encouraging too in that he identified some positive signs of the times. The priorities as he saw them were:

- To anchor our work in our faith
- To integrate not isolate our support for families and children
- To build bridges - we are all in this together and need a complementary cross-church initiative
- To support social teaching of the church, as it's about how we live, the choices we make in life
- To promote faithful citizenship. Faith should inform all we do as political/social animals
- To be engaged in the news media....

He warned however against ignoring the changes in family structures (you can be a realist without becoming a pessimist about these changes) and failing to practice what we preach in our institutions. He concluded by reminding us that in the end our ministry is about ordinary people.

Same Sex Marriage?

A useful presentation was made over lunch one day on the attempts to place same-sex relationships on a par with marriage. Bill Duncan offered five truths in defence of marriage:

- Marriage is a unique relationship between a man and a woman: the differences between them makes it unique. Woman plus man equals a unified whole.
 - Marriage pre-existed the state i.e. is recognised by the state as having intrinsic value, not vice-versa.
 - All relationships are not the same - only the sexual union of male/female results in natural procreation of children
 - Children are entitled to be raised by a man and a woman who are married to one another.
 - On the issue of unlawful discrimination (which had been pertinent in a US court case), if two things are not the same they don't need to be treated the same in order to avoid a charge of unlawful discrimination
- When asked what could be done to protect marriage he suggested we begin by strengthening our own marriage and family life. Then we should ask ourselves and our policy makers what the likely impact of their decisions might be on the family. Finally we need to communicate the issue, appealing to the common understanding of marriage, since most people still aspire to the ideal.

Bright Spots

Joanne Heaney-Hunter (Associate Professor of Theology at St. John's University, NY) was another positive speaker who identified some of the bright spots of the past twenty years: equality of opportunity for women; equality of sexes in gender roles; the development of a theology of the body; the theology of the domestic church; understanding of collaborative ministry and of course, a roomful of people present committed to building family of church. She viewed the four tasks of the family in *Familiaris Consortio* as a series of concentric circles. The first being the care of the vulnerable in our immediate reality: family as foundational church. The second task, service to life, encompassed every stage of life. The third task broadens the challenge to reach out to the world - how consistent are we in what we say and do? The fourth shares church with the church - church of home with other churches of homes.

Family As Sacrament

She described the family as embodying prophet, priest and king. As prophets, families evangelise through witness as described in Acts 2 and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. As priests they are called to be in dialogue with God - by being the living image of the mystery of the church. This presents the family as sacrament - eucharistic community, reconciling community. In their kingly role, the family follows the example of Christ the servant king, in concrete ways. Heaney-Hunter concluded by identifying three areas essential to supporting church families: marriage preparation, marriage enrichment and the religious education of children.

As the plane touched down at Reagan National Airport in Washington DC on Sunday 12 August two questions crossed my mind. Why was I allowing myself to spend a week with a group of complete strangers about whom I knew precious little, and would the money spent in getting me to Washington and keeping me there prove to be money well spent?

I am coordinator of family ministry in the Archdiocese of Armagh. I have been in the role for six months now while continuing to work as a curate in a parish. I became interested in family ministry due to my catechetical background, which gave me a sense that parents deserve support in their role as primary educators of their children. That conviction turned me into an advocate for the appointment of a family ministry coordinator in our diocese. I was thinking *lay* and *full time*. What we got was *clergy* and *part-time*. First Fr. Bobby McKenna, then me!

Not that I knew exactly what family ministry is all about, or where I would start or what I should actually do, nor was I sure where I would go to find out. So when I read in *Just between Us* that there was a symposium in Washington DC entitled *Marriage and Family Life: Enduring Truths, Changing Realities - 20th Anniversary of Familiaris Consortio 1981-2001*, I said to myself "I should be at that". The other members of the diocesan family ministry team agreed, as did the archbishop who was being asked to cover the cost. After a few enquiries I discovered that on the days prior to the symposium on *Familiaris Consortio* there was going to be a workshop entitled *Ministry with Families*, organised by a group called the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM). What attracted me to this workshop were its intended outcomes, namely:

- to further the transformation process of how one views family and ministry
- to deepen one's understanding of the impact of ministry on the Church of the Home
- to provide insights and skills for participants to live out a vision of ministry with families more intentionally in their personal life and ministerial efforts
- to explore with participants the dynamics of the family and parish as growing, changing systems.

I decided that I would attend that workshop as well and that is how I found myself flying into Reagan airport on August 12 with a sense of apprehension, wondering if I had made the right decision.

The workshop was attended by twenty-one people who are involved in parish and diocesan family ministry in a variety of ways. The five facilitators all had previous experiences of similar workshops, as participants or as facilitators. Overall it was a tremendously valuable experience. The interactive process enabled me to get to know people very quickly and to build up bonds of friendship. The sessions were intense and intimate and full of healthy laughter. The workshop helped me to clarify my thinking on some of what is entailed in family ministry, reminded of things I had heard before but needed to hear again and gave me some new ideas. Family ministry, it seems to me, is about helping families to recognise, reflect upon and respond to the presence of the sacred within family life and it is about supporting those who minister to families. Family ministers will try to:

- reflect on their own family of origin and how it influences their ministry
- brush up on family systems theory
- attend to what John Paul II has to say in *Familiaris Consortio*
- consider what is meant by a family perspective and develop a family perspective within parish and diocese
- explore the needs of families across the life cycle
- enable families to explore and adopt a family spirituality
- support parents in their role as primary educators of their children
- affirm the ministry that is being carried out by families
- provide resources that families can use at home
- put parishes and families in touch with resources that are available.... among other things.

That's some of what I gleaned from the workshop. Towards the end we were asked to identify a project that we would be willing to work on over the next 12 months and we were offered a mentor who would assist us during the year. Thus it ended on a very practical note. I came away convinced that it is important for dioceses and parishes to attend intentionally to how they minister to families and to ensure that they have personnel at diocesan and parish level whose role it is to coordinate family ministry. The strangers had become friends, my concerns about value for money had disappeared and I was still only half way through.

The symposium was a very different experience. Around four hundred people attended, three from outside the United States. It demanded a lot of listening and I was glad to be able to purchase some of the tapes of the presenters on the last day. The presenters were the top people in their field and their being there was made possible by the fact that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family and Committee for Pro-Life Activities, NACFLM and NFPA came together to jointly organise the symposium. A constant thread in the presentations was the importance of *Familiaris Consortio*, not just as central to the Catholic Church's teaching on family life but also as central to the Church's social teaching. The tasks of the family, as outlined in *Familiaris Consortio*, provided the framework for the presentations and the ecclesiology of the church of the home was emphasised throughout. There were moments of friction. One presenter's views on the impact of history on Church teaching led some participants to ask later presenters to state that there would be no future change in Church teaching in areas of sexual morality. The wisdom of holding a conference in a large hotel at a time that the Church must witness to a lifestyle of simplicity was questioned and the fact that the vast majority on the participants were white in a country where the Church is multi-cultural was not allowed to go unnoticed.

The symposium was enriching. Meeting so many people who are involved in and committed to family ministry was inspiring. Meeting the directors of Bethany Family Institute was high on my agenda and on the last day we had a lunch meeting where we discussed with a number of people from the US trends in family ministry in Britain and Ireland.

Six months ago I didn't know that NACFLM existed. Now I know that it has been in existence for over twenty years and that its membership has a depth of experience and resource that can be available in some way to those involved in family ministry on this side of the Atlantic.

The exhibition area was another great treasure. There are more resources available for family ministry than I ever imagined. The problem is that culturally they are American and not easily transportable into a British or Irish culture. That is why, in my view, the creation of Bethany Family Institute is an important development. We need to be able to develop resources for families that are sensitive to their experience and culture. In things like the *Nazareth Page*, Bethany is beginning to do that.

I am delighted that my archbishop made it possible for me to spend the week in Washington and on my return I have at least two suggestions for him. One is that he funds another member of our diocesan Family Ministry Team to attend NACFLM's workshop and conference in 2002 and the second is that he bring to the Irish Conference of Bishops the idea that they organise a twenty-first anniversary celebration of *Familiaris Consortio* in 2002.

Andrew McNally
Co-ordinator of Family Ministry
Archdiocese of Armagh
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Timothy which were read for us in our churches a couple of weeks ago.

Paul is in prison and at a moment in his life when he needs to prioritise and get things in perspective. I-us Christian faith seems to be the only important thing. He says, for God's sake Timothy, fan into a flame that gift that God has given you. Look after that precious thing given to you in trust. *(Continued page 11)*
(Continued from page 8)

We believe that this gift is nourished especially within the Christian family. The document 'Familiaris Consortio', which deals with the role of the Christian family makes that very clear. It refers to the family as 'a vital cell that contributes to the good of the whole church and the world'. Family is at the centre of society, a living cell, like leaven, which humanises society and reminds us that we are here to serve. We have been created for family, for community; to be co-operative rather than competitive. That belief and teaching is a prophetic voice for our Western world.

We believe that Christian marriage is more than a family arrangement. We believe that it is a Sacrament. That the life of a married couple is sacramental; that they reveal God to the world; a word of God; that their lives help us notice the presence of God; that the lives of married people through their love and service to one another reveal God to us; their lives give us an insight into the presence of God. So, married people — your lives are a word of God. The lives of married people are the nearest we can get in this world to understanding the life of God within the Trinity. Our God has been revealed to us as pure relation, the relation of Father, Son and Spirit. God has been revealed to us as Family.

Maybe, this is a pivotal time in our history: a time to reflect on the events of recent weeks, on our individualism and on the fragmentation of family life in the Western world. To look again at those needs and values that help us to be truly human: family, community, commonwealth.

In 1927 Thornton Wilder wrote the 'Bridge of San Luis Rey'. Five people are on a collapsing bridge somewhere in Peru. The book is about the five of them and how they came to be there. This is the final paragraph:

"But soon we shall die and all memory of these five will have left the earth. And we ourselves will be loved for a while and forgotten, but the love will have been enough, all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead, and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning."

Introducing Bethany Briefings

A quarterly summary of major books, articles and reports about family life.

In our busy lives, few of us have the time, or opportunity to keep up with what's being published and reported about family life today.

Bethany Family Institute (UK/Ireland/US) is therefore launching a new quarterly service to assist family ministers and others interested in keeping abreast of what's being written in this area.

Bethany Briefings will be electronically emailed to subscribers each quarter, starting October 2001. An annual subscription costs only £15. Subscribers to other BFI products will be eligible for a reduced rate of £10. The following publications will form the basis of our reviews:

America
Commonweal
Family Relations
Intercom (Ireland)
Journal of Marriage and the Family
Marriage
Psychotherapy Networker
Priests and People (UK)
Spirituality (Ireland)
St Anthony Messenger
Theological Studies
US Catholic
Weavings

Church
Family Ministry
INTAMS (Belgium)
Journal of Family Life
Lapis
Networking (UK)
Psychology Today
Sojourners
Spirituality and Health
The Tablet (UK)
Theology Today
Utne Reader

For copyright reasons we are unable to supply full copies of articles reviewed in *Briefings*. However you might consider it worthwhile subscribing to some of these titles once you know how useful they can be. Alternatively online document supply services such as *Ingenta* or *Qpass* can supply copies of some articles, not forgetting the British Library Document Supply Service.

Dr David Thomas, *Briefings* Editor, has this to say about the new service:

"For the past twenty years I served as "a resource person" for adult students in the graduate program I directed at Regis University in Denver, Colorado. I took it as part of my job to hang out in the library and keep an eye on recent periodicals. Having an office a short walking distance from the stacks also helped.

*Over the years I developed a regular diet of reading about twenty or so periodicals (certainly not cover to cover – that would be compulsive!) to find appetizing delights for my mental repository. Then a few times each year I would dash off something that resembled a traditional newsletter to our students and friends and mention some of my catch. When this practice subsided as the program slipped into the sunset, I was regularly asked (at least twice!) whether I might consider doing that newsletter thing again. Now I have and this is it: *Bethany Briefings*"*

Please register me to receive *Bethany Briefings*. I enclose my cheque for £15/£10 made out to Bethany Family Institute.

Name..... Email.....

Forward to: *Bethany Briefings*, Bethany Family Institute, PO Box 2858, Wolverhampton, WV3 0XL

Diocesan Round Up

Twice a year the Diocesan Co-ordinators of Family Ministry in England and Wales meet up for professional support and training. The agenda for these meetings always includes a chance to share news. We are very pleased to be able to make this news more widely known. It represents a fraction of the continuous activity in support of family life

Brentwood

Last March a day for separated and divorced Catholics was organised. Topics such as annulment procedures and the work of the ASDC were included. Evaluations of the day had indicated the usefulness of making the presentation on annulment (by local Marriage Tribunal staff) available at deanery level. A Handbook for Parish Representatives had been completed. FOCCUS had been introduced as part of the marriage preparation process. One parish was making it available to all couples as a pilot scheme.

Hallam

Work was continuing to build up teams of couples able to offer marriage preparation. A taster session on parenting had been delivered to fathers in the local prison. Apparently prisons are obliged to offer four parenting courses per year. Hallam had developed a 4-session course for use in prisons based on Family Caring Trust material.

Hexham & Newcastle

A survey of who was doing what re family in the diocese had been completed. Half the parish priests surveyed did marriage preparation themselves, but indicated they would support the training of marriage preparation facilitators. A weekend course had therefore just been offered with 18 couples participating. As part of the National Marriage Week celebrations last February, and in conjunction with Teams of Our Lady, Jack Dominian had given a talk, related to his recent book *Let's Make Love*, which over 300 had attended. A Mass for separated & divorced Catholics had been held in the cathedral.

Leeds

The Diocesan Family Mass with commissioning of family life ministers took place in October. A

programme of 'nurturing' of representatives was due to follow this. Marriage preparation was going well, with collaboration with Marriage Care to ensure availability across the diocese. A post-confirmation course was being discussed, based on the Family Caring Trust's youth assertiveness programme. FLAME and FLM were discussing the possibility of making a bid to the Lord Chancellors Department for funding for ecumenical marriage preparation.

Liverpool

Four bereavement support courses had been organised in the last year to meet demand. 15 couples had attended a marriage preparation weekend. A survey of parishes had identified a number of people also working in the area of marriage and family life. 18 parishes had asked for help to meet family needs. The diocesan consultation on pastoral priorities had brought 33 divorced people together to discuss good/bad experience and need for support. A day involving ASDC, Rainbows and Beginning Experience was now planned. The Rob Parsons' 60 Minute Marriage video had been used for marriage enrichment.

Shrewsbury

9 out of the 14 deaneries were now represented on the Commission for Marriage and Family Life. Family Caring Trust materials had been introduced at information evenings and to the Conference of Primary Head Teachers. Three more deaneries now had marriage preparation available to them. Marriage was now on the agenda at schools vocations days. Dr David Thomas had been booked to give a day on family spirituality on May 11th in Crewe.

Southwark

Marriage preparation courses continued to be oversubscribed with a search on for more facilitators to meet demand. A bereavement befrienders course was scheduled for November.

Westminster

With the reorganisation of the diocese into pastoral rather than geographical areas, it was hoped to spread the good practise that had arisen in many areas. A need for special resources for prepar-

ing couples with poor literacy skills had been identified. The Rob Parsons video had been used as part of National Marriage Week activities.

Comings and goings....

Sr Anne Conway remains as Co-ordinator for Family Ministry in the Diocese of Leeds for another year. Teresa Ricketts has been appointed as Co-ordinator in the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton. Peter Macpherson is the new Director of Family Ministry in the Diocese of Menevia

Bishop Peter Smith of East Anglia, formerly Chair of the Bishops Conference Committee on Marriage & Family Life has been appointed Archbishop of Cardiff. His place as chairman has been taken by Bishop John Hine of the Archdiocese of South-wark.

Marriage Information Service

2-in-2-1, the largest UK website dealing with marriage has introduced a new forum for keeping us all up to date with government and other developments related to marriage in the UK. If you sign up you can also get weekly updates mailed to your home computer. These have already proved invaluable in alerting us to the Lord Chancellors funding arrangements in support of marriage and relationships for 2002/2003.

You will need to register on the site but then to start using the system for the first time simply go to <http://www.2-in-2-1.co.uk/forums/>. Scroll to the bottom of the page where you will see a Login box. Put in your username and password and then press the Log in button. You will only need to do this login the first time you visit - from then on the system will recognise you each time you return (unless you use a different computer).

Pope beatifies married couple

On October 21st 2001, in St. Peter's Basilica, the Pope beatified the first married couple in the history of the Church, Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi (1880-1951) and Maria Corsini (1884-1965). Present at the ceremony were three of the beatified couple's four children: two sons, Msgr. Tarcisio and Fr. Paolino, who concelebrated with the Pope, and a daughter Enrichetta. Their second daughter, who became a nun, has passed away. In his homily, John

SOME COMMANDMENTS FOR THOSE WHO SERVE...

THOU SHALT NOT TRY TO BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

THOU SHALT NOT BE PERFECT OR EVEN TRY

THOU SHALT LEAVE UNDONE THINGS THAT OUGHT TO BE DONE

THOU SHALT NOT SPREAD THYSELF TOO THIN

Paul II

THOU SHALT LEARN TO SAY NO

THOU SHALT SCHEDULE TIME FOR THYSELF AND THY SUPPORTIVE NETWORK

THOU SHALT BE BORING, INELEGANT, UNTIDY AND UNATTRACTIVE AT TIMES

THOU SHALT NOT FEEL GUILTY



noted that the new Blesseds "assumed with full responsibility the duty of collaborating with God in procreation, dedicating themselves generously to their children in educating, guiding, and directing them to the discovery of His design of love." Luigi and Maria, he continued, "lived an ordinary life in an extraordinary way. Among the joys and worries of a normal family, they lived an existence extraordinarily rich in spirituality. At the centre, the daily Eucharist, to which was added filial devotion to the Virgin Mary, invoked with the recitation of the Rosary every evening, and reference to wise spiritual advisers. In this way they knew how to accompany their children in vocational discernment." sent, many with

Addressing the married couples present with their children, who took part in the previous day's National Encounter of the Family with the Pope, promoted by the Italian Episcopal Conference, the Holy Father said: "As with every journey towards sanctification, yours as well, dear married people, is not easy. Every day you face difficulties and trials in being faithful to your vocation, in cultivating conjugal and family harmony, in accomplishing the mission of parents and participating in the social life. May you know how to seek in the word of God the answer to the many questions which daily life puts to you."

John Paul II particularly recalled those who live "the drama of separation," those who are sick and those who suffer the premature death of a spouse or child, and affirmed that "even in these situations a great testimony of faithfulness in love can be given."

The beatification of this couple has caused comment in the media...

Whilst applauding this belated recognition of the sanctity of marriage, one has to ask what sort of signal the Pope is sending about married sexuality in the twenty-first century. The Second Vatican Council acknowledged the beauty and wonder of sexuality as a precious gift from God, and was quite clear about the union of sexual intercourse and love. At a time of widespread trivialisation of the meaning of sexuality, it is this teaching which urgently needs to be widely known for the sake of evangelisation.

(Dr) Jack Dominion The Tablet 3.11.01

It is of little help when a couple who have not slept together for 20 years are held up as examples of saintly matrimonial love. This may be saintly for them, but it hardly seems a good example for the rest of us. Young people especially need to hear that the ordinary experience of family life—cooking, eating, drinking, talking, and expressing our love for each other in sexual intercourse - is an opportunity to meet Jesus in and through each other. Seen through the eyes of faith, sexual intercourse is the language of commitment, affirmation, appreciation, totally self-giving, faithfulness and indeed a very glimpse of the love of God.

(Mrs) Gillian Meyer The Tablet 17.11.01

Intimacy: human and divine. Sandra Holt. SPCK, 2001 ISBN 0-281-05388-X

Sandra Holt writes from the conviction that there is "no need to choose between the love of partner and the love of God" - that human and divine intimacy is the gift of God and leads to greater openness to family and community.

The book is a reflection on the holiness of daily living in close and loving friendship with God and partner and also a handbook of exercises based on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. The author works imaginative meditations on the life of Jesus showing how readers may place themselves in the event and suggests using contemplation and reflection on the reader's experience of love and marriage. She shows how imaginatively recalling joys, sorrows, precious moments can deepen and enrich a marriage.

The book is accessible and intended for couples in a committed relationship - not only the married and it could help many. Possibly some readers could feel their own relationships with partner or with God falls far short of the closeness she describes and so be discouraged; however Sandra Holt writes to encourage the reader and it is surely good to celebrate the call to sexual and spiritual intimacy in marriage as one call.

Roberta Canning
Bangor, North Wales

Good News about Sex and Marriage. Christopher West. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Publications, 2000.

(We are taking the unusual step of including two contrasting reviews of this book. This reflects the continuing debate in this area. Our thanks to both our reviewers)

A book about sex and marriage whose cover carries enthusiastic tributes from, among others, Professors William E. May and Janet Smith, as this one does, probably needs no further endorsement for those readers who are looking for a guarantee that its content will be entirely faithful to the Church's teaching on the subject. Moreover the author's credentials – he holds a masters degree from the John Paul II Institute and is currently the Archbishop of Denver's advisor on marriage and family life (a role, incidentally, still regrettably not provided for in many UK dioceses) - should reinforce his standing as a writer who uncompromisingly upholds Catholic orthodoxy.

West, however, is not writing for those who already understand with clarity or accept without question the totality of the Church's teaching in this area. Neither

is this a work of academic theology, seeking to explore those issues at the boundaries of contemporary debate. As the book's subtitle - *Answers to your Honest Questions about Catholic Teaching* – indicates, its purpose is simply to provide straightforward and accessible answers to the legitimate doubts of those who are genuinely seeking, with an open mind, to deepen their understanding of the Church's position.

West has the advantage of both posing and answering the questions that he chooses to address, but he does not exploit this in order to manipulate the reader or shirk the more contentious and difficult issues. On the contrary, his coverage is comprehensive and, no doubt drawing on his experience as an educator in this field, many of the questions he includes are precisely those awkward ones that people tend to ask. He may even surprise a few by the candour with which he addresses certain topics that might be thought taboo in some Church circles.

The question and answer format in which the greater part of the book is written enhances its accessibility for those who might be deterred by a more weighty presentation. However, this also has the drawback that the reader might thereby be tempted to use it as a quarry in which to dig up quick answers to specific queries, in isolation from their context within the overall and integrated vision of human sexuality which the Church upholds. West is aware of such a risk and it is precisely this temptation that he urges the reader to avoid. The book is to be read as a whole because it is only when we have a grasp of the principles that underpin the Church's teaching that we can appreciate the coherence of all that flows from them, and which makes that teaching "good news" rather than the series of negative proscriptions that it is so often popularly caricatured as being, even at times within the Church.

The author's quest to present Catholic teaching, like the human person, as a "unified totality" is reflected in the structure of the book. It begins with a chapter on theological and anthropological foundations infused, as is the whole work, with the writing of John Paul II, both academic and magisterial, and in particular West recalls the Pope's insistence that we recognise the vision of sexuality incorporated in God's plan for humanity "in the beginning". This is followed by a chapter in which the author validates the authority of the Church's Magisterium, and a third which provides a summary of Catholic theology of marriage. Subsequent chapters build on these foundations to deal in turn with questions relating to chastity, contraception and reproductive technologies and the two final chapters consider respectively homosexuality and celibacy. Each chapter is extensively referenced to direct the reader to supporting documentation, further reading

and explanatory comments in the endnotes.

The racy, and at times humorous, style of West's writing should broaden its appeal although this, as well as his extensive use of North American idiom, may prove slightly irritating to some UK readers. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake if these features led to an underestimation of the real depth of the author's treatment of serious issues. Neither should they be allowed to detract from the book's value as a concise and systematic resource both for individual enlightenment and, perhaps better still, for collective study in parish or other catechetical groups. It deserves to be read not only by those who experience uncertainty on any aspect of Catholic teaching but also, and just as importantly, by those who think it sufficient to know all the answers yet lack a informed appreciation of the reasons behind them.

Fr. Edward Clare
Catholic Chaplain & Lecturer in Applied Theology
University of Wolverhampton

And another view...

If you liked the penny Catechism, you'll love this book. Personally I found the question and answer style adopted by West irritating, and designed to promote one version of the good news about sex and marriage.

Being able to choose the questions (even those that on the surface are difficult ones) and then provide the orthodox answers, conveys a feeling of sex and marriage being trapped in some sort of "love box". Whilst there can be little argument that love, sex and marriage have very deep meanings, what this book portrays is a kind of disembodied non-reality, that after 34 years of marriage and 15 years working fairly intimately with couples, I find hard to recognise. Some of his claims about the positive effects of NFP on marriages are very hard to justify, and certainly do not coincide with many peoples' experiences that I know of, I also know of one or two women who would like to "discuss" with him his thoughts on them "submitting" to their husbands!

Although the book is billed as "good news", and tries to maintain an upbeat message about love and sexuality, there remains an underlying feeling that, in reality, the answer is still "no". If your desire is to try to create good old fashioned guilt in couples, gay people and even those who choose to stay single, then buy them a copy of this book.

This book has no room for debate, no room to contrast some of the very powerful arguments from history, psychology and sociology that cast new light on Catholic teaching. I would certainly say that this book should not be read "stand alone", without the tempering influences of some of the other more closely argued contemporary thoughts on human relationships.

Following conscience is the ultimate teaching of the Church – that conscience can be formed by this book, but it would clearly be a very one-sided formation.

Reading this book gives me a sense of someone who is at once both obsessed with, and frightened of, sexuality – this may be a complete misjudgement, but that is what my gut tells me.

In short, I would expect a volume like this from a graduate of the JPPII Institute. It's straight down the line, but with little depth; certainly not a cerebral offering. But, if you still like to know the rules like in the good old days of the penny catechism, then this is one for you.

Martin Harpham
Hallam Caring Services

New on our bookshelf.....

Raising faith filled kids: ordinary opportunities to nurture spirituality. Tom McGrath. Loyola Press, 2000
ISBN: 0829414258

Building a Christian marriage: 11 essential skills. Kathleen Finley. Loyola Press, 2000 ISBN: 0829411720

Foundations for a Good Life, a relationship resource for secondary schools, also useful in parishes. Richard Whitfield. Marriage Care Curriculum Project. ISBN 0952914131 £35 approx

Family faith: reconciliation. Srs Doreen Grant & Janet McKenna. Redemptorist Publications, 2001 0852312458

Family faith: Eucharist. Srs Doreen Grant & Janet McKenna. Redemptorist Publications, 2001 085231244X

Family advocate formation: a course to orient, educate and empower parish & diocesan staff and volunteers to be family advocates within their ministries. 2nd Edition. Winnie Honeywell. NACFLM, 2000

Facilitative Family Ministry. Models of Parish Family Ministry Book 3. Family Life Office, Diocese of Omaha, 1998

NACFLM Publications:

Celebration and reconciliation rituals for families.

The Family Celebrates Series:

Baptism and new beginnings

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Eucharist—nourishment for life's journey

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Marriage—two shall become one

David Mackey, Diocese of Galloway, Scotland.
Died September 9th 2001

What can I say about David Mackey? David had an enormous capacity for work allied to a creativity, which was an inspiration for me. I will remember him most for his enthusiasm for life, for family - his own and the wider human family - and for the ministry to marriage, which he followed with such vigour. There was something of the "gentle giant" about David: a graciousness and a goodness. I am sad that he is no longer visibly among us but I guess he is rooting for all of us, family, friends and colleagues, in politic and courteous suggestions to those with influence in the heavenly court! I can hear him laughing as I write. I know we have a stalwart friend and family advocate in heaven. That's my consolation.

Sr Anne Conway, Leeds

David Mackey was a lovely person to have met and talked with at Conferences. He always made very positive and constructive contributions. He was so obviously a very dedicated and committed diocesan coordinator.

Moira Wilson, Westminster

A couple of thoughts on David: helpful, obliging, practical in his advice, and totally reliable - if he said he would send you something, it always appeared. On the Ushaw Course, as at National Meetings also, there was great strength and energy which he shared with everyone - a true friend who is very much missed.

Clara Donnelly, Shrewsbury

At the very first national meeting I ever attended, David went out of his way to make me welcome. Our dioceses had many physical, economic and religious similarities, so David's experience was especially valuable. He was generous in his sharing of his own resources - I still have his material for National Marriage Week. One of David's strengths was his attention to detail and his unmitigated commitment to the work of ministry with families. As Clara says, whenever he promised you something it always arrived.

When Bethany was launched David committed to supporting us and one of the best pieces covering those early, early days appeared in the Scottish Catholic Observer. Penned by his own fair hand, he had chased up some wonderfully encouraging words from the Scottish hierarchy. He had a real gift for writing - in just our last issue we were pleased to include one of his articles.

At the time he died we were planning a Bethany seminar in Scotland. In fact when I see him again I shall insist on a full answer to an email that is probably still in his inbox. David, we are really going to miss you. But it was great knowing you and thank you for sharing all your great good sense with us. Our prayers are with David's widow, Maggie and all his children.

Elizabeth Davies, Bethany Family Institute

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- To assist clergy, pastoral leaders, educators and catechists in serving families more effectively
- To offer educational opportunities for leadership in family ministry

For further information please contact Elizabeth Davies,
PO Box 2858, Wolverhampton WV3 0XL

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