

Celebrating Family

Back in 2004 we as a Catholic Community in England and Wales took part in a survey called 'My Family, My Church'. It highlighted some good things but also some tough stuff that needed listening to, and responding to.

In response we now have a dedicated Family Life worker in the Diocese funded by a benefactor who will be working in the diocese until August 2011.

Here you will find something of the work that the project co-ordinator undertakes, various resources and links you might like to follow up, activities and prayers, and contact details so you can get in touch!

Happy reading!

Jillian Wilce
Celebrating Family Project Coordinator
Cardinal Newman House
Wonford Lane
Exeter, EX2 4PF
Tel: 01392 671320
email: jillianw@plymouth-diocesan-office.org.uk

The first task of the Celebrating Family Initiative has been to affirm families in all their different shapes and sizes, as being holy in the way in which they love and care for one another. You can



view some of the content of the 'Home is a Holy Place' initiative by visiting <http://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/index.php?q=node/576> or <http://www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk/>.

At this latter website there is a wealth of other pages to visit which can help you explore how you and your family can mine the sacredness of your very

ordinary family life and there are links to agencies that can help you in times of need. Don't forget the internet is a great tool for finding up to date local contacts that can give you advice on difficult or delicate matters...if you get stuck, please call.



Here's a little activity to give you a taste of what you might find on the Home is a Holy Place website....On a piece of coloured paper draw around your hand; help a young child and encourage older children to 'go with you' on this! It's good to cut the hand out but not essential. Take a moment to talk and jot down all those things you do with your hands that might be considered

holy. Now take some time here and think again about all those small things you do for one another; cups of tea in the morning, a comforting hug, helping with house or school chores, keeping the garden tidy, standing in awe and wonder at a rainbow...all of these things connect us to God, as they are either demonstrating our love of another or of God's blessed creation. Now add some of those ordinary things you do for one another onto that hand...all these contribute to your holiness too!

Simply things faithfully done are like mosaic being laid on the floor of the Kingdom!



2009 is the Year of the Child. There are events across the country to celebrate the children in our midst. If you go to <http://www.yearofthechild2009.co.uk/> you will find ideas of what you might like to get started in your parish...picnics, films...be creative, be bold and again if you need some help, just call! You might also like to consider helping children in developing countries to have the opportunity of schooling by visiting and acting upon <http://www.sendmyfriend.org/>



The exam season will soon be upon us and we hold all those feeling the pressure in our prayers. The teenage years bring so many pressures and, with that, anxiety for parents...it is difficult to decide what to prioritise and when to let go...when to trust them to their own devices.

Jesus it is very hard to allow children to grow up. We focus on them for so long that it is painful to watch them make mistakes as they break free on their own. It is difficult to admit that sometimes they make better decisions for themselves than we would make for them. It's hard not to be in control.

Now our child has chosen not to attend Mass. I wrestle with making an issue of it, Lord. If I become too forceful, will the meaning of it all be lost in resentment at being forced to attend? If I do not occasionally insist on my values will my values be lost? Or can I trust Lord?

Help me trust them to make intelligent decisions about whatever confronts them-drugs, church, friends, careers, elections. Help me remember that occasional misjudgements did not ruin, but often strengthened my understanding of life. Let me trust them and believe that you do not forsake them, but continue to seek all of us in every event of life. Bless us all Lord.

Let me know what you think of this newsletter and if it's something we think is worth while we it could make regular appearances!

Jillian x