



**3 February 2009**

## Celebrating National Marriage Week

National Marriage Week is 7-14 February. This year's theme is "Celebrating Commitment," focusing on the way that many couples see marriage, and the need for society at large to continue to celebrate the stability that married families bring to society.

Bishop John Hine, Chair of the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Marriage and Family Life, issued the following statement today in advance of National Marriage Week:

"While recognising that the history of marriage is more complex than we sometimes think, there is no doubt that a supportive culture is enormously important for married couples. Among like-minded couples, there is an unspoken air of moral support which is invaluable in times of difficulty.

"This sort of implicit support is much less available to married couples today as fewer choose to declare their commitment to each other publicly in marriage. As a Church our response to this situation is not to denounce or criticise, but to work harder to provide the encouragement and the missing support so urgently needed. The recent report of the Good Childhood Inquiry identifies that the relationship, and particularly the communication between parents, is the most significant factor leading to good outcomes for their children. There are organisations within our church, such as Teams of Our Lady, Marriage Encounter and other similar groups, only too ready to help in these areas. I invite everyone to use the opportunity provided by National Marriage Week to publicise and recommend these organisations in our parishes, and get involved, wherever possible and appropriate, with this important work. The example and witness of a healthy marriage is a sign of joy and hope for us all."

ENDS

### National Marriage Week Celebrations

#### **Cardiff**

In Cardiff, Archbishop Peter Smith will be celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage with Mass at All Hallows Parish, Miskin, Llantrisant on Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 11.00am. For more information contact Anne Ballard, Chair, Diocesan Family Life Commission, Tel: 029 20212821, Email: [annejim98@yahoo.com](mailto:annejim98@yahoo.com)

### **Liverpool**

A celebration of Marriage and Family Life will take place within the Sunday Evening Prayer of the Church at the start of National Marriage Week on Sunday 8th February at 3.00pm in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool. Everyone is welcome to take part: young or ageing, married or single, widowed, separated or divorced. The service will be led by Archbishop Patrick Kelly and will include a Commissioning of Area Representatives for marriage and family life. Contact: Veronica Murphy, Assistant Coordinator for Faith Formation, Tel: 0151 522 1048, Email: [v.murphy@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:v.murphy@rcaol.co.uk)

### **Nottingham**

Fr John Sherrington, Director of the Marriage and Family Life Commission will be offering a Mass of celebration during National Marriage Week in St. Barnabas Cathedral, Nottingham on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30pm. All are welcome, especially those who have ever received the sacrament, as well as engaged couples and those experiencing difficulties in their marriage. Representatives of relevant Catholic organisations in the Diocese will be in attendance. Contact: Fr John Sherrington, Chair, Marriage and Family Life Commission, Tel: 01332 514107, Email: [family.nottingham@btinternet.com](mailto:family.nottingham@btinternet.com)

### **Shrewsbury**

In February 2008 the first Diocesan Celebration of Married Life was held during National Marriage Week. Because it was so successful, with over 350 people taking part, a similar celebration will be held in St Columba's Parish Church, Chester on Saturday, 7th February. Bishop Brian will celebrate Mass at 2.00pm and married couples will be invited to renew their vows to each other. All couples are invited to bring their family and make it a special day out to celebrate their marriage. Refreshments will be provided afterwards in the parish centre. Contact: Clara Donnelly, Marriage and Family Life Coordinator, Tel: 0151 691 2811, Email: [cc.donn@talktalk.net](mailto:cc.donn@talktalk.net)

### **Launch Event**

The Engage programme in the Diocese of Westminster will be launched on Wednesday, 11th February 2009 at 7pm. 'Engage' is a resource designed to help Catholic parishes with marriage preparation and offers advice and support to those wishing to marry. Much of the advice offered in the course is relevant to anyone thinking of getting married. Contact: Edmund Adamus, Director of the Department for Pastoral Affairs, Tel: 020 7798 9363, Email: [edmundadamus@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:edmundadamus@rcdow.org.uk)

Further information about the *Celebrating Family* initiatives is available from: Elizabeth Davies, Marriage & Family Life Project Officer, Tel 07817 479694, Email: [Elizabeth.davies@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.davies@cbcew.org.uk).