



inform

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Newsletter of the Catholic Bishop of Christchurch

Pastoral Planning Office

Mike Stopforth - Bishop's Deputy for Pastoral Planning



Working Together for a More Vital Parish

During a week in September, Father Stuart Sellar provided a workshop in Christchurch and all other pastoral areas covering the Diocesan Pastoral Principles; *holiness, communion, collaboration and mission.*

Father Stuart is a lecturer at Good Shepherd College in Auckland and a priest of the Diocese of Dunedin.

The purpose of his presentations was to highlight the pastoral principles in our Diocesan Pastoral Plan. How does 'Communio' relate to the Mission of the Church? What shape might that mission take? How do we move from the idea of evangelisation based on Communio to practical pastoral action? How can Collaboration and Holiness be fostered?

People appreciated the gentle presentation style of Father Stuart and the depth of knowledge he brought in so many areas. Many participants found the workshops inspirational, "His whole address was uplifting and displayed hope for the church's future." (Joan Dowling - South Canterbury). It also provided challenges for those present, "He reminded me of the 'paraphernalia' that builds up in the institution of the church and how we need to continually remind ourselves of the essential meanings of holiness, communion, collaboration and mission in our daily lives." (Phil McKendry - Mid Canterbury).

Christchurch West Pastoral Area Update

The following report has been received from the Christchurch West Pastoral Area, which comprises the parishes of Darfield, Hornby, Lincoln, Leeston, Riccarton and Sockburn.

On the 28th October we held our last meeting for 2008. The Area has met every two months since it was launched in August 2006. We are in the process of electing a new chairperson but in the meantime each of the six parish representatives will take responsibility for chairing one meeting each in 2009 or until a new chairperson emerges.

In December of 2007 Bishop Barry visited us. This meeting was a follow up from a letter the Council received from the Bishop informing the Area Council that Mass time changes were not to be on our agenda. This subsequent meeting with the Bishop was a welcome opportunity to talk over that particular matter and share with him other issues that have arisen within our meetings.

Mr Mike Nolan, Manager of the Catholic Education Office and Mr Paddy Beban, Diocesan Financial Administrator, were invited



Fr. Stuart Sellar

to our September meeting this year. The Area Council wished to air concerns about the future of catholic education with particular reference to the population growth in the district of Selwyn. This meeting was a good opportunity for dialogue and sharing our concerns to advance the mission of the church in the new suburbs and subdivisions within the six parishes of the Area Council.

First Year of Courses Enthuse Participants

2008 has been the first year that courses taught by the Catholic Education Office were offered to pastoral workers and parishioners. Very good numbers attended the courses which enthused participants and provided them with new knowledge in areas of scripture, theology and pastoral ministry. 2009 course information is now available for the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry and the Diploma in Religious Studies (Pastoral Ministry Stream).

2009 FORMATION COURSES NOW AVAILABLE

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan states that "It is highly desirable that as many people as possible continue their education-in-faith". As a result a Certificate in Pastoral Ministry and a Diploma in Religious Studies (Pastoral Ministry Stream) is now being offered.

The courses are NZQA certified and taught by staff of the Catholic Education Office free of charge.

Course information for 2009 is now available and can be downloaded from the website www.chch.catholic.org.nz/formation or contact Charles Shaw or Mike Stopforth (phone 03-366 9869), email mstopforth@chch.catholic.org.nz

From the Bishop's Chair



The Word of God

Just a few weeks ago, in Rome, there was the world-wide gathering of some of the world's Catholic Bishops for the Synod, which reflected on the topic "The Word of God in the Mission and Life of the Church."

Many of the Bishops were chosen to represent the various Conferences of Bishops throughout the world. Others present were Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, religious men and women and lay faithful – some present ex officio and some nominated by Pope Benedict to attend and contribute in various ways.

We know that words are intelligible sounds which written language is able to record – the Word of God, Catholic faith teaches us, is a Person – it is the eternal Logos or thought of the Father. This Word is a divine Person. As St. John tells us in his gospel, "In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God."

This divine Person, the Word of God, the eternal Son, took flesh from Mary, being born into time and history, into a culture and into a people. This we remember in the great liturgy of Christmas. His coming in the flesh, however, was prepared for over centuries by the activity of preachers and prophets. Pope John Paul II put it thus: "it is true that putting God's words into writing, through the charism of scriptural inspiration, was the first step toward the incarnation of the Word of God." Intelligible sounds inscribed as texts were the remote preparation for the becoming flesh of the Word, the eternal Son. Sacred Tradition, however, preceded the written texts, of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The sacred writings began as traditions before they could be recorded. Our Lord entrusted the gospel to the apostles and their successors and it was being lived, preached and expounded by the early Church before any inspired

texts were formed. The Word of God, therefore, comes to us in two streams flowing from the same Divine Source – Sacred Tradition, comprising everything which makes the People of God live their lives in holiness and increase in faith, by which, namely, the Church hands on all that she is, and believes, by her doctrine, life and worship – and Sacred Scripture, which the Church has always venerated as she venerates the Lord's Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist. "Lord Jesus, you come to us in Word and in Sacrament, to strengthen us in holiness – Lord, have mercy."

+ B. Jones

✠ Barry Jones
Bishop of Christchurch



A New Editor for Inform

The Bishop has appointed a new editor for *Inform*. He is Mr Gerard Duignan who lectures in broadcasting at CPIT.

Mr Duignan is originally from Wellington but has now lived in Christchurch for 16 years. He is married to Julia. They have three children and are active members of the St Albans, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

Formerly he was involved in commercial radio and was also a member of the NZ Bishops' Catholic Communications Board.

In Christchurch he has been involved in a number of Diocesan projects. At the moment he is a member of Board of Trustees of Marian College. He takes up his position as Editor from the beginning of January.

Father Dan Doyle



Fr. Dan visiting Scott's Hut at Hut Point, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica.

Fr. Dan is the Christchurch Diocesan Co-ordinator of the summer period Antarctic Chaplaincy Programme. He arranges for priests to go down to the ice for three or four weeks stays during the summer in order to minister to some of the people on that frozen continent. Also he is the Parish Priest of the very vibrant North Canterbury parish of Rangiora.

Saint Alphonsa of Bharananganam



First from India

Sister Alphonsa, a Franciscan Clarist nun from the southern Indian state of Kerala, was elevated to sainthood by Pope Benedict XVI on October 12, 2008.

To commemorate this great occasion on that day the Indian community in Christchurch celebrated Mass in Christ the King church. The Mass celebrated by Father Jolly from Kerala, concelebrated with Rev. Msgr Bill, Father John and Father Paul, was attended by more than 200 people. Apart from the Keralites who included not only Christians but Hindus as well, there were a good number of CTK parishioners who later enjoyed the hospitality of the Malayalees, as the people of Kerala are called.

Annakutty or "Little Anna" was born on 19th August 1910 as the fourth child of devout Catholic parents. After her mother's death when Anna was only three months, she was

brought up by her mother's sister in strict Catholic tradition. Contrary to her aunt's wishes to marry her off, Anna joined the Clarist convent in Bharananganam, a small town in central Kerala. Sister Alphonsa suffered from haemorrhage and severe pain, but she longed to suffer more for her own sanctification and that of the world. She died in 1946. She had a simple funeral unnoticed by the public. At the funeral Mass her spiritual father, Fr Romulus, preached, "I affirm that we are now participating in the last rites of a saintly person.... as far as the human judgement can be relied on this young nun was not much less saintly than the Little Flower of Lisieux." Her tomb is in the small chapel in Bharananganam. Soon after Sister Alphonsa's death the convent school children went to her tomb and started praying for her intercession and many favours were reported. Bharananganam has turned into a great centre of pilgrimage.

The elevation of Sister Alphonsa to sainthood is of great significance to the Indian Christians especially the Keralites. 2000 years ago it was in the Kerala port of Cranganore that St. Thomas landed and established the first Christian church in India. The canonisation of Sister Alphonsa is a fitting tribute to the strong faith of the Catholics in Kerala that number about five million in a predominantly non Christian country.

Fr. Brian Fennesy



This year is the 150th Anniversary of the Apparitions to St Bernadette at Lourdes. Fr Brian Fennesy recently attended the 50th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes. The Military Pilgrimage grew out of the scars of the Second World War which the French and German military forces sought to heal with the first International Military Pilgrimage during 1958.

As a part-time Army Chaplain, Fr Brian was in Britain for a 3½-month exchange between the British and New Zealand Armies. Fr Brian joined the 450 British contingent, including 25 Catholic Military Chaplains, for the Annual Pilgrimage. Approximately 20,000 military personnel from over 30 countries attended the three day Pilgrimage. The presence of soldiers who had been wounded in Afghanistan was a poignant reminder of Lourdes being a shrine of healing and hope. Not all the soldier pilgrims were Catholic - so there was a variety of understanding about Lourdes, but they were touched by various aspects of the pilgrimage.

Sister Marita Celebrates



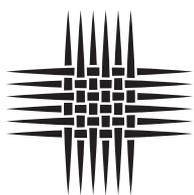
On August 23 Sister Marita Breen LCM celebrated her Golden Jubilee of Religious Profession at the Mary Potter Community Centre in Durham St North. Bishop Barry Jones was the main celebrant, Bishop John Cunneen and five priests concelebrated the Jubilee Mass. Sister's many friends, LCM Affiliates and Associates and Residents of Mary Potter Courts were among the large crowd who enjoyed the opportunity to congratulate Sister and enjoy refreshments following the Mass.

Carmelite Sisters Host another Youth Mass

Wow, the second Carmel Youth Mass I've been to and the biggest yet. So many youth and community gathered, post-World Youth Day '08, to join in the Mass with the Carmelite Sisters in their chapel. So many people, that the chapel was bulging at the seams! Fr John Adams celebrated the Mass - The Triumph of the Cross - and all there joined in beautifully with the music group leading the songs. I especially liked singing the World Youth Day liturgical songs again, as the last time I sang them was in Sydney for World Youth Day itself.

After the Mass, many people stayed for supper and a special celebration: the Carmelite Monastery's 75th Anniversary of foundation. Two beautiful cakes were presented to the Carmelites, complete with candles, and were shared amongst the guests and the Sisters. There was plenty of food to be eaten while a special video presentation of World Youth Day played in the supper room. Meanwhile, many people took the opportunity to visit the Sisters, chat with them and demonstrate their creative ways of saying goodbye! ;)

Thank you Carmelite Sisters!



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Around the Parishes

St Anne's Parish, Woolston

Family and friends gathered in October to witness 15 young adults receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at the hands of Bishop Barry Jones. May they continue to be workers in the Spirit.

Fr Chris Friel, P.P. of St. Anne's, will lead a tour to Greece in June next year and the Passion Play at Oberammergau in 2010. Phone him on (03) 3841600 for full details.



St Alban's Parish

Golden Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to Bill and Robinette Melhalski on reaching their anniversary. Their long marriage of love is a witness to the younger people entering into marriage today.

They were married in St Alban's Catholic Church on 4th October 1958.



Harwarden Parish

New Parish Centre Opened

A multi-denominational gathering recently witnessed the blessing of the new Catholic Parish Centre by Bishop Barry Jones.

Anglican, New Life and Presbyterian Ministers attended the blessing and cutting of the ribbon to celebrate the opening of the new building.

The Centre has been built with funds from the sale of the former presbytery - originally the convent, and includes self contained living accommodation for Father Kevin Foote, the Parish Priest, when he is working in the area. Bishop Jones told the gathering that the building was an example of the people knowing what was needed and of being heard (by the Diocesan Building and Sites Committee).

Fr. Kevin was not present, having recently had surgery. However he has now returned and been welcomed back with a house warming party.



Top left: Bishop Barry Jones blesses the new building.

Left: The new Harwarden Catholic Parish Centre on opening day.

Christ the King Parish, Burnside



Installation of Monsignor Middleton

On Monday 3rd November 2008, Bishops, Clergy, Religious, CTK Parish, family and friends, joined Monsignor William Middleton for his Installation by Bishop Barry Jones as an Honorary Prelate of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. An honour well-deserved for 44 years of tireless service to the Christchurch Diocese and the wider community. Although he can dress in coloured robes something like a bishop he is not a bishop, but in the hierarchy of the Church he is regarded as more important than an ordinary priest. Congratulations and blessings, Monsignor Bill.



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Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St Albans and St Matthew's Parish, Bryndwr

1 A CaFE, Catholic Adult Faith Exploration programme has been running during October and November. We are using Module One: GETTING TO KNOW GOD BETTER. This is a seven week programme that looks at God in our lives, God's Love, Forgiveness, Help, Word, Spirit and Hope. We have two sessions each week; the one on a Wednesday morning at St Albans brings together about 20 participants while the Wednesday evening session at St Matthews has

about 30 participants. The DVDs present the topics in an interesting and challenging way, while Scripture texts for prayer bring the message into one's daily life and during the following week.

2 A Retreat In Daily Life was held recently in our Parishes. This is a way to make a Retreat in the midst of an ordinary daily routine, and it is an invitation offered to a person to put aside time so that he/she can listen and respond to God's call at this time.

Eighteen Retreatants responded to the invitation, and during the week they were invited to pray for a period of time each day at home and, once a day at an agreed time, they would meet with a personal guide for half an hour to share what happened during prayer time. The Prayer Guides were Kevin Gallagher, Judy Garvey, Carole Sandford and Sr Marietta, SM, all qualified members of the National Association of Spiritual Directors.

Rakaia Parish Catholic Women's League 40th Jubilee

The CWL recently celebrated this Jubilee in Rakaia Parish. Mass was concelebrated by Mons. Harrington and O'Gorman. Forty years ago Mons. O'Gorman instigated the League in Rakaia.

A good attendance of past and present members and visitors from Ashburton, Methven and Christchurch Diocesan Council enjoyed a luncheon at the Community Centre and a time of remembering and socialising.

During the 40 years of 'Faith and Service' the Rakaia CWL has raised many thousands of dollars, which has enabled them to support their Mission Station in the Solomon Islands and numerous other worthy causes.

Five of the Foundation members were present at the Jubilee and received 40 year badges from the Diocesan President, Jenny Muschamp. They were Maree O'Neill of Ashburton, Colleen

Gorman of Methven and Pat Duncan, Monica Hanrahan and Pam Dolan of Rakaia.

The League are now proud possessors of a beautiful tablecloth made by a member on which is embroidered the name of every member who joined the League during the 40 years, a lasting memorial to all. The Rakaia Catholic Women's League continues to function well with a membership of 14.

Schools

St Patrick's School, Waimate



Greats and Grands' Day

Last Thursday the students at St Patrick's School invited their grandparents and older friends to spend the morning with them at school. They started the morning with a prayer liturgy, followed by a short concert, which included singing and guitar playing, poetry, drama, bagpipes and drumming. After morning tea the Greats and Grands went into the classrooms for a discussion on the differences between school in the past and now. Much laughter was heard, and surprise expressed, as children's eyes were opened to the way learning took place for their grandparents. Grandparents, in turn, were most interested to see what children can achieve at school today and the way technology is used to assist learning. The morning was deemed to be most enjoyable by all involved.



Photos: 'The youngest' - Ben Sullivan and Mckinley Ayers and 'The Oldest past pupils registered' - Frances Gaffaney and Patrick Scott

St Joseph's School, Temuka

On the weekend of 24th - 26th October 2008 celebrations were held to mark the 125th year since the opening of St Joseph's School in Temuka. It was a very successful weekend with 267 ex-pupils, staff and committee members attending, along with the Bishop and Congregational and Provincial leaders of the Sisters from Australia and NZ.

St Joseph's School was opened on 12th November 1883 with 90 pupils enrolled. The school was opened at the instigation of the Parish Priest, Fr Louis Fauvel. He had learned about the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart (known as the Josephites) from Fr Julian Woods whom he met while in Australia in 1876. The Order was founded by Blessed Mary MacKillop and she sent three of her Order to Temuka. Mary MacKillop visited Temuka on four occasions and she set up schools in various other parishes.

The School today has 97 pupils and the Principal is Terry Whyte. We are fortunate to still have two Sisters of St Joseph living in the convent, Sisters Lorraine Gaines and Mary Ellen Kerin.

Celebrate Love Seminar



Participants and presenters at the latest Celebrate Love Seminar held in Christchurch, 11th and 12th October.

The Seminar gave married couples a chance to stop and look at where they were at in their married relationship. It was like falling in love again, rekindling the passion to live a joy filled marriage. Couples were given the tools and skills to continue the passion and joy beyond the weekend. Another weekend is planned for next year. To find out about Celebrate Love, visit the website: www.celebratelove.com.au

150th Anniversary of the Visit of Our Lady at Lourdes



Statue of Mary

This year the Church is celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the visit of Our Lady to St Bernadette at Lourdes. Lourdes is the best known shrine of Mary in the Catholic world. Each year hundreds of thousands come to Lourdes from all around the world to worship God and to seek help from Our Blessed Lady. Among those who come there are approximately 70,000 sick people who seek healing of body or peace of soul. These sick pilgrims are cared for by generous people who give freely of their time to look after all their needs.

In our Christchurch Diocese we have celebrated this great event beginning on August 17th with a Cathedral full of people participating in a beautiful Marian Liturgy. On the 8th October the large statue of Our Lady of Lourdes arrived at the Carmelite Monastery to begin a journey to all pastoral areas of the Diocese. People have come in good numbers to the different host Churches, and South and North Canterbury have hosted the Statue in all the Churches in their areas.

The Diocesan celebration will conclude on Sunday 7th December at 3pm in the Cathedral. On this day there will be a Special Liturgy for the sick who will receive the Sacrament of Anointing and the Blessing of the Lord in the Monstrance.

Our Holy Father visited Lourdes in September and said, "Mary is a star of hope who enlightens us and gives direction to our journey" and that journey will lead us to her Son, Jesus, and eventually the Father's Kingdom.



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Jesus was at St Bede's

The weekend of 30th - 31st August saw our Life in the Spirit Seminar at St Bede's College for about 60 men when we experienced the real miracle of the Spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ come amongst us and move us!

Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament was made available in the College Chapel at times.

Later there was time for Reconciliation, Reflection and Prayer. Joshua Chaplain (Christchurch), Fr Peter Ewart SM, arranged for several Priests to join

him and Fr Bruce to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Prayer ministry was offered and the men who came forward for prayer included quite a few who had never before experienced being prayed over in this way. It was a tremendously gentle yet powerful time and God's love was tangible.

On Sunday morning Fr Bruce McGill reminded us we had been cleansed and were ready for God to pour out his Spirit upon us. After a talk on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit the men were invited

to come forward to be prayed over for the release of the Gifts, to which there was a ready response and God will surely respond generously to those prayers. Later we moved to the Chapel for Mass concelebrated by Fr Bruce and Fr Peter to wind up a highly successful Seminar.

Joshua Catholic Men's Fellowship has open meetings monthly and details are in your parish bulletins. The next Event will be the Annual Friday - Sunday Retreat on 1st to 3rd May 2009.

The Blessed Sacrament by Father Kevin Clarke

Tent and Temple

Although in a quiet and subdued way, there is for all of us an experience of awe and wonder when we come into the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament, reserved as it is, in many of our churches, the exquisitely beautiful self-giving which the Lord's presence demonstrates, is shown not only by the fact of His presence but by the fact He is present. He is present as food.

Now the most obvious thing that can be said about food is that it exists to be consumed. Having little stability it is subject to corruption. Its existence is quite impermanent. Food is not meant to last. It exists to be absorbed into another being and to give nourishment. The life-preserving and enhancing qualities of food become effective as it is assimilated into another and loses its identity in that person. This is the silent witness of self-giving which Christ's presence as our food gives to us.

The idea of impermanence is also indicated by the name, sometimes the shape and even the covering of the little safe we call the tabernacle. This word, meaning a tent, speaks to us of a temporary

dwelling, a way station, a place to wait. A tabernacle is not the end journey that the Lord is making, but a place to wait for the opportunity to move on.

So, in our churches we build a little place where the Blessed Sacrament might repose. We make it as beautiful as possible, but nevertheless it will be a tabernacle, a tent, a temporary dwelling place from where the Lord might continue His Eucharistic journey to feed and nourish His people and find in them His permanent dwelling, His Temple.

To spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament should be the delight of each of His disciples. Our time may be limited but we pray well when we pray in a manner that suits us personally. It is of little use if we pray in a manner that we imagine others do. Prayer is so intensely personal. Nevertheless we do need something a little more structured than praying informally. The following prayer was composed by Blessed John Henry Newman (Cardinal Newman). It is short and very beautiful, but because of its richness can very easily be expanded into a much longer meditation.



Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament:

'I place myself in the presence of His in whose Incarnate Presence I am, before I place myself there.'

'I adore You, O my Saviour, present here as God and man, in soul and body, in true flesh and blood.'

I acknowledge and confess that I kneel before the Sacred Humanity which was conceived in Mary's womb and lay in Mary's bosom which grew up to man's estate, and by the sea of Galilee called the twelve, wrought miracles and spoke words of peace, which in due season hung on the cross and lay in the tomb, rose from the dead and now reigns in heaven.

I praise and bless and give myself totally to Him who is the true bread of my soul and my everlasting joy.

Amen'

Juventutem Weekend

"Thank you for the heavenly weekend" was just one of the many positive comments received following our Juventutem Christchurch weekend, 17th - 19th October.

Juventutem came into existence at World Youth Day in Cologne in 2005 and revived again as Juventutem Australia for World Youth Day this year at Sydney.

The idea of a Juventutem weekend in Christchurch was born simply because some of us were unable to go to World Youth Day so why not have a Juventutem Weekend at home? Bishop Jones encouraged the idea giving it his blessing, so a few of us met regularly to plan the weekend. We came up with a mix of talks, teachings (including Gregorian Chant), Holy Masses, Compline

and Holy Hours. Presentations during the weekend were given by Bishop Meeking, Father William Define (the Provincial Superior of the Fraternity of Saint Peter from Sydney), Sister Deidre of the Sisters of the Holy Faith and Ken Joblin from the tertiary chaplaincy.

It was an informative, rewarding and highly successful weekend bringing to life the extraordinary form of the Mass, a treasure chest rich and satisfying for the soul. It was exciting to learn about our Catholic heritage and culture, rather like the Maori people who embrace and welcome their heritage.

Juventutem Christchurch will continue with occasional follow-up programmes in 2009. Those interested should check the Diocesan



website regularly, www.chch.catholic.org.nz/juventutem for future events. One of the talks from the weekend is also there.

Dove Catholic Fellowship for Women



Our Vision: The Dove Catholic Fellowship's (DCFW) vision is for women from all walks of life, to bond together in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to become instrumental in building up parish and family life,

providing effective support for each other. The primary focus of DCFW is on leading women to a personal and ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour; to become fully immersed in the life of His church and to become effective evangelisers.

The emphasis is on women's ministry to women in gentleness and love as shown by

Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

Origins: Dove Catholic Fellowship for Women originated in Auckland in 1984 to meet the needs of women to be nurtured and trained in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

DCFW operates with the blessing and under the authority of the Bishops of New Zealand, in co-operation with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

A special thanks to Mary Witteman who graciously agreed at our May Convention to share with us all. She stepped out. A truly special meeting was enjoyed by us all.

Dove Fellowship meet every second Saturday at Christ the King Parish Centre – Greers Rd, Burnside, 1.30 to 3.30 pm. For more information contact Anna Watson on 323 7780.



Rosalie, Mary W, Mary R, Janet, Mary Elizabeth, Maria, Julie and Cheryl (l to r) are women from Christchurch Dove Fellowship who generously shared their testimonies at their August meeting. These women lovingly shared some of their life story and the part that Dove plays for them.

The World Encounter of Families

Two from the Diocese to attend.

Every three years the Holy Father summons the Catholic families of the world to an encounter of unity, in which thousands of families from the five continents meet in order to share, dialogue, pray and study in depth important aspects of the role of the Christian family as a base unit of evangelization and society.

Each World Encounter of Families is organized by the Pontifical Council for the Family, in collaboration with the Diocese chosen as host.

The Encounter consists of three major events: a Theological-Pastoral Congress, a Festive and Testimonial

Encounter and a Solemn Eucharist Celebration Closing Ceremony.

The Congress takes for itself the Christian evaluation of marriage and the family, with the consciousness that this is the way to overcome the crises and problems of the present. It challenges and inspires Christians to examine thoroughly their personal belief, both intellectually and practically, so as to educate others in faith. The previous encounters have had a strong impact on the families of the world, thanks to the reflections on the Family.

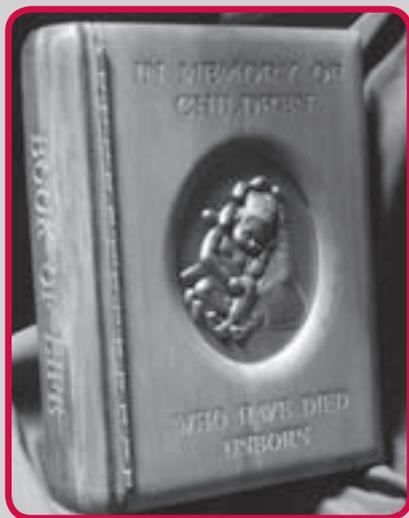
For Benedict XVI the world needs urgently to be transformed, starting with united, happy families, well-based

on the faith they teach with regard to principal values, families who recognize the worth of life and confront the future with hope.

The Solemn Eucharist Celebration closing ceremony culminates the World Encounter of Families as an act of thanksgiving to God for the gifts of Family, Marriage, Life, Love and all the other values that adorn the experience of Family.

At the invitation of Bishop Barry Jones our Diocese will be represented at this next World Encounter of Families by Celia and John Kennedy, from the John Paul II Centre for Life.

The Book of Life



On October 10th in a Diocesan Mass of Remembrance for children who have died before birth, a very special book was "launched": The BOOK OF LIFE.

This beautiful rimu memorial book now rests permanently in the Chapel of the Holy Innocents, at the John Paul II Centre for Life. Through this shrine to unborn children we hope to comfort families who are grieving and to honour the lives, no matter how brief, of children whose human dignity is often denied.

Losing a child is always painful. When a baby dies before birth however, grief has no focus and the process of grieving is cut short because parents possess neither

memories nor tangible reminders of their child's existence. There is no photo to frame, no gravesite to visit. In the past mothers were advised to "get on with life" as if the child's brief existence did not matter; the child was not named or acknowledged as part of the family. Yet each of these little ones was made in the image of the Lord of Life, created with an immortal soul, thereby possessing the same dignity as every other human being.

Families who have lost a child through miscarriage or stillbirth, or who may have had a child removed from the mother's womb, may take some comfort from the words of John Paul II that "Your child is now living in the Lord" (Evangelium Vitae, paragraph 99). These children can help their families on earth by interceding for them before the throne of God.

All children named in the Book of Life, together with their families, will be remembered in the weekly Mass and daily prayers at the John Paul II Centre. Families are invited to send names of children to be inscribed in the Book, and to spend some time in prayer in the Chapel at 88 Idris Road.

If a return address is given, an acknowledgement will be sent, including a picture of the shrine.

Contact: maria@fli.org.nz

*Family Life International, PO Box 36576, Christchurch 8146. *Ph 03 351 3225

From the Editor

As I sit at my desk and prepare Inform for the printers for the last time, as Editor, I thought I should write a few words to you, the readers.

Recently I made my annual spiritual retreat. During this time I read some parts of my spiritual journal and came to an extract from a letter that has always been an inspiration to me over the years. It was written to me 25 years ago by a young single person who was telling me a little of their journey with God at that stage of their life. I share it with you:

- "In setbacks I have come to realise my dependence on God.
- Then he lifts me up and His light shines.
- I must always be totally humble.
- I am God's creation; I am due no credit."

It is my hope and prayer that these words will help you on your life's journey with God also.

In a special way may the Lord Jesus send His Holy Spirit to you this Christmas so that His light shines.

Fr. Mike Doyle

Sadly I have not been in contact with this person for 25 years. If ever we do meet I will be overjoyed as it will give me the opportunity to offer my personal thanks for that letter of so many years ago.

Inform

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