

## Dates for your diary

March 2nd	Women's World Day of Prayer
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Prayer for Human Work
May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Migrant's Mass, Westminster Cathedral, 10 am followed by rally in support of the migrant worker
May 13 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>	Catholic Deaf Association (CDA) Awareness Week
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	World Communication Day
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Refugee Week
July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Day for Life
July 8 <sup>th</sup>	Sea Sunday
July 20 <sup>th</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup>	National Justice and Peace Conference. 'Called to be Peacemakers'

## Marriage Care Courses

April 28th	Rayleigh and Walthamstow
May 26th	Rayleigh and Walthamstow
June 23rd	Rayleigh
June 30th	Brentwood
July 14th	Rayleigh
21st July	Walthamstow

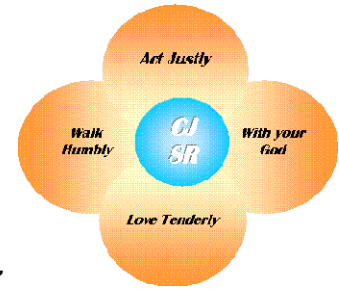
Further details from [cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org) or 01277 265290

**We always welcome contributions to Just Time.  
Please either post to Cathedral House or e-mail  
[cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org).**

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### War and its effect on Family Life

Today we are frequently overwhelmed with news of war in so many countries . What is this doing to families?

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### 'Home is a Holy Place' 2007

Why have the Bishops identified this as a priority for 2007?

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### In praise of parents

When the parents are all gathered before God on judgment day, the Lord will gently say.....

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## **Supporting Family Life**

It really doesn't seem three months since our first edition – how time really does fly. Over the past weeks we have seen snow, gales and floods but still the indomitable daffodils push their way through the earth to herald spring. I remember particularly a

friend of mine who, after putting tarmac over a driveway, was surprised to see that one daffodil had pushed its way through this seemingly impenetrable surface. The parallel is there in our daily lives as we struggle against sometimes insurmountable problems. No family is ever immune to these difficulties, however well we plan, and we all face issues that affect and impact on the peace and tranquillity we look for in our near and extended families.

In a recent survey from a national newspaper, 85% of people said that "family" was the single most important aspect of their lives. Sadly, today we see a world where there are almost two million single parents, 18 million "step" families and a divorce rate of 40%. Personal debt is running at over £1 trillion (£1,000,000,000,000) and is increasing at a rate of a million pounds in less than four minutes – each day and every day. Little wonder that the strain on families, in a world that seems obsessed by consumerism, is immense and many families struggle to keep their heads above water. We could give up but, following the example of the daffodil we can overcome these difficulties.

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."*

*Matthew 25: 31-36*

Founded by students in 1833, the SVP today runs an active programme of youth development in parishes, schools and universities.

In the Brentwood Diocese the S.V.P. has 65 parish groups called Conferences We have 464 full members and 92 auxiliary members. Last year they made 26,399 visits to homes ,hospitals, families, prisons, lone parent families and many other types of need. We also have a children's camp that operates 4 weeks a year, and caters for 600 children each year.

George Hasberry .S.V.P. President Brentwood

For more information or if you would like to support the work of the SVP telephone: 01375 641060 or email ghasberry@btinternet.com

## **Fairtrade Fortnight 26 February—11 March**



### **Change Today, choose Fairtrade.**

In addition to the standard Fairtrade products, e.g. tea, coffee, bananas, etc, did you know it is now possible to buy Fairtrade flowers, Fairtrade sportsballs (footballs, rugby balls, etc) ? Marks & Spencer are currently switching key ranges of their clothing to Fairtrade cotton. With over 2000 Fairtrade certified products now available, it's easier than ever to change what you eat drink and wear to Fairtrade, and make a positive change today for the lives of millions of farmers in developing countries. Take part in this Fairtrade Fortnight.



By making a small change in your "shopping basket" you can not only support Fairtrade but also the LiveSimply campaign – "two for the price of one" !

**Davina Bolt**

## St Vincent de Paul Society (England & Wales)

Registered Charity Number: 1053992

The St Vincent de Paul Society (or as it is often known - the SVP) is an international Christian voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing practical assistance to those in need – irrespective of ideology, faith, ethnicity, age or gender.

The Society is a lay organisation initially formed in Paris in 1833 by Frederic Ozanam and his companions, and active in England & Wales since 1844. Placed under the Patronage of St Vincent de Paul, it is inspired by his thinking and works. It seeks, in the spirit of justice and charity, to help those who are suffering poverty in whatever form.

The work of the SVP falls into two main areas: membership activity and Special Works.

The main work of the volunteer members is to befriend and assist individuals and families in need on a person-to-person basis, through visits to domestic residences, care homes, hospitals, prisons and other institutions. In England & Wales, around 10,000 volunteer members in 1,100 mainly parish-based groups make more than half a million visits each year to vulnerable people in their communities.

In addition to member visits, the Society also operates a number of "Special Works", which seek to serve people in a wider area or give more specialised help in a certain aspect of the work. These Special Works currently include holiday schemes, children's summer camps, furniture stores, community shops, support centres, soup runs, residential care, deaf clubs, debt counselling, community transport and asylum care. Direct support and financial assistance is also provided to people in need overseas through its international network of volunteers and the SVP Disaster Fund.

It has often been said that a “family that prays together-stays together”. This is very true but it is also true to say that a family that plays, laughs, cries, jokes, walks and anything else you can think of has a much better chance of a full and happy relationship. A teacher recently remarked that when a class was asked how many of the pupils sat down to eat together with their families at least once a week, only one hand went up. In our homes it is easy to have a TV dinner on our laps but rob us of the joy of communicating with each other. Mealtimes can be a wonderful opportunity to share the joys, hopes and fears of our families. Home really can be a holy place and one where we should experience that closeness of community and the presence of God’s love in loving relationships. Over the next months we will see the launch of the “Home is a Holy Place” initiative. This will provide a practical way of truly celebrating the sanctity of the family and proclaim the holiness of the home as a place of life, love, service, teaching, fellowship, witness and prayer.

As we move into Lent and the most special time of Easter we wish you and your close and extended families a Happy and Holy time.

Phil Butcher



## ***War and its effect on Family Life***

Today we are frequently overwhelmed with news of war in so many countries throughout the world. We are saturated, on a daily basis, with horrific scenes of victims blown up by “human bombs” and killed by western armies.

Often, what these pictures do not reveal is the terrible human suffering that this inflicts on families. In Iraq, family life for its citizen’s is no more. Almost every family will have lost someone – mother, father, son or daughter. It is estimated that around 50,000 Iraqis are leaving their homes each month and thousands more may follow.

The war in Iraq is what we see most of, but what about the continuing conflict in the Middle East and Darfur (and so many other countries). I recently read of a Palestinian peace activist whose 10 year-old daughter was killed during a clash between Israeli police and stone-throwing Palestinians. He said his daughter’s death would not stop him from working with Israel to promote peace, even though this event had torn his family apart.

Ravaged by 23 years of conflict, Afghanistan is struggling to rebuild its infrastructure and social and political systems. Afghans still form the largest refugee population in the world. Since 2002 more than three million of them have returned to their homeland, most of them from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. In war-ravaged cities such as Kabul there is not enough housing, and many are forced to live in tents among the ruins, putting an enormous strain on families.

The continuing civil war in the Darfur region is seen as “one of the worst nightmares in recent history”, and has resulted in the total break-up of families; men and young boys are frequently tortured and shot in front of their families; women and young girls are raped and left for dead. Up to 2 million have fled their

## ***Marriage and Family life Support***

### ***Enriching Relationships***

We are very pleased to be able to join forces with Fr Graham Smith, our Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Coordinator.

Fr Graham is based at St Thomas of Canterbury, Grays and has been working with us on many issues relating to marriage preparation, marriage enrichment and marriage support. Along with the work of a number of agencies including, among others, Holy Trinity Brompton and the Diocese of Westminster we aim to produce a series of resources for use within parishes.

In addition and supported by our commission, he is hosting a clergy study day in May which will look at the key areas of Theology, Natural Fertility and Human Relationships. We will also link to and work with new and existing contacts in parishes to both share and widen experience in this key area.

If you feel you would like more information on this subject or would like to help in this work area please contact [cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org).

*Phil Butcher*



## Catholic Marriage Care

Marriage Care is the largest Catholic marriage support organization in England. It was established in 1946 as the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and has an overwhelmingly volunteer membership.

Our purpose is to help couples prepare for, achieve and maintain happy, successful marriages and offer support to those marriages in difficulties.

Marriage Care has more than 60 Centres in England and Wales, including 3 Centres in the Diocese of Brentwood. The Diocese was used by Marriage Care to pilot its national, Marriage Preparation Day Course, in 1997/8. This course has been offered to the Parishes in this Diocese and others every year since that time.

A unique aspect of Marriage Care is a counselling service without charge, although we do seek donations for the counselling sessions. Counsellors are unpaid professionals, who have undergone a rigorous two years of training, together with on-going supervision and in-service training.

The pre-marriage courses (one day and Foccus) offered, in co-operation with the local parishes, and others, help the couples to prepare for married life. The focus of the course is on the 3 C's (Communication, Conflict Management and Commitment) and the 3 S's (Sexuality, Self Esteem, and Spirituality), which give a couple the basis for forming a loving and lasting relationship.

Relationship Education Courses are available in response to invitations from schools and colleges to help teachers deliver presentations and workshops on relationship skills.

A National Helpline ( 0845 6606000) offers listening support to those facing difficulties in marriages, families, or close personal relationships, who for various reasons are unable to attend at a Centre. The national website is [www.marriagecare.org.uk](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk)

**David Micklewright.**

homes and tens of thousands of people have been killed. Pro-government Arab militias are accused of carrying out a campaign of ethnic cleansing against non-Arab groups in the region.

In the face of such human suffering and hopelessness what can we do ? We must continue to pray for peace throughout the world. On the practical side we can lobby our MP's and implore them to put an end to all conflict in the world, highlighting the enormous cost war has on human development. Our country should be encouraging other wealthy, Western countries to channel the vast amounts of money spent on arms, to the world's poor, so that they can be educated, fed and live in a safe and secure environment

We can also make a commitment to the *LiveSimply* campaign. One of the suggestions we could take up is to "give up" 1% of our income to those less fortunate than ourselves. There are many other examples in the campaign literature that we could commit to.

The following words from former US President General Dwight D. Eisenhower sum up my feelings on war: *"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron"*.

**Davina Bolt**

**(Acknowledgements: Aljazeera, BBC, Pax Christi and UNHCR**



## 'Home is a Holy Place' 2007

### Why have the Bishops identified this as a priority for 2007?

- Home is a Holy Place aims to develop among families, parishes and the wider Catholic community a vision of:
- *the holiness of the home as a place of life, love, service, teaching, fellowship, witness and prayer.*
  - *the presence of God as love in all loving family relationships.*



Throughout the diocesan conversations of **Listening 2004** very little was spoken about marital or family spirituality. There appeared to be relatively low awareness of the vocational nature of marriage and parenthood or of the specific spirituality of the home (domestic church). Spirituality tended to be connected to church-going or to prayer at home, rather than being integrated into the daily living out of family life in response to the Gospel of Jesus. Such an omission indicates perhaps the most significant communication defect of all.

The absence of a broad understanding of the holiness of family life does not help the deepening of relationships between families and their parish. The call to holiness is "rooted in baptism." (*Christifideles Laici* #16). Christian families "have the ability to manifest this holiness and the responsibility to bear witness to it in all that they do." (*CL*#16) A language for understanding and articulating the holiness embedded within even the messiness of family life could help families in making sense of all their joys, sorrows and hopes and in restoring families "reasons for confidence" in themselves, in the riches that they "possess by nature and grace, and in the mission that God has entrusted to" them. (*Familiaris Consortio* #86)

- and women ahead of money, health, work and local safety. This concern is felt most strongly by fathers where 74% express this view, compared to 68% of mothers
- 77% say that it should be as easy for men to take time off for caring responsibilities as it is for women – with 84% of those with children agreeing
- 96% say it is difficult for carers to balance work and home life with 83% saying it will be worse in ten years' time.

### In her speech on family and community today, Jenny Watson said

"The social revolution is an unfinished revolution. Family life has changed dramatically in the last generation and 3 out of 4 people say it should be as easy for men to take time off for caring responsibilities as it is for women. Far more mothers are in the workplace. Fathers want to be hands-on dads. And more of us will need to provide some support, often unforeseen, for older relatives in the future. Add globalisation and the rapid rise of technology to the mix and it feels as if the world has changed but society has failed to keep up. "We face a choice. We can go on as we are, putting Britain's families under the kind of continued pressure our polling demonstrates, a pressure that will damage both our social health and our economic wealth. Or we can take a different road using the benefits of globalisation and technology to give us the solutions to transform the workplace. We can design services around the needs of the modern family ensuring that support is there when it is needed. And by enabling people to spend more time with those who matter most in their lives, we build strong families and stronger communities, meaning that we can face the future with confidence."

Elisabeth Abbott

for more information or to read the full text of Jenny Watson's speech visit [ww.eoc.org.uk](http://ww.eoc.org.uk)

## ***Does the family really matter anymore?***

Recent news items and surveys have given us cause to ask if we as a society still value the family as an effective social unit. A UNICEF survey showed that children in the UK are the unhappiest in the developed world coming after the USA with Denmark as the top country. Lifestyle changes and government attitudes to the family have made a difference or so the newspapers would say. An Equal Opportunities Commission surveys shows a different attitude entirely.

Almost three quarters of Britons think managing to balance work with raising a family and caring will be harder in ten years, according to a new poll of Britain's views on family and community, released by the Equal Opportunities Commission today (EOC). 82% of people say it is difficult for parents to balance work and home life with 72% saying it will get harder in 10 years. The Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) poll is released as EOC Chair Jenny Watson, in a speech to the Smith Institute, argues that we must complete the 'unfinished social revolution' created by changes in family life and participation in the workplace if don't want to see a serious breakdown in family and community life. This must involve better support for families, more opportunities for women and men to decide how to share caring and working better between themselves, radical changes in our public services, safer communities and more women in positions of power, she argues today. Almost two thirds of Britons (62%) believe that the world of work should change to suit the needs of families rather than the other way round, adding weight to calls for widespread flexible working and improved childcare. The survey also shows that the huge scale of social change in Britain is not being fully addressed by politicians as 68% of us now believe that the traditional model of male breadwinner and female homemaker is a thing of the past while 65% of us say the parties risk being unelectable if they do not provide direct support to families.

### **The ICM survey, carried out between 24 and 28 January 2007, shows:**

- Spending time with the family or finding time for key relationships is the biggest concern in daily life (64%) for men

“Since ancient times, the development of spirituality has been accomplished predominantly by persons focussed primarily (though not exclusively) on God’s transcendent love, as opposed to God’s immanent love ... While God is certainly other-worldly, God is also fully present in the nuts and bolts, the highs and lows, the chaos and noise of each person’s life. An immanent spirituality says that instead of eliminating those “distractions” which comprise a great deal of our day why not seek truth and wholeness from within the “distractions” themselves? So that the activities of family life are no longer obstacles to faith and relationship with God but are vehicles for faith and relationship with God.” *Leif Kehrwald*

**For further information contact:**  
[www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk](http://www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk)

***“The future of humanity passes by way of the family.”***

Pope John Paul II: Familiaris Consortio

## *In praise of parents*

When the parents are all gathered before God on judgment day, the Lord will gently say:

“I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink, naked and you clothed me, homeless and you sheltered me, imprisoned and you visited me. Come; enter the kingdom I have prepared for you”.

And the parents will be bewildered and ask:

*“Are you sure Lord? When did I see you hungry and feed you?”*

The Lord will reply, “How could you ask! Do you not remember the millions of daily meals lovingly cooked? The special treats when I was sick? The encouragement you gave to share the food from your table with visitors and strangers?”

*“But thirsty Lord?”*

“I knew I was loved when I drank from your breast. I was in the ice cream and soft drinks queue. I called out for a drink in the middle of the night and you were there. I needed soothing when my throat was sore and you knew what would give me ease”.

*“But naked Lord? Homeless?”*

“I was born naked and homeless and you sheltered me, first in your womb and then in your arms. Together you gave me not a house but a home, a place where I was loved even in my nakedness, where I could wrap myself in security, a place of laughter and friendship. You clothed me with your love and spent your life clothing me in trousers and dresses, often made with love, always washed and mended.

*“But imprisoned, Lord? I know I’ve got you there. None of mine have been in prison and I certainly have never been in a prison.”*

“This has been your life’s work. There are many forms of prison.

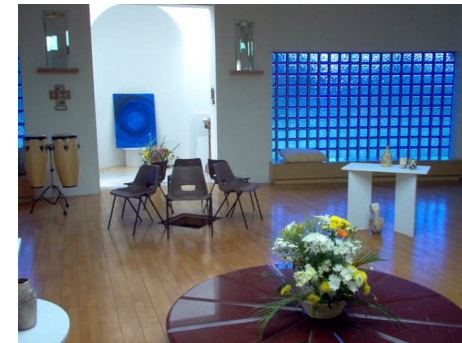
crèche facilities which have ensured that families with young children can benefit from the range of training.

Sr. Margaret Gallagher said, “Our aim is to encourage and promote the richness and diversity of our multi-cultural society. We do this by ensuring all our classes – in woodwork, pottery, needlework, hairdressing, IT skills along with ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) etc. - are a mix of local people, refugees and asylum seekers.

The quality of training and facilities are superb. As one client of Harmony House said “The tutors here are really professional and also, more importantly, give you time. The service is excellent and hard to find elsewhere”.

Harmony House, in common with many services is facing some challenging times. It relies heavily on the generosity of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, other benefactors and a number of volunteers. If you feel that you could help or would like more information please contact [cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:cjsr@dioceseofbrentwood.org) or telephone 01277 265290.

*Phil Butcher*



The Sacred Space

## *“Working in Harmony”*



*Its mission “To encourage and promote recognition of the richness and diversity of our multi-cultural community. To encourage and promote a willingness to learn from each other, whatever our ethnic origin, for the benefit of the whole community”*



The Courtyard at Harmony House

Hidden in the depths of Barking lies a real gemstone – Harmony House. Opened on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2001 by Cherie Blair QC, it has become a centre of excellence in a wide range of training and development courses. It is open to an equally wide range of people and has become a place where asylum seekers and refugees along with members of the local community can visit to improve their skills and find some quiet time away from their hectic lives.

The innovative model, developed by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, has enabled many to integrate into the local community. It has purpose built

When I was imprisoned in my littleness I cried out in the night and you came, you lifted me from the bars of the cot and folded me in your arms. I was frightened and you held my hand. You recognised the barriers that held me back and with wise words helped me to climb them. I was imprisoned inside a twelve-year-old body feeling so many new emotions, full of self doubt and you loved me for being myself, into accepting myself, into recognising my worth.

I was imprisoned behind my teenage anger, my rebellion, my desire for independence and you waited, firmly holding me and gently letting me find my own life, always there, never dominating. You lifted me when I fell, forgave me when I erred and loved me when I failed. You released in me the potential to love others”.

“Now, beloved enter into the joy that has been prepared for you from all eternity”

*Anon.*

## *It’s a RaW deal for the family*

The BBC’s RaW (Reading and Writing) campaign hit the headlines in January. Families are being encouraged to turn off the telly and read stories together. Local libraries in London set up story telling and story reading sessions. The children benefited from time with their parents and, as the parents began to feel more confident they were happy to approach the session leaders and ask for help with their own reading and writing problems.

To find out more about the RaW campaign and to discover events in your area visit the BBC website at [www.bbc.co.uk/raw](http://www.bbc.co.uk/raw) or call **0800 0150 950**. The calls are free and you can talk to someone in complete confidence.

These prayers are taken from 'Prayers for My Family', a collection of prayers written by children from some of the primary schools in our diocese for the Family Conversation Day held as part of 'Listening 2004'.

Dear God,

What do families do?  
Take trips to the zoo,  
Walks in the park.  
Sometimes give piggy backs  
when others are tired.  
Share a worry, an achievement or a joke,  
Thank you God for all our families.

Amen

Amy

### A prayer for Families

Without you there would be no me no us. We would not be together as a great big family. You chose a whole family not one person to have food. You help families to work as a team and share what we have.

Without you everyone would be on their own, doing what they want, but you have changed that. A family works together. You have taught us that no-one gets left behind. In a family no-one is left out, when a family does not work together you forgive them and we praise you for that.

We thank you for your everlasting love that is like superglue that sticks a family together, the strongest man in the world could not pull your love apart.

Amen

Molly

Dear Lord

Thank you for my family, whom lots are big,  
very few are small,  
a couple are short,  
and then the rest is extremely tall

You teach us to live in perfect harmony,  
You tell us that love and trust is not all money.  
My family is mixed with the whole human race,  
The world should accept you for who you are,  
not the colour of your face.  
Were always together we never split,  
We take each day bit by bit.

So there you have it my whole loving tribe,  
We don't cheat, steal or even bribe.  
Were all very different in every way,  
Like my birthdays in January and theirs is in May.  
Well that doesn't matter anyway,  
I really love them that's all I wanted to say.

Simmone

God our loving father,  
We praise and thank you for the families we have. Some of us see God's love in our own families by the way we show forgiveness, helpfulness, love and friendliness to each other.

We pray for those families where the love doesn't show freely, that they may find God's love in their hearts and use this in their own homes.

We pray that God's love will continue to grow strong in our families and touch our lives and that those who have lost loved family members will find strength in God's love.

We offer this prayer to the Father in the name of Jesus his Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts both now and forever.

Amen

Eleanor

Thank you for the memories we have shared.

We pray for the families who have been forced, to leave their homes and have little food.

Chloe

Amen.