



# FAMILYWORKS

Newsletter of the Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council  
Number 3/2011

## Advent Calendar - Available for Download

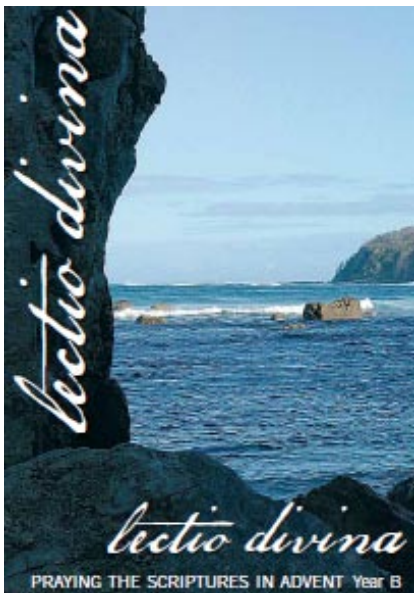


Advent Calendar prepared by the Melbourne Archdiocesan Office for Evangelisation. It has a brief (about 50 words) reflection for each of the 28 days leading to Christmas, including a scripture quote, to challenge us to witness Gospel values a bit more each day as we prepare to remember the momentous event ... when the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity "emptied himself ... being born in the likeness of men" [Phil 2:7] so that humanity could enter the Trinity.

This is an ideal resource to help families prepare for Christmas.

Download here: <http://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/download-document/276-advent-calendar-2011.html>

## Lectio Divina - Praying the Scriptures in Advent



"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh" [John 1:1]

The Word of God is Jesus. He is the human face of God. It is Jesus who gives meaning to the whole of God's revelation, of God's love for each one of us. In meditating on Scripture, on the Word, we enter into communion with God.

Lectio Divina (Latin for divine reading) is a traditional Catholic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase our knowledge of God's Word. Lectio Divina, is the meditative reading of a text of God's Word, the Scriptures, alone or with others, which leads to prayer, transformation of life, and, through that transformed life, the sharing with others of the mystery of God entrusted to us.

Bishop David Walker of Broken Bay has prepared an Advent Lectio Divina, a series of brief scriptural reflections for each Sunday of Advent, which invite us "to rest with the Word" this Advent, and in our resting with the Word we may find the space and the place and the patience to wait and discover anew the meaning of our waiting

This is another ideal resource to help individuals & families prepare for Christmas.

Download here: <http://www.dbb.org.au/ourworks/Documents/Lectio%20ADVENT%202011.pdf>

## For Your Marriage' - US Bishops' Website on Marriage



'For Your Marriage' is a comprehensive resource on all aspects of sexuality, marriage, parenting and family life from a Catholic perspective.

**For Your Marriage website:** <http://foryourmarriage.org>

## Getting Married in the Catholic Church – Frequently Asked Questions



The Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council has just published a comprehensive Q & A on “Getting married in the Catholic Church”. The document addresses a large range of questions posed by people over the internet. The questions range across inter-religious and inter-denominational marriages; they cover diverse delicate issues relating to personal circumstances (non-church going or ‘lapsed’ Catholics, people who have had abortions, vasectomies or tubal ligations etc); as well as addressing practical issues relating to preparing for the wedding ceremony.

- Why should we bother with a Catholic wedding?
- Basic requirements for marriage in the Catholic Church
- Will the Church let us have a Catholic wedding?
- What are the requirements re marriage celebrants?
- What are the promises and commitments in the wedding ceremony and what do they mean?
- What are the requirements relating to marriage education?
- How should we prepare for the nuptial mass and wedding ceremony?
- Structure of the wedding ceremony (Catholic rite of marriage)

This document is an authoritative source of Catholic teaching. It is a valuable resource both for couples contemplating marriage and for Catholic parents who would like to advise their children.

**Download:** [http://www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=1188&Itemid=184](http://www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=1188&Itemid=184)

## World Meeting of Families with Pope Benedict - Milan, 30 May to 3 June 2012



Announcing the 7<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Families, Pope Benedict XVI urged: “Christian families and church communities around the world ... to set their sights on “Milan 2012”.

The two days of celebrations, music, testimonies and papal mass will be preceded by a Pastoral Theological Congress on the theme: “Family, Work and Celebration” focussing on the critical balance between work and family life.

The Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council, together with Harvest Pilgrimages, has organised a pilgrimage with the World Meeting as its focus. The pilgrimage features:

- **7 nights Milan • Historic sites of the city of St Ambrose • Theological & Pastoral Congress • Eucharistic Celebration in the Duomo (Milan Cathedral) • Festival Vigil with Pope Benedict XVI • Concluding Papal Mass**
- **Optional Italy 7 night extension.**

*The pilgrimage will be led by Bishop Terry Brady and Ron & Mavis Pirola.*

**For expressions of interest or questions about the pilgrimage, email Ron or Mavis Pirola:** [rmpirola@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rmpirola@ozemail.com.au).

**World Meeting details on YouTube:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRJFVNpdCvE>

**World Meeting Website:** <http://www.family2012.com/index.php?l=en>

## St Valentine's Day 2012 – Parish Resource Kit

Celebrating

St  
Valentine

Honouring Marriage and life-long romantic love

2012



Issued by Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council

This Parish Kit is designed to reclaim the sacred from the secular. The kit includes a handout on Romantic Love and homily notes for the Readings of the Day. The resource can be used for a dedicated Mass for couples on Tuesday 14th February or to supplement the Sunday Mass on February 12th.

Copies of the Kit have been emailed to all parishes. However, you don't have to wait for the parish to organise something. Get together with some other local couples, develop some ideas for a community celebration, then propose them to your parish ... with an offer to assist!

### To Download your St Valentine's Day 2012 Kit...

- Liturgy Notes and Community Tips (PDF 0.5MB) – [click here](#)
- Reproducible Handout (PDF 0.5 MB) – [click here](#)
- Slides (MS PowerPoint 7MB) – [click here](#)
- Slides (PDF 0.5MB) – [click here](#)

In a world of widespread desecration of sexuality and marriage, the relatable love of married couples is a powerful sign of hope for others. So Christian couples are called to seek more than merely average marriages; they are called to be exceptional, to be vibrant, potent witnesses to the reality of life-long, faithful love. The world needs your example, the church needs you, the priests need you.

## Advance notice of Grand Parents – Parish Resource Kit

A Grandparents Day Kit will be sent out to parishes and schools in the new year. It is designed primarily for school 'Grandparents Days' but can be adopted by the parish for special feasts such as the Feast of Joachim and Anne or simply to celebrate all grandparents.

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pope John Paul's "Christian Family in the Modern World"



November saw the celebration in the Vatican of a double 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary – publication in 1981 of *Familiaris Consortio* (*The Christian Family in the Modern World*) and the establishment of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

*Familiaris Consortio* has been described as a blueprint for family life. Reflecting Pope John Paul II's irrepressible confidence in the family, it emphasizes the dynamic possibilities for the family in all its diversity. The word 'mission' appears 64 times. It is laced with famous quotes such as 'Family, become what you are!' and 'The future of humanity passes by way of the family'.

The Pontifical Council for the Family was founded in the same year and held a Plenary Assembly to mark the occasion. There was a strong Australian influence at the meeting. Cardinal Pell attended and Hon Kevin Andrews MP gave two talks – on *Familiaris Consortio* and on developments in family life in Oceania. Ron and Mavis Pirola, who were Members of the PCF for 25 years, spoke on the influence of the Council.

## Marriage: Myths & Realities - A Comment on Same Sex 'Marriage'



Marriage is becoming one of the most hotly-debated issues of our time. Many people instinctively understand that marriage is a faithful, loving and life-giving union between a man and a woman, but are unsure how to reconcile this truth with the growing push for same-sex 'marriage'. The following Web link is to an article from the Sydney Archdiocese which looks at some common arguments raised in favour of homosexual 'marriage' - and how we might respond to these arguments in truth and love.

Download here:

<http://www.dbb.org.au/ourparishesandpriests/Documents/Marriage%20-%20Myths%20and%20Realities.pdf>

## Stages Of Marriage - The Middle Years

(Adapted from: "For Your Marriage". Website of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

<http://foryourmarriage.org/> )

NOTE: (Stage 1- Newly Married, was presented in Newsletter 2/2011)

The psychologist Paul Tournier said, "I've been married six times - all to the same woman." Tournier explained that he never got divorced, but rather his marriage transitioned from one stage to another. All healthy marriages experience change and transition. That's what keeps them alive and growing. Some of the stages of growth are predictable, others are not.

For simplicity, we've divided marriage into the chronological time frames of:

- *Newly Married (0 - 5 years)*
- *Middle Years (6 - 25 year) - which usually coincides with active parenting stage*
- *Later Years (26+ years) - also known as the "empty nest" years*

Not all marriages fit neatly into these categories and the time frames will vary with each couple; however, certain developmental tasks generally take place during each stage.

### Stage 2 - Middle Years

For most couples, parenting is the most distinctive feature of this stage. It may be compared to the middle years of childhood (ages 5-12), which is sometimes called the latency stage. Although the child continues to grow, this growth tends to be steady and without significant turmoil.

*"All healthy marriages experience change and transition. That's what keeps them alive and growing."*

Some couples - the "sandwich" generation - find themselves taking care of children plus aging parents. Meanwhile, their marriage and personal needs may be pushed into the background, unless a crisis erupts. Couples in the middle stage of marriage often must renegotiate household, financial, and parenting tasks. The stress of these multiple adjustments helps explain why the marriage satisfaction rate drops significantly for parents with young children (Twenge, Campbell & Foster, 2003)

While rearing children can unite parents in a common venture, it also changes the marriage irreversibly. There is more to argue about and less time for conversation, play and sexual intimacy. During the teen years, parents generally find that they need more emotional than physical energy. Parents stress out over how strict or lenient they should be with their teens. Parents begin to lose control over their teens, but they still bear the responsibility of parenting without the rewards of children who look up to them as if they walked on water. Marital dissatisfaction decreases significantly for most couples during the teen years.

Couples who do not have children have their own issues to deal with. They may want children and have been dealing with infertility. If many of their friends have children they may they feel left out. They may be so consumed with career or extended family obligations that their marriage relationship has become stale.

**Further reading:** *"The Lifecycle Stages of Marriage,"* by Barbara Markey, Ph.D.

## Resources:

[FOUNDATIONS](#), a bi-monthly newsletter for newly married couples

[First Years and Forever](#), a monthly e-newsletter

[Smart Marriages](#): lists excellent resources

[Time, Sex, and Money: The First Five Years of Marriage.](#) : Center for Marriage and Family, Creighton University

["In Sickness and in Health"](#) : Newly Married Stories on ForYourMarriage.org

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*(In the next issue of FamilyWorks we will look at the "Marriage – the Later Years".)*

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