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## A Newsletter for all Grandparents in A&B Diocese

### Welcome

Since our last edition, there have been several events both nationally and internationally including Pope Francis meeting with grandparents & the elderly in Rome at the end of September.



We have an account of this with photos, together with reports on the annual Aylesford Pilgrimage, Grandparents' Week & other events throughout the diocese.

### We are looking forward to:

Saturday, 25th April. A **Day for Grandparents** across the diocese details to follow.

Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. **The Diocesan 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Festival** at Amex Stadium Brighton

Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July. The fifth Annual **Grandparents' Pilgrimage to Aylesford**

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014. **Grandparents' Week.**

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On 28<sup>th</sup> September, in St Peter's Square, Rome, Catherine Wiley and her grandson Tom Slater from Horsham (above) addressed Pope Francis at a gathering of senior citizens & particularly grandparents: "Dearest Holy Father my name is Catherine Wiley, I come from Ireland. My husband Stewart and I founded the Catholic Grandparents Association. The Association for Catholic Grandparents grew, thanks to the Special Prayer for Grandparents which was written for us by Pope Benedict 16th, Thank you Dear Pope Benedict. Grazie, Grazie, Grazie. This is my grandson Tom, from England. We bring you love and prayers from grandparents all over the world. For us the family is the first place in which we pass on faith. Today, our children are married and we have ten beautiful grandchildren who we love very much. Our parental vocation is not over, but has grown by embracing the wonderful call to be grandparents. Like Jesus grandparents, Joachim and Anne, we too want to be examples of faith for our families, teaching them to put God in the first place, to love our neighbour, to forgive and not to be ashamed to ask for forgiveness. We have realised that to transmit faith we need courage and determination. As grandparents, we have a unique opportunity: to sow faith which with time will bring fruit in abundance. Let us teach our Grandchildren to pray."

## Pope Francis meets Grandparents & the elderly - 28<sup>th</sup> September

On Sunday 28 September, we joined other members of the Catholic Grandparents Association in St Peter's Square, Rome for a gathering of senior citizens, particularly grandparents, to be with Pope Francis, to hear of the joys and difficulties of life for the elderly and how grandparents are an example of faith within families. Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI was present and we heard from elderly refugees from Iraq and others as well as Catherine Wiley and her grandson Tom.



Pope Francis told us that: "Old age in particular is a time of grace...in which the Lord calls us to preserve and transmit the faith. Grandparents, especially, have a capacity to understand the most difficult of situations and when they pray for these situations, their prayer is strong and powerful. To Grandparents, who have been blessed to see their children's children, to them are entrusted an even greater task... to share with simplicity their wisdom and the same faith which is a most precious legacy. Blessed are those families who have grandparents nearby! The grandfather is twice a father and the grandmother is twice a mother."

This dialogue with Pope Francis was followed by him celebrating Mass in St Peter's Square. We left in bright sunshine, elated by the words of Pope Francis, spiritually refreshed from the sharing in Mass with him and the desire to share our experience with other grandparents and Grandparent Groups throughout the diocese.



Michael & Christine Evans (St John's Grandparents' Group, Horsham)

## Aylesford Pilgrimage – July 2014

Coaches and cars arrived on a sunny day in July, bringing grandparents and families from three dioceses to Aylesford Priory, Kent, for the annual Pilgrimage sponsored by the Catholic Grandparents' Association. There were games, reflection, Rosary procession, refreshments and Mass – a great day.



## **Grandparents' Week – October 2014**

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### **Grandparents were celebrated all over the diocese in schools and parishes:**

#### **St Cuthbert Mayne Primary School - Cranleigh**

This has certainly been another wonderful week in the life of the school. It has been a joy to have been able to welcome so many faithful and generous grandparents into our school this week. You are so loved by your children and watching you engage in a wide range of activities, I can see why! My thanks to our teaching teams for preparing the Dinosaur afternoon (St David's), the joy of reading (St Andrew's Class), Healthy Eating (St Patrick's Class), creating a banner inspired by our Heavenly Garden (St George's Class), music across the ages (St Bernadette's Class), Remembrance Poppy banner inspired by the fields of ceramic poppies around the Tower of London (St Catherine's Class), plants and planting (St Teresa's Class). The excitement, energy and creativity coming from each room were palpable.

#### **St John's Church - Horsham**

The 9.00 am Mass on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October celebrated the role of Grandparents in the Parish. The lay ministries were fulfilled by Grandparents who also provided tea & cakes in the hall afterwards. Fr Terence Bateman included in his homily the special role that Grandparents have in sharing their faith in the family, welcome grandchildren to the Mass and gave a special blessing to all Grandparents present at the end of Mass.

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### **News from Grandparent Groups:**

#### **Effingham & Fetcham:**

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October. Father John Inglis said a HEALING OF THE FAMILY TREE Mass for the Effingham and Fetcham Grandparents Group. We started the Mass by saying the Grandparents Prayer. Many of the 40 who attended put petitions in a box for living and deceased members of the family which were all taken up at the offertory. After the Homily Fr John read out the beautiful, long prayer for The Healing of The Family tree (copies available) which we all answered Amen. Amen. Amen. So many of the Granny's had made beautiful cakes for our get together afterwards. (Greatly enjoyed by the Grandads!) It was good to have time just to laugh, chat and enjoy each other's company. Father John joined us for a while then went off with a plate laden with cakes!  
Jean Wells.

#### **Bexhill Group:**

Grandparents (actual and honorary) at St Mary Magdalene Church, Bexhill are the latest parishioners forming a Grandparents' group to focus on their vital roles of passing on the faith and keeping prayer at the heart of the family by praying together, supporting one another and sharing and discussing ideas and issues of importance to us.

### **Horsham Group:**

The Horsham Grandparents group combined a bring and share Summer lunch in a member's garden with a meeting to plan topics for future get-togethers in the forthcoming year.

They also held a very successful 'Retreat' with Fr Terence Bateman (now transferred to Bognor) followed by a fish & chips lunch.



### **Eastbourne Group:**

In October members of the Grandparents Group, with friends, visited the English Martyrs church in Goring where we were amazed by the beauty of the only known reproduction in the world of the Sistine Chapel Ceiling.

Working evenings, it took Gary Bevans five and a half years to complete the project. The colours were made to match those of the restored ceiling following cleaning. The size of the ceiling is 3,500 sq ft compared with the original 5,000 sq ft. We were all blown away by the technical skill involved.

Nor is it just the ceiling that impresses. The same artist has produced further paintings, created wonderful marble effects and the stained glass windows are not only beautiful but were rescued and the glass reused.

After a short but interesting talk, we had time to wander and admire before retiring to the small adjacent chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is usually reserved in view of the number of visitors to the church.

It seemed coincidentally appropriate that we, a Grandparents group, being under the Sistine Chapel ceiling of Goring, while Pope Francis and his Bishops were, in Rome, debating issues concerning the Family, that we should pray for the Pope and for Families everywhere.



### **Reaching out:**



Jean Wells (Centre) from the Effingham & Fetcham Group supported two Grandparents from Westminster Parish at their initial meeting to start a group at the Cathedral in London.

The Catholic Grandparents Association (CGA) now exists in many countries and has been adopted by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Its Mission Statement is 'to help grandparents pass on the faith, keep prayer at the heart of family life and support each other.' For many grandparents and for so many reasons, the first two of these aims are big challenges. The Diocese of Arundel & Brighton has developed the setting up of parish based groups of grandparents to pray, share, exchange ideas, listen and support one another in this vital role which we have in the family. We come together, understanding one another as no other body can.

If you are interested in joining a Grandparents' Group, there may be one in your Parish already. If not, why not start one!?

A&B Diocese and CGA National Contact - Katherine Bergin: [katherine.bergin@dabnet.org](mailto:katherine.bergin@dabnet.org)

For more information about the CGA see [www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org](http://www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org)

### **Some useful books:**

CTS booklets	The Role of Christian Grandparents The Family's Mission to Love Prayer in the Family
Mc Crimmons	Passing on our Faith to Children in their early years
Redemptorist	Family Spirituality: God Among the Pots and Pans Being a Catholic Grandmother
Hodder & Stoughton	The Sixty Minute Grandparent
	Rob Parsons

Available free from the Bruderhof Community 0800 018 0799 [contact@playbooks.co.uk](mailto:contact@playbooks.co.uk)

Rich in Years Their Name is Today Be Not Afraid and other titles.

### **Grandfather in The Ark?**

My sister's eldest boy liked nothing better than to sit on his grandfather's knee and have stories read to him. One day after a story about Noah's ark, and how Noah led pairs of animals to the safety of the ark. The little boy asked, 'Granddad, you are very old, were you in Noah's ark?'

Gosh no', said Granddad.

' In that case, how come you didn't drown when the flood came?'

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We welcome your feedback. If you have any suggestions for future issues, please email [cevansuk@btinternet.com](mailto:cevansuk@btinternet.com)