

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

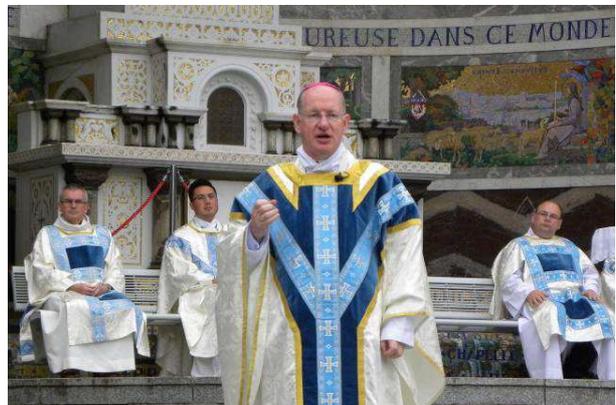
### Welcome

As you will see from in the following pages, Grandparents have been very active in our diocese in the last couple of months.

**Grandparents of the Diocese extend a very warm welcome to Bishop Richard who has kindly sent us the following words:**

#### A thought from Bishop Richard

Grandparents hold a very special place in the lives of so many of us. Perhaps as sources of wisdom and guidance, as people with whom we have great fun when we are younger, as examples of faith, as the fount of stories and those who hold family history in their minds. Some people would say that, at particular times in their lives, they find it easier to talk to grandparents than parents themselves.



As members of the family, grandparents are often present for the great and important moments – there to help with the new-born, there for the Baptism, for birthdays, at the school gate, at Confirmation, Marriage or Ordination; there, too, when the going is tough, when sickness and even death come to the family – grandparents are there.

Grandparenthood is something to be celebrated – not just by family, but by the parish community and, indeed, wider society. The value of the grandparent must never be underestimated. Let us give thanks for all that our Grandparents mean are – or have been – for us, for they are a wonderful gift.

With every Blessing,

*+Richard*

## Arundel & Brighton Jubilee – Grandparents’ Stand – 5 July 2015

When we agreed to help put up the Grandparents stand at the Amex Stadium Jo and I had no idea what we had volunteered to do – however, we need not have worried as all was organised.

We arrived at the stadium bright and early on the Saturday morning. The stadium itself was most impressive - I had never been closer than driving past on the A27. The stadium team were helpful in directing us to the nearest place to unload. We had to find our way to the Family Spirituality zone on the second floor of the East wing, where we joined other groups setting up. Gone are the days of displays using drawing pins and blu tac. We were very 21<sup>st</sup> century with laminated pictures and Velcro.



A picnic lunch was provided which we had sitting in the stands while waiting for Bishop Richard to speak to the volunteers. He thanked us for our efforts and to our surprise, said he was going to spend the night in the stadium with the youth groups on a prayer vigil. He came into the stands to meet as many groups as he could get to climbing up over the seats.

On Sunday the coaches were waiting for us outside St John’s and we set off with our fellow parishioners back to Brighton. Each coach was given a number on arrival to help us find our way back later (and we needed it – there seemed to be hundreds of coaches waiting when we came out. It was raining hard when we arrived, but we were greeted by cheerful young volunteers in red T- shirts with red umbrellas, who were there to give directions and assistance when needed.

My first stop was the theatre in the west stand where my school was singing. The children arrived dripping wet but were soon singing their hearts out. Next I had to find my way back to the grandparents stand. Grandparents from different groups in the diocese manned the stand for 30 minute slots, to answer queries and encourage the young ones to sit for a while and draw pictures. There were many other family orientated stands around us so it was a bustling area and we were all delighted that Bishop Richard made time to visit.

When I had finished it took me a while to find my way to the Education area, where I was on the Foundation Governors stand for a while – not so many visitors here – people give you a wide berth if they know you are looking for volunteers !!

I was sorry to miss the talks by Cardinal Murphy O'Connor and Dr Rowan Williams which were on in the main stadium during this time, but did get to visit the arts and crafts exhibition and the flower arrangements – some people are very talented.

Everywhere there were people to help, A and B volunteers, easily identified with their "Here to Help" tabards, the Lourdes team in white, to assist where needed and the cheerful red shirted young people- all to make sure everyone was able to make the best use of the day



After a quick lunch it was time to take down our display and pack up and find a place in the main arena in time for Mass. By the time Mass began there were about 11000 people in the stands with the altar and choir on the north side. There was also a "signing" choir. The clergy were an impressive sight as they processed in, in white robes. It was lovely to see Peter Murphy, who spent last year in our parish, leading in the altar servers. The music was beautiful and Bishop Richard gave an inspirational homily. All too soon Mass was over. A moving and inspiring end to a wonderful day



Then back to the coach park, I was overtaken by Bishop Richard running round the perimeter path with robes flying. It took a while to find the right coach but the number given on arrival was useful and there were many helpful stewards about. Soon we were on our way. Certainly a day I will never forget, thanks to all the people who worked so hard to plan and organise the event – from the diocese, the parish and at the stadium.

Pat Gooday - Horsham Group

## Grandparents' Retreat Day at Worth – 20 June 2015

The A&B Grandparents Retreat was held at Worth Abbey on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June. It was attended by over 70 people. Fr Stephen Ortiger was the Director.



Fr Stephen surprised us immediately by telling us what we meant to our grandchildren. Usually things begin with what they mean to us, but from his experiences in teaching boys and currently giving pastoral care to teenage girls he was uniquely placed to know a lot more than many of us did about that age group. He talked about their reactions when their grandparents died and the great loss and grief they felt and also about the relationships they have with us before our demise. So many of the things were thought provoking particularly when he pointed out that they treasure the slower pace of our lives as opposed to theirs when everything is immediately to hand in theirs. We had a great deal to talk about when we were left to discuss what we had heard.

We were privileged to join the monks for midday prayers, followed by lunch and a chance to meet one another. Then we convened again and Fr Stephen spoke about prayer and particularly Lectio Divina, for which he gave us a handout. Talking about prayer, I particularly liked the idea of “Holy Plonking”, just dumping your problems in front of God, for which he gave us precedents such as the lame man being let down through the roof in front of Jesus.



The day finished with Mass, when the names of all our grandchildren were placed on the Altar at the start. Many thanks to all who organised it and I hope it will be repeated at some time in the future.

Angela Warner - Frimley

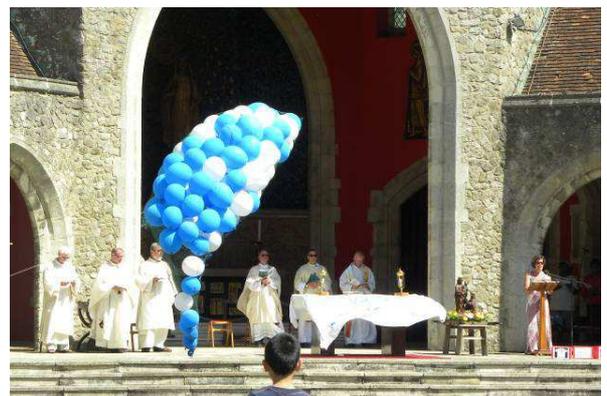
## Aylesford Grandparents' Pilgrimage – 11 July 2015

Coaches and cars arrived on a hot, 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.



The day started with an opening prayer service and included, reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration, the Rosary Procession and Holy Concelebrated Mass. The chief Celebrant was the Episcopal Vicar for Kent, Fr Paul Mason. During the day, many wrote a special intention for their grandparents on balloons, which were released as part of the Liturgy.

Through a full programme of events, young and not so young alike, experienced the tranquillity and prayerfulness of the shrine and its grounds and plenty of fun events. Other activities included 'fun family photos' and a multitude of children's games and activities. During his homily, Southwark Episcopal Vicar for Marriage and Family Life, Fr Graham Preston, spoke of the Altar Cloth, which had been enhanced by the addition of the handprints of the children, parents and grandparents present. All similar, but like us all, unique.



We look forward to a repeat of this enjoyable day full of faith & fun, next year. Why not come along?

### **Lewes Grandparents' Group (New):**

A parishioner had suggested to Fr Jonathan Martin in Lewes that perhaps a Grandparents group might be welcomed and valued by grandparents (and honorary grandparents) in St Pancras parish. Fr Jonathan invited Katherine Bergin (Marriage & Family Life Adviser) and Christine & Mike Evans from the Marriage & Family Life Commission to speak in the parish about the Catholic Grandparents association, the importance of grandparents in families and in the church and the strength that is found in supporting, sharing and praying with other grandparents in groups.



It was agreed that a group would be formed and Pauline offered to be the co-ordinator with Avril and Sandra volunteering to help her. What a great start! Our photo shows the three of them meeting to put plans in place. We all send our love and prayers to fellow grandparents and others in the new group in Lewes.

### **Frimley Grandparents' Group:**

A recent photo of some of the members of the large and flourishing group in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Frimley led by Angela Warner (holding banner) who wrote the article on the Grandparents' Retreat Day on page 3.



Retreats, talks, involvement in Parish activities and social events all feature in their programme.

### **Grandparents' Groups Co-ordinators' Meeting:**



Co-ordinators of Grandparents Groups from around the diocese met with Katherine Bergin to pray together, exchange ideas and experiences and to be updated by Katherine regarding the Catholic Grandparents Association. It was felt by all, that reassurance and increased confidence in our roles as grandparents, as well as growth in our spiritual lives, were all resulting from our membership of Groups. Friendship and fun also figured very highly too!



**Since its inception by Saint John Paul II in 1994, the World Meeting of Families has strengthened the sacred bonds of families across the globe.**

Held every three years and sponsored by the Holy See's Pontifical Council for the Family, the World Meeting of Families is the world's largest Catholic gathering of families. Each World Meeting of Families has a theme that energizes and enlivens the event while adding great depth of meaning to our understanding of families. The theme of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 is "Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive," emphasizing the impact of the love and life of families on our society.

With as many as 150 nations represented, the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 will bring together generations, different cultures and various socio-economic groups as well as families from multiple faith traditions. Whether Catholic or of another faith tradition, all will join together to reaffirm the families importance as the cornerstone of our global society.

Sponsored by the Holy See's Pontifical Council for the Family and the host diocese, each World Meeting has its own unique theme. The World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 is a six-day international event and celebration that draws participants from around the globe

The Congress – scheduled for Tuesday, September to Friday, September 25, 2015 – will be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center and is designed to provide participants with the opportunity to participate in cross-cultural dialogue and prayers during daily Mass, devotions and breakout sessions. **One of these sessions will be given by Catherine Wiley, founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association, & two other CGA representatives on the topic of 'Loving through the Generations: Grandparents and Great-Grandparents'. There will also be a meeting of Grandparent Group members and Mgr. Carlos Simon Vasquez from the Pontifical Council for the Family and the CGA Ecclesial adviser Fr Victor Ghio.** We hope to bring you a report on the Congress and these meetings in our next issue of Grand News.

### **The Holy Father will be visiting Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families in 2015!**

The closing events of the Eighth World Meeting of Families take place on Saturday, September 26 – Sunday, September 27 when Pope Francis visits Philadelphia. These events include the Festival of Families, an intercultural, multi-faith celebration of family life around the world, which will be held on the evening of Saturday, September 26, and a Papal Mass to be held during the afternoon of Sunday, September 27.



## Grandparents' Week – 2015

The 27th September - 4th October is Grandparents Week in our diocese. During this week various church and school based events, celebrating the role of grandparents in families today take place. Schools especially take part in this, often inviting grandparents into classrooms to be a part of their grandchildren's school lives, to celebrate with various liturgies and to share with the children some of their stories. Schools have reported back on the joys experienced during this week by all involved, including 'honorary grandparents' in families and how much children have enjoyed preparing and arranging these special days for their grandparents.

Look out for news of this week's celebrations in your local schools.

## The Catholic Grandparents Association

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.' 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 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:

Recommended: Grandparenting with a Purpose: Effective ways to Pray for your Grandchildren - by Lillian Ann Penner

CTS booklets      The Role of Christian Grandparents  
                            The Family's Mission to Love  
                            Prayer in the Family

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.

## We are looking forward to:

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September – Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2014. **Grandparents' Week in Schools & Parishes**

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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)