



## **Celebrating the International Day of Families**

**May 15<sup>th</sup> 2004**

### **Further Suggestions**

- ◆ Organise a parish social with an international theme. Find out how many countries are represented in the families of the congregation. Invite families of each nationality to bring a favourite dish from their homeland to share with others. Invite them to share other traditions – costume, language, dance, stories, song etc – but also possible concerns and difficulties in their land of origin. Enjoy the richness of the diversity of your community. Celebrate the world within your neighbourhood.

(If you are not a multi-cultural community organise a social based on the diversity of different generations: what music, dances, dishes, songs, stories, entertainment etc have different generations enjoyed?)

- ◆ Incorporate an international theme into your liturgy by asking families of different nationalities to bring a flag or other symbol of their country of origin to the altar. Remember international needs in the prayers of the faithful.
- ◆ Organise a display of family photographs, old and new, in the church. Incorporate these into the offertory processions. Or ask children to draw a picture of their family. Keep the display until July 4<sup>th</sup>, the Day for Life. This year's theme is the Blessing of Families.
- ◆ Offer a parenting programme in your parish as a way to invest in the relationships of your families, now and in the future.
- ◆ If you haven't already done so, find out more about Listening 2004 in your area. This is a national initiative across England and Wales that seeks to find out the joys, sorrows and hopes of family life right now and how the church can be more effective in nourishing family life.
- ◆ Invite parish organisations to speak about some of the family issues they come across in their work. Organise a parish forum to discover ways in which the local community to relive some of these pressures.
- ◆ The European Catholic Bishops' Conference has proposed a family strategy for Europe. They have identified six headline goals to make Europe the most family friendly region in the world. If you have groups that already meet in your parish invite them to consider the proposals and write a response. The document can be downloaded from [http://www.comece.org/upload/pdf/secret\\_family\\_040316\\_en.pdf](http://www.comece.org/upload/pdf/secret_family_040316_en.pdf)