

## FAMILY MATTERS

### The candles of Family Life

have continued to burn in the Church, signifying a constant focus on our purpose.

### Fostering effective communication



*Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your hearts be remade and your whole nature be transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God and to know what is good, acceptable and perfect.*  
(Romans 12 : 2)

Above are two quotations, one from our last report to the congregation, and the other from the September '09 *Ad Laos* written by Archbishop Thabo, in which he talked of the importance of building quality communication within the family, especially between parents and child.

Communication is a two way process. Only by listening attentively to the other party to the conversation, and both understanding the points being made, will a situation result in which common ground can be established.

Your Family Matters team have carefully addressed this necessity and from this a number of important activities have become part of our parish life.

A **Men's breakfast** has been successfully piloted, and now forms part of the House Group, or Bible study fellowship groups. See the information leaflet at the back of the church.

The **Marriage Course**, which focuses strongly on the effectiveness of two-way communication in marriage, has been successfully piloted, and the first fully fledged course run. Feedback from participants in the course confirms it to have been a great success. It will continue as an integral element of the Parish Mission.

The various elements of communication in the parish were carefully examined and the conclusion reached that the entire process to date has been one-way! Feedback systems were absent.

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The only process of allowing two-way conversation is either the **House Group** or the **Home Visiting programme**. The latter has not been successful in recent years for a variety of reasons. But the need exists. A new approach was needed, to reach everybody in the parish. From this emerged the **TeleVisiting programme** using the technology in our most common link – the telephone.

A pilot run was made in September, with a team of 10 volunteers out of a larger group who had offered to become TeleVisitors. Several logistical hurdles emerged and these are in the process of removal – you will have experienced the clipboards circulating at services aimed at confirming the accuracy of the Parish Roll. The programme will restart in January 2010.

The opening greeting in the phone call is '*Hello, I'm .... From St Francis. How are you – St Francis cares – can you spare a few minutes to chat?*' The predominant response was '*Yes, of course.*'

This elicited several interesting reactions, generally favourable and encouraging the continuation of the programme. Feedback was received, which was then passed on to the clergy. Some cases of need have arisen, which could receive attention, and one person contacted was delighted to have been contacted in this manner, saying it was the first 'parish visit' she had received since she had been a member – and she is a founder member of St Francis!

From similar feedback, it emerged that in certain families, there exists the particular problem of communication, mainly with adolescent children. Open discussion in these instances is not always easy and for this reason, these young people seek solace in movements such as our own Youth Group, and other less suitable groups of peers. This is a matter urgently requiring attention and the only way it will be possible is if parents of young persons examine the solutions.

**Parents with young family still at home who are prepared to participate in forming a group to address this issue are encouraged to submit their names to either Father Tim or Megan Winn.**

Hank Doeg