

Church of Ireland Marriage Council – Report 2004

**CHURCH OF IRELAND MARRIAGE COUNCIL**

**REPORT 2004**

**MEMBERSHIP**

*Appointed by the House of Bishops*

Rt Rev RCA Henderson, Bishop of Tuam

*Elected by General Synod*

Rev ECJ Woods (Chairman)  
Mrs H Clarke (Honorary Secretary)  
Rev Canon Dr JPO Barry  
Rev Canon PR Draper  
Dr J Turner  
Mr I Slaine  
Mrs C Missen  
Mrs I Deverell  
Mrs P Wallace  
Mr G Glenn  
Rev G Haire

*In attendance*

Mrs S Massey

The Marriage Council has had another busy and productive year. Some new initiatives, diocesan meetings, a development of the web-site and ongoing marriage preparation and counselling, are just a few of the features of the Council's work.

**DIOCESAN CLERGY TRAINING DAYS**

Mrs Claire Missen has completed the Marriage Council's programme in facilitating one-day training courses for clergy in most of the Church of Ireland dioceses. In the subsequent evaluation and feedback it was noted that this was a valuable and much appreciated exercise. It provided a forum for information, discussion, and consideration of pastoral issues. It also helped to increase awareness of marriage related issues and the services available such as Marriage Preparation and Marriage Counselling. The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs provided funding for training in the Republic and the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (NI) provided funding in the Diocese of Connor.

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION AND MARRIAGE COUNSELLING**

In the Republic of Ireland these services are increasingly in demand. Five professionally trained counsellors undertake marriage preparation with individual couples. Each couple pay €90 to the counsellor and the Marriage Council pay the balance of €85 for a three-hour session. Marriage Counselling is also available by appointment and this too is subsidised by The Marriage Council. These services are possible because of the generosity of the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs who have given a generous grant.

The five counsellors are:

Claire Missen (Dublin)	Tel: 01 6785256 / 01 4932002
Glynis Good (Dublin)	Tel: 01 6785256 / 087 6384355
Jean Ruddock (Wexford)	Tel: 053 43013
Paula Reidy (New Ross)	Tel: 087 2872894
Deirdre Whitley (Cork)	Tel: 021 4871368

Further information may be had from The Marriage Council at Tel: 01 4978422

## **MARRIAGE COUNCIL WEBSITE**

An important part of the Council's strategy has been to revamp the website, both in terms of image and content. With the help of a web consultant, Mrs Annette McGrath, the site has been relaunched as an attractive resource, which it is hoped will draw a broad readership. It details the activities of the Marriage Council and touches on various aspects of marriage in Ireland today. It also includes useful resources for parishes and individuals including lists of agencies, relevant courses, prayers and services. The web site address is [marriagematters.ireland.anglican.org](http://marriagematters.ireland.anglican.org)

## **MARRIAGE WEEK**

In the United Kingdom the 8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> February was National Marriage Week, when a special emphasis was focussed on Marriage. The Council invited parishes to make marriage and the family a theme of their Sunday worship on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February. Clergy were provided with some background sermon information and relevant prayers. Various practical suggestions were also included such as organising a dinner for couples with other members of the parish offering a baby-sitting service. The Council also submitted an article to the Church of Ireland Gazette. It was printed in Marriage Week and took the form of an interview between the Honorary Secretary of the Council and an experienced marriage counsellor. The themes of communication, affection, respect and encouragement were emphasised....CARE!

### **POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS**

The Council is exploring the possibility of producing a Powerpoint presentation on Nurturing Marriage.

The advantage of using a Powerpoint presentation is that it can easily be updated and changed as situations arise. It is hoped that it will be a helpful resource, which trained facilitators can take to parishes and groups, by invitation.

As part of this initiative it is proposed that the Marriage Council will offer to train facilitators.

### **MARRIAGE LAW**

During the course of the year the Council noted the changes in Marriage Law in Northern Ireland and the implications for the Church of Ireland. The Council recommends that clergy consult the booklet presented by the Standing Committee *Introducing New Marriage Regulations (NI) 2004*.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Marriage Council is committed to keeping abreast of changes in contemporary society, addressing current issues and promoting relevant initiatives which will help strengthen and nurture marriages.

