



Archdiocese of Cape Town



Centre for Pastoral Development

Parish Family Life Apostolate

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Introduction

The Domestic Church Office in the Centre for Pastoral Development carries out the Archbishop's ministry to the families of the Archdiocese, especially through the structure of the parishes. Where we can, we provide resources and support for marriage preparation and enrichment, help for hurting marriages and families and those who have experienced divorce or separation, resources for parenting, and other family enrichment resources. We want to help you and your parish be successful in bringing about a genuine renewal of the culture of the family. We also highly suggest being in contact with those in Family Life ministry in the parishes near you for ideas and support.

The Role of Family Life Ministry in the Parish

Those involved in the Parish Family Life ministry should work with the Parish priest and deacon and other parish ministry leaders to promote and coordinate Marriage and Family efforts in the parish. The goal of this role is to facilitate opportunities for families in your parish to experience God's love and mercy in the context of their relationships and their homes, and to provide credible witness to it. The work of the Family life ministry is an extension of the priest's ministry and operates with his direction and supervision. It will be very important, therefore, to establish and maintain strong lines of communication with your priest, deacons, and other ministry leaders in your parish.

Each parish has its own unique culture, needs and limitations. With the advice and guidance of your priest and other ministry leaders in your parish, we encourage you to develop a plan that responds to the unique needs and resources of your parish, and we are here to help you strategize. None of us can do this on our own!

This is a list of some of the areas where you can be of help to those in your Parish.

- Marriage Preparation
- Marriage Enrichment
- Parenting
- Separated or Divorced as well as Annulments and Remarriage
- Widows and widowers
- Singles

Even if your parish is not able to currently provide a strong approach to each, a good understanding of these individual areas will help you form a well-

rounded, more effective approach to ministry, no matter how small. The Domestic Church Office will try to focus on each of these areas in detail during the next year in special meetings.

The most effective ministries are the ones that invite and sustain participation from a wide range of people, so consider whom you might invite to take responsibility for one or another aspect of the ministry and select the resources that are most compatible with their strengths. Do not assume that you must run these programs yourself. Your task is to get everyone rowing in the same direction, not to row the boat all alone! Thank you, again, for your generosity to this ministry.

We at the Centre for Pastoral Development believe that the establishment of Family Life ministry at every parish is an exciting opportunity for the Church to make a renewed and lasting impact on the marriages and families in our Archdiocese. We look forward to working closely with you and learning from you as we labour in His vineyard together!

Marriage Preparation

Each couple is required to give the Parish/officiating priest at least 6 months prior notice of their intention to marry.

The marriage officer (priest or deacon) will carry out the pre-nuptial enquiry and refer the couple to one of the Archdiocesan programs.

Engage – the 6 week process or the online version is the preferred program

Engaged Encounter is run over weekends under the Engaged Encounter movement.

Evenings for the Engaged – also a 6 week process

There are other programs used by some priests and deacons.

Another idea is a parish mentor couple program, which pairs engaged couples with married couples in the parish to walk with them through the marriage preparation process. Mentor couple programs go a long way towards establishing a personal connection between the engaged couple and the parish and helps the marriage preparation program to respond to the particular needs of the engaged couple. Without a personal relationship, it can be very difficult for an engaged couple to truly internalize the information they receive in their preparation program. A parish mentor couple can also provide both post-wedding support and a personal bridge to getting involved in parish life.

Dates and Details for Marriage Preparation and Enrichment 2021

DOMESTIC CHURCH

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSES 2020

6 months notice is required for all marriages in the Archdiocese of Cape Town. Please contact the Parish Priest and complete the Pre Nuptial enquiry before registering for an advertised course.

The online Engage course is always available.

<https://members.smartloving.org/product/cape-town-registration>

Choose Engage Online –AU\$ 5 = R59.00

EASTERN DEANERY

ATHLONE St Mary of the Angels

2nd February to 09th March 2021

27th July to 31st August 2021

Contact: Juanita Barnes 021 692 3854 or 083 456 9447

WEST COAST DEANERY

MILNERTON/BROOKLYN Assumption

25 January to 22 February 2021

31 May to 28 June 2021

Contact: Secretary 021 551 1756 or Deacon Kalil 082 908 3438

TABLEVIEW Resurrection

27 July to 06 September 2021

Contact: Brenda Munro Brenda.munro@gmail.com or 084 6800 288

CENTRAL DEANERY

LAVISTOWN St Martin de Porres

26 February to 23 March 2021

31 August to 05 October 2021

Contact: Martin 084 222 1482 or Agnes Julies 084 333 1957

Parish 021 934 2387 Deacon Okkers 021 934 2312

NORTHERN DEANERY

KUILSRIVER St Ninian's

Contact: Parish 021 903 6961 or Veronica Stemmet veronica@byphakama.co.za 072 0445 897

CONSTANTIA DEANERY

RETREAT St Mary's

29 April to 10 June 2021

Contact: Connie and Henry Peterson 083 279 1083

PENINSULA DEANERY

ROCKLANDS St Stephen's

Contact: Parish 021 392 3647 or Bradley Atcheson 083 607 3681

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER WEEKENDS

Contact: Ursula Sobotka 079 486 5630

R600 for the Zoom weekend which includes Airtime. Dates still to be decided.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

ENGAGE – Contact Joan Armstrong 021 462 2417

Smart Loving Marriage Kit online course -

<https://members.smartloving.org/product/cape-town-registration>

R 59.00 (AU\$ 5)

Alpha – Contact Hilary Felix bfel@mweb.co.za

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER – Contact Janice Fortes 081 355 1304 marriage.encounter@gmail.com

RETROUVAILLE – Contact William and Bernadette Minords 076 339 5259

Marriage Enrichment

There are Marriage Encounter weekends from time to time run and organised by the Marriage Encounter Movement.

The key to strengthening a parish is to strengthen families. It is in our families that we first learn who we are, what we are worth, who God is, and what it means to love. The key to strengthening families is to strengthen marriages since marriage is the source of the family and of each member's identity. (Unfortunately, we often only come to understand this reality once the family breaks down.) We must cultivate what St. John Paul II called "conjugal spirituality," meaning the couple's unity in the spiritual life, their real unity in Christ. This unified experience of God's powerful love and mercy strengthens the marriage more than anything else can, and this, then, brings about the changes we've been praying and working for in families and in parishes. God working in families is both the goal we are trying to achieve through our ministry and the way by which we will achieve it!

On a very practical level the promotion and care of marriage and family can start with simple but meaningful gestures such as having the Offertory procession brought up by a family, having those who have wedding anniversaries be blessed after Sunday Mass. Celebrations in the Parish for Mothers and Fathers Days, Prayers of the Faithful for those preparing for Marriage. Mother and daughter evenings, Father and son outings etc. Just as we have Catechetical Sunday, we could have a Marriage Sunday for the renewal of vows of all those who are married. We can encourage families to be part of similar ministries.....children as Altar servers and parents as Sacristans.....joining the choir as a family...

Date Nights: A once- or twice-a-year couples' Date Night that features a nice meal, well-decorated environment, and a good speaker. This is basically a date night with a faithbased speaker. It is an excellent first step for any family life efforts since it requires very little commitment, and the focus is not completely on faith formation. One step at a time! Babysitting will double your numbers (at least!) and this will help many more young couples to attend. Talks should be testimony-based, and should ideally be a way of connecting couples in the Parish. This will lead to better involvement in other Parish programs.

There is also an online Marriage Kit which is to be highly recommended.

<https://members.smartloving.org/product/cape-town-registration>

Choose the Marriage Kit – AU\$ 5

Parenting

We have the tried and tested Parenting Skills program which has been run over the past few years in various Parishes. This is available in Xhosa and English.

Some of the suggestions above also apply here. From an early age we need to offer the Parish as a second home to all in the family. Child oriented liturgies and opportunities for children to be part of the community are important. These activities will need to be planned with the Catechetics and Youth teams.

Family days and prayer walks where all ages can be included. Providing strategies, support, and resources for praying together as a family, in all its different stages, is central to any effort at enriching families. This is where each member most learns who God is, what prayer is, and how God responds to prayer.

Special support and help for Single parents is always important. Those who are raising children on their own are usually overtaxed and very much in need of support from their community. However, their ability to show up to parish events or parent participation opportunities is often limited by their hectic schedules. So, efforts toward providing childcare for adult formation opportunities can be very helpful, and specific venues that offer connections with other single parents for support and strategizing would be much appreciated. Babysitting services by the Youth or a special social at the Parish are some ideas.

Parenting Skills Morning of Information and discussion. Saturday 17 April 2021
10.30 to 12.30

Separated and Divorced, Annulments and Remarriage

Since marriage affects us at the deepest levels of our identity and self-worth, the loss of marriage causes destruction at the deepest levels, and any effort at healing must take that into account as well as the effect on the children, friends, and other family members involved. Often, in an effort to uphold the dignity and indissolubility of marriage, those in the Church may hesitate to put sufficient energy into outreach to those who have experienced divorce.

However, there are excellent approaches to providing fruitful healing while still recognizing the beauty and gift of Catholic marriage. We must, as the Body of Christ, reach out to those who are suffering so deeply and are often so isolated. What is most important is that while we must always support and

encourage Marriage, we must never make those who are divorced and remarried feel marginalised or in some way inferior. This is a sensitive area.

Help for hurting marriages is available through the Retrouvaille Weekend Program. Many Parishes also have lay community counsellors trained by CWD.

A very large number of couples in every parish find themselves in “irregular” situations concerning Church law with respect to marriage, very often having been married outside the Church. Couples in irregular marriages are not considered in full communion with the Church, meaning they are unable to receive the Sacraments, though they may (and should be invited to) participate in parish activity to the fullest extent possible. Many end up leaving the Church because of a sense that they no longer belong, and it can be very difficult in the current culture to both communicate a welcoming invitation to deeper participation and to lead them to recognizing the need to correct their situation. We all have a duty to ensure that individuals both have access to and are accompanied through the available processes and personal conversion necessary for this.

Parish events and programs often help those who are alone to mingle with caring friends.

The whole area of Annulments is poorly understood and is often a real ordeal for those who go through this process. Accompaniment and support from those in the Parish can be of great assistance. The Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal is formulating ways to assist and accompany those seeking annulments.

Ministry to Divorced and Remarried People in the Parish – Saturday 19 June 2021 10.30 to 12.30.

[Widows and widowers and Family bereavement](#)

Bereavement is a whole new area of support that is required in the Parish. Mornings of support and reflection are held from time to time in the Archdiocese.

Many parishes have a bereavement committee who provide hospitality and/or meals for the families who have lost a loved one, and some have a structured way to help them through the grieving process. Family Life ministry should be ready to help to bring about greater parish participation and companionship during such a vital time in the life of a family whether this means working to

start a program if one does not exist, or work closely with those already involved. Only Christ can provide what a family truly needs when faced with the death of a loved one, and the Church is the way He established for us to get full access to Him!

Ministry to the Bereaved and Elderly – 21 August 2021 10.30 to 12.30

Singles

Often, those who are single request a parish structure to provide for their specific needs since they no longer fit with the youth or young adult groups, and are not married. Programming usually consists of social, formation, and service elements, and different age groups may need to be considered. Single parents should also be given special consideration since they are usually very limited in their ability to participate with any regularity in community activities and often need support specific to parenting issues (see above). It is important to keep in mind that those in the single state still have a vocation to holiness and love. This vocation will look different from that of a married person, and it is uniquely able to provide a kind of self-giving service that married people cannot. For this reason, any singles group should be directed to develop their formation, spiritual lives, and even connections to one another in such a way that they are pointed outward in service to their community. A single person is often able to give the time and energy to individuals in need (elderly, disabled, poor, lonely) that a married person is committed to giving to their family. Without the service of those who are not currently committed to a spouse and children, many are left without the love and attention they need. But, with good formation, good connection to the parish community, and an active prayer life, single people can provide a deep and lasting relationship that will lead many others to God and to a fuller life.

Supporting Single Parents – Saturday 16 October 2021.