



Listening 2004 in the Diocese of Nottingham

The Diocese of Nottingham Family Listening Day originally planned for May 8th did not take place. However the Diocese did participate in all other aspects of the Listening 2004 process. 13,000 copies of the national brochure with its twelve 'conversation starters' were distributed and approximately 80 individual and group responses were received. Furthermore four area conversation days were organised using the "Open Forum" format developed in preparation for the Diocesan Assembly in September 2003.

When the Family Listening Day was cancelled, both the brochure responses and the feedback from the area conversation days were forwarded to Bishop John Hine, Chairman of the Bishops' Conference Committee for Marriage and Family Life. The summary of the collated findings is as follows:

THE FAMILY AT HOME

- ◆ At home families are facing pressures of lack of time, difficulties balancing the demands of work and family life, and physical distance from family members.
- ◆ They cope by talking and listening to one another, prioritising time together and through mutual support.
- ◆ They say they are primarily blessed by the family experiences of love, togetherness, sharing and getting along; family meals and gatherings, including celebrations of successes, weddings and birthdays are extremely important to them.
- ◆ They hope for continued contentment and happiness, for shared knowledge and faith in God, for health for their children and that their children become responsible and pro-active citizens.

THE FAMILY WITHIN SOCIETY

- ◆ Within society, families experience most difficulty when values conflict with those of the home. Long and unsocial working hours are also a major difficulty as is the hectic pace of life. For some families, society presents no difficulty.

- ◆ Families cope primarily through prayer or other faith activities and by talking difficulties through at home.
- ◆ Families say that the world helps them primarily through providing a network of friends, neighbours and work colleagues. The development of communication technology and transport has also helped families immensely. Health and social services are another important blessing.
- ◆ Families hope for friendship, support, kindness, love from the community in which they live as well as by respect, acceptance and tolerance.

THE FAMILY WITHIN THE CHURCH

- ◆ Within the church, families experience difficulties arising from a lack of shared faith within the home. Children's faith development and involvement in the church is a major area of concern. Families are also challenged by the church's lack of awareness and understanding of their lives.
- ◆ They barely cope, if at all. Families seem to just plod along or leave.
- ◆ The church helps families by providing a set of moral values and a wider community of belonging. As many families said they had had no help from the church as those who said they had received kindness, support and understanding.
- ◆ Families primarily hoped for comfort, care or support from their parish, including a sense of belonging, welcome, knowledge, acceptance or understanding of their family life, and love, fellowship or friendship.