



Parish Prayer Day for Marriage and Family Life

On the 7th of each month, our parish of Newtownards & Comber prays for the 24 hours for Marriage & Family Life. This is part of a Movement of Continuous Prayer for Marriage & Family Life as other parishes and groups take on the prayer for the other days of the month.

To make this prayer continuous, many people in our parish have committed themselves to a specific hour of prayer on 7th July in such a way that the whole day and night are covered.

Everyone is invited to join in this prayer, either by taking on an hour, or by including this intention in your own prayer during that day; by including it in the prayers of the Masses celebrated on that day; by inviting the schools of the parish to involve the children and young people in praying for it; by asking any prayer groups that are meeting on that day to also include a prayer for it.

July

Proposed Theme: Grandparents – and Great Grandparents

Some Thoughts:

- July 26th is the feast of Saints Joachim & Ann, the parents of Mary, and of course the grandparents of Jesus.
- We have no information about them. The names we give them come from a tradition that goes back to the second century.
- In the system of extended family of the time these grandparents would have had a huge influence on Jesus as he grew up.
- They would have helped to teach him the skills of human living. And they would have been involved in his religious education, bringing him to a knowledge of the God of the Hebrew people.
- Grandparents today also fulfil a very important role in the upbringing of children and young people. In many places we no longer have a strong system of extended family. Because of this the grandparents have an even more important part to play in the healthy growth of children.
- They can be a very important source of support for the parents in their own relationship by enabling them to have time for each other.
- They can have direct personal contact with each child and young person by spoiling them now and again.
- They can be a great source of comfort for each child or young person especially when one of these children needs someone to confide in.
- And they can be a really good support for the parents in handing on the faith and the values of the faith, particularly

when the parents may be struggling with practicing the faith themselves.

Questions:

1. How can the parish community help to develop the role of grandparents in the rearing of children today?
2. How can grandparents be a support for the parents of their grandchildren without interfering in their central role as a couple and as parents?
3. How can grandparents be a support to each child and young person in these years of growth as well as being an influence for good in the family life of their daughters and sons?
4. In what ways can grandparents help in handing on the faith to their grandchildren even when the parents of the children would seem not to be interested?

Suggested actions:

- Establish July as Grandparents' Month.
- Encourage each Primary School to establish a day for Grandparents each year. July obviously would not be the month to do this as the schools are closed. Many parishes already have a day like this.
- During July pray each week for grandparents and encourage the families to pray each day in their homes for them.
- Look at the possibility of a Fun Day in the parish for grandparents and their grandchildren as a celebration of this unique and very important relationship
- Encourage children and young people to write a letter of gratitude to their grandparents to be given to them on the feast of Sts. Joachim and Ann



PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS

Lord Jesus,
you were born of the Virgin Mary,
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.
Look with love on grandparents the world over.
Protect them! They are a source of enrichment
for families, for the Church and for all of society.
Support them! As they grow older,
may they continue to be for their families
strong pillars of Gospel faith,
guardians of noble domestic ideals,
living treasuries of sound religious traditions.
Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,
that they may pass on to future generations the fruits
of their mature human and spiritual experience.

Lord Jesus,
help families and society
to value the presence and role of grandparents.
May they never be ignored or excluded,
but always encounter respect and love.
Help them to live serenely and to feel welcomed
in all the years of life which you give them.
Mary, Mother of all the living,
keep grandparents constantly in your care,
accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,
and by your prayers, grant that all families
may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,
where you await all humanity
for the great embrace of life without end. Amen!

Benedictus II in

