

Interchurch Families

Journal of the Association of Interchurch Families

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From Rome with joy



The 2003 Rome World Gathering of Interchurch Families, prepared by four language groups working together, brought to the Mondo Migliore Centre at Rocca di Papa some 230 adults from 11 countries and three continents. With them came 100 or so children and young people, whose participation was an important part of the Gathering, and included an all-night vigil of prayer for unity organised by the young people. The rich fare included worship and discussion groups, addresses and informal exchanges, a visit to Castel Gandolfo for the Angelus – with a special welcome for interchurch families from Pope John Paul II – the visit of a representative group to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (and for English-speakers a visit to the Anglican Centre in Rome for tea).

Some of the texts of the Gathering are printed here, and more can be found on the English-speaking interchurch families world web-site (see back cover), along with the Country Reports prepared for Rome, and various accounts of the Gathering. The co-ordinators of the four language groups did a splendid job, and special gratitude goes to Andrea Lari from northern Italy, and for the English-speaking associations, to Melanie Finch from England. The *Preproma* committee transformed itself into a *Postroma* committee on the final afternoon, and gave some thought to the co-ordinating links that will be needed between the various groups and associations if the work of the Rome Gathering is to be carried forward.

Rome 2003 is an outstanding landmark in the history of the interchurch family movement. The Message of Cardinal Kasper was an encouraging one. Interchurch families left Rome re-invigorated, with renewed courage to face the particular difficulties of our situation, but above all with intense joy and thanksgiving for our particular vocation: united in baptism and marriage; called to a common life in the Church for the reconciliation of our churches.

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In this issue: Texts from Rome 2003 pp.1-8; Around the world p.9; Franco-Swiss Conferences pp.10-11; Interchurch marriage spirituality pp.12-15

"You live in your marriage the hopes and the difficulties of the path to Christian unity." Pope John Paul II, York, 1982

THE JOURNAL

INTERCHURCH FAMILIES is a twice-yearly journal which discusses the theological and pastoral issues raised by the existence of interchurch families (especially families in which one partner is a Roman Catholic and the other a Christian of another communion). It shares the experience of these families with a wider public, and helps readers keep abreast of developments which concern interchurch families, in the context of the wider ecumenical movement. The views expressed in the journal are not necessarily those of the Association of Interchurch Families.

The journal is published by the British Association of Interchurch Families, but it intends to serve the needs of English-speaking interchurch families and all who care for their welfare world-wide. It welcomes contributions and editorial help from all parts of the world.

PLEASE NOTE

We are not expecting this Journal to continue in its present form after the Summer 2004 number. We hope to explain in that number how we shall continue the work of the Journal, largely in an electronic form, but not forgetting the needs of those who cannot access the internet.

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In all its activities, the Association of Interchurch Families is working to strengthen marriage and family life and to promote Christian unity.

It offers a support network for interchurch families* - for partners and parents, for growing children and young adults - and an information service to all concerned for their welfare (clergy and ministers, relatives and others).

It gives interchurch families a voice in the churches: this is done by articulating the experience of these families in all their diversity; by focusing attention on interchurch couples' need for pastoral care and understanding which takes seriously both their marriage commitment to one another and the fact that two churches** are represented in their family; by affirming at local, national and global level the gifts of interchurch families and their potential as a catalyst for wider church unity.

It undergirds all its activities with prayer and worship.

* where the partners belong to different denominations - often a Roman Catholic and a Christian of another communion.

** both in the sense of denominations and local congregations.

The British Association is a **registered charity** (no. 283811) dependent on members' contributions and the donations of others who support its work. **Friends of Interchurch Families** give regular support.

Presidents are: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, the Free Churches Moderator, Dr Kenneth Greet, Canon Martin and Dr Ruth Reardon.

Members receive the Journal, *AIF News and Notes* and *The Interdependent* (written by and for interchurch children). Details of membership, Friends, resources (publications, leaflets, AIF video), and a constantly up-dated list of Local Contacts throughout Britain are available on request. Contact:

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AROUND THE WORLD

The British Association of Interchurch Families is linked with other associations and groups of interchurch families around the world.

A constantly-updated list of contact addresses for English-speaking, French-speaking, German-speaking and Italian-speaking interchurch families in different parts of the world is available on request to The British Association of Interchurch Families at its London address.

A web-site for interchurch families worldwide is run by Ray Temmerman of Winnipeg, Canada. It is to be found at www.interchurchfamilies.org and a listserv at aifw@mylist.net

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Germany

The Church – which paths lead to unity?
 Braunfels, nr Wetzlar
 6-8 February 2004

France

4th rencontre francophone
Spreading the Word together
 Centre du Rimlishof, Mulhouse
 22-23 May 2004

Northern Ireland

Identity
 Derrynoid Rural Centre
 Draperstown
 22-23 May 2004

Britain

Building bridges
 Swanwick, Derbyshire
 28-30 August 2004

Austria

Voralberg
 22-23 October 2004