

Useful Resources

ASDC: Association of Separated and Divorced Catholics. National Enquiry Line Tel: 0113 264 0638

www.asdcengland.org.uk

Beginning Experience. Support for those who have lost a spouse through death, separation or divorce.

www.beginningexperience.com

Care for the Family. Promotes healthy family life and helps those hurting because of family breakdown. Tel: 029 2081 0800 Email: mail@cff.org.uk

www.careforthefamily.org.uk

Compassionate Friends Helpline.
(for bereaved parents) Tel: 0845 123 2304

Cruse Bereavement Care.
Helpline Tel: 0870 167 1677 Email:
helpline@crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Grief Net. An Internet community of persons dealing with grief, death, and major loss.
www.griefnet.org

Rainbows (for children affected by loss).
Tel: National Office 01582 724106
Email: rainbows.dc@virgin.net
www.rainbowsgb.org

SANDS: Still birth. Tel: 020 7436 5881
Email: helpline@uk-sands.org

SOBS: Bereaved by Suicide.
Helpline: 0870 241 3337
Email: sobs.admin@care4free.net
www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Lord, be with us today when life is difficult and uncertain. Help us to feel the security of your presence, the comfort of your love and the calm of your peace. Amen.

Marlene Moore

The Church prays that no one should be lost: 'Lord, let me never be parted from you.' If it is true that no one can save himself, it is also true that God 'desires all men to be saved' (1 Tim. 2:4), and that for him 'all things are possible' (Mt. 19:26).

More information and resources available at:
www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk/bereavement.html

For local resources please contact:



This leaflet is one of a series devised to assist parishes to become more welcoming, friendly and family-sensitive.

For further information contact:

Marriage and Family Life Project Office, CBCEW
39 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1BX
Email: everybodyswelcome@celebratingfamily.org.uk



what is life like if you or
someone in your family
is ***bereaved or
has suffered a
loss?***
...and what can your
parish family do to make
a difference?

- Bereavement is a fact of life
- Everybody suffers major loss at some time
- Loss can lead to loneliness, isolation and feelings of rejection

What is Life Like?

After the funeral or after the separation or divorce and the busyness of the first few weeks, the isolation and loneliness of the bereaved can become very intense.

'How can I talk about it? How can we talk about it when everyone seems to have forgotten my loss?'

During Listening 2004 we heard a great deal about the loneliness of individuals and the isolation they feel especially after the loss of someone they love.

'I'm a widow. It's lonely very often.'

'There is a dying inside when we do not share one another's burdens.'

'I just wish there was somewhere I could go where the hurt and pain and loneliness would be accepted.'

'I thought I was in a caring parish but I felt so alone. Everything had changed for me and I had become a stranger where I had previously felt at home.'

'Because I am divorced they did not want me.'

'It's hard to cope when someone dies but together we can help each other.'

As a Church we are very good at responding in a crisis but what do we offer the bereaved once the initial shock has passed?

Challenges for the Parish

- During Listening 2004 people expressed a need for "more sharing and fellowship". This is especially true for those who have been bereaved. How can we provide this?
- People exclude themselves because they do not think they will be accepted eg the divorced and the separated. What can we do to ensure that they always feel included?
- Many people thought that divorce prevented them from receiving Holy Communion. How can we share the clear teaching that exists?

It is important to emphasise that seeking or receiving a divorce, where there are serious and objective reasons for it, is not in itself a barrier to receiving communion.

Cherishing Life #136

- How well do we know each other? What more can we do to recognise the signs of loneliness, isolation, guilt and anger in others?
- What can we do to help our parish grow in trust so that it becomes a place where everyone can experience being listened to, understood and accepted; a place where we feel free to share?
- How can we build a community where forgiveness, healing, reconciliation and acceptance are lived and experienced by all?

Practical Action

- Create social and liturgical opportunities for people to gather for sharing and mutual support, both in church and in the home
- Provide support groups for the bereaved, divorced and separated, on a deanery if not a parish basis
- Identify, gather and train teams to visit, listen to and befriend the bereaved
- Prepare help sheets with appropriate information eg legal, financial, useful helplines, information services etc
- Formulate a grief support programme
- Offer practical help in the home
- Set up a LET (Local Exchange Trading or bartering of practical skills and services) Scheme : www.letslinkuk.org
- Arrange shared lunches

Prayer and Liturgy

- Homilies and bidding prayers are opportunities to raise and reflect concern for those affected by loss.
- Healing Masses and non-sacramental liturgies can be opportunities to personally invite those who feel isolated. See www.wellsprings.org.uk for prayers and rituals for healing, grief and remembrance.