



Family Group News 2000

Once again we are at the end of a very busy year. Still our groups are flourishing and growing. Some of our gatherings have been great, and some have been small but everyone who has given has received and we have all continued to grow together as Family.

Working with the other parishes in the "Shaping our Future" programme has brought home to us what a marvellous community of many races, ages and creeds we have. We have all put our weight behind many events in our Parish Family this year and it shows!! St Thomas More Parish is a great place to be.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Ward Family Group

We've seen steady growth in our Family for all during the Jubilee year, which is also the 10th year our family has been together.

We've welcomed Nick & Margaret Van der Walt [Julia, Sergei, Nikita and Illya], Peter & Olga Krestsov [Denis], Anna & Keith Jeftha [Melanie and Dale], Bridgette & Warren Jacobs [Stephanie and Lauren], and most recently Eileen & Richard Cocks to the family during the year.

We've celebrated the entry of Nick, Sergei, Nikita and Illya into the Catholic Church [with the ever-capable guidance of Susan], the Baptism of Charles & Ipolito Raass, and 21st birthdays for Melanie Li, Tony Jovel, Brett Rusk, Simon Ward & Bryan Baker. We've also celebrated kiwi Citizenship for Rafael, Elia, Tony & Cesar Jovel.

We've farewelled Norman, Jenny and Brendan Li on 'leave of absence' to South Africa, Dave Ward to Samoa [where he catches up with Iutita Rusk on her regular visits there....Shelley also put in a week up there], Rikki-Maria and Nik on their trip to Europe, and Jan Young to visit her daughter in Australia, while the Fernandez family represented us at the Olympics [very successfully and enthusiastically from all accounts!]

All in all, a busy year befitting a large and active family! One of the byproducts of group longevity is that our children grow older and 12 of our 'kids' will be over 20 this year. We see them from time to time as their busy adult timetables enable them to share some time with us collectively. It is wonderful when they do make it to the family gatherings and to see them interacting with the littlies brings great joy to older hearts! It is also heartwarming to see adults who joined the group as children now regarding their 'Uncle and Aunts' as friends with whom they can discuss 'meaning of life' type issues..... a sure sign that family groups do indeed become family as intended.

We look forward to the Summer with its associated weekends away at the Ward bach and at the Parish Camp, as these times are relished by the whole family, and give us an opportunity to grow. Our family weekends are an excellent opportunity to get to know each other better and to find out more about the cultures we all come from; we have family members from 8 countries all with different first languages....our potluck dinners are always a delightful feast as we like to bring a plate from our country of origin, that way we can acknowledge our differences and truly learn to appreciate them!

Graham & Shelley

Pride Family Group

We took over the leadership of our group at the beginning of this year from Kevin & Carolyn Murphy. They had led our group for nine years. We would like to thank them for all the hard work they have put in and for their continuing support.

Activities this year ranged from picnics, dinners, suppers, fireworks and even the odd exercise in the form of 10 pin bowling and kite flying.

The year featured two firsts for our group. The first was our inaugural wine trail, this event was open to the parish and we had a great response. All those who went enjoyed themselves with some of us lighter in the pocket as a consequence. The second was our first weekend away. This was to a farm stay close to Tauranga. Travelling in convoy at night was an interesting experience. Everybody had an enjoyable and relaxing weekend in a very pleasant setting. We felt that the weekend away was a great way to build relations within the group in a more social and relaxed environment.

Ridge Family Group

IT HAS ALSO WE BELIEVE, BEEN A TIME OF LEARNING FOR SOME OF OUR "NEW" KIWIS. IT APPEARS THAT FANCY DRESS PARTIES ARE NOT WELL KNOWN OUTSIDE OF WESTERN COUNTRIES, SO THAT OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY CAUSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST AS WELL AS SOME RAISED EYEBROWS! THIS TO GO ALONG WITH SOME RAISED SKIRTS WORN BY SOMEONE NOT A HUNDRED MILES FROM HERE.

WE'VE ALSO HEARD THAT THERE WILL BE MUCH MORE ENTHUSIASTIC PARTICIPATION NEXT TIME AROUND.

THIS YEAR HAS SEEN AN INCREASE IN OUR FAMILY GROUP WITH FOUR NEW BABIES BEING WELCOMED BY US. WE NOW HAVE REBECCA SMITH (OUR 4th GRANDCHILD), JOSEPH ALLEN, JOSEPH MATHESON & JOSIAH BROWN. BESIDES OUR BABIES WE ALSO WELCOMED JILL & MONTY WITH CHILDREN DWAYNE & JOSHUA.

JILLS' DANCING TALENTS WERE DISPLAYED AT THE FANCY DRESS PARTY AND ARE A GREAT ADDITION TO THE TALENT THIS FAMILY GROUP ALREADY POSSESSES.

AS LEADERS WE ARE VERY PLEASED AT HOW WELL OUR RELATIVELY NEW MEMBERS HAVE JOINED IN THE ACTIVITIES AND ENCOURAGED PARTICIPATION FROM OTHERS. THIS ATTITUDE CONTINUES TO ENHANCE THE "FAMILY" FEELING OF OUR GROUP.

MAUREEN & MAURICE RIDGE.

Lamb Family Group

What a fantastic, friendly, fun-loving group of people we have as members of the Lamb Family Group! This year we welcomed Mouhib, Maha, Maryam and Fady Tobia to the group and appreciated their hosting an evening filled with Iraqi hospitality (among other things!) Our annual traditions are now well entrenched - mid-winter dinner; fish'n'chips at the beach; ten pin bowling and the summer BBQ at Jim and Barbara's - and have all been well supported. First timers this year were a delicious champagne breakfast, which carried on into the afternoon, and a group camp at Whangarei which took place in Nov. We look forward to each gathering as a time to spend with special friends that we have come to know and love.

Capper Family Group

The Capper family group has enjoyed a good variety of get togethers this year and I think our two highlights have been our annual horse night in May and our mid year feast in July. The horse night is open to the parish and especially the kids! It always turns into a great fun evening and this year the money we raised went towards setting up the piety stall.

Our mid year feast once again was at the Hayward's home and we had a lovely evening of feasting, chatting and a sing along. The music talent in our group is great! Thanks to the Haywards again for their hospitality that makes this a great annual event.

Other enjoyable outings we have had include ten-pin bowling, ice-skating and dads and sons at the golf driving range. The girls got together for a relaxing afternoon at Lake Pupuke.

Thanks to all for their continued involvement and commitment to our group.

Breinhorst Family Group (New Group)

Hello from the Breinhorst Group!

We are really delighted to be a part of a family group and see it as a way to make life-long friends in our church community.

So far we have only had three get-togethers since the start of the group, but already we can see real friendships growing. With so many different cultures, "thinking outside the square we live in" may well become our family motto! We have a great opportunity of forming an extended family and are looking forward to participating in the annual family group weekend away early next year. By the next newsletter we hope to have heaps of interesting tales to share.

God Bless
Iona and Thomas Breinhorst

Apologies from the Lyons Family Group

They are alive and well but the secretary got lost in the traffic and well... you know!

The Camp is on in February 2001

We have succeeded in securing a booking at the Hunua Falls Camp for Feb 23 - 25th 2001

We have gone to great lengths to secure this because the interest has been so great from so many.

Looking forward to another great weekend for all the families.

*Details to follow Late January
Contact James Pride 418 1372*

Spiritual

(Downloaded from www.pfgm.org. Have a look)

REWRITING THE FINAL JUDGEMENT - FAMILY GROUP STYLE

First Version:

I was sick and you took care of me. *"I am an eight year old boy dying of AIDS. You took me in as one of your own. You helped me to celebrate my life and impending death with the Family Group."*

I was hungry and thirsty - for love, not knowing it. And you touched me. *"We were parents who changed our rigid, harsh parenting of our children through the love and example of other parents in our Family Groups."*

I was a stranger to myself and you opened my eyes. *"We belong to Family Groups. Gradually we were able to talk, share our experiences. We opened up as you listened. We saw the world and other people - even ourselves, as friends. Before we were strangers in a foreign land."*

I was imprisoned - the secrets of my life hidden within me. *"You opened my heart and allowed me to speak. I was not condemned. I was freed." "I was a father who couldn't forgive my teenage son. Over time, my heart was freed and I was able to share my feelings honestly with my group and learn to forgive."*

2nd Version:

I was hungry for company and you talked to me.
I was obnoxious and you tolerated me.
I was a stranger and you welcomed me into a Family Group.
I was feeling overwhelmed by the stresses of child/teenage-raising and you shared and supported me.
I was seriously ill and you rallied round me. Through the illness, our Family Group was brought closer together.
I had a baby and you brought a casserole to our home.

Don't forget the Hampers this year. They help to make our parish a family that cares.

Thanks to all the Group Co-coordinators for their unstinting efforts in making our Family Groups what they are. Hope you all have a lovely Christmas - and a great Family Group year in 2001.

Love
Michael and Maree Pervan.