

# Mixed Marriages Spearhead the Interchurch Process

*At the end of his first six months as Diocesan Ecumenical Officer for the Anglican Diocese of Manchester, Ian Walter contributed an article under this heading to the diocesan newsletter (a centrepiece for inclusion in parish magazines). He wrote of the Inter Church Process and of Local Ecumenical Projects, and continued as follows:*

Even these Local Ecumenical Projects are still on a relatively large scale. They may affect us at Sunday worship or at weekday evening meetings, but most of us can leave them and go home. We can often keep our relationships with Christians of other churches in a special compartment, separate from our regular devotions, let alone from our everyday lives.

However, there are families where this is not possible. There are those where husband and wife are both committed, practising Christians, yet from different denominations. Many couples from different religious traditions relegate their faith to the background of their marriages, but there are also many who refuse to let the Church's divisions mar what they share and who seek to build up a united christian family.

Recently I met a number of such couples at a meeting of the Association of Interchurch Families. They told what was by turns a sad and a triumphant story of how they struggled to win recognition from their churches for their own ecumenical pilgrimage. It could be heart-rending to hear of the problems surrounding say, their weddings or the baptisms of their children. But what impressed and encouraged me was how they were not to be put off, how they did not take the easy way out and say "A plague on both your houses". Instead, convinced of God's will to reconcile his separated people, they strove to join both christian traditions in their own lives.

It is this kind of determination that will be needed if the unity we talk about on the grand scale, is to find its place in every home and parish. So when you pray for the fulfilment of Jesus' prayer, "that they may all be one", please pray especially for husbands, wives and children who are in the front line of the struggle for unity. Pray for the Association of Interchurch Families which supports them.