

Information Guide for the 9th World Meeting of Families 2018

The theme of the family is central to the ministry of Pope Francis.

Shortly after his election, Pope Francis began a process of reflection within the Church right across the world on the family. He announced the holding of two sessions of the Synod of Bishops: one on the situation of families across the world and the other on how to respond to the challenges facing family life. Pope Francis recently published a wide ranging document as a fruit of that process, entitled *Amoris Laetitia*, on love in the family.

Why does Pope Francis consider the Family as so important?

- “The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church.”
- The experience of love in families is a perennial source of strength for the life of the Church.
- The family is like a factory of hope.
- God likes most to knock on the doors of families and to find families that are united, that love each other and who raise their children in view of creating a society of truth, goodness and beauty.

What is the World Meeting of Families?

In 1994 Pope St John Paul II asked the Pontifical Council for the Family to establish the World Meeting of Families as an international event of prayer, catechesis, and celebration that draws participants from around the globe. It seeks to strengthen the bonds between families and to witness to the crucial importance of marriage and the family to all of society. The Meetings also foster gestures of solidarity for families in difficulties.

When is the World Meeting of Families held?

The World Meeting of Families was first celebrated in Rome in 1994. Since then Meetings have been in Rio de Janeiro (1997); Rome (2000); Manila (2003); Valencia (2006); Mexico City (2009); Milan (2012); Philadelphia (2015); and now Dublin, Ireland (2018). The principal events of the World Meeting of the Families 2018 will be held in Dublin but events will also take place in other centres around Ireland. The dates of the Meeting and the title will be decided and announced by Pope Francis himself.

Who will organise World Meeting of Families 2018?

The World Meeting of Families will be organised jointly by the Pontifical Council for the Family and by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, as bishop of the host diocese. The planning will involve teams of women and men, clergy, religious and lay, from all over Ireland. A Committee of the Irish Bishops Conference has been set up to oversee fundraising for the event.

In preparation for the meeting a programme of pastoral preparation centered on the family will take place across Ireland, especially during 2017.

It is hoped that alongside the events gestures of solidarity will be fostered, especially with a Pope Francis Fund for Homelessness.

How can I make a donation to the World Meeting of Families?

The Irish Bishops' Conference will be holding three national Sunday Church collections over the coming years. It will also be possible in the near future to donate online through our website, by bank transfer, cheque or money order.

Details will soon be available on the website: www.worldmeeting2018.ie

How can I get involved?

- Pray for the success of the World Meeting of Families 2018.
- Prepare spiritually with the pastoral programme when it becomes available in early 2017.
- Attend the World Meeting events in 2018 as a pilgrim, a volunteer or an exhibitor. Details of opportunities will follow in the next few months.
- Subscribe for updates via www.worldmeeting2018.ie/contact/newsletter
- Help us with fundraising through the national collection or donation. We need help to make the World Meeting of Families 2018 a success. Any donation that you are willing to give is gratefully received.

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