

Pope's letter for Dublin World Meeting of Families

(Vatican Radio) Pope Francis has written a letter to the organisers of next year's World Meeting of Families, who presented the event at the Vatican press office on Thursday morning.



The Meeting is scheduled to take place in Dublin, Ireland from August 21st to 26th 2018 on the theme 'The Gospel of the Family: joy to the world'.

In the letter addressed to Cardinal Kevin Farrell, head of the new Vatican office for Laity, Family and Life, the Pope says he hopes the Meeting will be a way for families to deepen their reflection on the document 'Amoris Laetitia' which he wrote at the conclusion of the two recent synods on the family. At the press conference, the cardinal stressed the importance of preparations that will take place in parishes and dioceses ahead of the event. This catechesis must involve lay people as well as clergy, he said, reaching out especially to individuals and families who have grown away from the Church. "As Pope Francis said we need to be a Church that goes out to the peripheries of society to those people who don't listen to us at the present moment, to those families who have lost their way or who do not go to church any more".

Also present at the press conference was the Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin who highlighted the complex combination of faith and secularization which characterizes his country today. He said the meeting will be a challenge for the archdiocese but also an opportunity to underline the importance of family life for Irish society as a whole.

Archbishop Martin said the Church must learn to accompany families and address the real day-to-day difficulties which he hears about from those in his own archdiocese:

"They'd be talking about work, leisure, homelessness, how to make ends meet, how government subsidies are being cut back, how they'd have sleepless nights worrying about their teenage children – these are the challenges they have to be supported in so that they can carry out this essential role in society and that people really give them the support and confidence to do that".

Both leaders hope the meeting will not be a one-off event, but rather a chance for the whole Church to deepen its reflection on the Pope's words in 'Amoris Laetitia', seeing the family as a vital resource for sharing the message of God's love with the world.

Neither of them would confirm the Pope's presence at the Meeting next year, but they did share their hopes that he'll be attending the event – a hope also expressed in the promotional video for the World Meeting of Families.

Please find below the full text of Pope Francis' letter for the World Meeting of Families

To the Venerable Brother Cardinal KEVIN FARRELL, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life

At the end of the Eighth World Meeting of Families, held in Philadelphia in September 2015, I announced that the subsequent meeting with Catholic families of the world would take place in Dublin. I now wish to initiate preparations, and am pleased to confirm that it will be held from 21 to 26 August 2018, on the theme “The Gospel of the Family: joy for the world”. Indeed, it is my wish for families to have a way of deepening their reflection and their sharing of the content of the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

One might ask: does the Gospel continue to be a joy for the world? And also: does the family continue to be good news for today’s world?

I am sure the answer is yes! And this “yes” is firmly based on God’s plan. The love of God is His “yes” to all creation and at the heart of this latter is man. It is God’s “yes” to the union between man and woman, in openness and service to life in all its phases; it is God’s “yes” and His commitment to a humanity that is often wounded, mistreated and dominated by a lack of love. The family, therefore, is the “yes” of God as Love. Only starting from love can the family manifest, spread and regenerate God’s love in the world. Without love, we cannot live as children of God, as couples, parents and brothers.

I wish to underline how important it is for families to ask themselves often if they live based on love, for love and in love. In practice, this means giving oneself, forgiving, not losing patience, anticipating the other, respecting. How much better family life would be if every day we lived according to the words, “please”, “thank you” and “I’m sorry”. Every day we have the experience of fragility and weakness, and therefore we all, families and pastors, are in need of renewed humility that forms the desire to form ourselves, to educate and be educated, to help and be helped, to accompany, discern and integrate all men of good will. I dream of an outbound Church, not a self-referential one, a Church that does not pass by far from man’s wounds, a merciful Church that proclaims the heart of the revelation of God as Love, which is Mercy. It is this very mercy that makes us new in love; and we know how much Christian families are a place of mercy and witnesses of mercy, and even more so after the extraordinary Jubilee. The Dublin meeting will be able to offer concrete signs of this.

I therefore invite all the Church to keep these indications in mind in the pastoral preparation for the next World Meeting.

You, dear Brother, along with your collaborators, have the task of translating in a special way the teaching of *Amoris Laetitia*, with which the Church wishes families always to be in step, in that inner pilgrimage that is the manifestation of authentic life.

My thoughts go in a special way to the archdiocese of Dublin and to all the dear Irish nation for the generous welcome and commitment involved in hosting such an important event. May the Lord recompense you as of now, granting you abundant heavenly favours.

May the Holy Family of Nazareth guide, accompany and bless your service, and all the families

involved in the preparation of the great World Meeting in Dublin.

From the Vatican, 25 March 2017

FRANCIS

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