



## **The World Meeting of Families 2018 comes to Dublin, Ireland!**

We have just marked the one-year countdown to the 9<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Families which is taking place in Dublin, Ireland from 21-26 August 2018. Dublin was announced as the venue at the end of the concluding Mass of the last World Meeting of Families, which took place in Philadelphia in 2015.

There is no doubt that regular visitors to our website are aware that a WMOF is taking place in Ireland next year. But, you might have questions about the detail of the WMOF2018: What exactly is a World Meeting of Families? What do we know about the structure of the meeting next year in Ireland? What programmes are in place to assist with preparation? Is the Pope coming? How can we get involved?

Hopefully I can answer some of those questions here.

### **History and organisation of the World Meeting of Families**

The World Meeting of Families was established by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1994 with the aim of celebrating the Church's role in building the family. Held every three years, this major international event brings together families from across the world to celebrate, pray and reflect upon the central importance of marriage and the family as the cornerstone of our lives, of society and of the Church.

The World Meeting of Families is convened by the Holy Father and promoted by the Holy See's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. The Prefect of this new Dicastery Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, previously Bishop of Dallas, Texas in the US.

### **Dublin, the host diocese for WMOF2018**

The World Meeting of Families is always organised by a host diocese chosen by the Pope. Pope Francis chose the Archdiocese of Dublin to be the host diocese for the next World Meeting of Families, guided by the theme "The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World".

To fulfil this task, the Archdiocese of Dublin has appointed a team to work with the families, young people, women and men, clergy, religious and others from all over Ireland who will be involved in the planning of the event. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin is the President and host, Father Timothy Bartlett has been appointed as Secretary General and Anne Griffin as General Manager.

### **The main events for August 2018 at WMOF2018**

Next year's 9th World Meeting of Families has at its heart the following key moments:

- 21 August 2018: **A National Opening of WMOF2018**, which will take place simultaneously in each of the 26 dioceses in Ireland.
- 22 - 24 August 2018: **A three-day Congress**. Each day will reflect on the theme “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World” chosen by the Holy Father and will include an enriching programme for adults of keynote speakers, workshops, talks, testimonies and discussions; an engaging and exciting programme for young people as well as fun activities for children. The Congress will also include daily celebration of the Eucharist, prayerful activities, exhibitions, cultural events and musical performances.
- Saturday 25 August 2018: **A Festival of Families**, comprising a reflective concert style event within a prayerful and joyful atmosphere, in which personal stories of faith will be shared by families from all continents.
- Sunday 26 August 2018: WMOF2018 will close with a **Solemn Eucharistic Celebration**, that will gather thousands of people from Ireland and all over the world.

### **WMOF2018 and young people**

Each day, running concurrently with the adult programme, young people aged 13 and upwards will be able to experience an exciting and dedicated programme, where they will share their faith with many other young people from around the world and fuel their faith.

Younger children can also have a faith experience at World Meeting of Families 2018. A special children's programme will be run concurrent to the adult/youth programme for children age 4 to 12. Parents will be able to leave their little ones at the children's programme with a professional vetted team or stay with them while the children enjoy an exciting and interactive programme planned just for them.

### **Preparing for August 2018: The *Amoris: Let's talk Family! Let's Be Family!* programme**

This important and joyful international gathering will be preceded by a period of catechesis/faith education, which has been prepared by the Church in Ireland for use by parishes in Ireland and across the world.

The programme draws largely from Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, published in April 2016, following the Synods on the family held in 2014 and 2015. The *Amoris* programme aims to support families and parishes as they set out on the journey of preparation for WMOF2018 and to continue that journey in the years ahead.

The *Amoris: Let's Talk Family! Let's be Family!* Programme will offer a range of resources.

**Amoris - Let's Talk Family** is a six-part programme that will be offered to parishes from this Autumn. Using engaging short videos, animations and activities to encourage discussion, it will offer families, parishes and wider society an opportunity to think about our vision and hopes for family and marriage, and a chance to rediscover the gift that family is to the world. The programme will also challenge us to reflect on how we can provide greater support for

marriage and family in our local communities. In particular, Pope Francis has asked us to think about support for newly married couples and outreach to families in need.

**Amoris - Let's Be Family** is a set of practical engaging activities which draw from and build on the parish-based programme and aim to celebrate and support marriage and family life. Some of these activities are for families to carry out in their own homes, and others can be run by parish communities or groups of parishes, from a simple prayer before meals, to a family picnic for all the parish. For each activity, there will be a short guide, explaining the idea and offering instructions on how it might be carried out. A parish or family can pick as many or as few as they like, depending on their own circumstances.

Resources will also be available for **primary and secondary school children** at specific moments throughout the year, including Catholic Schools Week 2018.

The *Amoris: Let's talk Family! Let's Be Family!* programme is an interactive multimedia platform of catechetical resources that is available through the WMOF2018 website and a dedicated app. It will be supported by some additional resources which include:

- A series of **half-hour television programmes** will be produced and made available online to national and international audiences. Short video inserts will be followed by panel discussions with experts from Ireland and around the world, as well as in-studio audience participation, offering an opportunity for people to engage online with the message and challenge of *The Joy of Love*. Programmes will also be produced by and for young people.
- A set of **short digital animations** based on key *Amoris* themes aimed at a general audience and children and available in different languages.
- A series of **live events** hosted around Ireland and live streamed online in the lead up to World Meeting of Families 2018. These will feature national and international speakers from the Catholic world and from civil society and focus on key issues relating to marriage and family life. The events will also be recorded and will be available afterwards to online audiences around the world.

These resources are accessible through a dedicated Amoris website – [www.amoris.ie](http://www.amoris.ie).

### **What are some of the other resources available as part of the preparations?**

An official prayer, logo, icon and hymn have also been especially prepared for WMOF2018, as key elements of the journey of preparing for the event. These are accessible on the WMOF2018 website.

### **How can you get involved?**

There are several ways you can be involved:

**Volunteer:** World Meeting of the Families 2018 will attract thousands of Irish and International pilgrims. Organising it and seeing it through will only be possible with the help of thousands of generous volunteers who will put their love and talents to service. If you are

reading this and are based in Ireland then we would love you to volunteer. See [worldmeeting2018.ie/volunteer](http://worldmeeting2018.ie/volunteer) for more information.

**Pray:** All those involved in organising the WMOF2018 need our prayers so please do pray for the success of this event but also keep in mind the intentions of the Holy Father and pray for all families here in Ireland and around the world.

**Take part in the *Amoris* programme events:** Follow the *Amoris* programme as a parish, parish council, family, prayer group etc. All the resources and information you need are available on [worldmeeting2018.ie](http://worldmeeting2018.ie).

**Consider exhibiting at the event:** There will be opportunities for exhibition as part of the WMOF2018.

**Register to attend the events:** The WMOF2018 want as many people as possible from Ireland and around the world to experience the 9th World Meeting of Families so please register and do so early.

### **Is there a cost for attending as a pilgrim?**

Attendance at all World Meeting of Families 2018's events will require tickets/registration. Some events will be free; others will be subject to a fee. The following registration/tickets are available:

- Individual Adult Registration
- Clergy Registration
- Family Group Registration (any number of adults, any number of children)
- Group Registration (Parish/Diocese, Organisation)

### **Will Pope Francis attend the world meeting of families 2018?**

It is too early to know if Pope Francis will attend WMOF2018 in Ireland. What we do know is that he has said he would like to be with us for the World Meeting next August. His programme is normally announced just a few months prior to any event. Such a visit by Pope Francis would bring great joy to Irish Catholics and others, but the final decision will depend on many factors.

### **How can I keep up to date with WMOF2018 between now and August 2018?**

See [www.worldmeeting2018.ie](http://www.worldmeeting2018.ie) for more information and for a link to where you can register for the regular newsletter. Follow the WMOF on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and check your local diocesan and parish websites and social media accounts for information too.

You can also read regular articles about WMOF2018 here on the website of the Dicastery and on the news website of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference [www.catholicnews.ie](http://www.catholicnews.ie)

So, with just one year to go, please do put the World Meeting of Families in your diary and start planning to join us in Ireland from 21 to 26 August 2018. Come on your own, in a group

or with your family! Be part of this once in a generation event but don't forget to be part of the preparations too!

**Brenda Drumm is Media and Communications Manager for WMOF2018.**