

WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

Dublin, 21-26 August 2018

Final Mass

Phoenix Park, Dublin, 26 August 2018

Concluding words addressed to Pope Francis

Holy Father,

The 9th World Meeting of Families is now coming to an end. Over 500,000 people from all over the world are here to praise and thank God for the marvellous gift of marriage and family, and also to thank you, Holy Father, once again, for calling us to come to beautiful Ireland.

Thousands of families with children have come to either Knock or Dublin in order to share with you the joy of the Gospel of the Family. They came in a spirit of ecclesial communion and friendship, and we will all carry this for a long time in our hearts and homes. I thank all of those who helped this World Meeting to take place. I thank the Church in Ireland and the civil authorities who welcomed us with benevolence and a spirit of collaboration.

These past few days together helped us to see how we can implement the post-synodal exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, and how the Christian teaching on the family can become a real declaration of love and tenderness (cf *AL*, 59). The couples present here are a tangible sign of the presence of Jesus. Jesus loves them and, by virtue of the sacrament, calls them to be active in pastoral care in the Church. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires them and helps them to understand the meaning and beauty of the nuptial gift and the nature of the mission to which they are called. Today, these families with their children will be even more aware of the meaning of their nuptial and family

vocation within the Church as they return home to their respective communities and parishes. They have shown us how important and urgent it is to treasure, encourage and renew the gift of the sacrament, which is and will always be a precious gift and a strength for the Church and for the whole Christian community (cf. *AL* 87).

Holy Father, it is with great joy that I now announce to the whole world your decision to hold the next World Meeting of Families in 2021 in Rome, on the 5th anniversary of *Amoris Laetitia*.

I ask you to bless these couples and families now, so that the beauty of their love in Christ may be revealed to the world. May the outpouring of the Holy Spirit present in these families be renewed and be perceived by the Church gathered here around you.

For our part, we promise our prayers, especially those of our children, so that the Lord may continue to enlighten you and support you in this very special task of guiding the Church, a true “family of families”.

Thank you, Holy Father.