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Presentation of the World Meeting of Families

Vatican City, 24 May 2016 – "The Gospel of the family, joy for the world" is the theme of the 9th World Meeting of Families, to be held in Dublin, Ireland from 22 to 26 August 2018, which was presented this morning in the Holy See Press Office by Bishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin.

In his presentation, Bishop Paglia emphasised that the event in Dublin will be the first large-scale meeting of families since the Synod of Bishops, after which Pope Francis gave his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. This text thus becomes the "charter" of the Meeting, both in its preparation and in its celebration. "*Amoris Laetitia* requires not a simple update of family pastoral ministry, but much more: a new way of living the Church, a new way of achieving the love that gladdens the life of the people of God, of families and of society itself. In this sense the Dublin meeting assumes a special nature compared to the other World Meetings."

"In this important moment in the life of the Church, the meeting returns to Europe. We cannot neglect this detail. Only a few weeks ago the Pope gave a new shock to this old continent that risks turning in on itself, resigned to its own sterility. Pope Francis forcefully exhorted Europeans to rediscover their humanistic vocation, to revive the missionary passion that made progress and development possible, to abandon the temptation to raise walls, and to revive the extraordinary adventure of building bridges between cultures and faiths. Celebrating the family – that in Europe is suffering in a particularly acute way – is an extraordinary opportunity for all realities – civil, social, religious, political, economic – to rediscover the centrality and the strength of being the first locus of peaceful co-existence between different people."

The archbishop of Dublin affirmed that the meeting will be a significant event for the Church in Ireland and for Irish families. "Ireland – despite what many think - has a strong family culture. It is a young country. The proportion of the population under 15 years of age is 21.6 per cent, and those over 60 is 16.9 per cent, as compared for example with Italy there are twice as many people over 60 than under 15. ... That said, Ireland is a very open country and is open to all the pressures of Western secular culture regarding marriage and the family. The theme chosen for the World Meeting of Families thus wishes to stress the role of the family within society and the contribution of families to the overall health and stability of society."

"There are indeed many families in Ireland who struggle with a precarious economic situation. There is a

housing crisis. The Church's catechetical programmes regarding marriage and the family need a complete overhaul in line with what *Amoris Laetitia* sets out. The Dublin Meeting, thus, will be prepared for by a process of catechesis – based on the Apostolic Exhortation - which will take place right across the Church in Ireland during 2017. It is hoped that something of that catechetical process will be shared with other Churches around the World, especially in Europe where we share many of the same challenges. The Dublin World Meeting of Families, more than earlier Meetings, should be a world event even in its preparation."

"It is also vital that Church and society commit themselves to enabling families to experience that joy more fully through appropriate political, social and economic measures which support families and help remove burdens which families face", concluded Archbishop Martin. "The World Meeting of Families in Dublin will hopefully be a festival of witness to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The vocation of Christian couples, supported by the Sacrament of Marriage, is a call to witness to that love and to experience the joy of bringing the love of Jesus to those who are troubled and challenged."
