



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

*"The family, which is founded and given life by love,
is a community of persons."*

(Familiaris Consortio 18) St Pope John Paul II.

Dear Clergy,

This summer we are all invited to spiritually gather as a World Family in Christ to celebrate the joy, love, and glory that is the vocation of family life through The World Meeting of Families (WMF), Wednesday 22 to Sunday 26 June 2022.





At past meetings most families stayed at home with the meeting perceived as being something remote, at most followed on television, and unknown to the majority of families. This time WMF will have a special format with an opportunity provided by providence to create a worldwide event that can involve all families that would like to feel part of the ecclesial community.

Under the title **'Rome at Home'** we will be developing ways to celebrate the gift of family life.

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), Pope Francis speaks about **the importance of parish life**. He refers to St Pope John Paul II's description of a parish as "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters" (*Christifideles Laici*, 26). We are encouraged and strengthened through our community, while we are formed by the Holy Spirit.

Pope Francis highlights that **a parish is called to be the presence of the Church in a community**, providing a place where people can hear God's word, grow in discipleship, and extend themselves in love to the poor and needy, bringing families together — a place where we can pray, worship, and celebrate together (*Amoris Laetitia* 87,88).



In a 2005 address, Pope Benedict XVI described the parish as an extended family that “brings together brothers and sisters who have no desire for power or selfish interests, but who live in the joy of the charity of God, who is love.” It is when we come together at Mass, as a community in Christ, that **we see the great variety of families who make up our extended parish family.**

It is a special joy when we see young families taking part in the Mass and engaged in the life of the parish. When babies are crying, or fidgety children are making a noise; these are all signs that the Church is young and alive; a community of young families, mature families, extended families, young and old together.

The World Meeting of Families will offer a great opportunity to remember those families who have fallen away during the pandemic for whatever reason, reflecting on the recent synodal questions: “Are we aware of those at the edge of our community?” and “Are we welcoming?”

What better way to celebrate the joy of family life, than to embrace the opportunity that is this year’s World Meeting of Families, inviting everyone back home to Mother Church to celebrate just as the Father does with the return of the Prodigal Son.



The ways to get involved during the WMOF (22nd – 26th June)

- 1 Share the prayer card with family and friends. Encourage them to list all those (past and present) they will hold in prayer on the back of the card, place it on the mantelpiece or fridge so it is always visible
- 2 Publish the prayer in your newsletter, and share on all your social media platforms using #rome@home
- 3 Have a petition box on the sanctuary throughout the week (label provided) and invite all to submit petitions
- 4 Plan to host a parish picnic to celebrate the joy of family life that coincides with the closing of WMOF and stream the Angelus on the Sunday and listen to the message from Pope Francis
- 5 Use the catechetical resources (www.romefamily2022.com) to devise ways of developing family ministry in your parish

For further information contact Lianne Pap, Marriage and Family Life Coordinator: lianne.pap@rcaob.org.uk



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