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Press Conference to present the Tenth World Meeting of Families

At 11.30 this morning, a press conference was live-streamed from the Holy See Press Office to present the Tenth World Meeting of Families, to take place in Rome from 22 to 26 June on the theme: "Family love: a vocation and a path to holiness".

The speakers were: His Eminence Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life; His Eminence Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, vicar general of His Holiness for the diocese of Rome; Professor Gabriella Gambino, under-secretary of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life; Msgr. Walter Insero, director of the Communications Office of the diocese of Rome; and Giovanni and Elisabetta Scifoni, family representing the diocese of Rome.

The conference was attended by Msgr. Marco Frisina, composer of the hymn for the Tenth World Day of Families, and Fr. Marko Ivan Rupnik, who painted the image that provides the visual symbol of the event.

The following are the interventions by the speakers:

Intervention of His Eminence Cardinal Kevin Farrell

We are now just a few months away from the celebration of the Tenth World Meeting of Families.

As announced by the Holy Father, this edition will not take place with a single meeting in Rome, but will be a genuinely multi-centre event, spread throughout the dioceses of the world. A worldwide event, which will allow all families to take part in diocesan meetings, celebrations and Holy Mass, which each bishop is invited to organise in his own diocese, on the same days that the Pope will gather in Rome only the delegates of the bishops' conferences, movements and family associations.

The beauty of this opportunity lies in the fact that not only the family pastoral workers, but all the families of the

parishes and dioceses will be able to gather around their bishop. We cannot consider supporting family pastoral care if we do not involve families in these important moments of ecclesial encounter, especially as they are the “soil to be irrigated”, but at the same time the “seed to be sown in the world” to make it fertile with real and credible witnesses of the beauty of family love.

To this end, it will be our concern to invite the bishops to adhere to the Holy Father's invitation and to plan both the path of preparation towards the event, and the diocesan event itself, which can take place in the week of 22-26 June 2022, in conjunction with the Pope's meeting in Rome with the delegates.

I would remind you of the importance of using the theme of the Meeting - Family love: vocation and way to holiness - and the symbols that have been chosen (prayer, logo, hymn and image). In these next nine months leading up to the event, which will conclude the Year for the “*Amoris Laetitia* Family”, we have a propitious and still long enough time to incorporate into the programming of the pastoral year of each diocese some moments of reflection in view of the World Meeting.

In the first months of the year, many initiatives have already been taken by the Bishops' Conferences, the dioceses and even by many families to give greater implementation to the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. Everywhere there has been a desire to walk together in this difficult time for all, especially in the world's peripheries. Encouraged by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, it took very little to make everyone feel accompanied, supported and encouraged to work courageously to feel we are Church, united and full of hope. Let us not miss this opportunity to continue with enthusiasm in this decisive time to consolidate initiatives and launch new ones together with the families entrusted to our care.

Intervention of His Eminence Cardinal Angelo De Donatis

The Church of Rome is joyfully preparing to welcome delegates and participants to the Tenth World Meeting of Families. The diocesan community has gladly accepted the invitation of our bishop, Pope Francis, and considers this appointment not only as an extraordinary event, but “a precious opportunity to dedicate ourselves with enthusiasm to family ministry: spouses, families and pastors together”.

During the long preparation phase, which began just over three years ago, the approach to the implementation and development of the event underwent several changes and substantial modifications, due to the pandemic.

We thank Pope Francis for this privileged opportunity that he offers to the city of Rome and to the whole world. It is undoubtedly “an opportunity of Providence to create a worldwide event capable of involving all the families who wish to feel part of the ecclesial community”.

The choice of the city that preserves the memories of the Apostles Peter and Paul as the main venue for the meeting highlights the original vocation of the Church of Rome, which “presides over the communion of the Churches”. The ecclesial community of Rome, in fact, will welcome the delegates of the family pastoral care of the world Episcopal Conferences to attend the Meeting, in communion with the initiatives promoted at a local level by the other Churches.

In addition to the year dedicated to *Amoris Laetitia*, the preparation of the Tenth World Meeting of Families coincides with the first stage of the synodal process in our diocesan Church (October 2021 - April 2022). Our ecclesial community, involved in the “dynamism of mutual listening”, will give priority to listening to families with the intention of “walking together” with the pastors, in the awareness that only by listening to each other, as the Holy Father reiterated, will we listen to the Spirit speaking to the Church.

In this context, the diocese of Rome is making every effort to ensure that all the families of the world, especially those who cannot reach Rome, can also participate in the Meeting and live this extraordinary experience of faith.

In conjunction with the preparation and holding of the World Meeting of Families, the ecclesial community of Rome will continue to support some initiatives of the diocesan Caritas, already present in the area, in favour of families in difficulty. This will involve expressing feelings of solidarity and assistance to some families who, partly because of the pandemic situation, are in conditions of poverty.

Among the solidarity projects that we intend to support, in a special way, on the occasion of this great world event, I would like to point out the *Emporio della Solidarietà Santa Giacinta*, located inside the *Cittadella della Carità* in Via Casilina Vecchia, a real supermarket where needy families can shop for free. There is also the *Casa dell'Immacolata*, in the Alessandrino district, which welcomes homeless mothers and children, help and sustenance; and Casa Wanda, in the Villa Glori Park, where elderly people suffering from Alzheimer's live and where their families are also supported.

I am sure that this meeting, presided over by our bishop, Pope Francis, will be an event of grace and communion for the families, in our diocesan Church and in the other Churches throughout the world.

Intervention of Professor Gabriella Gambino

I would like to give some practical information for the preparation and holding of the Tenth World Meeting of Families.

With regard to the event to be held in Rome, the pastoral congress and festival will take place in the Paul VI Hall. Approximately two thousand delegates (including many families) will be able to attend. They will be invited directly by the Bishops' Conferences and by the heads of the Family Associations and international ecclesial movements. The number of delegates for each bishops' conference will be proportional to the size of the conference. There will also be a set number of delegates for the movements and associations. This number will be communicated directly to them by our Dicastery in the coming weeks, so that each Conference and movement can begin to identify its own delegates.

To the bishops in the dioceses throughout the world, we will send suggestions directly for organising the event, for the first time, at local level. We realise that it is not easy to take the initiative, especially in some geographical areas and in some particular pastoral situations, but we encourage everyone to try to involve families in this adventure. Many families wish to participate and would like to be involved even if only at diocesan level.

In the dioceses, the meetings can be structured around the theme chosen by the Holy Father, which is the basis for the 7 catecheses that will soon be published by the diocese of Rome in five languages and will be available to the whole world. These catecheses constitute in themselves a path of preparation for the meetings to be held both in Rome and in the individual dioceses.

The pastoral congress in Rome will be structured as follows: on Wednesday 22 June, in the afternoon, there will be the Festival with the testimonies of the families, in the presence of the Holy Father; on Thursday 23, Friday 24 and Saturday 25 morning, the pastoral congress, which will include celebrations and Eucharistic adoration, pastoral conferences and panels to bring into dialogue pastoral experiences from all over the world. On Saturday afternoon there will be Mass in Saint Peter's Square, which, as well as including the invited delegates, will be a moment open especially to the families of the diocese of Rome, who will be able to gather around their bishop, the Holy Father. Everyone, of course, will be able to follow the week via streaming and partly also on television. The choice of Mass on Saturday afternoon was made to allow families around the world to celebrate with their bishop on Sunday. The programme will conclude on Sunday morning with the Angelus with the Holy Father in Saint Peter's Square.

Families, on every continent, from home, via their computer or smartphone, will have the opportunity to participate at a distance with a special form of registration, both during the path of preparation – indeed, over the

course of the next few months, once registered, they will receive information on the pastoral tools that will gradually be made available by our Dicastery - and by following the meeting in Rome in the week of 22 to 26 June 2022 by direct digital means.

Intervention of Msgr. Walter Insero

One of the main challenges will be not only to enhance communication, but to encourage social participation in this event, in response to the Holy Father's invitation: "Everyone will be able to participate, even those who cannot come to Rome".

Families from every continent, in addition to the meetings in presence organised at local level, will have the opportunity to feel close to each other, following the World Meeting in Rome via computer or smartphone. The path of preparation will also be made available to everyone in digital form, thanks to the website www.romefamily2022.com. Thousands of participants will be added to the delegates gathered in person.

All the moments of the World Meeting can be followed in streaming on social channels. The inaugural meeting with the Pope, the Festival of Families on 22 June 2022 in the Paul VI Hall, will be broadcast worldwide, as will the Holy Mass on Saturday afternoon, 25 June, with all the families of Rome in Saint Peter's Square, and the Angelus of the following day with the mandate to the families of the whole world.

The website, in these months of approach, will serve mainly to disseminate content that can help the dioceses, movements and associations to organise events, reflections and meetings in local communities. There will be a space for the seven catecheses, which will be published progressively, to which videos with testimonies will be linked. A section of the site is dedicated to the materials produced by the diocese of Rome and the Dicastery, available to all and downloadable free of charge: logos, videos, texts, suggestions. Another section is reserved for practical help to the three Roman projects that support families in difficulty, mentioned earlier by Cardinal De Donatis.

As far as the social strategy is concerned, we have opted for an approach that is in keeping with the widespread and multi-centre approach. The aim is to involve as many social profiles as possible to share our hashtag #wmof22 with them and thus spread our content. Among these, in addition to the videos that will deal with the themes of catechesis, there will be some interviews with Roman families, testimonies of families from other continents, some stories of holy families, etc.

We will strive to be truly close to everyone, especially those who for various reasons cannot travel, aware that, as the Holy Father says, "the internet, with its countless social media expressions, can increase the capacity for reporting and sharing" (*Message for World Communications Day 2021*).

Intervention of Giovanni and Elisabetta Scifoni

It is an honour to be witnesses to this event and to represent all the families of Rome. We are experiencing these months leading up to the World Meeting of Families with a sense of joyful expectation and excitement. We know that something beautiful is about to happen, for us, for Rome, and for the whole world. Intense, rich, even tiring but certainly exciting days are ahead of us, together with our beloved Pope.

We are preparing spiritually for the appointment of June 2022 thanks to some tools that the diocese of Rome and the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life have prepared and given to all families.

First of all, the *prayer*. It has been conceived as a pastoral tool; it can be recited at home, among parents, together with the children; it will also be used in the parish for the meetings of groups, movements and communities. It is a way of thanking the Father for the great gift of the family. The full text is available on the website in several languages.

The diocese has also prepared a beautiful image which will be the symbol of the event. It is not an icon in the strict sense of the term, but a painting. It was created by Father Marko Ivan Rupnik, Jesuit, artist and theologian, director of the Atelier of Art and Architecture of the Aletti Centre. The title is: "This is a great mystery". Warm colours dominate, and the format is 80x80. The background shows the famous episode of the wedding at Cana in Galilee (*John 2: 1-11*), where Jesus performs His first miracle, changing water into wine. On the left, the bride and groom appear covered by a veil, while the servant pouring the wine has, according to ancient Christian iconography, the face with the features of Saint Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles. It is Paul himself, in the light of Christian Revelation, who removes the veil with his hand and, pointing to the union between Mary and Christ, exclaims: "This is a mystery; and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church!" (*Eph 5:32*).

And then we have the hymn entitled "We believe in love". The text and music were composed by Msgr. Marco Frisina. The song clearly takes up the theme of family love, the central theme of the World Meeting in June. The song highlights the great Mystery of the eternal wedding of Christ the Bridegroom and His Church. The family, even with its difficulties, has the power to touch every heart by bearing witness to the Cross as salvation. In fact, in the passage there are touching definitions of the family, such as a fruitful womb of beauty, life and joy; a school of love, light and hope for the world. The family truly has the task of revealing the face of the Creator to the world.

To further help us prepare for the event, a video clip of the hymn was also made. It was shot by director Luigi Pingitore, who wandered through our city, recounting Rome as it awaits the meeting through images of a splendour that spans the centuries. Not only that: the director's journey from the centre to the suburbs reveals the beauty of the family relationships that animate life in the city. In fact, in addition to the choir and Rome, the protagonist is a family that lives its daily life between faith, work and various commitments. But if there is no need for further words: we will see this together...
