



# The Meaning of Marriage

## Newsletter for dioceses and parishes

Issue 9, Sunday 17 May 2015, The Ascension of the Lord and World Communications Day

### Bishops' pastoral statement: *The Meaning of Marriage*



Please read the full text of *The Meaning of Marriage* which is available in English, Irish and Polish on [meaningofmarriage.ie](http://meaningofmarriage.ie)



“The family must always be defended as the main source of fraternity, respect for others and the primary path of peace.”

**Pope Francis**  
9 May 2015

Produced by the Catholic Communications Office of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. See [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie)

### Bishops' guidance on the marriage referendum

**Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference:** Marriage is of fundamental importance for children, mothers and fathers, and society – all of us need to reflect deeply before changing it. We ask the people of Ireland to consider very carefully the profound implications which this constitutional amendment would have on the family environment and on our understanding of parenthood.

**Archbishop Eamon Martin:** The Church's vision for marriage and the family is based on faith and reason and it is shared by many people of all faith traditions and none. Since time immemorial, Church and State have recognised marriage to be of fundamental importance for children, mothers and fathers, and society. To interfere with the definition of marriage is not a simple or a trivial matter.

**Archbishop Diarmuid Martin:** Marriage is not simply about “two individuals who are in love”. The Christian teaching about marriage stresses the complementary relationship between male and female, which is not just a social construction. Marriage is also about a stable and loving relationship where children are generated and educated. Family is also an intergenerational reality. The stability of marriage contributes in a unique way to the stability of society. It is important in our discussions about marriage and the family in these days that people should stop for a moment and reflect carefully on what marriage and the family mean within society and on what a change in our understanding of marriage across society would entail.

For full list of bishops' statements see [www.meaningofmarriage.ie](http://www.meaningofmarriage.ie)

**Archbishop Michael Neary:** “Are we going to be the first generation in human history to say that mothers and fathers don't matter any more in the upbringing of children?”

**Bishop Leo O'Reilly:** “I ask you to think of the wider consequences of this referendum passing. I have serious concerns about the blunt refusal to give any real guarantees regarding freedom of religion in relation to the referendum.”

**Bishop John Kirby:** “Marriage should be reserved for the unique and complementary relationship between a man and a woman from which the generation and upbringing of children is uniquely possible.”

**Bishop Ray Browne:** “The future of humanity passes by way of marriage and family”. This phrase has its origins in words spoken by Pope John Paul II. Is there anything more vital to the wellbeing of society than ‘marriage and family’?”

**Bishop Brendan Leahy:** The forthcoming Referendum is a call to Christians to rediscover the deep foundations of marriage based on the union of a man and a woman who are created to complement each other and, where possible, bring new life into the world.

**Bishop Phonsie Cullinan:** “Will the terms ‘father’ and ‘mother’ have any real meaning in the future? “

Website: [www.meaningofmarriage.ie](http://www.meaningofmarriage.ie) Twitter: @marriagesmatter and on FB.



# The Meaning of Marriage

## Newsletter for dioceses and parishes

Family Prayers for Parish and the Home

### Prayer by Pope Francis for the Synod on the Family

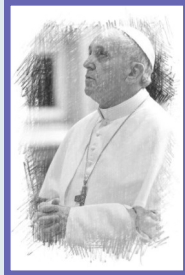
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, In you  
we contemplate  
The splendour of true love, We  
turn to you with confidence.

Holy Family of Nazareth, Make  
our families, also, Places of  
communion and cenacles of  
prayer, Authentic schools of the  
Gospel,  
And little domestic Churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth  
May our families never more experience  
Violence, isolation, and division:  
May anyone who was wounded or scandalised  
Rapidly experience consolation and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth,  
May the upcoming Synod of Bishops  
Re-awaken in all an awareness  
Of the sacred character and inviolability of the  
family, Its beauty in the project of God.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Hear and answer our  
prayer. Amen.



### Prayers of the Faithful

1. We pray for families; that they may, in the words of Pope Francis, communicate by their witness the beauty and the richness of the relationship between men and women, and between parents and children.
2. We pray for families; may they be places full of love, where all members are respected and where parents and children grow in love for one another.

Source: *Intercom* magazine

### Prayer for the Family Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin

Father in Heaven  
You called Louis and Zélie Martin to holiness  
through their married life.  
You gave them as Mother and Father to  
St. Therese of Lisieux.  
Through their intercession,  
we ask you to bless the married couples of our  
diocese/parish and those who are preparing for  
marriage.

Bless our children and our grandchildren.  
Guide us by your Holy Spirit to bear witness in  
our lives to the beauty of the Sacrament of  
Marriage.

Guide us as citizens to make the kind of decisions  
that will support family life, protect marriage  
and respect the dignity of children.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### God's plan for our marriage and family

As we answer God's call in  
our vocation in the  
Sacrament of Marriage to  
follow Christ and to  
serve the kingdom of God in our married  
life, we ask, in and through the concreteness  
of events, problems, difficulties and  
circumstances of everyday life, that God will  
come to us, guiding us and enlightening us as  
we share Christ's love with one another, in our  
family life, at work, in our neighbourhood, in  
our contributions to society and in the life and  
worship of our parish.

AMEN

Inspired by John Paul II, *Familiaris  
Consortio* (51), from *The Family Prayer Book*



Produced by the Catholic Communications Office of  
the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.  
See [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie)

Website: [www.meaningofmarriage.ie](http://www.meaningofmarriage.ie)  
Twitter: @marriagesmatter and on Facebook.