

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Rochester,

Few things are as important in life as family. As a diocese we are very excited about the news of Pope Francis' visit during the September 22-27, 2015 8th World Meeting of Families to be hosted by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The presence of the Holy Father will make the World Meeting of Families and the celebration of a Papal Mass an inspiring and uplifting event for Catholics and non-Catholics alike from all over our diocese and throughout the country!

People are asking us if they will be able to visit, participate and attend these events. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is the host archdiocese and has already begun the registration process for the weeklong events—especially the Theological and Pastoral Congress. Here in the Diocese of Rochester, we are preparing a group of clergy, religious and lay ministers alike to attend the Congress.

Still many of the faithful in our parishes are asking about attending the weekend's "Festival of Families" and the anticipated Papal Mass. At this time there is no information about registration, housing or a schedule of events for this portion of the World Meeting of Families. We are waiting for more news about the Pope's itinerary as it is made available. Right now, we don't have that information. As soon as we know, we will disseminate all information to you.

With all this excitement naturally follows high enthusiasm and high expectations. Pope Francis' visit and the high spirits it is generating should not distract from the purpose of the World Meeting of Families itself: "to explore the critical role the family plays in society and to give families opportunities to talk about the challenges and blessings that all families have" (Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap., "Welcome Letter").

The meeting's theme --- "Love is Our Mission: the Family Fully Alive" --- is a joyfully inspirational message in itself. Commenced by Pope St. John Paul II in 1994, these meetings have circled the globe in seven other cities and, now, to our own "City of Brotherly Love."

For the most current information available about the meeting, groups and individuals should consult the 8th World Meeting of Families website, hosted at www.worldmeeting2015.org.

The Diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis is coordinating our efforts and is available to answer questions and offer assistance to parishes and groups who are eagerly anticipating these events. For any inquiries, please feel free to contact:

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Yours in Christ,

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