

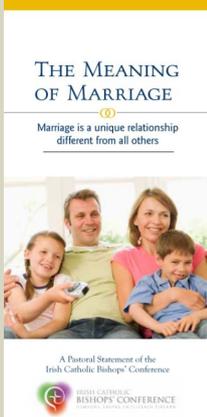


# The Meaning of Marriage

## Newsletter for dioceses and parishes

Issue 4 - Sunday 12 April 2015, Divine Mercy Sunday

### 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 [catholicbishops.ie](http://catholicbishops.ie).

“The human couple has been blessed by God since the beginning to form a community of love and life, to whom the mission of procreation has been entrusted. Christian couples, by celebrating the sacrament of Marriage, indicate they are willing to honour this blessing, with the grace of Christ, for all their life.” – Pope Francis

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

### 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.



### Marriage is important - Reflect before you change it



Marriage is of fundamental importance for children, mothers and fathers, and society - all of us need to reflect deeply before changing it. Ahead of the referendum on 22 May, bishops ask the faithful to carefully consider that:

- Married love is a unique form of love between a man and woman which has a special benefit for the whole of society.
- Our understanding of marriage is deeply rooted in all cultures: it is not intended to exclude or disadvantage anyone.
- To seek to re-define the nature of marriage would undermine it as the fundamental building block of our society.
- Marriage should be reserved for the unique and complementary relationship between a woman and a man from which the generation and upbringing of children is uniquely possible.