



DRAFT

EMBARGOED/CONFIDENTIAL Until 11/17 @ 4 a.m. EST

November 17, 2014

CONTACTS:

Kenneth Gavin
Director of Communications
215.587.3747 (*office*)
610.291.0838 (*cell*)

Meg Kane
Brian Communications
215.385.2938 (*office*)
215.704.4745 (*cell*)

PRESS RELEASE

Pope Francis Will Attend the World Meeting of Families—Philadelphia 2015

The Vatican confirms the Holy Father's visit to Philadelphia next year

Rome, Italy (November 17, 2014) – In remarks offered today in Rome, Pope Francis formally announced his intention to attend the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015, set to be held September 22-27, 2015. This visit will mark his first to the United States and only the fourth visit in the nation's history by a reigning Pontiff.

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., and a delegation of World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 organizers were present for the announcement, which the Holy Father made at the opening of the Humanum Colloquium. Also present were Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, Bishop Jean Lafitte, and Monsignor Carlos Simon Vasquez of the Pontifical Council for the Family, which is the co-sponsor of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015, with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. **Archbishop Chaput said, "I am overjoyed by Pope Francis' announcement that he will join with us for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia next year. A hallmark of his papacy has been a keen focus on the many challenges that families face today globally. His charisma, presence and voice will electrify the gathering."**

"As I've said many times before, I believe that the presence of the Holy Father will bring all of us – Catholic and non-Catholic alike – together in tremendously powerful, unifying and healing ways. We look forward to Pope Francis' arrival in Philadelphia next September and we will welcome him joyfully with open arms and prayerful hearts."

Detailed plans for Pope Francis' visit have not yet been finalized and are expected to be released in spring or summer of 2015. However, it is expected that the Holy Father will visit Philadelphia September 25 – 27, 2015 to participate in the closing events of the Eighth World Meeting of Families. These events include the

Festival of Families, an intercultural celebration of family life around the world, which would be held on Saturday, September 26, and a Papal Mass to be held on Sunday, September 27. Both of these events will take place on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in the heart of Philadelphia and will be open to the public.

The World Meeting of Families is a triennial global event that seeks to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe and highlight its intrinsic value to the good of society. Being held in the United States for the first time ever, the official theme for the 2015 World Meeting of Families is **“Love is our mission: the family fully alive.”**

For more information regarding the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 and Pope Francis’ accompanying visit to Philadelphia, please visit www.worldmeeting2015.org.

About the World Meetings of Families

Beginning with 1994, The Year of the Family, the Pontifical Council for the Family has been responsible for organizing the World Meetings of Families in Rome (1994); Rio de Janeiro (1997); Rome (2000); Manila (2003); Valencia (2006); Mexico City (2009); Milan (2012); and now, Philadelphia (2015). Since its inception by Saint John Paul II, the World Meeting of Families has sought to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe.

###