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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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To the Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Diocese of Trenton:

As a diocese neighboring the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we are very excited about the news of Pope Francis' visit during the September 22-27, 2015 World Meeting of Families there. The incredible, world-wide popularity of the Holy Father will make his attendance and celebration of Mass on the Parkway on September 26 a big draw for Catholics and non-Catholics alike from all over our region.

People are asking me if they will be able to attend. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is the host diocese and has already begun the registration process for the weeklong events --- except for the papal Mass. We will have to wait for more news about the Pope's itinerary as it becomes available. Right now, we don't have that information. As soon as we hear, we will post it on our websites.

With all this excitement naturally comes sky-high expectations. The Pope's visit and the anticipation it is generating should not take away 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 theme of the meeting --- "Love is Our Mission: the Family Fully Alive" --- is a beautifully inspiring meditation in itself. Begun by Pope St. John Paul II in 1994, these meetings have travelled from Rome to seven other cities and, now, to our neighboring City of Brotherly Love."

For all the information currently available about the meeting, the clergy, religious and faithful of the Diocese of Trenton should consult the meeting website, www.worldmeeting2015.org.

At present, I am gathering details to help us, as the Diocese of Trenton, participate in this wonderful week of prayer, sharing and celebration of family life. We also hope to have events throughout the Diocese leading up to the Philadelphia meeting. We will be adding a special section to our own diocesan website -- dioceseoftrenton.org -- that will provide regular updates and be a resource for those who wish to spiritually prepare for the meeting next fall. Please check all these websites often.

Few things are as important in life as family. We look forward to finding out more about the opportunities to celebrate "family" that next year's meeting will provide. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, be our example and our guide!

Sincerely,

Most Reverend David O'Connell, C.M.
Bishop of Trenton