



The first pastoral portion of Pope Francis' **Apostolic Journey to Ireland** for the **World Meeting of Families** will occur on Saturday afternoon when he visits Dublin's St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. There he will meet with **350 engaged and newly married couples**.

Fr Kieran Mc Dermott, the newly-appointed administrator of Dublin's St Mary's Pro Cathedral spoke with Vatican News about what will happen during this event and about the importance of St Mary's Pro-Cathedral for the people of Ireland.

### **Pope scheduled this visit!**

The meeting with engaged and newly married couples is taking place specifically at the request of Pope Francis, Fr Mc Dermott said. Couples from every diocese in Ireland will be present.

Before the Pope's arrival, the couples will participate in a 90-minute pastoral program based on chapter 4 of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

### **What will happen during the visit**

When the Pope arrives, he will first spend a few silent prayerful moments before the altar dedicated in 2010 to survivors of institutional and clerical abuse. Afterward, a couple celebrating their golden jubilee, who are contemporaries of the Pope, will greet him in the name of all present. Then two couples will present the Pope with questions to which he will respond.

Fr Mc Dermott foresees that Pope Francis will address the

*meaning of married love today...the vocation of the family today. He is speaking to the next generation of Irish families.... We don't know what he's going to say, but we're really looking forward to what he has to say to us, and what we can learn from him also from the experience of his own family life which he often refers to.*

## **St Mary's Pro-Cathedral**

Fr Mc Dermott explained that Dublin's Cathedral is relatively modern because Ireland was impacted "hugely" by the English Reformation. St Mary's was built after Archbishop Troy established a building commission around 1803 and Dubliners raised money. The Cathedral was blessed in 1825 by Archbishop Daniel Murray on the Feast of St Laurence O'Toole, the principal feast of the Archdiocese. It is located in the north of Dublin's inner city in a poor neighborhood. "The people of Dublin have a great affection and love for the Pro-Cathedral", Fr Mc Dermott said. He also explained that it has "hosted some significant events, such as state funerals".