



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE



Over a thousand expected to Share the Dream

Media Release

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From 15-17 April at Xavier College in Kew, An expected 1500 people will gather in for the National Family Gathering *Share the Dream*.

This event is the 3rd of its kind in Australia and is hosted by the Melbourne Archdiocese of behalf of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life (BCPL).

Matthew MacDonald from the Life, Marriage and Family Office in the Archdiocese of Melbourne said that the event aims to draw together families from across Australia to celebrate their role in evangelising society.

“We hope to try and give families something that’s a little like World Youth Day. The idea is to give people a sense that they are not alone in their faith. Even though they might feel like fish out of water or that they are all alone and swimming against the tide – there are many who share their vision and values as well as their troubles and challenges”, he said.

Pope John Paul II held the first World Meeting of Families in Rome in 1994 and it has become an international event which takes place every four years. Australian families who attended the 1998 event in Rio de Janeiro suggested it was something that could be replicated here.

Chair of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life Bishop Eugene Hurley said that this event is extremely important for families, to inspire and encourage them.

“These events give people a sense that they are not alone in the world. Our culture can be very individualistic and we really want to affirm families”, said Bishop Hurley.

“In 2000, there was a conference called *Dare to dream*, which was a similar format to what *Share the Dream* will be. The first event was very well received and around 1300 people came along. In 2004, they ran a similar kind called *Living the dream*.”

“These events are titled as such because we do dream of a society in which the family is held up as the most important institution and we want to encourage people to dare to have that, live that and share that dream”, he said.

The conference is extremely inexpensive, the same price whether you have one child or 10, with early bird family registration just \$250.

“Keynote speakers include Bishop Jean Laffitte, Secretary to the Pontifical Council for the Family; Melinda Tankard Reist; Byron and Francine Pirola; Dr Brigid McKenna and Dr Adam Cooper. A variety of married couples, religious, and different people who are experts in their field will conduct workshops on a wider variety of relevant topics”, said Matthew.

For more information or to register for this gathering, please contact Beth Doherty 0407 081 256, Matthew McDonald (03) 9287 5579 or visit the website www.sharethedream.org.au