**Speaking Notes for Address to Pope Francis by Archbishop Eamon Martin, President of the Irish Bishops Conference**

*A Athair Ró Naofa,*

*Ar son chomhaltaí Chomhdháil Easpaig na hÉireann, ba mhaith liom a rá go bhfuilimid fíor bhuíoch as ucht an cúirt speisialta a rinne tú go Baile Átha Cliath le hagaidh an naoú Chruinniú Domhanda na dTeaghlach. Is mór an onóir agus an bheannacht é seo don Eaglais in Éirinn agus don tír féin.*

Most Holy Father,

On behalf of the members of the Irish Episcopal Conference, I would like to say how deeply grateful we are for the special visit you have made to Dublin for the IX World Meeting of Families. This is a blessing for the Church in Ireland and for our country.

The last time we talked together with you was during our ad limina visit to Rome in January last year, when we shared our hopes for the World Meeting of Families. Today we give thanks to God that the last few days have indeed proven to be such an inspiration and joy for so many people. Your presence with us, Holy Father, has brought great happiness to Ireland and you have given us many reasons to hope for the future of the Church in this island and beyond.

The vibrant participation - especially by young families - in the activities of these past few days has encouraged us bishops and reminded us that this is our time to be shepherds, and it is an exciting time to be Church. This is our time for living. This is our time for believing. This is our time for mission and for teaching the truth that the Gospel of the Family is indeed “Joy for the World”.

Holy Father you have seen during your short visit that Family life remains strong in Ireland. Parents continue to want the best for their children in this complicated world with so many distractions and false promises. Our task is to convince them that in Christ they can find a reason for living, a reason for hoping and a path to genuine happiness and fulfilment for themselves and their family.

Your Holiness, as you return to Rome we wish to assure you of a special remembrance in our prayers for your ministry as successor of St Peter, the one who was called to confirm his brethren. We ask you to carry with you the prayers of the people of God in this country, and us their pastors whom the Lord has appointed to care for them.

Guímis rath Dé ortsa, a Athair Naofa, agus ar do chuid saothar i gcónaí. [*Holy Father, we pray success from God on you and on your work always*]