

The Power of the Catholic Family

Nordic Catholic Family Conference May 1-3, 2015

The Nordic Catholic Family Conference, a second of its kind, will be organised in the beginning of May (Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon) in the vicinity of Copenhagen, Denmark. Small and large families are all welcome to join both the serious and the joyful activities of the conference, with special programme also for children and youth. As languages, both English and "Scandinavian" are used.

The place of the conference is on the grounds of a camping hostel, and participants can choose between different kinds of lodging: tents, caravans, or proper rooms. All meals are included in the very economic prices of the conference: the whole stay in a room for a family of four costs only 3.900 DKK, which is only about 525 €. And plane tickets to Copenhagen are also relatively inexpensive.

Please go to the internet pages of the conference: <http://familiekonference.katolsk.dk/2693/> in order to learn more and have a look at the programme; and read the main speaker's invitation next to this text. Sign up through the same web page.

KATT



Being the Love ABC

Family event

The first weekend in May thousands of people step on each other's toes in Tivoli in Copenhagen. What should have been a great day for the family often ends up being an unhappy and very expensive experience. Why not spend the weekend and your money at the Nordic Catholic Family Conference in Ishøj some 15 km south of Copenhagen? There you will get some nice food served; there will be a lot of fun for your kids, discussions and new perspectives on Catholic family for the adults and the opportunity to make new friends. And last but not least – there will be no hurting toes ...

So what is a Catholic family? In my definition it is a small community where



Deacon Bjørn Håkonsson will be the key note speaker at the Nordic Catholic Family Conference in Ishøj 1.-3rd of May.

at least one of the members pray to God, trust in Him or have not forgotten Him completely. The same definition applies to the Church. The Church is indeed like a family. We can compare it with the Holy Family of Nazareth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph - just in a much larger scale. That is why the Bible talks about "brothers" and "sisters" and calls God our "Father".

A distinct union

What is so special about being a family, a father, a mother and children? A man and a woman are the progenitors and the safe environment for the new and vulnerable life. The family is like a Love ABC by being and meaning something for others and by coming to life through others. These basic relationships cannot be ignored even if we are being separated or hate each other. Despite the fact that he is drunk again or being imprisoned he is still my father. Both my mother and my father are God's gift to me - maybe I have difficulties saying this but the gratitude still lives in my heart (something I perhaps first recognize when they are dead). That is why it is painful when our family life fails. So we need inspiration from other families and above all we need God – He is the source of every true community.

What are the challenges?

A modernistic culture has swept across our countries during the last century and suppressed the Christian faith so that we have lost our inner compass. Many feel

that marriage and family life has become a burden. Our kids are always online and do not listen to what we, the parents, tell them. We have become our 'own project' and only that which is right in front of us has become the essence and meaning of life. What a poor outlook! We all need to breathe the fresh air again – our life needs a true perspective and vision so we can live a full life again. We need to bring God back to our families and to the public life. Let us be proud of our Christian faith so that our children do not need to hide it. All everyday problems begin in the morning – the time God has created for prayer. But instead of praying we are already full of plans and worries. We never have time to experience God's blessing in the morning. We are busy listening to the news while making coffee and reading the newspapers that tell us the most important news today. We are angry and grumpy and want the bathroom for ourselves. What is the result? Even if we manage to eat breakfast, leave the house in good order and catch the bus on time, none of us is really happy.

We can learn much from our children! A boy placed a note above his bed. On the note he wrote "Morning!" It was the first thing he noticed after waking up. Place a small bowl of holy water on your bedside table. Dip your finger and make the sign of the cross as the very first thing you do before getting up. It signifies: We enter the new day together with God.

The best thing about the Church

I have been asked to give a presentation at the Family Conference. I hope it will animate the discussions during the weekend in Ishøj. My main issues will be: how to communicate in the marriage, how to transform our home to a sacred space, family life with small children, teenagers and grown-ups, and how to boost life in your community.

So what is my vision of the Church? Let me tell you a story: I once had an eager boy at one of our youth camps. His mother was very proud of him when he came home because his suitcase was perfectly packed, just like she had done when he left. The reason was that the happy boy had not changed his clothes one single day during the camp! We did not notice it because the camp was so exciting and the program was full of activities. That is how I imagine the Church at its very best. So be it (which in Hebrew means AMEN).

Text: Deacon Bjørn Håkonsson



DEN NORDISKE VALFART TIL LOURDES

Pohjoismaiden katolilaisten pyhiinvaellus Lourdesiin 3.-10. elokuuta 2015

Matkoja on tehty yli 50 vuotta ja järjestelyt ovat tasokkaita. Matkalla on mukana Tromssan katolinen piispa Berislav Grgic ja useita pappeja Pohjoismaista sekä lääkäreitä ja sairaanhoitajia, koska mukaan tulee myös sairaita. Matkalle mahtuu 70 henkeä. Messujen yms. kielenä on tanska tai ruotsi.

Matkan hinta on 7000 Tanskan kruunua (n. 940 €), joka sisältää edestakaiset lennot Kööpenhaminasta Montpellierin, sieltä bussilla Lourdesiin, jossa täysihoito Hotel La Solitudessa (4 tähteä) 2 tai 3 hengen huoneissa (oma huone + 1500 DKK), ja ohjelmavihkon. Muita kuluja retki Bartresiin ja ryhmäkuva yms.

Matkan Suomesta Kööpenhaminaan ja takaisin jokainen hoitaa itse tai haluttaessa tehdään ryhmä.

Ilmoittautuminen kaavakkeella, jonka on oltava perillä 30.4. ja samalla on maksettava 2000 DKK (n. 270 €) + mahd. peruutusturva 500 DKK. Koko hinnan on oltava maksettuna 1.7.2015. Pankkiyhteys IBAN DK93 3000 0009 0005 93, SWIFT-BIC DABADKKK.

Kaavakkeet lähetettävä osoitteella: Pia Handberg, Elefantens kvt 8 B, DK-2620 Albertslund, Tanska. Kaavakkeita ja lisätietoja saa myös p. 09-8765 308 Kaarina Koho.

Katsokaa myös www.lourdes.dk tai info@lourdes.dk

