

Press release from the Diocese of Portsmouth

Friday 8 July

For Immediate Release

Bishop of Portsmouth announces action plan to support married couples

The Bishop of Portsmouth has introduced a number of reforms in his diocese in order to better support married couples.

In response to the papal document *Amoris Laetitia*, Bishop Philip Egan will outline a number of reforms in a pastoral letter, which is due to be read in every parish across the diocese this weekend.

The letter reads: “Over the next couple of years or so in the Diocese of Portsmouth, I would like us all, clergy and people, building on the good work already being done, to review and develop our pastoral practice in these four areas: marriage promotion, marriage preparation, marriage care and marriage ‘repair’. Indeed, in the light of *Amoris Laetitia*, I want us to develop new approaches to getting married.”

Amongst the many ways in which the bishop hopes to better support married couples is a new requirement of at least 12 months notice from engaged couples of their intention to marry.

He said: “Most weddings these days are planned well over a year in advance, but this new diocesan norm makes clear the desire of the Christian community to assist couples from the earliest opportunity. It will give time to speak of the beauty of Christian marriage and its life-long nature, to invite couples to come to know family prayer and to know better the Person of Jesus Christ.”

Bishop Egan also said that ordinarily he would like Catholics to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation before their wedding day:

“I would like Catholics getting married in church to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, which completes our Christian initiation and is the foundation of our lives as disciples of Jesus. After all, marriage is a vocation to service like the priesthood, and so just as the priesthood and the promise of celibacy ‘for the sake of the Kingdom’ needs the help of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, so too does married life.”

In his pastoral letter, Bishop Egan also announced that he would be inviting all engaged couples to Portsmouth Cathedral on Valentine’s Day next year for a special celebration.

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For more information please contact Kirsten McGuire PA to Bishop Egan

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