

Some people don't have a family.

Some people live in complicated mixed-up sorts of families. Some people live in families that give them much pain.

All family life, indeed all human life, all relationships are a work in progress, *going on as we do by faith and not by sight*.

The end of our journey remains invisible. The perfect family, that perfect relationship, that totally satisfying and fulfilling love always remains beyond our grasp, something to aspire to rather than to possess.

This is the vision of Pope Francis in his Encyclical *Amoris Laetitia*. The family, he says, is a beautiful thing but it is a journey rather than a destination. And the Church is to accompany each and every individual, each and every people and family on that journey. It doesn't matter where we are on that journey. The Church tries to love us rather than judge us, to listen to us rather than lecture us, to open up before us that journey into God Himself.

*"This is what the Kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know."* This is human life. This is family life. What matters is the sprouting and the growing, the journeying and the reaching out. Only God can bring the harvest. And, what is more, he will only bring that harvest in his own good time.

Some of us are going on a pilgrimage in August to Dublin, for the World Meeting of Families. The whole Church is on a pilgrimage, every family is on a pilgrimage, a pilgrimage to *our home with the Lord*, to the reaping of the harvest, to the God who is Love, father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Father Michael