
Austria: Pöllau, 900 people participated in the “Jungfamilientreffen”. “Meeting of Young Families” to take place in Berlin in August for the first time

The “Jungfamilientreffen” (Meeting of Young Families) ended in Pöllau, Styria, on Sunday. 900 people took part in the event that was held from 19 to 24 July, including 170 families with 400 children and over 200 volunteers and entertainers. The organisers drew a positive balance of the 20th edition of the gathering: Robert Schmalzbauer, from the “Initiative Christliche Familie” (ICF), told Kathpress news agency that he was satisfied that “the encouraging image of a living Church” emerged from the meeting. Families in Austria and neighbouring countries were offered a relaxing and spiritual week, with conferences and workshops aimed at strengthening good marriages and family leadership and at deepening their relationship with God. Keynote speakers on the general theme “Called to Freedom!” included French preacher Jacques Philippe from the Beatitudes Community, and couple Ferdinand and Margrit Trauttmansdorff. One of the highlights was the pilgrimage of the families to the Church of Pöllauberg with Bishop Wilhelm Krautwaschl of Graz, who encouraged families to keep walking as families with Christ: “‘Christ lives in me!’: this simple and beautiful sentence from the Apostle Paul, however, can only be lived if we continue to be open to and look for God’s presence”, said Mgr. Krautwaschl in his homily. For many participants, it was important to renew their wedding vows, the Bishop said, noting that the beauty of conjugal love is particularly evident in couples: “This is also an important message for our time - that marriage is still valuable as a special vocation and needs support, encouragement and appreciation”. Also, for the first time, the experience will cross borders with the Austrian event serving as a model for the “Meeting of Young Families” that will take place in Berlin from 4 to 7 August.

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