

## **FAMILY-FRIENDLY IMMIGRATION LAWS URGED**

### **Vatican Highlights Importance of Keeping Families Together**

VATICAN CITY, MAY 17, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The family is "indispensable" for social cohesion and peace, therefore "responsible family policies" of immigration that facilitate the regrouping of families are necessary, a Vatican note states.

This was the joint message made public Friday by the Pontifical Councils for the Family and for Migrants and Travelers, on the occasion of the observance of the U.N.'s International Day of Families, which was observed Saturday.

The note of the two dicasteries, in keeping with the magisterium and pastoral interventions in recent years on this issue (set out in the pastoral instruction "Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi") stressed the importance of policies that make possible the cohesion of immigrants' families, as part of the recognition of their human rights.

On this occasion, the joint communiqué highlighted the importance the Church gives the family, not only for migrants but also for social peace.

The family, stated the text, is irreplaceable "for the happiness of its members, for peace and for social cohesion, for educational development and general well being, for economic growth and social integration."

"Family cohesion constitutes the vital means to preserve and transmit values, acts as guarantor of cultural identity and historical continuity, ensures an environment that foster learning and offers effective remedies for the prevention of crime and delinquency," the note continued.

However, the text added, migratory movements cause ruptures that affect "individuals, native citizens and immigrant citizens" and, "above all families."

"Hence, in the migratory context the family appears as a challenge and possibility, not only for the migrant and his loved ones, but also for groups of the countries of departure and of arrival," the communiqué stated.

The Holy See noted that at present "the number" is increasing enormously "of women that leave their country of origin to seek a more fitting life, nourishing the dream of bringing their spouse with them, their children and perhaps their closest relatives."

Also, the text added, "minors and the elderly also enter the maelstrom of migratory currents, taking with them the sad baggage of loss, loneliness and of being uprooted, at times intensified by exploitation and abuse."

The dicasteries stated that the family unit, "disintegrated by the migratory plan, longs to be reconstituted, also for greater success in the process of insertion in the host societies"; hence, "responsible family policies" are needed that "facilitate regrouping, that allow illegal immigrants to come out of their situations of anonymity and precariousness through practical ways, and which guarantee the right of everyone to social and civil participation and co-responsibility, also through recognition of the right of citizenship."

Both councils appealed for the adoption of "appropriate measures that facilitate, on one hand, insertion in the social fabric that receives the immigrants and their families and, on the other, occasions of growth -- personal, social and ecclesial -- based on respect of minorities, of the different cultures and religions, in addition to the mutual exchange of values."

In this connection, they advocated "education and inculturation" directed to "establishing more friendly relations between individuals and families, in the realm of the school and in life and in work, with priority attention given to infants, to adolescents and to young people, in a world of rapid changes."

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