

VATICAN NOTE FOR UN'S WORLD FAMILY DAY

"Family Cohesion Constitutes the Vital Means to Preserve and Transmit Values"

VATICAN CITY, MAY 17, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of the joint message sent by the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers and the Pontifical Council for the Family on the occasion of the International Day of Families, which was convoked by the United Nations and observed on Saturday, May 15.

The day had as its theme: "The Impact of Migrations on the Families of the World."

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The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that the family is "the natural and fundamental element of society" (article 16) and Pope Benedict XVI asserted that the family is the "place and resource of the culture of life and factor of integration of values" (Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2007), hence it must be the object of the "greatest protection and assistance possible" (Pact of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 10).

The family has an irreplaceable role for the happiness of its members, for peace and social cohesion, for educational development and general well being, for economic growth and social integration. The solidity of family ties, in fact, guarantees stability, protects social balance and promotes development. Family cohesion constitutes the vital means to preserve and transmit values, acts as guarantor of cultural identity and of social continuity, ensures an environment favorable to learning and offers effective remedies for the prevention of crime and delinquency.

Hence, civil society and Christian communities are injected with the problems and difficulties, but also with the values and the resources of which each family is bearer.

We see, however, that migratory movements make deep furrows in the historic present of peoples and cities, of states and continents. This affects individuals, native citizens and immigrant citizens. Above all, it affects families. Hence, in the migratory context the family emerges as a challenge and possibility, not only for the migrant and his loved ones, but also for the groups of the countries of departure and arrival.

In fact, next to traditional masculine migration, the number of women is growing exponentially who leave their country of origin to seek a more fitting life, cultivating

the dream of bringing with them their spouse, their children, and perhaps their closest relatives. Also minors and the elderly enter in 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.

Hence, the family unit, disintegrated by the migratory plan, longs to be reconstituted, also for greater success in the process of assimilation in the host societies.

For these reasons, we hope that the competent institutions will elaborate responsible family policies, which facilitate regrouping, which will allow illegal immigrants to come out of situations of anonymity and precariousness through practical means, and that they will guarantee the right of everyone to social and civil participation and co-responsibility, also through recognition of the right of citizenship.

Finally, I encourage 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 the mutual exchange of values.

Education and inculturation can contribute to create a new sensitivity, geared to establishing more friendly relations between individuals and families, in the realms of school, life and work, with priority attention to children, adolescents and young people, in a world of rapid changes.

Solidarity and reciprocity, in respect of legitimate differences, are indispensable conditions to ensure peaceful interaction and a serene future to our civil societies and ecclesial communities.

Cardinal Ennio Antonelli

President of the Pontifical Council for the Family

Archbishop Antonio Maria Veglio

President of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers

Vatican City, May 14, 2010

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