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## Preparations Intensify for World Meeting of Families

### Symposium Considers How Families Are Affected by Media, Entertainment

By Salvatore Cernuzio

ROME, JAN. 13, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- With some 140 days remaining before the 7th World Meeting of Families, which will include the participation of Benedict XVI in Milan, the preparations are intensifying.

A symposium to prepare for the May 30 to June 3 meeting was held this week at the Pontifical Lateran University.

The symposium, fruit of synergy between the John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Marriage and the Family and the Pontifical Pastoral Institute Redemptor Hominis of the same athenaeum, was titled "Such a Family for Such a Society."

Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family and one of the organizers of the World Meeting, was one of the participants.

Speaking of the theme, the cardinal told ZENIT that "the cinema, art in general, information media, must be respectful of the profound dimension of the reality of the human person, in families, in work, in celebration."

"If they don't trivialize all this, reducing it to an object, they can be very useful to human growth and to a greater awareness of what man and life are," Cardinal Antonelli added.

The congress opened with the greeting of Monsignor Dario Vigano, president of the Redemptor Hominis Institute, and the brief but profound intervention of Bishop Enrico Dal Covolo, rector of the university, who reflected on how the media increasingly shapes family relations, reshaping times, spaces and roles, and specifying new challenges, in the light of the present educational emergency of which the Pope has so often spoken.

"By way of a concrete example, what is the image of woman that emerges from the media today? The image of an 'aggressive' woman, who desperately pursues her personal fulfillment, at the cost

of drastically reducing her presence and irreplaceable role in the family," lamented the rector. "I am convinced that the conversion of our society, must pass through the conversion of women: It is necessary and urgent that women abandon this pernicious image of themselves, furnished and fueled by much of the media."

The rector's intervention was followed by that of Monsignor Livio Melina, president of the John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, who stressed again how the subject of the family cannot be bypassed, inasmuch as it is "central and crucial, not only for the ecclesial society but for the whole of society."

Moreover, in regard to the collaboration between the family and the cinema, the institute's president reflected how the family is not "immediately evident in its positivity": in fact, the family is "a mystery, not in the sense of something dark, but of a human reality in which the revelation is guarded of the vocation of man to be a gift of himself and the revelation of God that is reflected in it."

The cinema, often representing this reality, "seems at times to discredit it, objectivizing it, so much so that John Paul II himself feared the risks of its representation in this sense," he added.

### Open homes

Putting the accent again on the great event of May 30 was Father Davide Milani, the director of communications in the Ambrosian diocese, who explained how the idea of the Meeting was born and how, despite the fact that there are still four months to go, "it can certainly not be said that in Milan this event has not already begun."

It began, in fact, specified Father Milani, "in the laborious expectation that, from the Ambrosian Church, is infecting the Lombard city and the civil society," already mobilized to effect the ideal conditions to receive the close to 100,000 families that will arrive.

An exorbitant number, so much so that, "for some weeks there has been under way the search for Milanese and Lombard families prepared to open the doors of their homes," offering "physical and heartfelt" hospitality, the priest explained.

After the report of professor Jose Noriega Bastos, titled "The Narrations of the Cinema and the Good of the Family," the series of interventions were beautifully closed by Chiara Palazzini, vice-president of the Redemptor Hominis Institute.

The focus of Palazzini's address was the relations or "aspects of bonds and references of meaning, which link members of a family in an inter-generational dimension." Hence, relations between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, siblings, and how they are often represented in an unfitting manner by the media, in particular by fiction.

"The future and serenity of all citizens, namely of today's children who will be tomorrow's adults, depends on the well-being of the family and of the positive relations established among its members," concluded the professor.

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