



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO VALENCIA (SPAIN) ON OCCASION
OF THE FIFTH WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

WELCOME CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

*Airport of Manises
Saturday, 8 July 2006*

*Your Majesties,
Mr President of the Government,
Distinguished Authorities,
My Brother Cardinals and Bishops,
Dear Brothers and Sisters:*

1. With great joy I come today to Valencia, to the noble and much-loved land of Spain, which has given me so many grateful memories from my earlier visits for Congresses and meetings.

2. I cordially greet all of you, those here present and all those following this ceremony through the communications media.

I am grateful to His Majesty King Juan Carlos for his presence, together with the Queen, and in particular I thank him for his words of welcome in the name of the Spanish people.

I express my respectful appreciation to the President of the Government and to the other national, autonomous-regional and municipal Authorities. I am grateful for their cooperation in the organization of this Fifth World Meeting.

I greet with affection the Archbishop of Valencia, Monsignor Agustín García-Gasco, his Auxiliary Bishops, and the whole "levantine" Archdiocese for their warm welcome to this World Meeting. I know that in these days you are grieving with the families mourning their dear ones who were victims of a tragic accident, and are also close to the injured.

My affectionate greeting also goes to the President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, and to the other Cardinals, the President and members of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, the priests, the consecrated persons and all the lay faithful.

3. My reason for this long-awaited visit is to take part in the Fifth World Meeting of Families, whose theme is "The Transmission of Faith in the Family". I wish to set forth the central role, for the Church and for society, proper to the family based on marriage. The family is a unique institution in God's plan, and the Church cannot fail to proclaim and promote its fundamental importance, so that it can live out its vocation with a constant sense of responsibility and joy.

4. My venerable predecessor, a great friend of Spain, the beloved John Paul II, convoked this Meeting. Prompted by the same pastoral solicitude, tomorrow I will have the privilege of concluding it with the celebration of Holy Mass in the City of Arts and Sciences.

In union with all taking part, I will implore from the Lord, through the intercession of our Most Holy Mother and the Apostle Saint James, plentiful graces for the families of Spain and of the whole world.

May the Lord abundantly bless all of you and your beloved families!

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