



# The Holy See

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**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE RECITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIXTH WORLD DAY OF FAMILIES  
HELD IN MEXICO CITY**

*Saturday, 17 January 2009*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Dear Families,*

I wish all of you who have gathered to celebrate the Sixth World Meeting of Families under the motherly gaze of Our Lady of Guadalupe "Grace... and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes 1: 2).

You have just finished praying the Holy Rosary, contemplating the Joyful Mysteries of the Son of God made man who was born into the family of Mary and Joseph and grew up in Nazareth in the intimacy of the home, amid his daily occupations, prayer and relations with neighbours. His family welcomed him and protected him lovingly, initiated him into the observance of the religious traditions and laws of his people and accompanied him to human maturity and the mission for which he had been destined. "And Jesus", says the Gospel according to St Luke, "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Lk 2: 52).

The Joyful Mysteries have alternated with the accounts of several Christian families from the five continents that are, as it were, an echo and a reflection in our time of the history of Jesus and his family. These accounts have shown us how the seed of the Gospel continues to germinate and bear fruit in various situations in today's world.

The theme of this Sixth World Meeting of Families *The family, teacher of human and Christian values* reminds us that the home environment is a school of humanity and Christian life for all its members, with beneficial consequences for people, the Church and society. In fact, the home is

called to live and to foster reciprocal love and truth, respect and justice, loyalty and collaboration, service and availability to others, especially the weakest. The Christian home, which must "show forth to all men Christ's living presence in the world and the authentic nature of the Church" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 48), must be imbued with God's presence, placing in his hands everyday events and asking his help in carrying out its indispensable mission.

For this reason prayer in the family at the most suitable and significant moments is of supreme importance since, as the Lord himself assured us: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18: 20). And the Teacher is certainly with the family that listens and meditates on the Word of God, that learns from him what is most important in life (cf. Lk 10: 41-42) and puts his teachings into practice (cf. Lk 11: 28). In this way, personal and family life is transformed, gradually improved and enriched with dialogue, faith is transmitted to the children, the pleasure of being together grows and the home is further united and consolidated, like the house built upon rock (cf. Mt 7: 24-25). May Pastors not cease to help families to benefit fully from the Word of God in Sacred Scripture.

With the strength that stems from prayer the family is transformed into a community of disciples and missionaries of Christ. In the family the Gospel is welcomed, passed on and it radiates. As my venerable Predecessor Pope Paul VI said: "The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them" (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 71).

By living filial trust and obedience to God, fidelity and the generous acceptance of children, care for the weakest and promptness in forgiving, the Christian family becomes a living Gospel legible to all (cf. 2 Cor 3: 2), as a sign of credibility that is perhaps more persuasive and better able to challenge the world today. The family should also bring its witness of life and explicit profession of faith to the various contexts of its surroundings, such as the school and various other associations. It should also be committed to the catechetical formation of the children and the pastoral activities of its parish community, especially those related to preparation for marriage or specifically addressed to family life.

Coexistence in the home is a gift for people and a source of inspiration for social coexistence, showing that freedom and solidarity are complementary, that the good of each one must take into account the good of the others and that strict justice demands openness to understanding and forgiveness for the sake of the common good. Indeed, social relations can take as a reference point the values that constitute authentic family life in order to become increasingly humanized every day and directed towards building "the civilization of love".

Furthermore, the family is also a vital cell of society, the first and decisive resource for its development. It is also, frequently, the last resort for people whose needs the established structures cannot meet satisfactorily.

Because of its essential role in society, the family has a right to have its proper identity recognized that is not to be confused with other forms of coexistence. It is likewise entitled to expect proper cultural, legal, financial, social, and health-care protection and, most particularly, to receive support that, taking into account the number of children, provides sufficient financial resources to allow it to choose the type of education and school freely.

It is therefore necessary to promote a family culture and policy that the families themselves can develop in an organized manner. For this reason I encourage them to join associations that promote the identity and rights of the family, in accordance with an anthropological vision consistent with the Gospel, while I invite the said organizations to cooperate with one another to ensure that their coordinated activity may be more effective.

To conclude, I urge all of you to have great trust, for the family is in the Heart of God, Creator and Saviour. Working for families is working for the worthy and luminous future of humanity and for the construction of the Kingdom of God. Let us humbly invoke divine grace so that it may help us to collaborate with enthusiasm and joy in the noble cause of the family, called to be evangelized and evangelizing, human and humanizing. this beautiful task, may we be accompanied by the maternal intercession and heavenly protection of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, whom I invoke today with the glorious title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and to whom, as Mother, I entrust the families of the whole world.

Many thanks.