



The Holy Family and the holiness of families

In his *Angelus address*, marking the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, in 2007, the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, speaking in Spanish, said :

"Contemplating the mystery of the Son of God, who came into the world surrounded by the affection of Mary and Joseph, I urge Christian families to experience the loving presence of the Lord in their life.

At the same time I urged them to bear witness, before the world, of the beauty of human love, marriage and family, finding inspiration in Christ's love for mankind.

Based on an indissoluble union between a man and a woman, it [the family] constitutes the privileged sphere in which human life is welcomed and protected, from its beginning to its natural end..."

The Holy Father's words were carried, via satellite video-link, to the Plaza de Colon in Madrid, Spain, where a meeting and celebration of the family, sponsored by the Spanish bishops' conference, was being held.

An estimated two million people attended to bear witness to **the family**, *defined as a man, a woman, and their children*

. The meeting also sought to assert the responsibility of parents in the education of their children and the absolute need for the state to support the family as an institution in which children and the elderly are welcomed. Every Spanish diocese and Church movement was represented at this celebration.

Recently the Spanish Socialist government had given legal recognition to homosexual unions and has decided to eliminate religious education from schools.

The Holy Father added:

'Parents have the right, and the fundamental duty, to educate their children in their faith, and the values that give dignity to human existence. It is worthwhile to work for the family and marriage, because it is worthwhile to work for human beings, the most precious being created by God.'

