

Its foundation is in marriage and in God's plan

TO BRAZILIAN PRELATES: SUPPORT CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

VATICAN CITY, 25 SEP 2009 (VIS) -



The family, "founded on marriage as a conjugal alliance in which man and woman mutually give and receive", was the central theme of the Holy Father's meeting today with prelates from the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (Northeast 1-4), who have just completed their "ad limina" visit.

In his remarks the Pope noted how, in their reports to him, the bishops had highlighted the fact that "families are beleaguered and under siege". Yet, he pointed out, "despite all negative influences", the people of north-eastern Brazil "remain open to the Gospel of life".

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The Church teaches . . . the secular world teaches



"The Church", Benedict XVI went on, "tirelessly teaches that the family has its foundation in marriage and in God's plan". Yet "the secularised world is dominated by profound uncertainty on this matter, especially since western societies legalised divorce. The only recognised foundation seems to be individual subjectivity, expressed in a desire to live together".

"In this situation the number of marriages is falling because no-one wants to commit themselves on such fragile and unpredictable grounds, the number of 'de facto' unions is increasing and divorces are on the rise. It is in this fragile scenario that the drama of so many children is played out - deprived of the support of their parents, victims of apprehension and abandonment - and social disorder grows".

A distorted idea of the family

"The Church cannot remain indifferent before the separation and divorce of couples", Pope Benedict cried, "before the break-up of homes and the repercussions on children, who need extremely precise points of reference for their instruction and education: in other words determined and confident parents who participate in their upbringing".

"This is the principle that is being undermined and compromised by the practice of divorce, through the so-called extended and mobile family which increases the number of 'fathers' and 'mothers' and leads to a situation today in which the majority of those who feel orphaned are not children without parents but children with a surplus of parents. This situation, with its inevitable ... crisscross relationships cannot but generate internal conflict and confusion that contributes to giving children a distorted idea of the family".

Solution is to return to the solidity of the Christian family

"The firm conviction of the Church is that the true solution to the problems which married couples currently face and which weaken their union is a return to the solidity of the Christian family, a place of mutual trust, of reciprocal giving, of respect for freedom and of education to social life".

"With all the understanding the Church feels towards certain situations, couples in their second marriage are not like those in their first; theirs is an irregular and dangerous situation which must be resolved, in faithfulness to Christ, finding, with the help of the priest, a way possible to rehabilitate everyone involved", the Holy Father said.

Families draw strength to overcome trials from the Sacrament of Marriage

He then invited the prelates to encourage priests and pastoral care centres "to accompany families so as to ensure they are not seduced by the relativist lifestyles promoted by cinema, television and other communications media". And the Pope concluded: "I trust in the witness of families who draw the strength to overcome trials from the Sacrament of Marriage. ... It is on the foundation of families such as these that the social fabric must be recreated".

[Stats on Divorce in Ireland](#)

