



How is the Catholic Family to survive this culture of death with its dignity and faith in tact without the support of other Catholic Families who share their faith and values? The Church has been called to be the light of the world (cf. Mt 5:14). If the family is to fulfill its role in building up the Church and becoming the leaven in society, then we must stand together and support each other to live and proclaim the "Gospel of Life".

*Mark Power M.I.  
Feast of the Assumption of  
the Blessed Virgin Mary*

## *Church and American Politicians Agree: No Future Without Family*

*Well Attended Meeting in Buenos Aires*

**BUENOS AIRES, AUG. 4**

(ZENIT).-Yesterday, Archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires inaugurated the 3rd Meeting of American Politicians and Legislators, being held in the Argentine capital from August 3-5, at the initiative of the Pontifical Council for the Family. The theme of the meeting is "Family and Life 50 Years After the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." The Archbishop said that threats against life and the family are "the greatest storms in history" that Christians are suffering at present -- product of the "culture of death" that characterizes society.

Two hundred fifty politicians and legislators of all political currents are participating, among them: Belisario

Betancourt, former president of Colombia; Hector Gross Espiell, former Uruguayan Chancellor; Severino Cavalcante Ferreira, second Vice-President of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies; Argentine President Carlos Menem, and the two leading Argentine presidential candidates: Eduardo Duhalde and Fernando de la Rúa.

### **Defense of the Vulnerable**

During the homily of the meeting's inaugural Mass, Archbishop Bergoglio warned that we seem to be witnessing the emergence of "a model of society in which the powerful prevail, marginalizing and even eliminating the vulnerable. I am thinking of the unborn, defenseless victims of abortion; the elderly and terminally ill, at times, the object of euthanasia; and in so many other human beings marginalized by consumerism and materialism."

"Such a model of society is characterized by the culture of death and, as such, is opposed to the Evangelical message. Faced by this grievous reality, the ecclesial community attempts to commit itself increasingly to defend the culture of life," continued the homily.

The opening Mass was concelebrated by some 30 Cardinals and Bishops from the Holy See and a variety of America's dioceses.

### **Avoid "Moral Bankruptcy"**

Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, emphasized that the theme of the meeting, is not just of interest to the Church: "The future of humanity necessarily rests on the coherence of life guided by the compass of values, without which no nation can go forward in its historic mission."

"The world cannot declare itself beaten in the great battle for human dignity," the Cardinal said, and he applauded the Argentine authorities for the country's decision to establish the Day of the Unborn, celebrated for the first time last

March 25. It is a "symbol of nobility" and proof that this cause "is in the heart" of the authorities.

### **Menem: No Nation Without Family**

Later in the day, the participants were received by President Carlos Menem, who describes these meetings as "fundamental and vital," because "the family is the primary concern, without which there is no nation."

This is the third meeting of Latin American legislators and politicians called by the Vatican to debate topics related to defense of the family and matrimony. Earlier meetings were held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1993, and Mexico City in 1997.

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## *God's Fatherhood Is Basis of the Family*

*On 4th June, the Holy Father's addressed the 14th plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family. The following is an edited version of the text.*

**VATICAN - 4 JUN.**

"[I]n today's family the father figure is in danger of becoming more and more hidden or even absent. In the light of the paternity of God 'from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named' (Eph 3:15), human fatherhood and motherhood acquire all their meaning, dignity and greatness. 'Human fatherhood and motherhood, while remaining biologically similar to that of other living beings in nature, contain in an essential and unique way a likeness' to God which is the basis of the family as a community of human life, as a community of persons united in love (*communio personarum*)' (*Gratissimam sane*, n. 6)."

2. "..... Just as the Holy Spirit is the life of the Church (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 7), he must also be the life of the family, *the little domestic church*. For every family he must be

the inner principle of vitality and energy, which keeps the flame of conjugal love ever burning in the spouses' reciprocal gift of self.

**“Church’s teaching is based on Revelation and natural law**

“It is the Holy Spirit who leads us to the heavenly Father and enables the trusting, jubilant prayer ‘Abba, Father!’ (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6) to rise from our hearts. The Christian family is called to be distinguished for its atmosphere of shared prayer, in which God is addressed with the freedom of children and called by the affectionate name of ‘our Father!’ May the Holy Spirit help us discover the Father's face as a perfect model of fatherhood in the family.

“For some time now the family institution has been under repeated attack. These attacks are all the more dangerous and insidious since they ignore the irreplaceable value of the family based on marriage. They have reached the point of proposing false alternatives to the family and of calling for legislative recognition of them. But when laws, which should be at the service of the family, a fundamental good for society, turn against it, they acquire alarming destructive power.

“Thus, in some countries there is a desire to impose on society so-called ‘de facto unions’, reinforced by a series of legal effects which erode the very meaning of the family institution. ‘De facto unions’ are marked by instability and the lack of the irrevocable commitment which gives rise to rights and duties and respects the dignity of the man and woman. Instead, there is a desire to give juridical value to a will that is far removed from any form of definitive bond. With these premises how can we hope for truly responsible procreation which is not limited to giving

life, but also includes that training and education which only the family can guarantee in all its dimensions? Arrangements of this sort ultimately put the meaning of human fatherhood, of fatherhood in the family, seriously at risk. This happens in various ways when families are not well established.

matrimony, but rather a weakening of it. In the so-called ‘de facto unions’, we see a more or less serious lack of mutual commitment, a paradoxical desire to maintain the autonomy of one's will within a relationship which should in fact be relational. What is missing in non-marital cohabitation is trusting openness to a

future life together, which love must create and build and which it is the law's specific task to guarantee. In other words, it is precisely the law which is lacking, not in its extrinsic dimension as a mere set of norms, but in its most genuine anthropological dimension as a guarantee of human coexistence and its dignity.

“Moreover, when ‘de facto unions’ claim the right to adopt, they clearly show their disregard for the child's welfare and the minimum conditions he is owed for proper upbringing. Lastly, ‘de facto unions’ between homosexuals are a deplorable distortion of what should be a communion of love and life between a man and a woman in a reciprocal gift open to life.

**“In the home parents represent the good Father in heaven**

4. “Today, especially in wealthier nations, there is a widespread fear of being parents

coupled with a disregard for the right of children to be conceived within the context of total

human self-giving, which is an indispensable prerequisite for their peaceful and harmonious growth.

“Thus, an alleged right to fatherhood or motherhood at any cost is asserted, and its exercise is sought through technical means



3. “When the Church explains the truth about marriage and the family, she does not do so only on the basis of the data of Revelation, but also by taking into account the demands of the natural law, which are at the foundation of the true good of society and its members. In fact, it is important for children to be born and raised in a home where parents are united in a faithful covenant.

“It is quite possible to imagine other forms of relationship and cohabitation between the sexes, but none of these, despite some people's contrary opinion, offers a real juridical alternative to



involving a series of morally illicit manipulations.

“Another feature of the cultural context in which we live is the tendency of many parents to renounce their role in order to be merely friends to their children, refraining from warning and correcting them even when this is necessary for teaching them the truth, albeit with every affection and tenderness. It therefore should be stressed that the education of children is a sacred duty and a shared task of the parents, both father and mother: it requires warmth, closeness, dialogue and example. In the home parents are called to represent the good Father in heaven, the one perfect model to inspire them.

“Fatherhood and motherhood, by the will of God himself, intimately share in his creative power and consequently have an intrinsic reciprocal relationship. On this subject? I wrote in the *Letter to Families*: ‘Motherhood necessarily implies fatherhood, and in turn, fatherhood necessarily implies motherhood. This is the result of the duality bestowed by the Creator upon human beings ‘from the beginning’ (*Gratissimam sane*, n. 7).

“This is another reason why the relationship between man and woman is the cornerstone of social relationships: while it is the source of new human beings, it closely binds husband and wife, who have become one flesh, to each other and, through them, their respective families.

5. “Dear brothers and sisters, as I thank you for your dedication to defending the family and its rights, I assure you of a constant remembrance in my prayer. May God make fruitful the efforts of all those who, in every part of the world, are devoted to this cause. May he help the family, the bulwark and defence of humanity itself, to withstand every attack.

With these sentiments, I am pleased now to renew my warm invitation to families to participate in the Third World Meeting of Families, which will be held in

Rome during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. I also extend this invitation to the associations and movements, especially those that are *pro-life* and *pro-family*. In the light of the mystery of Nazareth, we will reflect on fatherhood and motherhood from the standpoint of the theme I have chosen for the occasion: “Children, the springtime of the family and of society”. The mission of parents, called through an act of love to cooperate with the heavenly Father in the birth of new human beings, God’s children, is a great and noble one.”

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## *Inaugural Family Day 24 October 1999.*

***Plans are well and truly underway for the Association of Catholic Families’ inaugural Family Day***

The association of Catholic Families will be holding its first Family Day for Toowoomba and district on Sunday 24 October, 1999. Holy Name parish, 190 Bridge St, North Toowoomba has been confirmed as the venue for the day which will begin at 11:30 AM with a Tridentine Mass (celebrated according to the 1962 Missal) followed by a BYO Bar-B-Que lunch at 12:30 PM. By 2:00 PM we will begin with a Rosary, after which it is hoped that adults and youth will be settled quickly for a talk, while the younger children are taken for catechetical activities and games.

The guest speaker for the day is Fr John Rizzo of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter. Fr Rizzo has visited Australia twice before and will be taking up residence in Melbourne next year when the Fraternity opens its first Australian House.

The activities for children will be based on a format provided by the Missionaries of Faith. The Missionaries of Faith is a newly formed apostolate. The president of

Missionaries of Faith is well known convert and Catholic Biblical Scholar, Dr Scott Hahn.

If anyone is able to help in the preparations for the day, or would like to volunteer as a catechist to assist in looking after the children, could you please contact the acting president of the ACF at the address below. Details about the Family Day will be made available in the near future.

Thankyou.

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