

Mexico 2004: Mexico City Declaration

Our Purpose

We address ourselves to all people of goodwill who, with the majority of the world's people, value the natural family. Challenges to the family's very legitimacy as an institution include extreme individualism, easy divorce, radical homosexual activism, irresponsible sexual behavior, and the reinterpretation and misapplication of human rights. To protect and promote the family and to direct public policy with a family perspective, this Declaration asserts principles and recommends actions that respect and uphold the vital functions that the family plays in society.

The Family and Society

Principle

The natural family is the fundamental social unit, inscribed in human nature, and centered on the union of a man and a woman in the lifelong covenant of marriage. The natural family is defined by marriage, including extended family members, procreation, and adoption. Secure and stable families that welcome children are necessary for a healthy society.

Actions

- *Encourage governments to uphold and maintain the natural understanding of marriage.*
- *Provide special benefits to the unique relationship of man and woman in marriage.*
- *Recognize that the security of nations and the survival of civilization depend upon the strength of families worldwide.*
- *Establish an effective information system to compile and disseminate information on family friendly policies.*
- *Promote research on family issues through specialized institutions.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family and Marriage

Principle

Marriage, the cornerstone of healthy family life, brings security, contentment, meaning, joy and spiritual maturity to the man and woman who enter this lifelong covenant with unselfish commitment. In marriage, both husband and wife commit to a life of mutual love, respect, support

and compassion. Steadfast commitment in marriage provides the security in family life that is needed by children. Children are entitled to the complementary parental love and attention of both father and mother, which marriage bestows. Due to the importance of a child being raised by a mother and a father, social policies should not encourage cohabitation or single parenting.

Actions

- ***Present marriage as a desirable good for men and women.***
- ***Implement programs to prepare men and women for marriage in order to increase their chances of success.***
- ***Promote measures that aid in the healing of troubled marriages and broken homes.***
- *Revise laws to encourage commitment to the marriage relationship.*
- *Take legal or other appropriate action in cases of abusive relationships.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family and Children

Principle

The natural family provides the optimal environment for the healthy development of children. Healthy family life fulfills the basic human need to belong and satisfies the longings of the human heart to give and receive love. The family shapes the human person's attitude towards such fundamental matters as identity, security, responsibility, love, morality, and religion. In personal and intimate ways, the natural family cares for its children and provides for their spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, psychological, and ethical growth.

Actions

- *Encourage and support mothers in their essential role in caring for their children.*
- *Recognize the vital role of fathers in child rearing.*
- *Facilitate adoptions as a means to provide children with a family and to reduce abortions.*
- *Recognize the right of all children to a father and a mother.*
- *Support agencies which assist women and families in crisis.*
- *Strive for a society where all families have access to good homes, health care, and nourishment and opportunities for physical, intellectual and recreational development.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family and Sexuality

Principle

Sexuality exists for the expression of love between husband and wife and for the procreation of children in the covenant of marriage. Marriage between a man and a woman forms the moral context for sexual union. The complementary natures of men and women, both physically and psychologically, are evident throughout the course of human history and in every society. Deviations from natural sexual behavior cannot truly satisfy the human spirit. Culture, society, and government should encourage standards of sexual morality that support and enhance family life.

Actions

- *Give unique recognition to the societal benefits of the complementary relationship of man and woman in marriage.*
- *Take appropriate actions to assist homosexuals in programs of voluntary rehabilitation.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to recognize and encourage the unique importance of traditional marriage.*

The Family, Life and Bioethical Issues

Principle

Every human person has intrinsic value throughout the continuum of life from fertilization until natural death. Every human life is a gift to the person, the family and society. Loving families cherish and serve all their members, including the weak, aged and handicapped. Taking innocent human life through abortion and euthanasia is a direct attack on human life and dignity. Respect for human life demands the life-protecting options of adoption and palliative care. The destruction of embryonic human beings, lethal human embryo experimentation and abortifacients also involve the wrongful taking of human life.

Actions

- *Protect and respect through public policy the inherent dignity of human life.*
- *Prohibit by law all forms of artificial manipulation of human life that threaten human dignity, including cloning, in vitro fertilization, abortion, and embryo experimentation.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family and Population

Principle

Procreation is the key to the survival of the human race. An increasing number of countries are experiencing below population birth rates due to misguided population-control programs that promote contraception, abortion, delayed marriages, and the abandonment of the institution of marriage. Demographic growth is an indication of the expansion of human resources that represents challenges and opportunities, not burdens (poverty, hunger, and disease have other causes, including a lack of good will and misuse of governmental resources). These problems can

be solved by education, creative social policies, economic development and promotion of family integrity regardless of geographical boundaries, cultural practices and religious affiliation.

Actions

- *Make individuals aware of the positive social consequences of parenthood within marriage.*
- *Provide incentives by the state and educational institutions to promote marriage and support the natural family and pro-life policies aimed at reversing the declining fertility rate.*
- *In countries with below replacement birthrates, encourage an increase in population to provide a broad foundation to help support the expanded elderly population.*
- *Allocate public resources to encourage responsible married-couple families to have children.*
- *Craft an economic system that allows women to stay home and to bear the number of children they desire.*
- *Affirm that environmental improvement can be compatible with population growth.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family and Education

Principle

Parents possess the primary authority and responsibility to direct the upbringing and education of their children, except in clear cases of abuse and neglect. By its nature, education is not only technical and practical but also moral and spiritual. The family is the child's first school with parents their first and most important teachers. The state usurps the parental role when it monopolizes and mandates the educational system and deprives parents of their intrinsic authority over their children's education. School curricula should not undermine the right of parents to teach their children moral and spiritual values. Parents have a duty to their children and to society to provide their children an adequate education. Parents should be free to spend their resources for education, including tax money, on the schools of their choice, such as sending them to a religious school or educating their children themselves in the home.

Actions

- *Structure state policy to respect the natural authority and primary responsibility of parents over the education of their children.*
- *Craft policies that are responsive to parents who need assistance in fulfilling this duty.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family, Economy and Development

Principle

The natural family is the fundamental unit in society for economic growth and development. Promoting the dignity of families and respecting their rights are necessary conditions for a healthy and stable society. A nation cannot create true wealth if its policies lead to family disintegration. Policies that promote responsible government, sustain economic growth, care for the environment, and promote cultural harmony also support need of the family. The advancement of economic, social, technological and political growth is necessary, but not sufficient for, true human development.

Actions

- *Formulate and implement public programs which include the family perspective within all government entities.*
- *Require evaluations of the impact of public policies on the natural family.*
- *Empower families to break the cycle of poverty.*
- *Include the health and stability of the family as an indicator of development.*
- *Facilitate work conditions that allow both men and women to fulfill their respective family responsibilities.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family and Government

Principle

Government should protect and support the natural family and not usurp the vital roles that it plays in society. Government policies should not create pressure for mothers to enter the workplace when they would prefer to care for their families full time. Government should secure an orderly, lawful, and just society that allows families freely and responsibly to:

- Marry and bear children
- Pursue meaningful work
- Provide for their material and health needs
- Direct the education and upbringing of their children
- Participate in charitable, civic and recreational activities
- Care for elderly family members
- Provide security for their present and future generations, and
- Practice their religion.

Actions

- *Formulate public policies that allow mothers the choice to remain at home and care for their children.*
- *Make the health of the family the primary focus of international agencies.*
- *Encourage international agencies to embrace the family perspective.*
- *Re-examine international laws and policies that may harm the well-being of the natural family.*
- *Encourage Heads of State and other high governmental officials to issue proclamations affirming the natural family.*
- *Identify or create international mechanisms to foster cooperation in the interests of the natural family.*
- *Promote public policies with a clear family perspective.*
- *Encourage the media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

The Family and Religion

Principle

As the primary educators, parents have the right to teach their religious and moral beliefs to their children and to raise them according to their religious precepts. Based on and consistent with the human right to religious liberty, families have the right to believe, practice and express their religious views. Religious institutions should not accommodate cultural trends that undermine the created nature of the family. Religious institutions have the crucial cultural-leadership role of affirming that:

- The natural human family is established in creation
- The family is essential to a good society, and
- Life and sexuality are gifts from the creator to be enjoyed, respectfully and wholesomely.

Actions

- *Recognize that the state, its agencies, the media or other entities should not undermine the parents' role in teaching their children a belief system and raising them accordingly.*
- *Encourage media and other institutions (such as schools and non-governmental organizations) to uphold the above principle.*

Call to Respect the Family

We exhort all persons, families, social entities, governments, and international organizations

throughout the world to adopt the family perspective to craft and pursue realistic targets for action, and to respect and uphold the institution of the natural human family for the good of present and future generations, in accordance with the principles and recommended guidelines of the Declaration adopted at the third World Congress of Families in Mexico City.