Communiqué of the Conference “Orthodox and Catholics protecting the family together (Vatican, 13 November 2013)

The Pontifical Council for the Family and the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate held a conference on “Orthodox and Catholics protecting the family together” on November 13, 2013, in Rome. The conference was opened with addresses by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, and Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

The two addresses showed a similarity of positions in basic questions concerning the theme of the family. The common point is concern for the state of the family in the globalized world, which was expressed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia at his meeting with Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia on December 7, 2012, in Moscow, as he underlined that both the Orthodox and the Catholics are faced today with alarming tendencies of destruction of the institute of the family in today’s society, viewed by many as unconstructive and dangerous.

The participants believe that the conference marked an important stage in the common aspiration of the two Churches to protect and strengthen the family, which, according to Pope Francis, is ‘the engine of the world and history’.

The both sides analyzed the deep crisis experienced by the family today. The hegemony of individualistic and consumerist culture keeping in step with the globalizations of the market has as its consequence first the weakening and then destruction of the family and, together with it, any sustainable form of social life. The so-called alternative forms of “family life” are multiplying today. There is an increasingly popular conviction that individuals can “form a family” in diverse ways, alleging that “only love” is important. The family is not rejected but ranked with other forms of life together presented as compatible with it while actually depriving it of its meaning.

It is especially necessary today that the Christian heritage should influence the modern culture. The elimination of the notion of sex assignment targeted by the new gender culture awaits our unambiguous and clear answers. Marriage, which is the union of man and woman, realizes the differentiated culture without the unification of what is different. Marriage corresponds to the requirements of human being and is a good news for today’s world, especially for the de-Christianized society.

The theme of relations between the generations becomes especially important in a society in which the number of the elderly is rapidly growing. It affects a vast sphere of the rights of the family which includes the rights of children, the elderly, the sick, and the right to work, rest, etc.

The conference reinforced our conviction that we bear common responsibility for making marriage and family life a way to sanctity for Christian families. Addressing the treasury of the theological, spiritual and cultural heritage of our Churches, we make our Christian witness to the value of marriage and family ever more relevant and effective.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/52040/