



Communiqué of the ‘Christians Faced by the Challenge to the Institution of the Family’ Conference, Kaunas, 10 January 2011

We, the representatives of Christian confession – Catholics, Orthodox and Evangelical Lutherans – in evaluating the contemporary dangers hanging over the institution of the family and taking as our reference point the Gospel of Christ and ancient Christian tradition, declare that:

The family, created on the basis of marriage, is the foundation of the state and the Christian Church. Only families based on marriage provide the environment in which the human person may be worthily conceived, may be born and brought up with dignity and be developed in all his aspects. However, today this vital mission of the family has been rendered difficult to a significant degree because of the false understanding of freedom which equates the institution of the family based on marriage to other ‘unions’ as well as other forms of cohabitation and partnership.

We, the representatives of Christian confessions, insist firmly on the natural essence of the family and call upon people, Christians and non-Christians, to use wisely the gift of freedom granted by God to the human person.

The contribution of the Christian family to the common life of nations and countries, especially those of Europe, is beyond doubt and fundamental. Indeed, the cultural roots of Europe grew from Christianity and are intertwined with it.

We, the representatives of Christian confessions, united by faith in Christ, once again call upon people to listen to the good news of the family and marriage as instituted by the Creator and sent by him into the world. In accepting the challenge of contemporary reality, Christian families must be, as before, the hope and guarantee of European civilization. The personal contribution of believers of all confessions, as well as of all people of good will, is essential for the defence of life from the moment of conception until natural death. It is essential to protect and support cultural traditions favourable to the family, the inviolate nature of marriage, the obligations of marital fidelity, at the same time emphasizing the importance of upbringing within the family and recognizing the inviolate and primary right of parents to educate their children in matters of sex by actively participating in the adoption of legislation favourable to the family and based on its natural essence, thus cultivating in society the ideals of the greatness and perfection of the vocation of family life.

The contemporary post-modern world is replete with dangerous attacks against life rooted in the Gospel and general human values. The foundations of the family are especially rocked by the attempts to legalize homosexual partnerships, the practice of abortion, artificial insemination, the creation of *in vitro* embryos and the use of 'donor' cells, as well as euthanasia. In this regard we believe that co-operation between all Christian confessions is essential for the defence of the family, human life and dignity. We are prepared to extend our hand to all brothers and sisters in Christ who feel the same anxiety for the preservation of human life and the family, for the fate of Christianity and the whole world.

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