

Reinforcing family life

30 May 2023

Message for the launch of the Family Global Compact

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Pope Francis

Dear brothers and sisters!

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, I expressed my conviction that “the welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church” (No. 31). With this in mind, I wish to support the Family Global Compact, a collaborative plan aimed at bringing the pastoral care of families into dialogue with centres of study and research on the family located in Catholic universities around the world. An initiative of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences, the Compact is inspired by studies and research on the cultural and anthropological relevance of the family and the new challenges it faces.

The goal is synergetic: to enable the pastoral care of families in the particular Churches to benefit from the research and the educational and training programmes in Catholic universities. Together, the universities and programmes of pastoral ministry can more effectively promote a culture of family and life in this time of uncertainty and a certain shortage of hope. Solidly grounded in present realities, such a culture would help new generations to appreciate marriage and family life with its resources and challenges and the beauty of generating and nurturing human life. What is urgently needed, in a word, is “a more responsible and generous effort to present the... motivations for choosing marriage and the family and in this way, to help men and women better respond to the grace that God offers them” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 35).

Catholic universities have the task of developing in-depth theological, philosophical, legal, sociological and economic analyses of marriage and the family, in order to uphold their importance within contemporary systems of thought and action. Studies have revealed a crisis in family relationships, fueled by both contingent and structural problems, which, in the absence of adequate means of support from society, make it more difficult to create a serene family life. This is one reason why many young people are choosing unstable and informal types of emotional relationships over marriage. At the same time, surveys make it clear that the family continues to be the primary source of social life, and point to the existence of good practices that deserve to be shared and promoted globally. Families themselves can and should be witnesses and leaders in this process.

The Family Global Compact is not meant to be a static programme aimed at crystallizing a few ideas, but a process structured in view of four goals, namely:

1. Initiating a process of dialogue and greater collaboration among university study and research centres dealing with family issues, in order to make their activities more productive, particularly by creating or reviving networks of university institutes inspired by the social doctrine of the Church.
2. creating greater synergy of content and goals between Christian communities and Catholic universities.
3. promoting the culture of family and life in society, so that helpful public policy resolutions and objectives can emerge.
4. harmonizing and advancing proposals that result from this, so that service to the family can be enhanced and sustained in spiritual, pastoral, cultural, legal, political, economic and social terms.

It is in the family that many of God’s dreams for the human community are realized. Hence, we cannot resign ourselves to the decline of the family in the name of uncertainty, individualism and consumerism, which envision a future of individuals who think only of themselves. We cannot be indifferent to the future of the family as a community of life and love, a unique and indissoluble covenant between a man and a woman, a place where generations meet, a source of hope for society. The family, it should be recalled, has a positive effect on everyone, since it is a generator of common good. Healthy family relationships represent a unique source of enrichment, not only for spouses and children but for the entire ecclesial and civil community.

I thank all those who have joined the Family Global Compact and those who will do so in the future, and I invite them to devote themselves with creativity and confidence to every initiative that can help put the family once more at the heart of our pastoral and social commitment.

