

Opening remarks

As President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, and on behalf of His Holiness, Pope Francis, I extend warmest greetings to the President and Founder of the World Congress of Families, Dr Allan Carlson, and to all participants at the opening of this seventh international event.

The Pontifical Council for the Family has been honoured to support previous Congresses, and today, is very grateful for the opportunity to be in solidarity, once again, with a wide array of organizations, associations and individuals, men and women of different faiths, of good will, as well as of various cultures and backgrounds. We all share a common belief in the importance of the natural family for the future of civilization. We all come together to learn from each other and to read the signs of the times together.

I congratulate the organizers of this Congress from New Zealand and Australia. Their own societies are indeed, already multicultural, with some areas being almost a microcosm of the world-wide diversity of the family of nations. And it is in the expression of this diversity that we can look forward also to the participation and the contribution of the first peoples of their lands.

The expression of all this rich tapestry of human traditions and societies, will be further enhanced by the presence of international delegates with their own insights and experiences to share.

Finally, despite distances and commitments here in Rome, it is in a spirit of brotherhood that I wish to assure you of my union with you all, as I pray for a productive time of strengthening the gift that the natural family brings to society. I therefore, wish you and all Congress participants every blessing and success.

With sincere and heartfelt feelings of fraternal closeness, I thank you for your friendship and your kind attention.