



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM  
PRO FAMILIA

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Vatican City, March 23, 2016

Message of the President of the Pontifical Council for the Family  
**Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia**  
for the 2nd National Meeting of Families in Lagos, Nigeria, 11-14 April

Your Excellencies, Dear Nigerian families,

I thank you for having invited me to introduce your national meeting of families. I wish to assure you of my closeness and my spiritual presence.

This meeting is taking place precisely in the days when Pope Francis' Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation—the result of the Pope's evaluation of the outcome of the intense work accomplished over the past two years, which involved the Church and the families around the world—will be published. We are all looking forward to hearing his word and his instructions, which will give us, I am certain, new energy and enthusiasm for facing, with a deeper and more evangelical approach, the challenges that touch the family today.

In Africa, more than in other parts of the world, as many African Bishops present at the Synod frequently attested, the family is truly “God’s family,” the “sanctuary of love and life.” I urge you to advance perseveringly in this direction and to bear daily testimony to it. In the Wednesday catecheses dedicated to the family throughout 2015, Pope Francis explicitly asked the families not to be caught by consumerism and selfishness, to be dispensers of God's love at home, between the generations (the elderly and children), in schools, in the workplace and in the parishes.

Christian families are the privileged subjects of evangelization; as in the days of the first Christians, they are living cenacles of love and testimony. Family pastoral ministry has, among its main objectives, the task of supporting Christian families in this mission of evangelization. St. John Paul II, who loved to be called the Pope of the Family and Life, recalled this strongly in a short phrase during his visit in Gabon: “Families, become what you are!”



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May the family cell, humanity's driving force and patrimony, be the star that guides your nation into the future. Love the family, live the family, bear witness to the family.

May the image of the Holy Family of Nazareth open your lives to the future.

I remember you with all my heart in prayer and bless you in the name of the Lord.

*+ Vincenzo Paglia*

+ Vincenzo Paglia  
Presidente