



Zenit?

Receive zenit

Support zenit

Participate

FAQ

Advertising

Contact us

English > See information

ZENIT Gift-Subscription Campaign - Help us spread our news !

Sending Gift-Subscription

New Zenit Readers by Email: 101582



ZE09011904 - 2009-01-19

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-24840?l=english>

SOCIETY'S FUTURE DEPENDS ON THE FAMILY

Interview With Supreme Knight Carl Anderson

By Karna Swanson

MEXICO CITY, JAN. 19, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The future of society depends on the strong, authentic and visible witness of Catholic families, says the supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus.

Carl Anderson was in Mexico City last week to address the VI World Meeting of Families, which was attended by some 10,000 participants. His address Friday was titled "Solidarity and Family."

Anderson took some time to speak with ZENIT about his address on the concept of solidarity, his impressions of the world encounter, and what he sees as the greatest challenge for the Christian family today.

Q: The topic of your conference was "Family and Solidarity." Why solidarity?

Anderson: The short answer is that's the topic they gave me. But this is such an important term for John Paul II. Obviously because of what happened in Poland and in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, but more especially I think as part of his vision of renewal for the Church and for society.

Understanding that solidarity in the Christian sense is really understood as a communion of being for others, and that was so central to John Paul II in terms of the theology of the body and his whole understanding of the human person as being connected to other people. So this is the idea of solidarity in the family, and then the family as a model for the greater society of witnessing communion and solidarity, and living a life for others: first in the family, but then outside in the community of larger society.

Q: You went from the idea of unity, drawing on the thought of John Paul II, and then spoke of solidarity, drawing on the thought of Benedict XVI. How did you come to that conclusion?

Anderson: Well, what's so remarkable to me, although perhaps in the wisdom of Providence it's just part of what ought to be, [is that] obviously John Paul II and Benedict XVI are two different individuals -- they have two different specialties and interests -- but there is such a parallel between their two ways of thinking. To see Benedict XVI compliment and build upon this whole idea that John Paul II introduced in terms of solidarity, and unity and communion of persons and what that means, and to see Benedict XVI advance it and broaden it and deepen it, just shows the continuity in Church teaching, and the tradition and life of the Church. So, it is a wonderful thing and I think we are very lucky to have these two great Popes in the history of the Church.

- Home page
- Go back
- Printer-friendly format
- PDF format
- Send this to a friend
- ZENIT by e-mail
- ZENIT in RSS
- Give the gift of ZENIT
- Spread ZENIT
- Send your news or press releases
- Comment on this article
- Reprint permission

RELATED INFORMATION

Q: The idea of solidarity in the family seems to be something that happens almost spontaneously. Do you see that solidarity as something that is natural in society, but nevertheless something that is disintegrating?

Anderson: I think that one of the most important insights of John Paul II is this idea that these are not just ideas, but it's actually built into the very structure of human existence by the Creator as part of his design. If we look at the two great commandments -- love of God and love of neighbor -- love is built into the very vocation of the human person, at the very center. And therefore it shouldn't surprise us that the structure of human existence is designed in such a way to lead us to that kind of relationship with each other. And that is one of the most important contributions I think that John Paul II made to the ongoing teaching of the tradition of the Church, and I think that it's something that we're only now beginning to see how important it is and what the broad implications are.

Q: What are the major challenges you see for the family in the United States today?

Anderson: Well, it's hard to know where to begin. Certainly there are the obvious economic, social and cultural pressures. But I think the great challenge that the Christian family faces is to encounter what it means to be a Christian. What it means to say that Jesus is Lord. And to believe what we say in the Creed, and to live that life first within the family, and then outside in greater society. To be a true witness.

Forty years ago, Father Joseph Ratzinger, speaking to a group of students, said that what troubles so many Christians more than the question of whether God exists, is the question of whether Christianity makes a distinctive difference -- whether there is something new in society that we look around and we can see, resulting from Christianity. And this kind of distinctive witness, I think, is a challenge that Christian families face, fundamentally.

Is there a difference between the secular society and the way Christians marry, beget their children, raise their children, educate their children, the way they work, the way they treat their employees, the way they treat their customers and the way they vote? Or is it indistinguishable from the secular society?

If it is indistinguishable, then we go back to Father Ratzinger's great question, then what did Jesus Christ bring that was new? So I think that's the challenge of Christian families.

Q: President-elect Barack Obama will be taking office Tuesday. Many in the United States see his inauguration as a turning point for the country. What do you see ahead for the United States in 2009?

Anderson: I think much of the press -- present company excluded -- swings back and forth to extremes. And I think the expectations now for President-elect Obama are very, very high. The challenges that the United States and the world faces are so great that it requires everyone to be committed to finding solutions and working together to find solutions that make sense.

But, from his campaign rhetoric, especially on family issues, on social issues, on pro-life issues, if he moves forward in that direction, it will present very great challenges to many believers who recognize the sanctity of life, whether they are Catholics or Protestants, or Jews -- even nonbelievers, to some extent. So I think the expectations are tremendously high for the new president, and everybody wishes that he will find some way out of many of the economic and foreign policy issues.

Q: One last question. What should someone who is participating physically or spiritually in this event take away from the VI World Meeting of Families?

Anderson: The future of this society depends upon the family, the future of the family. This is the decisive place of encounter between the Church and culture today. Therefore the witness of Catholic families must be authentic, they must be very strong, and it must be one that its surrounding community can see.


And it must be one which reflects, and I think Pope Benedict has done this in a tremendous way, reflects the joy of being a follower of Jesus Christ, so that people who are not Christians can look at the Catholic family and say, that's a way of living that I would like to have, that I would like to participate in. It's not a series of no's, it's a series of yes's, and it's a joyful way of living, and it's a fulfilling way of living. And I want to be a part of that.

© Innovative Media, Inc.

Reprinting ZENIT's articles requires written permission from the [editor](#).

Themes: [family and marriage](#)

Indexed key words: [knights of columbus](#) [mexico](#)

 [Send this to a friend](#)

 [Comment on this article](#)

 [Printer-friendly format](#)

 [PDF format](#)

 [Home](#)

[ZENIT by e-mail](#) | [ZENIT in rss](#) | [ZENIT as a gift](#) | [Recommend ZENIT](#) | [Help ZENIT](#)

[change edition](#)

| [Terms of use](#) | [Send news and press releases](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Home page](#)

© Innovative Media, Inc.