

## UPF and WFPF Rome, Italy 's webinar: The future of the family

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Rome, Italy - The future of the family was the theme of a webinar organized by UPF and an affiliated organization.

The Italian chapters of UPF and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFPF) organized the online conference titled "Which Family ... Toward Which Future?"

The meeting was held on May 14, 2021, to celebrate the International Day of Families, proclaimed by the United Nations.

Carlo Zonato, president of UPF-Italy, opened the roundtable by reading the United Nations statement, "The family is the fundamental social group and the natural environment for the development and well-being of all its members, particularly children."

Mr. Zonato explained, "Within the UPF vision of peace, the family represents the fundamental cornerstone, and for this reason, every year on the occasion of this day, we dedicate significant reflections to the value of the family."

The journalist Francesca Baldini, moderator of the meeting, recalled the words of Pope Francis, who urged that children be considered as a gift. The pope called on all those who believe in life not to give up, because "it is good to dream, to dream good and to build the future, because without a birthrate there is no future."

She quoted UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon: "The family is the school where love for humanity is taught and learned. When children raised in the love of their parents go out into the world, they care about people in need, as they learned in their home."

The moderator added that the family is "the central core of society, a school where we learn not only to walk and talk but also the values that then delineate us as human persons."

Elisabetta Nistri, president of WFPF-Italy, stated, "Without family and without children there is no development, no renewal, no economy and no future." It is urgent that this institution "be supported through appropriate economic policies and facilities, especially with regard to women's work."

Mrs. Nistri spoke of the importance of motherhood as an opportunity for enrichment and growth, which, equal to paternity, allows one to develop a sense of responsibility toward others, an aspect that also benefits the world of work. She emphasized the value of emotional relationships for the formation of young people's character, as well as "quality time" that parents devote to their children.

"A mature character on the part of young people is also the best way to prevent the phenomenon of violence against women," she said.

Mrs. Nistri concluded by emphasizing that the bonds within the couple, in the family and in society must be based on selfless love in order to create harmonious and happy relationships.

With the help of slides and graphs, Professor Donatella Bramanti, professor of Sociology of the Family at the Catholic University of Milan, showed that "for Italians, the most important aspect of their lives is the

family, even for younger people," even though "marriage is in free fall."

She pointed out "the overtaking of civil marriages over religious ones and the emerging phenomenon of free unions, as an alternative to the formalization of the marriage bond. Witness how the younger generations do not understand the meaning of the marriage bond and its public and social value."



Professor Bramanti explained, "The majority of people would like to have two or more children, but then in fact they hardly get there." She expressed her hope that "this gap can be bridged by the measures we are talking about, an overall commitment of society, which could bring help to the youngest, who wish to form a family and have children."

Professor Luciano Sesta, professor of Moral Philosophy and Bioethics at the University of Palermo, said, "If conflict and competition prevail in the public sphere, in the family sphere there continues to be a dimension of collaboration and gratuitous welcome."

He compared the family to "water which is among the simplest and most vital things" and said, "We realize its importance when it is no longer there than when it is there." Speaking of family conflicts, he noted, "They are the ones that hurt the most and would not be so painful if the value they affect were not sublime."

Professor Sesta said, "The family is the heart of society; it is the last refuge, and the crisis that lacerates effective family ties affects society at its most intimate core." He concluded by stating, "The bond of filiation, the desire to become a parent, the solidity of the bond that keeps mothers and fathers united with their children is the point of the traditional family on which to relaunch a possible reconstruction."

Dr. Annalisa Ronchi, a family and teen coach, opened her talk by stating, "There is a situation that might seem difficult and disastrous, but I believe in parents and in this new form of contemporary family, if it is based on values, but with awareness and able to share them."

She spoke of the importance of parents having a clear understanding of what is behind their "no" and their "yes" and said their inner strength is marked by this awareness. She quoted the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner: "In the first seven-year period we must nourish children with goodness; in the second seven-year period with beauty, so that in the third seven-year period they can see the truth through the eyes of goodness and beauty."

Dr. Ronchi said, "The family and the education of children should be based on the understanding that there is always something good and beautiful in people and situations." She concluded her talk by saying, "The family has changed, but in the heart it must always remain firm in values."

The meeting ended with a session in which the participants presented many questions to the speakers.