

Pope Denounces Abortion Campaigns in Africa

Addresses Kenyan Bishops on Marriage and Family

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 19, 2007 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI denounced international agencies that promote abortion on the African continent, and encouraged the bishops of Kenya to defend life in all its phases.

Pope said this upon receiving in audience prelates of the episcopal conference of Kenya, in Rome for their five-yearly visit.

"While the understanding of Christian family life finds a deep resonance in Africa," he said, "it is a matter of great concern that the globalized secular culture is exerting an increasing influence on local communities as a result of campaigns by agencies promoting abortion."

"This direct destruction of an innocent human life can never be justified, however difficult the circumstances that may lead some to consider taking such a grave step," added the Holy Father.

The Pontiff added, "When you preach the Gospel of Life, remind your people that the right to life of every innocent human being, born or unborn, is absolute and applies equally to all people with no exception whatsoever."

Benedict XVI said "the Catholic community must offer support to those women who may find it difficult to accept a child, above all when they are isolated from their family and friends."

"Likewise, the community should be open to welcome back all who repent of having participated in the grave sin of abortion, and should guide them with pastoral charity to accept the grace of forgiveness, the need for penance, and the joy of entering once more into the new life of Christ," he said.

A blessing

The Pope also spoke of marriage and family life, "which the people of Africa hold in particular esteem."

"The devoted love of Christian married couples is a blessing for your country," said the

Holy Father. "This precious treasure must be guarded at all costs."

The Pontiff continued: "All too often, the ills besetting some parts of African society, such as promiscuity, polygamy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, can be directly related to disordered notions of marriage and family life.

"For this reason it is important to assist parents in teaching their children how to live out a Christian vision of marriage, conceived as an indissoluble union between one man and one woman, essentially equal in their humanity [...] and open to the generation of new life."