

**Message of the Holy Father to the participants of the
Congress on the Family in Jönköping, Sweden**

14-16 maj 2010

I send cordial greetings to all who will be taking part in the Congress on the Family in Jönköping, Sweden, later this month. Your message to the world is truly a message of joy, because God's gift to us of marriage and family life enables us to experience something of the infinite love that unites the three divine persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, are made for love – indeed at the core of our being, we long to love and to be loved in return. Only God's love can fully satisfy our deepest needs, and yet through the love of husband and wife, the love of parents and children, the love of siblings for one another, we are offered a foretaste of the boundless love that awaits us in the life to come. Marriage is truly an instrument of salvation, not only for married people but for the whole of society. Like any truly worthwhile goal, it places demands upon us, it challenges us, it calls us to be prepared to sacrifice our own interests for the good of the other. It requires us to exercise tolerance and to offer forgiveness. It invites us to nurture and protect the gift of new life. Those of us fortunate enough to be born into a stable family discover there the first and most fundamental school for virtuous living and the qualities of good citizenship. I encourage all of you in your efforts to promote a proper understanding and appreciation of the inestimable good that marriage and family life offer to human society. May God bless all of you.