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COMUNICATO DEL PONTIFICIO CONSIGLIO DELLE COMUNICAZIONI SOCIALI

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"The Media in the Family: A Risk and a Richness" is the theme chosen by Pope John Paul II for World Communications Day 2004.

"The theme chosen by the Holy Father", said Archbishop John P. Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, the department of the Holy See which prepares study materials on the theme for distribution to bishops' conferences, "reflects his concern that the media should enrich family life, and not damage it".

"The Holy Father is aware of the vast audience which follows through the media his own pastoral activity in Rome and in his apostolic visits to nations' around the world", Archbishop Foley continued, "and he is also aware of the many periodicals and programs of excellence which help to educate and inspire families, but he is also concerned about the negative influences of the media on family life through materialism and even the depiction of pornography and violence."

World Communications Day, the only worldwide celebration called for by the Second Vatican Council ("Inter Mirifica", 1963), is celebrated in most countries, on the basis of the recommendation of the bishops of the world, on the Sunday before Pentecost (in 2004, May 23).

The Holy Father's message is traditionally published in conjunction with the Memorial of St. Francis de Sales, patron of writers (January 24), to allow bishops' conferences and diocesan offices time to prepare materials for national and local celebrations of World Communications Day.

For the first time, the announcement of the theme was made on September 29, the feast of the Archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel, the last of whom has been designated the patron saint of radio.

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