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Helsinki symposium

Daring to be Families

12/07/2001

"Family: a revolution for the third millennium" was the theme of a one-day conference on November 10 sponsored by the European Training Center in Helsinki. The shared concern to reinforce the nucleus of society drew people from different religious backgrounds. Among the subjects discussed were "the family today," "mother's role," "true feminism" and "relating to children."

Opening the program was Eija-Riitta Korhola, who represents Finland at the European Parliament. While defending the classical notion of family, she analyzed threats to it, both social and personal. Trials, she emphasized, should strengthen the parents' commitment.

Next at the lectern was Mrs. Janne Haaland Matlary, professor of international relations at the University of Oslo. "We mothers," she declared, "must be convinced that true feminism defends every female facet. And what contrasts us from men is our privilege to be mothers."

"What parenthood requires today in a changing society," said professor Max Torres, is "overcoming the fear of being used." Torres teaches business ethics at the IESE business school in Barcelona. He encouraged parents to aim high in cultivating

good habits, regardless of occasional backsliding.

The teachings of Blessed Josemaría on marriage and family were summarized in the final session.

"Marriage is a path to heaven," said Rev. John Farrell, quoting Opus Dei's late founder, "wherein a God-given task has been entrusted to parents," who must ratchet their way upwards by mutual help.

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(07/13/2025)