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# **The Family: Work and Celebration**

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to June 3 in Milan, Italy. The theme for the meeting is ***“The Family: Work and Celebration”***. This is because the question of how to achieve a work-life balance is one that affects families throughout the world.

Pope Benedict XVI explains: “Work and celebration are closely connected to the life of every family. They condition its choices, influence the relationships between husband and wife and between parents and children, and affect the way the family relates to society and the Church. Holy Scripture tells us that family, work and the celebration of feast days are gifts and blessings from God, intended to help us live a fully human life” (Letter to the president of the Pontifical Council for the Family).

This encounter is families’ equivalent of the World Youth Day meetings.

When the World Meeting of Families was held in Valencia, Spain, in 2006, a million people attended.

The website [www.family2012.com](http://www.family2012.com) offers a collection of videoclips in which different families explain some of the problems they face and how they found the solutions, and catechesis to help prepare for the meeting. The catechesis is available in ten different languages, including Chinese, Romanian and Hungarian.

### **The Pope's program**

The World Meeting of Families will have two phases: first, the theological-pastoral congress, and then the meeting with the Pope. The congress organizers are expecting around 10,000 participants, and between 800,00 and a million people are predicted to attend the final Mass which the Pope will celebrate on June 3.

Friday June 1, Benedict XVI will arrive in Milan in the afternoon and will have an encounter with the people of Milan in the Piazza del Duomo. Afterwards he will attend a concert given in his honor at La Scala.

On Saturday morning, he will have a meditation with religious and priests in the Duomo, the Cathedral of Milan, and he will then address young people who are preparing for Confirmation in the stadium of Inter, Milan's football club. Saturday afternoon he will go to Bresso Airport for the encounter with families for the "Feast of Testimonies".

Also at Bresso Airport he will celebrate Mass for a vast congregation on Sunday morning. That afternoon, he returns to Rome.

For further details, see <https://www.family2012.com/en/program/>

## History of the World Meeting of Families

John Paul II thought up these encounters for families in 1992. They are held once every three years in major cities around the world, and their aim is to reflect in depth on the Catholic view of the family. The first World Meeting of Families took place in Rome in 1994. The largest gathering of all was in Manila, Philippines, in 2003. The Milan meeting will be the seventh in the series, and the third of Pope Benedict XVI's pontificate. Organizers are expecting three hundred thousand participants from around the world.