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World Meeting of Families

On September 22, Auxiliary Bishop Robert Barron of Los Angeles opened the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. Some excerpts from his opening address.

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(From Auxiliary Bishop Robert Barron's opening address):

Our deepest task is to lead all of creation in the great chorus of praise. Through our human voices, the

whole cosmos finds its voice, giving praise to God.

When we speak the moral law, when we speak the truths about the body, the truths about the family, the truths about complementarity, we're not seeing it as imposing some alien limitation on freedom; rather, we're posing what makes true freedom possible. That's the hinge upon which an awful lot of this turns. We've been cowed, I think, into prophetic silence ... and so we privatize. We silence ourselves. But part of the *imago Dei* (image of God) is to engage in prophetic speech precisely for the sake of the world. If we stop speaking, it won't be heard. That's the prophetic call.

The Church's extravagant demand, calling us to sainthood, is coupled with an equally extravagant mercy. ... Don't drive a wedge between the two things, and don't pretend it's a

zero-sum game. ... Moral demand all the way; mercy all the way.

Authentic Christianity is religion on the march. It's meant to be brought out to the world. ... We go out, of course, in nonviolence; of course, in love; of course, in compassion—but by God, we go out on march because we're kings meant to “Edenize” the world.

The family is the place where we are taught to be prophets, priests and kings. ... Families where a sense of mission among the children is cultivated and encouraged, that's a family that's learning right praise, and that family can now go out into the world to teach right praise.

A family where basic moral truths are taught and above all lived is a family that is learning how to engage in prophetic speech. It now learns how to go out to the wider society and speak this important truth.

Families where the virtues are cultivated ... that's a family that can now go out to teach the world those same virtues.

Rediscover who we were meant to be, not as private privilege. The image of God is a mission; it's an adventure; it's a command. We carry the image of the King out to the world. Do it confidently, as priests teaching right praise. Do it confidently, as prophets speaking truth. Do it confidently, as kings, people on mission, people on the march.