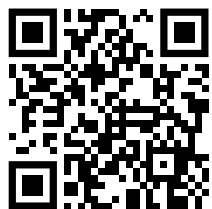


Guide n.5

Video n.5



**The 'foreverness'
and beauty of love**

The 'foreverness' and beauty of love

1.

Love is a dynamic process.

HOLY FATHER

«Marriage is a precious sign. It is the icon of God's love for us. This does not mean that the love spouses have for each other must be perfect... Nobody is perfect. But the love spouses have for each other is a dynamic process that progresses and improves over a lifetime. This is why marriage requires fidelity. Marriage lasts forever».

It is necessary «to accept marriage as a challenge to be taken up and fought for, reborn, renewed and reinvented. (...) If this love is to overcome all trials and remain faithful in the face of everything, it needs the gift of grace to strengthen and elevate it». AL 124

For this reason, in Christian marriage, «the Spirit which the Lord pours forth gives a new heart and renders man and woman capable of loving one another as Christ loved us». AL 120

Donato:

«God is faithful to his plan of Love. He trusts and relies on Christian married couples! The gift of His Love makes the 'forever' possible of two fragile, limited and wounded creatures, who are created 'in His image and likeness' and are therefore destined for eternity, that eternity that is God's 'forever'».

«Promising love forever is possible when we perceive a plan bigger than our own ideas and undertakings, a plan which sustains us and enables us to surrender our future entirely to the one we love». AL 124

«The love they pledge is greater than any emotion, feeling or state of mind. (...) They daily reaffirm their decision to love, to belong to one another, to share their lives and to continue loving and forgiving. Each progresses along the path of personal growth and development». AL 163





Invitation to reflect

Am I truly aware that the love between a husband and wife is much more than a feeling? That love requires my dedication, my will?



Family dynamics

Let us share how we feel each time we are able to overcome a relationship challenge within the family.



Community or group dynamics

Let us prepare a few prayers that can be read during Sunday Mass, to thank the Lord for the gift of each sacrament of matrimony which is a gift for the entire community.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord,
for the gift of the family.

Thank you also when it becomes challenging,
when it requires a struggle and we need to start over again and again,
because You are always at our side.

Thank you, because you love us just as we are
with all our imperfections.

Thank you, because your merciful gaze
encourages us to do better day by day.

We pray that you guide our steps
so that we might always follow you
wherever you lead us,
to reach the heights of love.

Make us strong
so as not to succumb to the thought of giving up.
And grant that we might know how to rejoice
over each small victory along the path of love.

Amen.

2.

Marriage protects love.**HOLY FATHER**

«Marriage demonstrates the seriousness of the commitment between two people who love each other. Not to get married means not to make that commitment public, that there are concerns, perhaps not being convinced, not being sure, who knows...»

«I would like to say to young people that (...) as a social institution, marriage protects and shapes a shared commitment to deeper growth in love». AL 131

«When love is expressed before others in the marriage contract, with all its public commitments, it clearly indicates and protects the 'yes' which those persons speak freely and unreservedly to each other. This 'yes' tells them that they can always trust one another, and that they will never be abandoned». AL 132

Francesca:

«Our forever is a gift above all. We as a couple are especially aware of this when we struggle in building our loving relationship, our intimacy, our dialogue. But it is precisely here that we see the intervention of Grace. Sometimes it happens, for example, that one of our hearts softens and seeks pardon of the other, or that a smile is enough to dissolve the coldness that may have crept into the relationship. Sometimes one of our children says something, makes a joke, or gives a hug that eases the tension between us. This is where we see Grace acting so that we can pick up the journey again...».

«Never let the day end without making peace in the family. 'And how am I going to make peace? By getting down on my knees? No! Just by a small gesture, a little something, and harmony within your family will be restored. Just a little caress, no words are necessary. But do not let the day end without making peace in your family». AL 104

«In the family, 'three words need to be used. I want to repeat this! Three words: 'Please', 'Thank you', 'Sorry'. In our families when we are not overbearing and ask: 'May I?'; in our families when we are not selfish and can say: 'Thank you!'; and in our families when someone realizes that he or she did something wrong and is able to say 'Sorry!', our family experiences peace and joy». AL 133



Invitation to reflect

Am I able to overcome my need to be silent and, when necessary, not to force others when they are silent?



Family dynamics

Let us write on three separate pieces of paper: “please”, “thank you”, and “sorry” (children can also help by drawing pictures). Choose together a place in the house to hang them.



Community or group dynamics

Let us organize a celebration with the renewal of marriage promises.



Prayer

Lord Jesus,
teach us not to be overbearing,
to know how to ask using “please”.

Remove selfishness from our hearts
so that we might know how to say “thank you”.

Grant us the humility to recognize
our mistakes and to know how to say “sorry”.

Amen.

3.

Love faces challenges.

HOLY FATHER

«Don't be afraid to fail: fear is the greatest obstacle to welcoming Christ and His plan for our lives! Be careful of fear!».

«Perfect families do not exist. (...) It is much healthier to be realistic about our limits, defects and imperfections, and to respond to the call to grow together, to bring love to maturity and to strengthen the union, come what may». AL 135

Donato and Francesca

Donato: «Attentive dialogue that involves listening, sharing, communion and even moments of silence allows the spirit to instruct our relationships, our instincts, emotions, desires, feelings... And all this allows Love to grow!».

Francesca: «Our large and small daily infidelities to each other and to our love as a couple show really clearly what we are made of and how illusory it is to think that the two of us are capable of building something that is everlasting, that will last “forever”. At that point, the only possibility we have as a couple is to allow God's Grace to mold us!».

«Dialogue is essential for experiencing, expressing and fostering love in marriage and family life. Yet it can only be the fruit of a long and demanding apprenticeship». AL 136

«Many disagreements between couples are not about important things. Mostly they are about trivial matters. What alters the mood, however, is the way things are said or the attitude with which they are said». AL 139





Invitation to reflect

Let us reflect on our capacity to dialogue and to listen. What difficulties do we encounter? What are our strengths?



Family dynamics

Let us make time for a family dialogue on a topic that is dear to us. Everyone should make an effort to listen to the others attentively, keeping silent even interiorly, to listen without making any noise in the heart or mind. (Cf. AL 137)



Community or group dynamics

Let us organize an event with young people and engaged couples, inviting married couples to witness about how their faith helped them face and overcome a particular fear or issue.

Prayer

Lord,
remove all fear from our hearts.
Help us trust your loving plan
for us, our family, our community.

Grant that every family might experience the joy
of Christ's presence within the walls of their home.

Help us be faithful to moments dedicated
to dialogue and listening.

Grant us the patience to accept each day
the large and small infidelities
of our love.

May our lives be a witness
to young people about how faith
can help overcome fear,
and can provide the strength
to make it through any difficulty
and to get better.

Amen.



4.

Love must be protected.

HOLY FATHER

«The Church really needs the courageous fidelity of married couples to the grace of the sacrament. Each couple should bear witness to the beauty of Christian marriage even through the hardships and challenges each day brings».

«Few human joys are as deep and thrilling as those experienced by two people who love one another and have achieved something as the result of a great, shared effort». AL 130
Marital love is not defended primarily by presenting indissolubility as a duty, but by helping it to grow ever stronger under the impulse of grace. Love grows only if we respond to God's grace through constant acts of love, acts of kindness that become ever more frequent, intense, generous, tender and cheerful. See AL 134

Leopaldi Family

«The family for us is 'fullness of life!' »

«Love (...) allows us to experience the happiness of giving, the nobility and grandeur of spending ourselves unstintingly, without asking to be repaid, purely for the pleasure of giving and serving». AL 94

«True love values the other person's achievements. It does not see him or her as a threat. It frees us from the sour taste of envy. It recognizes that everyone has different gifts and a unique path in life. So it strives to discover its own road to happiness, while allowing others to find theirs». AL 95





Invitation to reflect

Let us bring to mind some moments in which we experienced the happiness of giving ourselves completely, only out of love, renouncing our own will to self-affirmation.



Family dynamics

Let us do something in the family that communicates the unconditional love we have received and how it made us feel.



Community or group dynamics

"The family for us is...". Everyone is invited to respond in writing (or drawing) his or her response on a large poster that can be hung up in a common place.

Prayer

Jesus,
help us experience that
even when it is burdensome,
love always gives fullness of life.

As it was in your Holy Family in Nazareth,
grant also to our family and to every family on earth
*"the happiness of giving,
the nobility and grandeur
of spending ourselves unstintingly,
without asking to be repaid,
purely for the pleasure of giving and serving"*. (AL 94)

May our joy be contagious
and may we bear witness to others
that loving acts are always possible.

Amen.

Invitation to read Amoris Laetitia

The ‘foreverness’ and beauty of love

Amoris Laetitia, 120-164

Link to the Apostolic Exhortation *AMORIS LAETITIA*



Familial love: vocation and path to holiness

Holy Father,

we are here before You
to praise You and thank You for the great gift of the family.

We pray to You for families, consecrated in the Sacrament of Matrimony,
that each day they might rediscover the grace they have received,
and, as small domestic Churches,
they might know how to bear witness to Your Presence.
and the love with which Christ loves the Church.

We pray to You for families going through hardships and suffering,
illness, or problems only You know:
sustain them and make them aware
of the way of holiness to which You call them,
so that they might experience Your infinite mercy
and find new ways to grow in love.

We pray to You for children and young people,
so they can encounter You
and respond joyfully to the vocation You have in mind for them;
and for their parents and grandparents,
so they may be aware
that they are signs of the paternity and maternity of God:
in caring for their children who, in body and spirit,
You entrust to them, as well as in the experience of fraternity
that the family can give to the world.

Lord, grant that each family
might live their specific vocation to holiness in the Church
as a call to be active in evangelization,
in the service of life and peace,
in communion with the priests and with every state in life.

Bless the World Meeting of Families in Rome.
Amen.

Prayer for the *X World Meeting of Families*
22-26 June 2022

www.amorislaetitia.va



Amoris Laetitia Family
Year 2021 - 2022