



Amoris Laetitia Family
Year 2021 - 2022

Guide n. 7

Video n. 7



Called to an ecclesial mission

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1

Joyful witness of the Gospel of the family

Stella Josiane (daughter)

«The best way to live the Gospel in the family is to be witnesses to each other. To give others the joy of imitating you».

«We need to find the right language, arguments and forms of witness that can help us reach the hearts of young people, appealing to their capacity for generosity, commitment, love and even heroism, and in this way inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage». AL 40

HOLY FATHER

«What pastoral challenges face the Church in accompanying families? Christian families are the principal subject of family ministry, thanks to the sacrament of matrimony. Every family can be the first witnesses of the joy of the Gospel!».

«Christian families, by the grace of the sacrament of matrimony, are the principal agents of the family apostolate, above all through 'their joy-filled witness as domestic churches'. "It is important that people experience the Gospel of the family as a joy that 'fills hearts and lives', because in Christ we have been 'set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness' »». AL 200

«Enabling families to take up their role as active agents of the family apostolate calls for 'an effort at evangelization and catechesis inside the family' ». AL 200





Invitation to reflection

“The Gospel of the family is joy”: have I experienced that this joy can be present even when life presents difficulties? Recall a moment in life in which a difficulty revealed itself to be a positive motive for joy and hope.



Family dynamic

What are the values that are at the basis of our family life? Talk together about these values and write them down. Then they can be hung up throughout the house.



Community or group dynamic

In what way can our community respond to Pope Francis’ invitation to form Christian families to become joyous and evangelizing families?

Prayer

Lord,
you conceived and created the family
as a place of joy.
Teach us to enjoy your gifts
even on the most difficult days,
so as to always
offer a smile,
give someone a hug,
listen to someone who needs to get something off their chest,
console someone in pain.

Thank you, Lord,
for the many times we were
embraced, consoled and heard.

Amen.

2

Families are necessary to show the young the Gospel of love

Josée Christiane (mother)

«Proclaiming the Gospel means that the message received needs to fill our hearts and our entire lives with joy.».

HOLY FATHER

«A generic concern for the family in large pastoral projects is not enough. We need a new missionary thrust: we cannot stop at theory, but we need to grapple with people's concrete problems. Preparing young people for matrimony is a pillar for evangelizing families.».

*«I encourage Christian communities to recognize the great benefit that they themselves receive from **supporting engaged couples** as they grow in love. (...) Those couples are “a valuable resource because, (...) they can help renew the fabric of the whole ecclesial body. Their special form of friendship can prove contagious and foster the growth of friendship and fraternity in the Christian community of which they are a part” ».* AL 207

*«Those best prepared for marriage are probably those who **learned what Christian marriage is from their own parents**, who chose each other unconditionally and daily renew this decision».* AL 208.

Giorgiana (daughter)

«To live the Gospel means finding the time to live well together in love, by sharing and in unity».

*«Pastoral initiatives aimed at **helping married couples to grow in love and in the Gospel of the family** also help their children, by preparing them for their future married life».* AL 208

*«**Love needs time and space**; everything else is secondary. Time is needed to talk things over, to embrace leisurely, to share plans, to listen to one other and gaze in each other's eyes, to appreciate one another and to build a stronger relationship. Sometimes the frenetic pace of our society and the pressures of the workplace create problems. At other times, the problem is the lack of quality time together».* AL 224



Invitation to reflection

“We are called to help sow seeds; the rest is God’s work” (cf AL 200). We can reflect on what we do to live well together. Are we succeeding? Is there something we want to change? What can we begin with?



Family dynamic

We can reflect and decide together if there is something that can become secondary in order to spend some regular quality time together in the family.



Community or group dynamic

Plan a romantic evening for the engaged couples in the community, offering dinner or refreshments. Ask them to turn off their cell phones, and invite them to spend the evening in dialogue as a couple. At the end of the evening, invite them to spend a moment in prayer together, taking turns praying for the other.



Prayer

Lord,
bless our home,
may it might be a place of love and acceptance.

Grant us the awareness
that to offer another the warmth of our family
is not a task, but a joyful response
to Your desire that
the Gospel of the family
be proclaimed to everyone on earth.

Amen.

3

Preparing young people for married life

HOLY FATHER

«There is a catechetical process that prepares not only for the celebration of Matrimony, but for married life. We must review the preparation for marriage to help young people, beginning in their childhood, to discover that matrimony is a true vocation».

«With the help of missionary families (...) and a variety of pastoral resources, ways should also be found to offer a remote preparation that, by example and good advice, can help their love to grow and mature. (...) Learning to love someone does not happen automatically, nor can it be taught in a workshop just prior to the celebration of marriage. For every couple, marriage preparation begins at birth. What they received from their family should prepare them to know themselves and to make a full and definitive commitment». AL 208

«It is not great knowledge, but rather the ability to feel and relish things interiorly that contents and satisfies the soul». (...) Marriage preparation should be a kind of 'initiation' to the sacrament of matrimony, providing couples with the help they need to receive the sacrament worthily and to make a solid beginning of life as a family». AL 207

Jules José (father)

«So, it is desirable that pastoral ministers be formed with respect to the tremendous changes and the great questions that regard the family today; a formation that responds concretely to these questions and changes».

«There is a need for "a more adequate formation... of priests, deacons, men and women religious, catechists and other pastoral workers". (...) Seminarians should receive a more extensive interdisciplinary, and not merely doctrinal, formation in the areas of engagement and marriage. (...) It is helpful for seminarians to combine time in the seminary with time spent in parishes. There they can have greater contact with the concrete realities of family life, since in their future ministry they will largely be dealing with families». Cf AL 202-203

«Professionals, especially those with practical experience, help keep pastoral initiatives grounded in the real situations and concrete concerns of families. "Courses and programmes, planned specifically for pastoral workers, can be of assistance by integrating the premarital preparation programme into the broader dynamic of ecclesial life". Good pastoral training is important "especially in light of particular emergency situations arising from cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse". All this in no way diminishes, but rather complements, the fundamental value of spiritual direction, the rich spiritual treasures of the Church, and sacramental Reconciliation». AL 204



Invitation to reflection

Reflect on the people in your life who have provided a positive witness regarding married life and thank the Lord for giving you those experiences.



Family dynamic

Read together a part of the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* on the proclamation of the Gospel to young people and talk about it together (e.g., numbers 44, 257, 264).



Community or group dynamic

Propose a moment of prayer for young people and their vocation. Those who would like can write a prayer on a piece of paper and place it into a basket. Those who enter the Church can take one of these prayers and lift the prayer of a brother or sister up to the Father.

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
we pray for young people,
that they might experience
within their families
the power of your love.

We pray for engaged couples,
may they understand that marriage
requires creative work
undertaken day after day.

We pray for the families within our community,
May they witness
a love that is strong, solid, joyful.

Amen.



4

Reaching every family

HOLY FATHER

«The formative journey should continue at least during the first 10 years of married life so that families feel accompanied by their priests – and by other families as well – to face both the joys and the difficulties of their daily lives, and not get discouraged. Something to remember always is that every crisis can be a moment to renew in one’s own heart a new yes that makes love mature.

«Another great challenge of marriage preparation is to help couples realize that marriage is not something that happens once for all. (...) Their gaze now has to be directed to the future that, with the help of God’s grace, they are daily called to build. For this very reason, neither spouse can expect the other to be perfect. Each must set aside all illusions and accept the other as he or she actually is: an unfinished product, needing to grow, a work in progress. (...) This fact needs to be realistically presented to newly married couples from the outset, so that they can grasp that (...) by saying ‘I do’, they embark on a journey». AL 218

Jules José (father):

«Today, couples need to feel the proximity of the Church through her pastoral workers: a closeness that reassures, a nearness that knows how to respond to their concerns».

Josée Christiane (mother)

«We need to hear a message that is reassuring in the face of uncertainty».

«The initial years of marriage are a vital and sensitive period during which couples become more aware of the challenges and meaning of married life. Consequently, pastoral accompaniment needs to go beyond the actual celebration of the sacrament. (...) The parish is a place where such experienced couples can help younger couples. (...) Emphasis should also be given to the importance of family spirituality, prayer and participation in the Sunday Eucharist, and couples encouraged to meet regularly to promote growth in their spiritual life and solidarity in the concrete demands of life». AL 223

HOLY FATHER

«As a Church, we want to reach every family and accompany them toward the discovery of a better way to overcome the difficulties they encounter».



Invitation to reflect

What suggestions would you like to give engaged couples, young married couples, or a couple in difficulty? Are you willing to direct these suggestions first of all to yourself?



Family dynamic

Invite a newly married or engaged couple over for dinner to cultivate a friendship with them.

Community or group dynamic

How can we organize “listening sessions” in which married or engaged couples can meet with professionals, or even to be welcomed into families who are open to accepting and listening to them?

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
grant to our community
the gift of your Holy Spirit
so that we might find ways
to *“reach every family
and accompany them toward the discovery of a better way
to overcome the difficulties they encounter”*.*

May the door of our house
always be open to share joyful moments,
to provide support in difficult moments,
to pray to the Father
together with other families.

Amen.

**Pope Francis*



Dobo family, Democratic Republic of Congo



APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
AMORIS LAETITIA



Invitation to read *Amoris Laetitia*

“Some Pastoral Perspectives” Amoris Laetitia, 199- 258

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 witness to Your Presence.
and the love with which Christ loves the Church.
We pray to You for families going through difficulty and suffering,
from illness, or from 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.
Amen.

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

www.amoristaetitia.va



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