



Amoris Laetitia Family
Year 2021 - 2022

Guide n.3 Video n.3



**The Vocation
of the Family**

The Vocation of the Family

1

The family can become a light in the darkness of the world

Holy Father

With the same look of tenderness and mercy that Jesus had, the Church wants to accompany families so that every family might be a pillar of evangelization. I would like to say one thing to you: with the sacrament of matrimony, every family receives the grace to become a light in the darkness of the world.

*“Jesus looked upon the women and men whom he met with love and tenderness, accompanying their steps in truth, **patience and mercy** as he proclaimed the demands of the Kingdom of God”. The Lord is also with us today, as we seek to practice and pass on the Gospel of the family”. AL 60*

*“The covenant of love and fidelity lived by the Holy Family of Nazareth (...) enables [every family] better to face the vicissitudes of life and history. On this basis, **every family**, despite its weaknesses, **can become a light in the darkness of the world**”. AL 66*

“Through his Church, Christ bestows on marriage and the family the grace necessary to bear witness to the love of God and to live the life of communion”. AL 63

Antonio and Angela

Antonio: After thirty-one years of married life, we found sacramental grace of marriage is making things possible with Jesus.

Angela: I was told it is impossible to have babies when I was young. But finally, we've got three children.

Antonio: I got the power of the Holy Spirit to accept our differences and limitations of each other. I learned how to compromise honestly. I learned how to listen to the feelings of Angela and our children.

“I wish to turn my gaze to the living Christ, who is at the heart of so many love stories, and to invoke the fire of the Spirit upon all the world's families”. AL 59

*“The common life of husband and wife, the entire network of relations that they build with their children and the world around them, **will be steeped in and strengthened by the grace of the sacrament**. Neither of the spouses **will be alone in facing whatever challenges may come their way**. Both are called to respond to God's gift with commitment, creativity, perseverance and daily effort. They can always invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit who consecrated their union, so that his grace may be felt in every new situation that they encounter”. AL 74*



Invitation to reflect:

Through the Church, the Lord Jesus looks with tenderness and mercy on every family. Let us praise the Lord because he accepts and loves us as we are, with all our limitations and weakness.



Family dynamic:

Let us choose a particular moment during our day in which we can light a candle and remind ourselves of the living presence of Jesus in our family. It could be a moment at mealtime or a moment of prayer as a couple or as a family.



Community or group dynamic:

We can give each family a small candle that can be lit on the altar on which a larger candle can be placed that symbolizes the Light of Christ present in every domestic Church.



Prayer

Thank you, Lord, because by loving,
every family can reveal the light of your Presence.
Thank you, because in our weakness
you accompany us with love and tenderness.
Grant that we might never feel alone
when facing difficulties and challenges,
however large or small they are.
Grant that we might know how to respond with dedica-
tion and creativity,
to the gift of your Grace,
without getting tired of trying again each time we fall.
We invoke the gift of your Holy Spirit on each family
so that many small lights might be lit
in the darkness of the world.
Amen.

2

Married saints

Holy Father

Do you know about a canonized couple? There are a number of processes for the beatification of holy couples. Saints who were married, who became saints together, both the husband and the wife. Normal people, common people who witnessed to the love of Jesus through their marriage. Each of your marriages can be holy if you want. You spouses are like consecrated people, persons and you are essential in building the building up of the Church.

“Christ the Lord ‘makes himself present to the Christian spouses in the sacrament of marriage’ and remains with them. In the incarnation, he assumes human love, purifies it and brings it to fulfilment. By his Spirit, he gives spouses the capacity to live that love, permeating every part of their lives of faith, hope and charity. In this way, the spouses are consecrated and by means of a special grace build up the Body of Christ and form a domestic church (cf. Lumen Gentium, 11), so that the Church, in order fully to understand her mystery, looks to the Christian family, which manifests her in a real way”. AL 67

“Spouses, in their mutual love, receive the gift of the Spirit of Christ and live their call to holiness”. AL 69

“The beauty of this mutual, gratuitous gift, the joy which comes from a life that is born and the loving care of all family members – from toddlers to seniors – are just a few of the fruits which make the response to the vocation of the family”. AL 88

Antonio and Angela

Angela: As mentioned in *Amoris Laetitia*, marriage is a path to holiness.

Antonio: Yes, sometimes it was difficult and critical, just like the vocation [consecrated] life.

Angela: We put family in first priority, other than our personal favor or career.

Antonio: Twenty years ago, I decided not to work in China so I can stay with my family. For me, that was too difficult to compromise. But it works.

“The sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses. (...) Consequently, the decision to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment.” AL 72

“Through their union in love, the couple experiences the beauty of fatherhood and motherhood, and shares plans, trials, expectations and concerns; they learn care for one another.”

other and mutual forgiveness. In this love, they celebrate their happy moments and support each other in the difficult passages of their life together". AL 88



Invitation to reflection:

When the way God loves becomes the measure of our love as a couple, then between us two and in our family, the ordinary becomes extraordinary; everyday actions are transformed because they are inhabited by God.

Let us choose an action that we do routinely (it could be saying hello in the morning or goodnight in the evening). Let us try to communicate our love through this small action.



Family dynamic:

Let us look for the example of a couple who are canonized, beatified or venerable. Let us read an example written about them and share what might be possible in our life.



Community or group dynamic:

A text or video that presents the life of a couple that has been canonized, beatified or declared venerable can be used. Everyone can share in small groups some aspect of holiness that they think is possible in their own life.

Prayer

Holy Family of Nazareth,
help us to learn day by day,
the value of each small action that,
even if it is routine or difficult,
can communicate love to the person next to me.
Grant that we might know how to protect our family
as the way that has been given to us for our full human flourishing,
as the way in which we are to respond to the call holiness.
Grant that we might know how to joyfully live our commitment each day;
to know how to welcome each brother and sister with unconditional love;
to believe that holiness can become a path possible for every family.
Amen.

3

The Church is the “family of families”

Holy Father

Each family is a blessing, a strength for the Church! The beauty of the gift that is generated within families, the joy for life that is born and the taking care of the little ones and the elderly make every family irreplaceable not only in the Church, but also in society. This is why the Church is the “family of families”, enriched by the contribution of each of you.

“The experience of love in families is a perennial source of strength for the life of the Church”. AL 88

“The Church is a family of families, constantly enriched by the lives of all those domestic churches. In virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, every family becomes, in effect, a good for the Church. From this standpoint, reflecting on the interplay between the family and the Church will prove a precious gift for the Church in our time. The Church is good for the family, and the family is good for the Church”. AL 87

Antonio and Angela

Angela: Our third daughter, Maria, was born in 2005, when I was 43 years old. People thought it was a big risk and asked me to give it up.

Antonio: However, the fruit of our marriage is obviously a blessing.

“It follows that ‘spouses to whom God has not granted children can have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms’. Nonetheless, the conjugal union is ordered to procreation ‘by its very nature’. The child who is born ‘does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfilment’. He or she does not appear at the end of a process, but is present from the beginning of love as an essential feature, one that cannot be denied without disfiguring that love itself. From the outset, love refuses every impulse to close in on itself; it is open to a fruitfulness that draws it beyond itself”.
AL 80

“The choice of adoption or foster parenting can also express that fruitfulness which is a characteristic of married life. With special gratitude the Church ‘supports families who accept, raise and surround with affection children with various disabilities’ ”. AL 82



Invitation to reflection:

Our family is a gift not only for ourselves and our children, but for the entire Church. We are a gift because our loving gestures reveal to each person an image of God's paternal and maternal love. What does this truth evoke in us?



Family dynamic:

Concretely, how can our love be fruitful, that is, how can we show our love to the people who surround us?



Community or group dynamic:

Couples/families and priests/deacons can talk with each other about what they expect from each other, reflecting together on how the Church and the family are both necessary to build the Church together.

Prayer

O Holy Family of Nazareth,
who lived in total abandonment in God's hands,
witnesses of the Lord's merciful goodness,
bless all the families in the world.
Awaken holy desires in the hearts of the
young people.
Place in the hearts of engaged couples the Spirit
of purity and mutual respect.
Root deeply within married couples a love that
is steadfast and generous. Develop a sense of ma-
ternity and paternity
in the lives of parents.
Make every Christian family an eloquent sign
of God's love for the world,
small domestic churches,
where grace can produce abundant
fruits of holiness.
Amen.



4

The meaning of our life together

Holy Father

Other Popes before me have written as well on the matters that interest families: I spoke of them in *Amoris Laetitia*. Read it and you will find answers to many questions about the meaning of your life together.

“Here we understand the way to live as a family. ‘Nazareth teaches us the meaning of family life, its loving communion, its simple and austere beauty, its sacred and inviolable character. May it teach how sweet and irreplaceable is its training, how fundamental and incomparable its role in the social order’ (Paul VI, Address in Nazareth, 5 January 1964)”. AL 66

“Following this divine pedagogy, the Church turns with love to those who participate in her life in an imperfect manner: she seeks the grace of conversion for them; she encourages them to do good, to take loving care of each other and to serve the community in which they live and work”. AL78





Invitation to reflection:

The Church offers us many documents that help us understand the family. We too should feel called to respond to the Holy Father's invitation to read some of these documents, in particular *Amoris Laetitia*.



Family dynamic:

Let us find a topic that interests us in the table of contents of *Amoris Laetitia*. Let us read it and meditate on it together.



Community or group dynamic:

Let us find a topic that interests us in the table of contents of *Amoris Laetitia*. Let us read it and meditate on it together. Then let us share our reflections in a group.

Prayer

I believe in the family, O Lord:
that it came forth from your creative design,
founded on the rock of eternal and fruitful love;
that You chose it as your dwelling among us,
that You willed it be the cradle of life.
I believe in the family, O Lord:
even when in our home
the darkness of the cross might enter in,
when love loses its original attractiveness,
when everything becomes arduous and heavy.
I believe in the family, O Lord:
as a luminous sign of hope
amidst the crises of our time;
as the source of love and of life,
as the counterbalance of aggression,
egoism and death.
I believe in the family, O Lord:
as my path toward full human realization
as my call to holiness,
as my mission to transform the world
into the image of your Kingdom.

(Father Enrico Masseroni)



Invitation to read Amoris Laetitia

“Looking to Jesus: the Vocation of the Family”
t, 58-88

Link to the Apostolic Exhortation *AMORIS LAETITIA*



Family Love: Vocation and Path to Holiness

Heavenly Father,

We come before You to praise You
and to thank You for the great gift of the family.

We pray to You for all families
consecrated by the Sacrament of Matrimony.

May they rediscover each day
the grace they have received,
and as small domestic Churches,
may they know how to witness to Your presence
and to the love with which Christ loves the Church.

We pray to You for all families faced with difficulty and suffering
caused by illness or circumstances which only You know.

Sustain them and make them aware
of the path to holiness upon 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:
may they encounter You and respond joyfully
to the vocation You have in mind for them;

We pray for parents and grandparents: may they be aware
that they are signs of the fatherhood and motherhood of God
in caring for the children who, in body and spirit, You entrust to them;
and for 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 become missionary disciples,
in the service of life and peace,
in communion with our priests, religious,
and all vocations in the Church.

Bless the World Meeting of Families.

Amen.

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

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