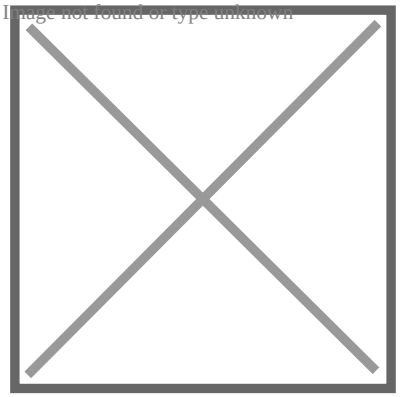


The Joy of Love (amoris Laetitia)

Description

Photo: Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, general secretary of the Synod of Bishops, holds his copy of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on the family, "Amoris Laetitia" ("The Joy of Love"), during a news conference for the release of the document at the Vatican April 8. The exhortation is the concluding document of the 2014 and 2015 synods of bishops on the family. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

The Joy of Love (*Amoris Laetitia*) is based on the discussions that took place at last year's Synod of Bishops on the Family. With the post-synodal document, we have been given a powerful resource to examine the beauty and joy of Christian marriage. As the title states, there is great joy found in the love that spouses share with each other in the bond of Holy Matrimony. In *The Joy of Love*, Pope Francis clearly places emphasis on the need of the Church to approach, through the heart and spirit of pastoral care, the many difficult challenges married couples confront in their daily lives. Christian marriage plays a unique role in society, displaying a love that is rooted in God. It reflects the true sacrifice and the dignity of the relationship that a husband and wife share not only between each other, but also with their children and the larger community. Pope Francis reminds us that the family is the basic cell of society, and we are called to provide support to all families especially those who have been disrupted by relational and emotional crises. We know that many families face the effects of separation and divorce. The Church desires to accompany them and keep them close to their faith communities. *The Joy of Love* is a lengthy and a rich document that will take time and patience and a commitment to study and reflect on the document for each of us to absorb its treasures of wisdom. Engaging in pastoral care requires great discernment, seeking to lead wounded families and individuals to mercy, without compromising the integrity of the Church's moral teachings. Pope Francis intends to assist the clergy and laity to be agents of mercy, helping those who have felt distant from the Church to find their way back into the sheepfold. The Diocese of Orange is excited to dive deeper into the examination of this document to see how we can improve our pastoral care to families. Bishop Kevin Vann is confident that much of this merciful work is already occurring through the outreach and ministries of the parishes. We hope to grow in our family outreach, especially in marriage preparation and marriage enrichment, and we desire to accompany our families and help them encounter the healing that Christ promises to all humanity.

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