

# Walking with Families

## 12 ways to walk with families following "*Amoris Laetitia*"

The following are twelve proposals and suggestions for a commitment to family pastoral care in the light of the apostolic exhortation "*Amoris Laetitia*". Each ecclesial reality is invited to consider which of these proposals can be developed or implemented at local level, according to its own conditions and needs.

**1.** Strengthen pastoral programs for marriage preparation with new **catechumenal itineraries** at Diocesan and Parish levels (cf. AL 205-222), in order to offer remote, proximate, and immediate marriage preparation, as well as accompaniment of new spouses in the first years of their marriage. This responsibility is especially entrusted to married couples who, together with pastors, become companions on the journey for engaged couples and those new to married life.

**2.** Foster the pastoral ministry of **accompaniment of spouses**, by means of formation encounters and times dedicated to prayer and spiritual development, so that spouses may gain awareness of the gift and grace of the nuptial sacrament. (cf. AL 58-ff. And 223-230).

**3.** Organize meetings for parents on children **education** and current challenges (cf. AL 172-ff. and 259-290), in response to the advice of Pope Francis, who suggests that parents try to understand "where children are in their journey". (cf. AL 261).

**4.** Promote meetings for reflection and discussion on the **beauty and challenges of family life** (cf. AL 32-ff. and 89-ff.) which should expand horizons both in terms of recognizing the value of the family on a societal level; as well as in creating well-established networks of pastors and families who, by their own sharing and witness, can accompany those who are struggling.

**5.** Enhance the accompaniment of **couples in crisis**, (cf. AL 232-ff.) to form them into an attitude of resilience, which will help them see challenges as an opportunity to become stronger and grow in love.

**6.** Involve **married couples into Diocesan and Parish structures** to set up **family ministry** (cf. AL 86-88), and rethink the **formation of pastoral workers, seminarians, and priests**, so that they may fruitfully collaborate with families and live up to the challenges of today's world (cf. AL 202-ff.). To this end, it will be important to foster

reciprocity between the “family- domestic Church” and the Church (AL 200), so that each may mutually discover and value each other as an irreplaceable gift.

**7.** Promote a **missionary vocation** in families (cf. AL 201, 230 and 324) by creating times for formation in evangelization and missionary initiatives (e.g., on the occasion of children’s reception of the sacraments, during marriage preparation, anniversaries or important liturgical moments).

**8.** Develop programs of **pastoral care of the elderly** (cf. AL 191-193) which seek to overcome the “throw-away” culture and societal indifference, and promote initiatives that build bridges across the different stages of life, while also making the elderly into active agents within the pastoral care of the community

**9.** Incorporate **youth ministry** into initiatives, which reflect upon and discuss issues such as family, marriage, chastity, openness to life, the use of social media, poverty, and respect for creation (cf. AL 40). We must succeed in sparking young people’s enthusiasm, in enhancing their ability to commit themselves fully to great ideals and face the challenges that such ideals entail. Special attention should be paid this year to **children**, in order to make them aware of the Year of “Amoris Laetitia Family” and suggested initiatives.

**10.** Encourage **preparation for the X World Meeting of Families** with catechesis and training itineraries, which will provide accompaniment for families towards the meeting with the Holy Father, through various steps and experiences.

**11.** Launch initiatives of accompaniment and discernment of **wounded families**, (cf. AL 50-ff., 241-ff. and 291-ff.) to help them discover and carry out their mission within their family and in the community, starting from their Baptism.

**12.** Organize meetings in Parishes and communities involving groups for an **in-depth study of Amoris Laetitia**, in order to raise awareness of the concrete pastoral opportunities that occur in individual ecclesial communities (cf. AL 199-ff.).

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