



WALKING  
together  
ADVENT 2021

WEEK ONE

# ADVENT 2021

MARRIAGE FAMILY ADVENT PROGRAM



Catholic Archdiocese of  
Canberra and Goulburn

**AMORIS LAETITIA**  
FAMILY YEAR 2021 - 2022  
[WWW.CGCATHOLIC.ORG.AU/ADVENT](http://WWW.CGCATHOLIC.ORG.AU/ADVENT)



## WEEK ONE

## GROWING IN LOVE &amp; HOLINESS IN FAMILY LIFE

1st Sunday in Advent - 28th November

**FACILITATOR:**

Begin the group time by asking each group member to introduce themselves. Be clear about the finish time. Then read the following introduction to the group.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Pope Francis** wants us to understand that family life, with all its imperfections, struggles, problems and joys, is an authentic way to follow Jesus and to grow as a Christian. As we struggle to appreciate each member of our family and learn how best support them, we ourselves receive grace and grow in our capacity to love.

**Advent** is a wonderful opportunity to review how we are going in loving others and to call on the grace of God to 'increase our love' especially within our families.

In this Sunday's **Second Reading** St Paul prays that God will increase our love and make us love one another more. He also prays that we will grow in holiness.

**FACILITATOR:**

Ask a group member to read the scripture passage slowly and clearly so that the group can reflect on the text as it is read.

**SCRIPTURE READING****Second Reading, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2**

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.

**FACILITATOR:**

Ask what struck the group members from today's passage (1 or 2 minute discussion) Read the following passage aloud before starting the video.

In this week's video **Archbishop Christopher** says the whole Gospel can be summed up in the words love and grace. In our ordinary relationships we can participate in God's grace as we strive to grow in our love for others, especially within our families. We also interviewed **people just like you** about their experiences of family life.

**FACILITATOR:**

Ask group members to read these two paragraphs.

**SHORT DISCUSSION (2MINS)**

**WATCH THE VIDEO:**



## WEEK ONE

## GROWING IN LOVE &amp; HOLINESS IN FAMILY LIFE

1st Sunday in Advent - 28th November

**FACILITATOR:**

Decide ahead how much time you are allowing for this group discussion time and let the group know.

Ask for initial impressions from the video. What struck you about the content? (1 or 2 minutes)

Now read each question aloud and give each member of the group an opportunity to respond

**FACILITATOR:**

As you wrap up the session remind participants:

- There is bonus video content available online if they would like to listen to more stories or reflections from the families interviewed in the main video.

- Relevant excerpts from Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia* are provided at the end of this handout for further reflection during the week.

Agree on when and where you will meet next week.

Close in prayer asking each group member to read one stanza from the following prayer:

**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Francis states that marriage is a 'pathway to sanctity'.

How can marriage and family life lead to greater holiness?

- Francis talks of looking at our family members 'with the eyes of Christ'.

What challenges have you experienced in seeing family members with the eyes of Christ? Have you had positive experiences of this dynamic? Have you experienced being seen by other family member's 'with the eyes of Christ'?

- Francis says: 'All family life is a shepherding in mercy.'

Have you witnessed this? How might you cultivate it in your immediate or extended family?

**Q 2 Seeing with the eyes of Christ**

"How much I see myself as a beloved child of God effects how I can see others with the same eyes"

Jerlin & Roby

**Q 3 Shepherding in Mercy**

"That's the fine print being parents, too. That's what you do. You love your kids no matter what happens."

Mark & Louise



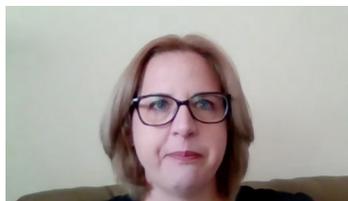
## WEEK ONE

## PRAYER



## Q1 Pathway of Sanctity

*"Marriage guarantees a whole series of challenges large and small, day in and day out. Whether your sanctity develops depends on how you react to these challenges."*  
Alex & John



## Q 3 Shepherding in Mercy

*Even though I'm a shepherd that will mess up, the Lord is my shepherd and he doesn't mess up.*  
Bernadette

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 of 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; 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*



## WEEK ONE

## EXTRA READING

1st Sunday in Advent - 28th November



In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis presents a challenging and inspiring vision of how God views the family with all its imperfections and problems. As you read Pope Francis' words, keep in mind St Paul's exhortation to "increase in love for one another and for all". 1Thess 3:12.13

**1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT:  
MARRIAGE - A SPIRITUALITY OF SUPERNATURAL COMMUNION**

**315.** The Lord's presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes. Living in a family makes it hard for us to feign or lie; we cannot hide behind a mask. If that authenticity is inspired by love, then the Lord reigns there, with his joy and his peace. The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures. In that variety of gifts and encounters which deepen communion, God has his dwelling place. This mutual concern "brings together the human and the divine", for it is filled with the love of God. In the end, marital spirituality is a spirituality of the bond, in which divine love dwells.

**316.** A positive experience of family communion is a true **path to daily sanctification** and mystical growth, a means for deeper union with God. The fraternal and communal demands of family life are an incentive to growth in openness of heart and thus to an ever fuller encounter with the Lord. ... Only if we "love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 Jn 4:12). Since "the human person has an inherent social dimension", and "the first and basic expression of that social dimension of the person is the married couple and the family", spirituality becomes incarnate in the communion of the family.

**322. All family life is a "shepherding" in mercy.** Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others; ... for "to love anybody is to expect from him something which can neither be defined nor foreseen; it is at the same time, in some way, to make it possible for him to fulfil this expectation". This is itself a way to worship God, who has sown so much good in others in the hope that we will help make it grow.

**323.** It is a profound spiritual experience to **contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God** and to see Christ in them. This demands a freedom and openness which enable us to appreciate their dignity. We can be fully present to others only by giving fully of ourselves and forgetting all else. ... We are constantly reminded that each of those who live with us merits complete attention, since he or she possesses infinite dignity as an object of the Father's immense love. This gives rise to a tenderness which can "stir in the other the joy of being loved."

**325.** No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love. This is a never-ending vocation born of the full communion of the Trinity, the profound unity between Christ and his Church, the loving community which is the Holy Family of Nazareth, and the pure fraternity existing among the saints of heaven. Our contemplation of the fulfilment which we have yet to attain also allows us to see in proper perspective the historical journey which we make as families, and in this way to stop demanding of our interpersonal relationships a perfection, a purity of intentions and a consistency which we will only encounter in the Kingdom to come. It also keeps us from judging harshly those who live in situations of frailty. ... Let us make this journey as families, let us keep **walking together**