



# ADVENT 2021

MARRIAGE FAMILY ADVENT PROGRAM



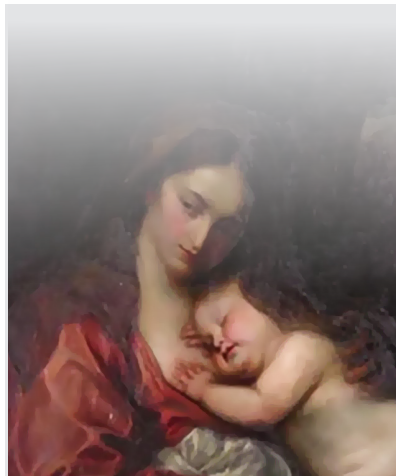
Catholic Archdiocese of  
Canberra and Goulburn

**AMORIS LAETITIA**  
FAMILY YEAR 2011 - 2022



## WEEK THREE

PLEASE, THANK YOU & SORRY –  
NURTURING JOY IN THE FAMILY  
3rd Sunday in Advent – 19th December



### 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 session:*

### 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.*

### FACILITATOR:

*Ask what struck the group members from today's passage (1 or 2 minute discussion)*

### INTRODUCTION

The third Sunday of Advent is "Rejoice Sunday". The opening antiphon of the Mass is "rejoice in the Lord always".

In Chapter 4 of *Amoris Laetitia* **Pope Francis** discusses in very concrete terms how we can be happy in family life. Francis teaches us that "please, thank you and sorry" are "three essential words" which "daily protect and nurture love". Through practicing daily disciplines of love and friendship we bring about the presence of Jesus in our midst and become a sign of hope to others.

In this week's video **Archbishop Christopher** says that 'please, thank you and sorry' are building stones which build the family into a lighthouse – a beacon of hope for others. It is in practicing the little things that big things can happen.

In this Sunday's **Second Reading** St Paul declares that what he wants is our happiness. To that end he exhorts us to practice tolerance, humility and gratitude, entrusting our needs to God.

### SCRIPTURE READING

#### **Second Reading, Philippians 4:4-7**

*I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.*

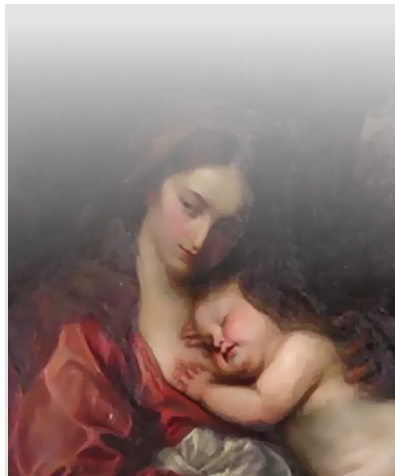


WATCH THE  
VIDEO:



## WEEK THREE

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**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 prayer overleaf:

**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Francis emphasises 3 words as critical to family life, "Please, thank you and sorry".

Describe when these have been important to unity in your family.

- Francis says "supposedly mature believers within the family {can} become unbearably arrogant" towards relations who neglect Catholic practice.

How might you react to those in your immediate or extended family, or friends, who have moved away from the Church?

**Advent** is a time for starting afresh. We review our lives, express sorry for failures to love and ask Jesus to be born anew in our hearts. It is a time of waiting for Christ.

It is also a time for reflecting on the various comings (advents) of Christ into our lives.

Besides his first coming at Bethlehem, Jesus comes into our lives in the people we meet in each present moment, including family members, through the Sacraments (especially the Eucharist), through the Word of God, through the worshipping community, at the moment of our death and, finally, in his Second Coming at the end of time.



## WEEK THREE

## PRAYER



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 THREE

## EXTRA READING

3rd Sunday in Advent – 19th December

Pope Francis provides concrete advice for loving in daily life, taking his cue from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 13:4-7)

Particularly powerful are the pope's words about love's avoidance of jealousy and arrogance. "Love has no room for discomfiture at another person's good fortune. Whereas love makes us rise above ourselves, envy closes us in on ourselves. True love values the other person's achievements. It does not see him or her as a threat... it strives to discover its own road to happiness, while allowing others to find theirs" (AL 95).

Pope Francis offers very practical advice for Catholics with family members who are "less knowledgeable about the faith, weak or less sure in their convictions." How important it is "for Christians to show their love by the way they treat family members" in these situations. **"At times the opposite occurs: the supposedly mature believers within the family become unbearably arrogant.** Love, on the other hand, is marked by humility; if we are to understand, forgive and serve others from the heart, our pride has to be healed and our humility must increase" (AL 98)

Pope Francis offers practical advice in proclaiming a love that forgives. In forgiving others, we must first "have had the experience of being forgiven by God... If we accept that God's love is unconditional, that the Father's love cannot be bought or sold, then we will become capable of showing boundless love and forgiving others even if they have wronged us". "My advice," says the pope, "is never to let the day end without making peace in the family. 'And how am I going to make peace? By getting down on my knees? No! Just by a small gesture, a little something, and harmony with your family will be restored'" (AL 104)

**133.** The love of friendship unifies all aspects of marital life and helps family members to grow constantly. This love must be freely and generously expressed in words and acts. In the family, "three words need to be used. **I want to repeat this! Three words: 'Please', 'Thank you', 'Sorry'. Three essential words!**" "In our families when we are not overbearing and ask: 'May I?'; in our families when we are not selfish and can say: 'Thank you!'; and in our families when some-one realizes that he or she did something wrong and is able to say 'Sorry!', our family experiences peace and joy". Let us not be stingy about using these words, but keep repeating them, day after day.. The right words, spoken at the right time, daily protect and nurture love.

**134.** All this occurs through a process of constant growth. The very special form of love that is marriage is called to embody what Saint Thomas Aquinas said about charity in general. "Charity", he says, "by its very nature, has no limit to its increase, for it is a participation in that infinite charity which is the Holy Spirit... Nor on the part of the subject can its limit be fixed, because as charity grows, so too does its capacity for an even greater increase".