



WALKING  
together  
ADVENT 2021

WEEK TWO

# ADVENT 2021

MARRIAGE FAMILY ADVENT PROGRAM



Catholic Archdiocese of  
Canberra and Goulburn

AMORIS LAETITIA  
FAMILY YEAR 2011 - 2022



## WEEK TWO

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

2nd Sunday in Advent - 5th 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) Read the following passage aloud before starting the video.

## INTRODUCTION

**Pope Francis** believes that "the Church" expresses itself and powerfully touches the lives of others through the 'domestic communities' which are our family relationships. How we organise our family life, how we reach out to and receive others and how we allow others to support us in times of trouble, all greatly contribute to the building of God's Kingdom.

In this week's video **Archbishop Christopher** says that the family is like 'a laboratory of the Gospel' in which we learn how to live and love for the sake of the world. The lessons learnt in the 'domestic Church' should be the lessons learnt in the universal Church. If we can get love right in the family then there is hope for the world.

In this Sunday's **Second Reading** St Paul prays that we will grow in knowledge and insight so that we can determine what is best in living out our vocation to love.

## SCRIPTURE READING

**Second Reading, Philippians 1:36, 8-11**

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you... And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best.*



WATCH THE VIDEO:



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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 following prayer:

**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Francis talks of being a 'sign of mercy?'

Do we live mercy in problematic situations, or when family members chose a lifestyle not in accord with our own?

- Francis says a family can be a 'domestic Church' with 'Christ seated at its table'.

How might this be lived in normal family life?

- Pope Francis talks of families being "blessings" to each other.

Describe a time your family was a blessing to, and a time your family was blessed by, another family.

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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 TWO

**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*



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## EXTRA READING

2nd Sunday in Advent - 5th December



In the following paragraphs Pope Francis focuses on the call for families to enter into their God given role to be Domestic churches ... to be living cells of the Church, the body of Christ". As you read Pope Francis' words keep in mind St Paul's prayer that "your love may overflow more and more ...to help you to determine what is best".

**200.** ... Christian families, by the grace of the sacrament of matrimony, are the principal agents of the family apostolate, above all through "their joy-filled witness as domestic churches". Consequently, "it is important that people experience the Gospel of the family as a joy that 'fills hearts and lives', because in Christ we have been 'set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness'. As in the parable of the sower, we are called to help sow seeds; the rest is God's work. ... The Church wishes, with humility and compassion, to reach out to families and **"to help each family to discover the best way to overcome any obstacles it encounters"**. It is not enough to show generic concern for the family in pastoral planning. Enabling families to take up their role as active agents of the family apostolate calls for "an effort at evangelization and catechesis inside the family".

**289.** We know that Jesus himself ate and drank with sinners, conversed with a Samaritan woman, received Nicodemus by night, allowed his feet to be anointed by a prostitute and did not hesitate to lay his hands on those who were sick. The same was true of his apostles, who did not look down on others, or cluster together in small and elite groups, cut off from the life of their people. ...

**290.** **"The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity** through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures, beginning in the territory in which the family lives, through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy". All this is an expression of our profound Christian belief in the love of the Father who guides and sustains us, a love manifested in the total self-gift of Jesus Christ, who even now lives in our midst and enables us to face together the storms of life at every stage. In all families the Good News needs to resound, in good times and in bad, as a source of light along the way. All of us should be able to say, thanks to the experience of our life in the family: "We come to believe in the love that God has for us" (1 Jn 4:16). Only on the basis of this experience will the Church's pastoral care for families enable them to be **both domestic churches and a leaven of evangelization in society.**

**324.** Led by the Spirit, the family circle is not only open to life by generating it within itself, but also by going forth and spreading life by caring for others and seeking their happiness. This openness finds particular expression in hospitality, which the word of God eloquently encourages: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb 13:2). **When a family is welcoming and reaches out to others, especially the poor and the neglected, it is "a symbol, witness and participant in the Church's motherhood"**. Social love, as a reflection of the Trinity, is what truly unifies the spiritual meaning of the family and its mission to others, for it makes present the kerygma in all its communal imperatives. **The family lives its spirituality precisely by being at one and the same time a domestic church and a vital cell for transforming the world.**