



Amoris Laetitia Family
Year 2021 - 2022

Guide n.9

Video n.9



Accompanying weakness

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1

Weakness

HOLY FATHER

«Today, families are severely tried by weakness. We are all fragile – and separation, divorce, and living together are now a reality that many families in the world deal with. **The Church has the task of going out to meet those who want to remain near God** to help them to transform their failures and sufferings into opportunities to journey toward the fullness of the Gospel».

«Whatever the case, all these situations require a constructive response [...]. That is how Jesus treated the Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:1-26): he addressed her desire for true love, in order to free her from the darkness in her life and to bring her to the full joy of the Gospel». AL 294

«Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness». AL 308

«Naturally, every effort should be made to encourage the development of an enlightened conscience, formed and guided by the responsible and serious discernment of one's pastor, and to encourage an ever-greater trust in God's grace». AL 303

Likesya Family

«Families who are weak need to be approached with visits, exchanges of opinions, to be understood and they need a spiritual type of advice that restores trust in themselves».

Jesus «expects us [...] to enter into the reality of other people's lives and to know the power of tenderness». AL 308

«The Gospel itself tells us not to judge or condemn [...] we are called to show mercy because *mercy was first shown to us*». AL 308, 310



Invitation to reflect

Our family has its weaknesses too. Am I able to recognize the «goodness the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness»?



Family activity

Let's take some time one evening and, together with our children, try to list what our weaknesses might be regarding how we relate to one another, and how we might equip ourselves to face them.



Community or group activity

Let's propose watching a film on resilience (knowing how to overcome difficulties in order to give new impetus to one's own life). After watching it, a sharing in small groups can be proposed: what does this film have to say about my life?

Prayer

Lord,
help us understand that our limitations
are not an obstacle for your mercy.

Help us not reject
the ideals of the Gospel
because they seem difficult to achieve.

Grant us your Holy Spirit
so that our failures and sufferings
can be transformed into opportunities
to improve as we
continue along our journey
toward the fullness of the Gospel.

Make us capable of accepting the goodness
You sow in the midst of our weaknesses.

Amen



2

Discernment

HOLY FATHER

«**Pastoral care for families** knows how to welcome, accompany, discern and integrate into the ecclesial community, not with simple and trite recipes, but with a vision that truly knows how to discern and distinguish situations».

«The Church must accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children, who show signs of a wounded and troubled love, by restoring in them hope and confidence, like the beacon of a lighthouse in a port or a torch carried among the people to enlighten those who have lost their way or who are in the midst of a storm». AL 291

Likesya Family

«No family should be excluded from the community, no matter what the problem. Marriage should bring happiness, not unhappiness. The community should build a support system that demonstrates to these families the importance of protecting and leading their children toward a better future.»

«Children should understand that God has a marvelous plan for them. This conviction gives them the courage to overcome the wounds caused by their parents and it gives them the certainty that «even if my father or mother abandons me, God will never abandon me». God bless all the families in the world.»

«It is a matter of [...] helping each person find his or her proper way of participating in the ecclesial community and thus to experience [...] whether in social service, prayer meetings or another way that his or her own initiative, together with the discernment of the parish priest». AL 297

Such persons need to feel [...] able to live and grow as living members of the Church and experience her as a mother who welcomes them always, who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life and the Gospel. This integration is also needed in the care and Christian upbringing of their children, who ought to be considered most important». AL 299



Invitation to reflect

Reflect on how merciful your love is: how disposed are you to understand, welcome, forgive, hope?

Family activity

We can propose an evening together to other families to share a «small step forward» taken during the day. Each person can ask others to pray for a particular difficulty.

Community or group activity

Under the guidance of the pastor or someone in community leadership, think of offering each person the possibility of putting themselves at the service of the community or of renewing their particular form of service. This might be done on a particular feast day.

Prayer

Lord,
help us understand
the problems and weakness of our brothers and sisters.

Help us know how to open the door of our home
and our hearts
to those who are weaker, those in difficulty,
so they might feel welcomed, heard, understood.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit
so we might know how to present to others
that mercy we first
received from You.

Amen



3

Small steps

HOLY FATHER

«In no way should the Church give up **proposing the full ideal of marriage**: today, more than a ministry addressing failures, we must carry out a pastoral care that **supports marriages and prevents them from breaking!** There are so many small steps people can take that and **God is always pleased with small steps**».

«A lukewarm attitude, any kind of relativism, or an undue reticence in proposing that ideal, would be a lack of fidelity to the Gospel and also of love on the part of the Church for young people themselves. To show understanding in the face of exceptional situations never implies dimming the light of the fuller ideal, or proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being». AL 307

Likesya Family

«This spiritual guidance consists in helping families understand that crises in marriage do not last forever and do not necessarily lead to breaking up. That is why it is imperative to integrate them so that they can rediscover how to dialogue, forgive each other and the joy of love.»

«Discernment must help to find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits. By thinking that everything is black and white, we sometimes close off the way of grace and of growth, and discourage paths of sanctification which give glory to God. Let us remember that 'a small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order, but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties' ». AL 305





Invitation to reflect

In the face of the temptation to say, «I'm made this way, I can't do anything about it», reflect on what small, possible step you can take to overcome one of your weaknesses.

Family activity

Let's create an opportunity to be with our children and listen to them, asking them how they see our marriage. It could even be an opportunity for us to understand how they see us and what type of example we are giving them.

Community or group activity

Let's organize a meeting for the community regarding the risks and dangers that threaten our families today and about how they can be avoided as a community.

Prayer

Lord,
help us to bear witness
that faithfulness is renewing the same choice each
day.

Help us understand that love
is never a goal that is completely attained,
but always presents new exigencies.

Accompany and guide
every little step
we are able to take
to build up our love.

Amen

4

The balm of mercy

HOLY FATHER

«In every situation, it is important to use the balm of mercy to soothe wounds and to make people feel welcome, **while respecting the truth**. It is necessary **to teach how to forgive, to understand, to hope.**»

Merciful love should be *«the mindset which should prevail in the Church and lead us to «open our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society». AL 312*

« 'The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone for ever; it is to pour out the balm of God's mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart...' [...] Consequently, there is a need 'to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations' and 'to be attentive, by necessity, to how people experience distress because of their condition' ». AL 296

«The Church's pastors, in proposing to the faithful the full ideal of the Gospel and the Church's teaching, must also help them to treat the weak with compassion, avoiding aggravation or unduly harsh or hasty judgements. The Gospel itself tells us not to judge or condemn». AL 308



Invitation to reflect

In my living environment, is there someone in particular toward whom the Lord is asking me to use the balm of mercy?

Family activity

«To forgive, to understand, to hope»: every member of the family can share something they have forgiven during the day, or something for which they were forgiven; how they succeeded in understanding, or how they felt they were understood; a moment in which they trusted in God.

Community or group activity

Let's prepare some prayers that we can read during the Holy Mass:

- Lord, teach us to forgive...
- Lord, teach us to understand...
- Lord, teach us to hope...

Prayer

Lord,
help us to believe in love
even in times of trial.

Help us never give up
fighting for our family,
even when conflict makes us suffer,
when forgiving seems difficult,
distant or impossible to achieve.

With You, nothing is impossible:
Your mercy comforts us,
Your Word guides us,
Your presence gives us hope.

Amen

Invitation to read *Amoris Laetitia*

«**Accompanying weakness**»

Amoris Laetitia, Chapter VIII, 291-312

Link to the Apostolic Exhortation *AMORIS LAETITIA*



Familial love: vocation and path to holiness

Holy Father,
we are here before You
to praise You and thank You for the great gift of the family.
We pray to You for families, consecrated in the Sacrament of Matrimony,
that each day they might rediscover the grace they have received,
and, as small domestic Churches,
they might know how to witness to Your Presence.
and the love with which Christ loves the Church.
We pray to You for families going through difficulty and suffering,
from illness, or from problems only You know:
sustain them and make them aware
of the way of holiness to 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,
so they can encounter You
and respond joyfully to the vocation You have in mind for them;
and for their parents and grandparents,
so they may be aware
that they are signs of the paternity and maternity of God:
in caring for their children who, in body and spirit,
You entrust to them, as well as in 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 be active in evangelization,
in the service of life and peace,
in communion with the priests and with every state in life.

Bless the World Meeting of Families in Rome.
Amen.

Official Prayer for *the 10th World Meeting of Families*
22-26 June 2022

www.amoristaetitia.va



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