

Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)

Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) is a Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, the result of two Synods on marriage and family in 2014 and 2015. It's highly readable in the accessible contemporary English translation and, in it, Pope Francis shows his great knowledge and understanding of many contemporary issues and challenges and proposes ways of meeting them through pastoral action and spiritual engagement.

[Download the full text of Amoris Laetitia \(Vatican pdf\) to your device.](#)

Ideally we should read the entire 250+ page document but let's start with Pope Francis' own summary in the Introduction of the Document to get a sense of what the document contains and particular sections you might want to read (chapter numbers in brackets)

"I will begin with an opening chapter inspired by the Scriptures, to set a proper tone. (Chapter 1) I will then examine the actual situation of families, in order to keep firmly grounded in reality. (Chapter 2). I will go on to recall some essential aspects of the Church's teaching on marriage and the family (Chapter 3), thus paving the way for two central chapters dedicated to love (Chapter 4 – Love in Marriage and Chapter 5 – on children). I will then highlight some pastoral approaches that can guide us in building sound and fruitful homes in accordance with God's plan (chapter 6), with a full chapter devoted to the raising of children (Chapter 7). Finally, I will offer an invitation to mercy and the pastoral discernment of those situations that fall short of what the Lord demands of us (Chapter 8), and conclude with a brief discussion of family spirituality (Chapter 9)"

Pope Francis notes, *"I do not recommend a rushed reading of the text. The greatest benefit, for families themselves and for those engaged in the family apostolate, will come if each part is read patiently and carefully, or if attention is paid to the parts dealing with their specific needs. It is likely, for example, that married couples will be more concerned with Chapters 4 and 5, and pastoral ministers with chapter 6, while everyone should feel challenged by Chapter 8. It is my hope that in reading this text, all will feel called to love and cherish family life, for 'families are not a problem; they are first and foremost an opportunity'"*

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