

LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



A Column by Fr. Tom



***Amoris Laetitia* - The Joy of Love; Introduction**

We spent the last 5 or so weeks exploring Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter "Patris Corde" and the role of St. Joseph – as a model for husbands and fathers, and as a model of faith for all of us. Now, it is time for us to broaden our scope a bit. While we briefly mentioned the other members of the Holy Family, Jesus and Mary, in our previous studies, it is now time for us to give a great deal more space to the love present in all "holy" families. In order to do so, we will turn our attention to Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, The Joy of Love.

As we mentioned previously, in addition to the Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis has named this year "The Year of *Amoris Laetitia* Family." (March 19, 2021-June 26, 2022) This "year" began on the Feast of St. Joseph in 2021 and will end during the X [Tenth] Meeting of Families in Rome in 2022.

What is *Amoris Laetitia*? This document we will explore is a Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation. What does this mean? First, "Apostolic" means it was written by the Pope. It is an "Exhortation," which means it was written to "exhort," or encourage, certain virtues in the faithful – in this case, the love of the family. Finally, it is "Post-Synodal," meaning that it was written as a response to The Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, also known as the Synod on the Family, a meeting of bishops which took place in October 2015. This document, dated March 19, 2016, was written by Pope Francis to summarize and respond to that synod.

How will we study this important document?

Amoris Laetitia consists of nine chapters. We will

dedicate at least one column to each of the nine chapters. Some of the more central and/or lengthier chapters may receive the attention of more than one column. Truth be told, there are many single paragraphs that could warrant a whole column. However, in this column, we merely wish to introduce this document, and encourage everyone to read it and study it further.

As we begin our study of *Amoris Laetitia*, we thought we might present some additional resources to assist you in your understanding of the document and all that it presents. As mentioned above, you may wish to read this document in its entirety, or you may read along as we examine each chapter. You may do so online at the Vatican website, vatican.va. However, as it is rather lengthy, some may wish to purchase a copy of the document, which you can obtain from a number of different sources, including the US Bishops' website, uscbb.org. You may also find some copies of this document in the St. Paul of the Cross Religious Shop. (If there aren't any copies when you go, just ask Frank or Pat about ordering one.)

You may also wish to explore more details about The Year of *Amoris Laetitia* Family on the US Bishops' website. In addition, you will find more information at the Vatican website for *Amoris Laetitia*: [<http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/amoris-laetitia.html>] Here you will find many additional resources, including videos from Pope Francis about each of the chapters of the document.

In our next column, we will dive deeper into Chapter 1 of *Amoris Laetitia*.