



Saint John XXIII Roman Catholic Church

3390 Portage Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3K 0Z3

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Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

SUNDAY LITURGIES (MASSES)

Saturday 5:00 p.m., Sunday 9:00 a.m. and 11:45 a.m.

WEEKDAY LITURGIES

Tuesday through Friday 9:15 a.m. and/or as announced

COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND SHUT-IN

Contact the parish office for assistance

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSIONS)

Friday 3:15 p.m., Saturday 4:00 p.m.

and/or as announced or by appointment

PARISH BULLETIN FOR THE TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 19, 2016

PARISH PASTORAL TEAM

Pastor: Reverend Fr. Robert Polz

204-832-7335 rpolz.johnxxiii@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant: Joanna Mason

204-832-7175 joanna@johnxxiii.ca

Pastoral Assistant: Sharon Camier

204-832-7206 sharon@johnxxiii.ca

Executive Custodian: José Barrera

204-888-9340

Trustee: Albert McMurdie

204-889-6606 mcmurdie@shaw.ca

Building and Maintenance Chair: Claude Precourt

204-898-1893 claudeprecourt@hotmail.com

Trustee: Christine Carlyle

204-889-0238 rccarlyl@gmail.com

Music Ministry: Donna Vendramelli

204-888-8200 d_vendramelli@mymts.net

Parish Finance Council

Fr. Robert Polz, Christine Carlyle, Anthony (Tony) Keck, Albert McMurdie, Loris Vendramelli

Parish Visioning and Strategic Planning Committee

Fr. Robert Polz, George Brown, Laurette Burch, Sharon Camier, Christine Carlyle, Ken Derendorf, Janine Gaudry, William Gould, Albert McMurdie, Gemma Minerva, Colette Mozol, Rod Olinyk, Marnie Puchniak, Victorina Tualla

FAITH FORMATION: Catechism sessions for children (K to Grade 8) are held on Sunday mornings, September through May, from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. Periodically other programs, workshops, and/or study sessions are offered for adults. Contact our Pastoral Assistant (Sharon) for further information and/or to register.

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST): Contact the parish office for further information.

SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Contact the Pastor (Fr. Robert)

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: Arrangements for preparation and celebration should be made at least six months in advance.

CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS: Contact the parish office before finalizing arrangements with funeral directors.

Blessings and best wishes to all fathers, grandfathers, godfathers on this Father's Day!

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 19 – 26, 2016

As circumstances suggest, the following schedule may be subject to change.

Sunday, June 19	TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
5:00 pm Saturday	MASS – <i>Lois Olinyk+</i> , requested by Tom and Kim Ploquin
9:00 am	MASS – “ <i>Pro populo</i> ” / <i>Intentions of parishioners</i>
11:45 am	MASS – <i>Manuel Pereira+</i> , requested by Idelta Bravo and family
Monday, June 20	FERIAL
	<i>The parish office will be closed on Monday – custodian on duty</i>
7:00 pm	Knights of Columbus Executive Meeting (<i>in room 10</i>)
Tuesday, June 21	MEMORIAL: SAINT ALOYSIUS GONZAGA, Religious
9:00 am	Recitation of the Rosary
9:15 am	MASS – <i>Fr. Célestin Malengu Mubaya (health)</i> , requested by Joanna Mason
Wednesday, June 22	FERIAL
9:00 am	Recitation of the Rosary
9:15 am	MASS – <i>Bill Camier (health)</i> , requested by John and Sharon Camier
5:00 pm	Winnipeg Harvest Food Bank (<i>in room 12</i>)
Thursday, June 23	FERIAL
9:00 am	Recitation of the Rosary
9:15 am	MASS – <i>Doug Rosler (surgery)</i> , requested by Ted and Stephanie Dandewich
3:45 pm	<i>Fr. Robert will participate in a marriage tribunal judging session at OLPH</i>
Friday, June 24	SOLEMNITY: SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
9:00 am	Recitation of the Rosary
9:15 am	MASS – <i>Gregory Burch (health)</i> , requested by his parents Laurette and Doug Burch
10:45 am	MASS – at Sturgeon Creek I Retirement Residence, 10 Hallonquist Drive
3:00 pm	Recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy (<i>in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel</i>)
5:00 pm	RUMMAGE SALE in the parish hall
Saturday, June 25	FERIAL
5:00 pm	MASS – <i>Pacita Yambao+</i> , requested by Virgil Maduro
Sunday, June 26	THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
9:00 am	MASS – <i>In thanksgiving (48th Anniversary of Marriage June 30th)</i> <i>requested by Jerome and Margaret Strachan</i>
11:45 am	MASS – “ <i>Pro populo</i> ” / <i>Intentions of parishioners</i>

MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

We are looking for new volunteers to help serve in the Ministry of Hospitality as Greeters/Ushers at all weekend Sunday liturgies. This is an excellent opportunity to meet some of your fellow parishioners and get involved in an important parish ministry. Parishioners interested in assisting may get more information by speaking with a current usher or by contacting Richard Carlyle @ 204-889-0238.

We also ask those currently serving in the Ministry of Hospitality to help in seeking out new Ministers of Hospitality by approaching prospective volunteers in a personal way at your own weekend Mass times.

– Richard Carlyle, Usher Coordinator

RUMMAGE SALE: Our next rummage sale will be held this **Friday, June 24, 2016 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.** We always welcome new volunteers to help to setup in the morning, to assist during the sale itself, and especially to pack items away in the evening after the sale. Items are now being accepted for the Rummage sale (jewellery is always a big seller). Please bring items to the church during regular office hours. Thank you!

JUNE 19, 2016

The Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Zechariah 12:10-11

The murder of good king Josiah brings mourning to all Jerusalem.

Psalms 63:1, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8

The need for God is like a thirst, the blessing of God like water.

Galatians 3:26-29

Paul erases the primary boundaries within his society in favour of Christ.

Luke 9:18-24

The disciples carry many reports and impressions of who Jesus really is



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

— Alice Camille

Today is Father's Day. "Father" is a powerful title in every culture. It refers to the man biologically responsible for your existence. But it's also a term of respect for any male elder or superior in the community. In our society, Father means the man complicit in your coming to life. But it might also include another man who raised you, if that was someone else. In Catholic culture, Father is a title for the men who serve us in sacramental ministry. And in Christianity, it's a name we use for God. Jesus even preferred the more familiar Abba, Papa. However you say it, calling God our Father claims God as our origin, our superior, and our family.

Names matter. The childhood chant about sticks and stones being lethal, while names are harmless, doesn't hold up upon inspection. Names are not harmless. You and I insist on being properly named, and can be devastated by what others call us—which is why libel is a crime. But we don't have to go that far to consider the significance of right naming. A reference to a person's race can be simply accurate, or deeply offensive, depending on the word chosen. Even the accurate word can be the wrong one if the intent is to confine a person to a category, the way "wife" may be inadequate when describing a senator, CEO, or scientist. We all know the discomfort of having our names mangled. If you prefer Joseph, being called Joey Boy just doesn't cut it. Susan may not appreciate being introduced as Suzy-Q. And never mind Sweetie.

Naming is such a tricky business, we can appreciate the disciples' cold sweat when the pop quiz is sprung: "Who are they saying I am?" As we know from the gospels, honest responses might include glutton and drunkard, sinner, madman, blasphemer, and demon-possessed! Jesus was called a lot of unflattering things, many of them missing the mark by light years. Perhaps the disciples are too timid or too political to bring these up. Instead, they offer a few positive assessments: John the Baptist, Elijah, some ancient resuscitated prophet.

You and I might be charmed to be mistaken for a dead hero. Jesus, Lord of the living and the dead, is less so. He rephrases his question: "And what do you call me?" Peter saves everyone's neck by blurting out: "The Christ of God." Sometimes no impulse control is helpful! Jesus doesn't reject this name. But he rejects the sharing of it beyond the group. For now, "Son of Man" describes his role most meaningfully. The one who will suffer and be killed is a person like us. One who does this willingly, sacrificially—well, that one is more like God.

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"Do not the angels differ from us in this respect, that they do not want so many things as we do? Therefore the less we need, the more we are on our way to them."

— Saint John Chrysostom

"We abandon ourselves, we renounce ourselves, when we escape from what we were in our old state, and strive toward what we are called to be in our new one."

— Saint Gregory the Great

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING AND COMFORT: Darrell Aucoin, Liz Baziuk, David Carlyle, Peter Corcoran, Connie Csizmadia, Phyllis Dreveski, Donald Hanis, Eola Johnson, Angela Kalichak, Debra McEnturff, Dolores and Paul Mulaire, Nell Ramsay, Phyllis Rogoski, Rose Stankewich, Marie Stuart, Jacob Trudel, Antonio F. Viegas, Maria Helena Viegas, Ted Wood and Helen Yankoski.



Please contact our Pastoral Assistant, Sharon, to have names added to our prayer list. Please remember that to have names added to the list and printed in the bulletin we require permission from the person(s) concerned. Thank you for your help.

EVERYBODY HAS A PART

There are a variety of opportunities available at Saint John XXIII Parish for people to share their time and talents for the common good and thereby to grow in their own understanding and practice of the faith. **Please prayerfully consider your participation as a member in the life of our parish and mark your areas of interest on a TIME AND TALENT RENEWAL FORM.** Forms are available in pamphlet rack at the south entrance. Please submit your completed forms to the parish office or place in the collection basket at Mass. Our parish team has been in the process of collating responses and has begun contacting parishioners to discern further their participation in the work of our parish. If they have not yet done so, those already serving in various ministries are kindly asked to renew their commitment by also completing a TIME AND TALENT RENEWAL FORM. THANK YOU for your ongoing prayers and generous response!

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

It is, first of all, the office of the Priest and Deacon as ordinary ministers of the Eucharist to distribute Holy Communion to the faithful. Upon recommendation of the Pastor, the Bishop may give other suitable members of the Christian faithful the faculty to give Holy Communion as extraordinary ministers whenever it seems necessary for the pastoral benefit of the faithful and sufficient numbers of ordinary ministers are unavailable.

In Saint John XXIII Parish, for many years *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* have assisted in the distribution of the Holy Eucharist both during Mass and to the sick and shut-in at the hospital and in their homes/residences. **We are so very thankful to all those men and women who have generously given of their time over the years to assist in this ministry.**

It is clear that circumstances indicate we should and will continue to involve designated lay ministers in the ministry of distributing Holy Communion in our Parish both at the church and in the home/hospital setting. Given that appointments of most of our parish's lay communion ministers expired May 3, 2016 and that there is a need for greater compliance with Safe Environment protocols, our Pastor has decided that now is a good opportunity for us to take the time for some needed updating, formation and discernment as to who is being called by God to continue or to join in this sacred ministry.

The above being said, many of our parishioners tend to go away during the summer months. So we will wait until the early fall to hold a workshop and retreat for those being called to serve in this ministry. Once this process of discernment and formation is complete, our Pastor will forward the names of those being called to this ministry to the Archbishop for (re)appointment and commissioning.

In the meantime, according to their availability, those who have been serving as Communion Ministers during the last three years are kindly asked to continue serving through the summer months. In cases of real necessity, our Pastor may also depute other suitable members of the faithful to assist with the distribution Holy Communion on a individual occasion. Also, those hoping to serve or continue in this ministry especially to the sick and the shut-in are asked to contact our pastoral assistant, Sharon, to make arrangement over the summer months to complete police checks and other necessary safe environment requirements.

God willing, by sometime in the fall the situation will be regularized with a new group of *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* commissioned in the appropriate liturgical rite by mandate of our Archbishop.

Gracious Lord,
who nourish us with the Body and Blood of your Son,
that we might have eternal life,
bless our brothers and sisters who are being called
to give the bread of heaven and the chalice of salvation
to your faithful people.

May the saving mysteries they distribute
lead them to the joys of eternal life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Saint John XXIII Roman Catholic Church, Winnipeg, MB

SUPPLEMENT TO THE PARISH BULLETIN

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 19, 2016

***WANTED: Volunteers to serve on a new Parish Stewardship Committee
and a new Parish Fundraising Committee***

As we move forward in faith as a parish community, we are looking to enlist and engage parishioners with appropriate gifts and talents to become involved in the establishment of both a new Parish Stewardship Committee and a new Parish Fundraising Committee. We are hoping to make some progress on this during the summer months. **Those interested in becoming involved in either or both of these proposed committees are encouraged to speak with members of the parish staff and/or members of our Parish Visioning and Strategic Planning Committee. Thank you for your consideration and your prayers.**

SHARING GOD'S GIFTS 2016

The total amount of the 2016 SGG's Appeal is \$1,944,100. This represents a 1.4% increase over the previous year, reflecting the impact of inflation. Our parish share of the 2016 Appeal is based on our parish's 2014 Offertory collection. **Thus, our Parish's appeal target for 2016 is \$50,670.**

Brochures about the appeal and envelopes were distributed with the parish bulletin at the end of May. Those who wish to begin their contributions to Sharing God's Gifts 2016 may do so through the parish office or directly to the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. Whether you submit your contribution through the parish office or directly to the Archdiocese, **please make cheques payable to "Sharing God's Gifts"**. Thank you for your generous support.

Sharing God's Gifts New Link: Go to the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website for full details of the archdiocesan annual appeal: http://www.archwinnipeg.ca/sharing_gods_gifts.php



SAFE ENVIRONMENTS: The Archdiocese of Winnipeg strives to foster safe environments in which church activities unfold. Policies and protocols are directed toward the protection of children and youth and vulnerable adults in parishes across the Archdiocese. Fostering safe environments also protects those whose ministries bring them into contact with the vulnerable. Catechists, catechist assistants and anyone else **involved in ministry with minors and anyone involved in any ministry to the vulnerable sector** are required to participate in safe environment formation and to have child abuse registry and criminal record checks. **Please contact Sharon, our pastoral assistant, for further assistance on fulfilling safe environment requirements. Thank you.**

IN AND AROUND THE PARISH, ARCHDIOCESE AND BEYOND

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CALLS TO ACTION ON EDUCATION: The two churches of St James Anglican and St. Stephen and St. Bede (Anglican and Lutheran) in Winnipeg are pleased to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action concerning education. The two churches have set aside the month of June to focus on Indigenous awareness. The events and speakers run to June 27. **See poster on the bulletin board for further information.**

RESTORING DIGNITY TO CREMATED REMAINS - HONOURING LIFE IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION: Presentation at St. Gianna's Church, 15 Columbia Drive, **Tuesday, June 21 at 7:45 p.m.** This session will delve into the teachings of our faith tradition relating to cremation and the rituals supporting death. <stgianna.ca>

ST. BENEDICT'S MONASTERY AND RETREAT CENTRE: **Summer Fullness** is a week long silent retreat with daily spiritual direction. Time to rest, reflect, pray, walk the grounds, do some creative activity. Meet God in a new way. If you can't make the week, choose a few of the days that you can attend. July 3-10. St. Benedict's Monastery and Retreat Centre, 225 Masters Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R4A 2A1, 204- 338-4601.

ST. CHARLES RETREAT CENTRE: Cana Session for Couples – July 9-15, 2016: CANA is a six-day retreat for married couples to strengthen their marriage and deepen their spiritual life. St. Charles Retreat Centre, 323 St. Charles Street. 204-885-2260, email: stcharlesretreat@hotmail.com

THE MANITOBA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE manages a **Substitute Teacher listing** used by all Catholic Schools in the city. If you wish to apply to be included on this listing please visit the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website <<http://www.archwinnipeg.ca>> for requirements and process. Please note the Catholic Schools Office is closed for the summer from July 8th, reopening August 23rd.

For other events in and around the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, please see information posted on bulletin boards at the north and south entrances of the church, and/or go to the website: www.archwinnipeg.ca/weekly_bulletin.php

An excerpt from the
**Summary of the
post-Synodal apostolic exhortation
Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)
on love in the family**

Holy See Press Office
N. 160408b



Vatican City, 8 April 2016 – The following is a [continuation from what was published in last Sunday's parish bulletin of the] summary of the post-Synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), on love in the family, signed on 19 March, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, which brings together the results of the two Synods on the family convoked by Pope Francis in 2014 and 2015. It frequently cites their final Reports, documents and teachings of his predecessors, and his own numerous catecheses on the family. In addition, as in previous magisterial documents, the Pope also makes use of the contributions of various Episcopal Conferences around the world (Kenya, Australia, Argentina...) and cites significant figures such as Martin Luther King and Erich Fromm. The Pope even quotes the film *Babette's Feast* to illustrate the concept of gratuity.

Chapter six: "Some pastoral perspectives" (199-258)

In the sixth chapter the Pope treats various pastoral perspectives that are aimed at forming solid and fruitful families according to God's plan. The chapter uses the Final Reports of the two Synods and the catecheses of Pope Francis and Pope John Paul II extensively. It reiterates that families should not only be evangelised, they should also evangelise. The Pope regrets "that ordained ministers often lack the training needed to deal with the complex problems currently facing families". On the one hand, the psycho-affective formation of seminarians needs to be improved, and families need to be more involved in formation for ministry; and on the other hand, "the experience of the broad oriental tradition of a married clergy could also be drawn upon".

The Pope then deals with the preparation of the engaged for marriage; with the accompaniment of couples in the first years of married life, including the issue of responsible parenthood; and also with certain complex situations and crises, knowing that "each crisis has a lesson to teach us; we need to learn how to listen for it with the ear of the heart". Some causes of crisis are analysed, among them a delay in maturing affectively.

Mention is furthermore made of accompanying abandoned, separated or divorced persons. The Exhortation stresses the importance of the recent reform of the procedures for marriage annulment. It highlights the suffering of children in situations of conflict and concludes: "Divorce is an evil and the increasing number of divorces is very troubling. Hence, our most important pastoral task with regard to families is to strengthen their love, helping to heal wounds and working to prevent the spread of this drama of our times". It then touches on the situations of a marriage between a Catholic and a Christian of another denomination (mixed marriages), and between a Catholic and someone of another religion (disparity of cult). Regarding families with members with homosexual tendencies, it reaffirms the necessity to respect them and to refrain from any unjust discrimination and every form of aggression or violence. The

last, pastorally poignant part of the chapter, “When death makes us feel its sting”, is on the theme of the loss of dear ones and of widowhood.

Chapter seven: “Towards a better education of children” (259-290)

The seventh chapter is dedicated to the education of children: their ethical formation, the learning of discipline which can include punishment, patient realism, sex education, passing on the faith and, more generally, family life as an educational context. The practical wisdom present in each paragraph is remarkable, above all the attention given to those gradual, small steps “that can be understood, accepted and appreciated”.

There is a particularly interesting and pedagogically fundamental paragraph in which Francis clearly states that “obsession, however, is not education. We cannot control every situation that a child may experience... If parents are obsessed with always knowing where their children are and controlling all their movements, they will seek only to dominate space. But this is no way to educate, strengthen and prepare their children to face challenges. What is most important is the ability lovingly to help them grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy”.

The notable section on education in sexuality is very expressively entitled: “Yes to sex education”. The need is there, and we have to ask “if our educational institutions have taken up this challenge ... in an age when sexuality tends to be trivialized and impoverished”. Sound education needs to be carried out “within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving”. The text warns that the expression ‘safe sex’ conveys “a negative attitude towards the natural procreative finality of sexuality, as if an eventual child were an enemy to be protected against. This way of thinking promotes narcissism and aggressiveness in place of acceptance”.

Chapter eight: “Guiding, discerning and integrating weakness” (291-312)

The eighth chapter is an invitation to mercy and pastoral discernment in situations that do not fully match what the Lord proposes. The Pope uses three very important verbs: guiding, discerning and integrating, which are fundamental in addressing fragile, complex or irregular situations. The chapter has sections on the need for gradualness in pastoral care; the importance of discernment; norms and mitigating circumstances in pastoral discernment; and finally what the Pope calls the “logic of pastoral mercy”.

Chapter eight is very sensitive. In reading it one must remember that “the Church’s task is often like that of a field hospital”. Here the Holy Father grapples with the findings of the Synods on controversial issues. He reaffirms what Christian marriage is and adds that “some forms of union radically contradict this ideal, while others realise it in at least a partial and analogous way”. The Church therefore “does not disregard the constructive elements in those situations which do not yet or no longer correspond to her teaching on marriage”.

As far as discernment with regard to “irregular” situations is concerned, the Pope states: “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’”. And he continues: “It is a matter of reaching out to everyone, of needing to help each person find his or her proper way of participating in the ecclesial community, and thus to experience being touched by an ‘unmerited, unconditional and gratuitous’ mercy”. And further: “The divorced who have entered a new union, for example, can find themselves in a variety of situations, which should not be pigeonholed or fit into overly rigid classifications leaving no room for a suitable personal and pastoral discernment”.

In this line, gathering the observations of many Synod Fathers, the Pope states that “the baptised who are divorced and civilly remarried need to be more fully integrated into Christian communities in the variety of ways possible, while avoiding any occasion of scandal”. “Their participation can be expressed in different ecclesial services... Such persons need to feel not as excommunicated members of the Church, but instead as living members, able to live and grow in the Church... This integration is also needed in the care and Christian upbringing of their children”.

In a more general vein, the Pope makes an extremely important statement for understanding the orientation and meaning of the Exhortation: “If we consider the immense variety of concrete situations, ... it is understandable that neither the Synod nor this Exhortation could be expected to provide a new set of general rules, canonical in nature and applicable to all cases. What is needed is simply a renewed encouragement to undertake a responsible personal and pastoral discernment of particular cases, one which would recognize that, since ‘the degree of responsibility is

not equal in all cases', the consequences or effects of a rule need not necessarily always be the same". The Pope develops in depth the needs and characteristics of the journey of accompaniment and discernment necessary for profound dialogue between the faithful and their pastors.

For this purpose the Holy Father recalls the Church's reflection on "mitigating factors and situations" regarding the attribution of responsibility and accountability for actions; and relying on St. Thomas Aquinas, he focuses on the relationship between rules and discernment by stating: "It is true that general rules set forth a good which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in their formulation they cannot provide absolutely for all particular situations. At the same time, it must be said that, precisely for that reason, what is part of a practical discernment in particular circumstances cannot be elevated to the level of a rule".

The last section of the chapter treats "The logic of pastoral mercy". To avoid misunderstandings, Pope Francis strongly reiterates: "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. Today, more important than the pastoral care of failures is the pastoral effort to strengthen marriages and thus to prevent their breakdown".

The overall sense of the chapter and of the spirit that Pope Francis wishes to impart to the pastoral work of the Church is well summed up in the closing words: "I encourage the faithful who find themselves in complicated situations to speak confidently with their pastors or with other lay people whose lives are committed to the Lord. They may not always encounter in them a confirmation of their own ideas or desires, but they will surely receive some light to help them better understand their situation and discover a path to personal growth. I also encourage the Church's pastors to listen to them with sensitivity and serenity, with a sincere desire to understand their plight and their point of view, in order to help them live better lives and to recognize their proper place in the Church".

On the "logic of pastoral mercy", Pope Francis emphasises: "At times we find it hard to make room for God's unconditional love in our pastoral activity. We put so many conditions on mercy that we empty it of its concrete meaning and real significance. That is the worst way of watering down the Gospel".

Chapter nine: "The spirituality of marriage and the family" (313-325)

The ninth chapter is devoted to marital and family spirituality, which "is made up of thousands of small but real gestures". The Pope clearly states that "those who have deep spiritual aspirations should not feel that the family detracts from their growth in the life of the Spirit, but rather see it as a path which the Lord is using to lead them to the heights of mystical union". Everything, "moments of joy, relaxation, celebration, and even sexuality can be experienced as a sharing in the full life of the resurrection". He then speaks of prayer in the light of Easter, of the spirituality of exclusive and free love in the challenge and the yearning to grow old together, reflecting God's fidelity. And finally the spirituality of care, consolation and incentive: the Pope teaches that "all family life is a 'shepherding' in mercy. Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others". It is a profound "spiritual experience to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them".

In the final paragraph the Pope affirms: "No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love ... All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families, and every family must feel this constant impulse. Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. (...) May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us".

The apostolic exhortation concludes with a Prayer to the Holy Family.

As can readily be understood from a quick review of its contents, the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* seeks emphatically to affirm not the "ideal family" but the very rich and complex reality of family life. Its pages provide an open-hearted look, profoundly positive, which is nourished not with abstractions or ideal projections, but with pastoral attention to reality. The text is a close reading of family life, with spiritual insights and practical wisdom useful for every human couple or persons who want to build a family. Above all, it is patently the result of attention to what people have lived over many years. The exhortation *Amoris Laetitia: on love in the family* indeed speaks the language of experience and of hope.