

***Unleash the Gospel* in Our Families**

(from STM Bulletin – July 2, 2017)

Last week outlined very briefly the “Guideposts” in Archbishop Vigneron’s Pastoral Letter that mark the Way to *Unleash the Gospel* and make real the Synod Vision for families and parishes. The **Propositions** affirmed by the Archbishop lead to specific **Action Steps** that challenge us to be bold and live in all times and places as faithful witnesses to Jesus.

The **Proposition for Families**, relevant to all individuals, is to *envision and develop a practical plan for ongoing human and spiritual formation for all the stages of life...*

- **Action Step 1.1** directs the **AOD** to provide specific supports before and after Confirmation and Marriage to help us continually embrace the Graces of those Sacraments, strengthen our relationships with Christ, and empower parents as primary witnesses of the faith.
- **Action Step 1.2** charges **parishes** to mentor families by forming “discipleship groups” that “accompany one another with the joys and struggles of life.” “All existing parish programs” are to be “opportunities for families to *encounter* Jesus anew, *grow* daily as His disciples, and give *witness* to the power of His mercy.” Parishes must help “men and women understand their identity and reclaim their sacrificial role as Christian husbands/wives and fathers/mothers.”
- **Action Step 1.3** charges **families** to commit to re-claiming their Christian identity in some very specific ways:
 1. *Reclaim Sunday*: Attend Mass as a family, spend time with one another, and use Sunday parish events to Unleash the Gospel in our families.
 2. Form our families in love by placing *Sacred Scripture* at the center of family life. Study and reflect on Scripture, especially Sunday readings. Participate in Bible studies.
 3. Create time for *Regular Family Meals* without distraction to reclaim the sacred nature of sharing meals together.
 4. Develop *Family Prayer Time* to listen, share, and grow together guided by the Lord in times of joy and trial. Seek simple ways to pray, giving primacy to the family rosary and devotions.
 5. Reclaim the sacrament of *Reconciliation in our Homes*. Heal wounds among family members through sacrifice, forgiveness, mercy and love.
 6. *Model Christ’s Love*, be aware of our neighbor’s needs and reach out with a welcoming spirit.
 7. *Parents* are reminded that they are to be the *Primary Witnesses* of the faith to our families.

The Pastoral Letter is *very* rich and this brief summary does not do it justice. Please read the Letter yourselves and find in it tremendous encouragement from the Holy Spirit.

Be bold.

These are some of the things we can all do to *Unleash the Gospel* in our families.