



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Statement on *Amoris Laetitia*

Amoris Laetitia (On Love In The Family) is not only a beautiful and welcome reflection on marriage and the family; it is also a particular call to pastors, parishes, and Catholic institutions to work in concrete ways to support families and help them grow. In this way *Amoris Laetitia* underscores the importance of the ministry to families that unfolds daily throughout the Archdiocese of Edmonton.

With this exhortation, the Holy Father has demonstrated a deep understanding of the challenges faced by all families. As a bishop who was privileged to participate in the 2015 Synod on the Family, I can say that my first glimpse into the exhortation confirms my observation that he listened very carefully to the concerns raised by bishops and other Synod participants from all over the world.

Ministry to families is one of the key pastoral concerns that we have identified here in the Edmonton Archdiocese, and so this teaching by Pope Francis will be invaluable to us. We know that many of our social ills stem from unhealthy, often violent, family situations. Here in Alberta, we have one of the highest rates of family violence in Canada. The importance of ministry to the family simply cannot be overstated.

As a Christian community, we are called to share the Gospel message of the beauty and dignity of marriage, the inexpressibly wondrous gift of children, and the home as the place of love, nurture, safety, and identity. Pope Francis illustrates this call in great detail in his exhortation.

This papal document does not change Church teaching or discipline regarding marriage. It does underline the need for pastors to listen attentively and deal sensitively with single people, couples, and families who experience difficult situations.

At more than 260 pages, *Amoris Laetitia* is lengthy, and I plan to follow the Holy Father's advice to give it the proper time and attention before giving any more detailed response.

In the meantime, I encourage all Catholics to join me in studying and reflecting on his words. Pope Francis has given us some important and timely teaching on issues that affect us all.

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

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