

LIVING FAITH

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 9, 2021

THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

John 15:9-17

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you.

And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

TAKING THE GOSPEL HOME

In 2016, five years ago, Pope Francis wrote *Amoris Laetitia*, his post-synodal apostolic exhortation on love in the family. This letter followed closely after the 2014 Synod of Bishops, which dealt with the realities of life for families today. Pope Francis wrote, “The complexity of the issues that arose revealed the need for continued open discussion of a number of doctrinal, moral, spiritual, and pastoral questions.” (AL, #2) Today, on Mother’s Day, we celebrate and honour all mothers, and those who fulfill a mothering role. We give thanks for those mothers, grandmothers, foster mothers and mother figures, who teach us how to give love and how to receive love. Love is often less than perfect. As we try to give ourselves wholeheartedly in love, we often become aware of our shortcomings, and of the shortcomings of those who tried to love us. Let’s take simple steps toward loving and abiding in the love of God, who has chosen us to go out and bear lasting fruit in our families, our communities and our world.

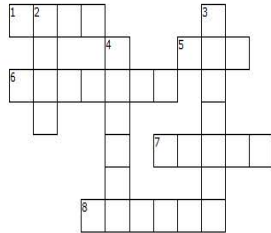
PONDER AND DISCUSS

- How does your family “abide” in the love that Jesus offers?
- What makes this kind of loving easy?
- What makes this kind of loving difficult?



Crossword Puzzle

Sixth Sunday of Easter



ACROSS

1. To hold dear, to like or desire greatly
5. A state of happiness or delight
6. Someone that performs duties for a master
7. To gain knowledge, skill, or understanding
8. A person that you like very much

DOWN

2. To do what you are told; follow the rules
3. An order which a person is expected to obey
4. One who has authority over another person

MASTER	OBEY	LOVE	COMMAND
FRIEND	SERVANT	LEARN	JOY



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Love One Another

John 15:9-17

Word Search Puzzle

G Q R J N I L D R Z G F U R G
 C O M M A N D D I M Y T E Z I
 G F S Y J F W J O K H N Y O J
 Q W F L F R U I T W S C P M I
 C H M E R B W Q J F N R U P O
 T L D R I K O B U S I N E S S
 Q X S X E J U O E R N L A Y R
 O A P R N E N B A I F L I S R
 M J L B D I O E D K R V T E T
 L A F O S A B Y M Z N N T V F
 M D S A V V Y K N R A A U E E
 Z H T T T E P W L V E L S F F
 Y M N P E H H A R R P O I V Q
 F F G P B R E E G Z H L H R I
 R E M A I N S R V C E C D S A

FRIENDS	OBEY	LOVE	FRUIT
DOWN	BUSINESS	BEAR	MASTER
LAY	FATHER	LIFE	REMAIN
SERVANTS	GREATER	COMMAND	CHOSE

Archdiocese of St. John's

**This week, May 9 - 16, is the National Week for Life and Family.
 Click [here](#) for resources from the Canadian Conference of
 Catholic Bishops with suggestions of ways to celebrate at home
 and in your Parish.**

THE CHURCH TEACHES AMORIS LAETITIA FAMILY YEAR

Pope Francis urges all to support families
and accompany them along the journey of life.



Amoris Laetitia
Family
Year 2021 - 2022

Amoris Laetitia: Family is the mirror of the love of God: a new video series from Vatican News and the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life

To view the video, click here: <https://youtu.be/PJ-fS7cWUhA>

To read more on this month's topic, click here: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2021-04/amoris-laetitia-family-mirror-love-god-pope-francis.html>

Beginning this month, May, and once a month for the next 10 months, the Vatican will be offering a series of videos to celebrate Amoris Laetitia Family Year, inviting us to delve into and explore the riches of the 2016 Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia. Each month, we will be offered a video with the Pope's reflections and first-hand testimonies of families from across the world on the theme of the family. The initiative is a joint collaboration between the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and Vatican News, and aims to 're-read' the Apostolic Exhortation, with the aid of downloadable material prepared for personal and community reflection. Because, as Pope Francis reminds us: being a family is always "primarily an opportunity".

This month, we are invited to read *Amoris Laetitia*, paragraphs 31-57. These sections of the document explore the current reality of the family.

32. "Faithful to Christ's teaching we look to the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with both its lights and shadows..."

37. We have long thought that simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace, we were providing sufficient support to families, strengthening the marriage bond and giving meaning to marital life. We find it difficult to present marriage more as a dynamic path to personal development and fulfilment than as a lifelong burden. We also find it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations. We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them.

38. We must be grateful that most people do value family relationships that are permanent and marked by mutual respect. They appreciate the Church's efforts to offer guidance and counselling in areas related to growth in love, overcoming conflict and raising children. Many are touched by the power of grace experienced in sacramental Reconciliation and in the Eucharist, grace that helps them face the challenges of marriage and the family. In some countries, especially in various parts of Africa, secularism has not weakened certain traditional values, and marriages forge a strong bond between two wider families, with clearly defined structures for dealing with problems and conflicts. Nowadays we are grateful too for the witness of marriages that have not only proved lasting, but also fruitful and loving. All these factors can inspire a positive and welcoming pastoral approach capable of helping couples to grow in appreciation of the demands of the Gospel. Yet we have often been on the defensive, wasting pastoral energy on denouncing a decadent world without being proactive in proposing ways of finding true happiness. Many people feel that the Church's message on marriage and the family does not clearly reflect the preaching and attitudes of Jesus, who set forth a demanding ideal yet never failed to show compassion and closeness to the frailty of individuals like the Samaritan woman or the woman caught in adultery.

HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY! POPE FRANCIS REFLECTS ON MOTHERS



Pope Francis has offered some beautiful reflections on mothers. Here, we share his words from January 1, 2019:

... Let us receive with amazement the mystery of the Mother of God, as the inhabitants of Ephesus did at the time of the Council. Like them, let us acclaim her “Holy Mother of God”. From her, *let us allow ourselves to be gazed upon, to be embraced, to be taken by the hand.*

Let us allow ourselves to be gazed upon. Especially in times of need, when we are entangled in life’s knots, we rightly lift our eyes to Our Lady, to Our Mother. Yet first, we should let ourselves be gazed upon by Our Lady. When she gazes upon us, she does not see sinners but children. It is said that the eyes are the mirror of the soul; the eyes of Mary, *full of grace*, reflect the beauty of God, they show us a reflection of heaven. Jesus himself said that the eye is “the lamp of the body” (Mt 6:22): the eyes of Our Lady are able to bring light to every dark corner; everywhere they rekindle hope. As she gazes upon us, she says: “Take heart, dear children; here I am, your Mother!”

This maternal gaze, which instils confidence and trust, helps us to grow in faith. Faith is a bond with God that engages the whole person; to be preserved, it needs the Mother of God. Her maternal gaze helps us see ourselves as beloved children in God’s faithful people, and to love one another regardless of our individual limitations and approaches. Our Lady keeps us rooted in the Church, where unity counts more than diversity; she encourages us to care for one another. Mary’s gaze reminds us that faith demands a tenderness that can save us from becoming lukewarm. Tenderness: the Church of tenderness. Tenderness is a word that today many want to remove from the dictionary. When faith makes a place for the Mother of God, we never lose sight of the centre: the Lord, for Mary never points to herself but to Jesus; and our brothers and sisters, for Mary is mother.

The gaze of the Mother, and the gaze of every mother. A world that looks to the future without a mother’s gaze is shortsighted. It may well increase its profits, but it will no longer see others as children. It will make money, but not for everyone. We will all dwell in the same house, but not as brothers and sisters. The human family is built upon mothers. A world in which maternal tenderness is dismissed as mere sentiment may be rich materially, but poor where the future is concerned. Mother of God, teach us to see life as you do. Turn your gaze upon us, upon our misery, our poverty. *Turn to us thine eyes of mercy.*

Let us allow ourselves to be embraced. From Mary’s gaze, we now turn to her heart, in which, as today’s Gospel recounts, she “treasured all these things and pondered them” (Lk 2:19). Our Lady, in other words, took everything to heart; she embraced everything, events both good and bad. And she pondered all these things; she brought them before God. This was her secret. In the same way, she now takes to heart the life of each of us: she wants to embrace our every situation and to present it to God...

And in the journey of life, *let us allow ourselves to be taken by the hand.* Mothers take their children by the hand and lovingly introduce them to life. But how many children today wander off on their own and lose their way. Thinking they are strong, they get lost; thinking they are free, they become slaves. How many, forgetting a mother’s affection, live in anger with themselves and indifference to everything! How many, sad to say, react to everything and everyone with bitterness and malice! Life is such. Showing oneself “malicious” even seems at times to be a sign of strength. Yet it is nothing more than weakness. We need to learn from mothers that heroism is shown in self-giving, strength in compassion, wisdom in meekness...

Mary, take us by the hand. Clinging to you, we will pass safely through the straits of history. Lead us by the hand to rediscover the bonds that unite us. Gather us beneath your mantle, in the tenderness of true love, where the human family is reborn: “*We fly to thy protection, O Holy Mother of God*”. Let us together pray these words to Our Lady: “*We fly to thy protection, O Holy Mother of God*”.