

Amoris Laetitia: **An Evangelizing Moment, Courtesy of Pope Francis** By Joyce Donahue

Since the beginning of his papacy, Pope Francis has transformed the view many people had of the Catholic Church through what [one commentator](#) calls “his immensely attractive vision of how to live out the faith.”

With the publication of *Amoris Laetitia, The Joy of Love*, the Pope has handed us a great new occasion for evangelization. The majority of this document is devoted to a beautiful explication of the theology and reality of human love, marriage and family life. Though there has been a mixed reception of some portions of the document and we certainly need to spend more time learning what it means for pastoral practice, there is much here that can support evangelizing catechesis.

It begins with a more positive pastoral approach to all kinds of families. Catechetical leaders should not ignore Pope Francis’ encouragement to welcome and hear the stories of those who struggle with the complex reality of marriage and family life and to catechize them where they are, not where we wish they were. This will necessarily be a process of mentoring people toward healing and discernment of the will of God for themselves as well as helping them to form their consciences.

However, the immediate evangelizing mission is for us to make every effort to communicate the Pope’s message. We should encourage reading of the document itself, but also promote appropriate positive commentaries that go beyond the inaccurate and oversimplified “sound bite theology” the secular press has provided.

This would be a great moment for parishes and dioceses to step up efforts to communicate positive messages about Catholic beliefs about love, family and marriage by promoting Pope Francis’ statements and activities. Avenues for this could be parish and diocesan websites, as well as email, social media and other forms of communication.

Here’s an example of a curated [Pope Francis catechetical resource page](#) which has the direct link to the new document on the Vatican site and to USCCB materials and news about it. It also includes links to well-done commentaries and catechetical resources to assist people to understand *Amoris Laetitia* and to respond appropriately to questions about it. The rest of the page is a standing Pope Francis resource center. If the concept of website curation is new to you, [go here to learn more](#) about this essential practice.

Let’s take this golden opportunity to capitalize on this moment that Pope Francis has given the Church. He has excited the world’s attention about the Catholic view of human love. Now, it’s our turn to build on the positive curiosity that this important document has aroused.

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