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## Adult Resource

### Prayer Ritual for Staff or Community

### International Day of Families

#### **Amoris Laetitia**

(The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family).



UN Family Logo

The theme of this year's observance of the International Day of Families is: **Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.**

**Concept:** The International Day of Families this May comes just after the April release of Amoris Laetitia, the document from Pope Francis reflecting the discussions of the two Synods on the Family.

The UN and the Catholic Church concentrate on the premise that a healthy and loving family life produces well-being not only for the immediate family group but for neighbourhoods, nations and, indeed, the common good of the earth's peoples.

"Welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world." AL, Chapter 2, #31 Pope Francis

Francis writes of the great concern in the "Lack of an environment that provides the basic services for the life of the family and the community." AL #44 "There is also a general feeling of powerlessness in the face of socio-cultural realities that often times ending up crushing families." AL #32

Ensuring behavioural patterns of care and inclusion develop when families have freedom of thought and speech, equal opportunities for education, recreation, home security and employment.

A family living in peace and security, with a future of hope, lives in joy and is a sign of the fullness of the human spirit and the love of God.

"No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love." AL #254

"The joy of love needs to be cultivated. Joy increases pleasure and helps us find fulfilment in any number of things...for joy expands the heart." AL #126.

#### **Resources:**

**Vatican:** Amoris Laetitia (*The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family*). Apostolic Exhortation.

**UN** <http://www.upf.org/united-nations/international-day-of-families>

**liturgyritualprayer.com** Adult Videos. Folder: *I Am With You Always*.

"Love One Another or "A Life of Love".

#### **Prayer Space/Media:**

A title slide (above) might be used as the community gathers and again at reflection time. Highlight a bible by having it open at the Romans readings, facing the assembly.

As this Day of Families falls on Pentecost, red drapery can cover the lectern and to where a large red candle and a heart shaped cluster of red candles could be placed. Light the large candle before the liturgy. Have a taper ready for use during the reading.

**Invitation to Prayer:** Large candle lit.

**Leader:** Open our lips in joy, O God.

**All:** So we will praise you for all your deeds.

**Leader:** Open our minds to rejoice in your word.

**All:** So we will praise you for all your deeds.

**Leader:** Open our hearts in gladness in your faithful presence.

**All:** So we will praise you for all your deeds.

**Gathering Song:** Suggestions:

**Cry out with Joy** (Joshua Blakely-Spirit & Song-OCP)

**Morning Has Broken** (Eleanor Farjeon-AOV1)

**For the Beauty of the Earth** (Traditional-Gather Australia)

**Sing a New Song, Sing A New Song** (McAuley/Connolly-Gather Australia)

**World Without End** (John Bell-Gather Australia)

**We Are Many Parts** (Marty Haugen-AOV1)

**Collect:**

**Leader:** Let us pray together..... (pause)

**All:** God, you created us in your image, to live and love as bearers of your purpose to birth and sustain life. Be with us as we today we ponder the joys and sorrows of family life. May our thoughts bring us to a greater understanding and compassion for our own families, and for those who struggle for security, peace, and better opportunities for a fuller and healthier family life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Reading and Reflection:** 1 Corinthians 13: 1, 3, 4

The reading and reflection are adapted from chapter four of Amoris Laetitia, in which Francis develops a homily for practical approaches to a joyous family life.

**Voice 1:** “If I speak in the tongues of mortal and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I do not have love, I gain nothing (pause).  
Love is patient.

Silence . A member lights one of the heart-shaped cluster of candles.

**Reflection:** Francis speaks to us: “Patience is the quality of one who does not act on impulse and who avoids giving offense, one who does not respond in anger. Patience takes root when I recognise that other people do have a right to live in this world just as they are.” AL #91

Silence for reflection.

**Voice 2:** “Love is not jealous”

Silence, Light another candle of the heart-shaped cluster of candles.

**Reflection:** Francis goes on to say that “Love has no room for discomfiture at another person’s good fortune, nor does it see them as a threat. Envy is a sadness provoked by another’s prosperity. But true love strives to discover its own road to happiness while allowing others to find theirs.” AL #95

Silence for reflection.

**Voice 3:** “Love is not boastful”.

Silence. Light another candle of the heart-shaped cluster of candles.

**Reflection:** Francis teaches us further that “Love is marked by humility in family life. There is no place for arrogance. In family life, the logic of domination and competition about who is the most intelligent, or powerful destroys love.” AL #97

Silence for reflection. (During the reading, light another small candle)

**Voice 4:** “Love is not rude”.

Silence. Light another candle of the heart-shaped cluster of candles.

**Reflection:** Francis commends to us that “We are to be gentle, thoughtful and courteous. True love is not rude, or impolite, abrasive, harsh or rigid.” AL #99

Silence for reflection. (During the reading, light another small candle)

**A time of sharing:** The words of Paul to the Corinthians as opened by Francis in Amoris Laetitia offer us a challenge. In our family life, in the families of those we neighbour, work with or read about, how can we respond? Are our family relationships marked by:

- Patience,
- Freedom to be
- Humility,
- Courtesy,

How in the wider community could these values improve the lives of families and create healthier communities?

**Song after the Reading:** Suggestions:

**Where there is Love** (David Haas-AOV1)

**I'll Sing Your Song** (Erica Marshall-AOV1)

**I Rejoiced** (Trevor Thompson-Spirit & Song-OCP)

**Day of Peace** (Janet Whitaker-Spirit & Song-OCP)

**We Ever Will Praise You** (Angus McDonnell-Spirit & Song-OCP)

**Prayer of the Faithful:**

**Leader:** On this International of the Family, we are filled with hope that all people of good will, in church, in international and national organisations, in corporations and in local neighbourhoods, will take seriously the statement by Francis that “Welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world.” We bring our prayer for families to the God whom we call the Family of the Trinity, Creator, Word and Spirit.

**Reader:** For families just starting out, with fresh commitments: new babies, little money and high hopes...

For families, well on the journey, as struggles and upsets slow them down and bring frustration...

For families, long together, but suffering from separation, sickness, death and loss of strength.

**All:** Bring them, O God, the joy of your presence: bring to us your peace.

**Reader:** For families on the seas and along the railroad tracks, searching for safety...

For families, searching for their lost, burying their dead, fleeing from war...

For families stripped of their land, tossed onto the dumps, sitting in the camps...

**All:** Bring them, O God, the joy of your presence: bring to us your peace.

**Reader:** For families born in poverty, stuck in disadvantage, helpless against the strong....

For families, lost in ignorance, mired in conflict and violence, strangers to security and gentleness...

**All:** For families turned away from education, work and health resources. Bring them, O God, the joy of your presence: bring to us your peace.

### **Blessing and Dismissal:**

**Leader:** Please stand and offer to your neighbour a loving sign of peace and hope as we ask God's blessing on human families. Pause.

**May the God of the promise lead you along the path of life and fruitfulness.**

**All:** Amen. Alleluia.

**Leader:** May the Word of God find a home in you, teaching you, in all wisdom and hope.

**All:** Amen. Alleluia.

**Leader:** May the Spirit of God, comforter and nurturer, bring health and peace to us all.

**All:** Amen. Alleluia.

**Leader:** Children of God, let us go forth, in love and joy. Alleluia.

**All:** Thanks be to God! Alleluia. Alleluia.

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### **Appendix : Information from the UN International Day of Families, 2016.**

- Families have a unique role in ensuring health and well-being of children. Parents can improve children's health outcomes by providing emotional support, ensuring preventive and sick healthcare visits, including timely immunizations and proper treatment in times of illness.
- Policies and programmes that increase family financial resources or improve caregiving behaviours also have the potential to positively influence child health and wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable families. Such as cash or in-kind transfers, such as child allowances, or conditional cash transfers requiring parents to ensure their children's preventive healthcare and school attendance.
- In addition, family policies for work-family balance impact health outcomes of all family members, especially the new-borns. Paid parental leaves promote children's well-being. For instance, maternity leave enables mothers initiate and sustain breastfeeding, which results in lower risk of a number of illnesses for infants and mothers themselves. Paternity leaves help fathers establish strong bonds with their children and promotes men's involvement in household responsibilities.
- A number of work-family balance policies, such as flexible work schedules boost parent's capacity to be available for their children and ensure proper care. Policies and programmes promoting safe and stable family environments and positive parenting also contribute to emotional and physical well-being of children and youth.
- Moreover, appropriate policies are also needed to help families care for older adults, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable family members. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages necessitates improvements in care provisions for older persons, be it at home or in care facilities, in line with older adults' preferences. In this respect, an area still largely ignored by policymakers is the extension of parental leave to include care for older persons. In rapidly ageing societies this issue is bound to grow in importance in the years to come.
- This year's observance of the International Day of Families is to raise awareness of the role of families and family policies in promoting healthy lives for sustainable future. Discussions will also focus on the role of parents in youth and children's well-being, with particular attention to the role of men, as well as inter-generational transfers and the well-being of older adults.