



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Year of the *Amoris Laetitia* Family

This is a year of *years*: it's the Year of St. Joseph, the Year of *Laudato Si*, and the Year of the *Amoris Laetitia* Family. Italians would say: Diego Maradona, that's a lot of celebration!

A few words about the Year of the *Amoris Laetitia* Family. It begins on 19 March 2021, the Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary, and the foster father of Jesus, our Savior.

Remember? *Amoris Laetitia* was written by Pope Francis (viva il Papa!) to promote thought and discussion on marriage and family; this anniversary observance has the same purpose.

If you haven't read it, do yourself a favor. Chapters Three and Four are worth a read, and accessible, even if we're not married or theologians.

Marriage. We understand it as an institution that began with creation, whereby man and woman freely give themselves to each other until death in a faithful and fruitful relationship.

All of us have a vested interest in safeguarding marriage and family, because when these are healthy and strong, so are our Nation and its citizens.

For example, spouses and their children enjoy greater physical and economic well-being, as well as fewer instances of domestic violence and anti-social behavior.

Also, studies show people more likely experience joy and a filled-full life when they live for another, serve and sacrifice for another – what you learn in and from marriage and family.

You get the point: marriage and family have a place and purpose independent of religious teaching. Jesus only restored the original plan of creation, and sanctified married love.

We need more vocations to priesthood. But there's also a need for vocations to marriage and family life; if this were to increase, there'd be an increase in the number of priests too.

Because the best way to learn the service and sacrifice involved in being a follower of Jesus is the witness of spouse to spouse, parents to children, children as future... priests?

Please, God, let the Year of the *Amoris Laetitia* Family be more than a passing observance, and bear the fruit of more people entering Holy Matrimony, a community of life and love.

Michael Jackels
Archbishop of Dubuque