



HORIZONS

CLC Celebrates the 10th Anniversary of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*

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Greetings

We warmly invite our world community and their families to join us in celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation [*Amoris Laetitia*](#) (AL) in 2026. Inspired by both the challenges and joys of family life and strengthened by Ignatian spirituality and our CLC journey on the Apostolic Priority of the Family, we recognize with gratitude a call to become families open to the world, walking together as *families accompanying families*.

With this same spirit, we share this document, prepared with love for our global CLC family, and encourage you to celebrate **World CLC Day in March 2026** with renewed joy, creativity, and hope.

Introduction

In 2016, following the two Synods on the pastoral care of the families, Pope Francis gifted the Church with – [*Amoris Laetitia*](#) – *The Joy of Love* – a heartfelt invitation to accompany, discern, and integrate family life, recognising both its beauty and its challenges.

The family is the cell of society, the first school of LOVE, where we learn selfless giving and love without limits. As Pope Francis reminds us, “No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed.” (AL 325).

Ten years on, we are called not only to reflect but to also respond, to create real pathways of accompaniment where families and individuals feel seen, supported, and spiritually nourished.

Understanding Family in Today's World

The words *home* and *family* stir something deep in us. For some, they bring warmth and belonging. For others, more complicated memories of absence or loss (AL 32) Whatever our story, we all carry a sense of home, whether it's the family we were born into or the one we've chosen or built along the way.

No family is perfect. Every home holds both joy and struggle, love and tension.

Family today takes many forms: parents and children, single parents, blended families, foster or adoptive homes, chosen kin, friends who become family. Love may not be where we started, but it's what every human heart longs for (*AL* 53).

Real love is more than a feeling. It's self-giving. It seeks the good of the other (*Deus Caritas Est* 1, 2). It grows through patience, forgiveness, and the quiet, daily choice to show up for each other. Family is where we begin to learn, however imperfectly, how to love and be loved (*AL* 325). This kind of love doesn't ask, *what can I take?* but *how can I give?* (*AL* 323). And in that giving and receiving, we catch a glimpse of something deeper, a communion that holds us all (*Familiaris Consortio* 18).

Scripture tells stories of families like ours, flawed and full of tension, but also grace. From Cain and Abel (*Genesis* 4) to the reconciliation experienced throughout salvation history, yet the journey of family life is drawn toward wholeness and restoration, culminating in the wedding feast of the Lamb (*Revelation* 21:2, 9).

Before he died, Jesus gave us this command: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another." (*John* 13:34-35). From the beginning, we depend on love, received, missed, or longed for. It shapes how we love others and how we see ourselves. Love is passed on not just by words but through the quiet deeds that breathe life into our relationships. Love is caught more than taught¹

Let these words rest with you: "God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them." (*1 John* 4:16)

Reflect:

- How does this vision of love speak to your own experience?
- Where do you sense love in the messiness of daily family life?

Testimony from the International Family Encounter (IFE)

In July 2017, the **First International Family Encounter (IFE)** took place in Madrid, Spain under the theme "*See how they love one another*", offering a lay Ignatian perspective on family life. It was held in response to the call of [Amoris Laetitia](#) for a renewed approach to the pastoral care of the family, one that listens deeply, accompanies tenderly, and dares to go where others fear to tread. The gathering became a space of encounter and courage, where ordinary families shared extraordinary stories of faith, love, and resilience. Here is one testimony:

"My family vocation is to welcome and open our home to others, generously, not to turn my family into a sanctuary. For me, family is above all a place of exchange with the world, of openness to the unexpected, to what is different. To allow ourselves to be discovered and enriched by other people, by other family experiences." (*Véronique, CLC France - Testimony from the IFE*)

Family life is nurtured both inwardly and outwardly. We weave our intimate bonds with care, like artisans, yet we also grow alongside and support other families. If we live turned only inward, we risk becoming impoverished, losing the opportunity to grow and to share

¹ Excerpt from "Exploring Love in the Home" a reflection by Michelle Ellison (CLC in England and Wales) shared at an Ignatian Day of Prayer and Reflection.

our unique gifts with the world. We are called to contribute, walk in companionship with other families, and allow ourselves to be transformed by encounters with others.

Love within the family needs space to breathe. It cannot grow in exhaustion. Family life requires rest, care, unhurried time together, and attentive conversation. Choosing to play, walk, talk, or simply be present – these sacred pauses help us rediscover what truly sustains love.

Reflect:

- Is my family open to the world, offering what we have, and receiving from others?
- Do we make space for encounters where we can rest, listen, and be present with one another?

The Apostolic Priority of the Family in CLC

The family is one of the apostolic priorities CLC discerned at the 16th General Assembly in Lebanon (2013). It is more than a structure; it is a sacred space where God's presence is revealed in ordinary moments, sharing meals, laughter, sorrow, and forgiveness (*FC 21; Caritas in Veritate 44*).

"As members of CLC, our first response to the pastoral care of families is to offer the gift of Ignatian spirituality, letting each person and family to know they are loved by God." (*IFE, 2017 – Progressio N°73*). Ignatian spirituality calls us to find God in all things. Families, in all their diversity, are privileged places for this encounter, where love grows, and wounds are healed through compassionate accompaniment. As a community, we walk with families in tenderness and openness, affirming strengths, acknowledging struggles, and supporting them in faith, hope, and love.

The 2023 General Assembly in Amiens reminds us: "Families are constantly adapting to new circumstances. The family, in all its forms, is a 'domestic church' where life and faith are shared and celebrated. In the intimacy of family, we have a unique opportunity to reveal God to one another. We seek to accompany families in ways that affirm love and bring healing in areas of pain and need." (*AL 67*)

In response, CLC communities worldwide have developed experiences that nurture family life. Here are some examples since the IFE:

- **The Family Clock (CLC in Spain)** – couples and families reconnect, harmonize rhythms, and renew their shared project.
- **The Clock of Life (CLC in Spain)** – workshops for older adults discovering new meaning and purpose in later years.
- **Four Seasons (CLC in Spain)** – support for those rebuilding life after marital breakdown.
- **Duopolis (CLC in Chile)** – a playful tool to foster communication between couples.
- **How to Speak about God to Children (CLC in Colombia)** – a guide to passing on faith and prayer.
- **Bringing the Examen to Families (CLC in USA)** – introducing reflective prayer into family life.

This list is not exhaustive. There may be other resources and tools that are equally fruitful and life-giving. We would love to hear about your projects, so please let us know by completing the form below:

👉 <https://forms.office.com/e/aPkYqyuiSe>

Some of us received the seed of faith from parents, grandparents, or wise elders; others discovered it later through community and friendship. As CLC members, we are one family, drinking from the fountain of love, and longing for the next generation to know God through the witness of our lives, like friends sharing with friends. In this spirit, we give thanks, ask for God's light and strength; to discern the paths that make real the dreams God has for families.

Reflect:

- How am I (are we) being called to accompany families in ways that bring healing, inclusion, and affirmation of their sacred journey?

Practicing Gratitude in Every Family Moment

Inspired by *Amoris Laetitia* and CLC's various efforts around the world to accompany families, we embrace the invitation to practice gratitude in every moment, even in times of suffering.

As the Family Clock reminds us: "It all begins with gratitude." Gratitude transforms how we see one another, helping us move beyond pride, resentment, or diminishing the other. It opens our hearts and lets the love we have received pass through us again, keeping us rooted in what is most fundamental.

Even in times of hardship, we can give thanks for small moments: a deep breath, a quiet pause, a shared smile, a simple meal. Gratitude is not automatic; it is a conscious choice to recognise, celebrate, and receive one another. It allows love to flow freely, humbly, and compassionately, sustaining us through confusion, pain, and uncertainty, while trusting in God who always walks with us.

"Keeping our trust in God... and practicing generosity in these critical, confusing, and dark periods of life, welcoming them openly with everything they bring, are opportunities to grow in a concrete love that is more humble and more compassionate."²

Reflect:

- What moments in my family life have helped me become more aware of God's presence and love?
- How often do we practise gratitude as a family, especially in times of difficulty?

CLC World Day 2026

This year, we warmly invite our one World CLC community to celebrate through two simple yet meaningful activities: one personal, one shared. Both help us recognise God's loving presence in our everyday lives and relationships.

Ignatian Family Pause (*Personal Moment*)

Take a moment together as a family to give thanks:

² María Carolina Sánchez Silva, Revista Mensajero, 2021

- Become aware of God's presence in your lives.
- Reflect on a recent time shared as a family, however, wherever family is for you.
- Give thanks for moments of joy, love, and growth.
- Ask forgiveness for difficult situations.
- Look to the future with hope, planning a family ritual of gratitude: a shared meal, picnic, or attending Mass together.
- Optionally, write down the moments and situations for which you are grateful.

Gratitude Circle (*Shared Experience for Local and National Communities*)

- Each participant brings a small object or photo representing a moment of grace or love experienced within their family.
- Gather in a circle and take turns sharing the story behind the item, focusing on how it revealed God's presence.
- After each sharing, pause for a moment of silence, followed by a Taizé song of gratitude:
“In the Lord I'll be forever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near.”
- Close by writing a short letter, prayer, or message of thanksgiving to your family or someone who has been “family” to you, expressing appreciation, love, or forgiveness.

Those who feel comfortable can share a photo of their item or a short quote from their message on social media using hashtags such as **#SacredFamilyMoments** and **#cvxclc**

For submissions, questions, or further resources:

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