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Marriage Ministry



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Secretary of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, USCCB, 3211 6th St., NE, Washington, DC 20017.
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United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Lord God, from You every family in Heaven and on earth takes its name.

Father, You are love and life. Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman, and through the Holy Spirit, the fountain of divine charity, grant that every family on earth may become for each successive generation a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that Your grace may guide the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good of their families and of all the families in the world. Grant that the young may find in the family solid support for their human dignity and for their growth in truth and love. Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage, may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission in the family and through the family.

We ask this of You, Who is life, truth and love with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

~ Pope Saint John Paul II ~

St. John Paul II's Prayer for Families



The Diocese of Rockford's
Life & Family
Evangelization Office



The Stahl Family



Brainstorming

When you think of
“Marriage
Ministry,”
what comes to
mind?

- Your name
- Your parish & city

**“The death and resurrection of
Jesus is the heart of our faith and
the basis of our hope.”**

Pope Francis, *Spes non confundit*, 20



IN THE BEGINNING

- Imago Dei
- Relationship
- To love and be loved



BROKEN & RESTORED

The Fall

New Covenant

Sacramental life

WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

Covenant

Lifelong

partnership

“Where one alone
may be overcome,
two together can
resist. A three-ply
cord is not easily
broken.”

ECCLESIASTES 4:12



Familiaris Consortio
(The Fellowship of the Family):
On the Role of the Christian Family in the
Modern World

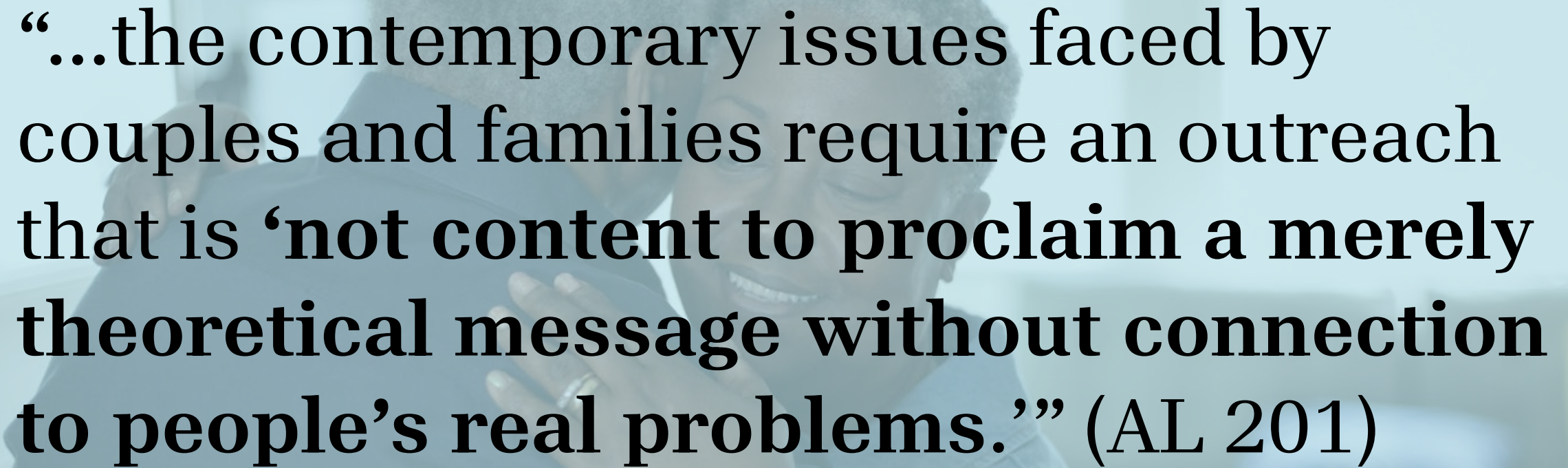
A photograph of a man and a woman in formal attire standing in front of a church. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white dress. They are both smiling and looking towards each other. The background shows the facade of a church with arched windows and a central doorway. The image has a light blue tint.

Marriage is one of the most precious and most urgent tasks of Christian couples in our time. (FC 20)

Familiaris Consortio



***Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love)**



“...the contemporary issues faced by couples and families require an outreach that is ‘not content to proclaim a merely theoretical message without connection to people’s real problems.’” (AL 201)

***Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love)**









Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life:

Pastoral guidelines for local Churches

MARRIAGE CATECHUMENATE PATHWAYS

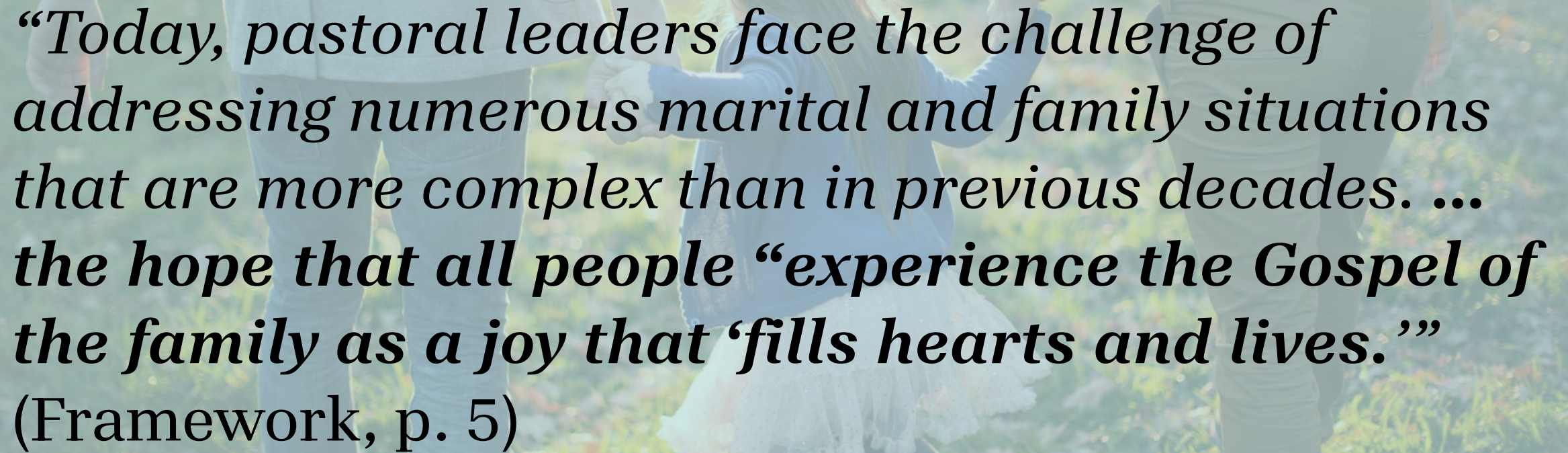
CATECHUMENAL

PRE-CATECHUMENAL	INTERMEDIATE	PROXIMATE	FINAL	FIRST YEARS	CRISIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational • Childhood • Discernment • Establish a solid foundation for a future vocation and discipleship [27] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerygmatic • Welcoming • ~14 months from wedding • Engagement • Achieve a personalized and exciting encounter with the candidates [38] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~12 months from wedding • Engagement • Betrothal ritual • Begin initiating couples into the Sacrament of Marriage [48] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~2-3 months from wedding • Matrimony • Ratify freedom, conscience, and sacredness of marriage [57] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 months • Parenting • Effectively accompany the first years of married life [74] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adulthood • Care • Prevent crises from becoming unsalvageable [87]
Remote [CL, 12]	Proximate [CL, 13]	Immediate Marriage Preparation [CL, 14]		First Years of Marriage [CL, 16]	
					





CALLED TO THE JOY OF LOVE: Pastoral Framework on Marriage and Family Life Ministry

A photograph of a family of four holding hands in a field. The father is on the left, the mother on the right, and two children in the center. The scene is outdoors with green grass and trees in the background. The image is semi-transparent, allowing text to be overlaid.

“Today, pastoral leaders face the challenge of addressing numerous marital and family situations that are more complex than in previous decades. ... the hope that all people “experience the Gospel of the family as a joy that ‘fills hearts and lives.’”
(Framework, p. 5)

CALLED TO THE JOY OF LOVE:

Pastoral Framework on Marriage and Family Life
Ministry

The Bishops' Plan: Four Pillars

for strengthening marriage and family life



Prayer

Formation

Accompaniment

Advocacy

The Bishops' Plan: Four Pillars

for strengthening marriage and family life

Prayer

Formation

Accompaniment

Advocacy

Remote (before 18 years)

- Modesty and Chastity
- Christian anthropology/Theology of the Body (TOB)
- Domestic Church / Vocation of marriage and family
- Sex Education / Fertility Awareness

Proximate (19 and up)

- Chastity / TOB
- Healthy Relationships / Moral Dating
- Femininity / Masculinity
- Authentic Human Sexuality
- Missionary Discipleship
- Fertility / Natural Family Planning (NFP)
- Blessing of Children

Immediate (Marriage Prep)

- Premarital inventories (Focus, Prepare & Enrich)
- Pre-Cana programs
- NFP/TOB/Gift of Self
- Practical/Moral Support for Cohabiting Couples
- Support for Convalidations
- Mentoring

Mystagogy (2-3 Years after)

- Mentoring
- Catholic Parenting

Marriage Enrichment Marriages in Crisis

DIOCESAN MARRIAGE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS



In addition to parish preparation, the Diocese requires all engaged couples to complete marriage preparation.

Two Courses:

1. Pre-Cana
 - Online course or in-person retreat (*Transformed in Love*)
2. Gift of Self: Natural Family Planning (NFP)
 - Online intro course, Gift of Self seminar, or full course of NFP

Civily Wedded Couples have additional option

- Pre-Cana option of WWME

Life Office Website: life.rockforddiocese.org

Parish Marriage and Family Life Inventory: Exercise

For your assigned phase of marriage ministry:

1. Choose one area of need for your assigned phase of marriage ministry.
2. Identify an event, program, or initiative that would meet that need through one of the four pillars of prayer, formation, or accompaniment, (or advocacy).
3. Write a one or two sentence description of the event/program/initiative.
4. Identify the “why.” Why does your parish need this event/program/initiative? Why should folks attend or participate?
5. List some logistics: target audience, how to promote, approximate costs, who will fund it, what supplies you will need, what sort of help will you need, etc.
6. Identify objections you may have to answer. Costs too much! No one will come!

Immediate Marriage Preparation





Mystagogy Phase

2-3 years after
marriage
ceremony



Marriage Enrichment



Silver & Gold Anniversary Mass & Reception

A photograph capturing a moment of emotional distress. In the center, a person with dark hair, wearing a mustard-brown sweater, has their hands pressed against their face, suggesting they are crying or overwhelmed. To the left, the out-of-focus arm and hand of another person in a light blue shirt are visible, reaching towards the distressed individual. The background is a simple, brightly lit room with white walls. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Marriages in Crisis' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Marriages in Crisis

LET US PRAY FOR FAMILIES!

*Because a solid society is built upon strong, healthy families, one parish per month in the Diocese of Rockford will pray a Mass intention that all families flourish in our universal call to holiness! Attend one of the Masses listed below to pray **“for the Sanctity and Protection of Human Life and Families in the Diocese of Rockford.”** More parish Masses will be announced.*

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE, CRYSTAL LAKE, ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2026, AT 7:30 AM

HOLY ANGELS, AURORA, ON SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2026, AT 11:00 AM

ST. MARY, POLO, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2026, AT 10:15 AM

ST. PATRICK, AMBOY, ON SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2026, AT 10:30 AM

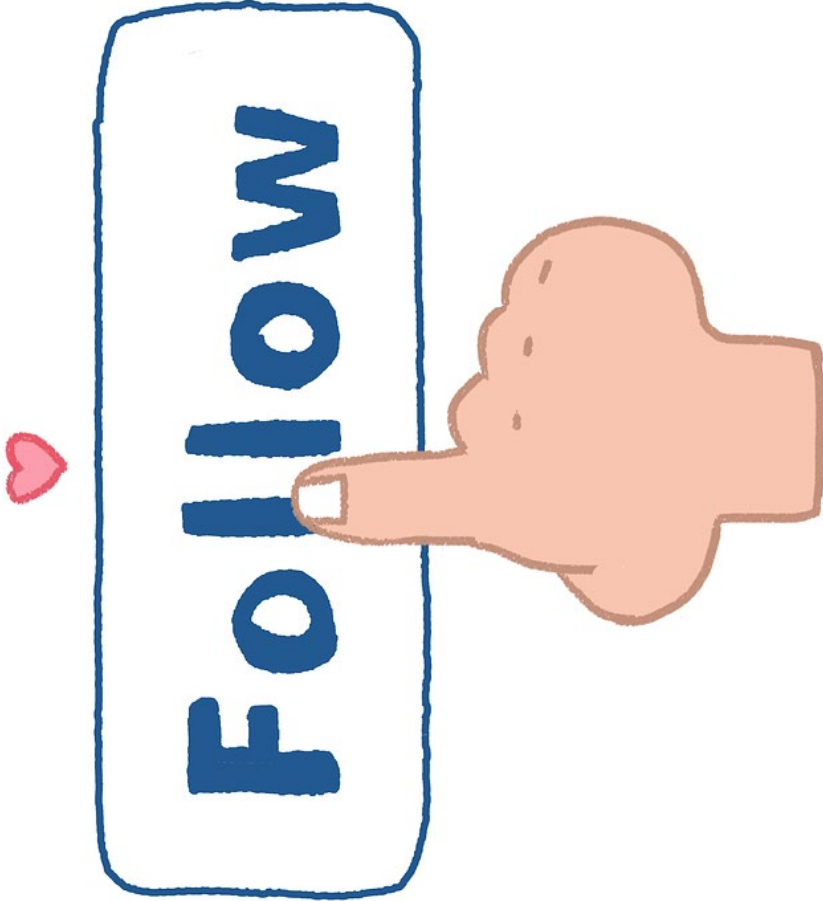
ST. JOSEPH, AURORA, ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2026, AT 4:00 PM

ST. PATRICK, ROCHELLE, ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026, AT 9:00 AM



DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD LIFE & FAMILY EVANGELIZATION OFFICE





Text LIFEDIGNITY to 84576 to receive our Flocknote emails



@rockford_life



@RockfordLiFE



Life & Family
Evangelization Office



Life.rockforddiocese.org