

OFFICE FOR FAMILY AND LIFE MINISTRIES – EPARCHY OF EDMONTON

Mandate – November 1, 2021



God chooses to reveal God's self by coming into the world through a family. At his birth, Jesus, the Son of God, is born into a family, Mary and Joseph, that is, the Holy Family. Like the Holy Family, our families form the first Church, the "Domestic Church," where God's love accompanies us in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation for humankind.

Today, more than ever, the Church is called to accompany families in the joys and challenges in what it means to be a family today, especially in the family's mission as the domestic church in passing on the faith to their children and grandchildren.

The newly created Office for Family and Life Ministries - Eparchy of Edmonton takes as its inspiration and mandate Pope Francis' 2016 Apostolic Exhortation [*On the Beauty and Joy of the Love in the Family, Amoris laetitia*](#).

Special Mandate

The Office for Family and Life Ministries responds to the pastoral needs of families by providing resources and support for **family spirituality, marriage preparation and post-sacramental care, formation for young people, and the domestic church**, to help families live out the grace of the sacrament in their daily lives.

In particular, the Office for Family and Life Ministries:

- Help families to **discover and experience the beauty and joy of love in the family**.
- Emphasize the **mission of the family** as a gift from God, as well as being a gift for the Church and society, transforming the world through the light of Christ.

- Foster the **vocation of the family as the first Church, the “Domestic Church,”** where God first dwells.
- Proclaim that the **sacrament of marriage is a gift** and contains in itself the transforming power of human love.
- Develop **faith formation and catechetical materials** which assist the family in nourishing their own faith journey, as well as helping families to pass on their faith from one generation to the next.
- **Journey with youth and young adults** in discovering God’s mission and vocation within them.
- **Support grandparents and the elderly** in their needs as well as call upon their wisdom and experience in support of the family and the Church.

Walking with Families

The Office for Family and Life Ministries is committed to ***Walking with Families***, an initiative of the Pontifical Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life in celebration of the Year of the Family (March 19, 2021 – June 26, 2022). *Walking with Families* provides 12 concrete pastoral proposals for journeying with families, inspired by [*On the Beauty and Joy of the Love in the Family, Amoris laetitia*](#).

1. Strengthen pastoral programs for **marriage preparation** in order to offer remote, proximate, and immediate marriage preparation, as well as accompaniment of new spouses in the first years of their marriage. This responsibility is especially entrusted to married couples who, together with pastors, become companions on the journey for engaged couples and those new to married life.
2. Foster the pastoral ministry of **accompaniment of spouses**, by means of formation encounters and times dedicated to prayer and spiritual development, so that spouses may gain awareness of the gift and grace of the nuptial sacrament.
3. Organize meetings for parents on **child formation** and current challenges in response to the advice of Pope Francis, who suggests that parents try to understand “where children are in their journey.”
4. Promote meetings for reflection and discussion on the **beauty and challenges of family life** which should expand horizons both in terms of recognizing the value of the family on a societal level; as well as in creating well-established networks of pastors and families who, by their own sharing and witness, can accompany those who are struggling.
5. Enhance the accompaniment of **couples in crisis**, to form them into an attitude of resilience, which will help them see challenges as an opportunity to become stronger and grow in love.
6. Involve **married couples in eparchial and parish structures** to set up **family ministry** and rethink the **formation of pastoral workers, seminarians, and priests**, so that they may fruitfully collaborate with families and live up to the challenges of today’s world. To this end, it will be important to foster reciprocity between the “family- domestic Church” and the Church, so that each may mutually discover and value each other as an irreplaceable gift.

7. Promote a **missionary vocation** in families by creating times for formation in evangelization and missionary initiatives (e.g., on the occasion of children's reception of the sacraments, during marriage preparation, anniversaries or important liturgical moments).
8. Develop programs of **pastoral care of the elderly** which seek to overcome the "throw-away" culture and societal indifference, and promote initiatives that build bridges across the different stages of life, while also making the elderly into active agents within the pastoral care of the community. Celebrate a Grandparents and Elderly Day.
9. Incorporate **youth ministry** into initiatives which reflect upon and discuss issues such as family, marriage, chastity, openness to life, the use of social media, poverty, and respect for creation.
10. Encourage **preparation for the World Meeting of Families** with catechesis and training itineraries, which will provide accompaniment for families towards the meeting with the Holy Father, through various steps and experiences.
11. Launch initiatives of accompaniment and discernment of **wounded families**, to help them discover and carry out their mission within their family and in the community, starting from their baptism.
12. Organize meetings in parishes and communities involving groups for an **in-depth study of [On the Beauty and Joy of the Love in the Family, Amoris laetitia](#)**, in order to raise awareness of the concrete pastoral opportunities that occur in individual ecclesial communities.

Support and Resources

The Office for Family and Life Ministries is primarily **supported by**:

Pope Francis in his love and teaching on the dignity of the family, in particular through his Apostolic Exhortation [On the Beauty and Joy of the Love in the Family, Amoris laetitia](#), including his ten videos explaining the chapters of his apostolic exhortation.

The **Pontifical Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life**, which provides [resources and initiatives, documents, videos, and testimonies on the family](#).

The **Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops** and its newly formed [Office for Family and Life](#), in particular its support for [family faith and moral issues](#) and [family catechesis](#).