

**REMAIN IN MY LOVE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA INITIATIVE  
FOR THE RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

Second Year: January to December 2018  
Staff of Parishes, Schools and Other Archdiocesan Institutions

**RENEWING OUR MISSION  
OF PASTORAL CARE OF MARRIED COUPLES  
AND FAMILIES**

# **GUIDEBOOK**

## Table of Contents

### SECTION ONE

- Letter from the Archbishop
- Title of the Initiative
- Mission and Vision
- Scope and Sequence
- Plan for the Second Year
- Results from the Archdiocesan-wide Survey of Families

### SECTION TWO

- The Staff Meeting
  - When to schedule the three staff meetings?
  - Who is included in these staff meeting?
  - A proposed outline of the staff meeting

#### **Content for Staff Meeting One**

- Marriage: Created by God, for God  
*The Sacramentality of Marriage*
- Summary
- Reflection Questions
- Evaluation and Application

#### **Content for Staff Meeting Two**

- Marriage: He Saw that It was Very Good  
*The Goods of Marriage*
- Summary
- Reflection Questions
- Evaluation and Application

#### **Content for Staff Meeting Three**

- Families, Become What You Are  
*The Family as the Domestic Church*
- Summary
- Reflection Questions
- Evaluation and Application

## **SECTION THREE**

- Plenary Catechetical Sessions
  - Speakers, Topic and Content for Plenary Catechetical Sessions
  - Locations and Schedule for the Plenary Sessions
  - How to Register

## **SECTION FOUR**

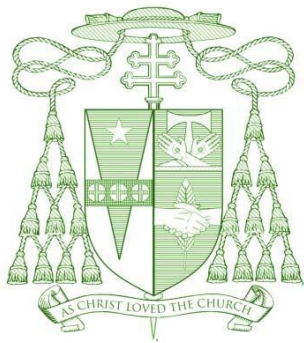
- *CanaVox* Small Study Groups on Marriage

## **SECTION FIVE**

- Next steps
- Sample Calendar

# SECTION ONE

## LETTER FROM THE ARCHBISHOP



Archdiocese of Philadelphia  
Office of the Archbishop  
222 North 17th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

January 31, 2018

*To the attention of all pastors, parish and diocesan school principals,  
and chief executive officers of archdiocesan institutions*

Dear brothers and sisters,

With this letter please find our guidebook for the second year of the diocese-wide "Remain in My Love" program. You'll recall that the program itself is a direct result of the 2015 World Meeting of Families. It seeks to build on that meeting's great success for maximum effect.

The program's first year focused on the leadership and staff of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center. That process was completed with lessons learned from a great many fruitful discussions. Now our task is to spread the program's content out to the local structures and realities of our Church. That vital work depends on you.

In the coming decade the Church in the United States will grow or suffer based on the health of active and faithful Catholic families. You have a crucial role to play in forming those families and their members; and for all of us, that task best begins by reviewing and refreshing for ourselves what the Church teaches and how we can best share it with others.

Please know that I regard this program as a high priority and fully support the efforts needed for its success. Our local Church looks to you for your leadership and help in making "Remain in My Love" real and fruitful in all of our parishes, with all of our staffs, and in all of our school and diocesan structures.

Thank you for your dedication and energy in pursuing this important program.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,

*+ Charles J. Chaput, of. op.*

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia

## TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE

Remain my love (John 15, 9)

*By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. (John 15, 8-11)*

*Remain in my love*, as the title of this archdiocesan initiative, offers several immediate ideas to assist with its reception and application in the parishes, schools and institutions of the Archdiocese. This commandment of Jesus originates in the love between the Father and the Son. This same love is what marriage signifies and is the duty of all disciples in the Church. This love fosters a fidelity to all the commandments of the Lord, promises a fruitful and joyful Christian life, and points the way to heaven.

## MISSION AND VISION

*Remain in my love* is an initiative that is directed to every member—clergy, religious, and lay, and every institution of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. There is a serious need to shift the previous approach to marriage and family life that ignores the consequences of inadequate catechesis and the lack of personal encounter to a more evangelical and relational approach.

This initiative hopes to reinvigorate Christian marriage and family life throughout the Archdiocese in three ways:

### 1. THROUGH TEACHING

- With clear and effective catechetical material on marriage and family life,

### 2. WITH EVALUATION

- An assessment of the effectiveness of information, programs and ministries currently in use for marriage and family life as well as for sacramental preparation and celebrations,

### 3. BY APPLICATION

- The development of an enduring and stable plan for Christian marriage and family life in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Additionally, the efficacy of this initiative demands corporate and personal conversion to the way of Christian marriage and family life through prayer and the worthy celebration of the Sacraments. The contemplative communities of religious throughout the Archdiocese have been praying for the fruitful benefits of this initiative since it began in 2017.

## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

*Remain in my love* has been planned to take place over a three year period, and to be carried out in a systematic, comprehensive and reflective manner, with each year dedicated to a segment of the local Church.

### **FIRST YEAR:**

**May to December 2017**

*Audience: Staff of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center*

The first year of the initiative focused on the offices and agencies located in and associated with the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center. In light of the outline above of the Mission and Vision of the initiative, the first year assembled the leadership of the offices and agencies associated with the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center and provided for the promotion of marriage and family life with clear teaching, the evaluation of existing data and their relationship to the parishes on marriage and family life, and offered guidance to improve current understanding and practices to reinvigorate Christian marriage and the family.

### **SECOND YEAR:**

**January to December 2018**

*Audience: Staff of Parishes [and Schools and Institutions] of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia*

This second year of the initiative, drawing on the outcome of the first year, focuses on parishes of the Archdiocese. Schools and institutions are invited to participate. In light of the outline above of the Mission and Vision of the initiative, this year will assemble the leadership of the parishes [and schools and institutions] to provide clear instruction on Christian marriage and family life for study by the principal staff within the parish [and school or institution]. It will also provide tools for the evaluation of structures and programs according to this teaching and guidance for ongoing means to reinvigorate Christian marriage and the family.

### **THIRD YEAR:**

**January to December 2019**

*Audience: Married Couples and Families of the Archdiocese*

The third year of the initiative, drawing on the outcome of the first and second year, will focus directly on married couples and families. In light of the outline above of the Mission

and Vision of the initiative, this year will provide for couples and families in their homes and in their particular situations to be ministered to by the parishes and institutions in the Archdiocese. Married couples and families, in order to grasp more fully the teaching on Christian marriage and family life, will need not only the support of an authentically formed parish and institution on matters related to marriage and family life, but also personal support and encounters. The aim of this year is to have married couples and families catechize and support one another to reinvigorate Christian marriage and the family throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.



# PLAN FOR THE SECOND YEAR

**January to December 2018**

*Audience: Staff of Parishes, Schools and Institutions  
of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia*

## **Part I**

### **The Staff Meeting**

Pastors [and leaders in schools and institutions] within the Archdiocese are to make use of this *Guidebook* to convene the principal staff (see Section 2 below) three times throughout the course of this year. The purpose of these meetings is to reflect on the teachings of Christ and his Church on the Sacrament of Marriage and the family. The topics and plan for these meetings are outlined in Section 2. This *Guidebook* provides the organizational, theological and practical information for the pastor [and leader of the school or institution] to lead the principal staff throughout the second year of the *Remain in My Love* initiative. The theological content for each of these three staff meetings is provided in Section 2 below.

This *Guidebook* also contains the summary of the results from an Archdiocesan-wide survey of families conducted this past year. The complete set of results can be found on the website, [archphila.org/remain2018](http://archphila.org/remain2018). The survey results give the parish [and school and institutions] leadership an encounter with verbatim responses from real families and help reveal areas where the local Church has supported or failed to support them in their marriages and family life. This information will help guide each parish's [and school's or institution's] discernment as they seek to create a plan to serve married couples and families more intentionally and efficaciously.

## **Part II.**

### **The Plenary Catechetical Sessions**

The *Remain in My Love* initiative for this second year includes three large catechetical sessions scheduled throughout 2018 to correspond relatively with the three principal staff meetings. These sessions will communicate the basic teachings of the Church on marriage and family according to the topics listed in Section 3 below. *Attendance at each of the three sessions by a minimum of two principal staff members is expected by the Archbishop.* The topics, location and registration information are also listed in Section 3.

These sessions will be large group gatherings and will consist of (1) the viewing of a *Humanum* video, (2) a talk by a local presenter skilled in the area of communicating the Church's teachings on marriage and family and (3) time for Q & A. Each session will be offered in more than one location to make it accessible to members of the principal staff.

### **Part III**

#### ***CanaVox* Small Study Groups**

To encourage group discussion and continue the conversation in between the plenary catechetical sessions, parishes [and schools and institutions] are encouraged to launch small study groups among the members of the principal staff, employees and volunteers. These small groups will follow the content and format of *CanaVox* study groups. To learn more about these study groups, please see Section 4 below or the website, [archphila.org/remain](http://archphila.org/remain) 2018.

### **Part IV**

#### **Evaluation and Application**

By summer 2018, parish [or school or institution] staff members will have participated in two Staff Meetings, attended two Plenary Catechetical Sessions and a number of *CanaVox* group meetings. At this time, parish [or school or institution] leadership will be asked to meet together to evaluate current practices concerning Christian marriage and family life. They will also be asked to generate a plan to more strongly and intentionally minister to married couples and families. The goal is to launch the parish plan in early 2019 as part of Year III, the year in which the *Remain in My Love* initiative aims to reach Archdiocesan married couples and families. Questions for the evaluation of current practices in the parish and guidelines for application will be provided in advance.

# RESULTS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESAN-WIDE SURVEY OF FAMILIES

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM MARRIAGE AND FAMILY SURVEY



In Summer 2017, a survey was conducted among Archdiocesan married couples and families to inquire (1) how our local Church has been doing in supporting them in their vocation and (2) what our families need from the Church. The actual, verbatim responses of our couples and families are a very valuable source of discernment and it is encouraged that all parish leaders take time to read them. The verbatim responses from the survey can be found at [archphila.org/remain2018](http://archphila.org/remain2018). Below is a summary of the six most repeated themes that emerged from the survey.

1. **Bold, clear, unequivocal teaching, especially in homilies:** Almost every survey response included a plea to the leaders of the Church to teach them the fullness of the Church's teachings on marriage and family, especially in the Sunday homily. Many indicated their disappointment with the silence of their parish leaders on these subjects, which they perceive as stemming from cowardice or lack of confidence in the truth of the teachings. Almost across the board, families expressed that they and their children are incessantly being bombarded by false messages from the culture and crave to hear from their shepherds instruction in the teachings of the Church about marriage and family with boldness and confidence.

*Related to this often-repeated point was the testimony of a number of couples who had received advice from Church leaders in the confessional and in conversation that was contrary to the teachings of the Church. This advice has resulted, in a number of cases, to suffering in the marriage for those who followed the poor counsel.*

2. **Opportunities to form community:** The second most repeated petition from the surveys was the desire for more opportunities for married couples to build

relationships with other married couples in order to find support in their vocation and life of faith. The lack of community among married couples who want to live their faith was lamented by many. Suggestions to address this included: parish-based socializing opportunities for married couples, mentoring programs in which older, more experienced couples offer guidance to younger couples, and more opportunities for couples to share their testimonies with each other by way of encouragement in the faith.

3. **Childcare is a *must* for parish activities:** A high majority of the surveys indicated that for couples to participate in parish-based ministries, childcare must be provided. Couples pointed to the high cost of babysitting and the precious hours they would spend away from their children as the reason why it is so difficult for them to participate in parish events. Many couples requested that parishes offer them “date nights” and indicated that childcare must be provided in order for this to serve them well.
4. **The Sacraments are the greatest gift to a marriage:** Across the board, almost every survey indicated that the highest contribution of the Church to their marriage and/or family life was the gift of the Eucharist and Confession. A number of surveys remarked that increased opportunities for Confession, rather than just the Saturday evening option, would be a very welcome gift in support of their marriage and family life.
5. **Availability of priests:** A strong portion of the surveys expressed deep gratitude for priests who have been available to them, ready and willing to offer accompaniment in their marriage and family life. Many have experienced priests who have been a great help in their vocation. An equally strong portion of the surveys expressed disappointment in the lack of availability of their priests, their distance from their people, their indifference, or even a negative or dismissive attitude. The consistent theme among them all was that the closeness and availability of their priests, or lack thereof, has a very strong impact on married couples and families, for better or for worse.
6. **Destigmatization of marital problems and marriage counseling:** Many respondents shared that while they had marital problems to greater or lesser degree, it is very difficult for them to disclose their marital problems or ask for help because of the perceived stigma surrounding marital difficulties. Many expressed that parishes could

do a great service to their marriage by helping to de-stigmatize marital difficulties and pave the way for more open discussion and paths of healing for couples who are struggling. Many pointed to the very high cost of marriage counseling and asked the Church to find a way to help them access faithful Catholic therapists who could assist them with their difficulties.

To read the actual, verbatim responses of Archdiocesan married couples and families, visit [archphila.org/remain2018](http://archphila.org/remain2018).

## SECTION TWO

### THE STAFF MEETING

#### **When to schedule the three staff meetings?**

The Pastor [or the leader of the school or institution] is responsible for scheduling the three staff meetings during the course of this Second Year of the *Remain in My Love* initiative.

The topics for reflection for three Staff Meetings are:

- Marriage: Created by God, for God
  - *The Sacramentality of Marriage*
- Marriage: He Saw that It was Very Good
  - *The Goods of Marriage*
- Families, Become What You Are
  - *The Family as the Domestic Church*

*A suggested schedule is to have the first staff meeting in February-March, the second in April-May, and the third in September-October. This schedule corresponds to the time frame for the Plenary Catechetical Sessions. Please see a sample calendar of meetings in Section 5.*

#### **Who is included in these staff meetings?**

The membership for these staff meetings is determined by the pastor [or leader of the school or institution]. Typically, the membership would be those who would be identified as members of the principal staff. For example, members would include all other clergy, paid staff, principal volunteers and ministry leaders. The size and composition of membership is at the discretion of the pastor [or leader of the school or institution].

## **A proposed outline of the staff meeting**

Sixty to ninety minutes should be allowed for these meetings. Those participating should be made aware of the topic beforehand.

- An opening prayer led by the Pastor [or leader of the school or institution]  
*--five minutes*
- A review of Year II of the *Remain in My Love* initiative as presented in Section 1  
*--five minutes*
- An introduction of the topic and reading aloud of the text on the topic presented below for each of the three staff meetings  
*--15 minutes*
- A period of open discussion of the text and the time to answer together the reflection questions provided for each the texts  
*--30 minutes*
- Using the evaluation and application questions provided, staff brainstorms a list of suggestions for renewing/improving current practices concerning the parish's (school's/institution's) pastoral care of married couples and families.  
*--remaining time*
- A closing prayer led by the Pastor [or leader of the school or institution]

*Someone should be designated to take notes at the staff meeting and provide a summary of the responses to the reflection questions and the immediate suggestions for evaluation and application based on the topic.*

*This information can be used during the Summer 2018 planning meetings when parishes will be asked to formulate a plan for more intentional pastoral care of married couples and families for 2019. See Part IV of the Plan for Year II in Section 1 above.*

## CONTENT FOR MEETING ONE

Marriage: Created by God, for God

*The Sacramentality of Marriage*

### Summary

As Catholics, we believe that God has made marriage a sacrament. In order to grasp that most fully, we need to see how our understanding of God informs our understanding of marriage. Through the coming of Jesus and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, we know that our one God is a trinity of persons. In the Nicene Creed that we recite on Sundays we talk about the Son being begotten of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. This may sound obscure or dry, but in fact it's exciting and alive. God is a communion of persons who give themselves to each other in love. Theologians sometimes describe this as a *perichoresis*, a Greek word for a dance in a circle. The point is that God is alive with love between the persons who are, together, one God.

It should be no surprise that this love did not stay contained within itself. The medieval Dominican writer Meister Eckhart describes the love of God creating the world like a pot boiling over. The universe was made to share in that love by being a reflection of it. This is true most of all for us human beings. In Genesis we read that God created us in his image and likeness. We are able to know and love like God. St. John Paul II puts it this way: "To say that man is created in the image and likeness of God means that man is called to exist 'for' others, to become a gift." God calls us to use our capacity for knowledge and love to be good stewards of the world he made and to use it for his glory. But Genesis also emphasizes how God created us male and female who join together to become one flesh and to be fruitful. The parallels between this divine call and what we know about the Trinity are striking. In the gift of marriage, God made a man and a woman capable of an intimate union whose love overflows into new life.

We see, therefore, that marriage is an icon of the Trinity, an image of the very life and love of God. Marriage transposes the infinite music of the divine life into a finite, human key. But what allows marriage to fulfill this role? When a man and woman enter into a valid marriage, they create a bond between them that is permanent and exclusive. Catholic tradition understands marriage to be a covenant, the kind of promise that God made to



Abraham and Moses, and to us in the person of Jesus. In Christian marriage, God endows this covenantal bond with grace so that, as *Gaudium et Spes* puts it, “the spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state *by a special sacrament*.” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that “The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God himself. . . . The covenant between the spouses is integrated into God's covenant with man: “Authentic married love is caught up into divine love.”

The catechism for the World Meeting of Families reminds us that the ongoing self-gift of two spouses is incorporated into the self-gift of the Trinity—of which it is an image—in the Eucharist, the Son’s gift of himself to the Father: “In the case of marriage, when husbands and wives give themselves to one another, with a love that imitates Jesus, their gift of self to each other is part of the work of Christ, joining in the same spirit of Jesus’ own gift of himself for the Church. When the spouses exchange their vows in church at their wedding liturgy, Christ receives their nuptial love and makes it part of his own Eucharistic gift of self for the Church and the Father who, pleased by the offering of the Son, gives the Holy Spirit to the spouses to seal their union.”

This gift of the Holy Spirit is what makes marriage a sacrament. God makes the bond between a husband and wife to be a sign of his enduring love and to become the means by which he gives the husband and wife grace to perfect their love and strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace, the fathers of Vatican II wrote in *Lumen Gentium*, they “help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children.” The spouses are also equipped for their service to the Church more broadly. Like the sacrament of holy orders, marriage confers a special grace for the couple’s mission in the Church, allowing them to build up the whole people of God through their family life.

Some people might balk at this focus on the bond of marriage as a sacrament. We tend to think of bonds as limiting and restricting us, keeping us from achieving our full potential. Many young people are afraid to enter into marriage because of this. They admit that they suffer from “FOMO,” the fear of missing out. As leaders in the Church, it’s up to us to show them that the bond of marriage is not a shackle that weighs us down, but a gateway to the freedom that Christ intends for us. By uniting to each other in this permanent and exclusive bond, married couples enter into sea of grace that the Lord has prepared for them. Yes, there will be struggles and hardships; the self-emptying path of Christ is not easy to walk. But

God invites those he has called to the married state to serve as an image of his love, and by so doing to participate in that love in this world and the next.

## Reflection Questions

- In what ways is marriage a picture of the nature of God?
- What makes marriage a sacrament?
- What are some of the ways in which sacramental grace strengthens spouses?
- How can spouses use the graces they receive through their sacramental marriage for the service of others?

## Evaluation and Application

- What are some ways to determine effective teaching of the Faith on this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?
- What are some ways to evaluate all information, programs, ministries and sacramental celebrations with regard to this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?
- What are some ways to develop and apply an enduring and stable plan for Christian marriage and family life with regard to this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?

## CONTENT FOR MEETING TWO

### Marriage: He Saw that It was Very Good

#### *The Goods of Marriage*

#### Summary

Last staff meeting we examined the ways in which marriage is an image of God's love and inner Trinitarian life. We saw that God makes the bond between a husband and wife to be a sign of his enduring love and to become the means by which he gives the husband and wife grace to perfect their love and strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace, the fathers of Vatican II wrote in *Lumen Gentium*, they "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children." We also saw that much of Catholic teaching on marriage is contained in the first chapters of Genesis. After creating Adam and Eve, God surveys all he has made and declares it to be very good. This staff meeting we want to step back and examine what is very good about marriage.

More specifically, we are examining what Catholic tradition calls the "goods of marriage." A good in this sense is not something that can be bought or possessed, the way we talk about someone's earthly goods. Nor is it just something that is good, as opposed to bad. Rather a good is a good thing that is also a goal or purpose. The goods of marriage are the good things that fulfill a marriage and that naturally arise from a marriage when it is healthy—in short, they are the whole point of marriage! The *Code of Canon Law*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and many other authorities in our tradition teach that there are three goods of marriage: the good of exclusive fidelity, the good of unity and indissolubility, and the good of procreation and the education of children.

As St. John Paul II writes in *Familiaris Consortio*, conjugal love is a relationship of total self-gift "in which all the elements of the person enter—appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands *indissolubility* and *faithfulness* in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to *fertility*." Like the communion of the persons of the Trinity, this union of man and woman demands that the spouses fully give themselves to each other without reserve such that "they are no longer two, but one flesh." This union of mind, heart and body, in fact, the whole of their lives, is what is understood as the marital good of fidelity.

As an icon of the Trinity, marriage also requires that spouses be faithful to one another until death, recognizing that the bond of their love is permanent, just as God's love for his people is permanent. This is what the Church calls the good of unity and indissolubility. Just as God's faithful promise creates his relationship with Israel and the Church, so do a husband and wife's faithful promise bind themselves to each other. It is this unbreakable fidelity that allows their marriage to be a true, total gift of self and a source of such joy.

We must remember that marriage is not only a grand project, but something that couples choose every day amidst the pressures of life. Pope Francis captured this in a meeting with engaged couples: "Matrimony is also a work of every day; I could say a craftwork, a goldsmith's work, because the husband has the task to make his wife more woman and the wife has the task to make her husband more man. To grow also in humanity, as man and as woman. And this is done between you. It is called growing together. This doesn't come from the air! The Lord blesses it, but it comes from your hands, from your attitudes, from your way of living, from your way of loving one another. Make yourselves grow! Always act so that the other grows."

Like the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the love of a man and a woman brings forth new life. When God has first created man and woman in Genesis, his first command is to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). In *Gaudium et Spes*, the Fathers of Vatican II teach that marriage finds its crowning glory in children: "Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves." Every marriage therefore, in fact, every marital act, must be open to new life in order that it may remain a faithful icon of God's own life-giving love. This is the complete expression of the marital good of fruitfulness.

In bringing children into the world, parents are able to cooperate with God and share in his creative work. They continue that cooperation through the education and formation of their children. The important thing isn't just having children, but raising them to love God and their neighbor. This task belongs primarily to their parents. It's not something they can hand off to a school or CCD class. It's not the parish priest's job to make their children Catholic. Rather, parents have the critical responsibility to raise their children in the faith and to set them on the path toward eternal life with God. He has entrusted them with the care of their souls.

It's important to acknowledge how counter-cultural this understanding of marriage is. In our time marriage is seen as a temporary bond, more like buying a car that will last for

some years before it is discarded when it wears out. Children are seen as either a burden—bad for the environment and bad for your life—or an accessory, an alternative to getting a cat or dog. Think about how many marriage ceremonies today vow that each couple will fulfill the other completely. None emphasize children to the same extent as the Catholic rite. But although they are afraid of it, many around us long for a love that like God's is faithful, permanent, and fruitful. We have to help them fight the “culture of the provisional” and “the fear of forever,” as Pope Francis puts it. He reminds us that this fear is “cured day by day by entrusting oneself to the Lord Jesus in a life that becomes a daily spiritual journey, made up of steps—small steps, steps of joint growth—made up of the commitment to become mature women and men in the faith.” We have to call couples to that small, daily self-gift rooted in a right understanding of marriage. By so doing, we help God as he strengthens their marriage and uses it to reflect his love in the world.

## Reflection Questions:

- What are the three goods of marriage? Why are they called “good”? In other words, why are they good for the spouses, good for the children, and good for society?
- Why is openness to the gift of children a good of marriage?
- Who is responsible for educating children in the faith? Why?
- How will our parish effort to strengthen and support married couples help to fight the culture of the provisional?



## Evaluation and Application

- What are some ways to determine effective teaching of the Faith on this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?
- What are some ways to evaluate all information, programs, ministries and sacramental celebrations with regard to this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?
- What are some ways to develop and apply an enduring and stable plan for Christian marriage and family life with regard to this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?

## CONTENT FOR MEETING THREE

### Families, Become What You Are *The Family as the Domestic Church*

#### Summary

In our first staff meeting, we examined the ways in which marriage is an image of God's love and inner Trinitarian life. We saw that God makes the bond between a husband and wife to be a sign of his enduring love and to become the means by which he gives the husband and wife grace to perfect their love and strengthen their indissoluble unity. In our second staff meeting, we examined the goods of marriage, the things that fulfill a marriage and that naturally arise from a marriage when it is healthy: the good of the fidelity of the spouses, the good of the indissolubility of their bond, and the good of procreation and the education of children.

At this staff meeting we want to examine the role of the family in the life of the Church and in society. In many respects, family life seems ordinary to us, even mundane. However, the Church sees the family as the fundamental unit of our society. Because the home is where children first receive the proclamation of the faith, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls the family “‘the domestic church,’ a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.” Notice that children first learn to grow in their faith in their families, not in Religious Education programs or Catholic schools. Without a strong domestic church, the Church will have trouble handing on her faith. In fact, *Gaudium et Spes* talks about the office and responsibility that parents have in their homes as an analogue to that of a bishop in his diocese. They teach their children not only how to be Christian, but how to be human. Hence *Gaudium et Spes* also calls the family a school for richer, more abundant and fruitful humanity.

One of Pope Francis's favorite images of the Church is that of a field hospital, actively seeking and open to those wounded by sin and in need of God's healing grace. Likewise, healthy families sustain and form not only their members, but also those in their surrounding community. Perhaps the most important way in which families can do this is by becoming homes for those who are single and celibate. Some have chosen to embrace a life of celibacy, perhaps as priests or consecrated religious, or because they understand that God calls them to this in their particular state in life. Others have not yet been able to find a

spouse—a fate becoming more and more common as young people fear commitment and postpone marriage. The *Catechism* reminds us that all single people are close to the heart of Jesus, and that he has chosen families as a privileged means of loving them. Those of us who are married should act accordingly.

We must also take care to guard our families from the hostile parts of the world that seek to destroy them. Pope Francis has been vigilant about reminding us to remain on guard against the devil. And next to the Church herself, the devil's greatest enemy is the family. We shouldn't be surprised that he has found many ways of attacking it. Technology brings us many good things. But televisions, computers, and smart phones can wreak havoc on family life. Unless we are deliberate in how we use them, they can come to master us. Instead of enjoying time resting with God and having fellowship with our relations, we distract ourselves with a steady diet of social media and entertainment. We cultivate anger when we lash out at strangers on Twitter. Our children are the least religious in generations, in part because of the self-absorption they have cultivated through constantly staring at a screen. Greatest of all, however, is the ubiquity of pornography, which poisons marriages and corrupts younger and younger minds. If families are truly to be domestic churches, they must be wise and careful in their use of technology. Parents need to be open and honest with each other and vigilant with their children. We need to step away from virtual conversations and relationships so that we can love those closest to us.

This means that healthy families will be countercultural in important ways. They will be purposeful in their spending, cultivating poverty and simplicity in place of consumerism. They will choose to love each other and not tolerate the small adulteries that have become the norm in our lustful society. And in place of self-realization through self-assertion, they will follow Christ who laid down his life for his friends.

Ultimately, of course, that is what family life is most deeply about: becoming Christ-like together and growing into the saints God has created us to be. And so we return to where we began. Family life is, however dimly, an image of God's own Trinitarian life of love. It grows out of the love between a man and a woman, blessed by God and given the grace of the sacrament of matrimony. Even though it is lived out in a world of crayon pictures, dirty socks, arguments, and laughter, family life is essential to God's work in the world. *Gaudium et Spes* teaches that "authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church." That should be the goal and prayer of our own families: to be caught up into the

fire of divine love and to be a means of enkindling that fire so that it spreads over the whole earth.

## Reflection Questions:

- Why is the family called the domestic church? What does that imply about its relationship to the Church as a whole?
- How can our families welcome those who need hospitality?
- What does this understanding of the family mean for those who are unable to have children? What about those who are single?
- What role does technology play in your life and the life of your children? How are you good stewards of the capabilities that technology provides?

## Evaluation and Application

- What are some ways to determine effective teaching of the Faith on this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?
- What are some ways to evaluate all information, programs, ministries and sacramental celebrations with regard to this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?
- What are some ways to develop and apply an enduring and stable plan for Christian marriage and family life with regard to this topic within our parish [or school or institution]?

## SECTION THREE

### PLENARY CATECHETICAL SESSIONS

The Plenary Catechetical Sessions will communicate the basic teachings of the Church on marriage and family according to the topics listed below. *Attendance at each of the three sessions by a minimum of two principal staff members is expected by the Archbishop.* The topics, location options and registration information are listed below.

These sessions will be large group gatherings and will consist of (1) the viewing of a *Humanum* video, (2) a talk by a local presenter skilled in the area of communicating the Church's teachings on marriage and family and (3) time for Q & A. Each session will be offered in more than one location to make it accessible to members of the principal staff.

#### Content and Schedule

The same presentation will be offered in each location for each of the three sessions. It is necessary to attend only one date for each session.

**Please RSVP for these sessions at:**

[archphila.org/remain2018](http://archphila.org/remain2018)

#### SESSION #1

#### MARRIAGE: CREATED BY GOD, FOR GOD

**Keynote Presenter:** Sarah Christmyer

National speaker and author, adjunct faculty member, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

**Theological content:** the sacramentality of marriage

- Marriage is an institution created by God from the beginning
- Marriage is founded upon the sexual complementarity of the spouses and the natural law
- Through the Incarnation, marriage is raised up to a sacrament of redemption
- The Sacrament of Marriage makes the spouses an image of the Trinity and visible sign of Christ's espousal to the Church

#### Date/Location Options:

- Mon, April 9, 1:30-3:30pm – St. Charles Seminary, Wynnewood
- Tues, May 1, 1:30-3:30pm – SS Simon & Jude, West Chester
- Thurs, May 3, 1:30-3:30pm – Nativity of Our Lord, Warminster

## **SESSION #2**

### **MARRIAGE: HE SAW THAT IT WAS VERY GOOD**

**Keynote Presenter:** Father Dennis Gill

Director, Office for Divine Worship, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**Theological content:** the goods of marriage

- Fidelity, Indissolubility, and Fruitfulness
- The goods of marriage as an expression of the sacrament, which is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church
- God, who is the author of the sacrament of marriage, also gives grace to the couple to live the goods of marriage
- Threats to the goods of marriage: divorce, contraception, adultery, pornography, etc...

#### **Date/Location Options:**

- Tuesday, June 19th – SS Simon & Jude, West Chester 1:30 – 3:30pm
- Thursday, June 21 – St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Wynnewood 1:30 – 3:30pm
- Tuesday, June 26 – Nativity of Our Lord, Warminster 1:30 – 3:30pm

## **SESSION #3**

### **FAMILIES, BECOME WHAT YOU ARE!**

**Keynote Presenter:** Damon Owens

International speaker, Executive Director and Founder, Joytob

**Theological content:** the family as the Domestic Church

- The mission of the family in the Church
- The mission of the family in the world
- The responsibility of the Church to married couples and families
- The current attack on the family and what we should do about it

#### **Date/Location Options:**

- Thurs, September 13, 1:30-3:30pm – Nativity of Our Lord, Warminster
- Tues, September 18, 1:30-3:30pm – SS Simon & Jude, West Chester
- Wed, September 19, 1:30-3:30pm – St. Charles Seminary, Wynnewood

**Please RSVP for these sessions at:** [archphila.org/remain2018](http://archphila.org/remain2018)



## SECTION FOUR

### *CanaVox* Small Study Groups on Marriage



To encourage group discussion and continue the conversation in between the plenary catechetical sessions, parishes [and schools and institutions] are encouraged to launch small study groups that will follow the content and format of *CanaVox* study groups. The small study groups are to be offered for the principal staff and “extended staff,” namely, volunteers who serve the parish in a ministry role. These groups of 8-10 people should plan to meet at a convenient time once a month for approximately one hour.

#### **CanaVox Groups Frequently Asked Questions**

##### **What are CanaVox groups?**

- CanaVox reading groups explore the truths of the Catholic faith and natural law concerning marriage using readings and videos that are modern, relevant, and practical.
- CanaVox groups foster positive, forward-looking dialogue on the pressing issues facing our marriage culture. They aim to provide participants with language to speak with others in an informed and compelling manner about what we believe about marriage.
- Discussion topics include: Divorce, Pornography, Cohabitation, Infertility, Loving Those with Same-Sex Attraction, Fatherhood, and more. The full list of topics and readings can be found at [archphila.org/canavox](http://archphila.org/canavox). Readings are also available in Spanish.
- It is recommended that two leaders be trained for each small group that is launched. To start a group and train leaders, contact April Readlinger at [aprilr@canavox.com](mailto:aprilr@canavox.com).

### **Who are the groups for?**

During this second year of the *Remain in My Love* initiative, CanaVox groups are offered to the primary and extended staff in the parishes and schools of the Archdiocese. This includes clergy, principals, teachers, administrative staff, directors of religious education, catechists, parish volunteers, etc. More than one group is encouraged. For example, you might launch a small group for catechists, one for teachers, one for faith formation leaders, and/or one for rectory staff. In 2018, the groups are for staff and key volunteers, not the general parish. *Remain in My Love* will extend to all the faithful in 2019.

### **How do the groups work?**

Participants read the articles and watch the videos assigned for a particular session on their own time. In the small group session, participants engage in positive, meaningful discussion about the readings/videos. Each group will have a leader who helps to facilitate the discussion, using a Leader's Guide that will help the leader facilitate the discussion. All group leaders will go through a short training to help them lead their group.

### **How do someone get trained to lead a group?**

Our training is quick and simple! You just need to participate in one short video conferencing call. During this call, we discuss the principles we cheer for, the rules of conversation that CanaVox groups follow, and you will join-in on a live video reading group with other group leaders in training.

### **How much reading will there be?**

The readings (and some videos) for each session can be completed in about 45 minutes to one hour. But even if you aren't able to complete the readings before each meeting, we encourage you to attend the group and join in the discussion.

### **When and where do groups meet?**

It is recommended that groups meet approximately once a month, starting in March or April 2018. Group meetings last 60-75 minutes. Groups can be hosted wherever is comfortable and convenient. Some groups meet in homes, others meet in parish centers or other office space and some even meet in coffee shops.

### **How can we get started?**

Email April Readlinger at [aprilr@canavox.com](mailto:aprilr@canavox.com). Once we receive your information, we

will be in touch to start the process.

## SECTION FIVE

### Next Steps and Sample Calendar

#### Where to Begin?

#### Immediate Next Steps

- The pastor determines who will be part of the “principal staff” that will attend the three *Remain in My Love* Staff Meetings
- The pastor schedules first *Remain in My Love* Staff Meeting
- The pastor shares the *Remain in My Love* Guidebook and Family Survey Results with principal staff inviting them to read and reflect before first staff meeting
- The pastor determines who will attend the three Plenary Catechetical Sessions and invites these people to RSVP for the sessions at [archphila.org/remain2018](http://archphila.org/remain2018)
- If the pastor determines that he would like principal staff and key volunteers to participate in *CanaVox* small reading groups, he identifies who will serve as small group facilitators and asks them to contact April Readlinger from *CanaVox* to get started: [aprilr@canavox.com](mailto:aprilr@canavox.com).

## Sample Parish Plan and Calendar

*The following is a sample calendar of meetings that a parish might set up in order to respond to the Remain in My Love initiative. The names and times are offered by way of example. Parishes are free to determine their own meeting schedule, staff members and key volunteers who will participate.*

### **Thurs, March 1, 1:30-3:30pm, St. Charles Seminary**

*First Plenary Catechetical Session with Sarah Christmyer*

- **Who attends?** Parish leaders chosen by pastor: Mary Smith (DRE), Paul Allen (Business Manager), and Melanie Turner (volunteer evangelization committee chair)

### **Tues, March 6, 2018, 10am-11:30am**

*First Remain in My Love Staff Meeting*

- **Who attends?** Pastor conducts first *Remain in My Love* Staff Meeting with principal staff using the format offered in Section 2 of the *Remain in My Love* Guidebook

### **Thurs, May 3, 1:30-3:30pm, Nativity, Warminster**

*Second Plenary Catechetical Session with Fr. Dennis Gill*

- **Who attends?** Parish leaders chosen by pastor: Mary Smith (DRE), Paul Allen (Business Manager), and Melanie Turner (volunteer evangelization committee chair)

### **Tues, May 27, 2018, 10am-11:30am**

*Second Remain in My Love Staff Meeting*

- **Who attends?** Pastor conducts second *Remain in My Love* Staff Meeting with principal staff using the format offered in Section 2 of the *Remain in My Love* Guidebook

### **Tues, July 10, 2018 – 10am-12pm**

*Evaluation & Application Meeting, Part I*

- **Who attends?** Pastor leads evaluation & application meeting with principal

staff to evaluate current practices regarding marriage and family in the parish and to construct a simple, concrete plan to more intentionally minister to married couples and families of the parish

**Tues, July 24, 2018 – 10am-12pm**

*Evaluation & Application Meeting, Part II*

- **Who attends?** Pastor continues the process of evaluation & application with principal staff to finalize a simple, concrete plan to more intentionally minister to married couples and families of the parish that will launch in 2019

**Wed, September 19, 1:30-3:30pm, St. Charles Seminary**

*Third Plenary Catechetical Session with Damon Owens*

- **Who attends?** Parish leaders chosen by pastor: Mary Smith (DRE), Paul Allen (Business Manager), and Melanie Turner (volunteer evangelization committee chair)

**Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 10am-11:30am**

*Third Remain in My Love Staff Meeting*

- **Who attends?** Pastor conducts the third *Remain in My Love* Staff Meeting with principal staff using the format offered in Section 2 of the *Remain in My Love* Guidebook

**Questions may be directed to:**

Father Dennis Gill  
Director  
Office for Divine Worship  
[fr.dgill@archphila.org](mailto:fr.dgill@archphila.org)  
215-587-3786

Meghan Cokeley  
Director  
Office for the New Evangelization  
[mcokeley@archphila.org](mailto:mcokeley@archphila.org)  
215-587-5630

**More information and related documents can be found at:**

[archphila.org/remain2018](http://archphila.org/remain2018)