



## **Recommendations for Parish Ministries and Families**

Love Is a Verb! – April 6, 2025

### **For Parish Pastoral Leaders**

**Parish leaders should become familiar with the resources offered on the [www.radiatelove.info](http://www.radiatelove.info) website. The major themes that flow from the readings this weekend (Year C) include:**

- The first reading from the prophet Isaiah recalls how Pharaoh's army was no match for the power of God. With God, the disaster of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt yielded to the joy of liberation and the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey. In this Lent, and especially during the Jubilee of Hope, married couples look for the renewal of love that God offers to overcome dry routines or past hurts in their marriage: "See, I am doing something new!... In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers." (Is 43:19)
- This firm hope of salvation from the Lord is reaffirmed in the Psalm, with an earnest prayer and a vision of new life in an abundant harvest: "Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the torrents in the southern desert. Those that sow in tears shall reap rejoicing." (Ps 126:4-5) This prayer and vision for a better future provide comfort and hope to married couples experiencing difficulties in their relationship or home life.
- In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul is fully aware of the sufferings he has been through and the challenges that lie ahead. But the hope of resurrection in Christ makes everything else seem like a minor inconvenience in comparison. In fact, the sufferings become a conformation to his death in order to share in his glory. All Christians, regardless of circumstances, are called to join as one in pursuit of that goal.





- Jesus' response to both the woman caught in adultery and her accusers is a stark reminder of the chaos and suffering we are capable of inflicting on our relationships—and of God's power to heal and restore what we have damaged. The love we all seek is meant to bring comfort, healing, security, and lifelong companionship, but we mess it up when we put our selfish desires first. God understands our frailty, lifts us up, and restores us to the right path: "Go, and from now on do not sin any more." (Jn 8:11)

### **Sample ideas for parish programs and activities:**

- In this year's Lenten celebration of Penance and Reconciliation, bring marriage and family life into focus. Invite couples, parents, children, and siblings to consider how God wants to make things new in their relationships, restoring them in His love.
- In the light of Canon 1063, review the programs and supports the parish provides to couples who are struggling in their relationship, and make sure that they are adequately promoted with pamphlets or booklets in the narthex or announcements in the bulletin throughout the year.
- Consider adding a new resource such as Retrouvaille, Pax in Familia, Movimiento Familiar Cristiano, Couples for Christ, or Worldwide Marriage Encounter.
- The general intercessions at Sunday Masses should reflect the lived experiences and concerns of the people in the community. Review the collection of prayers at the top of the parish resources page and this month's recommended prayers, then consider how the intercessions can lift people up who are struggling throughout the year.





### **For Parish Catechetical Leaders (PCLs) and K-8 Catechists**

Catechists and parents should be encouraged to deepen their understanding of God's desire to point us toward abundant life in Him and to restore us whenever we stray from that path:

- PCLs: when you communicate with the parents and families you serve this month:
  - Share with them the parish or diocese's social media that reminds them of their call to holiness in marriage and family life, rooted in the model of Christ's love and consistent practices of forgiveness and reconciliation.
  - Encourage them to make time this month to share and discuss the monthly reflection and "Learn, Pray, Do" activities.
- Catechists: take some time to:
  - Discover how faithfulness and fruitfulness are central to Christian marriage (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 2364 to 2372 and the explanation here).
  - Learn about adultery and divorce as offenses against the dignity of marriage (see the CCC, nn. 2380 to 2386 and the explanation here).
  - Recognize the damage caused by other offenses against the dignity of marriage (see the CCC, nn. 2387 to 2391 and the explanation here).
  - Appreciate the many forms of penance and how they can be lived in daily life (see the CCC, nn. 1434-1439 and the explanation here).





- Incorporate a 5 to 10-minute reflection, discussion, or activity into one of the catechetical sessions this month, drawing from the materials and resources in this Radiate Love packet. Some options might include:
  - Select a few verses from the Gospel (the woman caught in adultery, Jn 8:1-11) and do a lectio divina with the children. Pflaum's Gospel Weeklies provides age-appropriate content you may find useful. For younger children, you may want to focus on the tender Sacred Heart of Jesus (from 4:49 mark) or the Divine Mercy.
  - Use the Saint of the Month (St. Agnes Lê Thị Thành) as a group conversation starter.
  - Offer mercy-themed coloring pages (i.e. here and here) for the younger kids.

### **For Parish Youth and Young Adult Ministry Leaders**

The recommendations for PCLs and catechists also apply to parish youth and young adult ministry leaders. This month would be a great time to conduct a session on one or more of these topics:

- The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as a model for how to grow in love in our most important relationships, especially in marriage and family life (see this month's bulletin insert and the Sunday Gospel for some talking points or as a discussion starter).
- Why the commitment of marriage makes sexual activity holy in accordance with God's plan for human flourishing, and how societal notions of "safe sex" outside of marriage can still result in emotional, spiritual, and physical harm—and pregnancies!
- God's creativity, compassion, and infinite love are made manifest in his power to forgive our sins, restore us to a right relationship with Him and with our loved ones, and make all things new for us. No matter how bad our choices may have been in the past, God loves us, lifts us up, and wants us to thrive in life, as shown in today's Gospel (Jn 8:1-11).



- Many young people today are not aware of the harms that come from pornography use. Jesus himself said, “Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Mt 5:28) Prepare a session by pulling from the following:

- [The Real Problem with Sexually Explicit Content](#)
- Saint John Paul II’s [general audience](#) catechesis on this topic
- Websites: USCCB [Clean Heart](#) series, [Covenant Eyes](#), and [Fight the New Drug](#)

### **For Catholic Couples and Parents**

Families and couples are always encouraged to visit the [Families](#) and [Married Couples](#) sections of the Radiate Love website. In addition, take some time this month to learn together as a couple and pray as a family:

- USCCB – Visit [For Your Marriage](#) and [Por Tu Matrimonio](#)
  - A Litany for the Bride-to-Be – [Jesus, I Trust in You!](#)
  - [How St. Helena Handled a Difficult Marriage](#)
  - [Mercy in Marriage](#)
  - [Finding Help When Your Marriage Is in Trouble](#)