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Encounters with Amoris Laetitia

From today's session, the greatest lesson I have learnt is that marriage can be defined as two imperfect people coming together to form a family, and counting on God's help, refuse to give up on each other.

05/26/2022

This is one of the many reactions that couples shared after one of the sessions of “**Encounters with Amoris Laetitia**”, a monthly online platform on Pope Francis’

exhortation: *Amoris Laetitia*. In this exhortation whose English translation is *The Joy of Love*, Pope Francis addresses the pastoral care of families.

Encounters with Amoris Leatitia programme was mooted after a friend of mine in a group of married women attending a weekly meditation noted that the priest kept making reference to Pope Francis' exhortation and emphasizing how important it was to read and try to understand the Pope's teaching in the text. She confessed to not having read the document. It turned out that most of us in the group had not read the document either.

After a brief brainstorming session, we agreed to create an online platform where we and our husbands would try to invite our friends to share insights from the Pope's document. The idea would be

to discuss two chapters of Amoris Laetitia per session. We agreed that each couple would read the two chapters to be discussed ahead of time. Each session would have panellists drawn from among ourselves and our friends. Some sessions would be facilitated by priests, who would share an in-depth view on the church's teaching on marriage.

The first encounter with Amoris Laetitia was in February 2022. So far, three sessions have been held each attracting about 150 couples! The next sessions will be in May, June and July 2022. The facilitators have done a great job of giving life to the Pope's document by complementing it with anecdotes from their marriages. And from the reactions of the participants, great lessons have been learnt and hope rekindled. Engaged couples preparing for

marriage have also found the sessions extremely helpful.

Below a few more comments from the participants about the most striking lessons they have learnt from the sessions:

“Love conquers all; we should not be shy of being open to life.”

“That I should strive to create time for marriage just the same way I create time for career development and education”

“The importance of the three magic words that we should all strive to teach our children: *thank you*, *sorry* and *welcome*; they go a long way in keeping the love going.”

“That it’s not true that virtuous young men are dumb.”

“God accompanies a couple in their marriage; in their joys and in their sorrows too”

We all are very grateful to the Holy Father, Pope Francis for declaring the Year of the family and giving us an opportunity to contemplate our calling as married people in a special way. We hope that by the end of our sessions, we as Kenyan families, will be encouraged in our vocation. We pray that through this online interaction, marriages facing challenges will be strengthened and hope rekindled; that young people preparing for marriage will discover the joy of love and be better prepared for this beautiful sacrament and that those of us already married will not get tired of looking for ways of improving our marriage.

Join us virtually on Friday 27th May 2022, 7.30pm Session 4, to discuss this important document:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://strathmore.zoom.us/j/>

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