

# Catechumenal Pathways Presentation-Nov 2022

Archbishop Cordileone

## SLIDE 1

### ***Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life & Called to Love: Implications for Marriage and Family Life Ministry***

## SLIDE 2

Thank you, Your Excellency. Good afternoon, Brother Bishops.

During the World Meeting of Families in Rome last June, **the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life issued new guidelines for marriage preparation.** (The official English version was released on October 4.)

This document (*Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life*) **calls for the adoption of a new model** for the preparation of couples to the sacrament of marriage; namely, **a catechumenate model of sacramental preparation** akin to the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

- This model echoes the call of Pope John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio* and is a culmination of Pope Francis's desire as expressed on numerous occasions.
- Most importantly, **it is a response to the urgent need to re-think the way we prepare our engaged couples for the lifelong commitment to marriage.**
- Marriages within the Church are failing at a precipitous rate. **As pastors**, it is incumbent upon us to provide the faithful who are preparing for marriage, a more thorough, consistent, and evangelizing approach to the discernment, preparation, reception and living of this sacrament.

## SLIDE 3

The document outlines **general principles and a comprehensive pastoral proposal.**

- It may be **adapted** to the particular reality of each local Church.

- It is **not another program**, but a new pastoral approach to marriage preparation based on the catechumenate.
- *Catechumenal Pathways* **complements and reinforces** the recommendations made in the National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry, *Called to the Joy of Love*.

#### SLIDE 4

The illustration on the slide demonstrates the areas of convergence such as:

- *a pre-catechumenal stage* which coincides largely with remote marriage preparation as defined in *Called to the Joy of Love* [CL, p. 12] This stage emphasizes the early years of child development within the cradle of the family where marriage is first modeled. It also includes all forms of education and formation of the youth that should integrate vocational discernment, an understanding of the dignity of the human person and God's plan for sexuality, and a healthy Christian anthropology. This is the stage during which the threat of gender ideology is most effectively dispelled.
- *proximate marriage preparation* which is slightly different from our basic understanding to the extent that here it is intended *within* the **engaged phase** of the relationship *rather than immediately preceding engagement* [CL, p. 13].
- *And...final marriage preparation* which coincides with **immediate marriage preparation** in *Called to the Joy of Love* [CL, p. 14]
- The Dicastery recommends the continuity of relationship with the neo-catechumens or the newly married in three ways:
  - First, through the *first years of marriage* as also recommended in *Called to the Joy of Love* [CL, p. 16] Accompaniment takes up a form of **mystagogy** during the first years of marriage.
  - Second, with the *collaboration of the entire ecclesial community* (n. 6) [CL, p. 36-37]

- And thirdly, enjoining the participation *of every pastoral ministry* within the local Church, as a result of the *inter-connectedness* of marriage and family life ministry with every other ministry in the Church. (n. 12).

## SLIDE 5

Brother Bishops, I now would like to turn to the **practical implications of this document**. These three words can sum up its implications: **kerygma, co-responsibility, and calm**.

- First, a greater emphasis on **kerygma**. Marriage preparation is an opportunity for kerygmatic proclamation of the love of Jesus Christ and His Church. It is an invitation into the *mystagogy of the sacrament of marriage and the grace that accompanies it*. The couple should be invited to a **personal encounter** with Jesus Christ which culminates in the reception of the sacrament.
- Second, a greater sense of **calm** should imbue the sacramental preparation that deserves an **unrushed approach** as the lifelong commitment to marriage is discerned with the couple. The document strongly recommends **specific time frames** per catechumenal phase to respect the need for deep personal conviction and thorough catechesis. The phases should be marked by the observance of rites (or rituals) such as the rite of betrothal.
- Third, a greater **co-responsibility** on behalf of the entire parish to support the engaged couple. A marriage building parish that supports the foundations of marriage within its families, catechetical programs, and ministries for every age is the basis for a well-rounded accompaniment of our future married couples.

## SLIDE 6

*Catechumenal Pathways* is a crucial response provided by Mother Church **directed to the care of marriages and families**, as urged for by Pope Francis.

- *Called to the Joy of Love* was our initial response to the urgent call for the formation of spouses and pastoral care to families. Yet, our work has only just

begun. The pastoral recommendations proposed and now reiterated with the catechumenate model of marriage preparation **urge us to consider that we cannot continue to do business as usual.** The relationship between family and religious affiliation is very strong. Failing marriages and children raised in irregular families lead directly to a decline in religious adherence. For example:

- Millennials from married homes are **78% more likely** to attend church than peers from unmarried homes.
- A study of former Catholics found that **74% left the faith between the ages of 10 and 20**, with **age 13** being the median age when kids ‘check out’ of the faith.
- These statistics demonstrate how the marriage of one’s parents has a serious, lifelong impact on the transmission and adherence to faith. The faith of future generations rests, in fact, *almost entirely* on the foundations of marriage and family.

## **SLIDE 7**

**Yet, a recent study showed alarming proof of a lack of investment in marriages:**

- **82%** of Catholic parishes spend **\$0** on marriage and relationship ministry.
- Engaged couples and married couples of all ages are the new ‘disaffiliated’ from the Church.
- This is a key area of the new evangelization – the rebuilding of our domestic churches.

## **SLIDE 8**

Last November, I encouraged all of us to find **concrete ways to implement the National Pastoral Framework** by working with our marriage and family life directors to ensure that **every family is accompanied in and towards the Church.**

I also shared a **significant opportunity for financial support** in the form of matching grants from the **Catholic Marriage Initiative Fund**.

### **SLIDE 9 (Map)**

Many dioceses have taken advantage of this opportunity and have received funding to meet attainable goals for accompanying marriages and families.

- There is **still time** to take advantage of this opportunity to obtain funding for your marriage and family life ministries. For more information on how to apply for the CMI Fund grant, go to [CatholicMarriageFund.org](http://CatholicMarriageFund.org).
- **The next round of applications is due December 10.**

### **SLIDE 10 (CMI poster)**

In conclusion, Brother bishops, we are all consumed by numerous pastoral needs that vie for our attention however, the Church's ministry to and with families is of **paramount importance**. It is time for us to invest without further delay, our resources, attention, and efforts to the critical care of marriages and families.

### **SLIDE 11 (End)**

- Let us go forward, therefore, entrusting this good work to the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Thank you again Brothers and Your Excellency, I would be happy to respond to any questions if time allows.

**Return to SLIDE 10 (during Q&A)**