



**Archbishop Costelloe responds to Apostolic Exhortation
Amoris Laetitia, The Joy of Love**

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Pope Francis' document released today, "The Joy of Love", is a new and refreshing statement of the Catholic Church's genuine care and concern for every marriage and every family.

It contains Pope Francis's pastoral guidance for the Catholic Church following the two Synods of Bishops in 2014 and 2015 on caring for marriages and family life in the modern world.

In all of the document's 325 paragraphs (260 pages), Pope Francis recalls the Church to its primary role of bringing good news into the world – in this case, the good news that marriage and family life can be a rich source of blessing for everyone seeking happiness and fulfilment in life.

Throughout the document, the Pope concentrates on two key elements. He constantly stresses the beauty and potential of the high ideal of Christian marriage and family entrusted to us by the Lord.

At the same time Pope Francis understands the complexity of the challenges so many couples and families face today.

He challenges the Church to work much harder in getting the balance right between protecting the essential social institutions of marriage and family on one hand and, on the other, a more compassionate pastoral response to the difficult situations in which so many people find themselves today.

Acknowledging that, at times, the Church's handling of difficult marriage and family situations has not been as helpful as it should, Pope Francis develops clear rules for pastors to discern more positive and creative ways of strengthening and encouraging couples and families in difficulty.

It was never the Pope's intention to change Catholic teaching on divorce and remarriage, or on same-sex unions.

But he issues a strong appeal to pastors to help such individuals and couples find their proper place in Catholic parishes, and to accompany each one with patience, discernment, and above all compassion.



The task ahead of the Catholic community in the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth is to carefully read, reflect on, and discern how we in our local situation can implement the challenges contained in this remarkable document.

For further comment please contact:

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