

Discussion of Amoris Laetitia, Chapter 4: Love in marriage (89–164) will be in the Seminar Room of the Claussen Family Center on Tuesday May 10th at 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Thursday May 12th at 1:00 p.m., and Sunday May 15th at 9:30 a.m.

Pope Francis says that we cannot express the Gospel of marriage and family without speaking of love. He begins this chapter with a meditation of St. Paul's hymn to love (1 Cor. 13:4-7). The meditation is part exhortation, part examination of conscience. He speaks of the joy and passion of married love as well as the dark side of violence and manipulation in sex. Questions for Discussion:

1. What part of his meditation on Paul's hymn to love moved you most (90-119)?
2. Pope Francis says we become impatient "whenever we think that relationships or people ought to be perfect, or when we put ourselves at the center and expect things to turn out our way" (92). Is this your experience?
3. Pope Francis quotes St. Ignatius of Loyola who said, "Love is shown more by deeds than by words" (94). Do you agree?
4. "Envy is a form of sadness provoked by another's prosperity; it shows that we are not concerned for the happiness of others but only with our own well-being" (95-96). What makes you envious?
5. "Love is not boastful" (97-98). What do you boast about?
6. "Loving ourselves is only important as a psychological prerequisite for being able to love others" (101). Agree? Disagree?
7. Francis talks a lot about the need for forgiveness in families (103-108). Is he right? What do you find helpful in his advice? What do you forgive? For what have you been forgiven?
8. "Love does not have to be perfect for us to value it. The other person loves me as best they can, with all their limits, but the fact that love is imperfect does not mean that it is untrue or unreal" (113). Is imperfect love enough to hold a marriage together?
9. What does Francis mean by "trust enables a relationship to be free" (115)? Does that match your experience?
10. Francis has a long quote from Martin Luther King (118). Are we as individuals, as a nation, able to observe what he says? What does this say about our political culture and our response to terrorism?
11. "After the love that unites us to God, conjugal love is the greatest form of friendship," says Francis quoting St. Thomas Aquinas (123). Describe a couple you know who are truly friends.
12. What do you think of Francis' argument for "indissoluble exclusivity" in marriage (123-124)?
13. Francis, the celibate, speaks of the passion, joy, and beauty of marriage (125-130, 142-152). Does he get it right? What rings true? What doesn't?
14. Francis speaks to young people about the importance of marriage (131-132). Is he convincing?
15. Francis says the three essential words in a family are: "Please," "thank you," and "sorry." Do you agree? How have these words been important in your family?
16. How can you encourage dialog in your family (136-141)?
17. Is Francis realistic in his description of violence and manipulation in sex (153-157)?
18. What do you think of Francis' exegesis of St. Paul's women "be subject to your husbands" (156)?
19. What do older couples think of Francis' treatment of love and aging (163-164)?