



## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

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### **Diocese welcomes “rich and beautiful” papal document on the family**

Kalamazoo, Mich., (April 8, 2016): The Diocese of Kalamazoo welcomed the latest teaching from Pope Francis’ with the release of “Amoris Laetitia”/The Joy of Love, an apostolic exhortation (post-synod papal document) following the Ordinary Synod convened in October 2015.

Prior to both synods (Extraordinary Synod, October 2014 and the Ordinary Synod, October, 2015) the Holy Father sought worldwide consultation from clergy and all Catholics. Within the Diocese of Kalamazoo input was gathered utilizing surveys and town hall meetings.

In receiving the document, Bishop Paul J. Bradley welcomed the Pope’s beautiful work as a pastoral guide and reflection upon marriage and family.

“In the midst of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, much of what Pope Francis teaches in the document is a reminder that no one, and no family, is perfect,” said Bishop Bradley. “He urges us all to seek God’s mercy and forgiveness for any of our mistakes and sins, and he directs all those involved in ministering to families to ‘shepherd with mercy,’ to patiently listen to people in the midst of their struggles, and to guide them toward renewed efforts to keep moving forward.”

For the past several years The Diocese of Kalamazoo has focused one of its strategic diocesan priorities specifically on strengthening marriage and family life and will continue

to be inspired by the Holy Father’s encouragement to seek new ways to accompany people on this journey.

See below for the full text of Bishop Bradley’s statement on “Amoris Laetitia”/The Joy of Love.

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Bishop Paul J. Bradley statement on “Amoris Laetitia”/The Joy of Love:

“Pope Francis’ long-awaited Apostolic Exhortation on the family is a warm and loving pastoral letter from a father to his family of faith offering practical wisdom interwoven with important affirmation of Church teaching. In “Amoris Laetitia”(Latin for “The Joy of Love”), Pope Francis examines many of today’s important topics: love, marriage, children and family life.

“He speaks lovingly and pastorally, encouraging everyone to, in his words, ‘keep striving toward something greater.’ In the midst of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, much of what Pope Francis teaches in this document is a reminder that no one, and no family, is perfect. As he states: ‘The Synod’s reflections show us that there is no stereo- type of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems.’

“He urges us all to seek God’s mercy and forgiveness for any of our mistakes and sins, and he directs all those involved in ministering to families to ‘shepherd with mercy,’ to patiently listen to people in the midst of their struggles, and to guide them toward renewed efforts to keep moving forward.

“The Holy Father invites all of us to accompany each other; to avoid making judgments about anyone’s circumstances; to listen with compassion and understanding. Pope Francis reaffirms traditional doctrinal and moral principles of the Church regarding marriage, family and children. He reminds us of the powerful image of the Church as a field hospital, and calls upon all of us involved in ministering to families—bishops, priests, lay ministers-- to listen to, and journey alongside, all those who are wounded, offering hope and God’s unconditional love and mercy.

“The document is well-worth a close and prayerful reading. As Pope Francis writes: ‘I do not recommend a rushed reading of the text. The greatest benefit, for families themselves and for those engaged in the family apostolate, will come if each part is read patiently and carefully.’

“It is my hope and prayer that people will engage with, and be inspired by, this newest of Pope Francis’ major teachings so that each of us will experience more deeply the joy of God’s love for us, and our love for one another.”

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The Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo is the territory of Catholic churches and community led by Bishop Paul J. Bradley. The diocese was founded in 1971 when the Second Vatican Council called for the creation of smaller dioceses so that bishops could be more available to the people they serve. Today the diocese encompasses 5,337 square miles of nine counties in southwest Michigan: Allegan, Barry, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph and Branch and includes 59 parishes as well as 23 Catholic schools. [www.diokzoo.org](http://www.diokzoo.org).