

# DIOCESE OF SAN BERNARDINO



## OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, Pope Francis has released the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* ("The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family"). This rich and inspiring document brings to a close the process of consultation, dialogue and discernment on matters of the family that began with Extraordinary Synod in 2014 and extended through last year's Ordinary Synod on the Family. In that sense, we should all feel a sense of participation in this process through surveys and discussions that took place in our Diocese during the Synods, at the request of the Vatican.

*Amoris Laetitia* is an expansive, deeply pastoral writing that warrants our time and study. I encourage you to read the document in its entirety and not rely only on summaries or second hand interpretations. Read, reflect and pray over what our Holy Father seeks to teach us through his writing.

By its nature, this Exhortation does not change the dogma of the Catholic Church, as some may have speculated that it might. Still, it is significant in its call for us to address the complexities of family life without judgement, but with compassionate, pastoral hearts. This tone is consistent with past writings, homilies and speeches of Pope Francis, who urges us to seek out and care for the marginalized, including those in our own families and faith communities.

I look forward to the continued study and integration of this Exhortation into the life of our local Church. May your Easter Season continue to be blessed with new life in the Risen Lord.

In Christ,

Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes