

NATIONAL WEEK FOR LIFE AND THE FAMILY (CCCB)

May 14 (Mother's Day) – May 21, 2017

THEME:

“Love Grows by Giving”

CONTEXT:

In God's great plan of love for humanity, the family is intended to be the privileged place where merciful love is first encountered – the love of mother and father. Every family has its challenges; but parents and children who seek Christ through prayer, in the Word of God and the sacraments gradually become more and more like Christ who is mercy made flesh. In the family, the Christian child becomes the recipient of Christ's love, exemplified by the self-giving lives of his parents, and is thus empowered to make the sincere gift of self which the Second Vatican Council tells us is the only means by which one discovers himself. Contemporary Culture has in large measure forgotten the meaning of love. In his recent Post-Synodal Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis offers us a compelling reflection on the nature of love as proclaimed by St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. The child who receives unconditional love is, in the very receiving, empowered to bestow the kind of love of which St. Paul speaks.

1. PROMOTION

Before “the Week” begins ...

- **Prayer:** A call to prayer for life and the family in Canada to be issued on Easter Sunday, (April 16, 2017) or on Mercy Sunday (April 23, 2017), together with the distribution of a prayer card – downloadable from the Week's website page (www.familylifeweek.ca). We encourage dioceses to print and promote the prayer.
- **Bulletin announcements:** Parish bulletins should publish the following promotional announcements a few weeks in advance and on the Sunday chosen to celebrate the Week (either May 14th or May 21st):
 - A. NATIONAL WEEK FOR LIFE AND THE FAMILY (May 14-21) – This year, in the Church in Canada, the Week will focus on the theme: “Love Grows by Giving . . .” For more information about events related to the week, see: www.familylifeweek.ca
 - B. “LOVE GROWS BY GIVING” – In God's great plan of love for humanity, the family is intended to be the privileged place where merciful love is first encountered and nurtured. No family is perfect; but parents and children who stay in touch with Christ through prayer, the Word of God and the sacraments gradually become more and more like Christ who is mercy made flesh. The child who receives unconditional love is, in the very receiving, empowered to bestow unconditional love. During this National Week for Life and the Family (May 14-21), let us celebrate our families' wonderful calling to be nurseries of unconditional love. Please visit www.familylifeweek.ca !

2. THE EUCHARIST

A special Eucharist can be celebrated on one of two Sundays during this National Week for Life and the Family: ideally on May 14 (Mother's Day) or May 21st.

- **Homily notes / List of suggestions:** (see specific section)
- **Suggested Prayers of the Faithful:** (see specific section)
- **Public "testimony":** To be given during the Sunday Mass of the Week by a couple or family (including grand-parents), focusing on the role that God's unconditional love has had in their life as a family and how their love has grown by giving it away.

3. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Pope Francis has repeatedly called the faithful to "go to the periphery" in extending God's unconditional love and mercy. As he reminds us:

"Faith finds expression in concrete everyday actions meant to help our neighbors in body and spirit". . . Feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, welcoming strangers, offering instruction, giving comfort, incarnating God's unconditional love -- being His hand and feet - in the world -- "on such things will we be judged" ...

A. At home (see "Events and activities")

B. In the parish (see "Events and activities")