Vatican



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Rome — January 11, 2018
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Pope Francis is asking the Catholic Church to adopt a "change of attitude" towards families and the problems they face today, the Vatican's Secretary of State has said.

Asked in a Jan. 11 interview about the ongoing discussion over the meaning of the pope's 2016 apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia,* Cardinal Pietro Parolin said the document "flows from a new paradigm that Pope Francis is bringing forward with wisdom, prudence and patience."

Apparently referencing the criticism from a minority group of Catholics who have called the exhortation unclear, Parolin states: "The difficulties that have risen up and that still exist in the church ... are probably due to this change of attitude that the pope is asking of us."

"Obviously, every change always brings some difficulties, but these difficulties come with the territory and must be dealt with commitment, to find answers that might become instances of growth, of further deepening," the cardinal said.

Parolin was speaking to Vatican News, a new communications entity of the city-state combining the operations of many of its former outlets, such as Vatican Radio.

Amoris Laetitia, known as "The Joy of Love" in English, was released by Francis in April 2016 as a response to the 2014 and 2015 Synods of Bishop on family life. While

the exhortation covered many areas of family life, much of the global discussion has centered on what it says about Catholics who remarry after a divorce without obtaining annulments of their first unions.

The eighth chapter of the document urges pastors to assist those whose marriages have faltered and help them feel part of the church community. It also outlines a process that could lead divorced and civilly remarried Catholics back to the sacraments.

In the interview, Parolin called *Amoris Laetitia* "an embrace by the church of the family amid all the problems of today's world ... [and] at the same time a request for help from families that they might collaborate and contribute to the growth of the church."

The cardinal also spoke about the upcoming October Synod of Bishops, which will focus on young people, and the pope's process of reforming the Vatican bureaucracy, known as the Roman Curia.

Parolin said he thinks 2018 will see the church give a "special concentration" to young people.

"I believe the most innovative thing ... is the search for a new relationship between the church and young people, characterized by a paradigm of commitment free of every type of paternalism," said the cardinal.

"The church truly wants to enter into dialogue with young people's reality; it wants to understand young people and wants to help them," he said.

Parolin quoted U.S. President John F. Kennedy's 1961 inauguration speech, in which he famously told Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you," saying: "The church asks young people what they can do for the church, how their contributions can help spread the Gospel today."

On the issue of Vatican reform, the cardinal said Francis is working so that the Curia "might become a true help to the pope in proclaiming the Gospel, for giving witness to the Gospel, for evangelizing today's world."

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