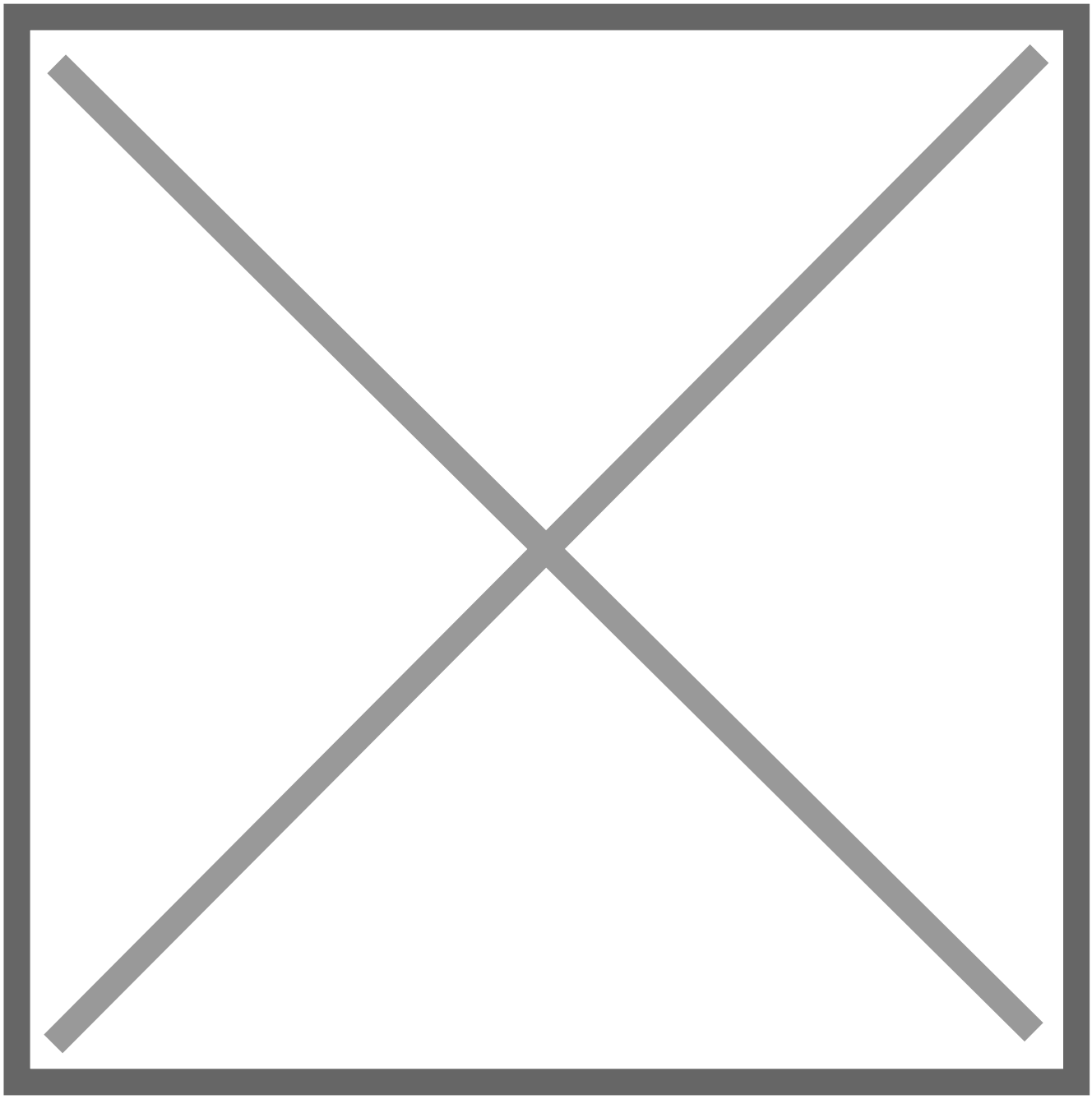
Vatican
Vatican News



Pope Leo XIV greets a baby and family at the conclusion of his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican Aug. 27, 2025. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Paulina Guzik

View Author Profile



OSV News

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — July 6, 2026
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

The Vatican has released the framework for a fall meeting with the heads of Eastern Catholic Churches and presidents of bishops' conferences, marking the 10th anniversary of *Amoris Laetitia* and focusing on the Church's pastoral approach to families.

Pope Francis' issued his post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the pastoral care of families. It was published after the 2014 and 2015 Synods on the Family.

The Oct. 7-14 gathering is intended "to proceed, in mutual listening, to a synodal discernment on the steps to be taken in order to proclaim the Gospel to families today," not only in light of *Amoris Laetitia* but also "taking into account what is currently being done in the local Churches."

The Vatican described the initiative as part of an ongoing process of "pastoral conversion," emphasizing renewed evangelization rooted in lived experience.

Participants are expected to reflect on how families themselves contribute to the Church's mission, not only as recipients of pastoral care but as active agents of evangelization. The framework — dated July 3 and released July 6 by the Vatican — said that families embody the Gospel in "daily relationships, choices, fragility and hope," and calls for continued openness to renewal, asking for "the courage to persevere on this path," while "always welcoming the Gospel anew in the joy of being able to proclaim it to all."

The meeting will include listening sessions, the sharing of concrete pastoral experiences, and dialogue with experts. Its goal is to discern "the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading us today," while recognizing and supporting what is already being lived out in families and local Church communities. The themes are divided into five daily sessions by the organizers of the family summit.

Families today: reality, beauty and challenges

The first topic discussed will be "Families today: reality, beauty and challenges" — aimed at "discerning the signs of the times through the experience of families and the Church's pastoral commitment today."

This part aims at "attentive listening to the concrete lives of families and to the experience of those who accompany them, recognizing together both the beauty of love as it takes shape in daily life and the fragilities that often affect it."

Advertisement

The Vatican listed "precarious employment and housing, illness, the challenges of raising children, emotional loneliness, and the care of family members with disabilities, the elderly, or those who are not self-sufficient," as challenges that families face today.

Among questions asked during the session will be: "How do the transformations of our time affect the experience of love between man and woman, generation of life, care, the transmission of the faith, and the mission of the Church?"

Young people and the discovery of the vocation to marriage

The second day will be focused on the young people "and the discovery of the vocation to marriage" and is aimed at "listening to young people and accompanying them in discovering the value of marriage."

"In many parts of the world, young people live in contexts in which confidence in the possibility of building a stable marital and family project has weakened due to economic, social and cultural factors," the Vatican said, pointing out that the meeting will address several challenges connected to upbringing of young people in families.

One of them is what "language, experiences, and educational and spiritual pathways help children, adolescents and young people today to recognize the value of marriage?" with the other asking "What witness can couples and families offer?" and how can they contribute to "accompanying young people in their emotional, relational and sexual growth?"

Pope Leo XIV, traveling to Spain June 6-12, encouraged young people to not be afraid to marry.

After one of the young men on the stage mentioned he was a newlywed, Leo went visibly off the cuff to urge young people to "not be afraid of marriage. Do not be afraid of forming a family!"

Married life. The first years of marriage: a decisive time

Listening to and accompanying couples "in the early years of married life and at every stage of life" is a third-day topic of the discussion — titled "Married life. The first years of marriage: a decisive time."

"The experience of couples in the first years of married life calls for particular attention," the Vatican said. "This is an especially important phase for strengthening the marital bond and facing together the changes that accompany the beginning of family life, such as the birth of children and the challenge of balancing family and work, while discovering ever new meanings of conjugal and family love."

The Vatican noted in their preparatory note that "it is during these early years that many of the human and spiritual resources are cultivated that will help spouses navigate the different seasons of family life."

Looking at this stage of marriage bears weight as according to Pew Research Center, 4 in 10 divorces occur in the first decade of marriage, with 16% of couples divorcing in the first four years, and 24% between the fifth and ninth year of marriage.

The Vatican announced that in that phase of the discussion, some of the questions asked will be: "What forms of accompaniment are most effective in supporting couples, particularly during the first years of married life?" as well as "How can spouses be helped to recognize and develop their relational, spiritual, generative and parental resources?"and "Which experiences demonstrate the fruitfulness of networks of families capable of supporting one another and, in turn, becoming a

source of accompaniment and witness for others?"

In the difficulties of life: accompanying and supporting

"Walking with families in complex situations" is the fourth stage of discussion, titled "In the difficulties of life: accompanying and supporting."

"Particular attention is directed to couples and families who, at every stage of married life, encounter relational, social or spiritual difficulties, situations in which the Gospel is called to draw ever closer," the July 6 release said.

"Failure, fragility, the gap between the ideal and reality, and the complexity of life situations also become places in which the work of God's grace may be recognized and where persons can be accompanied with respect, patience and hope," the Vatican said.

In this fourth day of the family summit designed around Amoris Laetitia, participants will be asking "What steps have been taken to support those living in situations of fragility or difficulty?" as well as "What forms of resistance continue to emerge?"

The discussion will also draw on the ways Christian communities can be built "in which those who have experienced suffering, abandonment, separation and divorce may truly feel listened to, involved and co-responsible."

Christian families as subjects of the Church's mission

The last day of the discussions will be focused on "Christian families as subjects of the Church's mission" and will discuss the theme of "Embracing conjugal and family love as an impetus for mission."

"Spouses know well that one never ceases to learn the languages of love, day after day," the Vatican said.

"Within Christian communities, couples have a distinctive way of responding to the common vocation to love. In a rapidly changing world, the contribution of families to the Church's mission is more necessary than ever in fostering an 'apprenticeship in enduring love,' with the benefits this brings to personal, ecclesial and social life."

The framework said that "Despite the challenges posed by the pace of contemporary life, families remain the primary setting in which the faith is handed on to new

generations, therefore participants will ask "How can the experience of couples and families be valued as a place of human, spiritual, ecclesial and social growth?" and "How can the contribution of families to the Church's evangelizing mission and to the pastoral conversion of Christian communities be recognized and supported?"

The pope made the announcement about the meeting on the feast of St. Joseph, saying that he was convening the meeting "in light of the changes that continue to impact families ... in an effort to proceed, in mutual listening, to a synodal discernment on the steps to be taken in order to proclaim the Gospel to families today, in light of Amoris Laetitia and taking into account what is currently being done in the local Churches."

"I entrust this journey to the intercession of Saint Joseph, guardian of the Holy Family of Nazareth," he added.