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AMORIS LAETITIA FAMILY YEAR

“He rejoiced with all his household that he had believed God” (Acts 16:34).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

Blessed greetings of the Holy Season of Great Lent!

Our God is a Triune God who is a communion of love and every catholic family is the living reflection of this communion. Families can experience this sincere communion to which it is modelled only when they live in prayer, when forgiveness prevails and when the daily harshness of life is softened by mutual tenderness and serene adherence to God's will. This experience of genuine communion consequently entitles our families the mission mandate to spread this joy of communion among the families around and it implies “an effort at evangelization and catechesis inside the family” (AL#200). Our response, as a family in the catholic church, to this invitation is all the more expected, as Holy Father Pope Francis has declared “Amoris Laetitia Family Year” from 19th March 2021 to 26th June 2022, celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Apostolic exhortation on Family, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love- 2016).

“Amoris Laetitia” was written as a post-synodal exhortation to support and help the families to live in a more graceful way and face various challenges in their day to day life. The document is, first of all, an invitation to all the Christian families to appreciate the values of the gift of marriage and family and to sustain in love empowered by generosity, commitment, fidelity and compassion (AL#89). Secondly, it encourages everyone to be a symbol of mercy and compassionate presence where family life is not fulfilled due to lack of joy and peace (AL#322). Celebrating the fifth year of the document, when we enter this Family Year, certainly it is an opportunity to self-examine our families, finding our progress so far and realising the aim we need to reach to, focusing more closely on the contents of this Apostolic exhortation. The four pillars on which an Amoris Laetitia family can be built upon and strengthened are the Word of God, Sacraments, Family prayer and Fellowship.

The Eparchial Commission for Family Apostolate, collaborating with other Eparchial Commissions, desires to introduce several spiritual, pastoral and cultural initiatives to channel all the blessings of the Year to our families. They aim at sharing the contents of the Apostolic

exhortation more widely, proclaiming the gift of the sacrament of marriage and enabling families to “become active agents of the family apostolate” (AL#200). I hope that all our parishes/missions/proposed missions would make every effort to celebrate this Family Year cooperating to the events scheduled in the Eparchy, apart from the local initiatives. The family units can be made a fruitful platform for locally organised programmes. The title passage chosen for the “Amoris Laetitia Family Year” is, “He rejoiced with all his household that he had believed God” (Acts 16:34). It reveals the direction for us to coordinate and implement our programmes and schedules.

The inauguration at eparchial level of the *Amoris Laetitia Family Year* will be held online at **8.00 PM on 19th March 2021**, (after the Holy Qurbana at 6.30 pm) and it will be streamed live in our YouTube Channel (CSMEGB) and the Facebook Page (Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain). I request all the priests and faithful to join me in the inaugural ceremony and to inaugurate the year in your parish/mission/proposed mission at the earliest possible. However I exhort all the faithful to inaugurate the this year of blessing, lighting a lamp in your family during the family prayer on the same day. Eparchial Assembly on “Amoris Laetitia”, Family Retreats, Seminar for various couples’ groups, Couples’ cells, Seminars on parenting, on the need of honouring parents and on the sanctity of Marriage etc. will be conducted later this year and the schedule of the same will be informed in due time.

We are already in the Kudumbakootayma Year. Let us use our family unit gatherings to learn more about the message of the Amoris Laetitia and share the joy of our families. As we move on in the year of St. Joseph (08 December 2020 – 08 December 2021) let us ask his intercession to model our families to that of his in which all families can find their sure point of reference and inspiration. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit protect and safeguard all our Families.

Yours in our Lord and our God,

+ Joseph Srampickal

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NB: This circular must be read in all the Parishes/Missions/Proposed Missions during the celebration of the Holy Qurbana before 22nd March 2021.