Moving Forward as Pilgrims of Hope
Mission Update
2023 – 2024
Mission

The Office of Family Life of the Archdiocese of New York cultivates prayer, formation, accompaniment, and advocacy through outreach to families in their homes, parishes, and Catholic schools.

Vision

The Office of Family Life of the Archdiocese of New York collaborates with the parishes, schools, and families of the Archdiocese by recommending programs, processes, and initiatives that prepare and enrich engaged and married couples; educate, form, support, and strengthen parishes and families; build and promote a culture of life; and provide healing and comfort to those struggling with loss, grief, and brokenness.

I welcome the opportunity to share with you a review of the past work of the Office of Family Life and a brief look forward as we begin our celebration of the Jubilee Year 2025. The staff and I are grateful to all those who have been a part of the family life ministry here in the parishes and networks of the Archdiocese of New York and beyond. The tremendous needs of the families, whether it be one person or many, can never overshadow the love of God. Pope Francis, in his Papal Bull “Hope Does Not Disappoint” introducing the Jubilee Year 2025 writes, “For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus...”

May God continue to bless us with grace, mercy, and hope.

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Director, Office of Family Life
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Family Life Ministry Foundations – Pastoral Strategic Plan Highlights

Prayer and Relationship with Christ

*Having first encountered Jesus and his love in the Church, the members of families can then effectively invite other families in need of God’s mercy and healing to an encounter with Jesus Christ.*


**Past Highlights:**

- Introduced the Marriage Catechumenate to the clergy, engaged couples, and parish leaders of the Archdiocese
- Gathered each Advent and Lent for a time of renewal and reflection
- Experienced an increase in the number of couples attending the Archdiocesan Pre-Cana sessions in English and Spanish
- Provided guidance and support for those interested in the Natural Family Planning (NFP) Program

Family Formation

*Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers. We want to have better training, a deepening love, and a clearer witness to the Gospel.*

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013

**Past Highlights:**

- Met with parents and grandparents in many parishes throughout the Archdiocese to better understand needs and ways to provide accompaniment
- Initiated the Strong Catholic Family Initiative
- Promoted small group faith sharing opportunities
Accompaniment: We are called to accompany each other

It is the duty of the entire ecclesial community to elaborate a catechumenal pathway for marriage preparation and to offer concrete accompaniment to couples along this path...Marriage is not only a social act; for Christians, it is an “ecclesial” act.

Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life, Catechetical Pathways for Married Life: Pastoral Guidelines for Local Churches

Past Highlights:
• Initiated a group for “Empty Nesters” and continued the planning process
• Met with pastors and parish leaders to explore programs and initiatives aimed at renewing marriage and family life in the parish and at home
• Gathered for pastoral development sessions during the annual Family Life Conference to help married couples and families

Advocacy

Today, pastoral leaders face the challenge of addressing numerous marital and family situations that are more complex than in previous decades.

Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, March 19, 2016, no.200

Past Highlights:
• Engaged the Nourish For Caregivers Association to assist those in need of support and encouragement
• Enhanced the long-standing Bereavement Group Initial Training Process and initiated an ongoing pastoral formation program
• Enhanced the Suicide Prevention resource digital library

Called to the Joy of Love, Evangelii Gaudium, #120
Catholic Families – Witnesses to Gospel Hope, Joy, and Love

Major Events from 2023–2024

- Bilingual Family Life Conference
- Formation Day at Fordham University
- Advent and Lent Family Reflections
- World Marriage Sunday
- Marriage Week Celebrations
- Archdiocesan Mass for Grandparents and the Elderly Day
- Archdiocesan Mass for Grieving Parents
- Emmaus Ministry Grieving Parents Retreats (English and Spanish)
- Hispanic Heritage Mass
- Safe Haven Sunday (English and Spanish)

- St. Gianna Mass and Social
- Family Life Leaders Recognition Mass and Awards Reception
- Post Cana Brunch
- Pre-Cana Facilitator Meetings
- Family Life Regional Meetings
- 50th Wedding Anniversary Mass
- Active Parenting (English and Spanish)
- Empty Nesters Group
- National Eucharistic Revival
- Family Rosary Initiative

Major Initiatives from 2023–2024

- Marriage Catechumenate (English and Spanish)
- Mentor Couples
- Post Cana Connections Brunches
- ALPHA Marriage Course
- Ongoing Marriage Enrichment courses
- Annual Marriage Week Mass and events
- Outreach to Grandparents and the Elderly
- Safe Haven Sunday
- Strong Catholic Families
- Parish Family Life and Marriage Renewal Initiatives
- Active Parenting Programs in English and Spanish
- Parish Family Life Consultation
- Parish Programs of Family Life and Marriage Renewal
- Grieving the Loss of a Loved One
- Seasonal Days of Reflection and Retreats
- Family Gatherings
Collaborators

- Catholic Family Life Association (CFLA)
- Catholic Faith Technologies (CFT)
- Covenant Eyes
- ArchCare
- RENEW International
- Departments and Offices of the Archdiocese of New York and associated agencies
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- Vatican Dicastery for Evangelization
- Paulist Evangelization Ministries (PEM)
- Communio

- Wonderfully Made Fertility Care
- St. Gianna Center, Manhattan
- Archdiocese of Newark – Healing and Loss
- Active Parenting
- Catholic HÔM
- Nourish for Caregivers
- Catholic Grandparents Association (CGA)
- Engaged Encounter
- Worldwide Marriage Encounter
- The Marriage Group
- ALPHA Marriage
- Walters Appreciative Consulting

Looking Ahead

- Family Life Institute
- Celebrating the Jubilee Year 2025
- Family Life and Jubilee Conferences
- Family Nativity Display
- Family Life Leaders Monthly Gatherings
- Additional Convalidation options
- Updated Marriage Preparation Program (Pre-Cana)
- Consolation Ministry
- Bereavement Showcases
- Prayer and Reflection for Separated and Divorced
- Expanded Natural Family Planning (NFP) Resource Center
- Newlywed Couple Groups led by Mentor Couples
- Expanded outreach by the staff and collaborators to parish staff and leadership
- Form and support a Parish and Archdiocesan Family Accompaniment Network
- Enhance Parenting Formation Networks
- Catholic HÔM
- RENEW International
- Renewed marriage preparation (Pre-Cana)
- Enriched married couple’s evangelization opportunities
- 24 Hours for the Lord - International Celebration with Pope Francis

The Lord calls us, “...to put out into the deep.”

JUBILEE 2025
PILGRIMS OF HOPE