



JOY OF LOVE (PREACHED RETREAT SUMMER 2026)

Additional Information from facilitator Fr. David Perrin

Released in 2016 *The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia)* reflects Pope Francis' Jesuit spirituality in its call for a more listening and discerning Church. This retreat brings into sharp focus the late Pope's desire for an inclusive, humble, and engaged Church. While he only references the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola three times, Ignatian spirituality is deeply present throughout the document. He constantly encourages us to pay attention, to listen, to see how God is present in our lives through everyday experiences. *The Joy of Love* is a prime example of the Ignatian charism in practice that begins solidly with lived experience, relying above all on the grace that is at work in our lives. "Realities are more important than ideas," affirms the Pope (*AL* 36).

Clearly the document is addressed to issues related to married and family life, but the fundamental *human issues* reflected upon in *The Joy of Love* also apply to priests, religious men and women, and lay persons who are not married or are partnered in different ways. Pope Francis puts into clear focus the need for authentic loving relationships based on the example of Jesus as the focus for the practice of our Christian faith. He makes it clear that authentic relations – in whatever form – are infinitely more demanding than rules. The latter can be adhered to lifelessly; the former require ongoing interior transformation as this retreat invites the participants to achieve. *The Joy of Love* emphasizes that no abstract rule can embody the many

complexities of the circumstances, intentions, levels of understanding and maturity that engages any one decision in our lives. Thus, “accompaniment” is required.

Accompanying people along the way, and that means also accompanying ourselves, means discerning the truth of our journey and the movements of God in our lives – because the real God moves also in the mess, in the sin, in the unconverted grace. God is not only the point of arrival, awaiting the successful at journey’s end, but God is also, says Francis, our companion on the way, with our failures; and we need to discover that truth as this retreat helps us to do.

Eight words, each one the focus of an individual conference are used to guide the retreatant to reflect on one’s life in prayer, in solitude, and in a mode of discovery. Eight key words from *The Joy of Love* will be used to guide the retreatant to a deeper relationship with God, with oneself, with others, and with the world around us: “Listen,” “Love,” “Community,” “Body,” “Desire,” “Leadership,” “Blessing,” and “Hope.”