

Love Is Our Mission

The Family Fully Alive

Chapter 7: Light in a Dark World Reading Guide

If you have not yet done so, please watch the introductory video for Chapter 1. It will give you a window into the chapter and make your reading and study of the catechesis more fruitful.

It will be beneficial for you to spread your reading of the chapter over a number of sessions. Take time, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, to consider in your mind what these things might mean (Lk 1: 29) and then ponder them in your heart (Lk 2:19 & 2:51).

1. Before reading

Begin your reading time with a prayer, asking for God's help to understand what you are about to read. Here is a traditional Catholic prayer asking the Holy Spirit for assistance:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

2. Reading the catechesis

Rather than reading the chapter straight through, read it one section at a time. For example, in chapter one there are four sections, each with its own heading. The first is "A plan for life and the love which sustains us" and it covers paragraphs 1-9.

Begin by asking yourself what the subheading probably means. Then read and reread the section from start to finish at a rate comfortable for you. While doing so, underline what you consider to be especially important statements and write questions and comments in the margins. These are great active reading techniques.

3. After reading a section

After reading the section, take some time to "digest" what you have just read. One way to do this is by responding to the text.

We recommend you answer in writing, *one* of the following generic questions or *one* of the directed questions. The generic questions can be asked of any section of this book. The directed questions pertain to the section specifically.

Generic questions

- What did you think the heading meant before you read the section? Has your understanding of it changed after reading?
- What most surprised or impacted you in this section?
- What most confused you or what did you disagree with the most in this section?
- If you were to summarize this section, what would you say it was about in one or two sentences?
- What action does this section call you to take? Does this change seem possible to you? What barriers do you think would stand in the way of you taking this action?

The following are directed questions for each section of Chapter 1. Choose one of them to answer in writing if you don't select one of the generic questions. A space is provided for you to write your response.

A plan for life and the love which sustains us

Directed questions

- How is it true that the meaning of marriage and of the family is the same as, or is a sub-set of, the general meaning of life?
- How does the idea of “promising love forever” explain the meaning of life for a Christian?
- Is it really true that without God any meaning of life we come up with will be inadequate?
- How do you see “the Catholic way of hope and joy, love and service” (§ 7) in relation to the meaning of life and the meaning of marriage and the family?

Your response:

Jesus reveals God, and the plan begins to unfold

Directed questions:

- What is an important and personally meaningful way you have “met” Jesus in your life?
- *Lumen Fidei* says that “To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather his response is that of an accompanying presence” (§ 9). How good an answer does this seem to you of the problem of suffering in this life?

- What does this mean: “God’s presence in human flesh in Jesus means that the transcendent creator of the world is also our immanent, intimate, utterly tender Father” (§10)?
- What does it mean or should it mean for you to be part of an eternal divine communion (§11)?

Your response:

Jesus reveals our human identity and destiny

Directed questions

- What are the human identity and destiny which Jesus reveals?
- What does the word “love” mean in this section?
- In what way does the image of God abide in us regardless of what other people do to us or what we do to ourselves?
- In what way is individualism a problem and communion/community a solution?
- Why is “theology . . . essential for anthropology” (§16)?
- According to §17, what are some things Jesus Christ has to say about marriage and the family?

Your response:

Love is the family mission

- Why is “Love is our mission” the theme of the 2015 World Meeting of Families?
- How is the mission of love in marriage and the family a “subset” of the overall mission of the human person to love?

- What does this mean: “The entire human person—body and soul, our maleness and femaleness, and all that follows from each—is implicated in God’s invitation” (§19)?
- To what extent is your family fully alive with God’s joy? What has made it possible for your family to experience joy? How do you think your family could grow in this fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Your response: