

## Joint Statement on *Amoris Laetitia*

*Confraternity of Catholic Clergy (USA) / Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy  
Confraternity of Catholic Clergy: British Province / Irish Confraternity of Catholic Clergy*

As members of the International Confraternities of Catholic Clergy, we believe there would be great value in an authoritative interpretation of the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* in line with the constant teaching and practice of the Church. This statement comes in light of continuing widespread divergence of understanding and growing divisions in practice. A clarification is clearly needed to correct the misuse of the Apostolic Exhortation to undermine sacred Tradition. We, therefore, thank the four eminent Cardinals who have recently submitted their *dubia* to the Holy See, requesting such clarification. The Confraternities recognize that this action has been taken out of love for the Church and concern for the salvation of souls. As the Cardinals themselves have made clear, this step has been taken with deep respect for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and should not in any way be used to foster divisions in the Church. The grave danger to the unity of the Church due to increasing moral relativism must be honestly faced and clearly remedied.

As pastors of souls, we are well aware of the many challenges facing the men and women of today. We strive to help our people, often living in complex situations, to hear the call of Christ and his Gospel. This task is made easier when the Church expounds her teaching boldly and clearly. It is also essential that the Church's discipline must always follow her dogmatic teaching. In particular, since at the present time there is much confusion, it is necessary to make clear that Holy Communion cannot be given to someone choosing to live in a sexual relationship with a person other than their validly espoused husband or wife. Those who find themselves in this situation are of course deserving of pastoral support and must be helped to play as full a part in the life of the Church as their circumstances allow. In connection with this, it is important to state that conscience is not a law unto itself replacing the holy law of God with private judgement, but rather an echo of the voice of the Creator. The dignity of conscience must be assisted to overcome all ignorance and protected from becoming 'practically sightless as a result of habitual sin' (*Gaudium et Spes*, 16)

Requesting such a clarification, which reiterates the perennial teaching of the Church, is an act of filial love by faithful sons of the Church who turn to our Supreme Shepherd seeking his paternal guidance. It is our desire that this elucidation will enable us and other Catholic priests and deacons to carry out our ministry in ways that are faithful and effective. We hope that this request for clarification may be an occasion for the Holy Father to feed and tend the flock entrusted to him by the Lord and to support us, the clergy, in doing the same.

*February 2nd, 2017: Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord*

