

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 8, 2016**

**Statement by Archbishop of Seattle J. Peter Sartain  
On the papal exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love)**

I am deeply grateful to Pope Francis for the teaching and pastoral care he has provided the Church and all people in his apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love). The depth and breadth of this teaching on love in the family, which follows the recent Synod on the Family, is extensive, and I urge all Catholics and everyone to heed the pope's suggestion and to study the document in the weeks and months ahead. In the opening lines of this love letter to families, the pope states that "The joy of love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church." Pope Francis set the tone for his teaching document by reminding the Church and all people of the great joy and grace that are experienced in marriage and within families. He also provides a context for the entire Church — bishops, priests, religious, lay leaders and families themselves — to meet the very real challenges facing marriage and the family today. The pope does not sidestep the challenges and he has invited all of us to meet them with a spirit of love. "The Joy of Love" is a document of hope. It reminds us of the great blessing married couples and families bestow on all of society. Precisely because the health of marriage and families are so important to the wellbeing of society, this document deserves careful consideration to determine how its teaching can be implemented for the common good. The pope's words should inspire all of us, especially married couples, to grow in love and to see marriage and family life as a mission of love in service to the world. In the months ahead, we will be studying the Pope's pastoral exhortation to discern how on the archdiocesan and parish level we should be strengthening and improving the pastoral care we give to couples as they prepare for marriage, as they seek to deepen their married love through the years, as they care for their children, and as they face difficulties in their marriage. Pope Francis has given us a teaching of Hope in God's grace and mercy in all of life's joys and challenges.

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