

**SECTION 48**  
**Daily Love in Marriage and Family:**  
**Part 10: Intimacy in Marriage.**

Under the heading "*a world of emotions*" (AL 143-146), in "Amoris Laetitia" ("The Joy of Love") Pope Francis devotes a great deal of attention to the experience of intimacy in the marriage relationship. He refers to the Second Vatican Council, which more than 50 years ago, taught that marital love with its physical and affective manifestations encompasses the whole person (AL 142). The Desires toward each other, feelings of tenderness and needs for intimacy play an important role in the love relationship, the Pope states (AL 143). They form a force that keeps the marriage relationship alive.

The Pope speaks of the beauty of the marriage relationship and the intense joy that intimacy, affection and embracing can bring. This is why he encourages the married couple to accept these feelings and desires as a divine gift. At the same time the spouses are urged to purify them, by freely guiding these feelings into the right direction. These emotions may sustain self-giving and commitment to one another, while enhancing mutual engagement. Desire for intimacy also helps spouses to overcome the fatigue that inevitably accompanies the care of the family (AL 148).

"*God rejoices in the joy of His children,*" the Pope writes (AL 147). But on the other hand, he also points out that feeling attracted to one another does not automatically mean that one actually loves the other. Believing that something *is* good because it *feels* good is a big mistake, the Pope writes (AL 145). Desire for intimacy can also arise from selfishness. Exuberance and lack of control weaken and spoil pleasure and harm family life (AL 148). There are people who believe that they are able to give a lot of love, when in fact they are only seeking to meet their personal need for affection. These people are not able to make another person truly happy. That is why the Pope emphasizes that the formation of the emotional life is necessary (AL 148).

## Reflection.

**"God rejoices in the joy of His children"** (AL 147)

*"We believe that God loves the enjoyment  
felt by human beings.*

*God created us and  
"richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment" (1 Tim 6:17).*

*Let us be glad when with great love God tells us:*

*"My child, treat yourself well...*

*Deprive not yourself of present good things" (Sirach 14:11-14).*

*Married couples likewise respond to God's will  
when they take up the biblical injunction:*

*"On a good day enjoy good things" (Ecclesiastes 7:14).*

*What is important is to have the freedom to realize  
that pleasure can find different expressions  
at different times of life,  
in accordance with the needs of mutual love.*

*In this sense, we can appreciate  
the teachings of some Eastern masters who urge us  
to expand our consciousness,  
lest we be imprisoned by one limited experience  
that can blinker us.*

*This expansion of consciousness  
is not the denial or destruction of desire  
so much as its broadening and perfection."*

(Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* n. 149).