

Pope Calls For Stronger Catechesis For Marriage Preparation

During a recent audience with members of the Roman Rota (the Vatican's main court) on Saturday, January 21, the Holy Father called for stronger and more effective catechesis in preparation for marriage. This new catechumenate is, as the pope said, "an appropriate path of preparation geared to rediscover marriage and the family in keeping with God's design."

"Great courage is needed to get married in the time in which we live," he said. The pope noted the variety of situations of people seeking the Sacrament of Marriage: some "take part actively in the life of the church" with "an intense life of prayer," while others are "far from faith or lacking in faith." Regardless of faith, these couples are influenced by today's culture, which is generally "lacking in religious values and faith."

Pope Francis quoted St. John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio*, echoing the saint's call for a new catechumenate in sacramental preparation. This provides an important opportunity for the evangelization of adults in the Church as well as the "so-called estranged" from the Church. The pope sees such marriage preparation as an "antidote that impedes the multiplication of null and inconsistent marriage celebrations."

The Holy Father also encouraged the participation of the whole Christian community in walking with young couples as they begin their married life. This prevents the newly married from feeling isolated, alone, or unwelcome. Accepted into the community, "beginning with participation in Sunday Mass," it is easier for these couples to continue their journey of faith in the Church. This is of particular importance when these new families begin to expand through bearing and raising children.

"It is all the more necessary to deepen the relation between love and truth," the pope concluded, hearkening back to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's final words to the Roman Rota several years ago. Love must be rooted in truth in order to last and

“build life and bear fruit” in the sacrament.