



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES
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20th March 2017

Dear Friends,

On the 20th March last year, following one of the Catholic Church's most extensive and wide-ranging consultation with bishops and theologians, Pope Francis made public his Apostolic Exhortation on relationships, love and the family. He entitled it *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) and it was the most remarkable of documents.

The Exhortation coincided with the Year of Mercy, which ended in November last year, and picked up on the need for mercy when faced with the challenges and difficulties that accompany all relationships.

It also issued a challenge. Pope Francis questioned whether educational institutions had taken heed of the Second Vatican Council when it spoke of the need for 'a positive and prudent sex education to be imparted to children and adolescences as they grow older'.

To mark the first anniversary of *Amoris Laetitia* we have taken up this challenge and produced a guide for all those charged with the duty of teaching young people about healthy and loving relationships. We hope this will support parents, teachers, catechesis and those in the wider Catholic community.

We have called this document *Learning to Love*. This is because all of us, no matter what stage of life we are in, never stop learning how to love.

When it comes to love and relationships, the pressures on young people are greater than they have ever been and we all need to recognise that without providing an education in this area, we leave young people vulnerable to receiving this information second hand and from potentially damaging sources.

Because we expect all Catholic schools to make space in the curriculum for Relationship and Sex Education, this document is here to help present the Church's teaching effectively, engagingly and in a way which is accessible to all those involved in educating young people.

We hope all those tasked with educating young people about healthy and loving relationships find *Learning to Love* helpful.

With every good wish and blessing,

The Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon OP
Chair of the Bishops' Conference Department of Catholic Education and Formation