



Witness to Love Releases New Book on Family Missionary Discipleship in Today's Culture

New book offers practical guide to forming holy marriages rooted in the Vatican's Marriage Catechumenate document

Lafayette, LA, Nov 7, 2023— During National Vocation Awareness Week, Witness to Love announces the release of their new book *The Road to Family Missionary Discipleship: Forming Marriages and Families to Share the Joy of the Gospel*. Co-authored by Witness to Love founders Ryan and Mary Rose Verret and seasoned Catholic journalist Peter Jesserer Smith, this new book models a framework for family-based evangelization and discipleship that starts with the “catechumenate for marriage” and proceeds from there to engage the entire church community through the whole of family life.

The book seeks to form holy marriages and accompanying families on their mission to share the “joy of the Gospel” called forth by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*. According to Mary Rose and Ryan Verret, “This book comes out of the heart of our experience of visiting the homes of so many couples who really see their home as a missionary outpost of the local church. It is for couples, families, clergy, consecrated, and lay leaders who want to learn not just about saints of the past but how to be the everyday saints that our world desperately needs!” The Verrets hope to fill “a gap in the resources available for families and parishes who want practical tools to live as missionary disciples.”

The Road to Family Missionary Discipleship offers a guide for parishes to implement the *Catechumenate Pathways for Married Life* prepared by the Dicastery for Marriage, Family and Life in 2022. The chapters are interspersed with insights from Catholic leaders who have adopted Witness to Love’s evangelization model or who have been directly involved with the marriage ministry. Revealing how to make the Church’s vision for married love and family life a lived experience, key collaborators include Curtis and Michaelann Martin of FOCUS, Katherine Coolidge of the Catherine of Siena Institute, and Dr. Bob Schuchts of the John Paul II Healing Center.

“With this book, the Verrets have provided an important roadmap for missionary action through the whole journey of family life,” said Curtis Martin, founder of FOCUS. In the foreword of the book, Martin goes on to state that missionary discipleship is critical for families today.

The Road to Family Missionary Discipleship begins by presenting marriage and family as an effective and underutilized avenue for evangelization in the Church, something often left to the clergy, consecrated men and women, or lay professionals. It then suggests the marriage

catechumenate as the necessary time of encounter and formation that introduces married couples to the person of Jesus and equips them for the task of making him known through their witness.

The book continues by shedding light on how couples can both serve the Church and how the Church can support families in various areas: prayer, marital friendship and sexuality, parenting, honoring grandparents and traditions, managing finances, and facing loss and complex situations. Each chapter includes discussion questions to prompt individuals, couples, and parishes to reflect and take action as missionary disciples.

Peter Jesserer Smith, national news and features editor for OSV News, said he was “grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Ryan and Mary Rose in creating a book that would recognize the marriage catechumenate as a powerful starting point for forming families of missionary disciples, but also for the missionary renewal of the entire church.” Smith said three things were key: “first, putting Jesus and the call of discipleship; second, intentionally thinking about how disciples accompany disciples through the seasons of family life; and third, taking the high-level language that Church teaching comes in and putting it into terms that everyday men and women could understand and apply to their lives.”

Archbishop J. Michael Miller of Vancouver praises the “Honest assessment of the current state of marriage and the family, [the] lively testimonies and countless “tips” on just about every area of family life” and suggests that *The Road to Family Missionary Discipleship* is a “must-read for all those who want to renew marriage and the family in their diocese, parish or organization.”

“The accessible, engaging, encyclopedic, super-practical masterpiece Ryan and Mary Rose Verret have given us is so timely,” stated Fr. Roger Landry, priest of the Diocese of Fall River, MA who currently serves as chaplain at Columbia University. “This belongs in the hands of all Catholic engaged and married couples, priests, and deacons, and those involved in the pivotal work of marriage preparation and ministry.”

Witness to Love has been serving parishes and couples for over a decade, using an innovative virtues-based, mentor-led catechumenate approach to marriage formation. Their unique model forms evangelizing spouses that accompany engaged and civilly married couples before and after the wedding, so that newlyweds have a connection to their parish and to Christ and His Church. At the same time, mentors are renewed in their relationship and live out their sacrament of service with greater intentionality.

To schedule an interview, contact Mary Rose Verret: maryrose@witnessstolove.org

Witness to Love's mission is to build and sustain communities of Evangelizing Spouses to Be Light in our world. We believe in building communities that connect couples to Christ and the Church, and not just creating content. Join our Marriage Movement today!

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