Pontificio Istituto Teologico
Giovanni Paolo II
Matrimonio e Famiglia
Sede Centrale

Virtual Learning

Walking with Families

Pathways in Pastoral Accompaniment

An Online Pastoral Formation Program



2027

offered by the
Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute
for Marriage and Family Sciences, Rome

Find out more

The Institute

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The **Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute,** born from the prophetic vision of St. John Paul II following the 1980 Synod on the Family and reestablished by Pope Francis in 2017 in the wake of the 2014–2015 Synod, has a clear mission:

- ***to serve*** the vocation and mission of marriage and the family through **teaching and research.**

- ***to promote*** **interdisciplinary and intercultural reflection** on the family and kinship structures, training professionals in pastoral care in a way that is attentive to the needs of families and to major, emerging social issues so as to contribute to the development of Theology and the Social Doctrine of the Family.

- ***to practice*** **solidarity, fraternity, and synodality** as a method of collective work, fostering the creation of an international research network that serves the journey of families.



The Program

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Online Pastoral Formation

Why This Program?
The future of the Church and society depends on the strength of families. To nurture this future, those who serve in pastoral ministry—clergy, religious, and lay leaders alike—need solid, **accessible formation in the theology and pastoral care** of marriage and family.

The Challenge
Many men and women dedicated to family pastoral ministry and to accompanying families through the different circumstances and stages of life **are looking for meaningful and flexible opportunities for high quality formation** that fit naturally into the rhythm of everyday life, alongside work and family commitments.

The Response
"Walking with Families" is an **online program taught entirely in English**, designed to provide theological and pastoral formation on marriage and family life. It offers a flexible and inspiring way to grow in knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to accompany families with professionalism, competence, and care.

Intended Audience
- Priests and religious engaged in family ministry
- Lay leaders preparing for or active in parish or diocesan apostolates
- Anyone seeking to enrich their personal life, strengthen family bonds, or serve more effectively in the Church's mission

Why Participate
- Deepen your understanding of Christian marriage and family life
- Strengthen your ability to accompany families in today's world
- Grow personally and spiritually while enhancing your pastoral outreach

Language & Format
The program is conducted in English through live, interactive sessions on Zoom.

Certification
Those who attended at least 60% of the class sessions will receive a Certificate of Participation upon completion.

Please note: This program is designed for personal and pastoral enrichment and ***does not*** confer university credits or an academic degree. If upon completion students enroll in an in-person program *at the Institute in Rome,* they can gain partial recognition of some credits for online studies.

The Classes

Accompanying Families in a Synodal Church - Prof. Julian Paparella
This course explores the pastoral accompaniment of families in the light of synodality. Understanding marriage and family life as lifelong journeys of growing in faith and love, the course examines pathways for welcoming and listening to families, recognizing their place in the Church, and promoting opportunities for them to support and learn from one another. Students will be given space to reflect on and share about their own local realities and pastoral experiences.

Canon Law and the Pastoral Care of Families - Prof. Orietta Grazioli
Marriage and family are complex realities open to many approaches. A legal approach is indispensable, since families are deeply bound up with social and legal questions, yet it risks losing sight of the real complexity of the faithful's lives. This is why a solid bridge between canon law and pastoral care is needed today: not to set the law aside, but to understand it in the light of the Gospel. The course treats the essentials of marriage and family in canon law from this perspective.

Families and Contemporary Challenges: A Sociological Perspective - Prof. Andrea Casavecchia
The course offers points of orientation and interpretive keys for reading family life from a sociological perspective. Several themes will be explored: relationships between partners and across generations; the building of social generativity and the risks of social vulnerability; and the role of the family as an active subject in processes of socialization and education, in which it interacts with other formative agencies, from the school to artificial intelligence.

The Nuptial Analogy in Scripture and Its Formative Power for the Family - Prof. Luca Pedroli
The course aims to show how the marriage symbolism that runs through the Old Testament—where the relationship between God and Israel is so often described in the language of conjugal love—reaches its full expression in the New Testament, where it is taken up to portray the union of Christ and the Church. The course is thus a journey into the very heart of biblical theology, which proves to be thoroughly marked by the spousal dimension: a journey that culminates in the Book of Revelation, where the gathered assembly is revealed as the Bride who awaits her Bridegroom.

The Meaning of Kinship - Prof. Stephan Kampowski
What do we mean by "kinship relations" as constitutive of the family? The course introduces key concepts of kinship studies—consanguinity and affinity, filiation, marriage—with attention to Lévi-Strauss's alliance theory and the incest prohibition that makes marriage the foundation of alliance between families. The guiding question is what it means to call the family a network of kinship relations, and what role bodily and generational bonds play in constituting personal identity.

Admission

To apply, please send an email to **pathways@istitutogp2.it**, including the following documents:

- A valid piece of government-issued photo identification (passport, national identification card)
- A curriculum vitae (CV)
- A letter of motivation
- A letter of reference from your parish priest or religious superior
- Proof of payment for the academic fees

The application deadline is **February 2, 2027.**

The registration fee is **€250,** payable upon submission of the application

If the number of applications exceeds the maximum available spots, applicants who complete their registration procedures first will receive priority.

Please note that the program administration reserves the right to cancel the program if the minimum number of participants is not met.

There are no academic prerequisites for this course.

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to provide a certificate of English language proficiency (CEFR Level B1) or equivalent documentation.

Any requests for payment in installments must be submitted to pathways@istitutogp2.it before sending the application and are subject to the administration's approval.

Registration fees are non-refundable in the event of voluntary withdrawal or failure to complete the required enrollment documentation.

The fees must be paid via bank transfer to:
Recipient: Pontificio Istituto Giovanni Paolo II
Bank:: BPER
IBAN: IT47 X053 8703 2370 0004 9267 544
BIC/SWIFT: BPMOIT22
Payment Reference: Please specify your first and last name and the program title "Walking with Families."

“The family will always be the first school of humanity, where one learns ... the basic grammar of living together.”

***Pope Leo XIV, Address to the Members of the Spanish Parliament,* June 8, 2026**

The program runs from **mid-February** to the **end of May 2027.** Classes will be held live on Zoom every **Tuesday** and **Thursday** from **3:00 p.m. to 4:40 p.m.** Rome time, for a total of 48 class hours. Classes will not be held during Holy Week and Easter Week. Participants will receive a Zoom link before the course begins and are asked to **keep their webcams on during sessions.**

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For enrollment and info:
Email: pathways@istitutogp2.it
www.istitutogp2.it

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