

JULY 2026 PRAYER SERVICE

Pope Leo's Teaching on Human Relationships and John 15:12-17

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Pope Leo XIV's teaching on human relationships—especially the need for true friendship that resists loneliness, manipulation, and “fragmented” connections—fits very naturally with the spirituality of the Teams of Our Lady: couples grow in holiness by learning truthful dialogue, covenant love, and prayer, so that their home becomes a “school” of communion for others.

The core of Pope Leo XIV's message (and what it's warning against)

In his dialogue with young people at the Jubilee Vigil, Pope Leo XIV describes a modern paradox: people can be “close and connected to so many people” yet experience “different forms of loneliness,” because relationships become “fleeting” and “illusory.”

He connects this to culture and technology:

- Culture is like a “lens” that shapes how you understand yourself and others; it contains both noble values and “errors.”
- Social media can be an “extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, encounter and exchange,” but it becomes misleading when controlled by “commercialism and interests” that fragment relationships.
- Algorithms can effectively dictate “what we should watch... and who our friends should be,” producing relationships that become “confusing” and “anxious.”
- When a tool controls someone, that person is treated like a commodity — “a piece of merchandise.”

His bottom line is clear: only “genuine relationships and stable connections can build good lives.”

Why this aligns with the Teams of Our Lady charism

The Teams of Our Lady are designed to form couples in a specifically Christian way of loving—love that is covenant-shaped, Eucharist-nourished, and spiritually disciplined.

St. John Paul II emphasizes that Christian marriage is:

- a visible sign of God's covenant and Christ's covenant with the Church, and
- a call to the “holiness set integral to marital and family life.”

He also grounds the Teams' spirituality in concrete practices and spiritual formation, not vague feelings:

- Couples are encouraged to draw strength from the Eucharist, which is called “source of Christian marriage.”
- He stresses the role of regular prayer—especially “personal, marital and family prayer,” saying that without prayer “a Christian risks being lost.”

- He underscores that the movement’s pedagogy includes “concrete points of effort” helping couples “grow together in holiness,” so they can “love in truth.”

So, when Pope Leo XIV warns that technology can fragment love into something fleeting, Teams responds by forming couples toward stable commitments lived out in prayer, truth, and mutual self-gift.

How Pope Leo XIV’s message can be lived concretely in Teams of Our Lady

Choosing “truth over fragmentation” in everyday communication

Pope Leo XIV says truth is a “bond” that connects words to things and names to faces, while lies divide and generate confusion.

In Teams, this becomes a practical conversion in how couples communicate:

- Replace “performative” communication (likes, image-management, algorithm-driven attention) with communication that seeks the other’s good.
- During team meetings and at home, practice conversations where the goal is clarity, honesty, and charity—not winning or “posting.”

A simple way to integrate this is to include a recurring question in team discussions like, “Where did we let technology or emotion substitute for real attention this week?” (That directly addresses Pope Leo’s concern about relationships becoming unstable through technological control.)

Making the home the “stable connection” the Gospel requires

Pope Leo XIV insists that relationships build good lives only when they are genuine and stable.

Teams can interpret this as: marriage must be protected from the “speed” and “substitution” of digital life by deliberately choosing relational steadiness:

- a regular shared prayer rhythm,
- scheduled times without devices,
- reliable fidelity to marital responsibilities.

This is exactly the kind of formation John Paul II describes: the Teams’ spirituality aims at couples who can love in truth and is sustained by prayer and the Eucharist.

Learning dialogue as an act of human dignity (not merely social skill)

Pope Leo XIV frames authentic dialogue and respect as placing the human person and dignity—especially relational and communal nature—at the center.

That matters for Teams because couples often become “good at talking” without becoming good at hearing.

In practice:

- In team meetings, encourage “mutual listening” in the Trinitarian and ecclesial sense: listening to one another as persons before solving problems.
- Encourage spouses to speak in ways that protect dignity—avoiding humiliation, domination, or using others as “audience” for personal frustrations.

This same relational emphasis appears in Pope Leo XIV's message on protecting minors and vulnerable adults: authentic relationships exist where dignity and freedom are safeguarded, and where respect is "a demanding form of charity," expressed in accompanying without dominating and serving without humiliating.

Formation that includes the vulnerable, not only the "happy couple"

Pope Leo XIV's concern is not limited to romantic friendship. He explicitly links authentic relationships to the Church's obligation to prevent harm, protect the vulnerable, and practice "evangelical care" (protect, listen, prevent, and leave no one alone).

For Teams of Our Lady, that can mean:

- forming couples to recognize how relational culture (including online culture) affects children, teenagers, and vulnerable adults in real time;
- taking the duty of vigilance and transparency in community life;
- and committing to healing-oriented charity when abuse has occurred—sincere closeness, humble listening, and perseverance in seeking what is right and possible to make amends.

Even when your team does not face these situations directly, Pope Leo XIV's teaching pushes Teams toward a mature, protection-centered relational ethic rather than a sentimental one.

Anchoring everything in Eucharist and prayer (the "stable" heart of love)

John Paul II explicitly connects marital growth to:

- Eucharist ("source of Christian marriage"),
- the necessity of personal, marital, and family prayer,
- and the Teams' pedagogy of "concrete points of effort" for holiness and truthful love.

Pope Leo XIV echoes this broader conviction about family life and love as a God-given reality that requires accompaniment and pastoral conversion, especially when fragility is present — love must be renewed through the courage to persevere and grow.

So, the most important "implementation" of Pope Leo XIV's relationship message inside Teams is not a technique, but a spiritual architecture:

- Eucharist → stable charity
- prayer → truthful love
- concrete efforts → habits that resist fragmentation

A practical "Teams plan" drawn from his message (ready for team leadership)

If you want to translate Pope Leo XIV's warning into weekly action, here is a format that matches the Teams' spirituality and can be adopted without changing the essence of the Movement:

- **One team agenda item per meeting:** "Where did we let something outside the covenant steer our attention (mood, social media, algorithm-driven habits)?"

- **One concrete effort for the week:** a “stability decision” (for example: a no-phone portion of a shared meal; a fixed date-night; a weekly family prayer at a consistent time).
- **One dialogue practice:** a 15–20 minute “listening-first” conversation between spouses before discussing solutions.
- **One prayer emphasis:** spend the week praying explicitly for the grace of truth—so words become bonds, and the home becomes a place where people can be known, not consumed.

This directly answers Pope Leo XIV’s call that genuine and stable relationships are the only foundation for building good lives.

In sum: Pope Leo XIV’s “relationship culture” critique calls Teams of Our Lady back to what they already do best—Eucharist-shaped stability, prayerful, truthful dialogue, and covenant love that resists being turned into something fleeting or commodified.

A particularly fitting Gospel passage for Pope Leo XIV’s theme of true friendship grounded in stable love (not fleeting, algorithm-driven “connections”) is:

John 15:12–17 (Friendship rooted in Christ’s love)

Pope Leo XIV explicitly highlights Christ’s friendship—“I have called you friends”—as key to how God speaks and enters relationship with us.

Why it matches his message

- Pope Leo XIV calls people back from illusory, unstable connections to genuine relationships that “build good lives.”
- John 15 grounds friendship in real love (not performance or substitution), centered on Christ’s self-gift and “abiding” relationship.

A very fitting psalm to pair with John 15:12–17 (love one another, friendship with Christ, “abiding”) is: Psalm 133: “How good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity”

Why it corresponds

- John 15 ties Christ’s friendship to love that creates a real “dwelling together” in Christ’s love.
- Psalm 133 celebrates precisely that: unity among “brethren” as something “good and pleasant,” associated with God’s blessing and life.
- Augustine even emphasizes charity as the “breadth” that makes one truly stand “in the courts” (a vivid image for living in Christ’s love rather than in tightness/hatred).

Therefore, for a Teams of Our Lady session anchored in John 15:12–17, Psalm 133 is the most natural psalm pairing.

READING OF SCRIPTURE:

John 15:12-17

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.

A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION:

SHARED PRAYER ON SCRIPTURAL TEXT:

The intent is reflection in the form of a prayer, not discussion.

PRAYER INTENTIONS:

- Pass card or cross, so people can pass gracefully and the team knows when the prayer is complete.
- The team should respond at the end of each person's turn, for example, "Lord, hear our prayer".

LITURGICAL PRAYER:

Psalm 133:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

Response: How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!

*Like fine oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
Upon the beard of Aaron,
upon the collar of his robe.*

Response: How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!

*Like dew of Hermon coming down
upon the mountains of Zion.
There the LORD has decreed a blessing,
life for evermore!*

Response: How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!

CONCLUSION OF PRAYER TIME:

ALL:

+Lord Jesus, You are the true vine, and we are the branches; our life and fruitfulness come from remaining in You. Cleanse us, prune what is unfruitful, and strengthen what bears fruit, so that love grows deeper and life bears lasting blessing.

Lord, help us to “abide” in You: As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains in the vine, so neither can we unless we remain in You. Make Your word abide in us, and make our homes fruitful in discipleship.

Jesus, You have said: “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.” Teach us to keep Your commandments in the same way You kept the Father’s will—through love that perseveres in truth.

Lord, place in our hearts Your commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” Give us the courage to lay down our lives in small daily sacrifices for one another. Make us Your friends—so that we learn to speak and listen as people who trust Your light and follow Your Word.

Pour out upon our Teams of Our Lady the grace of unity, for “how very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity.” Let our unity be like the precious oil flowing over the head and down upon the beard and robes, and like the dew of Hermon descending upon the mountains of Zion.

And grant us, Lord, the blessing that leads to life forevermore.

Help us live with “breadth,” not narrowness: Keep us standing in the courts of charity—so that we are enlarged by love and not distressed by hatred. Make our spouses and families a place where mercy is practiced, misunderstandings are healed, and reconciliation is chosen.

We ask You also for fruit that lasts: You chose us to go and bear fruit—fruit that remains. Through Your grace, make our conversations, decisions, and family prayer become a way for Your joy to be shared and to grow complete in us.

Holy Mary, Mother of Our Lord, accompany our Teams. Keep us close to Your Son, so that in the life of our homes we may love one another as friends of Christ. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DEEP POOLING:

This is a time to share on more serious matters or when the input of the group is requested. This will not necessarily happen at all meetings.

SHARING ON THE ENDEAVORS:

We join teams in order to enlist the help of others in growing closer to God. The “endeavors” are practices which we voluntarily assume. They have been found to be a means of drawing us closer as a couple and in furthering our spiritual growth. By sharing on the endeavors at the team meeting we seek help and encouragement from our teammates in our journey.