



# *The Joy of Love*

## Study Guide

### Chapter Eight - "Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness"

1. **"Gradualness In Pastoral Care"** "The Church must accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children, who show signs of a wounded and troubled love, by restoring in them hope and confidence, like the beacon of a lighthouse in a port or a torch carried among the people to enlighten those who have lost their way or who are in the midst of a storm." What resources are in place to help couples seeking the full reality of marriage?
2. **"The Discernment of 'Irregular' Situations"** "There are two ways of thinking which recur throughout the Church's history: casting off and reinstating. The Church's way from the time of the Council of Jerusalem, has always been the way of Jesus, the way of mercy and reinstatement...The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone for ever; it is to pour out the balm of God's mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart...For true charity is always unmerited, unconditional, and gratuitous." What are some of the irregular situations couples face?
3. **"Mitigating Factors In Pastoral Discernment"** List some of the mitigating factors pastors face that need to be discerned. How can those factors be handled?
4. **"Rules and Discernment"** "In every situation, when dealing with those who have difficulties in living God's law to the full, the invitation to pursue the *via caritatis* must be clearly heard. Fraternal charity is the first law of Christians" (cf. Jn 15:12; Gal 5:14). What examples are given, following this quote in the book, as acts we can perform on behalf of ourselves and others?

5. **“The Logic of Pastoral Mercy”** “I encourage the faithful who find themselves in complicated situations to speak confidently with their pastors or with other lay people whose lives are committed to the Lord. They may not always encounter in them a confirmation of their own ideas or desires, but they will surely receive some light to help them better understand their situation and discover a path to personal growth.” This week pray for all those in complicated situations for the courage to seek assistance.