

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

This questionnaire allows Catholics to participate actively in the preparation for the upcoming Synod of Bishops. The Synod of Bishops is seeking to consider the Gospel message in the light of the pastoral challenges facing the family today. Please feel free to respond to all or some questions.

Before you begin

Please tell us a little about yourself. This will help us understand the extent to which this questionnaire has reached as wide a cross section of local Catholics as possible.

Parish: _____

Marital Status: _____

Age: Under 18 18 – 25 26 – 35 36 – 45 46 – 55
56 – 65 66 – 75 76 – 85 Over 85 *(Circle age band)*

Gender: Male / Female (Delete as Applicable)

Are you: Lay Person
(Circle as many as apply) Member of a Religious Congregation
Priest
Parent
Teacher in a Catholic School
Actively involved in your local parish

You are welcome to add your name and contact email or address at the end of this questionnaire. There is no requirement to do so, but it will allow us to contact you if you we need to clarify your answers.

You can use as much space as you wish, to reply.

1. The Value of the Family – Official Teaching of the Church

- a. In your estimation, how is the Catholic Church's teaching on the value of the family understood by people today? How does the Church help people to understand these teachings?
- b. Where Church teaching is well known, is it accepted or are there difficulties putting it into practice? If you think there are difficulties, what are they?
- c. To your knowledge, how widespread is the inclusion of the Church's teaching on the value of the family in pastoral programmes at national, diocesan and parish levels?
- d. To what extent do you think that Church teaching in respect of the value of the family understood by people who are not Catholic and accepted, rejected or criticised by them?

2. Marriage as commonly understood

- a. Do you think that Christians have a common understanding that marriage is a union between a man and a woman?
- b. Is there a difference between the Church's understanding of marriage and family and the understanding of marriage and family in society in general?
- c. Do you think that there are challenges in marriages between a Catholic, who has the Church's understanding of marriage, and a non-Christian? If so, what are these challenges and how might they be overcome?

3. Pastoral Care of the Family

- a. The Church refers to the family as the 'domestic church', a place where faith is nurtured, shared and celebrated. How can a greater awareness of this reality be promoted?
- b. How successful have you been in promoting shared prayer within your family? If you have been successful, how did you achieve this?
- c. How do you think parents can most effectively pass the faith on to their children?
- d. What specific contribution can couples and families make to the spread of a credible and holistic idea of marriage and the Christian family in the world of today?
- e. What pastoral care does the Church provide couples preparing for marriage and couples who are experiencing relationship difficulties?

4. Pastoral Care in Difficult Marriage Situations

- a. How common is it for couples to live together prior to marriage in your city / town / area?
- b. Do you think that there are appropriate pastoral supports available, within the local Church community, to assist in situations where people are separated or divorced? How common is separation and divorce in your local area?
- c. In situations where, because of irregular unions, people are unable to receive sacraments, is it common for people to feel marginalised within the parish?
- d. To your knowledge, is it common for divorced and remarried people, whose second marriage has not taken place in church, to come forward to receive Holy Communion at Mass?
- e. A person whose marriage relationship breaks down can apply for a Decree of Nullity, sometimes called an Annulment. Do you think that if this process was simplified it would help solve problems for such people? If so, how do you think the process could be simplified?
- f. Is the Church, nationally or at diocesan level, effective in reaching out to people who are divorced and remarried? How is God's mercy expressed

to such couples? How does the church support such couples in their faith?

5. Same-sex Unions

- a. Do you think that civic society views same-sex unions as equivalent to marriage?
- b. What is the attitude of the local Church towards the State's recognition of civil same-sex unions? What is the attitude of the local Church to people who are in same-sex unions?
- c. How should the Church provide pastoral care to people who are in same-sex unions?
- d. Where same-sex unions have legally adopted children, what pastoral care should be offered to help them pass on the faith?

6. The Education of Children in Marriages which are not recognised as valid by the Church.

- a. In your area, could you estimate the percentage of children raised in marriages which are not recognised as valid by the Church?
- b. What do parents of such irregular marriages seek from the Church for their children? Is it any different from what is sought by those in marriages recognised by the Church?
- c. Does the Church treat children raised in marriages which are not recognised by the Church any differently from other children?

7. Openness of Married Couples to Life.

- a. What knowledge to Christians have today of the Church's teaching on family planning? Are they aware of how to evaluate the different methods of family planning, in light of Church teaching? Could the Church provide any useful pastoral support?
- b. Is the Church's teaching on family planning accepted by Catholics? What aspects of the Church's teaching pose the most difficulties for those who do accept the teaching?

- c. Does the Church locally provide any services to promote natural methods of family planning, helping couples to practice the Church's teaching on family planning?
- d. What is your experience of this matter, in the Sacrament of Confession and the Eucharist?
- e. How would you describe the differences between the Church's teaching on family planning and civic education programmes?
- f. How can the fostering of children be promoted? How can openness to children be promoted within Catholic families?

8. The Relationship between the Family and the Person

- a. Jesus Christ reveals our true calling to be fully human, as God wants us to be. How can the family be a special place in which each person can develop to his or her full human potential as a child of God?
- b. What difficult situations in modern families can block a person's encounter with Christ?
- c. To what extent do the crises of faith which people can experience affect family life?

9. Other Challenges and Proposals

What other challenges or proposals related to the above topics do you consider urgent and useful to treat?

10.If you have any further comments to make about this consultation, please do so here. If you would like to leave your name and contact email or address, please do so.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____