

Preparatory Document



XV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Young People, the Faith and

Vocational Discernment

PREPARATORY DOCUMENT

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Introduction

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn 15:11). This is God’s plan for all men and women in every age, including all the young men and women of the Third Millennium, without exception.

Proclaiming the joy of the Gospel is the mission entrusted by the Lord to his Church. The Synod on the New Evangelization and the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* treated how to accomplish this mission in today’s world. The two synods on the family and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* were, instead, dedicated to helping families find this joy.

In keeping with this mission and introducing a new approach through a Synod with the topic, “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”, the Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today. By listening to young people, the Church will once again hear the Lord speaking in today’s world. As in the days of Samuel (cf. 1 Sam 3:1-21) and Jeremiah (cf. Jer 1:4-10), young people know how to discern the signs of our times, indicated by the Spirit. Listening to their aspirations, the Church can glimpse the world which lies ahead and the paths the Church is called to follow.

For each person, the vocation to love takes concrete form in everyday life through a series of choices, which find expression in the states of life (marriage, ordained ministry, consecrated life, etc.), professions, forms of social and civil commitment, lifestyle, the management of time and money, etc. Whether these choices are willfully made or simply accepted, either consciously or unconsciously, no one is excluded from making these choices. The purpose of vocational discernment is to find out how to transform them, in the light of faith, into steps towards the fullness of joy to which everyone is called.

The Church knows the basis of “the strength and beauty of young people, [namely] the ability to rejoice at the beginning of undertakings, to give oneself totally without going back, to pick oneself up and begin again in search of new conquests” (Message of Vatican II to Young People, 8 December 1965). The riches of the Church’s spiritual tradition provide many resources in guiding the formation of conscience and an authentic freedom.

With this in mind, the present Preparatory Document begins the synod’s phase of consultation of the entire People of God. This document — addressed to the synods and councils of patriarchs of the Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris*, the episcopal conferences, the dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the Union of Superiors General — concludes with a series of questions. The consultation will also include all young people through a website with questions on their expectations and their lives. The answers to both series of questions will be the basis for drafting the “work-document” or *Instrumentum laboris*, which will be the reference point in the discussion of the synod fathers.

This Preparatory Document suggests a reflection in three steps, beginning with summarily outlining some of the social and cultural dynamics of the world in which young people grow and make their decisions and proposing that these be read in the light of faith. The document then retraces the fundamental steps of the process of discernment, which the Church feels is the basic means she can offer young people so they can discover, in the light of faith, their vocation. Finally, the document treats key points in a pastoral vocational programme for youth. The document, therefore, is not exhaustive, but serves as a kind of guide to encourage further discussion, whose fruits will be available only at the conclusion of the Synod.

- French,
- German,
- Italian,
- Portuguese,
- Spanish,
- Chinese (traditional),
- Chinese (simplified),