

Netherlands: Bishops Conference's report on young people's condition. "A minority faith"



A "Report on the situation of young Dutch people and developments in the area of Catholic religion in the Netherlands" was posted on the Bishops Conference's website. The 14-page document contains a number of "Assessments" in the run-up to the Episcopal Synod 2018, with "quantitative and qualitative elements about the situation in the Dutch dioceses". The document was jointly developed by the seven dioceses, the national statistics bureau, the Conference of religious people, and the training centres for priests and deacons. A few figures, for a start: Catholics are 3,882,000 (**22.9% of the population**).

Young Dutch people aged 16 to 29 are almost 3 million. Every year, there are about 3.5 people who start to study as priests, 25 as novices, and 2,320 Catholic marriages. Youth unemployment is 12.2% (one of the lowest in Europe). The challenges raised to the Church by the situation of young people:

"Young people who are in search of a religion are vulnerable and it takes them a lot of courage to go on now that they are a minority". And then: "overwhelmed" by religious, spiritual and philosophical options, "they live a more subjective view of the proclamation of the truth". Often, they do not join "a group or an association but try to leave their options open".

Then, the young feel they always have to live an interesting, perfect life in a world that scores them all the time, even at work and school.

Source: Agenzia SIR

Photo: Ramon Mangold