

Witness of Viktoria Zolnova, from Slovakia, at the 2nd part of the Synod



Holy Father, Synodal Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a great honor and privilege for me to be with you here today and my heart is full of gratitude for such a grace.

My name is Viktoria and I come from Slovakia, from the Archeparchy of Prešov, where the young people experience the love and care of our Mother Church, and where I have been involved with youth ministry for over 10 years. Through this involvement and by serving God in my neighbor I have experienced being an alive and important part of the Church. He is the one who is leading me through my life, showing me step – by-step his plan with me.

I studied Management, and then I worked for a small company as an Office Manager. The environment was acceptable, but I was not growing personally or professionally and I was missing that deep satisfaction and joy that comes from well accomplished work.

I desired a change.

While praying and searching for new opportunities, God opened a door for me to study English and Catechism abroad. I was grateful to God for answering my prayer, but I knew I needed further direction from someone.

I spoke at length with a priest who was my coworker for a few years. I trusted him and I was not afraid of being misunderstood by him even if I had so many questions and concerns. Our conversations led me to imagine that I had already made the decision. The question I had to ask was: What would my heart and mind experience? This was the turning point for me.

After much consideration and prayer, I realized that there was more to gain than to lose. I had made my own decision: „**yes**“! And this decision brought peace and joy to my heart, but I also knew it would be difficult for me to leave everything behind, and I still had questions and fears about the unknown.

In a way, I felt like Moses when God interrupted his daily routine and called him to lead the Israelites out of captivity. I did not take anyone out of captivity, but **I did know that this was NOT an ordinary offer**. God was calling me to something new and He was showing me the way. I perceived this as a vocation or a call to do something that God wanted me to do in a **concrete time and a concrete place**. The call to the interior activity which God wanted to fulfill in me, was a call to a growth in holiness.

This call was not what I expected, but it was how God chose to rekindle the flame of my heart's desires.

It also helped me to realize that vocation and its discernment is not limited to religious life or to marriage. It is an every day process that is reflected in my work, whereby fulfilling my tasks I can grow in holiness. I also understand that young people need someone to accompany them and support them in their discernment process as they seek to know and follow God's will.

Thank you!