

## Good News for Families

### A Way Forward

**P**OPE FRANCIS has announced a pastoral strategy which calls on the laity to help uplift family life.

It is through the lay faithful that the people of the world will hear the **Godly ideas** and be inspired to **Godly ideals** which are essential for Godly families.

The Pope has called an extraordinary meeting of the **Synod of Bishops**. Representative bishops from each country's Bishops' Conference will gather in Rome this coming October, 5<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>. The topic is: **The Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the context of Evangelization**.

'Extraordinary' simply means it is a synod not listed on the usual schedule. The previous extraordinary synod was in 1985, to assess the state of the Church 20 years after Vatican II. It found there were lights and shadows, and named things that needed improvement, including **liturgy and catechetics**.

There will be a follow-up Ordinary Synod, October, 2015, to implement the findings of the 2014 Synod.

The style of these Synods will be that of the Second Vatican Council, which so uniquely managed to combine the PRIMACY OF FAITH, which is **doctrine** (hard-headed clear thinking), with the SUBLIMITY OF LOVE, which is **goodwill** in all its persuasiveness, that is, kind-hearted, with Godly mercy on poor sinful humanity:

The greatest concern of the Second Vatican Council is that the Sacred Deposit of Christian Doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously.

Bl. John XXIII, Opening speech, 11-10-1962  
*Documents of Vatican II*, Abbott, p. 713;  
quoted by Bl. John Paul II, 11-10-1992  
*Catechism of the Catholic Church* p. 2.

VCII's secret was God's truth, beauty and love found in Bible & Tradition: "Speaking the truth in love..." (Ephesians 4:15), and "The only purpose of our instruction is that there should be love coming from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith," (1 Timothy 1:5).

See *VERA DOCTRINA — TRUE DOCTRINE*, a 10-page history of 1971-2011, found within [www.cardinalnewman.com.au](http://www.cardinalnewman.com.au).

Some recent neglect in presenting doctrine with love has compounded today's crisis in faith, morals and charity on the matters with which these synods will deal: marriage, family, sexual morality and all their related aspects in living the faith.

### CONSULTATION OF THE LAITY

**T**HE POPE requested widespread consultation before these Synods. Unfortunately, it was only patchy, and some dioceses did not alert the parish priests to invite the lay people to make submissions.

In the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn, several pages of questions from the Vatican website, grouped under eight headings, were distributed in parishes. In the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the laity were asked simply to write on the major topics and omit the minutiae.

An immediate benefit was getting the faithful to **think, pray, discuss and act** on matters which were within their power to improve at once.

Even if the synod never happened, this consultation is already bearing fruit.

**Ideas and ideals for the Synod and for us...**

1. **HOME-TUTORING** by Catholic families has been found very effective in handing on faith and practice. They have found it is more likely to culminate in sacramental marriages after a chaste courtship. Moreover, the home-tutored are better at socializing with all ages from infancy to 90+ and proven above average in academic outcomes.

The word "tutoring" for home-schooling indicates it is a **speciality**, and different from classroom teaching. It should be given encouragement by the Synod.

2. **NO INDISCRIMINATE HOLY COMMUNION!** It should be strenuously avoided. It violates New Testament teaching and cannot bear fruit in virtuous living:-

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29:

Yet nowadays it has become customary for everyone present to communicate: the unrepentant, the lapsed, non-Catholics, even unbaptized non-believers!

Drive past any Catholic school. See the multitude of children in the yard. They are notably absent from Sunday Mass — but all communicate at school Masses.

Until things improve, school Benediction would be better than school Masses, liturgies that are,

permeated by the spirit of reverence, adoration and the glory of God,

1985 Extraordinary Synod II B (b) 1.

For worthy and fruitful communions, we need:-

(1) The state of baptismal **sanctifying grace**, preserved or restored in sacramental Confession.

(2) A **right intention** (correct attitude). We might ask for the option of receiving kneeling down at altar rails, to promote "the sense of the sacred".

(3) A bodily fast of **at least one hour** (canon 919 §1). We might ask for Papal or episcopal urging of a three hour voluntary fast as a reparation for sacrilegious communions made from "human respect.

3. **CONTRACEPTION** has been practised by many Catholics from the mid-1960s, before and after *Human Vitae* in 1968. Dissenting authorities in seminaries and dioceses bullied bishops and priests into silence.

Yet Pope Paul VI accurately foretold the outcomes of ignoring or defying God and His law:-

(1) infidelity in marriage and general lack of morality;

(2) men, especially youth, with little respect for women, treating them as things for selfish enjoyment;

(3) governments promoting or enforcing immorality;

(4) mankind making up its own morality and losing its self-discipline and capacity to bring up the youth of the nation as morally responsible to God.

*Humance Vitae* n. 17

Today, we can add several more evils to his list:-

(5) **Divorcing motherhood and fatherhood** from marriage, so that wives no longer aspire to be home-makers or husbands to be family bread winners.

(6) Feminist **unisex doctrine** declares that the sexes are inter-changeable; hence much psycho-sexual confusion in adolescents, and a cascade of immoral attitudes and practices.

(7) **Sodomy** has become "political correct"; and is equated with marriage (thus reducing it to nothing). It cannot procreate children and it spreads disease to its practitioners and society at large, both to body and soul.

(7) Abortion is brazenly claimed as "a woman's right", whereas it is a **human wrong**; and "terminating a pregnancy" is in fact **terminating a baby**.

4. **CONFESSION** fulfils the Gospel text  
Repent and believe.

Mark 1:15

Repentance is not a once-for-all in a lifetime, but a continuous and ongoing activity. Absence of preaching and teaching it; years of widespread promotion of General Absolution in Australia; plus widespread contraception and abortion, have contributed to its present neglect and to our spiritual flabbiness.

## What's to be done?

Without a vision, the people perish.

cf. Proverbs 29:18 KJV

**USE CARDINAL CARDIJN'S** famous formula for the youth apostolate: See, Judge, Act:

### SEE

- Our Australian society has surrendered its Christian framework to aggressive secular inhumanism.
- Our culture is more and more based on the anti-religion of a Godless and inhuman world-view. It is atheistic and anti-life, the culture of death.
- It is promoted by an incessant barrage of words which counterfeit truth and goodness: 'sexual discrimination', 'homophobic', 'unisex', 'equal opportunity', 'affirmative action', 'a woman's right'.
- Remnants of religion cling on: the Lord's Prayer is recited at the opening of Parliaments; God can still be invoked in the oath taken by a witness in the law courts; clergy performing their marriage rituals act for the State as well as their Church.

### JUDGE

- The faithful need to be **counter-cultural** by promoting the **Christian world-view**: God, man, sin; and man's dignity, duty and destiny;
- use "**natural morality**" for apologetics with the Godless: lying, stealing, cheating are wrong, wrong for everyone: help people see the falsehood of relativism.
- **Christ's Christianity** of the Cross, hence the chastity, poverty, obedience appropriate for our state-of-life.
- Male & female **complementarity** in body, mind, spirit, hence marriage, family and appropriate roles in life.
- The **sacramental states of marriage and priesthood** are under intense attack by Satan who strives to spoil the good that God and we are doing. Therefore...

### ACT — The Lay Faithful

- Promote the ideas & ideals of vocations from God, Christian callings to be held in esteem (not the self-esteem of the ego-philosophy):-

**fathers**, the sublimity of manhood and husband;  
**mothers**, the sublimity of womanhood and wife;  
**child & adolescent & young adult**;  
marriage is for **peopling Heaven with saints**.

### ACT — The Sacred Ministry:

- The Church's life-giving hierarchy begets life outside itself in **spiritual fatherhood** in a **mystical marriage** with the Bride of Christ. The hierarchy **activates** grace and charisms in the lay faithful:

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of **teaching, sanctifying and ruling** in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ [*different order of priest and prophet*] and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church & in the world.

*Apostolicam Actuositatem* n. 2; cf. *Handouts* n. 10.

- Priests exist to achieve God's plan for the laity...  
What is most necessary at the present time is to have in each parish a group of laymen [who are] at the same time **VIRTUOUS, ENLIGHTENED, DETERMINED** and **REALLY APOSTOLIC**.

St Pius X

- Much priestly work concerns marriages and family. In marriage and family, a priest helps multiply the very presence and activity of the Lord Jesus Himself.
- Finally, **sin is a disease of the soul**, yet God loves sinners, not for their sins, but for them to repent. In the context of the Extraordinary Synod, we apply this to the evangelization of families.
- Priests cannot cure spiritual diseases by surrendering to them. Such capitulation to sin is **falsely called "a pastoral solution"**. Rather, a priest is **KIND** and **FIRM**: kind to sinners, firmly against sin.
- He must work and teach for **virtue to replace sin**, and work and teach in a kindly way: "love is patient and kind," 1 Corinthians 13:4. He does what he can.
- He helps sinners to pray, read, think, and to be open to **actual graces**. In God's mysterious Providence, this should culminate in an entry into or a recovery of sanctifying grace.
- Just as converts and catechumens must defer their reception of Holy Communion, and make acts of Spiritual Communion, communion of desire, so too must those who are **repenting gradually**: God, too, is patient and kind. No doubt some of them will be praying like St Augustine before his conversion, "Lord, make me pure, but not yet!"
- Basic Church teachings on marriage and family life are only vaguely known in society, and more as customs than natural morality. Formation given to practising Catholics varies greatly. Some NFP programs don't promote the duty to have children.

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