

RELATIO POST DISCEPTATIONEM

**THIRD EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS
ON THE PASTORAL CHALLENGES OF THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT OF
EVANGELIZATION
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Introduction

1.- _____ During the prayer vigil held in St Peter's Square on 4 October 2014 in preparation for the Synod on the family, Pope Francis evoked the centrality of the experience of family in all lives, in a simple and concrete manner: "Evening falls on our assembly. It is the hour at which one willingly returns home to meet at the same table, in the depth of affection, of the good that has been done and received, of the encounters which warm the heart and make it grow, good wine which hastens the unending feast in the days of man. It is also the weightiest hour for one who finds himself face to face with his own loneliness, in the bitter twilight of shattered dreams and broken plans; how many people trudge through the day in the blind alley of resignation, of abandonment, even resentment: in how many homes the wine of joy has been less plentiful, and therefore, also the zest — the very wisdom — for life [...]. Let us make our prayer heard for one another this evening, a prayer for all".

2.- _____ The source of joys and trials, of deep affections and relations – at times wounded – the family is truly a "school of humanity" ("*Familia schola quaedam uberioris humanitatis est*", Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, - *Gaudium et Spes*, 52), of which we are in great need. Despite the many signs of crisis in the institution of the family in various contexts of the "global village", the desire for family remains alive, especially among the young, and is at the root of the Church's need to proclaim tirelessly and with profound conviction the "Gospel of the family" entrusted to her with the revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ.

3.- _____ The Bishop of Rome called upon the Synod of Bishops to reflect upon the situation of the family, decisive and valuable, in its Extraordinary General Assembly of October 2014, a reflection which will then be pursued in greater depth in the Ordinary General Assembly scheduled to take place in October 2015, as well as during the full intervening year between the two synodal events. "~~The convenire~~The convenire in unum" around the Bishop of Rome is already an event of grace, in which episcopal collegiality is made manifest in a path of spiritual and pastoral discernment": thus Pope Francis described the synodal experience, indicating its tasks in the dual process of listening to the signs of God and the history of mankind and in the resulting dual and unique fidelity.

4.- _____ In the light of the same discourse we have gathered together the results of our reflections and our dialogues in the following three parts: -listening, to look at the situation of the family today, in the complexity of its light and shade; -looking, our gaze -fixed on Christ, to re-evaluate with renewed freshness and enthusiasm what the revelation transmitted in the faith of the Church tells us about the beauty and dignity of the family; and -discussion in the light of the Lord Jesus to discern the ways in which the Church and society can renew their commitment to the family.

Part I

Listening: the context and challenges to the family

The socio-cultural context

_____ 5.- _____ Anthropological and cultural change today influences all aspects of life and requires an analytic and diversified approach, able to discern the positive forms of individual freedom. It is necessary to be aware of the growing danger represented by an exasperated individualism that distorts family bonds and ends up considering each component of the family as an isolated unit, leading in some cases to the prevalence of an idea of the subject formed according to his or her own wishes, which are assumed as absolute.

_____ 6.- _____ The most difficult test for families in our time is often solitude, which destroys and gives rise to a general sensation of impotence in relation to the socio-economic situation that

often ends up crushing them. This is due to growing precariousness in the workplace that is often experienced as a nightmare, or due to heavy taxation that certainly does not encourage young people to marriage.

7.- Some cultural and religious contexts pose particular challenges. In African societies the practice of polygamy remains, along with, in some traditional contexts, the custom of "marriage in stages". In other contexts the practice of "arranged marriages" persists. In countries in which Catholicism is a minority religion, there are many mixed marriages with all the difficulties that these may lead to in terms of legal form, the education of children and mutual respect from the point of view of religious freedom, but also with the great potential that derives from the encounter between the differences in faith that these stories of family life present. In many contexts, and not only in the West, the practice of cohabitation before marriage, or indeed cohabitation not orientated towards assuming the form of an institutional bond, is increasingly widespread.

8.- Many children are born outside marriage, especially in certain countries, and there are many who subsequently grow up with just one of their parents or in an enlarged or reconstituted family context. The number of divorces is growing and it is not rare to encounter cases in which decisions are taken solely on the basis of economic factors. The condition of women still needs to be defended and promoted, as situations of violence within the family are not rare. Children are frequently the object of contention between parents, and are the true victims of family breakdown. Societies riven by violence due to war, terrorism or the presence of organized crime experience deteriorating family situations. Furthermore, migration is another sign of the times, to be faced and understood in terms of the burden of consequences for family life.

The relevance of emotional life

9.- Faced with the social framework outlined above, a greater need is encountered among individuals to take care of themselves, to know their inner being, and to live in greater harmony with their emotions and sentiments, seeking a relational quality in emotional life. In the same way, it is possible to encounter a widespread desire for family accompanied by the search for oneself. But how can this attention to the care for oneself be cultivated and maintained, alongside this desire for family? This is a great challenge for the Church too. The danger of individualism and the risk of living selfishly are significant.

10.- Today's world appears to promote limitless affectivity, seeking to explore all its aspects, including the most complex. Indeed, the question of emotional fragility is very current:

a narcissistic, unstable or changeable affectivity do not always help greater maturity to be reached. In this context, couples are often uncertain and hesitant, struggling to find ways to grow. Many tend to remain in the early stages of emotional and sexual life. The crisis in the couple destabilizes the family and may lead, through separations and divorce, to serious consequences for adults, children and society as a whole, weakening the individual and social bonds. The decline in population not only creates a situation in which the alternation of generations is no longer assured, but over time also risks leading to economic impoverishment and a loss of hope in the future.

Pastoral challenges

11.- In this context the Church is aware of the need to offer a meaningful word of hope. It is necessary to set out from the conviction that man comes from God and that, therefore, a reflection able to reframe the great questions on the meaning of human existence, may find fertile ground in humanity's most profound expectations. The great values of marriage and the Christian family correspond to the search that distinguishes human existence even in a time marked by individualism and hedonism. It is necessary to accept people in their concrete being, to know how to support their search, to encourage the wish for God and the will to feel fully part of the Church, also on the part of those who have experienced failure or find themselves in the most diverse situations. This requires that the doctrine of the faith, the basic content of which should be made increasingly better known, be proposed alongside with mercy.

PART II

The gaze upon Christ: the Gospel of the Family

The gaze upon Jesus and gradualness in the history of salvation

12.- In order to "walk among contemporary challenges, the decisive condition is to maintain a fixed gaze on Jesus Christ, to pause in contemplation and in adoration of His Face. ... Indeed, every time we return to the source of the Christian experience, new paths and undreamed of possibilities open up" (Pope Francis, Address of 4 October 2014). Jesus looked upon the women and the men he met with love and tenderness, accompanying their steps with patience and mercy, in proclaiming the demands of the Kingdom of God.

13.- From the moment that the order of creation is determined by orientation towards Christ, it becomes necessary to distinguish without separating the various levels through which God communicates the grace of the covenant to humanity. Through the law of gradualness (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 34), typical of divine pedagogy, this means interpreting the nuptial covenant in terms of continuity and novelty, in the order of creation and in that of redemption.

14.- Jesus Himself, referring to the primordial plan for the human couple, reaffirms the indissoluble union between man and woman, while understanding that "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning" (*Mt* 19,8). In this way, He shows how divine condescension always accompanies the path of humanity, directing it towards its new beginning, not without passing through the cross.

The family in God's salvific plan

15.- Since, by their commitment to mutual acceptance and with the grace of Christ couples promise fidelity to one another and openness to life, they acknowledge as constitutive elements of marriage the gifts God offers them, taking their mutual responsibility seriously, in His name and before the Church. Now, in faith it is possible to assume the goods of marriage as commitments best maintained with the help of the grace of the sacrament. God consecrates love between spouses and confirms its indissolubility, offering them help in living in fidelity and openness to life. Therefore, the gaze of the Church turns not only to the couple, but to the family.

16.- We are able to distinguish three fundamental phases in the divine plan for the family: the family of origins, when God the creator instituted the primordial marriage between Adam and Eve, as a solid foundation for the family: he created them male and female (cg. *Gn* 1,24-31; 2,4b); the historic family, wounded by sin (cf. *Gn* 3) and the family redeemed by Christ (cf. *Eph* 5,21-32), in the image of the Holy Trinity, the mystery from which every true love springs. The sponsal covenant, inaugurated in creation and revealed in the history of God and Israel, reaches its fullest expression with Christ in the Church.

The discernment of values present in wounded families and in irregular situations

17.- In considering the principle of gradualness in the divine salvific plan, one asks what possibilities are given to married couples who experience the failure of their marriage, or rather how it is possible to offer them Christ's help through the ministry of the Church. In this respect, a significant hermeneutic key comes from the teaching of Vatican Council II, which, while it affirms that "although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure ... these elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward Catholic unity" (*Lumen Gentium*, 8).

18.- In this light, the value and consistency of natural marriage must first be emphasized. Some ask whether the sacramental fullness of marriage does not exclude the possibility of recognizing positive elements even the imperfect forms that may be found outside this nuptial situation, which are in any case ordered in relation to it. The doctrine of levels of communion, formulated by Vatican Council II, confirms the vision of a structured way of participating in the *Mysterium Ecclesiae* by baptized persons.

19.- In the same, perspective, that we may consider inclusive, the Council opens up the horizon for appreciating the positive elements present in other religions (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 2) and cultures, despite their limits and their insufficiencies (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 55). Indeed, looking at the human wisdom present in these, the Church learns how the family is universally considered as the necessary and fruitful form of human cohabitation. In this sense, the order of creation, in which the Christian vision of the family is rooted, unfolds historically, in different cultural and geographical expressions.

20.- Realizing the need, therefore, for spiritual discernment with regard to cohabitation, civil marriages and divorced and remarried persons, it is the task of the Church to recognize those seeds of the Word that have spread beyond its visible and sacramental boundaries. Following the expansive gaze of Christ, whose light illuminates every man (cf. *Jn* 1,9; cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22), the Church turns respectfully to those who participate in her life in an incomplete and imperfect way, appreciating the positive values they contain rather than their limitations and shortcomings.

Truth and beauty of the family and mercy

21.- The Gospel of the family, while it shines in the witness of many families who live coherently their fidelity to the sacrament, with their mature fruits of authentic daily sanctity must also nurture those seeds that are yet to mature, and must care for those trees that have dried up and wish not to be neglected.

22.- In this respect, a new dimension of today's family pastoral consists of accepting the reality of civil marriage and also cohabitation, taking into account the due differences. Indeed, when a union reaches a notable level of stability through a public bond, is characterized by deep affection, responsibility with regard to offspring, and capacity to withstand tests, it may be seen as a germ to be accompanied in development towards the sacrament of marriage. Very often, however, cohabitation is established not with a view to a possible future marriage, but rather without any intention of establishing an institutionally-recognized relationship.

23.- Imitating Jesus' merciful gaze, the Church must accompany her most fragile sons and daughters, marked by wounded and lost love, with attention and care, restoring trust and hope to them like the light of a beacon in a port, or a torch carried among the people to light the way for those who are lost or find themselves in the midst of the storm.

Part III

The discussion

Facing the situation: pastoral perspectives

Proclaiming the Gospel of the family today, in various contexts

24. The Synod dialog Discussion at the synod has allowed ~~an~~for agreement on some of the more urgent pastoral needs to be ~~entrusted to being made concrete~~enacted in the ~~individual local~~particular Churches, in communion ~~-~~*cum Petro et sub Petro*.

25. The announcement of Proclaiming the Gospel of the ~~family~~Family is ~~an urgent issue for~~urgently needed in the ~~new~~work of evangelization. The Church has to carry this out with the tenderness of a mother and the clarity of a teacher (cf. ~~-~~*Eph_4;* 15), in ~~fidelity~~faithfulness to the ~~merciful kenosi of Christ. The truth is incarnated~~mercy displayed in Christ's *kenosis*. Truth became flesh in human ~~fragility~~weakness, not to condemn it, but to ~~eure~~heal it.

26. Evangelizing is the shared responsibility of all God's people, each according to his or her own[...] ministry and charism. Without the joyous testimony of spouses married people and families, the announcement proclamation, even if correct, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the oceanic flurry of words that which is a characteristic of our societies societies (cf. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 50). On various occasions, the Synodal Fathers underlined synod fathers emphasized that Catholic families are called upon themselves[...] to be the active subjects of all the agents in every pastoral activity on behalf of the family.

27. ~~It will be decisive to highlight the~~ The primacy of grace, needs to be highlighted and ~~therefore of, consequently,~~ the possibilities that which the Spirit gives provides in the sacrament. This Sacrament. It is about letting it be known a question of allowing people to experience that the Gospel of the family Family is a joy that «which "fills the hearts and lives»," because in Christ we are «"set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness»" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 1). In Bearing in mind the light Parable of the parable of the sower Sower (cf. *Mt 13: 3*), our task is to cooperate in the sowing; the rest is God's work. We must not forget that, in preaching about the family, the Church that preaches about the family is a sign of contradiction.

28. ~~For~~ Consequently, this reason, what is required is a calls for missionary conversion: it, that is necessary, not to stop at an announcement that proclaiming a message which is merely theoretical and has nothing to do with no connection to people's real problems. We must not be forgotten continually bear in mind that the crisis of faith has led to a crisis in matrimony marriage and the family and the family and, as a result, consequently, the transmission of faith from parents to children has often been interrupted. Confronted by we confront the situation with a strong faith, the imposition of certain cultural perspectives that weaken the family is of no importance.

29. Conversion has, above all, primarily to be that of seen in the language we use so that this it might prove to be effectively meaningful. The announcement is about letting it be experienced that Proclamation needs to create an experience where the Gospel of the family is the response Family responds to the deepest expectations of a person: a response to his or her each's dignity and its full realization complete fulfillment in reciprocity and communion. This is does not consists in merely about presenting a set of regulations rules but about putting forward espousing values, responding which respond to the need needs of those who find themselves today, even in the most secularized countries.

30. The indispensable In this regard, biblical-theological study is to be indispensable, accompanied by dialog, dialogue at all levels. Many insisted on a more positive approach to the riches contained in divers richness of various religious experiences, while

~~not being blind to~~ ~~without forgetting~~ the inherent difficulties. In ~~the diverse~~ different cultural ~~realities~~ settings the possibilities ~~should need to be~~ first ~~be grasped~~ understood and in the light of ~~them~~ these, limits and ~~radicalizations~~ extremes should be rejected.

31.- Christian marriage cannot only be considered as a cultural tradition or a social obligation; but ~~has to be~~ rather a vocational decision taken with ~~the proper~~ due preparation in ~~an itinerary of a~~ faith, journey and with ~~mature~~ a proper process of discernment. ~~This~~ It is not ~~about a matter of~~ creating difficulties and complicating the ~~cycles~~ various phases of formation; but ~~of going deeply into~~ examining the issue thoroughly and not being content with theoretical meetings or general orientations.

32. The need Everyone was ~~jointly referred to for a conversion of~~ in agreement on the necessity of reconsidering all pastoral practices ~~from the perspective of~~ with the family; in mind and overcoming its customary emphasis on the ~~individualistic points of view that still characterize it. This is why there was a repeated insistence on renewing in individual.~~ For this light reason, the synod fathers repeatedly insisted on renewal in the training of ~~presbyters~~ priests and other pastoral ~~operators,~~ workers through a greater involvement of ~~the~~ families themselves.

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33. In the same way, the necessity was underlined for an They equally highlighted the fact that evangelization ~~that denounces~~ needs clearly ~~the to~~ denounce cultural, social and economic factors, for example, the excessive ~~room~~ importance given to market logic; ~~that which~~ prevents an[...] authentic family life, ~~leading and leads~~ to discrimination, poverty, exclusion, and violence. ~~For this reason a dialog~~ Consequently, dialogue and cooperation ~~has need~~ to be developed with the social ~~structures, and~~ entities and encouragement given to lay people who are involved in cultural and socio-political fields ~~should be encouraged.~~

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Guiding engaged couples on the path in their preparation for marriage

34.- The complex social reality and the changes ~~that~~ affecting the family ~~is called on~~ today ~~to deal with~~ require a greater ~~undertaking from~~ effort on the part of the whole Christian community ~~for in~~ the preparation of those who are about to be married. ~~As regards~~ In this ~~necessity~~ regard, the ~~Synodal Fathers agreed to underline~~ synod fathers jointly insisted on the need ~~for a greater involvement of~~ to involve more extensively the entire community ~~privileging by favouring~~ the ~~testimony~~ witness of ~~the~~ families themselves, as well as a rooting of the and including preparation for marriage in the ~~path~~ course of Christian initiation; ~~underlining~~ as well as emphasizing the connection between marriage and the other

sacraments. ~~In the same way, the necessity was highlighted for~~ Likewise, they felt that specific ~~programs for preparation~~ programmes were needed in preparing couples for marriage ~~that are, programmes which create~~ a true experience of participation in ~~the~~ ecclesial life and ~~that study closely~~ thoroughly treat the ~~diverse~~various aspects of family life.

~~Accompanying the~~ early years of married life

~~Married Couple in the Initial Years of Marriage~~

35.- The ~~early~~initial years of marriage are a vital and ~~delicate~~fragile period during which couples ~~grow in the awareness~~become more aware of the challenges and meaning of ~~matrimony. Thus the need for a~~married life. Consequently, pastoral accompaniment ~~that goes needs to go~~ beyond the ~~actual~~ celebration of the sacrament. ~~Of~~In this regard, ~~experienced couples are of~~ great importance in ~~this any~~ pastoral ~~is the presence of experienced couples: activity.~~ The parish is ~~considered [...]~~ the ideal place for ~~expert~~these experienced couples to ~~place themselves at the disposal~~be of ~~service to~~ younger ~~ones. Couples need to be encouraged towards~~acouples. Married couples need encouragement in the fundamental ~~welcome of openness to~~ the great gift of children. The importance of ~~a~~ family spirituality and prayer needs ~~to be underlined, encouraging emphasis, where~~ couples ~~are encouraged~~ to meet regularly to promote ~~the~~ growth ~~of their their~~ spiritual life and solidarity in the concrete demands of life. Meaningful liturgies, devotional practices and the Eucharist celebrated for families; were mentioned as vital ~~factors~~ in ~~favoring~~fostering evangelization through the family.

~~Positive aspects of civil unions and cohabitation~~

36.- A new ~~sensitivity~~element in today's pastoral ~~consists in grasping~~ activity is a ~~sensitivity to~~ the positive ~~reality~~aspects of ~~civil weddings~~civily celebrated marriages and, ~~having pointed out our~~with obvious differences, ~~of~~cohabitation. ~~It is necessary that in the ecclesial proposal, while~~While clearly presenting the ideal, ~~we~~the Church needs also ~~to~~ indicate the constructive elements in ~~those~~these situations ~~that~~which do not yet or no longer correspond to that ideal.-

37. It was The ~~synod fathers~~ also noted ~~that~~ in many countries ~~an~~“an increasing number live together- *ad experimentum*, in unions which have not been religiously or civily recognized” (*Instrumentum Laboris*, 81). In Africa this occurs especially in traditional marriages; ~~agreed which are arranged~~ between families and often celebrated in different stages. Faced ~~by~~with these situations, the Church is called ~~on [...]~~ to be “the house of the Father, with doors always wide open [...] where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 47) and to ~~move towards~~draw near those who ~~feel the need~~want to ~~take up~~

~~again~~ resume their ~~path of~~ faith-journey, even if it is not possible to celebrate a ~~religious~~ canonically recognized marriage.

38.- In the West ~~as well there is [...]~~ an increasingly large number of ~~those who, having lived~~ people, after living together for a long period of time, ~~ask to be married~~ seek marriage in the Church. ~~Simple cohabitation~~ Simply to live together is often a choice ~~inspired by~~ based on a ~~general~~ overall attitude, ~~which is~~ opposed to ~~institutions~~ anything institutional and definitive ~~undertakings~~, but also ~~while waiting for~~ in expectation of a ~~more~~ secure existence (a steady job and income). In other countries ~~common-law~~ de facto marriages are very numerous, not because of a rejection of Christian values ~~as regards~~ concerning the family and matrimony; but, ~~above all,~~ primarily because ~~getting married is~~ celebrating a ~~luxury, so that~~ marriage is too expensive. As a result, material poverty ~~encourages~~ leads people ~~to live in~~ common-law marriages into de facto unions. Furthermore ~~in~~, such unions ~~it is possible to~~ grasp can display authentic family values or at least ~~the wish~~ an inherent desire for them. Pastoral ~~accompaniment~~ guidance should always start from these positive aspects.

39.- All these situations ~~have to be dealt with in~~ require a constructive ~~manner~~ response, seeking to transform them into opportunities ~~to walk towards the fullness of which can lead to an actual~~ marriage and ~~the~~ family in ~~the light of~~ conformity with the Gospel. ~~They~~ These couples need to be ~~welcomed~~ provided for and ~~accompanied with~~ patience guided patiently and ~~delicacy~~ discreetly. With ~~a view to~~ this in mind, the ~~attractive~~ testimony/witness of authentic Christian families is ~~particularly appealing and~~ important, as ~~subjects for~~ agents in the evangelization of the family.

Caring for ~~wounded~~ broken families (the separated, the divorced who have not remarried, the divorced who have remarried)

40. What rang out clearly in Particularly evident at the Synod was the necessity for courageous pastoral choices. ~~Reconfirming forcefully the fidelity~~ Strongly reconfirming ~~faithfulness~~ to the Gospel of the ~~family~~ Family, the ~~Synodal Fathers,~~ synod fathers felt the urgent need ~~for to embark on a~~ new pastoral ~~paths, that begin with~~ course based on the ~~effective~~ present reality of ~~familial fragilities,~~ weaknesses within the family, recognizing that ~~they~~ couples, more often than not, are more "~~endured~~" ~~enduring~~ situations than freely ~~chosen~~ choosing them. These ~~are~~ [...] situations ~~that are diverse~~ vary because of personal ~~as well as,~~ [...] cultural and socio-economic factors. ~~It is not wise to think of unique solutions~~ To apply a single solution for all or ~~those inspired by~~ one based on a logic of "all or nothing". ~~The dialog and meeting that took place in~~ is not wise. Dialogue and discussion at the Synod ~~will have~~ is to continue in the local Churches, ~~involving~~ [...] among their various components; in such a way that the ~~perspectives that have been drawn up~~ arrived at

positions might ~~find their full maturation~~ be fully developed in the work of the ~~next~~ approaching Ordinary General Assembly. The guidance of the Holy Spirit, constantly invoked, will ~~allow~~ permit all God's people to ~~live the fidelity~~ be faithful to the Gospel of the ~~family~~ Family as a merciful agents in caring for all situations of fragility.

human weakness.

41. Each damaged Every broken family first of all should, above all, be listened to heard with respect and love, ~~becoming companions~~ and be accompanied on ~~the~~ their journey as Christ ~~did with~~ accompanied the disciples of the road to Emmaus. In a particular way, the words of Pope Francis apply in these situations: «The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment”, accompaniment, which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Es 3: 5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze compassion which also, at the same time, heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life» (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 169).

42. Such This discernment is indispensable for the separated and divorced. What Respect needs to be respected above all is primarily given to the suffering of those who have endured separation and divorce unjustly. The forgiveness for the To forgive such an injustice endured is not easy, but it is a journey that grace makes this journey possible. In At the same way it needs to be always underlined that it is indispensable to assume time, the synod fathers emphasized the necessity of addressing, in a faithful and constructive way fashion, the consequences of separation or divorce on the children: they, who must not become an “object” to be fought over and the most of contention. Instead, every suitable means need ought to be sought so to ensure that they can get over overcome the trauma of the family break-up and grow up in the most serene way as peacefully as possible.

43.- Various Fathers underlined synod fathers emphasized the necessity need to make the recognition of annulment cases of nullity more accessible and flexible. Among the propositions were the abandonment of the need for the double conforming sentence less time-consuming. They proposed, among others, the dispensation of the requirement of second instance for confirming sentences; the possibility of establishing an administrative means under the responsibility jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop; and a summary simple process to be used in cases of clear where nullity is clearly evident. According to authoritative propositions, the possibility should then be considered of giving weight to proposals, the question of the faith of those about the persons to be married should be possibly examined in terms of considering the validity of the sacrament of marriage. It needs to emphasized that in Sacrament of Marriage. In all these cases it is about the, ascertaining of the truth over about the validity of the obstacle.

bond is uppermost.

44. As regards matrimonial suits, the speeding up Many synod fathers requested the streamlining of the procedure, requested by many, of marriage cases as well as the preparation of a sufficient number of operators, persons — clerics and lay people, dedicating themselves — entirely dedicated to this, requires an increase in work. This will require the responsibilities increased responsibility of the diocesan bishop, who could designate in his diocese might charge a specially trained priest who would be able to offer advice to the concerned parties advice on the validity of their marriage.

45.- Divorced people who have not remarried should be invited to find in the Eucharist the nourishment they need to sustain them in their present state of life. The local community and pastors have ought to accompany these people with solicitude, particularly when there are children are involved or they find themselves when in a serious situation of poverty.

financial difficulty.

46. In the same way the situation of the Likewise, those who are divorced who have and remarried demands are require careful discernment and an accompaniment full of great respect, while avoiding any language or behavior that which might make them feel discriminated against. For be construed as discrimination. Caring for such persons by the Christian community looking after them is not a weakening of its faith and its testimony witness to the indissolubility of marriage, but rather it, in this manner, the community precisely expresses precisely its charity in its caring.

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47.- As regards to the possibility of partaking of the sacraments Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, some synod fathers argued in favor favour of the present regulations because of their theological foundation, while others were in favor favour of a greater opening on very precise broader outlook with well-defined conditions, when dealing with situations that cannot be resolved without creating new injustices and suffering. For some, partaking of access to the sacraments might occur were it take place if preceded by a penitential path — under the responsibility of practice — determined by the diocesan bishop —, — and with a clear undertaking commitment in favor favour of the children. This would not be a general possibility applied to all, but the fruit of a discernment applied [...] on a case-by-case basis, according to at the law of gradualness, that which takes into consideration the distinction between a state of sin, the state of grace and the attenuating [...] extenuating circumstances.

48. Suggesting The suggestion of limiting themselves these persons to only the practice of "spiritual communion" was questioned by more than a few Synodal Fathers: if many synod fathers. If spiritual communion is possible, why not allow them to partake in the sacrament? As a result a Sacrament? Consequently, greater theological study was requested starting, beginning with the links between the sacrament Sacrament of marriage Marriage and the Eucharist in relation to the [...] Church sacrament. In the same way Sacrament. Likewise,

the moral ~~dimension~~ aspect of the problem requires further consideration, listening to and illuminating the consciences of ~~spouses~~.

these persons.

49.- The problems relative to mixed marriages were frequently raised in the interventions of the ~~Synodal Fathers~~ synod fathers. The differences in the matrimonial regulations of the Orthodox Churches creates serious problems in certain contexts ~~to~~ which ~~have to be found~~ require suitable responses in communion with the Pope. The same applies to inter-religious marriages.

Welcoming

Providing for homosexual persons

50.- Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community: ~~are~~. Are we capable of ~~welcoming~~ providing for these people, guaranteeing ~~to~~ [...] them [...] a ~~fraternal space~~ place of fellowship in our communities? ~~Often~~ Oftentimes, they ~~wish~~ want to encounter a Church ~~that~~ which offers them a welcoming home. Are our communities capable of ~~providing that~~ this, accepting and valuing their sexual orientation, without compromising Catholic doctrine on the family and matrimony?

51.- The question of homosexuality ~~leads to~~ requires serious reflection on how to ~~elaborate~~ devise realistic ~~paths of approaches to~~ affective growth ~~and~~, human ~~and evangelical maturity~~ development and maturation in the Gospel, ~~while~~ integrating the sexual ~~dimension~~: ~~it appears therefore as~~ aspect, all of which constitute an important educative challenge. ~~The~~ Moreover, the Church ~~furthermore~~ affirms that unions between people of the same sex cannot be considered on the same ~~footing~~ level as ~~matrimony~~ marriage between man and woman. Nor is it acceptable that ~~pressure~~ the pastor's outlook be ~~brought to bear on~~ pastors ~~pressured~~ or that international bodies make financial aid dependent on the introduction of regulations ~~inspired by~~ based on gender ideology.

52.- Without denying the moral problems ~~connected to~~ associated with homosexual unions ~~it has to be noted that~~, there are ~~cases in which~~ instances where mutual ~~aid~~ assistance to the point of sacrifice ~~constitutes~~ is a ~~precious~~ valuable support in the life of ~~the~~ partners: ~~these persons~~. Furthermore, the Church pays special attention to ~~the~~ [...] children who live with ~~same-sex~~ couples of the same sex, emphasizing and stresses that the needs and rights of the little ones must always be given priority.

_The transmission of life and the challenge of the declining birthrate

53. ~~It is not difficult to notice~~ Today, the ~~spread~~ diffusion of a mentality ~~that~~ which reduces the generation of life to ~~a variable of~~ accommodate an individual's or a couple's plans. ~~Economic~~ is easily observable. Sometimes, economic factors ~~sometimes have enough weight to contribute to the~~ are burdensome, contributing to a sharp drop in the birthrate which weakens the social fabric, ~~thus~~ compromising ~~the relationship~~ relations between generations and rendering ~~the view of the~~ future ~~outlook~~ less certain. ~~Being open~~ Openness to life is an intrinsic requirement of married love.

54. ~~Probably here as well what is required is a realistic~~ Realistic language ~~that is able to~~ is probably also needed in this instance, language which knows how to start ~~from~~ by listening to people and acknowledging the beauty and truth of an unconditional ~~opening~~ openness to life as that which human life ~~requires to be lived to its fullest. It is on this base that we can rest~~ needs to live life fully. This serves as the basis for an appropriate teaching regarding ~~the~~ natural methods ~~of human reproduction~~, which allow ~~the living a couple to live~~ in a harmonious and ~~aware way of~~ conscious manner the communication between ~~spouses~~ husband and wife, in all its ~~dimensions~~ aspects, along with ~~generative~~ their responsibility: ~~at procreating life~~. In this ~~light~~ regard, we should ~~go back~~ return to the message of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Pope Paul VI, which ~~underlines~~ highlights the need to respect the dignity of the person in the moral evaluation of the methods of ~~birth control~~:

regulating births.

55. ~~So help is required to live affectivity,~~ Affectivity needs assistance, also in marriage ~~as well~~, as a path ~~of maturation,~~ to maturity in the ~~ever more profound welcoming~~ ever deepening acceptance of the other and ~~in~~ an ever fuller giving. ~~It has to be emphasized in this sense the need to offer formative paths that~~ gift of self. This necessitates offering programmes of formation which nourish married life and the importance of ~~at~~ the laity ~~that provides~~ providing an accompaniment consisting of ~~living a lived~~ testimony. ~~It is undoubtedly of great help~~ Undoubtedly, the example of ~~at~~ the faithful ~~and is of great assistance, as well as their~~ profound love ~~made up of~~ shown in their tenderness, ~~of and~~ respect; ~~which is~~ capable of growing ~~in over~~ time and ~~which,~~ in its concrete opening ~~itself~~ to the generation of life ~~allows us to,~~ creates an experience ~~of~~ a mystery that transcends us.

_The challenge of education and the role of the family in evangelization

56.- The fundamental challenge facing families today is undoubtedly that of ~~education~~ raising children, rendered more difficult and complex by today's cultural reality.

~~What have~~ Consideration, then, needs to be ~~considered-are~~ given to the needs and expectations of families ~~who are~~ capable of ~~testifying~~ bearing witness in ~~their~~ daily ~~life, lives~~ and in places of growth, ~~of and the~~ concrete and essential transmission of the virtues ~~that provide, which gives~~ form ~~for to our~~ existence.

~~57.-~~ In this ~~regard, the~~ Church can ~~carry out~~ assume a ~~precious~~ valuable role in supporting families, starting ~~from with~~ Christian initiation, ~~through and being~~ welcoming communities. ~~What is asked of~~ More than ever, these, ~~communities~~ today ~~even more than yesterday, in complex as well as mundane situations, is to~~ are to offer support to parents, ~~in complex situations and everyday life,~~ in their ~~educative undertaking~~ work of raising their children, accompanying children, ~~adolescents~~ and young people in their ~~growth~~ development through personalized ~~paths~~ pastoral programmes capable of introducing them to the full meaning of life and encouraging ~~them in their~~ choices and responsibilities, lived in the light of the Gospel.

Conclusion

~~58. The~~ These proposed reflections ~~put forward,~~ the fruit of ~~the Synodal dialog~~ that ~~synodal discussion which~~ took place in great freedom and a spirit of reciprocal listening, are intended to raise questions and indicate ~~perspectives~~ outlooks that will ~~have to later~~ be ~~matured~~ developed and ~~made clearer~~ clarified by ~~the [...]~~ reflection ~~of in~~ the local Churches in the ~~intervening year~~ that ~~separates us from~~ leading to the ~~XIV~~ Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of ~~bishops planned~~ Bishops, ~~scheduled~~ for October, 2015. These are not decisions ~~that have been made~~ taken nor simply ~~various~~ points of view. ~~All the same~~ Nevertheless, the collegial ~~path~~ journey of the bishops and the involvement of all God's people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will ~~lead us~~ guide us in finding the road to ~~find roads of~~ truth and mercy for all. This ~~is has been~~ the wish ~~that of Pope Francis~~ from the beginning of our work ~~Pope Francis has extended to us,~~ inviting us to ~~exercise~~ the courage of ~~the~~ faith and ~~the humble~~ humbly and ~~honest welcome of~~ honestly embrace the truth in charity.

[03037-01.01] [Testo originale: Italiano] [Unofficial translation]

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