

Synod of Bishops
15th Ordinary General Assembly

Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment

Final Document

October 27, 2018

Vatican City

This is **not** an official English translation. Most of the contents are translated by Google Translate from the original [Italian document](#), and so contain many inaccuracies.

Provided by Gabriel Chow

www.gcatholic.org
[@gcatholic](#)

CONTENTS

☐

Introduction 3

Prologue 4

Part I: “He walked with them” 5

Chapter I: A Listening Church 5

Chapter II: Three Crucial Junctions 8

Chapter III: Identity and Relationships 11

Chapter IV: Being Young Today 14

Part II: “Their eyes are opened” 18

Chapter I: The Gift of Youth (and Young Adulthood) 19

Chapter II: The Mystery of Vocation 22

Chapter III: The Mission of Accompaniment 26

Chapter IV: The Art of Discerning 29

Part III: “They left without delay” 32

Chapter I: The Missionary Synodality of the Church 33

Chapter II: Walking Together Daily 36

Chapter III: A Renewed Missionary Momentum 40

Chapter IV: Integral Formation 43

Conclusion 46☐

INTRODUCTION

The synodal event we have lived

1. “On all I will pour out my Spirit; your sons and daughters will be your prophets young men will have visions and your elders will have dreams “(Acts 2:17, see Gl 3:1). It is the experience that we have done in this Synod, walking together and listening to the voice of the Spirit. He amazed us with the richness of his gifts, he filled us with his courage and of his strength to bring hope to the world.

We walked together, with Peter’s successor, who confirmed us in faith and there has reinvigorated the enthusiasm of the mission. Although coming from very different contexts from cultural and ecclesial point of view, we have felt a spiritual harmony from the beginning, a desire for dialogue and true empathy. We worked together, sharing what he cared more about us, communicating our concerns, not hiding our own labors. Many interventions have generated in us evangelical emotion and compassion: there we felt only one body that suffers and rejoices. We want to share with everyone the experience of grace that we have lived and transmit to our Churches and to the whole world the joy of Gospel.

The presence of young people marked a novelty: through them, the Synod was resounded in the voice of a whole generation. Walking with them, pilgrims to the tomb of Peter, we have experienced that closeness creates the conditions for the Church to be a space for dialogue and testimony of fraternity that fascinates. The strength of this experience overcomes every effort and weakness. The Lord keeps repeating to us: Do not be afraid, I am with you.

The preparation process

2. We have benefited greatly from the contributions of bishops, and from the contribution of pastors, religious, lay people, experts, educators and many others. From the beginning, the young people were involved in the synodal process: the online questionnaire, many personal contributions and above all the pre-synodal meeting is its eloquent sign. Their contribution was essential, as in the story of the loaves and fish: Jesus was able to perform the miracle thanks to the availability of a boy who generously offered what he had (see Jn 6: 8-11).

All the contributions have been summarized in the *Instrumentum laboris*, which has constituted the solid basis of the comparison during the weeks of the Assembly. Now the Final Document collects the result of this process and relaunches it towards the future: it expresses what the Synod Fathers have recognized, interpreted, and chosen in the light of the Word of God.

The Final Document of the Synodal Assembly

3. It is important to clarify the relationship between the *Instrumentum laboris* and the Final Document. The first is the unitary and synthetic frame of reference emerged from the two years of listening; The second one it is the fruit of discernment achieved and gathers the generative thematic nuclei on which the Fathers Synodal have concentrated with particular intensity and passion. We therefore recognize the diversity and the complementarity of these two texts.

This document is offered to the Holy Father (see Pope Francis, *Episcopalis communio*, n. 18; *Instructions*, art. 35 §5) and also to the whole Church as the fruit of this Synod. Since the synodal journey has not yet been completed and foresees an implementation phase (see *Episcopalis communio*, n. 19-21), the Final Document will be a map to guide the next steps that the Church is called to move.

** In this document the term “Synod” refers to the whole from time to time synodal process in progress or the General Assembly held from 3 to 28 October 2018.*

PROLOGUE

Jesus walks with the disciples of Emmaus

4. We have recognized in the episode of the disciples of Emmaus (see Lk 24: 13-35) a paradigmatic text to understand the ecclesial mission in relation to the young generations. This page expresses well what we have experienced at the Synod and what we would like that each of our particular Church could live in relation to the young. Jesus he walks with the two disciples who have not understood the meaning of his story and they are moving away from Jerusalem and the community. To stay in their company, travel the road with them. He questions them and puts himself in patient listening to their version of the facts for help them recognize what they are experiencing. Then, with affection and energy, he announces them Word, leading them to interpret the events they lived in the light of the Scriptures. Accept the invitation to stay with them at nightfall: enter their night. In listening, their heart is heated and their mind is illuminated, in the fraction of their bread eyes open. They themselves choose to resume their journey without delay opposite direction, to return to the community, sharing the experience of meeting with the Risen.

In continuity with the *Instrumentum laboris*, the Final Document is divided into three parts that are marked by this episode. The first part is entitled “He walked with them” (Lk 24,15) and seeks to illuminate what the Synod Fathers recognized the context in which young people are inserted, highlighting their strengths and challenges. The second part, “Their eyes were opened” (Lk 24:31), is interpretative and provides some fundamental interpretations of the Synod theme. The third part, entitled “They left without delay” (Lk 24.33), collects the choices for a spiritual, pastoral, and missionary conversion.

PART I

“He walked with them”

5. “And here, on that same day two of them were on their way to a village of name Emmaus, about eleven kilometers from Jerusalem, and conversing with each other everything that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus in person he approached and walked with them “(Lk 24: 13-15).

In this passage, the evangelist photographs the need of the two wayfarers to find a meaning for them events that have lived. The attitude of Jesus that sets out is underlined with them. The Risen Christ wants to work his way together with every young man, accepting his expectations, even if disappointed, and his hopes, even if inadequate. Jesus walks, listens, shares.

Chapter I: A Listening Church

Listen and see with empathy

The value of listening

6. Listening is a meeting of freedom, which requires humility, patience, willingness to understand, and a commitment to process the answers in a new way. Listening transforms the heart of those who live it, above all when one places oneself in an interior attitude of harmony and docility to the Spirit. It is therefore not just a collection of information, nor a strategy for reach a goal, but it is the form in which God himself relates to his people. God indeed he sees the misery of his people and listens to their lamentations, lets themselves be touched in the depths and descends to free him (see Exodus 3:7-8). The Church then, through listening, enters the movement of God who, in the Son, comes to meet every human being.

Young people want to be heard

7. Young people are called to continuously make choices that orient their own existence; express the desire to be heard, recognized, accompanied. Lot of they experiment how their voice is not considered interesting and useful in the social field ecclesial. In various contexts there is a lack of attention to their cry, in particular a that of the poorest and most exploited, and also the lack of available and capable adults to listen.

Listening to the Church

8. There is no lack of established initiatives and experiences in the Church through which young people can experience hospitality, listening and making their voices heard. The Synod recognizes, however, that the ecclesial community cannot always make the attitude that is evident the Risen One had towards the disciples of Emmaus, when, before enlightening them with the Word, he asked them: “What are these talks that you are making among you along the way?” (Lk 24.17). Sometimes there is a tendency to provide ready-made answers and ready recipes without them let the youth (and young adults’) questions emerge in their novelty and catch the provocation.

Listening makes it possible to exchange gifts in a context of empathy. It allows the young people to donate their contribution to the community, helping them to grasp new sensitivities and a ask unpublished questions. At the same time, it sets the conditions for an announcement of the Gospel that truly reaches the heart, in an incisive and fruitful way.

Listening to qualified pastors and lay people

9. Listening is a qualifying moment in the ministry of pastors, and in the first place, of the bishops, who however often find themselves burdened by many commitments and are struggling to find one adequate time for this indispensable service. Many have noted the shortage of people experienced and dedicated to

accompaniment. To believe in the theological and pastoral value of listening, it implies a rethinking to renew the ordinary forms of presbyteral ministry is expressed and a verification of its priorities. Furthermore, the Synod recognizes the need to prepare consecrated and lay men and women who are qualified for the accompaniment of young people. The charism of listening that the Holy Spirit gives rise to community could also receive a form of institutional recognition for ecclesial service.

The diversity of contexts and cultures

A plural world

10. The composition of the Synod itself made visible the presence and contribution of the different regions of the world, highlighting the beauty of being universal Church. Even in one the context of growing globalization, the Synod Fathers asked to highlight the many differences between contexts and cultures, even within the same country. There is a plurality of the young people's worlds so that in some countries we tend to use the term "youth (and young adulthood)" in the plural. Furthermore, the age group considered by the present Synod (16-29 years) does not represent a homogeneous whole, but it is composed of groups that live peculiar situations.

All these differences have a profound impact on the concrete experience that young people have they live: they concern in fact the different phases of the evolutionary age, the forms of religious experience, the structure of the family and its importance in the transmission of faith, relationships intergenerational—such as the role of the elderly and the respect due to them—, modalities of participation in social life, attitude towards the future, the question ecumenical and interreligious. The Synod recognizes and welcomes the richness of the diversity of the cultures and places itself at the service of the communion of the Spirit.

Changes in progress

11. Of particular relevance is the difference relative to the demographic dynamics among the countries high birth rate, in which young people represent a significant and growing share of population, and those whose weight is being reduced. A further difference comes from the history, which makes different countries and continents of ancient Christian tradition, whose culture is bearer of a memory not to be lost, from countries and continents marked by others religious traditions and in which Christianity is a minority and sometimes recent presence. In other territories then the Christian communities and the young people who are part of them are subject to persecution.

Exclusion and marginalization

12. Then there are differences between countries and within each of them social structure and the economic resources that separate, sometimes very clearly, those who have access to an increasing amount of opportunities offered by globalization, by those who live on the margins of society or in the rural world they suffer the effects of forms of exclusion and waste. Various interventions have reported the need for the Church to take courageously on their side and participate in the construction alternatives that remove exclusion and marginalization, strengthening reception, accompaniment and integration. This is why it is necessary to become aware of the indifference that marks the life of many Christians too, and to overcome it with the deepening of the social dimension of faith.

Men and women

13. We cannot forget the difference between men and women with their peculiar gifts, the specific sensibilities and experiences of the world. This difference can be a sphere in which forms of domination, exclusion and discrimination arise from which all societies and the Church they need to get free themselves.

The Bible presents man and woman as equal partners before God (see Gen 5: 2): each domination and discrimination based on sex offends human dignity. It presents also the difference between the sexes as a mystery so much constitutive of the human being as well irreducible to stereotypes. The relationship between man and woman is then understood in terms of one vocation to live together in reciprocity and in

dialogue, in communion and in fruitfulness (see Gen 1:27-29; 2:21-25) in all areas of human experience: life of a couple, work, education and others. God has entrusted the earth to their covenant.

Cultural colonization

14. Many Synodal Fathers from non-Western contexts point out that in their own Countries globalization carries with it authentic forms of cultural colonization, which eradicate young people from the cultural and religious affiliations from which they come. It is necessary a commitment of the Church to accompany them in this passage without losing the traits more precious than their identity.

The interpretations of the secularization process appear different. While from some it is lived as a precious opportunity to purify oneself from a habitual religiosity or based on ethnic and national identities, for others it represents an obstacle to the transmission of the wedding ring. In secular societies we also witness a rediscovery of God and spirituality. This constitutes for the Church an incentive to recover the importance of its own dynamism of faith, of proclamation and of pastoral accompaniment.

A first look at the Church today

The educational commitment of the Church

15. There are few regions where young people perceive the Church as a presence lively and engaging, which is also significant for their non-believing or other peers' religions. The educational institutions of the Church seek to welcome all young people, regardless of their religious choices, cultural background and personal situation, family or social. In this way the Church gives a fundamental contribution to education of young people in the most diverse parts of the world. This is achieved through education in schools of all levels and in vocational training centers, colleges and schools, universities, but also in youth (and young adult) centers and oratories; this commitment is also implemented through the reception of refugees and refugees and the varied commitment in the social field. In all these Presence the Church unites the work of education and human promotion with witness and the announcement of the Gospel. When inspired by intercultural and interreligious dialogue, action Church education is also appreciated by non-Christians as a form of authenticity human promotion.

The activities of youth (and young adult) ministry

16. In the Synod journey, there was a need to vocationally qualify the youth (and young adult) ministry, considering all young people as recipients of pastoral care for vocations. Together, we also underlined the need to develop complete pastoral processes, which from childhood they lead to adult life and enter the Christian community. Yes, it is also noted that different parish groups, movements and youth (and young adult) associations realize an effective process of accompaniment and formation of young people in their life of faith.

World Youth Day—born from a prophetic intuition of St. John Paul II, who remains a point of reference also for the young people of the third millennium—, as well as national and diocesan meetings, play an important role in the lives of many young people because they offer a living experience of faith and communion, which helps them to face the great challenges of life and to take their place responsibly in society and in the community ecclesial. These convocations can thus refer to pastoral accompaniment ordinary of the individual communities, where the reception of the Gospel must be deepened and translated into life choices.

The weight of administrative management

17. Many Fathers have pointed out that the weight of administrative tasks absorbs so excessive and sometimes suffocating the energies of many pastors; this is one of the reasons that make it difficult to meet young people and their accompaniment. To make more evident the priority of pastoral and spiritual commitments, the Synodal Fathers insist on need to rethink the concrete ways of exercising the ministry.

The situation of the parishes

18. While remaining the first and main form of being Church in the territory, different voices have indicated how the parish struggles to be a relevant place for young people and how it is necessary to

rethink its missionary vocation. Its low significance in urban spaces, the lack of dynamism of the proposals, together with the spatial-temporal changes lifestyles call for renewal. Even if there are various attempts at innovation, often the river of youthful life flows at the margins of the community, without meeting it.

Initiation to the Christian life

19. Many notice how the paths of Christian initiation do not always succeed introduce children, teenagers, and young adults to the beauty of the experience of faith. When the community is constituted as a place of communion and as a true family of the children of God, expresses a generative force that transmits faith; where instead it yields to the logic of delegation and bureaucratic organization prevails; Christian initiation is misunderstood as one course of religious instruction which usually ends with the sacrament of Confirmation. It is therefore urgent to rethink the approach of catechesis and the link between transmission family and community of faith, relying on personal accompaniment processes.

The formation of seminarians and consecrated persons

20. Seminars and training houses are places of great importance in which young people called to the priesthood and to the consecrated life they deepen their own vocational choice and they mature in following. Sometimes these environments do not take proper account of the previous experience of the candidates, underestimating their importance. This blocks growth of the person and risks inducing formal assumptions, rather than development of the gifts of God and the profound conversion of the heart.

Chapter II: Three Crucial Junctions

The news of the digital environment

A pervasive reality

21. The digital environment characterizes the contemporary world. Large sections of humanity they are immersed in an ordinary and continuous way. It is no longer just about “using” communication tools, but to live in a widely digitized culture that has very deep impacts on the notion of time and space, on the perception of oneself, of others and of the world, on the way to communicate, to learn, to inform oneself, to enter into a relationship with the others. An approach to reality that tends to privilege the image compared to listening and listening to reading influences the way of learning and the development of the critical sense. It is now clear that “The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but it is part of reality daily life of many people, especially the youngest” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the XLVII World Communications Day*).

The network of opportunities

22. Web and social networks are a place where young people spend a lot of time and, yes, they meet easily, even if not all of them have equal access, particularly in some regions of the world. They nevertheless constitute an extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, meeting and exchange between people, as well as access to information and communication knowledge. Moreover, the digital one is a context of sociopolitical participation and active citizenship, and can facilitate the circulation of independent information capable of effectively protect the most vulnerable people by revealing violations of their rights. In many web countries and social networks now represent an indispensable place to reach and involving young people, including in pastoral initiatives and activities.

The dark side of the network

23. The digital environment is also a territory of solitude, manipulation, exploitation and violence, up to the extreme case of the dark web. Digital media can expose you to the risk of dependence, isolation and progressive loss of contact with the concrete reality, hindering the development of authentic interpersonal relationships. New forms of violence spread itself through social media, such as cyberbullying; the web is also a channel of dissemination of pornography and exploitation of persons for sexual purposes or through the gamble.

24. Finally, gigantic economic interests, capable of realizing, operate in the digital world forms of control as thin as it is invasive, creating mechanisms of manipulation of the consciences and the democratic process. The operation of many platforms often ends to encourage the meeting between people who think the same way, hindering comparison among the differences. These closed circuits facilitate the dissemination of false information and news, fomenting prejudices and hatred. The proliferation of fake news is the expression of a culture that has lost the sense of truth and bends the facts to particular interests. The reputation of the people are jeopardized through online summary processes. The phenomenon also concerns the Church and her pastors.

Migrants as a paradigm of our time

A pluriform phenomenon

25. The phenomenon of migration represents a structural worldwide phenomenon and not a transitional emergency. Migrations can take place within the same country or between different countries. The Church concerns in particular for those who they flee from war, violence, political or religious persecution, from disasters natural ones due to climate change and extreme poverty: many of them are young people. In general, they are looking for opportunities for themselves and their families. They dream a better future and wish to create the conditions for it to be realized.

Many Synod Fathers stressed that migrants are a “paradigm” capable of enlighten our time and especially the youthful condition, and remind us of its original condition of the faith, or that of being “foreigners and pilgrims on earth” (Heb 11:13).

Violence and vulnerability

26. Other migrants start attracted by Western culture, sometimes nurturing expectations unrealistic that expose them to heavy disappointments. Unscrupulous traffickers, often linked to drug and arms cartels, exploit the weakness of migrants, who along their own path too often encounter violence, trafficking, psychological and even physical abuse, and unspeakable suffering. The particular vulnerability of non-minor migrants should be pointed out accompanied, and the situation of those who are forced to spend many years in the fields refugees or who remain stuck in transit countries for a long time, without being able to continue course of studies or expressing their talents. In some countries of arrival, the phenomenon of migration raise alarm and fear, often fomented and exploited for political purposes. One thus spreads xenophobic mentality, of closing and of refolding on oneself, to which it is necessary to react with decision.

Stories of separation and meeting

27. Young people who migrate experience separation from their context of origin and often also a cultural and religious eradication. The rift also affects the communities of origin, which lose the most vigorous and resourceful elements, and families, in particular when one or both parents migrate, leaving their children in their country of origin. The Church has an important role as a reference for the young people of these broken families. But those of the gods migrants are also stories of encounter between people and between cultures: for communities and societies in they are an opportunity for enrichment and integral human development of all. The welcoming initiatives that refer to the Church have an important role to play this point of view and can revitalize the communities capable of realizing them.

The prophetic role of the Church

28. Thanks to the different origins of the Fathers, with regard to the theme of migrants, the Synod has seen the meeting of many perspectives, in particular between countries of departure and countries of arrival. Furthermore, the alarm cry of those Churches whose members are forced to flee has resounded from war and persecution and who see in these forced migrations a threat to their very existence. Just the fact of including all these different within perspectives puts the Church in a position to exercise a prophetic role towards the society on the theme of migration.

Recognize and react to all types of abuse

Doing truth and asking for forgiveness

29. The different types of abuse made by some bishops, priests, religious and laity provoke in those who are victims, including many young people, suffering that can last all life and to which no repentance can remedy. This phenomenon is widespread in society, it also touches the Church and represents a serious obstacle to its mission. The Synod reaffirms the firm commitment to the adoption of rigorous prevention measures that prevent it to repeat itself, starting from the selection and training of those to whom tasks will be entrusted responsibility and education.

Go to the root

30. There are different types of abuse: power, economic, conscience, sexual. It is made evident is the task of eradicating the forms of exercise of authority on which they are grafted and of to counteract the lack of responsibility and transparency with which many cases have been managed. The desire for domination, lack of dialogue and transparency, forms of double life, the spiritual emptiness, as well as psychological fragilities, are the terrain on which corruption flourishes. Clericalism, in particular, “arises from an elitist and excluding vision of vocation, which interprets the ministry received as a power to be exercised rather than as a power free and generous service to offer; and this leads to the belief that it belongs to a group who has all the answers and no longer needs to listen and learn anything or pretend to listen “(Pope Francis, *Speech to the First General Congregation of the XV Assembly General of the Synod of Bishops*, 3 October 2018).

Gratitude and encouragement

31. The Synod expresses gratitude to those who have the courage to denounce evil suffered: help the Church to become aware of what happened and the need to react with decision. The Synod also appreciates and encourages the sincere commitment of countless lay people, priests, consecrated persons, and bishops who, every day, are spent with honesty and dedication to the service of young people. Their work is a forest that grows without making noise. Many of the young people present at the Synod also expressed gratitude for those from whom the great need for reference figures was accompanied and reiterated.

The Lord Jesus, who never abandons his Church, offers her the strength and the tools for a new path. Confirming the line of timely “necessary actions and sanctions” (Pope Francis, *Letter to the People of God*, 20 August 2018, n.2) and aware that the mercy demands justice, the Synod recognizes that addressing the issue of abuse in all its aspects, even with the precious help of young people, can really be an opportunity for a reform of epochal scope.

Chapter III: Identity and Relationships

Family and intergenerational relationships

The family privileged point of reference

32. The family continues to be the main point of reference for young people. The children appreciate the love and care of their parents, they care about family ties and they hope to succeed in forming a family in turn. Undoubtedly the increase of separations, divorces, second unions and single-parent families can cause large young people suffering and identity crisis. Sometimes they have to take on responsibilities that are not proportionate to their age and force them to become adults ahead of time. Grandparents offer often a decisive contribution to affection and religious education: with their wisdom they are a decisive link in the relationship between generations.

The importance of motherhood and fatherhood

33. Mothers and fathers have distinct but equally important roles as points of reference in forming the children and transmitting their faith to them. The maternal figure continues to have a role that young people consider it essential for their growth, even if it is not enough recognized from a cultural, political and working perspective. Many fathers play with dedication of your role, but we can not hide that, in

some contexts, the figure paternal is absent or evanescent, and in others oppressive or authoritarian. These ambiguities yes they also reflect on the exercise of spiritual paternity.

Relations between generations

34. The Synod recognizes the dedication of many parents and educators who are committed to fund in the transmission of values, despite the difficulties of the cultural context. In different regions, the role of the elderly and reverence towards the ancestors are a cornerstone of education and contribute strongly to the formation of personal identity. Even the extended family—which in some cultures is the family in the proper sense—plays an important role. Some young people, however, feel the family traditions as oppressive and flee under the pressure of a globalized culture that sometimes leaves them without reference points. In other parts of the world instead between young people and adults there is not a real generational conflict, but one mutual strangeness. Sometimes adults do not seek or fail to transmit values founders of existence or assume youthful styles, reversing the relationship between them generations. In this way the relationship between young people and adults risks remaining on the plan emotional, without touching the educational and cultural dimension.

(Young People) and cultural roots

35. Young people are projected towards the future and face life with energy and dynamism. But they are also tempted to focus on the use of the present and sometimes tend to give little attention to the memory of the past from which they come, especially the many gifts they have transmitted by parents, grandparents, the cultural baggage of the society in which they live. Helping young people to discover the living richness of the past, making memories of it and using it for them own choices and possibilities, it is a true act of love towards them in view of theirs growth and the choices that they are called to make.

Friendship and peer relationships

36. Alongside intergenerational relationships should not be forgotten those between peers, who represent a fundamental experience of interaction and progressive emancipation from family context of origin. Friendship and confrontation, often also in more or less groups structured, offers the opportunity to strengthen social and relational skills in a context in which have not been evaluated and judged. Group experience is also a great resource for the sharing of faith and for mutual help in witness. The young are capable of leading other young people and of living a true apostolate among their friends.

Body and affectivity

Changes in progress

37. Young people recognize an essential importance for their body and sexuality life and in the path of growth of their identity, because they are essential to live friendship and affectivity. In the contemporary world, however, we find fast phenomena evolution in their regard. First of all, the developments of science and biomedical technologies they strongly influence the perception of the body, inducing the idea that it can be changed without limit. The ability to intervene on DNA, the possibility of inserting artificial elements in the organism (cyborgs) and the development of neuroscience are a great resource, but at the same time they raise anthropological and ethical questions. An uncritical welcome of the technocratic approach to the body weakens the consciousness of life as a gift and meaning of the limit of the creature, which can deviate or be exploited by economic dynamism and politicians (see Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, 106).

Moreover, in some youth (and young adult) contexts, the fascination for risky behaviors spreads like tool to explore oneself, search for strong emotions and gain recognition. Together to the persistence of ancient phenomena, such as precocious sexuality, promiscuity, tourism sexual, the exaggerated cult of the physical aspect, today the pervasive diffusion of the digital pornography and the performance of one's body online. These phenomena, to which new generations are exposed, constitute an obstacle for a serene maturation. They indicate unprecedented social dynamics, which influence personal experiences and choices, making them the territory of a sort of ideological colonization.

The reception of the moral teachings of the Church

38. This is the context in which Christian families and ecclesial communities try to do discovering sexuality to young people as a great gift inhabited by the Mystery, to live in them relationships according to the logic of the Gospel. But they do not always manage to translate this desire in an adequate affective and sexual education, which is not limited to interventions sporadic and occasional. Where this education was really taken as a choice proactive, there are positive results that help young people to understand the relationship between them adhesion of faith in Jesus Christ and the way of living affectivity and interpersonal relationships. These results solicit and encourage greater investment in ecclesial energy in this field.

The questions of young people

39. The Church has a rich tradition on which to build and from which to propose its own teaching on this subject: for example, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the theology of the body developed by St. John Paul II, the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* of Pope Benedict XVI, the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of Pope Francis. But the young, even those who they know and live this teaching, express the desire to receive from the Church one clear, human and empathic word. In fact, sexual morality is often a cause of misunderstanding and estrangement from the Church, as it is perceived as a space of judgment and condemnation. In the face of social changes and ways of experiencing affectivity and life multiplicity of ethical perspectives, young people are sensitive to the value of authenticity and of dedication, but they are often disoriented. They express more explicitly desire for comparison on issues related to the difference between male and female identity feminine, to the reciprocity between men and women, to homosexuality.

Forms of vulnerability

The world of work

40. The world of work remains an area in which young people express their creativity and creativity ability to innovate. At the same time, they experience forms of exclusion and marginalization. There the first and most serious is young adult unemployment, which, in some countries, reaches exorbitant levels. In addition to making them poor, the lack of work cuts young people's ability to dream and to hope and deprives them of the possibility of making a contribution to the development of the society. In many countries this situation depends on the fact that some sections of the population juveniles lack adequate professional skills, also due to the deficiencies of the educational and training system. Often the occupational precariousness that afflicts young people responds to economic interests that exploit work.

Violence and persecution

41. Many young people live in war settings and suffer violence in countless numbers variety of forms: kidnapping, extortion, organized crime, trafficking in human beings, slavery and sexual exploitation, war rapes, etc. Other young people, because of their faith, are struggling to find a place in their societies and suffer various types of persecutions, until death. There are many young people who live by perpetuation or lack of alternatives crimes and violence: child soldiers, armed gangs and criminals, drug trafficking, terrorism, etc. This violence breaks many young lives. Abuse and addictions, as well as violence and deviances are among the reasons that lead young people to prison, with a particular incidence in some ethnic and social groups. All these situations question and question the Church.

Marginalization and social hardship

42. Even more numerous in the world are young people who suffer forms of marginalization and social exclusion, for religious, ethnic or economic reasons. We remember the difficult one situation of adolescents and young people who remain pregnant and the plague of abortion, as well as the spread of HIV, the different forms of addiction (drugs, gambling, pornography, etc.) and the situation of street children and young people, who lack home, family and economic resources; the young prisoners deserve special attention. Various interventions have stressed the need for the Church to value the abilities of excluded young people and contributions that they can offer to the communities. She wants to stand bravely on their side, accompanying them along paths of appropriation of their dignity and a role in the construction of the common good.

The experience of suffering

43. Contrary to a widespread stereotype, the world (of young people) is also profoundly marked by the experience of vulnerability, disability, illness, and pain. In not a few countries, especially among young people, there is growth of the spread of forms of psychological distress, depression, mental illness and eating disorders, related to experiences of profound unhappiness or the inability to find a place within society; finally, the tragic phenomena of suicides must not be forgotten. Young people who live these different conditions of hardship and let their families rely on the support of Christian communities, which however are not always adequately equipped to accommodate them.

The vulnerability resource

44. Many of these situations are the product of the “culture of waste”: young people in it they are among the first victims. However, this culture can also impregnate young people and communities Christians and their leaders, thus contributing to human, social and environmental degradation afflicts our world. For the Church this is a call for conversion, for solidarity and a renewed educational action making itself present in a particular way in these contexts of difficulty. Even the young people who live in these situations have precious resources from share with the community and teach us to measure ourselves with the limit, helping us grow in humanity. The creativity with which the community animated by the joy of the Gospel can be inexhaustible become an alternative to discomfort and difficult situations. In this way society can to experience that the stones discarded by the builders can become corner heads (see Ps 118.22; Lk 20.17; Acts 4.11; 1Pet 2,4).

Chapter IV: Being Young Today

Aspects of today's youth (and young adult) culture

Originality and specificity

45. The younger generations are bearers of an approach to reality with specific traits. The young people ask to be welcomed and respected in their originality. Among the specific traits, most of the preference is given to the image, and has been highlighted in the culture of young people compared to other communicative languages, the importance of sensations and emotions as a way of approach to reality and the priority of concreteness and operability with respect to analysis theoretical. Relationships of friendship and belonging to groups of people are of great importance peers, also cultivated thanks to social media. Young people are generally carriers of one spontaneous openness towards diversity, which makes them attentive to the themes of peace, inclusion and dialogue between cultures and religions. Numerous experiences of many parts of the world testify that young people know how to be pioneers of meeting and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, in the perspective of peaceful coexistence.

Commitment and social participation

46. Although in a different form compared to past generations, social engagement is one specific trait of young people today. Alongside some indifference, there are many others available to engage in voluntary initiatives, active citizenship and social solidarity, to accompany and encourage to bring out the talents, skills and creativity of the young people and encourage their assumption of responsibility. Social engagement and the direct contact with the poor remain a fundamental opportunity for discovery or deepening of faith and discernment of one's own vocation. Strong and widespread results the sensitivity to ecological issues and sustainability, which the encyclical *Laudato Si'* has catalyzed. The availability of political commitment for this was also reported for the construction of the common good, which the Church has not always been able to accompany by offering opportunities for formation and areas for discernment. With respect to the promotion of justice, young people ask the Church for a firm and coherent commitment, which uproots every connivance with a worldly mentality.

Art, music, and sport

47. The Synod recognizes and appreciates the importance that young people give to expression artistic in all its forms: there are many young people who use talents in this field received, promoting beauty, truth

and goodness, growing in humanity and in relationship with God. For many, artistic expression is also a genuine professional vocation. Not we can forget that for centuries the “way of beauty” was one of the modalities privileged to express faith and evangelize.

Quite peculiar is the importance of music, which is a real environment in which young people are constantly immersed, as well as a culture and language capable of to stir up emotions and to shape identity. Musical language also represents one pastoral resource, which challenges the liturgy and its renewal in particular. The approval of tastes in a commercial key sometimes risks compromising the link with the traditional forms of musical expression and also liturgical.

Equally significant is the importance that young people take sport practice, of which the Church must not underestimate the potential in an educational and formative way, maintaining a solid presence within it. The world of sport needs to be helped overcome the ambiguities from which it is traveled, such as the mythization of the champions, the enslavement a business logic and the ideology of success at any cost. In this sense, the value of the accompaniment and support of the disabled in sports practice.

Spirituality and religiosity

Different religious contexts

48. The religious experience of young people is strongly influenced by the social context and cultural life in which they live. In some countries Christian faith is a strong community experience alive, that young people share with joy. In other regions of ancient Christian tradition, the majority of the Catholic population does not live a real belonging to the Church; not however, creative minorities and experiences that reveal a rebirth of interest are lacking religious, as a reaction to a reductionist and suffocating vision. In other places the Catholics, together with other Christian denominations, are a minority, which they sometimes know discrimination and even persecution. Finally, there are contexts in which there is a growth of the seven or forms of alternative religiosity; those who follow them are often disappointed and they become averse to everything religious. If in some regions young people do not have the possibility to publicly express their faith or do not see their own recognized religious freedom, elsewhere we feel the weight of choices of the past—even political—that they have ecclesial credibility. It is not possible to talk about the religiosity of young people without keep all these differences in mind.

Religious research

49. In general young people claim to be in search of the meaning of life and demonstrate interest in spirituality. But this attention is sometimes configured as a search for psychological well-being more than an opening to the encounter with the Mystery of the living God. In particular in some cultures, many consider religion a private matter and select from different spiritual traditions the elements in which they find their own convictions. Yes thus spreads a certain syncretism, which develops on the relativistic assumption that all religions are the same. Adherence to a community of faith is not seen by everyone as the way to privileged access to the meaning of life, and is flanked and sometimes superseded by ideologies or from the search for success on a professional and economic level, in the logic of a material self-fulfillment. However, some practices delivered by the company remain alive tradition, such as pilgrimages to shrines, which sometimes involve a lot of young people numerous, and expressions of popular piety, often linked to devotion to Mary and the saints, that guard the faith experience of a people.

The meeting with Jesus

50. The same variety is found in the relationship of the young with the figure of Jesus. Many of them recognize him as Savior and Son of God and often feel close to him through Mary, his mother, and commit themselves to a journey of faith. Others do not have a personal relationship with him, but consider him as a good man and an ethical reference. Others again they meet through a strong experience of the Spirit. For others it is a figure of the past devoid of existential relevance or very distant from human experience.

If for many young people, God, religion, and the Church appear as empty words, they are sensitive to the figure of Jesus, when presented in an attractive and effective way. In many ways even today's (young

people) tell us: “We want to see Jesus” (Jn 12,21), thus manifesting that healthy restlessness that characterizes the heart of every human being: «The disquiet of the spiritual search, the restlessness of the encounter with God, the restlessness of love » (Pope Francis, Mass for the beginning of the General Chapter of the Order of St. Augustine, August 28, 2013).

The desire for a living liturgy

51. In various contexts young Catholics ask for prayer proposals and moments sacramental ones capable of intercepting their daily life, in a fresh, authentic and liturgy joyful. In many parts of the world liturgical experience is the principal resource for identity Christian and knows a broad and convinced participation. The young recognize you one privileged moment of experience of God and of the ecclesial community, and a starting point for the mission. Elsewhere, there is a certain departure from the sacraments and from the Sunday Eucharist, perceived more as a moral precept than as a happy encounter with the Risen Lord and with the community. In general it is noted that even where it offers the catechesis on the sacraments, the educational accompaniment to live the celebration is weak depth, to enter the mystery wealth of its symbols and its rites.

Participation and protagonism

Young people want to be protagonists

52. In the face of the contradictions of society, many young people wish to make the most of them their talents, skills and creativity and are willing to take responsibility. Between social sustainability and environmental sustainability emerge from the issues that are most important to them discrimination and racism. The involvement of young people often follows unpublished approaches, also exploiting the potential of digital communication in terms of mobilization and political pressure: diffusion of lifestyles and critical consumption and investment models, supportive and attentive to the environment; new forms of commitment and participation in society and in politics; new ways of welfare to guarantee the weakest subjects.

The reasons for a distance

53. The Synod is aware that a substantial number of young people, for the most reasons different, they ask nothing from the Church because they do not consider it meaningful to them existence. Some, on the contrary, expressly ask to be left alone, because they feel the its presence as annoying and even irritating. This request is often not born of a uncritical and impulsive contempt, but it has its roots also in serious and respectable reasons: sexual and economic scandals; the unpreparedness of ordained ministers who do not know adequately intercept the sensitivity of young people; the lack of care in preparation of the homily and in the presentation of the Word of God; the passive role assigned to young people within the Christian community; the effort of the Church to make sense of its own doctrinal and ethical positions in the face of contemporary society.

Young people in the Church

54. Young Catholics are not merely recipients of pastoral action, but living members of the only ecclesial body, baptized in the Spirit of the Lord, living and active. They contribute to enriching what the Church is, and not just what it does. They are the present and not just the future of the Church. Young people are protagonists in many ecclesial activities, in which they offer generously his service, in particular with the animation of catechesis and of the liturgy, the care of the little ones, volunteering towards the poor. Also, movements, associations, and religious congregations offer young people opportunities for commitment and co-responsibility. Sometimes the availability of young people meets a certain authoritarianism and distrust of adults and shepherds, who do not sufficiently recognize their creativity and struggle to share them responsibility.

Women in the Church

55. There is also a demand among young people for greater recognition and enhancement of women in society and in the Church. Many women play an irreplaceable role in the Christian communities, but in many places, it is hard to give them space in the decision-making processes, even when they do not

require specific ministerial responsibilities. The absence of the female voice and gaze impoverishes the debate and the path of Church, subtracting from the discernment a precious contribution. The Synod recommends making all more aware of the urgency of an unavoidable change, even starting from one anthropological and theological reflection on the reciprocity between men and women.

The mission of young people towards their peers

56. In various contexts, there are groups of young people, often the expression of associations and ecclesial movements, which are very active in the evangelization of their peers thanks to a clear testimony of life, an accessible language, and the ability to establish authentic bonds of friendship. This apostolate allows us to bring the Gospel to people who they would hardly be reached by ordinary youth (and young adult) ministries and will help to make mature the same faith as those who commit themselves to it. It must therefore be appreciated, supported, accompanied wisely, and integrated into the life of the communities.

Desire for a more authentic and fraternal ecclesial community

57. Young people ask that the Church shine for authenticity, exemplariness, competence, co-responsibility and cultural solidity. Sometimes this request sounds like a criticism, but often takes the positive form of a personal commitment to a fraternal community, welcoming, joyful and prophetically committed to fighting social injustice. Between the expectations of young people stand out in particular the desire that in the Church a style of less paternalistic and more frank dialogue.

PART II

“Their eyes are opened”

58. “And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures what was he was referring to him. When they were close to the village where they were headed, he did as he should go farther. But they insisted: “Stay with us, because it is evening and the day is now at sunset”. He entered to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread, he recited the blessing, broke it and gave it to them. Then they opened their eyes and they recognized. But he vanished from their sight “(Lk 24: 27-31).

After having listened to them, the Lord addresses to the two travelers an incisive and decisive “word”, authoritative and transforming. Thus, with sweetness and strength, the Lord enters their dwelling, he stays with them and shares the bread of life: it is the Eucharistic sign that allows the two disciples to finally open their eyes.

A new Pentecost

The action of the Holy Spirit

59. The Holy Spirit kindles the heart, opens the eyes and arouses the faith of the two travelers. He works from the beginning of the creation of the world because the project of the Father to recapitulate everything in Christ reaches its fullness. It acts in every time and in every place, in the variety of contexts and cultures, arousing also in the midst of difficulties and to the sufferings the commitment to justice, the search for truth, the courage of hope. This is why St. Paul affirms that “all together, creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth until today “(Rom 8:22). The desire for life in love and the healthy restlessness that lives in the hearts of the young are part of the great yearning of all creation towards the fullness of joy. In each of them, even in those who do not know Christ, the Creator Spirit acts for lead them to beauty, goodness, and truth.

The Spirit rejuvenates the Church

60. Youth (and young adulthood) is an original and stimulating period of life, which Jesus himself has lived, sanctifying it. *The Message to the (Young People) of the Second Vatican Council* (December 7, 1965) presented the Church as the “true youth of the world”, which possesses “the ability to rejoice for what begins, to give oneself without return, to renew oneself and to start again for new one’s conquests. “With their freshness and their faith young people contribute to show this the face of the Church, which reflects “the great Living, the eternally young Christ”. It is not therefore a matter of creating a new Church for the young, but rather of rediscovering with them the youthfulness of the Church, opening us to the grace of a new Pentecost.

The Spirit in the life of the believer

61. The vocation of the Christian is to follow Christ passing through the waters of Baptism, receiving the seal of Confirmation and becoming part of his Body in the Eucharist: «The Holy Spirit comes, the fire after the water and you become bread, that is the body of Christ» (Augustine, Discourse 227). In the path of Christian initiation, it is above all Confirmation that allows believers to relive the Pentecostal experience of a new one outpouring of the Spirit for growth and mission. It is important to rediscover the wealth of this sacrament, to grasp the link with the personal vocation of every baptized person and with the theology of charisms, to take better care of pastoral care, so that it does not become a moment formal and not very significant. Every vocational journey has the Holy Spirit as protagonist: He is the “inner master” to be led by.

An authentic experience of God

62. The first condition for vocational discernment in the Spirit is authentic experience of faith in the dead and risen Christ, remembering that it “is not light that dissipates all our darkness, but a lamp that guides

our steps in the night, and this is enough for the journey “(Pope Francis, *Lumen fidei*, 57). In Christian communities sometimes we risk propose, beyond the intentions, an ethical and therapeutic theism, which responds to the need for security and comfort of the human being, rather than a living encounter with God in the light of Gospel and in the power of the Spirit. If it is true that life is awakened only through the life, it becomes clear that young people need to meet deeply rooted Christian communities really in friendship with Christ, who leads us to the Father in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter I: The Gift of Youth (and Young Adulthood)

Young Jesus among the young people

The youth (and young adulthood) of Jesus

63. “Young man among the young to become an example for the young and consecrate them to the Lord” (Irenaeus, *Against heresies*, II, 22.4), Christ sanctified youth (and young adulthood) for the very fact of having lived it. The biblical narrative presents only one episode of the younger years of Jesus (cf. Lk 2: 41-52), which was lived without clamor, in the simplicity and diligence of Nazareth, so much so as to be recognized as “the carpenter” (Mk 6: 3) and “the son of the carpenter” (Matt 13,55).

Contemplating his life, we can best grasp the blessings of youth and young adulthood: Jesus had an unconditional trust in the Father, he looked after the friendship with his disciples, and even in times of crisis, he remained faithful to it. Jesus manifested deep compassion towards the weakest, especially the poor, the sick, sinners and the excluded. He had the courage to face the religious and political authorities of his time; he did experience the feeling of being misunderstood and discarded; he felt the fear of suffering and knew the fragility of the Passion; he turned his gaze to the future by entrusting himself to the sure hands of the Father and the power of the Spirit. In Jesus all young people can find each other, with their fears and their hopes, their uncertainties and their dreams and to him they can trust. It will be their source of inspiration to contemplate the meetings of Jesus with the young.

With the gaze of the Lord

64. Listening to Christ and communion with him also allow pastors and educators to mature a wise reading of this season of life. The Synod has tried to look at young people with the attitude of Jesus, to discern signs in their lives of the action of the Spirit. In fact, we believe that even today God speaks to the Church and to the world through the young, their creativity and their commitment, as well as their sufferings and their requests for help. With them we can more prophetically read our age and recognize the signs of the times; this is why young people are one of the “theological places” in which the Lord makes us know some of his expectations and challenges to build tomorrow.

Characters of the young age

65. Youth (and young adulthood), the stage of personality development, is marked by dreams that are embodied, from relationships that acquire more consistency and balance, from attempts and experiments, from choices that gradually build a life project. In this season of life, young people are called to project forward without cutting off roots, to build autonomy, but not in solitude. Yet the social, economic, and cultural contexts do not always offer favorable conditions. Many young saints have made them shine lineaments of youthful age in all their beauty and were in their era true prophets of change; their example shows what young people are capable of when they open up to the encounter with Christ.

Even young people with disabilities or those suffering from diseases can make a valuable contribution. The Synod invites the communities to make room for initiatives that recognize them and allow them to be protagonists, for example with the use of sign language for the deaf, itineraries catechistic opportunely finalized, associative experiences or work placement.

The healthy restlessness of young people

66. Young people are bearers of an anxiety that must first be accepted, respected and accompanied, betting with conviction on their freedom and responsibility. The church knows from experience that their

contribution is fundamental for its renewal. Young people, for certain aspects may be ahead of the shepherds. On Easter morning the young Beloved Disciple arrived first at the sepulcher, preceding Peter weighed down by age in his race and from betrayal (see Jn 20: 1-10); in the same way the dynamism in the Christian community, youth (and young adulthood) is a renewing energy for the Church, because it helps it to shake off heaviness and slowness and to open up to the Risen One. At the same time, the attitude of the Beloved Disciple indicates that it is important to remain connected with the experience of the elderly, recognize the role of pastors and not go forward on their own. This will have the symphony of voices which is the fruit of the Spirit.

The wounded young people

67. The life of young people, like that of everyone, is also marked by wounds. They are the wounds of the defeats of one's own history, frustrated desires, discriminations and injustices, of not having felt loved or recognized. They are wounds of the body and the psyche. Christ, who has accepted to cross the passion and death, through His cross becomes the neighbor of all young people who suffer. Then there are the moral wounds, the weight of their mistakes, the feelings of guilt for to be wrong. Reconciling oneself with one's wounds is more than ever a necessary condition for today a good life. The Church is called to support all young people in their trials and a promote appropriate pastoral actions.

Becoming an adult

The age of choices

68. Youth (and young adulthood) is a season of life that must end, to make room for the ages of adulthood. This passage does not take place in a purely personal way, but implies a journey of maturation, which is not always facilitated by the environment in which young people live. In many regions, there has, in fact, spread a culture of the provisional that favors an indefinite extension of adolescence and the return of decisions; the fear of the definitive thus generates a sort of decision paralysis. But youth (and young adults) cannot remain in a suspended time: this is the age of choices and this is precisely its appeal and its greatest task. The young people make decisions in the professional, social, political, and other more radical that they will give their existence a decisive configuration. It's about these last ones that one speaks more precisely of "choices of life": it is in fact life itself, in its singularity unrepeatable, which receives definitive orientation.

Existence under the sign of the mission

69. Pope Francis invites young people to think about their life on the horizon of the mission: "Many times in life we waste time asking ourselves: 'Who am I?'. You can ask yourself who you are and have a whole life looking for who you are. But ask yourself: 'For who I am me?'" (Speech in the prayer vigil in preparation for World Youth Day, Basilica of St. Mary Major, 8 April 2017). This statement illuminates in a profound way of life choices, because it urges us to take them on the liberating horizon of gift of self. This is the only way to achieve authentic and lasting happiness! Indeed, "the mission to the heart of the people is not a part of my life, or a ornament that I can take away, it is not an appendix, or a moment among the many of existence. It is something that I cannot uproot from my being if I do not want to destroy myself. I am a mission on this earth, and for this I find myself in this world" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 273).

A pedagogy capable of questioning

70. The mission is a sure compass for the journey of life, but it is not a "navigator", showing all the way in advance. Freedom always brings with it a dimension of risk that must be valued with courage and accompanied with gradualness and wisdom. Many pages of the Gospel show us Jesus who invites us to dare, to take off, to pass by logic of the observance of the precepts to that of the generous and unconditional gift, without to hide the need to take up one's own cross (see Mt 16,24). He is radical: "He gives everything and asks for everything: he gives total love and asks for an undivided heart" (Pope Francis, Homily of October 14, 2018). Avoiding deluding young people with minimal proposals or suffocating them with a set of rules that give Christianity a reductive and moralistic image, we are called

to invest on their audacity and educate them to assume their responsibilities, certain that even error, failure and crisis are experiences that can strengthen them humanity.

The true sense of authority

71. To fulfill a true path of maturation, young people need authoritative adults. In its etymological meaning, authority indicates the ability to grow; it does not express the idea of a directive power, but of a real generative force. When Jesus he met the young, in whatever state and condition they were, even if they were dead, in one way or another he told them: “Get up! Grow up!” And his word realized what he said (see Mk 5:41, Lk 7:14). In the episode of the healing of the demoniac epileptic (cf. Mk 9: 14-29), which evokes many forms of alienation of today’s youth (and young adults), it is clear that the close of the hand of Jesus is not to remove freedom but to activate it, to free it. Jesus fully exercises his authority: he wants nothing more than the growth of the young, without any possessiveness, manipulation, and seduction.

The link with the family

72. The family is the first community of faith in which, even between limits and incompleteness, the young person experiences the love of God and begins to discern his own vocation. The Synods previous, and the subsequent Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, do not cease to underline that the family, as a domestic Church, has the task of living the joy of the Gospel in daily life and make all the members participate according to their condition, remaining open to the vocational and missionary dimension.

However, families do not always educate their children to look to the future in a vocational logic. Sometimes the search for social prestige or personal success, the ambition of parents or the tendency to determine the choices of children invade the space of discernment and they condition decisions. The Synod recognizes the need to help families to hire in a clearer way a conception of life as a vocation. The Gospel story of Jesus adolescent (see Lk 2: 41-52), submissive to parents but capable of detaching from them for taking care of the things of the Father, he can offer precious lights to set up the Gospel in an evangelical way in family relationships.

Called for freedom

The Gospel of freedom

73. Freedom is an essential condition for every authentic choice of life. It risks however of be misunderstood, also because it is not always adequately presented. The Church itself ends to appear to many young people as an institution that imposes rules, prohibitions and obligations. Christ instead “he freed us for freedom” (Gal 5: 1), making us pass from the regime of the Law a that of the Spirit. In the light of the Gospel, it is appropriate today to recognize with greater clarity that freedom is constitutively relational and show that the passions and emotions are relevant to the extent to which they orientate towards authentic encounter with each other. One such perspective clearly states that true freedom is understandable and only possible in relation to the truth (see Jn 8: 31-32) and above all to charity (see 1Cor 13:1-13, Gal 5:13): freedom is being oneself in the heart of another.

Responsorial freedom

74. Through the fraternity and solidarity lived, especially with the last, the young they discover that authentic freedom arises from feeling welcomed and grows in making room for another. They have a similar experience when they commit themselves to cultivating sobriety or respect environment. The experience of mutual recognition and shared commitment there it leads us to discover that their heart is inhabited by a silent appeal to the love that comes from God. It becomes easier to recognize the transcendent dimension that freedom brings originally in itself and that in contact with the most intense experiences of life—birth and the death, friendship and love, guilt and forgiveness—is more clearly awakened. It is precisely these experiences that help to recognize that the nature of freedom is radically responsorial.

Freedom and faith

75. More than 50 years ago, St. Paul VI introduced the expression “dialogue of salvation” and he interpreted the mission of the Son in the world as the expression of a “formidable question of love”. He added, however, that we are “free to correspond with or reject it” (see *Ecclesiam suam*, n. 77). In this perspective, the act of personal faith appears as free and liberating: it will be the starting point for a gradual appropriation of the contents of the faith. Faith therefore it does not constitute an element that is added almost from the outside to freedom, but fulfills the yearning of conscience to truth, to goodness and to beauty, finding them fully in Jesus. The testimony of many young martyrs of the past and present, resounded strongly to the Synod, it is the most convincing proof that faith sets free against the powers of the world, its injustices and even in the face of death.

The wounded and redeemed freedom

76. Human freedom is marked by the wounds of personal sin and concupiscence. But when, thanks to forgiveness and mercy, the person becomes aware of the obstacles that imprison it, grows in maturity and can engage with more lucidity in the choices definitive of life. From an educational perspective, it is important to help young people not to be discouraged by errors and failures, though humiliating, because they are an integral part of the journey towards a more mature freedom, conscious of its own greatness and weakness.

But evil does not have the last word: “For God so loved the world that he gave his Son only begotten” (Jn 3:16). He loved us to the end and thus redeemed our freedom. Dying for us on the cross he poured out the Spirit, and “where there is the Spirit of the Lord is there freedom” (2 Cor 3:17): a new, paschal freedom that is fulfilled in the daily gift of self.

Chapter II: The Mystery of Vocation

The search for a vocation

Vocation, travel and discovery

77. The story of Samuel’s call (see 1 Sam 3:1-21) makes it possible to grasp the features fundamental principles of discernment: listening to and recognizing the divine initiative, a personal experience, a progressive understanding, and patient support respectful of the mystery in progress, a community destination. The vocation does not impose itself to Samuel as a destiny to be suffered; it is a proposal of love, a missionary sending in one history of everyday mutual trust.

As for the young Samuel, so for every man and every woman the vocation, despite having strong and privileged moments, involves a long journey. The Word of the Lord requires time to be understood and interpreted; the mission to which it calls is gradually revealed. Young people they are fascinated by the adventure of progressive self-discovery. They willingly learn from activities that they perform, from meetings and relationships, putting themselves to the test in everyday life. But they need to be helped to gather the different experiences in unity and to read them in a faith perspective, overcoming the risk of dispersion and recognizing the signs with which God speaks. In the discovery of the vocation, not everything is immediately clear, because faith “‘sees’ in the measure in which he walks, in which he enters the space opened by the Word of God” (Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, 9).

Vocation, grace, and freedom

78. Over the centuries, the theological understanding of the mystery of vocation has known different emphases, according to the social and ecclesial context within which the theme has been worked out. In any case, the analogical character of the term “vocation” must be recognized and the many dimensions that characterize the reality that it designates. This leads, from time to time, to highlight individual aspects, with perspectives that do not always have able to safeguard with equal balance the complexity of the whole. To seize profoundly in the mystery of the vocation which finds its ultimate origin in God, we are therefore called to purify our imagery and our religious language, rediscovering the wealth and balance of the biblical narration. The interweaving of divine choice and human freedom, in particular, must be thought out of all determinism and of every extrinsicism. There vocation is neither a script

already written that human beings should simply recite or a theatrical improvisation without a trace. Because God calls us to be friends and not served (see Jn 15:13), our choices contribute in a real way to the historical unfolding of God's project of love. The economy of salvation, on the other hand, is a Mystery that surpasses us infinitely; for this reason, only listening to the Lord can reveal to us what part we are called to have in it. Cultured in this light, the vocation really appears as a gift of grace and of covenant, as the most beautiful and precious secret of our freedom.

Creation and vocation

79. Affirming that all things were created through Christ and in view of Him (see Col 1:16), the Scriptures orientate to read the mystery of the vocation as a reality that it marks the very creation of God. God created with his Word that "calls" to being and to life and then "distinguishes" in the chaos of indistinct, giving beauty to the cosmos of order and the harmony of diversity. If already St. Paul VI had said that "every life is vocation" (see *Populorum progressio*, 15), Benedict XVI insisted that being human is created as a dialogical being: the creative Word "calls each one in terms personal, thus revealing that life itself is a vocation in relation to God" (see *Verbum Domini*, 77).

For a vocational culture

80. Speaking of human existence in vocational terms allows us to highlight some elements that are very important for the growth of a young person: it means to exclude it is determined by destiny or by chance, as well as being a private asset to be managed in own. If in the first case there is no vocation because there is no recognition of one destination worthy of existence, in the second a human being thought "without bonds" becomes "without vocation". This is why it is important to create the conditions because in all Christian communities, starting from the baptismal conscience of their members, develop a true one and his own vocational culture and a constant commitment to prayer for vocations.

The vocation to follow Jesus

The charm of Jesus

81. Many young people are fascinated by the figure of Jesus. His life looks good to them beautiful, because poor and simple, made of sincere and deep friendships, spent for the brothers with generosity, never closed to anyone, but always available to the gift. The life of Jesus remains also today deeply attractive and inspiring; it is a provocation for all young people that challenges. The Church knows that this is due to the fact that Jesus has a profound connection with every human being because "Christ, who is the new Adam, just revealing the mystery of the Father and his love also fully reveals man to himself and manifests his highest vocation" (see *Gaudium et Spes*, n.22).

Faith, vocation and discipleship

82. In fact Jesus not only fascinated with his life, but also called explicitly to the faith. He met men and women who recognized him gestures and in his words the right way to talk about God and to relate to him, by accessing that faith that leads to salvation: "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace!" (Lk 8:48). Others who met him were instead called to become his disciples and witnesses. He did not hide from those who want to be his disciple the need to take up his own cross every day and to follow him on a paschal path of death and resurrection. Faith witness continues to live in the Church, sign and instrument of salvation for all peoples. The belonging to the community of Jesus has always known different forms of sequela. There most of the disciples lived their faith in the ordinary conditions of daily life; others, however, including some female figures, shared itinerant existence and prophetic of the Master (see Lk 8,1-3); from the beginning the apostles played a role particular in the community and have been associated with him by his ministry of guidance and of preaching.

The Virgin Mary

83. Among all the biblical figures that illustrate the mystery of the vocation must be contemplated in singular way that of Mary. Young woman who with her "yes" made it possible the Incarnation creating the conditions so that every other ecclesial vocation can be generated, she remains the first disciple of Jesus and the model of every discipleship. In his pilgrimage of faith, Mary followed her Son to the foot of

the cross, and, after the Resurrection, accompanied the nascent Church at Pentecost. As a mother and a teacher merciful continues to accompany the Church and to implore the Spirit that vivifies every one's vocation. It is therefore evident that the "Marian principle" has an eminent role and illuminates the whole the life of the Church in its various manifestations. Next to the Virgin, also the figure Joseph's husband is an exemplary model of vocational response.

Vocation and vocations

Vocation and mission of the Church

84. It is not possible to comprehend fully the meaning of the baptismal vocation if not it is considered that it is for everyone, nobody excluded, a call to holiness. This appeal necessarily implies an invitation to participate in the mission of the Church, which has how fundamental purpose is communion with God and among all people. Ecclesial vocations in fact they are manifold and articulated expressions through which the Church realizes her call to be a real sign of the Gospel welcomed in a fraternal community. The different forms of sequela di Cristo express, each in its own way, the mission of witnessing the event of Jesus, in whom every man and every woman find salvation.

The variety of charisms

85. Saint Paul returns several times in his letters on this theme, recalling the image of the Church as a body made up of various members and emphasizing that each member it is necessary and at the same time relative to the whole, since only the unity of all makes the body living and harmonious. The origin of this communion is found by the Apostle in the same mystery of the Most Holy Trinity: "There are different charisms, but only one is the Spirit; There are different ministries, but only one is the Lord; there are different activities, but only one is God he works all in all" (1 Cor 12: 4-6). The Second Vatican Council and the subsequent Magisterium offer precious indications to elaborate a correct theology of charisms and ministries in the Church, in such a way as to welcome with grateful appreciation and value the gifts of grace that the Spirit continually rises in the Church to rejuvenate it.

Profession and vocation

86. For many young people, professional orientation is lived in a vocational horizon. It is not uncommon to reject attractive job offers that are not in line with Christian values, and the choice of training paths is made wondering how to make personal talents fruitful at the service of the Kingdom of God. Work is for many occasions to recognize and value the gifts received: in this way men and women participate actively in the Trinitarian mystery of creation, redemption and sanctification.

The family

87. The two recent Synodal Assemblies on the Family, followed by the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, have offered a rich contribution to the vocation of the family in the Church and the irreplaceable contribution that families are called to give to testimony of the Gospel through mutual love, generation and education of children. While referring to the wealth that emerged in recent documents, it is important to reclaim these messages to rediscover this calling and make young people understand the beauty of the vocation of marriage.

Consecrated life

88. The gift of the consecrated life, in its contemplative and active form, that it is the Spirit awakening in the Church has a particular prophetic value as it is witness joyful of the gratuitousness of love. When religious communities and new foundations live authentically the fraternity they become schools of communion, centers of prayer and of contemplation, places of witness to intergenerational and intercultural dialogue and spaces for evangelization and charity. The mission of many consecrated men and women who are take care of the last in the outskirts of the world concretely manifest the dedication of an outgoing Church. If in some regions it experiences numerical reduction and fatigue of aging, consecrated life continues to be fruitful and creative even through co-responsibility with many lay people who share the spirit and the mission of the different charisms. The Church and the world cannot do without this vocational gift, which constitutes a great resource for our time.

The ordained ministry

89. The Church has always had particular care for vocations to the ordained ministry, in the knowledge that the latter is a constitutive element of his identity and is necessary for Christian life. For this reason, it has always cultivated specific attention for the formation and accompaniment of candidates for the presbyterate. The concern of many churches due to their numeric decline necessitates a renewed reflection on the vocation to the ordained ministry and to a vocational pastoral care that can make the charm of the person of Jesus and his call to become shepherds of his flock. Also there vocation to the permanent diaconate requires more attention, because it constitutes one a resource that has not yet developed all its potential.

The condition of the “single”

90. The Synod reflected on the condition of people living as “single”, recognizing that with this term we can indicate very different life situations between them. This situation may depend on many reasons, voluntary or involuntary, and on factors cultural, religious, social. It can therefore express a very wide range of paths. The Church recognizes that this condition, assumed in a logic of faith and gift, can become one of the many ways through which the grace of baptism is carried out and one walks towards that holiness to which we are all called.

Chapter III: The Mission of Accompaniment

The Church that accompanies

Faced with choices

91. In the contemporary world, characterized by an increasingly evident pluralism and by an ever-wider availability of options, the theme of choices is particularly particular strength and at different levels, especially in the face of ever less linear life itineraries, characterized by great precariousness. In fact, young people often move between extreme approaches as naive: from considering itself to the mercy of an already written and inexorable destiny, to feeling itself overwhelmed by an abstract ideal of excellence, in a context of unregulated competition violent.

Accompanying to make valid, stable and well-founded choices is therefore a service of which yes he feels the need widely. Be present, support and accompany the itinerary towards authentic choices are for the Church a way of exercising one’s maternal function by generating to the freedom of the children of God. This service is nothing other than the continuation of the way in which the God of Jesus Christ acts towards his people: through a constant and cordial presence, a dedicated and loving closeness and a boundless tenderness.

Break bread together

92. As the story of the disciples of Emmaus teaches, to accompany requires the willingness to work together a stretch of road, establishing a meaningful relationship. The origin of the term “accompany” refers to the broken and shared bread (*cum pane*), with all the human and sacramental symbolic richness of this reference. It is therefore the community as a whole the first subject of accompaniment, precisely because in its bosom it is develops that web of relationships that can support the person in his path and provide them points of reference and orientation. Accompaniment in human and Christian growth towards adult life is one of the ways in which the community shows itself capable of renewing itself and of renew the world.

The Eucharist is a living memory of the Easter event, a privileged place for evangelization and transmission of faith in view of the mission. In the assembly gathered in the Eucharistic celebration, the experience of being personally touched, educated and healed by Jesus accompanies each person on his journey of personal growth.

Environments and roles

93. In addition to family members, those who are called to play a role of accompaniment include all of the significant persons in the different spheres of life of a young person, including teachers, animators, coaches, and other reference figures, including professionals. Priests and religious, despite not having the monopoly of accompaniment, have a specific task that stems from their vocation and which must rediscover, as requested by the young people present at the Synodal Assembly, in the name of many others. The experience of some churches enhances the role of catechists as companions of Christian communities and their members.

Accompany the insertion in the society

94. Accompaniment cannot be limited to the path of spiritual growth and practices of the Christian life. Equally fruitful is the accompaniment along the path of progressive acceptance of responsibility within the company, for example in the field professional or socio-political commitment. In this sense, the Synodal Assembly recommends the enhancement of the social doctrine of the Church. Within companies and communities more intercultural and multi-religious ecclesial groups, accompaniment is necessary specific to the relationship with diversity, which enhances it as a mutual enrichment and possibility of fraternal communion, against the double temptation of identity retreat and of relativism.

Community, group and personal accompaniment

A fruitful tension

95. There is a constitutive complementarity between personal accompaniment and that community that every spirituality or ecclesial sensitivity is called to articulate in a manner original. It will be above all in some particularly delicate moments, for example the phase of the discernment with respect to fundamental life choices or the crossing of critical moments, that direct personal accompaniment will be particularly fruitful. Remains however important also in daily life as a way to deepen the relationship with the Lord.

The urgency of personally accompanying seminarians and young priests is emphasized, religious in formation, as well as couples on the journey of preparation for marriage and in the early days after the celebration of the sacrament, inspired by the catechumenate.

Community and group accompaniment

96. Jesus accompanied the group of his disciples sharing life with them of every day. The community experience highlights the quality and limitations of each and every person it makes the humble conscience grow that without sharing the gifts received for the good of all it is not possible to follow the Lord.

This continuous experience in the practice of the Church, which sees young people inserted into groups, movements and associations of various kinds, in which they experience the warm and welcoming environment and the intensity of relationships they desire. The inclusion in reality of this type is particular importance once the path of Christian initiation is completed, because it offers young people the ground to continue the maturation of one's Christian vocation. In these environments the presence of shepherds should be encouraged, so as to guarantee adequate accompaniment.

In educator and animator groups they represent a point of reference in terms of accompaniment, while the friendships that develop within them constitute the ground for peer support.

Personal spiritual accompaniment

97. Spiritual accompaniment is a process that aims to help the person to integrate progressively the different dimensions of life to follow the Lord Jesus. In this, three instances are articulated: listening to life, meeting Jesus, and mysterious dialogue between the freedom of God and that of the person. Who accompanies welcomes with patience, it raises the most real questions and recognizes the signs of the Spirit in the response of the young.

In personal spiritual accompaniment, one learns to recognize, interpret and choose in the perspective of faith, listening to what the Spirit suggests within the life of every day (see Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 169-173). The charism spiritual accompaniment, even in tradition, is not necessarily linked

to ordained ministry. Never as today there is a need for spiritual guides, fathers and mothers with one profound experience of faith and humanity and not only intellectually prepared. The Synod yes wishes that there will be a rediscovery in this area also of the great generative resource of the consecrated life, especially that of women, and of lay people, adults and young people, well-trained.

Accompaniment and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

98. The Sacrament of Reconciliation plays an indispensable role to proceed in life of faith, which is marked not only by the limit and by fragility, but also by sin. The ministry of reconciliation and spiritual accompaniment must be suitably distinct because they have different purposes and forms. It is pastorally opportune a healthy and wise gradualness of penitential paths, with the involvement of a plurality of educational figures, which help young people to read their moral life, to mature a correct one a sense of sin and above all to open oneself to the liberating joy of mercy.

An integral accompaniment

99. The Synod then recognizes the need to promote integral accompaniment, in whose spiritual aspects are well integrated with human and social ones. As Pope Francis explains, “spiritual discernment does not exclude the contributions of human wisdom, existential, psychological, sociological or moral. But it transcends them” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, n. 170). These are elements to be seized in a dynamic and respectful manner spirituality and culture, without exclusions and without confusion.

Psychological or psychotherapeutic accompaniment, if open to transcendence, can reveal itself fundamental for a journey of integration of the personality, reopening to the possible vocational growth some aspects of personality closed or blocked. The young live all the wealth and the fragility of being an “open construction site”. Psychological processing could not only to help you retrace your story with patience, but also to reopen questions for reach a more stable emotional balance.

The accompaniment in formation to the ordained ministry and to the consecrated life

100. In welcoming young people in training houses or seminaries, it is important to check sufficient rooting in a community, a stability in relations of friendship with peers, in the commitment to study or work, in contact with poverty and suffering. In spiritual accompaniment it is crucial to start prayer and inner work, learning discernment first of all in one’s life, even through forms of renunciation and asceticism. Celibacy for the Kingdom (see Mt 19,12) should be understood as a gift to be recognized and verified in freedom, joy, gratuity and humility, before admission to orders or first profession. The contribution of psychology is to be understood as aid for the affective maturation and the integration of the personality, to be included in the itinerary training according to professional deontology and respect for the effective freedom of those in training. The figure of the rector or of whoever is responsible for formation becomes more and more important to unify the formative journey, to arrive at a realistic discernment consulting all the people involved in the training and to decide on the eventuality to interrupt the formative journey by helping to proceed in another vocational way.

Once the initial phase of the training has been completed, it is necessary to ensure the formation perm the accompaniment of priests, consecrated and consecrated, especially the youngest. These yes they often find themselves confronted with disproportionate challenges and responsibilities. The task of accompany them not only to special delegates, but must be exercised personally from bishops and superiors.

Quality escorts

Called to accompany

101. In many ways young people have asked us to qualify the figure of the companions. The accompaniment service is a genuine mission, which solicits availability apostolic of those who do it. Like the deacon Philip, the (pastoral leader) is called a obeying the call of the Spirit by going out and leaving the enclosure of the walls of Jerusalem, figure of the Christian community, to go to a deserted and inhospitable place, perhaps dangerous, where to work hard to chase a wagon. Reached him, he must find the way to enter into a relationship with the foreign traveler, to arouse a question that perhaps spontaneously it would never have been formulated (see Acts 8: 26-40). In short, accompany it requires to

make itself available, of the Spirit of the Lord and of who is accompanied, with all their qualities and abilities, and then have the courage to step aside with humility.

The profile of the companion

102. A good companion is a balanced person, who listens, has a life of faith and prayer, which measures itself with his or her own weaknesses and fragility. This is why the companion knows how to be welcoming towards young people; they accompany without moralism and without false indulgences. They also know when it is necessary to offer a word of fraternal correction.

The awareness that accompanying is a mission that requires deep roots in spiritual life will help him to keep him or herself free with the young people he or she accompanies: he or she will respect the outcome of the young person's journey, supporting them with prayer, and rejoicing in the fruits that come. The Spirit produces in those who open their hearts, without trying to impose their will and their own preferences. Equally he or she will be able to put him or herself at the service of the other, rather than occupy the center of the scene, or assume possessive and manipulative attitudes that are addictive and not freedom in people. This profound respect will also be the best guarantee against the risks of plagiarism and abuse of all kinds.

The importance of training

103. In order to be able to carry out their service, the guide will need to cultivate their own spiritual life, nourishing the relationship that binds him or herself to the One who assigned him the mission. At the same time, he or she will need to feel the support of the ecclesial community of which they belong. It will be important that they receive specific training for their particular ministry and which can also benefit from support and supervision.

It should finally be remembered that characterizing features of being a Church that possesses a great appreciation of young people is the availability and ability to work in a team: in this way it is more significant, effective, and incisive in the training of young people. This competence in community work requires the maturation of specific relational virtues: the discipline of listening and the ability to make space to another, readiness in forgiveness and the willingness to get involved in a true spirituality of communion.

Chapter IV: The Art of Discerning

The Church, environment for discernment

A constellation of meanings in the variety of spiritual traditions

104. Vocational accompaniment is a fundamental dimension of a process of discernment by the person who is called to choose. The term "discernment" is used in a variety of meanings, although connected to each other. In a more general sense, discernment indicates the process in which important decisions are made; in a second sense, more proper to the Christian tradition and on which we will dwell particularly, corresponds to the spiritual dynamics through which a person, a group or a community try to recognize and to accept God's will in the concrete of their situation: "Check everything and keep what is good" (1 Thes 5:21). As attention to recognizing the voice of the Spirit and to accept his call, discernment is an essential dimension of the style of life of Jesus, a basic attitude far more than a punctual act.

Throughout the history of the Church the different spiritualities have faced the theme of discernment, with different emphases also in relation to the different charismatic sensibilities and eras historical. During the Synod we have recognized some common elements that do not eliminate the diversity of languages: the presence of God in the life and history of each person; the possibility of recognizing the action; the role of prayer, of sacramental life and asceticism; the continuous confrontation with the demands of the Word of God; freedom compared to certainties acquired; constant verification with daily life; the importance of an adequate accompaniment.

The constitutive return to the Word and to the Church

105. As “an interior attitude that is rooted in an act of faith” (Pope Francis, *Address to the 1st General Congregation of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, 3 October 2018), the discernment is constitutively referring to the Church, the whose mission is to make every man and woman meet that Lord who is already at work in their life and in their hearts.

The context of the ecclesial community fosters a climate of trust and freedom in research of one’s own vocation in an environment of meditation and prayer; offers opportunities concrete for the re-reading of one’s own history and the discovery of one’s own gifts and one’s own vulnerability in the light of the Word of God; allows you to compare yourself with witnesses that they embody different life options. Even the meeting with the poor solicits the deepening of what is essential in existence, while the sacraments—in particular the Eucharist and the Reconciliation—nurture and support those who set out to discover the will of God.

The community horizon is always involved in every discernment, never reducible to the sole individual dimension. At the same time every personal discernment challenges the community, urging her to listen to what the Spirit suggests to her through experience spiritual of its members: like every believer, the Church is always in discernment.

Consciousness in discernment

God speaks to the heart

106. Discernment calls attention to what happens in the heart of every man and of every woman. In biblical texts the term “heart” is used to indicate the central point of the interiority of the person, where listening to the Word that God constantly addresses to them becomes a criterion for evaluating life and choices (see Ps 139). The Bible considers the personal dimension, but at the same time emphasizes the community one. Even the “new heart” promised by the prophets is not an individual gift, but concerns all of Israel, in whose tradition and salvific history the believer is inserted (see Ez 36: 26-27). The Gospels go on on the same line: Jesus insists on the importance of interiority and places the center of the heart in the heart moral life (see Mt 15: 18-20).

The Christian idea of conscience

107. The apostle Paul enriches what the biblical tradition has elaborated regarding the heart putting it in relation with the term “conscience”, which assumes from the culture of his time. It is in the conscience that the fruit of encounter and communion with Christ is grasped: a saving transformation and the reception of a new freedom. Christian tradition insists on the conscience as a privileged place for special intimacy with God and for encounter with Him, in which His voice makes itself present: “Conscience is the most secret nucleus and the shrine of man, where he is alone with God, whose voice resounds in intimacy” (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 16). This consciousness does not coincide with immediate and superficial feeling, nor with one “Self-awareness”: it attests to a transcendent presence, which each one finds in his own interiority, but not available.

The formation of consciousness

108. Forming the conscience is the path of all life in which one learns to nourish the same feelings of Jesus Christ by adopting the criteria of his choices and the intentions of his actions (cf. Phil 2:5). To reach the deepest dimension of consciousness, according to the vision Christian, it is important a cure for the interiority that includes above all times of silence, of prayerful contemplation and listening to the Word, the support of sacramental practice and the Church’s teaching. Furthermore, a habitual practice of the good, verified, is necessary in the examination of conscience: an exercise in which it is not only a question of identifying sins, but also to recognize the work of God in his daily experience, in the events of history and cultures in which it is inserted, in the testimony of many other men and women who are there they have preceded or accompanied us with their wisdom. All this helps to grow in the virtue of prudence, articulating the global orientation of existence with concrete choices, in the serene awareness of their gifts and their limits. The young Solomon has asked for this gift more than anything else (see 1 Kings 3,9).

Ecclesial conscience

109. The conscience of every believer in his most personal dimension is always in relationship with the ecclesial conscience. It is only through the mediation of the Church and of her a tradition of faith that we can access the authentic face of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Spiritual discernment thus presents itself as the sincere work of conscience, in its commitment to know the possible good on which to decide responsibly in the correct exercise of practical reason, within and in the light of the personal relationship with the Lord Jesus.

The practice of discernment

Familiarity with the Lord

110. As an encounter with the Lord who becomes present in the intimacy of the heart, the discernment can be understood as an authentic form of prayer. For this it requires adequate timing of recollection, both in the regularity of daily life and in moments privileged, such as retreats, courses of spiritual exercises, pilgrimages, etc. A serious discernment it feeds on all occasions for meeting with the Lord and for deepening familiarity with Him, in the different forms with which it is made present: the Sacraments, and in particular the Eucharist and Reconciliation; listening and meditating on the Word of God, the *Lectio divina* in the community; the fraternal experience of common life; the meeting with the poor with whom the Lord Jesus identifies himself.

The dispositions of the heart

111. Opening oneself to listening to the voice of the Spirit requires precise interior dispositions: the first is the attention of the heart, favored by a silence and an emptying that requires asceticism. Equally important are awareness, acceptance of self and the repentance, united with the willingness to put order in one's own life, abandoning that that it should prove to be an obstacle, and reacquire the inner freedom necessary to make choices guided only by the Holy Spirit. Good discernment also requires attention to movements of one's heart, growing in the ability to recognize them and give them a name. Finally, discernment requires the courage to engage in spiritual struggle, since it does not the temptations and obstacles that the Malignant poses on our path will fail to manifest.

The accompanying dialogue

112. Different spiritual traditions agree that good discernment require a regular confrontation with a spiritual guide. Bring to word in an authentic way and his personal experiences favor the clarification. At the same time the chaperone assumes an essential function of external confrontation, becoming a mediator of presence maternal of the Church. This is a delicate function referred to in the chapter previous one.

The decision and confirmation

113. Discernment as a dimension of the style of life of Jesus and his disciples allows concrete processes that aim to come out of indeterminacy by assuming the responsibility for decisions. The processes of discernment cannot therefore last indefinitely, both in cases of personal paths, both in community and institutional ones. At the decision follows an equally fundamental stage of implementation and verification in life daily. It will therefore be essential to continue in a phase of attentive listening to inner resonances to grasp the voice of the Spirit. The comparison with concreteness takes place a specific importance at this stage. In particular, various spiritual traditions report the value of fraternal life and service to the poor as a testing ground for the decisions taken and as a place where the person fully reveals himself.

PART III

“They left without delay”

114. “And they said one to another: ‘Our heart might not burn within us while he talked with us along the way, when he explained the Scriptures to us?’ They left without delay and they returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Eleven and the others they were with them, who said: ‘Truly the Lord is risen and has appeared to Simon!’ And they narrated what had happened along the way and how they had recognized it in breaking the bread” (Lk 24: 32-35).

From listening to the Word, we move on to the joy of an encounter that fills the heart, gives meaning to existence and infuses new energy. The faces light up and the path regains its strength: it is the light and the strength of the vocational response that becomes a mission towards the community and the world whole. Without delay and without fear the disciples return on their steps to reach the brothers and witness their meeting with the risen Jesus.

A young Church

A resurrection icon

115. In continuity with the Easter inspiration of Emmaus, the icon of Mary Magdalene (cf. Jn 20: 1-18) illuminates the path that the Church wants to accomplish with and for young people like fruit of this Synod: a path of resurrection that leads to proclamation and to mission. Inhabited by a deep desire of the Lord, defying the darkness of the night, Magdalene runs from Peter and from the other disciple; her movement triggers theirs, her feminine dedication anticipates the path of the apostles and opens the way for them. At the dawn of that day, the first of the week, comes the surprise of the meeting: Mary looked for why he loved, but finds because she is loved. The Risen One is recognized by calling it by name and he asks her not to hold him back, because his Risen Body is not a treasure to be imprisoned, but a Mystery to share. Thus, she becomes the first missionary disciple, the apostle of the apostles. Healed from his wounds (see Lk 8:2) and witness to the resurrection, it is the image of the young Church we dream of.

Walking with young people

116. The passion for seeking the truth, the amazement before the beauty of the Lord, the ability to share and the joy of the ad live in the hearts of so many young people today who are living members of the Church. So it is not a matter of doing just something “for them”, but to live in communion “with them”, growing together in the understanding of the Gospel and in the search for the most authentic forms to live it and witness it. The responsible participation of the young in the life of the Church is not optional, but a requirement of life of baptismal service and an indispensable element for the life of every community. The labors and fragility young people help us to be better, their questions challenge us, their doubts there question the quality of our faith. Even their criticisms are necessary, because not infrequently we listen to the voice of the Lord who asks us to convert the heart and renovation of the structures.

The desire to reach all young people

117. At the Synod we have always asked ourselves about young people, not just in mind those who are part of the Church and actively work in it, but also all those who they have other visions of life, profess other faiths or declare themselves strangers on the horizon religious. All young people, no one excluded, are in the heart of God and therefore also in the heart of the Church. However, we recognize frankly that this statement is not always one that resounds on our lips or finds real expression in our pastoral action: often we remain closed in our environments, where their voice does not arrive, or we dedicate ourselves to activities less demanding and more rewarding, stifling that healthy pastoral restlessness that brings us out from our supposed security. Yet the Gospel asks us to dare and we want to do it without it presumption and without proselytizing, bearing witness to the love of the Lord and holding out his hand to all the young people of the world.

Spiritual, pastoral and missionary conversion

118. Pope Francis often reminds us that this is not possible without a serious journey of conversion. We are aware that it is not just a matter of giving rise to new activities and we do not want to write “expansive, meticulous and well-designed apostolic plans, typical of the defeated generals” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 96). We know that to be credible we must live a reform of the Church, which involves purification of the heart and changes of style. The Church must really allow itself to be shaped by the Eucharist which celebrates as the culmination and source of its life: the form of a bread made up of many ears and broken for the life of the world. The fruit of this Synod, the choice that the Spirit has inspired us through listening and discernment is to walk with young people going to all to witness the love of God. We can describe this process speaking of synodality for the mission, that is missionary synodality: “The establishment of a synodal Church is an indispensable presupposition for a new missionary impulse that involves the entire People of God”. This is the prophecy of the Second Vatican Council, which we have not yet assumed in all its depth and developed in its daily implications, to which Pope Francis reminded us by stating: “The path of synodality is the path that God expects from the Church of the Third Millennium” (Pope Francis, *Address for the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015). We are convinced that this choice, fruit of prayer and discussion, will enable the Church, by the grace of God, to be and to appear more clearly as the “youthfulness of the world”.

Chapter I: The Missionary Synodality of the Church

A constitutive dynamism

The young people ask us to walk together

119. The Church as a whole, at the moment in which this Synod has chosen to deal with of young people, has made a very specific option: the Church considers this mission a pastoral priority epochal on which to invest time, energy and resources. From the beginning of the preparation path young people have expressed the desire to be involved, appreciated and to feel co-protagonists of the life and mission of the Church. In this Synod we have experimented that the co-responsibility lived with young Christians is a source of profound joy also for the bishops. We recognize in this experience a fruit of the Spirit that continually renews the Church and calls her to practice synodality as a way of being and acting, promoting her participation of all the baptized and people of good will, each according to his age, state of life and vocation. In this Synod, we have experienced that collegiality that joins the bishops *cum Petro et sub Petro* in solicitude for the People of God is called ad articulate and enrich themselves through the practice of synodality at all levels.

The synodal process continues

120. The end of the meeting and the document that collects the fruits do not close the synodal process, but they constitute a stage. Because the concrete conditions, the real possibilities and urgent needs of young people are very different between countries and continents, even in the community of the one faith, we invite the Episcopal Conferences and the Churches to continue this path, engaging in processes of discernment that include Synods not just with those who are bishops in deliberations. The style of these ecclesial paths should include fraternal listening and intergenerational dialogue, with the aim of developing pastoral guidelines particularly attentive to marginalized young people and to those who have few or no contact with the ecclesial communities. We hope that families, religious, associations, movements, and institutes, as well as young people themselves, will participate in these paths, so that the “flame” of how much we have experienced these days spreads.

The synodal form of the Church

121. The lived experience made the Synod participants aware of the importance of a synodal form of the Church for the proclamation and transmission of faith. The participation of young people has contributed to “awakening” synodality, which is a “constitutive dimension of the church. [...] As St. John Chrysostom says, ‘Church and Synod are synonymous’—because the Church is nothing other than the ‘walking

together' of the Flock of God on the paths of history meeting Christ the Lord" (Pope Francis, Speech for the 50th Memorial anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015). Synodality it characterizes both the life and the mission of the Church, which is the People of God formed by young and old, men and women of every culture and horizon, and the Body of Christ, in which we are members of one another, starting with those who are marginalized and trampled. During exchanges and through the testimonies, the Synod revealed some traits fundamental of a synodal style, towards which we are called to convert.

122. It is in relationships—with Christ, with others, in the community—that faith is transmitted. Also, in view of the mission, the Church is called to assume a relational face that focuses on listening, welcoming, dialogue, common discernment in a path that it transforms the life of those who participate in it. "A Synodal Church is a Church of listening, in the awareness that listening 'is more than feeling'. It is a mutual listening in which each one has something to learn. Faithful people, Episcopal Conferences, and the Bishop of Rome: the one listens to the others; and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the 'Spirit of truth' (Jn 14,17), per to know what He 'says to the Churches' (Revelation 2: 7)" (Pope Francis, *Speech by the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015). In this way the Church presents itself as the "tent of the conference" in which the ark is kept of the Covenant (see Ex 25): a dynamic and moving Church that accompanies walking, strengthened by many charisms and ministries. Thus, God makes himself present in this world.

A participatory and co-responsible Church

123. A characteristic feature of this style of Church is the enhancement of the charisms that make it Spirit gives according to the vocation and the role of each of its members, through a dynamism of co-responsibility. To activate it, a conversion of the heart is necessary a willingness to listen to each other, that builds an effective common feeling. Animated by this spirit, we can proceed towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, capable of to enhance the richness of the variety of which it is composed, gratefully receiving also the contribution of the lay faithful, including young people and women, that of men's and women's consecrated life, and that of groups, associations and movements. Nobody must be put or be able put aside. This is the way to avoid clericalism, which excludes many people decision-making processes, as well as the clericalization of the laity, which closes them rather than launches them towards the missionary commitment in the world.

The Synod asks to make the active participation of young people in the effective and ordinary places of co-responsibility within the particular Churches, as well as in the bodies of the Episcopal Conferences and of the universal Church. It also calls for the office of young people to be strengthened within the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, as well as through the constitution of a representative body of young people at an international level.

Community discernment processes

124. The experience of "walking together" as a People of God helps us to understand the sense of authority is always better with a view to service. The ability of to increase collaboration in witness and mission, and to accompany processes of community discernment to interpret the signs of the times in the light of faith and under the guidance of the Spirit, with the contribution of all the members of the community, starting from whom it is on the edge. Ecclesial leaders with these skills need one specific training in synodality. It seems promising from this point of view to structure common formative courses among young lay people, young religious and seminarians, in particular for regarding issues such as the exercise of authority or team work.

A style for the mission

Missionary communion

125. The synodal life of the Church is essentially mission-oriented: it is "the sign and the instrument of the intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 1), until the day when God will be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). Young people, open to the Spirit, they can help the Church to carry out the Easter passage of exit "from" I "individually meant by the ecclesial "we",

where each “I” is clothed with Christ (see Gal 2:20), he lives and walks with his brothers and sisters as a responsible and active subject in the one mission of the People of God “(International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, March 2, 2018, n. 107). The same passage, through the impulse of the Spirit and with the guidance of the Pastors, must take place for the community Christian, called to exit from the self-referentiality of the “self” of self-preservation towards the service to the construction of an inclusive “we” towards the whole human family and of the whole creation.

A mission in dialogue

126. This fundamental dynamic has definite consequences on how to do it a mission together with young people, which requires to open, with frankness and without compromise, a dialogue with all men and women of good will. As stated by St. Paul VI: «The Church makes a word; the Church becomes a message; the Church speaks” (*Ecclesiam suam*, n. 67). In a world marked by the diversity of peoples and the variety of cultures, “Walking together” is essential to give credibility and effectiveness to the initiatives of solidarity, integration, promotion of justice, and to show what it consists of a culture of encounter and gratuitousness.

Just the young, who live daily in contact with their peers of others Christian confessions, religions, convictions and cultures, stimulate the whole Christian community a living ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. This requires the courage of parrhesia in the to speak, and that of humility in listening, assuming asceticism—and sometimes martyrdom—that this implies.

Towards the peripheries of the world

127. The practice of dialogue and the search for shared solutions are clear priorities in a time when democratic systems are challenged by low levels of participation and from a disproportionate influence of small interest groups that do not have a large one feedback in the population, with the danger of reductionist, technocratic and authoritative. Fidelity to the Gospel will guide this dialogue in search of how to give response to the double cry of the poor and the earth (see Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 49), verse in which young people show particular sensitivity, inserting the inspiration of the social processes into social processes principles of social doctrine: the dignity of the person, the universal destination of goods, the preferential option for the poor, the primacy of solidarity, the attention to subsidiarity, the care of the common home. No vocation within the Church can be placed outside of out of this community dynamism of exit and dialogue, and therefore every effort of accompaniment is called to measure itself against this horizon, reserving attention privileged to the poorest and most vulnerable.

Chapter II: Walking Together Daily

From structures to relationships

From delegation to involvement

128. Missionary synodality is not just about the Church on a universal level. The need to walk together, giving a real testimony of fraternity in a life renewed and more evident community, concerns first of all the individual communities. It is therefore necessary awaken in every local reality the awareness that we are God’s people, responsible for incarnating the Gospel in different contexts and within all daily situations. This it involves going out of the logic of delegation which so much influences pastoral action.

We can refer, for example, to the catechetical paths in preparation for the sacraments, which they are a task that many families give completely to the parish. This mentality has the consequence that the children risk to understand the faith not as one reality that illuminates everyday life, but as a set of notions and rules that belong to a separate area from their existence. Instead it is necessary to walk together: the parish needs the family to make young people experience realism daily of faith; the family vice versa needs the ministry of the catechists and of the parish structure to offer children a more organic vision of Christianity, for introduce them to the community and open them to wider horizons. Therefore, it is not enough to have some structures, if authentic relationships do not develop in them; it is the quality of these relationships, in fact, that evangelizes.

The renewal of the parish

129. The parish is necessarily involved in this process, to take the form of a more generative community, an environment from which the mission radiates to the last. In this particular historical juncture emerge several signs that testify that it, in various cases, fails to correspond to the spiritual needs of the men of our time, mainly due to some factors, which have modified the lifestyles of the people. In fact, we live in a culture “without borders”, marked by a new space-time relationship due to digital communication, and characterized by continuous mobility. In this context, a vision of parochial action bounded by territorial borders and unable to intercept the faithful with diversified proposals, and in particular young people, would imprison the parish in an unacceptable immobility and in a worrying pastoral repetitiveness. Therefore, a pastoral rethinking of the parish needs to be developed with synergy in its territory, in a logic of ecclesial co-responsibility and of missionary zeal. Only in this way can it appear a significant environment that intercepts its life of young people.

Open and decipherable structures

130. In the same direction of greater openness and sharing it is important that the individual communities question themselves to check if the lifestyles and the use of the structures they transmit to the young people a legible testimony of the Gospel. The private life of many priests, nuns, religious, bishops is undoubtedly sober and committed to the people; but it is almost invisible to most people, especially to young people. Many of them find that our ecclesial world is complex to decipher; they are held at a distance from the roles we play and from the stereotypes that accompany them. Let's make our ordinary life, in all his expressions, be more accessible. Effective proximity, sharing spaces and activities they create the conditions for an authentic communication, free from prejudices. It's this way that Jesus brought the proclamation of the Kingdom and it is on this path that he pushes us today too Spirit.

Community life

A mosaic of faces

131. A synodal and missionary church manifests itself through local communities inhabited by many faces. From the beginning the Church did not have a rigid and homologous form, but it was developed as a polyhedron of people with different sensibilities, backgrounds and cultures. just in this way it has shown to bring the treasure in the clay vessels of human frailty incomparable of the Trinitarian life. Harmony which is a gift of the Spirit does not abolish the differences, but gives them a symphonic richness. This meeting in the one faith among different people is the fundamental condition for the pastoral renewal of our communities. It affects the announcement, the celebration and the service, that is on the fundamental areas of ordinary pastoral care. Popular wisdom says that “to educate one child needs a village”: this principle applies today to all areas of pastoral care.

The community in the territory

132. The effective realization of a community with many faces also affects insertion in the territory, on the opening to the social fabric and on the encounter with the civil institutions. Only one united and plural community can openly propose itself and bring the light of the Gospel into the areas of the social life that challenge us today: the ecological question, the work, the support to the family, marginalization, the renewal of politics, cultural and religious pluralism, the path to justice and peace, the digital environment. This is already happening in the associations and ecclesial movements. Young people ask us not to face these challenges alone and to dialogue with everyone, not to cut off a slice of power, but to contribute to the common good.

Kerygma and catechesis

133. The proclamation of Jesus Christ, dead and risen, who revealed the Father to us and gave him Spirit, it is the fundamental vocation of the Christian community. It is part of this announcement the invitation to young people to recognize in their lives the signs of God's love and to discover the community as a place of encounter with Christ. This announcement is the foundation, always to revive, the catechesis of the young and gives it a kerygmatic quality (cf. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 164). The commitment

to offer itineraries must be kept alive continuous and organic that they can integrate: a living knowledge of Jesus Christ and his Gospel, the ability to read one's own experience and the events of history in faith, a accompaniment to prayer and to the celebration of the liturgy, the introduction to the *Lectio divina* and support for the witness of charity and the promotion of justice, thus proposing an authentic youth (and young adult) spirituality.

Catechetical itineraries show the intimate connection of faith with the concrete experience of every day, with the world of feelings and bonds, with the joys and disappointments that you they experiment in the study and in the job; they know how to integrate the social doctrine of the Church; they are open to the languages of beauty, music and different artistic expressions, and to the forms of digital communication. The dimensions of the corporeity, of the affectivity and of sexuality must be taken into account, since there is a deep intertwining of education to faith and education to love. In short, faith must be understood as a practice, that is as a form of inhabiting the world.

It is urgent that in the catechesis of young people the commitment to languages and the others is renewed methodologies, without ever losing sight of the essential, that is, the encounter with Christ, who is the heart of catechesis. There is great appreciation for the *YouCat*, *DoCat* and similar tools, without leaving out the catechisms produced by the various Episcopal Conferences. It is also necessary a renewed commitment to the catechists, who are often young people at the service of other young people, almost their peers. It is important to properly take care of their training and make sure that their ministry is more recognized by the community.

The centrality of the liturgy

134. The Eucharistic celebration is generative of community life and synodality of the church. It is a place for the transmission of faith and formation for the mission, in which it is makes it clear that the community lives by grace and not by the work of its own hands. With the words of the oriental tradition we can affirm that the liturgy is meeting with the Divine Servant who wraps our wounds and prepares for us the Easter banquet, sending us to do the same with our brothers and sisters. It must therefore be clearly reaffirmed that the commitment to celebrate with noble simplicity and with the involvement of the different lay ministries, it is an essential moment of the missionary conversion of the Church. Young people have shown that they are able to appreciate and live intensely authentic celebrations in which the beauty of the signs, preaching care and community involvement speak really of God. We must therefore favor their active participation, but keeping it alive with amazement for the Mystery; to meet their musical and artistic sensitivity, but to help them to understand that the liturgy is not purely an expression of self, but an action of Christ and of the Church. Equally important is to accompany young people to discover the value of adoration Eucharistic as a prolongation of the celebration, in which to live contemplation and life silent prayer.

135. Great importance, in the paths of faith, also has the practice of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Young people need to feel loved, forgiven, reconciled and have secret nostalgia for the merciful embrace of the Father. This is why it is fundamental that the priests offer generous availability for the celebration of this sacrament. The Community penitential celebrations help young people to approach confession individual and make the ecclesial dimension of the sacrament more explicit.

136. In many contexts popular piety plays an important role in access for young people to the life of faith in a practical, sensitive and immediate way. Enhancing the language of the body and emotional participation, popular piety brings with it the desire to come into contact with the God who saves, often through the mediation of the Mother of God and the saints.

The pilgrimage is for young people an experience of journey that becomes a metaphor of life and of the Church: contemplating the beauty of creation and art, living fraternity and uniting thus the best conditions for discernment are presented to the Lord in prayer.

The generosity of diakonia

137. Young people can contribute to renewing the style of parish communities and others building a fraternal community close to the poor. The poor, the young discarded, the more suffering, they can

become the principle of community renewal. They go recognized as subjects of evangelization and help us to free ourselves from worldliness spiritual. Often young people are sensitive to the dimension of diakonia. Many are actively engaged in voluntary service and find the way to meet the Lord in service. Thus, dedication to the latter truly becomes a practice of faith, in which one learns that love “in loss” that is at the center of the Gospel and that is the foundation of the whole Christian life. The poor, the little ones, the sick, the elderly are the flesh of the suffering Christ: for this putting themselves at their service is a way to meet the Lord and a privileged space for the discernment of one’s call. A particular opening is required, in different contexts, migrants and refugees. With them we must work for the reception, protection, promotion and integration. The social inclusion of the poor makes the Church the home of the Church charity.

Youth (and young adult) ministry in a vocational key

The Church, a home for young people

138. Only a pastoral care capable of renewing itself starting from the care of relationships and from quality of the Christian community will be significant and attractive to young people. The Church will be able to thus present itself to them as a welcoming home, characterized by a family-made atmosphere of trust and confidence. The yearning for fraternity, so many times emerged from the synodal listening of the young people, asks the Church to be “mother for all and home for many” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 287): pastoral care has the task of realizing motherhood in history universal of the Church through concrete and prophetic gestures of joyful reception and every day that make it a home for young people.

The vocational animation of pastoral care

139. The vocation is the fulcrum around which all the dimensions of the person are integrated. This principle concerns not only the individual believer, but also the pastoral in his together. It is therefore very important to clarify that only in the vocational dimension is the whole pastoral can find a unifying principle, because in it, it finds its origin and its fulfillment. In the path of pastoral conversion in progress, therefore, we are not asking to strengthen the pastoral care of vocations as a separate and independent sector, but of animating the whole pastoral care of the Church by presenting effectively the multiplicity of vocations. The end of the pastoral care is in fact to help each one of us, through a path of discernment, to arrive to the “measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13).

A vocation ministry for young people

140. From the beginning of the Synod journey, the need to qualify vocations has emerged strongly for youth (and young adult) ministries. In this way, the two characteristics emerge indispensable for a pastoral care for young generations: it is “youthful” because its own recipients are in that singular and unrepeatable age of life that is youth and young adulthood; it is “vocational” because youth and young adulthood is the privileged season of life and life choices that respond to the call of God. The “vocationality” of youth and young adult ministries should not be understood in exclusive, but intensive way. God calls to all ages of life—from the womb up to old age—but youth and young adulthood is the privileged moment of listening, of availability and acceptance of the will of God.

The Synod advances the proposal that at the level of the National Episcopal Conference is prepared a “Youth and Young Adult Pastoral Directory” in a vocational key that can help those responsible diocesan and local operators to qualify their training and action with and for young people.

From fragmentation to integration

141. While recognizing that planning for pastoral sectors is necessary to avoid improvisation, on several occasions the Synod Fathers have communicated their discomfort for a certain fragmentation of the pastoral care of the Church. In particular they referred to the various pastoral care of young people: youth, young adult, family, vocational, scholastic and pastoral ministry university, social, cultural, charitable, leisure, etc. The multiplication of offices is very specialized, but sometimes separate and do not benefit from the significance of the Christian proposal. In a fragmented world that produces dispersion and

multiplies memberships, young people need to be helped to unify life by daily reading the experiences in depth and discerning. If this is the priority, it is necessary to develop greater coordination and integration between the different areas, moving from a work for “offices” to a work for “projects”.

The fruitful relationship between events and everyday life

142. During the Synod on many occasions there was talk of the World Youth Day and also many other events that take place on a continental, national and diocesan level, together with those organized by associations, movements, religious congregations, and from other ecclesial subjects. These moments of meeting and sharing are appreciated almost everywhere because they offer the possibility of walking in the logic of pilgrimage, to experience fraternity with everyone, to joyfully share faith and grow in belonging to the Church. For many young people they have been an experience of transfiguration, in they have experienced the beauty of the face of the Lord and made important life choices. The best fruits of these experiences are gathered in daily life. It becomes then It is important to plan and implement these calls as significant stages of a greater virtuous process.

Youth (and Young Adult) Centers

143. Specific spaces dedicated by the Christian community to the young, such as the oratories and youth and young adult centers and other similar structures show the educational passion of the Church. They decline in many ways, but they remain privileged areas in which the Church makes itself home welcoming for teenagers and young adults, who can discover their talents and put them to provision in the service. They transmit a very rich educational heritage, from sharing on a large scale, in support of families and of civil society itself.

In the dynamism of an outgoing Church, however, it is necessary to think of a creative renewal and flexible of these realities, moving from the idea of static centers, where young people can come, to the idea of pastoral subjects in movement with and towards the young, that is, capable of meeting them in the their ordinary places of life—the school and the digital environment, the existential suburbs, the world rural and work, musical and artistic expression, etc.—creating a new type of more dynamic and active apostolate.

Chapter III: A Renewed Missionary Momentum

Some urgent challenges

144. Synodality is the method by which the Church can face old and new challenges, being able to gather and make the gifts of all its members dialogue, starting with the young. Thanks to the Synod’s work, in the first part of this document, we outlined some areas in which it is urgent to launch or renew the momentum of the Church in carrying out the mission that Christ has entrusted them. Now we try to deal with them in a more concrete way.

The mission in the digital environment

145. The digital environment is a challenge for the Church on many levels; it is therefore essential to deepen the knowledge of its dynamics and its scope from anthropological and ethical point of view. It requires not only to inhabit it and to promote it its communicative potentialities in view of the Christian announcement, but also to impregnate with Gospel its cultures and its dynamics. Some experiences in this sense are already in course and should be encouraged, deepened, shared. The priority that many assign to the image as a communicative vehicle, it cannot fail to question the modalities of transmission of a faith based on listening to the Word of God and reading the Sacred Writing. Young Christians, digital natives like their peers, find an authentic here mission, in which some are already engaged. However, it is the young people themselves who ask for be accompanied in a discernment on the mature ways of life in an environment today strongly digitized that allows to seize the opportunities avoiding the risks.

146. The Synod hopes that appropriate offices or offices are set up at the appropriate levels in the Church organizations for digital culture and evangelization, which, with the indispensable contribution of young people, promote ecclesial action and reflection in this environment. Among them functions, as well as

promoting the exchange and dissemination of good practices on a personal level community, and to develop appropriate tools for digital education and evangelization, they could also manage certification systems for Catholic sites, to counteract the spreading fake news about the Church, or looking for ways to persuade the public authorities to promote increasingly stringent policies and instruments for the protection of minors on the web.

Migrants: breaking down walls and building bridges

147. Many migrants are young. The universal spread of the Church offers a great opportunity to make the communities from which they leave and those in which they dialogue when they arrive, helping to overcome fears and distrust, and to strengthen the bonds that migrations they risk breaking. “Accept, protect, promote, and integrate”, the four verbs with which Pope Francis summarizes the lines of action in favor of migrants, are synodal verbs. Implementing them requires the action of the Church at all levels and involves all members of Christian communities. For their part, the migrants, opportunely accompanied, will be able to offer spiritual, pastoral and missionary resources to the communities that welcome them. Of particular importance is the cultural and political commitment, to be continued also through appropriate structures, to fight against the spread of xenophobia, racism and refusal of migrants. The resources of the Catholic Church are a vital element in the fight against trafficking human beings, as is clear in the work of many religious. The role of Santa Marta Group, which combines religious and law enforcement officials, is crucial and represents a good practice to inspire yourself. The commitment to guarantee the right must not be left out effective to remain in their own country for people who would not want to migrate but are forced to do so and support for the Christian communities that migration threatens to empty.

Women in the Synodal Church

148. A Church that tries to live a synodal style cannot help but reflect on the condition and role of women within it, and consequently also in the society. Young people and young people ask for it with great force. The reflections developed they require to be implemented through a work of courageous cultural conversion and of change in daily pastoral practice. An area of particular importance to this regard is that of the female presence in the ecclesial organs at all levels, also in responsibilities, and of female participation in ecclesial decision-making processes respecting the role of the ordained ministry. It is a duty of justice, which finds inspiration in the way in which Jesus has related to men and women of his time, as for the importance of the role of some female figures in the Bible, in the history of salvation and in the life of the Church.

Sexuality: a clear, free, authentic word

149. In the current cultural context the Church struggles to transmit the beauty of the vision of Christianity of corporeity and sexuality, as emerges from the Holy Scriptures, from the Tradition and the Magisterium of the last Popes. A search for methods is therefore urgently needed more adequate, that translate concretely into the elaboration of formative paths renewed. It is necessary to propose to young people an anthropology of affectivity and sexuality, also capable of giving the right value to chastity, showing the pedagogical wisdom of it more authentic meaning for the growth of the person, in all states of life. It is about focus on empathic listening, accompaniment, and discernment, indicated by recent Magisterium. For this reason, it is necessary to take care of the formation of pastoral workers who are credible, starting from the maturation of their emotional and sexual dimensions.

150. There are issues concerning the body, affectivity and sexuality that are in need of a deeper anthropological, theological and pastoral elaboration, to be realized in the methods and at the most convenient levels, from local to universal. Among these emerge in particular those relating to the difference and harmony between male and female identity and homosexual inclinations. In this regard, the Synod reaffirms that God loves each person and so it is the Church, renewing its commitment against all discrimination and violence on a basis of sexuality. It equally reaffirms the determinant anthropological relevance of difference and reciprocity between man and woman and considers it reductive to define the identity of the people to leave solely by their “sexual orientation” (Congregation For the Doctrine of the

Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the pastoral care of homosexual persons*, October 1, 1986, n. 16).

In many Christian communities, there are already accompanying paths in the faith of homosexual persons: the Synod recommends encouraging these paths. In these paths, people they are helped to read their own story; to adhere with freedom and responsibility to his or her own baptismal call; to recognize the desire to belong and contribute to the life of the community; and to discern the best forms to make it happen. In this way, we help each young person, with no one excluded, to increasingly integrate the sexual dimension into one's own personality, growing in the quality of relationships and walking towards the gift of self.

Economy, politics, work, common home

151. The Church engages in the promotion of a social, economic and political life in the sign of justice, solidarity and peace, as young people also strongly demand. This requires the courage to make voice of those who have no voice with the world leaders, denouncing corruption, war, arms trade, drug trafficking and exploitation of resources natural resources and inviting those responsible for it to conversion. In a perspective integral, this cannot be separated from the commitment to include the most fragile, building paths that allow them not only to find an answer to their needs, but also to contribute to the construction of society.

152. Aware that “work is a fundamental dimension of existence of man on earth” (Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, No. 4) and that the lack of it is humiliating for many young people, the Synod recommends to the local Churches to favor and accompany the insertion of young people in this world, also through the support of youth and young adult entrepreneurship initiatives. Experiences in this sense are widespread in many churches premises and must be supported and enhanced.

153. The promotion of justice also challenges the management of Church property. The young people feel at home in a church where economics and finance have lived in transparency and consistency. Courageous choices in the perspective of sustainability, like those indicated by the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, are necessary, as the lack of respect environment generates new poverty, of which young people are the first victims. The systems also change showing that a different way of living the dimension is possible economic and financial Young people encourage the Church to be prophetic in this field, with words but above all through choices that show that an economy is friendly to the person and the environment is possible. Together with them we can do it.

154. Compared to ecological issues, it will be important to offer guidelines for the concrete implementation of *Laudato Si'* in ecclesial practices. Numerous interventions have emphasized the importance of offering young people a formation in the socio-political commitment and the resource that the social doctrine of the Church represents in this regard. Young people engaged in politics must be supported and encouraged to work for a real change in unjust social structures.

In intercultural and inter-religious contexts

155. Cultural and religious pluralism is a growing reality in the social life of young people. The young Christians offer a beautiful testimony of the Gospel when they live their faith in a way that transforms their life and their daily actions. They are called to open up to young people of other religious and spiritual traditions, to maintain authentic relationships with them foster mutual knowledge and heal from prejudices and stereotypes. They are thus the pioneers of a new form of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, which contributes to freeing our societies from exclusion, extremism, fundamentalism and even from manipulation of religion for sectarian or populist purposes. Witnesses to the Gospel, these young people with their peers become promoters of an inclusive citizenship of diversity and a socially responsible and constructive religious commitment to social ties and peace.

Recently, just on the proposal of young people, initiatives have been launched to offer the opportunity to experience the cohabitation between members of different religions and cultures, because everyone in an atmosphere of conviviality and in respect of their respective faiths are actors of one common and shared commitment in society.

Young people for ecumenical dialogue

156. As regards the path of reconciliation among all Christians, the Synod is grateful for the desire of many young people to grow unity among the Christian communities separate. In engaging in this dialogue, very often young people deepen the roots of their own faith and experience a real openness to what others can give. They sense that Christ already unites us, even if some differences remain. As has Pope Francis affirmed on the occasion of the visit to Patriarch Bartholomew in 2014, are the young people “who today urge us to take steps towards full communion. And this does not because they ignore the meaning of the differences that still separate us, but because they know see beyond, are able to grasp the essential that already unites us” (Pope Francis, *Intervention on the occasion of the Divine Liturgy*, Patriarchal Church of St. George, Istanbul, 30 November 2014).

Chapter IV: Integral Formation

Concreteness, complexity and integrality

157. The current condition is characterized by an increasing complexity of the social phenomena and individual experience. The changes taking place in the concreteness of life mutually influence and cannot be addressed with a selective look. In reality, everything is connected: family life and professional commitment, the use of technologies and the way of experiencing the community, the defense of the embryo and that of the migrant. There concreteness speaks to us of an anthropological vision of the person as totality and a way of know that it does not separate but grasps the connections, learns from experience by re-reading it in the light of the Word, it is inspired by the exemplary testimonies rather than by abstract models. Thus it requires a new formative approach, which points to the integration of perspectives, makes capable of grasping the intertwining of problems and able to unify the different dimensions of the person. This approach is in deep harmony with the Christian vision that it contemplates in the incarnation of the Son the inseparable meeting of the divine and of the human, of the earth and of the sky.

Education, school and university

158. During the Synod there was a particular insistence on the decisive task and irreplaceable vocational training in schools and universities, also because it deals with places where most young people spend a lot of their time. In some parts of the world basic education is the first and most important question that young people address the Church. It is therefore important for the Christian community to have a significant presence in these environments with qualified teachers, significant chaplaincies, and an adequate culture of commitment.

The Catholic educational institutions, which express the Church’s concern for the integral formation of young people. These are precious spaces for the meeting of the Gospel with the culture of a people and for the development of research. They are called to propose a model of formation that is capable of making the faith dialogue with the questions of the contemporary world, with the different anthropological perspectives, with the challenges of science and technology, with changes in social customs and with commitment to Justice.

Particular attention should be paid in these environments to the promotion of youth and young adult creativity in the fields of science and art, poetry and literature, music and sport, digital and media, etc. In this way young people will be able to discover their talents and then put them at the disposal of society for the good of all.

Prepare new trainers

159. The recent Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium* on universities and ecclesiastical faculties has proposed some basic criteria for a training project that results up to the challenges of the present: spiritual, intellectual and existential contemplation of the kerygma, the full dialogue, the trans-disciplinarity exercised with wisdom and creativity and the urgent need to “network” (see *Veritatis gaudium*, No. 4, d). These principles they can inspire all the educational and training fields; their recruitment will go first to advantage of training new educators, helping them to open up to a vision sapiential and capable of

integrating experience and truth. A fundamental task they play the Pontifical Universities worldwide and the Universities at continental and national level Catholics and study centers. The periodic verification, the demanding qualification and the constant renewal of these institutions is a great strategic investment for the good of the young people and of the whole Church.

Forming missionary disciples

160. The synodal path has insisted on the growing desire to give space and body to the protagonism of youth and young adults. It is evident that the apostolate of young people towards other young people cannot be improvised, but must be the fruit of a serious and adequate formative journey: how can we accompany them in this process? How can we offer better tools for young people to be authentic witnesses to the Gospel? This question also coincides with the desire of many young people to learn more about their faith: discover their biblical roots, seize their development history of the doctrine, the sense of the dogmas, the richness of the liturgy. This makes it possible to young people reflect on current issues in which faith is put to the test, to know to give reason for the hope that is in them (see 1 Pet 3:15).

This is why the Synod proposes the enhancement of experiences of youth and young adult mission through the establishment of evangelization training centers for young people and to young couples through an integral experience that will end with sending in mission. There are already initiatives of this kind in various territories, but every Conference is asked Episcopal to study its feasibility in its context.

A time to accompany discernment

161. Many times there is a heartfelt appeal to invest with generosity for young educational passion, prolonged time and also economic resources. Collecting various contributions and wishes emerged during the synodal comparison, together listening to qualified experiences already underway, the Synod proposes with conviction to all Particular Churches, religious congregations, movements, associations and other ecclesial subjects to offer young people an accompanying experience in view of the discernment. This experience—whose duration must be fixed according to the contexts and opportunities—it can be qualified as a time destined for the maturation of adult Christian life. It should provide for a prolonged detachment from the usual environments and relationships, and be built around at least three indispensable hinges: an experience of shared fraternal life with adult educators who are essential, sober, and respectful of the common home; a strong and significant apostolic proposal to live together; and an offer of spirituality rooted in prayer and sacramental life. In this way, there are all the necessary ingredients because the Church can offer young people who will want a profound experience of it vocational discernment.

Accompaniment to marriage

162. The importance of accompanying couples along the path of preparation to marriage must be reiterated, taking into account that there are several legitimate ways of organizing such itineraries. As *Amoris Laetitia* states at n. 207, “it is not a matter of giving them all the Catechism, nor of saturate them with too many arguments. [...] It is a sort of ‘initiation’ to the sacrament of the marriage that provides them with the necessary elements to be able to receive it with the best provisions and start family life with a certain solidity”. It is important to continue the accompaniment of young families, especially in the first years of marriage, helping them also to be an active part of the Christian community.

The formation of seminarians and consecrated persons

163. The specific task of the integral formation of the candidates to the ordained ministry and the male and female consecrated life remains an important challenge for the Church. We also recall the importance of a solid cultural and theological formation for consecrated persons. As for the seminarians, the first task is obviously the recruitment and the operational translation of the new *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*. During the important underlining, this emerged from the Synod, which should be mentioned.

Firstly, the choice of trainers: it is not enough that they are culturally prepared, it is necessary that are capable of fraternal relationships, of an empathic listening and of profound inner freedom. In Secondly, for a proper accompaniment a serious and competent will be necessary work in differentiated educational teams, including female figures. The constitution of these formative teams in which different vocations

interact is a small but precious one form of synodality, which affects the mentality of young people in initial formation. Third place, formation must aim at developing in future pastors and consecrated persons the capacity to exercise their leadership role in an authoritative and non-authoritarian way, educating young people candidates to give themselves for the community. Particular attention should be paid to some criteria such as: overcoming tendencies to clericalism, the ability to work in a team, the sensitivity for the poor, transparency of life, willingness to be accompanied. The seriousness of initial discernment is decisive in the fourth place, because it is too often young people present themselves at seminars or training houses are welcomed without knowledge adequate and a thorough re-reading of their history. The question becomes particularly delicate in the case of “wandering seminarians”: relational and affective instability, and lack of ecclesial roots are dangerous signs. To neglect the ecclesial norm to this regard is an irresponsible behavior, which can have a lot of consequences serious for the Christian community. A fifth point concerns the numerical consistency of the training communities: in those too big there is the risk of depersonalization of the path and an inadequate knowledge of young people on the way, while those too small ones risk being suffocating and subject to addictive logic; in these cases the better solution is to set up inter-diocesan seminars or shared training houses among more religious provinces, with clear training projects and well-defined responsibilities.

164. The Synod makes three proposals to promote renewal.

The first concerns the joint formation of laity, consecrated persons and priests. It is important to keep young people in constant contact with the daily life of families and communities, with particular attention to the presence of female figures and Christian couples, so that formation is rooted in the concreteness of life and characterized by a relational trait capable of interacting with the social and cultural context.

The second proposal implies the inclusion in the curriculum of preparation for the ministry ordained and consecrated life of a specific preparation concerning the pastoral care of the young people, through targeted training courses and lived experiences of apostolate and evangelization.

The third proposal asks that, within an authentic discernment of persons and of the situations according to the vision and spirit of the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, evaluate the possibility of verifying the training path in an experiential and community sense. This is especially true for the last stage of the journey which involves gradual insertion in pastoral responsibility. The formulas and the modalities can be indicated by Episcopal Conferences of each country, through their *Ratio nationalis*.

CONCLUSION

Called to become saints

165. All the vocational differences are gathered in the one and universal call to the holiness, which in the end can only be the fulfillment of that appeal to joy of the love that resounds in the heart of every young person. Actually, starting from the one vocation to holiness can articulate the different forms of life, knowing that God “there He wants saints and does not expect us to be content with a mediocre, watered down existence inconsistent” (Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, n.1). Holiness finds its source inexhaustible in the Father, who through his Spirit sends us Jesus, “the saint of God” (Mk 1:24) come among us to make us holy through friendship with Him, which brings joy and peace in our life. To recover in living the ordinary pastoral care of the Church the living contact with the happy existence of Jesus is the fundamental condition for every renewal.

Awaken the world with holiness

166. We must be holy to be able to invite young people to become so. The young have clamored for an authentic, luminous, transparent, joyful Church: only a Church of saints can live up to these requests! Many of them have left it because they do not have it found sanctity, but mediocrity, presumption, division and corruption. Unfortunately, the world is outraged by the abuses of some people of the Church rather than revived by the holiness of its members: for this reason, the Church as a whole must make a decisive, immediate and radical change of perspective! Young people need saints who form other saints, thus showing that “holiness is the most beautiful face of the Church” (Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, n. 9). There is a language that all men and women of all times, places and culture can understand, because it is immediate and luminous: it is the language of sanctity.

Drawn by the holiness of the young people

167. It has been clear from the beginning of the Synodal path that young people are an integral part of the Church. So too is their holiness, which has produced one in recent decades multifaceted bloom in all parts of the world: contemplate and meditate during the Synod the courage of many young people who have renounced their lives in order to remain faithful to the Gospel has been moving for us; listen to the testimonies of the young people present at the Synod that in the midst of persecutions have chosen to share the passion of the Lord Jesus was rejuvenating. Through the holiness of the young people the Church can renew her spiritual ardor and its apostolic vigor. The balm of holiness generated by good life of many young people can heal the wounds of the Church and of the world, bringing us back to that fullness of the love to which we have always been called: the young saints urge us to return to our first love (see Rev 2: 4).