

**FROM THE RELATIO, THESE QUESTIONS AROSE TO CREATE THE  
LINEAMENTA – THE WORKING PAPER FOR THE SYNOD**

*YOU NEED NOT ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE  
(The original questions have been reformatted here to be less academic and more easily  
approached. The original questions, as received, are on the diocesan website)*

**PART I                      Listening: The Context and Challenges of the Family**

**The Socio-Cultural Context**

*(arising from paragraphs no. 5-8 of the Relatio)*

1. Have any initiatives taken place – or are any initiatives planned – to help address the many cultural challenges family life faces today?  
If so, what “initiatives”
  - a) are geared toward re-awakening an awareness of God’s presence in family life?
  - b) are geared toward teaching about and establishing sound interpersonal relationships?
  - c) are geared toward fostering social and economic policies useful to the family?
  - d) are geared toward alleviating difficulties associated with raising children?
  - e) are geared toward the needs of family members who are elderly or who are ill?
  - f) are geared toward addressing more specific cultural factors present in the local Church?
  
2. What scientific surveys or data gathering/analysis is being used today to analyze cultural and anthropological changes we face today?
  - a) What are the more significant results produced by such studies?
  
3. How does the Church choose to be present “as Church” and draw near to families in extreme situations?
  - a) How does the Church seek to prevent these “extreme situations” faced by families?
  - b) What can be done to support and strengthen families of believers
  - c) What can be done to support and strengthen those faithful to the bond of marriage?
  
4. How does the Church respond, in her pastoral activity, to cultural relativism in a secularized society?
  - a) how does the Church respond to the consequent rejection of the model of family formed by man and woman united in marriage and open to begetting children?

## **The Importance of Affectivity in Life**

*(arising from paragraphs 9 & 10 of the Relatio)*

5. How do Christian families bear witness to the development and growth of a life of true feeling?
  - a) In this regard, how might the formation of ordained ministers be improved?
  - b) What qualified ministers are urgently needed in this pastoral activity?

## **Pastoral Challenges**

*(arising from paragraph 11 of the Relatio)*

6. How are families on the periphery cared for pastorally?
  - a) How do we foster and appreciate the “desire to form a family” – a desire planted by the Creator in the heart of every person?
  - b) How do we do this especially among young people?
  - c) What about those in family situations which do not correspond to the Christian vision?
  - d) How do THEY RESPOND to the Church’s efforts in her mission to THEM?
  - e) How prevalent is marriage (as an institution) in society as a whole?
  - f) How prevalent is marriage a part of forming a family in society as a whole?

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## **Part II**

### **Looking at Christ: The Gospel of the Family**

#### **Looking at Jesus and the Divine Pedagogy in the History of Salvation**

*(arising from paragraphs 12-14 of the Relatio)*

7. How is the teaching found in Sacred Scripture used in pastoral activity on behalf of families?
  - a) to what extent does “fixing our gaze on Christ” help families to be courageous and faithful?
8. Are any marriage and family values evidenced in young people? In married couples?
  - a) How might some of those values be made evident as part of their lives already?
  - b) Can some of these values be highlighted?
  - c) What sinful aspects of married life and family life should be avoided or overcome?

9. What human teaching/learning needs to be taken into account
  - a) for the better understanding of what is required for the Church to help nourish couples toward the true seeking of marriage?
  
10. What is being done to demonstrate the greatness and beauty of “indissolubility” of marriage?
  - a) what is being done so as to prompt a desire to live it
  - b) and what is being done to strengthen it?
  
11. How can people be helped to understand that a relationship with God can assist couples in overcoming the inherent weaknesses in marital relationships?
  - a) How do people bear witness to the fact that divine blessings accompany every true marriage?
  - b) How do people demonstrate that the grace of the Sacrament sustains married couples throughout their life together?

### **The Family in God’s Salvific Plan**

*(arising from paragraphs 15 &16 of the Relatio)*

12. Christian marriage corresponds to God’s original plan for man and woman; how can the Church help people understand that the marriage bond is one of fulfillment rather than confinement?
  
13. How can the Church be imagined and realized as a “domestic Church”?
  - a) How can such a notion be a work of evangelization?
  
14. The family does have a missionary task in the world; how can we make people aware of that task and help to foster its legitimate place?

### **The Family in the Church's Documents**

*(arising from paragraphs 17 -20 in the Relatio)*

15. How can family spirituality be developed?
  - a) How can families become places of new life in Christ?
16. There is often a great discrepancy between what is lived and what is professed
  - a) What must catechesis offer to assist families in living our Church's beliefs?
  - b) What will help in the process of personal conversions to actually living the Faith more deeply?

### **The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Joy of Sharing Life Together**

*(arising from paragraphs 21 &22 of the Relatio)*

17. How can we help people understand the value of life-long and fruitful marriage as the path to complete personal fulfillment?
18. In what and how many unique ways does the family experience the joys of human existence?
19. How does pastoral activity acknowledge the value of natural marriage (man and woman attracted and drawn together in love and possible child-bearing) as fundamental in culture and society?

### **The Truth and Beauty of the Family and Mercy Toward Wounded and Fragile Families**

*(arising from paragraphs 23-28 of the Relatio)*

20. How can people be helped to understand that no one is beyond the mercy of God?
  - a) How can this truth be expressed in the Church's pastoral activity toward families?
  - b) How, most especially can this be expressed to wounded or fragile families?
21. Some have not yet arrived at a full understanding of the gift of Christ's love;
  - a) How can the faithful express a friendly welcome and guidance without compromising the demands of the Gospel?
22. Today man and woman enter various types of unions in which human values are present;
  - a) How can we offer respect, trust and encouragement for them to grow in the Church's good will for them?
  - b) How can they then be helped to arrive at the fullness of Christian Marriage?

### Part III

### Confronting the Situation: Pastoral Perspectives

#### Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family Today in Various Contexts

*(arising from paragraphs 29-38 of the Relatio)*

23. In the formation of priests and other pastoral workers, how is the family emphasized?
  - a) How are families themselves involved?
  
24. Rapid evolution in society requires constant attention to language in pastoral communication; are people in ministry aware of that reality?
  - a) How can we communicate what we mean by Grace – Sanctifying Grace, Actual Grace?
  - b) What do people think the word means?
  - c) How can people understand – how can we communicate effectively the teaching that family life is conceived and lived as welcoming the Holy Spirit?
  
25. The Gospel of the Family – what kind of atmosphere is necessary so that each family might thrive as a community of God’s love?
  - a) What will it take for society to acknowledge the dignity and mission of the family?
  - b) What steps are being taken toward an in-depth examination of a question such as this?
  - c) What “pastoral conversion” is happening to achieve such an atmosphere for family life?
  
26. Are people aware that collaboration is necessary in society for the discovery of the dignity and mission of the family?
  - a) If so, are there examples of how this collaboration has achieved the desired end?
  - b) What criteria are used to evaluate beneficial collaboration?
  - c) What role can family associations play for good or for ill?
  - d) How can this collaboration be sustained – even when we do stand strong against the tide of secularization?
  
27. How can beneficial relations among family, society and civil life be fostered for the true dignity and mission of the family?
  - a) How can the support of the State and international community be fostered for the good of family dignity and mission in the world?

## **Guiding Engaged Couples in Their Preparation for Marriage**

*(arising from paragraphs 39 & 40 of the Relatio)*

28. Marriage preparation – does it highlight the vocation and mission of the family according to faith in Jesus Christ?
  - a) Is it proposed as an authentic participation in a true Church experience?
  - b) Does marriage preparation need to be improved or renewed?
  - c) If so – in what ways?
  
29. Catechesis for Christian Initiation – does it present an openness to the vocation and mission of the family?
  - a) Pre-Baptismal instruction
  - b) Elementary classes (grade levels of Faith Formation) studying/reviewing the Sacraments of Initiation
  - c) Baptism, Eucharist and marriage – how would the relationship among them be proposed?
  - d) In marriage preparation is there a real sense of “a catechumenate experience” for the couple to be formed in the faith at this important moment of entering into a state of graced covenant with its unique dignity and mission as disciples of Christ in the world?
  - e) How can the community be involved in a vision such as this?

## **Accompanying Married Couples in the Initial Years of Marriage**

*(arising from paragraph 40 of the Relatio)*

30. Are families, associations and family movements given adequate place in the formation, preparation and early years of couples?
  - a) Have there been any positive experiences to report in this regard?
  
31. The discussions in the Extraordinary Synod pointed to the need for pastoral accompaniment of couples in their early years of marriage;
  - a) What are the most significant initiatives being undertaken already?
  - b) What needs further development in parishes, dioceses or associations or movements?

## **Pastoral Care of Couples Civilly Married or Living Together**

*(arising from paragraphs 41-43 of the Relatio)*

32. The Church teaches that the primary elements of marriage are unity, indissolubility and openness to life;
  - a) In individual situations, what proper pastoral criteria of discernment are considered in cases of our civilly married and members of our Church who are living together?

33. Is the Christian Community able to be pastorally involved in situations in which couples are civilly married or living together?
- How can the Christian community assist in discerning the positive and negative elements in the life of persons in a civil marriage?
  - How can the Christian community guide and sustain them on a path of growth and conversion toward the Sacrament of Matrimony?
  - How can those who are living together be assisted to decide to marry?
34. How does the Christian community address the real problems arising from the continuing practice of “marriage in stages” or cohabitation without benefit of marriage?

**Caring for Wounded Families (separated / divorced but *not* re-married / divorced *and* re-married / single-parent families)**

*(arising from par.44-54 of the Relatio)*

35. Is the Christian community in a position to undertake the care of all wounded families so that they can experience the Father’s mercy?
- Facing social and economic factors, what can the Christian community do to alleviate these conditions which are often so much a part of the situations?
  - What has been done?
  - What needs to be done?
  - How can a sense of mission be instilled so that the Christian community is inspired to strive earnestly to bring the experience of the Father’s mercy to the wounded family?
36. How can the U.S. Catholic Church collaborate in establishing guidelines for pastoral practice in caring for wounded families?
- How can the Universal Church collaborate, while regarding and respecting the fact that there are cultural differences among the Continents as one Body of Christ?
37. How can the procedure to determine cases of nullity
- Be made more accessible
  - Streamlined
  - Possibly without expense
38. Divorced and re-married:
- Pastoral practice needs to be studied
  - Orthodox Christianity (Russian, Greek, etc.) vis-à-vis Roman practice
  - What are the prospects?
  - What is possible?
  - How to resolve forms of undue or unnecessary impediments?

39. Does Church law currently provide a valid response to challenges arising from
- mixed marriages (between two Baptized persons male/female)
  - interreligious marriages (between one who is Baptized and one who is not)
  - should there be a study of the elements of current Church law in this regard?

### **Pastoral Attention Toward Persons With Homosexual Tendencies**

*(arising from par 55 & 56 of the Relatio)*

40. How can the Christian Community give pastoral attention to families with persons with homosexual tendencies?
- In light of cultural sensitivities what are most appropriate responses?
  - How can such persons receive pastoral care in light of the Gospel?
  - How can God's Will be proposed to them in their situation?

### **The Transmission of Life and the Challenge of a Declining Birthrate**

*(arising from paragraphs 57-59 of the Relatio)*

41. What are the most significant steps that have been taken to announce the beauty and dignity of
- Becoming a mother
  - Becoming a father
  - What does *Humanae Vitae* actually say about the human person?
  - How can dialogue between faith and science that respects the humanity of reproduction be promoted?
42. Parenthood needs structures and tools
- Does the Christian community offer solidarity and support?
  - If so, how?
  - Even at the political level?
  - Adoption and foster-parenting – signs of fruitful generosity?
  - How to promote the care and respect of children?
43. Motherhood/Fatherhood – a lived response to a vocation
- Is this vocation sufficiently emphasized in catechesis?
  - How about formation for effective guidance of consciences of married couples?
  - Are people aware of the grave consequences of demographic change (societal mobility/instability)

44. How does the Church
- a) combat the scourge of abortion
  - b) and foster an effective culture of life

**Upbringing and the Role of the Family in Evangelization**

*(arising from paragraphs 60-61 of the Relatio)*

45. Do parents find solidarity and support in education of their children?
- a) What can be done?
  - b) What steps to affirm the role of parents in raising their children
  - c) What steps in the socio-political reality?
46. How can parents and the Christian family be made aware that the duty of transmitting the Faith is an intrinsic aspect of *being* a Christian?

END