

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Report on Results of Questionnaire for Synod on the Family

### German Bishops

A report from the bishops' conference of Germany shows a clear divergence between what the church teaches on marriage, sexuality and family life and what Catholics — even those active in parish life — personally believe. The differences are seen “above all when it comes to premarital cohabitation, (the status of the) divorced and remarried, birth control and homosexuality,” said the German bishops' report, posted Feb. 3 on their conference website in German, Italian and English. The text is a summary of the official responses from all of Germany's 27 dioceses

*“In most cases where the church's teaching is known, it is only selectively accepted.”*

and about 20 German Catholic organizations and institutions to a Vatican questionnaire published in preparation for October's extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family. “Most of the baptized have an image of the church on the one hand that is family-friendly in its attitude, while at the same time considering her sexual morality to be unrealistic,” the German survey found. The report said Catholics accept the church's vision of marriage as a lifelong union of a man and a woman open to having children, and hope to realize that vision in their own family. However, the German dioceses reported that “premarital unions' are not only a relevant pastoral reality but one which is almost universal,” since between 90 percent and 100 percent of couples who seek a Catholic wedding are already living together despite church teaching that sex outside of marriage is sinful. “Many in fact consider it irresponsible to marry without living together beforehand,” the report said. The summary said many of the respondents supported a 2013 initiative of the Archdiocese of Freiburg to encourage divorced and remarried couples to speak to a local priest about their situation, suggesting that their status could be resolved as a matter of personal conscience. The report follows.

**t**his summary is based on responses from the 27 German dioceses and archdioceses as well as on those from roughly 20 well-known Catholic associations and institutions.

Owing to the short survey period that  
*continued on page 618*



### contents

- 617 Report on Results of Questionnaire for Synod on the Family  
*by the Bishops of Germany*
- 627 Speech to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith  
*by Pope Francis*
- 628 Pastoral Exhortation on Crisis in South Sudan  
*by the Bishops of Sudan and South Sudan*
- 632 Datebook
- 632 On File

February 27, 2014  
Volume 43  
Number 38