

origins

CNS documentary service

Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization

Synod Secretariat

Contraception, divorce, same-sex marriage, abortion and the right of parents to be primary educators of their children will be among the topics facing the third extraordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops, according to the 24,600-word “instrumentum laboris,” or working paper, made public June 26 at the Vatican by the Synod Secretariat. The document will serve as the basis for discussions at the synod, scheduled for Oct. 5-19. It summarizes the thousands of responses received from bishops’ conferences, dioceses, parishes, academic institutions and individ-

“The family is experiencing very difficult times requiring the church’s compassion and understanding in offering guidance to families ‘as they are.’”

ual Catholics and non-Catholics to a series of questions posed by the Vatican on marriage and family life. “Many respondents confirmed that even when the church’s teaching about marriage and the family is known, many Christians have difficulty accepting it in its entirety,” it says. Catechesis about marriage and family “cannot be limited exclusively to the preparation of couples for marriage,” but must instead permeate the entire church, the document adds. The working document says many bishops’ conferences encouraged the church to consider “more widely exercising mercy, clemency and indulgence toward divorced and remarried Catholics. On the topic of same-sex marriages, the document said the church needs to “develop a ministry that can maintain the proper balance between accepting persons in a spirit of compassion and gradually guiding them to authentic human and Christian maturity.” The text of the working document follows

INTRODUCTION

On Oct. 8, 2013, Pope Francis convoked the third extraordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops to treat the topic “The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization.” The General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops began its preparation by sending the preparatory document, which generated significant reflection among the people of God. The results of that consultation are presented in this *instrumentum laboris*.
continued on page 158



contents

157	Synod 2014 Working Paper: The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization <i>By the Synod of Bishops General Secretariat</i>
184	Datebook
184	On File

July 17, 2014
Volume 44
Number 10