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Lineamenta for the 2015 Synod on the Family

Synod of Bishops

To help set the agenda for the 2015 Synod of Bishops on the family, the Vatican sent the world's Catholic bishops' conferences a list of questions on a range of topics, including matters of marriage and sexuality that proved especially controversial at the 2014 family synod. Together with the final report of the 2014 assembly, the 46 questions published by the Vatican Dec. 9 comprise a preparatory document, known as a "lineamenta," for the Oct. 4-25 synod, which will have the theme: "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World." Bishops' conferences are being asked to consult with "academic institutions, orga-

"The vocation and mission of the family are fully configured to the order of creation."

nizations, lay movements and other ecclesial associations" in preparing their responses, which are due at the Vatican by April 15. The bishops' responses will serve as the basis for the synod's working document, to be published by the summer. The questionnaire instructs bishops' conferences to "avoid in their responses a formulation of pastoral care based simply on an application of doctrine," in favor of what it describes as Pope Francis' call to "pastoral activity that is characterized by a 'culture of encounter' and capable of recognizing the Lord's gratuitous work even outside customary models." The questions echo the tone of the 2014 synod's final report, which emphasized traditional Catholic teaching by comparison with the same assembly's mid-term report, which stirred controversy with remarkably conciliatory language toward people with ways of life contrary to church doctrine, including the divorced and civilly remarried and those in same-sex unions and other nonmarital relationships. The "lineamenta" follows, copyright © 2014 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana and the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops.

at the conclusion of the third extraordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops, celebrated in 2014 to treat the topic "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization," Pope Francis decided to make public the *relatio synodi* [synod report], the document that concluded the synod's work. At the same

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