

## **“Sorting Through the Synod on the Family”**

**Ordinary Synod** to be held October 2015. Theme: “Jesus Christ reveals the mystery and vocation of the family”

**Extraordinary Synod** held in October 2014. Theme: “The pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization”

### **CHALLENGES FACING THE FAMILY:**

#### **In the West:**

- Contraceptive culture
- Abortion
- Redefinition of marriage
- Rampant consumerism
- Domestic violence

#### **In the East:**

- The struggle to find food, drinkable water and decent work
- A lack of adequate places to worship
- Fleeing from war or terrorism
- The fight against disease
- Political and religious instability

#### **In Africa:**

- Culture of polygamy
- Marriage in stages
- Arranged marriages

#### **Worldwide:**

- The fight against poverty
- Young people lacking the optimism to start a family
- Families broken up by divorce, infidelity, pornography, alcoholism and other forms of addiction
- Mixed marriages
- Cohabitation before marriage, or instead of it, children born outside of marriage
- Migration
- Children becoming the object of contention between parents, the true victims of family breakdowns

## **KEY POINTS FROM PREPARATORY DOCUMENT (INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS)**

### **FORMAT OF THE SYNOD**

Open dialogue and debate. Not a clash between “liberals” and “conservatives” with a democratic vote determining “the winner.” Rather, a search for the truth that will ultimately unite. Pope Francis invited the synod fathers to a “sincere discussion, open and fraternal,” and asked them to trust that “in his time the Lord will not fail to lead us back to unity.”

Cardinal Andre Vingt-Trois: “We are not there to achieve majorities for particular positions; we are there to work toward the objective of allowing a common will to emerge in the Church.”

### **KEY POINTS FROM THE RELATIO**

We must have a three-fold approach:

1. Keep our gaze on Jesus and imitate his gaze.
2. Operate from the “law of gradualness,” not “gradualness of the law.”
3. Discern and affirm the values present in wounded families and irregular situations, then work from there.

### **PARTICULAR SITUATIONS THAT WERE ADDRESSED IN THE RELATIO:**

**Need for sound marriage preparation, both before and after the celebration of the sacrament**

**Positive aspects of civil unions and cohabitation**

**Caring for wounded families (the separated, the divorced, the divorced who have not remarried, the divorced who have remarried)**

**Welcoming homosexual persons**

**The transmission of life and the challenge of the declining birthrate**

**The challenge of education and the role of the family in evangelization**