

#synod2018

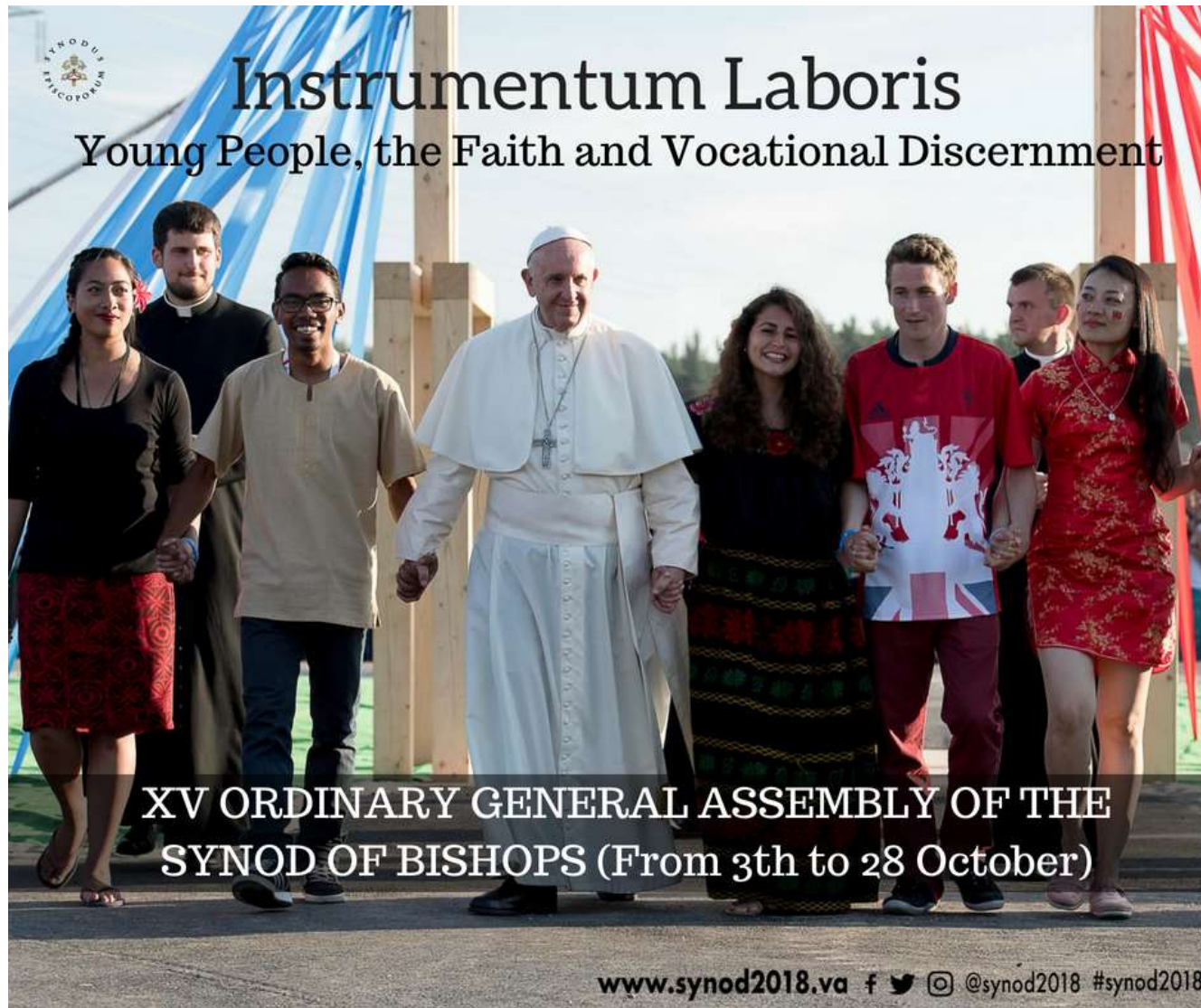
Recognizing. Interpreting. Choosing
Reflections on the Instrumentum Laboris

UISG webinar July 5th



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at the Bishops' Conference of France

Reflections on the the working document for #synod2018



Towards #synod2018

A “walk together” with the youth



Pope Francis Prayer for the synod

Lord Jesus

in journeying towards the Synod, your Church turns her attention to all the young people of the world. We pray that they might boldly take charge of their lives, aim for the most beautiful and profound things of life and always keep their hearts unencumbered.

Pope Francis Prayer for the synod

Accompanied by wise and generous guides,
help them respond to
the call you make to each of them,
to realize a proper plan of life and achieve happiness.
Keep their hearts open to dreaming great dreams
and make them concerned for the good of others.

Pope Francis Prayer for the synod

Like the Beloved Disciple, may they stand at the foot of the Cross,

to receive your Mother as a gift from you.

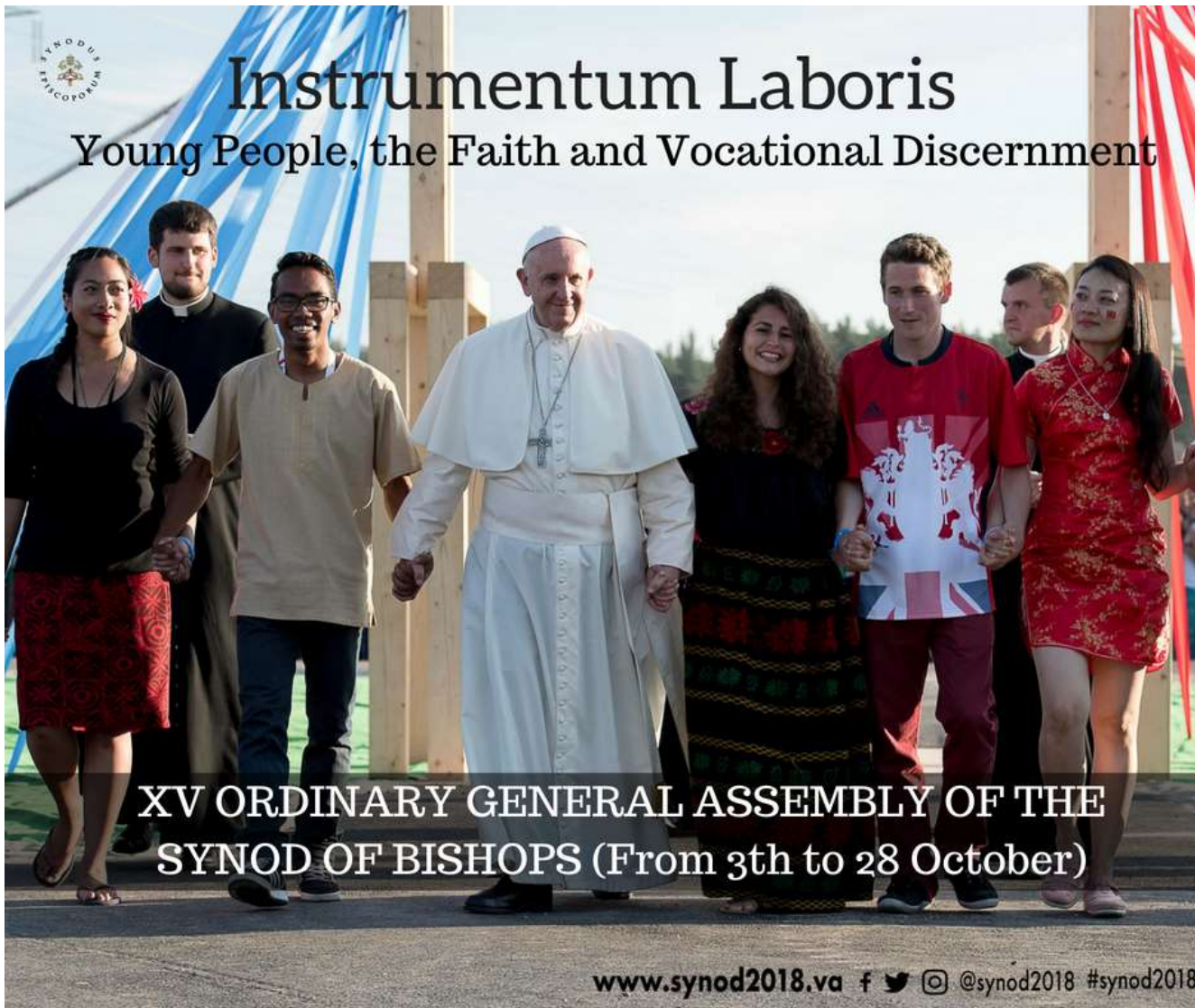
May they be witnesses to your Resurrection

and be aware that you are at their side

as they joyously proclaim you as Lord.

Amen.

Introduction : The process to elaborate the working document for #synod2018



A process of discernment

- Discernment is the way, the method of the synod
- « A synodal Church is a listening Church »
- The role of the General Secretariate of the Synod presided by Cardinal Baldisseri
- Two special secretaries :
 - Fr Giacomo Costa, sj and Fr Rossano Sala, sdb



The process to elaborate the working document for #synod2018

- **October 2016** : Pope Francis announcement of the synod on « Young people, faith and Vocationnal Discernement »
- **January 2017** : Publication of the Preparatory Document with a questionnaire + letter for Youth
- **Mars 2017** : international meeting for WYD and Synod with national and youth delegates
- **June 2017** : Online Questionnaire for young people by the Synod Secretariate

The process to elaborate the working document for #synod2018

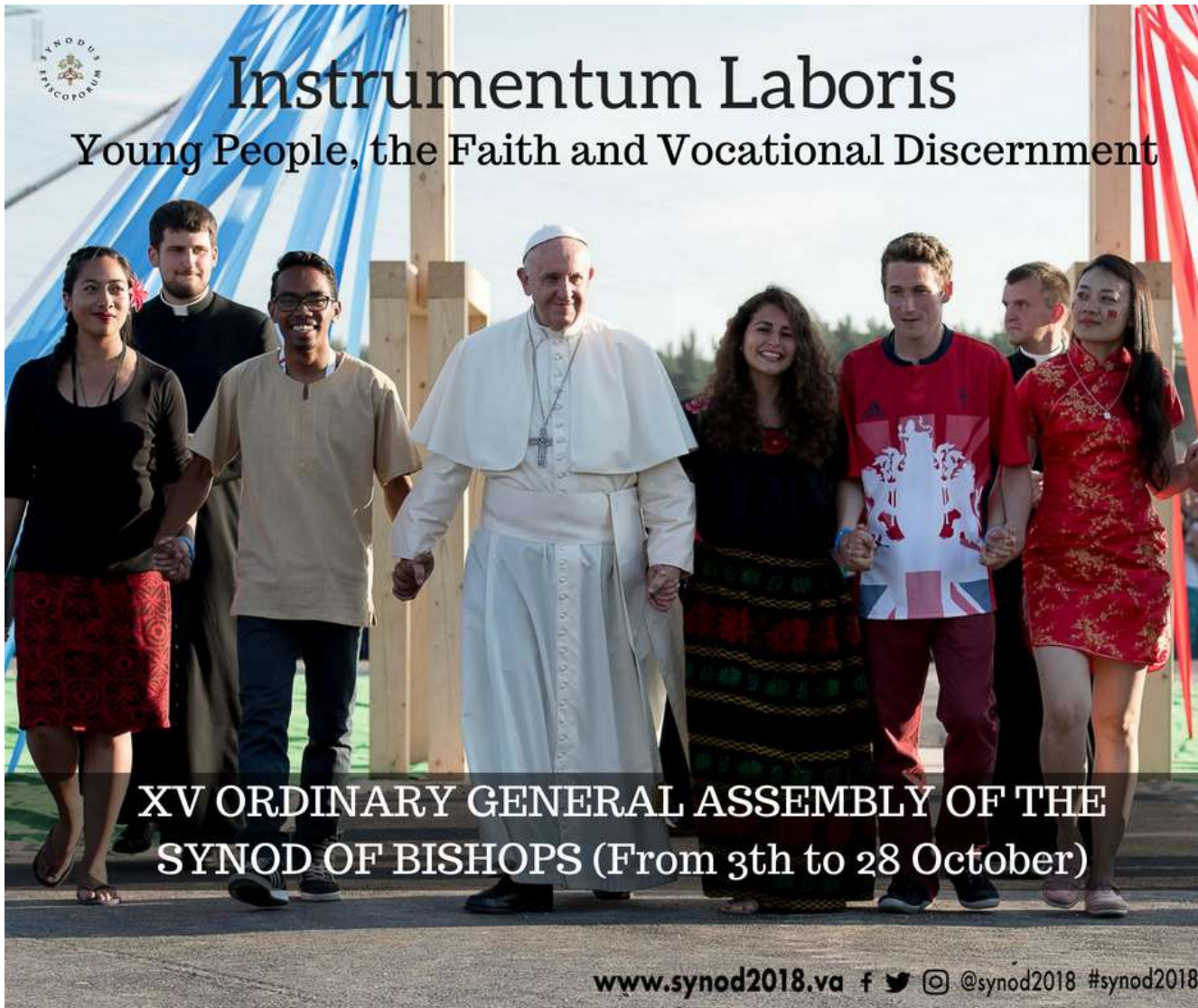
- **September 2017** : International Seminar on the Condition of Youth
- *December 2018 : International congress on “Consacrated Life and Vocations”*
- **March 2018** : Pre-synod with 300 young from all over the world
- **June 19th** : Publication of the Instrumentum Laboris
- **October 3rd – 28th** : Synod of the Bishops

An insight from a youth

- Anne Thibout, national coordinator for WYD Panama 2019, media-team for the presynod



Presentation of the working document



Introduction : Synod purposes according to Instrumentum Laboris (IL)

- **1. Taking care of young people is not an optional task for the Church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission in history.** In just a few words, this is the specific scope of the upcoming Synod : just as our Lord Jesus Christ walked alongside the disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35), the Church is also urged to accompany all young people, without exception, towards the joy of love.

Part I : Recognizing : the Church listens to reality

- Chapter I. Being Young Today
- Chapter II. Experiences and Types of Language
- Chapter III. In the Throwaway Culture
- Chapter IV. Anthropological and Cultural Challenges
- Chapter V. Listening to Young People

IL Part I - Ch IV Anthropological and Cultural Challenges

- 51. The societies and cultures of our time, albeit in different forms, are characterized by certain key questions. Their constant resurfacing allows us to recognize them as signs of change in the anthropological and cultural time we live in. **Young people, who are the watchmen and seismographs of every age, perceive them as a source of new opportunities and unprecedented threats more than others do.** Some analysts speak of a “metamorphosis” of the human condition that gives rise to enormous challenges for everyone, and young people in particular, in the path to build a sound identity.

IL - A Decision-making Paralysis in an Overproliferation of Proposals

- **61.** Several elements mentioned above, taken together, explain why, in some parts of the world, we are living in a **“culture of indecision”**, which considers lifelong choices impossible, if not meaningless. **In a world where opportunities and proposals increase exponentially, reacting with choices that are always reversible becomes spontaneous**, even if this implies a constant mortification of our wishes. The vocational discernment process, along the axis marked by the steps “recognizing, interpreting, choosing”, often gets stuck at the moment when choices must be made or implemented. Sometimes external certainties are sought, that do not require the toil of walking in the faith and surrendering to the Word; at other times, what prevails is the fear of abandoning our beliefs to open up to God’s surprises.

Part II : Interpreting : faith and vocationnal discernment

- Chapter I. The Blessing of Youth
- Chapter II. Vocation in the Light of Faith
- Chapter III. The Dynamism of Vocational Discernment
- Chapter IV. The Art of Accompanying

IL - Part II ch.2 Vocation in the Light of Faith

- 85. Young people, in the final document of the PM, state: «We seek a Church that helps us find our vocation, in all of its senses» (PM 3). To do so, **the meaning of the term “vocation” needs to be clarified.** Caring about all young people, without exception, the Synod is asked to shed light in a convincing way on the vocational horizon of human existence as such. The young themselves are asking the Church to help them «find a simple and clear understanding of vocation» (PM 8).

IL - Part II ch.2 Vocation in the Light of Faith

- 85... From the responses of various BC, and also from many comments made by the young themselves, we understand that **the term vocation is generally used to indicate vocations to the ordained ministry and special consecration.** One BC argues that «a weak point of pastoral care, in discerning young people's vocations, is that it limits the notion of vocation only to the choice of the ministerial priesthood or consecrated life».

IL - Part II ch.2 Vocation in the Light of Faith

- 86. If we just compare this “narrow” vision to the journey of the two past Synods, where it was said that «marriage is a vocation» and that «the decision to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment» (AL 72), it is not difficult to realize that a reductive view of the term “vocation” generates a strong bias amongst young people, who see vocational pastoral care only as an activity whose sole purpose is to “recruit” priests and men and women religious. **Starting from this shared ecclesial imagery, there is the need to lay the foundation for a broad “vocational youth pastoral care” that can be meaningful to all young people.**

IL - Part II ch.2 Vocation in the Light of Faith

- 88. When Scripture states that all things have been created through Christ and for Him (cf. Col 1:16), **this leads us to interpret the mystery of vocation as a reality that characterizes God's own creation, thus mysteriously illuminating the existence of every man and woman.** Blessed Paul VI already stated that «every human life is called to some task by God» (PP 15), while Benedict XVI insisted that human beings are created by God as creatures of dialogue: the creating Word «calls each one of us personally, revealing that life itself is a vocation from God» (VD 77).

IL - Part II ch.2 Vocation in the Light of Faith

- 88. In this respect, **only a vocational anthropology seems adequate to understand humans in all their truth and fullness.** The fact that, during the PM, some young non-believers and members of other religions testified to their wish to discern their vocation in the world and in history was significant. (cf. PM 8).

IL - Part II ch.2 Vocation in the Light of Faith

- 89 “Vocational discernment along these lines becomes a journey of reconciliation with our body and self, with others and the world.”
- 92 “The destination of Jesus’ call is disclosed only when we follow Christ, which is dialogue and relationship with the Master.”

IL - The Vocation of the Church and Vocations in the Church

- 97. Furthermore, it is not possible to fully understand the meaning of our baptismal vocation if we do not think of it as inherently connected to the Church's missionary character, which is ultimately directed towards communion with God and among all people. **In truth, the different ecclesial vocations are the many multifaceted expressions through which the Church fulfils her call to be a real sign of the Gospel, received in a fraternal community.** The various forms in which we can follow Christ express, each in its own way, the mission to bear witness to the Jesus event, in which every man and woman finds salvation.

IL - The Vocation of the Church and Vocations in the Church

- 99. **Therefore, the different forms of Christian life cannot be conceived or understood autonomously, but only in the reciprocity they generate and in the exchange of gifts they accomplish** (cf. CL 55; VC 31). This is the only way the Church can become an integral image of the face of Jesus in the history of mankind. The recent letter *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, on the relationship between hierarchical and charismatic gifts for the life and mission of the Church, provided valuable indications to develop a correct theology of charisms, in order to gratefully welcome and wisely enhance the gifts of grace that the Spirit constantly elicits in the Church for her rejuvenation.

Discernment as a lifestyle

- 111. Above all, vocational discernment is not over, once a decision between different alternatives is made, but it extends over time, accompanying the concrete steps we make to implement that decision. In this sense, **discernment is also a lifestyle** : «It is necessary not only at extraordinary times, when we need to resolve grave problems and make crucial decisions. It is a means of spiritual combat for helping us to follow the Lord more faithfully.

Discernment as a lifestyle

- 111. (...) We need it at all times, to help us recognize God's timetable, lest we fail to heed the promptings of his grace and disregard his invitation to grow. Often discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things, since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities» (GE 169). **Discernment is a gift and a risk**, and this can be frightening.

IL - The Art of Accompanying

- 121. «**All young people, without exception, have the right to be guided in life's journey**» (DP III, 2). Vocational accompaniment is a process that is able to unleash freedom, as well as the capacity to give and to integrate the various dimensions of life within a horizon of meaning. For this reason, a true accompaniment will strive to present vocation not as a pre-determined fate, a task to be carried out, a ready-made script, to be accepted by discovering how to implement it effectively. God takes seriously the freedom He has given to human beings, and responding to his call is a commitment that requires work, imagination, audacity and willingness to make progress also by trial and error.

IL - The Qualities of Mentors

- **130.** Mentors are called to respect the mystery that all persons carry in themselves and trust the Lord who is already at work in them. They are invited to realize they are a model that can influence others through what they are, rather than for what they do or suggest. The deep affective interaction that is created in the space of spiritual accompaniment – the fact that tradition talks about spiritual fatherhood and motherhood is no coincidence, as a profound generative relationship – requires a sound formation on the part of mentors, and the willingness to work, first of all, on themselves spiritually and, to some extent, also psychologically.

IL - The Qualities of Mentors

- **130.** (...) Only in this way will they be able to truly serve, listen and discern, and avoid the most frequent risks related to their role: displacing those they accompany in the search and responsibility of choices, denying or removing the emergence of sexual issues and, lastly, crossing boundaries and becoming inappropriately and destructively involved with the people they are helping in their spiritual journey, with the potential for actual abuse and dependency. When this happens, in addition to the injuries caused in the accompanied persons, a climate of fear and mistrust starts spreading, that discourages the practice of accompaniment.

Part III Choosing : paths of pastoral and missionary conversion

- Chapter I. An Integral Perspective
- Chapter II. Deep into the Fabric of our Daily Lives
- Chapter III. An Evangelized and Evangelizing Community
- Chapter IV. The Animation and Organization of Pastoral Care

IL - Discernment as a Christian and ecclesial lifestyle

- 139. In this framework, **“choosing” does not mean giving answers to problems once and for all, but rather identifying actual steps to increase the capacity to engage in discernment processes for our mission, as an ecclesial community.** Moreover, we cannot expect our offer of accompaniment towards vocational discernment to be credible to the young people we address, unless we show that we are able **to practice discernment in the ordinary life of the Church, making it the *modus operandi* of our community** before applying it to their situation. Just like young people themselves, many BC expressed their difficulty in finding their way through a complex world for which they do not have a map. In this situation, **the Synod itself is an exercise to enhance the capacity for discernment** that is evoked in its theme.

IL - A Generative Church

- 141. This dynamism, whereby we go out of ourselves to give our life and work unsparingly so that everyone, individually and collectively, may encounter the joy of love, also characterizes the way the Church exercises the authority entrusted to her, **in a way that is truly generative and therefore creates communion.**
(...)

IL - A Generative Church

- 141. (...) According to some analyses, etymologically speaking, authoritativeness is the capacity to make all creatures grow (*augeo*, in Latin, hence *auctor* and *auctoritas*) in the originality that the Creator conceived and wished for them. **Exercising authority means taking on the responsibility to foster development and set freedom free**, rather than exercising control that holds people down and keeps them captive.

Towards an Integrated Pastoral Care

- 210. To many, **the linchpin to achieve this integrated unity is the vocational horizon of existence**, since «the vocational dimension of youth pastoral care is not something that should be suggested only at the end of the whole process or to a group that is particularly sensitive to a specific vocational call, but it must be proposed constantly throughout the whole process of evangelization and of education in the faith of adolescents and of young people» (Francis, *Message to the participants in the International Congress «Vocational Pastoral and Consecrated Life: Horizons and Hopes»*, 25 November 2017).

Conclusion : the call to holiness

- **213.** We believe that «**holiness is the most attractive face of the Church**» (**GE 9**) and before we can suggest it to young people, we are called to experience it as witnesses, thus becoming a “likeable” community, as the Acts of the Apostles shows us on various occasions (cf. GE 93). Accompanying young people on the ways of holiness becomes relevant only if we are consistent in the first place. (...)

Conclusion : the call to holiness

- **213. (...) A true spiritual dynamism and a fruitful pedagogy of holiness do not disappoint young people's deepest ambitions : i.e. their need for life, love, expansion, joy, freedom, future and also for mercy and reconciliation. To many BC, presenting holiness as a horizon of meaning that is accessible to all young people and achievable in our ordinary life is still a great challenge.**

Expectations for the synod...

