There is no love without fidelity
**VATICAN BULLETIN**

**AUDIENCES**

**Thursday, 18 October**

H.E. Mr Jae-in Moon, President of the Republic of Korea, with his wife and entourage

**Friday, 19 October**

H.E. Mr Stephan Weil, Minister-President of Lower Saxony, with his entourage

H.E. Mr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization

Archbishop Luigi Ventura, titular Archbishop of Equilino, Apostolic Nuncio in France

Archbishop Piergiorgio Bertoldi, titular Archbishop of Spello, Apostolic Nuncio in Burkina Faso and in Niger

**Saturday, 20 October**

Fr Alessandro Gazzola, CS, Superior General of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint Charles (Scalabrinians)

H.E. Ms Caroline Weijers, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for the presentation of her Letters of Credence

Bishop Gianmarco Busca of Mantova, Italy

H.E. Mr Truong Hoa Binh, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, with his entourage

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, PSS, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops

Monday, 22 October

H.E. Mr Iván Duque Márquez, President of the Republic of Colombia, with his wife and entourage

H.E. Cardinal Béchara Boutros Rai, OMM, Patriarch of Antioch for Maronites, Lebanon

Bishop Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, MSC, titular Bishop of Luperciana, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

**ON TUESDAY, 23 OCTOBER**

**On Tuesday afternoon, 16 October, Pope Francis received in audience H.E. Ms Caroline Weijers, Ambassador of The Netherlands, for the presentation of the Letters by which she is accredited to the Holy See.**

H.E. Ms Caroline Weijers, 59, was born in Amsterdam. She holds a degree in history.

She has held the following positions: official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (1987); attaché at the embassy in Maputo, Mozambique; attaché of the Permanent Representation to the European Union; officer of the Africa Directorate at the MFA; head of the Political Department in Pretoria (2000-2005); deputy head of Mission in Pretoria (2005-2006); Ambassador in Cotonou (2006-2009); Ambassador in Tunis (2009-2012), head of the Department for Travel Documents, Legalisation, Anti-Fraud at the Directorate for Consular Affairs in the political sector (2012-2017); project manager for the Conference of Honorary Consuls at the Directorate General of Political Affairs/Diplomatic Commission (since 2017).

**New Ambassador of The Netherlands**

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**With the President of Korea**

On Thursday, 18 October, in the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Mr Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, who subsequently met with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, and with Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the parties evoked the good bilateral relations and the positive contribution offered by the Church in the social, educational and healthcare sectors, as well as the promotion of dialogue and reconciliation among Koreans.

Deep appreciation was expressed for the common commitment to fostering all useful initiatives to overcome the tensions that still exist in the Korean Peninsula, in order to usher in a new season of peace and development. Various regional issues were also discussed.

**On 9 October, Archbishop Martin Krees, titular Archbishop of Taboreenta, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Uruguay with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Tabaré Ramón Vázquez Rosas, President of the Republic.**

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**Pope Francis welcomes Grand Imam of Al-Azhar**

On Tuesday afternoon, 16 October, Pope Francis received the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Prof. Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyib in a private visit at the Casa Santa Maria.
There is no love without fidelity

The Pope reaffirms the need for careful marriage preparation

One cannot love only as long as it is “convenient” because “no human relationship is authentic without fidelity and loyalty”. Pope Francis emphasized this at the General Audience in Saint Peter’s Square on Wednesday, 24 October. Continuing the series of catecheses on the Decalogue, the Pontiff spoke about the “Sixth Word, which addresses the sentimental and sexual dimension, and states: ‘You shall not commit adultery’. The faithful is a translation of the Holy Father’s catechesis, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

Our series of catecheses on the Commandments brings us today to the Sixth Word, which addresses the sentimental and sexual dimension and states: “You shall not commit adultery”. The immediate call is to fidelity, and indeed no human relationship is authentic without fidelity and loyalty.

One cannot love only as long as it is “convenient”; love is truly manifested beyond the threshold of one’s own personal advantage, when one gives unreservedly. As the Catechism states: “Love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement ‘until further notice’” (n. 1646). Fidelity is an attribute of a free, mature and responsible human relationship. Friends, too, reveal themselves as authentic because they remain so in all circumstances, otherwise they are not friends. Christ reveals authentic love; the One who lives in the boundless love of the Father, is, on this strength, the faithful Friend who welcomes us even when we err, and who always wants good for us, even when we do not deserve it.

Human beings need to be loved unconditionally and those who do not receive this acceptance carry a certain incompleteness within themselves, often without knowing it. The human heart seeks to fill this void with surrogates, accepting compromises and mediocrity that have only a vague flavour of love. The risk is to call certain bitter and immature relationships ‘love’, with the illusion of finding the light of life in something that, at best, is merely a reflection of it.

Thus it can happen, for example, that one overestimates physical attraction, which is itself a gift from God, but aims to pave the way for an authentic and faithful relationship with the person. As Saint John Paul II used to say, the human being is “called to a full and mature spontaneity of relationships”, which is “the gradual fruit of discerning the impulses in one’s own heart”. It is something that is acquired, because every human being must “learn with determination and consistency what the body signifies” (cf. Catechesis, 12 November 1980).

This Sixth Word calls us to turn our gaze to Christ whose fidelity can remove us from an adulterous heart and give us a faithful heart. In him and in only him, is there love without reservations and second thoughts, absolute and unmitigated giving, and the tenacity of full acceptance.

From his death and resurrection comes our fidelity, from his unconditional love comes steadfastness in relationships. From communion with him, with the Father and with the Holy Spirit comes communion among us and the ability to live our bonds in fidelity.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Canada and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord’s blessings of joy and peace. God bless you!

I offer a special greeting to young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds. Dear friends, Christ’s Gospel message does not ask us to do extraordinary things, but rather to allow God to act in our lives. He told us: “apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). Christian life is the encounter between our weakness and the strength of God’s grace that allows us to live daily a full and joyful life in which charity means doing everything with joy and humility, for the glory of God and for the good of mankind.
The Pope recalls that pastoral accompaniment does not end with the wedding

Continuing formation for spouses

On Thursday afternoon, 27 September, in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome, the Holy Father addressed himself to a formation course on marriage and the family. Expressing the importance of a ‘permanent catechumenate’ for the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Holy Father observed that for married couples the Church should be ‘a thoughtful mother who does not neglect, does not discard, but draws near with tenderness, embraces and encourages’. The following is a translation of Francis’ discourse, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a joy for me to meet with you at the conclusion of the formation course on marriage and the family organized by the Diocese of Rome and by the Tribunal of the Roman Rota. I cordially greet each one of you and I thank the Cardinal Vicar, the Dean of the Rota and those who have collaborated in these days of study and reflection. They have given you the occasion to examine the challenges and pastoral projects concerning the family, considered as domestic church and sanctuary of life. It is a vast, complex and delicate apostolic field, to which it is necessary to dedicate energy and enthusiasm, with the intent to promote the Gospel of the family and of life. In this regard, how can one fail to recall the broad and far-sighted vision of my Predecessors, in particular, that of Saint John Paul II, who boldly promoted the principle of the family, crucial and irreplaceable for the common good of peoples?

In their wake, I have developed this theme, particularly in the Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia. In this respect, how can one fail to recognize the broad and far-sighted vision of my Predecessors, in particular, that of Saint John Paul II, who boldly promoted the principle of the family, crucial and irreplaceable for the common good of peoples?

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The world needs healing and reconciliation

To the General Chapter of the Passionist Fathers

Dear brothers,

I am pleased to meet you on the occasion of your General Chapter and I thank the Superior for his words. These days, your reflections have been guided by the theme "Renewing our Mission: gratitude, prophecy and hope". These three words: gratitude, prophecy and hope express the spirit with which you wish to stimulate your Congregation to a renewal of mission. In fact, besides electing the government of the Institute, you propose to implement a new path of continuous formation for your communities, rooted in the experience of daily life, and you also intend to discern pastoral methodology in your approach to younger generations.

Your Founder, Saint Paul of the Cross, gave to himself and to his companions this motto: "May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts." His first biographer, St. Vincent Mary Strambli, said of him: "It seemed that God Almighty had chosen Father Paul, in a special way, to teach people how to seek him in the interiority of their own heart." St. Paul of the Cross wanted your communities to be schools of prayer, where they could experience God. His holiness itself was lived between darkness and desolation, but also with a joy and peace that touched the hearts of those who met him.

At the heart of your life and your mission is the Passion of Jesus, which the Founder described as "the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love" (Letters II, 499). The vow that distinguishes you, with which you undertake to keep alive the memory of the Passion, places you at the foot of the cross, from which springings the healing and reconciling love of God. I encourage you to be ministers of spiritual healing and reconciliation, which are greatly needed in today’s world, marked by ancient and new afflictions. Your Constitutions call you to immerse yourselves to “evangelizing and… re-evangelizing the faithful, especially the poor in more marked areas" (Const. 70). Your closeness to people, traditionally expressed through popular missions, is the expression of the pastoral direction and the sacrament of Penance, is a precious testimony. The Church needs ministers who speak with tenderness, listen without condemnation and accept with mercy.

The Church today strongly perceives the call to come out of herself and go to the peripheries, both geographic and existential. Your commitment to embrace new frontiers of mission implies not only going to new territories to bring the Gospel, but also addressing the new challenges of our time, such as migrations, secularism and the digital world. This means being present in those situations where people perceive the absence of God, and trying to be close to those who, in any way or form, feel alienated. In this age of change, which is rather a change of era, you are called to be attentive to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, reading the signs of the times.

You are inspired by the example of Father Paul of the Cross. His commitment to the mission in the United States was so strong that he was able to reconcile his spiritual family with the Congregation. This example guides you to respond to the needs of today’s world, staying close to the suffering Christ in order to bring his presence to a world that suffers.

Your Congregation has given many examples of holiness for the people of God. We recall St. Gabriel of the Mother of Sorrows, a young man whose joyful following of Christ still speaks to the youth of today. The testimony of the Saints and Blesseds of your religious family manifests the fruitfulness of your charism and offers models to inspire you in your apostolic choices.

More than by words and ideas to approach the faith, because it follows the same path of faith, that of beauty. The beauty of art enriches life and creates communion, because it unites God, man and creation in a single harmony. It connects the past, the present and the future, and it attracts us because of the same gaze — different and far-off peoples.

Celebrating your anniversary allows us to recall this history with gratitude, but it also enables us to renew our awareness of the important mission of preserving such a beautiful heritage that is so beneficial to men and women. Contemplating great art, which expresses the faith, helps us rediscover what truly matters in life. In leading us both within and above ourselves Christian art points us to the love that created us, to the mercy which saves us, and to the hope that awaits us.

In today’s troubled world, unfortunately so often torn and damaged by selfishness and the thirst for power, art represents, perhaps even more than in the past, a universal need because it is a source of harmony and peace, and it expresses the dimension of generosity. Thanking you warmly for the good that you do, I willingly impart my Blessing accompanied by my best wishes for peace, to you and your families. And please do not forget to pray for me. May the Lord bless you all!

To the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums

Great art expresses the faith

Heirs to "a centuries-long tradition", the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums renew "the achievements of those who contributed to the Church's history through art". In the Consistory Hall on Friday morning, 28 September, Pope Francis shared these thoughts with members of the association established 35 years ago in the United States. The following is the English text of his address.

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of your meeting in Rome, which this year coincides with the thirty-fifth anniversary of your Association’s foundation.

Your generosity over these years has contributed to the restoration of numerous art treasures held in the Vatican Museums. In this way you have continued a centuries-long tradition, imitating the achievements of those who contributed to the Church’s history through art. These works include the frescoes and sarcophagi in the catacombs, the great Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals, and the masterpieces of Michelangelo, Raphael, Bernini and Canova.

Throughout history, art has been second only to life in bearing witness to the Lord. It was, and remains, a majestic road allowing us to approach the faith, because it follows the same path of faith, that of beauty. The beauty of art enriches life and creates communion, because it unites God, man and creation in a single harmony. It connects the past, the present and the future, and it attracts us — in the same place and with the same gaze — different and far-off peoples.

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Infundibulo Maria Vann.

Seven decades
The year of three popes
Karol Wojtyła elected on 16 October 1978

The year of three popes
Karol Wojtyła elected on 16 October 1978

Thirty years ago, at the height of summer, the sudden death of Paul VI, on 6 August 1978, shocked the world of a year that closed with the historic encyclicals by the Council of Vatican II, in 6 October 1962, and in 1978, at the height of summer, nothing could have been more unexpected, more unanticipated, more shocking, than the sudden death of the new, seemingly ill-fated pontificate of Paul VI, in the year of three popes and the two Conclaves of 1978; all of which had been foreseen by the faithful collaborator of Paul VI as Substitute of the Secretariat of State. His rival was Cardinal Montini that had already arisen in progressive Catholic environments in the United States on 21 September 1978, and in the Dominican Republic on 27 September 1978.

Eleven days earlier, on 15 August, the feast of the Assumption of Mary, the Virgin of Rome, has always been a touchstone for the Church, in imitation of its Virgin, to be a place where one could see in its solemnity the vision of the end, a kind of divine forecast of the Church's ultimate destiny. It was on this day, Tuesday, the 15th of August, Montini wished to visit in nearby Frascati the tomb of Cardinal Giuseppe Pizzardo, who had died in 1973. Although Pizzardo had facilitated his entry into the service of the Vatican, Montini was one of the children who most adored him. The Pontiff had tried to decline his morning in preparation and writing out by hand, as always, the discourse for the General Audience. Upon his return from Fiumicino the Pope had a high fever and was visited by his physician, Mario Fontana, who presented a treatment to base the fever.

The next day, Wednesday, the 16th, Montini held the General Audience as usual. “We must all remember that the Church, because being a teacher is a task”, he said, because “she teaches a doctrine that she herself, the Father of all, had to know” and “another word which derives from the transcendent thought of God. This is her power and her light. What is this incomparable transmission of the Word of God called? It is called faith”. Despite the meditations, the fever did not subside. Thursday morning Montini was taken to the hospital to undergo an operation that made possible the private audiences the Italian Pre- Oscar Montini, who had been elected less than a month before.

The fever persisted throughout the entire day on Friday the 4th, but the Pope continued to carry out a normal course of activities. As dawn on Saturday the 5th, he developed a sudden respiratory crisis, which he could not cope with the administration of the medicine. Yet there were no more leaks to the outside world and all that was communicated was that the Pope’s body was buried beneath the Basilica, where a humble tombstone indicates in Latin only the Pontiff’s name. There are many journalistic and historical chronicles and reconstructions of the two short sessions and the two Conclaves of 1978, which, however, are impossible to make due to the lack of records and of objective views, but the general lines were rather clear. In those August days the name of Cardinal Albino Luciani was repeatedly noted as the choice in line. Luciani was a priest of the Diocese of Udine, a devoted on the day of his election, acute pulmonary embolism, which he had developed a sudden respiratory crisis, which he could not cope with the administration of the medicine.

The Pope’s sudden death, which occurred on the night of 4 August, was discovered at dawn on 5 August. The first to learn of the Pope’s death came about suddenly, for the simplicities and communicative power of the words and their significance, then in light of the sudden death of the new, seemingly ill-fated pontificate of Paul VI, in the year of three popes and the two Conclaves of 1978; all of which had been foreseen by the faithful collaborator of Paul VI as Substitute of the Secretariat of State. His rival was Cardinal Montini that had already arisen in progressive Catholic environments in the United States on 21 September 1978, and in the Dominican Republic on 27 September 1978.

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The year of three popes

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The joyful title is particularly remarkable because the author of the book, "Susanza's Alleluja: the legacy of the girl who didn't come home from WYD in Krakow" (L'Alleluja di Susanna. L'eredità di lei che non tornò dalla GMG di Cracovia, San Paolo 2018) is Enrico Rufi, the girl's father, who only modestly alludes to the family's profound suffering. Many of us – especially those who are parents – remember how our hearts sank on reading the news of the 19-year-old girl who had died so unexpectedly in Vienna, on her way home. We have all waited – and wait – anxiously for our children to come back from their travels, holidays, pilgrimages... and we know what it means when a disconcerted anxiety could become a terrible certainty.

But this book is different. It is the happy story of a surprising family. And this is because Susanna's parents did not marry in church but, just the same, they created a solid family built on love between their two daughters, who were very close and shared all their experiences together – a fact no so common among sisters.

Their father is a friend of Marco Pannella and works for Radio Radicale, but this did not stop him from participating in parish life, where the girl found a congenial environment that did not belie the open and generous one they knew at home. Their mother, a scientist, read the Bible to her daughters when they were little. They travelled around the world together during holidays, pursuing memories of open and tolerant historical figures whose father had dubbed as their predecessors. In this spirit, they met the daughter of Albert Camus, listened to all the songs of Fabrizio De André and visited the Château de Montaigne.

Indeed, their father felt like a Protestant in Catholic Italy and like a Catholic in Protestant America. Close contact with the parish community of San Poli-carpo, where Susanza joyfully and generously participated in many activities, did not prevent her from feeling a bit apprehensive about Catechism, an apprehension marked by what she had learned at home: "Susanza was not fond of comprehensive about Catechism, an apprehension marked by what she had learned at home: "Susanza was not fond of Catechism she'd had to go to school on, to be instructed in the faith, to begin with the Pontiff’s teaching. "Her journey toward maturity was supported by Pope Francis”, Susanna's father wrote. “The Pope's Magisterium had been well received by the domestic church, from the outset. When she heard him say that mercy comes before faith, everyone received strong validation from believers’, she wondered".

The girls' Catholic vocation received strong validation from the Pontiff's teaching. "Her journey toward maturity was supported by Pope Francis”, Susanna's father wrote. “The Pope's Magisterium had been well received by the domestic church, from the outset. When she heard him say that mercy comes before faith, everyone received strong validation from believers’, she wondered."
On Monday afternoon, 15 October, the Circuli Minores language groups tasked with offering their reflections on Part II of the Instrumentum Laboris on “Interpreting: Faith and Vocational Discernment” presented these reports during the 11th General Congregation.

Among the reports presented by the four English language groups, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh introduced the findings of Circulus Anglicus A.

Group A recommended that the Synod’s final document present a clear definition of vocation, “rooted in a theology, anthropology and ecclesiology which reflect the signs of the times”. The group suggested that one aspect of vocation that should be more fully explored is the biblical theme featuring God’s call, and the response of his disciples. They urged the addition of a full paragraph on the sacrament of Confirmation and its links to the other sacraments of initiation.

Group A further suggested a distinct treatment of Mary’s response to God’s call at the Annunciation.

Regarding Chapter II on “discernment”, Archbishop Martin’s group felt that much of this material might be edited and needed more focus. The group felt that Chapter IV on “accompaniment” would also benefit from clarification, particularly of the difference between the general support network offered to young people by family, friends and schools, and the specialist spiritual accompaniment provided by properly trained and accompanied mentors. Finally, the group felt strongly that the Church’s role in pastoral accompaniment is “Mater et Magistra”, and the distinct contribution of “pastors of souls” should be given much greater prominence in this chapter.

With regard to Chapter II, Group B recommended broadening the “sense of vocation” to be broaden to include the “ordinary place” of vocation in the family, community and work, and the “extra-ordinary” vocation of religious life.

The group felt that Chapter 3 should “more forcefully present discernment as entering into a dialogic relationship with God”. They also considered the importance of “definition, role and formation” of Christian conscience. The group also suggested that a section be created to focus on accompaniment for engaged and newly married couples.

The relator for Circulus Anglicus C, Bishop Thomas Dowd, Auxiliary of Montréal, provided insight into that group’s findings. In examining Chapter I, the group found several biblical examples offered in the Instrumentum Laboris “out of place” and suggested alternative passages. For Chapter II, Bishop Dowd’s group proposed a modus to restructure the presentation to include a “vocation pyramid” to “better illustrate the relationships between the various layers of vocation.”

Participants found Chapter IV to be “very important”, especially the need to discern the elements of true accompaniment vs “pseudo-accompaniment”. They made several observations regarding the way accompaniment is best carried out, and highlighted the important role of community.

Bishop Robert Emmet Barron, Auxiliary of Los Angeles, presented the findings of Circulus Anglicus D, recommending that Part II of the Instrumentum Laboris begin with the moment “in the Road to Emmaus story when Jesus emerges as teacher and interpreter” who “faced persecution and misunderstanding – called men and women to conversion of heart.” Group D pointed to the story of Samuel and Eli (Sam I) as a reminder not to fall victim to today’s postmodern culture which encourages individuals to “invent themselves and define their own values” by exercising their freedom.

With regard to accompaniment, the group felt the document should “acknowledge the various dimensions of vocation”, which is a “life-long process”. The final document, the group observed, should also “insist on the proper eschatological horizon of vocation”, namely, “sharing the life of God in heaven”.

Where the formation of mentors was concerned, the group warned against the prospect of mentors devolving into “gurus” who “encourage a cult of personality around themselves”. They further recommended that the document make the “very natural connection” between accompaniment and the Church’s sacramental life, particularly reconciliation, confirmation, marriage and holy orders. Regarding the theme of conscience, Bishop Dowd’s group felt that the language in the document “might give the impression that conscience is an individualistic affair” according to one’s feelings and will. Finally, a number of young women in the group suggested that the inclusion of more biblical texts in the final document, “would considerably broaden the appeal of this section”.

The 12th General Congregation of the Synod got underway on Tuesday morning, 16 October, with the Synod Fathers taking full responsibility for past mistakes and scandals, and with a request for forgiveness and a commitment to authentic renewal in order to break away from the shackles of clericalism.

The session, presided by Cardinal John Rihak and attended by 254 Synod Fathers, focused on the third and final – and most concrete – Part of the Instrumentum Laboris. The special Relator, Cardinal Sergio da Rocha introduced the themes presented in Part III noting that after listening and discernment, it is essential to “choose” to “renew pastoral practices and to take a concrete ‘leap forward in love’.”

The Synod Fathers were challenged to consider a series of questions, such as: What should the priorities be for educational and pastoral action? What can be done to eliminate the abuses that distance people from the Church? What areas of ecclesial participation should be dedicated to young people? How should we promote youth leadership within the reality of clericalism?

Speaking at the Synod, Perivval Holt, 32-year-old auditor and president of the Indian Catholic Youth Movement, outlined the troubling social situation in his country – in which young people, he said, prefer to seek help from lay rather than consecrated people because “many of our priests today are a poorer inspiration than lay people”, and this issue must be addressed.

Another central theme was the need for a renewed commitment to education and formation to give value to the great patrimony of youth in the Church and society. The Church must instill confidence in young people, stoke the fire that burns in their hearts, give horizons to their hopes. Various forms were suggested for the active participation of young people in ecclesial structures, from the universal to the diocesan level.

A new pastoral ministry for youth vocations and a greater commitment to priestly formation ranked among recommendations in the area of education and formation. It was said that there is need for the right form of accompaniment, that is not stifling or conditioned by clericalism, and that provides a confidant closeness that is truly able to enter hearts.

There was also particular mention of the Church’s need to strengthen her communicative skills so that she may become truly outward-bound, reaching out to young people in the places they are found: in the physical spaces of social life, school, sport, and so on. It was stressed that the arts, including music, can also be a helpful tool for dialogue and encounter.
Youth unemployment, conversion and the need to support those persecuted for their faith were among the issues discussed during the 15th Congregation on Tuesday, 16 October, presided by Cardinal R fiat and attended by 251 Synod Fathers and seven Auditors and Pope Francis. On the topic of youth unemployment, one of the 20 interventions put forth the recommendation that the Church identify ways to help create new jobs for new generations.

In regard to the situation in Africa, one Synod Father spoke of the many other challenges facing young people, including addiction, delinquency, the hedonistic and materialistic culture and the exodus from rural areas, to name a few. Young people need firm guidance in facing these issues, but also mercy. With regard to accompaniment, an intervention in the presence of the ministerial diaconate was suggested, along with more intensive programs, activities and initiatives in Catholic educational institutes.

Several young people from the Amazon region called for priests to accompany young people beyond the confessional, and one Synod Father observed that many young people are persecuted on account of their faith they thus continue to volunteer in parishes. They especially need the Church’s care and attention.

The 14th General Congregation on Wednesday morning, 17 October, was presided by Cardinal Sako and attended by 254 fathers, who focused on the importance of an outward bound Church. Participants considered the undeniable importance of the digital world both on the social level and as a means of evangelization. One intervention recommended that a special office for digital technologies be established in ecclesiastical institutions. It was also stressed that the Church needs to familiarize herself with the digital language, social networks and new technologies in order to help new generations to freely and responsibly navigate the web.

Many of the 57 interventions reflected on education and on spiritual formation for active citizenship, including in the political sphere. It was said that in both the ecclesiastical and social contexts, young people must be offered a solid moral foundation and tools to grow so that they may become creative, generous and responsible citizens of tomorrow.

Interventions from poorer countries called for more support for Catholic schools which in many vulnerable areas provide young people with the only stable institution for a future better future. One Synod Father stressed that Christian formation should be an integrated system of education that is not limited to catechesis, but also considers the role of families, schools and oratories. A shortage of young catechism teachers was mentioned as well as the need for seminaries focused on the human dimension and on service.

Among other topics discussed was the importance of speaking forthrightly about delicate issues such as same sex marriage, contraception and abortion.

15th and 16th Congregations

Outlining a new pastoral ministry for young people and the importance of encouraging new generations to rediscover the Bible as a guide to life, Sy nod Father and Pope Francis, the Congregation heard seven interventions. A leading suggestion was that youth pastoral ministry should pursue two objectives: to bring about an encounter between young people and Christ and to help the young discern God’s plan for their lives.

One Synod Father noted the importance of accompanying young people even after they have received the sacraments of initiation because many young people abandon their commitment at that point. Young people would also benefit from being acquainted with the main examples of young saints.

The Holy Father granted his approval for the establishment of a Commission to be tasked with the drafting of a letter to young people around the world, a suggestion put forth by several Synod Fathers. The Commission, whose initial draft has since been submitted to the Assembly, is composed of Synod Fathers, two Auditors and two guests.

The topic of women in the Church returned to the forefront of discussions at the 16th Congregation on Thursday morning, 18 October, with a call for a courageous cultural conversion to counter the inability to recognize, welcome and promote feminine creativity. Referring to Latin America, one Synod Father affirmed that it is possible and indeed, a duty, to step up the fight against the sexist culture and clericalism in order to achieve greater respect for women, recognition of their unique gifts and their equal integration in society and in the Church. Presided by Cardinal Tsarahazana and attended by Pope Francis, 258 Synod Fathers and seven Auditors, the Congregation heard the presentation of the final 14 reports of the Circuli Minores working groups examining Part III of the Instrumentum Laboris: “Choosing Paths of Pastoral and Missionary Conversion”. The 17th Congregation was attended by 255 Synod Fathers and presided by Cardinal Bo.

From among the presentations of several English language groups, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, Relator for Circularis Anglicus A, proposed several pastoral action strategies, including “practical resources and guidance for parents and grandparents”, “opportunities for young people to connect with their peers and others on pilgrimages, gatherings and events of popular piety”, and “encourage ment for our Catholic schools and universities”. In other words, he explained, “we are talking about the re-imagining of parishes and structures so that young people are heard, listened to, appreciated and encouraged”. Discussions were especially highlighted “the Church’s beautiful, yet challenging, vision, teaching and anthropo logy of the body, sexuality, love and life, marriage and chastity”, reaffirming “the Church’s opposition to discrimination against any person or group”.

Relator Bishop Mark Stuart Edwards OMI, Aux iliary of Melbourne, presented the report of Circularis Anglicus B, which focused on the importance of formation. The explanation of the role and goals of chaplaincy needs to be strengthened in its many contexts: hospitals, schools, Catholic universities, secular universities and so on.

With regard to seminaries, his group identified the need to train future Church leaders to accompany others”, suggesting a course of formation that is not only new but also more community oriented. The report also proposed that “a pastoral plan for youth ministry should be intentional, comprehensive, focused, planned and resourced”. The group strongly urged that the Church provide “pastoral structures for accountability, safe environment, regular reviews and ongoing formation for those accompanying young people”.

“Young people are you ready to dream? And are we Bishops ready to be incon veniently dreamed of by the dreams of young people and to walk with them to make these dreams of newness and beauty come true?” With this challenge on Saturday morning, 20 October, Archbishop Bruno Forte of Chieti-Vasto opened the Synod floor to the presentation of the final 14 reports from the Circuli Minoris working groups examining Part III of the Instrumentum Laboris: “Choosing Paths of Pastoral and Missionary Conversion”. The 17th Congregation was attended by 255 Synod Fathers and presided by Cardinal Bo.

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Relator Bishop Thomas Dowd, Aux iliary of Montreal, reported on behalf of Circulars Anglicus C, which called for the need to place Jesus at the centre, so as to “incarnate his attributes in our life of discipleship”. And, Bishop Dowd added, “the mission to which Jesus sends us is expressed in our specific vocations. For this reason, the group stressed the impor tance of helping young people discover...
As the disciples of Emmaus
Draft of the Final Document

The draft of the Synod's Final Document was presented and consigned to the Synod Fathers on Tuesday morning, 23 October, affording them time to read the text carefully and subsequently offer suggestions to cut, add or substitute formulations. They had specific forms available to aid in this task, and were also given the opportunity to take the floor in the Synod Hall on Wednesday. Instructions were offered by the General Secretary, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldissleri, during the 18th General Congregation, in which 235 Synod Fathers were present. The Relator General, Cardinal Sérgio da Rocha, then presented the outline of the Final Document, which applies the experience of the disciples of Emmaus as the common thread. He observed that the outline was the result of teamwork and had been very challenging, especially considering the time constraints. The real authors of the document were all the Synod participants, with a special mention of the contributions made by the drafting commission, in whose work Pope Francis had joined on Monday evening.

Cardinal da Rocha also emphasized the attitude of listening that had characterized the assembly and which allowed a wealth of the contributions and experiences to be articulated. Another fundamental approach, he added, was that of prayer, with the invaluable help of the pauses of silence between interventions, at the Pontiff’s recommendation. Two special secretaries, Fr Giacomo Costa, sj, and Fr Rossano Sala, stb, then presented the outline of the Final Document, which will be read aloud during the final Mass on Sunday 28 October.

Many of the 44 Synod Fathers who had asked to speak during the session expressed great appreciation for the work carried out by the Commission, which had the task of collecting all the meditations presented by the working groups in recent days. The document that was emerging revealed the awareness that a response to young people lies within the Church herself. The result is not merely a formal document of attitudes and language but rather of substance.

One Synod Father spoke about the excessive fragmentation of the topic of catechesis and suggested that more space be given to the liturgy, while several others suggested that the text should highlight the positive aspects: a Church that does not cast aside the past but that wants to renew herself for young people and with young people, and to do so with joy, because she is infected with the very joy and enthusiasm of the younger generations.

Several interventions addressed the topic of abuse, and changes to terminology were suggested to better express the depth of the wounds of the Church that have resulted from the crimes committed by members of the Church herself. Clearer language that is more attentive to the person and which highlights the reciprocity between man and woman was suggested for the section on sexuality, while at the same time a proposal was made that the virtue of chastity not be relegated to the sidelines. Further suggestions addressed attentiveness to young priests, collegiality, synodality, clericalism, priestly formation, the role of ecclesial movements, accompanying, education, migrants, the role of women and the diaconate.

Cardinal Baldissieri took the opportunity to explain the procedures for the election of the next Council of the Secretariat, which will be composed of 21 members, 16 of whom will be elected according to geographic area, 4 appointed by the Pope and one represented by a Diocesery head.
At the Angelus on World Mission Day, Sunday, 21 October, commenting on the day’s passage from the Gospel of Mark, the Holy Father recalled that in the Church “the way of service is the most effective and best weapon against the disease of seeking first place”. After leading the recitation of the Angelus, he asked those gathered in Saint Peter’s Square to “pray that the new generations not lack the message of the faith and the call to cooperate in the mission of the Church.” The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s reflection, which he shared in Italian.

Young people called to mission

The Pope at the Angelus recalls that the Church is at the service of the least.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

Today’s Gospel passage (cf. Mk 10:37-45) describes Jesus who, once again and with great patience, tries to correct his disciples, converting them from the world’s mentality to that of God. The opportunity is given to him by the brothers James and John, two of the very first whom Jesus met and called to follow him. By now they have gone quite a long way with him and in fact belong to the group of the 12 Apostles. Therefore, while they are on their way to Jerusalem — where the disciples anxiously hope that on the occasion of the celebration of Passover, Jesus will at last establish the Kingdom of God — the two brothers take courage, approach the Teacher and make their request: “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory” (v. 37).

Jesus knows that James and John are inspired by great enthusiasm for him and for the cause of the Kingdom, but he also knows that their expectations and their zeal are tarnished by the spirit of the world. Thus he responds: “You do not know what you are asking” (v. 38). And as they are speaking of ‘thrones of glory’ on which to sit beside Christ the King, he speaks of a “cup” to be drunk, of a “baptism” to be received, that is, his passion and death. James and John, always aiming at the hoped-for privilege, say in an outward: yes, “we are able!” (v. 39). But here too, they do not truly understand what they are saying. Jesus forewarns that they will drink his cup and receive his baptism, that is, that they too, like the other Apostles, will take part in his cross, when their time comes. However, Jesus concludes: “to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared” (v. 40). As if to say: now follow me and learn how to ‘love at a loss’, and the heavenly Father will see to our reward. The way of love is always ‘at a loss’, because to love means to set aside egoism, self-referentiality, in order to serve others.

Jesus then realizes that the other to Apostles are angry with James and John, and thus show they have the same worldly mentality. And this offers him inspiration for a lesson that applies to Christians of all times, for us too. He says: “You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” (v. 44/45). It is the rule of Christians. The Teacher’s message is clear: while the great people of the Earth build themselves ‘thrones’ for their own power, God chooses an unformidable throne, the cross, from which to reign by giving his life: “the Son of man”, Jesus says, “also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (v. 45).

The way of service is the most effective antidote against the disease of seeking first place; it is the medicine for status seekers, this seeking first place, which infects many human contexts, and does not even spare Christians, the People of God, not even the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Therefore, as disciples of Christ, let us receive this Gospel passage as a call to conversation, in order to witness with courage and generosity a Church that bows at the feet of the least, in order to serve them with love and fidelity, as Virgin Mary, who fully and humbly adhered to the will of God, help us to joyfully follow Jesus on the way of service, the royal road that leads to Heaven.

After praying the Angelus the Holy Father continued.

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday in Malaga, Spain the Jesuit priest Tiburcio Arnáz Muñoz, Founder of the Missionaries of the Rural Parishes, was proclaimed Blessed. Let us give thanks to the Lord for the witness of this zealous minister of Reconciliation and tireless proclaimer of the Gospel, above all among the humble and forgotten. May his example spur us to be workers of Reconciliation and tireless proclaimer of the Gospel, above all among the humble and forgotten. May his example spur us to be workers of Reconciliation and tireless proclaimer of the Gospel, above all among the humble and forgotten. May his example spur us to be workers of Reconciliation and tireless proclaimer of the Gospel, above all among the humble and forgotten. May his example spur us to be workers of Reconciliation and tireless proclaimer of the Gospel, above all among the humble and forgotten.