



The Holy See

CLOSING OF THE 15TH ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS
ON:
"YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT"

*WORDS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS*

Synod Hall
Saturday, 27 October 2018

[Multimedia]

I too must say ‘thank you’ to everyone. To Cardinal Baldisseri, to Bishop Fabene, to the Presidents Delegate, to the Relator, to the Special Secretaries — I said that they had left their ‘pound of flesh’ in the preparatory document; now I think they are leaving their bones to us, because they have lost everything! — thanks to the experts: we have seen how one goes from a wrenching text to a martyr commission, that of drafting, which drew this up with such effort and hardship; thank you. Thanks to all of you, to the Auditors and among the Auditors especially the young people, who brought their music to us here in the Hall — ‘music’ is the diplomatic word for saying ‘clamour’, but so be it.... Thank you.

I have two little concerns at heart.

First: to re-emphasize once more that the Synod is not a Parliament. It is a protected space so the Holy Spirit may act. For this reason, general information is given and not particular details, names, figures of speech, with which the Holy Spirit works in us. And this was a protected space. Let us not forget this: it was the Spirit at work here. The second thing is that the purpose of the Synod is not a document, as I said at the outset. We are laden with documents. I do not know if this document will be effective outside, I do not know. But I know for certain that it must have an effect on us; it must work in us. We, the commission, have drawn up the document; we have studied it; we have approved it. Now the Spirit gives us the document so that it may work in our heart. We

are the intended recipients of the document, not the people outside. May this document be effective; and it is important to pray with the document, to study it, to ask for light.... The document is mainly for us. Yes, it will help many others, but we are the primary recipients: it is the Spirit who did all this, and it depends on us. It must not be forgotten, please.

And a third thing: I think of our Mother, the Holy Mother Church. [In the document], the last three items on holiness show what the Church is: our Mother is Holy, but we children are sinners. We are all sinners. Let us not forget that expression of the Fathers, the '*casta meretrix*', the holy Church, the holy Mother with her sinful children. And because of our sins, the Great Accuser always exploits them, as the first chapter of Job says: he goes to and fro upon the Earth, looking for one to trap. At this moment he is accusing us vehemently, and this accusation even becomes persecution; today's President [Patriarch Sako] can say it: his people [the Church in Iraq] are persecuted as are so many others in the East and elsewhere. And it also becomes a different type of persecution: continuous accusations to tarnish the Church. But the Church must not be tarnished; her children, yes; we are all tarnished, but not our Mother. And for this reason it is time to defend our Mother; and our Mother is defended against the Great Accuser with prayer and penance. This is why I have asked everyone, in this month that ends in just a few days, to say the Rosary, to pray to Saint Michael the Archangel, to pray to Our Lady to always shield Mother Church. Let us continue to do so. It is a difficult time, because by attacking us, the Accuser attacks our Mother, but our Mother is not to be touched. I wanted to say this from my heart at the end of the Synod.

And now, the Holy Spirit gives this document to all of us, even to me, in order to reflect on what he wants to say to us. Many thanks to everyone, thank you all!