



Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis
Consilium Internationale
FAMILY COMMISSION

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CONCLUSIONS OF SYNOD ON THE FAMILY, OCTOBER 2015

CHAPTER III

Chapter III presents “**Family, Inclusion and Society**” and its many important themes so that we can share and reflect on them together. We suggest that you read this chapter completely. We will reflect on some points but we propose that each fraternity try to animate itself and to deepen your knowledge according to your local reality.

Let us share (discuss) in fraternity the following questions:

- 1. What is the reality of our grandparents, persons with special needs, (and) single persons in our families and our surroundings?**
- 2. Migrants, refugees, and the persecuted live in our cities. What is their situation?**
- 3. Women – what are the difficult situations that women face today?**
- 4. Are our children and youth happy? Are their rights respected in our society?**

We will form ourselves in light of the documents:

The Elderly

Our grandparents are very important in the restructuring of family values:

One of the most serious and urgent tasks of the Christian family is to preserve the link between generations to ensure the transmission of the faith and the basic values of life... Grandparents in a family deserve special attention. They are the link between generations, and ensure a psycho-affective balance through the transmission of traditions and customs, values and virtues, where younger persons can recognize their roots [...] (N°17/18.)

*Pope Francis, in his exhortation, **Amoris Laetitia** says: “Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent” (Ps 71:9). This is the plea of the elderly, who fear being forgotten and rejected. Just as God asks us to be his means of hearing the cry of the poor, so too he wants us to hear the cry of the elderly. This represents a challenge to families and communities, since “the Church cannot and does not want to conform to a mentality of impatience, and much less of indifference and contempt, towards old age. We must reawaken the collective sense of gratitude, of appreciation, of hospitality, which makes the elderly feel like a living part of the community. Our elderly are men and women, fathers and mothers, who came before us on our own road, in our own house, in our daily battle for a worthy life”. Indeed, “how I would like a Church that challenges the throw-away culture by*

the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old!" [...] (AL191). The lack of historical memory is a serious shortcoming in our society. A mentality that can only say, "Then was then, now is now", is ultimately immature. Knowing and judging past events is the only way to build a meaningful future. Memory is necessary for growth: "Recall the former days" (Heb 10:32). Listening to the elderly tell their stories is good for children and young people; it makes them feel connected to the living history of their families, their neighborhoods and their country. [...] (AL 193)

Persons with Special Needs

So much love is reflected in families that give value to life...

[...] Families which lovingly accept the difficult trial of a child with special needs are to be greatly admired. They render to the Church and society an invaluable witness of their faithfulness to the gift of life[...] If the family, in the light of the faith, accepts the presence of people with special needs, they will be able to recognize and guarantee the quality and value of every human life, with its proper needs, rights and opportunities. This approach will encourage care and services on behalf of these disadvantaged persons and will encourage people to draw near to them and provide affection at every stage of their life. (N° 21) (AL 47)

Persons Who Are Unmarried

In our fraternities there are many brothers and sisters who have chosen this state in life...

Many people who are unmarried in life are not only devoted to their own family but often render great service in their group of friends, in the Church community and in their professional lives. Sometimes, their presence and contributions are overlooked, however, causing in them a sense of isolation. More often than not, many exhibit noble motives in their full engagement in art, science and the good of humanity. Many put their talents at the service of the Christian community in the name of charity and volunteer work. Others remain unmarried, because they have consecrated their lives for love of Christ and neighbor. Their dedication greatly enriches the family, the Church and society. (N° 22)

Migrants, Refugees and Those Suffering Persecution

A reality that challenges us today is welcoming these brothers and sisters and working with them...

We are all pilgrims: Special pastoral attention needs to be given to the effects of migration on the family. In various ways, migration has its effects on entire populations in different parts of the world. The Church has exercised a major role in this area. Maintaining and developing this witness to the Gospel (cf. Mt 25:35) is more urgently needed today than ever. The truth of the history of humanity and the history of migrants is inscribed in the life of families and entire peoples. Even our faith makes this clear: we are all pilgrims...In accompanying migrants, the Church needs a specific pastoral program addressed to not only families in migration but also members of the families who remain behind. This pastoral activity must be implemented with due respect for their cultures, for the human and religious formation from which they come and for the spiritual richness of their rites and traditions, even by means of a specific pastoral care. "It is important to view migrants not only on the basis of their status as regular or irregular, but above all as people whose dignity is to be

protected and who are capable of contributing to progress and the general welfare. This is especially the case when they responsibly assume their obligations towards those who receive them, gratefully respecting the material and spiritual heritage of the host country, obeying its laws and helping with its needs” (Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2016, 12 September 2015). (N ° 23).

Children

Jesus said: “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Matthew 19:14

Children are a blessing from God (Gen 4:1); they ought to be of primary concern in the family and society and are a priority in the Church’s pastoral activity. “In fact, society can be judged from the way children are treated, not only morally but also sociologically, whether it is a liberal society or a society enslaved by international interests. [...] Children remind us [...] that all are sons and daughters. [...] And this always brings us back to the fact that we did not give ourselves life but that we have received it.” (Francis, General Audience, 18 March 2015) [...] (N°26)

“Families cannot help but be places of support, guidance and direction, however much they may have to rethink their methods and discover new resources. Parents need to consider what they want their children to be exposed to, and this necessarily means being concerned about who is providing their entertainment, who is entering their rooms through television and electronic devices, and with whom they are spending their free time. Only if we devote time to our children, speaking of important things with simplicity and concern, and finding healthy ways for them to spend their time, will we be able to shield them from harm. Vigilance is always necessary and neglect is never beneficial. Parents have to help prepare children and adolescents to confront the risk, for example, of aggression, abuse or drug addiction”. (AL 260)

Childhood, today, must be a priority for the church, for the family and for state institutions – because of the possibilities (children) offer, as well as the vulnerability to which (they) are exposed. Children are a gift and a sign of God’s presence in the world because of their ability to accept the Gospel message simply. Jesus chose them with special tenderness (Cf. Mt. 19:14), and presented their capacity to accept the Gospel as a model to enter the Kingdom of God (Cf. Mark 10:14; Mathew 18:3). We painfully see the situation of the poor, of family violence (above all in irregular or broken families), of sexual abuse; we see what a large number of our children are going through -- working children, homeless children, children with HIV, orphans, soldier children, boys and girls who are misled and exposed to pornography and forced prostitution – as much virtual as actual. Above all, early childhood (0-6 years old) requires special attention and care. We cannot remain indifferent in view of the suffering of so many innocent children. (Aparecida Document, the Latin American Bishops 438/439)

Women

“But Mary kept all these things pondering on them in her heart” (Lk 2:19).

Women have a crucial role in the life of the individual, family and society. “Every human person owes his or her life to a mother, and almost always owes much of what follows in life, both human and spiritual formation, to her.” (Francis, General Audience, 7 January 2015) [...] Truly, however, the status of women in the world varies considerably, primarily

because of socio-cultural factors. The dignity of women needs to be defended and promoted [...]In many places, discrimination results simply because one is a woman: the gift of motherhood is penalized rather than valued. [...]A contributing factor in the social recognition of the role of women is a greater appreciation of their responsibilities in the Church: their involvement in decision-making, their participation in the administration of some institutions and their involvement in the formation of ordained ministers.(N ° 27)

Men

Man plays an equally decisive role in family life, particularly in reference to the protection and support of his wife and children. A model for a man in a family is St. Joseph, the just man, who in the hour of danger, “took the child and his mother by night” (Mt 2:14) and brought them to safety. Many men are aware of the importance of their role in the family and live according to their masculine role. The absence of a father gravely affects family life and the upbringing of children and their integration into society. This absence, which may be physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual, deprives children of an appropriate model of paternal behavior. [...] (N ° 27)

Young People

Many young people continue to see marriage as the great desire of their life and the idea of forming their own family as a fulfilment of their aspirations. Nevertheless, young people, in practice, have varying attitudes with regard to marriage. [...] In their plans of love, young people who are baptized are to be encouraged to have no doubts in viewing the riches available in the Sacrament of Matrimony, to be aware of the strong support they can receive from the grace of Christ and to seize the opportunity of participating fully in the life of the Church. The reasons for the young renouncing marriage and their discouragement in marrying need to be more carefully discerned. Young people can gain greater confidence in the choice of marriage thanks to those families who, in the Christian community, provide a trustworthy example of enduring witness over time. (N ° 29)

FINALWORK:

- **In view of these challenges, ¿what actions should we take and what commitments should we make?**
- **Considering especially the older brothers and sisters of our fraternities, what should we do to accompany them at this stage in their lives?**

Documents:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20151026_relazione-finale-xiv-assemblea_en.html

We finish the session by praying together.

Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph
in you we contemplate
the splendor of true love, to you, confidently we come.
Holy Family of Nazareth, make our families also
the Cenacle place of communion and prayer,
genuine schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
let there never be families episodes
of violence, of isolation and division;
that anyone who has been hurt or offended
may soon be comforted and healed.
Holy Family of Nazareth, make aware to all
the sacred and inviolable character of the family,
of its beauty in God's plan.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, hear and receive our prayer.
Amen.

July 2016.-