

Synod to Probe Meaning of Christian Family

Pope John Paul recently addressed the prelates who are preparing for next fall's general synod of bishops. Following are excerpts from his address.

It is with joy that I meet you this morning in this hall which witnessed the first general synod, and where you have kindly arranged to hold the last session of your council, thus making it possible for me to join in your work for a moment.



The next synod has as its subject: "The role of the Christian family in the modern world."

Our age makes it necessary, in fact, to throw full-light, in a comprehensible and suitable way, on the permanent meaning of this institution, which has long been rightly defined as "the domestic Church."

On all sides, the secretariat of the synod has gathered the observations of the episcopal conferences, the experience of pastors, the way in which the evangelical ferment is at work in very different situations. On this basis, you are drawing up the background document which will permit thorough and fruitful work on the part of members of the synod.

I do not wish to take up again here all the riches of your discussions or to dwell on all the problems which you think it necessary to submit to the next synod.

This synod will involve, in the first place, a description of the situation of families and of the different problems it raises. It is necessary to begin by looking clearly at the way in which family life is lived today, as far as the causes and lines of evolution, in order that evangelization may really penetrate this world.

An important part will be dedicated to theology, to the Catholic doctrine on the family. The synod must, in fact, strengthen the convictions of Christians. It is without doubt less a matter of giving again a systematic exposition of facts that are already well known and well established — as if we were starting from scratch, whereas the Church has been living by them for two thousand years — as of finding the language and underlying motivations that illustrate the permanent doctrine of the Church in a way that will reach and, if possible, convince the men of today, in their concrete situations, which will enable them to

Pope to Visit Africa

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope John Paul II announced he will visit six nations in Africa May 2 to May 12 in the first papal trip to the continent in 11 years.

The pope said he will visit Zaire, the People's Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Ghana, Upper Volta and the Ivory Coast. It will be the first papal trip to Africa since Pope Paul VI spent three days in Uganda in July 1969.

Pope John Paul noted that both Ghana and Zaire are

celebrating this year the centenary of the arrival of Roman Catholic missionaries in the two countries.

He said the purpose of the journey "corresponds to my universal pastoral mission." The pontiff added that he hoped to meet "personally with the pastors and faithful of that flowering community."

The pope has visited the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Poland, Ireland, the United States and Turkey.

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reply, for example, to certain tendencies which are spreading, such as that of consensual union.

The synod will not provide an answer to all problems, but it will have to show clearly that it means to follow Christ in this field; it will have to define the values without which society plunges blindly into a dead-end; it will have to help Christians and men of good will to form on these points, an enlightened and firm conscience, according to Christian principles.

Finally and above all, the synod will seek realistically to permit families to find again these values or having them, to live by them, to spread them around them, step by step. This will be the directly pastoral part.

Considerations of the Christian family cannot be separated from marriage, for the couple first form the family and maintains its value, even in the absence of children. And there, it is necessary to reach the deep meaning of marriage, which is a union and love between a man and a woman, a sign of the covenant between Christ and his Church, love that is rooted in Trinitarian life. The characteristics of this union must then appear in all their clarity: unity of the couple, faithfulness of the union, permanence of the conjugal tie.

The family must be envisaged as an institution, not only in the sense that it has its place and its functions in society and in the Church, that it must have juridical guarantees for the accomplishment of its duties, and in order to have the stability and influence expected of it, but in the sense that in itself it transcends the will of the individuals, the spontaneous projects of the couples, the decisions of social and governmental organisms: Marriage is "the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind his design of love."

It will be necessary to pay particular attention to preparation for love and for marriage, which is necessarily also a preparation for family life and family responsibilities: How can this preparation be ensured today? It is an essential point of pastoral work.

Priests must be prepared and formed for the family apostolate, for a fundamental part of their role consists in supporting lay people in their responsibilities, personal and social, certainly, but also family responsibilities. Do they appreciate this family apostolate sufficiently? Are they initiated into its complex problems? As pastors, we do not have to solve

all the problems of married couples ourselves, but we must be close to them in their difficulties as in their joys, and be able to help them, as the Lord wishes.

The laity, of course, must also be able to find the conditions of their doctrinal, spiritual and pedagogical formation for their life as a couple, as well as for their responsibilities as parents at grip with all the problems of bringing up their children at the different stages of their growth.

It is a question further of enlightening them in their attitudes towards all the members of the family in the wide sense, among whom there must be real solidarity; particularly with the sick, the handicapped and the old. The latter expect to receive special affection and support from the family, while themselves making a fine contribution, through their experience and their love.

The formation of these lay people is doubly important, in order to initiate them to real Christian values, and to enable them to bear witness to them, for, under present-day conditions, the evangelization of families will be carried out mainly by other families.

Finally, we shall not forget the pastoral solicitude required by difficult cases: separated couples; divorced persons, who have contracted another civil marriage, and who, without being able to have full access to sacramental life, must be accompanied in their spiritual needs and the apostolate which is possible for them; widowers and widows; persons who alone are in charge of children.

These few words, esteemed brothers and dear friends, give you an idea of all the interest the Pope takes in this synod, and the great hopes he lays in it for the Church.

We will all pray to God to enlighten minds and prepare hearts in order that the experience of the synod may bring about an increase of convictions, resolutions and encouragement for the holiness of families. We are entrusting this work to the intercession of the mother of Christ who is the Mother of the Church.

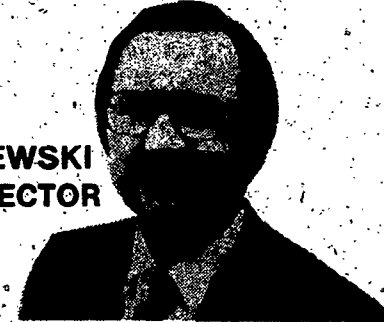
Pope John Paul II has spoken!

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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



**EDWIN SULEWSKI
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"Easter"

A special dinner, new clothes, family get-togethers, the Easter bunny, going to church together -- Easter means lots of things to lots of people. But, regardless of the symbols we use in recognition of the day, it is truly a time of celebration.

Observed by Christians as the day of Christ's resurrection, Easter has long been an important part of the religious community. The Feast of the Passover, regarded by Jews as one of the most important celebrations of the year, also occurs at about the same time.

We join with you in recognizing a day that is important to all of us -- and hope that you are able to enjoy it with the people you love.

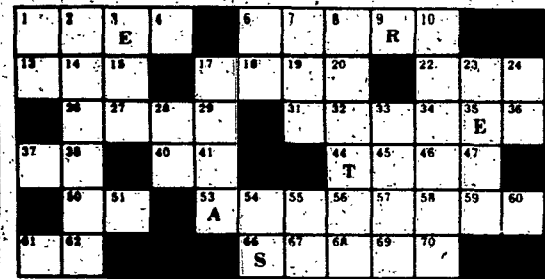
Happy Easter!

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Sunday Scripture Quiz

I. Gospel Reading:
Luke 24:13-35 — Jesus brings the two disciples the message, death's meaning.
Below is a key passage from Sunday's Gospel reading. You can determine what this passage is by finding the answers to the questions below the puzzle and then putting the letters in their appropriate box. The first one is done for you.



- Resurrection day: E A S T E R
3 53 66 44 35 9
- Jesus defeated it: 60 7 57 1 22
- Foretells future: 55 19 62 54 14 59 38
- Travels on tracks: 61 31 8 40 29
- Pay homage to: 32 10 18 56 27
- A beverage: 26 51 47 45

Based on scripture readings for Sunday, April 6, 1980, C Cycle.

Following are key passages from Sunday's scripture readings. Fill in the missing words.

- First Reading:**
Acts 10:34,37-43 — Peter proclaims the meaning of Good Friday/Easter.
Phrase: Peter addressed the _____ in these _____ "I take it you _____ what has been reported all over _____ about _____ of _____ beginning in _____ with the baptism _____ preached of the way _____ anointed him.
- Second Reading:**
Colossians 3:1-4 — Paul tells us that we too will have a personal Easter.
Phrase: Since _____ have been _____ up in _____ with _____ set your _____ on what pertains to higher realms where Christ is seated at _____ right _____ Be _____ on earth.

Answers on Page 6

- Man's name: 50 23 17
- Led Israelites: 68 69 34 56 41
- Affirmative: 4 28 24
- Joined together: 46 70 33 13 15 36
- Concealed self: 6 37 20
- A greeting: 2 67

Passage I words: Easter, adore, prophet, beer, death, hi, Moses, hid, Hal, united, train, yes.
Passage II words: Judea, Nazareth, people, God, words, John, Galilee, Jesus, know.
Passage III words: Christ, company, above, you, intent, God's, heart, raised, hand.