

Pontiff Asks Prayer for Synod

Following is the text of the letter sent last Friday, by Pope John Paul II to the bishops, priests and faithful of the whole Catholic Church calling for prayers for the Sixth Synod of Bishops.

Venerable brothers and dear sons and daughters,

We are approaching the Synod of Bishops, which will begin on Sept. 26 to discuss the role of the Christian family in the modern world. A question of prime importance will thus be examined at the Synod. The Church's mission with regard to the family was dealt with by my predecessor, Pope Paul VI (cf. *Humanae Vitae*, 39); the theme was the object of pronouncements by the last ecumenical council, which recalled that the family is "the basis of society" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 52), and that since the family is also "the church of the home," it guarantees the existence and development of the Church as a whole, for in it "new citizens of human society are born and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, they are in baptism made children of God, so that the People of God may be perpetuated throughout the centuries" (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).



This God-given image of the family, renewed and sanctified by Jesus Christ, is nowadays often impoverished, obscured, and perhaps also profaned (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 47). Therefore there is a need to reflect anew on the words of Jesus Christ: "From the beginning it was not so" (Mt. 19:8). The Synod must "show clearly what it means to follow Christ in the field of married and family life" (cf. Pope John Paul II, Address to the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, Feb. 23, 1980).

Yes indeed, the families of today must be called back to their original position. They must follow Christ. This year's Synod is an important event for the life of the Church as a whole and for her mission. Her mission finds expression in evangelization (the theme of the 1974 Synod) and is given concrete form in catechesis (the theme of the 1977 Synod), but there is a basic link between both of these vital Church tasks and the family. The Church's mission is directed towards the family with the love that God himself has revealed in the family through his son, and it is carried out largely within the family and through the family. In view of the importance of this question, we must support the work of this year's Synod of Bishops with special care and with prayer by all.

Accordingly, when in the near future the Synod of Bishops begins, the whole Church must take part in its work. The whole Church must in a sense be at the

Synod, present above all by prayer and sacrifice. Let all the Church's children pray and make spiritual offerings for the Synod, to obtain God's light and strength for the assembled Synod Fathers. The family is a cell from which come all the vocations and states of life in the Church. These in turn, each in its own measure, are at the service of the family, in accordance with the teaching of Paul VI addressed to priests: "Long, rich experience has shown you that your celibacy gives you a special availability for being, for families in their progress towards holiness, active witnesses of the Lord's love in the Church" (Address of May 4, 1970 to Members of the Association "Equipes Notre Dame", AAS 62, 1970, p.435).

For within the Church as the Apostle teaches, "our gifts differ according to the grace given us" (Rm. 12:6), and this is due to the fact that "all of us, in union with Christ, form one body" (Rm. 12:5).

And so I earnestly invite everybody to pray and offer sacrifices for the Synod. I make this invitation in a special way to the sick: Providence has called them to a unique sharing in the sacrifice of Christ. I address this same invitation also to the contemplative orders: Christ has called them in a particular way to have burning solicitude for his Church's problems.

And now I have some cordial words of encouragement for families. From Sept. 26 on, let the "churches of the home" of Christian families be centers of fervent prayer for this year's Synod: the Synod will be "a family affair," it will be directed, in the Holy Spirit, with special concern and love towards those families.

May your sons and daughters, so dear to the heart of the Lord Jesus, obtain his blessing for your own families and for the families of the whole world.

The chief day of prayer for the Synod will be Sunday, Oct. 12. I would like public prayers to be offered on that day in each diocese, in every parish, and in every church, in accordance with the indications that the pastors will give.

Let the whole Church and every family unite in common prayer on that day. And I invite the representatives of the families of the whole Church to come to Rome on that day, if possible, so that they can meet the Successor of Peter and the Synod Fathers and thus manifest the spiritual presence of all families in the Church, united in faith and love.

To the Holy Family of Nazareth, I entrust every family, and I cordially impart to you, venerable brothers and beloved sons and daughters, especially to every home my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, Aug. 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1980, the second year of the pontificate.

'Youth Day' Set As NCCC Event

Workshops on significant questions that young people raise, a folk group competition, movies, non-competitive games, special displays and information booths and worship are all being drawn together for the celebration of Youth Day, Sept. 20 at Monroe Community College.

The event, being sponsored by the Catholic Youth Organization and the diocesan Department of Religious Education, is being held in conjunction with the National Conference of Catholic Charities Convention.

According to Joyce M. Strazabosco, acting director of CYO, the purpose of the day is "to provide an atmosphere of openness, sharing and celebration of ourselves," as well as to offer a forum where issues that face youth may be raised.

The day will open with registration at 8:45 a.m. and will close with an ecumenical worship service at 4:30 p.m. A Mass will be celebrated following the service to assist persons in fulfilling the Sunday obligation.

Among the more than 20 workshops on the day's agenda are sessions on practical job-hunting techniques, vocational training opportunities, clown ministry, child abuse, emotions, decision making, human sexuality, other faiths, student rights and responsibilities, and improving parent/teen relationships.

Youth Day is open to both young people and adults. Further information is available by contacting the CYO, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604; (716) 454-2030.

ALCUS Readies For Conference

The 10th biennial conference of the Associations of Ladies of Charity of the United States (ALCUS) will be held in Rochester, Sept. 18-22, concurrent with the National Conference of Catholic Charities.

Highlighting the ALCUS gathering will be a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the group.

Bishop Timothy J. Harrington, episcopal chairman of ALCUS and auxiliary of the Diocese of

Worcester, will celebrate the liturgy on the opening day. Bishop Raymond J. Gallagher of the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind., will be the keynote speaker at the anniversary dinner on the same day.

The conference will be housed at the Genesee Plaza and Americana Rochester hotels. According to Vivian Grosvenor, ALCUS spokesperson, "Ladies of Charity are urged to register and make hotel reservations at once in order that disappointment may be avoided."

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All in the Family

Where There's A Will

The bulletin board, the hood over the stove, the refrigerator—all are adorned with small bits of paper on which have been copied words which inspire and comfort.

The words over the stove (where I seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time) are from Proverbs (3:5,6) and begin "Trust in the Lord with all your heart."

Another on the bulletin board starts: "My plans for you are peace and not disaster." Jeremiah 29:11-12. And a very recent addition reminds: "For it is God who of his good pleasure works in you both

the will and the performance." Phillipians 2:13. The last is particularly helpful when I can't find the helpful motivation to do what I know is good for me.

Some of the words are no longer posted—I carry them now in my head and not all of them are from the Bible.

The latest, for example, comes from Phyllis A. Whitney, author of 55 novels who told a conference of novice writers the "secret" to getting a book published.

"You have to want to enough," she said.

It is invaluable advice. Not only for writing and selling a book but for other gargantuan tasks.

In order to run a marathon, take off 25 pounds, become a millionaire, learn a foreign language, understand your children, get along with your neighbor, save a sinking marriage—even get closer to the Lord... you have to want to enough.

First Vows

Sisters Mary Louise Mitchell and Sheila Marie Miller will make their first commitment in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, at the Motherhouse on Sunday, August 17 at 2 p.m.

Sister Mitchell is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Mitchell of St. Patrick's Parish, Corning. Sister Miller is the daughter of Al Miller and the late Norine Miller of Holy Trinity Parish in Webster.

First commitment marks the beginning of membership in a religious congregation. It is preceded by a time of living among members of the congregation while studying and experiencing their way of life.

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