



### **Pope Francis is calling! Let's answer all together!**

Our Church is preparing for synod on youth. As Catholic Guides you have probably heard of it many times. But, do you really understand what does it mean? Do you know how to be connected with our Pope Francis and bishops from all over the world?

The document below is prepared for you, dear guide leader to be able to speak about synod in your group. It aims to bring you some information on this meeting of bishops and is inviting you to get connected to all of us, our Church and bishops present at the synod.

**We would be happy to receive back information from you on [europe.iccg@gmail.com](mailto:europe.iccg@gmail.com)**

### **Did you know? What is the Synod of Bishops and how does it work?**

The Synod of Bishops[1] is, so to speak, assembly or meeting of bishops' on certain current topic. The leaders of the Eastern Churches[2] as well as leaders of an individual bishops' conferences[3] attend the assembly. The Synod of Bishops is called every three years by the Pope and it's called »regular«. If there is a need, the Pope may call the synod even during the period between two regular synods. Such a synod is »irregular« or »special«. The Synod of Bishops was »established« in 1965 by Pope Pavel VI. and it was called for the first time two years later. In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council[4], and in the time of rapid changes and many challenges that occur in the world, the same Pope wanted to tell people what the Church thinks and stand for.

The primary purposes of the Synod of Bishops are:

- to connect the leadership of the Church in Rome with the bishops of the world,
- to identify challenges and problems within and outside the Church,
- to help seek solutions and formulate an opinion on them according to the doctrine of religion.

At the session of the Synod of Bishops participants exchange opinions and formulate guidelines. The Synod of Bishops does not directly define doctrine and functioning of the Church, but rather collects opinions and stands, guides attention and encourages further discussions to possible (final) thought on

discussed subject. After each Synod of Bishops, the Pope usually issues a so-called "*post-synodal apostolic exhortation*". It draws on the views and opinions of the participants, invites to talk and further exchange views on topic and point out ways to solve open questions.

The Synod of Youth[5] is titled: Young people, the Faith and Vocational Discernment and will be held from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of this year. Before the beginning of the synod – this happened for the first time since the establishment of the Synod of Bishops – Pope Francis wanted to hear voice of those affected, that is, the young ones themselves. Not only bishops, but also young people should say what they think. And not just that. Participants of the synod will also be youth representatives who will be in this synod placed in decisive role. The preparatory document[6] – some sort of introduction of the Synod theme and the presentation of challenges – has three main emphases:

- The youth in today's world – the world in which young people live, examples that attract them and the choices youth find themselves in front of
- Faith, discernment, calling in purpose – what the Bible proposes, listening to the Holy Spirit, monitoring
- Pastoral work – walking with youth, *bearers of the pastoral* of young people, opportunities and »accessories« for it.

### **Has the Church already spoken about youth and Guides/Scouts?**

Among the documents of the Church (including documents of the Vatican offices) we find many messages, speeches, letters, initiatives or invitations addressed to youth. But in a way that will happen on this synod, Church representatives on youth, have not yet spoken. Young people have become a special challenge to society and the Church, especially in the last two centuries. Probably, therefore, it has not been spoken about them on such a high level.

Let's name some examples of dealing with this challenge. Don Bosco noticed this group of people and started working with and for young people with the so-called »preventive method«. In the last two hundred years, monks, nuns and other individuals have opened schools for children and young minds and developed educational methods for them. Pope John Paul II. has introduced world youth days and around the world are taking place national and diocesan youth gatherings. There

were religious groups for young people in the parishes and we know various committees and councils, which are specifically set up for the pastoral of young people. Last but not least, Baden-Powell initiated a process that led to the global movement of youth with their own educational method.

To scouts around the world (especially Catholic ones), the Popes and other representatives of the Vatican (for example, State Secretary) were devoting their messages since the time of Pope Pius X, specifically since 1913[7]. With messages Church wanted to encourage and direct scouting as an educational institution. As it often happens, the attitude of the Church to the scout movement in the beginning was retained and at times even defiant, but eventually, in this movement, a valuable educational method and role in society was recognized.

## 2. We are proposing - An initiative for children and youth

Pope Francis wants to hear what young minds are thinking about, what they have to tell their shepherds, and what kind of Church they want. An initiative came from him, as already said, that the voice of youth would be heard by the participants of the synod and himself. Therefore, in the time before the beginning of the synod, we are invited to say, write, speak our mind... and inform the participants of the synod of our initiative, thoughts, suggestions and wishes. Let's write a letter to the bishops who

will attend the synod and tell them our experiences with the Church, the parish, the communion, the movement and the group which we are in and act in; let's express our initiatives and suggestions on what we would like to do better and how the Pope and the Bishops can help us.

We would like to collect those letters and send them to pope Francis and to the whole synod together with our prayers and good thoughts.

Please send them to : [europe.iccg@gmail.com](mailto:europe.iccg@gmail.com)

## 3-. We are inviting you to register and share the pre-Synod on line through the following

3.1 Link to the Presentation of the pre-Synodal Meeting, the Work Framework and the Letter from young people inviting other youths to participate **via Facebook Groups**:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1VSAkJ-ZAugZbNNFoqKmJG-P54IDGdeOi>

Video in Italian: <https://youtu.be/itHvdpkEiIM>

Video in French: <https://youtu.be/GL8hy7AEaE>

3.2 Link to **the mini sites** of the pre-Synodal Meeting:

Italian: <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/it/riunione-pre-sinodale.html>

French: <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/fr/reunion-pre-synodale-des-jeunes.html>

English: <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/pre-synodal-meeting.html>

German: <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/Deutsch.html>

Spanish: <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/es/reunion-pre-sinodal-de-jovenes.html>

Portuguese: <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/reuniao-pre-sinodal.html>

3.3 Link to the **Facebook Groups** of the pre-Synodal Meeting:

Italian: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/presinodale/about/>

French: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pre.synodale/about/>

English: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Pre.Synodal/about/>

German: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Versammlung.der.Vorsynode/about/>

Spanish: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pre.sinodal/about/>

Portuguese: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Reuniao.Pre.Sinodal/about/>

[1] More in detail about the Synod of Bishops on the link: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_motu\\_proprio\\_19650915\\_apostolica-sollicitudo.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu_proprio_19650915_apostolica-sollicitudo.html).

2 The Churches that recognize the Pope as their supreme leader, but they perform their liturgy the same as the ones performed in the Orthodox Churches.  
3 *The bishops' conference is represented by the bishops of specific country, part of a country or bishops representing more countries together.*

4 Council is the meeting of all bishops, in which the teaching and functioning of the Church is defined. The last such meeting (the Second Vatican Council) was between October 11<sup>th</sup> 1962 and December 8<sup>th</sup> 1965 in Vatican.

5 Here you can read all about it: <https://skam.si/dogodki/mednarodna-sreca/sinoda-mladih-2018/>.

6 Here you can find the full text in Slovene: <https://skam.si/novica/mladi-vera-in-razlocevanje-poklicanosti/>.

[7] prim. Giovanni MORELLO in Francesco PIERI (a cura di), *Documenti pontifici sullo scoutismo*, Editrice Ancora, Milano 1991.

**POPE FRANCIS  
PRAYER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE  
IN VIEW OF THE FORTHCOMING  
SYNOD OF BISHOPS 2018:  
Young people, faith and vocational discernment**

Lord Jesus, in journeying towards the Synod,  
your Church turns her attention  
to all the young people of the world.

We pray that they might boldly take charge of their lives,  
aim for the most beautiful  
and profound things of life and always  
keep their hearts unencumbered.

Accompanied by wise and generous guides,  
help them respond to the call you make to each of them,  
to realize a proper plan of life and achieve happiness.

Keep their hearts open to dreaming great dreams  
and make them concerned for the good of others.

Like the Beloved Disciple,  
may they stand at the foot of the Cross,  
to receive your Mother as a gift from you.

May they be witnesses to your Resurrection  
and be aware that you are at their side  
as they joyously proclaim you as Lord.

Amen.