



November 8, 2013

Dear Brother Priests, Deacons and Pastoral Coordinators,

As you know, Pope Francis has called for an Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to take place in October, 2014, on the theme, "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization." The 2014 synod is "Phase 1," to be followed by the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2015 on the same topic. Phase 1 will define the *state of the question* and collect the insights and proposals of the bishops regarding the task of "proclaiming the Gospel of the family in a credible manner;" Phase 2 will seek to prepare working guidelines for the pastoral care of the person and the family.

You may be aware that last week the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisserri, sent bishops around the world a letter asking input in preparation for the synod. Specifically, he asked for input based on the synod's *Preparatory Document*, which I am attaching to this letter in English and Spanish. Recognizing, as Archbishop Baldisserri notes, that this phase of consultation is to happen within a very short window, there is not much time. In fact, we have been asked by the USCCB General Secretary to send our diocesan input to him no later than December 31 in order to meet Archbishop Baldisserri's deadline of the end of January.

It seems that the best way to discuss and offer comments on the *Preparatory Document* is to make use of our deanery structure. Thus I ask that our deans lead a discussion of the attached document at your meeting in November or December. I also ask that you send your responses to me *no later than December 15*. Mary Beth Celio will assist me in the compilation of the input you send in, and I will send our input to the USCCB by December 31. I will also be distributing this document to certain archdiocesan staff members and other lay leaders for their input.

As Archbishop Baldisserri notes in his cover letter, Pope Francis wishes to strengthen the synod process, which is approaching its 50th anniversary. Our participation in this consultation is one significant way we can contribute to this important legacy of the Second Vatican Council.

I am grateful for your help as well as your understanding that the timeframe is so short!

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. J. Peter Sartain
Archbishop of Seattle

Attachment