

## **The subject of the 2015 Synod of Bishops is “The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World”.**

A series of 30 questions on this theme has been made available by the Australian Bishops for the further consideration of the faithful. People are welcome to respond to as many or as few of the questions on this list as they would like.

1. Does the final Synod Document offer an adequate account of marriage and the family or does more need to be said?
2. What is being done to help families cope in the midst of great social changes? What more could be done, especially in helping them to understand those changes?
3. What is being done to ensure that governments support marriage and the family in every way possible? What more could be done?
4. What is being done to support strong families? What more could be done?
5. What is being done to help families in trouble? How might troubles be prevented? How effectively is pastoral care being offered to families “on the periphery”?
6. How can we help individuals and couples grow in affective or emotional maturity?
7. What needs to be done to equip ordained ministers and others to work effectively in the area of marriage and the family?
8. Does the encounter with Christ shape pastoral care in the area of marriage and the family? How well is Scripture used in the pastoral care of couples and families?
9. What values are in fact most important in the area of marriage and the family in the eyes of young people and married couples? What counter-values are evident?
10. How can couples living together before marriage or in de facto relationships be encouraged to choose marriage?
11. What is being done to help people understand the greatness and beauty of the indissolubility of marriage? What more could be done?
12. How can we help people understand better the power of a relationship with God in marriage and of the grace of the Sacrament in their lives?
13. How can we help people understand better that marriage is a key part of God’s original plan and is therefore a way of fulfilment not confinement, joy not sorrow?

14. How can the family be helped to become “the domestic Church” with a missionary vocation? How can we help develop a family spirituality?
15. What can be done to provide an effective and comprehensive catechesis of marriage and the family, starting in early life and involving life-long formation?
16. Do we need to shape a new language in the area of marriage and the family? If so, how?
17. How effective is the marriage preparation that is being offered? How might it be more effective?
18. Do we need to do more to support couples in the early years of married life? If so, what?
19. What place do marriage and the family have in the RCIA?
20. What movements and associations are there in the area of marriage and the family? Can these contribute more broadly and effectively?
21. What are the challenges of mixed marriages and interreligious marriages? How can we meet them more effectively?
22. Apart from sacramental marriage, what can be done to foster appreciation of “natural marriage”?
23. How can we respond compassionately to people in irregular unions while remaining faithful to the teaching of Christ and the Church?
24. Does the process of declaring nullity need to be simpler, less difficult and less costly?
25. How can we respond better to people of same-sex attraction and their families?
26. How can we communicate more effectively the Church’s vision of married love and the beauty and dignity of parenthood as presented, for example, in *Humanae Vitae*?
27. What more can be done to promote a sense of parenthood as divine vocation? What more can be done to help parents in their educational mission, especially in transmitting the faith to their children?
28. How can we encourage adoption and foster-parenting as signs of fruitful generosity?
29. What more can we do to prevent abortion and foster a genuine culture of life?
30. How can we help all people see that no-one is beyond God’s mercy?