

Assembly on Family October 2015

Introduction:

In 2014 the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops met in Rome to discuss Family Life and its challenges in the area of Evangelisation. The findings of that meeting have been sent by Pope Francis to the whole church. We are invited to read the document and reflect upon it before the follow up assembly in October next. To help the diocese and the parish your feed back would be very welcome.

As we look at the reality of family life today with its light and shadow we ask how we as a parish community can support family life in all its forms.

Set out below are a number of questions. You might like to choose 3 or 4 to respond to. You could work on them on your own or gather a little group and have a discussion about them. We would be very grateful for your responses by....

1. In your experience what cultural changes have taken place that challenge family life?
How can we as local church help to reawaken an awareness of God in family life?

How can we support and strengthen the many good families in our parish?

What can we do to help families in difficulties?
2. Christian families are searching for meaning. People need to be accepted in the concrete circumstances of life. Remembering that the Christian message is always one of mercy, how do we support these families as they search and want to feel part of the church?
3. In your experience of striving to live as a Christian family with your gaze on Jesus how did you find the pastoral care of families in our church community?
How could you improve it? How would you reach out to families in difficulties?
4. Accepting the invitation of Pope Francis to look at Christ who is a constant source of newness: How could we use the Scripture in our pastoral activity on behalf of families? What values can be highlighted for married couples and young people?
5. As a young couple grow in maturity how can they be helped so that their lives together would lead to marriage in the future?
6. How can the greatness and beauty of the gift of a good marriage be emphasised so as to prompt a desire to live it and strengthen it.?
7. The family, too, is called to evangelise: How can we foster an awareness of this missionary task so that our families may reach out to others?
8. The church's teaching on marriage and family is very rich. What initiatives can be developed to help people live out of this teaching?
9. The members of the Synod asked themselves how the Church is to regard Catholics who are united in a civil bond, those who simply live together and those who after a valid marriage are divorced and married civilly. All these people as Pope Francis tells us "need to be accompanied with mercy and patience. How can we as local church reach out to those wounded or fragile?
10. The pastoral care of persons with homosexual tendencies poses new challenges today, due to the manner in which their rights are proposed in society. How can the Christian community give pastoral attention to these families?
11. The transmission of life is a fundamental element in the vocation and mission of the family. How do we offer parents with young families the solidarity and support they need? Are we courageous in looking for this support at a political level? How can we speak out against abortion and foster an effective culture of life?
12. Fulfilling their educational mission is not always easy for parents. How can we help the Christian family in their calling to transmit their faith to their children.