

**THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE FAMILY
IN PREPARATION FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS**

2014-2015

BISHOP DENIS INVITES YOUR RESPONSE

Pope Francis has called a meeting of bishops, known as a Synod. The synod will address the modern day pastoral challenges to the family in the context of living and handing on the Gospel.

As part of the initial preparation for the synod, Rome is asking dioceses across the world to gather relevant information locally. To assist the process the committee preparing the synod has provided a document containing a series of questions. This document is available on www.kandle.ie. At my request Faith Development Services have re-presented the questions in a way that I hope will facilitate people in completing the questionnaire. In particular sections the questions look for statistical and specific information that is not readily available to parish groups or individuals. These questions have been omitted from this form of the questionnaire and the answers are being sought from the appropriate agencies. There are also two questions that I have asked a theologian to address.

This is a unique opportunity for all of us as members of the Church to reflect and respond thoughtfully on the challenges to family life and to marriage. *The local responses to these questions will form the foundation of what each bishop will submit ahead of the synod.*

As Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, I invite individuals, parish groups, clergy and parish personnel in the diocese to take some time to complete the questionnaire. **You may not be in a position to respond to every question but I welcome each and every response that you can offer.**

Time is short. The Irish Bishops' Conference is looking for each diocese to return their response by the end of January 2014. I ask, then, that all responses are returned to Bishop's House before **Friday, January 17.**

Yours in Christ,

+ DENIS NULTY

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES TO:

FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

BISHOP'S HOUSE

DUBLIN RD

CARLOW

ON OR BEFORE FRIDAY, JANUARY 17

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH'S TEACHINGS ON THE FAMILY

- a) Describe how well the Catholic Church's teaching on family life is understood by people today. (As contained in the Bible, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Familiaris Consortio*, *Lumen Fidei*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other documents)

UNDERSTOOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	MOSTLY UNDERSTOOD	<input type="checkbox"/>
PARTLY UNDERSTOOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	NOT UNDERSTOOD AT ALL	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENT BOX:

- b) From your understanding of the Church's teaching on family life is it

FULLY ACCEPTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	MOSTLY ACCEPTED	<input type="checkbox"/>
PARTLY ACCEPTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	NOT ACCEPTED AT ALL	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENT BOX:

c) **Are there Pastoral Programmes at national, diocesan and parish level that facilitate catechesis on the Church's teaching on the family?**

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
NATIONAL LEVEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DIOCESAN LEVEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PARISH LEVEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENT BOX

d) i) **To what extent – and what aspects in particular – is this teaching actually known, accepted, rejected and/or criticized in areas outside the Church?**

COMMENT BOX

d) ii) **What are the cultural factors that hinder the full reception of the Church's teaching on the family?**

COMMENT BOX

2. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE AS DEFINED BY THE CHURCH

a) What place does the idea of the natural law have in the cultural areas of society: (e.g. Institutions, education, academic circles and among the people at large)

CENTRAL PERIPHERAL

NONE DON'T KNOW

b) Is the idea of the natural law in the union between a man and a woman commonly accepted as such by the baptised?

YES NO DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

3. HOW FAMILIES ARE PASTORALLY SUPPORTED IN LIVING AND HANDING ON THE FAITH

a) i) Are you aware of any church based initiatives that have emerged in recent decades regarding marriage preparation?

YES NO DON'T KNOW

IF YES PLEASE GIVE SOME EXAMPLES

a) ii) Are you aware of efforts to help the task of growing and handing on the faith of the couple and of the family?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

IF YES PLEASE GIVE SOME EXAMPLES

a) iii) Is there awareness of the family as the "domestic Church," the Church of the home?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

HOW COULD THIS BE BETTER PROMOTED?

b) How successful has the Church been in promoting a way of praying within the family which can withstand life's complexities and today's culture?

SUCCESSFUL

SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL

UNSUCCESSFUL

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

c) In the current generational crisis, how have you, as a Christian family been able to fulfill your vocation of handing on the faith?

SUCCESSFUL

SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL

UNSUCCESSFUL

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

d) Has your parish or any Christian movement helped you in living as a Christian family?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

e) Can couples and families make a specific contribution to spreading a credible and holistic idea of the couple and the Christian family today?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

IF YES PLEASE GIVE AN EXAMPLE OR EXAMPLES

f) Are you aware of pastoral care that the Church provides in supporting couples getting ready for marriage and couples in crisis situations?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

IF YES PLEASE GIVE SOME EXAMPLES

4. PASTORAL CARE OF SINGLE PARENTS, COHABITING COUPLES, SEPARATED, DIVORCED AND REMARRIED PEOPLE

a) Is cohabitation *ad experimentum* (from the Latin to test or experiment) a pastoral reality in your parish?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

c) Are separated couples and those divorced and remarried a pastoral reality in your parish?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

d) In all the above cases, how do baptised people live in this irregular situation?

Tick all that apply below

THEY ARE AWARE OF IT

THEY ARE SIMPLY INDIFFERENT

THEY FEEL MARGINALIZED

THEY SUFFER FROM THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS

I DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

e) Do divorced and remarried people pose questions to the Church concerning the Sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

f) **Could a simplification of the rules and process for an annulment of a marriage provide a positive contribution to help the persons involved?**

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

g) i) **Is there a specific ministry to the separated, divorced and remarried in your parish, diocese and national church?**

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

- g) ii) How is God's mercy proclaimed to separated couples and those divorced and remarried?

COMMENT BOX

- g) iii) Does the Church put into practice her support for separated couples and those divorced and remarried in their journey of faith?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENT BOX

5. OUR ATTITUDE TO SAME-SEX COUPLES

- a) Is there a law in your country recognizing civil unions for people of the same-sex and equating it in some way to marriage?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

- b) i) What is the attitude of your local parish Church and your diocesan Church towards the State as the promoter of civil unions between persons of the same sex?

COMMENT BOX

- b) ii) What is the attitude of local parish Church and your diocesan Church towards people involved in same-sex unions?

COMMENT BOX

- d) In the case of unions of persons of the same sex who have adopted children, what can be done pastorally in light of handing on the faith?

COMMENT BOX



Question 6 has been referred to parish personnel and Diocesan offices.

7. THE OPENNESS OF MARRIED COUPLES TO HAVING CHILDREN

a) i) What knowledge do people have today of the teachings of *Humanae vitae* on responsible parenthood?

VERY AWARE	<input type="checkbox"/>	AWARE	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOT AWARE	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW	<input type="checkbox"/>

a) ii) Are people aware of how to morally evaluate the different methods of family planning?

VERY AWARE	<input type="checkbox"/>	AWARE	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOT AWARE	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENT BOX

a) iii) **Could any insights be suggested in this regard pastorally?**

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

b) i) **Is this moral teaching accepted?**

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

b) ii) **What are the biggest challenges for couple's acceptance of this teaching?**

COMMENT BOX

c) **Are natural methods promoted by the diocese or in the Irish Catholic Church to help spouses put into practice the teachings of *Humanae vitae*?**

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

COMMENT BOX

- d) **What is your experience in relation to family planning in the practice of the Sacrament of Penance and participation at the Eucharist?**

COMMENT BOX

8. THE FAMILY AS A PLACE WHERE CHRIST IS ENCOUNTERED

- a) **Jesus Christ reveals the mystery and vocation of the human person. How can the family be a privileged place for this to happen?**

COMMENT BOX

- b) **What critical situations in the family today can obstruct a person's encounter with Christ?**

COMMENT BOX

c) **To what extent do the many crises of faith which people can experience affect family life?**

GREATLY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOMEWHAT	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOT AT ALL	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENT BOX

9. OTHER CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS

What other challenges or suggestions related to the topics in the above questions do you consider essential and useful to address?

COMMENT BOX