

YOUTH, FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

Involvement of the Episcopal Conference and its Youth Commission, and of the diocesan* youth ministries in the conference

RATIONALE

Pope Francis is convening the next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in the year 2018 on the theme, “*Youth, faith and vocational discernment*”.

To prepare for this, His Holiness invites the Church to reach out to the peripheries, both in content and in strategy: *I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation* (EG, 27)

Thus, for the Synod 2018, two strategies during the preparatory period were set, which will enable the Church to reach out to the focus of the Synod: the young people. These are an online questionnaire/ survey for young people, and a questionnaire for ecclesial bodies to express their understanding of youth and their vocational accompaniment. Both, we seek to accomplish with the pastoral leadership of each diocesan Bishop, who, in *his mission of fostering a dynamic, open and missionary communion... will have to encourage and develop the means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law, and other forms of pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear* (EG, 31) so that these participatory processes will foster *the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone* (EG, 31).

On the part of the Church of the Philippines, the Bishops have expressed our ecclesial commitment to youth: “As we in this Council have declared our evangelical love of preference for the poor, so it would appear to us now to declare a preferential apostolate for children and youth” (PCP II, art. 385).

* In this document, “diocesan/ diocese” is used to mean a particular church, i.e. archdiocese, diocese, prelatore or apostolic vicariate, and the Military Ordinariate.

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Part of the preparations for the Synod 2018 is the online questionnaire “aimed at young people throughout the world from 16 to 29 years of age”, to provide them with the opportunity to communicate, express and recount who they are and what they want to say about themselves.

The questionnaire is available here—

<http://youth.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en.html>

This survey link is open until 2017 November 30.

All youth ministry offices (parishes, BECs, campus ministries, religious congregations, etc.), especially the diocesan youth ministries, as well as the national councils of FNYO member organizations, are earnestly requested to encourage young people within their respective networks and circles of influence to take part in this survey.

The following are some proposals on how to do this:

1. Promote the link in one’s website/s and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) on a regular basis (e.g. daily/ weekly) until November 30.
2. Make announcements, through the parish, chapel and BEC youth ministries, in all parishes and chapels during Sunday Mass.
3. With the support of school authorities, inform student bodies of schools (whether Catholic, non-sectarian, etc.) within one’s area.
4. Write to the diocesan association of Catholic schools (or its equivalent) to request that their students be instructed to take part in the survey.
5. Use posters and leaflets, printed using environment-friendly material, in places with high concentration of young people (campuses, for example), to promote awareness and generate interest about the online survey.
6. In the youth center or youth ministry office or other similar spaces (you may even ask internet café owners within your diocese!), make available a computer with internet connection where young people can access the survey link and therefore participate

Youth ministers are invited to think of and foster other ways to promote awareness about the online survey and to encourage answering it among young people—ways which are especially attuned to the particular cultures and contexts where they are.

In encouraging our young people to take part in the survey, may we propose the following steps:

Young People (ages 16-29) and the Synod of Bishops on Youth

YOUth! Let your voice be heard!

Pope Francis, *Lolo Kiko* himself, wants to hear you.

1. Visit the web and share your answers to the online Questionnaire

<https://survey-synod2018.glauco.it/limesurvey/index.php/147718>

2. If you may, please say a short prayer of guidance before going through the Questionnaire.
3. Follow the instructions in the Questionnaire. For each question, answer from your mind and heart.

When you finish...

Say a short prayer of thanksgiving, and
Pray for Pope Francis and for your fellow youth.

Thank you for your time and effort at answering the Questionnaire!

Congratulations! You made a mark!

May we then also invite you to pray for or wish well the coming Synod on October 2018.



What is the Synod of Bishops?

Get to know about it here—

<http://youth.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/the-synod-of-bishops.html>

The USCCB website has a helpful link with basic information about the Synod 2018—

<http://www.usccb.org/about/bishops-and-dioceses/synod-of-bishops/synod-2018/index.cfm#anchor1>

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCILS

Another part involves hearing from the Diocesan Youth Councils with the help of a guide and a set of questions.

“The aim of the questions is to assist the customary ecclesial bodies ‘by right’ to express their understanding of the world of young people and assess their experience of vocational accompaniment, in order to gather information for drafting the work-document or *Instrumentum laboris*.”

Below are more specific instructions how to go about this:

“So as to take into account the various situations on the different continents and regions, three specific questions for each geographic area have been inserted after question 15, to generate response from the interested ecclesial bodies.

To facilitate and make tenable this work, the respective bodies are requested to limit their response to approximately one page for the question on statistics, one page each for the questions assessing the situation and one page for the three experiences for the continents and regions. If necessary or desired, other texts can be attached to support or supplement the contents of the responses.”*

For our youth ministries, giving our answers is a momentous opportunity to concretize our commitment to *engage in dialogue with the youth, strive to enter their world, and journey with them towards Christian maturity* (National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal, 2001).

This part will involve all the archdioceses, dioceses, prelatures and apostolic vicariates, as well as our own Federation of National Youth Organizations, by generously and honestly hearing the voice of the young people, knowing their aspirations, dreams and hopes as that of the universal Church. And when it speaks of the youth, it will include even those from other faith traditions and practices, possibly even those who identify as having no faith. Pope Francis aims at an inclusive work of gathering data about young people of today.

In providing answers to the Questionnaire, we ask our Youth Councils to do so with a careful and deeply reflective stance. We hope the answers will help assess

* The full set of questions is accessible here--http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html#QUESTIONS

how the Church has been pastoring the youth, and see what else could be done for the youth—to feel they belong and to enable them to see that they are catalysts of change.

1. The Diocesan Youth Council acknowledges the email communication from the CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Youth by confirming if the following have been received by email:

- a. Endorsement of the CBCP President
- b. Letter of the CBCP-ECY Chairman
- c. Letter of Pope Francis to Young People
- d. Preparatory Document
- e. Questionnaire

2. The Diocesan Youth Director takes the lead in the reading of these documents and in strategizing how the Diocesan Youth Council will make its response, covering (but not limited to) the following areas:

- a. Setting the date, time and venue for the collaborative work.
- b. Listing down and inviting representatives from the Diocesan Youth Council, as well as from other diocesan ministries (or their equivalent) which have direct relation to youth/ youth ministry: Family and Life, Laity, Biblical Apostolate, Catechesis, Catholic Education (Catholic Schools), BEC, Social Communication and Mass Media, Social Action, and Vocation.

Other possible ministries to involve (depending on their presence in the diocese): Prison Apostolate, Women, Ecumenism, Inter-faith Dialogue, Mission, etc.

- c. Coordinate with leaders of youth organizations which are members of the Federation of National Youth Organizations (FNYO) that are present in the diocese, as well as from other youth-related organizations, in order to get substantial representation from them.
- d. Getting the confirmation of those invited, and providing them with the reading materials beforehand.

NOTE: To gather 20-30 people for the data gathering will appear to be a good number to work with.

- e. Preparing the required staff, tools, materials, etc. for the data gathering.
 - f. Orienting the staff required for the data gathering, i.e. Facilitator/s or Moderator/s, Secretary/ies, Registration Team, Documentation Team, and others as may be needed for a smooth flow of the program.
 - g. Ensuring that everyone invited and confirmed to attend the data gathering are able to read and study the related documents, so that they will be able to come together with a common understanding.
3. On the schedule set for the data gathering:
- a. Welcome and Registration (to generate a list of those involved)
 - b. Preliminaries: Welcome Remarks, Opening Prayer, Introduction of Participants (in a joyful way), Mood Setting and Orientation

IMPORTANT: In this portion, it will be helpful that those invited get a clear grasp of why they were invited, and of the value of what they can contribute. To do this, the mood setting may include a brief open forum on expectations and contributions, leading the answers to a shared commitment to participate fully and actively in this gathering, which is one of the local church's contribution to the momentous event that is the Synod 2018.

- c. Questionnaire:
 - c.1. The Moderator invites everyone to pay attention to the Questionnaire.
 - c.2. After reading the questions, generate from the participants their responses. This may be done by dividing them into small groups (small enough to be manageable while allowing for variety in representation), with a facilitator and a secretary per group.

IMPORTANT: As requested by instruction from the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops (available on the Preparatory Document), i.e. to *limit their response to approximately... one page each for the questions assessing the situation and one page for the three experiences for the continents and regions*, answers may be given in bullet points.

- c.3. At the end of the given time for sharing, the notes of the group secretaries will be collected.

IMPORTANT: While the language of the Questionnaire is English, the responses may be made in another language, provided that the original concept of the questions are followed, and that a translation of the responses are given which represent the original responses made in the sharing of the groups.

- d. Conclusion: The Moderator wraps up the gathering, and thanks everyone for their presence and participation. Everyone is invited in a closing prayer.
4. After this data gathering, work on the documentation: encode and collate the answers from all the groups, to come up with one set of answers for the diocese, taking care that the instructions from the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops are followed. Together with a short narrative report and selected photos of the data gathering, submit this set of documentation to the CBCP-ECY via email.

May this data gathering be done electronically/ virtually, without having to meet personally?

While data gathering may indeed be done without gathering people, each particular church is highly encouraged to undertake this through a physical gathering of people. Despite the limitations of time, distance and other factors, it is our earnest hope that this data gathering becomes a venue not only for a meeting of minds and hearts in the diocese who are concerned about the youth, but also of fostering the culture of encounter promoted by Pope Francis not only as a fruit of our mission but also of how we do our ministries.

Should there be questions or clarifications, please feel free to contact our ECY Secretariat during weekdays, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM—

Email secretariat@cbcp-ecy.ph

Telephone +63 2 5729567

Mobile +63 917 8536792

TIMELINE

October 06	The CBCP-ECY communicates by email to all the Diocesan Bishops about the questionnaires for the Synod 2018. Upon receipt, the Diocesan Youth Council confirms receipt of the email.
Between October 06 and 29	The Diocesan Youth Council, led by the Diocesan Youth Director, works together for the data gathering as a diocese in response to the questionnaire for ecclesial bodies.
Between October 06 and November 30	The Diocesan Youth Councils request their respective youth ministry networks and links to encourage young people ages 16-29 to answer the online questionnaire for young people.
October 30	Last day for sending to the CBCP-ECY the diocesan results from the data gathering
October 31	The CBCP-ECY transmits by email to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops all the diocesan results submitted to it.
November 30	Last day for the online questionnaire for young people

PRAYER OF POPE FRANCIS FOR THE SYNOD 2018

may also be used as opening or closing prayer during the data gathering

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.

St. Pedro Calungsod and Bl. Diego Luis de San Vitores, pray for us.