

Press release – October 8, 2016

## **Joy and interest in the 2018 Synod on Youth**

*The youth of the Focolare together with the entire Movement thank Pope Francis.*

The XV General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to be held in October 2018, will focus on “Young people, the faith and discernment of vocation”. This decision of Pope Francis arouses joy and interest even in the Focolare Movement, especially in its branches for young members. The new generations have always been essential to the life of the Movement, in reciprocity with adult members, who accompany the young ones also in discerning their life goals. The Pope’s choice to focus the Church’s attention on youth strengthens and renews this commitment. First reactions of young members of the Movement show gratitude, hope and trust in a new and transparent relationship between the Church and youth, and a desire to contribute towards it.

**Gloria, Uganda:** “This is good news and it is also a response. The choice corresponds to the need. We already try to live our vocation in a bond with our faith, and not merely as a choice. It is time that these two realities are unified in our lives. We are so happy that the Pope has thought of us!”

**Ryan, USA:** “Great news. If young people are not offered a good environment in today’s Church, tomorrow’s Church will lack good culture. I think Pope Francis wants to leave the Church in good hands. We need good ideas about living the vocation, not just about future choices: getting married, becoming a priest, a religious, a focolarino....In my Focolare formation I have learnt to consider the vocation as an answer to a call that has to be lived also presently, right away. I hope that the Synod will also focus on this aspect so that the Church will be in good hands”.

**Amanda, Brazil:** “It’s a surprise! I am sure the Pope knows how to get to all young people. Many of those who no longer participate in the life Church, have shown great interest in his encyclical on the environment. I consider this synod as a great opportunity. It will be fantastic if it reaches everyone”

**Aileen, India:** “What I have learnt from the Catholic Church in the State where I grew up differs in certain aspects from its teaching in another State. Ideas vary even though the same material, as for example Youcat, is used. Globalization and social media put us in contact even with what the Church teaches in other parts of the world. Differences in approach on important issues can cause confusion in the absence of a clear voice. The Pope and the universal Church have a very important role in this, while they take into consideration the different cultures. I think the Synod offers excellent prospects”.

**Jorge, Peru:** “Young people are getting to know more about Church problems, especially about hot issues: scandals, social problems, Church and politics. In Peru, for example, such issues cause further distance between the position of the clergy and the reality of youth. The news of the Synod fills me with hope: the contribution and the ideas of the youth, using the media and the social networks in a transparent and convergent manner, can show a more human face of the Church.”

**Dam, Argentina:** “I grew up in the parish, and I think that the theme on vocation and youth should have been addressed years ago. Today we are in the midst of a crisis of vocations: family, religious life, as citizens, etc. So I say: Well done for choosing this theme, even if late”.

**Jorge, El Salvador:** “World Youth Days have shown the Church’s openness towards youth. Giving priority to youth shows that Pope Francis now wants to pass from words to deeds; even because we have to be the ones to find solutions for world problems. Sometimes one tends to think that we are unable to address problems, but together with mature and experienced persons we do arrive to solutions. It seems as if the Pope is telling us: you are ready for this challenge”.

**Jose Luis, Brazil:** “Who knows what will really happen during the Synod! It would be great if some young people would actually be present. I think we all wish to have someone voicing us in this Synod”.

The young people of the Focolare Movement are also pleased because the Synod will take place just after the Genfest, when young people from the five continents will be gathered in Manila, in July 2018.

**Jose Luis, Colombia:** “This is a marvellous coincidence. We will be in the Philippines, in a continent with so many young people and to whom the Pope gives much attention. This time of preparation will help us understand how we can contribute towards the Synod”.

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