

Go, you are sent... to accompany one another

“...Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

MARK 10:17

Pope Francis has chosen as the theme for the 2018 Assembly of the Synod of Bishops “Young people, faith and vocational discernment”. The statement announcing the theme says: “The Synod wishes to accompany young people along their existential journey towards maturity so that, through a process of discernment, they can discover their life plan and achieve it joyfully, opening themselves up to an encounter with God and humanity and actively taking part in the building of the Church and society.”

During adolescence and young adulthood young people deal with many new experiences including employment, leaving home, new relationships, developing personal values and worldviews, accepting responsibility for one’s self, and moving towards financial independence. At the same time their faith has to become their own, freely accepted without obligation. Discerning God’s call to a particular state in life – single, married, religious life, priesthood – is part of this process.

Young people are full members of the Church. They are not just “the future Church”, they are the Church of the present. They pray, worship, serve, give and receive, as at the same time they are discerning the specific nature of their call in life. Our focus is on how young people can accompany one another and be accompanied by the wider community as they undergo the experiences and discernment which will shape their lives.

1. What initiatives taken to accompany young people in your family, parish, or the archdiocese have young people responded well or poorly to?

2. What can be done by, with and for young people to assist them to “discover their life plan and achieve it joyfully”?

3. What would help young people to be “drawn to the overwhelmingly attractive figure of Jesus, and stirred by the challenge of the Gospel’s sublime ideals”? (*Ecclesia in Oceania* 44)

If you are 16-30 years of age please also answer this question:

4. What forms of accompaniment and support (not just spiritual) do you and your friends use, or would use if they were available?



“To you, who are at the beginning of the journey of life, I ask: have you thought about the talents that God has given you? Have you thought about how you can put them at the service of others? Don’t bury your talents! Bet on big ideals, those ideals that enlarge the heart, those ideals that will make your talents fruitful. Life is not given to us so that we can keep it jealously for ourselves, but is given to us so that we may donate it. Dear young people, have a great soul! Don’t be afraid to dream great things!”

POPE FRANCIS, GENERAL AUDIENCE 24 APRIL 2013

“When the Lord calls us, he doesn’t worry about what we are, what we have been, or what we have done or not done. Quite the opposite. When he calls us, he is thinking about everything we have to give, all the love we are capable of spreading. His bets are on the future, on tomorrow. Jesus is pointing you to the future, and never to the museum.”

POPE FRANCIS, WORLD YOUTH DAY 2016

“My friends, Jesus is the Lord of risk, he is the Lord of the eternal ‘more’. Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and ease. Following Jesus demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths. To blaze trails that open up new horizons capable of spreading joy, the joy that is born of God’s love and wells up in your hearts with every act of mercy. To take the path of the ‘craziness’ of our God, who teaches us to encounter him in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the friend in trouble, the prisoner, the refugee and the migrant, and our neighbours who feel abandoned. To take the path of our God, who encourages us to be politicians, thinkers, social activists.”

POPE FRANCIS, WORLD YOUTH DAY 2016

