

February 27, 2015

undefined, and in my opinion, naïve. There are elements of secular Western culture which can utterly erode the foundations of faith, and make it almost impossible to practice. Pornography is one of these, and it tears apart the family and the vocation to marriage, yet is not even mentioned in the *Relatio*, nor are other elements such as the current confusion about gender, or strains of feminism which are utterly opposed to the Church.

9. Beginning with #33, a list of solutions is proposed. "Proclamation...in espousing values," "...a more positive approach to the richness of various religious experiences," and denunciations of poverty stemming from "market logic." I have no idea what these mean. Reading the Bible, increased catechesis, older couples lending a hand in formation are mentioned, and while these make sense, it seems to me that this has already been going on for some time. "Meaningful liturgies" are mentioned, but this is vague and sentimental.

10. The "trauma of family break-up" is mentioned, closely followed by a proposal to streamline the annulment process. How such streamlining can possibly address the trauma is not discussed. We can streamline the process of annulment all we want, and the trauma to the children of divorce will remain.

11. Admittance of the divorced and re-married to the sacraments (by-passing the annulment process altogether) proposes in itself another question, namely, why not open the sacraments to anyone, for any reason, no matter what they have done or what their state of life is?

14. The section on persons with homosexual tendencies (#55) is exceedingly

vague, with the exception of #56.

15. It was a relief to read #'s 57-58 and it's clear teaching regarding the transmission of human life. It was the only part of the document that was clear to me.

In short, I found the document vague, secular, naïve and sentimental. It was discouraging to read.

Sincerely,

The Rev. James W. Jackson, FSSP

**A response to the document on the Synod of the Family, submitted to the Very Rev. Michael Pavlakovich, V.F. at the request of the Archbishop of Denver.**

1. In the Preface the desire is expressed to "find concrete solutions to so many difficulties and innumerable challenges that families must confront." I suggest concentrating on one or two difficulties, and trying to solve those. For example, if the Universal Church tried to stop cohabitation of couples, and was at all successful, then many other problems would improve. This would mean a united effort, with at least the Pope and the bishops working together. But trying to address all the numerous problems outlined in the *Relatio* at the same, time is not realistic.

2. The language of sin and redemption was missing from the documents. Instead, we were treated to sentences like "The challenge for the Church is to assist couples in their emotive maturation and affective development." This is an example of substituting sociology and psychology for the Word of God and the teaching of the Church, examples of which may be found throughout the document.

3. Many of the statements were too vague to understand. For example, "...a reflection capable of reframing the great questions about the meaning of human existence, can be responsive to humanity's most profound expectations." I do not know what this means. And there seems to be little in the document about our obligation to be responsive to the expectations of the Lord.

4. Throughout the document there is a sentimental notion of mercy which can be

quite misleading. For example, "Jesus looked upon the women and men he met with love and tenderness...in proclaiming the demands of the Kingdom of God." Except when He didn't. The words He used to condemn the Pharisees were not words of tenderness.

5. It seems that the writers of these documents went to great lengths to avoid talking about sin. For example, "...the Church turns with love to those who participate in her life in an incomplete manner..." If there is no sin, then there is no need of salvation. Which is why I suppose, that the sentence continues with "...recognizing that the grace of God works also in their lives by giving them the courage to do good, to care for one another and to be of service to the community in which they live and work." There is no salvation in the "courage to do good etc.," as the pagans do as much.

6. I could find no distinction between short term and long term goals, or even a mention of the desirability of setting these.

7. In #32, there was a call for missionary conversion by everyone in the Church. But for this to take place there must be doctrinal unity – a unity of faith – at least amongst the pope and the bishops. In the document there is no mention of this.

8. In the same paragraph we read "...the crisis of faith has led to a crisis in marriage and the family..." I could not find a definition of this crisis of faith, nor what the causes of it are, in this document. Unless this is clarified, there will be business as usual, with no indication of how we can assess progress. The paragraph further states, "In the face of a strong faith, the imposition of certain cultural perspectives which weaken the family and marriage will cause no harm." This too is