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November 2, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairpersons and Directors of Education
- All Catholic District School Boards

FROM: Brian O'Sullivan, Director of Catholic Education

SUBJECT: **Vatican's Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith & Vocational Discernment**

Dear Colleagues,

You may recall during my regional presentations to our Ontario Catholic trustees last month that the Vatican would be holding its Bishops' synod on "**Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.**" This is an exciting time to see the importance that Pope Francis places on the role of the church in the lives of young people.

As I mentioned in our presentation, the importance of forming Catholic leaders for the next generation is an important part of succession planning if we are to have new, capable and informed Catholic leaders in the future. You will recall that there was a pre-meeting with some 300 "youth" worldwide to inform the Bishops and the preparatory document leading up to this Synod.

The volume of material published on this Synod is quite daunting, so I have organized several key sites to assist you to follow the Synod this month.

General Overview of the Synod

<https://www.catholicregister.org/home/international/item/28119-synod-helps-to-renew-the-church-to-help-young-catholics-cardinal-says>

Letter of Pope Francis to Young People at the Start of the Synod

<http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/pope---young/letter-of-his-holiness-pope-francis-to-young-people.html>

Preparatory Document for the Synod

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html

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Excerpt:

“It should not be overlooked that many societies are increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious. In particular, the presence of different religious traditions is a challenge and an opportunity. The situation can lead to uncertainty and the temptation of relativism, but, at the same time, can provide for increased possibilities for fruitful dialogue and mutual enrichment. From the vantage point of faith, the situation is seen as a sign of our times, requiring greater listening, respect and dialogue. Today’s generation of young people live in a world which is different from that of their parents and educators. Economic and social changes have affected the gamut of obligations and opportunities. Young people’s aspirations, needs, feelings and manner of relating to others have changed as well. Furthermore, from a certain point of view, young people, because of globalization, tend to be more homogeneous in all parts of the world. Nevertheless, they remain in their local surroundings and their unique cultural and institutional settings, which have repercussions in the process of socializing and forming a personal identity.

...Walking with Young People – Accompanying young people requires going beyond a preconceived framework, encountering young people where they are, adapting to their times and pace of life and taking them seriously. This is to be done as young people seek to make sense of the reality in which they live and to utilize the message which they have received in words and deeds in their daily attempts to create a personal history and in the more-or-less conscious search for meaning in their lives.

Address by Pope Francis on the Opening of the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment

<http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/news/address-by-pope-francis-at-the-opening-of-the-synod-of-bishops-.html>

Message of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God, at the conclusion of the XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (October 24, 2008)

www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20081024_message-synod_en.html

Final Report & the Process Involved in the Synod of Bishops’ Conference

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/synod-document-calls-for-participatory-co-responsible-church-47910>

Conclusion of the Vatican Synod (Catholic Register)

https://www.catholicregister.org/home/international/item/28296-synod-document-focuses-on-listening-to-youth-women-welcoming-their-contributions-to-church?mc_cid=f3f771eef7&mc_eid=957128775c