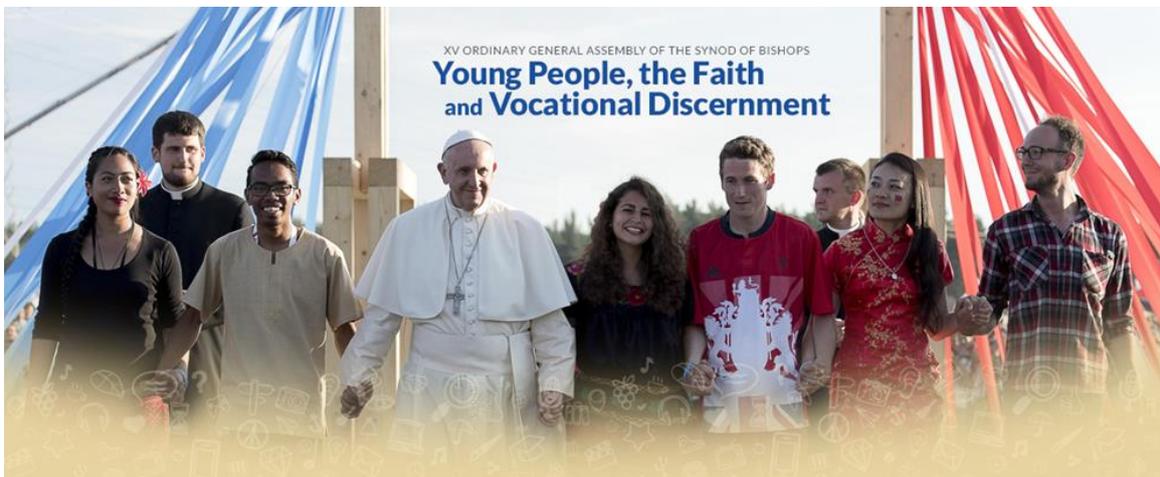




“WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE TOWARDS THE SYNOD”



The Pre-synodal Meeting challenges us as Educating Communities

Youth Ministry Sector

Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

Rome - 2018

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INTRODUCTION

The Pre-Synodal Meeting, held in Rome from March 19 to 24, 2018, had as its objective to give young people the possibility to present to the Synodal Fathers, who will be gathered in October 2018 for the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme: “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, a document which expresses their point of view on reality, their ideas, their sentiments and their proposals.

The 315 young men and women who participated in this Pre-Synodal Meeting represented the young people of the five continents. Among them were Maria Eugenia Sehara from Uruguay (the World delegate of the Salesian Youth Movement) and Anjana Treesa Thadathil (the representative of her diocese who is also a young teacher in one of our schools in India). Some FMA also participated: sr. Cristina Vargas, Colombian, who represented the young religious women of Latin America; sr. Cynthia Calabig, Filipina and Directress of Novices, who represented the formators of Asia; and sr. Karla Marlene Figueroa from Honduras and professor of the Facoltà di Scienze dell’Educazione “Auxilium” – Rome, represented the educators of Latin America.

The young people were very much involved during the Pre-Synodal Meeting. Other young people who could not be physically present in the Meeting in Rome were able to take part in the meeting through the Facebook group. All were invited to participate in the collective sharing and to express their voice in a way that the Pre-Synodal Meeting could be as much as possible the expression of the entire world of youth.

In this Youth Ministry Series n.14, **“WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE TOWARDS THE SYNOD”**. **The Pre-Synodal Meeting Challenges Us as Educating Communities**, we have gathered the impressions and the reflections of the five participants, who represented us in the Pre-Synodal Meeting. Likewise, we have attempted an essential transversal reading of the final document of the young people to grasp reality from their perspective, their dream of the Church, their expectations from adult educators, the processes they would like to implement, and finally their "cry", what they consider an urgency for the Church and for the world. For each of the seven points for reflection and sharing, there is a corresponding guide, which is an invitation to the Educating Communities to pause and to listen attentively to the voice of the young people.

The general objective of this Series is to motivate the Educating Communities to walk with young people and thanks to young people. For this, towards the end of the series, a guide "to do something creatively", inspired by the "Design for change" methodology¹, could be helpful to carry out a journey of change. It is not only about thinking or planning, but about living an experience in the community in the spirit of the “pedagogy of small steps” because « there is no point in wanting if you do not have the courage to "dare"» (Giuseppe Donadei).

¹ “Design for Change” is a methodology that came into being in India by Kiran Bir Sethi. It is present in more than 60 Countries. Every project or story consists of four simple steps: feel the needs and problems; imagine new solutions; do and make the change possible; share their story of transformation in order to inspire other people. “We can” add a fifth step, that of analyzing and evaluation the whole process, with its fruits, in order for it to continue to evolve. Cf. <http://www.dfcworld.com>

THE PRE-SYNODAL MEETING: AN EXPERIENCE OF GRACE

Two young people from our educational settings and other three FMA participated at the Pre-Synodal Meeting. Here they tell us what it meant for them to participate in this experience of grace and communion.

An ecclesial experience of respect

María Eugenia Sehera - Uruguay

- “The experience that captured most my attention during the Pre-Synodal Meeting was the climate of mutual respect lived among us: to see how, none of the young persons came with an absolute truth but with the will to contemplate, to be transformed, to be formed and to be enriched by others’ contribution.
- Moreover, it was very gratifying to see many young people so involved in building a Church where, little by little, the values of the first Christian communities are lived. Young people with a desire to truly live in the style of Jesus.”

A transforming experience

Anjana Treasa Thadathil – India

- “The experiences were wide and varied. Like, meeting different people - from different continents, languages, cultures, religions, ideologies, etc. My roommate was from Colombia. And I used to talk to her using Google translator because my knowledge of Spanish was limited to “hola” and “ciao” and she as well knew little English. There were people coming from as close as Pakistan and as far as Chile. I actually talked, interacted and discussed with them the different aspects of life and of the faith. As for me, this was an experience which I have never lived before, and which I am not sure will ever be repeated.
- Another great experience was the meeting with Pope Francis. Although we saw Pope Francis almost on a daily basis through the television and heard his words through the different means of communication, the experience of really meeting him was so humbling. Pope Francis was there with us - just like one of us, with a friendly hug and an easy smile for everyone; he talked to us, told us things, asked about us. He was not just present, he was listening, nor was he just compassionate, he was empathetic – the youth of today often do not get this.
- For the discussions, I was in the English Group 4. I think, being part of an English group actually enhanced my experience because the members were all from different places and from very different realities. I have been part of the youth ministry in some capacity for the last 11 years, but this was totally new – six full days of reflecting, talking, walking, and sharing meals – all in common. Youth and Church and nothing else. The morning Mass offered us the first push and then began the exercise. From breakfast to goodnight, all our time was dedicated to youth issues and to youth and life. Most days I slept after 12.00 AM. There were so many people to meet, so many things to listen to and to share that time was not enough.
- Also, the Pontifical Mass on Palm Sunday was another unforgettable experience.”

A unique and a historic moment

Sr. Cristina Vargas, FMA – Colombia

"What touched me most and taught me was the very fact that the Church listens to young people. In fact, it is important that the Church not only works for young people, but WITH them, because it is TOGETHER - forming a community - that the transformation that our Church is so much in need can take place. In this sense, the General Chapter XXIII wisely orients us when it proposed to be missionaries of hope and joy WITH the young people. I also would like to underline the following experiences:

- The fact of seeing the great love for the Church of many young people who come from the different parts of the world, including non-believers or those who belong to other religious denominations. A love that is reflected in the arduous and joyful work in every country, diocese, parish, despite moments of refusal and pain.
- To respond to the urgent need in the Church to rethink catechesis. Let me cite an example from the Spanish-speaking Group 4, of which I was part. The young people made a contribution with what they said: *"In our Church, we see that the proposals for catechesis are based on specific moments (first communion, marriage, etc.), but we do not feel that the catechesis touches life, that leads to a true encounter with Christ. We need a catechesis that is not based on events, but one that is an accompaniment to life, and last throughout life and for life. We need a Church that does not transmit the Gospel as a book of rules and norms, but as an experience of love and of an encounter with Jesus."*
- To assess as well the urgent need in the Church to form a "community of faith". In this regard, many young people have expressed that *"unfortunately, we do not always find in our Church a true community that supports, a point of reference from whom we can learn to be Christians, to be disciples. We need a Church through which we can know Jesus and deepen our faith, but without ever abandoning what we learn from our concrete everyday life"* (Spanish Speaking - Group 4).
- Aware that the Church needs to change some of its styles of government, thus, we wrote in the Final Document: *"The Church must involve the young people in the decision-making processes and must offer them key leadership roles"*. I would add that this does not refer only to Bishops. Likewise, parents, religious, committed laity, professionals, etc. must ensure the involvement of young people in the decision-making processes. Our "being a community" is also expressed in this.
- Reaffirm that women are called to continue to discover their role in the Church and to give their creative and vital contribution within the Church.
- Manifest once again the beauty of the Salesian religious vocation among the young people, in a way that they can discover our charism as more than ever as actual and as a concrete response of holiness in the Church.

A new Pentecost

Cynthia Calabig, FMA - Philippines

- The 2018 Pre-Synodal Meeting was for me the PENTECOST of the 21st Century! In the history of the Church, this was the first Synod in which the young people were called to participate - young people from all over the world, from different walks of life and religious beliefs. Believers and non-believers alike were present as expressed by Pope Francis in his invitation to the meeting. He asked the Bishops, the Priests, the Religious, the laity and the entire Church to listen to what the young had to say.
- It was a significant experience. I witnessed the sincerity of heart of these young people who had a great desire, as well as a strong sense of commitment and of responsibility, to build a WORLD which is ONE, where everybody counts and WHERE EVERYBODY BELONGS! The Pre-Synodal Meeting offered the young people a safe place where they can

be themselves, free of any pretensions. This allowed them to sincerely express their life's deepest longings while they continue to search for their significance in the world and in the Church.

- The meeting was significant to me for I saw how the Church took seriously its commitment to LISTEN to young people. In so doing it made them feel that they “are the light of the world” as Jesus said. It filled me with hope for a bright tomorrow because I saw in these young people the openness to the spiritual, a disposition that nurtures their aspiration to be contemplative in the daily as they embark to live life to the fullest and to give their contribution in building a better and livable world.
- Like the many young people participants, I also felt the palpable presence of the Holy Spirit in the small linguistic group. It was a strong experience of God which I will treasure for a lifetime. The two days and a half of listening, of discussion, and of sharing were sufficient to create a strong and deep “connection” among us. There was great openness, a non-judgmental attitude, an atmosphere permeated by understanding and acceptance. Joy filled the air and the hallways of Maria Mater Ecclesiae where the Pre-Synodal Meeting was held. All these contributed to generating an encounter that was so intense that it formed among us that one mind and one heart. More than producing a document, we were simply hoping that these young people just allow themselves to be led by the whole process. The dialogue, the exchange of stories and not merely of ideas, the fellowship, have paved the way to the possibility of forming a new culture, that is, a CULTURE OF PEACE AND SOLIDARITY regardless of one’s belief and social background.
- For this reason, I would like to honor, to celebrate, to remember in a particular way the presence of each one of us who participated in this Meeting. I rejoiced for those who shared and told their stories ...; I rejoiced also for every instance, from our small language groups to our casual mealtime conversations, from the short breaks at the hallway while taking our snacks to the solemn yet festive Eucharistic celebrations and prayer moments. This created an atmosphere of familiarity and collaboration as we worked on the task entrusted to us.
- I was awed and grateful for this rare opportunity to represent the men and women formators in such a privileged gathering with the young, even if at first, I thought I would be out of place as I was old enough to be these young people’s grandmother! Thanks.

A work done with seriousness

Sr. Karla Figueroa, FMA Auxilium – Rome

- What struck me about the Pre-Synodal Meeting was to see the young people’s courage and a great sense of responsibility in carrying out the particular task entrusted to them. All the young people gathered in this Meeting were aware that they were participating in an important meeting for the future of the Church’s ministry and for that they gave their contribution to this reflection with great love and sense of belonging. They succeeded to create a climate of serene and frank dialogue in keeping with the exhortation of Pope Francis to engage in a fearless and no holds barred discussion so as to offer a contribution to better the pastoral practice with young people.
- I greatly appreciated and admired in many young people their ability to pray, their thirst for silence. I was able to understand how those young people, committed to the ministry of the Church for years, were convinced that the encounter with Jesus is what gives meaning to their life. I listened and appreciated their simple and effective way of transmitting the Gospel. In transmitting the faith, their language starts with experience and leads to the witness of life.

- Young people are open to dialogue, they believe in respecting differences, they desire communion, a joy which is not fleeting, but which comes from the depth of the heart. The young people are full of hope and courage.
- I was very struck by the moment of reflection in the assembly and of the reading of the first draft of the final document. I saw how, with great courage, responsibility, and fearlessness, many young people expressed their agreement or disagreement with what was written in the draft. After the reading we saw them engaged in an attentive and sincere dialogue in search of proposals to be modified. But this was done respectful of the differences of opinions and with the audacity of one who gives the best of herself/himself.



GUIDE 1 for the SHARING IN THE EDUCATING COMMUNITY

“If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work. Instead teach them to long for the vast and endless sea. As soon as this thirst will be awakened in them, they will immediately go to work to build the ship.” (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

1 - Let us briefly comment on this phrase and look together at its meaning for a shared experience of the Pre-Synodal Meeting and for our Educating Community.

After the reading of the text "Pre-Synodal Meeting: an experience of grace":

2- What struck us the most and why?

3- What seems to us more interesting or provocative for our context? Why?



THE PRE-SYNODAL MEETING: THE VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The opinion of a young person, whoever she/he is, has a great importance for us because it allows us to enter into her/his way of seeing reality, the world and of identifying his needs. So much more if these young people have participated in the first person at the Pre-Synodal Meeting. Such is the case of María Eugenia Sehara and Anjana Treesa Thadathil who are sharing their reflections and are offering a sort of re-reading of their direct experience.

“Everyone has a right to speak”

María Eugenia Sehara – Uruguay

- The Pope asked the young people to express themselves courageously and without filters, and the young people immediately promised him that they would do so. I can say that the Pre-Synodal Meeting was really such.
- In reality, The Pre-Synodal Meeting was a space in which we young people could speak without filters, and we were listened to. We were able to what makes us "suffer" in our Church and what makes us proud of her. The best example of how this attitude of listening and of courage had been lived was evident in the very Final Document. In fact, if we had not talked without filters, if we had not said what challenges us in our Church, the document would not have made sense and writing it together would not have been possible.
- After this experience in the Pre-Synodal Meeting, I would like to send a message to the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM). My message to the SYM will be in two parts: all of us as young people and as young adults form part of the SYM. We live our faith, our Christian commitment with the same simplicity (essentiality + depth) as lived by Don Bosco and by Main. Let us animate one another to be witnesses and agents of change and of hope for the Church and for society.

Young people disciples - missionaries

Anjana Treesa Thadathil – India

- In the Final Document of the Pre-Synodal Meeting young people clearly stated their desire of a Church that does not consider them to be too young to be the protagonists of their own spiritual journey. This desire for missionary-discipleship has truly emerged in the reflections of the Pre-Synod Meeting.
- Yes, it has really been such. To begin with, my group was an eclectic one. There was a Muslim girl, an atheist, a girl representing the European Union, a boy from a Protestant Church, and three youth from the Oriental Churches. We were surrounded by people coming from Europe, from America, and from the other parts of the world. Therefore, we were dealing with a mixed group.
- But, all of us were of “one voice” when we found ourselves in the space reserved for young people, be they belonging to the Church or be they outside the Church. Notwithstanding our profound ethnic differences, we were similar in many points. All respected the diverse roles given to each one during the different moments of the meeting without further discussion.

- We had discussed in detail about how the young people should not only be considered protagonists of their spiritual journey but also about how they could effectively be, more than the adults, better missionaries for other young people.
- The idea of being missionary disciple” had been expressed in different ways and in the different points of the final document, especially in Part three: “The Church’s Formative and Pastoral Activity”. The Final Document repeats the sentiments of more than 15,000 young people participants (personally present or online): they are ready to be guides and leaders.
- We, the young people acknowledge these two realities: the fact that we are ready to assume the responsibility for our lives and the fact that we need the help and the guidance of our elders. Our only request is that they walk beside us as they accompany us, neither ahead of us nor behind us. It is necessary that our guides recognize with empathy our reality and at the same time are firm in the faith. And moreover, that they keep pace with the changing world.

Regarding this point I would like to share two ideas with the FMA communities and with the Educating Communities in general:

- a. Return to the path traced out by Don Bosco and search for young people in their particular places. I think, with our well-established schools, colleges and institutes, we have become, for many years, so comfortable in our environments where many young people and children come to us. But now we must also think that there are so many needy people just out there. We can do a lot more like talking to young people about our faith and of Jesus, having the courage to tell them that it is not enough to live a good life as exemplary citizens, but that it is necessary also to live a life illumined by the Christian faith because only this can guarantee salvation and paradise.
- b. Make the young people capable of assuming their responsibilities for their omissions, for their actions, and even for their dreams and for their lives. Seemingly today a good percentage of young people lacks at least this capacity. Such lack leads to a life of non-commitment towards institutions, religion, faith, persons, relationship with others, vocation, etc. Somehow, an unstable lifestyle, easier yes, but very harmful, is penetrating every corner of the world. And this must be stopped.

There are many good educational institutions and universities, as well as there are many non-governmental organizations working for social advancement. Despite all this pluralism, the FMA continue to work in these fields. Why? Perhaps, because they are better educators or social workers? No. It’s not that. They do so to proclaim and to witness God’s love. And “this” message should reach all young people.



GUIDE 2 for the SHARING IN THE EDUCATING COMMUNITY

“Too often we talk about young people without allowing ourselves to be challenged by them. [...] This Pre-Synodal Meeting should be a sign of something great: the Church’s willingness to listen to all the young, without exclusion. And this is not a political ploy. It is not out of an artificial “pro-youth”, no, but because we need to better understand what God and history are asking of us. If you are not present, then a part of the access to God is missing.” (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis, Pre-Synodal Meeting with Young People, March 19, 2018)

1- How does this phrase of Pope Francis challenge us?

Starting from the reading of the text "Pre-Synodal Meeting: the voice of young people":

2- Which spaces of communication without filters do young people find in our educational presences?

3- Which spaces of protagonism do young people find in our Educating Community? What steps do you take in this regard?

4- What ministry model is applied in our community: a ministry FOR young people or a ministry WITH young people?

5- What can we do after this observation?



THE GAZE OF THE FMA IN THE PRE-SYNODAL MEETING

As already mentioned, three Daughters of Mary Help of Christians were invited to the Pre-Synodal Meeting: sr. Cristina Vargas as a young religious and catechist, sr. Cynthia Calabig as an experienced formator and sr. Karla Figueroa as a professor. Here are more of their reflections after the wonderful experience of living with young people.

Urgencies and challenges for the FMA Educating Community

Sr. Cristina Vargas, FMA - Colombia

- In this brief reflection, I would like to share certain aspects raised by young people which according to me, are more important and urgent to our FMA Educating Communities. To be faithful to the conclusions, I would like to highlight a few aspects on which we should work in the Youth Ministry of the Institute, of the Church, and in society.
- I start from an observation and from a desire. We note that on a number of occasions in history, the changes and the reflections of the Councils, as well as those of the Synods, had had quite a bit of difficulty to get into the basic fabric of youth ministry. Despite this, we have a desire, the hope that the contribution of the young people will be truly accepted and bring improvements in all the sectors of the Church, both as an institution and as an organization, as well as both in the formation sector and in that of evangelization, etc.
- The Final Document (FD) states: "The impact of social media on the lives of ñpeople cannot be understated. Social media is a significant part of young people's identity and way of life" (FD n. 4). In my opinion, as an FMA, we should discern how to accompany the young people and how to offer spaces for integral formation and evangelization through the "social media".
- Take sufficient care so that our communities are not spaces of exclusion. This requires unflinching vigilance and discernment. We must, therefore, ask ourselves: What attitudes, words, gestures may be "exclusive" in our Educating Community? Do young people see us as "closed"? Why? And in this regard, we should not be afraid to reflect with the young people "on controversial subjects such as homosexuality and gender issues" (FD n. 11). To reflect not like those who already have all the answers and who are rigid in their way of thinking, but like those who listen and seek the best in each person in every situation.
- Reflect with the girls on what it means to be women. The theme on women and their "role" within the Church had been emphasized several times in the Pre-Synodal Meeting. In fact, it was mentioned five times in the Final Document! What vision of woman do we explicitly and implicitly offer to young women?
- Reflect on Salesian accompaniment (also in line with the Strenna 2018) by giving it greater dynamism and strength in our Educating Communities and by being more aware of how we accompany and assess ourselves on this aspect.
- Build "community WITH young people". We are already a "large Educating Community", but how do we create small communities of faith where the young people can feel they belong to and through which they can experience discernment and accompaniment as a way of life? The Salesian Youth Movement (SYM), which promotes youth group and protagonism could be the real answer to this. In this regard, it would be necessary that each youth group verifies its objectives and its progress.
- We should ask ourselves: what kind of catechesis do we offer? Do they learn to be Christians, to be missionary disciples? Is it only pre-sacramental or does it introduce us into a community of faith for life? The young people of the Spanish-speaking Group 4 had asked

themselves: where can I receive faith formation and an effective impulse and support for being a Christian?

- Be "authentic FMA and bear witness to discernment and accompaniment as a way of life. Do young people ever get a sense that we, too, are being accompanied? Do others perceive that we are women of discernment ...? For we cannot form others unless we, first, have made those values ours ...

The dreams and the desires of today's youth

Sr. Cynthia Calabig, FMA – Philippines

- The Pre-Synodal Meeting, willed by Pope Francis in view of and in preparation for the Synod of Bishops, had for its goal to take into consideration how the young people see the world with its wounds and its challenges: an investigative look and one of hope.
- I identified some of the important elements of the Final Document which, according to me, resonated very well with our 23rd General Chapter theme: "Being with the young people today, a home that evangelizes".
- As I tried to go through my experience, I discovered the FOUR desires of the young people, which to me are their DREAMS to be realized because they express their fundamental aspirations and these help them to face the challenges of today's world. They are :
 - a. THE DESIRE FOR A FAMILY that supports them: "Young people look for a sense of self by seeking communities that are supportive, uplifting, authentic and accessible: communities that empower them. We recognize places that are helpful for the development of their personality, namely family, which occupies a privileged position." (FD n.1)
 - b. THE DESIRE TO BELONG: "A sense of belonging is a significant factor in the shaping of one's identity. As we grapple with these challenges, we need inclusion, welcome, mercy, and tenderness from the Church – both as an institution and as a community of faith." (FD n. 1)
 - c. THE DESIRE TO BE ACCOMPANIED in their search for life's meaning and one's vocation: "Young people are looking for companions on the journey, to be embraced by faithful men and women who express the truth and allow young people to articulate their understanding of faith and their vocation. Such people do not need to be models of faith to imitate, but instead living testimonies to witness." (FD n. 10)
 - d. THE DESIRE TO BE PROTAGONISTS especially of their own spiritual and cultural formation that enable them to be leaders in building a just and humane society: "There is a need for trust in young people to lead and to be protagonists of their own spiritual journey. This is not just to imitate their elders, but to really take ownership of their mission and responsibility, lived out well." (FD n. 7)
- Furthermore, for me, this Pre-Synodal Meeting was the VALDOCCO and MORNESE of the 21st century! As I reflected on the Final Document which was presented by the Pre-Synodal Delegates to the Holy Father on Palm Sunday, I cannot but thank God for our Salesian charism reconfirmed throughout the process of Pre-Synodal Meeting 2018. I found myself in a familiar working place, the holy ground of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello. I felt renewed and happy to re-dedicate my life to God in the service of the young.

Implications for the formative journey

Sr. Cynthia Calabig, FMA – Philippines

- Starting from the experience lived with young people in the Pre-Synodal Meeting, I would like to suggest some concrete implications for the formative journey of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and some considerations in order to address these transformations as an Institute.
- As an FMA, I feel the profound need to cultivate the capacity for an active listening which is possible only if I foster a contemplative stance in the daily. This invitation to a contemplative attitude leads me to a journey inward that helps me to clarify my identity. It is a process that helps me acknowledge my own limitations and my giftedness, the joys and the sorrows of a spiritual journey. This process will help me to clarify my personal identity which in turn will help me to embrace our charismatic identity. Eventually, it will empower me to carry out whatever mission God will entrust to me.
- As an FMA, I feel it a vital duty to listen to the cry of the young people who need to be accepted and who long to belong to a family. It is a call to let go of my comfort zones and meet the young where they are; to open and widen my horizons especially to those who due to diverse circumstances are considered a periphery.
- As an FMA, I am invited to listen and to constantly live in an attitude of discernment as I accompany the young people in their own discernment process. “Listen. Discern. Live!” These are the words of Pope Francis on the 2018 World Day of Vocations. A strong invitation to a renewed commitment to being an FMA today!

Richness, originality and limitations of the Pre-Synodal Meeting

Sr. Karla Figueroa, FMA – Rome

- Each language group presented a summary of the work of the various groups. I am going to show you some aspects which I think are the wealth and the originality of young people according to their various languages and backgrounds.
- The different syntheses by language groups possess certain degree of originality due to the persons who form part of each group, to their country of origin, and to their experience of faith in the God of Jesus Christ. It is worth pointing out that in the Pre-Synodal Meeting there were young people who declared themselves atheist or who belong to other religious denominations. Their reflection, from a perspective far different from that of the Church, was their true contribution.
- In my opinion, there has been a general perception among the young Catholics that it is of utmost necessity that to come in contact with the person of Jesus the corresponding Gospel proclamation on the part of the Church needed new styles and ways: closer to the present experience of the young people, in a participative manner in which the young people are not merely passive protagonists present during the process where they are recipients of the proposals to be implemented; the young people, instead, are so desirous of a style in which they can be active protagonists, participating responsibly and directly, in places where the pastoral plans, the methodologies, and the process are decided. We cannot just put aside this desire of the young people to be co-responsible with the adult educators.
- They call for a Church that is authentic, humble, open, and capable of listening to the young people. A Church that is concerned with the young people’s preoccupations and that promotes paths of hope. They love a Church that is open, where mercy has the first

word. They want a decentralized ecclesial community, not bound to the temple, but bound to persons. That is why the privileged places of an authentic presence of the Church are the service to the poor and to the marginalized, the accompaniment of migrants, the promotion of peace, the care and the stewardship of the environment, the educative passion for young people. The young people have a clear vision of the “Church which goes forth”: every place is a potential space of encounter and of dialogue with them.

- The young people’s deepest longing is to be accompanied, to be helped to discern on the life choices they have to make. They expect a well-prepared, humble guide, who had experienced, in turn, to be accompanied and who remain in a constant state of discernment.
- They expect educators-guides who are beside them, who know how to give concrete and solid answers to the different issues such as the meaning of life, the ‘why’ of pain and suffering; issues related to sexuality and to bioethics; who know how to encourage them and who educate them on how to make good use of technologies.

The young people had identified differences in approach on the different dimensions of the faith.

- In some contexts, as they pointed out, what prevails is the community seen as a place of encounter with the person of Jesus, while in other contexts, what prevails is the rather personal dimension of this encounter. It is well-known how in certain regions, the religious sense is still present, while in other places, secularism and secularization are emerging.
- They highlight as well that in some areas the Church is open to dialogue with the world, with non-believers, and with persons of other religions; while in other contexts interreligious and intercultural dialogue is particularly difficult.
- However, in my opinion, everyone is aware that the Church, on her part, is called to dialogue and to listen attentively to diversity if it were to be a prophetic, audacious, and credible presence.
- In some contexts, what has been underlined was the need for the involvement of the Church in certain specific social spheres such as the promotion of peace, the care for creation, political commitment, the active participation in social policies in favor of the vulnerable, a particular attention to the issue of work and unemployment, the attention to migrants and to refugees.
- Some young people had emphasized the difficulty of finding sense in the sacramental practice and, consequently, they gradually abandon such practice.

I will now move to my next consideration, which is the limitation of the Pre-Synodal Meeting in terms of style, methodology, schedules, presences, etc.

- The main limitation of the meeting lies in the time. All the work, as well as the drafting of the document, had to be accomplished in less than a week.
- If on the one hand the language groups were a source of richness, on the other hand the failure to group the participants according to their geographical areas or according to their belonging to a specific group (movements, consecrated life, educators, representatives of schools and universities, non-believers or of other religions, etc.) meant that issues or concerns of certain groups had little relevance in the final documents.
- It would have been possible to express the specific need of a particular context had the young people had a space to be grouped according to the different geographical areas

(America, Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania). Likewise, it would have been possible to express one or more concerns that society raises when it comes to the reality of young people, had the group representing other religions and non-believers, those of the world of art and work, the Consecrated young religious and seminarians were able to have an explicit voice.



GUIDE 3 for the SHARING IN THE EDUCATING COMMUNITY

“We are called to identify concrete ways to fulfill an educational and evangelical presences in tune with our Salesian identity and the expectations of young people. The rapid change that marks our era necessitates walking Gospel paths, faithful to the Salesian charism - that is faithful to the young and ready to continually investigate the signs of the times” (Acts General Chapter XXIII, n.9).

- 1- On what aspects should we still work in youth ministry to be faithful to young people? And to live, work, evangelize with young people, in our context?
 - 2- Which wounds affect the young people of our context more? What are their dreams?
 - 3- How can new generations of FMA be trained in active listening and accompaniment in our context?
 - 4- Which aspects of reality and their life would have emphasized the young people of our continent? Why?
- 

A “SELFIE” TAKEN BY YOUNG PEOPLE

From the Final Document of the Pre-Synodal Meeting (FD), we can gather some ideas on how young people perceive themselves in today's reality. They seem, at times, contrasting because of the diversity of the contexts, the experiences, the stories, the cultures, etc. Here are some ideas for this "selfie":

Young people who are in search

- Young people seek identity by remaining rooted within their family traditions and striving to stay true to the way they were raised (FD n.1).
- Young people move away from their family traditions, hoping to be more “original” than what they see as “stuck in the past” and “old fashioned” (FD n.1).
- Young people appreciate groups, associations and movements because their identity is also shaped by such interactions and membership (FD n.1).
- Young people have a passion for “the fire” of contemporary and charismatic movements that focus on the Holy Spirit (FD n.15).

Young people who are suffering

- Young people suffer the pressures of social exclusion and the pressure to shed their cultural identity and assimilate to the dominant culture (FD n.1).
- Young people are full of hope despite the many wars and intermittent outbreaks of violence (FD n.3).
- Young people seek the opportunity to work towards building a better world (FD n.3).
- Young people are forced to emigrate in order to find a better economic and environmental situation (FD n.1).
- Young people have to migrate in order to find a good place to work (FD n.5)
- Young people due to economic instability abandon family and culture (FD n.5).

Young people who are dreaming

- Young people, in many Western countries, have dreams centered on personal development and self-realization (FD n.3).
- Young people dream of safety, stability, fulfillment, and of a better life for their families (FD n.3)
- Young people are especially attracted to the “Western myth”, as depicted through media (FD n.3).

Young people who are struggling

- Young people find it hard to make long-term decisions (FD n.3).
- Young people who consider themselves “spiritual but not religious” and who relate to God solely on a personal level (FD n.7).
- Young people strongly want to know Jesus, yet often struggle to realize that He alone is the source of true self-discovery (FD n.5).

Young people who are distant

- Young people who look for a peaceful life end up dedicating themselves to alternative philosophies or experiences (FD n.1).
- Young people with parallel lives: often they tend to separate their behavior into online and offline environments (FD n.4).
- Young people's loss of identity linked to a misrepresentation of the person, a virtual construction of personality and the loss of grounded social presence (FD n.4).

- Young people are carried away by the culture and dictatorship of appearances and suffer loss of concentration linked to fragmentation (FD n.4).
- Young people who are influenced by digital spaces are blinded to the vulnerability of another human being and are prevented from self-reflection (FD n.4).
- Young people's faith has become private rather than communal (FD n.7).
- Young people infrequently seek the answers to life's meaning in the context of faith and (FD n.5).

Young people who are disillusioned

- Young people, having lost trust in institutions, have become disaffiliated with organized religion and would not see themselves as "religious." However, young people are open to the spiritual (FD n.5).

Young people who are digital natives

- Technology is a permanent part of young people's life. Social media is a significant part of their identity and way of life (FD n.4).
- Young people are more receptive to a "literature of life" than an abstract theological discourse (FD n.5).
- Young people consider the culture of openness as extremely healthy (FD n.15).

Young people who are committed

- Young people who are deeply vested in and concerned about topics such as sexuality, addiction, failed marriages, broken families as well as larger-scale social issues such as organized crime, human trafficking, violence, corruption, exploitation, femicide, all forms of persecution and the degradation of our natural environment (FD n. 1).
- Young people who respect others' thoughts and freedom of expression (FD n.2).
- Restless young people who try to make sense of a very complicated and diverse world (FD N°2).
- Young people who share the same innate desire for the higher ideals: peace, love, trust, equity, freedom and justice and who seek to engage with and address the social justice issues of our time (FD n.3)
- Young people who are aware of being the primary ambassadors of the faith to their peers (FD n.7).
- Young people have a passion for political, civil and humanitarian activities (FD n.12).
- Young people who desire for social outreach and evangelization to people struggling with illnesses and addictions (FD n.14).
- Young people drawn towards silence, meditation, traditional liturgies, contemplative prayer and Eucharistic Adoration (FD n.15).
- Young people, digital natives, who wish to commit themselves with the Church in evangelizing through the social media and online multimedia (FD n.15).
- Young people who allow themselves to be challenged by the lives of the Saints, by their paths to holiness and fulfillment (FD n.15).



GUIDE 4 for the SHARING IN THE EDUCATING COMMUNITY

“In different contexts, it is the young [...] who stand in the “periphery”. [...] The different forms of poverty affecting young people challenge us in our presences and in our choices, in our creativity and in our formation. These poverties call us to become involved in seizing opportunities for development and education, even in situations of weakness and insecurity. In this sense the young people on the margins urge us on in our desire for transformation and the ability to recognize the new frontiers of youth where God speaks to us and awaits us” (Acts General chapter XXIII, n.30).

1- Concretely, as an Educating Community, from which youth periphery of our context have we been urged to act? Were we capable of innovation? What keeps us from going to these new youth frontiers?

2- What would we like to add and what would we remove from the text "A selfie taken by young people" so that it could "mirror" our youth reality?

3- What would we say in another way?

4- How does this "presentation" of young people challenge us in the journey of pastoral conversion?



THE CHURCH THAT THE YOUTH OF TODAY DREAM OF

In the Pre-Synodal Meeting, the young people clearly expressed the need of finding, in their journey, a Church (a Christian institution and a community) and adults who are true guides and facilitators. Through a cross-reading, we offer you some ideas on the profile of an adult-educator and of the Church which emanate from the Final Document of the Pre-Synodal Meeting with Young People.

Profile of an adult-educator

Here are some of the characteristics of the adult-educators as gathered from the Final Document. To find such educators is what young people need (FD n. 1).

→ Their being

Young people need adult-educators who ...

- are welcoming, merciful and tenderness personified (FD n.1)
- are naturally joyful, attractive, coherent and authentic models (FD n.1 & n.7)
- acknowledge they are human beings who make mistakes: not perfect people but forgiven sinners (FD n. 10)

→ Their relationship with God

Young people need adult-educators who ...

- are authentic witnesses - men and women who vibrantly express their faith and their relationship with Jesus (FD n. 5)
- are capable of encouraging others to approach, meet, and fall in love with Jesus themselves (FD n. 5)

→ Their being with others

Young people need adult-educators who ...

- are able to create open communities where the contribution of young people is valued (FD n. 1)
- believe wholeheartedly in a young person's ability to participate actively in the life of the Church (FD n. 10)
- take young people seriously with their needs and desires (FD n. 15)
- do not lead young people as passive followers, but walk alongside them, allowing them to be active participants in the journey (FD n. 10)

→ What they do

Young people need adult-educators who...

- work in favor of the family which is recognized by the young people as a privileged place for the construction and development of their personality (FD n.1)
- help young people to pursue their vocation and therefore promote a culture of vocation (FD n. 3)
- in solidarity with young people who are living in unstable and vulnerable regions of the world, committed to justice, in fighting to end war and corruption, in addressing climate change, social inequalities and security (FD n. 3)
- respect the freedom that comes with a young person's process of discernment and equip them with tools to do so well (FD n.10)
- are apostolically daring but detached: who nurture the seeds of faith in young people, without expecting to immediately see the fruits of the work of the Holy Spirit (FD n.10)

→ **Their style of communicating**

Young people need adult-educators who...

- are deeply reflective and are capable of giving a reason to their faith because the young people need rational and critical explanations to complex issues – simplistic answers do not suffice (FD n.1)
- speak in practical terms about controversial subjects such as homosexuality and gender issues, etc. (FD n.11)
- give space to the artistic expression of young people in evangelizing and as a means of evangelizing (FD n.12 and n.15)

To sum up, the adults, guides, and mentors the young people need are faithful Christians who are engaged with the Church and with the world; they constantly seek holiness; they are non-judgmental and caring; they actively listen to the needs of young people and respond with gentleness; they are deeply loving and self-aware; they acknowledge their limits and know the joys and sorrows of the spiritual journey (FD n.7 and n.10).

Profile of a Church which young people desire

In the Pre-Synodal Meeting, the young people have verbalized the Church they dream of. Although they are aware of their "being Church", they realize that there are styles that block the relationship between them and the Church (as institution and as community of faith).

→ **The Church's being and nature**

Young people dream of a Church who ...

- appreciates her roots and her treasures, who does not renounce being herself (FD n.1)
- loves everyone without exception (FD n. 1)
- not only holds fast to her teachings, amid unpopularity, but also proclaims them with greater depth (FD n.5)
- is a living testimony to what it teaches and witnesses to authenticity on the path to holiness (FD n. 7)
- speaks in practical terms about controversial subjects such as homosexuality and gender issues, etc. (FD n.11)
- knows how to present in a clear and attractive way what the Sacraments truly are for the life of a Christian (FD n. 14)

→ **The Church's way of relating**

Young people dream of a Church who ...

- is welcoming, merciful, tenderness personified (FD n.1)
- helps young people to find their vocation, in all of its senses (FD n. 3)
- is solicitous and sincere, admits its past and present wrongs, is not afraid to allow itself to be seen as vulnerable, is made up of persons who are capable of error and misunderstanding, but, with humility, knows how to ask for forgiveness (FD n. 7 and n. 11)
- eliminates indifference, judgment, and rejection. Unfortunately, many persons leave the Church due to these negative experiences (FD n.7)
- takes the young people seriously by giving them space for dialogue and exchange (FD n. 15)
- adopts a language which engages the customs and cultures of the young so that all people will have the opportunity to hear the message of the Gospel (FD n. 15)

- knows how to value more and more artistic expression in the field of evangelization through music, visual art, architecture, design etc. Young people especially respond to and enjoy being creative and expressive (FD n.15)

→ **The Church's way of organizing herself as an institution**

Young people dream of a Church who ...

- examines how it thinks of young people and commits itself for them, in order to be an effective, relevant and life-giving guide in the young people's journey (FD n.1)
- deepens its understanding of the role of women and values their unique contribution (FD n.9)
- lives pastoral conversion by involving young people in its decision-making processes and offering them leadership roles (FD n.12)
- prepares seminarians and religious men and women to have an even greater ability to accompany young leaders (FD n. 12)

→ **The Church's prophetic action**

Young people dream of a Church who ...

- addresses the widespread crisis of pornography, including online child abuse, as well as cyber-bullying and the toll these take on our humanity (FD n. 4)
- reinforces initiatives that fight against human trafficking and forced migration, as well as drug-trafficking (FD n. 14)
- is "mother" and therefore, supports, provides, assists the healing of her children who suffer under the weight of mental illness and physical disabilities (FD n.3)
- with authority, exerts pressure on governments so as to ensure social justice, peace and security for all (FD n. 3)
- meets the young people "in the periphery", because the place in which they wish to be met is the streets, where people of all kinds are found (FD n.13)
- is present in the schools and universities in a stronger and more effective way (FD n.13)
- is accessible also through social media as well as other digital spaces, to more easily and effectively offer information about the Church and its teachings, and to further the formation of the young person (FD n.13)



GUIDE 5 for the SHARING IN THE EDUCATING COMMUNITY

“In a culture that challenges institutions and in which the same authorities struggle to express their role in an effective and attractive way, [...] we feel the need to form ourselves to a type of leadership that is adapted to these times for a style of animation and government that is authoritative because it is consistent in word and action, able to facilitate involvement, fostering obedience to God’s plan and promoting co-responsibility in the mission” (Acts General Chapter XXIII, n.31).

- 1- How do the expectations of young people in the path of pastoral conversion challenge us?
- 2- Which aspects of the "Profile of the adult-educator" are more desired and necessary in our context? Why?
- 3- Similarly to the "dream of the Church" expressed by young people, we elaborate a text with our "dream of an Educating Community".

THE CRY-NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

On certain occasions when someone cries anxiously, we think that this person is in danger or is bearing a profound suffering ... his cry is, therefore, a language, a way of expressing an urgency, a request for help, a need. In this sense, we have read the Final Document of the Pre-Synodal Meeting and have identified some of the "cries" expressed by the young people who challenge us as educators, educators of young people.

- **The need of family**

- "Traditional family models in other places are in decline. This leads to young people suffering as well" (FD n.1).

- **The need of community and the need to belong**

- "A sense of belonging is a significant factor to the shaping of one's identity" (FD n.1).
- "A common dream across continents and oceans is the desire to find a place where the young person can feel that he or she belongs" (FD n.3).
- "Sometimes, parishes are no longer places of connection" (FD n.1).
- "We need to revitalize the sense of community that leads us to a sense of belonging" (FD n.3).
- "There is also a desire for strong communities in which young people share their struggles and testimonies with each other" (FD n. 12).
- "It is imperative that those who are already engaged are supported in the Church community so that they can be strengthened and inspired to evangelize the outside world" (FD n.13).

- **The need to find solid reasons and profound mentors**

- "We need rational and critical explanations to complex issues – simplistic answers do not suffice" (FD n. 1).
- "Sadly, not all of us believe sainthood is something achievable and that it is a path to happiness" (FD n. 3)
- "The term vocation is not very clear to many young people; hence there is need for greater understanding of the Christian vocation (the priesthood and religious life, lay ministry, marriage and family, role in society, etc.) and the universal call to holiness" (FD n. 8).
- "We ask that the Church continue to proclaim the [Truth] with the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (FD n.11).

- **The need to be protagonists and to be valued**

- "On many occasions, young people have difficulty finding a space in the Church where they can actively participate and assume a responsibility" (FD n. 7).
- "Young people interpret their experience of the Church as one where they are considered too young and inexperienced to lead or make decisions as they would only make mistakes" (FD n. 7).
- "There is a need for trust in young people to lead and to be protagonists of their own spiritual journey" (FD n. 7).

- **The need to seriously commit oneself to the common good**

- "They want to act as Catholics in the public sphere for the betterment of society as a whole" (FD n. 12).
- "The young people of the Church also looks outward" (FD n. 12).
- "Years of service within movements and charities give young people an experience of mission and a space to discern" (FD n. 15).

- **The need for security and peace**

- “We are afraid because in many of our countries there is social, political and economic instability” (FD n. 1).
- “We want a world of peace, one that harmonizes integral ecology with a sustainable global economy” (FD n. 3).
- “Racism at different levels affects young people in different parts of the world” (FD n. 2).

- **The need to find one’s true identity**

- “We want to preserve our cultural identity and avoid uniformity and a throwaway culture” (FD n. 2).

- **The need to hope and trust**

- “Young people wish to affirm the inherent dignity of work” (FD n. 3).
- “Sometimes, we end up discarding our dreams. We are too afraid, and some of us have stopped dreaming. This is seen in the many socio-economic pressures that can severely drain the sense of hope among young people. At times, we have not even had the opportunities to keep dreaming” (FD n. 3).

- **The need to communicate and to establish ties**

- “It is evident that young people around the world are obsessively consuming media products” (FD n. 4).
- “We should be met where we are – intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, socially and physically” (FD n. 13).

- **The need of integration, equality and to be valued**

- “What are the places where women can flourish within the Church and society?” (FD n. 5).
- “Some young women feel that there is a lack of leading female role models within the Church and they too wish to give their intellectual and professional gifts to the Church” (FD n. 12).
- “Another common perception that many young people have is an unclear role of women in the Church” (FD n. 7).
- “Just as Mary’s “yes” to God’s call is fundamental to the Christian experience, young women today need space to give their own “yes” to their vocation” (FD n. 9).

- **The need of authentic witnesses centered on Christ and the Gospel**

- “For some young people, the Church has developed a culture which focuses heavily on members engaging with the institutional aspect of herself, not the person of Christ” (FD n. 7).
- “Other young people view religious leaders as disconnected and more focused on administration than community-building” (FD n. 7).
- “Today’s young people are longing for an authentic Church... a transparent, welcoming, honest, inviting, communicative, accessible, joyful and interactive community” (FD n. 11).
- “The young have many questions about the faith, but desire answers which are not watered-down, or which utilize pre-fabricated formulations” (FD n. 11).

- **The need to experience the faith - celebrated and lived with joy**

- “Christians profess a living God, but some attend Masses or belong to communities which seem dead” (FD n. 7).
- “We want to be a joyful, enthusiastic and missionary presence within the Church” (FD n. 12).

- “We also strongly express a wish for a prominent creative voice. This creativity often finds itself in music, liturgy and the arts but, at the moment, this is an untapped potential, with the creative side of the Church often dominated by the older Church members” (FD n. 12).
- “We long for experiences that can deepen our relationship with Jesus in the real world. Initiatives that are successful offer us an experience of God” (FD n. 14).



GUIDE 6 for the SHARING IN THE EDUCATING COMMUNITY

“The one who is led by true inspiration, by seemingly impossible dreams, by a cause, a creed, an ideal, can easily find other dreamers who share a dream and wish to participate in making it a reality. The important thing for them is not an immediate plan but letting the dream lead them to the impossible” (Acts General Chapter XXIII, n.53).

- 1- On the path of pastoral conversion, how do these cry-needs of young people challenge us?
 - 2- What cries do young people express in our context? Through which behaviors do they make them known?
 - 3- Which processes are of priorities and demand to be developed by the Educating Community in our context?
- 

JOURNEYING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The young people present at the Pre-Synodal Meeting shared their reflection by highlighting some ideas which provoke us and lead us to analyze the processes underway in the Institute, especially in the Youth Ministry sector. Here are some of the "ideas for the journey":

- **Reinforce family ministry**
 - “The Church [...] needs to better support families and their formation because parents are the real educators of their children to the faith” (FD n. 1).
- **Create processes so as to reach out to those in the “margins”**
 - “For some, religion is now considered a private matter. Sometimes, we feel that the sacred appears to be something separated from our daily lives” (FD n. 1).

- **Develop educative itineraries which favor critical thinking, creativity, and autonomy**
 - “Often, our schools do not teach us to develop our critical thinking” (FD n. 1).
 - “Young Africans dream of a self-reliant local church, one that does not require aid that feeds into dependency, but one that is a life-giving contributor to its communities” (FD n. 3).
- **Act and create a ministry for migrants and refugees**
 - “Among young people there is still no binding consensus on the question of welcoming migrants and refugees, or on the issues which cause the phenomenon in the first place. This is despite the acknowledgement of the universal call to care for the dignity of every human person” (FD n. 2).
 - “The Church should reinforce initiatives that fight against human trafficking and forced migration” (FD n. 14).
- **Promote a social educative ministry which transforms the persons and the environment where they live, and which motivates their commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation**
 - “We seek the opportunity to work towards building a better world. In this regard, Catholic Social Teaching is a particularly informative tool for young Catholics who also want to pursue this vocation” (FD n. 3).
 - “The Church should also care for environmental issues, especially pollution” (FD n. 11).
 - “We also desire to see a Church that is empathetic and reaches out to those struggling on the margins, the persecuted and the poor” (FD n. 11).
 - “In all these aspects of Church life [the commitment in public sphere], young people wish to be accompanied and to be taken seriously as fully responsible members of the Church” (FD n. 12).
- **Educate and educate ourselves to accompany young people**
 - “Crucial moments for the development of our identity include: deciding our course of study, choosing our profession, deciding our beliefs, discovering our sexuality and making life-changing commitments” (FD n. 1).
 - “Sometimes, we feel excluded for being Christians in a social environment that is adverse to religion. We are aware that we need to encounter ourselves and others to build up profound bonds” (FD n. 2).
 - “Many young people, when asked the question “What is the meaning of your life?” do not know how to answer. They do not always make the connection between life and transcendence” (FD n. 5).
 - “There is a need for a simple and clear understanding of vocation to highlight the sense of call and mission, desire and aspiration, which makes it a concept more relatable to young people at this stage of their lives” (FD n. 8).
 - ““Vocation” has sometimes been presented as an abstract concept, perceived as too far out of the reach of the minds of many. Young people understand the general sense of bringing meaning to life and being alive for a purpose, but many do not know how to connect that to vocation as a gift and call from God” (FD n. 8).
 - “Many young people do not know how to intentionally go about the process of discernment; this is an opportunity for the Church to accompany them” (FD n. 9).
 - “All such mentors should benefit from being well-formed, and engage in ongoing formation” (FD n. 10).

- **Promote processes which make the young people evangelizers of other young people**
 - “There is still an opportunity for the Church to propose another “way” for young people to live their lives” (FD n. 2).
 - “Young people are deeply vested in and concerned about topics such as sexuality, addiction, failed marriages, broken families as well as larger-scale social issues such as organized crime, human trafficking, violence, corruption, exploitation, femicide, all forms of persecution and the degradation of our natural environment” (FD n. 1).
 - “We envision greater opportunities, of a society which is coherent and trusts us. We seek to be listened to and to not merely be spectators in society but active participants” (FD n. 3).
 - “Go where the young people naturally socialize: bars, coffee shops, parks, gyms, stadiums and any other popular cultural centers. Consideration should also be given to less accessible spaces, like in the military, the workplace and rural areas. As well as these environments, we also need the light of faith in more difficult places such as orphanages, hospitals, marginal neighborhoods, war-torn regions, prisons, rehabilitation centers and red-light districts” (FD n. 13).
- **Think and come up with processes which form the conscience of digital natives**
 - “It is necessary to offer formation to young people on how to live their digital lives. Online relationships can become inhuman” (FD n. 4).
 - “Despite living in a hyper-connected world, communication among young people remains limited to those who are similar to them. There is a lack of spaces and opportunities to encounter difference” (FD n. 4).
 - “Mass media culture still exercises a lot of influence over young people’s lives and ideals” (FD n. 4).
 - “Problems like pornography distort a young person’s perception of human sexuality. Technology used this way creates a delusional parallel reality that ignores human dignity” (FD n. 4).
- **Promote formative itineraries and group experiences through which the young people can deepen their faith, read their experiences, and balance their lives. A ministry which is not limited to great events**
 - “We need young leadership programs for the formation and continued development of young leaders” (FD n. 12).
 - “One way to reconcile the confusions that young people have regarding who Jesus is involves a return to Scripture” (FD n. 6).
 - “Spending time in silence, introspection and prayer, as well as reading the Scriptures and deepening self-knowledge are opportunities very few young people exercise. There is a need for a better introduction to these areas” (FD n. 9).
 - “We respond to well-organized, larger-scale events, but also hold that not all events need to be of this scale. Small, local groups where we can express questions and share in Christian fellowship are also paramount to maintaining the faith” (FD n. 14).
- **Accompany processes which help us as Church and local community to give true space to women and to the marginalized persons**
 - “Today, there is a general problem in society in that women are still not given an equal place” (FD n. 5).
 - “It would be helpful for young people if the Church not only clearly stated the role of women, but also helped young people to explore and understand it more clearly” (FD n. 7).



GUIDE 7 for the SHARING IN THE EDUCATING COMMUNITY

“The profound renewal of how we understand love of neighbor [...] calls into question our communities and the educational programs that they offer. The social dimension of evangelization, indicated explicitly in Evangelii Gaudium, challenges our entire mission and opens new areas of attention to the poorest young people. A seed of prophecy that is not yet fully developed is planted in the soil of the charism. In an unprecedented time, as we face the future, boldness is an act of love” (Acts General Chapter XXIII, n.68).

1. "Boldness is an act of love towards the future": What do we feel and what do we imagine when we say this sentence?
2. After reading the text "Walking with the young", let us ask ourselves: which of these processes have been planned and are already taking place at the local or provincial level?
3. Which processes would be good to strengthen in our context?
4. What other processes are necessary for our reality? Why?

LET US DO SOMETHING CREATIVELY

“Conversation pushes us first to get out of our mediocrity, living in an authentic and credible way, so as to be a prophecy for the world. It urges us to act boldly, docile to the Holy Spirit: the brave person invents, risks, and is not paralyzed by fear, but starts innovating and illuminates the future” (Acts General Chapter XXIII, n.53).²

We invite you to share in a creative way the reflection and the work carried out by the Educating Community using the methodology “*Design for Change*”.³



WE FEEL

Starting from what the young have told us

- *Let's dialogue with others:* how do I feel? What preoccupies me or worries me personally or in the community?
- *Let's try to understand:* starting from the previous answers, we organize the information by themes (focus).
- *Let's get a consensus:* we make a summary and we choose, with the consent of everyone, a focus that will be "translated" as a challenge or commitment.



WE IMAGINE

To go beyond the challenge or commitment identified

- We propose many ideas: thinking of creating a great impact that produces a lasting change, we are looking for solutions.
- We combine and improve the ideas: we choose among the best ideas, the one we find most appropriate.
- We plan an attainable solution.
- We concretize the proposed change.
- We draw an action plan.



WE DO

Let's implement together the project solution

- We organize the action plan: lines of action, resources, strategies, time frame, tasks, responsibilities.
- We make a concrete commitment: to develop the idea and apply it by working in the community, to give life to the idea, to experience it personally and in the Educating Community, step by step.

² Cf. *Evangelii gaudium* N. 30 e 33.

³ Cf <http://www.dfeworld.com>



WE SHARE

Communicating is a way of inviting others to change the world

- Send your project of change to the other Educating Communities of your Province and to the Interprovincial Conference to which you belong.
- Celebrate and give importance to this experience in your local or provincial context.
- Document the experience by making a video or through another medium of communication, where you tell about your experience, and finally, send the documentation to the Youth Ministry Sector in Rome.



WE VERIFY AND WE MAKE IT HAPPEN

It is time to reflect on what has been achieved for real learning springs from reflection.

It is about verifying what you have experienced and making it evolve in situations that the Educating Community lives.

CONCLUSION

The Pre-Synodal Meeting was truly a moment of grace and of openness for the whole Church. Not so much for the fact that it gathered many young people but above all for its attitude of unconditional listening to them: this seems to be an unprecedented page in the history of the Church.

Pope Francis was the first clear example of what it means to dialogue when he invited the young people to speak without filters. From the very start, there was this desire to welcome the thought, experiences, and proposals of young people. And the young people, assuming the task entrusted to them with a sense of responsibility, truly worked and produced a document addressed to the Bishops who will participate in the next Synod 2018. This Final Document is a narration of life and is a passionate appeal to join forces so as to rejuvenate the Church and to bring to all the joy of the Gospel.

The one who has experienced this "Pentecost" cannot remain silent; one shares it and allows oneself to be transformed by it. We, too, as an Educating Community, welcome the Message of the young people, and we let ourselves be challenged by their requests, their dreams, and their needs. With them we would like to build a "Church - family", a Church that welcomes and sends, that commits itself seriously and that believes in communion and in the respect of diversity.

**"They say that when Cicero had finished speaking,
the public thought: "How well he spoke!"
Instead, when Demosthenes finished speaking,
the people stood up and said:
"Let's get this done!"**

Umberto Vanna

**Dear Young People,
thank you for your courage...
and now, together "let's get this done!"**