



SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM

Vatican City, 18 October 2013

Prot. N° 13123

Your Excellency,

As Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, recently appointed by His Holiness, Pope Francis, I am pleased to write you in order to greet you and express my joy at being able to work here. Throughout its 50 years of existence, the Synod has endeavoured to fulfil its mission of being an instrument of communion through which the collegiality desired by the Second Vatican Council is expressed and realized.

The synodal reality is manifested with the most effective participation of the world episcopate under the governance of the Holy Father, who wishes to strengthen it for a better exercise of collegiality.

After the recent meeting of the Ordinary Council of the Synod, the Holy Father, who presided over it, decided to convene an Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops next year, from 5 to 19 October, on the theme: *Pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization*.

During this meeting, the Members of the Council drafted the *Preparatory Document*, which you will find enclosed.

I would be most grateful if you would distribute the *Document* to the Dioceses, and ask them to share it immediately as widely as possible to deaneries and parishes so that input from local sources can be received regarding the themes and responses to the questionnaire, as well as any helpful statistics, for the preparation of the *Instrumentum laboris*.

Since the time available is short, I would appreciate if you would follow the most brief and practical institutional process so that it would be possible to have a synthesis of the responses collected sent to this Secretariat by the end of January.

The Council of the Secretariat will meet during the month of February to analyse the responses which have been sent in from the Episcopal Conferences and other Entities contacted, in order to draft the *Instrumentum laboris*, which will later include further input for the celebration of the Synod.

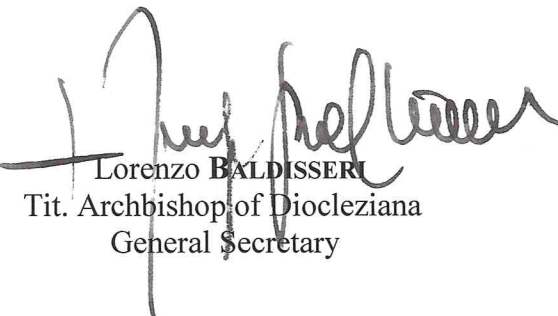
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H. Exc. Most. Rev. Paul-André **DUROCHER**
Archbishop of Gatineau
Conférence des Évêques Catholiques du Canada
CANADA

It is the expressed will of the Holy Father that this Extraordinary Assembly be the first stage, which is to be followed by a second one, namely, the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in 2015, marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Synod.

Trusting in the special attention you will give to what I have written regarding the forthcoming Extraordinary Synod, I take this opportunity to thank you and to express my best wishes.

Sincerely in Christ,



Lorenzo BALDISSERI
Tit. Archbishop of Diocleziana
General Secretary

