



October 11, 2014

To all striving for the renewal of our Church -

## **Synod Process being used by Pope Francis**

Some of us have stayed on in Rome through the closure of the Synod to communicate with journalists and bishops. Tom Reese, the Jesuit who writes for NCR, shared his insights about the process that Pope Francis will be using in making decisions during the 2015 Synod. As he explained, the Pope wants to introduce the bishops to collegiality and collaboration (new skills for them!) and toward that end, he wants the bishops to first open dialogue with their people and then discuss critical family-focused issues among themselves. From those meetings, he wants them to define their position in a proposal to the Pope, called the *relatio*, that will be the basis for the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the 2015 Synod. Of course, as we know, only a few bishops are following this process but it is gradually beginning to spread among the others.

## **Drafting Committee to write the "*relatio*"**

We've learned that six additional prelates have now been appointed by Francis to join with Cardinal Peter Erdo, the primary drafter, to help write the "*relatio*," the summary of the first week's dialogue of the Synod, and it will be released Monday. Interesting as yet another Francis strategic move as the majority appear to be supporters of the pope's expressed desire for using mercy to resolve some of the controversial issues (such as married and divorced receiving communion and easing the annulment process)! This document then will serve to define the issues that will be foundational in all future interchanges.

This drafting team is composed of the following:

1. Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture (*known to be open-minded and to whom we have hand-delivered our position papers and summary of our surveys*).
2. Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, D.C.
3. Archbishop Victor Manuel Fernandez, rector of the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina and one of the pope's top theological advisors. (*Also known to be open-minded*)
4. Archbishop Carlos Aguiar Retes of Mexico, president of CELAM, the Latin American bishops' council.

5. Archbishop Peter Kang U-Il of South Korea.
  6. Father Adolfo Nicolás Pachón of Spain, superior general of the Jesuit order.
- All current indications are that there is positive movement in the direction leading to some reform. The Spirit is working overtime!

## Continue to follow our blog

Janet Hauter continues to keep up our blog with [day by day reports](#) on our Rome Adventure. Go there to read about our challenges and successes and to see photos posted.

## Need your help contacting bishops and journalists

In order to make contact with people here in Rome, we could use your help. We need you to reach out to anyone attending the Synod (1) with whom you may have a personal relationship or, if not, (2) your bishop for whom you may have an email or phone number. If anyone has connect information regarding the drafting team, we would especially like to get the reform movement message to them. The email below is a model for you to use that Carol Harris (Louisville, Kentucky) created in her outreach to Bishop Kurtz, the president of the U.S. Bishops' Conference.

Dear Archbishop Kurtz,

As the first week of the Synod on the Family draws to a close, I wanted to let you know I have been watching and listening for any news. But, more importantly, I have continued to hold you, Pope Francis and the other Cardinals and Bishops, as well as our entire Church family in prayer, asking the Spirit to move in and through us all.

I have been asked to extend an invitation to you from Rene Reid, the director of Catholic Church Reform International. She is in Rome with 2 other member of CCRI: Janet Hauter with American Catholic Council and Catholic Organizations for Renewal in the U.S., and Keith Brennan representing the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests. They are eager to meet with you anytime at your convenience. Rene's cell phone number is: [+775-772-1210](tel:+775-772-1210). Please try to make time for them!

Below please find the link for the Summary Report of the work of the past year:

<http://www.catholicchurchreform.com/documents/SummaryReportofourRegionalGatheringsandSurveysfromFamiliesworldwide.pdf>

Blessings and peace,

## The Reform Movement Continues to receive good Press Coverage

There are early signs that the reform movement message is beginning to be used in the language of the Synod dialogue. Here are the media reports that have come out to date on the Reform Movement and our Forum in Rome:

A [Hong Kong online newspaper](#) is following CCRI through Janet's blog (scroll part way down page), Fr John Wotherspoon OMI, an Aussie priest working in Hong Kong as a prison chaplain, October 9, 2014.

[Robert Mickens' Address to the CCRI delegates in Rome](#), Catholica, Brian Coyne, Australia, October 9, 2014

[Suggestions for updating Catholic Thinking on Listening to the Sensus Fidelium](#), Catholica, Brian Coyne, Australia, October 8, 2014

[Where is the Democracy at the Synod on the Family](#), NPR, Maureen Fiedler, October 6, 2014

[As CCRI raises our banner to ask for Families to have a Vote in Family Synods, we are surrounded by the gendarmes](#) from Future Church Oct. 5, 2014

[Reformers to Pope Francis: Don't wait for the Bishops](#), Crux, October 3, 2014

[CCRI invites all Reformers to come together to share their hopes for the Synod](#) from Future Church, October 3, 2014

[Catholic Church Reform's Alternate Gathering on the Family highlights lay vocation](#) by Joan Chittister, October 2, 2014

[Reform Group Rome Calls for Family Input in Synod](#) by Joshua McElwee, October 2, 2014

[Invited or Not, Here They Come](#), NCR, Joan Chittister, July 3, 2014



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