

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **INTERNATIONAL REFORM NETWORK CALLS FROM MORE SYNOD OPENNESS**

Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI), a network of groups and individuals in 65 countries committed to the renewal of the Catholic Church, is calling for more openness from the Synod of Bishops in its discussions on marriage and the family.

CCRI has recently written to Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, asking that the Vatican not only permit local Episcopal Conferences to make public the summaries of responses they prepare on Synod questionnaires, but actually encourage them to be more open.

Last year, when Cardinal Baldisseri sent a specially prepared Synod questionnaire to bishops across the world urging them to circulate it widely and get grass-roots feedback on the issues it raised, he also instructed that their summaries of the responses be kept secret.

Across the world almost all Episcopal Conferences and bishops acquiesced to the ban, with the notable exceptions of the German, Swiss, and Japanese Conferences and a few individual bishops, who decided that openness was the proper course and published their summaries. "The ban reinforced the impression that the Vatican still does not understand the importance of transparency," said Rene Reid, CCRI convenor, "Nor is it in keeping with Pope Francis's call for openness and involvement of all the People of God."

As preparations get under way for the Ordinary General Assembly in October 2015, the Catholic faithful are again to be asked to reflect, this time on the contents of the 62-paragraph *Relatio Synodi* (Synod Report), and to provide feedback. In a sign that Pope Francis understands the need for openness, he instructed that the voting results on each of the *Relatio's* paragraph be appended to the document. But CCRI is asking for more.

When the grass-roots reflections on the *Relatio* have been gathered and summarized, CCRI wants every Episcopal Conference to be free, indeed encouraged, to make their summaries public and widely available.

Further, prior to the commencement of the new round of reflections, CCRI has also asked Cardinal Baldisseri to allow every Episcopal Conference to publish and disseminate the summaries of responses to the 2013 questionnaire. Those summaries could greatly assist the faithful in every local church to develop and clarify their reflections on the issues which the Synod is about to ask of them.

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