



# Catholic Church Reform Int'l.

A global network seeking renewal of the Church

September 29, 2014

Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri  
Secretary General for the Synod of Bishops  
Palazzo del Bramante,  
Via della Conciliazione, 34  
00193 Roma, Italy

**VIA EXPRESS AND ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Dear Cardinal Baldisseri,

Greetings, and best wishes for the Synod on the Family!

This is the last of our letters a) inviting you to our Forum on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and b) asking for your assistance. An earlier letter included our reflections and hopes for change, which we again attach. This last letter also includes an interim report on regional dialogues and a survey based on these reflections. A final report will be ready for the Synod which is to meet a year from now.

We are joyful at the prospects for evangelization and new life for the Church that we love. Much of that joy, quite frankly, is in response to the inspiration provided by Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* and in his emphasis upon “walking with” those who are ‘other’ in our midst. These inspirations touch something deep in the human spirit, and give us hope to face the struggles ahead. We are mindful that this is only the beginning of a process. We appreciate that our hopes for Church policies that treat all families with greater love and justice may not be fully realized by the proposals coming out of the forthcoming Synod, or in the decisions made by the regular Synod next year.

But the emphasis of Pope Francis upon mercy opens up possibilities for real progress for families who are suffering from lack of sacramental support from the Church and who need to be welcomed into reconciliation.

We are determined to act in support of these possibilities for a more loving and more just Church. Our particular concern is to expand participation of the faithful in the life and decisions of the Church. The Synod on the Family is an immediate opportunity to expand that participation to include the voices of the very families whose suffering prompted Pope Francis to call the Synod in the first place. While we are disappointed that no such suffering families will be at the Synod itself we are consoled by their inclusion in the survey issued by your office a year ago. That initiative has spawned a number of additional surveys and efforts – including our own -- to dialogue about the challenges facing Church policies and teachings regarding the family.

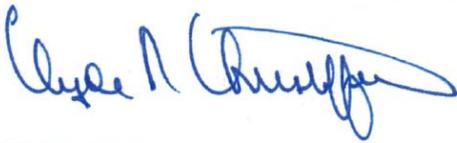
Please feel free to join us at our Forum on the Family in Rome on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you or a member of your staff can be with us at the Caravita we would be honored. We have worked long and hard in preparation for this Forum. An abbreviated copy of our program schedule is attached.

We believe you will find the program helpful. We have taken great care to assemble the results of dialogues and surveys from our worldwide network, which includes individuals and over a hundred organizations in more than sixty countries. We will showcase the attached interim compilation of survey results at our Forum and in the packet of materials being prepared for the Forum. We hope the unique demographic breadth and perspective of the survey may also make the packet useful to you and to those attending the Synod.

While we have attempted to distribute the attached reflections and interim survey results directly to many of those who are attending the Synod, your assistance toward that end would be appreciated. The attached PDF file may be adequate. If not we will be happy to deliver as many copies as you desire to a staff member at a time and place of your choosing on Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, or Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.

We pray for you and for the guidance of the Spirit so that the members of the Synod will be overcome with the joy of the Gospel to find a way forward for families.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rene Reid", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

For the Synod Liaison Committee

On behalf of Catholic Church Reform International

## **Forum on the Family: Listening to the Faithful**

October 2-3, 2014

***Oratory of San Francesco Saverio del Caravita  
Via del Caravita, 7, 00186 Roma, Italy***

### **Thursday, October 2, 2014**

9:00 – 9:45 AM	Arrivals, informal conversation
9:45 – 10:00	Introduction and opening prayer
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome from Sr. Joan Chittister (by video)
10:10 – 10:30	John Buggy: our recommendations to the Synod Where we began and where we're going next
10:30 – 11:15	Robert Mickens, How to Negotiate our Way through the Vatican Bureaucracy
11:15 – 11:30	Questions and comments from the audience
11:30 – 11:45	short break
11:45 – 12:15	Marilyn Hatton: The importance of women's role in decision-making in the Church within the context of <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>
12:15 – 12:30 PM	Questions and comments from the audience
12:30 – 2:00	Lunch break
2:00 – 2:15	Convening – Rene Reid
2:15 – 3:00	Paul Collins, What can we tell about this synod from what has happened in past synods?
3:00 -- 3:15	Questions and comments from the audience
3:15 -- 3:30	short break
3:30 -- 4:15	Sr. Mary John Mananzan Developing a non-patriarchal form of family relationships
4:30	Press Conference with Q & A from press
5:00	Wine and cheese reception

### **Friday, October 3, 2014**

9:00 AM	Gathering Welcome
9:30 – 10:45	Colloquium with numerous reform groups: "What are their hopes for the Synod?" "What are the next steps for us?"
10:45 – 11:00	short break
11:00	Questions and discussion from all participants
12:30 – 2:00 PM	Lunch
2:00	Breakout sessions: clarify mandate to be delivered to the Synod
3:00	Janet Hauter, Presentation on World Meeting of Families 2015, "People's Synod" 2017
3:45	Liturgy (Fr. Keith Brennan, celebrant)
5:00	Wine and cheese reception