



February 10, 2015

To reform-minded Catholics throughout the world:

We ask that you join with us in helping spread the press release below to your local media - both Catholic and secular. There are petitions currently being circulated by conservative groups targeting 2 million signatures delivering their message to Pope Francis asking him to "Save the Family:"

Why sign? Because dissident "Catholic" groups, backed up by the big liberal media, are pressuring the Church to change its teaching on marriage and family at the next Synod on the Family in Rome. In fact, they are bombarding the Pope right now with messages to "change, change, change" the Church. For God and the future of the family:

[Sign this Prayerful Petition to Pope Francis -- Save the Family](#)

Your petition will be hand-delivered at the Vatican by a delegation of concerned Catholic leaders before the next Synod begins.

Please help us counter this attempt to prevent any reform of our Church. Pass this press release onto your media contacts and local journalists. Let us join together to take a stand in support of Pope Francis who clearly wants to create a more just, inclusive, and compassionate church.

## Message for the Media

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Catholic Reform Network says Synod questionnaire was designed to fail ... and is failing**

Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI) has written an Open Letter to Pope Francis telling him that the 46-question survey requiring all essay-type answers devised by the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops to gather feedback for the October 2015 Synod on the Family, is totally unworkable and not being promoted on most of the worldwide diocesan websites.

"We know it is an unworkable document," said Peter Wilkinson, CCRI coordinator from Australia, "because our research shows that, in the nine weeks it has been out there, few

bishops and dioceses anywhere in the world are using it. The complex survey is not only doomed to fail, but sadly, appears to have been designed to fail."

"Not only will it not gather the voices of Catholic couples and families, but it will drive them away," said Rene Reid, CCRI co-founding director. "Whether it is intentional or not, this questionnaire is counterproductive, threatens to thwart the Pope's wishes, and could even endanger the effectiveness of the Synod itself."

Many bishops also want to hear the voices of Catholic couples and families, but now find themselves stymied by a Vatican tool unsuited to the task. It is overwhelming to even the most well-educated Catholic. Without the people's voices, those bishops elected to attend the October 2015 Assembly will have little to offer. "Pope Francis has made it clear that he does not want them turning up with formulations for pastoral care based simply on the application of doctrine or their own interpretation of what their people need," Virginia Saldanha, CCRI coordinator from India, pointed out. "That would defy the concluding directives of the October 2014 Assembly."

But the voices should not be only those of practicing Catholics. "Many Catholics no longer attend Mass," said Ms. Reid, "often precisely because of Church teachings, attitudes, and pastoral practices - the very issues that should be on the Synod's agenda. Pope Francis wants the bishops to find concrete solutions to the innumerable challenges that families face. The *Lineamenta* questionnaire not only shuts down the Faithful but completely leaves out those who are no longer practicing Catholics. If the Synod wants to 'look at the reality of the family today in all its complexities' as stated as its objective," said Ms. Reid, "there has to be a simplified, user-friendly means to gather the reflections of ordinary Catholics."

Catholic Church Reform Int'l, a network which spans 65 countries and shares Pope Francis's vision for a church engaged in a communal search of discernment, is now looking to develop an alternative survey, an uncomplicated living poll which, the CCRI letter explains "will be an invitation to all the baptized to share with the Synod their lived experience of marriage and family: 'How have their marriage and family life benefited from the teachings of the Church, or how has it caused difficulties or harm?' ...They will be asked for suggestions for change. 'If you were once a participatory practicing Catholic but have left the Church, what caused you to leave, what would bring you back?'" Brendan Butler, CCRI coordinator from Ireland who is serving on the committee designing the poll said: "CCRI wants a survey instrument which will be a pastoral agent in itself, looking to support families still in the flock, those on the fringes who will leave if some reform is not forthcoming, and looking to show welcome to those who've strayed or felt driven away."

"Too long have we lay Faithful colluded in silence out of a mistaken sense of respect," said Robert Blair Kaiser, CCRI co-founder and author. "We need to be speaking out, reminding bishops of the need to respond to families in the context of a complex and changing environment. If the Church is to be a credible instrument of the Gospel, it must instigate structural change in the way it operates. One key element of that is ensuring that all the baptized have a proper say in the governance of the Church."

To read the full letter to Pope Francis, click

<http://www.catholicchurchreform.com/AlternativeLivingPoll.htm>.