



**Society of Mary
Marianists**

PREPARATION OF XXXVI GENERAL CHAPTER (JULY 2024)

**Consultation of All Communities,
open to the Marianist Family, collaborators, and volunteer friends**



INTRODUCTION



We are now just 17 months until the next General Chapter, which will take place from July 5 to 27, 2024. This document is intended for the preparatory period, to be conducted in a synodal mode, lasting from now until the Chapter itself. The document explains the process and provides elements for reflection.

1. A GENERAL CHAPTER FOCUSED ON YOUTH MINISTRY

The education and accompaniment, both humanly and religiously, of young people represent great challenges today, for our civil societies and for the Church.

The great changes in today's world have a particularly strong impact upon youth. Our societies are struggling to transmit their values to the younger generation by adapting them to modern times and in a language that is accessible to them.

The Society of Mary, and the entire Marianist Family, have a great educational tradition. Since its origins, the SM has been very active in this field, principally through a large number of school and university institutions, but also through other works in which part of the activity is related to formal or informal education (parishes, spiritual centers, social works, etc.). Our work in the field of education gives us an expertise but also a particularly pastoral responsibility in the face of the current needs of our youth.

Our communities are concerned with a large number of young people. Brothers are directly involved in the works. When that is not the case, an influence can still be exerted because of geographical proximity and contacts. In both cases, there are opportunities. How can we best respond?

In July 2022, the General Leadership Assembly decided to dedicate the XXXVI General Chapter (July 2024) to the theme of *Pastoral Ministry with and for Youth, in the Context of the Marianist Family*. The goal is to respond to this great challenge in a way that is consistent with our tradition. We want to be attentive in particular to what we can do **with** young people and not only **for** them. This is an attitude profoundly consonant with our tradition.

From the indications articulated by the General Leadership Assembly, **seven methodological choices** have been made:

- **To deepen this theme in dialogue with the Marianist Family.** In continuity with the advances of the XXXV General Chapter (2018): *In Mission with the Marianist Family*. The Marianist Family is the context in which we fully understand who we are. Our mission, including with young people, is carried out in this context. It is based on common objectives, and it benefits from common actions. The World Council of the Marianist Family has chosen as one of its quadrennial goals 2022-2025, "to strengthen youth and vocation ministry."¹
- **To prepare the General Chapter according to a synodal process open to the Marianist Family, to our collaborators, and to young people.**

All the communities of the Society of Mary are being consulted. They are asked to share the fruit of their reflection with the preparatory committee.

In particular, for Stages 1 and 2 of the consultation, we strongly encourage **opening the consultation** beyond our communities **to the Marianist Family** on the one hand, **and to our collaborators** (works, administration, etc.) on the other. This expansion is left to the initiative of the Unit Administrations and the communities. We are counting on their initiative in this regard. A great enrichment of the process can result from this.

Youth participate in Step 3 of the consultation, as described below.

In the spirit of the synodal process, the reflection is carried out according to the **method of Spiritual Conversation** (see below: "4. Preparation and Facilitation of Meetings" and Appendix 3).

As in any synod, the **process** of listening, walking, and reflecting together is an important part of the expected outcome. It opens the community to new forms of missionary presence and collaboration.

- **To build on the reflection already done by the October 2018 Synod of Bishops on Youth Ministry, Faith and Vocational Discernment.** We can benefit from the documents produced at that Synod: the Pre-Synod on Youth, meeting in Rome in March 2018; the final document (October 27, 2018); the Pope's exhortation, *Christus Vivit* (March 25,

¹ WCMF, *Goals 2022-2025*, "B-1". See <https://marianist.org/fr/elementor-761/world-council/world-council-statutes-objetsives/#objectives>.

2019). Other sources of reflection can be used locally, especially when the 2018 Synod documents do not exist in the local language.

- **To link this reflection with the one that is being carried out around the Global Education Pact**, whenever possible and desirable.
- **To involve the youth themselves in these reflections.** Take advantage of this preparation to talk with the young people themselves about their lives, their aspirations, or difficulties. To listen to their perception and their proposals concerning youth ministry and their availability to be actors with us. Let them propose new styles of Christian life and proclamation; dialogue with them. Challenge each other.
- **To draw on our Marianist educational heritage.** Our Founders have been active and creative in the field of formal and non-formal education. Our educational tradition benefits from more than two centuries of experience, especially in lay sodalities and educational works. In continuing that momentum, what choices and decisions do we feel provoked to make today? What does Blessed William Joseph have to say about this?
- **To place our reflection under the patronage of the Venerable Faustino and the future Servant of God Miguel Quiroga, SM.** Faustino, a Sodalist, reminds us that all young people are called to holiness. He reminds us of the importance of the support and guidance that educators provide on this journey. He is a witness to the influence of school and university education in the human and spiritual growth of young people.

Miguel, a young religious who was murdered in Colombia in 1994, shows the capacity of young people to commit themselves. He shows the importance of social works and non-formal education, as well as the privileged role of our young brothers in the human and religious accompaniment of young people.

2. WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE?

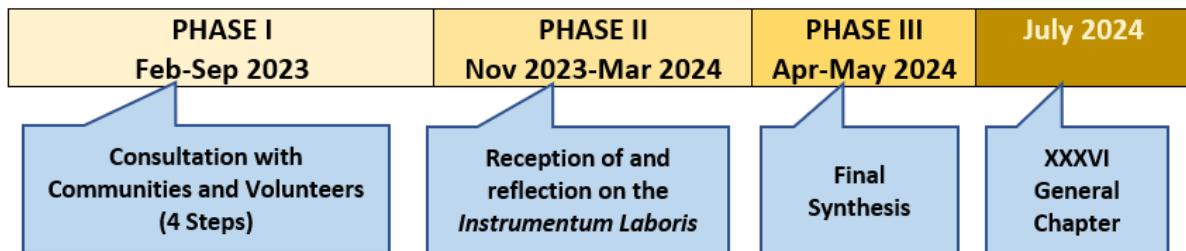
Which young people are we talking about? It is necessary to clarify our choices and our vocabulary, the latter varying from one language to another. The General Leadership Assembly, when consulted on this matter, wished to leave the age range open, including both adolescents and young adults, from 15 to 29 years of age. Nevertheless, here are some necessary clarifications, because of the diversity that exists among these different age groups.

- The GLA asked that a **common terminology** be adopted in conversation and used in reporting. So, for our purposes, the terms used and their referents are: *adolescents* (15-18 years); *young adults* (19-29 years); *youth* (across all ages, 15-29 years).
- As we begin our reflection and before sharing it, the religious/other participants will designate the **age group** that is the focus of their reflection: adolescents (15-18), young adults (19-29), or youth (15-29). If some of the reflections are for a different age group, that should be specified.
- Choosing a category on which to concentrate the reflection:
 - Some priority will be given to **young adults** (19-29 years) whenever possible, taking into account the next bullet point that may provoke another choice.

- In the Units where the **15-18-year-old pastoral ministry** is minimal or non-existent, we recommend that you consider choosing this category, reflecting on pastoral ministry with adolescents, since this serves as the basis for pastoral work with young adults. The Unit Council could give direction in this regard. In these communities/Units, it will nevertheless be useful to also express something about the development of young adult ministry (ages 19-29).

3. A JOURNEY IN THREE PHASES

The proposed course consists of **3 phases** of unequal duration. The SM religious participate in various ways in each of them.



PHASE 1 (February-September 2023): CONSULTATION with all the communities of the SM and with volunteers (Marianist Family, collaborators, and young people). It consists in **OBSERVING** the local situations of young people and our activity with them (steps 1-3) and proposing **ACTIONS** (step 4)².

This entire phase is done in four steps:

- Step 1: Who are the young people (their human and social situations)?
- Step 2: We and the youth.
- Step 3: Meeting(s) with the youth
- Step 4: Synthesis and proposals

October: SYNTHESIS OF all consultations (GA). Draft *Instrumentum Laboris*/Working Paper (**IL-1**).

PHASE 2 (November 2023 - March 2024): RECEPTION OF the *Instrumentum Laboris* (**IL-1**) and REACTIONS.

- Unit councils and capitulants, zonal conferences:
 - Review and reflect on IL-1 offering comments and modifications.
 - Proposals: amendments, additions, and prioritization.
- The Family Councils, other branches or collaborators are to be consulted.

² During this period, in May 2023, the official convocation of the General Chapter will take place, followed by the election of its delegates by each Unit.

PHASE 3 (April-May 2024): FINAL SYNTHESIS. Final drafting of the *IL* and then sending it to the capitulants.

4. PREPARATION AND ANIMATION OF THE MEETINGS DURING PHASE I

1. In preparation for each meeting, **each religious dedicates a time of reflection and study to the theme and the questions planned.** At each stage, documents are indicated to enable this preparation. An unprepared meeting remains superficial and bears little fruit.

In order for the meeting to run smoothly, **the facilitator and the secretary** must have fully understood the content, spirit, and method of the meeting.

2. **At least one meeting** of sufficient duration is devoted to each stage. If necessary and possible, another meeting can be held to further develop each step.

Each meeting begins with a prayer, which can be the *Adsumus* prayer, available in many languages (see *Appendix 1*). For a brief moment, we can also let the words of Christ resonate within us: "I have come that [all] may have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

For Step 4, the meeting will be conducted using the **Spiritual Conversation method** (see explanation in Appendix 3), which is adapted to a synodical process. This method is also recommended for steps 1 and 2. The objective is to avoid a purely intellectual discussion that leaves no room for a contemplative analysis of reality.

During this meeting, attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, each participant shares what seems to him or her to be most important regarding each of the themes proposed for the meeting, without going into all the details of each of the questions.

3. At each stage, the secretary, chosen by the participants, takes notes and then submits a written summary of the meeting ([HERE](#)). This contribution is structured according to the main themes indicated in green type below.



CONSULTATION



PHASE 1

(February - September 2023)

CONSULTATION OF COMMUNITIES

AND

OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY, OF OUR COLLABORATORS, OF YOUNG PEOPLE (3RD STAGE),
OF VOLUNTEERS



STEP 1

WHO ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE?

HUMAN, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS SITUATIONS

Objective:

To share and deepen our knowledge of youth. To reacquaint ourselves with their situations and to identify what concerns us or challenges us about their current condition.

Who are the young people?

In order to talk to today's youth, one has to know them. What do we know about them or what do we not know? What do we need to learn or to deepen our understanding about them?

The implementation of this first stage is based on the reflections of the religious and all the participants, drawing on their local experience, completed by the study of documents produced locally or at a continental or international level.

The young people we are talking about are those around us in our city, region, country. We give priority to those who are closest to us, without excluding those with whom we do not have direct contact, but who may be important to talk about in describing today's youth. In some cases, the lack of contact can be a challenge.

To prepare for the discussion, each religious should read and meditate on at least one of the documents listed. When none of these documents is available in the language of the religious, the Unit Council will see to it that one or more documents are provided to assist the brothers in their preliminary reflection.

Preliminary reflection of the brothers - proposed texts:

- *Christus Vivit* (2018) chap. III & V
(https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/fr/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html)
- The document of the pre-synodal meeting (Rome, 19-24 March 2018), §§ 1-5.
(<http://secretariat.synod.va/content/synod2018/fr/news/document-final-de-la-reunion-presynodale-des-jeunes--traduction-.html>)
- Possible complement: the *Final Document of the Synod. Youth, Faith, and Vocational Discernment* (October 27, 2018) (§§ 32-58)
(https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_fr.html)
- Other documents that may be available locally about the youth of the country.

Persons consulted: all the SM communities, members of the Marianist Family, and volunteer collaborators.

Members of the Marianist Family and collaborators may meet separately from the religious or with them.

If there are more than ten participants, it is preferable to divide the group.

Definition of the community/group's preferred age range³:

- Adolescents (15-18)
- Young adults (19-29)
- Youth (15-29)

³ This choice will normally be retained for all four stages for this group of participants.

Note for the secretary. The report of the reflection of the community/group, sent by the secretary, is structured according to the titles marked in small capitals at each stage. Here there are two sections: the human and social situation of the young people / the religious situation.

Methodology (reminder)

The community/group may choose to use the **Spiritual Conversation method**. See the explanation above (4.2) and the description of the three stages of Spiritual Conversation (Appendix 3).

QUESTIONS FOR THE MEETING

A. What is THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE?⁴

- Overall observations (if necessary)
- The **family**: contexts: relationships between parents and children, importance in their lives, ...
- **Relationships**:
 - between young people (times, places, types of relationships, importance)
 - with adults...
- **Communications**: forms and importance in their lives.
- **Education**:
 - level, accessibility, obstacles, ...
 - importance and role for their life of the places of education: school, university,
 - role of other non-formal educational entities...
- **Situation in society**:
 - vision of social life, expectations;
 - membership in associations: sports, culture, religion, volunteer work;
 - vision of politics;
 - vision of their profession and the world of work...
- **Difficulties** or **problems** they perceive as the most important in their lives.
- ...

B. RELIGIOUS SITUATION

- **Spiritual experience** (in general):
 - interiority, search for the meaning of life, construction of their personality...
 - means sought/used to cultivate it
- **Relationship with an institutional religion**
 - degree of belonging or identification with it, commitment, importance in their lives
- for **Catholics**:
 - way of living their faith and its importance in their lives;
 - vision of the Catholic Church, sense of belonging and commitment within it...
- what **helps** or **hinders** their religious experience?

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SENDING THE RESPONSE

After the completion of this step, the group secretary submits the result of the reflection by clicking [HERE](#). If the participants wish, he can submit his summary to them before sending.

⁴ These young people are those for whom we are responsible and those who are geographically close to us, even if we do not have direct contact with them. It is above all the young people of our region, in their diversity.



STEP 2

WE AND YOUTH

Objective: to observe our relationship with young people both from a human point of view and in terms of religious experience. To discern what we can learn from it as lessons, calls, confirmations, new commitments, ...

Texts proposed for the brothers' preliminary reflection:

- *Christus Vivit* (2018) chapters VII, VIII and IX (on school ministry: §§ 221-223 ; 247)
(https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/fr/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html)
- The document of the pre-synodal meeting (Rome, March 19-24, 2018), §§ 6-15 (on school ministry: § 13).
(<http://secretariat.synod.va/content/synod2018/fr/news/document-final-de-la-reunion-presynodale-des-jeunes--traduction-.html>)
- Possible complement: the *Final Document of the Synod. Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment* (October 27, 2018): §§ 91-103: accompaniment; §§ 128-164.
(https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_fr.html)
- Other documents available locally about the youth of the country.

Persons consulted / Definition of age range / Methodology: as in step 1 (see above).

QUESTIONS FOR THE MEETING

A. CONTACTS AND COLLABORATIONS (in both secular and religious fields)

- What are **our places and forms of contact**, personal or community/collective, with youth?
 - Which ones are the most life-giving?
 - Should any of these be expanded or added? modified or abandoned?
 - What welcoming attitudes should be developed?
- What are the **fundamental elements of our educational undertaking** (even if it is carried out by others in our name), its strengths and weaknesses? What should be developed?
- What are our experiences of **collaboration** or **co-responsibility with youth**?
- The GEP- **Global Educational Pact** (if our Unit/work in which we are involved is committed to this):
 - What existing achievements does it confirm and reinforce?
 - To what new calls does it provoke us? How to put them into practice?

B. PASTORAL MINISTRY WITH AND FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In what ways is faith offered to young people in the places where the community is active or under its responsibility?

- What are the most essential elements to give it the necessary momentum?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of what we offer?

In this proposed itinerary, **what is the place of:**

- the Word of God,
- the experience of prayer,
- the liturgy,
- fraternal life,
- service,
- personal accompaniment,
- discernment of personal vocation?
- ...
- What is the **level of responsibility of the youth** themselves in these activities?

C. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

- By **evaluating** what we are doing and considering the calls of the world, the Church, and the young people: what do we need to **improve**? should we **abandon** certain means that have become useless? should we **start** something new?

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SENDING THE ANSWER

After the completion of this step, the group secretary submits the result of the reflection by clicking [HERE](#). If the participants wish, he can send his summary to them before submitting it.



STEP 3

MEETING(S) WITH YOUTH

Objective. This meeting allows us to listen to the young people themselves about their identity, their searching, their faith, their relationships in general and with us, their wishes, ...

Each community discerns how to carry out **one or more meetings with some young people**, to listen to them talk about themselves and other young people. It is also possible to have meetings with individuals and then summarize those.

These youth must be primarily in the **age category** preferred by the community or Unit: adolescents (15-18), young adults (19-29), or youth (15-29).

They are **committed** young people, representative of the young people around us, convinced believers, searching or even distant from the Church. In countries where the Christian faith is in the minority, it is important to listen also to young people from other major religious faiths.

One of the religious of the community is **responsible for convoking** the meeting. One or more religious or lay persons can facilitate this meeting and even animate it. The organization should favor dialogue (place, time, ...), in a spirit of freedom, by including informal and fraternal moments.

At some point, it would be good to let the young people also ask questions of the religious.

The dialogue revolves around the following **four themes**. For each one, the facilitator can use the suggested questions or prepare others adapted to the characteristics of the youth present. It is important to explain to the young people why we are having this dialogue.

A secretary makes a report of the discussion, detailed enough to understand its content, and submits it as in the previous stages.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH

- **WHO ARE YOU?**
 - Family, studies, ...
 - What are your connections with Marianists (past and present)?
 - What are your dreams for yourself and the world you live in?
- **HOW IS THE FAITH/RELIGIOUS DIMENSION EXPRESSED IN YOUR LIFE?**
 - By what actions does it manifest itself and what are your commitments?
 - What has supported it or still supports it?
 - What weakens and hinders it?
 - In the experience of other young people, what has sustained their faith or slowed or hindered it?
- **HOW DO YOU FEEL WELCOMED IN THE CHURCH:** well, moderately, uncomfortable, excluded?
Can you explain why?
 - Are you involved in it? Do you have responsibilities? Do you have any wishes in this regard?
 - What about your friends?
 - What are your dreams for the Church?
- **WHAT SUPPORT HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM MARIANISTS** (and their collaborators), how have they supported your life or your faith?

- What should be pursued? Or what new proposals can you make?
- What kind of collaborations or experiences would be desirable, for you? for other young people?
- What are you willing to do to help other young people discover the Christian faith?
- Do you have an idea or a dream for the Marianists?
- Is there ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

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SENDING THE ANSWER

After the completion of this step, the group secretary submits the result of the reflection by clicking [HERE](#). He takes care to preserve the significant elements of the meeting.



STEP 4

SYNTHESIS AND PROPOSALS

Objective: to synthesize in each community the elements brought out by the first three stages and to arrive at concrete proposals for Pastoral Ministry with and for youth. The community speaks for itself, but it can also express ideas for its Unit, the Society of Mary, or the Marianist Family.

A. Preparatory work

Before the meeting, the members of the community review all the reflections made during the three previous steps.

1. They take note of **the new reflections that this experience has provoked in them**, as they review each of the steps and compare those reflections.
 - **1.1. YOUTH, WHAT THEY ARE:**
 - What we say
 - What they helped us discover
 - **1.2. WHAT WE DO WITH AND FOR THEM:**
 - What we say
 - What the youth suggested
 - **1.3.** What **CHANGES OR DEVELOPMENTS** do I/we feel called to?
2. They discuss the **CONCRETE PROPOSALS** arising from all of these reflections concerning *pastoral work with and for young people in the context of the Marianist Family*.
 - **2.1.** For the **SM; my Unit; my community**
 - **2.2.** in the **Marianist Family; with our collaborators**
 - **2.3.** with the **collaboration of the youth**

These reflections are made with our Marianist tradition in mind, the inspiration of our Founders and its development to the present day.

This will be the matter for the sharing done in community in this step 4.

B. Community Meeting

Using the **Spiritual Conversation method**, participants share:

1. the essential elements of **their thinking on the themes 1.1., 1.2. and 1.3.**
2. **CONCRETE PROPOSALS** (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3).

The community agrees on the concrete **proposals** (2) that it wishes to preserve and transmit. It indicates after each of them an order of urgency:

(A) = priority

(B) = important

(C) = desirable

The **secretary** of the meeting:

- (1) writes a **summary of the ideas shared**, highlighting those that have generated the most interest and unanimity. Ideas that are considered secondary are dropped.
- (2) transmits the **proposals**
by clicking [HERE](#).

Before sending it out, it may be important to review the minutes with the participants to ensure that they reflect their opinions.

Individual responses:

For this fourth step, if he thinks it appropriate and useful, a religious or another participant can send his own concluding reflections, separately from those of the community.

This should not be done, however, if the community has not already sent in its reflection.



THANK YOU

FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS REFLECTION!

APPENDIX 1

ADSUMUS, SANCTE SPIRITUS (Vatican II)

for an ecclesial assembly

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen.



*(The Adsumus prayer in 26 other languages:
<https://www.synod.va/en/resources/the-adsumus-prayer.html>)*

APPENDIX 2

THE SYNODAL SPIRIT



To live our approach in a synodal spirit, we can welcome these words from Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod (03/19/2022) and Pope Francis (10/03/2018)

Card. Mario Grech

It is well known that today's world is in urgent need of fraternity. Without realizing it, the world yearns to meet Jesus. But how do we make this encounter happen? We need to listen to the Spirit together with the whole People of God, so as to renew our faith and find new ways and languages to share the Gospel with our brothers and sisters. The synodal process that Pope Francis proposes to us has precisely this objective: to set out, together, in mutual listening, in sharing ideas and projects, to show the true face of the Church: a hospitable "house," with open doors, inhabited by the Lord and animated by fraternal relationships.

So that we do not fall into the risks highlighted by Pope Francis - that is, formalism, which reduces the Synod to an empty slogan; intellectualism, which makes the Synod a theoretical reflection on problems; and immobilism, nailing us to the security of our habits so that nothing changes - it is important to open our hearts and listen to what the Spirit suggests to the Churches (cf. Rev. 2:7). (...)

... two passages from the *Preparatory Document* ... can inspire and accompany us almost like a *Vademecum*.

"The ability to imagine a different future for the Church and her institutions, in keeping with the mission she has received, depends largely on the decision to initiate processes of listening, dialogue, and community discernment, in which each and every person can participate and contribute." (n. 9).

"We recall that the purpose of the Synod, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but "to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands" (n. 32).

Mario Card. GRECH

Pope Francis, Homily for the Opening of the Synod on Young People, *The Faith and Vocational Discernment* (3 October 2018)

“The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you” (*Jn 14:26*).

(...) we ask the Paraclete to help us preserve the memory of the Lord and rekindle in us his words that have made our hearts burn (cf. *Lk 24:32*). A Gospel ardour and passion which lead to an ardour and passion for Jesus. A memory that can rekindle and renew in us the *capacity to dream and to hope*. For we know that our young people will be capable of prophesy and vision to the extent that we, who are already adult or elderly, can dream and thus be infectious in sharing those dreams and hopes that we carry in our hearts (cf. *Joel 2:28*).

May the Spirit grant us the grace to be (...) anointed with the gift of dreaming and of hoping. We will then, in turn, be able to anoint our young people with the gift of prophecy and vision. May the Spirit give us the grace to be a memory that is diligent, living and effective, that does not allow itself from one generation to the next to be extinguished or crushed by the prophets of doom and misfortune, by our own shortcomings, mistakes and sins. Rather, may it be a memory capable of enkindling our hearts and of discerning the ways of the Spirit. With this attitude of docile listening to the voice of the Spirit, we have gathered (...).

Anointed by hope, let us begin a new [time of reflection]. One that can broaden our horizons, expand our hearts and transform those frames of mind that today paralyze, separate and alienate us from young people, leaving them exposed to stormy seas, orphans without a faith community that should sustain them, orphans devoid of a sense of direction and meaning in life (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 49).

Hope challenges us, moves us and shatters that conformism which says, “it’s always been done like this”. Hope asks us to get up and look directly into the eyes of young people and see their situations. This same hope asks us to make efforts to reverse situations of uncertainty, exclusion and violence, to which our young people are exposed.

Having been formed by so many choices taken in the past, young people now call us to join them in facing the present with greater commitment and to work against whatever prevents their lives from growing in a dignified way. They ask us and demand of us a creative dedication, a dynamism which is intelligent, enthusiastic and full of hope. They ask us *not to leave them alone* in the hands of so many peddlers of death who oppress their lives and darken their vision.

(...) we will try to listen to one another, in order to discern together what the Lord is asking of his Church. And this demands that we be really careful against succumbing to a self-preservation and self-centredness which gives importance to what is secondary yet makes secondary what is important. Love for the Gospel and for the people who have been entrusted to us, challenges us to broaden our horizons and not lose sight of the mission to which we are called. In this way we shall aim for an even greater good that will benefit all of us. Without this disposition, all of our efforts will be in vain. (...)

Dear brothers and sisters, let us entrust this time to the maternal protection of Our Lady. May she, the woman who listens and cherishes memories, accompany us in recognizing the signs of the Spirit, so that with a sense of urgency (cf. *Lk 1:39*), with our dreams and hopes, we may accompany and encourage our young people to always continue prophesying. (...)

APPENDIX 3

THE SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

A suitable method for group dialogue which resonates with the principles of synodality can be used. The Spiritual Conversation method promotes active participation, attentive listening, reflective speaking, and spiritual discernment.

Participants form groups of no more than 10 members.

This method takes, at least, about one hour and comprises **three rounds**.

1. In the first round, everyone takes an equal turn to share **the fruit of his or her prayer**, in relation to the reflection questions circulated beforehand. There is no discussion in this round and all participants simply listen deeply to each person and pay attention to how the Holy Spirit is moving within oneself, within the person speaking, and in the group as a whole. This is followed by a time of silence to note one's interior movements.
2. In the second round, participants share **what struck them most** in the first round and what moved them during the time of silence. Some dialogue can also occur, and the same spiritual attentiveness is maintained. Once again this is followed by a time of silence.
3. Finally, in the third-round participants reflect on what seems to be resonating in the conversation and **what moved them most deeply**. **New insights and even unresolved questions** are also noted. **Spontaneous prayers** of gratitude can conclude the conversation.

Each group should choose a moderator and a secretary to take notes and send the group's reflections on the topics discussed.

