

# Lineamenta

## XIV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World

#### LINEAMENTA RESPONSE FORM

*Please complete and return this form electronically to Elizabeth Davies  
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Response made by 'Two in One Flesh', whose apostolate is to enhance the spirituality of married couples – comprising:

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#### *Preliminary Question Applicable to All Sections*

<i>a) Does the description of the various familial situations in the Relatio Synodi correspond to what exists in the Church and society today?</i>	Yes, but some aspects are particularly relevant; see Question b) below.
<i>b) What missing aspects should be included?</i>	• The spirituality of married life is rarely mentioned in Sunday homilies and, when life in the home is addressed, the focus is usually on the spirituality of family life, which is different. As a result, most married couples receive no formation on their

	<p>sacrament after their wedding day. It is noted that family and not marriage appears in the title of the Relatio Synodi and the Lineamenta.</p> <p>* It is also important to recognise (and in so doing affirm), those married couples, who through no fault of their own, have not been blessed with children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most young people approach marriage with no understanding that it is a vocation – a call from God to live an intimate life with each other to bring life to each other, their children and the wider church, and community. There is a major deficiency in the catechesis of young people in this regard.</li> </ul>
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**Part I**

**Listening: The Context and Challenges of the Family**

**The Socio-Cultural Context (ns. 5 - 8)**

<p><b>1. <i>What initiatives are taking place and what are those planned in relation to the challenges these cultural changes pose to the family (cf. ns. 6 - 7):</i></b></p>	<p>The need for communication and intimacy between the spouses is paramount and is addressed in reflective weekends for married couples such as Engaged and Marriage Encounter, Smart Loving, Explore etc. However, very few couples/Schools take advantage of these. There are also our own efforts in publishing resources such as the Trilogy of books with reflections for couples on the Scriptures at Mass</p>
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	throughout the three year cycle of the Church's Liturgical Calendar, <b>MARRIAGE MATTERS</b> and <b>Two In One Flesh</b> .
<i>which initiatives are geared to reawaken an awareness of God's presence in family life;</i>	Again, this is addressed in reflective weekends for married couples such as Marriage Encounter etc. And through schools by Explore, and with TIOF's resources as mentioned above.
<i>to teaching and establishing sound interpersonal relationships;</i>	As above
<i>to fostering social and economic policies useful to the family;</i>	
<i>to alleviating difficulties associated with attention given to children, the elderly and family members who are ill;</i>	
<i>and to addressing more specific cultural factors present in the local Church?</i>	
<i>2. What analytical tools are currently being used in these times of anthropological and cultural changes</i>	
<i>what are the more significant positive or negative results? (cf. n. 5)</i>	
<i>3. Beyond proclaiming God's Word and pointing out extreme situations, how does the Church choose to</i>	

<b><i>be present “as Church” and to draw near families in extreme situations? (cf. n. 8).</i></b>	
<b><i>How does the Church seek to prevent these situations?</i></b>	
<b><i>What can be done to support and strengthen families of believers and those faithful to the bonds of marriage?</i></b>	<b>Programmes run by Engaged &amp; Marriage Encounter, Smart Loving etc are very powerful ways of deepening couple relationships and organisations such as Teams of Our Lady provide valuable ongoing support. TIOF's resources also help. However, MUCH MORE needs to be communicated by the Priest at Mass, in the Homily AND by them letting folk know about the support and resources available.</b>
<b><i>4. How does the Church respond, in her pastoral activity, to the diffusion of cultural relativism in secularized society and to the consequent rejection, on the part of many, of the model of family formed by a man and woman united in the marriage and open to life?</i></b>	<b>Again, movements such as Marriage Encounter and Teams of Our Lady can play a major role in couples finding out God's plan for them. However, there is a need for a much deeper catechesis in the area of marriage during the school years, and as part of the priestly proclamation of the Gospel at Mass. There could be much greater utilisation of the laity experienced in such matters.</b>

**The Importance of Affectivity in Life (ns. 9 - 10)**

<b><i>5. How do Christian</i></b>	<b>The main way in which children learn</b>
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<p><i>families bear witness, for succeeding generations, to the development and growth of a life of sentiment? (cf. ns. 9 - 10).</i></p>	<p>the ability to form deep and lasting relationships is from experiencing the love of their parents for each other. “The greatest gift a father can give his children is to love their mother” and visa versa. We are aware that some dioceses are implementing programmes where couples share their relationships with school children (Explore). The potential is there for couples together, and also couples together with their children, to witness, particularly through various ministries at Mass, to their love for one another.</p>
<p><i>In this regard, how might the formation of ordained ministers be improved?</i></p>	<p>The formation of ordained ministers should include input from married couples on the reality of being married and ideally should include formation such as a Marriage Encounter week end, where the ability to relate emotionally is addressed in depth. Ordained ministers need to make/take every opportunity they can to be involved with couples, as an ecclesial 'team', when it comes to <u>any</u> ministry that could be worked on together.</p>
<p><i>What qualified persons are urgently needed in this pastoral activity?</i></p>	<p>Couples and priests who can provide the above formation are required. Besides, there are many retired, highly qualified single people and couples, available who could be involved personally, as well as in training and mentoring others.</p>

<b>6. To what extent and by what means is the ordinary pastoral care of families addressed to those on the periphery? (cf. n. 11).</b>
<b>What are the operational guidelines available to foster and appreciate the “desire to form a family” planted by the Creator in the heart of every person, especially among young people, including those in family situations which do not correspond to the Christian vision?</b>
<b>How do they respond to the Church’s efforts in her mission to them?</b>
<b>How prevalent is natural marriage among the non-baptized, also in relation to the desire to form a family among the young?</b>

**Part II**

**Looking at Christ: The Gospel of the Family**

**Looking at Jesus and the Divine Pedagogy in the History of Salvation (ns. 12 - 14)**

<b>7. A fixed gaze on Christ opens up new possibilities. “Indeed, every time we return to the source of the Christian experience, new paths and undreamed of possibilities open up” (n. 12). How is the teaching from Sacred Scripture utilized in pastoral activity on behalf of families?</b>	<b>The scriptural call to love is part of the day to day work of those that visit families, marriage councillors and all those who work in a ministry to marriage and the family. Examples where the direct message of Scripture to married couples is provided include Marriage Encounter weekends, books of Scripture reflections for married couples (<i>I Am With You</i>; YEARS A, B and C), MARRIAGE MATTERS etc.</b>
<b>To what extent does “fixing our gaze on Christ” nourish a pastoral care of the family</b>	<b>As stated in Para 11, “Jesus looked upon the women and men that he met with love</b>

<p><i>which is courageous and faithful?</i></p>	<p>and tenderness and he walked with them with patience and mercy as he talked to them about the Kingdom of God". HOWEVER, we have not seen or personally experienced much proclaiming or practicing of such '<i>courageous and faithful</i>' a vision at parish level.</p>
<p><b>8. What marriage and family values can be seen to be realized in the life of young people and married couples?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men and women are equal</li> <li>• Desire for intimacy, tenderness, togetherness, prayerfulness and a life-giving responsible sexual relationship</li> <li>• Desire for children</li> <li>* Desire for children's best education</li> <li>• Responsibility over size of family</li> <li>• Co-responsibility in parenthood and family activities</li> <li>• Co-responsibility as grandparents</li> </ul>
<p><i>What form do they take?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* As mentioned above...</li> <li>• Often, both spouses work</li> <li>• Both share activities associated with the children</li> <li>• Both share domestic activities etc.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Are there values which can be highlighted? (cf. n. 13)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality between the partners...</li> <li>- joint decision making.</li> <li>- jointly committed to relationship, their spirituality,</li> </ul>

	faith and generally 'in it together' with whatever life throws at them.
<i>What sinful aspects are to be avoided and overcome?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would question the word sinful, prefer to see it in inverted commas.</li> <li>• Gaining material comfort at the expense of couple and family relationships.</li> <li>• Selfishness in marriage... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MY children, home, kitchen, money etc.</li> <li>- 50/50 relationship rather than 100/100% from each partner</li> <li>- self indulgence of wants, feelings, sexual practices etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>9. What human pedagogy needs to be taken into account — in keeping with divine pedagogy — so as better to understand what is required in the Church's pastoral activity in light of the maturation of a couple's life together which would lead to marriage in the future? (cf. n. 13)</i>	There are several requirements. Firstly, there is the need for catechesis during the school years on which future catechesis can build. This may involve couples sharing their relationship with school children. Secondly, it is necessary for there to be a ministry that walks with couples, including and perhaps especially couples that are living together. Such a ministry can witness to and share the fruitfulness of married life.
<i>10. What is being done to demonstrate the greatness and beauty of the gift of indissolubility so as to prompt a desire to live it and strengthen</i>	* Not a lot

<i>it more and more? (cf. n. 14)</i>	
<b>11. How can people be helped to understand that a relationship with God can assist couples in overcoming the inherent weaknesses in marital relations? (cf. n. 14)</b>	This is a feature of activities such as those organisations and resources we have already mentioned, such as Engaged and Marriage Encounter, Smart Loving, Explore; the Trilogy of books ( <i>I Am With You</i> ; YEARS A, B and C), with Scripture reflections for couples on the Mass readings, MARRIAGE MATTERS and Two In One Flesh.
<b>How do people bear witness to the fact that divine blessings accompany every true marriage?</b>	By the love shown for each other, as well as with and to their children, and the love they give and share as a couple, and as a family, to others.
<b>How do people manifest that the grace of the Sacrament sustains married couples throughout their life together?</b>	By their love and faithfulness during times of adversity.

**The Family in God's Salvific Plan (ns. 15 - 16)**

<b>12. How can people be made to understand that Christian marriage corresponds to the original plan of God and, thus, one of fulfilment and not confinement? (cf. n. 13)</b>	Again, catechesis at school is important together with formation using the Sunday homilies.
<b>13. How can the Church be conceived as a “domestic Church” (Lumen Gentium, 11), agent and object of the work of evangelization in</b>	Awareness that a married couple and later the family is the domestic Church is one of the roles of marriage preparation. An important part

<i>service to the Kingdom of God?</i>	of their growing in relationship with God is their growing in relationship with each other.
<b>14. How can an awareness of this missionary task of the family be fostered?</b>	Again, this is one of the roles of marriage preparation. However, there is an ongoing need for formation in which movements such as Marriage Encounter can play a valuable role.

**The Family in the Church's Documents (ns. 17 - 20)**

<b>15. The Lord looks with love at the Christian family and through him the family grows as a true community of life and love. How can a familial spirituality be developed</b>	<p>Firstly, it is important to distinguish between matrimonial spirituality and family spirituality. The strength of love in a family depends on the former first of all.</p> <p>Diocesan Masses to celebrate marriage are a valuable way of affirming married couples. Similarly, Masses to celebrate grandparents are a valuable way of affirming their role.</p> <p>The preparation for marriage is the beginning of discovering the presence of God in the relationship of the couple. However, to develop matrimonial spirituality needs ongoing formation such as a Marriage Encounter weekend, retreats for married</p>
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	couples etc where the focus is on deepening the couple's relationship.
<i>and how can families become places of new life in Christ? (cf. n. 21)</i>	See above
<b>16. <i>What initiatives in catechesis can be developed and fostered to make known and offer assistance to persons in living the Church's teaching on the family, above all in surmounting any possible discrepancy between what is lived and what is professed and in leading to a process of conversion?</i></b>	Again developing matrimonial spirituality needs ongoing formation such as a Marriage Encounter weekend.

**The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Joy of Sharing Life Together (ns. 21 - 22)**

<b>17. <i>What initiatives can lead people to understand the value of an indissoluble and fruitful marriage as the path to complete personal fulfilment? (cf. n. 21)</i></b>	Again, the following are needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catechesis on marriage in schools</li> <li>• Catechesis for engaged couples</li> <li>• Ongoing formation for married couples</li> </ul>
<b>18. <i>What can be done to show that the family has many unique aspects for experiencing the joys of human existence?</i></b>	As for Question 17
<b>19. <i>The Second Vatican Council, returning to an ancient ecclesial tradition, expressed an</i></b>	

<i>appreciation for natural marriage. To what extent does diocesan pastoral activity acknowledge the value of this popular wisdom as fundamental in culture and society? (cf. n. 22)</i>	
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**The Truth and Beauty of the Family and Mercy Towards Wounded and Fragile Families (ns. 23 - 28)**

<i>20. How can people be helped to understand that no one is beyond the mercy of God?</i>	
<i>How can this truth be expressed in the Church's pastoral activity towards families, especially those which are wounded and fragile? (cf. n. 28)</i>	
<i>21. In the case of those who have not yet arrived at a full understanding of the gift of Christ's love, how can the faithful express a friendly attitude and offer trustworthy guidance without failing to proclaim the demands of the Gospel? (cf. n. 24)</i>	
<i>22. What can be done so that persons in the various forms of union between a man and a woman — in which human values can be present — might experience a sense of respect, trust and encouragement to grow in the Church's good will and be helped to arrive at the fullness of Christian marriage? (cf. n. 25)</i>	

**Part III**

**Confronting the Situation: Pastoral Perspectives**

**Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family Today in Various Contexts (ns. 29 - 38)**

<i>23. How is the family emphasized in the formation of priests and other pastoral workers?</i>	
<i>How are families themselves involved?</i>	<b>Occasionally married couples have been involved in the formation of</b>

	seminarians and permanent deacons.
<b>24. Are people aware that the rapid evolution in society requires a constant attention to language in pastoral communication?</b>	Yes, on the whole ( but the Relatio Synodi is poor in this respect)
<b>How can an effective testimony be given to the priority of grace in a way that family life is conceived and lived as welcoming the Holy Spirit?</b>	Again, the following are needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catechesis on marriage in schools</li> <li>• Catechesis for engaged couples</li> <li>• Ongoing formation for married couples</li> </ul> There is also a need for marriage to be proclaimed in the life of the Church including the participation of couples in the Liturgy and on Church bodies rather than participating as individuals.
<b>25. In proclaiming the Gospel of the Family, how can the conditions be created so that each family might actually be as God wills and that society might acknowledge the family's dignity and mission?</b>	See Question 24
<b>What "pastoral conversion" and what further steps towards an in-depth examination are being done to achieve this?</b>	Very little
<b>26. Are people aware of the importance of the collaboration of social and civil institutions</b>	

<i>on behalf of the family?</i>	
<i>How is this actually done?</i>	
<i>What criteria are used to inspire it?</i>	
<i>In this regard, what role can be played by family associations?</i>	Organisations such as the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child and Care for the Family are active in lobbying Members of Parliament
<i>How can this collaboration be sustained even in a bold repudiation of the cultural, economic and political processes which threaten the family?</i>	The Marriage and Family Life ministries in each diocese and of the Bishops' Conference need to be active in lobbying Members of Parliament.
<i>27. How can relations between family, society and civil life be fostered for the benefit of the family?</i>	
<i>How can the support of the State and the international community be fostered on behalf of the family?</i>	

**Guiding Engaged Couples in Their Preparation for Marriage (ns. 39 - 40)**

<i>28. How is marriage preparation proposed in order to highlight the vocation and mission of the family according to faith in Jesus Christ?</i>	Engaged Encounter weekends provide an effective way for the couple to encounter each other and experience the presence of God in their relationship.
<i>Is it proposed as an authentic ecclesial experience?</i>	Definitely
<i>How can it be renewed and improved?</i>	Ideally marriage preparation would be provided by a

	married couple and a priest.
<b>29. How does the catechesis of Christian initiation present an openness to the vocation and mission of the family?</b>	
<b>What practices are seen as most urgent?</b>	
<b>How is the relation among Baptism, Eucharist and marriage proposed?</b>	
<b>What emphasis is given to the character of the catechumenate and mystagogy which is often a part of marriage preparation?</b>	
<b>How can the community be involved in this preparation?</b>	

**Accompanying Married Couples in the Initial Years of Marriage (n. 40)**

<b>30. Does marriage preparation and accompanying couples in the initial years of married life adequately value the important contribution of the witness and sustenance which can be given by families, associations and family movements?</b>	Accompanying couples during the initial years of marriage is rare. A major difficulty is that few couples live in the parish where they were married after the wedding.
<b>What positive experiences can be reported in this regard?</b>	In dioceses, where couples have been involved in marriage preparation and have continued to meet with the couple after the wedding, both parties have found the experience very rewarding.

<p><b>31. <i>The pastoral accompaniment of couples in the initial years of family life — as observed in synodal discussion — needs further development.</i></b></p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p>
<p><b><i>What are the most significant initiatives already being undertaken?</i></b></p>	
<p><b><i>What elements need further development in parishes, dioceses or associations and movements?</i></b></p>	<p><b>There needs to be encouragement for many more couples to go on Engaged Encounter weekends. In addition, there needs to be local teams of couples and the parish priest who deliver the marriage preparation for other engaged couples and who accompany couples after the wedding as far as practicable.</b></p>

**Pastoral Care of Couples Civilly Married or Living Together (ns. 41 - 43)**

<p><b>32. <i>What criteria in a proper pastoral discernment of individual situations are being considered in light the Church's teaching in which the primary elements of marriage are unity, indissolubility and openness to life?</i></b></p>	
<p><b>33. <i>Is the Christian community able to be pastorally involved in these situations</i></b></p>	<p><b>There would need to be a marriage team in each Local Pastoral Area that would visit couples in their homes. A major challenge is that, with</b></p>

	<p>both spouses working, couples below retirement age have little time for pastoral work outside the family.</p> <p>The role of grandparents is key and provides the principal pastoral care together with priests, deacons and sisters</p>
<p><i>How can it assist in discerning the positive and negative elements in the life of persons united in a civil marriage so as to guide and sustain them on a path of growth and conversion towards the Sacrament of Matrimony?</i></p>	<p>Again the role of grandparents is key</p>
<p><i>How can those living together be assisted to decide to marry?</i></p>	
<p><i>34. In a particular way, what response is to be given to problems arising from the continuity of traditional forms of marriage in stages or those between families?</i></p>	

**Caring for Wounded Families (Separated, Divorced and Not Remarried, Divorced and Remarried, Single-Parent Families) (ns. 44 - 54)**

<p><i>35. Is the Christian community in a position to undertake the care of all wounded families so that they can experience the Father's mercy?</i></p>
<p><i>How does the Christian community engage in removing the social and economic factors which often determine this situation?</i></p>
<p><i>36. How can the identification of shared pastoral guidelines</i></p>

<i>be fostered at the level of the particular Church?</i>
<i>In this regard, how can a dialogue be developed among the various particular Churches cum Petro and sub Petro?</i>
<i>37. How can the procedure to determine cases of nullity be made more accessible, streamlined and possibly without expense?</i>
<i>38. With regard to the divorced and remarried, pastoral practice concerning the sacraments needs to be further studied, including assessment of the Orthodox practice and taking into account “the distinction between an objective sinful situation and extenuating circumstances” (n. 52).</i>
<i>What are the prospects in such a case?</i>
<i>What is possible?</i>
<i>What suggestions can be offered to resolve forms of undue or unnecessary impediments?</i>
<i>39. Does current legislation provide a valid response to the challenges resulting from mixed marriages or interreligious marriages?</i>
<i>Should other elements be taken into account?</i>

**Pastoral Attention towards Persons with Homosexual Tendencies (ns. 55 - 56)**

<i>40. How can the Christian community give pastoral attention to families with persons with homosexual tendencies?</i>
<i>What are the responses that, in light of cultural sensitivities, are considered to be most appropriate?</i>
<i>While avoiding any unjust discrimination, how can such persons receive pastoral care in these situations in light of the Gospel?</i>
<i>How can God’s will be proposed to them in their situation?</i>

**The Transmission of Life and the Challenge of a Declining Birthrate (ns. 57 - 59)**

<i>41. What are the most significant steps that have been taken to announce and effectively promote</i>	<p>The key stages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catechesis in schools</li> <li>• Marriage preparation</li> </ul>
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<p><i>the beauty and dignity of becoming a mother or father, in light, for example, of Humanae Vitae of Blessed Pope Paul VI?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing formation through the Sunday homilies</li> <li>• Ongoing formation through programmes such as Marriage Encounter, Teams of Our Lady etc</li> </ul>
<p><i>How can dialogue be promoted with the sciences and biomedical technologies in a way that respects the human ecology of reproduction?</i></p>	
<p><i>42. A generous maternity / paternity needs structures and tools. Does the Christian community exercise an effective solidarity and support?</i></p>	
<p><i>How?</i></p>	
<p><i>Is it courageous in proposing valid solutions even at a socio-political level?</i></p>	
<p><i>How can adoption and foster-parenting be encouraged as a powerful sign of fruitful generosity?</i></p>	
<p><i>How can the care and respect of children be promoted?</i></p>	
<p><i>43. The Christian lives maternity / paternity as a response to a vocation. Is this vocation sufficiently emphasized in catechesis?</i></p>	
<p><i>What formation is offered so that it might effectively guide the consciences of married couples?</i></p>	<p>Again, the only current formation to married couples is through movements such as Marriage Encounter, etc</p>
<p><i>Are people aware of the grave consequences of demographic</i></p>	

<i>change?</i>	
<b>44. How does the Church combat the scourge of abortion and foster an effective culture of life?</b>	

**Upbringing and the Role of the Family in Evangelization (ns. 60 - 61)**

<b>45. Fulfilling their educational mission is not always easy for parents. Do they find solidarity and support from the Christian community?</b>	Parenting programmes are very successful ways of supporting parents but they need Diocesan resources to organise them
<b>What suggestions might be offered in formation?</b>	
<b>What steps can be taken to acknowledge the role of parents in raising children, even at the socio-political level?</b>	
<b>46. How can parents and the Christian family be made aware that the duty of transmitting the faith is an intrinsic aspect of being a Christian?</b>	Again, the key stages are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catechesis in schools</li> <li>• Marriage preparation</li> <li>• Ongoing formation through the Sunday homilies</li> <li>• Ongoing formation through programmes such as Marriage Encounter, Teams of Our Lady etc</li> </ul>