



Let us REFLECT together.

March 2019

“The young have always been a priority for the Assumption.”

(General Chapter Document p. 14)

We want to engage you into reflection based on the Synodal Document on Youth— first, personal reflection, then we hope that you will create spaces for communal reflections, and then, we encourage you to share your concrete responses.

The Synodal journey on “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment” has commenced on the 6th of October 2016, when the Holy Father, Pope Francis, announced the theme of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. The Preparatory Document was drafted and published on January 13, 2017. Several opportunities to listen to the voice of young people themselves were created to make them involved in the synodal process: the online questionnaire, the large number of personal contributions, and the Pre-synodal Meeting. All the contributions were summarized in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, which is the comprehensive and synthetic frame of reference that emerged from the two years of listening. The Final Document, written in October 2018, is the fruit of the discernment that followed and it draws together thematically the key discussion points that the Synod Fathers focused on with particular intensity and passion. The Final Document will be a roadmap for the next steps the Church is called to take. (Final Document of the Synod on Young People... #s. 2 & 3)

The Gospel text from Lk. 24:13-35, Journey to Emmaus, was used in the document as a paradigm for understanding the Church’s mission to younger generations: to walk with; to listen; and to share. As Assumption Transformative Educators, let us ask ourselves today, how can we walk with the young, listen to them, and share with them?

The document # 158, calls on educational institutions to propose a model of formation that can bring faith into dialogue with the questions of the contemporary world, with different anthropological perspectives, with the challenges of science and technology, with changes in social customs and with the commitment to justice.

The Gospel narrative about the disciples on the road to Emmaus depicts a concrete transformational experience. These are some “movements” or “conversion” that we can gather from the story:

FROM	TO
“not seeing”	recognition
“unbelief”	understanding
faces cast down – can be a sign of discouragement; sadness; disappointment; hopelessness	“hearts burning” – returning to Jerusalem; proclaiming; retelling the story

How can we translate the “Journey to Emmaus” into a pedagogical method in our teaching-learning experiences in the school? How can we make educational encounters with the young become displacement experiences towards fuller and greater life as we dialogue with their contexts and realities?

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There where we are situated as we listen to the young in their digital environment, in their experiences of migration, in their battles with poverty, in their encounters with violence, and other realities that influence and form them today.

It is interesting to note what the document teaches us about the value of listening –
“Listening is an encounter in freedom, which requires humility, patience, readiness to understand, and a commitment to formulate the answers in a new way. Listening transforms the hearts of those who do it, especially when it takes place with an interior disposition of harmony and docility to the Spirit. So, it is not just a gathering of information, nor is it a strategy for achieving a goal, but it is the manner in which God himself relates to his people.” (Final Document of the Synod on Young People... # 6)

How can we form our educators to LISTEN?

The Province of France had a formation session for educators on “Listening” last January 2019. It will be good to share and to learn from one another.

Pope Francis invites young people to view their lives within the horizon of mission: “So often in life, we waste time asking ourselves: ‘Who am I?’ You can keep asking, ‘Who am I?’ for the rest of your lives. But **the real question is: ‘For whom am I?’**” (Address during the Prayer Vigil in preparation for World Youth Day, Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, 8 April 2017).

Marie Eugenie tells us that “everyone has a mission on earth.” How can we accompany the young in discovering and assuming their unique contribution to the world?

The document # 97 teaches about spiritual accompaniment –
“Spiritual accompaniment is intended to help people integrate step by step the various dimensions of their lives so as to follow the Lord Jesus. In this process three elements can be identified: listening of life, encounter with Jesus and mysterious dialogue between God’s freedom and that of the individual. Those who accompany should be welcoming and patient, they elicit pertinent questions and recognize the signs of the Spirit in the replies of the young.”

No. 102 of the document presents the profile of the accompanier -

“A good accompanier is a person who is balanced, a listener, a person of faith and prayer, who has the measure of his own weaknesses and frailties. Hence, he knows how to be accepting of the young people he accompanies, without moralizing and without false indulgence. When necessary he also knows how to offer a word of fraternal correction.”

How can our educators perform not just as teachers of particular subject areas, but as accompanier of the young?

As Assumption Transformative Educators, let us walk together, listen, and share. Let us be one with the Church in this synodal process and journey with the young.