



The XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops begins on Wednesday. The Synod's theme is **Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment**".

Today begins the Synod of Bishops in which young people are the subject. From 3-28 October, Synod Fathers from all over the world, and other invited participants, will explore the theme **"Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment"**.

Synod process

The Synod process began in October 2016 when Pope Francis announced the Synod's theme. In January 2017, the initial phase of the Synod began with a letter of the Holy Father to young people, and the publication of the [Preparatory Document](#).

Input solicited through the Preparatory Document was gathered from the local Churches. In addition, input from young people was requested through an online questionnaire. More than 200,000 young people responded either completely or partially to this questionnaire.

Young people participate

In order to include the voices of young people in a more concrete way, a Pre-Synod meeting was held in Rome from 19-24 March 2018. 300 young people participated in Rome and 15,000 others participated virtually. On that occasion, Pope Francis said, "the Church wants to listen to the voice, sensitivity, faith and also the doubts and criticisms of the young. We must listen to the young." A document prepared by the young people who

came from all over the world, and represented Catholics, non-Catholics, and unbelievers, was presented to Pope Francis on Palm Sunday. The working document for the Synod contains material from this document as well as a summary of the input sent in from the local churches.

The Synod begins

Until the closing Mass of 28 October, Synod participants will be meeting daily. Their days will begin and end with prayer. Much of the time will be spent listening to the interventions given by a number of the over 250 bishops, the almost 40 young people, and other auditors, experts, consultants and fraternal delegates invited to participate in the Synod. In the midst of the Synod, on 14 October, Pope Francis will canonize Pope Paul IV, under whose pontificate the first Synod of Bishops was held in 1967. The Synod of Bishops will present to the Holy Father their final report on which the Pope is expected to base a future Apostolic Exhortation on the Synod theme.