

BISHOP'S HOUSE  
PO Box 246  
BATHURST NSW 2795

8<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Dear Friends,

You may be aware that Pope Francis has called an Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for next year with the title *Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelisation*. This is intended to "define the *status quaestionis* and to collect the bishops' experiences and proposals in proclaiming and living the Gospel of the Family in a credible manner." It will be followed up with an Ordinary General Assembly in 2015 to seek working guidelines in the pastoral care of the person and the family.

I strongly welcome this initiative. In my first pastoral letter I stated that "the renewal of the domestic church has to be our pastoral focus. If we could begin to do that, how many dead branches in the Church would begin to bud with life again!"

The time frame for consultation in preparing the Extraordinary Assembly is very tight. I will be informed and guided by the work we did earlier this year on the *Domestic Church: Marriages and Families* component of our Diocesan Assembly. However, should you have further ideas and suggestions, particularly on topics that were not raised in the Assembly process, I shall be grateful to receive them.

The questionnaire that the Synod Secretariat has circulated to bishops is attached for your study. A message from the Catholic bishops of NSW/ACT is also attached.

Although the first stage of consultation will be over soon, the whole process will continue for some time. I ask your prayers now and your cooperation in the days ahead.

With every good wish.

Sincerely yours in Christ.



**Bishop of Bathurst**