



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

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From 11 to 15 September 2017, at the Auditorium of the Jesuit General Curia, an *International Seminar on the condition of youth in the world* was held in preparation for the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme *The young, faith and vocational discernment*, to be held in October 2018.

The Seminar was attended by 82 people invited from the five continents: 21 young people, 17 experts from ecclesiastical universities, 15 experts from other universities, 20 formators and youth and vocational pastoral workers, and 9 representatives of entities of the Holy See. From a geographical perspective, 52 participants were European, 18 from the Americas, 7 Asian, 4 African, and one Australian. Of particular interest was the presence of young people from different geographical, socio-cultural and religious contexts: they contributed actively to the study days, also introducing and concluding the event with their life experiences and reflections. Since the Seminar was also open to all those interested in the theme, around 50 guests also took part, including some young people.

During the sessions, respected professors communicated on the themes set out in the programme: the young and identity, the young and otherness, the young and planning, the young and technology, and the young and transcendence. A session was dedicated to each theme; the morning sessions were introduced by a biblical meditation and each communication was followed by a wide-ranging and inclusive debate, then furthered in the linguistic groups working in Italian, English, French and Spanish.

The first session, which took place on Monday afternoon, opened with greetings from Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri and a biblical reflection by the Rev. Fr. Giulio Michelini, O.F.M. Five young people then gave compelling testimonies, regarding issues such as concrete situations of war, the recovery of values, facing daily challenges, commitments and life decisions. Finally, Professor Alessandro Rosina and Professor Cecilia Costa introduced the works.

The first of the themes, which regarded identity, was examined in the second session, in the morning of Tuesday 12, in which two communications were given: *Young men and women today in search of identity*, by Msgr. Philippe Bordeyne; and *The places that form the identity of the young*, by Dr. Chiara Amirante. In these contexts several other themes emerged, including the importance of education in the formation of a complete identity that

responds to the need for guidance and reconciliation shared by many young people.

The theme of planning was the subject of two communications during the third session in the afternoon: *Young people and work*, by Professor Leonardo Becchetti, and *Young people and migration*, by Professor Rosa Aparicio Gómez. The interweaving of these two aspects emerged, since many young people migrate from their own countries not only in order to flee from situations of violence or war, but also to build a better future that would appear to be foreclosed in their places of origin.

The fourth session, in the morning of Wednesday 13, considered the theme of otherness through two communications: *Young people and social engagement*, by Professor Alvin Ang; and *Young people and political engagement*, by Professor Angela Cristiana Calvo. It was shown that, due to general mistrust in the world of politics, the young prefer to engage at a social level in projects of solidarity.

The theme of technology was examined in the fifth session on Wednesday afternoon, with two communications: *Young people and future scenarios of technological development*, by Fr. Eric Salobir, O.P.; and *Young people and anthropological aspects of technological development*, by P. Ferdinand Muhigirwa, S.J. It emerged that the relationship of young people with new media technologies opens up new horizons that, on the one hand, cause complex problems at anthropological, moral and relational levels, while on the other offering interesting paths for evangelisation.

Transcendence was the theme of the sixth Session on Thursday morning, developed in two communications: *Young people, the sacred and faith* by Professor Franco Garelli; and *Young people and the Church*, by Professor María Marcela Mazzini. The interventions illustrated how the search for the transcendent is experienced today by young people not only through various forms of spirituality, but also within the Church which, open to listening to young people, in many cases presents the person of Jesus in an engaging manner.

In the seventh session, a summary of the work of the various language circles was presented and Prof. Eugenio Gaudio, rector of "La Sapienza" University of Rome, held a conference on young people and the university.

In the eighth and final session, an overview was given and perspectives for the forthcoming Synod were indicated. The young people presented a video in which they summarised their experience, which may be summed up in the phrase: "We are a family, let's listen and grow together". From this slogan there emerges the desire of young people to find in the Church a *home*, a *family* and a *community* where they can develop their life choices and contribute to the common good. Subsequently, Professor Alessandro Rosina and Professor Cecilia Costa presented a general summary of the work, in which they highlighted the premises and conditions for accompanying the new generations, as well as the Church's commitment and desire to respond to the demands of young people to be protagonists in building a better world. Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri concluded the proceedings by thanking the participants and confirming that the Church, listening to young people, wishes to be stimulated by them with a view to the missionary renewal invoked by Pope Francis.

The *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram* channels used during the Seminar remain open, with the hashtag *Synod2018*, also after the completion of the works.
