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Press Release of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops: pre-Synodal Meeting in preparation for the 15th Ordinary General Assembly (19-24 March 2018)

As announced by the Holy Father in today's General Audience, on Wednesday 4 October 2017, a pre-synodal meeting will take place in Rome from 19 to 24 March 2018, attended by young people from different parts of the world, in view of the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme *Young people, faith and vocation discernment*, scheduled for October 2018. This meeting will be organised by the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, in collaboration with the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life.

We thank the Holy Father for this initiative, which will allow young people to express their expectations and desires, as well as their uncertainties and concerns in the complex events of today's world. This initiative is part of the synodal tradition, as pre-synodal meetings have been organised in the past, such as the one held in preparation for the Seventh Ordinary General Assembly in 1987 on the vocation and mission of lay people in the Church and in the world, and the Symposium prior to the 1991 Special Assembly for Europe.

In this pre-synodal meeting, young people will be invited to represent the Episcopal Conferences; the Oriental Churches; consecrated life and those preparing for the priesthood; associations and Church movements; other Churches and communities, both Christian and of other religions; the worlds of school, university and culture, work, sports, arts and volunteering; and the world of young people who find themselves in extreme existential peripheries, as well as experts, educators and trainers engaged in helping young people to discern their life choices.

The pre-synodal meeting will contribute to enriching the consultation phase already undertaken with the publication of the Preparatory Document and its questionnaire, with the opening of the online website containing a specific questionnaire for young people, and the International Seminar on the condition of young people, held last September. The fruit of the works of this meeting will be offered to the Synod Fathers, along with other documentation, to encourage their reflection and further examination.

The planned date for the pre-synodal meeting was specially chosen to enable all participants to take part, at the end, in the celebration of the Eucharist on the Palm Sunday with the Holy Father in Saint Peter's Square at the 33rd World Youth Day 2018 on the theme "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God" (*Lk*

1:30).

We entrust the happy outcome of this initiative to the intercession of Our Lady and to all our prayers.
