

Pope Francis Launches Survey on Modern Catholics



Pope Francis is surveying Catholics on family issues including homosexual marriage and divorce in preparation for next year's bishop synod, according to NBC News.

Veteran Vatican observers say the survey is remarkable on a number of levels in that it deals with subjects previous Popes appeared to regard as off-limits and seeks feedback from rank-and-file Catholics.

"It's fascinating," said Boston College theology professor Thomas Groome. "To my knowledge, it's the first time in the history of the magisterium" where a genuine effort was made to consult the laity, he said.

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Single-parent families, mixed marriage, remarriage, and surrogate motherhood also are among the survey questions. According to NBC News they include:

What pastoral attention can be given to people who live in these types of [same-sex] union?

In the case of unions of persons of the same sex who have adopted children, what can be done pastorally in light of transmitting the faith?

Do [the divorced and remarried] feel marginalized or suffer from the impossibility of receiving the sacraments?

In cases where nonpracticing Catholics or declared nonbelievers request the celebration of marriage, describe how this pastoral challenge is dealt with.

The questionnaire does not indicate that Pope Francis is planning large-scale changes, and a senior Vatican official said the Catholic Church continues to be loyal "to the vision of the family where a man and a woman join together and procreate children."

According to a report in The Mirror, a document sent along with the survey stated that Francis is concerned about the "widespread practice of cohabitation, which does not lead to marriage and sometimes even excludes the very idea of it, same-sex unions between persons who are, not infrequently, permitted to adopt children," and "a culture of non-commitment."

By Joel Himelfarb - NewsMax