



37/2014

**Circular Letter
of H.L. Mario Grech
Bishop of Gozo**

**Invitation to Prayer
in preparation for the Bishops' Synod**

To the Reverend Archpriests, Chaplains, Rectors of Churches, Religious Superiors, Consecrated Persons and Christian Laity

Beloved,

It is the desire of Pope Francis that all Christians would unite as one heart and one soul in prayer in preparation for the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops due to be celebrated next October. This meeting will be, above all, a powerful moment of prayer for the Holy Spirit to enlighten the hearts of the shepherds of the Church so that the Gospel will help us respond to the pastoral challenges being met by today's families.

Therefore, what is expected of us is that we accept this invitation of the Pope and pray for the intercession of the Holy Family in regard to this Synod. In a special way, the Holy Father wanted to involve in this campaign of prayer, the well-known Sanctuaries associated with the Holy Family, namely, those of Nazareth, Loreto and Barcellona.

Since we have, in this Diocese, the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Loreto in Ghajnsielem, which is spiritually affiliated with the Loreto Sanctuary, I wish to encourage all the Christians in the Diocese to visit this local Sanctuary during the coming weeks in order to pray for the forthcoming Synod. Apart from visiting the new Sanctuary, one could visit also the old Ghajnsielem parish church, which is also affiliated with the Loreto Sanctuary, and where there is daily Eucharistic adoration from 8.30am to 4.00pm.

I am also informing that the Apostolic Penitentiary, in a Decree of 25th March 2014, has been pleased to bestow the *Plenary Indulgence* on those who visit the Sanctuary of Loreto or any Sanctuary affiliated with it, such as those of Our

Lady of Loreto and the old church of Ghajnsielem. In order to obtain the Plenary Indulgence, those who visit the Sanctuary are encouraged to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation, receive Holy Communion, pray according to the Pope's intention and, inside the Sanctuary, recite the prayer that Pope Francis wrote to the Holy Family. The Plenary Indulgence is bestowed also on those who are old or sick or who, for some grave reason, cannot leave their homes if, during the days and solemnities of the Holy Virgin Mary sincerely despise sin in their heart and recite the prayer of Pope Francis in front of a picture of Our Lady of Loreto, while resolving to go to confession and communion at the first opportunity and pray for the Pope's intention.

I strongly urge that we apply these graces from Heaven for the strengthening and blessing of our families. We pray also for those lay persons who, together with the Diocesan Family Commission, are working in the interest of engaged and married couples.

I urge every one of us to accept this invitation and realise that we are truly living members of the Church by doing this pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Loreto in Ghajnsielem and there pray that, through the intercession of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, this Synod will be a powerful moment for the Church and for all the families of the World.

Given from our Curia, Victoria, today 28th of June. Feast of the Immaculate Heart of the Holy Virgin Mary.

✠ Mario Grech
Bishop of Gozo

Mgr. Saviour Debrincat
Chancellor