



CONFERENTIA
EPISCOPALIS
MELITENSIS

STATEMENT BY THE MALTESE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE – 12/09/14

PRAYERS FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

In a few weeks' time, Bishops from all over the world shall be meeting in Rome for the Extraordinary Synod on 'Pastoral challenges for the family in the context of evangelization'. The Synod will be held between 5th and 19th October. This will be a defining moment for the whole Church and for this reason, every believer is called to participate and share in this event. Above all, this meeting of the Bishops will be a profound moment of prayer. In preparation for this Synod, Pope Francis is encouraging all Christians from around the world to unite together with one heart in a moment of prayer next Sunday, 28th September 2014. We should all pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten the hearts of the shepherds of the Church, that the Gospel of the Family may once again be heeded as the 'good news' for all mankind, at a time when the family is undergoing several difficulties.

In the light of this, we encourage all Maltese and Gozitan Christians to unite, as we pray fervently to God, so that as a Church, we may respond to the pastoral challenges which the family is facing in contemporary society. On 28th September and also on the days leading up to the Synod, we urge all parish communities and families to recite the Prayer to the Holy Family which the Pope has written (attached), as well as to offer special prayers for the meeting. Considering that October is the month of the Rosary, we encourage Christians, particularly families, to pray the rosary together.

We pray that, through the intercession of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, this Synod will serve as a moment of grace and renewal for the Church and for families around the world.

✠ **MARIO GRECH**

Bishop of Gozo

President of the Maltese Episcopal Conference

✠ **PAUL CREMONA O.P.**

Archbishop of Malta

✠ **CHARLES J. SCICLUNA**

Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar General of Malta



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PRAYER TO THE HOLY FAMILY FOR THE SYNOD

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
in you we contemplate
the splendour of true love,
to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that our families too
may be places of communion and prayer,
authentic schools of the Gospel
and small domestic Churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
may families never again
experience violence, rejection and division:
may all who have been hurt or scandalized
find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
may the approaching Synod of Bishops
make us once more mindful
of the sacredness and inviolability of the family,
and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
graciously hear our prayer.
Amen.



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PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and Sisters, gathered together as God's family and inspired by our faith, we raise our minds and hearts to the Father, that our families, sustained by the grace of Christ, might become true domestic churches where all live and bear witness to God's love.

Together we pray: **Lord, bless and sanctify our families.**

- For Pope Francis: the Lord has called him to preside over the Church in charity; sustain him in his ministry of service to the communion of the episcopal college and the entire People of God, we pray:
- For those who have the responsibility of governing nations: that the Holy Spirit might inspire programmes which acknowledge the value of the family as the basic unit of society in God's plan and which offer support to families in difficulty, we pray:
- For Christian families: may the Lord who has sealed the union of husband and wife with his presence, make our families cenacles of prayer and ardent communities of life and love, after the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth, we pray:
- For couples undergoing difficulties: may the Lord, rich in mercy, be present to them through the Church's motherly care and concern in showing understanding and patience in their journey towards pardon and reconciliation, we pray:
- For children: may the Lord of life, who in his ministry welcomed them and made them a model for entering the Kingdom of heaven, inspire a respect for life in the womb and programmes in raising children which conform to the Christian outlook towards life, we pray:
- For young people: may the Lord, who made holy the Wedding at Cana, lead them to discover the beauty of the sacredness and inviolability of the family in God's plan and sustain engaged couples as they prepare for marriage, we pray:

O God, you never forsake the work of your hands, hear our prayer; send the Spirit of your Son to enlighten the Church as the synodal journey begins, so that contemplating the splendour of true love which shines forth in the Holy Family of Nazareth, she might learn the freedom and obedience to respond with boldness and mercy to the challenges of today's world. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.