**Synod of Bishops maps contours of a supportive Church**

**The youth of today do not need a structure but a place where they belong, where they are missed if they are not there**

**La jeunesse d’aujourd’hui ne veut pas d’une structure mais d’un lieu d’appartenance où ils manqueraient s’ils étaient absents.**

Nicolas Senèze, Rome, Vatican City

October 16, 2018

*Participants at the Synod of Bishops assembly on young people on Oct. 15 completed their work in language groups on the second part of the working document, dedicated to vocational discernment.*

“You are mistaken!” — “Well then, help me not to be mistaken any longer!” Father Mario Tasca heard of this heated family-table dialogue, between a slightly rebellious girl and a European bishop, from the cleric himself during one of the Synod’s coffee breaks.

“Vous vous trompez” – “Alors aidez-moi à ne plus le faire”. Le Père Mario Tasca rapporte ce dialogue entre une jeune fille un peu rebelle et un évêque au cours d’un repas familial un peu chaud.

For the Minister General of the Conventual Franciscans, the anecdote encapsulates the change of attitude the Church needs to undergo in years to come: listen more and be able to change.

“The Church needs to move from listening to conversing, because it is conversation that brings about dialogue,” says Father Bruno Cadoré, Master of the Dominican Order. He feels the Church must be able to embrace all the youthful diversity observed in the first part of the Synod.

“L’Eglise doit passer de l’écoute à la conversation parce que la conversation mène au dialogue » dit B. Cadoré, maître des dominicains.

“It’s not just a matter of making way for the young people, but of change,” says the French priest, “because that is the particularity of the Church: embracing the new and changing, not just transmitting.”

“L’Eglise ne doit plus seulement transmettre mais créer du neuf”, ajoute-t-il.

**We tend too much to ask young people to be docile**

**Nous avons trop tendance à demander aux jeunes d’être dociles**

This new approach by the Church has been brought up on many occasions in the discussions at the Synod and has influenced the manner in which the bishops envisage the support to be given to the young.

While a number of bishops in the Synod, largely in the minority, stress that it is now time to strengthen the magisterial dimension of the Church – a Church of “teachers” who teach their disciples – others warn against a vision that focuses excessively on “guidance.”

Des évêques, minoritaires, restent sur le schéma d’une Eglise qui enseigne mais d’autres s’opposent aux excès de la simple gouvernance.

In many respects, the notion of “support” has been taking over from that of spiritual “guidance,” all the more since many bishops have stressed the risk of spiritual abuses

that the latter could entail. “We tend too much to ask the young people to be docile,” one bishop warned.

**The Church needs to be a community of belonging**

“Accompaniment in the Church can no longer take the sole form of a relationship between master and disciples,” admits Auxiliary Bishop Bertrand Lacombe of Bordeaux and head of vocations at the French Bishops Conference, who advocates more of a community dimension, “an accompaniment among peers.”

« L’Eglise ne doit plus être relation de maîtres à disciples mais relation de pairs à pairs » admet B Lacombe, évêque auxiliaire de Bordeaux.

“The issue today has less to do with structures than with community: The Church needs to be a community of belonging,” Father Cadoré said.

“L’Eglise doit être une communion d’apartenants » ajoute B. Cadoré.

“The youths of today – as always – do not need a structure but a place where they belong, where they are missed if they are not there,” the French Dominican explained further. He calls for a real synodality at all levels of the Church and not only in Rome.

**What is the Church we are dreaming of for the future?**

“If we really wish to have assemblies with everyone, everyone first has to live together in the same Church,” Father Cadoré said.

As was noted during the week of 8 October by Archbishop Bruno Forte of Chieti in Italy, one of the drafters of the final document of this assembly, the big question for this Synod assembly is: “Which Church are we dreaming of for the future?”