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My dear People of God:

Pope Francis has engaged the Church in a discussion of marriage and family as an integral part of the Synod on the Family or more specifically on *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World*.

The Holy Father has also asked for a very broad based consultation and, with this in mind, has provided a document (*Lineamenta*) for study and a “series of questions aimed at knowing how the document is received and to generate an in-depth examination of the work initiated during the Extraordinary Assembly.”

In the *Lineamenta*'s preface we read, “It is a matter of re-thinking ‘with renewed freshness and enthusiasm, what revelation, transmitted in the Church’s faith, tells us about the beauty, the role and the dignity of the family’ (*Relatio Synodi*, no. 4). From this vantage point, we have “one year to mature, with true spiritual discernment, the proposed ideas and to find concrete solutions to so many difficulties and innumerable challenges that families must confront” (Pope Francis, *Concluding Discourse*, 18 October 2014). The results of this consultation, together with the *Relatio Synodi*, will serve as the basis for the *Instrumentum laboris* of the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of 2015.”

In order to assure that everyone who wishes might have the opportunity to engage in this requested consultation I have posted the Synod documents on the Diocesan website: www.santarosacatholic.org. I have also provided to your pastors a 28 page document which you are welcome to ask him or the parish office to copy and use as the basis for your replies. The size of the document make it impractical for me to attempt to send the entire document to every home or to ask pastors to print copies for the entire parish.

If you choose to engage in this process—and I pray that you do—then please send your completed responses to the Chancery Office (address above) no later than Monday, March 9 so that they can be compiled and sent to the Bishop’s Conference for transmission the Holy See.

Asking every good grace and blessing of God upon you, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

The Most Reverend Robert F. Vasa
Bishop of Santa Rosa