

# **Analysis of the *instrumentum laboris* of the Ordinary Synod 2015**

## **Executive Summary**

The [\*instrumentum laboris\*](#) is intended to act as the basis for discussions at the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome from 4-25 October 2015. The theme of the Synod is “The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World.”

The document seeks to observe “*a twofold yet unique faithfulness*” to (1) “the signs of God” and (2) the signs of “human history”. The adoption of this twofold fidelity is based on an erroneous understanding of the relationship between God, Catholic doctrine and historical development, an understanding which has already been identified and condemned by the Catholic Church.

When this approach is adopted, the natural moral law is no longer regarded as immutable but rather as subject to change over the course of time. The consequences of this can be seen in the *instrumentum laboris*, which threatens the entire structure of Catholic teaching on marriage, the family and human sexuality.

It does this by:

- Undermining the doctrine of *Humanae Vitae* by proposing a false understanding of the relationship between conscience and the moral law (paragraph 137)
- Discussing artificial methods of reproduction without giving any judgement on the morality of such methods or making any reference to previous Catholic teaching, or to the enormous loss of human life that results from their use (paragraph 34)
- Proposing the admission of the “divorced and remarried” to Holy Communion without amendment of life (paragraphs 120-125)
- Reducing the indissolubility of marriage to the level of an “ideal” (paragraph 42)
- Suggesting that cohabitation and “living together” have “positive aspects” and can, to some extent, be considered legitimate forms of union (paragraphs 57, 61, 63, 99, 102)
- Preparing the ground for the acceptance of same-sex unions by acknowledging the need to define “the specific character of such unions in society” (paragraph 8)
- Denying the full rights of parents regarding the provision of sex education to their children (paragraph 86)

In these and other ways, the document poses a very real danger to the family, especially its most vulnerable members, and to the integrity of Catholic doctrine. Catholics have a duty to oppose the direction being taken at the Synod.

