

SYNOD BISHOPS COMING TOGETHER



Bill Donohue comments on the unofficial summary of the reports issued by the ten working groups that comprise the Synod of Bishops:

The working groups expressed their dismay at the false impression that was given by the interim report. This was understandable given that almost none of them were consulted about it; the document was leaked to the press behind their backs. This explains why they took the opportunity yesterday to say that the midterm report “does not express a univocal opinion shared by all the Synod Fathers.” They also called for a more definitive statement in the final report, to be presented tomorrow, affirming the Church’s teachings on marriage and the family.

The interim report was deficient, the bishops said, in not addressing such issues as adoption and the challenges to the family presented by biotechnology and the Internet. They also said that greater attention should be given to the plight of women and children who are being sexually exploited.

On the subject of homosexuals, the bishops accepted the need to respect their dignity “without however implying that this may indicate a form of approval, on the part of the Church, of their orientation and way of life.” By explicitly calling attention to the “way of life” of homosexuals—a clear reference to the gay lifestyle—the bishops took a courageous stand.

Moreover, the working groups counseled against giving “the impression of a willingness on the part of the Church to legitimise irregular family situations.” Thus did they reject the interim report’s embrace of the “positive” aspects of

cohabitation. On the issue of divorced and remarried Catholics, there is a clear split between those who want to perfect current practices and those who want to amend them. It was suggested that this issue be given further study.

It will be interesting to see how the final report measures up with the working groups' input, or whether it mirrors the divisive interim report.