

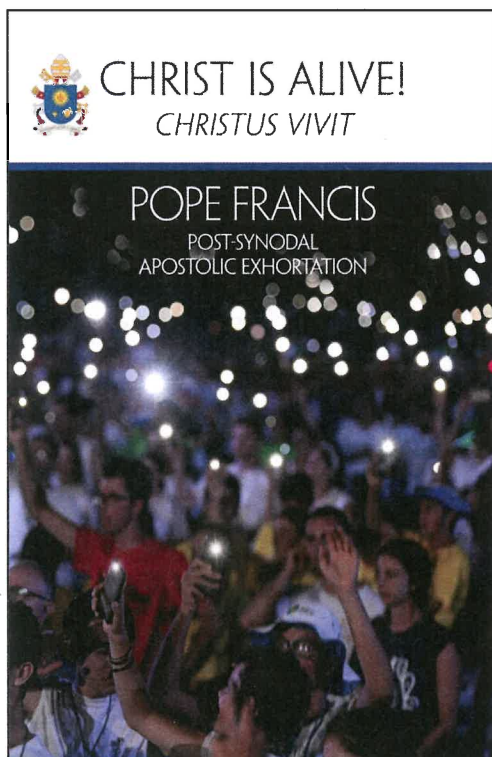
Christus Vivit

Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on Young People*

Summary compiled by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth ©2019

In April 2019, Pope Francis released his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit* (*Christ is Alive!*), addressed to youth and young adults and the entire People of God. This document is the Holy Father's reflection and insights on the Church's synodal journey which focused on *Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment* from 2016 to 2019.

Christus Vivit is written in nine (9) chapters that roughly correspond to the pastoral method of "see" (chapters 1-3), "judge" (chapters 4-6), and "act" (chapters 7-9). There are 299 paragraphs and many footnotes and references.



*Who are young people?

In *Christus Vivit* and during the synodal process that led up to it, young people (*jóvenes* in Spanish, *giovani* in Italian) are defined as those approx. ages 16 to 29, or who we would call *youth and young adults* in the United States.

- Chapter 1:** **Scriptural Observations** | "...the Word of God..."
Looking at youth and young adults in salvation history.
- Chapter 2:** **Theological Observations** | "Jesus, Ever Young"
Looking at Jesus, Mary, and the saints as young people, which inspires the Church to regain her youthfulness.
- Chapter 3:** **Sociological Observations** | "You are the 'Now' of God"
Looking at some realities and challenges facing young people today, as heard in the synodal listening process.
- Chapter 4:** **Spiritual Assessment** | "A Great Message..."
Understanding three key foundations: God loves you, Jesus saves and suffers with you, and Christ is alive.
- Chapter 5:** **Developmental Assessment** | "Paths of Young People"
Understanding the transitions and pathways youth and young adults experience from the personal to the global.
- Chapter 6:** **Generational Assessment** | "Young People with Roots"
Understanding the call to dialogue and co-responsibility across generational lines in the Church and in society.
- Chapter 7:** **Pastoral Action** | "Ministry with Young People"
Advancing new models for pastoral ministry and accompaniment with youth and young adults.
- Chapter 8:** **Missionary Action** | "Vocation"
Advancing a culture of vocations among young people, helping them see their mission and service to the world.
- Chapter 9:** **Synodal Action** | "Discernment"
Advancing a mutual listening (synodal) model of discernment in engaging youth and young adults.

A Few Insights from the Synodal Journey and *Christus Vivit*

“Taking care of young people is not an optional task for the Church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission in history.” (2018 Synod *Instrumentum Laboris* 1)

“The Church as a whole, when choosing through this Synod to concern herself with the young, took a very definite option: **she considers this mission a pastoral priority of epoch-making significance**, in which to invest time, energy and resources.” (2018 Synod *Final Document* 119)

“The Church should not be excessively caught up in herself but instead, and above all, reflect Jesus Christ. This means humbly acknowledging that **some things concretely need to change**, and if that is to happen, she needs to **appreciate the vision but also the criticisms of young people...** To be credible to young people, there are times when (the Church) needs to regain her humility and simply listen.” (*Christus Vivit* 39, 41)

“Young people frequently fail to find in our usual programs a response to their concerns, their needs... there is a need to look at the ways these groups participate in the Church’s overall pastoral care, as well as a need for greater communion among them and a better coordination of their activities... It does not matter where they are coming from or what labels they have received, whether ‘conservative’ or ‘liberal,’ ‘traditional’ or ‘progressive.’ What is important is that we make use of everything that has borne good fruit and effectively communicates the joy of the Gospel.” (*Christus Vivit* 202, 205)

We need to make all our institutions better equipped to be more welcoming to young people.” (*Christus Vivit* 216)

“Instead of ‘overwhelming young people with a body of rules that make Christianity seem reductive and moralistic, **we are called to invest in (young people’s) fearlessness and to train them to take up their responsibilities...**’ The Synod called for the development of a youth (and young adult) ministry capable of being inclusive, with room for all kinds of young people, to show **we are a Church with open doors**. Nor does one have to accept fully all the teachings of the Church to take part in certain of our activities for young people. It is enough to have an open mind toward all those who have the desire and willingness to be encountered by God’s revealed truth” (*Christus Vivit* 233, 234)

“Dear young people, make the most of these years... Don’t observe life from a balcony... Whatever you do, do not become the sorry sight of an abandoned vehicle... Take risks, even if it means making mistakes... **Make a ruckus! Cast out the fears that paralyze you**, so that you don’t become young mummies. Live! ...Open the door of the cage, go out, and fly! Please don’t take an early retirement.” (*Christus Vivit* 143)

“The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging, and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation, and affection, and avoid constantly judging them...” (*Christus Vivit* 243)

“Ministry (with young people) has to be synodal; it should involve a journeying together... through a process of co-responsibility... fully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations, and movements.” (*Christus Vivit* 206)

“Dear young people, my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you, outstripping all those who are slow or fearful... **‘The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith. We need them!** And when you arrive where we have not yet reached, **have the patience to wait for us.**” (*Christus Vivit* 299)

***Christus Vivit* has re-framed our ministries with youth and young adults, and has called the entire Church to a time of renewal and rejuvenation.**

For more information about this landmark document, the first-ever papal exhortation on young people, go to www.usccb.org/christusvivit or contact the USCCB Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth for consultation on implementation in your diocese/region: email laity@usccb.org or call (202) 541-3040.

Order copies of *Christus Vivit* for your diocese (and for youth and young adults) at www.usccb.org/store.