

France. “Young Catholics a minority but not giving up”



France too prepared a summary of the answers to the questionnaire that was sent to young people in the run-up to the Episcopal Synod 2018: 110 answers, 69 of them from dioceses, 18 from communities, 6 from movements, and 15 from Catholic schools, making up a total of 450 pages that have been summed up into the 26 pages that are online now.

Out of a population of 66,990,826, there are 11 million people aged 16 to 29 in France. The rates of religious backgrounds change depending on the source, but the finding is that “some spiritual and religious renewal can be observed among French young people”, 42% of whom say they are Catholics. However, there is “a real difference between young people”, even Catholic ones, “and reality”, hence the need to “listen to and open up to them in very different ways”.

Another distinctive feature of such group of believers is that they are a “minority in a lay and deeply secular society”. The list of challenges they have to face is one page long, with one detail: “The questionnaires do not say much about the challenge of interreligious relationships, Islam, though it features heavily in French society and media”. For young people, the “ecclesial places” that work best are “big rallies and pilgrimages” and, in terms of ordinary pastoral services, “the Scouts, a movement that is deeply rooted all over France and is very dynamic”, while it seems that “specialist Catholic Action movements are fading out of the ecclesial landscape”.

Source: Agenzia SIR