

### *Instrumentum laboris*

In the period leading up to the Oct. 2015 Synod of bishops at which the pastoral care of the person and the family was scheduled to be discussed, three well-respected priest/theologians -- Claude Barthe, of Paris, cofounder of the magazine *Catholica*; Antonio Livi, of Rome, president of the apostolic union "Fides et Ratio;" and Alfredo Morselli, of Bologna, pastor, writer, and preacher of spiritual exercises -, critiqued the working document, particularly the section on homosexuality. Their paper, "Observations on the *Instrumentum laboris*" presents the concerns of numerous European priests, bishops, and laity.

In it, {*Instrumentum laboris*} they write, "We maintain that at a synod on the family, addressing the issue of homosexuality by saying only that homosexuals must not be treated badly and their families not be left alone, is a sin of omission."

Recalling that the Church is called to be a field hospital for the proclamation of God's mercy, they write: "it is opportune to recall that, in every self-respecting hospital, the doctors do their duty when: 1) they diagnose the illness, 2) administer treatment, 3) follow the patient all the way to recovery; moreover the Church is like "a physician who realizes the danger of disease, protects himself and others from it, but at the same time he strives to cure those who have contracted it."

The papers compares those who reduce the work of the Church to welcoming persons with same-sex attraction with "respect and delicacy" to reducing the work of a hospital to palliative care.

They encourage the Church and Bishops, in particular, to foster and support "those forms of psychological support which have been provided in recent years, with encouraging results...In a particular way, we would ask the Bishops to support, with the means at their disposal, the development of appropriate forms of pastoral care for homosexual persons. These would include the assistance of the psychological, sociological and medical sciences, in full accord with the teaching of the Church."

They also encourage the Church to take an active part in unmasking "all homosexualist theories (such as "gender" theory) and slogans such as 'homosexuals are born that way.' They are concerned that such slogans suppress the hope that change is possible.