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Pope Francis has ratified the members elected by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to represent the United States at Synod of Bishops Oct. 3-28.

The synod will meet at the Vatican to discuss "young people, faith and vocational discernment."

The U.S. bishops' conference announced July 23 that the U.S. church's delegates will be:

-- Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. bishops' conference.

-- Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the U.S. bishops' conference.

-- Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

-- Bishop Frank Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut, a member of the bishops'Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

-- Auxiliary Bishop Robert Barron of Los Angeles, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis.

In preparation for the synod, the U.S. bishops' conference and other episcopal conferences, as well as ecclesial movements, associations and experts in the field, were consulted throughout 2017 on the synod topic of "young people, the faith, and vocational discernment."

The Vatican also collected responses from an online questionnaire aimed at youth and young adults conducted last year.

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In March of this year, over 300 young adult delegates gathered in Rome, where Francis convened a presynod gathering to listen directly to the voice of young people from around the world. The gathering produced a final presynodal document.

The U.S. bishops sent three delegates to that meeting: De La Salle Christian Brother Javier Hansen, who teaches at Cathedral High School in El Paso, Texas; Nick Lopez, director of campus ministry for the University of Dallas; and Katie Prejean-McGrady, a wife, new mother, youth minister, and a popular speaker from the Diocese of Lake Charles, Louisiana.

The working document was released in late June and includes a summary of all the synod consultations to date. It describes the purpose of the upcoming Synod of Bishops as an opportunity for the church "to accompany all young people, without exception, toward the joy of love," realizing that "taking care of young people is not an optional task for the church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission is history."

On July 14, the Vatican announced Francis has chosen his delegates to the synod -- four cardinals from countries where young people are facing special challenges.

He named Cardinals Louis Sako of Baghdad, the Chaldean patriarch; Desire Tsarahazana of Toamasina, Madagascar; Charles Bo of Yangon, Myanmar; and John Ribat of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. As presidents-delegate, the cardinals will alternate presiding over the synod sessions.

This story appears in the **Synod on the Youth 2018** feature series. View the full series.