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USCCB: U.S. bishops will follow 'usual process' on synod document

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Washington — The U.S. bishops' conference will follow a "usual process" in soliciting comments from lay Catholics on next year's Vatican synod on the family, a spokeswoman said late Thursday.

Helen Osman, the secretary of communications for the conference, was responding to *NCR's* story that the Vatican has asked national bishops' conferences around the world to conduct a wide-ranging poll of Catholics asking for their opinions on church teachings on contraception, same-sex marriage and divorce.

The previous story reports that a letter from the U.S. bishops' general secretary, Msgr. Ronny Jenkins, only asks the U.S. bishops to provide their own observations. Earlier Thursday, Osman said Jenkins was out of the office for the day and was not available to comment.

Following is Osman's full response, made after publication of the original story:

We'll follow the usual process, since Rome asks for this kind of consultation on a regular basis.

We pass on to bishops what is sent to us. They then take care of the local consultation and send the data back to us. We transmit it to the Holy See. That is why the letter says the bishops will send back observations (gathered locally).

It will be up to each bishop to determine what would be the most useful way of gathering

information to provide to Rome.

The original story has been updated to include Osman's expanded response.

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