



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Joint Communiqué of the Holy See and the German Bishops' Conference

This morning, 18 November, an interdicastery meeting was held at the Augustinianum Institute in Rome, attended by, along with the heads of several Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the 62 bishops of the Catholic Church present in Rome for their *ad Limina Apostolorum* visit.

The meeting was planned some time ago as an opportunity to reflect together on the synodal journey underway in Germany, convened as a response to cases of sexual abuse of minors by some members of the clergy.

The meeting was moderated by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, who in introducing the work recalled the bond of communion and love that unites the bishops among themselves and with the Successor of Peter and, emphasizing the importance of the meeting as a moment of sharing and grace, of unity in differences, he mentioned the concerns raised by the synod way, indicating the risk of “reform of the Church, and not in the Church”.

In his introductory intervention, Bishop Georg Baetzing of Limburg, president of the German Bishops' Conference, offered an interpretation of the work of the German synod way, and highlighted its spirit, based on listening to the People of God and on their grief at the abuses committed by members of the clergy. Furthermore, Bishop Baetzing listed the themes discussed at the assemblies: Power and division of powers in the Church; Common participation and missionary planning; Priestly life today; Women in ministries and offices of the Church; Living in functioning relations; Living love in sexuality and in relationships in couples. Finally, he expressed appreciation for the work of the Synod convened by the Holy Father for the entire Church and the decision to extend its timeframe.

This was followed by the theological reports of Their Eminences Cardinal Luis Francisco Ladaria, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, who spoke frankly and clearly about the concerns and reservations regarding the methodology, content and proposals of the Synodal Way, proposing, for the benefit of the unity of the Church and its evangelizing mission, that the requests that have emerged so far be included in the Synod of the universal Church.

Numerous German bishops and representatives of the Curia took part in the subsequent open dialogue. The

importance and also the urgency of defining and deepening some of the issues highlighted thus emerged, such as those relating to the structures of the Church, the sacred ministry and access to it, Christian anthropology, etc. At the same time, there was a full awareness on the part of all that they are on a journey with the entire holy and patient People of God, even in the confrontation between different positions. Precisely in this sense, many interventions indicated the centrality of evangelization and mission as the ultimate goal of the ongoing processes, as well as the awareness of the inaccessibility of certain topics.

In this perspective of open and fraternal sharing, a number of proposals were made, such as that of applying a moratorium to the German Synodal Way, which was not pursued, and that of encouraging further reflection and mutual listening in the light of the perplexities that have emerged.

In concluding, the Cardinal Secretary of State expressed his appreciation for the confrontation, which was not formal, but necessary and constructive, and which "cannot be disregarded" in the paths currently being taken.

It was agreed that mutual listening and dialogue should continue in the coming months, so that they may contribute to the enrichment of the German Synodal Way and the universal Synod of the Church.
