



Statement by the Presidents of the Synodal Path on the statement presented by the Holy See

Statement given by the Presidents of the Synodal Path, Dr Irme Stetter-Karp, President of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK), and Bishop Dr Georg Bätzing, President of the German Bishops' Conference on today's (21 July 2022) statement on the Synodal Path presented by the Holy See:

“We welcome that the Holy See once again emphasises what we have already committed to in the Statutes and Rules of Procedure before the start of the Synodal Path in 2019:

‘Resolutions passed by the Synodal Assembly have no legal effect of their own accord. The authority of the Bishops’ Conference and of the individual diocesan Bishops to issue legal norms and exercise their magisterium within their respective spheres of competence remains unaffected by the resolutions.’

‘Resolutions whose topics are reserved for an all-church regulation are transmitted to the Apostolic See as a vote of the Synodal Path’. (Articles 11 and 12)

We never tire of underlining that the Church in Germany will not follow a “special German path”. Nevertheless, we see it as our duty to clearly state where we believe changes are necessary. In doing so, we already sense that the problems and questions we have named are similar worldwide.

We would also like to recall that the Synodal Path is the result of the study ‘Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests, Deacons and Male Religious in the Domain of the German Bishops’ Conference’ (MHG Study) and we are grateful that the bishops and the ZdK are walking this path together and can be sure of the support and active cooperation of the pilgrim people of God.

In 2021, Pope Francis has opened a worldwide synodal process. We will, of course, as planned - and today’s statement also encourages us to do so - contribute to the synodal process of the universal Church with the experiences and results gained from the Synodal Path. We have

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always stressed that we want to actively shape this process through our work. Because we are convinced that this leads to a 'mutual enrichment' (declaration of the Holy See).

In the Rules of Procedure and Statutes of the Synodal Path we formulate the communication with the Apostolic See which we consider necessary and which we are looking for. The Apostolic Nuncio in Germany is invited to participate in the Synodal Path as a permanent observer. Since the beginning of the Synodal Path, the Synodal Committee has endeavoured to find direct ways of communication with the Roman bodies. In our opinion, this would be the right place for such clarifications. Unfortunately, the Synodal Committee has not been invited to a discussion to date. We regret with irritation that this direct communication has not yet taken place. In our understanding, a synodal Church is something else! This also applies to the way today's communication has been handled, which has been a source of astonishment for us. It is not a good example of communication within the Church, if statements are published which are not signed by name.

The next Synodal Assembly will be the place to take up as well as discuss the Holy See's concern. Once again, as Presidents of the Synodal Path, we would like to emphasise that we are interested in an early discussion with as many authorities within the Roman Curia as possible.”

The press offices of the German Bishops' Conference and the ZdK have jointly formed the Synodal Path press office since 1 December 2019. As the different distribution lists cannot be united for data protection reasons, you may receive the press releases twice by email. We would like to apologise for this.