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## **XII International Pilgrimage of altar boys and girls to Rome in July/August 2018**

### **Information on the Coetus Internationalis Ministrantium (CIM) and the International Pilgrimage to Rome**

The International Association of altar servers Coetus Internationalis Ministrantium (CIM) was founded with considerable German involvement in 1960/1961 in Altenberg, Odenthal and other places. In addition to pastoral and liturgical concerns, a peace initiative by and for altar servers was particularly important. Their service can make it especially clear that the message of Jesus Christ, the peace of God, the celebration of this message of the Redeemer and the common service for him transcend all national and linguistic borders. The altar service exists worldwide; children, adolescents and young adults, for example, can serve together even if they do not speak each other's language.

In 1961, the first common pilgrimage to Rome took place which has since then been held every four years (formerly about every five years) for young people aged 13 to 14 and young adults. In 2014, there was a unique pilgrimage only of the altar servers from Germany with more than 50,000 participants, and in 2015 the XI International Pilgrimage with altar servers from more than 22 countries took place.

In 2018, at the initiative of the CIM and its President Dr. Ladislav Nemet SVD, Bishop of Zrenjanin/Serbia and President of the International Bishops' Conference of Sts Cyril and Methodius, and following the impulse of Pope Francis, the countries and dioceses invited to set off again together internationally for Rome and to organize pilgrimages. The CIM expects more than 60,000 altar servers from Germany, Europe and the whole world: Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, Croatia, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, Serbia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary and the USA.

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### **German pilgrimage groups**

In Germany, some 360,000 young people are currently active as altar servers. The dioceses and their respective responsible persons for altar service ministry organize pilgrimages with their own concepts for the altar servers. They are responsible for the travel and accommodation organisation as well as the corresponding programme parts of the pilgrimage week (diocesan services, spiritual programme in Rome and its churches, pilgrim routes, visits to historical, cultural and spiritual sites, e.g. of early Christianity, occasional pre- or connecting trips e.g. to Assisi, excursions, spare time, etc.).

26 German dioceses (excluding the Archdiocese of Cologne) participate in the pilgrimage.

The German group of pilgrims will consist of more than 50,000 altar servers aged between 13 and 27 years (with the main group aged between 14 and 18 years). In addition to the Chairman of the Commission for Youth Ministry of the German Bishops' Conference, Bishop Dr. Stefan Oster SDB, numerous other members of the German Bishops' Conference are expected.