



Press release of the German Lay Initiative New Beginning, January 25, 2023.

"Immediate stop of the synodal committee!"

Neuss. The Catholic lay initiative New Beginning demands the immediate stop of all further preparations for the installation of a "Synodal Committee" (That body which is to prepare the Synodal Council, a kind of church parliament after the end of the Synodal Path in Germany after the coming last session in March 2023). Where there is no longer a legitimate goal, there is no need to waste resources organizing prohibited committees - unless one wants to lead the Catholic Church in Germany full speed into the abyss of a schism with Rome.

The serious letter from Rome is not a well-intentioned serving proposal, but an order issued "in forma specifica" - that is, legally binding and also final - that lacks no clarity: Neither the Synodal Path, nor any body established by it, nor any Episcopal Conference has the competence to establish a "Synodal Council" at the national, diocesan or parish level.

Transparent trick of planned "self-commitment"

This committee had been decided at the Synodal Assembly in September 2022, exclusively to prepare the establishment and work of the new planned Synodal Council. **So why does Bishop Bätzing insist on the establishment of a committee to build a council which, even according to his own current admission - just like the Synodal Path itself - could not make any legally binding decisions anyway and would only be an endless waste of time for church functionaries as well as a waste of money?**

Behind it a transparent strategic trick can be suspected: The "voluntary self-commitment" to new contents and structures already practiced by some bishops in introducing a new sexual morality while formally not touching church law.

The fact that the Bishop of Münster, Felix Genn, immediately announced that he agrees with Bishop Bätzing's statement and that he is prepared to "bind himself to the decisions of diocesan bodies within the framework of a voluntary commitment" may be interpreted as confirmation of this strategy. This has not only no theological and legal legitimacy, but is to be called particularly perfidious. It is simply an attempt to circumvent the Roman decision. A bishop cannot relieve himself of his consecration and the responsibility given with it, he can only submit his resignation. The Roman letter itself also points to a statement of the 2nd Vatican Council on this matter (Lumen Gentium n. 21).

As laity, we want an end to structural, pseudo-democratic and synodality-simulating debates, as we have now experienced for years on the Synodal Path, and instead finally a turn to the beauty of our faith, an honest reappraisal of the abuse debate and a genuine reform of our Church by turning to evangelization and mission - as Pope Francis has already formulated in the letter to us Germans in 2019.

Dangerous solo attempt towards schism



If Bishop Bätzing now declares that he does not share Rome's concerns about the Synodal Council, one must conclude: It does not matter at all, because according to the Catholic understanding of the Church - which he knows as a bishop - there is neither a margin of discretion nor a right of veto, and he obviously misjudges his competences and his position in the Church hierarchy.

In fact, he is just maneuvering all German Catholics into dangerous proximity to Can. 751 CIC of Canon Law: "...schism is called the refusal of submission to the pope or of communion with the members of the church subject to him." Bätzing's refusal is an act of schism in substance. We, as the Catholic Church in Germany, are on the verge of the dogmatic and moral quality of this act becoming legally manifest and creating a reality that is also formally schismatic.

Urgent appeal to all bishops:

As a lay initiative, we urgently appeal to all German bishops to stop a chairman who single-handedly threatens to drag the particular churches in the area of the German Bishops' Conference into the abyss of a church schism. We do not want to be "differently" Catholic, but to remain Roman Catholic.

Referring Link to the Letter from Rome in German Language:

https://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/presse_2023/2023-009a-Brief-Kardinalstaatssekretaer-Praeferkten-der-Dikasterien-fuer-die_Glaubenslehre-und-fuer-die-Bischoefe.pdf

Referring Link to the Letter from Rome in English Translation:

https://neueranfang.online/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-009a-Letter-Cardinal-Secretary-of-State-Praeferct-of-the-Dicasteries-for-the_Doctrine-to-German-Bishops-on-Synodal-Council.pdf

Link to the Reaction of Bishop Bätzing, where he announces to go futher on to install the Synodal Council:

<https://www.dbk.de/presse/aktuelles/meldung/kommunikation-mit-dem-heiligen-stuhl-nach-dem-ad-limina-besuch-der-deutschen-bischoefe>

The initiative Neuer Anfang („New Beginning”) has been founded by a group of lay Catholics in response to tendencies in Germany which implement a secular anthropology in the church. The initiative wants to clarify why and how Catholic teaching is relevant in a post-modern world.

On January 5th, 2022 members of the initiative traveled to Rome and presented their „manifesto for reform” – nine thesis concerning the German Synodal Path, its theological implications and offering alternative solutions – to Pope Francis himself.

Find here the [link to the manifesto presented to Pope Francis in January 2022](#)

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