



Implementation text

Sustainable strengthening of Synodality: A Synodal Council for the Catholic Church in Germany

Decision of the Synodal Path adopted by the Synodal Assembly on September 10, 2022

Introduction

(1) “With the “foundational text” on “Power and Separation of Powers” qualifying “Joint Participation and Involvement in the Mission”, we note the following:

(2) Synodality is a fundamental activity of the Church. Synodality is also a spiritual process that helps us to hear God’s Word today and to promote evangelisation through discernment of spirits, prayer and the exchange of arguments. Synodality is a means enabling the members of God’s people to discover, contribute and interconnect their specific spiritual gifts. Synodality is furthermore a form of transparent, solution-oriented working. To deliberate and decide together on the Synodal Path has strengthened the community of faith in recent years. These good experiences gained on the Synodal Path form a foundation on which to further strengthen the synodality of the Catholic Church in Germany. Co-operation between bishops and faithful at supra-diocesan level is to become a permanent practice.

Motion

(3) The Synodal Assembly herewith resolves to establish a Synodal Council by March 2026 at the latest. The Synodal Council sees itself as a further development of the Joint Conference and is intended to replace it. The Council shall be established on the basis of can. 127 and can. 129 CIC. A Synodal Committee shall be appointed by the Synodal Assembly in order to prepare the Synodal Council. The decision of the Synodal Assembly to establish the Synodal Council shall be implemented by the Presidium of the Synodal Assembly in accordance with the decisions of the Synodal Committee by March 2026 at the latest. The Synodal Committee shall consist of the 27 diocesan bishops, 27 members elected by the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) and 20 members elected by the Synodal Assembly. The Committee is composed in a generationally and gender equitable manner. This Committee shall be jointly supported by the German Bishops’ Conference and the Central Committee of German Catholics. It shall be chaired by the President of the German Bishops’ Conference and the President of the Central Committee of German Catholics. The Synodal Committee shall constitute itself after the Synodal Assembly in March 2023 and adopt statutes. It shall conclude its activities by March 2026 at the latest and report to the Synodal Assembly.

(4) The Synodal Committee shall have the following tasks:

- It shall prepare the establishment of a Synodal Council of the Catholic Church in Germany by 2026 at the latest which shall meet the requirements set out below. The development of the Synodal Council includes determining the relationship to other bodies of the German Bishops' Conference as well as to the Central Committee of German Catholics.
- It shall prepare and evolve the evaluation of the resolutions of the Synodal Assembly.
- It shall continue to develop the initiatives that have been discussed on the Synodal Path in the Synodal Forums and in the Synodal Assembly. It decides promptly on the texts that were discussed and decided in the Synodal Forums and could no longer be submitted to the Synodal Assembly.
- It seeks an understanding of the notion of synodality as a basic activity of the Church, which is deeply rooted in the Church and was re-emphasised by the Second Vatican Council and the worldwide synodal process in the pontificate of Pope Francis. As basic prerequisites for synodality, the Synodal Committee develops synodal structures, a synodal culture of togetherness as well as an inner attitude of being able to accept criticism and the common search for a sustainable consensus.
- It shall arrange for the necessary financial and personnel resources.

(5) Key features of the Synodal Council:

As an advisory and decision-making body, the Synodal Council shall advise on major developments in the Church and in society and based on this shall take fundamental decisions of supra-diocesan significance on pastoral planning, future perspectives of the Church and financial and budgetary matters of the Church that are not decided at diocesan level.

- The Synodal Council shall be composed in accordance with the proportions of the Synodal Assembly in transparent procedures and elections in a gender- and generation-appropriate manner, ensuring a size that is appropriate for work.
- The resolutions of the Synodal Council shall have the same legal effect as the resolutions of the Synodal Assembly (Art. 11 para. 5 of the Statutes of the Synodal Path).
- The Synodal Council shall meet in public session. The chair of the Synodal Council shall be held jointly by the President of the German Bishops' Conference and the President of the Central Committee of German Catholics.
- The Synodal Council shall elect two spiritual companions. It may invite observers to attend its meetings.
- The Synodal Council shall adopt statutes and rules of procedure.