



Closing press conference on the occasion of the XIII International Pilgrimage of Altar Servers to Rome

More than 50,000 altar servers from roughly 20 countries have come together this week in Rome (29 July to 2 August 2024) at the XIII International Pilgrimage of Altar Servers under the motto “*with you*” (*Isa 41:10*). The Special Audience with Pope Francis on Tuesday evening (30 July 2024) was the highlight of the week of pilgrimage. The week was characterised by catechesis, church services, guided tours, excursions and meetings between the altar servers. The German Pilgrimage Centre in Rome, offered for the first time ever, was very well received. The pilgrims thus had a place to rest and exchange ideas, take advantage of the cultural programme with drama, music and film, and find out about the work of the vocational pastoral care services. There was a considerable amount of interest in the discussion format which has been dubbed “Ask the Bishop”, at which amongst others Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ (Archbishop of Luxembourg), President of CIM, Auxiliary Bishop Johannes Wübbe (Osnabrück), President of the Commission for Youth Ministry of the German Bishops' Conference, and Bishop Dr Georg Bätzing, Bishop of Limburg and Chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, answered the young altar servers' questions.

Cardinal Hollerich SJ drew a positive conclusion at today's (1 August 2024) closing press conference: “It is impressive that so many young people have travelled to the Eternal City to celebrate their faith together. Altar servers could be seen on every corner of the city, exchanging pilgrim badges and exploring the city. 70,000 young people attended the Special Audience with Pope Francis. The sense of fellowship and the meeting with the Holy Father have strengthened them in their service, and I am sure that they will take their enthusiasm home to their parishes.” He stated that the altar servers from the different countries had met, shared and made friends during the week of pilgrimage, and went on to say that it was particularly important for the young people to exchange views, both nationally and internationally. “They have been given the opportunity to learn that faith is something global.”

Auxiliary Bishop Johannes Wübbe underlined: “A great festival of faith! This pilgrimage has opened up a perspective for young people who have had the opportunity to learn in Rome that it is worthwhile living for faith, despite all the crises in the Church. What is remarkable about these young people is the joyful atmosphere, their strong solidarity and commitment, and their interest in talking

Editor
Dr Beate Gilles
General Secretary of the German
Bishops' Conference

Editorial
Matthias Kopp (responsible)
Director of the
Communications Office

Kaiserstraße 161
53113 Bonn
Tel. +49 (0) 228 103 214
Fax +49 (0) 228 103 254
Mail pressestelle@dbk.de

dbk.de
facebook.com/dbk.de
twitter.com/dbk_online
youtube.com/c/DeutscheBischofskonferenz
instagram.com/bischofskonferenz

about God and about the world. For me, they are really a symbol of hope for our Church. I am wholly convinced that Pope Francis was just as impressed as I was. We were able to feel in these few days that he is building on the young generation when it comes to making the Church into a living thing.”

Secretary-General of CIM Tobias Knell was also impressed by the altar servers. “The young people have travelled to Rome from some 20 countries. As different as they are, they are united by their shared commitment to their faith. There was no mistaking during the Audience on St Peter’s Square that so many young people are enthusiastic about their faith. The Pilgrimage of Altar Servers is one of the Church’s largest events in pastoral work with young people in Germany. Our task as a Church is to guide, encourage and strengthen the altar servers on their path. We were able to show them through the various activities which were offered that every individual person counts, and everyone together makes up our hope and our future.”

Background

Those attending the XIII International Pilgrimage of Altar Servers have come from at least 88 (arch)bishoprics and roughly 20 countries (including Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland and Ukraine). The roughly 35,000 altar servers from Germany are accompanied by the President of the Commission for Youth Ministry of the German Bishops’ Conference, Auxiliary Bishop Johannes Wübbe, as well as by many members of the German Bishops’ Conference. This year’s International Pilgrimage of Altar Servers was held under the motto “*with you*” (*Isa 41:10*).

Information:

Photographs from the altar servers’ pilgrimage are available free of charge in print quality in the German Bishops’ Conference’s database [DBK-Mediendatenbank](#). Please quote the copyright information © Deutsche Bischofskonferenz/Maximilian von Lachner. The selection of photographs will be continually expanded during the pilgrimage.

You will find more information on the altar servers’ pilgrimage at www.dbk.de on the topical page [Internationale Ministrantenwallfahrt 2024 nach Rom](#), and on the website ministranten.de/romwallfahrt-2024.