
Netherlands: Dutch Bishops at the Vatican. “Weakening of faith, sexual morality, priesthood candidates” discussed

The ad limina visit of the Bishops leading the Dutch Church has come to a close in Rome. The highlight of the visit, which lasted from 7 to 12 November, was the audience with Pope Francis on Friday 11 November. “The Pope devoted a lot of time to us”, the President of the Bishops’ Conference Hans Van den Hende said, describing a “spontaneous conversation, with so many questions”. The informal exchange lasted over an hour and a half, Bishop Jan Hendriks of Haarlem-Amsterdam revealed in his blog, which provides a daily account of the visit and meetings with the different Dicasteries in Rome. “The Pope told us that we could feel free to criticise him, because he thought it would be better if it happened during the conversation, rather than later, outside”, Mgr. Hendriks explained. The prelate gave a detailed personal account of the issues addressed and the Pope’s words, including the weakening of faith in the Netherlands, sexual morality, gender ideology, and the selection of candidates for the priesthood. At the end of the meeting, the Pope exhorted the Bishops “not to lose heart in the desert, because the Lord makes the desert bloom with beautiful flowers. The Pope encouraged us to continue with confidence”.

Valentina Bombelli