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## **Netherlands: a survey about the “added values” of being a Church, “mutual care, hospitality, celebrations”. Fund raising for religious communities**

On Saturday, 18th January, the “Actie Kerkbalans” campaign will be making a comeback in the Catholic parishes and in the communities of the Protestant world of the Netherlands, mobilising volunteers until 4th February to raise funds in support of the work of the local Churches. The findings of a national survey aiming at finding “what are the added values” of being an ecclesial community have been published just before such yearly initiative. The first three values that have been recognised as most qualifying are “mutual care, hospitality and celebrations”. This has been reported to SIR by Anna Kruse, spokesperson for the Bishops’ Conference of the Netherlands. Today, the survey has been presented at a press conference in Utrecht. “The social dimension of being a Church is deeply valued by devotees. The Church is a community in which people know they are related to each other, who like to take care of each other, even they are not there”, Kruse explained. Another much-valued dimension “is the experience of faith: such features as the encounter with God and the celebrations” are elements that distinguish the Church from the other organisations. In the Catholic world, the religious experience comes top of the list, “while Protestants see the social dimension of being a Church as the most important feature”, Kruse pointed out. The online survey involved over 1,400 people, most of them proactively working in their communities; the Catholic and Protestant souls were equally represented; 75% of respondents have been going to Church for over 11 years, and 81% of them work as volunteers in their communities.

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