
Austria: Bishops to meet via video conference. Situation following Vienna attack, “Fratelli tutti” and pastoral care in Covid times

The next autumn Plenary Assembly of the Austrian Bishops' Conference (ÖBK) will be unprecedented for two reasons: for the first time, the Bishops will meet remotely, via video conference, rather than face-to-face, and for the first time, the four-day plenary will be opened and chaired by the Archbishop of Salzburg, Mgr. Franz Lackner, who succeeded Card. Christoph Schönborn to the ÖBK presidency. “This time, due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the Bishops will not meet in Salzburg as is customary, but will exchange views remotely”, the Secretary General of the Bishops' Conference, Peter Schipka, told Kathpress this morning. This procedure is “a sign of responsible management in the current coronavirus situation”. The Bishops have familiarised with this form of pastoral communication in the informal video conferences held over the past few months of restrictions and lockdowns. According to Mgr Schipka, the impact of the virus on the ecclesial life, on pastoral care and on aid offers will be one of the main topics for discussion. Discussion will also focus on other important themes, including Pope Francis' social encyclical “Fratelli tutti” and the social situation following the terrorist attack in Vienna. The Bishops' Assembly will begin on Monday, 9 November, and end on Thursday, 12 November.

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