
Germany: Bishops' Conference, declaration "in dialogue with people at school" published today

The German Bishops' Conference (DBK) has today released the declaration "In dialogue with people at school" which seeks to answer questions about the current situation of pastoral care in schools. 25 years after the programmatic document "School Pastoral Care - The Church's service to the people in a school environment", the Bishops are again addressing the world of students and education which have both changed significantly over the past decades. It should be noted that the key words today are the religious and ideological plurality of students and teachers, diversity, and the requirements of inclusion and digitalisation. "School is more than teaching", said the chairman of the Commission for Education and Schools of the German Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Hans-Josef Becker of Paderborn. "It is a vital space where students and teachers spend most of their day. School pastoral activities make a fundamental contribution to shaping this vital space". Today, these activities include the days of religious orientation, spiritual programmes in the "rooms of silence" as well as a wide range of "social diakonia" activities such as the one-world projects, arbitration programmes, and spaces and opportunities for encounter with parents and aimed at parents. The document provides an extensive analysis of environmental and social issues and proposes individual advice or pastoral care measures for times of crisis, or in the event of accidents or death.

Other points addressed in the declaration are: the conscious management of religious and ideological plurality at school; the exercise of political and social responsibilities; supporting violence prevention measures; and cooperating with Protestants in the field of school pastoral care.

