
Germany: Mgr. Bätzing (Bishops' President), Pope “encouraged us to continue Synodal Path undertaken”

Today Pope Francis has received in audience, for the second time, the President of the German Bishops, Mgr. Georg Bätzing. The first audience with him was a year ago to mark the beginning of his mandate as president. “Our discussion mainly focused on the situation of the Church in Germany as regards the handling of abuse cases and the difficult situation facing various dioceses”, Bishop Bätzing said in a statement released by the Bishops' Conference Secretariat. “Pope Francis is well-informed about the situation of the Church in Germany”, the statement reads, and “hopes that tensions can be resolved”. Discussion also touched on the Synodal Path: “I made it clear that the rumours that the Church in Germany wants to take a special path are totally unfounded”, Mgr. Bätzing said. Pope Francis, for his part, “encouraged us to continue the Synodal Path we have undertaken, to openly and frankly discuss the issues at stake, and to make recommendations for a renewed action by the Church”. The Pope also urged the Church in Germany to “contribute to the synodal journey” in the run-up to the Synod of Bishops in 2023. “I am grateful to Pope Francis”, the bishops' president said, for the opportunity to talk about ecumenism and the recent Third Ecumenical Kirchentag. “Like a year ago”, the statement ends, “I feel supported by Pope Francis in my ministry as Bishop of Limburg and in my role as President of the German Bishops' Conference”. Mgr. Bätzing also said he was “impressed” by how Pope Francis knows the situation of the Church in Germany and “is able to name the problems”. He “will help the Church in our country out of the crisis”.

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