

The storm is coming - it is getting uncomfortable on the Synodal Way

On the day before the start of the fifth synodal assembly, the forecast is for storms. You have to rub your eyes in bewilderment, looking at the initial situation of the coming days: the Holy Father himself forbade the founding of a synodal council, the very body that was to be one of the main outcomes of the synodal journey. “It was precisely this point that the papal ambassador to Germany inculcated once again in the bishops’ plenary assembly just last week, and is thus in continuity with numerous statements by the Holy See on the German synodal path,” said Clara Steinbrecher, spokeswoman for the Maria 1.0 initiative. “But instead of taking these stop signs seriously, the criticism is rejected as methodologically wrong, presented as incomprehensible and ultimately ignored as an encroachment,” she continues. Bishop Bätzing, in his desperation, tried to save what could be saved by having the bishops’ conference draft toned-down texts as an alternative. These should be more likely to find an episcopal majority than the ones drafted so far by the individual forums, so that there would not be a similar or even worse *éclat* than the one at the last synodal assembly on the evening of the first day of the session, when one of the texts was not adopted. Irme Stetter-Karp (ZdK), however, immediately blocked this move and explained that these texts cannot be taken into account so late now because the statutes do not allow it. Thereupon Gregor Podschun (BDKJ), a synod member, clarified that the statutes allow this very well and have already been practiced in this way. Clara Steinbrecher, head of Maria 1.0, noted that even in the liberal camp there is apparently no agreement on how the Synodal Way should continue and how the desired reforms can now be implemented without losing the episcopal majorities or the renewed threat of an episcopal blocking minority. Among the defenders of the Synodal Way, one thing is particularly striking: the constant clarification that they want to comply with the applicable law and also do not want to touch the decision-making authority of the individual bishops. All these corrections take up the theme of “change in the hierarchy”. But in the process, the two other issues that are just as worrisome fall by the wayside, namely, doctrinal and moral change. On this, the Vatican made it unequivocally clear last year, and this clarification remains: “The ‘Synodal Way’ in Germany

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does not have the authority to oblige bishops and the faithful to adopt new forms of governance **and** new orientations of doctrine and morals.” Maria 1.0, on behalf of many Catholics in our country, calls on all synod members to resign their mandate and to stop thinking about perpetuating or continuing anti-clerical goals and committees.