

They just can't let it go...

DBK and ZdK continue synodal committee undeterred

On March 22 a delegation of German bishops negotiated the continuation of the synodal committee in Rome. The joint press release from the Vatican and the DBK states that the German bishops will not do anything that contradicts the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, canon law, or the guidelines of the World Synod. Furthermore, everything that is "decided" must be submitted to Rome for approval.

The Maria 1.0 initiative is astonished to note, however, that the DBK and ZdK announced the continuation of the synodal committee in their latest press release. For example, six working groups are already set up to explore the topics of the synodal path in greater depth, without the slightest mention of the recent talks with Rome. What's more, one working group completed its work with another four already active. They were apparently set up before the talks in Rome. Whether they were also approved by Rome remains unclear.

Although the statutes of the synodal committee are not yet in force, members of the working groups were already appointed. "How is it even possible that, under these circumstances, working groups are active beyond the synodal path? Have we now reached another intermediate stage, with the synodal committee functioning between the synodal path and the synodal council, and the working groups functioning between the synodal path and the synodal committee?" asks Clara Steinbrecher, head of the Maria 1.0 initiative.

A closer look at the topics makes it clear that they echo the themes of the synodal path exactly: The involvement of the faithful in the appointment of the diocesan bishop, for example, was explicitly prohibited. A year ago, the Vatican disapproved of plans by the Archdiocese of Paderborn, for example, to disregard current church law (which provides for the election of bishops by the cathedral chapter) by including selected lay people in the election process.

Issues such as gender diversity or women in ministries and offices are non-negotiable. These issues were expressly entrusted to expert commissions that are not to be found in Germany but in Rome. "We, as the Maria 1.0 initiative, would like to see the German bishops finally give in instead of constantly ruminating on issues that have long since been resolved," Steinbrecher continued.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the German bishops did not even wait for the Easter celebrations to make it clear that they want to continue on their current path. After the joint meeting between the DBK and the Vatican, some circles spoke hopefully that the German bishops would face facts, but by this press release at the latest, a more sober view is necessary. The members of the Maria 1.0 initiative state: "The Roman intervention has been noted, but no significant influence can be ascertained at present. It is more a case of business as usual."

Maria 1.0 is an initiative of Catholics, especially young women, who live the one universal faith of the Church in different spiritualities. The initiative sees itself as a mouthpiece for all Catholics who profess the beauty and truth of the Catholic faith as formulated by the Magisterium of the Church and would like to make this faith known through the media.