

ALL THAT I ASK OF YOU GOD
IS THAT THE SUFFERING DOESN'T LEAVE ME INDIFFERENT
THAT DEATH WON'T FIND ME, MY BODY DRY AND ROUGH
ALONE AND EMPTY, AND NOT HAVING DONE ENOUGH
ALL THAT I ASK OF YOU GOD
IS THAT INJUSTICE DOESN'T LEAVE ME INDIFFERENT
Mercedes Sosa: Solo le pido a Dios

Yes, Mercedes Sosa's song is about great social injustice, deprivation and exclusion. All scientists tell us that women and children suffer the most from injustices, hunger, wars, violence, pollution, ... all over the world. They are the ones who suffer the most.

Justice is the mother of peace.

The Catholic Women's Movement, as well as many other Christian diaconal and social works, are committed to helping disadvantaged women. They help them to help themselves, so that they take their life and the commitment for justice into their own hands.

The commitment of working for improving women's rights is therefore very much linked to the works of mercy. Bishop Wanke, bishop emeritus of Erfurt, translates it into being here and now: I listen to you. I walk a bit with you. You belong. I pray for you. I share with you. I visit you. I speak well of you.

Commitment to justice today - in 2022 - means commitment to gender justice in every respective society and it also means commitment to gender justice within the Catholic Church.

Because of the history - evolution of Democracy and from a world democratic viewpoint it is clear, that inequality between women and men can no longer be presented as just today.

Countless young women of today increasingly assume a fundamental equality of the sexes and also demand this from politics, the church and society. It is about equality and not about privileges.

Frauendelegation der Katholischen Frauenbewegung Österreichs

gemeinsam unterwegs mit Mag.a Doris Schmidauer und unterstützt durch Botschafterin Dr.in Franziska Honsowitz-Friessnigg im Austausch mit hochrangigen Vertreterinnen der röm.-kath. Kurie im Vatikan

The icon of St. Petka and St. Marina from Bulgaria shows the basic Christian message from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. They are holding the Cross of Martyrdom and Annunciation and the Rosary of Faith Practice and both have put on a stole. They are priestly.



Transformation towards gender justice now

So if the Catholic Church does not want to lose face in front of history and society, then a change, a transformation towards gender justice and equality at all levels of the Church is needed now. This concerns the promotion of women in leadership positions, the appreciation of the ways of life and faith of young women as well as the reorganization of the sacramental ministry for women and men.

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world, Gaudium et Spes Chapter 4:

To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics. Some of the main features of the modern world can be sketched as follows.

Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world.

Said another way:

Gender justice at all levels of the church is a sign of the times. Now is the time for change! The synodal path in the Austrian dioceses shows this clearly. The topic of women and church, gender justice, equality are the most mentioned topics and are presented in all synthesis reports.

The Church throughout the world is largely sustained by the commitment of women. If they are to continue to be part of the pilgrim people of God in the future, the time for change is now.

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Together of laity and clergy

Since the II. Vatican Council, the Catholic Church in Upper Austria / Diocese of Linz has lived as a constructive cooperation of laity and clergy, of volunteers and full-time employees.

This is reflected

- in the assignment of theologically qualified lay people to share responsibility in the leadership of parishes,
- in the possibility of extraordinary admission to administer baptism in the context of the baptismal ministry in the parish due to the lack of priests, their appointment for several parishes and their advanced age,
- in the training and commissioning to lead a funeral liturgy and the Service of the Word.
- in the cooperation of lay people and clergy in the preparation for the sacraments, in parish life, in the organization of child care facilities, schools and adult education, as well as in the support of the "Caritas" in Upper Austria.

Some figures on this:

In 486 parishes, only 265 of about 500 priests of the Diocese of Linz are still officially appointed, since the priests already have an average age of 68. The approximately 500 theologically qualified lay people have an average age of 44. In addition to the 138 permanent deacons (volunteering), there are now 1600 volunteers serving, instructed for leading Services of the Word, and 270 supplying as volunteers funeral ministry in the Diocese of Linz. In addition, there are 7500 parish council members, 5000 volunteers in Catholic adult education, and 80.000 members of Catholic Action.

Our lay ministers in hospital care accompany people in prayer and conversation also in their last phase of life, but they are not able to fulfill the wish for the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, they feel their disappointment and wish (shared by the permanent deacons) for the possibility of a form of commissioning or a rethinking of the sacramental ministry admitting women and men to ordination. Because of the small number of available priests, the sacramental structure of the Church can no longer be well maintained in this area either.

"It's nice to have a female theologian baptizing."

One parish priest expressed the necessary relief, but also pastoral enrichment, in a recent priests' council in this way: "People really appreciate that a female theologian baptizes their child. This female pastor simply has good access to the lives of young families today. She is understood and lives the faith with radiance. She does that better than I do."

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The Episcopal Office for Pastoral Care and Apostolate is a
pastoral competence, development and service center

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