



Synod of Bishops in Rome

Statement by Auxiliary Bishop Johannes Wübbe (Osnabrück)

At the Synod of Bishops in Rome, Auxiliary Bishop Johannes Wübbe (Osnabrück) spoke on the first part (Chapter III, especially Nos. 41–42) of the Instrumentum laboris. We document his statement before the Synod:

I would like to express my sincere thanks for the excellent *Instrumentum laboris*, because in many places it focuses on disadvantaged young people and wants to give them a voice. In this regard, I would like to mention two points:

1. In numbers 41-50, the *Instrumentum* pays special attention to the "young victims of injustice and exploitation" (No. 42). In Germany, too, young people are excluded from cultural and social resources for physical, psychological or family reasons or due to their migration background.

In the church institutions of open child and youth work and youth social work we try to support the young people. An example of this is the institution "Manege" (ring) in Berlin, which offers young people a home, school education and social participation seven days a week and 24 hours a day in an areligiously marked socially deprived area. The employees also go out directly to the young people, knock on their door and invite them into the ring. Its motto for all young people is: "It's great that you're here". We must continue to intensify our efforts to give disadvantaged young people an authentic welcome and to offer them a ring: a space in which they can perform and develop their potential. Vocational accompaniment here is first and foremost an accompaniment into life.

2. The *Instrumentum* asks in number 199 where and how young people can be protagonists in our Church. I believe that many of our institutions and structures need the prophetic voice of young people. They should not only be heard, but be able to participate concretely in consultative and decision-making bodies at the level of the parish, the diocese and the Bishops' Conference. Let me give you just one example from our diocese of Osnabrück: there we involved about 1000 young people via workshops and modern means of communication in redesigning the chapel in one of our large youth educational institutions when the necessary renovation was due. The young people

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committed themselves with great seriousness and care to the task. It was noticeable how much they are interested in facilitating a fruitful encounter of their world and the celebration of faith in the liturgy.

I would like to continue this reflection: How can we also give a voice to all marginalized young people in our Church, not least those who have been victims of sexual abuse and violence in our Church? This is only possible if we start from these vulnerable people and rethink our church structures, our working methods and procedures, and even our language as a whole. *They* define the "how" of our actions if we really want to stand by their side. Our mission is to be the advocates of the “discarded”. We can be confident that “the stones the builders rejected may become cornerstones” (n. 42) for the renewal of the Church!