

The pastoral way in progress

01

How everything started ...

Bishop Kohlgraf had conversations with many people during his first year in office – within the administrative units of the diocese, but also with various other groups and organisations. The aim was to hear what people had to say about their image of a contemporary church. In addition, some 'pathfinders' were sent out to other German dioceses in order to enquire about processes of change and development in their respective church organisations.

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The plan

On the basis of this information, Bishop Kohlgraf then developed the basic ideas for the pastoral process in our diocese. Since autumn 2018, he has been supported in this task by the office of coordination that manages the communication and implementation of the various processes.

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A spiritual time of preparation

The pastoral process in our diocese officially began with a time of spiritual reflection during the Easter season 2019, which considered the question: How do we want to and how are we able to be church of Jesus Christ in 2030? What attitudes and stances do we need to adopt on the way to becoming a sharing church? Those are the questions that will remain with us during the process.

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Phase 1:

The first phase of implementation started in the spring of 2019 with meetings in the 20 deanships of our diocese.

These are the sites of discussion where individuals are being asked to contribute and review pastoral concepts for new pastoral spaces until the summer of 2021. This two year period is accompanied with a hand-out to provide focus and support.

Phase 2:

After the phase of consultation, the new pastoral concepts will be discussed and will form the basis for subsequent decisions. It will be the responsibility of the bishop to determine the new areas where the relevant pastoral concepts will be further developed and realised. The estimated 50 new parishes should be established between 2022 and 2030.

Phase 3:

The new and bigger parishes are not supposed to be just larger versions of our recent parishes. The new parishes are supposed to be networks of multifaceted church life in various places where experiences of life and faith can be shared. The aim is to live as a church locally, but also to be open for the many other forms of shared life in the wider space of the parish area.

On our homepage, we provide material for the pastoral process – information leaflets, spiritual impulses and input for discussion, prayer and worship. We hope that you will find it useful.

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The new pastoral way in the diocese of Mainz – A guidebook

The pastoral process in the diocese of Mainz – a factsheet

The term “pastoral way” describes a process of continuous development and renewal in the Catholic church of Mainz. It refers both to the spiritual and organisational levels. The guideline for the process is the idea of the “sharing church”.

Church and society are in a state of change. Bishop Kohlgraf wants to invite individuals and groups to actively and creatively shape this change. Some of his questions are:

- What do individuals want from church today?
- How do we succeed in announcing the message of the gospel, in particular to those who have not found it helpful for their lives (yet)?
- Why and how do we want to be church of Jesus Christ today?

The answers to these questions are the basis for any further steps on the way of the pastoral process. With every step, new challenges will be met and have to be addressed; not only spiritual and pastoral, but also structural, personal and financial.

What is the image of a sharing church?

Sharing life

- We want to share in the joy and hope, but also in the grief and fear of all people. The topics that are relevant to individuals in their everyday life need to be the topics of the church.

Sharing faith

- We can only pass on our faith in a community environment. Our parishes and places of church life need to offer spaces for missionary activities.

Sharing resources

- Important resources for our church are the people working for it, but also property, such as buildings and investments. We want to commit to using these resources justly in order to serve those who are in our care.

Sharing responsibilities

- Upon baptism, everyone can take on responsibilities in our church. We want to strengthen the community and find new and practical ways of distributing responsibilities.

Facts and Figures – why is change necessary?

The aim of the pastoral process is to find and preserve productive ways of sharing our faith and living as Christians. This is only made possible by acknowledging challenges and developing new ideas on how to meet them:

It is likely that the numbers of the Catholics in the diocese of Mainz will decrease from 720000 today to 610000 by the year 2030.

The numbers of priests, deacons and other pastoral workers will also go down significantly.

In the period between 2021 and 2030, the existing 134 parishes and parish groups will be merged to roughly 50 parishes. These networks will bring together active church life in many communities and church groups locally.

Buildings, and in particular our churches, are precious to us. However, we cannot afford to keep them on in the present number. In future, the diocese will only be able to finance approximately half of the necessary investments.

We also need to finance our pastoral work and we estimate a decrease in church tax revenue of at least 30% by the year 2030.