

GERMAN NATIONAL SYNTHESIS

Germany opened the Synodal Path in September 2019 following a devastating report on the Catholic Church's mishandling of the sex abuse crisis. But it has raised growing perplexity among Vatican officials.

The Germans plan to continue the Synodal Path into early 2023. But the process will reach a decisive stage this September when bishops, priests, religious and laity of the ZdK (the central committee of German Catholics) hold their next plenary assembly.

The Vatican has publicly issued several warnings to participants.

Pope Francis sent a letter to German Catholics in June 2019. Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, then sent another letter three months later.

In September 2020, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, head of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, rejected proposals to allow Protestants to receive communion in Catholic churches and vice versa. And more recently, the pope said in an interview with Jesuit magazines that Germany already has "a very good Protestant Church", add that "we don't need two of them".

"They have forgotten the Holy Spirit "In private, Francis has been even harsher in his criticisms, since he identifies the Church of Germany as the counterexample for what the synodal approach must not become. "They are playing at synod, but it is not a synod. They have forgotten the Holy Spirit," he told a group of bishops visiting Rome last autumn.

The pope sees in this process a politicization of the life of the Church, deploring in particular the intervention of pressure groups. "This new text from the Holy See does not surprise me," said a Vatican source. "It's a reminder that each Church must be able to express itself, but that no one can go it alone," this source said. As explained in Rome, balance is being put to the test by the German Catholics' approach.

Read more at: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/vatican-admonishes-german-catholics-over-synod-proposals/16426>