

EN2 - English Online-workinggroup

Moderator Dr. Anja Appel

Our summary on question 1 „Which intuitions resonate most strongly with the lived experiences and realities of the church?“

We can and must give hope to people. Ukraine is calling for a “just peace”, the world needs our urgent commitment to the climate and biodiversity, families need support, and there are numerous other issues calling for attention. In order to offer the support that the world needs from the Church, we must rely on the expertise of lay people.

As baptized people, we are “the salt of the earth and the light of the world”. Together we bear responsibility for the faith and the Church, and each one of us must assume that responsibility, as women and men, ordained, consecrated and lay. We are all called to a personal relationship with Jesus, but in a symphony of vocations. We must learn to appreciate each vocation in order to see a more fruitful collaboration among them all. For example, it is important to recognise the role of consecrated women who have succeeded for centuries in caring for those on the margins of society. And on the other hand, we must consider how to give women - both lay and consecrated - the possibility of real participation in decision-making processes but also in the proclamation the gospel. We all need an education and formation in synodality, which is ongoing, relating to every stage of life. The synodal process is spiritual journey, that requires conversion.

All this calls us to live as credible witnesses of the Gospel. It requires us to go out, to dialogue with the world and to not limit our focus to internal matters. Evangelization is an important way to include everyone in the Church. But even as we evangelize, we must allow ourselves to be evangelized in our encounter with the other. We must be open to truth regardless of its source.

Our summary on question 2 „what substantial tensions or divergences emerge?“

Tension in itself makes up the central character of a tent. Only the tension of the ropes leads to the fact that the people inside are protected as the tent stands stable. We should therefore value tensions as something good and even unavoidable in our church.

1. Tension: is evident between the different societies and national realities through which the Church is confronted with different issues and challenges. Secularisation contributes, among other things, to the fact that the Church is no longer understood or its responses, for example by young people, are no longer seen as adequate answers to their realities and desires for shaping their lives.
2. Tension: between truth and mercy has been and will be a part of our path. It is a question of discussing what the essential basic truths are and how we can communicate them in the world of today in order to give answers to people's needs and concerns in the face of the signs of the times.
3. Tension in relation to proclamation and actual practice: The Church is losing credibility because there are too many discrepancies between what the institution claims to be moral guideline and what is lived and partly tolerated in its structures, especially when it comes to sexual morality.
4. Tension: between the claim to expand the tent and the need to distance oneself from doctrinal interpretation and canonical resentment in order to do so. The freedom to try different ways without anxiety is not shared by all and shows the tension between the fear of losing the consistency with changing teachings and the frustration of excluding people who want to be part of our community with the rules that have been built or changed over the centuries.
5. Tension: between the socio-ecological change we demand from society in terms of living together peacefully in justice in times of multiple crises, and the lack of our own capacity for conversion towards more justice, e.g. the practised second-class status of women.

Our summary on question 3 „what are the priorities, recurring themes and calls to action?“

The Church must play an active role in solving the challenges, especially when it comes to the acute global crises, in order to be a credible Church in the modern world. Therefore, the following issues will be prioritized

1. Unity in diversity; clarify what is meant by this and what opportunities local churches should have to follow their own path as is appropriate in exercising the principle of subsidiarity while maintaining unity and promoting through local and regional solutions and thus contextualise our proclamation.
1. Involvement of women in the church: recognising the dignity and capability of women and considering how they can participate more fully in decision making in the Church and proclaiming the Gospel.
2. Formation: many people do not understand the dignity conferred on them at the time of baptism. This means that they do not fully appreciate their dignity and thus do not take up their co responsibilities. Formation is needed to develop this along with developing the synodal approach going forward.