

Pfarrer-Initiative

Appeal to Disobedience

The Roman refusal to take up long needed reforms and the inaction of the bishops, not only permits but demands that we follow our conscience and act independently:

We priests want to set a mark for the future:

1. WE WILL include a petition for church reform in every liturgy.
2. WE WILL not deny Communion to faithful of good will, especially remarried people, members of other Christian churches, and in some cases those who have officially left the Catholic Church.*
3. WE WILL avoid as much as possible celebrating multiple times on Sundays and feast days, and avoid scheduling priests travelling around or priests unknown to the community. A locally-planned Liturgy of the Word is preferable to providing guest performances.
4. WE WILL use the term "Priestless Eucharistic Celebration" for a Liturgy of the Word with distribution of Communion. This is how the Sunday Mass obligation is fulfilled when priests are in short supply.
5. WE WILL ignore the prohibition of preaching by competently trained laity, including female religion teachers. In difficult times, the Word of God must be proclaimed.
6. WE WILL advocate that every parish has a presiding leader – man or woman, married or unmarried, full-time or part time. Rather than consolidating parishes, We call for a new image of the priest.
7. WE WILL take every opportunity to speak up publicly for the admission of women and married people to the priesthood. These would be welcome colleagues in ministry.

We express solidarity with colleagues no longer permitted to exercise their ministry because we have married, and also with those in ministry who live in a permanent relationship.

Both groups live in accordance with their conscience – as we do with our protest.

We see in them as we do in our bishops and the pope our brothers. **

Trinity Sunday, 19th June, 2011

* Here we refer to those who officially leave the Church; some to avoid Church Tax as a means of protest

** This is a reference to the German Word "Mitbruder" instead of "Bruder" (=brother) which is sometimes used by clerics and excludes the laity.

Comments

"Disobedience"

Since the "call to disobedience" we have been asked to withdraw the text. We cannot do this in good conscience, because we continue to be committed to the content. Disobedience to various existing strict church rules and laws has for years been part of our life and work as priests.

To profess other than we think and act, would only further aggravate discord in the church and pastoral care.

We are, however, aware that "disobedience" can be understood as an offensive word. Therefore we are willing to explain that we do not mean general disobedience for opposition's sake, but the graduated obedience where we first owe obedience to God, then to our conscience, and lastly also to church order. It is in this sequence of priorities that we have always understood the teaching of the Church, of the pope and the bishops. We want to keep it that way.

"Priestless Eucharistic Celebration":

Many called, and qualified Christians are denied access to ordination by the bishops, because they obdurately adhere to the idea of compulsory celibacy. They are also in no way willing to re-think the ordination of women.

They also bar priests who have married from exercising their vocation.

Due to the shortage of priests caused by these rules many Christians can only take part in a Liturgy of the Word on Sundays.

In using the term "Priestless Eucharistic Celebration" we want to stress the connection between a Liturgy of the Word and Communion with a previously celebrated Eucharist.

Because of the uncertainty caused by those that state the opposite, we want to emphasize that all who celebrate a Liturgy of the Word in in this manner, of course fulfil their Sunday obligation.

It is our aim to keep celebrating the Eucharist with the priest as president and link to the entire church. By using the provocative term "Priestless Eucharistic Celebration" we want to bear in mind that the Eucharist is celebrated by the whole congregation with the priest as president.

If the Church leadership cannot provide priests as presidents for the Eucharist, then communities will legitimately wonder how they can manage to celebrate the Eucharist and if there shouldn't be new ways of achieving this.

"We will avoid celebrating more than once ..."

The fact that a pastor or a curate possibly celebrates 2 or 3 (*) Masses on a weekend is not the subject of this paragraph.

The practice of retaining elderly, overworked priests to travel up and down the country "to help out" should be rejected.

Many foreign priests do very good service. But some unfortunately speak German insufficiently or often only know a completely different ecclesial life, or have not gone through inculturation in Austria (eg. therefore not knowing the adequate way of working with lay people, etc.). Scheduling these priests to celebrate Mass just to somehow celebrate a Mass (or even to be in charge of a parish) cannot be a way forward for a solution to the shortage of priests.

*) By the way, Canon Law (CIC CAN 902 § 2) provides that a priests should celebrate no more than 3 Masses on a weekend.