
Austria: parish council elections. Mgr. Lackner (Salzburg), “communities must welcome those fleeing Ukraine”

The Austrian dioceses take stock of the parish council elections which took place in local parishes over the weekend where 4.3 million Catholics were called to elect their representatives in the governing bodies of some 3,000 parishes. The Archdiocese of Salzburg and the Dioceses of Linz and Innsbruck presented a first summary of the newly elected parish councils on Sunday. Due to the different electoral processes, not all votes have been counted yet, and the final results of the elections are expected to be announced in about two weeks, the spokeswoman for the Parish Consultants in Austria, Klaudia Achleitner, said. In the Archdiocese of Salzburg, a total of 382,158 people had a right to vote (275,720 in the Salzburg province and 106,438 in the Tyrol region). According to Achleitner, the drop in voter turnout from 18% (2017) to 14% was due to the pandemic and its effects. In the Cathedral parish where he voted, Archbishop Franz Lackner said “the parish council is an element of local stability and is always entrusted with great responsibility”. For Lackner, this is all the more important in light of the growing number of refugees from Ukraine. “Parishes now have an important duty: to welcome people who are fleeing”, and “social charity is one of the key duties for parishes”.

Valentina Bombelli