
Germany: Bishops' Conference, "Catholic Book Prize for Children and Adolescents" goes to graphic novel "Völlig meschugge?!" by Andreas Steinhöfel and Melanie Garanin

The jury of the Catholic Book Prize for Children and Adolescents, presided over by the Auxiliary Bishop of Trier, Mgr. Robert Brahm, announced that the winner for 2023 is the graphic novel "Völlig meschugge?!" by Andreas Steinhöfel and Melanie Garanin. The winner, selected by the German Bishops' Conference (DBK) from among 177 titles presented by 67 publishers, is a funny and profound book that tells the story of three inseparable friends who face conflict and disaffection following an existential discovery by one of them. The title, half in German and half in Yiddish, means "completely crazy". With an emphasis on racism and prejudice and their weakening, the book shows "in an impressive way how young people can learn from one another", a statement from the DBK reads. The prize will be awarded on 25 May 2023 at St. Augustine's Monastery in Erfurt. "Meschugge" is a Yiddish word that has entered the German language meaning "crazy, insane". The book is about three young friends, Charly, Benny and Hamid. After the death of his grandfather, Benny, who is Jewish, arrives at school wearing a necklace with the Star of David as a way to express remembrance and attachment. This gives rise to conflicts, which are increasingly expressed in racist actions and misunderstandings about everything, that also affect the Muslim Hamid. Staunch environmentalist Charly continues to believe in the friendship between the three and increasingly acts as a mediator. "Völlig meschugge?!" is a story about friendship that shows "how quickly traditional prejudice is absorbed by children and young people, who absolutely need support", said the president of the jury, Mgr. Brahm. The Catholic Book Prize for Children and Adolescents is awarded annually by a jury with the participation of the DBK and is endowed with 5,000 euros.

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