
Germany: updated Atlas of Dioceses online now. The German Church at hand

Where are Catholic kindergartens, schools or monasteries? Which church is closest to the chosen holiday destination? And which advisory centres or old people's facilities does the nearest Catholic church provide? For these and more questions, help can come from the new German national Catholic diocesan Atlas, which is available at www.bistumsatlas.de. An interactive online map offers lots of search and view options: one can search by address and name and find whether a house or an institution belongs to a given diocese or parish. For instance, in just a few clicks, one can view the cemeteries, Catholic schools or libraries of a region. The diocesan Atlas can be consulted on different devices, including smartphones and tablets. It provides GIS-based detailed information. Such GIS data are managed by the participating dioceses and are regularly updated through a shared platform. The Atlas was born in 2006, when 7 of the German archdioceses and dioceses (Berlin, Hamburg, Limburg, Magdeburg, Mainz, Trier and Würzburg) joined into a cooperative ("G7") to put the maps of their dioceses online. So far, Dresden-Meissen, Essen, Freiburg, Fulda, Hildesheim and Passau, as well as the bishopric of Münster, have joined the G7. Over the last few years, data have also been collected about the ecclesiastic facilities that are not in the group yet, thus creating today's interactive map of all Germany. The map also shows the offices of advisory services for families, couples or singles, healthcare and charity facilities, old people's homes and facilities for disabled people run by the Catholic Church. Kindergartens and schools run by the dioceses and many educational facilities operated by religious orders are included too.

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