
Altar servers: international pilgrimage to Rome. 40,000 from Austria and Germany

50,000 young Catholics from 20 countries will meet in Rome at the end of July for the 13th International Pilgrimage of Altar Servers, organised by the International Association of Altar Servers – CIM (Coetus Internationalis Ministrantium). The highlight will be the audience with Pope Francis in St Peter's Square. According to the Catholic youth movement Jungschar, over 3,200 altar boys and girls, acolytes, and chaperones from all the dioceses have registered in Austria alone. As usual, the German servers will be the largest group, with over 36,000 participants who have registered from Germany. Alongside the Austrian children and young people, some bishops will also be travelling to Rome from 28 July to 3 August. The interest in the pilgrimage to Rome under the motto "With You" (Isaiah 41:10) is great and "shows the enthusiasm and importance of altar boys and girls in Austrian parishes", Jungschar President Veronika Schippani-Stockinger told Kathpress news agency. The altar servers will travel to the Eternal City by bus from the dioceses. The largest group, with 1,300 altar boys and girls and chaperones, is from Upper Austria. "It is an unforgettable experience and a unique opportunity to meet with other committed young people from Austria and other countries and make new friends", said Schippani-Stockinger, who will also participate in the pilgrimage to Rome. The programme features music, prayers, religious services and international exchanges. Among the highlights are the evening prayer with Pope Francis and the international meeting in St Peter's Square on July 30. The pilgrimage of altar servers dates back to 1961.

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