
Germany: the pandemic takes its toll on German cathedrals. Fewer devotees, financial losses. The case of Cologne

The restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic are causing quite a lot of problems to the historical cathedrals and churches of the German dioceses and archdioceses. A [survey](#) conducted by the [website of the German Catholic Church](#) revealed that all of the big German cathedrals are experiencing remarkable financial losses, a reduced number of devotees and tourists, and logistic and maintenance problems. Taking the Cologne cathedral as an example, since the outbreak of the pandemic one year ago, the number of visitors to the famous cathedral has plummeted: about 16 thousand people a day used to pour into the cathedral before the restrictions, now just a few hundreds do, and almost only when the celebrations are held. The cathedral's running and maintenance costs amount to about twelve million euros a year. Right now, definite losses are in the order of 2.5 million euros and, in addition, tourists' offerings, sales of gadgets, candles, tourists' admission tickets have totally disappeared. For instance, the over three thousand 4-euro tickets sold every day to visitors going to the southern tower of the cathedral are gone. While most of the costs are covered by the North Rhine-Westphalia Land, the cathedral's chapter has covered at least 5 million euros' expenses. According to the cathedral's spokesman, Markus Frädrieh, "some of the planned projects have been postponed", but the most important goal is that none of the 180 employees of the cathedral should have to be dismissed. Similar problems have been reported by the cathedral chapters of Freiburg, Aachen and Erfurt.

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