
Germany: third Ecumenical Congress ended. The views of Bishops Bätzing (“common witness”) and Feige (“church bubble”)

The third German Ecumenical Congress (ÖKT) ended yesterday with a festive celebration at the Weseler shipyard on the banks of the river Main, with Frankfurt's skyscrapers in the background. Some 400 people attended the event, including Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Different views were expressed about the 3rd ÖKT that was held mostly online. The president of the German Bishops' Conference (DBK), Mgr. Georg Bätzing, said: “with these experiences, I personally go towards a stronger future. We will clearly state what still divides us and address it honestly. But what unites us is much stronger. Our society expects our common witness on the many disturbing questions that turn people away. We are ready to give reasons for the hope that unites us”. Bishop Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg, chairman of the DBK Commission for Ecumenism, was impressed “by the fact that the meeting could take place during this difficult time and that it apparently reached a large number of people. I am amazed by the creativity that has emerged. And I am very grateful to the many full-time employees and volunteers who prepared, organized and contributed to the meeting. It took courage to organise it, and I do hope it will bear fruit. However, I am critical of the fact that, despite all efforts, both linguistic and visual, people have mostly moved within an internal church bubble and almost no non-believer or person outside the church has been reached”.

Valentina Bombelli