
Austria: 100 years of Caritas, celebration in Vienna with Card. Schönborn. Fr. Birnbacher, “extraordinary humanitarian organisation”

Caritas Austria will celebrate the centenary of its foundation tomorrow with a liturgy in Vienna's Cathedral presided over by Card. Christoph Schönborn, Bishop Benno Elbs, responsible for Caritas, and Caritas President Michael Landau. Also attending the celebration will be Bishops Hermann Glettler, Josef Marketz, Alois Schwarz, and Franz Scharl, upon return from the plenary of the Austrian Bishops' Conference, and Mgr. Helmut Schüller, President Emeritus of the charity. Caritas delegations from all the dioceses - starting with their directors - will also be attending and will actively contribute to the Eucharistic celebration in Vienna. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions still in force, in-person attendance at Mass will be limited. The celebration, however, will be broadcast by Radio Klassik Stephansdom and livestreamed on YouTube. In a congratulatory message today, religious orders in Austria thanked Caritas for being an “extraordinary humanitarian organisation” that is “close to people's needs” with “its daily work”. For the abbot of St. Peter's Abbey in Salzburg, Fr. Korbinian Birnbacher, President of the Austrian Conference of Religious Orders, Caritas “always meets Christ in the poor and the little”, and for 100 years, it has been sending “the right signals to improve the lives of the poorest and the weakest”. For the abbot, this commitment to charity should be properly recognised. “Religious communities and Caritas organisations have much in common: Orders were usually started in times of upheaval, marked by tension. And both religious communities and Caritas organisations perceive the needs of their times, look, act and help”.

Massimo Lavena