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## **Germany: Berlin, ecumenical service for Bundestag installation. “We will pray for you every Sunday”**

Bärbel Bas (SPD), 53, is the president of the 20th German Bundestag. She was elected today, in the constitutive session of the parliament elected on 26 September. She succeeds Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU). She is the third woman to lead this institution. Ahead of the meeting of the new Bundestag members, the Protestant and Catholic Churches invited new and outgoing members of parliament to an ecumenical service in St. Mary's Church in Berlin. Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel and outgoing Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble were also present. Referring to the mustard seeds, which are tiny but grow into large plants, Mgr. Karl Jüsten, director of the Catholic Office in Berlin, said that “it is our responsibility to sow: in state institutions, in the Church and in society, in the economy, science and culture, and in every corner of our land”, so that “great things may grow, and prosperity and peace may reign”. The habitability of our planet, social cohesion, the challenges of digitisation – these are the tasks awaiting the new Bundestag, which Martin Dutzmann, from the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), recalled in his sermon. “I assure you that every Sunday, when Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox communities gather for celebrations, we will pray for you”, he remarked, “that God may protect you and give you strength, insight, prudence, and courage to assume your responsibilities”. And recalling the unpredictable challenges brought about by the pandemic that the outgoing Bundestag had to face, Dutzmann concluded: “In Jesus, God walks with us. Even when we are powerless and without strength, or faced with a harsh fate” or “when we get lost or make mistakes. In Him, we have a hope that not even death can destroy”.

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