
Germany: Synodal journey, work of third Assembly has begun. First reform proposals put to the vote. Priestly celibacy on the agenda

The first reform proposals will be voted on at the Synodal Assembly that started in Frankfurt this afternoon. Today's voting on the first texts relating to the issues of power in the Church and lay participation in the appointment of bishops will show the level of consensus among the 230 delegates of the Bishops' Conference and of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZDK). The approval of "two-thirds of the bishops" is required to "proceed with the path of reform", ZDK President Irme Stetter-Karp explained at a press conference. We will then understand whether "the bishops want to pursue the reform with us". If this threshold is not reached, the work will stop to understand how to proceed in a consensual manner. "As we look for changes in our own structures, we need the bishops to commit themselves to carrying on the reforms", Biblical Scholar Thomas Söding added. Among the items on the agenda these days is priestly celibacy: "Celibate priesthood is a great treasure. I willingly live it and feel its value", Bishop Georg Bätzing, President of the Bishops' Conference, said in response to a question, "but it is not the only form in which it is lived in the Church", he said, referring to the experience of the Eastern Catholic Church, where married priests are "an asset". The Amazon Synod has already "addressed the issue in a detailed manner", Mgr. Bätzing went on to explain, adding that: "We join in a movement that has been going on for a long time even beyond Germany". The third Synodal Assembly will continue until Saturday, 5 February.

Valentina Bombelli