

# **Statement by Catholics of Limburg**

## **We want our Bishop back**

Franz-Peter Tebarz-von Elst, the bishop of Limburg has been away from his Episcopal See for the last two and a half months. He left because of a German-wide media campaign against him. To this day only a few fearless clericals have come to his defence, rejecting reproaches made against him. Many believers have not reacted at all to the banishment of the Bishop, as though nothing has happened. Therefore we appeal to all Catholics today declaring:

## **Defend your Bishop and the Church**

For three reasons: 1. It is high time for us believers to stand up for our Bishop and our Church: since everybody else is silent, we the laymen are called on to raise our voices. 2. Especially in days of declining belief, we are obliged to raise the banners high in defence of our Church with pride and self-assurance. 3. It is important to champion the Bishop's case because the actual situation is by no means merely about him,... his flight ticket to India, the costs regarding the diocese centre or his leadership capabilities.

## **By defending our Bishop we defend our Church**

For months numerous critics have been denying obstinately that the so called "progressives" in our diocese wanted to eliminate Bishop Elst because of his loyalty to Rome. But many inner-church occurrences confirm this. This is the final rebellion which is the culminating point of a long lasting factional struggle in Limburg. This struggle has been persisting for decades throughout the whole German-speaking region. Numerous have been the campaigns and initiatives supported by a part of the Church's staff in favour of a "different" – supposedly better – Church, an example of which we have lately seen in Limburg. Sadly enough, this inner conflict has injured the Church's reputation and credibility. Just when we were supposed to be celebrating the "Year of the Faith"! Many believers find their years of missionary undertakings destroyed. People should have been led to the faith and Church. Instead the opposite has happened. What desolate news from our diocese!

## **Who is responsible?**

To a much larger degree than the Bishop himself, a great number of "protestant Catholics" among priests and full-time synod members are to blame. For years their fundamentally critical view on the Church has led to a gradual but constant alienation from the Roman-Catholic creed, from its sacramental rites and its clear rules. We are convinced: those are exactly the points our Bishop opposed to!

Whereas controversial fights within the church have always existed since the apostles, disagreement should be discussed openly and on solid theological basis. An enforcement of opinions by means of the Yellow Press and their

scandalous methods must be refused unconditionally and without any hesitation. This option is NO option.

Mobbing and a publicly proclaimed disobedience of priests towards their own Bishop, with the help of unrestrained journalism should never be supported between "brothers and sisters in the Lord". And let us not forget that the Bishop, our Bishop, has been driven from his diocese!

## **We demand fairness from the media**

The contributions written by Daniel Deckers and Volker Zastrow (editorial staff of the FAZ), the dishonest methods of investigation of Peter Wensierski (editorial staff of the Spiegel-magazine) and the disdainful terminology of the BILD-newspaper ("ostentatious bishop") have permanently poisoned the atmosphere – in the diocese as well as all over Germany and beyond. Through this kind of destructive journalism and by continuous and exorbitant polemics that clearly aimed to destroy the bishop's credibility, journalists have severely misused their medial power. False accusations against the Bishop have not been revoked despite evidence proving the contrary!

In view of the great responsibility that the press bears in a democratic culture, we appeal to those responsible for this campaign:

Excuse yourself and take the necessary consequences! We demand quality journalism and fairness for our Bishop and the Church!

## **We want the authentic Roman-Catholic Church And no other!**

Most inner-church critics, the ones that criticise the Bishop, appeal to a so called "spirit" of the Second Vatican Council and keep dreaming of a different, a democratic church. They complain that the Bishop is not following their advice but rather – on the contrary – is taking decisions on his own, authoritarily. Obviously they are confusing advice and democratic resolutions. The so called "resistance to advice" often may have been due to the mere fact that the recommendations themselves were not acceptable. Remember the case of a homosexual couple in Wetzlar, and the little known ones like the proposal to accept abortion.

It simply is not respectful of his position to call a pastor "authoritarian" because he is carrying out his duties according to Church law.

The Second Vatican Council clearly states that a bishop has to lead his diocese "in persona Christi...in full power of authority". He is to watch over the unity of the Church. He is the one who decides and no one else.

## **Change of paradigm**

More than ever the authentic Roman-Catholic church is being taken very seriously by young people. They are distinguished by a radical unprejudicedness towards creed and Church which is comprehended neither by the establishment nor its bureaucrats.

The most consequent reaction to this new sincerity is shown by young priests who value an authentic, existentially reflected Catholicism and who put emphasis on a worthy and dignified mass in an appropriate sacred space. By no means can the Church's establishment afford to have a negative view on these recent movements! Unlike many of his critics Bishop Franz-Peter is very aware of these new dynamics. He knows very well how to theologially integrate the awakening youth. **We need him back urgently!**

## **The Bishop leads the diocese**

**He** is our shepherd..... not the councils.

We claim that all priests, theologians, church employees and representatives owe faithfulness to their bishop which can not be renounced and faithfulness to church magisterial powers in the past, present and future. The same applies to us laymen.

Today, in the 21. century, we are facing burning challenges regarding creed and Church. We are fed up with absolute and intolerant critics "from below" incessantly criticizing our priests .....from the bishop to the Pope. They have no right to contest their competence just because they arrogantly think they know better! Their logo is: NON SERVIAM!

WE DO NOT WANT:

Co-determination regarding eternal salvation!

WE WANT:

Good and holy priests, who are serious about the Catholic Church

The authentic words of the Second Vatican Council's documents - rather than the so-called "spirit" of the Council, are standards within the church TODAY

WE DO NOT WANT A PROTESTANT CHURCH 2.0, BUT THE UNA SANCTA CATHOLICA – THE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

**With pleasure we stay Roman-Catholic with our Bishop  
Franz-Peter Tebarz van Elst.**

## **We want our Bishop back!**

Frankfurt, January 2014-01-12

una-sancta-catholica

Laymen for Bishop and Church of Limburg

For more detailed information see our homepage!

We kindly ask you to spread the news even by photocopies