



INTERNATIONALE ALTKATHOLISCHE
BISCHOFSKONFERENZ
DER UTRECHTER UNION

Communiqué of the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference | Vienna, 2023

The IBC convened from 22nd to 27th June 2023 in Vienna. At the beginning of the conference there was a joint session with the Anglican Bishops in Europe. One important topic was an exchange about the guidelines for a safe church, especially safeguarding.

On Saturday the focus of attention was the consecration of Maria Kubin as bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Austria. The main consecrators were Archbishop Bernd Wallet and bishops Matthias Ring und Harald Rein. The consecration, with about 450 participants, took place at the Lutheran Gustav-Adolf-Church in Vienna.

The conference heard reports from the individual member churches of the Union of Utrecht and from the churches with which they are in full communion. The developments in the Old Catholic congregations in Croatia, Slovakia and Slovenia were discussed. Archbishop em. Joris Vercammen reported on France and Belgium, where he continues to be the delegate.

The main theological topic at this conference was a reflection on the Porvoo Communion, which was originally founded by Anglican and Lutheran churches in the north of Europe. It has since expanded to include other churches in Europe. First Bishop Harald Rein gave an overview of the ecumenical initiatives of the IBC and pointed out that the next logical step for the IBC would be to take a closer look at Porvoo. The new bishop of Visby (Sweden), Dr. Erik Eckerdal gave a presentation on the Porvoo Communion, especially the various forms of *episcopate*. Dr. Dirk Jan Schoon, the bishop of Haarlem, made a statement from the perspective of Old Catholic theology.

The IBC welcomed the election of the four new bishops of the Polish Catholic Church, whose consecrations are planned for late summer. The newly elected Prime Bishop Andrzej Gontarek attended part of the conference.

The IBC welcomes the initiative for the ecumenical youth assembly "Together – Gathering of God's People", which is to take place on 30th September, on the eve of the Roman Catholic bishops' synod on synodality in Rome.

The IBC has taken note of the Roman Catholic reaction to the results of the second phase of the International Roman Catholic – Old Catholic Dialogue (IRAD) and is preparing an appropriate answer.

The IBC has sent a video greeting to Bishop Joel Porlares, the new Obispo Maximo of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente. The IBC asks its member churches to pray for Bishop Carlo Morales, who has been imprisoned, so that truth and justice may prevail when his case is judged. The IBC is concerned about the spate of murders in the Philippines, especially the attacks on church leaders, who are dedicated to support marginalized groups.



The International Old Catholic Congress, which took place in Bonn last year, was considered to be successful. Ideas for the further development of the concept of the congress were discussed.

The IBC said farewell to Dr. Heinz Lederleitner, the previous bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Austria and to Dr. Harald Rein, bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Switzerland, who will retire at the end of October.

The next meeting will take place in Prague in June 2024.

*Utrecht and Bern,
27th June, 2023*



From left to right: Bishop Dirk Jan Schoon, Bishop Pavel Stránský, Bishop Maria Kubin, Bishop Matthias Ring, Bishop electus Andrzej Gontarek, Archbishop Bernd Walleit

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