



Paul M.
Zulehner
Naht das Ende
des Priester-
mangels?

Ein Lösungsmodell

English translation: ebook



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662051556 Is the end of the priest shortage near?

Translated with DEEPL

662051556 Paul M. Zulehner

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662051556 A solution model

662051556 Patmos Publishing House

662051556 ((Imprint page))

662051556 Logo Publishing Group Patmos

662051556 ((Logo: 1-colour, always upper edge of type area left-justified, size independent of format; if there is not enough space or if dedication or other logos are placed there, the logo is omitted))

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Schwabenverlag AG, Ostfildern, Germany

662051556 Sync by honeybunny <font

color="#ffff00">www.patmos.de

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662051556 Cover design: Finken & Bumiller, Stuttgart

662051556 Envelope picture: ""

662051556 Design, typesetting and reproduction: Schwabenverlag AG, Ostfildern

662051556 Pressure: ""

662051556 Made in Germany

662051556 ISBN 978-3-8436-

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662051556 foreword

662051556 Already years ago Bishop Fritz Lobinger from Aliwal-North had made the proposal to ordain "persons experienced in parishes" (*personae probatae*) in living parishes into a "team of presbyters". The Munich dogmatist Peter Neuner and I together with him had theologically examined this proposed solution for the shortage of priests. Despite many journeys through the universal church, Bishop Lobinger did not succeed in persuading bishops to obtain a Roman permit for such priests of another kind in Rome.

662051556 There are reliable signals that this will change in a short time under Pope Francis. When I presented Pope Francis with the documentation with the 75,000 signatures to the Open Letter "ProPopeFrancis" at the General Audience on 28 February 2019, I also gave him the book "People's Priests in Living Parishes", published in 2003, which Peter Neuner and I had published together. He took it, read the title and said, "Ah, Lobinger! I already read that!"

662051556 In his press conference on the flight home from World Youth Day in Panama, Pope Francis spoke about the lack of priests, which is causing a "Eucharistic hunger" in some regions of the World Church. The latter concerns the shepherds, they are responsible for finding a solution - and mentions the Lobinger model as a possibility worth considering. As an example, he cited remote areas, such as the Pacific Islands. But he must have thought of the Amazon rainforest. He invited the bishops of this area to Rome for a synod in autumn 2019. As Bishop Erwin Kräutler assured in an ARD interview, the Pope had asked her to make courageous suggestions regarding the lack of priests.

662051556 The time is ripe, therefore, to recall the Lobinger solution model once again. This stands and falls with viable communities. From these, people with community experience are to be selected, proposed for training and ordained into a "Team of Elders". This essay reflects pastoral theology on this solution model.

662051556 Overview of the

662051556 This already shows what awaits you as a reader in this brief pastoral theological essay. Altogether you will be familiarized with what you will experience "in this hour of the Church" (according to the Munich Council Cardinal and chairman of the Würzburg Synod Julius Döpfner) around the Amazon Synod. They are expertly introduced to the process, which is already in full swing.

- 662051556 In a first part the 662051556 *question will*662051556 be clarified by means of the press conference of Pope Francis on the return flight from World Youth Day in Panama, the convocation of the Amazon Synod and its working document as well as the ARD documentary "Church without Priests".
- 662051556 In the second part we then have to familiarize ourselves with the model in its foundations to which the Pope referred in the press conference. From now on it is to be named after its "inventor", the emeritus bishop Fritz Lobinger, briefly "662051556 *Lobinger model*662051556 ". Key chapters will be those on the need for believing churches for the coming of the kingdom of God into the world. Then the central importance of the Eucharist in believing churches is shown. Furthermore, the meaningfulness/necessity of ordained persons in these congregations will be a topic. Finally, this main section discusses in which concrete 662051556 *practical steps*662051556 the Lobinger model could be implemented.
- 662051556 In an excursion, the focus will be on the French diocese of 662051556 *Poitiers*662051556 . Those responsible for them have embarked on a path that is largely similar in parts of 662051556 the Lobinger model. On the question of priests,

the leaders of this diocese could not take the second step. The reason for this was the existing church law framework. Poitiers would have reached its goal if it had reformed the framework itself rather than the framework. This is the forward-looking strength of the Lobinger model.

- 662051556 In a third part, 662051556 *selected pastoral theological aspects* 662051556 will finally be discussed. The question is, what does the Pope mean when he is talking about a solution in areas "far, far away"? So not with us? Also to be discussed is the question of how the "priests" of the Lobinger model relate to the traditional priests and how the relationship between honorary and full-time priests can be productively shaped in the future.

662051556 Foreword by Bishop Fritz Lobinger

662051556 "For me, the impetus to delve deeper into this subject came from a heated evening conversation with a few young fellow missionaries high up in the mountains of Lesotho fifty years ago. The whole group was firmly convinced that it would be no problem at all to ordain proven parishioners as priests. I was also completely in favour of such consecrations, but I had the feeling that some hidden problems had to be solved. So I looked for interlocutors, especially bishops, who could examine this question with me. But again and again I got the refusal: "Let me out of this tricky question." Despite these rejections, one discussion paper after the other was produced. Who else could help think about it? Because there could still be invisible problems that need to be considered in advance. So it came to contact with the author of this book, Professor Zulehner. During the following decades this contact led to several joint publications. In the meantime the then delicate subject has also become socially acceptable and so we can only hope that the present book will also lead to further reflection.

662051556 *emeritus. Bishop Fritz Lobinger, 15.2.2019*

1 Bishop emeritus Fritz Lobinger lives in Mariannhill, South Africa. His e-mail: F.Lobinger@intekom.co.za

662051556 Pope Francis confronts the "pastoral need"

662051556 ((cover page))

662051556 Pastoral Stagnation

662051556 Not everywhere in the Catholic World Church there is currently a shortage of priests. So, for example, not in the unified Greek Catholic Church. In some regions, the priesthood has more people interested in the priesthood than it can take into service.

662051556 Also in large parts of Africa there is no shortage of candidates for priesthood. Recently a doctoral student from Africa told us that his bishop had asked him to collect money. The diocese has so many applicants for the priesthood that it will build two more seminaries. Piety and social security are attractive motives!

662051556 The situation is different in many mission areas. During a course for missionaries in Taitung (Taiwan) at the beginning of 2019, it was obvious that many European religious were old, some sick and at the end of their rope. They have been handing over their ministry in the churches to locals for years. But their number is by far not enough to serve the many small parishes in the mountains of the well-formed island "Formosa" on Sundays and to celebrate the Eucharist with the parishes.

662051556 An increasingly catastrophic shortage of priests has existed for decades in many North Atlantic countries, including the USA, Canada and (Western) Europe. Already years ago I published the book "Europa ohne Priester" together with Jan Kerkhofs SJ from Leuven. If you look at 2662051556 the age pyramid of priests in active ministry and take the dramatically low number of candidates for priesthood in Austria, Germany or Switzerland, for example, you will see, as an ARD documentary from 23 April 2016 entitled, that in Europe a "church without priests" is coming in a short time.

662051556 The lack of priests is thus a widespread but at the same time a regional problem in the great and colourful Catholic world church. For the affected areas, however, this is no consolation at all. The lack of priests is a deep wound in the lives of many local churches.

662051556 Failed calls for remedy

662051556 Scientists, church leaders and especially committed church reform groups have been putting their finger on this wound of many local churches for decades. In 1971 even a World Bishops Synod on the theme "The priestly ministry and justice in the world" had addressed the priestly question. At that time the Synodalists also discussed the admission criterion of celibacy in view of the lack of priests. Those who advocated the opening of the Ordo to married couples, however, remained narrowly in the minority.

662051556 Already at the Second Vatican Council the office of permanent deacons had been reintroduced, with the possibility of marrying before ordination in the Eastern Church. Some local churches (such as the Archbishopric of Cologne under Cardinal Joseph Höffner) consecrated a large number of married deacons within a short time. They pushed this in the hope that they would soon be ordained priests. The then bishop of Passau, Antonius Hofmann, nevertheless ordained candidates for priesthood who had doubts about the acceptance of the celibate promise before the consecration. They should dare to take the step: because the abolition of the obligatory celibacy is anyway only a matter of time. He made a mistake and thus caused great embarrassment to many priests of the diocese.

662051556 panic centralism

662051556 That in this question nothing went on despite dramatic increase of the lack of priests in large areas of the Roman Catholic World Church also has to do with the Vatican "panic centralism". The Popes and the curial advisors centralized church politics on uniformity. Important questions of church life must be regulated uniformly for the whole world church. Subsidiarity at this time was indeed claimed by the Catholic Social Doctrine for the societies. Pius XII also demanded it in the church itself.³ But the fear of the breaking of unity was greater than the trust of the church leadership in a truly practiced inner-church subsidiarity. 662051556 The Catholic Church was to be spared the fragmentation that had unstoppably occurred in the churches of the Reformation since that time.⁴ 662051556 Indeed: Despite intensive inner-Protestant unification efforts⁵ an end of the emergence of further Protestant "churches" cannot be foreseen.

3 Wolf, Hubert: The many smells of the sheep. Why subsidiarity is the key to reforms in the Catholic Church, in: Zulehner, Paul M./Halík, Tomáš: We share this dream. Theologians from all over the world argue Pro Pope Francis, Ostfildern 2019, ebook. - Zulehner, Paul M./Halík, Tomáš: Pro Pope Francis. Worldwide Support for the Pope from the People of the Church, Ostfildern 2018, 51-64.

4 This is favoured by the "Protestant principle" of general freedom of thought, belief and conscience.

5 The Geneva-based World Council of Churches now includes over 340 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches. <http://heilandskirche.st/evangelische-kirche-weltweit/> (6.2.2019)

662051556 This "panic centralism", filled with fear but weak in faith, caused a fatal stagnation in the development of the universal church. This also happened in the question of the lack of priests. Whenever a local church assembly hard hit by the lack wanted to put the subject on the agenda, open bishops also replied: "We can take note of this question, but we cannot deal with it in our local church assembly. We will pass them on to Rome. Which often happened. But the result was always that in the Vatican these applications were accepted, but not further processed. Even more: Roman authorities saw in the applications only another sign of the contemporary secularization and decay of the local churches in the liberal cultures of North America and Europe.

662051556 The churches with a lack of priests were advised to strengthen prayer for "spiritual vocations" as a remedy. The local churches concerned have also faithfully accepted this. Despite years of praying, the success was of course small. Moreover, the fervent prayers did not help to overcome the stagnation: She was merely covered with piety. Spiritually strong personalities, however, began to ask more and more the question whether God did not want to teach the church something else with the lack of priests.

662051556 Local churches abandoned by Roman panic centralism had to resort to structural emergency measures. The fewer priests were available, the larger the pastoral rooms became, for which one of the few priests was available. The parishes were often dissolved for this purpose in order to comply with the applicable canon law. After this only a parish priest can lead a parish.

662051556 Also over this rule meanwhile more and more dioceses disregard themselves in a pastoral self-defence. Against all ecumenical decisions that presbyteral ministries (such as the leadership of a congregation) require ordination, lay people are commissioned to lead, baptize and bury congregations in "church places". In this development the affected church areas accepted a rapid eucharistic thinning. One can certainly concede that in "good times" possibly too many Eucharistic 662051556 celebrations were scheduled. Catholic congregations are approaching reformed conditions with regard to the importance of the Eucharist / the Lord's Supper.

662051556 Francis: a reformed pope

662051556 Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini had this highly questionable pastoral development of the Roman Catholic World Church in mind when he noted a few weeks before his death in a conversation with the Jesuit Georg Sporschill: "Three hundred years the church is lagging behind modern development".

662051556 Already as Archbishop of Argentina, Jorge Bergoglio venerated his Jesuit brother, the Cardinal of Milan. Cardinal Martini had proposed him to the Cardinals in the Conclave as a possible candidate when, after the death of John Paul II in 2005, the "race" between him and the later Pope Benedict XVI came to a head. 662051556 He himself, Martini explained to the electoral college, was out of the question as a candidate despite an honourably high number of votes. His advanced Parkinson's disease prevented him from being available for an election. Instead of him, he recommended to the Cardinals the Archbishop of Argentina: Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio. This made him so well known to the Cardinals that, after the unpredictable resignation of Pope Benedict XVI in the 2013 Conclave, they elected him Pope rather quickly, but not surprisingly for insiders.

662051556 Already after a short time it became clear that Francis would be more than a short-term transitional pope. Although he was the first Pope not to participate in the Second Vatican Council,

from the beginning he was committed to the more determined continuation of the Council. At a sermon in Santa Marta, he noted that in the last fifty years the Council had only been "set up a monument". But the spirit had been wiped out. However, the spirit could not be obstructed. Radio Vatican reported about this stirring sermon against the pastoral stagnation which was held just on the 86th birthday of his predecessor in his presence:

662051556 "'The Holy Spirit urges change and we are comfortable': Pope Francis, in his homily on Tuesday morning, took a clear stand and lamented the poor implementation of the Second Vatican Council. This is above all a spiritual problem, according to the Pope. Today we are far too satisfied with the alleged presence of the Holy Spirit, and this satisfaction is a temptation. Today we are celebrating an anniversary, but we would like it to be as easy as possible for us. The church today would rather not change. Moreover, there were even voices that wanted to go back. These are all attempts to domesticate and tame the Holy Spirit. The Pope said literally, 'This is how you get foolish and lame hearts.'"⁶

6 Vatican Radio, 16.4.2013:-2022447960 _
<http://www.radiovaticana.va/tedesco/tedarchi/2013/April13/ted16.04.13.htm>

662051556 Pope Francis has meanwhile won the hearts of many people through his symbolic actions (how he dresses, which car he drives, how he lives). But his previous contribution to the development of the church is deeper. In an open letter he was certified by many supporting and signing persons from the whole world church that he had "in a short time succeeded in reforming the pastoral culture of the Catholic Church from its Jesuanian origin. The wounded people, the wounded nature go to your heart. They see the church on the fringes of life, as a field hospital. Her concern is every single person loved by God. The last word in dealing with people should not have a legalistic, but a mercifully interpreted law. God and his mercy characterize the pastoral culture that you impose on the Church. They dream of a 'church as mother and shepherdess'. This is your dream we share."7

662051556 Clever and targeted reform strategy

662051556 Pope Francis, who in his work in the Council of Latin American Bishops' Conferences was affected by Roman centralism itself, quickly distanced himself from the well-established centralist style of leadership of the popes and the curia. This shows his strategy in the intended reforms. With this he has begun in a typical way to overcome the stagnation of the Church in pastoral urgent questions.

662051556 However, his reform strategy is not only based on organizational development wisdom, although it is certified by experts. Rather, it has strong theological foundations. The decisive condition for this is his believing conviction that the Holy Spirit is at work everywhere where true faith is believed in communion with the bishops. God's Spirit therefore works in the whole world church and in its favour not only centralistically and uniformly. In "Evangelii gaudium" (2013), his government declaration, he repeatedly quotes on this line - and without obvious reason - local bishops' conferences. Faith in the workings of the Spirit of God even in the remotest8662051556 corners of the universal Church encourages him to proceed subsidiarily and synodally within the Church as well. He does not question his last responsibility as pope. He cultivates a "well-managed synodality." As his task he sees it as triggering organized processes in the universal church in which all participants perceive the work of the Spirit in their church area and on that basis make "courageous proposals to the Pope".

8 In a press conference he will coin the formula "far, far away". This is not a devaluation of the remote regions of the world church, but speaks for their theological reevaluation - even in the farthest corners the Spirit of God is at work for the benefit of the world and the church as in the Central Church.

662051556 Pastoral care for divorce and remarriage: a prime example

662051556 This approach has already proved its worth in the struggle for further development of the pastoral ministry of the Catholic Church in the vicinity of divorce and remarriage. It is impossible to overlook the skilful logic of reform with which the Pope unstoppably sets in motion development processes for the willing, without authoritatively forcing the unwilling to go along with the papal authority.

662051556 The development processes usually begin with the formulation of a pressing pastoral question.⁹662051556 The following is an attentive listening to those affected by the question. 662051556 They are the Pope's "true experts" in the sense of the Latin word "experts". Especially the unfortunate and the poor enjoy respect and authority with the Pope. For this reason he presented a worldwide survey to the ordinary Synod of Bishops on the subject of the family. He encouraged the episcopal synodals to attentively perceive the results of the worldwide survey at an extraordinary family synod. Then he obliged them to penetrate the insights theologically prudently in order to be able to develop pastoral practice responsibly. The ordinary family synod then took great steps towards that document which brought the process to a climax - without ending it completely: the post-synodal letter "Amoris laetitia" (2016). A concern that had already been discussed in Austria since Cardinal 662051556 König in the sixties, that the bishops of the Upper Rhine wanted to solve in 1994 by a considered admission of individual cases, received an appreciation (albeit by no means accepted by all). The resistance that broke open clearly shows that a courageous pastoral development has taken place.

9 The process of pastoral reform in the context of divorce and remarriage began with the Pope outlining the case of a woman in the famous interview with Antonio Spadaro and ending the case description with a question that was decisive for the synodal path: "I am also thinking of the situation of a woman whose marriage has failed, in which she has also had an abortion. Now she is remarried, satisfied and has five children. The abortion is a burden on her and she really regrets it. She wants to go on as a Christian. What does the confessor do?" Spadaro, Antonio: Interview with Pope Francis, Freiburg 2013.

662051556 A new development process

662051556 On the question of the lack of priests in individual regions of the universal church a similar, albeit modified, procedure emerges. First the Pope takes up the concerns and solution ideas of a region concerned in order to formulate the decisive question for the common path. It is not surprising that this is a region from Latin America from which he himself comes and which he knows very well from his work in the Council of Latin American Episcopal Conferences (CELAM).

662051556 He gives weight to this regional bishops' assembly, 662051556 **the Amazon Synod** 662051556, by calling the bishops concerned to Rome for a special synod in autumn 2019. Outstanding topics will be the protection of the rainforest and fair living conditions for the indigenous population. But also the suffering of the congregations from the lack of priests will be on the agenda. Already during the time of preparation, the Pope asked the bishops to make "courageous proposals" to him. These are now available in writing.¹⁰

662051556 The entire process takes place on the stage of the universal church. On April 23, 2016, Erste Deutsche Fernsehen (ARD) showed a much acclaimed documentary entitled "Kirche ohne Priester?" ("Church without Priests?"). Pros (Bishop Erwin Kräutler) and Contras (Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller) had their say. The emotionally charged "remote dialogue" on German television between former bishop Erwin Kräutler and Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller reveals the significance of the Church's development process set in motion in the matter of a shortage of priests.

662051556 On the return flight from World Youth Day in Panama, Pope Francis gave one of his press conferences above the clouds, coveted by journalists from all over the world. The speech also referred to the upcoming Amazon Synod. In his statement the Pope formulated briefly cornerstones of his position: A clear no to the general exemption of celibacy; but at the same time openness for the "pastoral need" in some regions of the world church.

662051556 For the representation of the pastoral need he relied on a suggestion of the former bishop of Aliwal North in South Africa, Fritz Lobinger. With this in mind, he gave the journalist his answer - and this again in the mode of a question. More on that in a moment.

662051556 This puts us in the middle of the current exciting development of church politics. The Pope has clarified the question. The Amazon Synod will be in his presence to try to find an answer. It is also already discussed what a possible permission of the Pope for the ordination of married, part-time church leaders (liturgical leaders) for the Amazon region would mean for other parts of the world church. It could be that a significant reform of the world church will begin in the remote Amazon rainforest. It is not only possible, but quite probable, that an end of the self-made shortage of priests in the Catholic world church is approaching.

662051556 "Give me courageous suggestions!"

662051556 ((cover page))

662051556 Amazon Synod 2019

662051556 Bishop Erwin Kräutler, born 1939 in Vorarlberg, Austria, is an emeritus bishop in Xingu, Brazil. Pope Francis had appointed him to the Pre-Synodal Council, which had the task of preparing the working document for a Synod of the Bishops of the Rainforest. This has now been published. The Synod will take place in Rome in autumn 2019.

662051556 The working document deals primarily with ecological issues that are becoming more acute due to the increasing destruction of the rainforest. In addition, the working paper deals with fair life chances for the indigenous population.

662051556 But the living communities in the dioceses entrusted to them are also important to the local bishops. They live by the power of the Gospel, but they cannot celebrate the Eucharist because the bishops have no priests for them. In Xingu, too, only a small number of priests are available for the many parishes of the diocese. Highly experienced church leaders¹¹662051556 worry about the churches.

662051556 On 23 April 2019, Erste Deutsche Fernsehen (ARD) broadcast a documentary about the situation in the diocese of Xingu. People who lead a local church had their say.¹² They are impressive testimonies of their ministry in the churches.

662051556 A woman from one of these churches underlines the importance of lay ministry with a leadership assignment: "The church leaders are very important to us. Because we only have one priest. One, for the whole parish with dozens of parishes! Since there were not enough people left to become priests."

662051556 A church leader recalls that the Second Vatican Council opened the church leadership by lay people: "We are allowed to lead the church because the Second Vatican Council gave us the opportunity to do so. But we must not celebrate the Eucharist. The prerequisite for leading the church is that one is accepted by the community. She must want this." Pastoral theology in this statement is remarkable for two points: one has to be accepted by the congregation. And: unfortunately, we cannot preside over the Eucharist.

662051556 In the same direction another church leader comments: "I am always very satisfied and happy here when I can at least celebrate a worship service. I just hope we can do this more often than we've done so far. Because that's what people here want."

662051556 An impressive truck workshop manager reports about his ministry as church leader and missionary. At first he talks about his profession, which he would never want to miss: "Here I make my hands full of oil. Look over there. And that's a good thing. I enjoy my job very much. I've been a car mechanic for 25 years. But I'm also a Christian and a missionary. This vocation is important to me. I want to carry the gospel into the church. To the people who need it most." A secular vocation and missionary activity flow into each other in this person. In the workshop, he has oil on his 662051556 hands. In the church he blesses with these. Both are important to him. He wouldn't want to miss any of them. He lives and nourishes his family from the worldly profession, but his pastoral work is also part of his life, inspiring him and nourishing his heart.

662051556 These talks were started during the period of preparation for Easter. Palm trees are blessed by community leaders who preside over the Palm Sunday liturgy.

662051556 Bishop Erwin Kräutler, emeritus bishop, then enters the picture at the consecration of the palm tree in Altamira. He then begins to reflect on the situation of the parishes in the diocese of Xingu in front of the camera. He's struggling to find the right word for the situation. In short one expects 662051556 him to say "scandal", but he quickly turns the sentence to "a challenge". This consists in the fact that the faithful congregations are not able to celebrate the Eucharist at Easter: "The congregations now at Easter, they have no Easter night, they have no service on Holy Thursday. Nothing. Nothing. It's just a challenge. We have to answer that."

662051556 Bishop Erwin Kräutler once told me about his experiences in the diocese of Xingu. When he travels to the parish, many would fetch a table from the neighboring school to celebrate the Eucharist with the bishop. Then they take him back to school. "Ecclesia sine eucharistia", then this state can be described in reference to the title of the moving Eucharistic Encyclical of John Paul II. ("Ecclesia de eucharistia").

662051556 In the ARD interview the emeritus bishop draws a clear conclusion from this grievance, and that in the mode of the question. In his statement he acknowledges the many years of commitment of the church leaders, in whose service the diocese has invested enormously in pastoral education and training over the years. But then he asks the question: "If someone really has been there for many years, for years - and the congregation has been presiding, and has done so with

much commitment, much courage, with much dedication, I wonder why we cannot ordain these people, that is, give them the consecration so that they can preside over the Eucharist on Sunday. That is the question. And from the theological point of view, there is absolutely nothing to object to."

662051556 In order to advance precisely this question, the Pope has given the bishops of the Amazon region the task of "making courageous proposals" for the preparatory period.

662051556 In the ARD interview Bishop Kräutler's positioning is followed by an exchange of blows between him and the former leader of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. After "the Pope had put the chair outside his door" (this is how the commentator in the ARD documentary perceived it) the Pope had massively positioned himself against the Amazon Synod and the idea of ordaining proven and experienced parish leaders: "Now to think that through the consecration of viri probati one could solve the shortage of priests in the Amazon region13662051556 or with us in Europe, that is a very superficial attitude, a cure of symptoms.

662051556 Then he expressed the suspicion that everything was only a clever game of the Pope to change the conditions of admission for the priesthood, and this as it were by a game over the gang. He obviously insinuated to the Pope that he was using his roped parties in Latin America. With these he wanted to achieve a goal which he could not achieve at the level of the world church. He 662051556 pretended a synodal consultation: "From the experiences of recent years, it is not entirely clear that the results have already been determined beforehand, then by the whole direction and cast of the participants - who will be invited - that it is going in this way in a certain direction".

662051556 Even in the ARD film itself, Bishop Kräutler vehemently contradicts him and is probably irritated and angry because of the disparaging, even humiliating, speech about the Amazon region: "No result is certain. Absolutely not. I have to disagree with him. The Pope wants us to make bold proposals. But to say from the outset that the result has already been determined contradicts what the Pope actually wants."

662051556 One can understand a little the harsh reaction of Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller. He suspects very well that the further development of the priesthood in the Catholic Church has inexorably got under way. To warn against this, he paints a possible division of the Catholic Church on the wall and threatens, as it were, the Pope: "... and if one then wants these consequences, then one must also take responsibility for them."

Pastoral Not "far, far away"

662051556 Pope Francis himself recently contributed to the clarification of the question. On the flight home from World Youth Day on 28. 1. 2019 he gave one of his legendary press conferences above the clouds. 662051556 James T. Keane's report in America Magazine was entitled: "Will Pope Francis allow married priests?"¹⁴

662051556 The Pope's answer went in two very different directions:

- 662051556 On the one hand, Pope Francis advocated the maintenance of celibacy and described it as his own conviction. Personally, I believe that celibacy is a gift to the Church. Second, I disagree with the permission of an optional celibacy. No!
- 662051556 Then, on the other hand, he put his personal option on the side and formulated a pastoral challenge: "There could well be a possibility in these far, far distant areas - I am thinking of the islands in the Pacific. You have to come up with something if there's a pastoral need. The shepherd must think there for the flock!"¹⁵

662051556 Then Pope Francis refers to an old bishop from South Africa who has been asking this question for quite some time in order to join his question: It is Fritz Lobinger, the emeritus bishop of Aliwal North. With his reflections he clarifies what questions a pastor in the Pacific asks himself: "Who makes the Eucharist in these places? Who leads these communities? It's the deacons, the nuns or the laity. So Lobinger asks if an elder, a married man, could be ordained, but only to take on the 662051556 sanctifying role16662051556 : to celebrate Mass, to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the anointing of the sick".17

662051556 In short, the Pope shows sympathy with the "Lobinger model". Naturally, this could not be presented in more detail at the press conference, neither in its practical details nor in its basic principles. This will be done in the second part of this book.

662051556 The Lobinger model in theory and practice

662051556 ((cover page))

662051556 Fritz Lobinger, born 1929 in Passau, was ordained priest for the diocese of Regensburg in 1955. He earned his doctorate with Adolf Exeler in Münster on the topic 662051556 *"Catechists as church leaders. Permanent or temporary?"* 662051556 "Together with Hubert Bucher and Oswald Hirmer he showed early interest in the mission: in 1956 he went as a Fidei Donum priest to Aliwal in South Africa. For many years he headed the Lumko Missiological Institute. There he developed the pastoral models of the Small Christian Communities and Bible sharing.¹⁸662051556 The Lumko Pastoral Institute was founded by the Episcopal Conferences for Southern Africa to implement the Second Vatican Council.¹⁹ 1987-2004 Fritz Lobinger was bishop in Aliwal North.

18 Vellguth, Klaus: A new way of being a church. Origin and Dissemination of the Small Christian Communities and Bible Sharing in Africa and Asia, Freiburg 2005.

19 Prior, Anselm: A brief history of the Lumko Institute, Germiston 1993.

662051556 Bishop Lobinger was both the director of the Lumko Pastoral Institute and of the Diocese of Aliwal North, involved in the development of Christian662051556 communities on the basis of Holy Scripture. Inevitably, he also came across questions about the leadership of the congregations and the celebration of the Eucharist. The elements of his church development model have thus grown over the years through practical and theoretical work.20662051556 After the study on priests in Europe in 2000,21 Bishop Fritz Lobinger, Peter Neuner (Munich) and myself worked together until today. 662051556 During22662051556 this time, we developed a joint position paper in order not only to compile the basic principles of the model on the basis of theses, but also to show with which steps it could first be introduced in a diocesan pilot model and beyond this in a further step to the world church.23

20 Lobinger, Fritz: *Wie Gemeinden Priester finden*. Graz, Wien 1998. – Lobinger, Fritz: *Like his brothers and sisters: ordaining community leaders*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company 1999. – Lobinger, Fritz: *Teams of Elders: Moving Beyond "Viri Probati"*, Manila 2007. – Ders.: *Every Community Its Own Ordained Leaders*, Manila 2008. – Ders.: *Equipos de ministros ordenados. Una solución para la eucaristia en las comunidades*, Barcelona 2010.

21 Zulehner, Paul M.: *Priest in modernization stress*. Research report of the study priests 2000. Ostfildern 2001. - Zulehner, Paul M./Hennersperger, Anna: *"They walk and do not become dull" (Is 40:31). Priest in today's culture*, Ostfildern 2001.

22 Lobinger, Fritz/Zulehner, Paul M.: *For the sake of people and churches. Plea for the discharge of priests*. Ostfildern 2002 - With Lobinger, Fritz/Zulehner, Paul M./Neuner: *Peter: People priests in living churches. A plea for community presbyteries*. Ostfildern 2003.

23 The Lobinger model was to be "tried out" in three priest-less parishes of the Archdiocese of Vienna. Our proposal was that the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Schönborn, obtain a special permit from Pope Benedict XVI. But the Cardinal, as he literally said, considered this to be "too early". He therefore did not take the position paper to Rome at all. In the time of Pope Francis, however, he said in a conversation in the ORF radio café that the bishops had been "too cowardly in the last thirty years".
http://www.wir-sind-kirche.at/sites/default/files/wsk-zeitung_90-2016.pdf

662051556 basics

662051556 "Thy kingdom come."

662051556 The starting point for the Lobinger model is the vocation of the church and the role of the congregations in it. Lobinger's church concept was guided by the biblical reports as well as the People's God Theology of the Second Vatican Council. Accordingly, congregations are not an end in themselves, but a concretisation of the vocation of the Church in today's world.

662051556 The aim of the Church in its communities, religious orders and all the various institutions (diaconal, educational, media, cultural, etc.) is to bring movement into the development of the world. It's about "shaping the world," even more "transforming the world." In this way the church resembles modern movements and can be described as the "Jesus movement".

662051556 In the sense of *Lumen gentium* they are like the whole Church an instrument ("sacrament"). Also in the "small Christian communities" it can be read ("signs") what God intends to do with all people, and in the history of the world today they advance this intention of God in their local environment ("instruments").²⁴

24 "The Church in Christ is, as it were, the sacrament, that is, the sign and instrument for the most intimate union with God and for the unity of all humanity. (*Lumen gentium*)

662051556 Klaus Hemmerle, once bishop of Aachen, formulated - completely on this Jesuanian trace of the coming of the kingdom of God - as goal for the Christians and the church: "We are not on earth to go to heaven, but that heaven now comes to us". At least in traces, so I add with a view to the real existing church. This is a theological paraphrase of Jesus' original intention. Its core goal was the coming of the kingdom of God: In the force field of God, under an open sky, the world was to become more human. In it the world around us should be spared and peace and justice "should kiss one another" (Psalm 85:11).

662051556 Karl Marx's old accusation, for example, that Christianity would prevent exploited people with the opium of religion from remedying the misery of the world and put them off to a better afterlife, was not entirely unfounded in his day. But it can no longer be sustained in a time of theologies of liberation and of a Pope Francis. The Pope's model is not a clerical church that revolves around itself and is therefore ill. His wish is rather: "Oh, how much I want a poor church for the poor!"²⁵⁶⁶²⁰⁵¹⁵⁵⁶ where this "for" (por les pobres) is not meant paternalistically.

662051556 Jesus movement

662051556 In the course of its history, the Jesus Movement has formed many different forms in different cultures from the very beginning. 26662051556 These were each an answer to the question how the Jesus movement can best fulfill its task in the respective culture. 662051556 However, dark moments have always crept into these historical church figures, which should be reduced by reforms. Such a dark moment today is diagnosed as the pejorative treatment of women and thus of sexuality in all its forms by the clerical men's church.

662051556 Particularly formative was the alliance between political and ecclesiastical power, which had produced the feudal form of a Ständekirche. It was precisely this figure that the Council wanted to overcome with a view to the biblical founding documents. The Council therefore worked on a conversion of the traditional church form: an undertaking that is far from complete. The design of the Lobinger model is a contribution to this long overdue reconstruction of the church.

662051556 The Church, as can be said in dialogue with modern organizational sciences, is increasingly regaining the form of a movement, the Jesus movement. The passing church form had experienced good times, but has increasingly developed from a movement into a rigid centralistic and clerical 662051556 organization. The movement has given way to stagnation. Stagnation can be overcome by giving the movement a new form for today.

The Jesus Movement Organizes 662051556 Itself as a Network

662051556 Experts advise the Jesus movement for today to have a network structure. This could unleash their dynamism again. Many people know that they belong to the Jesus movement. Young people, for example, can clarify before confirmation whether they know what Jesus was about in his movement and whether they are "wildly determined" to join the movement.

662051556 There will be various modes of connection. Even Jesus did not include everyone in his core group. To some he told them to just go home and tell about what had happened to them.

662051556 Nevertheless, the Jesus movement is by its very nature communitarian, community-building. In this, too, she illustrates and advances what is to take place in all humanity: the worldwide unity of human beings among one another, and this from a deep God-unity of all (Lumen gentium, 1).

662051556 "Hostels" as network nodes

662051556 If the Jesus movement today adopts a network structure, then it forms "knots" and condenses in such, for instance in orders or also in congregations. According to the Dutch pastoral theologian Jan Hendriks, these are similar to "hostels".²⁷662051556 Looking at Klaus Hemmerle, it can be said that in these communities something of the outstanding heaven is already being lived in a trace-like way in the midst of humanity.

662051556 They live "eschatologically," "as after the resurrection." They have death behind them, because before them, as Dorothee Sölle wrote, there is only love. This eschatological power is not only carried by the orders. It must also be felt in the other communities of the Church. Many critics of the present situation of the churches in rich societies ask whether the churches have not lost their eschatological power and have now been "bourgeois" or even better "civilized" in a more negative understanding of this word. Perhaps this bourgeoisization of church life is one of the reasons why today there is no "time of the orders" (Johann B. Metz), although these would be more important than ever.

662051556 Hostels have operators. In the church as a hostel, these are people who are gripped by the Jesus movement and have joined it. Together they bear the life and work of the community to which God Himself "added" them (Acts 2:47). They constantly listen to the traditional Jesus stories, share the Bible, which opens up God's Spirit to them anew, celebrate the meal that Jesus has given them. When they incorporate themselves into Jesus' body, they become "body of Christ" - that is, a God-related community of sisters and brothers. Here, as the Council states and Church law²⁸ repeatedly states, "Although some are appointed by God's will as teachers, dispensers of mysteries and shepherds for others, a true equality prevails among all in the dignity and activity common to all believers for the building up of the Body of Christ" (LG 32).

662051556 In this 662051556 body of Christ, because of the unity of all in Christ, there is no discrimination between "Jews and Greeks, slaves and free men, men and women" (Gal 3:28). Raymund Schwager used to say that 662051556 we in the Catholic Church are still working on equality between men and women!

662051556 But this very body, according to the report about the Lord's Supper, is always a "body given", a "blood shed". Therefore, when the illuminators of the Middle Ages represented the church, they always depicted the two scenes of the Lord's Supper and the washing of the feet in one picture. Christian community and congregations are thus always at the service of washing the feet of the poor. They go to those who live on the margins of life and society. Their lives take place in a double movement: they immerse themselves in God and in people, especially the poor. Like Jesus (Mt 8:1-4), they go up on the mountain to feel and deepen their bond with the divine mystery. Then they come down like him from the mountain to arrive directly at the leper, at the exposed from life and society. These bring them back into the community from the edges of society and life, healing them. A hallmark of pastoral work is therefore integration. The mystic from New Mexico, the Franciscan Richard Rohr, has dressed the innermost experience of Christian spirituality in the moving formula: "It is not necessary to be perfect, but to be connected! It is not necessary to be morally perfect, but God-bound.

662051556 Variety of services

662051556 Hostel communities (communities, small Christian communities) provide all the services they need for their community life and for their service to the world. For this purpose, all those whom God has called and "added" are given a multitude of competences (gifts, charisms) by his Spirit. Reports about the Pauline communities 29662051556 show an enormous wealth of such "gifts of grace". These all, of course, release their power only in the circle of love (1 Cor 13).

662051556 With a view to the mature tasks of the Church, these are today talents in the liturgical field, in the field of proclamation and in diaconal service to one another and for the poor in the "world".

662051556 The various services in the hostels will be provided on a voluntary basis. This has to do not least with the fact that only a church form which is poor and cannot rely on possessions and regulated income (church tax, church contribution) will be sustainable in the future.

662051556 A full-time church would also not be realizable in many areas of the universal church. This already applies to the churches in Eastern (Central) Europe, which are financially hardly able to employ full-time theologians.

662051556 guest company

662051556 However, the hostels do not live for themselves, but for their guests and with them. It's what makes a hostel a hospitable house. They are open to seekers, doubters, pilgrims, spiritual vagabonds, cosmically homeless people, atheists and "apatheists" (Tomáš Halík). The Jesus movement always has "open edges".³⁰

662051556 According to the proven rule of Saint Benedict, guests are not only welcomed with pleasure. If they stay longer than three days, they should participate in the life and work of the church.

662051556 This hospitality is missionary in a rightly understood sense. People who are looking for a solid interpretation for their lives, who are looking for a meaningful way of life, can explore in their own lives whether the Jesuan lifestyle is something for them. This also means that the main missionary 662051556 instrument of such churches is what they themselves live. Mission is first and foremost wordless testimony.³¹ Jesus already shaped this "missionary culture" by living together with his own for three years. 662051556 Thus he was able to "infect" these people with his vision of the Reich God. Mission is a kind of contagion.

662051556 Of course, the life of the Gospel in communities does not replace the word. But the proclamation refers to what is experienced in life together. Annunciation then gives an answer to the question: Why do you live like this? The churches give an account of the hope they bear (1 Peter 3:15). In the space of proclamation, people who have already begun to live with the Spirit and the power of the Gospel in their lives can, as it were, draw on their own experience. They "re-reflect". Mystagogy happens: People are introduced to the mystery which their life has always been (Karl Rahner).32662051556 Could it be that the need for proclamation today is that there are hardly any communities that live the Gospel credibly? 662051556 Which seekers welcome hospitably to the Mitl(i)eben? And who finally - if the seekers so desire - consider the experiences together in the mirror of the Gospel?

662051556 Pastoral Projects

662051556 The individual nodes are connected to other nodes in the network. The network forms the basis for hostels and other church communities to unite and ally themselves in joint projects. They organize joint projects in various areas of the commitment of the Jesus movement in today's world. People at the margins of life and society are particularly in focus. Diaconia, including education, care for the sick, young people without work and lonely old people are the focus.

662051556 Secular institutions, especially from civil society, are also welcome to participate in these projects, as are unattached people of good will.

662051556 These projects require a high level of professionalism in our company. Together we will succeed in recruiting well-trained experts, hiring them full-time and paying them appropriate salaries. Often they will be people who have a double scientific education - in theology and in one of the many human sciences.

662051556 No remote consecration of "viri probati"

662051556 Already the report about the press conference as well as the widespread discussion about the lack of priests is narrowed down to the consecration of so-called "viri probati". The focus is on the decoupling of ordination and unmarried way of life: "Will Pope Francis allow married priests?"³³ James T. Keane, adapted to the mainstream discussion, asked in his report.

33 Keane, James T.: Wird der Papst verheiratete Priester erlauben?
<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2019/01/29/explainer-will-pope-francis-allow-married-priests>,
January 29, 2019.

662051556 On the trail of what has been said so far it becomes easily understandable why Bishop Lobinger is not of the opinion that the future viability of the church depends on a quick consecration of "viri probati". In this respect one may also take something from the statement of Cardinal Gerhard 662051556 Ludwig Müller. The Cardinal questions Erwin Kräutler's proposal to ordain community leaders because he believes that this only cures symptoms, but not the causes of the lack of priests.

662051556 But the concerns of Bishop Fritz Lobinger in the discussion about the "viri probati" have other reasons than those of Cardinal Müller. He does not want to renounce the celibate way of life of the priests. Lobinger, on the other hand, does not want to do without the development of lively and capable communities.

662051556 But precisely this goal could very well be endangered in some church areas if one would increase the number of celibate priests by married priests beyond a committed development of the congregation or if one would also immediately take the many laicized priests into service again. For the people in the rich church regions have become accustomed to the fact that the church is no longer a priestly church since the Council.662051556 Rather, it mutated into a modern "service church" for us. 662051556 Their performance is quite respectable. But the concern of Bishop Lobinger is whether in the context of this perfected service church a sustainable development of "small Christian communities" is not hindered more than promoted.

662051556 Of course, one can object that it is the job of the full-time staff (including priests) to promote volunteers. Some church members, of course, gain the feeling that the same paradox now occurs in the church as for example in banks. As a customer, I am asked to do the work myself (at the machines or in online banking), but I have to pay for it at the same time. In church tax churches, the members pay full-time staff to be trained by them to do the tasks themselves on a voluntary basis.

662051556 intermediate result

662051556 The points I have put forward so far can be summarized by the first points of the 662051556 position paper that I compiled for the Lobinger model together with Bishop Lobinger himself and Peter Neuner. 662051556 The starting point are viable communities. They will not get a priest in the foreseeable future - but many will be led by experienced lay people:

662051556 *"1. it is about communities that will not get a pastor in the foreseeable future (because the human and/or financial resources are limited). However, they are determined to retain their (parish) autonomy and their Sunday Eucharistic celebration.*

662051556 *2. these communities have already proven their viability through the formation of ministries and the building of pastoral groups, and are proving it now. In most cases, laypersons, women and men alike, already assume leadership responsibility.*

662051556 *3. the churches are going through a process of spiritual renewal. The aim is to win as many people as possible for a missionary attitude. Also, as many as possible should learn on a spiritual path to speak an adult adsum at their baptism and be willing to become witnesses from members.*

662051556 *9. it is not advisable to consecrate 'viri probati' in the conventional sense, i.e. e.g. by full-time officials, independently of the municipality. This would predictably jeopardize the development of the congregations into a missionary witness."*

662051556 In addition to the position paper, the intermediate result is that several congregations, together with other communities (religious orders, Movimenti, organizations, institutions from civil society), design quality pastoral projects. This is the preferred place for professional staff.

662051556 Excursus: Poitiers - a first reform step

662051556 This first part of the Lobinger model is very similar to the church development model of the French diocese of Poitiers.³⁴662051556 France is one of those European countries whose culture is coloured by Catholicism. 662051556 In this country today there are many pèlerins (pilgrims) and some convertis (converts: Danièle Hervieu-Léger).³⁵662051556 The traditional parish church structures proved to be less and less affordable. 662051556 Nor were they missionary fit for the future.

34 Feiter, Reinhard/Müller, Hadwig: What will become of us now, Mr. Bischof?, Ostfildern 2010.

35 Hervieu-Léger, Danièle: La religion en mouvement, le pèlerin et le converti, Paris 1999.

662051556 Bishop Albert Rouet, now emeritus, invited to a diocesan synod. On this occasion it was decided to dissolve the traditional parish church structure and to risk a new form of church in a secular society. It was a process both "from above" and "from below":

- 662051556 The diocese was divided "from above" by a decision of the Synod into "secteurs" (literally: cut up). In this way, new pastoral spaces were created for the sustainable development of the Church. The best German word for these spaces of pastoral cooperation that are indispensable for future church development is "development spaces".
- 662051556 Local communities (communautés locales) should be founded in these "from below". As soon as a certain number of people had decided to live together as Christians, they could propose to the bishop that they should also be established as "local communities" according to ecclesiastical law. The prerequisite was that they could train all the services necessary for community life. Five such ministries were indispensable: one each for each of the three basic ministries of community life, namely "prayer, word and service", i.e. liturgy, proclamation and diakonia. In addition, a fourth person had to be ready for the management and another for the finances. While those responsible for basic services could be selected by the community, those responsible for management and finances were appointed by the leadership of the secteur.

662051556 In this way, several local communities were to gradually emerge in the secteur. These were fully in the hands of volunteer parishioners (lay people). Their responsibility related to the entire pastoral work of the community.

662051556 Remarkable is the "culture of calling": a service was initially transferred for three years. It could be extended for a further three years. During this period, the official was obliged to find a successor and prepare him for the service. As a result, more and more members of the community should assume pastoral responsibility and grow in their Christianity.

662051556 The bishop had no priests for these new communities that he could assign to them and that lived locally with them. The bishop gathered the few priests of the diocese into a community with himself in the bishop's town. Each secteur was assigned a priest from this presbytery of the bishop. This accompanies the local communities and celebrates a common Eucharistic celebration with all the local communities of the secteur on Sunday.

662051556 Poitiers thus remains within the scope of the legal possibilities at that time. In principle, many other dioceses followed this model. They mastered the shortage of priests by building large pastoral spaces. Often, as in Poitiers, the parishes were legally dissolved.³⁶

36 It's called "deepochialization." There are transparent legal reasons for this. For where there is no parish, there is no need for an ordained person to lead it. As in the "communautés locales", the leadership can be taken over by lay people without any problems. The price which, of course, parishes which have so far been independent pay is the loss of the right to a priest of one's own, thus to the celebration of the Eucharist, and sometimes also to finances. Hense, Ansgar: Stabilität und Flexibilität - Strukturveränderungen in den Diözesen im Fokus des Kirchen- und Staatskirchenrechts, in: Essener Gespräche zum Thema Staat und Kirche (44), edited by Burkhard Kämper and Hans-Werner Thönnies, Aschaffenburg 2010, 57-156.

662051556 Bishop Fritz Lobinger goes further than Poitiers. This is possible because he is 662051556 *not reforming the framework, but is*662051556 *reforming*662051556 *the framework itself*. 662051556 The solution, however, does not initially bring the change in the conditions for admission to ordination, as is widely demanded, but he designs "priests of a different kind". For these he creates a "Presbyterteam", a "Team of Elders" in the believing churches. This enables believing churches to be "full churches" with Eucharist and ministry.

662051556 Before this part of the Lobinger model is presented in more detail, the significance of the Eucharist in church life and the connection between congregation and ministry must first be considered.

662051556 Source of life: Eucharist

662051556 In his statement at the press conference above the clouds on 28 January 2019, Pope Francis diagnosed a "sacramental hunger" in the Church. This "occurs in various geographical places throughout the world, where a lack of priests prevents many Catholics from accessing the sacraments662051556 , especially the Eucharist"37662051556 .

662051556 With it he puts his finger into a deep wound of the Catholic Church. It is beaten by the fact that, on the one hand, it gives top priority in theory to the celebration of the Eucharist, but on the other hand, in concrete practice in more and more church areas, it sacrifices it to the insistence on celibacy as a condition of access to the priesthood. This is a real challenge, says Erwin Kräutler, or theologically speaking a scandal. The church leadership thereby makes itself heavily guilty of believing congregations. If it is true that the celebration of the Eucharist is the heart of community life, the church leadership in many communities is indebted to a kind of spiritual "heart attack".³⁸

38 Zulehner, Paul M.: The Eucharistic Heart Attack of the Church, in: Herderkorrespondenz [can you please insert, is in the last number, I do not have any specimen copies]

This also weakens their serving presence in the world, for the Lord's Supper and the washing of the feet have always been inseparably interwoven. Therefore, it is not primarily a matter of pluralizing the life forms of priests. What is at stake is what constitutes, nourishes and strengthens Christian life, both personal and community.

Council: Eucharist as Source and Summit

The central importance of the celebration of the Eucharist for the life of the Church, her communities and her members was stressed in several places at the Second Vatican Council. As a reminder, the relevant Council texts:

The Council instructs the bishops: "In carrying out the work of sanctification, pastors must ensure that the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is the centre and summit of the whole life of the Christian community" (Christ Dominus, 30).

The Decree on Priests orders the sacramental cosmos of the Church, stressing that everything in the Church is ordered to the Eucharist: "The other sacraments are connected to the Eucharist; they are ordered to the Eucharist; the same is true of the other ecclesial ministries and apostolic works. The Most Holy Eucharist contains the salvific good of the Church in all its fullness, Christ Himself, our Easter lamb and the living bread. Through his flesh, which lives and creates life through the Holy Spirit, he gives life to people, encouraging and instructing them to offer themselves, their works and all creation with him. This is why the Eucharist is the source and summit of all evangelization: catechumens are gradually being prepared to participate in the Eucharist, and those who have already been baptized and confirmed are being fully incorporated into the Body of Christ by receiving the Eucharist" (Presbyterum ordinis, 5).

The Constitution on the Liturgy underlines the central importance of the liturgy and sees the Eucharist as "source and summit": "Nevertheless, the liturgy is the summit to which the action of the Church aspires, and at the same time the source from which all its power flows. For the apostolic work is directed so that all, made children of God through faith and baptism, may gather together, praise God in the midst of the Church, participate in the sacrifice and enjoy the Lord's Supper. On the other hand, the liturgy urges the faithful that, saturated with the 'paschal mysteries', they are 'in love of one heart'; it prays that they will 'keep in life what they have received in faith'; when God's covenant with men is reaffirmed in the celebration of the Eucharist, the faithful are drawn and inflamed by Christ's urgent love. From the liturgy, especially from the Eucharist, grace flows to us as from a source; in Christ the sanctification of men and the glorification of God are realized to the highest degree, to which all action of the Church strives as its goal" (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 10).

The cosmic significance of the Eucharistic celebration is finally indicated by the Mission Decree: "Missionary activity is nothing less than a proclamation or epiphany and the fulfillment of God's plan in the world and its history, in which God visibly completes the history of salvation through mission. Through the word of the Annunciation and the celebration of the sacraments, the centre and summit of which is the Holy Eucharist, it makes Christ, the author of salvation, present" (Ad gentes, 9).

John Paul II: Ecclesia de Eucharistia (2003)

In 2003 Pope John Paul II published his outstanding encyclical "Ecclesia de Eucharistia" (2003). The title itself is both an ecclesiological and a pastoral liturgical programme: the Church lives from the

Eucharist. Right at the beginning, the Pope reminds us of the deep interdependence of the Church and the Eucharist:

"The Church lives from the Eucharist. This truth not only expresses an everyday experience of faith, but also summarizes *the core of the mystery of the Church*. With joy she experiences incessantly that the promise is fulfilled in many ways: 'Be sure: I am with you all the days until the end of the world' (Mt 28:20). In a unique intensity, however, she enjoys this presence in the Holy Eucharist, in which bread and wine are transformed into Christ's body and blood. Ever since the Church, the People of the New Covenant, began her pilgrimage to the heavenly homeland on the day of Pentecost, this divine sacrament has constantly marked her days and filled them with trusting hope" (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 1).

The Pope recalls the early days of the church. It is inconceivable that at that time the churches did not gather for the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, the Easter day of the resurrection.

"From the Easter mystery emerges the Church. This is precisely why the Eucharist, the sacrament of the Easter mystery par excellence, is at *the centre of ecclesial life*. This can already be seen in the first pictures for the Church which are handed down to us in the Acts of the Apostles: 'They held fast to the teaching of the apostles and to the community, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers' (Acts 2:42). The Eucharist is indicated in the 'breaking of bread'" (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 3).

"*Mysterium fidei!* - "Mystery of faith! To these words, spoken or sung by the priest, the fellow celebrants answer: 'We proclaim your death, O Lord, and we praise your resurrection until you come in glory. '

With these or similar words, the Church points to Christ in the mystery of his Passion and *also reveals her own mystery: Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. When the Church comes to light with the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit and takes to the streets of the world, the institution of the Eucharist in the Upper Room is certainly a decisive moment in its formation. Its foundation and source is the entire *triduum paschale*. But in the Eucharistic gift this is, so to speak, collected, anticipated and 'concentrated' forever. In this gift Jesus Christ transmitted to the Church the everlasting realization of the Easter mystery. With her he created a mysterious 'simultaneity' between that *triduum* and the course of all centuries" (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 5).

Benedict XVI at World Youth Day in Cologne (2005)

We owe Pope Benedict XVI a text which, in condensed form, refers to the fourfold transformation which takes place in the celebration of the Eucharist. On World Youth Day in Cologne in 2005, he explained the importance of the Eucharistic celebration in the homily of the youth community:

"This first fundamental transformation [in the death of Jesus on the cross into the resurrection] from violence into love, from death into life then entails further transformations. Bread and wine shall be his body and his blood. But at this point the transformation must not stop, here it must begin completely. The body and blood of Jesus Christ are given to us so that we may be changed. We ourselves shall become the body of Christ, blood kindred to him. We all eat that one loaf of bread. But that means: We are made one with each other. Worship becomes, so to speak, union. God is no longer just the other person to us. He's in ourselves and we're in him. His dynamism permeates us

and wants to spread from us to others and to the world as a whole, so that his love really becomes the dominant measure of the world".³⁹

662051556 Amazon Working Document

662051556 The Amazon working document comes in several places to speak about the Eucharist in believing churches (nos. 58, 64, 81, 85).⁴⁰662051556 In the "listening to one another [of the faithful people and the bishops] the complaint about "the many thousands of congregations... who for a long time had to do without the Sunday Eucharist" (DAP 100 e) came to light as one of the most decisive points. 662051556 In an⁴¹662051556 almost hymnal way, reminiscent of Teilhard de Chardin's grandiose vision of⁴²662051556 the Mass on the altar of the world, the Amazonas working text formulates: "The celebration of the Eucharist invites 662051556 us to rediscover how 'at the height of the mystery of the Incarnation... the Lord Himself wanted to enter our hearts through a piece of matter' (LS 236). The Eucharist therefore refers us to the 'centre of life of the universe', the overflowing starting point of love and inexhaustible life in the Incarnate Son, present in the gifts of bread and wine, the fruits of the earth and the vine, and in human work (cf. LS 236). In the Eucharist the congregation celebrates a cosmic love through which men, together with the Incarnate Son of God and all creation, give thanks to God for the new life in the Risen Christ (cf. LS 236). In this way, the Eucharist establishes the congregation, a pilgrim, solemnly celebrating congregation that 'becomes the source of light and motivation for our concern for the environment, and directs us to be guardians of all creation' (LS 236). At the same time, the blood with which so many women and men soaked the soil of Amazonia and which they shed for the good of its inhabitants and of the territory, connects with the blood of Christ shed for all and for all creation".⁴³

40 A compilation of these text excerpts can be downloaded from my homepage www.zulehner.org. It is also documented in the Annex.

41 New ways for the church and for a holistic ecology. Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon Region October 2019. Preparatory Document, 64.
<https://www.misereor.de/fileadmin/publikationen/vorbereitungsdokumentamazonien.pdf>

42 Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre/Tardivel, Fernande: Hymn of the universe; Mass on the world; Three stories like Benson; The spiritual powers of matter, Paris 1961.

43 **Preparatory document for the Amazon Synod**, loc.cit. 54.

Against this background, it is not surprising that Pope Francis, following his great predecessor John Paul II, said succinctly in the press conference above the clouds: "The Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church". He leaves no doubt that without the celebration of the Eucharist the Church is not viable in her faithful communities and therefore has no future.

Ordo/Ordination

A not insignificant question is whether and why there must be ordained persons (presbyters, priests) for the faithful congregations and the celebration of the Eucharist in them.

This question has to be answered with a clear "normally yes" in the history of ordination. In the normal case, because there were historical clues that at least raise the question of whether the celebration of the Eucharist (and, by the way, of baptism as well) was so important in the course of time that "in an emergency" it was possible to baptize and celebrate the Eucharist without ordained persons. A text by the church teacher Tertullian opens access to this question.

In the final analysis, it is irrelevant whether Tertullian was not a "Montanist" at the time when he wrote this text, i.e. a rigorist in the execution of church practice. This also has to do with the fact that the church teacher was not concerned at all with baptism and the Eucharist. His question was rather: Why are the priests not allowed to remarry after the death of their wife, but the ordinary church members are? In his severity, Tertullian searched for undisputed arguments that would prove him right. Then the sacramental practice, which was obviously self-evident at that time in Carthage around 209, came to his aid. Using their example, he tried to prove that all church members are priests. Therefore the prohibition of a new marriage applies to all. That's his insightful text:

"Aren't we lay priests, too? It is written, 'He has made us kings and priests to God and His Father.' The difference between the priesthood and the laity has been established by the authority of the Church and by God's sanctified rank in the circle of clergy. Where no ecclesiastical state is established, you offer the holy sacrifice and give baptism, and you are the only priest for yourself; of course there is a church where there are three together, even if they are lay."⁴⁴

44 "Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? scriptum est: regnum quoque nos et sacerdotes deo et patri suo fecit. differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit ecclesiae auctoritas et honor per ordinis consensum sanctificatus a deo. ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consensus, et offers et tinguis et sacerdos es tibi solus; scilicet ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici. Tertullian: De exhortatione castitatis, 7.3. - Literature: Legrand, Hervé M.: The Presidency of the Eucharist According to the Ancient Tradition, in: Worship 53 (1979) 413-438 - Faivre, Alexandre: Les laïcs aux origines de l'Église, Paris 1984 - Beneden, Pierre van: Did laymen without ordained persons celebrate the Eucharist? To Tertullian's "De exhortatione castitatis" 7,3, in: Archiv für 29 (1987) 31-46 - "De exhortatione castitatis", differently classified than in the LThK [Freiburg 8 (1964),1371] [Altaner/Berthold, Stüber/Alfred: Patrologie, Freiburg 81978, 158], originates from the pre-Montanist period. - Besides Tertullian, the church historian Theodoret von Cyrus (393 to presumably 466) also reports on this: Church history 1,23,5.

Tertullian therefore believes that offering (offerre: the celebration of the Eucharist) and immersion (tinquere: the celebration of baptism) are possible, even if the ecclesiastical authority has not assigned an ordained person. At the "emergency baptism" this possibility is still right to this day. A "Noteucharistie", on the other hand, does not exist (anymore).

Tertullian is not recommended for imitation here. However, it can be seen from his report that the scope of the church in shaping the ministry is considerably greater than is currently seen. It would be helpful to take up Karl Rahner, who speaks of a basic ministry of the Church that unfolds in the concrete ministries.⁴⁵

45 Lastly, Paul M./Rahner, Karl: For you precede our deeds with your grace.

After all, it becomes apparent here that a believing congregation carries within it everything it needs for a full Christian life: at least in the mode of a theologically weighty claim⁴⁶. In the course of the early days, when the expectation of blinds disappeared, the offices have developed. Therefore Tertullian speaks of "institutus" with regard to the Ordo, i.e. established by the ecclesiastical authority. Offices should secure the tradition of the Jesus movement. The death of the witnesses of the resurrection and the emergence of deviant doctrines ("heresies") made a lasting contribution to this development.

⁴⁶ In the discussion of the last decades the formula of the "Right of the congregation to the Eucharist" can be found: Blank, Josef/Zulehner, Paul Michael/Hünemann, Peter: The Church's Right to the Eucharist, The Threatened Unity of Word and Sacrament. Solidarity group Catholic priest of the diocese Speyer, Trier 1978 - This initiative of the solidarity group was criticized by the German Bishops' Conference. In the meantime, however, the applicable Catholic canon law of 1983 itself knows such a 'right': "The faithful have the right to receive help from the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the Word of God and the sacraments, from the spiritual shepherds". (c. 213 CIC)

"Now forms of preservation were needed that had not yet had a place in the first generation and under the impression of a massive eschatological tension. In the later layers of New Testament development and especially after the conclusion of the New Testament texts, answers were given to these questions which had not been asked at the time of Jesus or Paul. The basic theme is now that of duration, history and fidelity to the origin in a world that has changed widely. This problem was exacerbated by clashes with heresy teachers who worried the congregations. Above all, the Church responded to currents of Gnostic origin by forming the ministry structures familiar to us today. In this context, the apostolic tradition was linked to the succession of the office, the office was divided into three stages, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was assigned to the municipal leadership.⁴⁷

47 Nines, Peter: The Church's teaching on ministry and the proposal of parish priests, in: Zulehner/Lobinger/Neuner: Leutepriester, 198.

According to ecumenical agreement between the Christian churches, this is also today⁴⁸ the main meaning of the Ordo: ordained persons ensure the faithfulness of the Gospel to the faithful community in which the ordained person lives and to whom he officially serves. Therefore, the Gospel is placed on the head of a Catholic bishop during ordination. Catholically, in addition to this "diachronic unity" (in the history of tradition), there is also the "synchronous unity" which makes the ministry visible and ensures it: unity with the other communities of the Gospel, the local Church, the universal Church.

⁴⁸ The Convergence Declaration on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, or Lima Declaration for short, was adopted by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Lima, Peru, in January 1982. The Lima Declaration shows similarities in the understanding of baptism, eucharist and ministry in the different member churches of the WCC. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lima-Erklärung>

In today's understanding, the concrete tasks of ensuring track faithfulness include the leadership of a local church (diocese) or a local church (congregation), the official proclamation of the Gospel and the presidency of sacramental celebrations.

Whoever assumes such presbyteral tasks in a believing congregation must be ordained, i.e. laid on his hands in prayer. When today, due to the lack of available ordained people in the Catholic Church, presbyteral acts are transferred to lay people, the Church produces an ecumenically questionable "lack of consecration". Or it creates - as in the times of the church teacher Tertullian - just an "ecclesiological state of emergency" in which "in need" members of the faithful community take over the ministry of the non-existent ordained. They then act priestly, without being ordained priests. As I said, a legally undesirable situation. But theologically not nothing to quote a famous saying of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger about marriages without marriage certificate.

It is not the task of the Ordo to relieve church members of their very own tasks. This temptation existed and still exists today in both the priestly and the service churches. The priests function as a "charismatic sponge" and absorb the widely distributed charisms of the members of the faithful community. You're responsible for everything. When in the time of the dissolution of the "Christian society" they were confronted with more and more tasks, they began to "delegate tasks to lay people". But they have only "given back" to the laymen what they have "taken away" from them before.

In practical terms, this means that the entire life and ministry of a believing church does not spring from the minister. All contribute (as in Poitiers or in the communities of the Lobinger model) to the life and work of the community. As a Christian, the ordained person also has charisms which he can introduce into the life of the community. But then he acts not as an ordained, but as a baptized man. Therefore, it is also absurd to reserve the concept of pastoral care to priests. Thus the bishop of Hippo, Aurelius Augustinus, can formulate: "With you I am a Christian. For you bishops!"

Karl Rahner once put this aspect in such a way on the concept: All baptized persons act "ecclesiastically", the ordained, on the other hand, in very specific situations act "in the name of the church".

The question in concrete terms

Our question, which leads straight to the Lobinger model, becomes even more acute. The church has to take care of the "ecclesial normal case". This means that wherever there are faithful communities, an essential moment in their life is the celebration of the Eucharist, which (as a desirable rule) should be presided over by an ordained person.

Once again we return to the press conference above the clouds, where Pope Francis perceives that today the Church is apparently not fulfilling its duty of precaution for believing congregations. Because it cannot provide a sufficient number of priests in distant places, a kind of "Eucharistic famine" has broken out which cannot leave the leadership of the Church untouched. Once again his church-politically explosive statement: "I think of the islands in the Pacific. It is necessary to reflect when there is a pastoral need; there the shepherd must think of the faithful."⁴⁹ And how this can look like, he clarifies with the questions of bishop Lobinger:

"On the islands of the Pacific, [asks] Lobinger: Who makes the Eucharist in these places? Who leads these communities? It's the deacons, the nuns or the laity. So Lobinger asks if an elder, a married man, could be ordained, but only to take on the sanctifying role: to celebrate Mass, to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the anointing of the sick".50

Lobinger ultimately asks very practically: How can the church fulfill its duty that faithful communities that have proven their viability can celebrate the Eucharist as the source and summit of their lives? This is exactly the question his model addresses. It outlines a viable path.

Practical steps of the Lobinger model

The starting point of the Lobinger model is thus formed by believing communities. They have proven over several years (perhaps five years in practical terms) that they are capable of living and acting. They have trained the necessary services for their life and work. These communities hunger for the Eucharist, which unites them into the "Body of Christ" and makes them foot-washers. But for their rightful celebration they need the Ordo.

The Lobinger model now proposes "Teams of Elders" (Presbyter teams) precisely for such communities. At the following is sketched, how these are build practically. This requires a movement "from below" (i.e. from the communities concerned) and a movement "from above" (a bishop who courageously assumes responsibility, listens to the proposals of the communities and also ordains "personae probatae" chosen and proposed by them).

A concrete example

A concrete example will be used to initiate considerations as to how the Lobinger model can be implemented. The example comes from the Amazon region. Bishop Fritz Lobinger already presented it some years ago as a concrete example of a possible vision of the future. Even then, the idea was to ask Rome for permission to test the model in five parishes.

"The diocese of N. consists of 35 parishes, comprising 680 parishes. Every Sunday the 75 priests of the diocese can celebrate the Eucharist in only 120 of the 680 parishes. In all other congregations, teams of local lay leaders have been trained to hold a celebration of the Word of God in place of the Eucharist.

If our request is approved by the Holy See, we propose to begin in only five of the 35 churches. These five parishes, which are served by 12 priests, comprise 95 parishes. In about half of these communities, 42 out of 95, of which we are very sure, there are reliable, proven teams of church leaders. We ask that a first phase of ordination should take place in 15 of these churches. In each of these churches there is a team of 8 to 15 men and women who lead the Sunday liturgy. In some places four men from these church leaders could be selected as candidates for ordination, in others six men, an average of five candidates per church. This would mean that we would present on average fifteen times five candidates, which would mean a total of about 70-75 candidates for the first phase of setting up 'Teams of Elders'. The preparation of the candidates would be mainly the work of twelve animator-priests. This first phase of ordination would thus cover only about three percent of our diocese. About two years later, a second phase could follow."⁵¹

51 Lobinger, Fritz: Teams of Elders. Moving beyond "viri probati", Quezon City 2007, 39f.

This example shows that the concrete design of the Lobinger model can and must be different depending on the church area. The pastoral-historical grown circumstances are to be perceived carefully and to be included in a kind of "Kulturation" of the Lobinger model.

In the following a few basic suggestions will be made. Europe is now the focus of attention.

Choice of experienced persons

In a first step, the viable communities select a handful (at least three) of "personae probatae" from among themselves.

Two points are decisive in this sentence:

-*Select* the municipalities. This necessity of choosing one of the church leaders who spoke in the ARD documentary emphasizes in all clarity: "The prerequisite for leading the church is that one is accepted by the community. She must want this." The trust of the community is expressed in the result of the election. Proven church leaders will be the first choice. But they alone are not enough: at least two more experienced people are needed.

-It is also "personae *probatae*". These are members of the congregation who have become "experienced in the congregation" through their commitment. In contrast to the Timothy letter⁵², the emphasis is not on private life (which must of course also be taken into account when choosing a person). What is crucial is that these persons are "pastoral experts" in the life and work of the community to which they belong and who have been leading them for some time as appointed leaders. There is also talk of "*personae (probatae)*" (of proven persons), not of "*viri (probati)*" (of proven men). Because Lobinger does not want to exclude the possibility of ordination of women in local presbyteries already conceptually.

52 "Therefore, the Bishop should be blameless, man of one woman, sober, prudent, dignified, hospitable, able to teach" (1 Tim 3:2).

These persons are therefore not lonely soloists called by God, but they come from believing churches. In the church there may well be soloists who feel called to the priesthood by God. The prophets were called of this lonely kind. Also there will and should continue to be people who feel called to the priesthood in its traditional form, academically trained, celibate, in their main profession.

(Secondary) vocational training

These selected "personae probatae" are well trained in practical theology.

The duration of the training and its form depends on the respective culture: In the North Atlantic area, with its highly developed educational societies, the standards will be higher than in many former mission areas. The training model documented in this essay was developed with a view to the situation in Europe.

Diocesan educational institutions, including theological faculties, are faced with new tasks. It is important that the practical training also promotes the ability to work in a team.

To do this, these proven individuals need a wide range of skills. These include pastoral competences such as the art of presiding as a team over a liturgy (ars celebrandi - which is, of course, first of all a competence of the whole community), proclaiming the Word (ars praedicandi), a capacity for mystagogical accompaniment, a sense of pastoral care and diaconia (tasks which they carry out with other parishioners).

Leadership skills are also required. This includes the joy of promoting and accompanying volunteers. In order to ensure the faithfulness of the entrusted congregation, it is indispensable that these persons are as it were "filled to the brim" with the Gospel.⁵³

53 There is also a draft for a qualified education available, on the development of which the em. dogmatist Josef Weismayer from the University of Vienna collaborated: Zulehner, Paul M./Lobinger, Fritz: For the sake of people and communities. Plea for the discharge of the priests, Ostfildern 2002, 185-189. This draft is documented in the appendix.

Ordination in presbyter teams.

After this longer process of preparation (election, new formation), the Bishop ordains these persons and assigns them as a "Team of Elders" to the community from which they come and which has requested their ordination.

The members of this team work on an honorary basis. They also receive regular pastoral supervision. Their ministry (like that of all pastorally active persons, including bishops, in the future) is also regularly evaluated. If necessary, a member can leave the team (because this person no longer wants to, can because the trust was lost: The ordination then rests - which practically results in a kind of temporary priesthood).

The "supervision" of several of these teams is carried out by a "dean" who has acquired sufficient skills to do so. The Dechant is a full-time priest of traditional kind, lives celibate and mostly communitarian.⁵⁴

54 Such communities of celibate priests were also recommended by the 2011 African Synod (Africa Munus, 10).

Summary of the

The relevant points from the common position paper can serve as a summary of the practical steps:

"5. Suitable persons are sought in the congregations. These come from the middle of community life and have already borne responsibility; in this sense they are 'personae probatae'. They also have ample professional experience. Normally, they are able to work as volunteers. (The term 'personae probatae' keeps the ordination of women open.)

6 The Bishop shall ensure that the elected persons receive a theologically founded and pastoral intensive formation. The suitability for leading tasks in the team must be given.

55 This can be connected to a higher education institution/university. If it is a bachelor's degree, it needs a special pastoral emphasis.

662051556 *The Bishop receives the special permission (as an exception to can 1042 §1) to ordain these persons as priests and to 662051556 assign 662051556 them to the 'Team of Elders' of a parish in the pastoral 662051556 area.*

662051556 *After the consecration, great importance is attached to an intensive spiritual and pastoral accompaniment of the teams. This allows the compact training to be continued and deepened.*

662051556 *10) The formation of local presbyteries opens the possibility for the celibate priests to live together in central parishes. Under modern conditions, celibacy is very closely interwoven with community life. In this surprising way, the formation of local presbyteries is at the same time an opportunity to ensure celibacy for the traditional type of priest by making it practically liveable.*

662051556 *The dean, who himself lives in such a priestly community, is responsible for the presbyteries (Teams of Elders): legal, spiritual, pastoral".*

662051556 Introduction of the Lobinger Model

662051556 Far, far away

662051556 When Pope Francis in his press conference above the clouds localized pastoral challenges, he used the expression "far, far away". He then put this into concrete terms - and I quote from the English report by James T. Keane from America Magazine: "I think about the islands in the Pacific. It's something to think about when there's a pastoral need; there the shepherd has to think about the faithful." 662051556 As a reminder, the title of the report and therefore the concern of the questioning journalist is: "Will Pope Francis allow married priests?56

662051556 "Far, far away," on "Pacific Islands." So don't let his thoughts upset anybody! The pastoral need is as far away as its possible solution. The formula "far, far away" could therefore suggest that it is a region far from Rome. On the periphery of the roman-centered Weltkirche. If one reads "far, far away" like this, then it could be an understandable attempt by the Pope to play down the subject and what he says about it.

662051556 This localization of the pastoral challenge could, however, also give rise to the idea that the Pope secretly thought of the Amazon region, whose bishops will discuss just this topic in the Vatican in autumn 2019. He had expressly asked them for courageous proposals on this issue. From the perspective of the Roman Curia, the Amazon region lies "far, far away", which Cardinal Müller tends to contemptuously suggest in the ARD interview.

662051556 Of course, it cannot be ruled out that Pope Francis, in his answer to the question of the journalist, will make use of the rules of the proven scholastic casuistry in which the Jesuit Jorge Bergoglio was well trained during his studies. In this format of academic debate, the aim was to construct a possible "casus", i.e. a concrete individual case. The question was then dealt with on the basis of this case. In the end, however, the result should be generally acceptable. If this disputation logic applies here, then it would turn the "far, far away" into a "can be the case everywhere".

662051556 If the Pope in the casuistic logic suggests that the distant can ultimately be the case everywhere, then the question can be asked whether this does not also apply to our European church area. Because even here people try to live the gospel decisively, gather in believing communities and churches and know that they are sent to ministry in the world of today. More and more of these churches are led by lay people. You cannot preside over the Eucharist. Therefore also in our congregations we feel a "Eucharistic hunger".

662051556 Some time ago I accompanied a weekend retreat of a parish council of a Viennese city parish. Thanks to years of committed community development, it meets all the criteria that the Pope mentions in his casus: it is a viable community. Their lives and work are supported by a large number of competent employees. The parish still has a parish priest, but he will retire soon. The archdiocese will no longer be able to assign a pastor to this parish in the future. The plan of the diocesan church leadership is to merge the parish into a large parish ("new parish"), which is to be led by a team of foreign priests. Is this really the only and above all the best solution for the future of this community? The majority of those in charge of the parish council were of the opinion that this was not the case. But then what? The Lobinger model could open up a good and acceptable way for this municipality.

662051556 Admittedly, we must also ask self-critically with regard to the situation of the church: Aren't many of our communities and churches "far, far away" from exactly this vision? Are there not still far too few viable believing churches in our country that have assumed responsibility for their lives and ministries? Do we not rather have priestly parishes or parishes that are well cared for by full-time laity, but are dramatically shrinking? This process is shown drastically in the fact that in the Sunday pews predominantly old people sit and young hardly move up?

662051556 domino effect

662051556 "Far, far away" could have a completely different meaning. It could reflect an aspect of the reform logic of Pope Francis. One of the high aims of his pontificate is to open a way out of the stagnation of the uniformed world church. In the search for a suitable reform strategy he is guided by

the conviction that the necessary reforms do not always have to come from Rome and take place in step with the world church. For God's Spirit is at work for the benefit of the development of His Church in all places where the Gospel is believed and laid. "Far, far away" and the pastoral need assumed for the Pacific islands, which compels shepherds to reflect and act, could become the starting point for a reformatory domino effect throughout the universal Church.

662051556 The far, far away could become from far, far away. Church development in this case would not "go out" from the headquarters to the remote areas, which historically were mostly mission areas. On the contrary, the direction of reform would be reversed. It does not begin then in the centre of the church, but at its periphery. Based on the principles of subsidiarity and synodality, the Pope gives a remote region the opportunity to initiate a development that can gradually take hold of the universal Church. Even more: It does not only permit such a local development. He asks almost in rem for "courageous proposals" to solve the pastoral challenge (according to Bishop Erwin Kräutler).

662051556 The experienced opponents of reforms in the Catholic Church have long since seen through this theologically well-founded reform strategy with certainty. This is documented by the already presented television dispute between Bishop Erwin Kräutler from the periphery and Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller from the headquarters.

662051556 Cardinal Müller's statement on ARD appears highly ambivalent.

662051556 -On the one hand, he humiliates the meaning of Amazonia: What is the significance of such remote areas for those in charge of the church headquarters?

662051556 -On the other hand, he clearly sees that the mixture of subsidiarity and synodality by Pope Francis is ultimately explosive and can unstopably bring about world church reforms. He is obviously so sure of this that he even indirectly threatens the Pope: "... and if one then wants these consequences, then one must also take responsibility for them".

662051556 Cardinal Müller simply ignores the good consequences hoped for by the Pope and the bishops of Amazonia, namely that a serious pastoral problem is solved at least once by a local church, a Eucharistic hunger is satisfied. In his opinion, this reform process from the periphery to the centre and thus the development of local churches into world churches will not bring anything good, but will trigger harsh resistance, which can even lead to a division.

662051556 The Pope will unswervingly continue on his chosen path. This makes him a "revolutionary", a word that he constantly calls out to young people with the intention of revolutionizing social conditions. In the end, however, "revolutionary" would not only be the solution to the shortage of priests in Amazonia, but above all the papal reform strategy, the explosive force of which is quite clearly seen by the opponents of the Pope.

662051556 Also the deputy chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, the Osnabrück bishop Franz-Josef Bode, in his statement in the ARD documentary is firmly convinced that a regional solution of the priestly question in Amazonia will gradually, but unstopably, extend in a kind of domino system to the whole world church. Bishop Bode Franz Josef in the original tone: "If somewhere in the world this possibility is given, then one must not deceive oneself. One will say: If it is possible in principle, then it must also be possible in situations where the need is different, then it

will not be justified in exactly the same way, but then we will have to ask ourselves about it. That's quite clear. It won't stay calm."57

662051556 Bishops who join us in such a solution of the shortage of priests can count on strong support among the people of the Church as well as among the pastors. The acceptance of such "priests of a different kind" is remarkably high in the present clergy. This is shown by a survey among pastors in Austria in 2012, when 75% agreed with the statement: "If the Church cannot provide a celibate priest in a believing community, then established persons from that community should be trained and ordained."⁵⁸

662051556 How to prepare for it?

662051556 Can local churches prepare for this possibility today with anticipatory confidence? This question must be answered with a modified yes. First of all, the most important aspect of the preparation would not be the search for possible candidates for a "Team of Elders", but a high level of commitment to the development of viable communities. In the Lobinger model and also at the Amazon Synod it is primarily not a question of priests from faithful congregations, but primarily of viable congregations. Without their development into communities and congregations that are well connected among themselves and with other ecclesial places and organizations, the Church in Europe will not be sustainable. And without viable communities, the Lobinger model should not be applied.

662051556 The best preparation for the introduction of other types of priests who work in "teams of elders" is therefore the transformation of traditional parishes, where priests or lay people serve people well, into living communities that are supported by many voluntary ministries of the community itself and are viable even if they do not have a priest on the ground. This alone would be an enormous gain for the development of the local churches in the future. This profit is maintained even if it is still "too early" for the Lobinger model.

662051556 A further possibility to prepare ourselves in advance for the ordination of "Teams of Elders" is the intensive training of lay people who are entrusted with tasks by the parishes in many areas of Latin America and Africa. Those who are given responsibility for a church as church leaders are well prepared and accompanied by diocesan trainers.

662051556 Diverse fields of application are already open to committed laymen: The funeral liturgy is not led by full-time laypersons, but by teams of volunteer laypersons. The same can happen at Word of God celebrations: And again, it's teams that conduct such worship services. Other teams are visiting or catechesis - processes that have become commonplace in many developed churches in Europe after the Council; other churches can catch up here.

662051556 If it were not a good signal for the discussion in the World Church, individual congregations could already introduce teams of funeral directors at the end of the current year, initially only two teams of men and women, trained by the pastor himself, dressed in Albe at the liturgy, each acting in threes! This would make it clear to the bishop and the pope that this readiness actually exists in individual communities.

662051556 Finally, it would also be conceivable that viable congregations would immediately begin to look for candidates experienced in congregations for the "priesthood of a new kind". These could also already be trained. The Tübingen dogmatist Peter Hünemann had organised such training for deacons long before the hoped-for introduction of the diaconate for women. A considerable number of suitable women have now been trained and are waiting for the Pope to approve the consecration of the diaconate for women.

662051556 Distrust the parish?

662051556 The Lobinger model is based on the development of viable communities. Now in Europe today in the practical theology voices can be found⁶⁰ which the congregations and with them the congregational theology, which was developed around the Council in the German-speaking area, regard as outdated. The parish sees it as a moment of an expiring clerical "registration church". The cultural individualism stands in high tension to the community. Instead of the static structure of parishes, it is more important for the Church to have a mobile missionary presence to the places of human life, to heterotopes and other places.

662051556 But does this criticism of the parishes not overlook the fact that the parish structure of the local churches has always been supplemented by "other places" such as religious or pilgrimage churches? There was also a rich development in the area of categorical pastoral care. Associations and catholic action, educational institutions and diaconia, media, art and culture complemented the basic structure of the parish. More recently, so-called Movimenti, more recent movements, have been added.

662051556 The future therefore certainly does not belong to the parishes alone. That was not the case in the past. Parishes are certainly not sustainable in their traditional form within the framework of a priestly or service church.

662051556 It cannot be overlooked, however, that these very traditional parishes have long since undergone profound changes. In many parishes an active core of the parish has mostly developed, a kind of "base parish" ("hostel"), sometimes even several of them in one parish. Together they lead a powerful Christian life, cultivate open hospitality and organize pastoral projects across parishes. And in many cases they do this together with nonchurch civil society institutions.

Was zudem oft übersehen wird: Personen, die sich in den vielfältigen Vorgängen der Kirche außerhalb der Pfarrgemeinden höchst kreativ engagieren, kommen oft aus einer solchen und sind zumeist in einer solchen fest verwurzelt. Es trifft auf sie zu, was der Gründer der ungarischen Basisgemeindebewegung Bokor (auf Deutsch: Busch), György P. Bulányi (1919–2010), formulierte: „Jeder braucht eine Gemeinschaft, die ihn nährt, und eine andere, die er nährt.“⁶¹-2022447975

61 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/György_P._Bulányi proudly presents-2022447975 HYPERLINK "#Bokor" i#Bokor

Verschiedene Arten von Ordinierten

Eine der wichtigen Auswirkungen des Lobinger-Modells besteht darin, dass es nach seiner Einführung zwei unterschiedliche Arten von Priestern geben wird:

- Da sind auf der einen Seite die *traditionellen Priester*. Sie kommen vom „freien spirituellen Markt der Berufungen“. Die Ortskirche spürt diese „geistlichen Berufungen“ auf, sammelt sie (heute) in Priesterseminaren, bildet sie an theologischen Fakultäten aus. Wenn sie freiwillig die zölibatäre Lebensform übernehmen, können sie (in der römisch-katholischen Kirche) geweiht werden. Der Bischof teilt ihnen dann in der Ortskirche im pfarrlichen oder kategorialen Dienst eine Aufgabe zu. Zwei Aufgaben, so die deutschen Bischöfe in der Ordnung der Pastoralen Dienste 1979, ragen in ihrem beruflichen Portfolio heraus: „Gemeinden zu gründen und zu leiten“.
- Auf der anderen Seite kann es künftig im Sinn von Lobinger „Teams of Elders“, „*Presbyterteams*“ in Gemeinden geben. Sie werden nicht mehr in Priesterseminaren ausgebildet – ihre ursprüngliche Ausbildung erhalten sie, indem sie durch ihr Mittun in ihrer Gemeinde pastoral erfahren werden. Diese Priester neuer Art sind für den Bischof auch nicht so einfach „versetzbar“. Während die Weihe zum traditionellen Priester keine Verbundenheit mit einer Gemeinde voraussetzt, ist diese bei den Priestern neuer Art unverzichtbar. Sie werden auch für jene Gemeinde bestellt, von der sie gewählt und dem Bischof zur Ordination vorgeschlagen worden sind.

Diese Verbundung des Priesteramts könnte die nur auf den ersten Blick widersprüchliche Spannung in der Aussage von Papst Franziskus auf der Pressekonferenz über den Wolken auflösen.

- Einerseits betont der Papst, dass er nicht daran denke, den Zölibat freizustellen. Die herkömmlichen „Priester für Gemeinden“ bleiben für ihn ein wichtiger Priestertyp: volle akademische Ausbildung, ehelos – sie leben vielleicht mit anderen kommunitär. Hier spricht er vom traditionellen Priestertyp, den es seiner Meinung nach auch in Zukunft geben soll und wird.
- Andererseits sucht der Papst für die pastorale Not und die Stillung des eucharistischen Hungers eine Lösung und verschließt sich dazu nicht dem Vorschlag von Bischof Lobinger. Folgt ihm der Papst auf Vorschlag der Bischöfe in Amazonien, entstünden in der katholischen Weltkirche Priester anderer Art, „Priester aus und für Gemeinden“, berufsbegleitend ausgebildet und zumeist verheiratet. Die Beibehaltung der ehelosen Lebensform als Zugangsbedingung zum Ordo bezöge sich dann allein auf den traditionellen Priestertypus, nicht auf die Priester anderer Art, die in „Teams of Elders“ ordiniert werden.

In einer Übergangszeit wären zunächst die Priester in „Teams of Elders“ eine Ausnahme. Aber das würde vorhersehbar auf Dauer nicht so bleiben. Der künftige normale Priestertyp wird wohl jener aus den Gemeinden kommende und in den Gemeinden dienende „Priester neuer Art“ sein:

- diese sind in Teams eingebunden,
- sind gemeindeerfahren,
- sind als Ordinierte verantwortlich für die Spurtreue im Evangelium,
- sie treten amtlich in Vorgängen hervor, in denen sie „im Namen der Kirche“ handeln,

- deshalb stehen sie der Gemeinde und den sakramentalen Feiern vor;
- ansonsten leben diese Priester neuer Art aus der Taufe, wie alle anderen Gemeindemitglieder handeln sie für gewöhnlich „kirchlich“, eingebunden in die Gemeinschaft von Schwestern und Brüder;
- sie bringen die ihnen gegebenen Begabungen in das Leben und Wirken der Gemeinde ein.

Der heute vorfindbare „Normalfall“ des voll akademisch ausgebildeten, ehelos lebenden, hauptberuflich wirkenden Priesters wird künftig eine –allerdings bedeutsame – Minderheit sein. Diese traditionellen Priester werden auch zusätzliche Aufgaben erhalten. Eine davon wird sein, mehrere Presbyterteams („Teams of Elders“) spirituell wie pastoral zu begleiten. Zudem werden manche gemeindegründerisch unterwegs sein.⁶²

62 That was the reason why at the beginning of the development of the model Bishop Lobinger and I coined the terms "Corinthian priests" (for the priests from and in the churches) and "Paulus priests".

Ob es zu Spannungen zwischen den beiden Typen kommen wird? Ob beide Typen einander befruchten werden? Und was soll geschehen, wenn das Mitglied in einem „Presbyterteam“ sich nicht bewährt? Diese und ähnliche Fragen werden sich erst im Prozess der Einführung klären.

Ein Randaspekt der Einführung des Lobinger-Modells besteht darin, dass sich in der künftigen Gestaltung des Priesteramts die katholische Kirche der orthodoxen oder auch der griechisch-katholischen Kirche annähert. Die Priester in den Gemeinden können dort verheiratet⁶³ sein. Ordinierte mit gemeindeübergreifenden Leitungsaufgaben hingegen, voran die Bischöfe, sind unverheiratet und sind zumeist Mönche aus Klöstern.

⁶³ The rules of the Eastern Church, which also apply to our married deacons, are not without problems. The marriage must take place before the consecration. This puts not a few candidates for priesthood under proper pressure. Also the prohibition of a renewed marriage with the death of the woman is felt as burdening.

Ehrenamtliche und Hauptamtliche

Es gibt unter den hauptamtlichen Laien viele, welche heute von sich aus⁶⁴ oder auf Grund des Priestermangels „presbyterale Aufgaben“ übernehmen: in der Leitung, indem sie taufen⁶⁵ und amtlich verkündigen. Sie tragen dazu bei, dass die herkömmliche Kirchengestalt weiter funktioniert. Der theologisch und pastoral hochwertige Dienst hauptamtlicher Laien, Frauen wie Männer, belegt den Übergang von einer Priesterkirche in eine Dienstleistungskirche: und das (allein) in geldstarken Kirchengebieten.

⁶⁴ Zulehner, Paul M./Renner, Katharina: Search for a place. Survey of pastoral workers in the German-speaking area, Ostfildern 2006.

⁶⁵ This permission is considered controversial. For baptism as integration into the Church was originally the task of the bishop. When he could not always be there, the post-Baptismal anointings were separated from the sacramental integration - this led to the development of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in the end only completes the integration process!

Die Kirche der Zukunft wird, wenn sie eine arme Kirche sein wird und (wie in den meisten Gebieten der Weltkirche) es keine Kirchensteuer/keinen Kirchenbeitrag mehr geben wird, nicht mehr Dienstleistungskirche sein, sondern eine Kirche, die Dienste leistet.

Es ist vorhersehbar, dass das gemeindliche Leben künftig durch ehrenamtliche Dienste getragen werden wird, einschließlich ehrenamtlich tätige Ordinierte in den „Teams of Elders“.

Aber auch in diesen Zeiten wird die Kirche professionelle Hauptamtliche brauchen: in gemeindeübergreifenden Leitungsaufgaben; in vielfältigen Projekten im kirchlichen Netzwerk, und das in gesellschaftsrelevanten Bereichen wie im Sozialbereich, Bildungsbereich, in den Medien etc.

Können hauptamtliche Laien oder auch Diakone in „Teams of Elders“ ordiniert werden? Die Antwort ist einfach: Wenn die Gemeinde sie wählt, dann selbstverständlich. Sie würden aber den priesterlichen Dienst neben ihrer hauptamtlichen Anstellung etwa in einem diakonalen Projekt wie die übrigen im „Team of Elders“ gleichfalls ehrenamtlich ausüben.

Nur ausgewählte „munera“?

In der Pressekonferenz über den Wolken versucht der Papst einen anderen Unterschied zwischen den traditionellen Priestern und den Presbytern anderer Art, wie Bischof Lobinger sie vorschlägt. Er greift dazu auf die Lehre von den drei „munera“ (Aufgaben) aus der Schultheologie zurück, die sich einem Priester stellen. Den Journalisten nannte der Papst als diese drei „munera“ der Priester: lehren, heiligen, leiten.

Den Presbytern anderer Art, welche der pastoralen Not an Orten „far, far away“ abhelfen könnten, sollten aber nicht alle drei munera übertragen werden, sondern nur das munus sanctificandi. T. Keane berichtet im America Magazine darüber so:

„Franziskus vermerkte dann, dass ‚die Priesterweihe drei Rollen oder Funktionen (munus)‘ verleiht“ – lehren, heiligen und leiten – ‚aber der Bischof könnte die Erlaubnis für nur eine davon vergeben: die heiligmachende Rolle‘. Nach dieser Formulierung wäre der Ordinierte nicht notwendigerweise ein Hirte oder gar ein Prediger, könnte aber jene sakramentalen Aufgaben wahrnehmen, die den katholischen Diakonen derzeit verwehrt sind, vermutlich einschließlich des Hörens von Beichten und des Vorsitzes bei der Messe.“⁶⁶

Diese Möglichkeit entnimmt der Papst nicht dem Lobinger-Modell, in dem es dazu keinerlei Anhaltspunkte gibt.

Aus theologischen Gesichtspunkten ist diese Aufteilung auch nicht wünschenswert. Was macht ein „Gemeindeführer“ im Amazonasgebiet, wenn er der Liturgie vorsteht? Natürlich legt er die Heilige Schrift aus. Er ist, was der Papst ausklammert, natürlich ein „homilist“. Zudem werden die Menschen auch mit den pastoralen Sorgen zu ihm kommen. Also ist ein Anteil seiner Tätigkeit auch die eines „pastor“, eines Hirten.

Vielleicht wollte der Papst sagen: Die gläubigen Gemeinden brauchen vor allem die sakramentalen Feiern, vor allem die Feier des Herrenmahls, um den „eucharistischen Hunger“ zu stillen. Die Trennung der munera erscheint dem Papst vielleicht ein Argument, um die Lösung, die regional gefunden ist, weltkirchlich eher annehmbar zu machen.

Dennoch: pastoraltheologisch ist dringend davon abzuraten. Es würde die sakramentalen Feiern vom Wort abtrennen. Damit ginge eine der großen liturgischen Errungenschaften des Konzils verloren, die auch ökumenisch von großer Tragweite ist: das Ineinander von Wort und Sakrament.

Personae probatae: auch Frauen!

Das Lobinger-Modell verwendet gezielt nicht den Begriff „viri probati“, sondern redet von „personae probatae“. Der Grund besteht darin, dass dieses Priesteramt anderer Art nicht nur für Männer, sondern auch für Frauen offenstehen soll. Das hat zunächst mit der Tatsache zu tun, dass unter den „gemeindefahrenen Personen“ zumeist mehr Frauen als Männer sind.

Dazu kommt, dass die vielen kleinen Abwertungen und latenten Diskriminierungen von Frauen tiefe Wunden der Kirche sind. Im Umkreis der Missbrauchskrise kommt das immer deutlicher zum Vorschein. Eine der Hauptursachen für Belästigungen und Übergriffe auf Kinder, aber auch auf Nonnen, besteht in einer psychosexuellen Unreife von traditionellen Priestern. Durch die Absonderung der männlichen Priesteramtskandidaten in der Sonderwelt eines Seminars werden Reifungsprozesse, wie sie sich in Liebesbeziehungen zu Frauen ereignen könnten, unterbunden. Manche Kandidaten nehmen ihre Unreife ins Priesteramt mit. Ihre erotisch-sexuellen Bedürfnisse richten sich dann nicht in Beziehungen auf gleicher Augenhöhe auf eine Partnerin. Vielmehr wächst die Versuchung, das unterdrückte erotisch-sexuelle Potential auf „schwächere“ und abhängige Personen, Kinder und Jugendliche zu richten. Die mystische Überhöhung des Priesteramtes verschärft die Lage und erzeugt in den Begegnungen ein folgenschweres Machtungleichgewicht. Das oft archaische Vertrauen in einen „Mann Gottes“, welches in das spirituell weit überhöhte Amt eines Priesters gesetzt wird, kann schamlos missbraucht werden.

Daher ist für die Kirche die Auseinandersetzung mit diesen ihren Strukturen und Zuwegen zum Priesteramt von höchster Dringlichkeit. Kardinal Christoph Schönborn nannte deshalb die Frauenfrage im Bayerischen Fernsehen ein „Zeichen der Zeit“.⁶⁷

Die Entdiskriminierung zwischen Juden und Griechen, Sklaven und Freien, Männern und Frauen gehört zum biblischen Grundprogramm (Gal 3,28). Jene der Frauen ist in ihre Endphase gelangt. Die Glaubwürdigkeit der Kirche hängt an der Lösung der Frauenfrage.⁶⁸ Eine solche Lösung der Frauenfrage in der katholischen Kirche kann nicht am Zugang von Frauen zu den ordinierten Ämtern vorbei gefunden werden.

⁶⁸ So many theologians in their expertises on the pontificate of Pope Francis: Zulehner, Paul M./Halík, Tomáš: We share this dream. Theologians from all over the world argue ProPopeFrancis, Ostfildern 2019, ebook.

Erleichtert wird die längst fällige umfassende Gleichstellung der Frauen im kirchlichen Leben, weil die biblischen wie dogmatischen Befunde den Zugang von Frauen zum Ordo durchaus offen sehen. Daran ändert auch die Position von Johannes Paul II. in *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* (1984) nichts, dass die Kirche keine Vollmacht habe, Frauen die Hände aufzulegen und zu ordinieren. Auch das Verbot, die Frauenordination überhaupt zu diskutieren, konnte sich nicht durchsetzen.

Das bloße Traditionsargument von Johannes Paul II. besitzt theologisch keine Tragfähigkeit. Hätte es diese, gäbe es heute noch die Sklaverei und müssten Christen vor der Taufe das ganze jüdische Gesetz annehmen (vgl. Gal 3,28). Die Formel „nie und nimmer“, die Päpste gern verwenden, um Diskussionen zu unterbinden, hat sich in der Kirchengeschichte so gut wie nie bewährt.

Übrigens auch nicht bei Petrus vor dem Apostelkonzil. Dieser berief sich auf die Tradition. Er beteuerte, dass er „nie und nimmer“ von unreinen Speisen essen werde. Dieses bockbeinige Traditionsargument hielt aber nur so lange, bis ihn Gott in einem Traum bei Joppe eines Besseren belehrte. Die Kirche braucht also in der Frage der Frauenordination ein neues Joppe! Ein Konzil?

Auf diesem Hintergrund legt sich die Begriffsbildung von „*personae probatae*“ nahe. Auch das Arbeitsdokument zur Amazonassynode sieht deutlich den Frauenaspekt: „In diesem Zusammenhang ist es notwendig, Klarheit zu schaffen über die Art offizieller Dienstämter, die den Frauen übertragen werden können, wobei die zentrale Rolle, welche die Frauen in der Kirche Amazoniens ausüben, in Betracht zu ziehen ist.“⁶⁹

Nachwort

((cover page))

Am 4. November 2013 teilte Leonardo Boff in einem Tweet mit, dass Clelia Luro verstorben sei. Diese hatte in der Zeit, als Jorge Bergoglio Erzbischof in Buenos Aires war, den damaligen Weihbischof Jerónimo Podestá geheiratet. Kurz vor dessen Sterben hatte der Erzbischof seinen ehemaligen Weihbischof besucht. Nach dessen Tod betreute er die Witwe Clelia Luro seelsorglich. Das war der Beginn einer andauernden und fruchtbaren Kommunikation zwischen beiden.

Eines ihrer Themen war auch die Frage nach dem Zölibat. „Und natürlich hofft sie darauf, dass sie es noch erleben darf, den Zölibat fallen zu sehen“, so berichtete eine österreichische Tageszeitung bald nach der Wahl von Kardinal Bergoglio zum Papst. „Auf die Frage des Journalisten ‘Wird der Papst den Zölibat anfassen?’ antwortete sie ‘Ja, aber jetzt noch nicht. Ich habe ihn gebeten, jetzt noch nichts zu unternehmen’, sagt Clelia Luro. ‘Er sagt mir, du hast recht. Bitte deine Pfarrer, dass sie Ruhe bewahren.’ Clelia hat angeboten, dass ihr Verband von mehr als 100.000 verheirateten Priestern mindestens ein Jahr lang das Thema nicht aufbringt. Sie weiß, welche Reaktionen eine Entscheidung rund um den Zölibat nach sich zöge: ‘Mehr als einer schneidet dir dafür den Kopf ab’, sagt sie.“⁷⁰

Vederemo. Wir werden sehen.

appendices

((cover page))

"Teams of Elders."

Gemeinsames Positionspapier von em. Bischof Fritz Lobinger, Peter Neuner, Paul M. Zulehner

1. Es geht um Gemeinden, die in vorhersehbarer Zeit keinen Pfarrer mehr bekommen werden, weil die personellen und/oder finanziellen Ressourcen begrenzt sind. Sie sind jedoch fest entschlossen, ihre (pfarr)gemeindliche Eigenständigkeit und ihre sonntägliche Eucharistiefeier zu behalten.
2. Diese Gemeinden, haben ihre Lebensfähigkeit schon durch die Ausbildung von Diensten und den Aufbau pastoraler Gruppen bewiesen und beweisen diese auch aktuell.
3. Die Gemeinden machen einen geistlichen Erneuerungsvorgang durch. Ziel ist es, möglichst viele für eine missionarische Grundhaltung zu gewinnen.
4. Auch sollten möglichst viele auf einem spirituellen Weg lernen, zu ihrer Taufe ein erwachsenes Adsum zu sprechen und bereit zu sein, aus Mitgliedern zu Zeugen zu werden.
5. In den Gemeinden werden geeignete Personen gesucht. Diese kommen aus der Mitte des gemeindlichen Lebens und haben bereits Verantwortung getragen; sie sind in diesem Sinn „personae probatae“. Sie verfügen ebenso über reichliche berufliche Erfahrung. Im Normalfall sind sie in der Lage, ehrenamtlich zu wirken.
6. Der Bischof sorgt dafür, dass die gewählten Personen eine theologisch fundierte und pastoral intensive Ausbildung erhalten.⁷¹ Die Eignung für Leitungsaufgaben im Team muss gegeben sein.

71 This can be connected to a higher education institution/university. If it is a bachelor's degree, it needs a special pastoral emphasis.

7. Der Bischof erhält die Sondererlaubnis (als Ausnahme vom can 1042 §1), diese Personen zu Priestern zu weihen und sie dem „Presbyterteam“ (Team of Elders“) einer Gemeinde im pastoralen Großraum zuzuordnen.

8. Hoher Wert wird nach der Weihe auf eine intensive spirituelle und pastorale Begleitung der Teams gelegt. 662051556 Dadurch kann die kompakte Ausbildung weitergeführt und vertieft werden.

662051556 9. it is not advisable to consecrate 'viri probati' in the conventional sense, i.e. e.g. by full-time officials, independently of the municipality. This would predictably jeopardize the development of the congregations into a missionary witness."

10. Die Bildung lokaler Presbyterien eröffnet die Möglichkeit, dass die ehelosen Priester in Zentralpfarren gemeinsam wohnen. Unter modernen Bedingungen ist der Zölibat sehr eng mit kommunitärer Lebensform verwoben. Die Bildung von lokalen Presbyterien ist auf diese überraschende Weise zugleich eine Möglichkeit, den Zölibat für den traditionellen Priestertypus dadurch zu sichern, dass er auch praktisch lebbar gemacht wird.

11. Der Dechant, der selbst in einer solchen Priestergemeinschaft lebt, ist für die neuen Presbyterien (Teams of Elders“) verantwortlich: rechtlich, spirituell, pastoral.

Vorbereitungsdokument für die Amazonassynode Oktober 2019 zur Eucharistie

58. Die Feier der Eucharistie lädt uns ein, wieder zu entdecken, wie „auf dem Höhepunkt des Geheimnisses der Inkarnation... der Herr selbst durch ein Stückchen Materie in unser Innerstes gelangen [wollte]“ (LS 236). Die Eucharistie verweist uns also auf das „Lebenszentrum des Universums“, den überquellenden Ausgangspunkt von Liebe und unerschöpflichem Leben im menschengewordenen Sohn, der in den Gaben von Brot und Wein, den Früchten von Erde und Weinstock sowie der menschlichen Arbeit anwesend ist (vgl. LS 236). In der Eucharistie feiert die Gemeinde eine kosmische Liebe, durch welche die Menschen gemeinsam mit dem menschengewordenen Gottessohn und der ganzen Schöpfung Gott Dank sagen für das neue Leben im auferstandenen Christus (vgl. LS 236). Auf diese Weise begründet die Eucharistie die Gemeinde, eine pilgernde, festlich feiernde Gemeinde, die „zur Quelle des Lichts und der Motivation für unsere Sorgen um die Umwelt wird [und uns darauf ausrichtet], Hüter der gesamten Schöpfung zu sein“ (LS 236). Zugleich verbindet sich das Blut, mit dem so viele Frauen und Männer den Boden Amazoniens getränkt und das sie für das Wohl seiner Bewohner und des Territoriums vergossen haben, mit dem Blut Christi, das für alle und für die gesamte Schöpfung vergossen wurde.

64. Eine Sonderversammlung der Bischofssynode für das Amazonasgebiet ist auf ein wirksames Einüben gegenseitigen Zuhörens angewiesen, insbesondere auf das Aufeinander-Hören zwischen dem gläubigen Volk und den Verantwortlichen für das Lehramt der Kirche. Einer der entscheidenden Punkte beim Aufeinander-Hören ist die Klage über „die vielen tausend Gemeinden..., die über lange Zeit die sonntägliche Eucharistiefeier entbehren müssen“ (DAp 100e). Wir vertrauen darauf, dass die Kirche, verwurzelt in ihrer synodalen und missionarischen Dimension (vgl. Franziskus, Ansprache zur 50-Jahr-Feier der Errichtung der Bischofssynode, 17.10.2015), in der Lage ist, Prozesse des Zuhörens (Sehen und Hören) sowie Prozesse einer differenzierten Bewertung (Urteilen) in Gang setzt, um den konkreten Realitäten der Völker Amazoniens gerecht zu werden.

81. In diesem Sinn erinnert uns das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil daran, dass das ganze Volk Gottes am Priestertum Christi teilhat, wobei es das gemeinsame Priestertum und das Weihepriestertum zu unterscheiden gilt (vgl. LG 10). Von daher müssen dringend die für heute notwendigen Dienstämter evaluiert und neu durchdacht werden, damit sie den Aufgaben „einer Kirche mit dem Gesicht Amazoniens und einer Kirche mit indigenem Antlitz“ (Fr. PM) entsprechen. Eine Priorität ist es, die Inhalte, Methoden und Handlungs- und Denkweisen zu definieren, um eine inkulturierte Pastoral zu entwickeln, die in der Lage ist, auf die großen Herausforderungen auf diesem Territorium zu antworten. Eine andere Priorität ist es, neue Ämter und Dienste für die verschiedenen Verantwortlichen der Pastoral vorzuschlagen, die für die Aufgaben und Verantwortlichkeiten in den Gemeinden zuständig sind. In diesem Zusammenhang ist es notwendig, Klarheit zu schaffen über die Art offizieller Dienstämter, die den Frauen übertragen werden können, wobei die zentrale Rolle, welche die Frauen in der Kirche Amazoniens ausüben, in Betracht zu ziehen ist. Ebenso ist es notwendig, dem indigenen und aus der Region stammenden Klerus unter Berücksichtigung seiner eigenen kulturellen Identität und Werte Rückendeckung zu geben. Schließlich ist es notwendig über neue Wege nachzudenken, wie das Volk Gottes häufiger an der Eucharistie, dem Zentrum des christlichen Lebens (vgl. DAp 251) teilnehmen kann.

87. Es soll eine Spiritualität nach der Art Jesu sein: einfach, menschlich, dialogfähig und samaritanisch, eine Spiritualität, die erlaubt, das Leben zu feiern, die Liturgie, die Eucharistie und die Feste, immer im Respekt vor den eigenen Rhythmen eines jeden Volkes.⁷²

72 New ways for the church and for a holistic ecology. Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon Region October 2019. Preparatory Document. <https://www.misereor.de/fileadmin/publikationen/vorbereitungsdokument-amazonien.pdf>
"https://www.misereor.de/fileadmin/publikationen/vorbereitungsdokument-amazonien.pdf"
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Ein Ausbildungsmodell

Aus- und Fortbildungsziele

Wer gemeindebezogene Priester neuer Art will und die Auffassung teilt, dass die hochqualifizierten Hauptamtlichen ebenso wie die Priester herkömmlicher Art andere gemeindeübergreifende Aufgaben haben werden, wird rechtzeitig neuartige Aus- und Fortbildungsformen entwickeln. Diese könnten auch kürzer sein als die Ausbildungswege für Priester herkömmlicher Art.

Das hier dokumentierte Ausbildungsmodell ist mit Blick auf die Situation in Europa ausgearbeitet worden. Andere Kirchengebiete werden ihre je eigene Ausbildung konzipieren.

Ziel einer solchen „Ausbildung neu“ für Europa wäre es, in einem akademischen Dreijahresprogramm (an katholisch-theologischen Fakultäten könnte sich dazu das kommende dreijährige Bakkalaureatsstudium eignen) jene Grundlagen und Kompetenzen zu vermitteln, die für die Ausübung des Amtes eines gemeindebezogenen Priesters erforderlich sind.

So könnte eine solche „Ausbildung neu“ aussehen – es handelt sich dabei um einen ersten Entwurf, eine Gedankensammlung, die noch weiterer Überlegungen bedarf.⁷³

⁷³ This draft was repeatedly discussed in a group of thought leaders. Besides me, her members are: Dr. Christine Mann, Director of the Archbishop's School Office, and Helmut Schüller, former Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Vienna.

Ein Ausbildungsentwurf

„Diese Form der konzentrierten Ausbildung von Priestern, die vornehmlich *aus Gemeinden* kommen, ausgereifte Persönlichkeiten sind, soziale Kompetenz haben und über ihre ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit in hohem Maße *gemeindeerfahren* sind, wird für den deutschsprachigen Raum organisiert. Es ist wünschenswert, wenn die gemeindeerfahrenen Männer einen *akademischen Abschluss* haben und auch beruflich *Leitungsaufgaben wahrgenommen* haben. Sind sie *verheiratet*, wird für die Weihe um eine Ausnahme von der Zölibatspflicht ersucht. Zu klären ist, inwieweit diese Ausbildung in der Form eines Fernkurses – vielleicht Internetgestützt – durchgeführt werden kann.

Ziel: Die Ausbildung soll auf die Tätigkeit als Gemeindepriester (in einem gemeindlichen Presbyterium) vorbereiten.

Dazu braucht es folgende Kompetenzen:

Arbeitsfeldkompetenzen

- Vorstehen in einer gemeindegetragenen Liturgie
- Predigtkompetenz – wo der Predigtendienst in engem Zusammenspiel mit Personen geschieht, die auf die Predigt hin das Evangelium meditieren
- Mystagogische wie katechetische Grundkenntnisse (vor allem für die gemeindliche Sakramentenvorbereitung)
- Seelsorgliche Kompetenz (Begleitung von Lebensgeschichten in guten und bösen Zeiten aus der Kraft des Evangeliums; Förderung einer Kultur der Umkehr und in diesem Rahmen die Fähigkeit, das Bußsakrament ‚fruchtbar‘ zu feiern)
- Diakonale Grundkompetenz (Verknüpfung von Gottes- und Nächstenliebe in konkreten gemeindlichen Diakoniprojekten)

Leitungskompetenzen

- Leitung einer gläubigen und aktiven Gemeinde im Team (Vision, Analyse, Projekt) – Fähigkeit zur andauernden Gemeindeentwicklung (Organisationsentwicklung)
- Fähigkeit zur Führung und Begleitung von Ehrenamtlichen (in den verschiedenen Tätigkeitsfeldern) (Personalentwicklung)
- Sichern, dass die Gemeinde in der Spur des Evangeliums bleibt – was gegebenenfalls auch die Fähigkeit zu prophetischem Widerstand verlangt
- den Verbund der anvertrauten Gemeinde mit der Ortskirche (Presbyterium) symbolisieren und gewährleisten

Bausteine für die dreijährige Ausbildung:

Vermittlung theologischer Grundkompetenzen

Eine gründliche Kenntnis der Glaubenstradition

- Bibelwissenschaften

- Patrologie und Kirchengeschichte
- systematische und spirituelle Theologie – wie und was die Kirche heute lehrt und was das für den persönlichen und gemeindlichen Glaubensweg unter den Bedingungen einer modernen Kultur bedeutet
- die eigene Glaubensstradition auf dem Hintergrund anderer subjektiver (Un-)Glaubensentwürfe (andere Religionen, andere christliche Konfessionen, aber auch naturalistischer Humanismus, fernöstliche Religionen, Islam, Atheismus) bedenken

Eine gediegene Gegenwartskunde (Zeichen der Zeit) – Mensch und Gesellschaft

- Philosophie
- Anthropologie
- Sozialwissenschaft
- Psychologie
- Zur Lage des Glaubens heute...

Erwerb von Tätigkeitsfeld- und Leitungskompetenzen

Dazu arbeiten die traditionellen theologischen Disziplinen transdisziplinär zusammen. Näherhin heißen die interdisziplinär bedienten Ausbildungsfelder:

- gemeindegerechter Liturgie vorstehen
- heute (mystagogisch und gemeindegerechter) den Glauben an atheisierende und spirituell suchende moderne Zeitgenossen tradieren
- Wortkompetenz (Predigt, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Gemeinde...)
- lebensbegleitende Seelsorgskompetenz samt der Kompetenz, Umkehrgeschichten wirkmächtig zu begleiten und sakramental zu feiern
- aus der Kraft der Gottesliebe auf die Seite der Bedrängten treten (gemeindliche Diakonie, Zusammenspiel mit der Caritas..., Caritaswissenschaft, Sozialpastoral)
- Leitung und Kooperation (Organisations- und Personalentwicklung)⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Zulehner, Paul M./Lobinger, Fritz: For the sake of people and communities. Plea for the discharge of priests, Ostfildern 2002, 185-189.

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