

SYNODALITY AND THE CATHOLIC GERMAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (KDFB)





BEING PART OF A SYNODAL CHURCH

For the Catholic German Women's Association (KDFB) synodality means, that we want to learn from each other, that we walk together as **women in all our diversity** and that we work for a fair church inspired by the Holy Spirit. Listening to the experiences of women from all over the world is essential for the work we do.

As an association working on a local, diocesan and nationwide level we elect the members of our boards in a democratic process. At our general assemblies we vote on which topics we want to address and which campaigns we want to launch within **society, politics, and the Church**. Our issues range from solidarity with women and climate justice to questions of justice within the Church. In order to make an impact, we rely on the expertise and charisma of our members.

TRANSPARENCY AND A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The Church in Germany has been shaken by the findings of the MHG-Abuse Study, published in 2018. The German Bishops' Conference (DBK) and the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) therefore initiated the Synodal Path in order to address the systemic reasons of sexual and spiritual abuse. As a Catholic Women's Association we **have been dealing with the long overlooked abuse of adult women within the Church** since then. For this we published the book "Erzählen als Widerstand" ("Narrating as Resistance") with the autobiographical testimonies of 23 female victims of spiritual or sexual abuse.

Listening to these women and to many more, who have had the courage to speak up, we notice, that sexual or spiritual abuse is simultaneously an abuse of power: Clerical perpetrators can still rely on ideas of gender roles and clerical authority. It is our conviction, that we therefore **need transparency and accountability, female leadership and the participation of women in decision-taking**. The Church should become a place where the charisma of all believers is welcomed.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Discrimination against women based on gender encourages abuse of women worldwide. We feel the **urgent need to address the admission of women to ordained ministries**, especially the sacramental **diaconate**. In our parishes and associations, women perform and represent diaconal ministries. Women work on the “margins”, they pass on the faith, they witness the Gospel and preach the Word of God, they have leadership positions within their communities. At the same time, we experience time and time again, that limiting the diaconate and priesthood to men favours clericalism and simultaneously diminishes the recognition of the *diaconia* practised by women.

Admitting women to the diaconate will strengthen the diaconal dimension in the Church. For us this is a “sign of the times”.

OUR COMMITMENT IN SYNODAL PROCESSES

Women of the KDFB are **active members**
of the German Synodal Path

Monthly **digital talks with experts on the Synodal Path**
and the Synod 2021–2024 for our members and all
interested

Book “Erzählen als Widerstand” (“Narrating as
Resistance”): Testimonies of 23 female victims of abuse
in the church as a cry for justice and healing

Theological reflections on spiritual autonomy and
liberty of conscience within women’s lives and within
our association and increasing awareness of this

Online tutorial against abuse of adult women
(in cooperation with the University of
Regensburg / Chair of Pastoral Theology
Prof.in Dr. Ute Leimgruber)



www.missbrauchsmuster.de

CATHOLIC GERMAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (KDFB)

The KDFB with its approximately 130,000 members has been part of the catholic women's movement for 120 years since its founding in 1903. It works independently, democratically and regionally structured for the equal participation of women in society, politics, and the Church on a local and global level.

Since October 2023, Anja Karliczek (Member of the German Bundestag) is president of the KDFB.

We are committed to

- gender justice within the Church
- strengthening global and intergenerational justice, human dignity, and solidarity against populist tendencies
- fair working conditions and a livable future
- caring for the environment, working for climate justice

Imprint



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