



Pope Francis has opened a "synodal journey" for the entire Church on October 9, 2021. In preparation for the Synod of Bishops in 2023, he invites all the faithful to "pray, listen, dialogue, discern and advise one another on making pastoral decisions as close as possible to God's will". The Pope has requested that open meetings be held everywhere where everyone is welcome.

The RK gay emancipation foundation wants to contribute to this process. We would like to contribute to building a church where there is a full place for everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity or orientation; a church that, in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, makes a heartfelt effort to include people, not to exclude people. We therefore see these preparatory consultation meetings as a good opportunity to further adjust the position of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to homosexuality.

In Germany, among others, the bishops talk about the possibility of blessing civil unions between people of the same sex. In December 2020, Bishop Georg Bätzing, the president of the German Episcopal Conference, said in an [interview](#) that changes are needed in the catechism regarding homosexuality, and specifically that the catechism should provide openness to the blessing of homosexual unions.

Unfortunately, our hopes for this were soon dashed. In March 2021, this appeal of the German Bishops' Conference was sent in a [responsum](#) of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. The Congregation maintained its age-old position that all "homosexual acts" are "intrinsically wrong and disordered" and therefore sinful.

The *Academic Declaration on the Ethics of Free and Faithful Relations Between Persons of the Same Sex*, prepared under the auspices of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, prophetically expresses the urgency to address this topic at this critical time in Christian history. set. This statement was signed by 72 Catholic academics from 16 countries. These scientists state that *"there are no grounds, neither scientific nor biblical, to support the current official Church teaching that every sex act has a reproductive meaning and purpose, and that therefore same-sex acts are 'intrinsically disordered' because they lack reproductive meaning and purpose"*

The statement continued: *"Same-sex orientation, like heterosexual orientation, is not a 'tendency', the result of an individual's choice, a defect or an unnatural factor. Rather, same-sex sexual orientation is the natural capacity for deep emotional, affective, and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, same-sex individuals. Today there is no doubt that the diversity of sexual orientations is much more than a scientific hypothesis, and as such demands to be taken seriously through theological reflection."*

The Dutch version of the academic statement can be found [here](#).

We have now entered a historically important phase when it comes to emancipation in the Roman Catholic Church. The enormous gap that has arisen between the teaching of the Church and the reality that is lived necessitates a serious dialogue with the people concerned (experiential experts), in order to achieve a better religious appreciation of homosexuality and same-sex relationships. to come. We can only break through the culture of [fear](#) (editorial commentary in the newspaper Trouw, 26 January 2022) surrounding homosexuality in the Catholic Church in the Netherlands.





The positive steps that Pope Francis has taken in recent years offer hope. In October 2020, for example, he repeated his earlier statement about the recognition of a registered partnership for gay couples. In the documentary Francesco, the Pope said he believes homosexual couples should be allowed to enter into a registered partnership. Such a commitment would provide them with legal protection. The Pope has spoken out about gay rights in this way before. In mid-2021, Pope Francis encouraged American Jesuit James Martin to continue his pastoral commitment to LGBT people. "God approaches all his children with love," the pontifex wrote in a handwritten letter to Martin. Francis thanks the Jesuit for his closeness to the people, with which he tries to imitate the "style of God". He calls "closeness, compassion and sensitivity" as characteristic of this style. Keep it up, the Pope tells James Martin.

We see the synodal journey in which we now find ourselves as an excellent opportunity to make our church future-proof. According to Francis, the worldwide ecclesiastical plebiscite "thanks to the blowing of the Holy Spirit" must ensure "that the church does not become a museum". We wholeheartedly endorse this.

A number of short questions can help you to formulate answers individually and in a broader context that can serve as input for our contribution to Synod 2023:

- In what way could gay emancipation be promoted within the church?
- What do you (did) enjoy in the church?
- What bothers you in the church?
- What advice would you like to give to Synod 2023 in Rome?

You can submit the answers in the locally or regionally organized Synod meetings. We would also like to receive the answers, to ensure that they end up in the right place together. Answers can be emailed to us: info@rk-homo-emancipatie.nl.

We wish you a lot of courage and inspiration.

Sincerely,

Board RK gay emancipation

Also visit our website: www.rk-homo-emancipatie.nl

