



We Are Church

Pour une Eglise du Peuple de Dieu
Für eine Kirche des Gottesvolkes
Para una Iglesia del Pueblo de Dios
Para uma Igreja do Povo de Deus
Per una Chiesa del Popolo di Dio
For a Church of the People of God

Press Release 15 April 2024

Incapable of critical self-reflection

Response to the Vatican letter "Dignitas Infinita"

We Are Church International welcome the fact that the Vatican, in its declaration "Dignitas Infinita", recalls the fundamental and absolute dignity of all human beings, which is threatened and violated in many ways in our world today.

However, the question arises as to whether a document like this, which the Vatican claims to have worked on for five years, would not also have offered the opportunity to research human **dignity within the Church itself**. The sexual abuse by clerics and other church employees has not yet been forgotten and, particularly from a systemic point of view, is far from being sufficiently addressed, so it is very surprising how little the declaration has to say about these ecclesiastical crimes against human dignity.

A similar inability for critical self-reflection can be seen in the statements on "violence against women": with reference to Pope John Paul II, the "actual equality of the rights of the human person" is demanded and thus, among other things, "equal pay for equal work" and "fair advancement in professional careers", but not a syllable is mentioned that precisely this does not exist in the Catholic Church and that **the Church marginalises and discriminates against women** by excluding them from ordained ministry and thus from the highest offices of leadership.

The Vatican's approach is to define gender as based solely on a person's physical appearance. The document's attempt to uphold and defend human dignity is weakened by its **stunning lack of awareness of the actual lives of transgender and nonbinary people**. Far from being an individual's choice, gender identity is based on a discovery of who God created each of us to be accounting for factors other than the physical appearance of one's body. There is an urgent need to approach the subject with less ideological prejudice and more modern openness and scholarship.

We may be comforted by the title of the document: "Dignitas infinita" is a reference to the fact that human dignity is infinite, but could also be understood to mean that the Church's teaching on human dignity has not yet been thought through to the end.

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We Are Church International (WAC) founded in Rome in 1996, is a global coalition of national church reform groups. It is committed to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church based on the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the theological spirit developed from it.