

Station 14 b

- a supplement

*Dear Papa Francesco, dear Santo Padre,
I have just attended the Stations of the Cross in the
Roman Colosseum on TV.*



*Very lively – you gathered different families
and invited them
to carry the cross for one station
and to tell their story.
The widowed mother*

*was there with her child,
families with adopted children
or with a disabled child in a wheelchair,
the large family and the childless family
and others. Moving.*

*Two friends at the end,
from Russia and Ukraine
no words on that, just a deep
silence for peace.*

Fourteen stations.

*Allow me to add one,
since there are no fifteen
I will simply call it 14 b,
it's part of it, there's no question about it.
I mean the "other" families,
that you in Rome, behind Vatican walls,
which you still shamefully conceal,
as if they didn't exist
or if they do, it's unfortunate.*

*The two men I mean,
who love each other and said yes to each other,
and the child who will grow up sheltered by them.*

*The two women who have grown old together,
who for a long time didn't dare to confess,
practised in hiding for decades.
So many mothers, so many fathers,
who embrace and protect their gay son, their lesbian daughter,
The daughter who, after agonising years,
becomes a son to the parents,
now free and so full of life.*

*The couples who have been childless for so long,
who, by artificial means
finally become parents,
even though Rome forbids it.*

*For them I'm setting it up, the station 14 b,
look at her, Papa Francesco,
they exist and thank God for it.
Life, multi-faceted, is richer and more colourful.
God's imagination knows no bounds.
Let the breeze blow in the dusty rooms,
Let our church dance and celebrate life!*

Msgr. Stephan Wahl 15/16.4.2022

22.9.2022

Dear Pope Francis,

At the beginning of our letter to you, we have placed "Station 14 b," which Msgr. Stephan Wahl formulated in view of this year's Stations of the Cross prayer in the Roman Colosseum.

We are queer employees in the church who came out together on January 24, 2022 and many of us shared our stories of suffering in the church. The enclosed book, which we are pleased to present to you, documents some of these stories. What all of the participants have in common is that we try to earnestly live and work out of our commitment to our faith and we try to feel at home in our church despite suffering many injuries.

With our initiative #OutInChurch, we want to speak out on our own. We no longer want others to talk about us while refusing to talk with us. We no longer want to hide, but to tell people about our lives, our feelings, our love, and our faith.

Many of us are familiar with suicidal thoughts because of our queerness. Many feel unaccepted in and by the church because church teaching still views homosexuality and transgender identity as a defect.

Today, there is widespread awareness that gender transcends 'man' and 'woman' and that the diverse forms of gender expression are not evidence of a pathology. In 2018, 'transsexuality' was removed from the scope of psychiatric diseases in the newest edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Likewise, it is now the scientific consensus that homosexuality is not a disease. Moreover, the theological sciences have convincingly demonstrated that the creation story in Gen 1:27 is not to be interpreted as a creation of man and woman, but as male and female, thus allowing for a diversity of gender identities. Numerous exegetes emphasise that the Bible and biblical authors did not have a concept of homosexuality comparable to our own, which is responsible love relationship

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between consenting adult, and that there is therefore no condemnation of homosexuality in the Bible.

In view of the changes in society, the scientific findings of medicine, psychology and theology, it is only fitting for the Church to teach in the light of the Gospel that homosexuality, as well as the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations, is willed by God and expressed in theological anthropology. As a result, the Church should therefore be committed to combating exclusion and violence against LGBTIQ people throughout the world.

An important step to reduce injustice, oppression, violence and inner distress of LGBTIQ+ people is the reformulation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Therefore, we consider an amendment of the Catechism with the following aspects to be urgently necessary:

- Concerning the condemnation of homosexual relationships: in view of the new theological and scientific research, which no longer permits the previous interpretation of homosexuality as a terrible aberration, there is a need for a positive valuation of homosexuality as a variant of creation (number 2357).¹ Therefore a condemnation of homosexual relationships is inadmissible because it violates the inviolability and dignity of the person.
- The deletion of number 2358 and number 2359, because they do not stand up to research and also do not recognise that God created human beings with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, and that God could not have erred in his creation. God's creative plan wanted people to be different, to live differently, and to form loving relationships.
- Also based on the Gospel, we expect the Church to work actively throughout the world to end the persecution and oppression of LGBTIQ+ persons so that people can live their vocations in diverse relationships with dignity.
- Homosexuality and trans identity are not a disease. Therefore, so-called "conversion therapies" should be rejected. They are not medically effective, and have been proven to be harmful. In pastoral care, self-determination must be respected and the integration of trans-identity must be promoted. No one should be coerced into believing that their homosexual orientation or transgender identity and their life-history realisation are inherently sinful.

We experience the many approaches to life and multitude of life experiences of queer people as diverse sites of divine activity and therefore also as sources of knowledge of the faith. We are convinced, that diversity makes our church richer, more creative, more humane, and more alive. As workers in and for the church, we want to bring our life

¹ A critical review of the state of exegetical and moral theological research can be found here: https://www.wijngaardsinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/christian_same_sex_relationships__interim_report.pdf.

experiences and charisms to bear on an equal footing and to be able share them with all Christians and non-Christians.

We believe that it is essential for a new beginning, and that you, as the head of the church, together with all other church leaders, take responsibility for the countless negative experiences that LGBTIQ+ people have had in the church, and that you push ahead with the task of reconciliation with the church's history of guilt in this matter.

We are very committed to contributing our experience and competences to the forthcoming discussion process and we wish to participate in every available form of cooperation and dialogue.

In solidarity and with warm regards on behalf of the initiative #OutInChurch

Dr. Michael Brinkschröder, Munich

Jens Ehebrecht-Zumsande, Hamburg

Pastor Bernd Mönkebüscher, Hamm