

Leading theologian withdraws from German bishops' 'synod'

A member of the International Theological Commission has announced that she is no longer available to participate in the "binding synodal path" undertaken by the bishops' conference of Germany.

Marianne Schlosser, a member of the International Theological Commission, cited concerns over both the approach and methodology of the "synodal path" when she announced that she could no longer participate.

Schlosser, a professor of theology at the University of Vienna and the recipient of the 2018 Ratzinger Prize, was invited to take part in the Synodal Way's forum "on women in ecclesial roles and offices" as an expert.

Saying she could not identify with the intermediate report of the preparatory group, Schlosser raised a number of issues, in particular identifying a "fixation on ordination" of women.

This "fixation" was neither theologically and historically nor pastorally and spiritually justified, she told news agency KNA. The Catholic Church teaches that it has no authority to admit women to priestly ordination.

Schlosser said the discussion about ordination had "been conducted for so long," all arguments had been exchanged and were on the table.

Since it was "not a disciplinary question," the topic "could not be negotiated in a synodal forum with mixed members", i.e. between bishops and laity, she said.

Schlosser had not been present for the two preparatory meetings held so far.

The theologian also expressed the fear of a progressive polarization of the church in Germany.

On Sep 23, 2014, Pope Francis appointed Schlosser as a member of the International Theological Commission. She was also appointed a member of the study commission investigating the female diaconate in 2016.

The Bavarian is also an adviser to the Faith Commission of the German bishops' conference and since January 2018 a member of the Theological Commission of the Austrian bishops' conference.