

Fiat Spiritus Community in Germany

In June of 2010, Sister Isolde Schneider professed her vows as the first German member of the Fiat Spiritus Community. During the past three years Sister Isolde has been seeking ways to invite others to consider a vocation in this new expression of consecrated life in Germany. This has not been easy since the Catholic Church in Germany, not unlike the rest of Europe, has experienced a decline in church attendance. People are seeking other ways to gather and express their spirituality. In 2012 Sister Isolde asked the rest of the Fiat Spiritus Community if she could request the Bishop of Trier, which is her home diocese, for formal recognition of the community in his diocese. In 2013 with the community's affirmation Sister Isolde spoke to the Bishop and he agreed and placed the Fiat Spiritus Community in the Diocesan Directory of Trier and invited Sister Isolde to participate in a newly formed Diocesan Synod of new ecclesial communities that would look to the future of the Church in the Diocese of Trier. The following are Sister Isolde's reflections on her participation.

— Brother Bob Overland, FS Provincial



Sister Isolde Schneider, FS

As a member of the Fiat Spiritus Community and also a member of the Women's Social Services I was voted to take part in this Synod.

It is for me like a small bit of spring in winter and I gladly reflect on my participation in the Synod. The Synod is a special time of discussion and consultation as well as orientation and guidance. The members have the responsibility to discuss with the Bishop the themes of the meetings. It is our call to show our understanding and to work with the signs of the time. If God is with us always, in every time, what does that say to us in our day? There are many wishes and longings that people have

today and religion today does not necessarily mean only going to church.

Altogether we are over 290 members of the Synod. There are clerics and lay people from different walks of life. We feel no differences among us. But already after the first working time it is clear that seeking the signs of the time is difficult and there is no finality to issues.

The third millennium demands we let loose of many things. People want in their life situations to be taken seriously, they want different ways to worship God. People want to be accompanied and guided in their spiritual welfare. They seek compassion and mercy with no exclusion of people. Many things in our time are a heavy burden for the soul. Problems and demands surround us constantly.

The Church is being asked many political questions when it concerns the dignity of people. This is an important mission to represent and support the Church's views. We must set the sails despite contrary winds. The development of the Church is unforeseeable. The Church belongs not to us but to God. We must be open to diversity but nevertheless aware because there are adversaries of the Church. We are called to gather the good and bring it to Christ. People today do not have a clear orientation and structure in their lives but the longing for a home in God is very strong. It can be had in different ways.

I work in a group focused on religious life and we know how important it is to build up, to have courage and structured rituals. A person does not go the spiritual way alone, he/she goes with others. We must go with the people on their way, stay with them and return with them.

The Synod will continue to meet over a two year period to continue discussion and consultation. This is an incentive for us. Although the signs of the times are sometimes dark, God goes with us. God is there in generosity.



Sister Isolde Schneider, FS

Translation provided by Sister Roberta Christianson, PHJC