



**Zeichen  
der Zeit**

**Hoffnung und Widerstand**

**Information on the conference**

***Commemorate and renew the Pact of the Catacombs!  
The „secret“ legacy of Vatican II  
Rome, November 11-17, 2015***

**Location of the event with information desk:**

Casa La Salle, Via Aurelia, 472

**Contact of the spokespersons: +49 157 809 452 39**

Cordula Ackermann (German, English, Spanish)

Benedikt Kern (German, French, Spanish)

**Press conferences:**

Monday, **9th November 2015, 11:30**, UISG, Piazza di Ponte Sant'Angelo, 28, for information about the planned events commemorating the Pact of the Catacombs.

Monday, **16th November 2015, 12:30**, Domitilla-Catacomb, Via delle Sette Chiese, 280/282, after the commemoration service on the anniversary of the Pact of the Catacomb with Bishop Luigi Bettazzi, Jon Sobrino SJ, Norbert Arntz.

We kindly ask you to inform us about your participation in the press conference.

Further information and the detailed program can be found here: [www.pro-konzil.de](http://www.pro-konzil.de)

**Projektgruppe Pro Konzil**

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**Commemoration of the „secret“ legacy of the Second Vatican Council -  
Remembering and renewing the Catacomb Pact congregation! from 11 to 17  
November in Rome,** Press release from the 2nd of November 2015

*Soon it will be the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Catacomb Pact, in which 40 Bishops and Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Councils committed themselves to a Church of the Poor. An occasion which has been all but forgotten for some time, but whose groundbreaking character manifests itself again in view of the disputes recently initiated in the Catholic Church by Pope Francis. Following the motto „Remembering and renewing the Pact of the Catacombs“ it is the aim of a congregation of more than two-hundred Christians to bring this pact to the attention of the public once more and at the same time highlight the importance of a Church standing alongside the poor and excluded.*

On 16 November 1965 - three weeks before the end of the Second Vatican Council - 40 Bishops from all over the world met at the Domitilla Catacomb on the outskirts of Rome. In 13 commitments they promised to lead a simple life, to renounce the insignia of power and enter into a pact with the poor. What those bishops did later became known as the *Option for the Poor*: „Because there are poor people we have to make a new decision. The poor are the living proof that there is something wrong with society. Because of the poor we have to take an option. From this point of view the Church has to fight against injustice,“ explains Norbert Arnzt (Münster/Germany), who has researched the Catacomb Pact and the history of its effects on the development of Liberation Theology. For the Bishops of the Catacomb Pact it was all about a certain image of the church which reappears when Pope Francis writes, „With its words and gestures the 'awakening' Church [...] places itself inside the daily life of others, shortens distances, lowers itself if necessary to the point of humiliation and embraces human life by touching the suffering body of Christ within the people.“ (Evangelii Gaudium 24)

Building on this image of the Church the congregation *Remembrance and renewal of the Catacomb Pact* organised by the Institute of Theology and Politics (Münster/Germany) in cooperation with project group *Pro Konzil* will take place from 11 to 17 November at Casa La Salle in Rome. 250 people from all over the world, from different initiatives, orders, universities, and movements will come together to engage with the processes leading to the creation of the Pact and those which have derived from it.

The contributors to the gathering, which include - among others - Bishop Luigi Bettazzi (Italy), one of the last initial signees of the Pact still alive, Bishop Erwin Kräutler (Brasil), the theologian Jon Sobrino SJ (El Salvador), and the Muslim liberation theologian Kacem Gharbi (Tunisia), advocate changes in society and Church to secure a life in dignity for everybody. Together we are going to update the concerns of the Catacomb Pact for the current situation.

A day of study of the *Justice and Peace Commissions* (14 November) and the convention of the Church reform movement *Council 50* (20 to 22 November) are among further initiatives in Rome remembering and drawing on the prophetic tradition of the Catacomb Pact. The universal highlight of the Pact's commemoration will be a Church service at the historic location of its signing in the Domitilla Catacomb on 16 November. Together the initiatives wish to take a stand in support of a Church which - just like Francis in many of his statements - has a critical view of social conditions and opposes structures that make life impossible.

## Public events in Rome

Sunday, November 15, 2015, 11:30 am, Piazza San Pietro

### Collective visit to the Angelus prayer on St. Peter's Square

To carry the commemoration of the Pact of the Catacombs into the center of the catholic church the participants of the gathering together with the Justice and Peace Commissions will visit the Angelus prayer which is held every Sunday. We hope to set a visible sign in favor of the renewal of the church leading to a church of the poor.

Monday, November 16, 2015, 10:30 am, Via delle Sette Chiese, 280/282

### Solemn mass in the Catacomb of Domitilla

The most important event of the gathering is the mass on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pact of the Catacombs, celebrated at the historical location of its signing. The mass will be celebrated by Bishop Luigi Bettazzi, Jon Sobrino SJ and Norbert Arntz. The sermon will be held by Jon Sobrino about the meaning of martyrdom today. Since the space within the Basilica of the Domitilla Catacomb is limited we kindly ask you to inform us about your participation.



#### Bischof Luigi Bettazzi

He was born in 1923 in Treviso (Italy) and participated as auxiliary bishop of Bologna in the II. Vatican Council. From 1966 until 1999 he was bishop of the Diocese of Ivrea. Luigi Bettazzi is one of the last yet living participants / fathers of the II. Vatican Council. He is one of the first signatories of pact of catacombs and has subordinated his episcopal ministry entirely under the commitments of the pact.

#### Jon Sobrino SJ

He was born in 1938 and grew up in Barcelona and Bilbao. In 1957 the community of the Jesuits sent him to El Salvador. He studied philosophy, engineering in St. Louis (USA) and theology in Frankfurt (Germany). Sobrino teaches till this day in theology at the Theological Center, founded by himself and Ignacio Ellacuría, at the Catholic University José Simeon Cañas in San Salvador. 1989 there he has had a narrow escape of the massacre, in which six of his fellow Jesuits, among them his close friend Ignacio Ellacuría and two women working in the household had been killed. Sobrino is one of the leading liberation theologians.



## Preceding events in Casa La Salle, Via Aurelia, 472

Wednesday, November 11, 2015, 7 pm

### From the Pact of the Catacombs to the "Francis project"

Speech by Michael Ramminger (Institute for Theology and Politics, Germany)

Interview with Norbert Arntz (Germany) and Marco Politi (Italy)

To kick off the meeting Michael Ramminger will talk about the current relevance of the Pact of the Catacombs and the motivations that led to the gathering commemorating it. Carrying the title "Back into the Catacombs – A necessary step" his speech will ask for the challenges that the church meets in the capitalist world of today and how she can keep to her roots.

Norbert Arntz and Marco Politi will illuminate the origin of the Pact of the Catacombs and its impact on the church closer. Many of the bishops who signed the Pact of the Catacombs came from Latin America. They took part in the 2nd Latin American Bishops' Conference in Medellin and many of them promoted the social movement of which grew out the liberation theology. But this decisive start towards a Church of the poor not everywhere was accepted positive. Especially from the church hierarchy came skepticism and active disability. Lots Reservations are still available and can also be seen now in relation to the departure, the Pope Francis dares.



#### Michael Ramminger

Michael Ramminger, born in 1960, is one of the founders of the Institute for Theology and Politics in Munster, Germany and did his doctorate under Johann Baptist Metz. He published various political-theological Texts on Liberation theology, social movements, globalization and neoliberalism. An important part of his work is the cooperation with theologians and activists of social movements in Latin America. As an activist of social movements in Europe he works on strategies for a "globalization from below".

#### Marco Politi

He was born in 1947 in Rome. The German-Italian journalist and author wrote for 20 years for the Italian daily „La Repubblica“ as Vatican-correspondent. He later moved to „Il Fatto Quotidiano“ and wrote as well for the German weekly „Die Zeit“ and the daily „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung“. Several of his books have been translated into various languages: In 2012 he published "Benedict. The crisis of a pontificate" and in 2015 "Francesco tra i Lupi. Il Segreto di una rivoluzione "(" Francis among wolves. The Pope and his enemies ").



#### Norbert Arntz

He was born in 1943 in Kleve and has especially agitated for the promulgation of the Pact of Catacombs. After the degrees in theology and the ordination from 1983 to 1990 he served an "world church's apprenticeship" with the Quechuan people in Peru. He was an observer to the General Assembly of the Latin American Episcopate in Aparecida in 2007. In November 2015 he published his book "The Pact of the Catacomb. For a poor and serving church".

Thursday, November 12, 2015, 8 pm

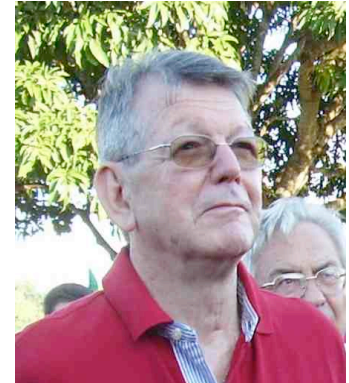
## **Laudato Si: Church of the poor and "concern for the common house"**

Lecture by Bishop Erwin Kräutler (Brazil)

Erwin Kräutler is Bishop of the dioceses Xingu in the Amazon region. In this area, rich in raw materials, especially comes into notice the violent conflict between the integrity of creation, in the interests of the poor and - in contrast - the exploitation of nature in the interests of large corporations and less profiteers. Against this background, Bishop Kräutler has cooperated in the elaboration of the recently published encyclical of Pope Francis in which the protection of the environment is considered as an essential to reach global justice.

### **Bishop Erwin Kräutler**

Born in Koblach / Vorarlberg, since 1981 Bishop of the diocese Xingu. Xingu is the one of the largest tributary streams of the Amazon. It is the geographically largest diocese (the size of Germany) and one of the most conflict-riddled parts of Brazil. Bishop Kräutler conceives of himself as an advocate of the still without rights and exploited, especially the landless peasants and the indigene. His passionate pleadings in favor for justice and humanity, his uncompromising commitment against exploitation and pillage of people and their environmental contemporaries do not remain without consequences. His speaking as well as his action are an impressive testimony of resistance and hope.



Sunday, November 15, 2015, 8 pm

## **Living between hope and resistance**

Conversation with Bishop Luigi Bettazzi (Italy) and Alberto Moreira (Brazil)

Bishop Luigi Bettazzi is one of the few yet living original signatories of the pact of the catacombs. On the eve of the 50th anniversary of this pact he will report as a witness. The conversation will be conducted by the Brazilian theologian Alberto Moreira.



### **Alberto da Silva Moreira**

He comes from the region of Anapolis, Goiás in the central-west region of Brazil, where he was born in 1955. He received his philosophical and theological education at the Franciscan Institute in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro. From 1979 to 1982 Alberto Moreira worked as member of the land-pastoral committee (CPT) in the conflictual region Araguaia-Tocantins. In Munster he did a doctorate under J. B. Metz about the land-conflict from the perspective of Liberation Theology. Currently Moreira works as professor of theology in Goiania and São Paulo and continues working with social movements in his place of living.

Friday, November 13, 2015, 10 am

## **Suppressed - but still there is...?**

### **Post-Conciliar breakups in Europe and Latin America**

International Panel with S.J. Emmanuel (Sri Lanka / Germany), Maria Klemm (Switzerland), Fernando Torres (Colombia)

The II. Vatican Council was the beginning of many awakenings in the church around the world. The participants of the panel will report along of their own biography, the hopes and disappointments they have experienced. What we learn from the experience of the past 50 years? Where are the threads we should pick up? Given many young participants in the meeting rediscovering their passion for a church of the poor, it is important to ask where the roots of their hopes are.



#### **Seemanpillai Joseph Emmanuel**

He was born in 1934 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. He studied mathematics and physics and worked as a teacher and journalist. Later he studied theology and philosophy at the Pontifical University Urbaniana in Rome and Philosophie. In Sri Lanka, he worked as a parish priest, teacher and until 1997 as vicar-general of the diocese of Jaffna. After the assaults committed by the army, from which he had fled into the jungle, he went into exile in Germany. Since then he has been involved as an activist in working for peace and coping the civil war. Since 2010 S. J. Emmanuel is President of the Global Tamil Forum.

#### **Maria Klemm**

She was born in 1949. As theologian she worked in the ecclesial service in Switzerland during 40 years. In the field of asylum she participates actively in social movements. At the Collège de Brousse, Switzerland she holds a role in the management of the studies in Liberation Theology.



#### **Fernando Torres Millan**

Born in 1957, theologian and Educador Popular. He studied philosophy and comparative literature in Bogotá; also he studied theology at the Universidad Latinoamericana Bíblica in San José, Costa Rica and the Centro de Estudios Bíblicos Ecueménico, CEBI, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Currently Torres Millan works in the matter of popular education and in theological reflection with the base communities of Colombia. He is coordinator of Kairos Educativo in Bogotá, Colombia.

Sunday, November 15, 2015, 4:30 pm

## **Liberation Theology - current prospects and challenges**

International Panel with José Guadalupe, Mexico; Julia Lis, Germany; Kacem Gharbi, Tunisia

Both, the Pact of Catacombs and liberation theology share the preferential option for the poor. As before, this option is important because, despite all the promises there are still many people living in poverty. And even in the rich countries of the North, not everyone can live in dignity. So: how we can spell this option in today's world? Three young theologians from different parts of the world will give a reply.

### **José Guadalupe Sanchez Suarez**

Born in 1976. Educator, philosopher and theologian. He studied philosophy, theology and classical philology in various cities and universities, inter alia at the Pontifical University of Mexico and the Free University of Mexico (UNAM). As an activist Sanchez Suarez is involved for many years in social movements and human rights organizations. Currently he is Executive Secretary of the Secretariado Social Mexicano. He researches on the topic "Gender and the Theology of Liberation".



### **Julia Lis**

She was born in 1982 and studied Theology, German language and literature and Eastern European history at the University of Munster, Germany. Since 2013 she's managing director of the Institute for Theology and Politics in Munster. She especially works on the topics: protests against austerity in crisis, escape/ migration and Church sanctuary, theology in the context of social movements, Church of the poor and the project "Commemorating the Council".

### **Kacem Gharbi**

He did his doctorate in philosophy in France. Being an oppositional activist in times of Ben Ali's dictatorship in Tunisia he suffered massive repressions by the state on him. Actually he works at the University of Tunis researching on Enrique Dussel and his theology of liberation. He is one of the most prominent Muslim liberation theologians of Northern Africa.



## Programmübersicht

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Wed., 11.11.</b>		7 pm, Casa La Salle <b>Opening: From the Pact of the Catacombs to the “Francis Project”</b> with Michael Ramminger and Norbert Arntz, Germany; Marco Politi, Italy	
<b>Thu., 12.11.</b>	10 am, Casa La Salle <b>The Council, the Kingdom of God and the Church of the Poor</b> Speech held by Urs Eigenmann, Switzerland	<b>Church of the Poor in the world of today - workshops, excursions, discussions</b>	8pm, Casa La Salle <b>Laudato Si: The Church of the Poor and the “concern for the common house”</b> Bishoop Erwin Kräutler, Brasil
<b>Fry. 13.11.</b>	10 am, Casa La Salle <b>Suppressed - but still there is ...? Post-Conziliar breakups in Europe and Latin America</b> International Panel with S.J. Emmanuel, Sri Lanka; Maria Klemm, Switzerland; Fernando Torres, Colombia		8 pm, Casa La Salle <b>Presentation of the German translation of the Letters of Dom Helder Camara during the II. Vatican Council</b>
<b>Sat., 14.11.</b>	9 am – 2 pm, Via Urbano VIII, 16 <b>Seminar of the Justice and Peace Commissions on the Pact of the Catacombs in the Pontifical University Urbaniana</b> (possibility of participation) with Alberto Melloni, Jon Sobrino, Mons. José Mario Pires, Kardinal Roger Etchegaray, Sr. Thea Frigerio.		<b>Common service</b>
<b>Sun., 15.11.</b>	11:30 am, Piazza San Pietro <b>Visit to the Angelus prayer together with the Justice and Peace Commissions</b>	4:30 pm, Casa La Salle <b>Liberation Theology - current prospects and challenges</b> International Panel with José Guadalupe, Mexiko; Julia Lis, BRD; Kacem Gharbi, Tunesien	8 pm, Casa La Salle <b>Live between hope and resistance</b> Interview with Bishop Luigi Bettazzi, Italy; Alberto Moreira, Brasil
<b>Mon., 16.11.</b>	10:30 am, Catacomb of Domitilla <b>50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pact of the Catacombs: Solemn mass in the catacomb led by</b> Bischof Luigi Bettazzi, the sermon will be held by Jon Sobrino SJ, El Salvador		
<b>Tue., 17.11.</b>	10 am, Casa La Salle <b>Conclusion: Following the spirit of the Pact of the Catacombs today</b>		

You can find the detailed programme with all speeches and workshops at [www.pro-konzil.de](http://www.pro-konzil.de). During the gathering there is an information point for journalists set in Casa La Salle (Via Aurelia, 472, 00165 Roma).