



SOLIDARITY AND
SUPPORT FROM
GERMANY FOR
NORTHERN EUROPE

2025



Hilfswerk für den Glauben
**bonifatius
werk**



DIASPORA-KOMMISSARIAT
DER DEUTSCHEN BISCHÖFE/
DIASPORAHILFE DER PRIESTER

EDITORIAL

About the Content of this Brochure

With this brochure, the Bonifatiuswerk and the Diaspora-Kommissariat of the German Bishops would like to give you an insight into the diversity of their support projects in the Northern European diaspora. In countries such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and the Baltic States, Catholic parishes often face particular challenges: great distances, small communities, and the task of keeping the faith alive in a secular environment. The support projects presented here demonstrate how committed priests, deacons, and lay people work together to nurture faith, community, and pastoral care under the challenging conditions of the diaspora. They report on new pastoral approaches, inspiring encounters, and bold ideas that make the church tangible on the ground.

These examples are intended to encourage us to look beyond our own borders and learn from one another – aware that we are connected in the universal Church and can strengthen one another.

Warm greetings from the Bonifatiuswerk and the Diaspora-Kommissariat

Georg Austen

FROM PRIESTS FOR PRIESTS

What is the Diaspora-Kommissariat?



**DIASPORA-KOMMISSARIAT
DER DEUTSCHEN BISCHÖFE/
DIASPORAHILFE DER PRIESTER**

“From priests for priests.” This is the guiding principle of the work of the Diaspora-Kommissariat of German Bishops/ Diaspora Aid of Priests. It supports the pastoral care in the area of the Nordic Bishops’ Conference by funding building projects, providing salary subsidies and offering motorisation grants. The financial means for this are provided by priests in the German dioceses as they pay one percent of their personal salary to the Diaspora-Kommissariat.

Further information about the Diaspora-Kommissariat can be found here:

www.diaspora-kommissariat.de



»NO ONE SHOULD BELIEVE ALONE.«

What is the Bonifatiuswerk?



Hilfswerk für den Glauben

**bonifatius
werk**

The Bonifatiuswerk of German Catholics helps where Catholic Christians live their faith in a minority situation in the diaspora of Germany, Northern Europe and the Baltic states Estonia and Latvia. With its commitment, it calls attention to a hardship that does not obviously catch our eye: Being alone in your faith, being alone among people who follow a different faith, who do not belong to any religion or who left the church. The Bonifatiuswerk has supported projects in the diaspora since 1849, it promotes the propagation of faith, enables the faithful to live their faith in a community and supports social and charitable projects. The President of the Bonifatiuswerk is Manfred Müller; Monsignor Georg Austen is Secretary General, Ingo Imenkämper is the Managing Director.

Further information about the Bonifatiuswerk may be found here:

www.bonifatiuswerk.de/en



“STRENGTHEN WHAT SUSTAINS YOU.” DIASPORA SUNDAY 2025

“He gives strength to the
weary and increases the
power of the weak”
(Jesaja 40,29–31)

Each November, the Bonifatiuswerk prays for its fellow Christians in the diaspora regions. In 2025, Diaspora Sunday will take place on the 16th of November. Please inform your parishes about this date and encourage them to pray in solidarity.

With the motto “Strengthen what sustains you.” this year’s Diaspora Campaign is an invitation to consciously take time, both individually and as a community, to reflect on the foundations of life and faith. In doing so, we are also called upon to nurture our relationship with God and our fellow human beings, as well as to strengthen our (faith) identity.

One of the major concerns of the work of the Bonifatiuswerk is that we, as Christians, encourage one another to act in solidarity and bear missionary witness – especially in environments of different or non-believing faiths. “Strengthen what sustains you.” also reminds us that faith and relationships can sustain us only if they are themselves continually affirmed and nurtured.



STÄRKE, WAS DICH TRÄGT.

Diaspora-Sonntag

16. November 2025

DEINE SPENDE WIRKT!



www.bonifatiuswerk.de

Keiner
soll alleine
glauben.



Hilfswerk für den Glauben
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Foto: © Wilfried Hagemann. Bearbeitet von Allgipix

DIASPORA SUNDAY

Example project

NEW CHURCH IN SELFOSS APPROACHES COMPLETION

Number of Parishes in the Diocese of Reykjavík
Grows to Nine



The new church in Selfoss, Iceland, which will be named "Holy Cross", is scheduled for completion this year. Consecration will take place in 2026. Photo: Ivan Sovic

It is a symbol of solidarity carved in stone: the new church and community center in Selfoss, Iceland, which is scheduled to be consecrated later this year. By early September, the roof and insulation had been completed. Shortly afterward, Bishop David Tencer (Reykjavík) celebrated a solemn Mass to establish the new parish of the Holy Cross, which will have its home in Selfoss. This

marks another step toward making the small town an important spiritual center in southwestern Iceland. The new church will raise the level of pastoral work in the vast and sparsely populated parish to a new standard.

Until now, parishioners often had to endure hours-long drives to attend Holy Mass. For many, the new church will now

be within walking distance. Canceling services due to adverse weather will become a thing of the past. The Bonifatiuswerk has played a key role in this development. The aid organization for the faith is supporting the project with the equivalent of 437,000 euros. Another 563,000 euros come from the “Diaspora-Kommissariat of the German Bishops/ Diaspora Aid of Priests”. The total cost for the church, community center, and rectory will amount to approximately 3.6 million euros.

Bishop Tencer appointed Father Mercurio Claudio Rivera III, originally from the Philippines, as administrator of the parish. The priest has been serving in Iceland since 2021 and will be officially installed in Selfoss on October 5. The new church in Selfoss will also bear the name Holy Cross. The name continues an old tradition: in nearby Kaldaðarnes, pilgrims and locals once venerated a cross believed to

possess healing powers. The young parish now carries on this spiritual heritage and its accompanying story.

Until construction is completed, the parish celebrates its services in a nearby chapel, where temporary housing for the priest has also been set up.

With the founding of the Holy Cross parish, the number of parishes in the Diocese of Reykjavík rises to nine. This is a strong indication that the Catholic Church in Iceland continues to grow despite great challenges – supported by worldwide solidarity and the donations of many people, which make the aid from the Bonifatiuswerk and the Diaspora-Kommissariat possible.



*Bishop David Tencer (left) regularly checks on the progress of construction.
Photo: Ivan Sovic*



*Msgr. Georg Austen inspects the shell of the building in Selfoss with the new Pater Mercurio Claudio Rivera III., with an engineer and a representative of the parish.
Photo: Bonifatiuswerk*

A CHAPEL WITH A GREAT HISTORY

Small Church will be Completed on the 1000th Anniversary of the Death of Saint Olav

On the battlefield of Stiklestad in Norway, Saint Olav met his death. A small church commemorates his life and work. The chapel has now been restored with support from the Bonifatiuswerk – just in time for a major anniversary. Stiklestad – This place holds special significance for the Church in Norway: Saint Olav died there on July 29, 1030, in the Battle of Stiklestad. In his honor, a chapel was built on the battlefield and consecrated on July 29, 1930. Over the years, time took its toll on the small house of worship. With financial assistance from the Bonifatiuswerk, the building has been undergoing a complete renovation since 2022. Completion is now imminent, setting the stage for a very special anniversary. The chapel will play an important role in the 2030 celebration of the 1000th anniversary of Saint Olav's death.

Restoration work began in 2022. The floor, a new roof, electrical wiring, and a fire alarm system were all addressed, and even the structural integrity of the small chapel had been at risk. The renovation costs have accumulated to nearly 500,000 euros. The Bonifatiuswerk of German Catholics is contributing 100,000 euros toward the total expen-

ses. Archbishop Dr. Udo Markus Bentz of Paderborn (patron of the Bonifatiuswerk) and Secretary General Monsignor Georg Austen recently visited Norway's diaspora regions on a pastoral and project trip to see the progress for themselves. On site in Stiklestad, they were personally briefed on the current state of the work by Bishop Erik Varden of Trondheim, Chairman of the Nordic Bishops' Conference.

The Stiklestad Chapel is, incidentally, a gift from the writer Sigrid Undset to the Catholic Church in Norway. In 1928, she received the Nobel Prize in Literature and used part of her prize money to fund the chapel's construction.



Historic site: The restoration of the chapel in Stiklestad is nearing completion. It was built in 1930 on the site where Saint Olav died. Photo: EWTN Norway / Mateusz Opila

BUYING INSTEAD OF RENTING

St. John's Church Becomes Property of the Diocese of Stockholm



The Diocese of Stockholm acquires St. John's Church. The central Stockholm landmark previously belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Photo: Theresa Meier

St. John's Church in Stockholm has officially become the property of the Catholic Church following a solemn handover ceremony. The striking neo-Gothic brick church is one of the city's architectural landmarks. Until now, it was owned by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden. The Bonifatiuswerk is contributing 40,000 euros from its construction aid fund to support the purchase and upcoming renovations. Cardinal

Anders Arborelius, Bishop of Stockholm, attended the service together with his Protestant counterpart, Bishop Andreas Holmberg.

The church is already familiar to Stockholm's Catholic community, as Catholic Masses have been celebrated there for many years, including services in Polish and Ukrainian. For the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm, acquiring St. John's Church



Signing the purchase contract in January 2025: Bishop Andreas Holmberg (Church of Sweden, right) and Cardinal Anders Arborelius, Bishop of the Diocese of Stockholm. Photo: Diocese of Stockholm

is a significant gain. Until now, the diocese lacked sufficient facilities for worship, often having to rent space from the Church of Sweden. "We are very happy and grateful to finally purchase this large and beautiful church, which can accommodate 900 people," the diocese said. In addition to religious services, the church will also host concerts and other events.

For the time being, however, the church will remain mostly closed due to urgent renovation work, particularly to the roof and interior. The work is expected to continue until February 2026, during which the church will primarily be open on weekends.

Example project

A VIBRANT PLACE OF FAITH IN THE ICELANDIC DIASPORA

Expansion of the Carmelite Convent in Hafnarfjörður: Sisters Seek Further Support

Catholic Christians in Iceland are a minority: of the country's roughly 400,000 inhabitants, just over 15,000 are Catholic. Yet in the small coastal town of Hafnarfjörður, there is a vibrant place of faith, silence, and prayer that shines far into the Icelandic diaspora: the Carmelite Convent. Thirteen nuns live there, devoted to their faith and daily prayer. As the community grows, additional space is urgently needed. In August 2025, the official groundbreaking marked the start of the planned expansion of the convent. For the order, this is a major project, with costs amounting to approximately 1.5 million euros. The Bonifatiuswerk has already contributed €600,000 to the project, but the sisters still rely on further support.

So there was great joy when Monsignor Georg Austen, Secretary General of the Bonifatiuswerk, presented a donation of an additional 6,200 euros during his trip to Iceland in October 2025. The money had been collected for the Carmelite monastery during the Paderborn church festival "Libori".

The new building is urgently needed. The existing facilities in the convent are fully utilized, while demand for rooms

for prayer, silence, and spiritual life continues to grow. People turn to the sisters with personal concerns, asking for prayers, pastoral care, and spiritual guidance. The Carmelites serve as a model for those seeking counsel – they live for God and pray for the world. For Catholics in Iceland, the convent is a vital spiritual center.

The expansion will include six new cells, connected by a light-filled corridor to the chapel and main building. Three of the cells will be wheelchair-accessible for sisters requiring assistance, while the other three will accommodate sisters responsible for caregiving. The community plans a simple structure designed to support monastic life, both now and in the future. The new building will be connected to the existing convent via a glass corridor. The vacated rooms in the current building will be converted into workshops, as the sisters earn their living by producing and selling items such as hand-painted candles. The building components, prefabricated in Estonia, will be shipped

to the Icelandic port of Þorlákshöfn and transported from there to Hafnarfjörður, where they will be assembled on a prepared foundation. At the same time, the heavily corroded roof of the existing chapel will be replaced. Mother Superior Sister Agnes hopes that the available funds will suffice to also construct the planned glass corridor linking the new building to the convent.

The project is more than a construction expansion – it is a sign of living faith, fostering community and offering hope.



At the groundbreaking for the expansion, the sisters at the Carmelite Convent in Hafnarfjörður (Iceland) participated in the work themselves. Photo: Sister Melkork / Carmelite Convent Hafnarfjörður



Sister Miriam explains the construction plans to Msgr. Austen. Photo: Bonifatiuswerk

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE IN GRAŠU, LATVIA

A Place of Security for the Youngest

Children build sandcastles, swing, and play football in the garden. Scenes like these are common in Grašu, a special place in the heart of Latvia. But for the girls and boys at the Caritas Children's Village, a carefree childhood was not always guaranteed. Many of these children have parents who, due to alcohol, drug use, or serious illness, are unable to care for them. Ensuring that children grow up safely and feel secure is also a key concern for the Bonifatiuswerk. On the occasion of its 175th anniversary, the aid organization, together with the BALTA Choir, held three benefit concerts this summer in Paderborn (Markt-kirche), Cologne (Cologne Cathedral), and Oldenburg (St. Joseph's Church). The award-winning choir delighted a total of 1,100 attendees with powerful performances, presenting contemporary choral works by Latvian, German, and Norwegian composers of the 21st century under the direction of Māra Marnauza.

The proceeds from the benefit concert series, together with designated donations, totaled 19,800 euros, which was used to refurbish the children's rooms. The children were delighted with new beds and wardrobes, a new sofa, and

updated bathroom facilities. Thanks to the new kitchen equipment, the young residents now spend even more time cooking together.

Sandra Stade, the director, emphasizes the importance of creating a secure and welcoming environment: "We are very grateful for the support of the Bonifatiuswerk. Thanks to the new furnishings, the children and adolescents feel even more at home in their second home." With a team of more than ten caregivers, Sandra Stade looks after the well-being of the children, who enter the children's village from the age of two and can stay until they complete their schooling or vocational training.

The Secretary General of Bonifatiuswerk, Monsignor Georg Austen, expres-

*At the Caritas Children's Village in Grašu, Latvia, children can play without worry.
Photo: Markus Nowak*

sed deep satisfaction with the donation amount: "We are very grateful for this fantastic contribution from all donors. The funds support a facility that gives the youngest children a place of security and a sense of home. Here, children can simply be children. They receive the support they need for a successful life. The children's village impressively demonstrates what it means to stand up for one's fellow human beings."

See more about the project on Youtube:
**[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=6cX000Vu2h4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cX000Vu2h4)**



*Cooking together, eating together: At the Caritas Children's Village in Grašu, no one has to feel lonely.
Photo: Markus Nowak*



Example project

NORDIC YOUTH DAYS IN SKARA

400 Young People
Celebrate the Joy of Faith

The Swedish city of Skara recently hosted a special celebration of faith: more than 400 Catholic youths from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland gathered to celebrate the Nordic Youth Days ("Nordiska ungdomsdagar", NUD). The streets and squares were filled with life, joy, and faith.

Organizing such a large event required not only numerous volunteers but also significant financial support. The Bonifatiuswerk found the concept of the Youth Days so compelling that it contributed 18,000 euros from its Faith Aid budget. Over three days, participants experienced prayer, fellowship, deepening of



The Nordic Youth Days demonstrated that the church is vibrant and full of hope.
Photo: EWTN Norway / Mateusz Opila



Cardinal Anders Arborelius took a lot of time to meet with the young Catholics.
Photo: EWTN Norway / Mateusz Opila

faith, games, and recreational activities. The event was organized by the Catholic Youth Association ("SUK Riksförbundet Sveriges Unga Katoliker").

A large tent served as the heart of the gathering, hosting daily morning and evening prayers as well as meals, conversations, and festive liturgies. The program was enriched with music, dance, and faith-oriented workshops. A particular highlight was the Holy Mass on Saturday morning at Skara Cathedral, preceded by a rosary procession through the city. In the evening, the youths met with the Bishop of Stockholm, Cardinal Anders Arborelius, who took time for personal conversations and encounters. He also presided over the closing Mass on Sunday. Many participants described the experience as a deeply moving spiritual event.

The Nordic Youth Days in Skara vividly demonstrated that the Church is young, alive, and full of hope – a message that the more than 400 young people will carry back into the world.

Example project

WORLD YOUTH DAY IN ROME

World Youth Day in Rome
Draws Over a Million Young People

In August, a solemn outdoor Mass marked the conclusion of the week-long World Youth Day during the Holy Year 2025 in Rome. More than one million young people from 150 countries gathered at the open grounds of Tor Vergata to celebrate the service with Pope Leo XIV. Pilgrims from Riga, Helsinki, and Stockholm also attended, with their participation supported by the Bonifatiuswerk through 38,980 euros from its Children's Aid fund. The Pontiff called out to the crowd: "The fullness of our existence does not depend on what we accumulate or possess. It depends rather on what we can accept and share with joy. We must lift our eyes, look upward, to 'what is above'... to recognize that everything in the world only has meaning insofar as it serves to unite us with God and our brothers and sisters in love..." Pope Leo emphasized during the closing Mass. Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life, highlighted the strong signs of peace and faith emanating from this World Youth Day and addressed the youths' responsibility: "It is up to young people to be pilgrims of hope, to heal loneliness and poverty, and to become witnesses of peace – in a world torn apart by division, conflict, and war."

Example project

PASTOR'S SELF-SUFFICIENCY ASSURED

Even Cooking Pasta was a Challenge in the Mariukirkyan Rectory

After almost 100 years, the Catholic community in Thorshavn faced a completely new situation: The Franciscan nuns left the community on the Faroe Islands. From that point on, the priests, who lived in the Mariukirkjan rectory, had to provide for themselves. However, without a functioning kitchen with a stove that could maintain sufficient temperature even in the winter months, this was difficult. On top of that, the washing machine broke down. The Diaspora-Kommissariat supported the necessary modernization and new equipment with 12,000 euros.



Father Paul Marx, OMI, stands in the new kitchen. Photo: Katolske Kirke i Danmark

Example project

THE RAVAGES OF TIME

St. Michael's School Undergoes Renovation

The ravages of time are taking their toll on St. Michael's School in Estonia's capital, Tallinn. The backlog of necessary repairs is considerable. To improve conditions for the 300 students, the Bonifatiuswerk has been supporting the institution since 2018. Recently, the aid organization transferred an additional 150,000 euros to help preserve the building. The renovation plan includes the construction of two dining halls, as well as new toilet and washroom facilities.

The structural work is extensive: specialist companies must expose deteriorated parts of the foundation and replace them with a solid support structure. The school administration estimates the total costs at 350,000 euros. St. Michael's is one of only two Catholic private schools in Estonia. It was founded in 2013 by a group of parents seeking a Catholic-oriented education for their children. As a place of learning, the school provides an important service, as school spokesperson Hanno Padar emphasizes: "More and more young people are struggling with social or psychological issues. In Estonia, one in five students requires special support." At the same time, the school faces the challenge of decreasing state funding



The entrance portal of St. Michael's School in Tallinn. Photo: Andreas Kaiser

for education. According to Padar, parents compensate for this through their own engagement.

It is therefore particularly encouraging that the school has already implemented many elements of its renovation plan. The teachers' lounge has been expanded, science subjects now have dedicated rooms for experiments, and thanks to a new acoustic concept, the cafeteria can now also be used for quiet study.

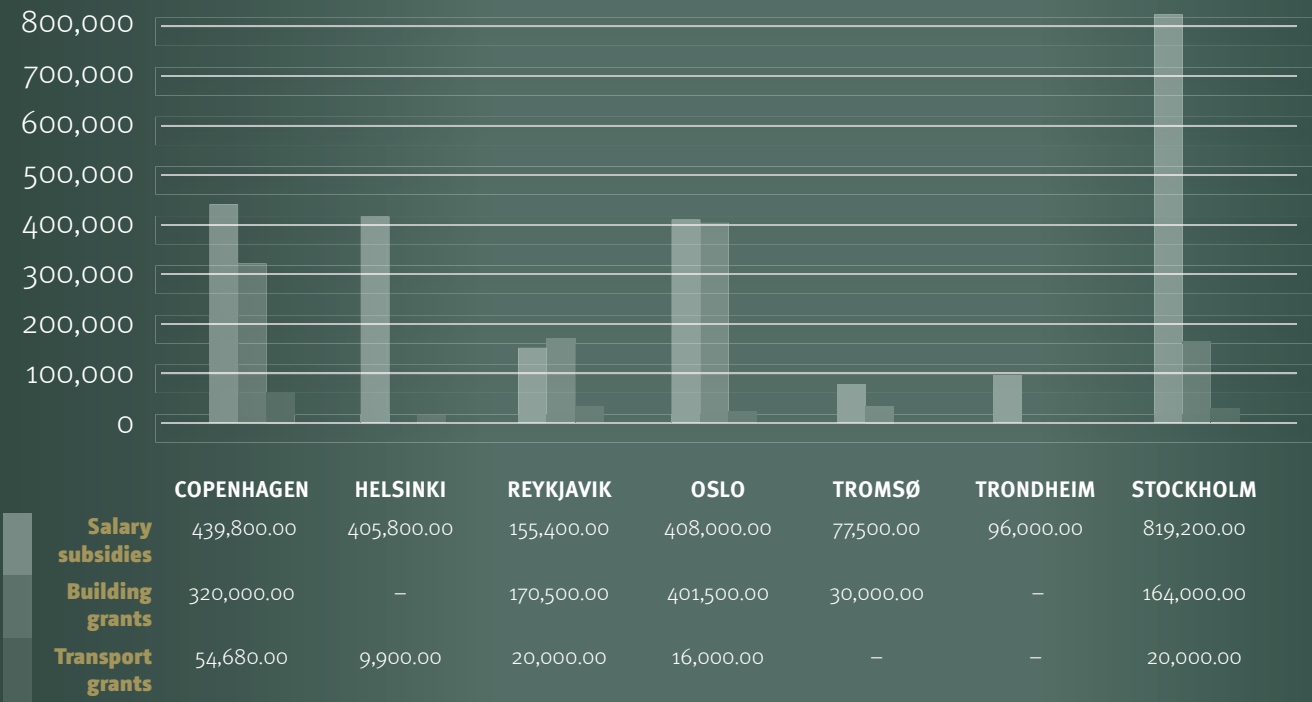
AID OF THE DIASPORA-KOMMISSARIAT FOR THE NORTHERN EUROPEAN DIASPORA DIOCESES 2024

ICELAND
Inhabitants: 389,500
Reg. Catholics: 15,605
Percentage: 4.07%
Priests/Religious: 17/34
Parishes: 8



Aid by type and diocese

Figures: Diaspora Kommissariat, 2024



7,900 euros were paid for Ukrainian Catholic priests in the area of the Nordic Bishops' Conference.

NORWAY
Inhabitants: 5,553,121
Reg. Catholics: 170,812
Percentage: 3.08%
Priests/Religious: 108/121
Parishes: 40



FINLAND
Inhabitants: 5,637,214
Reg. Catholics: 17,457
Percentage: 0.3%
Priests/Religious: 27/19
Parishes: 8

ESTONIA
Inhabitants: 1,364,000
Reg. Catholics: 6,700
Percentage: 0.5%
Priests/Religious: 13/20
Parishes: 10

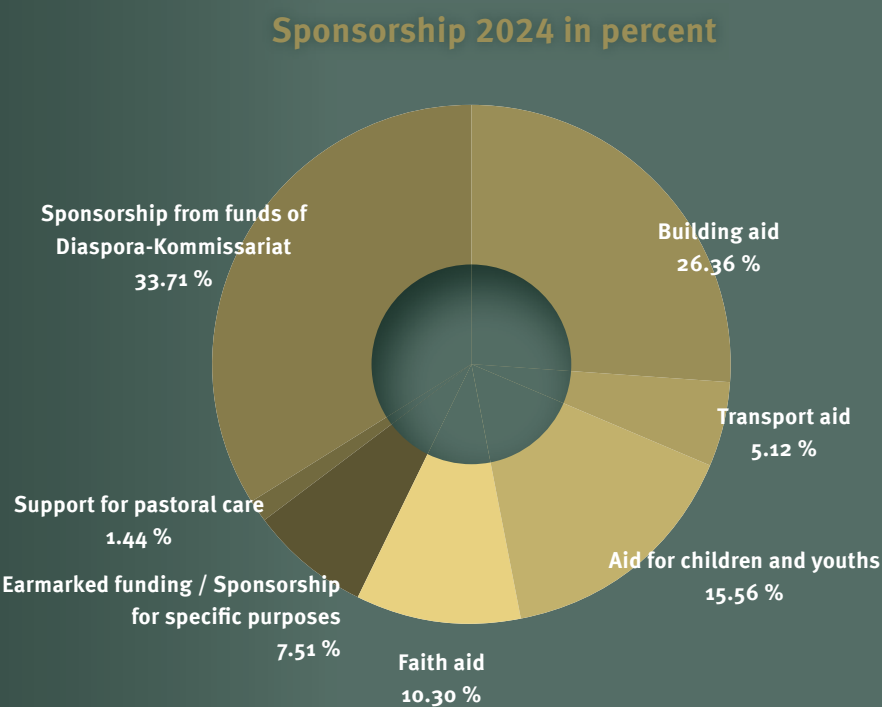
DENMARK
Inhabitants: 5,995,464
Reg. Catholics: 56,053
Percentage: 0.9%
Priests/Religious: 72/72
Parishes: 41

SWEDEN
Inhabitants: 10,587,710
Reg. Catholics: 130,880
Percentage: 1.24%
Priests/Religious: 181/144
Parishes: 44

LATVIA
Inhabitants: 1,849,980
Reg. Catholics: 363,920
Percentage: 19.7%
Priests/Religious: 142/123
Parishes: 251

*Figures Northern Europe: nordicbishopsconference.org, Figures Baltic States: Catholic.org
Map: www.freevectormaps.com*

SPONSORSHIP WITH FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE BONIFATIUSWERK IN 2024 – BY TYPES OF AID



Project Type	Subsidy Amount
Building aid	2,732,300.00 EUR
Transport aid	530,555.74 EUR
Aid for children and youths	1,613,029.18 EUR
Faith aid	1,068,120.48 EUR
Earmarked funding / Sponsorship for specific purposes	778,748.96 EUR
Support for pastoral care	149,267.15 EUR
Project sponsorship from the funds of the Diaspora-Kommissariat	3,495,191.52 EUR
TOTAL	10,367,213.03 EUR

Of these funds, the following were allocated specifically to Northern Europe:

	Total	Building Aid	Aid for Children and Youths	Faith Aid	Transport Aid
DENMARK	267,000.00	113,000.00	54,000.00	100,000.00	—
FINLAND	271,940.00	150,000.00	26,000.00	95,940.00	—
ICELAND	308,000.00	262,000.00	—	—	46,000.00
NORWAY	212,000.00	194,500.00	17,500.00	—	—
SWEDEN	509,580.00	302,500.00	41,180.00	165,900.00	—
ESTONIA	161,500.00	125,000.00	23,600.00	—	12,900.00
LATVIA	373,040.00	175,000.00	77,240.00	107,800.00	13,000.00

(Figures in Euro)

For further information, please read the annual financial report on the homepage of the Bonifatiuswerk:

www.bonifatiuswerk.de/de/ueber-uns/zahlen-fakten



The application forms for project support can be found here:

www.bonifatiuswerk.de/en/en/application-details



ONWARD TO THE NEW: 25 VOLUNTEERS EMBARK ON THE ADVENTURE “INTERNSHIP IN THE NORTH”

Young Men and Women serving in the Diaspora



25 volunteers embark on the “Internship in the North” with the Bonifatiuswerk. Secretary General Monsignor Georg Austen (right) spoke of the “enriching experience the young people will have.” Photo: Hartmut Salzmann

Farewell to the familiar, onward to the new: 25 young men and women are about to spend an exciting and eventful year in Northern Europe and the Baltics, performing voluntary service in the region’s diaspora communities. This opportunity is made possible through the Bonifatiuswerk program “Internship in the North.” The program focuses on experiencing new cultures, broadening horizons, personal growth, and learning to stand on one’s own feet.

The service locations are as diverse as the participants themselves. Whether assisting in monasteries, supporting schools, working with children and youth, or helping in care facilities, the volunteers contribute in their own individual ways. “Internship in the North” encourages them to bring in their own ideas, observe, ask questions, and be creative and proactive. Through this engagement, the young people can make a real difference both in the diaspora communities and in their own lives. Both sides benefit.

Monsignor Georg Austen, Secretary General of the Bonifatiuswerk, said that the interns in Northern Europe and the Baltics will experience a different form of Church. “This Church is shaped by the diverse cultures and traditions of the countries. At the same time, it shows the international face of a young migrant church, with all its optimism but also its challenges. I am pleased and grateful that through their commitment, these young people will have this enriching experience. They actively support the Church and the societies there, while also expanding their own faith horizons.”

The 25 volunteers come from all over Germany, representing 13 dioceses. Eight Bonifatiuswerk interns will be stationed in Sweden, seven in Norway, and two each in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, and Latvia.

Since the program’s launch in 2011, more than 250 young people have participated in this special voluntary service. “Internship in the North” has been recognized for one year as an “International Youth Volunteer Service” by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

A YEAR THAT LEAVES ITS MARK

Incomer wanted!

The Bonifatiuswerk is now offering an incomer position for young people from Northern Europe and the Baltic States. As incomers (m/f/d), aged 18 and over, they can now gain their first professional experience at the aid organisation in Paderborn for a year. The incomer will have the opportunity to become familiar with the Church, culture, and society in Germany. The focus is on intercultural exchange – as well as a shared commitment to a vibrant faith life in diaspora areas.

Spread the word to young people who are interested in joining the Bonifatiuswerk Team, so that they can become part of a strong community!

Contact person: Marisa Grummich
marisa.grummich@bonifatiuswerk.de
Phone: +49 (0)5251-2996 44



Antonia Tervaportti from Finland is grateful for the experience she gained as an incomer at the Bonifatiuswerk. Photo: Pia Wittek

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM “INTERNSHIP IN THE NORTH“ 2025

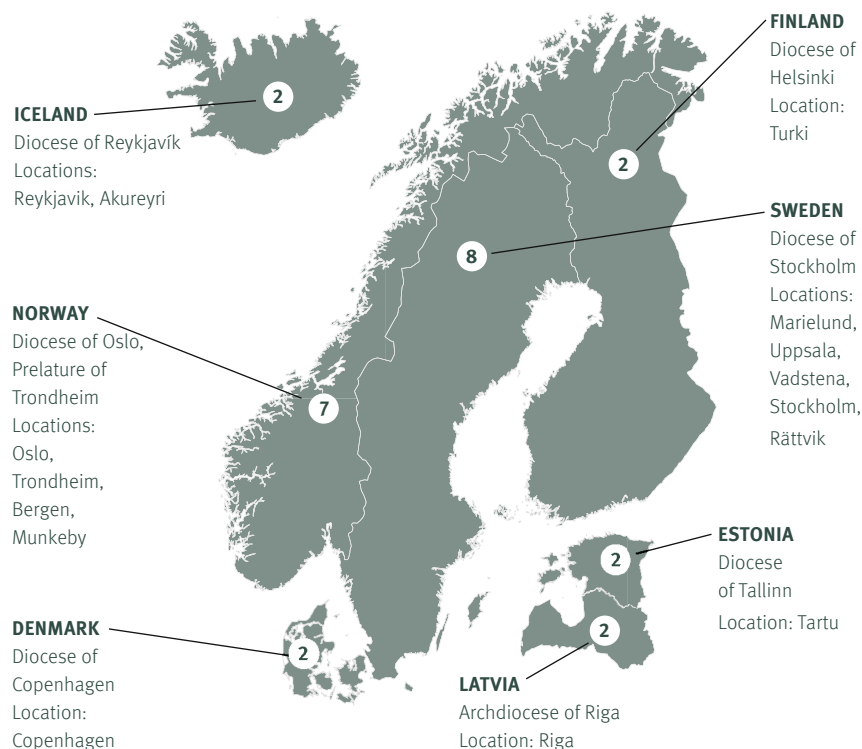
Supported by the Bonifatiuswerk

The “Internship in the North” is a collaboration between the Bonifatiuswerk in Paderborn and the Newman Institute in Uppsala, Sweden. The tasks during

the internship are individually arranged with each host institution. In general, the interns either observe or actively assist in the work of a church-related institution.

Number of participants 25
Countries of service: 7

Average age: 18.75 years



19 PRIESTS EMBARK ON A GRAND JOURNEY THROUGH ESTONIA AND FINLAND

First-hand Experience of the Diaspora

Those who experience the spirit of renewal in the local Catholic Church in Northern Europe and the Baltics often return as changed individuals. This was likely also true for the participants of a trip organized by the Bonifatiuswerk, specifically designed for priests. Nineteen clergymen from Germany, accompanied by Andreas Kaiser (Consultant at the Bonifatius Foundation Center), traveled to Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, and to Helsinki. By ferry, they reached the Finnish capital, where they celebrated Mass together at St. Henry's Cathedral. The highlight of the day was the encounter with Bishop Raimo Goyarrola, who had



Anatoli Ljutju, founder of the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Tallinn.
Photos: Andreas Kaiser



19 clergymen embarked on a grand journey to Estonia and Finland with the Bonifatiuswerk.

been consecrated in November 2023. The six-day trip offered a balanced mix of activity and reflection. City tours, excursions, church visits, conversations, and prayer created a varied and engaging program. Travel companion Andreas Kaiser noted that the priests were “deeply moved by the extreme nature of the diaspora there and by the gratitude of those receiving support.” The clergy were touched by the dedication of pastoral workers striving to advance the Church in the diaspora regions of Northern Europe and Estonia.

Similarly, Pastor Hans Reicherzer (Büchenbach, Middle Franconia) reflected after the Helsinki tour: “The day allows me to view our Church with serenity. The Church there is young and growing.”

The Bonifatiuswerk will offer another priestly journey in 2026. Learn more at www.bonifatiuswerk.de/reisen



TO FRANCE WITH THE BONI BUS

Latvian Youth Experience the Festival “Welcome to Paradise”

In the summer, several BONI buses set off from Latvia to France in a bright yellow convoy. The trip was organized by the “Chemin Neuf” community. The destination was the abbey of Hautecombe in the Savoy region, the site of the international Christian youth festival “Welcome to Paradise.” For each young participant, the journey provided an opportunity to strengthen their faith identity, relax, and make new friends from various countries around the world.

The “Communauté Chemin Neuf” is a Catholic community with a pronounced ecumenical character. Founded in Lyon in 1973, it today has around 2,000 members across 30 countries. Its members include priests, celibate lay people, and married couples. Chemin Neuf is committed to Christian unity and has been active in Latvia since 2011.

Forty young pilgrims, accompanied by several priests, took part in the Latvia-to-France trip. The journey was made possible through the financial and material support of the Bonifatiuswerk. The festival, which brought together 700 young people from 23 countries, revolved around the theme “BE REAL.” Sincerity and discovering one’s identity in Christ were at the center. The



program included engaging talks, prayer, shows, music, sunshine, swimming in the lake, and sports.

For many participants, the experience was profoundly formative. Teresa, attending for the first time, said: “This festival gave me the opportunity to feel once again that God is by my side and has always been by my side.”

Young pilgrims set off from Latvia to France on BONI buses. Photo: Chemin Neuf, Latvia



Fredrik Hansen, Bishop of Oslo



The Catholic Church in Norway would be hard to imagine without the generous support of the Bonifatiuswerk and the Diaspora-Kommissariat. Much of the work in the Diocese of Oslo was initiated in one way or another with the support of the Church in Germany.

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