

Grußwort

Bischof Viktors Stulpins

Reverend Monsignor Austen. We are gathered here today to celebrate a remarkable milestone — the fortyth anniversary of your ordination to the priesthood. Forty years is not just a measurement of time; it is a lifetime of ‚Yeses‘ given to God. It is 14,600 days of prayer, service, and sacrifice. Monsignor, your journey which began four decades ago has led you through many landscapes of faith, and today, we stand as witnesses to the fruit of that journey.

A priest is often called a ‚bridge builder.‘ In your role as General Secretary of *Bonifatiuswerk*, you have taken this title to heart. You have built bridges of solidarity across Europe, reaching out to those in the diaspora, ensuring that no one feels alone in their faith. Your work has been a living testament to the Gospel — moving beyond borders to support the ‚small flocks‘ and the silent corners of the Church. You haven’t just managed an organization; you have shepherded a mission of hope.

Today, I carry a message of profound gratitude from the Baltic shores. Specifically, I want to say ‚Thank You‘ on behalf of the Church in Latvia and the Diocese of Liepāja. Monsignor, your heart has always been open to our needs. Through the support of *Bonifatiuswerk*, our cathedrals have been restored, our social projects have flourished, and our priests and sisters have been given the tools to reach their people even in the most remote areas.

In Liepāja, we do not just see you as a benefactor, but as a true friend and a brother in Christ. Your solidarity has shown us that even a small diocese is never forgotten when hearts are united in faith. You have helped us build not just walls of stone, but a living Church of spirit and hope.

We admire your tireless energy and your ability to see the face of Christ in every person you serve. Your dedication has left an indelible mark on our communities, fostering a spirit of togetherness that transcends language and geography. You have carried the weight of your responsibility with grace and a distinctive vision.

Monsignor, as you look back on these forty years, may you feel the deep satisfaction of a life well-spent in the service of the Lord. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide you with wisdom, and may the joy of the Gospel remain your constant strength. We thank you for your ‚Yes.‘ We thank you for your friendship and your leadership. We wish you many more years of health, peace, and divine inspiration. Congratulations on your Ruby Jubilee!

Bischof Viktors Stulpins