

Bonn, May 4, 2023

The Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn is to confer an honorary doctorate on Dr. Johan Bonny, Bishop of Antwerp

**Tuesday, June 6, 2023, 6:15 pm
Forum Internationale Wissenschaft, Heussallee 18–24**

Attendance by invitation and registration

The Faculty of Catholic Theology is to confer an honorary doctorate on Dr. Johan Bonny, Bishop of Antwerp, in recognition of his outstanding service to the synodality of the Catholic Church and the revitalization of its teachings on marriage, the family and other forms of relationship and ways of life.

Bishop Bonny is synonymous with a shift in the Church's theological views in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council that Pope Francis is continuing to take further. He is critical of exclusionary and discriminatory narrowmindedness and misguided trends in doctrine that are causing more and more people to turn away from the Church disappointed and hurt. Johan Bonny's thinking is rooted in his own personal and pastoral experience. It is theologically sound, grounded in the humanities and culturally sensitive. At the heart of his reflections lie an unconditional respect for personal conscience and the call for personal morality and pastoral care in the Church. He also advocates a strengthening of local churches and an approach to synodality that recognizes and incorporates local social and cultural characteristics.

Johan Bonny has articulated his views in academic lectures, public statements and interviews and has become an unmistakable and highly effective voice. Within Germany, he is best known for his comments on the 2014 Synod on the Family and as an international observer of the fourth and fifth meetings of the Synodal Way. Anyone who knows him will appreciate his theological expertise and consistency, his pastoral breadth and his own personal courage.

About Bishop Bonny

Johan Jozef Bonny was born in the Belgian city of Ostend in 1955 and grew up in a large family in the countryside. He studied theology and philosophy at the Major Seminary in Bruges and KU Leuven. His ordination to the priesthood in 1980 was followed by a licentiate and doctoral studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He then returned to the Major Seminary in Bruges as a Professor of Church History, Ecclesiology, Ecumenism and Spirituality, also going on to serve as dean and director of pastoral care. At the same time, he was involved in youth work, in adult education, in ecumenism and on the priests' council in his diocese for many years and in various roles. He was a member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity from 1997 to 2008, where he focused on Orthodoxy, the Eastern Churches and ecumenical communities such as Taizé, and served as rector of the Belgian Pontifical College in the same period. In 2009, he was installed as bishop of Antwerp. He chairs several committees of the Belgian Bishops' Conference and represents it in its dealings with the Belgian government. He has also been a member of the Dicastery for the Promotion of Christian Unity since 2010.

press release



Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn
Faculty of Catholic Theology

The Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn

The Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn is one of the most prestigious such faculties in Germany, whose teaching is based on a strong track record of research in the individual theological disciplines. It trains future pastoral ministers and priests as well as religious education teachers for *Gymnasien*, *Gesamtschulen* and *Berufsschulen*. Its new BA degree programs also open up the broad spectrum of study options and potential career paths in the humanities.

Contact for the Press

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