

Greeting from Archbishop Dr. Udo Markus Bentz
and Monsignore Georg Austen:
Episcopal ordination of Msgr. Fredrik Hansen
on 18 January 2025 in Oslo

Archbishop Dr. Udo Markus Bentz:

**Dear Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin,
dear Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Julio Murat,
dear Bishop Bernt Eidsvig,
dear confreres,
dear sisters and brothers in faith,
dear Bishop Fredrik Hansen,**

A few weeks ago, you said: 'I have always felt at home where the Church has placed me' - it is good to see that you have now found your place here in Oslo and are being consecrated bishop today. I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the Archdiocese of Paderborn and on behalf of the Bonifatiuswerk as its patron.

It is a great honour for the Secretary General of the Bonifatiuswerk, Monsignore Georg Austen, and me to be here to celebrate your episcopal consecration. We are very pleased that such a suitable successor has been found for Bishop Bernt Eidsvig. Bishop Bernt has been making a beneficial contribution to the positive development of the diocese in Oslo for more than 20 years now. We agree with his statement that the Pope 'has made a wise and good choice with Fredrik Hansen as bishop and coadjutor'.

I can see that many good relationships and personal contacts have resulted from the many years of co-operation with our brothers and sisters in Germany and especially with the Bonifatiuswerk of German Catholics. In the summer, I myself will be in Bergen and Trondheim for a few days for conversations and to explore the beautiful country of Norway. I am looking forward to discovering more about the life of the Church then.

Monsignore Georg Austen:

I join in on the congratulations, thank you very much for the invitation and I congratulate the diocese of Oslo on the new bishop and you, dear Bishop Fredrik, on behalf of the Bonifatiuswerk and the 'Diaspora Commissariat of the German Bishops' on your consecration. I would also like to give warm greetings and congratulations from the Ansgar-Werke in Germany, which also have a long association with the Church in Northern Europe.

The close connection between the dioceses in Northern Europe and the Bonifatiuswerk, and thus also with the diocese of Oslo, has existed for more than 50 years now. However, this connection does not only exist on paper. It is much more than that. It is a very close, lived connection that is supported by the relationships between the people involved. In Germany and in Northern Europe, we can learn a lot from and with each other. And so this connection has resulted in a reliable partnership and numerous important joint projects.

I am thinking, for example, of the founding of the parish of St. Elisabeth in Hosle or the purchase and extensive renovation of St. Johannes in the diocese of Oslo. The new construction of the St. Gudmund church and parish centre in Jessheim in 2014 - 2016, which was funded with 250,000 euros, was certainly also a major project. In addition, Bishop Bernt was also responsible for the planning and construction of the new cathedral and parish centre in Trondheim during the eleven-year bishop's vacancy in the Trondheim prelateure. I am very grateful to Bishop Bernt Eidsvig and all employees in the diocese of Oslo for their trusting cooperation, even in challenging times and difficult situations.

The major financial support comes not only from the Bonifatiuswerk, but also from the Diaspora Commissariat, which exists for more than 100 years. This year, the 'Diaspora Commissariat of the German Bishops' will provide almost five million euros in financial support for priests and full-time deacons working in pastoral care in Northern Europe. Thanks to this support, flats of priests can be renovated, cars purchased and priests' salaries co-financed. It is help from priests for priests, a great sign of solidarity. It is about a community of faith. 'For no one should believe alone' is the guiding word of the Bonifatiuswerk.

Every year, volunteers from Germany experience this at first hand. Every year, around 23 young people get to know church life in the diaspora through our "Praktikum im Norden" ('Internship in the North') support program and get involved locally in parishes and institutions in Northern Europe and in Estonia and Latvia. We are also very grateful to the organizations and those responsible for this valuable support. When I speak to the volunteers after their stays, they often tell me very impressively about the lively and international church in the north.

Archbishop Dr. Udo Markus Bentz:

Joy and vitality are good keywords. Both can be experienced here in the international diaspora church in Norway. Here you can feel the spirit of the universal church. I am sure that this episcopal consecration will once again provide an upswing in the diocese of Oslo and I hope that we can also get together for joint pastoral initiatives. The people and the projects here on site remind us time and time again that Christian life and community cannot only take place in church buildings, but wherever people come together in trust in God, where they find orientation for their lives and strength in prayer, but also charitable support. As patron of the Bonifatiuswerk, I would like to thank you all here in Oslo for the good cooperation. The fact that you are giving a testimony of faith through hospitality with your ideas and projects encourages many people.

A few years ago, the General Assembly of the Nordic Bishops' Conference was a guest in Paderborn. On behalf of the Archdiocese of Paderborn and the Bonifatiuswerk, I would like to invite you, dear members of the Nordic Bishops' Conference once again to hold the general assembly in Paderborn.

Dear Bishop Fredrik Hansen, the diocese of Oslo will probably hold many challenges in store for you, but hopefully also many moments of joy. We all wish you courage, strength, perseverance, a far-sighted view and good companions as well as God's blessing for your new task!