

„Courage, courage, my daughters!“

The Women Theologians' Stand at the German Protestant Church Congress in Nürnberg, June 7-11, 2023.

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The word „Courage, courage, my daughters!“ by Theresa of Avila could be read at the stand of the Association of Protestant Female Theologians in Germany at the Market of Opportunities in Nürnberg. It was framed by encouraging photos of many women theologians from near and far and wants to encourage ourselves and all women to stick to their life and career goals and to do what is necessary now.

The photo of the nine Polish women theologians newly ordained in May 2022 hung just to the right of the word of courage. With a lot of courage, confidence and perseverance, the Polish women theologians and their supporters succeeded in having the synod in October 2021 anchor the ordination of women in the church constitution. At this year's annual meeting of the Theologinnenkonvent in February 2023 in the beautiful monastery of Drübeck, the two ordained pastors Halina Radacz and Katarzyna Rudkowska thanked the Theologinnenkonvent for the years of support on the way to the implementation of women's ordination. The mutual visits, theological discussions and joint conferences have helped to achieve the goal. At this year's Kirchentag, Polish Lutheran Bishop Jerzy Samiec and International Relations Officer Anna Wrzesińska visited our stand at the Market of Opportunities and reported that a documentary on the development of women's ordination in the Evangelical Augsburg Church in Poland was in preparation, to be published in Polish and English and distributed at the LWF Assembly in Krakow in September.

Courage and staying power were also demonstrated by the women who founded the Convention as a professional association in 1925, at a time when adequate professional opportunities for academically educated women theologians in the churches had not yet been created. With trust in God, courage, defiance and energy, the pioneering women also overcame stony and arduous roads. The solidarity of the women theologians still exists today, and can be felt in the Theologinnenkonvent, which is organized throughout Germany, and in the regional conventions. These associations are and remain important in order to strengthen each other, to be inspired together by the power of the Spirit and to support the struggle for equality of women and men in the ministry in all churches worldwide.

Opposite our stand was the Association of Protestant Pastors in Germany. The question arose why a women's theologians' association is still necessary. The great advantage of our association is that women theologians who have not become pastors and work in other contexts or at other institutions can also be members and that the exchange at the annual conference and in the conventions takes place among women.

The stand attracted many young and older visitors who took part in our participatory campaign "Now is the time for..." and "For me it is important...". Points were distributed for what is important now in our society and world. "Peace" was the favorite, but "Equal pay for equal work," "An end to violence against women" and "Action for climate protection" also received high scores. What is important to me personally now was written on clothespins

and taken away as a reminder, for example: Courage, joy, singing, music, defiance and energy, trust in God, lightness, serenity....

Many a photo was taken with the purple gown and red stiletto heels that were an eye-catcher at our stand. It is not a woman's gown, but the gown was worn by Pastor Uwe Stradtner, Pastor Christine's husband.

At the theologians' stand we had constant activity, many encounters with guests from near and far, friends, colleagues, but also theology students who did not know about our association before. Cornelia Auers and Christine Stradtner have prepared and organized everything wonderfully, a big, heartfelt thank you for that! We were many stand ministers from different regions and churches in Germany. It was great to be part of this wonderful event, to present our work, actions, pictures and books and to encounter with the people all over the world.