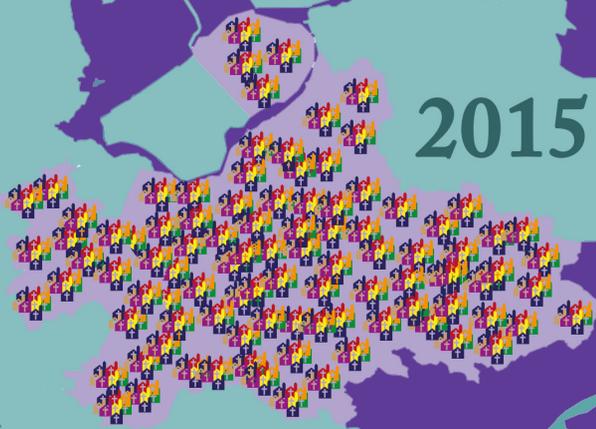


Urgent cry for help to Pope Francis



About the catastrophic process of suppression of vital parishes and small faith communities in the Netherlands, in particular in the Archdiocese of Utrecht.



*On behalf of more than 12.000 faithful Dutch Catholics,
Beziel Verband Utrecht*

Urgent cry for help to Pope Francis

In the past weeks an appeal has been enrolled out of deep concerns over the catastrophic developments resulting from Cardinal Eijk's centralization plan of parish mergers, massive church closures and suppressions of local faith communities in the Archdiocese Utrecht.

More than 12.000 Roman Catholics have responded to this appeal with their signature and formulated their feelings of sorrow, anger and despair to this Urgent Cry for Help to Pope Francis

Cardinal Eijk is gathering the last remnants of parish communities around the few remaining parish priests in so called "Eucharistic Centra". In his widely disseminated 23 November 2014 letter to the parishes under his direction, Cardinal Eijk communicated his vision and forecast for the Archdiocese. He intends within about 10 years from now to merge the original 326 parishes in less than 20 mega-parishes under one priest and one board. And he estimates in each mega-parish finally no more than 1 church is needed. This implies that about 20 churches will remain and the other more than 300 churches in the Archdiocese will be closed, a scale heretofore unseen in the long history of Christianity in our country. Combined with his banning the faithful from coming together in their own communities and in their own villages for celebrations, this implies the suppress of over 300 local faith communities and with them, destroy the Catholic culture. Even vital communities will not escape these draconian measures.

Many members of the Christian communities affected by these measures, are reluctant, even unwilling, to voluntarily abandon their local faith communities in order to travel to a newly created "Eucharistic Centrum." Thus, in a process of aggressive secularization, he is being forced to implement increasingly more rigorous measures in order to realize his ultimate goal in the shortest time possible. As a result ten thousands of Roman Catholics will turn their back on the official church in the coming years, and their souls will be at stake.

On several occasions, as a reference to the principle of subsidiarity, Pope Francis, has warned of the inherent dangers of attempting to deny a parish community of its own unique identity and the associated risks of suffocating it under the force of a centralized power base. The Holy Father has also clearly stated, that the clergy have been "sent to serve" and not the reverse. They were even instructed to "go out and smell the sheep."

In name of more than 12,000 signatories, we humbly call on the Holy Father for protection!

Ad de Groot
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In our report "Urgent cry for help to Pope Francis" we present three other protests against the policy of Cardinal Eijk, an overview of the reactions to the call support of our petition and the signatures, which have been received in response to the petition.