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PRESS RELEASE  
GERMAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCE



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**Statement**  
**by Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ (Luxembourg),**  
**President of CIM,**

**Press conference at the start**  
**of the XIII International Pilgrimage of Altar Servers**  
**in Rome on 29 July 2024**

Hello, and welcome to you all!

I am very glad to see that you have taken up our invitation to come to this press conference. The XIII international pilgrimage to Rome is indeed an event of considerable international significance. Altar servers from roughly 20 different countries have come together here in the Eternal City. Despite this, we are all united under one umbrella, namely Coetus Internationalis Ministrantium – CIM.

It is a very special moment of joy and blessing for us to come together in Rome this week with 50,000 registered pilgrims under the motto “with you”. With you, these words from the Book of Isaiah, are a valuable indication that God is near: “Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you.” This assurance lends us comfort and encouragement, as it confirms to us that God not only accompanies us, but also strengthens and supports us, regardless of the challenges we need to overcome. This pilgrimage to Rome enables us to experience the diversity and unity of our global community of altar servers. The daily reports of war, suffering and injustice show us clearly that this is no matter of course. So it is all the more significant to see that we all come from different countries, speak different languages, and pray in different languages, but we have one service and one responsibility. This unites the altar servers, so that each of them is also a peace-maker.

I would like to warmly thank all the pilgrims for their service, their witness and their willingness to enter into a full commitment. It is a true witness of faith for me to be able to experience Rome at this time. The streets of this city full of altar servers are an impressive sign that you are many, you are young, and you are a global community!

I wish all the pilgrims a fulfilled week jam-packed with experiences that bring them blessings!

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