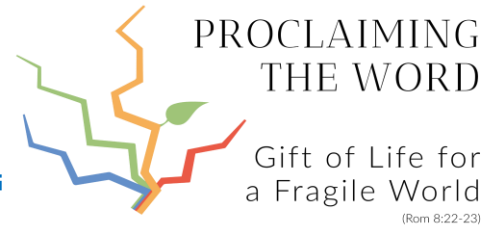


# DOCUMENTS

*Catholic Biblical Federation  
10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly  
Mar Del Plata, Argentina*

---



## Financial Report

*Mr. Oliver Bludovsky*  
Member of the CBF Administrative Board

---

Dear Delegates,  
Dear President Cardinal Tagle,  
Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

First of all, I would like to express my regret that I cannot be with you in Argentina in person. This is not meant to be a sign of disrespect or disregard but is essentially due to family reasons. In addition, the Administrative Board does not wish to place an additional financial burden on the CBF as far as possible.

Furthermore I must also inform you that today I can only give you a provisional financial report, and with regard to the last two years also not a complete one. As you know, our previous treasurer, Mr Holger Sichler, whom I personally held in high esteem, died unexpectedly in October last year. Holger Sichler is a loss for the CBF and the CBF has not yet found a successor.

Although I am not an expert in finances, I have therefore been asked to present to you the financial development since the last General Assembly in 2015. I have therefore summarised the data and documents available to me to the best of my knowledge and belief in the time available to me.

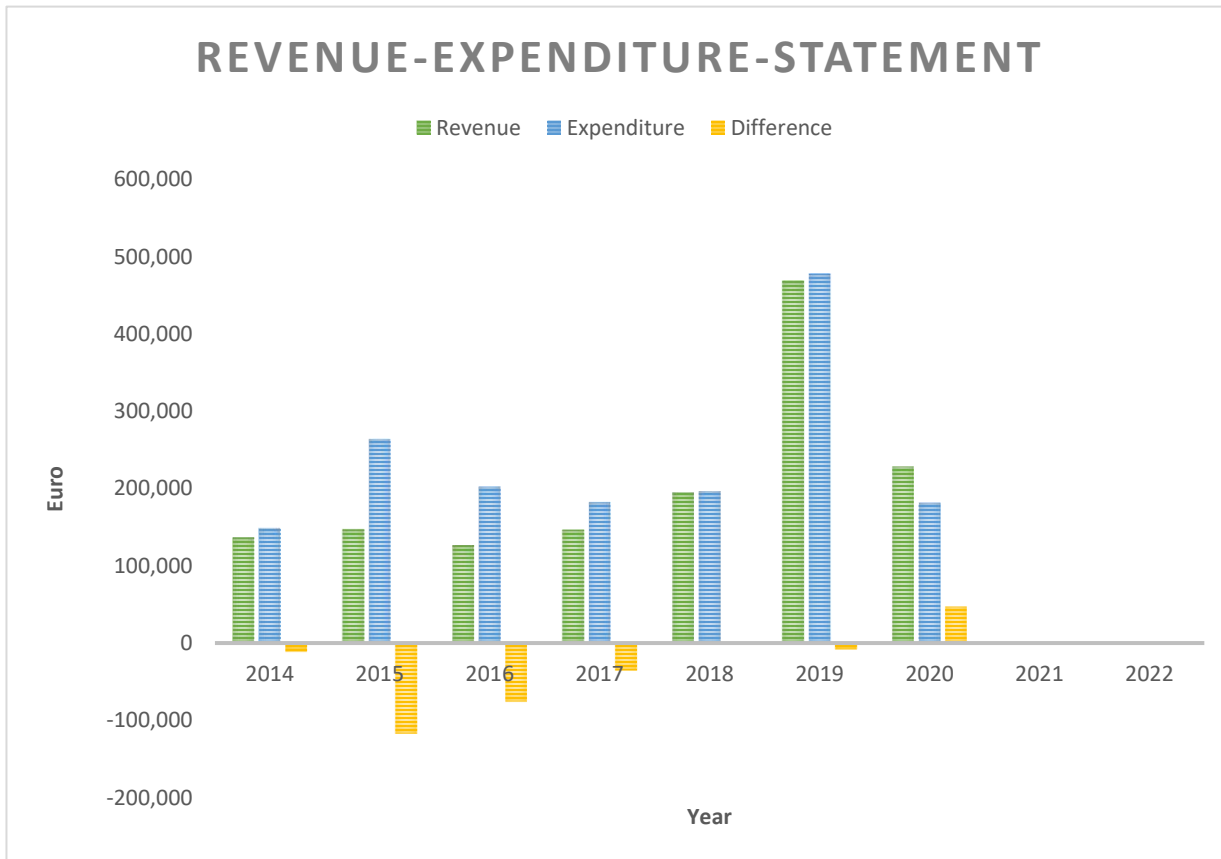
As soon as a new treasurer has been found, the final financial report will be submitted to the Executive Committee and also made available to the members. Of course, it will then be possible to inspect the detailed accounts at any time.

# Part I

## Financial Report

### 1.

Now to the financial data of the CBF. Right at the beginning I have to tell you that the finances are still very tight, as the following income and expenditure statistics show:

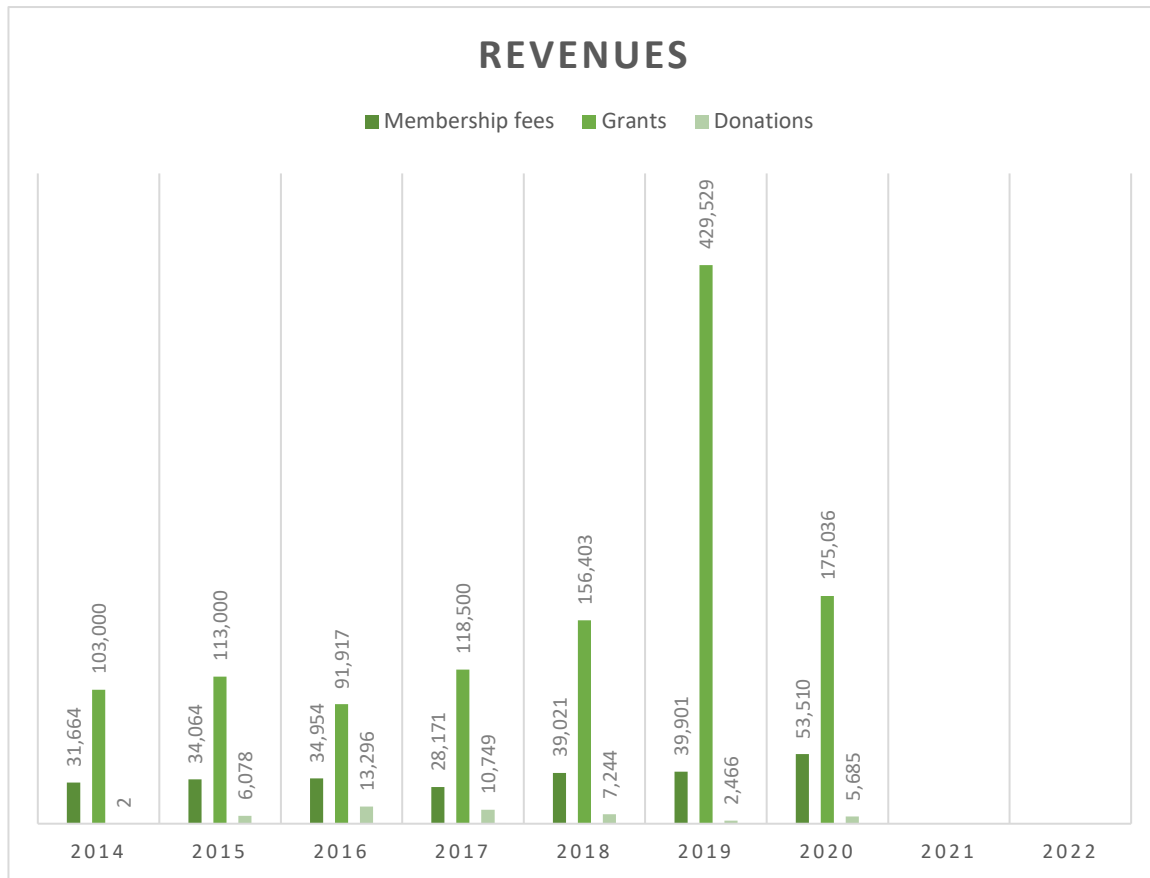


The revenues and expenditures show a constant and thus structural deficit over the last few years. Only the Covid-19 epidemic interrupted this somewhat. However, this does not change the structural deficit.

In particular, the current assets are in part greatly reduced. Especially before larger events such as the Bible Congress in 2019 and also now again before the Plenary Assembly, the CBF is dependent - albeit on a relatively small scale - on smaller interim financing, this means loans from individual members, dioceses or sponsors, until the promised funding is actually received. Currently, this is the case to the tune of about € 20,000.

## 2.

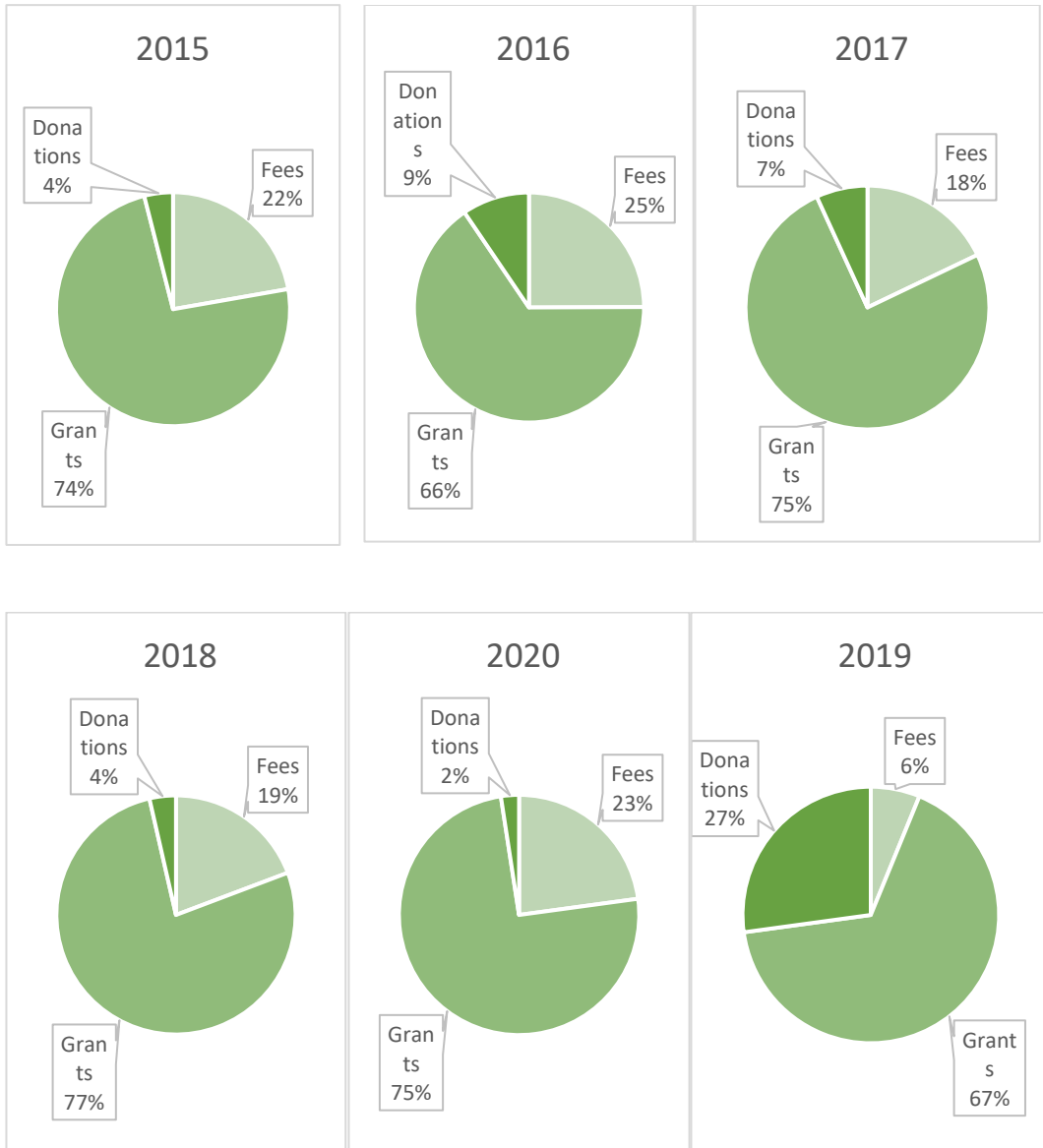
If we look at the income side, it is as follows:



In the run-up to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was even an increase on the income side, but this should not hide the fact that the CBF was living from hand to mouth. At the same time, as already mentioned, expenditure also increased and deficits continued to occur. Moreover, the increases in income observed here largely concern project-related income, which in particular cannot be used to improve the staffing situation of the General Secretariat.

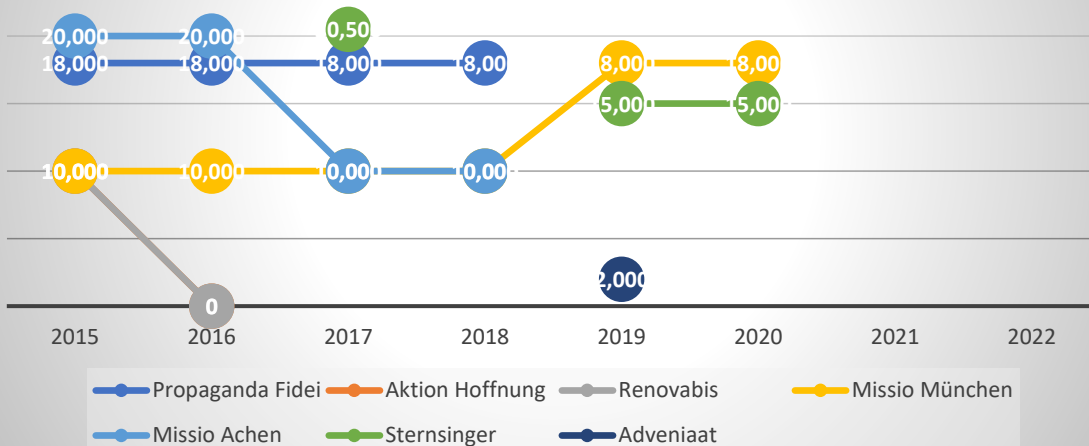
Only the last increase in membership fees has a lasting effect, but at a very low level

Membership fees continue to account for less than 25 % of income. Compared to the year 2025, they have remained almost the same in percentage terms:

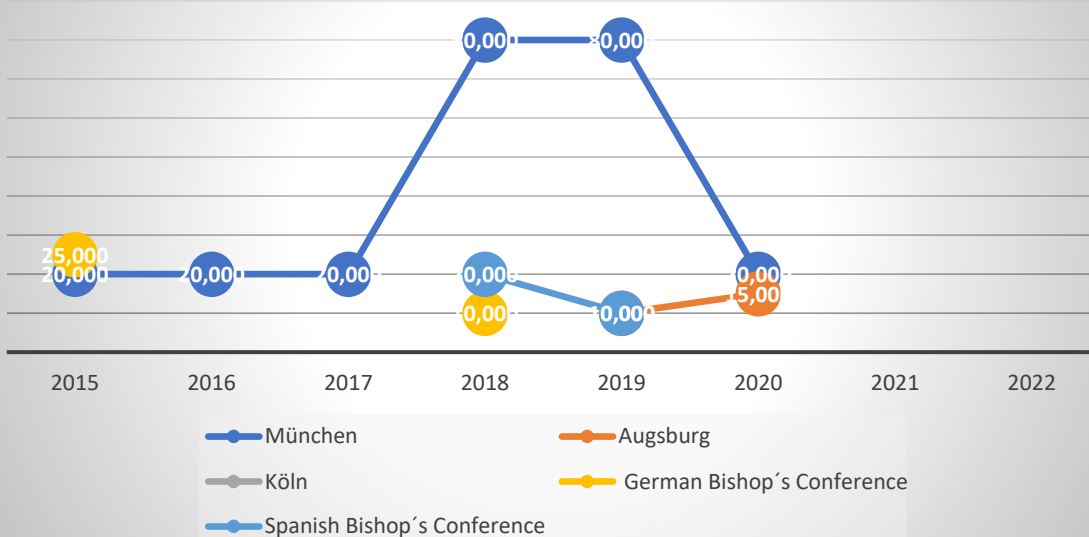


The biggest problem affecting income is the fact that donations from aid agencies, which are not linked to projects and therefore help cover CBF's basic costs, are decreasing.

## Non projet-related Grants of cath. relief of funding agencies



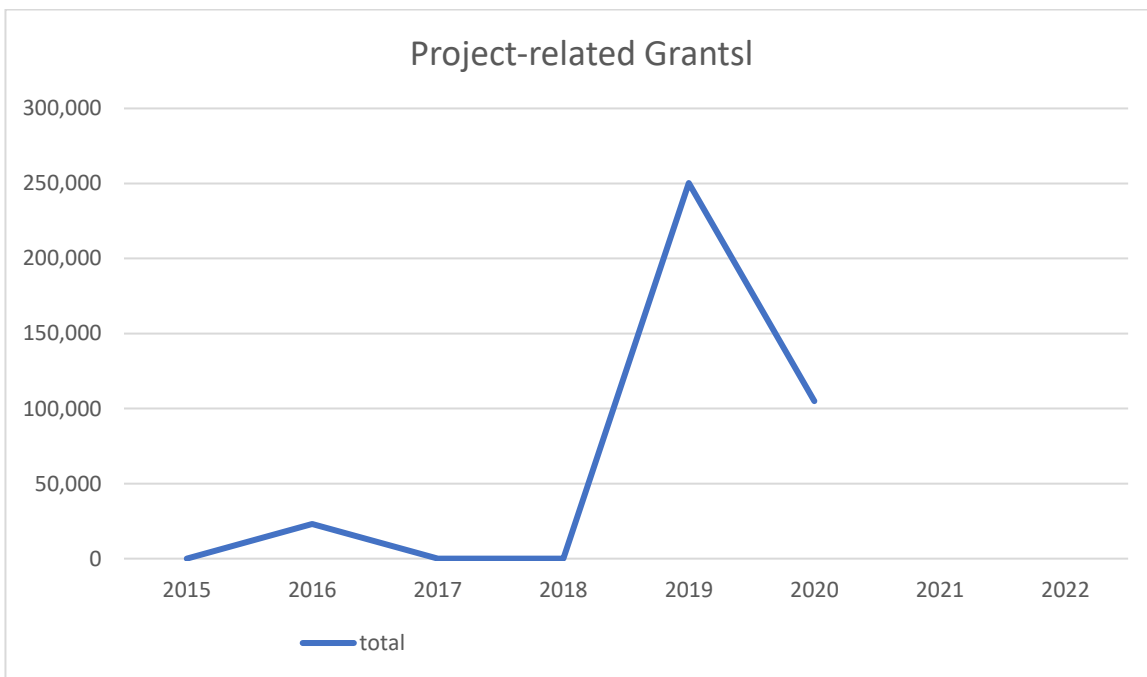
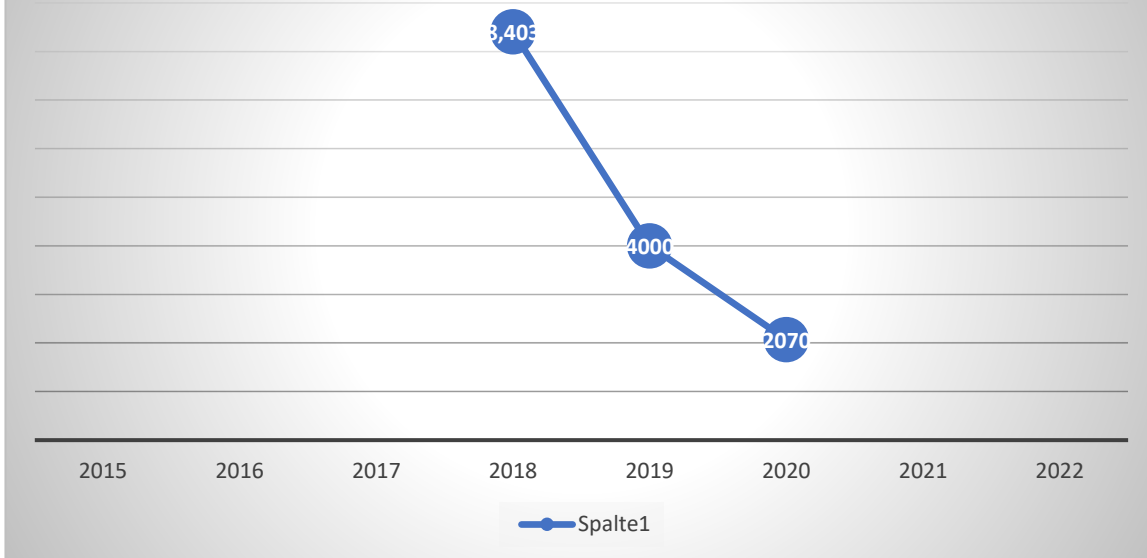
## Non project relatet Grants of Dioceses



This effect of the decline in non-earmarked donations is somewhat mitigated by donations from Friends of the CBF. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has also led to an interruption here.

Nevertheless, the idea of financial support through Friends of the CBF is a good approach for the future.

## Non project relatet Grants of Friens of CBF.

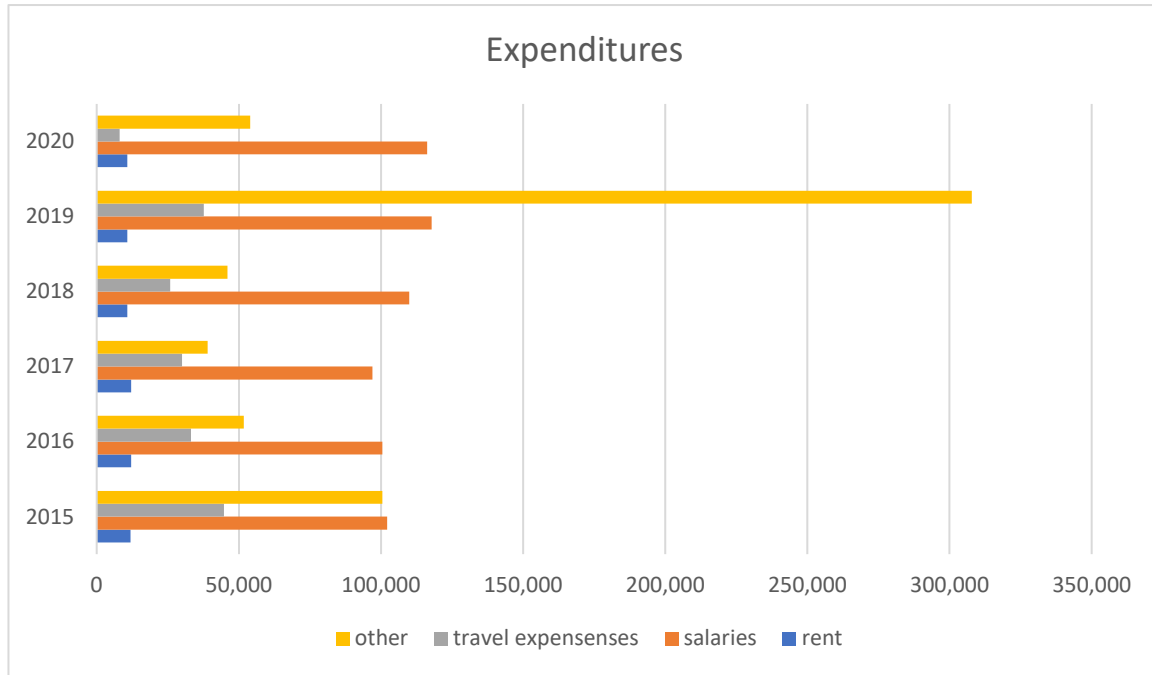


In the years in which there were larger projects, it was also possible to generate project-related funds to a not inconsiderable extent. Nevertheless, as was shown at the beginning, these have not been able to prevent a deficit in these years either.

### 3.

On the expenditure side, an overall increase can be seen compared to previous years, which can be explained by a stronger activity of the CBF as a whole.

Looking more closely at the expenditure of the last few years, the following can be noted:



CBF's have remained essentially stable. This applies to both rents and salaries, especially when inflation is still taken into account.

Travel costs have even decreased. However, there are currently signs of a market-related reversal here.

Other costs, on the other hand, are subject to greater fluctuations. In this respect, the year 2019 shows the greatest fluctuation due to the Bible Conference.

## Part II

### Comments and Rekommandation

After the presentation of the essential data on the financial situation, I would like - as announced at the beginning - to add a few comments on these data from my perspective.

I am a lawyer, not a theologian. As a family man with four school-age children and a partner in a commercial law firm, I am in some ways a foreign body in the CBF. I did not follow a path of ecclesiastical vocation and I do not work for the church. My work for the CBF is purely voluntary.

But perhaps just looking at the CBF and its finances from the outside can also be helpful.

#### 1.

The question of finances is inextricably linked to the tasks of the CBF. These are summarised in essence right in the preamble of the CBF's statutes, where it states:

*"The Catholic Biblical Federation came into existence on April 16, 1969 to implement the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on Divine Revelation "Dei Verbum" (DV) and, in particular, its chapter VI on "The Sacred Scriptures in the Life of the Church",*

The CBF is therefore not an end in itself, but serves to implement one of the four main Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, the Constitution "Dei Verbum".

There, the importance and the role of the Bible as one of the two essential sources of revelation as well as its historical-critical interpretation were emphasised in particular.

This already makes it clear that the statutory task of the CBF is not a voluntary or additional task of the Church. Rather, it is a core church task or, in the words of a lawyer: a compulsory task.

#### 2.

The task of implementing "The Verbum" also affects the church at the local level. However, it undoubtedly also has a considerable universal dimension. The Word of God is universal and the Catholic Church is a church that spans the world. The world-church view and the care for the world-church are therefore always part of the local-church task and vice versa.

This requires a minimum of mutual exchange and, if possible, coordination. Those who follow the themes of the synodal process initiated by Pope Francis will find many examples of this central and difficult task.

Evangelical and Pentecostal communities, by the way, do not usually have this problem. They are much more limited to local or social groups and therefore often interpret the Bible much more purposefully in relation to the interests of the respective addressees. This "structural advantage" of the evangelical communities is particularly evident in mission and pastoral work. However, the success of evangelical groups is often based on a too simple solution and sometimes also on a dubious handling of the Holy Scriptures. Economically, one would speak of a quality disadvantage - which, however, is insignificant for the believer as long as it is not recognised by him.



In the Catholic Church, exactly the opposite is the case. The compulsion to a minimum of unity and the discourse that goes with it may lead to disputes, but as a rule to better quality.

### 3.

This is one of the reasons why, after the Second Vatican Council, the implementation of *Dei Verbum* at the level of the universal Church was not, or not only, placed in the hands of Vatican dicasteries, but was organised federally with the CBF and the regional members of the Church were given decisive responsibility. The CBF's full members are not just any organisation or private individuals, but exclusively national bishops' conferences. They are not only responsible for the implementation of *Dei Verbum* in their own geographical area, but also for the worldwide implementation of *Dei Verbum*.

Why do I emphasise this? Because I want to make it clear that the worldwide implementation of *Dei Verbum* lives from the members of the CBF. It is their very own task to be actively involved in the CBF. But if it is one of the very own ecclesial tasks of the members of the CBF to actively participate in the CBF, this also includes ensuring sufficient financial resources so that the CBF can fulfil its tasks.

### 4.

Financially, the CBF has for the most part had little impact on the individual members in the past. At that time, the founders of the CBF were able to rely on the support of wealthy dioceses and Catholic funding agencies, such as *Missio*, *Misereor* or *Aveniat*, not only for projects but also for the basic financing of the CBF's organs. This system has worked - at least to some extent - for a long time, although it is actually not right to finance the organisation for a core task of the church primarily through funding agencies. National Bible societies, for example, are usually not financed by aid agencies but directly by their member dioceses.

In the meantime, we have come a long way from these early days of the CBF, even though the German funding agencies and dioceses are still among the important supporters of the CBF. Compared to the donations of the funding agencies before the turn of the millennium, CBF receives only a fraction. Payments continue to decrease steadily. The same is to be expected with regard to the German dioceses, even though the archdioceses of Munich, Cologne and Bamberg and especially the diocese of Augsburg are still committed.

### 5.

To some extent, it has been possible to compensate for the drop in income from Germany through special payments from bishops' conferences in other countries and in particular through the commitment of the CBF's President Cardinal Tagle.

Nevertheless, as the figures clearly show, there is a structural deficit. The General Secretariat of the CBF has been completely underfunded and understaffed for too long in relation to its task. The General Secretary and his assistant do their utmost. Nevertheless, they are often simply unable to meet the demands placed on them by the CBF statutes and the membership.

Moreover, the income is too much subject to uncertainties and is structurally unsustainable. The need for special payments takes away any planning security. If there were planning security and the General Secretariat had to worry less about gels, it could devote much more attention to the actual goals of the CBF.

Therefore, I ask you all to get involved in the considerations for further sources of funding for the CBF and to actively involve its member organisers in a sustainable financial structure. The lack of such is the biggest obstacle to CBF's further development.

In my opinion, there is therefore an urgent need for:

- Founding of "Friends of the CBF" organisations in more CBF member countries.
- Increase membership fees to ensure sustainable and predictable basic funding.

The latter point in particular often raises the question among delegates: what more does the CBF bring to my member organisation if more is paid? Two answers to this question:

1. for me this is a question of the chicken and the egg - which came first? - In other words, it is a question that is currently going nowhere. Because only when the CBF is sufficiently equipped will it be possible to see whether it will work more optimally for all members. If it is not better equipped, however, this will in any case work in favour of those mostly evangelical fellowships that do sometimes dubious Bible work at a low level.

2. As stated above, the world-wide implementation of Dei Verbum is also a task of the individual regional members of the Church. Indirectly, everyone benefits from good biblical scholarship and biblical pastoral ministry. Therefore, the good financing of the CBF is a task for all of you. The CBF are you all.