

Dennis Josef Meseg's "Shattered Souls – in a Sea of Silence" denounces the handling of abuse cases within the Catholic Church

COLOGNE (GERMANY)
PR Newswire [New York, NY]

August 4, 2023

By Denis Josef Meseg

On the occasion of World Youth Day in Lisbon from August 1st to 6th, 2023, 333 child figures were be placed in front of the imposing Cologne Cathedral. The small figures are draped in white-purple barrier tape; symbolizing the colors of innocence and the curia.

With outstretched hands, they point towards Cologne Cathedral, drawing attention to the church's disastrous handling of victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse. Through the installation "Shattered Souls in a Sea of Silence," artist Dennis Josef Meseg aims to "give more visibility and a voice to the victims."

However, the installation doesn't solely focus on the victims, but also casts a critical light on the perpetrators and accomplices. His intention is that they can no longer continue their wrongdoing under the church's protection.

The decision to choose Cologne as the location and the timing during this year's World Youth Day in Lisbon as the occasion for the installation is deliberate. It aims to underscore the ongoing discussion about dealing with potential abusers in the Archdiocese of Cologne and the Catholic Church worldwide.

The distressing reality of abuse and the way it is handled have rightfully sparked discontent in the past. In 2022, over 600,000 members left the German Catholic Church, a sad testament to the loss of trust in the Catholic Church.

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