



7. Ökumenischer
Förderpreis
Eine Welt

Brot
für die Welt



Award ceremony in Stuttgart on May 27, 2022

**Award Winner:
Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice**

**Laudatory speech by Mr. Gabriel Klaasen, African Climate Alliance
Cape Town, South Africa**

"No pilgrim ever returns home without one less prejudice and one more new idea." This saying of Thomas More is written on the website (homepage) of the Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice and it also says "The "option for the poor" is at the core of the biblical understanding of justice. Thus, based on our biblical witness, we are called to raise our voices for the weakest and most vulnerable in our global community. For "the victims of climate change are the new figure of the poor, widows and strangers, to whom God's love and care is especially directed." These are powerful statements.

Ecumenical Pilgrimages for Climate Justice have been held regularly since the 2015 World Climate Conference in Paris. The sponsor of the climate pilgrimages is a broad ecumenical alliance of Catholic dioceses, Protestant regional churches, the Pilgrim Base Paris 2015 and church relief organizations in Germany.

The 5th Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice under the motto "Go for it!" to the climate summit in Glasgow started on August 14, 2021 in Zielona Góra, Poland. After 1,450 kilometers in 77 stages, the pilgrims reached Glasgow, where the 26th UN Climate Change Conference was held from November 1 to 12, 2021. All climate pilgrimages are always pilgrimage and demonstration at the same time. It stops at places where the threat to the environment is clearly evident and experiences "pain points," but it also passes through places that demonstrate solutions for sustainable developments and thus become "places of power."

Local communities and civil society actors organized devotions, thematic events, meetings with politicians and press events at the pain points and places of power. The 5th Ecumenical Pilgrimage 2021 focused on mobility, agriculture and food change.

Along the way, the pilgrims collected signatures for their petition to the political leaders. They demanded that the goals of the Paris climate agreement be consistently implemented with a binding set of rules to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The threat of climate catastrophe can only be averted through global and international cooperation. Climate justice will and must play a central role in this. Pope Francis' environmental encyclical, *Laudato si'*, impressively shows how the social and ecological issues are interrelated and that they must be considered and solved together.

With the Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice, the organizers have established a format that connects head, body and spirituality and attracts a high level of church and public attention. The 5th Climate Pilgrimage was already scheduled to take place in 2020. Due to the pandemic and the postponement of COP 26, the pilgrimage could not take place until 2021. The organizers made a virtue out of necessity and transferred the 2020 pilgrimage into the digital space. They built an Internet presence that included digital professional events and messages from the climate pilgrims. This kept the issue of climate justice alive during the pandemic.

The success of the Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice is based on a broad and strong alliance between churches of different denominations and civil society. The 2021 pilgrimage in the real world generated a great church-political and public resonance through international cooperation with Protestant and Catholic churches in Poland, the Netherlands England and Scotland. Daily reports were available on the website and there were meetings with citizens along the way.

Protestant and Catholic parishes, environmental initiatives, schools and non-profit associations participate in the pilgrimage route with their own activities along the way.

The innovative format, its strength of alliance and the high level of church and public attention it generates in Germany convinced the jury of the Seventh Ecumenical Advancement Award.

We award the Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Climate Justice in the category "Climate Justice" as a prize winner and put Dietrich Bonhoeffer's motto to all of you: "May it be that the Last Day dawns tomorrow, then we will gladly lay aside our work for a better future, but not before."

Congratulations!