



Archbishop Dr. Heiner Koch (Berlin)

24th International Congress Renovabis 2020

Welcoming Address

We humans belong inseparably together. This statement has rarely cut to the core of our essence as much as it has in the recent corona pandemic. This inconspicuous virus has spread its tentacles throughout the world. It is constantly on our minds and this inconspicuous something influences our thinking and our actions. Up until now, a lot of people thought that they were coming close to understanding the universe right to its very core. They thought they had the moon in their pockets. Now they are noticing how helpless they are, how vulnerable, and they are becoming ever more keenly aware of all their constraints and limits. The social dialectic is in flux, with the forces of poor and rich, freedom and security searching for a new equilibrium. Nor do we, members of the Church, know what the future will bring. How is community shaped through the experience of physical disengagement and the digitalisation of human relationships. How can belief be shared and communicated to people who are not connected to us online in these times?

In such times, it is crucial that the members of the Renovabis family, in which we have been, and still are, tied across borders, stick together. The guiding principle at the upcoming 24th International Congress Renovabis as well is: online instead of offline We owe it to the people, to the Church, to our congregations and societies! We have to compare our experience with corona and its psycho-social and material impact, nor can we lose sight of the people living on the margins of our society. We have to ask ourselves what sustains us spiritually in these times, drawing on Scripture and our relationship with God. We have to contemplate political repercussions in our different nations, not least in Europe as well. Corona will pass, to be followed by a new era. Things will be different. What will this new world look like? Renovabis! Do we believe that God's Spirit will renew everything today as well? Are we together with God on the path of renewal during and after the corona period?

I am grateful that the Renovabis Congress is taking place. I am grateful that we can come together. I am grateful that we are joined together through Renovabis. I am grateful that God's Spirit touches us as we come together in this campaign of solidarity. We shall experience and go through it all together!

Dr. Heiner Koch
Archbishop of Berlin