

"Moving to Kist a real win-win situation" 06.11.2023 | 16:21

Bishop Dr Franz Jung visits the Dominican Sisters in the Senior Citizens' Residence Kist - Renewing the order's charism in new surroundings

Kist/Neustadt am Main (POW) Bishop Dr Franz Jung visited the Dominican Sisters in the Senior Citizens' Residence Kist on Sunday, 5 November. He celebrated Sunday Mass there with the community. This was followed by a lively exchange between the Sisters and the bishop. After a detailed round of introductions, the topic was of course the Sisters' courageous decision to give up their convent in Neustadt am Main (Main-Spessart district) and move to the retirement home in the district of Würzburg after the convent was closed in January of this year.

The Sisters gave an impressive account of the lengthy decision-making process that led to the actual search for a new home. It was a stroke of luck that the facility in Kist was able to provide shared accommodation on one floor after it had temporarily housed Ukrainian refugees. Each Sister has her own room or "cell", and there is also a small oratory and a meeting room. Meals are taken together, just like in the convent.

As not all the Sisters were living in Neustadt before the move, the convent in Kist now not only has to find its way in a new environment, but the Sisters have to find themselves as a new community. This is no easy task, requiring a great deal of sensitivity and patience. Bishop Jung explained that it was encouraging to see the openness with which the convent, under the leadership of Prioress Sister Hilke Stenner and Coordinator Irene Schneider, is tackling this challenge and making determined progress.

By their own admission, the Sisters clearly feel at home in the bright and spacious house. Reservations concerning the accommodation of the Sisters on the part of the rest of the house community were quickly dispelled. As pastors and companions, especially for dying residents, the Dominican Sisters are actively involved in the life of the house.

The fact that this commitment is greatly appreciated by both the management and the residents of the residence was made even clearer to Bishop Jung during the final meeting with the home's advisory board and management. "In this respect, the move to Kist is a real win-win situation for everyone," the bishop pointed out.

He thanked the Sisters for their encouraging example of breaking new and unfamiliar ground. Instead of withdrawing into themselves, they were once again making a completely new contribution to the retirement home, seeking to live and renew their charism in a social space-oriented way. In this way, they saw the crisis as an opportunity and used it in an exemplary manner. "Blessed are those who, at an advanced age, once again muster the courage to make such a new start!" the bishop said in his farewell address.

Text Dominik Zeißner (Media Office, Diocese of Würzburg) and Martina Schneider
Photos Dominik Zeißner (Media Office, Diocese of Würzburg) and Irene Schneider
Translation Sr Marie-Luise Faupel OP