



Prayer for Berlin

September 2011

Good News: Brothel stopped for the time being

For years there have been an increasing number of attempts to open new brothels near the area of the corner of Potsdamerstraße and Kurfürstenstraße in Berlin-Schöneberg, which is known for its sex trade. Some of these attempts have failed because house owners have not agreed to this; others have just simply been sealed off by the trade office. In the red-light district, there is a sex store with video booths being used for prostitution. A businessman wants to open a large brothel in the same house, but a year ago, the Administrative Court denied permission for building the planned brothel.

The court explained its decision by saying that the quality of life of residents in the area is already diminished because of the present red-light district and that enlarging that district is intolerable for residents and businesses. Thus, the court upheld the view of the District Office Tempelhof-Schöneberg, which had refused permission to build. The petitioner has now filed an appeal with the Higher Administrative Court.

Prayer

- **Thank God for the rigorous decision on the part of the officials. Thank God also for Christians who are ministering to prostitutes through “Neustart” (New Beginning) and “Alabaster Jar”**
- **Pray for solid arguments which will influence the courts to put an end to the planned brothel for good**
- **Pray that the police will rigorously crack down against exploitive conditions and every form of forced prostitution**

New Selection Process

Actually the new Chief of Police had already been selected, but a defeated candidate filed a suit against the selection process. The Administrative Court ruled in his favour. The Senator of the Interior of Berlin, Mr. Körting, has surprisingly admitted to failures in the process of filling the position. Now the entire process of selecting a new Chief of

Police must begin all over again. In particular, candidate selection discussions must again be organized. Whether Mr. Körting can name a new Chief of Police before elections on September 18th is questionable, so let us continue to pray for our prayer request from July for the selection of the person for this important position. Things are happening!

Prayer:

- **Pray for the work of the Selection Committee**
- **Pray that God’s Spirit will encourage suitable candidates to apply for the position**
- **Pray for the right successor from God’s perspective for the city and the people**

March for Life

The national *March for Life 2011* is taking place on Saturday, September 17 at 1:00pm. The march, which has taken place in Berlin and many other cities for many years, will begin in front of the Bundeskanzleramt, not on the Alexanderplatz, as was the case until now. This year’s motto is “Ja zum Leben” (Yes to Life). It is a symbolic stand against abortion and a remembrance of all the children in Germany who are being killed every day before being born. Every year the march is contested, because left-wing radicals and anarchist groups come together to yell hate slogans at the participants and even attack them. Last year, the march could be held only under massive police protection.

Fortunately, the birth rate in Berlin has increased dramatically. Last year there was a near-record baby boom in the city. More people were born (33,393) than died (32,200). However, according to the official statistic, over 9500 children were aborted—nearly every third child! The estimated number of unreported cases is probably much higher.

Prayer:

- **Pray for forgiveness that children whom God had given life were not allowed to live**
- **Thank God for an increased birth rate in Berlin**
- **Protection and success of the planned “March for Life”**

Theatre for and with Immigrants

The Ballhaus Theatre on the Naunsynstraße in Kreuzberg is a focal point for artists with an immigrant background. Currently it is attaining national

attention with its programs and topics by winning renowned theatre awards and an unusually high number of ticket sales. Most normally they are over 90% sold out.

In 2010, Nurkan Erpulat, the Turkish director, staged an “Immigrant Play” called *Verrücktes Blut*, which became a hit overnight and is even playing a role in the current debate about integration. It creates room for a debate, an artistic dialogue, which is obviously hitting a nerve. Cultural partnership and a shared participation in public discussions are important parts of successful integration. Bringing up topics and talking about things which need to be improved, as well as sharing one’s own perception and cultural insights, are all part of the process.

This sort of dialogue is succeeding in many places in the world of art and the fine arts, but not everywhere. The German spoken theatre generally has the reputation of being a eurocentric and “white” stronghold in its choice of topics, authors, and actors. The rest of the potential of society is not being used.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the initiatives like the Ballhaus Theatre on Naunsynstraße, which are risking new ideas and are having an important impact in the world of theatre as well as in society**
- **Pray that theatre for, with, and about immigrants will help balance the dialogue and enrich the public discussion**
- **Pray that young talent will be encouraged and that no one will be refused because of background or outward appearance**

New Catholic Archbishop for Berlin

The end of August, Rainer Maria Woelki officially began his office as the new Archbishop of Berlin. The former Auxilliary Bishop of Köln is faced with a totally new situation in terms of faith in the community than the one he was used to. He calls this adjustment a challenge. He will first be spending time getting to know the churches, the priests, and the spiritual life in the city.

In Berlin there is a lot of good ecumenical work taking place. On October 3, Together for Berlin will once again sponsor an intercultural worship service and celebration together with the Diocesan Council of Catholics (see dates!).

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the good cooperation between denominations in the city**

- **Pray that the new Archbishop’s ministry will be successful**
- **Pray for wisdom for dealing with the faith-challenges in this city**

Arson Attacks

Thanks to the election campaigns, which drew attention to the topic of an increasing number of arson attacks, Berlin is now receiving the help of 100 federal police to detect and arrest the culprits. A 29-year old newspaper delivery man in Prenzlauer Berg who had set fire to many baby prams has now been arrested. His motive was “Hate against the Schwaben (Swabians)”. This hate is making itself known on posters and graffiti on house walls.

“Piss off, you Schwaben” is often written on walls, and on one someone even wrote, “Kill the Schwaben”. Until now, most observers saw these as ironic expressions, but the confession of the serial arsonist showed that many people could have died through just one fire.

Prayer:

- **Pray for more detection and arrests of arsonists and for an end to the violence**
- **Pray for a successful confrontation against hate-filled paroles against the Schwaben**
- **Pray for peace in our city among all population groups**

Dates

- **City-Prayer-Worship Service for elections in Berlin: September 7, 6pm**, Jerusalem-Gemeinde, Spreeufer 5, Nikolaiviertel, U+S Alexanderplatz; followed by prayer groups at the City Hall. This will conclude our series of weekly prayer for the elections.
- **City-Prayer-Worship Service for the Prison System: September 14, 7pm**, Evg.-Freikirchl. Gemeinde, Tempelhofer Damm 133, 12099 Berlin
- **THANKING, CELEBRATING, PRAYING – 21 Years of German Unity, intercultural and ecumenical, October 3, 3-7:30pm**
3pm THANKING AND PRAYING, St.-Sebastian-Kirche, Feldstr.4, 13355 Berlin-Wedding
4pm THANKING and remembrance walk along the Wall Memorial
5pm CELEBRATING and sharing, Christus-Kirche, Anklamer Str. 31, 10345 Berlin-Mitte