

PRESS INFORMATION  
PAPAL VISIT 2011

24.09.2011

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*Check against delivery!*



**Archbishop Dr Robert Zollitsch**  
**President of the German Bishops' Conference**

**Welcoming the Holy Father**  
**at the Münsterplatz in Freiburg**  
**on 24 September 2011**

Holy Father,

It is a great honour and joy for me to welcome you today here in Baden-Württemberg, in the Southwest of the Federal Republic, in the tricountry point of France, Switzerland and Germany, in the Archdiocese and in the City of Freiburg. We have long awaited this moment and have undertaken intensive preparations for these days. After more than 1,600 years of Christianity on the Upper Rhine, this is the first visit to Freiburg by a Pope. We would like to thank you and are glad that you are here: Welcome, Holy Father!

This is your first visit to Freiburg as Pope. But you have known our city and our archdiocese for decades. One of the most impressive meetings in living memory today for many – myself among them – was the 1978 Catholic Convention. 31 years ago almost to the day, on the night of 16 September, many thousands of young people gathered in Freiburg Cathedral and here on the square to celebrate a Vigil. It was a night of watching for the Lord, of being open to God's calling. Witness was given by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the Polish Bishop Jerzy Stroba and yourself, Holy Father, of their lives following Jesus Christ. The words with which you ended your address at that time could not have been more beautiful and more poignant for our meeting today: *"We have not been left alone, but the Lord goes with us. And as we trust and carry one another, it is He Himself who carries us, who re-enters our midst and gives us a future and a hope."* Our Freiburg Cathedral has particularly reminded us for many centuries in a very special way of this future that God wishes to give us. The "most beautiful tower in

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P. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ  
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Bischofskonferenz

Christendom”, as the Swiss art historian Jacob Burckhardt once called it, points beyond this world and to God. Regardless of the direction from which we approach Freiburg, it always provides locals and guests alike with a signpost and a welcome, as it will over the coming days for the many thousands of pilgrims and quite particularly for you, Holy Father. I hope that you will feel at home here. You are most truly welcome!