

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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## BQ 781 – No. 04/2024

# Bishop Schirmacher congratulates Cardinal Czerny

## The Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance congratulates Cardinal Michael F. Czerny SJ on receiving the Klaus Hemmerle Prize

(Bonn, 12.03.2024) The head of the Vatican Development Agency, Cardinal Michael Czerny, was honoured with the Klaus Hemmerle Prize 2024 awarded by the ecumenical Focolare Movement in Aachen on 26 January. The General Secretary of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), Bishop Thomas Schirmacher, was among the first to congratulate him.

Czerny used his speech to urgently call for change in society and politics. He called on the Church to never tire of making its contribution, “in the knowledge that integral development is the path to the good that the human family is called to take”.

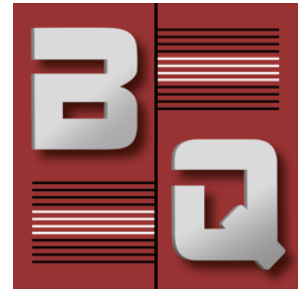
Born in 1946 in what was then Czechoslovakia, Michael Czerny grew up in Canada and joined the Jesuit order at the age of 18. After being ordained a priest in 1973, he was director of the Institute for Human Rights in San Salvador and founded the Jesuit African Aids Network. Pope Francis ordained him bishop in 2019 and appointed him to the College of Cardinals. Czerny has headed the Vatican Development Agency since 2022. He became known as a Vatican migration expert who constantly called for a more open migration policy in the EU and more commitment against human trafficking and exploitation.



During the award ceremony © WEA/Dr. Sorin Muresan

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Evangelical Missiology, Journal of missiopot – Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions (German Evangelical Alliance) [missiopot.org](https://missiopot.org)

Evangelical Review of Theology (New York, Bonn) [theology.worlddea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology](https://theology.worlddea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology)

Giving Hands – International Charity (Bonn) [gebende-haende.de](https://gebende-haende.de)

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Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance [europeanea.org](https://europeanea.org)

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In a moving speech, Michael Czerny referred to his maternal ancestors, who were Jewish converts to Catholicism, which is why his grandmother died in Auschwitz while his mother survived internment in Theresienstadt.

Bishop Schirmmacher had already met with the Cardinal beforehand and was one of the first to congratulate him. Among the well-wishers was the Papal Nuncio for Germany, Archbishop Dr. Nikola Eterović, who has held the post since 2013. He has known Schirmmacher for a long time from his time as Secretary General of the Vatican Synod of Bishops.



Bishop Schirmmacher in conversation with the Papal Nuncio for Germany © WEA/Dr. Sorin Muresan

The prize, awarded for the eleventh time, honours the former Bishop of Aachen, Klaus Hemmerle (1929–1994). According to the Focolare Movement, it honours “personalities who promote dialogue between churches, religions and world views as bridge builders”. The unendowed award is presented every two years. Past recipients of the award include Patriarch Bartholomew I, Rabbi Henry G. Brandt and Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos.

### Downloads and Links:

- **Photo 1:** During the award ceremony © WEA/Dr. Sorin Muresan
- **Photo 2:** The award winner with Dr. Sorin Muresan, Managing Director of Gebende Hände gGmbH © WEA/Dr. Sorin Muresan
- **Photo 3:** Bishop Schirmmacher in conversation with the Papal Nuncio for Germany © WEA/Dr. Sorin Muresan
- Invitation to the award ceremony: [https://bucer.org/fileadmin/dateien/Dokumente/BQs/BQ700ff/BQ781/Einladung\\_hemmerle-preis\\_2024.pdf](https://bucer.org/fileadmin/dateien/Dokumente/BQs/BQ700ff/BQ781/Einladung_hemmerle-preis_2024.pdf)
- Wikipedia entry on the Focolare Movement: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Focolare\\_Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Focolare_Movement)
- Wikipedia entry on Michael Czerny: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Czerny](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Czerny)
- Report on domradio.de: <https://www.domradio.de/artikel/kurienkardinal-czerny-erhaelt-klaus-hemmerle-preis>

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