

Press release

Theologian Seewald new speaker at Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”

University of Münster Cluster elects Catholic theologian Michael Seewald as its speaker – “Continue interdisciplinary, international, and publicly visible research on religion” – Research on religion at University of Münster to be further strengthened by new “Campus of Religions”

Münster, 29 June 2022 (exc) Michael Seewald (34), Professor of Dogmatics and History of Dogma at the University of Münster, was elected as the new speaker of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” on Tuesday evening. As of 1 July 2022, he will succeed legal historian Nils Jansen, who has held the post since the beginning of 2019. After the election, Seewald stated: “Our goal is to continue the interdisciplinary, international, and publicly visible research on religion at the Cluster of Excellence. I look forward to working with the newly elected board to set the course for a successful extension of our Cluster from 2026”. As speaker, Seewald will represent the Cluster of Excellence both within and outside the University, and will chair the Cluster’s committees. The election took place at the Cluster of Excellence’s General Assembly, and saw the election of Ines Michalowski (46), professor of the sociology of religion at the University of Münster, as deputy speaker.

“Our longstanding research on the relationship between religion and politics draws on the close cooperation between experienced and well-known scholars from a good 20 disciplines, early-career researchers, and recently appointed professors”, says Seewald. The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” has had since its establishment in 2007 a significant impact on the building of structures at the University of Münster, and has given rise to new research centres, third-party funding networks, and professorships linked to religious studies, for example in the sociology of religion, Jewish studies, and political science. Under construction is a “Campus of Religions”, which is designed to bring together theologies and non-denominational research on religion in Münster.

Michael Seewald has held the Chair of Dogmatics and History of Dogma at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Münster since 2017. He was a fellow at the Berlin Institute for Advanced Study (*Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin*) in the 2021/22 academic year. His publications, such as *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln* (Herder 2018) and *Reform. Dieselbe Kirche anders denken* (Herder 2019), have had great resonance both in academia and in society as a whole, and have been translated into several languages. His book *Theories of Doctrinal Development in the Catholic Church* will be published by Cambridge University Press in the autumn. Seewald is conducting research on “Dogmatic traditions of faith and religious identities” at the Cluster of Excellence. He is organizing the Cluster’s current

annual theme, [“Tradition\(s\)”](#), together with Regina Grundmann, professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Münster. (sca/apo)

Images: Michael Seewald (Photo: Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, Simon Camp)

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The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”

The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics. Dynamics of Tradition and Innovation” has been investigating since 2007 the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences focus in the funding phase (2019 to 2025) on the “dynamics of tradition and innovation”. They analyze in transepochal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day the conditions and factors that make religion an engine of political and social change, with their focus being above all on the paradox that religions often develop their innovative potential precisely by drawing on their traditions. The focus of interest is on Europe and the Mediterranean region, as well as on their entanglements with the Near East, Africa, North and Latin America. The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany; and, of the Clusters of Excellence, one of the oldest and the only one to deal with the issue of religion. It will receive funding of 31 million euros from 2019 to 2025.