News



Theologian Fr. Hans Kung is pictured in his office in Tubingen, Germany, in a 2008 file photo. (CNS/Harald Oppitz, KNA)

by NCR Staff

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Today is the 90th birthday of Fr. Hans Küng, Swiss citizen and professor emeritus of ecumenical theology at Tübingen University in Germany. Over the years, Küng has been vocal in the pages of NCR about the need for Vatican reform, and for a closer

look at the dogma of papal infallibility in particular. We salute Küng as he graces the church with another year of his sharp intellect.

Read Küng's notable contributions to NCR:

- Throughout his career, Küng has taken great pains to end the 16th century schism between Catholics and Protestants since he wrote his doctoral dissertation on "Justification. The Teaching of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection" in 1957. In March 2017, NCR and The Tablet simultaneously published a new statement from Küng on the topic.
- In March 2016, Küng made an appeal to Pope Francis to re-examine the dogma of papal infallibility. He made the request, he writes "not in order to destroy but to build up the church." Weeks later, Pope Francis responded to Küng with a personal letter.

- From 2013, Küng on a surprising new pope: "When I decided, months ago, to resign all of my official duties on the occasion of my 85th birthday, I assumed I would never see fulfilled my dream that — after all the setbacks following the Second Vatican Council — the Catholic Church would once again experience the kind of rejuvenation that it did under Pope John XXIII."
- Support from Pope Francis, the representative of the ecclesiastical institution and tradition, means more than just comforting and encouraging words, Küng wrote.
- The clergy sexual abuse scandal requires that the Catholic Church rethink mandatory celibacy, Küng wrote in 2010.

From the archives:

- Küng once compared then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger with the head of the KGB in his capacity as the Vatican's top doctrinal enforcer, but shortly after Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI, the two called a truce and met as cordial, old friends.

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