

Hannover, May 27, 2013

**Acceptance speech of Fanny Dethloff at the award ceremony of the
Hanns-Lilje Foundation in Hannover on May 27, 2013.**

Fanny Dethloff and Genia Schenke-Plisch received the award on behalf of the German Ecumenical Committee on Church Asylum.

As the national chairman I would like to express my thanks to the board of trustees of the Hanns-Lilje Foundation for this recognition of our work.

I also thank my predecessor and founder of the German Ecumenical Committee on Church Asylum, Professor Wolf Dieter Just, and the many volunteers of the Church of Hannover, as well as Karl Helmut Barharn, Sigrid Ebritsch, and Hildegard Grosse who are present today.

Thanks to all parishes, monasteries, and communities who, in the past, helped refugees to find protection in Germany; and thanks to all who support us and have come today.

Thank you!

The sanctuary movement is a healing movement!

After 30 years, many are convinced of it!

We currently have 12 cases of church asylum in Hamburg. Those are mainly for Syrian refugees who have members of their families in Germany but still are sent away to Italy where they have no prospects. Many churches cannot understand the European Dublin II Regulation and are willing to protect these people.

Church asylums work to counter the administrative decisions that are often unjust and difficult to understand.

They heal the parishes, which are able to experience that an intercultural learning experience is feasible and good work can make the gift of teaching come alive.

Church asylums have a healing effect for all those who are allowed to stay in our midst. We are successful in at least 70% of the cases.

We are witnesses both for our faith as well as for human rights. Pastoral care or guardianship of the church? This is not a question for us, because both are in demand in our work.

- We are faithful because we are committed to the biblical foundations and witness our faith.
- We are politically active for the protection of human rights.
- We are democratic because the basic rights must be given helping hand for they are sometimes threatened to disappear by regulatory law.
- We think European because so many refugees drown at our borders and coastlines - in secret; therefore we make this public, celebrate memorial services, hold vigils, and act for the rights of refugees.

Sanctuary Movement – originated in the US - protects refugees against unjust deportations, which can be fatal. It organizes visits to detention centers and is committed to the dignity of each individual.

"God bless me the Sanctuary Movement," said Dorothee Sölle when she came from the United States in the eighties.

Today we are united in New York and Arizona, in Finland, Sweden, Austria and other countries.

Again, I thank all who have given us this award.

Because of the many people we currently support in church asylums, we truly need the money that comes with it.

Thank you