
Germany: “Day of the Visually Impaired”, a month of ecumenical events in June. One million people live in darkness

With a long list of social and pastoral events, the German Catholic Church will be taking part in the initiatives for the “Day of the Visually Impaired”: in the parishes, the month of June, especially Whit Monday, will be entirely focussed on blind and visually impaired people. It has been estimated that in Germany at least one million people live in darkness. Many visually impaired people do not want to show their impairment to the world. So, there is often little awareness of such problem in ecclesial communities, and visually impaired people may be faced with problems that could sometimes be solved in very easy ways and with explanatory talks. It is there that an alliance among ecclesial and ecumenical associations and self-help groups of blind and visually impaired people comes into play, as they have created the “Sunday of the Visually Impaired”. As well as lots of communal celebrations on the subject, several events will take place from 1st to 30th June – from self-discovery courses to inclusive picnics and diocesan parties – during which visual impairment will also be discussed through interactions of groups for children, young people and elderly people. When interacting with blind and visually impaired people, ways should be found to live inclusion in everyday communal life. Such events are supported by free materials, such as magnifying glasses, dedicated lights, bookmarkers and glasses to simulate visual impairment. The organisers of the programme are the German Federation of Blind and Partially-Sighted People, the German Bishops’ Conference, the German Evangelical Church, the evangelical pastoral service for blind and visually impaired people, and the German Catholic Association for the Blind.

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