
Germany: Diocese of Passau provides personal counselling to the bereaved

The “bereavement group” is a protected space proposed by the Diocese of Passau, so that bereaved people are not left alone with their feelings and can give meaning to their grief. They are supported by two counsellors from the Federation of German Catholic Women (KDFB), Birgit Czippek and Brigitte Hartl, who both know, thanks to years of experience, that “grief is not a static process that always follows the same pattern”. “Grief is as individual as each person is. There is no guideline specifying how it is processed”, Hartl stressed. Every bereaved person must find their own way of dealing with their different feelings and their new situation. “It is sometimes difficult to talk about one’s grief with family members because one does not want to burden anyone else. It is in these cases that external help can make a difference”, Birgit Czippek remarked, explaining that people who let themselves be accompanied in their pain also serve as models for family members and society: “They want to process their loss. Grief is not a weakness. Rather, it is a strength to accept grief and deal with it constructively”. The counsellors encourage participants to make room for their feelings: “It is important to understand that grief is not a disease! But it can seriously compromise your health if you do not process it”, said Czippek. “Something new can blossom. To accept grief is an important step”, Hartl said.

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