
Austria: dioceses and associations reach out to families. Many summer opportunities for children and adolescents

Today, the Austrian Catholic news agency Kathpress relays and highlights the many initiatives that the Austrian dioceses have set up to provide assistance and summer activities for children and youth. The activities are offered free of charge at a crucial time in the COVID-19 crisis, with many families heavily affected by the crisis and with many parents struggling to cope with the long-standing problem of reconciling work and childcare during the summer holidays. The Diocese of Graz-Seckau, together with Caritas, will provide free kindergarten services to children and young people for three weeks in July in Voitsberg, Graz and Zeltweg. The Diocese of Gurk-Klagenfurt is offering assistance programmes at the parish level in compliance with health guidelines. According to Bishop Josef Marketz, “it is a matter of the heart for the Church to support children and their parents, because they are the ones who need special care and support in our society”. In Feldkirch and St. Pölten, “the summer programme is varied and includes a wide range of activities such as exercising in nature, relax, prayer, reflection and contact with people”, said Fenkart Martin, in charge of pastoral care: “this summer, there are opportunities to experience a piece of open sky in Vorarlberg”. The Catholic Youth of Salzburg is offering the traditional “SpiriSplach” summer week from 2 to 8 August. The programme includes common moments of reflection, beach volleyball, and outdoor activities and seminars. In the Diocese of Linz, the Catholic Youth is offering six summer programmes aimed at young people of different ages, with hiking in the mountains, pilgrimages along ancient granite routes, a beach holiday, spiritual paths, and a week in Taizé for the older ones.

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