Listening Points for adverse experiences or concerns

A previous article (Report on sexual abuse perpetrated by a former consecrated member of the Focolare in France) reported on the publication of the GCPS Consulting's *Report of an Independent Inquiry into Historical Child Abuse* within the Focolare Movement in France (GCPS Independent Inquiry) and the response to this to members from the President and Co-President (Letter from the Focolare President and Co-President to the members of the Focolare Movement in France).

The report listed a number of recommendations for improving the culture and practice within the Focolare Movement internationally, some of which are already in place in Britain (see our Safeguarding information: Focolare GB Safeguarding) and others are currently being worked on. Among these recommendations was the need for "Leaders at all levels to initiate discussion of the inquiry findings and to create 'safe space' discussions that allow members to talk about their response to the Inquiry, their own experiences of being in the Focolare and the changes they would propose to improve safeguarding."

As a first response to this, the Focolare is encouraging conversations that provide for this among members, sometimes taking place in small groups, and most frequently informally, as well as sometimes with the aid of a facilitator.

In addition, the Focolare is offering 'Listening Points', to provide a listening ear to members and previous members. Here people can share any adverse experiences or concerns, as well as positive suggestions which could avoid mistakes being repeated.

The people from the Listening Points have professional backgrounds and are experienced in enabling others to share, confidentially, experiences which could be difficult for them. They are not acting in a professional capacity and will not be offering any professional services but will be welcoming and respectful of each person's privacy.

Anyone who contacts a Listening Point will be offered up to three sessions as an opportunity to share and explore their experience. After these sessions, advice may be offered in understanding where to find further assistance, where it is needed.

Sometimes they may be asked if they are willing for themes raised in their experience to be fed back centrally, anonymously of course, so as to improve practice within the Focolare Movement. Some people will simply want to be heard in confidence, in a safe space, to talk about something they have lived through, without their experience being used in this way, and this is fine too.

Any member or previous member, who so wishes, is encouraged to contact the Listening Points. If you wish to do so, please follow the links below for further information about the Listening Points' team, who they are and how to contact them, and about the notice of limitations and confidentiality of the Listening Points.

FURTHER LINKS:

What to expect from the Listening Points

Focolare GB Safeguarding