

Ending the Silence

Recognising pain and calling for an end to violence

To reflect on;

Show favour to me, Lord, for my strength fails:
Lord, heal me, for my body is wracked with pain:
I am utterly distraught.
When will you act, Lord?
Return, Lord, deliver me;
Save me, for your love is steadfast.
I am wearied with my moaning;
All night long my pillow is wet with tears,
I drench my bed with weeping.
Grief dims my eyes;
They are worn out because of all my adversaries.
Leave me alone, you workers of evil,
For the Lord has heard my weeping!
(Psalm 6 v2-4, 6-8)

Prayer and response

God whose spirit dwells within us,
Thank you for the uniqueness of each girl, boy, woman and man
Thank you that each one of us is valuable and special in your sight.
Help us to know this, deep within our hearts.
God whose spirit dwells within us
We praise you for we are gifted people!

God whose spirit dwells among us,
Thank you for the gifts of listening and sharing.
Thank you for wisdom and creativity.
Let us use our gifts for God's work.
Let us help others to recognise their special gifts.
God whose spirit dwells among us
We praise you for we are gifted people!

God whose spirit is dancing among us,
Thank you for friendship, for laughter, for the sharing of stories.
Let us sing and shout and dance with joy!
We praise you for we are gifted people!

(Out of the Shadows: Mothers' Union)

Come to the waters of life,
All who are thirsty,

Come to the waters of life
And drink from its precious cup.

Come to the waters of justice,
And touch the face of truth,
Come to the waters of justice
And deny no-one the water of life.
(Mothers' Union)

Lord God, we pray to you for your intervention
In every circumstance in which people are subjected to violence today. We
denounce domestic violence and injustice in all forms in our society.
We pray that you will make us all instruments for your divine service and you shall
forever remain our mediator and advocate.
Guard us and guide us when we are weak and strengthen us in all adversity
(From Mothers' Union "The prayers we breathe")

Prayer of intercession for Domestic Violence Week

The response:

*Kindle a flame to lighten the dark
and take all fear away*

In the name of the Redeemer of Shadows and to the Creator of Light
We offer prayers for lives touched by violence.

With the women who suffer the torture of the shadows
we bring into the light:

The suffering of children who are powerless to
protect their mothers from abuse;
The suffering of the police and hospital workers whose senses
are not yet numbed by the job;
The suffering of the men who cannot endure the brutality
committed in the name of manhood.

*Kindle a flame to lighten the dark
and take all fear away*

With the women who refuse to remain in the shadows
we bring into the light:

The refusal of colleagues and neighbours to collude
with cover-ups and lies;
The refusal of the campaigners to accept that the law
gives women adequate protection;
The refusal of the protestors to believe that
the flame of anger should be extinguished.

***Kindle a flame to lighten the dark
and take all fear away***

With the women who seek healing from the shadows
we bring into the light:

The healing offered in the practical support
of outreach, advice centres, help-lines and refuges;
The healing offered in the patient listening
of counsellors, ministers and friends;
The healing offered in the courage, dignity and
understanding of sister survivors.

***Kindle a flame to lighten the dark
and take all fear away***

With the women who seek to create life beyond the shadows
we bring into the light:

The life sought by men and women working to ensure
justice and compassion in official responses;
The life sought by women and men struggling to reach
the perpetrators of violence;
The life sought by women and men struggling to pray
with integrity for abuser as well as abused.

***Kindle a flame to lighten the dark
and take all fear away.***

Alison Peacock North West Decade Group

From Dorset Churches Together, who invite its use on their website.

POETRY

For the scream in the night

We pretend not to hear;

For the cutting remark

We choose to ignore.

FORGIVE US O GOD, AND OPEN OUR EARS

For the cuts and the bruises

We pretend not to see;

For the look of dull terror

We choose to avoid;

FORGIVE US O GOD, AND OPEN OUR EYES

For the quiet desperation

We pretend we imagined; For the gossip and whispers

We choose not to check out;

FORGIVE US O GOD, AND OPEN OUR HEARTS

To the need and the longing we pretend isn't there;

To the right to a safe place we choose to deny

OPEN OUR HANDS,

THAT YOUR LOVE MAY REACH OUT

TO ALL WHO SUFFER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THIS DAY.

From the Gal Aboriginal Foundation

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Eggshells

I'm scared, just like I thought I would be..

As I know not what the future holds for me..

I have no place to call my home..

I'm walking this earth all alone..

I put my trust, my life in your hands..

You used me and my love, you call yourself a man..

You tore my world completely apart..

You bruised, battered and broke my heart..

You don't understand what you have done wrong..

You refuse to accept, I'm never coming home..

So many times I thought it would be easier to kill myself

And die..

Then I thought about the four parts of me, I would leave

Behind..

They shouldn't live a life of feeling guilt. For me taking my

Life...
I never want to cause them more pain and strife..
You told me I had to choose..
This time I choose my children and my life over you..
I know I may end up sleeping on the streets..
But, it is better than living a life of pain and deceit..
As walking on eggshells I can no longer take—it's a
Sign of my weakness and defeat..
Now is the time that I finally live life for me..

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A Prayer Calendar against Domestic Violence

January For an end to fear, threats, coercion, and violence in families. Let us pray to the Lord.

February That married couples trapped in a fearful cycle of anger, threats or violence will seek and be able to find help, Let us pray to the Lord.

March For families who are controlled or isolated by self-righteous anger, violence or intimidation, that they seek help and find it. Let us pray to the Lord.

April That parents will courageously not tolerate any violence in their homes, we pray to the Lord.

May That families afflicted with fear from abusive or coercive behavior may find help for the abuser and the abused, we pray to the Lord.

June Today, on this Father's Day, we pray that all fathers and stepfathers might be instruments of God's love and discipline but never violent nor coercive in their behavior, We pray to the Lord.

July For grace to respond with patience and wisdom to an angry child or sulking spouse, we pray to the Lord.

August That a spirit of humble service replace selfishness, pride or control contests in marriage relationships, we pray to the Lord.

September That families divided by violence or fear of violence may find a haven of help in our parish, we pray to the Lord.

October That victims of domestic violence and their abusers may break their silence, cry out to God and find help from caring and wise people, we pray to the Lord.

November That remorse after hurting a family member will move us to not only apologize but to get help for ourselves that we not cause hurt again, we pray to the Lord.

December That God give gifts of hope, joy and real help to anyone feeling hopeless or trapped by their family situation, we pray to the Lord.

Bible Readings for themed Services during White Ribbon Fortnight

Ephesians Ch5 v28-33

1 Corinthians ch 13 v4-5

Proverbs Ch3 v31

Galatians ch 2 V5-6

1Corinthians ch 3 v16

Symbols etc

Wear white ribbons of course!!

If no church bells to ring;

Beat drums or blow whistles to call for an end to violence, and show solidarity with those oppressed

Prayer tree. Use lengths of white ribbon to represent the prayers offered. Can tie ribbons to "tree" as prayers are taking place

Candles; (images of violence can be placed around the candles before they are lit) they show that in times of despair and pain there is still hope.

Hymns

Beauty for brokenness (Graham Kendrick)

All I once held dear, built my life upon (knowing you, Jesus) (graham Kendrick)

Amazing Grace (John Newton)

A new commandment I give unto you; that you love one another as I have loved you. (Unknown; based on 1Cor v13)

Be thou my guardian and my guide (Isaac Williams)

Brother, sister, let me serve you (Richard Gilliard)

Christ's is the world in which we move (Iona Community)

Just as I am (Charlotte Elliott)

Make me a channel of your peace (based on prayer of St. Francis)

When I needed a neighbour (Sydney Carter)

FINALLY

Violence is not a cross to carry.

The bible should not be used to justify violence within a relationship

Violence is the concern of us all.