

Catholic Quotations on Domestic Violence

“If either of the spouses causes grave mental or physical danger to the other spouse or to the offspring or otherwise renders common life too difficult, that spouse gives the other a legitimate cause for leaving [i.e. separation]” (Code of Canon Law, 1153.1).

“As pastors of the Catholic Church in the United States, we state as clearly and strongly as we can that violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form”—physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal—is sinful; often, it is a crime as well. We have called for a moral revolution to replace a culture of violence. We acknowledge that violence has many forms, many causes, and many victims—men as well as women. The Catholic Church teaches that violence against another person in any form fails to treat that person as someone worthy of love. Instead, it treats the person as an object to be used. When violence occurs within a sacramental marriage, the abused spouse may question, “How do these violent acts relate to my promise to take my spouse for better or for worse?” The person being assaulted needs to know that acting to end the abuse does not violate the marriage promises. While violence can be directed towards men, it tends to harm women and children more” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *When I Cry for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women*, 2002, Introduction).

“A correct reading of Scripture leads people to an understanding of the equal dignity of men and women and to relationships based on mutuality and love” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *When I Cry for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women*, 2002, p. 9).

“Surely it is legitimate and right to reject older forms of the traditional family marked by authoritarianism and even violence, yet this should not lead to a disparagement of marriage itself, but rather to the rediscovery of its authentic meaning and its renewal. The strength of the family “lies in its capacity to love and to teach how to love” (Pope Francis, *The Joy of Love*, 2016, no. 53).

“Demands that the legitimate rights of women be respected, based on the firm conviction that men and women are equal in dignity, present the Church with profound and challenging questions which cannot be lightly evaded” (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, 2013, no. 104).

“Doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights. Even so, we constantly witness among them impressive examples of daily heroism in defending and protecting their vulnerable families” (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, 2013, no. 212).

“At the root of every act of violence against one’s neighbor there is a concession to the ‘thinking’ of the evil one, the one who ‘was a murderer from the beginning’ (John 8:44)” (Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, 1995, no. 7).

“There are situations of acute poverty, anxiety or frustration in which the struggle to make ends meet, the presence of unbearable pain, or instances of violence, especially against women, make the choice to defend and promote life so demanding as sometimes to reach the point of heroism” (Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, 1995, no. 11).

“Every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offence against the creator of the individual” (Pope John Paul II, *On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World*, 1988, no. 176).

"Christ's way of acting, the Gospel of his words and deeds, is a consistent protest against whatever offends the dignity of women" (Pope John Paul II, *On the Dignity and Vocation of Women*, 1988, no. 15).