Bulletin Notices, Prayers of the Faithful, Testimonial

for September – October 2023

Violence at home hurts! You are not alone. During the past difficult year many families suffered abuse at home. Now is the time to protect yourself and those who count on you for safety. If you experience any form of abuse, help is available. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1 (800) 799-7233 (24 hours). To learn more about domestic violence visit: [www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace](http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace).

Everyday millions of women suffer “psychological violence, verbal violence, physical violence, sexual violence.” For Pope Francis, this reality is "cowardice and degradation for all humanity." He asks us to pray for the victims, "so that they are protected by society and so that their suffering is considered and heard by all." For more information, Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1 (800) 799-7233 (24 hours).

**National Mass in Observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

Many Catholic families have experienced violence and abuse at home. You are invited to participate in the 7th National Observance of "Domestic Violence Awareness Month" at the Vigil Mass on October 7th at 4:30 PM at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The Most Reverend Roy Campbell, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., will be the presider and homilist. Help is available for families suffering abuse. For more information: [www.CatholicsforFamilyPeace.org](http://www.CatholicsforFamilyPeace.org)

**“As pastors of the Catholic Church in the United States, we declare as clearly and firmly as possible that violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified.** Violence in any form – physical, sexual, psychological or verbal – is sin …we emphasize that no one should be expected to stay in an abusive marriage.” Pastoral letter from the United States Catholic Bishops. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1 (800) 799-7233 (24 hours); 1 (800) 787‐3224 (TTY); <https://www.thehotline.org/> to find assistance.

Bulletin Notices for October 2023

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. “The number of women who are beaten and abused in their homes, even by their husbands, is very, very high,” Pope Francis said in answer to a question by a woman named Giovanna, a victim of domestic violence. (Reported by Reuters Dec 19, 2021.) “The problem is that, for me, it is almost satanic because it is taking advantage of a person who cannot defend herself, who can only [try to] block the blows,” he said. “It is humiliating. Very humiliating.” Giovanna said she had four children to care for after they escaped from a violent home. For women suffering abuse, help is available. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1 (800) 799-7233 (24 hours).

You don’t deserve to be abused. Violence at home hurts! You are not alone. Now is the time to protect yourself and those who count on you for safety. If you experience any form of abuse, please know that there is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1 (800) 799-7233. To learn more about domestic violence visit: [www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace](http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace).

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. “The Church is Mother, the Church is woman. And since mothers bestow life, and women “keep” the world, let us all make greater efforts to promote mothers and to protect women. How much violence is directed against women! Enough!,” said Pope Francis, January 1, 2022 at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican. “To hurt a woman is to insult God, who from a woman took on our humanity.” For women suffering abuse at home, help is available. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1 (800) 799-7233 (24 hours); 1 (800) 787‐3224 (TTY); <https://www.thehotline.org/> to find assistance.

It Shouldn’t Hurt at Home. The Catholic community cares about families experiencing violence and unhealthy relationships. Visit [www.CatholicsforFamilyPeace.org](http://www.CatholicsforFamilyPeace.org) to learn more about this issue, how to help, who to call, and the rich Catholic teaching that supports survivors. If you need help now, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1 (800) 799-7233 (24 hours); 1 (800) 787‐3224 (TTY); <https://www.thehotline.org/>.

Catholic families deserve to be safe and loved at home. Yet 1 out of 4 women, 1 out of 7 men have experienced severe physical violence in an intimate relationship: being kicked, beaten, choked, burned, or having a weapon used against them. The Catholic Charities Priest Domestic Violence Advisory Committee invites parishioners to learn more about how to help families and friends suffering domestic abuse. For Catholic Charities resources, including information on how to develop a domestic violence ministry at your parish see [www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace](http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace).

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Testimonial: Escaping from Abuse to Save her Life:

*Testimony from Marieta Moscoso, parishioner at St. Rose of Lima, sharing her experience of domestic abuse.*

When I was young, I worked with an elderly couple, helping them in their grocery store and home. They were not able to have children and loved me like a daughter. I met their nephew, a very kind, respectful young man. We became friends, dated and got married. The first year of being together was filled with joy and happiness and I became pregnant.

When my son was born, my husband’s parents and siblings started visiting us often. My brothers also came to visit me and I felt happy. My husband became upset after my brothers’ visits, angry and insulting. I told my brothers that it would be better if they didn’t come. My husband’s family was always at home with us and I began to feel unimportant. When I complained and asked for more attention my husband hit me for the first time. After that I cried a lot. He apologized to me and said that it would not happen again. He told me it was my fault. He said he loved me but I should try not to make him angry. I thought he was right and that I was to blame.

I tried not to make him angry, but the blows came anyway. His family knew that he hit me but they did not help me. There were days when he was very affectionate and said that he loved me. Those times I was happy, but it didn't last long. He seemed to look for a reason to treat me badly, insulting me and saying that I was good for nothing. I wanted to work but he didn't allow it. I never had any money because he didn't share with me what he earned from his job. He bought what was necessary and sometimes gave me a small amount just to buy food to cook.

Two years passed and I resigned myself to living like this. I didn't tell my family anything. I blamed myself for everything. I became pregnant again. I hoped that with another baby he would change. But it was not like that. My husband told me when he came back from work, I should have his hot food ready to serve him. I tried to do everything perfectly but he would look for a reason to beat me anyway.

My husband didn't allow me to talk to the neighbors or to anyone. He was very courteous and kind to everyone else, yet he was practically my executioner. Despite that, I loved him. Then another child arrived. On good days when he was happy, I asked him to please stop hitting me. He promised that he wouldn't do it anymore. Yet the blows continued.

I became completely submissive depending only on him, my self-esteem broken. I realized I was living in darkness and fear. I wanted to get out. One day I decided to ask my neighbor for help, but she didn’t believe me. The beatings and verbal abuse became even more terrible. I had a chance for the first time and I escaped with my children. An elderly lady helped us, but she could not even provide food for us.

My husband started looking for me and found me. He was crying and said he loved me and my children very much, he also told me that he would change. We went back home with him, but those promises lasted only a few months. He felt an intense anger that I had escaped. The abuse became more cruel, both sexual abuse and death threats with a weapon. I realized he might end my life.

I was born Catholic and in all the time of my darkness I asked the Virgin Mary to help me. I prayed to the Lord Jesus that he would not abandon me, that he would give me the strength to do something to escape from the hell that I was living. I managed to escape and went to my friend again. She took me to another friend so my husband couldn’t find me. He looked for me, but I knew if I returned he might kill me. With the help of my Lord Jesus, the Virgin Mary and God the Father I came out of darkness and became strong.

Today, after 25 years of living in the light with Jesus always in my heart, I want to tell people who are experiencing abuse of any kind to speak up, don't be silent. Please seek help in the church and agencies helping families. Like me you can come out of darkness. Let there be light in your lives. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1 (800) 799-7233.

Prayers of the Faithful for September 2023

FIRST SUNDAY   
That more Catholics may answer the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ call to help break the cycle of domestic violence and that we as the body of Christ protect our most vulnerable members, we pray to the Lord.

SECOND SUNDAY  
For women, children and men experiencing violence at home, may they be filled with Christ’s healing and strength, we pray to the Lord.

THIRD SUNDAY  
That we as Catholics may comfort and shelter victims of domestic violence from their past and current pain, we pray to the Lord.

FOURTH SUNDAY  
For the members of the parish who experience domestic violence, may we see them, love them and guide them to safety, we pray to the Lord.

Prayers of the Faithful for October 2023  
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FIRST SUNDAY  
For all people in abusive relationships. May they experience God’s love and know that their abuse is not God’s will. May they find in our parish community support to seek help, find safety, and free themselves from domestic violence, we pray to the Lord.

SECOND SUNDAY  
That as a Church we might be a place of refuge for those experiencing domestic violence. For women, children and men traumatized by violence in their homes, we pray to the Lord.

THIRD SUNDAY  
During this month of Domestic Violence Awareness, we pray that the Lord might open our eyes to see families suffering domestic violence in our midst, so that we might be able to better protect the vulnerable among us, we pray the to the Lord.

FOURTH SUNDAY

For the elderly who are abused. May they experience God’s love and find the support and resources they need in our parish community, we pray to the Lord.

FIFTH SUNDAY

For teenagers in violent or controlling relationships. May they find in our parish the role models of kindness, care, and love that will show them how to recognize what a healthy and whole relationship should be, we pray to the Lord.

Social Media Posts for October 2023

1. “How much violence is directed against women! Enough!” said Pope Francis, January 1, 2022 at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican. “To hurt a woman is to insult God, who from a woman took on our humanity.”
2. You are not alone. The Church stands by families suffering violence at home. See more at *When I Call for Help*: <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/when-i-call-help-pastoral-response-domestic-violence>
3. “He will shelter you with his pinions, and under his wings you may take refuge. His faithfulness is a protecting shield.” Psalm 91.

Domestic violence against one of the members of the body of Christ affects all of us. Learn how you can help: <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/when-i-call-help-pastoral-response-domestic-violence>

“If we have to fight against an evil, let's do it, but always say ‘no’ to domestic violence.” H.H. Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 104

*To request an information display at your Mass or parish gathering, contact Laura.YeomansDV@CC-DC.org.*