



Dear AMUA Friends,

We are constantly being confronted with the prevalence of Family Violence. Of course you remember Rosie Batty being awarded Australian of the Year in 2015 for her raising awareness of domestic violence following the death of her son Luke by her estranged husband.

Domestic violence includes not only physical violence but also emotional, psychological, spiritual and economic abuse and it can affect both men and women. The tragedy is that it occurs within marriages in our churches. And when victims have taken to courage to seek help from church leaders they have often not been believed.

In the past year, I have met with several Christian women who are victims of domestic violence. I have been humbled by their courage as they've faced the difficult choice of leaving their marriages. It was not easy but for the sake of their children they had to take this step. You can imagine they are faced with traumatized children, little income and a sense of failure.

In September this year the General Synod of the Anglican Church offered a formal apology to victims of domestic violence. It realised that many victims have been let down by church leaders and its teachings.

Although it is late in the year it is not too late to pray as we come to the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**. I have included some prayers developed from the resources of the General Synod, Anglican Church of Australia. And as well some helpful suggestions on how to respond.

This Christmas time as we rejoice in the birth of our Saviour the Lord Jesus, may our hearts be stirred to pray for those families shattered by family violence.

God bless,

Christine Jensen

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## PRAYERS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

(Developed from resources from the Liturgy Commission of the General Synod, Anglican Church of Australia)

Loving Lord God, we cry to you for all who are victims of violence, particularly today for beaten girls and battered women.

For women bashed in their own homes, and for their children who witness the violence; for those trapped in destructive relationships, manipulated and controlled; for the women who hide their bruises and lie about their injuries for fear of the next attack: we cry out to you: bring justice!

For young girls given or sold in marriage, and for unwilling brides with no way out; for the rape survivors who live with its scars; for women sold or tricked into the sex trade; for female-children who are unwanted or the first to be aborted and abandoned; for girls denied access to education and the women denied religious freedom: we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the women harassed in their workplaces, underpaid or threatened with losing their job; for women in prison, abused and abusing, beset by poverty, mental illness and addictions; for older women, frail in body or mind, fearful of violence, manipulation or neglect: we cry out to you: bring justice!

We cry to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for our sisters, our daughters, our mothers, ourselves. Hear us, Lord Jesus Christ, for you know what it is to be stripped and beaten, humiliated, betrayed and shamed. Amen.

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And God of wisdom and care, we pray to you for all whom you call to share in the work of helping girls and boys, women and men, to live, work and learn together with respect and dignity.

For maternal and children's health workers and advocates for girls' education; for law-makers and lobby groups, shaping structures that protect and promote women's wellbeing; for relationship educators, developing healthy partnerships and good parenting skills; for religious leaders shaping beliefs about the worth of women and girls; for women in business, industry, politics and education, leading by example and providing role models; for police and community workers sifting through the damage done by domestic violence; for prison chaplains and restorative justice programs, giving hope where violence has shattered many lives; for counsellors and social workers offering a new start for survivors of domestic violence or sexual abuse; for women's refuges and men's support groups creating safe spaces for problems to be named and tackled; for campaigners against human trafficking and the sex trade, pricking the conscience of complacent societies; for the specialised care of traumatised children bringing healing and hope for a life beyond suffering: living God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O God, we look for your works of healing and wait for the day when you will wipe away the tears from every face, through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **How to respond**

If you recognise or suspect that you, or someone you know, are experiencing domestic violence:

- Remember that safety for the victims and any children in the household is the number one priority
- Be aware of the range of ways in which domestic violence can be experienced:
- emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, physical etc.
- As a victim: speak to someone you trust and get help from those who specialise in dealing with family and domestic violence.
- For someone you know: listen to them and believe their story.
- Help the victim to feel safe: this may mean arranging accommodation away from the home.
- Find out where to get help from those experienced in working with family and domestic violence.
- Do not talk with the perpetrator if the victim feels unsafe or asks you not to.
- If you do speak with the perpetrator, expect them to minimise or deny that anything serious is happening.
- Invite the perpetrator to take responsibility for their behaviour: this may mean attending a group program, getting individual counselling, moving out of home etc.

- Arrange for individual counselling, for both parties if possible. Remember that if there is an established pattern of power and control, relationship counselling is not suitable.
- Do not suggest to the victim that they can improve the situation by changing their behaviour e.g. by loving their partner more or being less argumentative.
- Do not ask the victim to forgive or to reconcile the relationship prematurely.
- Be aware that in some situations, permanent separation or ending the marriage is the only safe option.
- Understand that this may be a crime and may need to be reported to the police and/or Family and Community Services.



**Mothers' Union UK** is highlighting '**16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence**' -  
Get involved as we speak out against gender-based violence for the period 25th  
November to 10th December.

There are some great resources here which can be used at any time.

<http://www.mothersunion.org/16-days>

Sent from my iPad