

# *When Home is Unsafe:* Recognizing the Reality of Domestic Violence Today

## OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

**MONTH.** Catholics for Family Peace offers you this Media Resource Kit to enhance your efforts to address domestic abuse and violence and to promote family peace.

Catholics For Family Peace Education and Research on Domestic Abuse is co-host of the National Domestic Violence Awareness Partners, in collaboration with the U.S. Catholic Bishops Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

We aim to inform the Catholic community on ways to promote family peace and to prevent and respond to domestic abuse and to provide resources and promote prayer for all families. Our initiative provides education, resources, and research that help pastoral leaders, clergy, and parishioners recognize domestic abuse and respond with compassion. To learn more, please visit [www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org](http://www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org).

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**KNOW THE FACTS.** Around the globe, governments have implored residents to stay home to protect themselves and others from the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19. But for domestic violence victims—the vast majority of whom are women and children—home is a dangerous place. Even before the added stress and isolation of COVID-19, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experienced severe intimate partner physical violence, as reported by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Domestic abuse and violence refer to the physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse including teen relationships.

Faith communities are called to offer hope, help, and healing to all harmed by domestic abuse and violence. We must learn to recognize domestic abuse, respond with compassion, and refer people to the proper services that are prepared to help them.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO BE HELPFUL IF AN ABUSIVE SITUATION IS REVEALED?

- Listen, Believe, and Refer. Share that the abuse is not God's will. Say that help is available 24/7 at the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), 1-800-787-324 (TTY) or at [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org).
- Let them know that without intervention, abuse often escalates in frequency and severity over time.
- Seek expert assistance by calling the NDVH. Refer them only to specialized domestic violence counseling programs, not to couples counseling.
- If possible, encourage the abusive person to seek help. Attending an appropriate 12-step recovery group has been a source of recovery for many people.

# SPREAD PEACE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

## Domestic Violence Awareness Month Resource Kit

### SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS.

- Join us every day at 3:00 pm to pray for all harmed by domestic abuse.
- Lord, protect all families in need of your healing touch.
- “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.”  
-Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi
- Catholic teaching about domestic abuse is explained in "When I Call for Help." In English and Spanish at <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/when-i-call-help-pastoral-response-domestic-violence>
- “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to one another.” -St. Teresa of Calcutta.
- “What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family.” -St. Teresa of Calcutta.
- “The time has come to condemn vigorously the types of sexual violence which frequently have women for their object and to pass laws which effectively defend them from such violence.” -Pope Francis
- Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us and for peace in our families.
- Love is not abusive. Speak up against domestic violence and pray for family peace.
- “The LORD hears the cry of the poor; blessed be the LORD.” - Psalm 34

### CONNECT WITH CFFP



Share your Domestic Violence Awareness Month outreach response and programs with Catholics for Family Peace. Initiatives will be highlighted on our website and social media pages.

[Contact Catholics For Family Peace](#)

### STAY IN THE LOOP WITH LEADING CATHOLIC AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS ORGANIZATIONS.



# SPREAD PEACE THROUGH PRAYER

## Domestic Violence Awareness Month Resource Kit



JOIN US ON  
**OCTOBER 28** FOR  
A UNITED DAY OF  
PRAYER TO ST.  
JUDE, PATRON OF  
IMPOSSIBLE CAUSES.

### NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Join us during October as we pray a [Novena for Peace in All Families](#), especially those suffering injustice or abuse. We will use the form of a novena, which is a traditional nine-day Catholic prayer. We will announce each day on our Facebook page, and more prayers can be found on our website at [www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org](http://www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org).

### HOW TO HELP THE ABUSED RECLAIM THEIR VALUE AND WORTH AS CHILDREN OF GOD

What would you do if your best friend or fellow parishioner told you about an abusive situation? Rose Folsom will show you how anyone can use three ordinary Christian virtues to safely walk with them toward healing. Visit Catholics For Family Peace's [video page](#) for a multi-part lesson.

### STORIES OF RECOVERY AND GRACE

Four Catholic women testify about their journey from abuse to healing, written by Melanie Rigney. Read their stories [here](#).

### SAINTS: AN EVER-PRESENT HELP

The Saints' lives can help us respond prudently with care and compassion to people dealing with difficult situations. [Visit this page](#) to pray with the Saints.

*Photo courtesy of St. Jude Shrine*

### PRAY WITH US AT 3:00 PM EACH DAY FOR FAMILY PEACE.

Catholics believe that God loves and cares for everyone, and that God knows their pain and concerns. Catholics For Family Peace invites you to join us in a moment of prayer at 3:00 pm, wherever you are, for those suffering from violence and abuse and those who use violence to control others. We pray for them and for all who work to end domestic violence. **Would you set an alarm to join us each day to pray at 3:00 pm?**

### SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT TO SHARE IN YOUR PARISH BULLETIN.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. To learn more about the Catholic response, visit the U.S. Bishop's website for their Pastoral Letter, "[When I Call for Help.](#)"

If you, a family member or friend needs help now, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-799-7233 (24 hours); 800-787-3224 (TTY), [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org).

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

# *When Home is Unsafe:*

## Recognizing the Reality of Domestic Violence Today

### PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

#### 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 the courage and support to seek help, find safety, and free themselves from domestic violence.

#### SECOND SUNDAY

For children who are victims of abuse or are traumatized by witnessing violence in their homes. May they know that God loves them and receive comfort and assistance in our parish community.

#### THIRD 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.

#### FOURTH 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.

#### FIFTH SUNDAY

For all men and women who use power and control over other people, whether physically, verbally, emotionally, or financially. May they recognize their abusive behavior and find help, hope, and healing in our parish community.

### ORACIÓN UNIVERSAL

#### PRIMER DOMINGO

Recemos por todas las personas en relaciones abusivas. Para que ellos tengan la experiencia del amor de Dios y para que sepan que el abuso no es la voluntad de Dios. Para que encuentren en su parroquia el valor y al apoyo para buscar ayuda, encontrar seguridad y poder liberarse del abuso doméstico.

#### SEGUNDO DOMINGO

Recemos por los niños que son víctimas del abuso o que han sido traumatizados al ver el abuso en su familia. Para que conozcan el amor de Dios y que reciban el consuelo y ayuda de su parroquia.

#### TERCER DOMINGO

Recemos por los ancianos que han sido abusados. Para que ellos puedan sentir el amor de Dios y puedan encontrar el apoyo y los recursos que necesitan en su parroquia.

#### CUARTO DOMINGO

Recemos por los adolescentes que están en relaciones violentas o que se sienten controlados por su pareja. Que puedan encontrar en su parroquia los ejemplos de dulzura, amabilidad, y amor que les demuestre lo que es un amor sano y completo.

#### QUINTO DOMINGO

Recemos por todos los hombres y mujeres que usan su poder y su control sobre otras personas, sea físicamente, verbalmente, emocionalmente o en temas de finanzas. Para que ellos se den cuenta de su comportamiento abusivo y para que encuentren ayuda, esperanza, y saneamiento en su parroquia.



**Catholics For  
Family Peace**  
Education and Research Initiative

Learn more at [www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org](http://www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org).



# *When Home is Unsafe:*

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## For Priests and Deacons - Resource for Preaching All Year Long

Domestic Violence Awareness Month offers us the opportunity to draw attention to the Church's teaching on the dignity of all human life and the problem of violence in the home. However, the scripture readings of almost *every Sunday* of the liturgical year afford us the opportunity to speak about gospel values of love, respect, kindness, and gentleness to others, especially to those with whom we live.

Just a simple and pastorally sound reference to domestic violence in a homily lets people know that it is okay to approach you, the pastor or deacon, about the matter for help. Be aware that possibly some form of domestic violence may impact at least a third of the assembly that is listening to your homily on any given Sunday.

Here are some examples of opportunities for preaching against domestic violence, compiled by the USCCB Committee for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

### Marriage Resources

- From the USCCB Committee for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth

[For Your Marriage.org](#)



[Por Tu Matrimonio.org](#)



### Restroom Signs - English and Spanish

Placing signs in restrooms is a discrete way to let people know that the Church cares. [Download these signs](#), adapted by USCCB Committee for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. Space is provided for adding information on your local resources.

### Podcasts

["When Love Means Leaving"](#)

- From *Made for Love*, USCCB

["Exploring domestic violence in Catholic families, and how the church can help"](#)

- *America Magazine* interviews Dr. Christauria Welland, Catholics For Family Peace Advisor