

Bulletin Notices for September – October 2025

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. To learn more about domestic violence visit: www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace.

Pope Leo XIV during the Pentecost Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican June 2, 2025. "The Spirit also transforms those more hidden dangers that poison our relationships, such as misunderstandings, prejudices and exploitations. I also think with much pain of the cases in which relationship becomes toxic due to the will to dominate the other, an attitude that frequently leads to violence as is demonstrated by the numerous and recent cases of femicide...The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, brings to maturity within us the fruits that enable us to cultivate good and healthy relationships." If you have experienced harm caused by your spouse call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1 (800) 799-7233.

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 asked 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 National Observance of "Domestic Violence Awareness Month" at the Vigil Mass on Saturday October 4th at 4:30 PM at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Help is available for families suffering abuse. For more information: 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 Conference of 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.

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 is our duty, everyone's responsibility, to give voice to our voiceless sisters: women who are victims of abuse, exploitation, marginalization, and inappropriate pressure," Pope Francis said. "Let us not remain indifferent! It is necessary to act now, at all levels, with determination, urgency, and courage." In a message to an Italian campaign to end violence against women published on Nov. 8, 2023. The Catholic community cares about families experiencing violence and unhealthy relationships. Visit 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. Catholic Charities 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.

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Testimonial: Escaping from Harm to Save Her Own Life

Testimony from Marieta M., parishioner in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., sharing her experience.

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 2025

FIRST SUNDAY

For women, children and men experiencing violence at home, may they be filled with Christ's healing and strength and know that help is available, we pray to the Lord.

SECOND SUNDAY

For all men and women who abuse their partners, whether physically, emotionally, economically or sexually, may God help them recognize their abusive behavior and find help to turn lives around and be instruments of peace, we pray to the Lord.

THIRD 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.

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, we pray to the Lord.

Prayers of the Faithful for October 2025

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

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

For people who suffer emotional, physical or sexual abuse at the hands of a loved one, we pray for a cessation of the violence and for help and support for the person being harmed and the person causing harm, 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 to the Lord.

FOURTH SUNDAY

For the elderly who suffer domestic abuse, may they experience God's love and find the support and resources they need in our parish community, we pray to the Lord.

Social Media Posts for October 2025

"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."

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>

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>

"The Lord wants us free and in full dignity! Faced with the scourge of physical and psychological abuse of women, there is an urgent need to rediscover just and equitable relationship patterns based on respect and mutual recognition," Pope Francis said. In a message to an Italian campaign to end violence against women published on Nov. 8, 2023.