



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR CHURCH MINISTRY
COUNCIL FOR AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC WOMEN



MEDIA STATEMENT

20 November 2014

Elimination of Violence against Women

In advance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on Tuesday 25 November 2014, the Australian Catholic Bishops ask all to focus on the message of Jesus Christ and his relationship with women, always one of dignity and respect.

Referring to the 'Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus Report' (1999) on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia, the Australian Catholic Bishops quote Pope St John Paul II who wrote: "Transcending the established norms of this own culture, Jesus treated women with openness, respect, acceptance and tenderness."

Violence against women has no place in our society, the Australian Catholic Bishops stress.

"Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching."

The United Nations' Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as any act of "gender-based violence" that results in "harm to women".

According to the UN, globally, up to 70 per cent of women experience violence in their lifetime.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) reports that in a 12-month period, between five and ten per cent of Australian women experienced at least one incident of abusive violence.

The reasons for violence are complex and we all have a part to play in reducing violence against women. Some practical ways that you can show your support for this issue include:

- Listening to women and learning from women
- Learning about the issue of domestic violence
- Challenging language that degrades women
- Learning to identify and oppose gender harassment and violence in your community
- Supporting local women's programs
- Examining how your own attitudes and behaviour might contribute to the problem

As Pope Francis notes and the Australian Catholic Bishops reiterate: "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." (Evangelii Gaudium, 212)

For media queries, please contact Aoife Connors on 0450 348 597 | media@catholic.org.au

Resources:

United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 25 November

<https://www.un.org/en/events/endviolenceday/>

White Ribbon Day

<http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/>

Social Justice Statement 2010 – Violence in Australia: A Message of Peace

<http://www.catholic.org.au/acbc-media/media-centre/social-networking-protocol/publications-1/1024-2010-social-justice-sunday-statement-1/file>

Social Justice Statement 2000 – Woman and Man: The Bishops Respond

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/files/SJSandresources/2000-SJSS-Statement.pdf>

Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus: A Report on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia (1999)

<http://opw.catholic.org.au/woman-and-man/woman-and-man-resources.html>

Catholic Social Services Submission to the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022

<http://www.cssa.org.au/storage/CSSA%20Submission%202nd%20Action%20Plan%20-%20Final.pdf>