

Prayer for Survivors of Abuse

2023 Resources

Introduction

The Bishops of England and Wales have chosen Tuesday of the 5th Week of Easter as the Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse — **9 May 2023** — it is a day of prayer for those who have been abused in a season of hope and new life.

The *Isaiah Journey* has prepared a range of resources for prayer, action and reflection for use throughout the year which are launched on the day of prayer.

The *Isaiah Journey* is a working group of the Bishops' Conference and has grown out of the need for a pastoral-spiritual response to the suffering of victims and survivors of abuse in the Church. Inspired by the writing of the prophet Isaiah, it has three strands: seeking truth; bringing hope; finding healing.

What is important is for the local Church to acknowledge and respond in prayer when it is able rather than restrict its activities to just one day in the year. Much of the material in this resource has been written by and with survivors. Though it is hoped that survivors will be included in any local initiative that may not always be possible.

A focus for this year is *I will make a way in the wilderness* an ongoing project which seeks to support parishes, communities and individuals which have been affected by the abuse of victims in particular where there is an allegation against a member of the clergy. This project is beginning on the margins with those who might have known or worked with the perpetrator and offering resources for their reflection and support. However, as with all work by the *Isaiah Journey* the experience of the survivor is central. Resources include:

- A guide for Survivors of Abuse — a short leaflet explaining how the Church will support and respond to Survivors
- A Guide to those listen to those among us impacted by abuse in the Church
- Reflection Material
 - Serenity Prayer
 - Labyrinth
 - Exploring Landscapes
 - Intercessions
 - Frequently Asked Questions
- Let's Journey Together — a week of online Guided Prayer for all who have been affected by clerical abuse in the Catholic Church.
- Northampton Healing Garden

In addition to these there are general notes on Safeguarding and on Support – Listeners.

- Resources for the Day: Intercessions, Homily Notes, Other Activities

This year's resources can be found on the Bishops' Conference website:

- <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse/>

Additional resources which were prepared for previous Days of Prayer are listed in Appendix 2:

Notice for Bulletins

On Tuesday 9 May the Church in England and Wales marks a Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse. We are invited not only to prayer for them, but listen to their voice and learn about what how the Church responding to them.

Intercessions

The following two intercessions are offered to parishes. One or both may be included in the Intercessions at Mass celebrated on the Day of Prayer (17 May) and the surrounding days.

- For all survivors of sexual abuse;
may they come to know, once again, the compassionate love of God and find healing and hope in the risen Lord.
- For all who work in safeguarding;
may they place the voice of the survivor at the heart of their service and through their care for others help to build up the Body of Christ.

Homily Notes for 9 May

Reading 1	Acts 14:19–28	<i>They gave an account to the church of all that God had done with them.</i>
Psalm	Ps 144:10–13. 21 r.12	<i>Your friends, O Lord, shall make known the glorious splendour of your reign. or Alleluia!</i>
Gospel Acclamation	Lk 24:46.26	<i>It was ordained that the Christ should suffer and rise from the dead, and so enter into his glory.</i>
Gospel	John 14:27–31	<i>My own peace I give you.</i>

- What is the Good News that survivors hope to hear?
- As we embark on the synodal journey what will ‘put fresh heart’ into the Church which has been scarred by the abuse of its members.
- Survivors are seeking peace, peace which is a gift of Jesus, peace which takes many forms, peace which is founded upon justice.

Other Activities

Prayer and action go together. The day of prayer is not simply a time to pray an intercession but also an invitation to learn, engage and do.

- LOUDfence — is a visible display of support and solidarity with those affected by abuse and is organising events in Birmingham and Plymouth during the 5th Week of Easter
 - <https://survivorsvoices.org/loudfence/>
- Find out about the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency []
- Check that safeguarding information is clearly displayed in the church.
- Discover local charities which support victims and survivors.
 - Find out about what they do
 - Support their activities or see what opportunities for volunteering
 - Hold a fundraising event for their work.

Appendix 1 Additional Texts

A Prayer for Healing & Reconciliation

Praise to you Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
the source of all consolation and hope.

Be the refuge and guardian of all
who suffer from abuse and violence.

Comfort them and send healing
for their wounds of the body, soul and spirit.
Help us all and make us one with you
in your love for justice
as we deepen our respect for the dignity of every human life.

Giver of peace, make us one in celebrating
your praise, both now and forever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

“Jesus made the crowds welcome and talked to them about the kingdom of God; and he cured those who were in need of healing.”

cf. Matthew 4: 123

Using the prayer

- The prayer was prepared by Northampton Diocese.
- The prayer could be used at Mass and at other times when the community gathers, such as meetings, on the day of prayer and in the days leading up to it.
- It could begin either on the preceding Sunday or there could be a novena of prayer beginning on Sunday 30 April.

Appendix 2

2019 Resources

In 2019 the Day of Prayer was marked on 12 April in the 5th Week of Lent

- Reflections
- Prayer
- Intercessions
- Devotions: the Rosary and Stations of the Cross
- Passion: Reflection on the Passion of St John
- <http://www.cbcew.org.uk/day-of-prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-12-april-2019/>

2021 Resources

- *Listening with Love to the Word* — a series of Conversations by Survivors through hurting, healing and hope
- *Let's be Honest* — A Service of Sorrow and Acknowledgement of Abuse
- A Diocesan/Deanery Mass

2022 Resources

- The Light of Christ — holy hour
- The Paschal Candle — a reflection of hope
- The Isaiah Journey
- The Peace of Christ
- Psalm 121
- www.cbcew.org.uk/prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-2022

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