

# Prayer for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

## Call to Worship ■

In the beginning the Spirit God danced over the void.

**It was a dance of creation, of joy, of freedom of wholeness, of power.**

And God, knowing that all that is good is shared, held the Earth tenderly and yearned for relationship.

**And humanity was born in the yearning of God. We are born to share the earth.**

Adapted from: Blessing the Earth, Carter Heyward, USA

## Lighting the candle ■

God of light and mercy, we light this candle as a sign of our willingness to be your light in the world. We remember before you our own communities; the places where we live and work; the people whose lives are connected to ours.

We bring before you all the people whose stories we have witnessed and all those whose stories have shaped our lives. In Jesus, you show us how to confront violence and how to transform it into peace and justice.

Fill us with your peace, that we may be peacemakers.

Fill us with your truth, that we may speak truth to power.

Fill us with your courage that we may bring hope to those who live in fear.

Fill us with joy, that we may be your beacons in the world.

We ask it in the name of Jesus, our Saviour and friend. Amen.

## Scripture reading: Luke 13: 10-17 - Healing of the woman ■

*Look at and listen to Jesus in this passage:*

*Who is the woman whom Jesus looks at in the synagogue, and how does He relate to her?*

*In what way can we identify with this situation?*

*What things today bend or hold back the life of people, particularly of women?*

*Which are some of my personal experiences of having been "straightened" by the Lord or having witnessed the liberation experienced by others?*

*Take your time to share your reflections with the group.*

Every woman and every girl has the right to a life free of violence. Yet this rupture of human rights occurs in a variety of ways in every community, particularly affecting those who are most marginalized and vulnerable. Around the world, more than 1 in 3 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lives; 750 million women were married before age 18, and more than 250 million have undergone Female Genital Mutilation. It is now widely recognized that violence against women, including harassment and harmful practices, are major barriers to the fulfillment of human rights, and a direct challenge to women's inclusion and participation in sustaining peace. Without tackling it, we will never fulfill the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is time to further our collective action to end violence against women and girls for good. That takes all of us working together in our own countries, regions and communities, at the same time, towards the same goal. It is time for united action from all of us, so that women and girls around the world can live free from harassment, harmful practices, and all other forms of violence.

*(Message by UN secretary General Antonio Guterres on the International Day for the Elimination of violence against women, 25 November 2017)*

*How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that Eliminates Violence Against Women?  
Locally? Nationally? Globally?*

## *We pray,* ■

God of love, compassion and healing, we pray to you on this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women:

For women and girls who have experienced violent relationships, that they can find safety and healing from their trauma, and rebuild their lives;

For children who have witnessed violence in their homes against their mothers and sisters and other family members, that they will experience healing and hope;

For indigenous women and refugee women who have been impacted by extreme violence, that deep and lasting change will ensure their safety;

For individuals and organisations working to prevent violence against women and girls and help survivors of violence, that their courage and generosity will endure;

For men who speak out against forms of expression that demean women or condone violence against them, that their voices will grow stronger;

For the men and boys who have behaved violently towards women and girls that they will have a change of heart, repent in meaningful ways, and seek whatever help they need to lead changed lives.

God of love, we commend these prayers to you and for your compassion to flood the hearts of all people. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## *What can we do to take action against gender based violence?* ■

**LISTEN.** Be open to learning from others who have more expertise and experience before you speak, think: have you really listened?

**BELIEVE.** Believe survivors and those who have been affected by gender based violence. Hear their truths and support their stance.

**SPEAK OUT.** Join the conversation and use your voice to speak out against gender based violence. We all have a role to play in ending violence.

**INTERVENE.** If you see someone being threatened or assaulted – find a safe way to help.

**ACT.** Giving your time to an organization or group that works to prevent and address gender based violence. Be the change you want to see and take on a leadership role within your community.

## *Do you need support?* ■

The following Domestic and Family Violence support services are available:

**1800 RESPECT National Helpline:**

1800 737 732

**Men's Referral Service:**

1300 766 491

**Women's Crisis Line:**

1800 811 811

**Lifeline (24 hour crisis line):**

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