

RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE IN CATHOLIC FAMILIES

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Christauria Welland, Psy.D.



Dr. Christauria Welland
Priests' Study Day
Archdiocese of San Francisco
February 26, 2019

SCHEDULE

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- ✦ 10:00 Prayer for families suffering violence
- ✦ Acknowledgements and introduction of participants
- ✦ Introduction of Pax in Familia
- ✦ Define discussion groups
- ✦ 10:15 -12:15 Domestic violence: Basic knowledge/Magisterium, discussion
- ✦ 12:15 Lunch
- ✦ 1:15 Effects on family with examples, discussion
- ✦ 2:40 Pastoral Responses and Planning, discussion & final comments
- ✦ 4:00 Closing prayer

PAX IN FAMILIA

- *Pax in Familia is an international Catholic ministry dedicated to peace, and to the prevention of violence and abuse in Catholic families.*
- drchristauriawelland@gmail.com
- www.paxinfamilia.org



EVANGELII GAUDIUM, #77

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- ✦ I feel tremendous gratitude to all those who are committed to working in and for the Church... I would like to reflect on the challenges that all of them must face in the context of our current globalized culture. But in justice, I must say first that the contribution of the Church in today's world is enormous. The pain and the shame we feel at the sins of some members of the Church, and at our own, must never make us forget how many Christians are giving their lives in love... They are dedicated in many other ways to showing an immense love for humanity inspired by the God who became man. I am grateful for the beautiful example given to me by so many Christians who joyfully sacrifice their lives and their time. This witness comforts and sustains me in my own effort to overcome selfishness and to give more fully of myself.

THE FIELD HOSPITAL

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Jesus knocks from within so that we will let him come out.

The Church must go out of itself to the peripheries to minister to the needy

The image of the field hospital teaches us to give priority to the wounded, to serve those who most need help

We are those who take up the work of healing by sharing in the sufferings of others

We do not sit back and wait for those who need Christ to come to us

Be with the wounded on the field of battle!

Pope Francis, 2013

RAISE YOUR PROPHETIC VOICE!

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- What can you do to protect women, children, and families from domestic violence and its terrible consequences?
 - As a diocese?
 - As a parish?
 - As a bishop, priest, religious, educator, catechist or parent?
 - As an individual?
 - As a member of your own family?

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God (Mt. 5, 9)

DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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- ✦ Intimate partner violence [commonly called domestic violence] refers to behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors.

World Health Organization, 2016

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

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- Physical violence is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, dragging by the hair, or using another type of physical force. E.g., choking, strangling, burning, using weapons or hazardous chemicals, kicking or pulling male genitalia



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- ✦ Sexual violence is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent. Hiding HIV status, refusing to use protection during sex, etc.

CONTACT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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- ✦ Contact sexual violence is a combined measure that includes rape, being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion, and/or unwanted sexual contact.

STALKING

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Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.



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PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION

- Psychological aggression is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm another person mentally or emotionally and/or exert control over another person. Insulting, belittling, humiliating, threatening to hurt others



ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

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- ✦ Denial of household money for expenses, taking partner's money, control of money and spending decisions, damage to other's property, denial of right to work, forcing other to work against their will, denial of food and other basic needs.

MORE TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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- ✦ Male privilege
- ✦ Religious abuse (*using religion or the Bible to justify abuse, forcing, or denying the freedom to practice one's faith*)
- ✦ Child Abuse (to hurt the partner)



DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE ARE CONNECTED

- ✦ Violence takes many forms, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child maltreatment, bullying, suicidal behavior, and elder abuse and neglect. These forms of violence are interconnected and often share the same root causes.

Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., Kleven, J. (2014). Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute.

WORKING DOCUMENT FOR THE SYNOD ON THE FAMILY 2014

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- ✦ The responses [of the bishops' conferences] unanimously make reference to psychological, physical and sexual violence and abuse in families which has a particularly damaging effect on women and children, a phenomenon which, unfortunately, is neither occasional nor isolated, particularly in certain parts of the world.

Instrumentum Laboris, 66 (2013)

POPE FRANCIS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



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- ✦ Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice. The verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages contradicts the very nature of the conjugal union.

Amoris Laetitia, 2016, #54

GLOBAL STATISTICS: SUMMARY

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- ✦ Recent global prevalence figures indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- ✦ Most of this violence is intimate partner violence.
- ✦ Worldwide, almost one third (30%) of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner.
- ✦ Globally, as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner.

WHO, 2016

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: PREVALENCE

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Lifetime prevalence means a person has experienced IPV at least once in their life. The majority of victims, however, experience multiple assaults.

The worldwide lifetime prevalence rate of physical and/or sexual IPV is 30% of women, or 1 in 3.

WHO 2014

IPV statistics are often calculated by 12-month incidence, or the number of new cases in the course of a year.

Most national surveys do not compile statistics for female-to-male IPV, thus this empirical data is lacking for most of the world.

IPV LIFETIME PREVALENCE BY REGION

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✦ High income nations (e.g., Canada & W. Europe)	23%
✦ Eastern Europe	25%
✦ Latin America	30%
✦ Middle East Region	37%
✦ Sub-Saharan Africa	37%
✦ Western Pacific Region/Asia	25%
✦ South-East Asia Region	38%

WHO 2014

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf?ua=1

LIFETIME AND 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF
CONTACT SEXUAL VIOLENCE, PHYSICAL
VIOLENCE, AND/OR STALKING VICTIMIZATION
BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER — **U.S.WOMEN**,
CDC 2018

	Lifetime	12 Month
✦ Contact sexual violence	18%	
✦ Physical violence	31%	
✦ Stalking	10%	
✦ Contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking		
	36%	6%
✦ w/ IPV-related impact	28.8%	

LIFETIME AND 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF
CONTACT SEXUAL VIOLENCE, PHYSICAL
VIOLENCE, AND/OR STALKING VICTIMIZATION
BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER — **U.S.MEN,**
CDC 2018

	Lifetime	12 Month
✦ Contact sexual violence	8%	
✦ Physical violence	31%	
✦ Stalking	2%	
✦ Contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking	34%	5%
✦ w/ IPV-related impact	9.9%	

SEVERE IPV IN USA

- ✦ What is severe IPV?
 - ✦ Severe physical violence includes being hit with a fist or something hard, kicked, hurt by pulling hair, slammed against something, tried to hurt by choking or suffocating, beaten, burned on purpose, used a knife or gun.
 - ✦ Other forms of severe IPV?
 - ✦ How common is it in the US?
 - ✦ Women lifetime prevalence: 21% (1 in 5)
 - ✦ Men lifetime prevalence: 15% (1 in 7)
- ✦ CDC, 2018

IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE A PROBLEM IN CATHOLIC FAMILIES TOO?

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- ✦ Studies show **there is no difference in the rate** of domestic violence among members of different religions and the general public
- ✦ Thus, the rate of domestic violence among Catholics worldwide is likely at **30% lifetime prevalence**
- ✦ Men who attended religious services *every week* were less violent than infrequent attendees
- ✦ In summary, **violence in Catholic families is a major problem**

Ellison, C. G. and Anderson, K. L. (2001), Religious Involvement and Domestic Violence Among U.S. Couples. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40: 269–286. doi: 10.1111/0021-8294.00055

STATISTICS ON CATHOLICS

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- ✦ Number of Catholics worldwide (2015) 1,285,000,000
- ✦ 26% under 15 = 334,100,000
- ✦ Total Catholics 15 or over = 950,900,000
- ✦ Total Catholic men 15 or older 477,815,423
- ✦ Total Catholic women 15 or older 473,084,577

IPV STATISTICS ON CATHOLICS

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✦ Considering the global rate of domestic violence, if 30% of Catholic women are abused, that number would be:
141,925,373

✦ Even calculating a 20% rate (just for comparison) of abused Catholic women the number would be: **94,616,915**

* There is no empirical reason to assume that the statistics for Catholic families are any lower than the rest of families.

C. Welland, & Kenneth Lobo, 2015

WHY IS THERE FAMILY VIOLENCE?

**THERE ARE MANY REASONS THAT A MAN (OR WOMAN)
MAY BE VIOLENT TO HIS SPOUSE/PARTNER**

- ✦ Violence in the overall environment
- ✦ No negative consequence for violent actions
- ✦ Feeling the need and the right to control another person
- ✦ Seeing women as inferior, and himself with right to dominate her
- ✦ Learning violence in his own family as a child or adolescent
- ✦ Approval of violence as a valid response

WHY IS THERE FAMILY VIOLENCE?

- ✦ The aggressor has a problem with alcohol or drug abuse
- ✦ He/she has emotional or neurological problems that affect his/her self-control
- ✦ He/she has an insecure attachment style and is plagued by jealousy. He/she tries to control his/her spouse
- ✦ He/she doesn't know how to calm himself down when his/her is angry
- ✦ He/she may have a history of criminal behavior

LEARNING FROM PARENTS

- ✦ Learning violent behavior through modeling by adults, especially parents, is the basic tenet of *social learning theory* as applied to IPV. As Rogelio stated:
- ✦ “I learned that from my father. That you have to hit women to teach them that you're a man... You use force because, to start with, you have that tradition that that's the way to educate her. By force. To the wife, but also to your children. To both. That's the mentality you have. That's the way you teach people, by hitting them, shoving them, and shouting at them.”

Welland & Ribner, 2007

RISK FACTORS FOR PERPETRATION OF IPV

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✦ **DEMOGRAPHIC**

- ✦ Younger age
- ✦ Low income/poverty
- ✦ Unemployment
- ✦ Stress: Financial, parenting, work-related, acculturation
- ✦ Living in war zone

✦ **FAMILY**

- ✦ Witnessing parental IPV
- ✦ Being child abuse victim

✦ **PEER ASSOCIATIONS & INFLUENCE**

- ✦ Association with deviant peers

Capaldi, Noble, Wu Shortt, & Kim, (2012)

RISK FACTORS FOR PERPETRATION OF IPV

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✦ **PSYCHOLOGICAL & BEHAVIORAL**

- ✦ Conduct disorder
- ✦ Antisocial Behavior
- ✦ Early aggression
- ✦ Negative Emotionality: Anger & Hostility
- ✦ Low verbal IQ
- ✦ Some personality disorders
- ✦ Depression (for female abusers)

✦ Alcohol use

✦ Drug use

✦ Polysubstance use

COGNITION

- ✦ Hostility towards women (by men)
- ✦ Attitudes approving of violence

RISK FACTORS FOR PERPETRATION OF IPV

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► RELATIONSHIP

- Marital status, especially for separated & divorced women
- Relationship conflict
- Insecure attachment
- Jealousy and negative emotionality



A BRIEF FORAY INTO PORNOGRAPHY

The Barna Group Survey found that:

- ▶ Teens and young adults consider not recycling more immoral than viewing pornography.



THE SPREAD OF PORNOGRAPHY

- ✦ “College men’s exposure to pornography is nearly universal, with growing viewing rates nationwide.”
- ✦ Foubert, J., Brosi, M., & Bannon, S. (2011). Pornography viewing among fraternity men: Effects on bystander intervention, rape myth acceptance & behavioral intent to commit sexual assault. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 18: 212-231.

PORNOGRAPHY AS POSSIBLE PRECURSOR TO VIOLENCE AND RAPE

A rigorous studies provide clear evidence confirming that pornography exposure contributes directly to:

- ✦ Developing sexually deviant tendencies
- ✦ Committing sexual offenses
- ✦ Experiencing difficulties in intimate relationships
- ✦ Accepting rape myths.

Paolucci-Oddone, E., Genuis, M., & Violato, C. (2000) A meta-analysis of the published research on the effects of pornography. In C. Violato, E. Paolucci-Oddone, & M. Genius (Eds). The Changing Family and Child Development (pp. 48-59). Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing.

PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE: IS THERE A LINK?

- ✦ A meta-analysis assessing countries around the world found that consumption of pornography was associated significantly with both verbal and physical aggression, among males and females.

Wright, P., Tokunaga, R. & Kraus, A. (2015). "A meta-analysis of pornography consumption and actual acts of sexual aggression in general population studies." *Journal of Communication*

WHY IS THERE VIOLENCE IN SO MANY CATHOLIC FAMILIES?

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- ✦ We are all products of the culture we are born and raised in, especially if we have not assimilated the non-violent and compassionate values of Christianity



WHY IS THERE VIOLENCE IN SO MANY CATHOLIC FAMILIES?

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- ✦ Spouses have not learned specifically in marriage preparation that violence in a Catholic marriage goes against the mission to love and honor the spouse, and/or this message is not frequently reinforced in the parish (if he attends)
- ✦ The faithful often do not hear their priests speaking against domestic violence in their homilies, and the topic is not brought up in catechism and faith formation
- ✦ San Diego Diocesan Synod on the Family and Implementation Committee

ARE VIOLENT MEN MORE OR LESS LIKELY TO PRACTICE THEIR FAITH?

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José expressed amazement that such a question should even be asked of him:

Of course men who don't practice faith are more abusive. If I don't have any hope in any kind of Catholicism, as they say, in religion, then I'm a person who doesn't have anything good in my mind. So I think it's better for people who go to church, or to some religion. A man like that is less likely to be violent. It has the same effect as one of my classes. Maybe some other religion thinks it's good to beat your wife, but not my church. No, never.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A CHALLENGE TO THE WELL-BEING AND THE MISSION OF THE FAMILY

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LEGAL RESPONSES TO IPV IN CALIFORNIA

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- ✦ Reporting is mandatory only if you know a child has been exposed to IPV in the home, or if the victim is disabled or elderly
- ✦ Police make a rapid response to IPV reporting after a 911 call, on site
- ✦ A temporary restraining order may be placed so that abuser may not approach, call or otherwise contact the victim. The judge issues RO on petition, with evidence
- ✦ Usually if it is a misdemeanor, not a felony, the person found to be the primary aggressor will be sent to county jail for 3-4 days, then released with orders to schedule 52-week therapy, pay a monthly fine, and do community service. The abuser must prove compliance to the judge in 30 days or return to jail
- ✦ Repeat offences, especially felonies, can result in multiple years of prison
- ✦ Threatening to kill someone or cause grave bodily harm is a criminal threat and can be prosecuted as a felony or a misdemeanor
- ✦ Both abusive men and women are mandated to treatment in the US.

SEXUAL FORCE AND ABUSE IN MARRIAGE – POPE FRANCIS

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We also know that, within marriage itself, sex can become a source of suffering and manipulation. Hence it must be clearly reaffirmed that “a conjugal act imposed on one’s spouse without regard to his or her condition, or personal and reasonable wishes in the matter, is no true act of love, and therefore offends the moral order in its particular application to the intimate relationship of husband and wife”.

*Amoris Laetitia, 2016, #154,
quoting Bl. Paul VI in Humanae Vitae, 1968, #13*

THE CHURCH TAKES IPV SERIOUSLY

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- ✦ In some cases, respect for one's own dignity and the good of the children requires not giving in to excessive demands or preventing a grave injustice, violence or chronic ill-treatment. In such cases, "separation becomes inevitable. At times it even becomes morally necessary, precisely when it is a matter of removing the more vulnerable spouse or young children from serious injury due to abuse and violence, from humiliation and exploitation, and from disregard and indifference". Even so, "separation must be considered as a last resort, after all other reasonable attempts at reconciliation have proved vain". *Familiaris Consortio*, #83

Amoris Laetitia, 2016, #241

HOW DOES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONTRAST WITH THE DIVINE PLAN FOR THE FAMILY?

DIVINE PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

- ✦ Man and women are made in the image and likeness of God
- ✦ As spouses they form a *communion of persons*
- ✦ The family reflects, through grace, the mystery of the Holy Trinity

(Relatio Synodi, 2014)

COMMUNION OF LIFE AND LOVE



ST. JOHN PAUL II

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Whenever a man is responsible for offending a woman's personal dignity and vocation, he acts contrary to his own personal dignity and his own vocation.

On the Dignity of Women, #10, 1988



THE WOMAN CANNOT BECOME THE "OBJECT" OF "DOMINATION" AND MALE "POSSESSION"

ST. JOHN PAUL II

- ✦ The union of marriage requires respect for the true personal subjectivity of both.
 - ✦ Domination by man leads to the loss of stability of the fundamental equality which man and woman possess in the unity of the two.
- ✦ Mulieris Dignitatem, 10

THIS EQUALITY IS BOTH A GIFT AND A RIGHT DERIVING FROM GOD THE CREATOR

Violation of this equality



Disadvantage of the woman



Diminishes the true dignity of the man

THE THEOLOGY OF THE BODY AND IPV

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THE SPOUSAL (NUPTIAL) MEANING OF THE BODY IS A SIGN OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

- ✦ The call to love as God loves is inscribed in the human body as male and female. The nuptial meaning of the body is *“the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the man-person becomes a gift and—by means of this gift—fulfills the meaning of his being and existence.”*

St John Paul II, 16/01/1980

- ✦ **FROM THIS TEACHING IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS CONTRARY TO THE SACREDNESS OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND THE HUMAN BODY**

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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- ✦ The Church can help break the cycle of violence
- ✦ Many abused women seek help first from the Church because they see it as a safe place



When I Call for Help, 2002

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/domestic-violence/when-i-call-for-help.cfm>

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

- ✦ As bishops, we condemn the use of the Bible to support abusive behavior in any form. A correct reading of Scripture leads people to an understanding of the equal dignity of men and women and to relationships based on mutuality and love.

✦ *When I Call for Help, 2002*



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- ✦ We emphasize that no person is expected to stay in an abusive marriage



When I Call for Help, 2002

POPE FRANCIS: NO TO VIOLENCE

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- ✦ Do not let the day end without making peace in your family. Our first reaction when we are annoyed should be one of heartfelt blessing, asking God to bless, free and heal that person.
- ✦ “On the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing” (1 Pet 3:9).
- ✦ If we must fight evil, so be it; but we must always say “no” to violence in the home.

Amoris Laetitia, 2016, #104

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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- ✦ Responding with pastoral concern to domestic violence comes under the following themes of Catholic Social Teaching:
 - ✦ Life & Dignity of the Human Person
 - ✦ Call to Family, Community and Participation
 - ✦ Rights and Responsibilities
 - ✦ Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
 - ✦ Solidarity

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Tells you that you can never do anything right
- Shows extreme jealousy of your friends and time spent away
- Keeps you or discourages you from seeing friends or family members
- Insults, demeans or shames you with put-downs
- Controls every penny spent in the household
- Takes your money or refuses to give you money for necessary expenses
- Looks at you or acts in ways that scare you
- Controls who you see, where you go, or what you do

National Domestic Violence Hotline, <https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/>

MORE WARNING SIGNS

- Tells you that you are a bad parent or threatens to harm or take away your children
- Prevents you from working or attending school
- Destroys your property or threatens to hurt or kill your pets
- Intimidates you with guns, knives or other weapons
- Pressures you to have sex when you don't want to or do things sexually you're not comfortable with
- Pressures you to use drugs or alcohol

PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE ABUSED

- ✦ **Death:** 1095 women and 241 men were murdered by an intimate partner in the United States in 2010.
- ✦ **Injuries:** as a direct result of the physical violence (e.g., bruises, knife wounds, broken bones).

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html>

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF IPV ON WOMEN

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PHYSICAL

- Immediate physical injuries, from minor to severe
- More serious injuries, which can lead to disabilities
- Gastrointestinal conditions
- Long-term health problems, including chronic pain syndromes
- Death, including femicide and AIDS-related death



SEXUAL

- Unintended pregnancy
- Abortion/unsafe abortion
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Complications of pregnancy or miscarriage
- Vaginal, urinary or pelvic infections
- Fistula
- Painful sexual intercourse
- Sexual dysfunction

WHO 2012

ADVERSE HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH CHRONIC STRESS

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- ❖ Cardiovascular disease
- ❖ Fibromyalgia
- ❖ Chronic pain syndromes
- ❖ Gastrointestinal disorders
- ❖ Migraines and headaches
- ❖ Children might be injured during violent incidents
- ❖ <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html>



PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL EFFECTS OF IPV



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Physical and/or sexual violence is typically accompanied by emotional or psychological abuse, which can lead to:

- ✦ Anxiety
- ✦ Depression
- ✦ Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- ✦ Suicidal thoughts or behavior
- ✦ Low self-esteem
- ✦ Inability to trust others, especially in intimate relationships
- ✦ Sleep disturbances
- ✦ Flashbacks
- ✦ Ineffective parenting
- ✦ Abuse and neglect of children

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS (PTSD)



- ✦ “The world is not a safe place; there is no safety in love; it is not safe to be myself; men who love me will hurt me; I will not get what I deserve even if I am fair, or reasonable, or honest; there is no God; God has forgotten me.”
- ✦ Traumatic stress “ends my life as I know it,” and can lead to enduring personality changes. However, it can also lead to extraordinary resilience.

From Healing from Domestic Violence: A Case Study, Miki Paul, 2004

A MESSAGE TO WOMEN FROM “CHUY”

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- ❖ My mother stayed because her husband owned her and she had to obey him in everything. She couldn't talk back. She never defended herself. She just put up with the beatings. I used to ask her, *“Mamá, why do you let him do this to you?”*
- ❖ She'd say, *“The Church gave me my husband.”* But he took her by force. He cornered her with his horse, and the policeman said,, *“If you like her, take her.”* And he helped him to get her onto his horse.
- ❖ She was 23 years old. It was in the time of the Cristeros. (1926-29). She had no father. Sometimes people would kill each other when a girl was stolen like that; there'd be a massacre.

WHY DO SOME WOMEN NOT TAKE ACTION?

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- ✓ She is unaware that she has rights and that she deserves respect and affection
- ✓ She is afraid to leave him, because of threats to kill her or himself, take away children, or cut off economic support, etc.
- ✓ She is unaware of or does not trust the legal system and its response
- ✓ She believes that the children need their father
- ✓ She loves him and believes he will change

WHY DO SOME WOMEN NOT TAKE ACTION?

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- ✓ She thinks that violence is an expected part of marriage
- ✓ She believes that she can never separate or divorce because she is married in the Church
- ✓ She believes it is her fault and she is ashamed to expose it
- ✓ Her family does not support her, or they tell her she has to put up with it
- ✓ She believes that she will not be able to support her family without his financial help
- ✓ Her relatives and friends notice it, but they say nothing

LYDIA'S STORY

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I was ashamed to tell my parents, I was afraid, because I was stubborn... my mother begged me not to marry him. He was a total womanizer; I thought I could change him.

He was very handsome, and he was used to being the center of attention. But I took that place. He used to say, *"I can't compete. I'm like a nobody next to you."* He was very macho. If another man looked at me, he beat me. I always earned more than he did. He spent everything, then he'd beat me to get more money. He was always drunk.

LOVE AND HONOR?

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MEN CAN ALSO BE ABUSED BY THEIR PARTNER

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- The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2018) found that 34% of U.S. men had experienced contact sexual abused, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime.
- “Regardless of injuries sustained or other negative outcomes, society views IPV perpetrated by a woman towards a man as less dangerous and less potentially harmful to the victim” (White & Dutton, 2013).

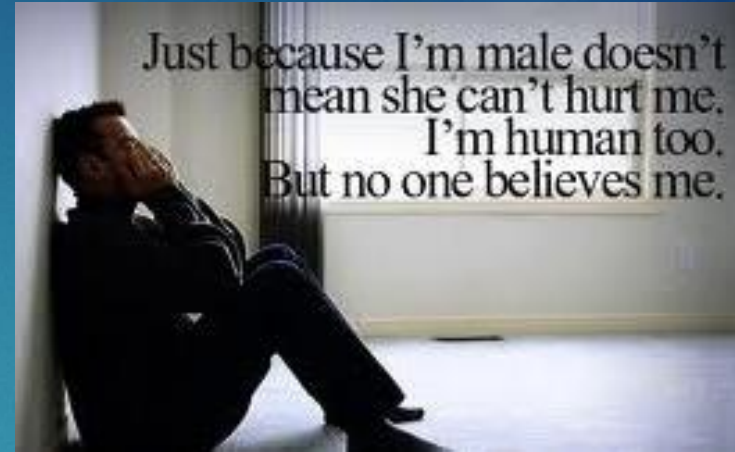
IPV: ABUSED MEN

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- ✦ Male to female abuse is reported as generally more severe overall (Impact figures 3x< for male victims, NISVS 2018).
- ✦ Female to male abuse includes more throwing of objects, slaps, kicks, and bites.
- ✦ Broken bones, stab wounds, teeth marks, deep scratches and lacerations are also documented, as well as homicide.
- ✦ 72% of men admitted with IPV injuries had been stabbed.

IPV: ABUSED MEN



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Qualitative studies of abused men discovered:

- ✦ A sense of failure to achieve masculine identity: they felt emasculated, marginalized, ashamed, embarrassed.
- ✦ Disclosures met with disbelief, surprise, & skepticism, leading to revictimization.

TAKE NOTE! IPV HAPPENS AT EVERY LEVEL OF SOCIETY

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- ✦ Although IPV is more common in the low-income population, this does not at all mean that there is no IPV among the upper and middle income groups.
- ✦ It may be more hidden among those with more resources.
- ✦ They also have the financial resources to get away for a while
- ✦ Some victims stand to lose a great deal of financial security and status by denouncing IPV, and thus may be less likely to do so, in spite of the cost
- ✦ Custody battles where there has been IPV are usually toxic affairs, where the person with the most money, often the abuser, may win custody of the children, as another way to deeply hurt the victim

WHAT DO CHILDREN NEED TO DEVELOP AS HEALTHY PERSONS AND CHRISTIANS?

CHILDREN NEED:

- + Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments
- + Secure attachment to both parents
- + Caring, protective adults
- + To be taught and modeled the values of human and Christian dignity, justice, equality, respect, and love

THEY DO NOT NEED TO BE EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



EFFECTS ON CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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- ✦ Depression
- ✦ Anxiety
- ✦ Aggression
- ✦ School refusal or failure
- ✦ Affects cognitive and emotional development

- ✦ Constant toxic stress produces damaging neurochemical changes
- ✦ Exposed children are more likely to be violent or to become victims of domestic violence in their families as adults

http://ojjdp.gov/programs/safestart/IB1_UnderstandingChildrensExposuretoViolence.pdf

EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE OFFENDER

- ✦ Incarceration
- ✦ Loss of employment
- ✦ Increased substance abuse
- ✦ Isolation and depression
- ✦ Existential diminishment
- ✦ Loss of love and trust of family
- ✦ Distance in relationship with children
- ✦ Distance in relationship with God



✦ Welland, 1999

TODAY'S PERPETRATOR IS OFTEN YESTERDAY'S VICTIM: CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN THE FAMILY OF ORIGIN

- ✦ Male abusers produce higher scores on measures of psychopathology than control groups, e.g., depression, anxiety, personality disorders.
- ✦ They often have symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, related to childhood experience of and exposure to violence.
- ✦ This trauma affects their sense of self, their ability to trust, and their view of the world, and affects their ability to withstand real or perceived stressors.

Welland & Ribner, 2007

UNDERSTANDING WITHOUT EXCUSING

- ✦ We need to balance the recognition of many abusers' status as past victims with their current status as perpetrators.
- ✦ This can be done without ever insinuating that their past experience excuses their present behavior.
- ✦ Not to recognize past trauma and empathize with it is to risk never building rapport with them
- ✦ Thus we lose the opportunity to make a profound difference in their lives and in the lives of their families.



TWO BROAD CATEGORIES OF ABUSERS

76

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INTIMATE PARTNER TERRORISM

- ❖ Primary abuser almost always male
- ❖ Abuse more frequent and severe, especially emotional abuse
- ❖ Systematic use of “coercive control”
- ❖ Abused partner afraid, demoralized, feels trapped

SITUATIONAL COUPLE VIOLENCE

- ❖ Not characterized by “coercive control”
- ❖ May be initiated equally by men or women

Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Johnson, 2008

WHY IS THIS USEFUL INFORMATION TO HAVE?

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- ✦ Helps to assess the abuser for most appropriate referral to treatment; not all abusers respond equally to treatment
- ✦ Helps when listening to those who have been or are being abused, to assess issues of risk and danger
- ✦ Makes our counsel carry more weight, e.g., if we understand better what the abuser/abused person is experiencing
- ✦ Provides direction for prevention efforts

FACING THE CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSING

78

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- ✦ Mistreating a woman and being violent doesn't lead to anything good. They're things that, instead of taking us to a happier place, to union with each other, we're throwing ourselves away. We lose what's most important to us. I was like that until my eyes were opened, when this problem happened. Because I've talked to my wife since then, and she has told me how I was, how I killed the love she had for me bit by bit, and the affection. All those things made me think, they opened my eyes.

“Blas” : Welland, 1999

FIND A WAY TO GET THEM THERE AND:

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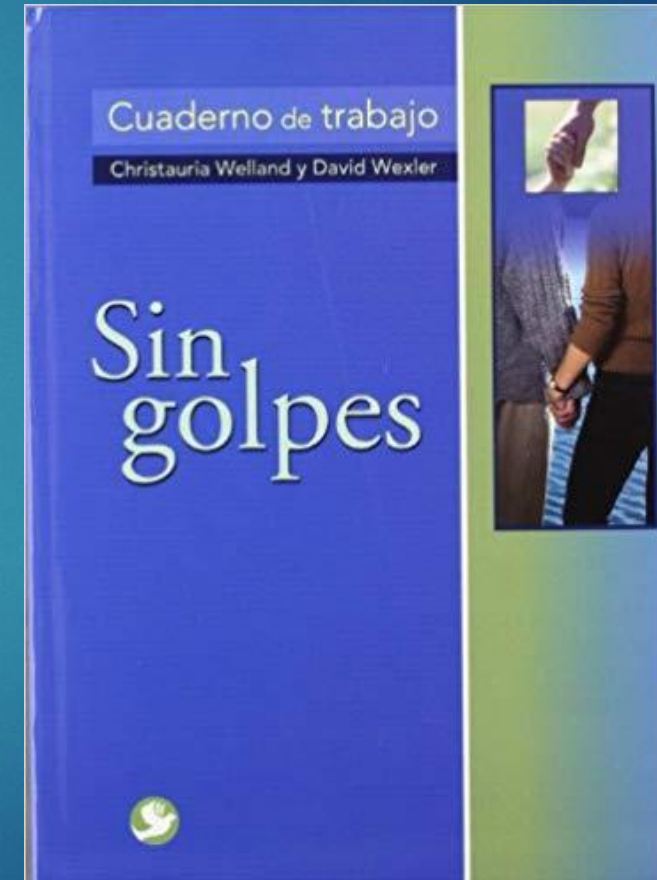
- ✓ With a respectful and well-trained group leader,
- ✓ A cohesive and supportive group of their peers,
- ✓ and a research-based program designed to focus on the main objectives of IPV treatment,
- ✓ The therapy will “do its magic” for many, if not all, of the members

MODELO SIN GOLPES CUADERNO DE TRABAJO

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- ▶ A complete group therapy or men's group experience, used in California, the US and Latin America to help abusers change their beliefs, attitudes, words, and behavior toward their partner and their children
- ▶ Has been effectively used at parishes as well as in official, court-ordered treatment groups.
- ▶ Can be used for prevention of violence and for relationship training
- ▶ Includes Catholic spirituality, Scripture and the Magisterium
- ▶ Researched and written by Christauria Welland, Psy.D. & David Wexler, Ph.D.



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTREACH

81

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- ✓ Parishes can offer Men's Groups, like St. Pius in Chicago. Ministry started by Fr. Charles Dahm, OP
- ✓ <https://pvm.archchicago.org/human-dignity-solidarity/domestic-violence-outreach>
- ✓ Fr. Chuck will come to teach priests and diocesan staff how to set up a domestic violence ministry in the diocese and parishes



THE GROUP: A SAFE PLACE TO HEAL AND CHANGE

82

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- ✦ *Leonardo understood that an important part of his personal change came in making a contribution to other men.*
- ✦ So I said to him, “If you don't talk we can't help you. That's what we're here for; we're members of the same group.” First he said one word, then he began to tell all his problems, and he began to cry. Everyone was listening and people got really surprised and quiet. The other guys helped him, to know how to solve his problem. And after a while you could see he was really relieved and he started to laugh with the others.

WELLAND, 2007

FEMALE ABUSERS

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- ✦ Female-to-male IPV has been increasingly researched in the last two decades
- ✦ There was/is fear of *blaming the victim*. We must exercise caution and examine the facts
- ✦ Retaliation or self-defense can be an explanation in some cases
- ✦ The statistics for female-to-male IPV are on a par with male-to-female IPV, though women are more often injured and negatively impacted
- ✦ Children are as negatively affected by exposure to female IPV as to male IPV

FEMALE ABUSERS

84

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- ✦ Risk factors are similar to male perpetrators: history of witnessing IPV, child abuse, corporal punishment, parental substance abuse, parental separation, insecure attachment and hypersensitivity to abandonment.
- ✦ Depression in women puts them at risk of abusing.
- ✦ Conduct disorder, antisocial personality, history of aggression, substance abuse.
- ✦ Female perpetrators have high rates of PTSD.
- ✦ Incarcerated female perpetrators were just as likely as partner-abusive men to use minimization, denial and blaming.

WHY SHOULD WE TREAT THE ABUSER?



- ❖ To protect the rights, safety, and well being of the abused and the children in the family
- ❖ To rehabilitate and heal the abuser
- ❖ To prevent the intergenerational cycle of violence
- ❖ The person with the problem is the one who needs to change if there is to be real change in the family

BECOMING AGENTS OF CHANGE

- ✦ Being in the group can empower violent men to change themselves and to be agents of change in their social circle.
- ✦ “Normalizing” the violence they have grown up with, not justifying it, can be a step toward recognition that they can help break the cycle of intergenerational violence in their families.
- ✦ They can model adaptive skills to their partners and children, and intervene or share their knowledge with relatives and friends.

SELF-REPORTED TREATMENT OUTCOMES FOR LATINO MALE ABUSERS

- ✦ Learning to be nurturing fathers
- ✦ Improved communication skills
- ✦ Ability to manage anger
- ✦ Greater flexibility in gender roles; understanding and “trying on” gender equality
- ✦ Overcoming addiction to alcohol
- ✦ Learning to be “a different kind of man”

Welland, 1999

COMMUNICATING RESPECT

88

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- ✦ The men (or women) in our programs deserve respect – not for the actions they have taken – but rather for the individual stories that have led them to act desperately and destructively. Many of the men in our groups, *like all of us*, have become overwhelmed by emotions they had difficulty handling. And they lacked the skills to handle them in a constructive and proactive manner.

David Wexler, 2013

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

89

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- ✓ Universal human rights of men, women and children
- ✓ Focus on mutual respect
- ✓ Opposition to discrimination
- ✓ Tolerance for change
- ✓ Spiritual life and Respect
- ✓ Non-violent discipline of children

PARISHES CAN ALSO PROVIDE SUPPORT OR THERAPY GROUPS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

90

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- ✦ Know the local resources for victims: shelters, counseling, support groups, legal assistance
- ✦ Dr. Welland is completing a 12-20 week structured group therapy model to be facilitated by a professional or paraprofessional
- ✦ Emphases of the program
 - ✦ Education in human rights, local laws and protections, and safety planning
 - ✦ Group support among the women
 - ✦ Self-management skills with dialectical behavioral therapy method: mindfulness, emotion-regulation, interpersonal skills, validation
 - ✦ Specific Catholic and Christian focus with use of Scripture, prayer, and Magisterium
 - ✦ Ongoing support and referrals

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY

- ✦ By preventing violence we avoid all the negative short and long-term effects of domestic violence on victims, children and aggressors
- ✦ There is a worldwide push to extend prevention efforts (WHO, 2014)
- ✦ Even though we work on prevention, there will always be acts of family violence that we need to address as Catholics



YOUNG PEOPLE NEED NON-VIOLENT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ✦ Anger management
- ✦ Respectful conflict resolution
- ✦ Negotiation and compromise
- ✦ Assertiveness
- ✦ Empathy
- ✦ The parents' example of love and respect is essential
- ✦ Parents must teach their children to respect women and treat them as equals



PREVENTION OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

As a society, how can we help to prevent IPV in at-risk families?

- ✦ Teach safe and healthy relationship skills
- ✦ Engage influential adults and peers
- ✦ Disrupt the developmental pathways toward partner violence
- ✦ Create protective environments
- ✦ Strengthen economic supports for families
- ✦ Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL, USA, PREVENTION OF INTIMATE PARTNER
VIOLENCE, TECHNICAL PACKAGE,

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf> (2017)

THE CROSS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ✦ The Lord walks at the side of both the victim of domestic violence and the aggressor, leading them to healing. He uses us, his people, to serve as guides to families suffering from violence. Saying, “It is your cross and you must bear it” is not only hurtful and possibly places the victim at risk - it also contradicts Catholic Social Teaching.

Welland, 2015. *How can we help to end violence in Catholic families?*

A guide for clergy, religious, and laity

THE FAITH COMMUNITY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ✦ For 2000 years, the Church has reached out to the sick, the injured, and those who are oppressed, not fearing to stand up for the poorest and the most neglected. Those who suffer domestic violence are some of these people.



OUR CHALLENGE AS PEOPLE OF FAITH

- ✦ As we embrace the Cross of Jesus in our lives, let us move forward in solidarity to lessen the suffering of victims and children in families of faith, and to provide non-violent solutions to those who are the cause of that family's suffering.

THE CHURCH TAKES IPV SERIOUSLY

Christauria Welland, Psy.D

- ✦ In some cases, respect for one's own dignity and the good of the children requires not giving in to excessive demands or preventing a grave injustice, violence or chronic ill-treatment. In such cases, "separation becomes inevitable. At times it even becomes morally necessary, precisely when it is a matter of removing the more vulnerable spouse or young children from serious injury due to abuse and violence, from humiliation and exploitation, and from disregard and indifference". Even so, "separation must be considered as a last resort, after all other reasonable attempts at reconciliation have proved vain". *Familiaris Consortio*, #83

Amoris Laetitia, 2016, #241

HOW CAN THE PARISH BE A RESOURCE WHEN THERE IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

- ✦ The faithful should know they can seek help at the faith community
- ✦ Know the secular resources in your community
- ✦ Group treatment is most effective for abusive men
- ✦ Education groups for couples of faith can help
- ✦ Counseling a couple where there is violence can put the victim at risk. Be cautious and get more information in private before you recommend it

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

Trained advocates are available 24/7 at
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
in more than 200 languages. All calls are free and confidential.



SPEAKING THE UNSPEAKABLE: A PASTORAL LETTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, 2001

- ✦ Most Rev. Ricardo Ramírez, C.S.B., Bishop Emeritus of Las Cruces, raised his prophetic voice on violence in Catholic families:
- ✦ “Violence inflicted in the family on spouses, parents, children or siblings is intolerable and unconscionable. We ask the forgiveness of all persons affected by the inadequate response of the Church's pastoral leaders to violence which has occurred in homes and in the family – places meant to be of sanctuary for all persons.”

WHY DO SOME WOMEN NOT TAKE ACTION?

- ✓ She is unaware that she has rights and that she deserves respect and affection
- ✓ She is afraid to leave him, because of threats to kill her or himself, take away children, or cut off economic support, etc.
- ✓ She is unaware of or does not trust the legal system and its response
- ✓ She believes that the children need their father
- ✓ She loves him and believes he will change

WHY DO SOME WOMEN NOT TAKE ACTION?

- ✓ She thinks that violence is an expected part of marriage
- ✓ She believes that she can never separate or divorce because she is married in the Church, or other religion
- ✓ She believes it is her fault and she is ashamed to expose it
- ✓ Her family does not support her, or they tell her she has to put up with it
- ✓ She believes that she will not be able to support her family without his financial help
- ✓ Her relatives and friends notice it, but they say nothing

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

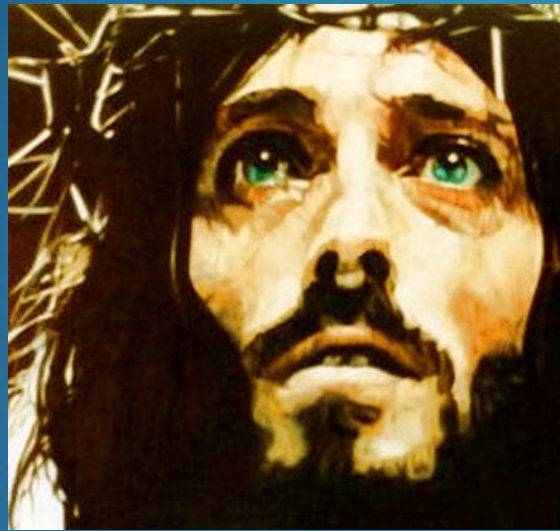
✦ *A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

Luke 10: 33-34

“YOU DID IT TO ME”
MATTHEW 25

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Christauria Welland, Psy.D.



COMPASSION AND COMPREHENSION TOWARDS THE VICTIM OF VIOLENCE

- ✦ NEVER BLAME THE VICTIM!!
- ✦ Take her concerns seriously
- ✦ Focus on her and her children's safety
- ✦ Do not minimize the potential risk
- ✦ Be armed with accurate information about domestic violence
- ✦ Be ready with information on resources in the community

WHAT *YOU* CAN DO: PRIESTS, DEACONS AND LAY MINISTERS

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- ✦ Intervention by Church ministers has three goals:
 1. Safety for the victim and children
 2. Accountability for the abuser
 3. Restoration of the relationship (if possible) or mourning over loss

USCCB, When I Call for Help, 2002

IF YOU ARE A PRIEST, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

“This I ask you: be shepherds, with the “odor of the sheep”, let that be felt by others.

Pope Francis, Chrism Mass, 2013

- ✦ **Do not blame the victim!**
- ✦ **Avoid telling victims that this is their cross** and they must just carry it. Support and defend victims; do not turn your back on a person in need!

IF YOU ARE A PRIEST, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

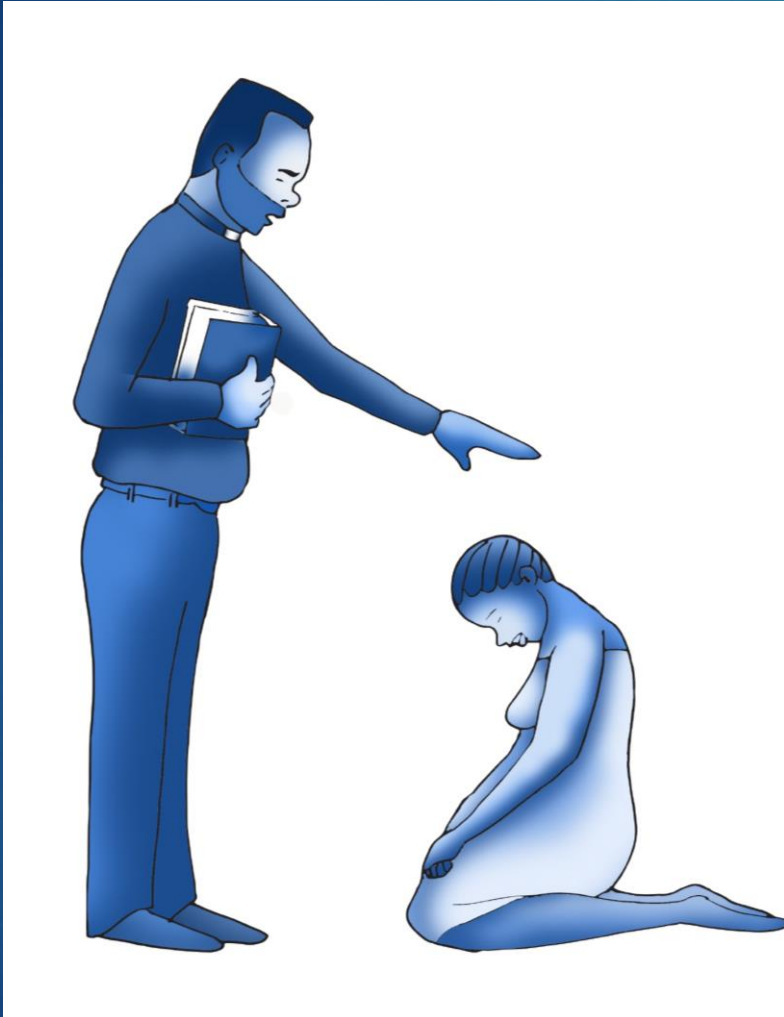
108

Christa W. Welland, Psy.D.

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IF YOU ARE A PRIEST, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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- ✦ **Get trained on domestic violence and learn about local resources:**
There is a general lack of awareness of the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence among the clergy. Many women and men are ashamed and afraid to tell their pastors what is happening in their families. If they realize there is compassion and help available, they will come forward.
- ✦ **Designate a member of the parish staff** as your on-site expert in pastoral response to domestic violence and local resources. This person will help carry your burden and respond effectively.

IF YOU ARE A PRIEST, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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- ✦ **Preach on the good of the spouse and on domestic violence** whenever the readings of the day or any other occasion are conducive to it.
- ✦ **Men who hear their priest use his moral authority** to denounce domestic violence are positively influenced by it. Women and children find hope and support.
- ✦ **Encourage religious and catechists** in the parish and teachers in the parish school to be aware of domestic violence and responsive to parishioners' needs.

MORE IDEAS

112

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- ✦ **Gather your priest colleagues, discuss domestic violence, and ask your bishop to get training for you.**
- ✦ **The leadership of the priest on domestic violence makes all the difference in a parish.**
- ✦ **Resources from the USCCB website:**
 - ✦ <http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/womens-issues/preachint-tips.cfm>

SHOWING GOD'S MERCY

113

Everyone needs to be touched by the comfort and attraction of God's saving love, which is mysteriously at work in each person, above and beyond their faults and failings.

Pope Francis, [Evangelii Gaudium](#), 44



WHAT ABOUT THE AGGRESSOR? WHAT CAN YOU DO OR SAY?

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- ✦ Be straightforward. Ask him : “What did you say? What did you do? Why do you think you act like that?”
- ✦ Help him to take responsibility for his actions, and not to blame others
- ✦ Pray with the abuser to open his heart to repentance and transformation
- ✦ Stress the dignity and equality of his spouse and children
- ✦ Ask him to answer sincerely if there is a problem with alcohol or drugs. If so, help him to take action now.
- ✦ Have local resources for healing and therapy on hand
- ✦ Do not collude with the aggressor, or nothing will change in the family
- ✦ Consider starting an aggressors’ group at the parish, where men can learn to be non-violent and to express love and respect to their spouses and children

HEALING THE EFFECTS OF ABUSE SPIRITUALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY

❖ Help for spiritual healing

- ❖ Reconciliation and wise counsel from a priest
- ❖ Prayer and healing services
- ❖ Welcome and resources at the parish level
- ❖ Materials from our speakers
- ❖ Welland, 2017. *How can we help to end violence in Catholic families? A guide for clergy, religious, and laity*

❖ Professional psychological help:

- ❖ Individual and/or group therapy.
- ❖ Several effective programs are available.
- ❖ Specific program for abused Christian women is in research and pilot stage, using adaptations to an evidence-based method.

HOW THE CHURCH CAN HELP (OR HURT) WOMEN IN ABUSIVE MARRIAGES

Stories from America magazine, June 2018

- ✦ <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/06/26/how-church-can-help-or-hurt-women-abusive-marriages>
- ✦ Louise got immediate, straightforward help from her pastor when she revealed that her husband was threatening to kill her. She called the priest when her husband was at work, and he showed up with a truck and 15 seminarians, who packed up and loaded her possessions and brought her and her young son to safety. Louise was a stay-at-home mom. She had no money, and nowhere else to turn. Her priest saved her life.

HOLD ABUSERS ACCOUNTABLE

- ✦ Rev. Denis Lemieux calls this notion a disastrous misunderstanding of marriage and of love itself. “A spouse who leaves an abusive marriage is truly being faithful to their vows. How is it loving that person to allow them to continue to degrade you? To love is to will the good for the other person. These are very serious decisions to work through, but I just can’t see how tolerating abuse is serving the good of conjugal love and unity. Love them by holding them accountable for bad behavior.”

BEYOND ADVICE, THE INNER STORY

Christauria Welland, Psy.D

- ✦ Many of those who have been abused feel a complex tangle of emotions around their situation, including guilt, self-doubt and self-blame.
- ✦ An abuser works hard to make his victim believe the abuse is her fault, and that she is obligated, as a wife and as a Catholic, to endure it humbly.
- ✦ The abused cannot always admit, to others or to themselves, what is truly happening in their marriage.

UNINFORMED ADVICE PUTS VICTIMS AT GREAT RISK

- ✦ One priest encouraged an abused woman to cultivate internal calm.
- ✦ A Catholic therapist taught her to dissociate, so that she could endure abuse patiently.
- ✦ Another priest told her that even though her husband was raping her, threatening to kill her, drinking heavily and trying to coerce her into a threesome, she should not leave him because he had not hit her.

RECOGNIZE, RESPOND, REFER

- ✦ When a pastor arrives at a new parish, he can introduce himself at the local domestic violence response agency and offer the church's support.
- ✦ The domestic violence hotline should be stored in the cell phones of all parish employees, and they should be able to point both victims and perpetrators toward the U.S. bishops' document "When I Call For Help."
- ✦ It is also important for the church to frequently and publicly acknowledge that abuse happens and that the church condemns it.
- ✦ "We recommend pastors put a note in their bulletin every week or so, saying 'Someone you know may be in an abusive relationship,' and including the national domestic abuse hotline," she said.

✦ Dr. Sharon O'Brien, Catholics for Family Peace, CUA

CAN THERE BE A REASON TO LEAVE?

- ✦ Canon 1153 states: “A spouse who occasions grave danger of soul or body to the other or to the children, or otherwise makes the common life unduly difficult, provides the other spouse with a reason to leave, either by a decree of the local Ordinary or, if there is danger in delay, even on his or her own authority.”
- ✦ Most bishops have delegated the power of decree to local pastors; and in any case, the first priority is the moral obligation to seek safety.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING!

- ✦ When a victim asks for help, it is not the time to talk about “forgiving and forgetting.”
- ✦ Human beings do not *forget* trauma. We *can* learn to process it better, with help and with the Lord as our Healer.
- ✦ We may and should forgive once healing is taking place, but this takes time.
- ✦ Forgiveness does *not necessarily mean* the victim should receive the abuser back into the family and expose herself and the children to hurt and harm, or even death.
- ✦ Sometimes a victim has to leave (or the abuser has to leave) for reasons of physical safety and emotional health.
- ✦ Studies show that 50% of the women in one Mexican state who had separated or divorced were victims of domestic violence. ENDIREH, 2011

✦ Welland, 2015

WHAT WOULD *YOU* DO?

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Christauria Welland, Psy.D.

- ✦ Some abusive men can and do change *with help*, but without that change, it is unreasonable and unjust to expect a woman to live in a dangerous and intolerable situation





LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE

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✧ *Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?*

Isaiah 58: 6-7. 9

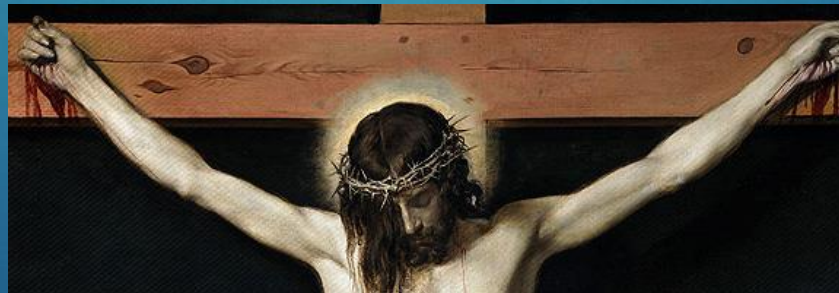
THREE USEFUL STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS IN THE FAMILY

1. CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE!
2. ACCEPT/EXPECT RESPECT!
3. TIME OUT!



1. CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE!

- ✦ Have I made the papal teaching on the rights and equality of men and women my own?
- ✦ What do I think of the value of men, redeemed by Christ's blood?
- ✦ What do I think of the value of women, redeemed by Christ's blood?
- ✦ Do I see Christ in the victim of domestic violence?
- ✦ Do I see Christ in the violent aggressor?



2. ACCEPT/EXPECT RESPECT!

- ✦ In order to respect my spouse, whether man or woman, I must accept his or her inalienable dignity before God
- ✦ I must choose to actively respect my spouse in my words and actions
- ✦ I must expect to be treated justly and respectfully by my spouse, to be honored and loved all the days of my life
- ✦ If such respect is missing, I must seek justice and conversion, in myself and in my spouse
- ✦ I must seek help if that respect and love is lacking in my marriage



3. TIME OUT!

- ✦ I can avoid violent speech and action!
- ✦ Non-violence is a decision I make!
- ✦ I can't hurt my spouse or my children if I am not in the same room or within earshot!

STEPS FOR TAKING A TIME OUT

- ✦ Recognize that I'm getting upset
- ✦ Let my spouse know that I need to take a time out
- ✦ Go into a different room or outside for a while - breathe deeply, pray, exercise, do something that calms me down
- ✦ Once I am calm, come back and see if we can speak respectfully
- ✦ Solve the problem, or let it go for now - if we both agree
- ✦ Ask forgiveness if you offended your loved one
- ✦ Keep trying! It is difficult to change the habits of a lifetime!

FOR THE ABUSER: DECISIONS AND CHANGES TO MAKE TO STOP THE VIOLENCE YOU ARE COMMITTING AGAINST OTHERS

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- ✦ I will express love, admiration, and affection with the body God gave me.
- ✦ I will strive to understand the consequences of my violence by listening to those I have hurt, and by listening to the Lord and his Church
- ✦ I will ask (but not demand) forgiveness of my spouse and my children
- ✦ I will look at myself honestly and decide if now is the time for me to change
- ✦ **If not now, when?**
- ✦ I will avoid all physical harm to my family
- ✦ I will avoid sexual coercion and abuse
- ✦ I will avoid harmful behaviors like alcohol abuse and drug abuse. Do I need to seek help for this?
- ✦ Are there people I should avoid if I really want to change my drinking habits?

LIVING THE DIGNITY AND EQUALITY OF A CHRISTIAN WIFE

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Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2



PREVENTION OF FUTURE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WORK WITH GIRLS AND WOMEN

- ✦ Let us not be afraid to live the Gospel by treating each other as equals worthy of love and respect.
- ✦ Women of faith can make a difference by reaching out to and supporting each other. Abused women usually seek help first from the women they are close to - their mother or a mother-figure, or from close family or friends. If you are that person, your understanding and compassion can bring light and comfort. But if you are rejecting or blaming of the victim of violence, she will most likely retreat into her painful solitude again.

✦ Welland, 2015

A SIMPLE INTERVENTION

Once you know about domestic violence, you can intervene in this simple but effective way when you suspect a woman is being abused:

- ✦
- ✦ Go up to her and ask her what is happening
- ✦ Support her by listening without judging or blaming her
- ✦ Help her, she may be in danger
- ✦ Go with her to a place she can get help
- ✦ Respect her confidentiality at all times

PROMOTE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AT THE PARISH LEVEL

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- ✦ Awareness of priests, deacons, staff, catechists and educators
- ✦ One member of staff can attend diocesan trainings so as to share knowledge and resources with the parish staff
- ✦ Short segments on awareness and prevention of violence can be included in catechesis at all levels, from elementary grades and youth groups through marriage prep and adult catechesis
- ✦ Effective prevention strategies are free, widely available, and compatible with the faith. They provide necessary skills for our parishioners. We do not have to reinvent the wheel.
- ✦ Dr. Welland's violence prevention program (2018) for Catholic youth and couples is also available: *Journeying through Life with Jesus, the Son of God*

MORE ABOUT ABUSERS

Let us learn to help the person with the problem, the abuser, and not expect the victim to face a painful future with no remedy in sight.



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UNDERSTANDING WITHOUT EXCUSING

- ✦ We need to balance the recognition of many of abusers' status as past victims with their current status as perpetrators.
- ✦ This can be done without ever insinuating that their past experience excuses their present behavior.
- ✦ Not to recognize past trauma and empathize with it is to risk never building rapport with these men
- ✦ Thus we lose the opportunity to make a profound difference in their lives and in the lives of their families.
- ✦ None of this understanding includes that their partner should stay with them while they are learning to be different



“AA” AS ADJUNCT TO TREATMENT FOR ABUSERS

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- ✦ Alcoholics Anonymous, a 12-step program, can save many from a lifetime of alcoholism and imminent self-destruction, as well as give hope to their families.
- ✦ The group format, the structured belief-system, the spiritual orientation, and the support offered are a good fit for many abusers mandated to AA as well as to IPV treatment.
- ✦ Some are sent by the judge to other mandated programs, when AA fails to produce results for some offenders.

RIGHT WORDS, RIGHT ACTION

- ✦ When a victim asks for help, it is not the time to talk about “forgiving and forgetting”
- ✦ Human beings do not forget trauma. We *can* learn to process it better. The Lord is our Healer
- ✦ We may and should forgive once healing is taking place
- ✦ Forgiveness does not necessarily mean the victim should receive the abuser back into the family and expose herself and the children to hurt and harm, even death

✦ Welland, 2015

CATHOLIC TEACHINGS APPLIED TO IPV



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- ✦ Catholic teaching on marriage as a communion of life and love
- ✦ Living the reality of the sacredness of the human person and the human body
- ✦ The Theology of the Body and the nuptial meaning of the body
- ✦ How a disciple of Christ should live with spouse and children
- ✦ Living the dignity and equality of a Catholic wife
- ✦ Developing a life of prayer and closeness to Jesus to be more like him

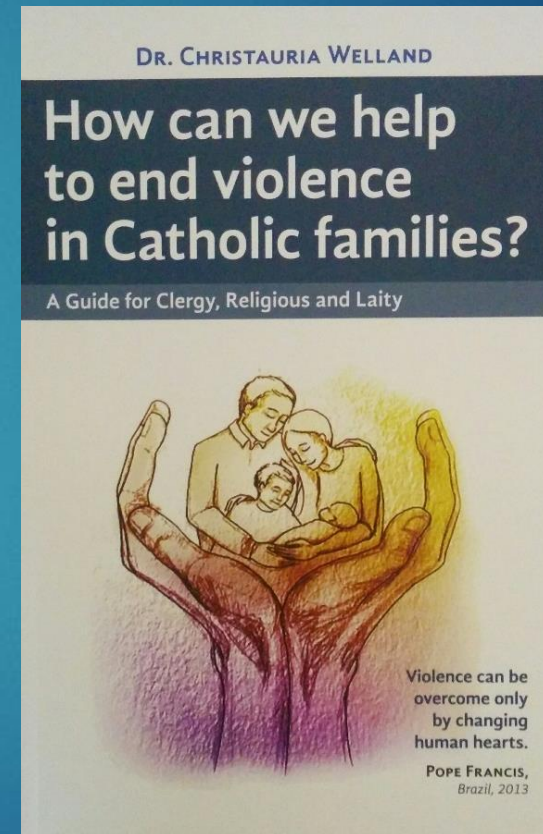
✦ Welland, 2015, 2018

CATHOLIC TEACHINGS APPLIED TO IPV

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- ✦ Sacred Scripture
- ✦ Teachings of St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict and Pope Francis on married love
- ✦ Teaching of Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia*
- ✦ USCCB: *When I Call for Help*
- ✦ Bishop Ricardo Ramirez: *Speaking the Unspeakable*



SPIRITUAL PRACTICES TO PROMOTE PEACE AND HARMONY: FOR FAMILIES

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- ✦ Become familiar with the teaching of Christ on non-violence, compassion, and kindness
- ✦ Learn to pray and to meditate, to find God in your own heart
- ✦ Allow God's light to penetrate the dark places and memories inside you so he can heal you
- ✦ Seek forgiveness in Reconciliation, and strength to be like Jesus in the Eucharist
- ✦ Pray together – with your beloved, your social group, your college community

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