

# Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse

## Resources 2021

### Introduction

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) has highlighted the importance of prayer and suggested to Pope Francis that the worldwide Catholic Church should join together in a day of prayer. The Holy Father has welcomed this initiative.

From 2021, in response to a request from the Let's Be Honest working group, the Bishops have chosen Tuesday of the 5th Week of Easter as the Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse — **4 May 2021**. There were two connected reasons for moving the Day of Prayer from Lent to Easter: this is not a penitential day for the failure of the Church and others to respond to the scourge of abuse but a day of prayer for those who have been abused in a season of hope and new life.

Some of these resources were first put out in 2020 but as the Day of Prayer (3 April 2020) came at the beginning of the first lockdown there were scarcely used. They are intended to be used on Tuesday 4 May or on the surrounding days. They may also be used at other times of the year. Indeed, the Service and the Mass, if offered across the deaneries of a diocese, would be celebrated throughout the year.

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. This should not be a barrier to using the *Let's Be Honest* service as it was prepared by survivors so that their voice would be heard even in places where it has not yet been heard.

This year's Resource has 4 focuses:

- Intercessions for any Parish Mass
- *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

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

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

- <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/day-of-prayer-abuse-survivors-2021/>

Additional resources which were prepared for the Day of Prayer in 2019 are listed in Appendix 2:

# 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 (4 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.

## Listening with Love

### Introduction

The *Let's be Honest* group was approached by the Bishops' Conference to provide some material for reflection. From the beginning, it was recognised that the opportunity to invite people to reflect on the impact of abuse on individuals, and the Church, should not be limited to a particular time and that the resource could be for use at any time.

It is hoped that the Day of Prayer will provide an opportunity for many parishes and groups to take up the resource and use the sessions over a period of time.

After an initial discussion about looking at scripture and how it might be reflected upon as well as how to link the sessions the members of LBH asked survivors to prepare the resource. The survivors identified the themes and decided that, in conversations the voice of the survivor could be heard. Therefore, using scripture and recorded conversations each session reflects upon the impact of abuse. Participants are invited to listen and reflect.

At the end of the seven sessions there is an opportunity to reflect on what has been heard and what it means for the local Church.

### Ways of Using this Material

This material is designed for use in small groups, with a leader and participants. At the time of writing (January 2021) we recognise that the familiar format of small groups meeting together in one place may not be possible. Many have discovered that video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, have made coming together possible. There are a number of ways of using the material, depending on a community's circumstances or resources, each model allowing for social distancing.

The material is available in two formats:

- A PDF document for participants with separate audio clips for the Conversation
- A PowerPoint presentation (with embedded audio).

The two may be used separately or together.

All the material and further information can be found on the Bishops' Conference website:

- <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/listening-with-love/>

# Preparation

Individual notes are provided for the two liturgies below. Some of the aspects of preparation are common to both.

## Preparation Group

- It is important that survivors are, where possible, an integral part of the group. These are liturgies celebrated *with* not *for*.
- Others to be included will be the presider, musicians, someone from the church chosen to host the celebration.

## Tasks

In addition to the preparation of the liturgy the group should be aware of:

- Hospitality — apart from the fact that some may have travelled a distance to attend, the offering of refreshments allows people space to make connections, if they wish. Note that it is not currently possible to offer refreshments indoors so alternative arrangements may have to be considered.
- Care needs to be taken to ensure that support is available — this may take a number of forms:
  - Contact numbers for support on the liturgy leaflet.
  - Display of sources for support, including availability of the leaflet prepared by Survivors Advisory Panel (SAP) *Hurt by Abuse*. SAP is a group of Survivors and others who ensure that the voice of those affected by abuse is heard when drawing up national policy and guidance on safeguarding.)
  - Visibility of members of planning team and members of Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
  - Availability of identified listeners – more details below.
- Welcomers — these will be important. To hand out leaflets, provide direction and a warm smile. As with any parish liturgy they should be sensitive to those who wish to slip in quietly and, if needed, point people towards a Listener or one of the forms of support.
  - In some places there may be a need for welcomers and listeners outside the church before the liturgy begins so that if people come as protesters or deniers they can be treated with courtesy and invited to participate in the liturgy.
- Once the liturgy has taken place it can be helpful for the group to meet to evaluate the celebration. It is hoped that these liturgies will not be one-off events. To assist with this it may be helpful to have a comment sheet for people to fill in which includes hopes for the future. The ‘Paper of Hope’ in the ‘Let’s be honest’ service are intended for this and also to be shared with the diocesan bishop.

## Publicity

- It is key that the event is well advertised so that people know about it. Information should be included in diocesan ad clerums, newspapers, social media, schools information and other channels.
- Consideration should be given how to advertise more widely so that those who would not normally hear of church activities might be aware.
- It can be helpful to mention in the advance material that there will be people available at the service to respond to any queries or enquiries and offer any assistance.
- A Poster – particularly if the liturgy is one in a series repeated in different locations.
- It may be desirable to have some photographs of the liturgy for future publicity. Information should be included in the service booklet and announced to the effect that the images taken will not specifically indicate those who have attended.

## Testimony

There should be the opportunity for people to listen to the voice of survivors in the liturgy. It is sometimes easier for the survivor who speaks to come from outside the local area or for two survivors to speak together. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team may be aware of suitable speakers. If not, the Survivors Advisory Panel (SAP) may be able to help (but need to be asked in good time). Where all avenues have been exhausted it might be possible to use some of the testimonies which have been published as part of the Truth Project of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. (<https://www.truthproject.org.uk/experiences-shared>)

In addition, for the Mass it may be fruitful for the homilist to reflect on the scriptures with survivors.

## *Let's Be Honest*

# A Service of Sorrow and Acknowledgment of Abuse

This Service was written by Survivors and has been used as a deanery focus for prayer. The Bishops used parts of this service when they met together in Valladolid last May to listen to, and learn from the experiences of survivors of abuse.

The full text is given with some notes about possible adaptations that a planning group might consider.

## Preparation Notes

This liturgy was prepared by survivors for a deanery liturgy in the diocese of Hallam. The full text is given as it was first prayed. As it was written by survivors the text should be respected and trusted — if there are reasons to change it avoid presuming what a survivor wants to hear or be told, check with them.

Consideration will need to be given to who might lead the various parts of the liturgy. Towards the end of the liturgy there is an invitation for people to write their hopes for the future. Pieces of paper will need to be prepared beforehand.

## Music

There are a couple of hymns suggested. If these are not well known they might be replaced by hymns which speak of God's Love for Us, and Trust in God.

In addition there is some secular music suggested. Some places may not have the facility or the necessary licence to play music. It is important that the lyrics of the songs are reflected upon to help understand why the songs were chosen.

# A diocesan/deanery Mass for survivors

A celebration of the Eucharist can be a powerful sign of the response of the local Church. It can provide a safe space for survivors and an opportunity for the community to show its concern. At the heart of the Eucharist is the broken body of an innocent victim which gives life and hope.

The following notes are based on the Mass for Survivors 'Towards Healing and Reconciliation' prepared by the Diocese of Northampton.

## Preparation Notes

### Readings

The readings of the day should be considered.

If the date chosen allows for other readings to be used (cf. GIRM 374, 376) the following might be used:

1 Peter 5: 5-6	Wrap yourselves in humility.
Psalm 94	O that today you would listen to his voice, harden not your hearts.
Mark 4: 35-39	Jesus calms a storm.

Alternative readings may be found in the *Masses for Various Needs and Occasions: For Reconciliation, For the Sick, For Charity* (Lectionary Volume III). (This is not to suggest that victims/survivors are sick or in need of charity but where the liturgy of the Church has not formally addressed this need these themes may provide helpful starting points.)

### Prayers

The following might be considered:

#### Penitential Act:

Lord Jesus, you stand alongside all who are suffering.  
Lord Jesus, you listen to those who cry out to you.  
Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of betrayal and hurt.

**Intercessions:** model texts can be found on the website.

<http://www.bishopsconference.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/07/DPSA-Intercessions.pdf>

Eucharistic Prayer for use in Masses for Various Needs and Occasions: IV *Jesus went about doing good.*

**Prayer:** it may be helpful to have a common prayer said by all after Communion. The prayer at the beginning of this resource might be used or an additional example can be found in the Appendix.

### Music

In addition to the psalm and parts of the Mass the hymns sung should be familiar. Themes may include: Peace, Healing, God's Love for Us, Jesus's Care for Us, Light.

# Support - Listeners

Prayer and liturgy can touch on powerful emotions and memories. It is important therefore that at any liturgy that is about abuse there are people available, listeners, who can provide a sympathetic ear to whatever some people wish to raise. For some it may be about their own personal story, for others it may be a more general hurt about the Church.

There are trained and experienced listeners in the Diocese; wise and compassionate people can be found in every community. As a rule it is better if the listeners come from outside the particular place and it is helpful to offer a range of people to act as listeners.

Listeners might be coordinated by a member of a Diocesan Spirituality Team in collaboration with a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. They together brief the listeners before the liturgy, based on this document (which could also be sent out prior), and it would be appropriate to end this briefing with prayer. It may also be helpful to send to listeners prior to the liturgy *Hurt by Abuse*, a leaflet prepared by the Survivors Advisory Panel which offers helpful guidance on listening.

Common sense guidelines would include:

- DBS check (though this ministry is in public and may not require one)
- Listeners are clearly identifiable — this could be by wearing something distinguishing such as a brooch, lanyard or sash.
- Listeners are clearly visible — placed around the church or hall but out of earshot of others. It may be helpful to have some background music.
- Listeners are there for this Service only: they do not arrange to meet those they have listened to privately afterwards.
- Listeners pray beforehand – ideally with those leading the liturgy – and between each person who comes.
- Listeners should have lists of local agencies or Christian listening services for follow-up.
- It can be useful to have one or two “roving listeners”. They should be experienced Listeners/ Directors as their task is to be aware of people – participants or Listeners - who seem to be struggling. They will try to ensure that no-one leaves the church in distress.
- Listeners and priests should have a short session of prayer and reflection at the end to share (as appropriate) anything that needs to be off-loaded. A blessing would be appropriate.

# Appendix 1 Additional Texts

## *Litany*

*This was used in place of the Intercessions.*

We invite him to accompany us as we pray:

R. Stay with us, Lord. Stay with us, Lord,  
Stay with us, Lord. Your presence calms our fears.

When trust is fragile.  
When voices go unheard.  
When we are unable to pray. R.

When suffering is endured.  
When memories are reawakened.  
When we feel betrayed. R.

When darkness weighs upon us.  
When we cannot see you.  
When burdens feel too heavy. R.

When hope seems faint.  
When we are weak.  
When faith seems difficult. R.

## *Common Prayer — A Prayer for Healing*

*This Prayer was said after Communion.*

God of endless love,  
ever caring, ever strong,  
always present, always just:  
you gave your only Son  
to save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,  
join to your own suffering  
the pain of all who have been hurt  
in body, mind and spirit  
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters  
who have been harmed,  
and the cries of those who love them.  
Soothe their restless hearts with hope,  
steady their shaken spirits with faith.  
Grant them justice for their cause,  
enlightened by your truth.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,  
heal your people's wounds  
and transform brokenness into wholeness.  
Grant us the courage and wisdom,  
humility and grace to act with justice.  
Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labours.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

### *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 25 April.



# Appendix 2 2019 Resources

- <http://www.cbcew.org.uk/day-of-prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-12-april-2019/>

## Reflections

An introduction, a meditation from a survivor, some reflections on selected Psalms from the Liturgy of the Hours for Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent and a Penitential Litany spoken by Pope Francis at the World Meeting of Families in Dublin, 2018.

## Prayer

Prayer to the Holy Spirit by the Archdiocese of Boston, a prayer from the Archdiocese of Armagh and prayers from [wellsprings.org.uk](http://wellsprings.org.uk)

## Intercessions

Three different sets of Intercessions are offered - one set was composed by the Daughters of Mercy, a community of religious sisters in France, who were praying during the Vatican Summit in February 2019.

## Mass

The following material could be used at Weekday Mass on Friday 12 April (Friday, 5th Week of Lent). In addition to this Priests may consider using one of the two Eucharistic Prayers of Reconciliation.

## Devotions

Two versions of familiar devotions are offered: Praying the Rosary — the Sorrowful Mysteries and Stations of the Cross.

## Passion

A reflection on the Passion according to St John. We come before our God, who alone can lead us together in a path towards healing for all our brothers and sisters who have suffered so grievously as a result of our failures as Church.