

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Worship – Ecumenical Centre - 2017

“PRECIOUS IN GOD’S EYES”

From 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign is a time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

Since 2015 an interreligious coalition¹ is actively working to raise awareness and to affirm commitment with the end of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

This year the Coalition is using the slogan “*precious in God’s eyes*” with the aim of having a unified voice from faith communities and a clear engagement from their leaders to emphasize that women’s dignity is precious. Religious and lay Christian and Muslim leaders who are part of the campaign “precious in God’s eyes” affirm their commitment to overcoming sexual and gender-based violence addressing its religious roots.

By being part of the “Precious in Gods Eyes” Campaign, faith communities say NO to human trafficking, rape, domestic violence, child and forced marriage, honour crimes, female genital mutilation and other types of abuse; and say a YES to life with dignity, justice and the basic right to live a life safe and protected, embraced by God’s wings and mercy.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. Psalm 36.7

Song

A Litany of Lament

Hear us, Jesus Christ, when we cry to you for all the women and girls who are precious in God’s eyes, who are precious in their own eyes and are precious to one another. God of love and mercy, help us to see in each other a precious gift of God; receive us under your wings as we seek refuge and protection.

we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the young girls given or sold in marriage, and for unwilling brides with no way out,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the women raped as a weapon of war
and for the children they bear in grief and shame, **we cry out to you: bring justice!**

¹ Finn Church Aid (FCA), Mission 21, World Council of Churches (WCC), World Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Church of Sweden CoS), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Islamic Relief Worldwide, World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), Anglican Communion, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

For the victims of rape who are killed or take their own lives, and for the rape survivors who live with its scars,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the girls denied access to education, told they are stupid or worthless or expendable,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the girls and women sold or tricked into the sex trade, and for sex workers exposed to disease and violence,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the women trapped in destructive relationships, manipulated, controlled, justifying their abusers,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the women who hide their bruises and lie about their injuries for fear of the next attack,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the women bullied in their workplaces, belittled, underpaid, threatened with losing their job,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the women attacked because of their sexual identity, targets for physical or spiritual assault,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

For the women and girls denied religious freedom, forced to submit by custom or law,
we cry out to you: bring justice!

We cry to you, Jesus Christ, for our sisters, our daughters, our mothers, ourselves.

Bring justice. Bring healing. Bring hope. Amen.

Song:

*O Lord hear my prayer, o Lord hear my prayer, When I call, answer me,
O Lord hear my prayer, o Lord hear my prayer, Come and listen to me.*

Reading Psalm 55.1-14 (if possible, ask the congregation to close their eyes and to think in a woman who is part of their circle of relations, whom they know and can name who has suffered violence. Remember her name and ask people to listen the words of the Psalm as if would be the voice and words of this woman)

Reflection: Precious in God's eyes!

Rev Dr Elaine Neuenfeldt - LWF

Song

Let us pray

God of love,

We give you thanks for the signs of life and hope among us, even though they are tiny and being overshadowed by oppressive powers that sometimes seem so strong and dominating. We pray for life-giving power we receive from you.

We pray for all people that are courageously struggling to end violence against women. We pray for all people that are protesting in the streets, squares and churches, remembering those who are not among us anymore.

We pray for men who have not yet learned how to express their emotions and affections and for those who have chosen to dominate through violence; we pray for their transformation and repentance. We pray for your wisdom, guiding and sustaining all men who are courageously seeking help and breaking the cycle of violence.

We pray for all institutions and shelters that are welcoming victims and survivors, or are working with the perpetrators, we pray for all refugees, and for those who are giving their lives in the defense of women's human rights.

We pray for all churches that are assuming their prophetic role, denouncing gender-based violence.

We pray for love, peace and justice among us.

In Jesus' name, amen.

A Blessing for those working to end violence against women

God bless you

with insight to recognize violence in all its forms, and courage to name it, speaking out for justice. **Amen.**

The Lord Jesus bless you with compassion for the vulnerable, and grace to stand with them, sharing his strength. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit bless you with a prayerful heart, and power to breathe peace, transforming the world. **Amen.**

The blessing of the holy and glorious Trinity, eternal Wisdom, living Word, abiding Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Sending

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Litany of lament and blessing adapted from: <http://gracepoint.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Liturgy-for-prayer-for-an-end-violence-against-women.pdf>