

Prayer Diary

Prayers and reflections
for 16 Days of Activism
Against Gender-Based
Violence and Abuse

Calling for an end to violence
and abuse around the world

25 November to 10 December 2022



Welcome

Welcome to our 16 Days of Activism prayer diary. In this, as in previous years, we join together to highlight the pervasive issue of gender-based violence (GBV), which affects so many. We pray for those living with GBV and for those working to change their lives for the better. We call for a fuller understanding of the issues that trigger and cultivate GBV across our communities and societies; we pray that we and others will be equipped to make a difference, shining a light into dark corners and freeing people from unseen but powerful prisons.

Mothers' Union is against all forms of violence and abuse. **On 26 November, our Global Day of Action**, we call specifically for an end to the violence and abuse suffered by 1 in 3 women across the world. 'No more 1 in 3' is still our cry. By joining together on this day, we can raise awareness of the issues and reignite people's passion for change and for justice. We use our collective voice to draw attention to those whose voices are often stolen or muted by their circumstances.

We are rightly proud of the work our members do across the world: making individuals, families and communities safer and supported, giving them a chance to thrive. We know that this issue is not one that can be quickly fixed, but let us not lose heart. Every life changed, every woman freed, every person who grasps afresh the importance of speaking out on this issue – these are all reasons to celebrate and continue this important work.

We long for a world where people do not have to live in fear of those who are supposed to love them. Let us continue to strive to make this reality possible – in whatever way we can.

'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...'
(Proverbs 31:8)

Sheran Harper
Sheran Harper
Worldwide President
Mothers' Union

This diary was created by members of the Policy Community of Interest to inspire, engage and support others



What is 16 Days of Activism?

The United Nations' 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and Abuse is an annual international campaign. It takes place from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

Started over 30 years ago by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute, the 16 Days are used by individuals and organisations around the world to call for prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

Throughout the campaign, Mothers' Union joins with over 6,000 organisations from approximately 187 countries to raise awareness of, and call for an end to, gender-based violence and abuse in all forms and in all societies.

GBV can affect any person at any time, and statistics demonstrate that women and girls are particularly at risk. Every day of the year, Mothers' Union works alongside communities to help end domestic abuse and gender-based violence and to support those affected by it. For these 16 days, we focus on women and girls, recognising the value of women and men reflecting, praying, and acting together to call for an end to violence in all its forms.

'For the LORD is a God of justice.'
(Isaiah 30:18b)

'Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.'
(Hebrews 4:13)




Mothers' Union Global Day of Action

Mothers' UNION
#nomore1in3
End abuse and violence now
**Saturday 26
November 2022**

On our Global Day of Action, tied into the 16 Days of Activism, we are building on last year's campaign, focusing on #nomore1in3 (no more 1 in 3). 1 in 3 women will be impacted by some form of violence in their life and we believe this is unacceptable.

What are we doing on this Global Day?

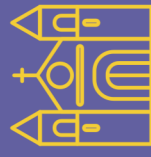
 This year we join together on Saturday 26 November, wearing specially branded #nomore1in3 badges.

We will gather, where possible, for a one-minute silence at **1.03pm** (linking to the 1 in 3 theme).



We want to make this as big as we can, combining the voices of our four million members around the world – calling for action on an international scale and in the countries where we live.

Their are 3 different ways you can be involved:



1. Big

We hope this event will be held at cathedrals in at least 15 dioceses across Britain and Ireland, with as many members as possible, plus clergy and other local high-profile individuals. Speak with your diocesan president (DP) to see what the plans are in your area or perhaps to lead on this!



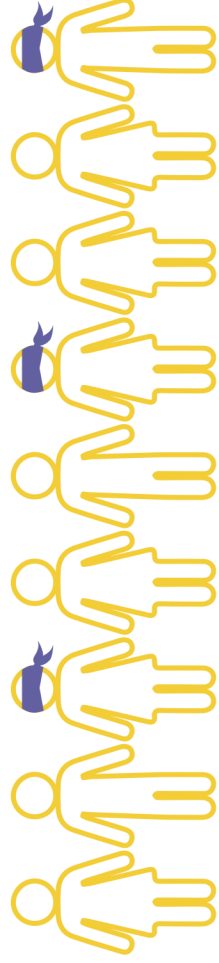
2. Local

Get together at a local level, perhaps in your branch or deanery, or ask other local groups to get involved.



3. Home

If you can't join an outside event, why not join in fellowship with those from your own home?



When holding a group event, stand (if able) wearing your #nomore1in3 badges to show why you are observing the silence. You can also use your purple scarves from last year - with every third person wearing a scarf over their mouth or eyes, as a powerful symbol of the 1 in 3 women affected by domestic violence.

Supporting resources

We will produce templates for you to use for events, including signs, information sheets, local newsletter articles and press releases. These will be available on the MU website closer to the event date: www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2022

Tell us what you are doing!

Together we want to get those who make the decisions on funding, support and services to sit up and listen. Let us know what you are planning – big or small! Complete this simple online form <https://tinyurl.com/16-days-of-activism> or let your DP know, so that they can collate and share with Mary Sumner House and try and secure national press coverage.

Buy your #nomore1in3 badges today

Special branded campaign badges can be purchased here: www.mueshop.org/collections/no-more-1-in-3

Why not wear your badge or a purple scarf to church or other events over the 16 days, to spark conversation? Use the information in this prayer diary to share why we are campaigning on this issue.



Friday 25th November

International Day for the

Elimination of Violence against Women

1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, most frequently by an intimate partner. (UN)

'There is one universal truth ... violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.'

(UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2008)

'As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'
(John 13:34)

Loving one another like Christ means caring and respecting each other.

In fullness of love, we seek to serve one another, to be uplifting, gracious, supporting and encouraging.

May God reveal violence, discrimination and abuse in our communities and help us to understand and speak out against all forms of violence.



Saturday 26th November

Spotlight on FGM

Worldwide, 200 million women and girls have undergone Female Genital Mutilation. (UN)

So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
(Genesis 1:27)

Our physical bodies are an important part of the body of Christ and the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 6:19). We are each beautiful and precious in his sight.

We pray for women and girls living with health problems because of FGM, for effective education programmes and for those who accompany survivors on their journey of healing.



Sunday 27th November

The impact on children

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you, I appointed you a prophet to the nation.'
(Jeremiah 1:5)

Before children are even formed in the womb, they are known and loved by God. Children are often the unseen and unheard victims of domestic violence. We can only imagine what it is like for a child to see a parent experiencing abuse from their spouse or partner and being unable to prevent it.



Today we pray for every child who is a survivor of violence in the home. May they find help and support. We pray for all those services offering a listening ear to children.



Why not wear your badge to your church service today?



Monday 28th November

The story of Tamar

Tamar's story is a powerful, uncomfortable example of perpetuated sexual violence and God's condemnation of it. It is a stark reminder that sexual violence is a violation of human rights.

Read 2 Samuel 13:1-22. Reflect on this biblical story and how it mirrors the experiences of many in the 21st century.

Consider: in what ways does our society make it hard for those who have experienced gender-based violence to speak out about their experiences?

We pray for the healing of pain caused by sexual violence and for caring men and women who will speak out against sexual violence and endeavour to support people who have experienced it.



Tuesday 29th November

The disabled community

'A vast crowd brought to him people who were lame, blind, crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others. They laid them before Jesus, and he healed them all. The crowd was amazed! Those who hadn't been able to speak were talking, the crippled were made well, the lame were walking, and the blind could see again! And they praised the God of Israel.'
(Matthew 15:30-31)

We are all one in Christ, no matter how different we might look or how our bodies might move. The disabled community is also affected by domestic abuse. How terrifying it must be when your carer is your abuser.

We pray that the government will recognise that the disabled community is affected by domestic abuse and that laws will be changed accordingly.



Wednesday 30th November

Safe places

Where is your safe place? As Christians, we understand God to be our stronghold, our place of refuge – a God of solidarity in suffering. How can we join with God, by standing in solidarity with women and children who do not have a safe refuge from violence?

The Istanbul Convention, the gold standard framework on violence against women, recommends one woman's refuge space per 10,000 population. A refuge is a safe haven, but every day, women and children are turned away because of lack of space.

Pray for the women who need to access the refuges, for women who are healing from trauma, for staff on the frontline and for the provision of adequate supplies of emergency refuge accommodation.



Thursday 1st December

Elder abuse

'Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.'
(Deuteronomy 32:7)

Often within our rural communities, many generations still live together or close by to one another. The elderly can be subject to domestic abuse from a family member. There are many women who have been brought up to stay in a marriage no matter how badly they are treated.

We remember how our Lord ensured his mother would be cared for even after his death (John 19:26-27).



Today we think of the elderly women and men who are stuck with an abusive family member. We pray that they will seek and find help.

Friday 2nd December

The Samaritan woman at the well

Read John 4:1-30

Jesus challenged many social customs. Here, Jesus chooses to demonstrate to us that this woman is created and loved by God. He does not treat her as a social outcast, or condemn her, but meets her in her need and gives her life.

Reflect on this biblical story and how it mirrors the experiences of many in the 21st century. How do we respond to people who feel isolated, unworthy or excluded? Why do you think survivors of sexual violence don't always feel able to report their experience?

We pray that we can love as Christ did and be a faithful witness in representing God and sharing God's unconditional love.



Our work in action

Listen to their voices

'Nobody cares what happens... the neighbours know but they act like nothing is going on... how can they hear it and pretend like they don't... they're just as bad as him... they could do something, but they don't.' (A child's voice)

Hearing and sharing voices educates, motivates and moves us. Children's voices can be shared in a variety of settings. Print our voices resource which can be found on the Global day page under resources here www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2022 and use in a variety of ways. Put one in each pew or chair in your church, make posters for shop windows, read them out during a service, post them on social media.

Let their voices speak out.

The **'Souls of Our Shoes'** exhibition features the voices of those experiencing violence, accompanying their shoes. allireland.mothersunion@gmail.com (Ireland) hilary.moran@btinternet.com (UK)



These shoes may be glamorous but my life is not...



Freedom from FGM

Female genital mutilation (FGM) has long been practised in the Diocese of Sebei, Uganda. Mothers' Union has been campaigning against it, with great success in urban areas. Women have been empowered; men in the community are supportive. Women who have been mutilated can now talk openly about the disadvantages of FGM.

Reports from schools and churches are encouraging. Girls study without fear of mutilation. Marital conflict and separation due to FGM issues have reduced. Through the efforts of MU leaders, girls have a right to pursue their education without disruption and women have a right to sexual pleasure during marriage.

We thank God for all that has been achieved, but the struggle against FGM in rural areas of the diocese is ongoing. The campaign to prevent women and girls from experiencing this continues.

Saturday 3rd December

Coercive control

Coercive control is the most pervasive form of domestic abuse. Not necessarily physical, it is a persistent and deliberate pattern of behaviour by an abuser over a prolonged period, designed to achieve obedience and create fear. It may include coercion, threats, stalking, intimidation, isolation, degradation and control. It may also include physical and/or sexual violence.

'...as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.' (Galatians 6:10)

How can we act to change a culture that accepts coercive behaviour in a relationship?



We thank God for legislation on this issue, and we pray for effective resourcing and implementation to enable victims and families to regain their lives.

Sunday 4th December

Breaking the cycle of trafficking

Speaking of her rape as a seven-year-old child, and her subsequent five-year mutism, Maya Angelou said that cynicism in a young person is one of the worst things, because they move from knowing nothing to believing nothing.

Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. Children traumatised by abuse carry that trauma into adulthood. Many enter abusive relationships, either as victims or perpetrators.

How can we contribute to breaking that cycle?

We pray for children living in desperate situations, whose families are coaxed into trafficking them to orphanages or to other countries for work, believing they can have a better life.



Monday 5th December

Healthy relationships matter

Behind beautiful homes can lie a predator that no one else sees.

A woman may be experiencing physical, financial and emotional abuse, yet feel it is important, despite her private misery, to submit to her husband, no matter the cost. All because of how she understands Ephesians 5:22 ('wives, submit to your husbands'). It is a tragic irony when this verse is used to justify violence and abuse against women.

We pray that we may faithfully teach God's Word and that it may not be used as a tool to damage and abuse. May church communities work towards being safe places where survivors will be listened to and signposted to places of support.



Tuesday 6th December

Love matters

Our love for God motivates and challenges us to keep this command: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbour as yourself.' (Luke 10:27)

Survivors and perpetrators of violence may find it hard to love both God and themselves. Reflect on how or whether they can be helped to do this. How might this benefit them in the long term?

We give thanks that we can show our love for God and God's people through our actions; and that these actions will have eternal as well as earthly significance.



Join our 16 Days of Activism

Wednesday 7th December

Women in conflict zones

In conflict zones, rape is being used as a weapon of war. Targeted violence does not come from nowhere; there was a pre-existing inequality and social norm from which it stemmed. Violence against women is a symptom of a deeper-rooted societal ailment.

Stigma and silence are the bedfellows of violence and inequality. Education and empathy are the breakers of chains.

We pray for MU Literacy and Financial Projects in communities and refugee camps, where women are fleeing war and conflict.

We pray for the women who lead and who attend these projects, that they may gain confidence and invaluable training to enhance their opportunities.



Thursday 8th December

The impact of child marriage

Each year, 12 million girls marry before the age of 18. That's 23 girls every minute. (UN)

Child brides face huge challenges because they are married as children. Girls tend to be poor, under-educated and live in rural areas, where birth and death rates are high, and conflict is common. Isolated and with limited freedom, they lose their childhood.

Child brides are neither physically nor emotionally ready to become wives and mothers, risking dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth, and often suffering domestic violence.

'For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.' (Psalm 72:12)

We pray for a change in religious and cultural norms and that governments will outlaw this appalling practice.



Friday 9th December

Transforming power

God's power is transformative. Mary meekly gave her 'yes' to the angel who told her she was to be the mother of Jesus. She sat helpless at the foot of the cross as she watched her son die. Yet this same Mary sang the radical song – the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

What does the song of Mary say to the use and abuse of power in our society?

Lord, in our lives there are times to accept what life brings and trust in your guidance and love. May power be used for the good of all, and may those who abuse power, remember that, in the end, all power comes from God.



Saturday 10th December

International Human Rights Day

'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28)

Today we rejoice and reflect on ways we can share God's compassion and love.

'Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.'

(Eleanor Roosevelt, UN)

We are all created equal and are together one with Christ. Respect for women and girls is the responsibility of everyone.

Pray that we may bring love and respect into the small and hidden places, to those who feel unvalued and unseen.



Actions

- 1. Everyone has a story.** Make eye contact with those whom you meet today, greet each one with a welcoming smile. Listen to a woman today. You do not know her life behind closed doors. Believe in her, invest time in her.
- 2. Across Britain and Ireland, over 210 requests for refuge are turned away every day.** Find out what shortages there are in your local area and write to your local politician, asking them to prioritise funding and resources for these.
- 3. The Safe Place initiative** is a simple way for organisations to provide information and signposting for anyone affected by domestic abuse. Sign up for your church to be part of raising awareness in your community: <https://www.onustraining.co.uk/play-your-part>
- 4. Thursdays in Black** – towards a world without rape and violence. Join with a growing number of people who are committed to wearing black on Thursdays, with a Thursdays in Black badge. Print the logo and make your own badge from the World Council of Churches. Take a picture and put it on social media.
Find out more: www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black
- 5. Plan to become better informed of the wider picture.**
Here are some resources that might help:

MU 16 Days of Activism resources

Mothers' Union www.mothersunion.org/global-day-2022

UN Women www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures

Restored <https://www.restored-uk.org>

There are various YouTube resources on different aspects of abuse:

Walking through domestic abuse <https://youtu.be/98OFTTqae8>

Rural abuse <https://youtu.be/E6i3gNip3Jk>

Elder abuse https://youtu.be/_zau7OzKaXQ

Disability abuse <https://youtu.be/P0NIH8nY9W's>

Male abuse <https://youtu.be/ZSyT3UV0D9I>



Signposting



The Survivor's Handbook from Women's Aid provides practical online support and information for people experiencing domestic abuse, with simple guidance on every aspect of seeking support.

www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook



Bright Sky App, free for phones on app stores. Support and information for anyone in an abusive relationship or family members. Contains a UK directory of specialist help.

www.hestia.org/brightsky

LOCALLY

Local help can be found at Women's Aid groups; social services at your council; from your GP or local pharmacy. Victims of domestic abuse can access immediate help from the police or local pharmacy by asking for 'ANI' (code for Action Needed Immediately).

UK

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (24 hours)

Men's Advice Line: 0808 8010327 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 8pm)

SCOTLAND

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline: 0800 027 1234 (24 hours)

NORTHERN IRELAND

Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline: 0808 802 1414 (24 hours)

The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre: 0800 389 4424 (24 hours)

The Men's Advisory Project Northern Ireland (MAP): 028 9024 1929 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Women's Aid National Helpline Ireland: 1800 341 900 (24 hours)

Men's Aid Ireland: 01 554 3811 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm)

WALES

Live Fear Free helpline: 0808 80 10 800 (24 hours)

Speaking out makes an impact



'I was invited to speak at a church service about the 16 Days of Activism campaign and afterwards two people came and spoke to me about the impact my words had had on them.'

'Some months later one of the people contacted me to tell me that she had left an abusive relationship after many years. She had, at last, found the courage to leave and she told me how she was re-building her life. She thanked me for my words. She now wants to help others in a similar situation and is in contact with a women's domestic abuse organisation.' (Diocese in Britain and Ireland)

Raising awareness of God-given rights

Gender-based violence (GBV) is accepted by some cultures, encouraging men to beat their wives as a sign of manhood. Among the Turkana and Samburu tribes in North Kenya, wife beating is accepted as a form of discipline. It is a cause of many broken marriages, resulting in single mothers raising children after running away from domestic violence.

The Church and Mothers' Union in Kenya assist women with prayers, encouragement, food and clothing. Together with Alice, an MU Community Development Coordinator, MU members give space to schoolchildren during the evenings, as they don't have an environment in their homes in which they can study.

One cause of GBV is lack of understanding of human rights, which are God-given. As Mothers' Union, we are working hard to change this.



A prayer for those working to end sexual and gender-based violence

God bless you with insight to recognise violence in all its forms, and courage to name it, speaking out for justice.

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

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

The blessing of the holy and glorious Trinity, eternal Wisdom, living Word,

abiding Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

(With thanks to the Anglican Church of Australia)

The hands and feet of Christ

Christ has no body now but yours.

No hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,

yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

(St Teresa of Avila)

Mothers' Union, Mary Summer House, 24 Tuffton Street, London, SW1P 3RB

The Mothers' Union, incorporated by Royal Charter 1926, is a charity registered in England and Wales (Registration No: 240531)

Lord, today we make a commitment to take a stand: to say 'no more! in 3', to use our eyes to see where change needs to be made, to use our voices to challenge injustice in our world. May we support people experiencing abuse, enabling them to reach their full potential and may we call for change. Amen



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guide for
back cover
(bookmarks)

...what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love
mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

Calling for justice

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. (Hebrews 4:13)

Opening our eyes

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness,
but rather expose them (Ephesians 5:11)

Breaking the silence

