

## A PRAYER

O God, in mystery and silence you are present in our lives, bringing new life out of destruction, hope out of despair, growth out of difficulty. We thank you that you do not leave us alone but labor to make us whole. Help us to perceive your unseen hand in the unfolding of our lives, and to attend to the gentle guidance of your Spirit, that we may know the joy you give your people. Amen.

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## A PRAYER

Lord, there are homes in our community where women, men and children live in fear of violence. For them, home is not a place of peace and love. It is a place of danger and pain. Help them Lord, give them strength to endure. Help them find a place of quiet acceptance in which to rest their tired spirits.

Lord, there are also in our community people who turn their back(?) upon those in abusive situations. Those who know and yet do nothing to help end the suffering. Whisper into their ears, Lord, let them hear of your love for all peoples. Open their hearts to the pain of others.

Lord, we hear the voices of our children crying. Help us turn their tears to laughter. We see terror in the faces of our sisters, Lord. Help us turn their fear into hope. Give us courage to confront abusers, Lord, whether in our community, family, or ourselves. Help us not to judge, Lord, for we do not know another's pain. Give us strength to endure, Lord, for the battle will be long. We put our trust in You, Lord.

For peace in our world will come only through peace in our hearts and in our homes.

Amen.

Written by Donna Cumming, New Hampshire. Reprinted with permission from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) (1992) NCADV Domestic Violence Awareness Month Packet. (For more information, contact the NCADV, P.O. Box 34103, Washington, DC 20043-4103)

**Shorter Version**

***Inspiration for this prayer was drawn from the U.S. Catholic Bishops' statement on domestic violence, "When I Call for Help."***

***Response: When I call for help, answer me, O God.***

- ◆ ***For clarity of realization, in church and society, that violence against women, men and children is sinful, and is never justified, we pray..... Response***
- ◆ ***For conversion of heart which calls us to confront and name the evil of domestic violence against men, women and children, we pray..... Response***

***For courage of conviction which refuses to deny and resist the truth that domestic violence exists in our homes and families, in our diocese and parishes, we pray..... Response***

***For discernment of spirits to separate protection of privacy from a secret conspiracy of silence about domestic violence against women, men and children, we pray.....Response***

- ◆ ***For empowerment of victims who are battered and repentance of abusers, we pray.....Response***
- ◆ ***For healing of children who witness violence at home and so break the cycle of domestic violence from generation to generation, we pray..... Response***

***For prophecy of vision and voice we see and speak the outrage of domestic violence, we pray..... Response***

- ◆ ***For restoration of dignity to women, men, and children abused by domestic violence, we pray..... Response***

***For understanding of relationships between men and women which are based on justice, equality, respect, dignity, and peace, we pray..... Response***

- ◆ ***For valuing of human persons in the image of God as equals, neither men superior nor women inferior, neither men dominant nor women controlled, we pray..... Response***

***Let Us Pray***

**Gentle and gracious God, we give you thanks and praise. You call us forth into being and bestow upon us dignity and honor as women and men created in your image.**

**Touch us with your grace. Strengthen us to accept the conversion of heart which requires us to live in equality and mutuality, with gentleness and compassion, with reverence and respect, toward ourselves, toward one another and toward all creatures who come forth from your love. We pray this through Jesus Christ, God's Word and Wisdom, giving affirmation to the human dignity of all, now and forever. Amen**