

Domestic Violence Bulletin Inserts

Please include the source information.

As pastors of the Catholic Church in the United States, we state as clearly and strongly as we can that violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form — physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal — is sinful; often, it is a crime as well. We have called for a moral revolution to replace a culture of violence. We acknowledge that violence has many forms, many causes, and many victims — men as well as women²

² *Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action*. USCCB 1994.

WHY MEN BATTER

Domestic violence is learned behavior. Men who batter learn to abuse through observation, experience, and reinforcement. They believe that they have a right to use violence; they are also rewarded, that is, their behavior gives them power and control over their partner.

WHY WOMEN STAY

Women stay with men who abuse them primarily out of fear. Some fear that they will lose their children. Many believe that they cannot support themselves, much less their children.

Alcohol and drugs are often associated with domestic violence, but they do not cause it. An abusive man who drinks or uses drugs has two distinct problems: substance abuse and violence. Both must be treated.

Source:

Quotes from “When I Call for Help”, A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women, 10th Anniversary Edition, A Statement of the US Catholic Bishops, copyright 2002. Used with permission.

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. Beginning with Genesis, Scripture teaches that women and men are created in God’s image. Jesus himself always respected the human dignity of women. Pope John Paul II reminds us that “Christ’s way of acting, the Gospel of his words and deeds, is a consistent protest against whatever offends the dignity of women.”¹¹

¹¹ Pope John Paul II, *On the Dignity and Vocation of Women*

REMEMBER: Some battered women run a high risk of being killed when they leave their abuser or seek help from the legal system. It is important to be honest with women about the risks involved. If a woman decides to leave, she needs to have a safety plan, including the names and phone numbers of shelters and programs. Some victims may choose to stay at this time because it seems safer. Ultimately, abused women must make their own decisions about staying or leaving.

Violence against women in the home has serious repercussions for children. Over 50 percent of men who abuse their wives also beat their children.⁶ Children who grow up in violent homes are more likely to develop alcohol and drug addictions and to become abusers themselves.⁷ The stage is set for a cycle of violence that may continue from generation to generation.

⁶ *Walk in the Light: A Pastoral Response to Child Sexual Abuse*. USCCB 1995.

⁷ www.cdc.gov/ncip/factsheets/ipvfacts.htm.