

DAY OF PRAYER & PENANCE FOR VICTIMS OF ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Each year, on the Friday after Ash Wednesday, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC) calls us to commemorate a **Day of Prayer & Penance for the Victims of Abuse and Violence**.

For Christians, prayer, conversion and justice are central to the healing process. As a faith community, we come together before God, seeking forgiveness for the harm that has been done.

On Friday, 7 March 2025, our bishops invite us to acknowledge the horrors of violence and cruelty inflicted on all those who suffered abuse within Catholic settings.

In this Year of Jubilee, Pope Francis invites the Church to be **Beacons of Hope** and **Channels of Forgiveness, Peace & Reconciliation**. As we gather in prayer on Friday, 7 March, let our voices be one with St Francis of Assisi:

LORD,

make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

READINGS FOR THE MASS OF THE DAY

Is 58:1-9	Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me: to open unjust fetters, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke?
Ps 50:3-6,18-19	A broken humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.
Gospel Acclamation	Glory and praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ! Seek good and not evil so that you may live and the Lord will be with you. Glory and praise to you, Lord, Jesus Christ!
Mt 9:14-15	When the bridegroom is taken from them, then they will fast.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Choose one or more prayers from the list below. If being used in Sunday Mass, the prayer can be prefaced with "As the Church marks the Day of Prayer and Penance for Victims of Abuse and Violence this week, we pray..."

Reader **For children, young people and vulnerable adults
who have experienced violence and abuse:**

May they be held in God's love. May they find relief and healing from their suffering; may they find hope in times of darkness.

In your mercy ...

ALL **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

Reader **We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church:**

May they know God's love. May they find justice, healing and peace in the risen Christ.

In your mercy ...

ALL **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

Reader **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.

In your mercy ...

ALL **HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

Leader

Ever-faithful God, whose love knows no end,
you gave your only Son to become human like us.

Jesus, bearer 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 all who have been harmed
and the cries of those who love them.
Soothe their hearts with hope, steady their shaken spirits,
lighten their burdens.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal the wounds and brokenness
of those harmed by abuse
and grant that they may find peace.

Through Christ our Lord

Amen

