

# WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

## Elimination of Violence against Women Say NO to Violence Against Women

<http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/vaw/>

### 25th NOVEMBER – A DAY WE NEED TO REMEMBER

#### It is International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

We read in many articles that women and girls all over the world are especially vulnerable to particular types of violence such as domestic violence, incest, rape, people trafficking, female genital mutilation and 'honour crimes'.

One in three Australian women will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. This is one of the most widespread and serious human rights abuses in Australia. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006) That figure also sums up the crisis confronting women throughout the world, but thanks to various activists a number of actions have been taken in an attempt to eliminate violence.



#### Personal Encounter:

One of our own women, **Sister Patricia McDermott RSM** (North Sydney) has been working with women in Peru for the last 12 years. Having heard the stories of domestic violence from so many women, she has witnessed how Luke 13: 10-18 can be a transforming moment for them. She states:

*Rosa is one such woman – beaten by her husband for many years. But then, one day, hearing the courage of other women, she decided “Enough – I won’t let him do it to me any more. I looked at the photo you had taken of me, all beaten and bruised. I couldn’t deny it! From that moment, I could feel a new strength within me. I know I have dignity. I will not be beaten again. I can stand tall like the woman in the gospel – My life has changed and I want to help other women realise that they don’t have to stay bent over and oppressed.”*

The **UNIFEM REPORT 2003** states –

*“In a relatively short time, women and their advocates have transformed the way gender-based violence is understood, and have promoted international documents and treaties that recognise, for the first time, women’s right to live free of violence. We cannot change the basic structures of society overnight. But each step in the ongoing effort to eradicate violence puts more pressure on those who condone the violence and allow it to exist. Each step makes it harder to ignore the international agreements to protect and promote women’s human rights. This is the moment for a renewed commitment to build on the achievements of the last decades and find the resources for meaningful action.”* <http://www.unifem.org/>

#### Further Information ...

UNIFEM: Not a Minute More <http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/vaw/>

Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Common Myths [http://www.wdvcs.org.au/common\\_myths.htm](http://www.wdvcs.org.au/common_myths.htm)

End Violence Against Women [www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)

The Centre for Non-violent Communication <http://www.cnvc.org/>

Domestic Violence Resource Centre <http://www.dvirc.org.au/index.htm>

## WHAT ARE WE DOING... WHAT CAN WE DO IN OUR OWN COUNTRY?

Various measures include the following –

- Re-running the successful national Violence Against Women - Australia Says No Campaign.
- Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Initiatives.
- Continual Funding for the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.
- Research Projects on domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Training for nurses in regional and rural areas
- Training for the criminal justice sector on sexual assault.
- Dedicated resource at the Australian Institute of Criminology – Research
- Mensline

Further information on these initiatives: Australian Government Office for Women

[http://www.ofw.facs.gov.au/womens\\_safety\\_agenda/index.htm](http://www.ofw.facs.gov.au/womens_safety_agenda/index.htm)

**WHITE RIBBON DAY** ([www.whiteribbonday.org.au/](http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au/)) was created by some Canadian men in 1991 on the second anniversary of one man's massacre of fourteen women in Montreal. They began the White Ribbon Campaign to urge men to speak out against violence against women.

On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September Prime Minister Kevin Rudd presented the 2008 White Ribbon Ambassador Award and announced funding for research and analysis of Australian community attitudes towards violence against women.

White Ribbons and wristbands are being sold to help raise awareness of violence against women.

Coinciding with Father's Day, results of a survey found that more than half of Australian men said their father had rarely or never spoken to them about avoiding violence in their personal relationships when they were growing up. A media release calls Aussie dads to speak out to help prevent violence.

- Further educating ourselves on this issue. Caritas Australia offers us the opportunity of downloading a powerful presentation prepared by them on the theme of "Ending impunity for violence against women and girls."  
[http://www.caritas.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Empowering\\_women\\_ppts](http://www.caritas.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Empowering_women_ppts)
- Taking the opportunity of advocating on behalf of women who are affected by violence and encouraging women to seek assistance if they need it.
- Purchase a white ribbon to help raise awareness of violence against women.
- Reflect on Patricia's Poem, **STANDING TALL**

### STANDING TALL

For eighteen long years she had been bent over,  
Oppressed and scorned she was.  
But at the touch of Jesus, made whole again!  
Standing tall, face to face,  
Seeing the eye of love-transformed!

So many women too, year upon year  
Oppressed, beaten, humiliated,  
Accepting as part of their lot,  
The violence dealt to them.  
But then, one day, they hear a different call  
"Enough, no more! This should not be so!"

In solidarity with other women, they gain new strength  
Standing tall, they face the future with courage.  
Transformation, new life!  
Precious, with dignity!  
A new day dawns!  
A future full of hope!

(Luke 13: 10-18)

**Sister Patricia McDermott RSM**

From: Specific Issues Committee, Women and Poverty (Sisters Leonie Crotty, Miriam Grech, Angela Reed, Anne Ryan)  
The Committee warmly invites your response to the article or the issue.

Email: [women.poverty@mercy.org.au](mailto:women.poverty@mercy.org.au)

Contact: Carmel Heagerty RSM, Institute Justice Co-ordinator

Email: [Institute.Justice@mercy.org.au](mailto:Institute.Justice@mercy.org.au)