

Let Us Lament Praying Out Of Violence

In 2017, the NZ Catholic Bishops drew our attention to the need to pray in the face of violence by introducing a day of Prayer and Penance for victims of abuse and violence. While this day is to be the first Friday of Lent each year, let us make prayer in the face of violence a habit. Let us lament...

A Lament for Violence Against Individuals

With appropriate discussion and agreement, this lament may be led by a community member. It may be used as it is, altered to suit particular groups or simply used as inspiration to create something new. Consideration needs to be given to those who may attend, especially if victims of violence are present. Prepare an environment which is both comfortable and beautiful – it could be in a church or meeting room. As people arrive, ensure they are warmly welcomed. Prepare beforehand who will do each part of the ritual and how it will be done. Psalms are best sung. Ensure lengthy silences.

Introductory Rite

Leader **Welcome** The sources of violence are many from minor insults on a street corner or sports field, to major assaults outside pubs, train stations or supermarkets. From the volatile anger of domestic violence to international war zones and aggressive armaments displays. From the violence of displacement from job, home or country to the violence of nature in storms, earthquakes and volcanoes. From the insidious violence of sexual abuse to the silent violence of premature life ending procedures. No-one is immune to the reaches of violence or detached from its effects. Violence seizes upon the unsuspecting and makes victims of the innocent. Let us take this time to turn and face the violence in our own lives.

Song Come to Me All who Labour; Sing Praise 154

Greeting When Jesus spoke, he echoed the words of the Psalmist, saying,
'Come to me all who labour,' he said.
'For I see, that your yoke is heavy.
Your burden has crippled you,
And you cannot walk.
Come to me.'
So let us come now.
For the yoke of violence is too heavy,
And we have been doubled over beneath its weight.
Let us face the darkness of violence that has lived
In ourselves and in our homes,
In our churches, our community
in our country and in our world.

Complaint

Reading 2 Samuel 13:7-19

Psalm 102 Hear my prayer O Lord;
Let my cry come to you.
Do not hide your face from me on the day of my distress.
Incline your ear to me;
Answer me speedily on the day when I call.
For my days pass away like smoke and my bones burn like a furnace.
My heart is stricken and withered like grass;
I am too wasted to eat my bread.
Because of my loud groaning
My bones cling to my skin.
I am like an owl of the wilderness,
Like a little owl of the waste places.
I lie awake; I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.

Stories of contemporary violence – people may recount their own experience of violence, or other participants may read or tell stories of contemporary violence according to the theme or purpose of this lament.

Silence

Leader

Prayer

O God,
we look on from a distance,
with Mary Magdalene and the other faithful women,
as Jesus is crucified again in our own day;
Still today your child Jesus cries out,
“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
Still today our brother Jesus is crucified
in our sisters and brothers,
whose clothes are stripped off,
who are mocked and derided,
beaten and starved.
We weep, and you weep as well:
Your dream for humankind goes awry.
Be with your crucified ones today,
and help us to stand in solidarity with them.
In the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen

Liturgies of Lament J Frank Henderson LTP 1994

Petition and Assurance

Psalm

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Save me O God, for the waters have come up to my neck
I sink deep into the mire, where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters; and the flood sweeps over me.
I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched.
My eyes grow dim with waiting for God
Save me O God, for the waters have come up to my neck

Stories of contemporary healing and hope - people recount their own experience of healing, or other participants tell stories with examples of healing or hope according to the theme or purpose of this lament.

Litany:

Leader	That violence might give way to understanding.	All	Make us fresh as the morning dew
Leader	That aggression might give way to tenderness.	All	Make us fresh as the morning dew.
Leader	That abuse might give way to compassion	All	Make us fresh as the morning dew.
Leader	That abandonment might give way to compassion.	All	Make us fresh as the morning dew.
Leader	May despair give way to hope.	All	Make us fresh as the morning dew.

Leader

- Water of Renewal

“The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.
The woman said to him ‘Sir, give me this water so that I may never have to be thirsty,
or have to keep coming here to draw water.’” Jn 4.15
Water is both tomb and womb, death and life.
It signifies chaos and endings,
It signifies life and beginnings.

{Either all People are now invited either to come and move their hands in the bowl of water, or if there are people present who would appreciate feeling supported by those around them, people move slowly in procession and circle the bowl of water, while those needing support stand inside the circle and move their hands in the bowl of water.}

Leader I invite you forward to place your hands in this water.
As you do, call to mind the different faces of water;
the chaos and the calm,
the terror and the play,
the rage and the great beauty of life in all of its wonderful forms.
Surrender to the caverns of pain within
As the water encircles your hands
Be aware that God's grace encircles your heart,
And reclaim the spring of living water
That wells up into eternal life.

Procession *Opportunity given now for people to come forward and move their hands in the water. Music could be played*

Song Come To The Water AOV 1/74

Trust and Praise

Reading Luke 18: 35-38,40-42

Psalm 31 In you O Lord, I seek refuge; let me never be put to shame...

Dream *...for an alternative future. This could be a power point and music, it could be a poem or it could be a chance to meditate silently on a piece of artwork. During this time, people take a tea-light candle, light it and put it onto a prepared focus area.*

Concluding Rite

Blessing
Leader Bless us with courage when we are assailed.
All Send us now, sustained by your living water.
Leader Bless us with self-respect born of God's deep love for each one of us.
All Send us now, sustained by your living water.
Leader Bless us with a renewed understanding of unity
All Send us now, sustained by your living water.

Leader Dismissal. As we end this time of prayer, may healing remain with us, may gentleness direct us, may strength sustain us and may love remind us of our infinite worth. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

Song as we sing this song, get the candle you lit to take it with you. Shelter Me O God Bob Hurd AOV 1,140 could be sung or The Lord is My Shepherd AOV 1/26

This lament is inspired by material from *Liturgies of Lament* by J Frank Henderson © LTP Chicago 1994 and developed by the Staff of the Liturgy Centre Auckland. May 2018.