



DAY OF PRAYER FOR
SURVIVORS & VICTIMS OF
ABUSE

Mass Booklet

20th February 2026
*NBSCCCI & Towards
Peace*

Introduction

In August 2018, Pope Francis wrote:

“It is always helpful to remember that “in salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in the human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people” (Gaudete et Exsultate, 6).

Consequently, the only way that we have to respond to this evil (of abuse) that has darkened so many lives is to experience it as **a task regarding all of us as the People of God**. This awareness of being part of a people and a shared history will enable us to acknowledge our past sins and mistakes with a penitential openness that can allow us to be renewed from within. **Without the active participation of all the Church’s members, everything being done to uproot the culture of abuse in our communities will not be successful in generating the necessary dynamics for sound and realistic change.** The penitential dimension of fasting and prayer will help us as God’s People to come before the Lord and our wounded brothers and sisters as sinners imploring forgiveness and the grace of shame and conversion. In this way, we will come up with actions that can generate resources attuned to the Gospel. For “whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today’s world” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 11).

It is essential that we, as a Church, be able to acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable. Let us beg forgiveness for our own sins and the sins of others. An awareness of sin helps us to acknowledge the errors, the crimes and the wounds caused in the past and allows us, in the present, to be more open and committed along a journey of renewed conversion.

“No wonder so many people who have been abused find it so very difficult to forgive or to trust the Church anymore. They need to hear from Church leaders like me, that we realise the harm that has been done to them, that we are sorry for that, and that we want to make atonement. And I repeat that to them today. I am sorry for what happened to you. I am sorry for the terrible failures and crimes that happened in your Church, and I want to do my best to ensure that no one else suffers in the way that you did.” (ARCHBISHOP EAMON MARTIN FEBRUARY 2021)

Opening Prayer

The following prayer was sent to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Dublin, by someone who suffered abuse so that it could be shared. It speaks with simplicity and sincerity:

Lord, we are so sorry
for what some of us did to
your children: treated
them so cruelly,
especially in their hour of
need.

We have left them with a
lifelong suffering.
This was not your plan for
them or us.

Please help us to help
them.

Guide us, Lord, Amen.

A Thiarna, tá brón mór
orainn maidir leis an méid
a rinne cuid againn
d'íontúsacha do leanbh:
d'íocamar go cruálach
leo,
go háirithe ina n-
uaireanta riachtanais.
Fágfaimid leo fulaingt ar
feadh a saoil.
Níorbh é seo do phlean
dóibh ná dúinn.
Le do thoil, cabhraigh linn
iad a chabhair.
Treoraigh sinn, a Thiarna,
Áiméan.

First Reading: Isaiah 58: 1-9a

“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion

and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

For day after day they seek me out;

they seem eager to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that does what is right

and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions

and seem eager for God to come near them.

‘Why have we fasted,’ they say,

‘and you have not seen it?’

Why have we humbled ourselves,

and you have not noticed?’

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.
Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.
You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.
Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?
“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness^[a] will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.
“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

Responsorial Psalms 51:3-4, 5-6, 18-19

***Response: “A heart contrite and humbled, O God,
you will not spurn.”***

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

Response

Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

Response

May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.
Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Response

Verse Before the Gospel: Amos 5: 14

“Listen to this dirge I intone over you, House of Israel”

Gospel: Matthew 9: 14-15

Then came to him the disciples of John, saying: Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples do not fast?

And Jesus said to them: Can the children of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.

The Gospel of the Lord

Prayers of Intercession

With humility of heart, let us pray to God, whose love and faithfulness endures forever./ Le humhail croí, guímis do Dia, maireann a ghrá agus dilseacht go buan.

We pray for all who have been abused whether physically, mentally, emotionally or sexually: that the Lord of all tenderness and compassion will restore them and give them peace.

Lord Hear Us

We pray that we may become more and more a community that actively cares for and protects the most vulnerable sections of our society,

Guimís ar son gach duine gur baineadh mí-usáid asta bíodh sin go fisiciúil, go hintinneach, go maoithneach nó gréasach: go ndéanfadh an Tiarna atá lán de cineáltacht agus trua athneartú orthú an síocháin a thabhairt dóibh.

a Thiarna, éist linn

Guimís go mbéimid ina phobal atá gríomhach ag tabhairt aire agus cosaint don cuid dár sochaí atá gan chosaint, ár bpáistí ach go háirithe.

particularly our children.

Lord Hear Us

We pray for the Spirit of wisdom that it will enlighten the minds of all people and lead to a growth in awareness and a determination to put an end to all acts of violence and abuse.

Lord Hear Us

We pray for all in the healing professions who minister to those who suffer as a result of violence or abuse: that God will give them an abundance of love, compassion and wisdom.

Lord Hear Us

Lord, we pray for the courageous survivors of abuse who remind us that healing and repair are not accomplished by the settling of accounts alone, but by restoring dignity and humility to all involved, in the presence of one another and before God.

a Thiarna, éist linn

Guimís ar son spiorad na críonnachta; go dtabharfar leargas dintinn gach duine agus go dtreoraí se dhfás in eolas agus diongbháilteacht le deireadh a chuir le gníomhartha dhforeigean agus mí-úsáid

a Thiarna, éist linn

Guimís ar son na gairme cneasú a thugann fóirithint dóibh súid atá ag fulaingt de thoradh ar fhoreigean nó mí-úsáid go dtabharfaidh Dia flúirse grá, trua agus críonnacht dóibh.

a Thiarna, éist linn

A Thiarna, guímid ar son na mairbhseacha dána a throidtar thar mhíchleachtaí a chuireann i gcuimhne dúinn nach ndéantar leigheas agus deisniú trí scór a socrú amháin, ach trí dhínit agus humilíocht a athbheochan do gach duine a bhfuil páirt acu, i

Lord Hear Us

Lord, we pray for the strength of victims and survivors of abuse, who have the courage to own their woundedness even as we struggle to own the brokenness of the Church. Grant us the wisdom to learn from victims and survivors, so that we may help repair the wounds inflicted upon them. Guide us to jointly restore truth and integrity, while assisting victims and survivors to achieve reparation and justice.

Lord Hear Us

láthair a chéile agus roimh Dhia.

a Thiarna, éist linn

A Thiarna, guímid ar son neart na n-íospartach agus na marbh-shlánaithe de mhí-úsáid, a bhfuil an misneach acu a n-gortuithe a aontú fiú agus muid ag streachailt leis an bhfíoch an Eaglaise a aontú. Tabhair dúinn an chiall chun foghlaim ó na híospartaigh agus na marbh-shlánaithe, ionas gur féidir linn cabhrú leis na gortuithe a ghintear orthu a dheisiú. Treoraigh sinn chun an fhírinne agus an dílseacht a athchóiriú le chéile, agus na híospartaigh agus na marbh-shlánaithe a chabhair chun díoltas agus ceartas a bhaint amach.

a Thiarna, éist linn

We pray in the name of Jesus, by your mercy, who lives and reigns through all ages. Amen/ Guimis in ainm Íosa, do trua, a mhaireann agus a rialaíonn trí shaol na saol. Amen.

Post Communion: Symbol of Light & Hope – Candle of Protection

Jesus is the light of Ireland and the world. We pray that blessing will flow from this terrible wound and we trust that God will bring blessing from all the pain that has been endured by the abused children. Where sin abounded we trust that the grace of God will all the more abound. We hope that our act of repentance may open all our hearts to receiving the unconditional love of God as expressed in Jesus, His Son.

We are determined that Evil will not have the last word but that out of the suffering of the many abused children will grow a new compassion that will be truly reflective of Jesus' love and care for the young.

A light is taken from the Paschal candle to the Candle of Protection

Prayer of Blessing:

Lord we ask you to bless + this candle, a simple sign of our hope for the future and for the healing of lost innocence. May this candle be symbol of renewal for all who worship here at the Pro-Cathedral. May we pledge ourselves to the cause of protecting young people as Mary and Joseph guarded their precious child.

Song **Christ be our light (Bernadette Farrell)**

Candle of Atonement

“The Candles are a reminder to pray for all those who carry lifelong suffering following abuse – they symbolise

repentance, light in the darkness and hope.”- *Archbishop Eamon Martin*

During their retreat in Knock in 2018, the bishops of Ireland blessed and dedicated candles of atonement for use in their Cathedrals and parishes throughout the country on 15 February 2019 and thereafter during the celebration of Mass and other liturgies.

Speaking in 2019 Archbishop Eamon Martin said, “I welcome the candles of atonement initiative, and the accompanying prayer ***which was written by a survivor of abuse***. In lighting these candles we will bring to mind our brothers and sisters, and their families, who have been left with a lifelong suffering as a result of abuse, whose trust was so deeply betrayed and whose faith has been so cruelly tested within the sanctity of the Church by perpetrators of abuse.

“In recent weeks I have been privileged to meet with victims and survivors of abuse and members of their families in the four provinces of Ireland. Many have spoken to me about the importance of prayer for survivors, and for the need for the Church to be open to justice, to atone and never forget them. I have been humbled by their courage and overwhelmed by their generosity of spirit. It is my intention to relay the lived experience and insights of Irish survivors, both personally to Pope Francis, and more widely to the safeguarding meeting in Rome later this month.

“I encourage dioceses and parishes to undertake this new prayer initiative and to light the ‘Candle of Atonement’ in Cathedrals and churches across Ireland. It would mean a lot to survivors if the ‘Candle of Atonement’ was a permanent feature in our Cathedrals and parish churches.

People visiting the church for quiet prayer might light the ‘Candle of Atonement’, pray the prayer, and bring to mind someone they know who has been directly impacted or affected by abuse.....I am convinced that prayer and outreach to survivors of abuse is a modern-day corporal and spiritual work of mercy.”

“The ‘Candle of Atonement’ and accompanying prayer are offered as a reminder to all of the need for us to atone, to ask forgiveness as a Church for the suffering caused by abuse. My hope is that these candles will be lit in Cathedrals and parishes across the country as a reminder of the need for atonement and that they will symbolise repentance, light in the darkness and hope.”

Candle of Atonement Prayer

Lord, forgive us our many sins.

We grieve and repent with all our hearts for having offended you, for our great failings and neglect of the young and vulnerable.

We place all of those who have been hurt by the Church in any way into your loving hands and under the

protection of Our Blessed Mother.

Lord, bring peace to their broken lives and show us all the way out of darkness and into the light of your Word. May we as the people of God be more fully human, more fully Christ-like and more fully your people, that we may see the errors of the past and go forward with renewed hope and faith in Christ and in our Church.
Amen

SAFEGUARDING SERVICES IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

If you have a safeguarding concern and/or wish to report an allegation of abuse, please contact the Designated Liaison Person (DLP):

Telephone:

Email:

[TOWARDS HEALING](#) is an independent organisation, funded by the Catholic Church, providing professional support for people who have experienced institutional, clerical or religious abuse in Ireland

Freephone 1800 303416 UK
freephone 08001026172
Tuesday to Friday – 10am to 4pm
Email info@towardshealing.ie
Website: <https://towardshealing.ie>

[TOWARDS PEACE](#) provides spiritual support for survivors of abuse by Catholic Church personnel in Ireland
Coordinator: Ms. Una Allen, Coordinator
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