



Respond  
Inform  
Support  
Empower

Unite  
Pray



## A Summary of MU Activities undertaken to RISE UP and Change The Story of Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence in Ireland 2014 – 2024

Through our efforts:

- **Governments are and have been lobbied for policy change and judicial reform** – we respond to relevant consultations in both jurisdictions e.g. in 2023 we responded to the Northern Ireland Departments of Health and Justice draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy. Subsequently, we have met and had useful discussions with members of the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Directorate
- **Domestic abuse services are supported** across all 11 dioceses,
- **Resources have been created and initiatives undertaken** to highlight domestic abuse which, in turn, lead to a greater understanding of this scourge within our society e.g.
  - The creation of a 5 part gender justice programme: **'Equipping The Church To Take Action and End Domestic Abuse'**.
  - Editing and contextualising the Irish Edition of the Restored manual: **'A Guide for Churches to Address Domestic Abuse'**.
  - The creation of **'Changing The Story Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Groups'**, creating a safe space to explore topics and nurture one's self esteem.
  - The production of a **16 Days Prayer Diary** highlighting GBV, domestic abuse, relevant theology and practical supports.
  - A **RISE UP Challenge** encourages parishes and communities to Respond, Inform, Support and Empower as we Unite together in Prayer and action. It involves taking simple consistent actions towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award process.
  - Providing Parishes with DA HELPLINE posters and stickers for wet areas
- **Prayer Vigil events** take place annually across Ireland, during the 16 Day period, beginning on 25 November - the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- **Partnerships have been developed** with like-minded organisations eg. Bishops' Appeal, The Church's Ministry for Healing: Ireland, Christian Aid, Tearfund Ireland, Safeguarding Church of Ireland, ONUS, Restored, Kintsugi Hope, domestic abuse services, other churches etc.
- **Teenagers are educated** through MU led secondary school assemblies and workshops.
- In 2023 two **'Changing The Story 'Domestic Abuse Conferences'** took place with attendance open to all faiths.
- **Diocesan Outreach:**  
Ongoing events in each diocese - these include.....  
Clogher: A clergy morning with Fermanagh Women's Aid, PSNI and MU (2023)  
Derry & Raphoe: Rev Dr Helen Paynter, Theologian and author of 'The Bible Doesn't Tell Me So', spoke at three events – one for clergy, and interfaith evening and a morning with parishes in the diocese. (2024)

*Other activities include:*

- Wearing black on Thursdays in support of the World Council of Churches initiative, **Thursdays in Black**.
- The creation of a **Souls of Our Shoes Exhibition**, initially for the Catholic World Meeting of Families in 2018 – now available on loan to any church or community group in Ireland.
- Introduction of the **Red Chair Project**, reserving an empty chair in a public place, alongside information about domestic abuse and violence against women. The empty chair acts as a powerful symbol of the many women who've been killed through gender-based violence - women who should still be with us today.

Throughout the last decade we have consistently underpinned this issue with prayer, built a bank of knowledge and understanding, alongside listening, supporting and finally, acting appropriately, based on the situation and the need presented.

For further information:

[www.mothersunion.ie](http://www.mothersunion.ie)

[RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](https://www.mothersunion.org)

[Domestic Abuse Campaigning Resources 2024 | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](https://www.mothersunion.org)

***'The home should be a place of safety, security and love and the very centre of family life. Domestic abuse therefore attacks the very heart and essence of the family and should never be tolerated. As Christians, and members of the wider Church family, we need to offer a safe place for those facing abuse, and offer them protection, understanding and unconditional love.'***

Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke,  
Archbishop of Armagh 2012-2020

***"When you don't empower women, nothing happens".***

The Most Revd. Dr Laurent Mbanda, Archbishop of Rwanda,  
2019 Worldwide Council in Kigali, Rwanda



Mothers' Union in Ireland is recognised as a Charity by the Revenue Commissioners, **5161**  
Registered Charity Number –**20007331**  
(Charity Regulatory Authority)