



Elimination of violence against women and children

In conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, with the 2020 theme **"Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!"**, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Malaysia (CBCM) joins in the call to unite in global action to prevent violence against women and girls.

The welfare of children is of paramount importance and all of us must acknowledge our social responsibility for child protection and commit to protecting our children in all circumstances. With violence in all forms against women and girls reportedly intensifying at such an alarming rate as to amount to a Shadow Pandemic alongside the Covid 19 pandemic, we must all take action to ensure that victims may report, without fear of repercussions, stigma or shame, the sexual violence and harassment inflicted upon them whether at home, in the workplace, educational institutions or establishments or at entities, including places of worship, which work or interact with children.

Policies and protocols for the prevention and reporting of sexual violations and all other forms of abuse, physical or psychological, must not only be in place but be made known to all and counselling by trained counselors as well as support from the community must be readily available to all survivors. Strong pronouncements against gender based violence must be heard from all in positions of authority and influence whether in the Government, the private sector, non-governmental bodies or communities of faith. All must know that sexual violence, whether rape within or outside of marriage, forced sexual acts and marriages, child sexual abuse, stalking or cyber harassment, will not be tolerated and perpetrators will be swiftly and judicially dealt with.

Most of the dioceses within CBCM already have in place committees which are actively working on promoting effective plans for child abuse prevention programmes which will include therapy and support for victims and survivors. Likewise, the different Churches in Malaysia already have or are committed to having policy guidelines in place to provide a vision, mission and statement of commitment for Child Protection. Policies in place include protocols for the conduct of church personnel with children, the recruitment and screening of personnel working with children, procedures for receiving and handling complaints of child abuse, seminars and training in child protection awareness programs for church personnel, and procedures for monitoring and evaluations of child protection policies.

The CBCM and its offices will also continue to work with those in the advocacy community who are dedicated to ending gender based violations in our society. Pledging our commitment to being active participants in the global effort to end such grotesque violations of human rights, we take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the work of all organizations reaching out to help its victims. We call upon all to work in partnership with them so that once restored to wholeness, the brave victims and survivors of life changing abuse may fulfil their God ordained destinies and rise up to be stalwart contributors to our community.

+ Archbishop Julian Leow Beng Kim D.D.
President CBCM

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF MALAYSIA (CBCM)

APC, 5th Floor, No. 5, Jalan Robertson, off Jalan Pudu, 50150 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: +603-2078 5777 Email: exesec@cbcmsb.org Website: cbcmsb.org
