**Domestic Violence Outreach**

**ARTICLE 5 – Domestic Violence – WHY?**1

**A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops**

**AN OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

* Domestic Violence is any kind of behavior that a person uses to control a partner through fear and intimidation.
* It includes physical, sexual, psychological, verbal and economic abuse.
* Examples include battering, name calling and insults, threats to kill or harm one’s partner or children, marital rape, or forced abortion.

**WHY MEN BATTER**

* Men who abuse generally share some common characteristics.
	+ They tend to be jealous, possessive and easily angered.
	+ They hold a view of women as inferior
	+ Many believe that men are meant to dominate and control women.
	+ Many try to isolate their partners by limiting their contact with family and friends.
* Alcohol and Drugs are often associated with domestic violence, but they do not cause it.
* Men who batter learn to abuse through observation, experience, and reinforcement. They believe that they have a right to use violence. Their behavior gives them power and control over their partner.
* Typically, abusive men deny that the abuse is happening, or they minimize it. They often blame their abusive behavior on someone or something other than themselves. They tell their partner, "You made me do this."

**WHY WOMEN STAY**

* **Fear*:*** Fear for themselves, fear for their children, fear that they cannot support themselves
* **Disbelief:** Women often are incredulous when a violent act first occurs. She many believe her abuser when he apologizes and promises that it will not happen again. When the abuse happens again - many women believe that if they just act differently they can stop the abuse.
* **Shame:** Women may be ashamed to admit that the man they love is terrorizing them. Some cannot admit or realize that they are battered women.

***REMEMBER:*** *Some battered women run a risk of facing more violence when they leave their abuser or seek help from the legal system. It is important to be honest with women about the risks involved. If a woman decides to leave, she needs to have a safety plan, including the names and phone numbers of shelters and programs. Some victims may choose to stay at this time because it seems safer. Ultimately, abused women must make their own decisions about staying or leaving.*

**Prayer For Those Affected By Domestic Violence:**

**God of peace, there are many places and many people who do not experience Your peace. Right now there are many women and children who live under the dark weight of the fear of violence right in their own homes. We pray for Your protection, and for wisdom for friends and officials to help bring the right protection to them. We pray for the many men who themselves feel powerless and confused about their relationships. We ask that You help them find healthy ways to work out their frustrations and to find hope without resorting to destructive impulses. God, we ask for your perfect peace.**

**Amen.**

1”When I Call For Help” A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women, A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops.