

Bishops' Conference of Scotland
DAY OF PRAYER
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED ABUSE
Friday 20 February 2026

The Day of Prayer for Those who have Suffered Abuse is marked each year on the Friday following Ash Wednesday.

This resource has been prepared by the National Liturgical Commission. We are grateful for the insight of survivors of abuse towards the development of this resource.

Prayers to begin and to conclude the Stations of the Cross page 1
Material for Incorporation into the Mass of Friday after Ash Wednesday..... page 2
An Examen for Personal Prayer page 6
Other Online Resources..... page 7

PRAYERS TO BEGIN AND TO CONCLUDE THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

PRAYER TO BEGIN THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Lord, we have come to accompany you as you walk the Way of the Cross out of love for us. Among us are those who have been abused in any way. On this painful journey to Calvary help us to help us to walk together in pain and pray with compassion. As we walk with you, Lord, help us to open our ears and hearts to suffering in our midst. Give us the courage to never deny pain and suffering as a result of abuse. Let us walk together on this path of suffering, which brings healing and wholeness.

Through Christ our Lord.

PRAYER TO CONCLUDE THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Lord, we proclaim: "Save us Saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free!" Help us to live that message of freedom and healing. On our journey to the cross we have brought with us all those who have suffered abuse – in body and in spirit – within the Church and in society. By the power of your cross and resurrection bring healing and courage where there is pain and vulnerability. May all who suffer the wounds of abuse encounter deep understanding and wise accompaniment in their journey towards healing and wholeness. Renew in survivors confidence in a Church which is humble and rooted in upholding the dignity of every person.

Through Christ our Lord.

FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE MASS OF FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

We cannot measure how you heal
Christ be beside me
Christ be our light
Be thou my vision

INTRODUCTION

Today, the first Friday in Lent, is dedicated here in the Catholic Church in Scotland to remembering and praying for survivors of abuse. We don't always know who they are when we gather as a community to pray. Some no longer feel able to come into Church with us, and their loss is sorely felt. Abuse suffered at the hands of priests and religious was a betrayal of the sanctuary that the Church should be, and the effects of it continue to ripple through our communities. We don't always find these themes comfortable or want to acknowledge them, yet it is our sacred duty and an act of justice to recognise the tragedy of abuse and to humbly pray for healing, reconciliation and the rebuilding of trust. In light of the brokenness in our world evidenced by recent events, we pray that our communities may always be a sanctuary for those in danger and distress.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

Lord Jesus, you stand alongside all who are vulnerable and suffering.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you listen to those who cry out to you. Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of betrayal and hurt. Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

SUGGESTED HOMILY NOTES

The Lenten fast, the ongoing Christian sacrifice, which is pleasing to the Lord is, as the prophet Isaiah says, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke, to share bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless poor into your house. We cannot love God without loving our neighbour. Today, the first Friday in Lent, is dedicated here in the Catholic Church in Scotland to remembering and praying for survivors of abuse.

Accompanying survivors is, without any doubt, a challenging ministry, but it is, at the same time, a beautiful vocation, a contemporary vocation towards which the Church calls people forth. We become instruments of healing by seeking justice, but also, increasingly, by listening and accompanying. Today is a day in our Church when we accompany survivors with our prayer and we cry out to the God who redeems brokenness and makes his people God's gifts to the world.

"Took... blessed... broke... gave". These are words Catholics will hear thousands of times in their lives. What comes to mind is the last supper and the Eucharist. But this *body* also refers to the Body of Christ.

It is important to thank God for **taking** you and me – for choosing us – for calling us by name. God has led our lives to this point and we are in God's hands, whether or not we are always aware of it. As well as being chosen or taken, we have been **blessed** by God and it is healthy for us to thank God for some of the unique talents, abilities and aptitudes that God has given each one of us.

However, there are times in life when we feel the opposite of blessed. Times when we have felt **broken** perhaps because of the death of a loved one, a failed relationship, abuse or trauma, difficulty in career, lack of direction in life. Perhaps there is a personal weakness, physical, mental or spiritual that I have which makes me feel broken. God is present with us, loving us, when we take a long, loving, honest look at our brokenness.

God can also show us how the ways we have been broken prepare us to share love with others. Has my brokenness given me a better understanding of others' pain? Has my brokenness strengthened me for some task God is calling me to? How is God **giving** you and me to the world? Can we imagine concrete ways how we can be a gift to others? Can we even thank God for redeeming our brokenness and thank him for making us God's gifts to the world?

At a time characterised by a global crisis of trust, which encourages people to live in distrust and suspicion, the Church must acknowledge its own shortcomings. It must humbly ask for forgiveness, must care for victims, provide for preventative measures, and strive in the Lord to rebuild mutual trust. The Church is called to put at the centre of its life and action the fact that in Christ, through Baptism, we are entrusted to each other. Recognition of this profound reality becomes a sacred duty that enables us to recognise mistakes and rebuild trust. There is a missionary obligation upon the People of God to walk this path in our world and we need to invoke the gift to do so from above. Walking this path is also an act of justice.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Presider:

With humility of heart, we pray to God, whose faithfulness reawakens in us hope for the growth of his Kingdom.

Reader:

For the faithful: may they renew their commitment to the sacraments, to learn the faith, to participate in their parish communities, and to serve the poor and protect the vulnerable.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who have been abused: may they experience healing from shame, isolation, anger, and despair; may they be listened to with compassion, treated with dignity, and supported in the journey to wholeness.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who counsel survivors: that their words of wisdom and compassion may be instruments of healing for those they accompany.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For the perpetrators of abuse: that they may experience sincere remorse for their sins, approach God with sorrow, and be prepared to make reparation for the damage they have caused.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those members of the clergy who, through no fault of their own, have inherited the abuse crisis with all its horrible complexities: may they be strengthened to encounter those who are vulnerable with firm hope in the healing power of the Cross and Resurrection. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all parents: that they may foster family life rooted in love, prayer, faith, and open communication.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For young people discerning a religious vocation to priesthood or consecrated life: that the tragic failures of some may not blind them to the heroic virtue of others.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Presider:

May these prayers rise in your presence like incense O Lord, as a symbol of our sorrow and contrition, our humility and penitence.

Renew us in spirit, strengthen us in hope, perfect us in love.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

Bestow healing, Lord God,
upon your beloved children,
wounded by the pain and fear
inflicted on them by others.
Cast light on the darkness of their hearts
and draw near to them
to restore what is lost.
Shelter them safely in your love
and make them confident in the knowledge
that they have been powerfully redeemed.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever.

R. Amen.

AN EXAMEN FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

AN EXAMEN: TAKEN, BLESSED, BROKEN, GIVEN

**He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body."
(Mark 14:22)**

"Took... blessed... broke... gave". These are words Catholics will hear thousands of times in their lives. What comes to mind is the last supper and the Eucharist. But this *body* also refers to the Body of Christ.

In this variation on the Ignatian Examen, you will pray through how God has taken you, blessed you, broken you, and will give you to the world.

I Begin

Taking a few deep breaths, I calm my mind, body, and spirit. I recognize the presence of God with me. I ask God to lead this prayer in me. I don't rush myself. When I am in a state of prayer and feel ready, I move on.

Taken

I thank God for taking me – for claiming me – for calling me by name. If I am baptized, I might spend some moments reflecting on the meaning of my baptism. I bring to mind whatever has brought me to this moment of prayer with God. I consider how God has led my life to this point and that I am in God's hands, whether or not I am always aware of it. *How have I been claimed by God?*

Blessed

Recognizing how God has taken me and led me, I thank God for the many blessings in my life. I do not move on until I sense gratitude in my heart. Then, I thank God for some of the unique talents, abilities, aptitudes, and callings God has given me. *How have I been blessed by God?*

Broken

I ask God to reveal to me the ways have I felt the opposite of blessed. When have I felt broken? The death or loss of a loved one? A failed relationship? Abuse or trauma? Difficulty in career? Lack of direction in life? Perhaps there is a personal weakness, physical, mental, or spiritual that I have which makes me feel broken. Though this may be difficult or unpleasant, I take a long, loving, honest look at my brokenness. I talk to God about this.

Given

I now ask God to show me how the ways I've been broken prepare me to share love with others. Maybe my brokenness gives me better understanding of others' pain. Perhaps my brokenness has strengthened me for some task God is calling me to. I meditate on this for a while. I ask how God is giving me to the world. I imagine concrete ways how I can be a gift to others. I allow myself to daydream about the possibilities. I thank God for redeeming my brokenness. I humbly thank God for making me God's gift to the world. I resolve to give myself to God and the world in whatever way God has revealed.

Amen

Yes, Lord. Amen.

Written by David Herr. An audio recording with music for reflection is available at <https://godinallthings.com/prayer/taken-blessed-broken-and-given-an-examen/>

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/day-of-prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse/>

A Rosary for Healing and Protection:

<https://adw.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/09/Healing-Rosary-and-Prayers.pdf>