#### National Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse, 2025

### Homily Thoughts

The NDPSA is the Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Easter which this year is 20th May. However, parishes can mark it on the preceding Sunday (18th May) or on another day that week.

Abuse, be it physical, sexual or psychological, is not an easy subject to speak about. It causes distress beyond measure, sometimes prompting despair as well as anger, prompting misplaced shame and so much more, which can oppress individuals and communities for decades. All abuse is an affront to human dignity and to the image and likeness of God, in which we are made. All abuse prompts desire for justice. Working and praying for justice is imperative and part of our task and that of every follower of Christ. At the same time St. Gregory the Great reminds us, wisely, that the virtue of justice is easily tainted by the vice of anger, which itself has potential for further harm. We ask God’s protection from this and every vice. But our first prayer is for healing.

God’s comforting and God’s peace are so often his healing gifts which he gladly gives to his children. These gifts we ask of God today.

Below are thoughts that may help in the development of a homily for the Sunday or day on which this is the focus.

Reflections based on the Readings for Sunday 18th May

From the Second Reading

Revelation 21: 1-5a ‘God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.’ And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’

Reflection

1. In today’s second reading from the book of Revelation, John has a prophetic vision of the coming reality when all creation is to be made new. Abuse of all kinds creates damage to the individuals on whom it is perpetrated and casts a cloud of sadness over family and friends. In this Jubilee year as pilgrims of Hope we join the apostle John on the journey in hope drawing always nearer to the fulness of tears being wiped away for good, of mourning coming to its completion in the fulness of the peace of Christ, of pain no longer being that ever-open disabling wound, but limbs and memories being remade through the image, likeness and love of God.

2. Dear God, for those who suffer abuse, and for all their loved ones who share their pain, we ask that in your love and through your healing power, the current pain and anguish be transformed. Through your healing love may they become former things which have passed away.

3. Deepen our hearts in the knowledge of the truth that in you is the fullness of healing, “Behold, I am making all things new”. Guide us by the promptings of your Holy Spirit that we, too, through our prayers, our love and our Christian compassion, may help those who suffer on their journey to freedom, that we share as instruments of your healing power.

Reflections based on the Gospel for Tuesday 20th May

Gospel John 14: 27-31a ‘My peace I give to you.’

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, “I am going away, and I will come to you.” If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.’

Reflection

1. In today’s gospel Jesus tells his disciples that the “ruler of this world is coming”. Jesus speaks here of the devil, the one who deceives, the adversary who brings discord, the one who is inviting us down a path of sin, death, and despair.

2. Despite the evil and suffering of the Passion of Jesus; despite all attempts to provoke Jesus to destructive anger, we see in the gospel a great reminder of the state of peace in Jesus’ heart. Jesus, bringer of peace, is the Good News of today’s gospel. His Peace is found and expressed by a profound love both of his Father, and of all humankind. This love, in Jesus, even extends to those who cruelly abuse him in his passion (“Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing” [Lk 23:34]).

3. Jesus’ peace comes not from this world, nor its “ruler”, the devil, but from the king of heaven and earth, God himself whose love has a power stronger than the devil, stronger than the discord and despair of abuse. Our prayers today are for justice, are for those crippled in mind, body, and spirit; those filled with confusion and negative emotions. Lord, let them know your love. Lord, grant them the fulness of peace.

4. Our prayers ask that we all, despite the traumas which life may bring, seek to be shielded from discord, from feeling inadequate, from spikes of anger or resentment, but be able to find peace in Jesus who lives in us, loves us, comforts us and gives us strength.