



Wednesday Prayer

3rd Sunday of Advent – Anointed with joy instead of mourning

The Lord has anointed me...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. Isaiah 61:1,3

When I was a young county social worker many years ago, I served domestic violence victims in rural Minnesota. There was no women's shelter in our county, and we often relied on volunteers to transport women fleeing abuse to the nearest shelter about sixty miles away. With little funding for services, I often partnered with community members to have bake sales and garage sales to generate money for gasoline for our volunteers. Eventually, we enlisted several families in our county to serve as temporary safe homes when winter storms made travel all but impossible. We were pioneers in the field of domestic violence intervention, and we made do with what we had.

During that time, I attended a training seminar in Duluth that changed my professional life as a social worker and counselor. The forward-thinking staff at the Duluth Abuse Intervention Programs had set out to understand the way the criminal justice system in our state responded to abusers. In doing so, they built relationships that allowed new intervention to be proposed and tested. The results were strikingly effective in keeping batterers from continuing their abuse. This project became known as the Duluth Model, which has evolved and spread throughout the globe.

This training unveiled the first [Power and Control Wheel](#), a visual aid to help both abused and abusers see behaviors that contribute to the cycle of maltreatment that can still be applied today to all types of relationship abuse. The Wheel includes brief explanations of physical and sexual violence; the use of intimidation; emotional abuse; the use of isolation; minimizing, denying, and blaming; the use of children (as pawns); male privilege; economic abuse; coercion and threats. These tactics are used by all types of abusers, whether marriage partners, those in long term relationships, sexual predators who use "grooming" to woo their targets, or other types of chronic abusers in all kinds of relationships. Additional wheels developed included nurturing children.

When I began to use the Wheels in my work with victims of all types of abuse, I watched as understanding dawned on those who had been harmed. This knowledge started their journey to safety. Through our work with Cherish All Children, through educating about exploitation *and* healthy relationships, *we can make a difference* in the lives of children and youth.

Lord, we pray that you will bestow upon all victim/survivors of sexual and domestic violence "a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair." Amen.

Written by Meg Blaine Corrigan, Christian author, speaker, trainer, and sexual assault survivor. Read more about Meg [HERE](#), and find links to her memoir, *Then I Am Strong: Moving From My Mother's Daughter to God's Child*, and *Saints With Slingshots TWO*, just released in time for Christmas and a New Year of reading.