



IGREJA EPISCOPAL ANGLICANA DO BRASIL

Dom Francisco de Assis da Silva

Bispo Primaz

MESSAGE FROM PRIMATE OF BRAZIL

ON THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

Brothers and Sisters,

We are experiencing yet another campaign that has a global scope, the campaign of activism against gender violence. It has mobilized churches – our Anglican church has also assumed this campaign – NGOs, social movements and ecumenical organizations. We need to continue raising our voices against institutionalized violence against women throughout the world. Here in Brazil, even with the advance of affirmative policies, we are still a country that occupies the shameful position of a country where violence against women has reached insupportable levels.

Day to day, in our society constructed around standards of sexist behavior, we see the continuation of femicide, of the exclusion of women from access to work, from unequal salaries, exclusion from public policy in health, amongst many other challenges which seem to grow at an exponential speed, and whose solutions and coping arrive slowly and with rare successes.

The Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil (IEAB) has affirmed its clear commitment in confronting the problem of violence against women. SADD (Anglican Service of Development and the Diaconate) has been an important anchor in the process of educating the Church about this topic and bringing it into our wider consciousness. That is, we recognize that alone, we have not achieved the concrete advances that we desire. It is necessary to join forces with civil society and other political and social actors so that this stain that shames our society can be eliminated.

It is opportune that in our communities, we have roundtable discussions about the problem of gender violence. It is important that our clerical and lay leaders rise up to reflect about the violence that has happened to our sisters, many times to those very close to us, including inside our ecclesial communities. We need to assume the project that Jesus left us, examples of welcome, respect, listening, and affirming human dignity. And in this context, that women received from him very special attention. In front of Jesus, women had their thoughts and speech respected, their rights recognized, and their dignity assured.

Even historically distant from our times, we perceive that the oppressive categories of women – as seen in reports of the ministry of Jesus – have perhaps changed in appearance, but in essence, continue the same. Shame, pain,

hopelessness, and silence continue inhabiting the souls of many of our contemporary sisters. It doesn't matter the social class or the cultural or economic level of the victims of physical and emotional violence of women in our times. Institutionalized violence continues to victimize millions of women around the world. This is not a problem to be ignored. We need to confront it with courage! In these days of activism – and not just these days – may we assume inside and outside of the Church, the commitment to overcome violence against women.

Santa Maria, 24 November 2014

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francisco Silva". The script is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

++ Francisco
Primate of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil