

VIGIL FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF HOMOPHOBIA

Guide-text for the vigils



The text was proposed by the volunteers of the Liturgia group from Florence (Italy), made up by Catholics and Evangelicals in 2008.

There are three parts in the vigil: **the introduction** when the confession of the sin is made (Matthew 25; 31-45); the second part with the **remembrance of the victims and the prayer** for the torturers through the reading of homophobic episodes and stories (which you can find profusely in press articles or on <http://www.gionata.org/omofobia/storie/index.php>) followed by the reading of a short passage of the Gospel with opposite value, so that we reply with love to violence, with welcome to exclusion; and a **third part** is conceived to listen to **positive Christian examples** of welcome and it is introduced by a small excerpt to help people think. In 2008 Baptist pastor Martin Luther King's speech was chosen ("*I have a dream*").

This draft of the Ecumenical vigil celebrated in Florence in 2008 was used with variations for the other vigils against homophobia. The bible used for the biblical texts was the Jerusalem Bible.

INDEX OF THE VIGIL:

- Song
- Introduction

First part: Confession of the sin of homophobia

Invocation

Psalm 42, 5:11 (All together)

Confession of the sin of homophobia: Matthew 25, 31-46

The sign: the stones

Moment of silence, announcement of the forgiveness (by the pastor) and explanation of the sign of the stone (Stones are the sign chosen for this year. A bunch of stones are laid before on open

Gospel. Each reader after reading an evidence adds a stone to the others: "words are stones" and every thrown stone represents the violence committed to the other).

1° musical break: song or musical interlude.

Second part: the remembrance

First Evidence of Homophobia (a reader).

- John 8, 1-11.

Second Evidence of Homophobia (a reader).

- Psalm 108 (All together).

Third Evidence of homophobia (a reader).

2° musical break (gospel or song)

- A poetry *they came first* by Martin Niemöller (?)

... for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the gays, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a gays.

Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up."

Third part: positive Christian evidence

Small excerpt taken from Martin Luther King's speech "*I have a dream*" (a reader).

- Positive evidence of a Christian mother or a Christian homosexual (a reader).

Psalm 100 or 101. (With an interdenominational version of the Bible all pray together).

- Reflections and personal prayers.

Sign of Peace (hugging by-standers).

3° musical break (short instrumental interlude or song).

In general, the scheme we use in Italy for the IDAHO vigils (but feel free to adapt it to your cultural and religious environment) is to:

- introduce the vigil with music or songs
- introduce IDAHO (what it is, the situation all over the world about legal persecution of glbt people, ...)

- negative stories on homophobia (this year we will start remembering David Kato) both from news or from personal episodes
- reading of Gospels or other religious passages
- positive stories of acceptance or inclusion of glbt people (also from news or from personal episodes)
- blessings

Here the links are:

Evidence of Homophobia

David Kato

<http://www.economist.com/node/18111806>

The Crucifixion of Matthew Shepard

www.southwesterncollegesun.com%2F2.9183%2Fmatthew-shepard-s-wyoming-crucifixion-still-haunts-us-1.1301254&anno=2

Iraq's Newly Open Gays Face Scorn and Murder

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/world/middleeast/08gay.html?_r=1

Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/homosexuals/>

Positive Christian evidence

Desmond Tutu: 'Hate Has No Place in God's House'

http://www.essence.com/news/commentary_2/desmond_tutu_hate_has_no_place_in_gods_h.php#ixzz1JRRxccn9

Body and Soul United

<http://www.transfaithonline.org/articles/other/tos/bodyandsoul/>