

AQUINAS INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY

**PREACHING ABOUT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
IN THE VIETNAMESE AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

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To Amy, Charles, and Quynh, my constant loves, and to all women silenced by abuse: may this work lend strength to your voices and light to your path toward Justice and healing.

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Abstract

PREACHING ABOUT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE VIETNAMESE AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Vincent Dam, Thu, M.C.I.S., M.T.S., D. Min. Aquinas Institute of Theology, Saint Louis, Missouri, 2025.

This thesis, "Preaching about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the Vietnamese American Catholic Community," unveils the transformative potential of preaching to disrupt the hidden chaos of IPV. Recognizing the reluctance of Vietnamese Church leaders to confront this issue due to cultural, systemic, and theological barriers, it advocates for a renewed homiletic approach embracing priests, deacons, religious, and catechists alike.

Chapter 1 lays bare the limitations of current preaching strategies in addressing IPV within the Vietnamese American Catholic context, challenging underlying assumptions. Chapter 2 then weaves an interdisciplinary tapestry, drawing from sociology, psychology, psychiatry, and trauma studies to contextualize IPV within broader cultural and systemic realities. Shifting to theological foundations, Chapter 3 illuminates the Church's teachings on equality—rooted in the creation narrative—and biblical principles of mutual submission as pathways to healing. Chapter 4 introduces the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model, a structured homiletic framework designed to guide individuals and communities toward awareness, repentance, healing, and transformative action.

The practical application of this model unfolds in Chapter 5, detailing seminar interventions crafted to equip clergy and lay leaders with tools for IPV education and pastoral care. Finally, Chapter 6 evaluates seminar outcomes through qualitative and quantitative lenses, revealing shifts in participant understanding and engagement, while also reflecting on persistent challenges and future horizons. By harmonizing theological depth, cultural sensitivity, and homiletic innovation, this thesis demonstrates how preaching can become a potent force for dismantling IPV within the Vietnamese American Catholic community, fostering hope and healing where silence once reigned.

Chapter 1

Preaching about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women: A Contextual Approach for the Vietnamese American Catholic Community

“Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

—Eph. 5:21

Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women presents a profound challenge to the foundational principles of human dignity, mutual love, and respect upheld by the Catholic Church in its teachings on marriage. Grounded in Scripture, Catholic traditions, and magisterial teachings, the Church has consistently advocated for mutual submission between spouses, rooted in Christ’s sacrificial love for the Church (Eph. 5:21-33).¹ While these teachings have evolved over time, particularly in addressing imbalances of power within marriage, the Church remains unequivocal in condemning all forms of abuse and domination as antithetical to the gospel.

Historically, the church fathers upheld the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage and championed the mutual love and responsibilities of spouses. Yet, their interpretations were not immune to the patriarchal norms of their time. These norms inadvertently influenced cultural attitudes that, in some contexts, contributed to the justification or oversight of violence against women.²

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised in Accordance with the Official Latin Text Promulgated by Pope John Paul II*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 2201–2228.

² Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History*, Second Edition (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012). Ruether’s work serves as a call to critically reexamine these foundational texts of the church fathers like Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, highlighting that even well-intentioned theological models can inadvertently validate patriarchal norms. This critical inquiry is essential for understanding how historical discourses continue to influence modern practices and attitudes, including those that perpetuate IPV against Vietnamese American women and other groups.

Over time, the Church advanced its understanding through key doctrinal milestones. The Council of Trent reaffirmed marriage as a sacrament rooted in love and sanctification,³ while the Second Vatican Council highlighted equal partnership in marriage, condemning domination and abuse.⁴ Post-Vatican II Papal teachings have included *Familiaris Consortio*,⁵ outlining the Church's vision of marriage and family life and promoting an ideal of mutual love, responsibility, and partnership between spouses; *Mulieris Dignitatem*,⁶ focusing on the dignity and vocation of women and affirming that women are full and equal partners in marriage; and *Amoris Laetitia*,⁷ offering pastoral guidance on family life and stressing the Church's responsibility to protect all family members, especially the most vulnerable. Alongside these documents, Canon Law underscores the Church's commitment to justice, victim support, and mutual respect.⁸

In America, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has officially condemned IPV and all forms of domestic abuse, recognizing them as grave moral offenses that

³ Henry Joseph Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent; Original Text with English Translations* (St. Louis, Mo., And London. B. Herder Book Co, 1960), 180-213.

⁴ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)*, December 7, 1965, in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations: A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 46-52.

⁵ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1981), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html.

⁶ John Paul II, "Mulieris Dignitatem," www.vatican.va, accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html, 1, 6.

⁷ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html.

⁸ *Code of Canon Law*, canons 1055-1057, 1153, 226, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cicindexen.html>.

violate human dignity. The USCCB document, “When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence against Women” explicitly states that violence against women is never justified and affirms that victims should seek safety and support. This pastoral document also provides concrete guidelines for recognizing, preventing, and responding to domestic violence. It addresses the need for trauma-informed pastoral care, outlines proper investigative and canonical procedures, and emphasizes support for survivors.⁹

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that marriage, as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman established by God and ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children, must be rooted in mutual love, respect, and dignity, and that abuse contradicts these fundamental principles.¹⁰ The Church unequivocally condemns all forms of abuse, including IPV, recognizing that violence is a failure to respect God's image and likeness in every human person and a denial of human dignity.¹¹ The Church teaches that every individual, regardless of their condition, has infinite value in God's eyes and deserves to be

⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence against Women” (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2002), accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/when-i-call-help-pastoral-response-domestic-violence>.

¹⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1601, 1660; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html, pars. 338.

¹¹ John Paul II, “Apostolic Journey to Jamaica, Mexico and Denver: Liturgy of the Word for the Faithful of Denver” (Homily, Denver, August 14, 1993), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1993/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19930814_fedeli-denver.html.

treated with respect.¹² It denounces the abuse of power and the desire for domination in relationships.¹³

Yet, despite the Church's condemnation of IPV on theological and moral grounds, its overall institutional response has been inconsistent and inadequate. Various dioceses and affiliated Catholic Charities organizations across the United States have indeed launched pilot surveys and initiatives to assess and enhance their IPV interventions. For instance, a 2012 survey of Catholic Charities-USA affiliates revealed that many dioceses have implemented a diverse array of support services ranging from psychological counseling to legal and economic assistance, as well as shelter support to address domestic abuse.¹⁴ These initiatives have raised critical awareness and enabled more systematic approaches for referrals and crisis intervention; yet, the overall implementation is hampered by funding gaps and regional variability, which prevent seamless support for every affected woman. This disparity underscores an urgent need for a comprehensive, uniformly applied strategy that truly reflects the Church's commitment to justice, respect, and the human dignity of all individuals.

In Australia, the Diocese of Sale embarked on a pilot project known as *Shining a Light* in collaboration with Catholic Social Services Victoria. This program brought together 130 participants including clergy, parish staff, and local community members to build capacity for a

¹² John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to Tanzania: Eucharistic Celebration in Mwanza" (Homily, Mwanza, September 4, 1990), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1990/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19900904_mwanza.html.

¹³ Francis, "Final Document" (Vatican City: General Secretariat of the Synod, October 26, 2024), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf.

¹⁴ Christopher Yueng, "Summary of 2012 Pilot Survey of Responses of Catholic Charities- USA Affiliates Regarding Domestic Violence Programs" (Catholics for Family Peace, 2015), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org/uploads/9/7/5/4/9754767/pilot_summer_2012_survey_of_catholic_charities_us_-_website_rev.pdf.

whole-of-Church response.¹⁵ While the project successfully raised awareness, fostered dialogue, and provided valuable training, its participant base remains relatively small. This limited reach means that the lessons learned, although promising, have yet to be fully integrated into a broader network across all parishes, and scalability continues to be a challenge. The long-term impact depends on sustained investment, systematic follow-up, and the integration of these efforts into regular parish practices.

The international training workshops led by Christaوريا Welland’s organization, “Pax in Familia,”¹⁶ have been piloting trauma-informed training for clergy and lay pastoral agents in regions including Latin America, Africa, and Asia. These programs have broadened the conversation around IPV and equipped pastoral agents with essential skills across diverse cultural settings. Nonetheless, the variation in cultural contexts means that a one-size-fits-all training model may not sufficiently address local nuances, and the sustainability of these workshops, often delivered as isolated sessions without ongoing support, can restrict their long-term impact on the communities they intend to serve.

Parallel to these initiatives, the Church has been striving to enhance its canonical annulment process for IPV survivors by making it more accessible, trauma-informed, and centered on the needs of the survivor.¹⁷ While Pope Francis has initiated some reforms in this

¹⁵ Georgia Lenton-Williams, "Catholic Diocese Finds Lived Experience Rife in Examination of Domestic and Family Violence," *ABC News*, November 22, 2023, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-22/catholic-diocese-examines-domestic-family-violence-prevention/103130570>.

¹⁶ Christaوريا Welland-Akong and Michael Akong, “Pax in Familia,” *Paxinfamilia.org*, 2022, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://paxinfamilia.org/>.

¹⁷ Jimmy Akin, “Pope Francis Reforms Annulment Process: 9 Things to Know and Share,” *Catholic Answers*, September 8, 2015, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/pope-francis-reforms-annulment-process-9-things-to-know-and-share>; Charles W. Dahm, “The Church Needs to Improve Annulment Process for Domestic Violence Victims,” *National Catholic Reporter*, 2022, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/church-needs-improve-annulment-process-domestic-violence-victims>.

area, significant systemic efforts remain necessary to prevent re-traumatization and ensure that survivors receive the justice and care they deserve. Although these canonical reforms hold promise for a more sensitive recognition of abuse within marriage, they are still in the early stages of development. Their practical impact has yet to be fully realized, and their successful implementation will require broad consensus within the Church's judicial structures, along with ongoing evaluation to effectively address the complex realities of IPV.¹⁸

While these efforts exist and vary across dioceses and organizations, critics argue that the Church's response remains fragmented and inconsistent, with many survivors struggling to find accessible, concrete support. The Church as a whole has yet to fully integrate IPV prevention and survivor support into its broader pastoral mission. Indeed, many advocates, psychologists and theologians feel that the Church has not effectively implemented concrete programs to prevent IPV or provide widespread, accessible support for survivors. The Church has yet to implement a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to prevention and victim support.¹⁹ Her official documents against IPV are largely mere symbolic gestures rather than real, tangible programs.²⁰ Moreover, some argue that the Church's emphasis on marriage sanctity, marital indissolubility, male headship, and procreation reinforce ideas of women's subordination and restrict women's

¹⁸ "Com-Dyn," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2003), ix–x.

¹⁹ Nathalie Lynn, "Understanding Intimate Partner Violence in the Church: A Call for Church Leaders to Engage in Dialogue," n.d., accessed June 19, 2025, <https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/wordpress.lehigh.edu/dist/5/694/files/2020/01/IPV-the-Church-White-Paper.pdf>.

²⁰ John L. Allen, "'Loose Canon' on Annulments May Get Tighter," *National Catholic Reporter*, 2017, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/loose-canon-annulments-may-get-tighter>; Charles W. Dahm, "Annulments and Domestic Violence," *Chicago Catholic*, December 14, 2022, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.chicagocatholic.com/other-authors/-/article/2022/12/14/annulments-and-domestic-violence>.

agency, making them more vulnerable to IPV and inadvertently discouraging them from seeking help or leaving abusive relationships.²¹

It is also argued that the Church's focus on forgiveness and reconciliation, while important, should never come at the expense of the safety and well-being of victims. Others contend that the Church's hierarchical structure and traditional views on gender roles may contribute to a culture of silence around domestic violence. The Church's long-standing patriarchal practices have perpetuated a culture in which the lived experiences of domestic violence are discounted. There is a significant disconnect when it comes to the practical help offered to abused women.²²

The issue is particularly severe in marginalized and patriarchal communities, where traditional cultural norms and confusion about religious teachings may mistakenly reinforce gender inequality and discourage women from leaving abusive relationships. In many immigrant groups, misinterpretations of Catholic teaching, such as the perceived permanence of marriage and the valorization of suffering, lead women to endure abuse rather than seek help, thereby impeding candid discussions about domestic violence. Furthermore, these communities frequently face additional hardships, including language barriers, legal uncertainties, and limited access to secular support services like counseling, legal aid, or shelters. Thus, even when abuse is recognized, victims often have few alternatives aside from relying on the Church and its pastoral networks. Compounding this challenge, many priests and Church leaders are not adequately educated to recognize or address IPV, as seminary training has historically omitted

²¹ Gabrielle Tremblay, "A Domestic Violence Paradox: Catholic Teachings as Source and Solution," *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*, Vol. 48, Issue 1, (2024).

²² Denise A. Starkey, "The Roman Catholic Church and Violence against Women," in *Religion and Men's Violence against Women* (New York, NY: Springer, 2015); Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1983).

the topic. This lack of training, combined with a cultural taboo around discussing IPV in homilies or pastoral messages, leaves victims feeling isolated and unaware of available help, especially in Vietnamese American communities where the Church is a primary source of trusted support.²³

To ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response to IPV, the Catholic Church must establish a centralized authority, such as a Dicastery for the Protection of Human Dignity, charged with promulgating systematic, evidence-based directives rooted in Biblical mandates, the Code of Canon Law's protective provisions, Second Vatican Council decrees, and Papal teachings.²⁴ Drawing on the Church's structured response to clergy sexual abuse as exemplified by the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors,²⁵ this framework would mandate standardized clergy training on IPV recognition and trauma-informed pastoral care, the integration of IPV-focused catechetical modules for couples and youth, and the establishment of clear diocesan protocols, including partnerships with secular agencies, to ensure accessible support systems. These universal standards, reflecting the Church's commitment to justice and human dignity, must also allow for contextual flexibility that empowers local Churches to adapt and implement culturally sensitive programs appropriate to their regional realities.

²³ Mary Farrow, "How the Church Can Better Respond to the Problem of Domestic Violence," Catholic News Agency, June 23, 2019, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/41612/how-the-church-can-better-respond-to-the-problem-of-domestic-violence>; Starkey, "The Roman Catholic Church and Violence against Women," 177-193.

²⁴ Cf. Gen. 1:27; *Code of Canon Law*, 1151–1155; Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 29; Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 54.

²⁵ See Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, *First Annual Report on Church Policies and Procedures for Safeguarding* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2024); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *When I Call for Help*, 2–3; Jeanne M. Hoeft, *Agency, Culture, and Human Personhood: Pastoral Theology and Intimate Partner Violence* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009), 112–120; FaithTrust Institute, *Working Together to End Domestic Violence: A Guide for Faith Communities* (Seattle: FaithTrust Institute, 2015), 45–50.

As the universal Church continues to discern and implement a comprehensive, theologically grounded, and pastorally effective response to IPV, my thesis, *Preaching about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the Vietnamese American Catholic Community*, offers a culturally sensitive contribution by providing essential education and a Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model that enables preachers and teachers to speak against IPV effectively and confidently. This work, which is presented during seminars, seeks to bridge the gap between the Church's high-minded doctrinal condemnations of IPV and its often inconsistent, reactive institutional responses. By harnessing the transformative power of pulpit preaching and catechesis, the model challenges entrenched patriarchal norms and catalyzes concrete initiatives, such as mandatory clergy training, the development of consistent referral systems, and the creation of sustainable support networks that translate doctrinal imperatives into lived pastoral realities. In so doing, it inspires communal solidarity, reaffirms the intrinsic dignity of women, and fully embodies Christ's model of love and justice, thereby providing a robust and evidence-informed framework tailored to meet the urgent cultural needs of the Vietnamese American Catholic community.

Genesis of the Project

In the Spring Semester of 2023, I was tasked by the Aquinas Institute of Theology Committee to select a subject for my doctoral thesis. This assignment marked the beginning of a turbulent yet transformative period as I searched for a topic that would ignite my passion and inspire unwavering dedication. My primary objective was to choose a subject that not only would compel me to invest the needed time and effort but also would benefit my Vietnamese American Catholic community—a community I have faithfully served for most of my life.

Guided by my deep commitment to help young Vietnamese Catholic adolescents discover their purpose by following Jesus, I initially envisioned a focus on youth ministry. As a deacon for the Diocese of Dallas, my ministry has centered on preaching, teaching Bible and Confirmation classes, and spiritually journeying with teenagers considered rebellious or troubled, all in the hope that, with God's grace, they might become individuals of faith and goodness. However, my encounter with these adolescents revealed a painful truth: many came from broken and unhappy families. Often, they lived with single mothers or mothers in unstable relationships. Their family circumstances, riddled with dysfunction and strife, profoundly impacted their well-being and faith journeys. Despite my deep desire to help them, I found myself constrained by an inability to influence their parents and address the root causes of their struggles. This realization led me to recognize that I needed to tackle the underlying family issues affecting these teenagers.

My journey toward identifying the topic of IPV began with conversations with Fr. Gregory Heille, O.P., and Sr. Sara Fairbanks, O.P., who patiently guided me with wisdom and insight. They introduced me to the subject of IPV as a critical cause of family brokenness. In a moment of intuitive clarity, I recognized this as the subject I must explore and address, a phenomenon profoundly affecting Vietnamese families and their communities.

The issue of IPV struck a deeply personal chord. As a husband reflecting on moments when I exerted power and control in my own family, I began to confront the pervasive reality of IPV within Vietnamese families. This phenomenon remains immense in scale yet hidden beneath cultural norms of avoidance and neglect. Its roots stretch deep into human sinfulness, a rejection of God's justice, love and compassion. IPV is both ancient and tragically persistent, leaving countless lives fractured and families in turmoil. This recognition solidified my resolve to devote

my time, energy, and commitment to studying this critical issue, seeking solutions that would benefit the Vietnamese American Catholic community.

I am profoundly enthusiastic about this thesis topic, and I seek to contribute meaningful insights and resources for Catholic preachers and catechists who seek to address IPV effectively. By engaging deeply with this subject, I aim to offer something unique, impactful, and transformative for the Vietnamese American women and broader communities of faith. Through my project, I aspire to harness the transformative power of preaching to cultivate healing, justice, and renewal, anchored in God's grace and compassionate pastoral care. I envision a future where our preaching and teaching not only offer hope for personal restoration but also ignite a spirit of community transformation, creating resilient, supportive environments for those who have suffered IPV and inviting the Church to truly embody the love and sanctuary it preaches.

Ministry Context

According to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau, over 2 million Vietnamese immigrants reside in the United States, making them one of the largest foreign-born groups and accounting for 3 percent of the 44.5 million U.S. immigrants as of 2019. The majority of Vietnamese immigrants are concentrated in regions with substantial foreign-born populations. Notably, 39 percent live in California, 13 percent in Texas, and 4 percent in both Washington State and Florida. Approximately 96,000 Vietnamese Americans call the Texas Metro area of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Arlington home.²⁶ The Diocese of Dallas, which spans nine counties, has

²⁶ Abby Budiman, "Vietnamese in the U.S. Fact Sheet," *Pew Research Center*, April 29, 2021, accessed Mar 31, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-vietnamese-in-the-u-s-fact-sheet/>.

69 parishes and serves around 1.3 million Catholics, representing 30 percent of the North Texas community of over 4 million people.²⁷

As a deacon of the Diocese of Dallas, I have the privilege of serving the Vietnamese American Catholic parish, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, in Garland, which has 2,093 families. Our parish is one of four Vietnamese American Catholic churches within the diocese. According to annual attendance counts at Sunday Mass, these four parishes collectively host between eleven to fifteen thousand members.²⁸ The majority of our congregation consists of young Vietnamese Americans from the one-and-a-half and second generations. Many of these families are employed in technological fields, in professional careers as doctors, dentists, and lawyers, or as business owners. Recent immigrants often work as nail technicians or hairdressers to support their families. On average, each family has two children, and the number of children enrolled in local Sunday School is increasing every year.

As I often meet with parents of young adolescents preparing for Confirmation, I first encountered Ms. Ha Dinh²⁹ in 2022 at Sunday school. She arrived alone and her quiet presence and weary expression immediately caught my attention. In our conversation, she confided the overwhelming demands of work and household responsibilities and expressed a deep longing for her husband to assume more responsibility for their teenager, a plea that had gone unanswered. At that moment, I perceived her as a mother stretched thin and yearning for support. I was unaware of the profound struggles unfolding beneath the surface.

²⁷ Catholic Diocese of Dallas, “About The Diocese,” July 25, 2022, accessed Mar 31, 2023, <https://www.cathdal.org/about>.

²⁸ Statistics provided by the Liaison for Statistical Data, Office of the Vicar General of Dallas Diocese, personal communication, March 22, 2023.

²⁹ In this study, pseudonyms are used to maintain participant confidentiality.

When I met her again the following year, I learned that she had divorced her husband after enduring years of abuse. My initial reaction was one of deep sorrow, not for the dissolution of her marriage but for the unspoken pain and isolation she had suffered for so long. I found myself wondering if I could have recognized her distress sooner and offered the support she so desperately needed. Her story made me question how a family meant to be a sanctuary of love and holiness³⁰ could survive under the weight of cruelty and degradation.

Ms. Dinh later shared how her life had changed after the divorce. She described a profound sense of relief and renewed physical well-being, now able to focus on herself and her children without the constant barrage of harassment and insults from her former husband. Yet, her narrative is not unique; it echoes the experiences of many Vietnamese American women, who resettle in the United States burdened by cultural expectations and the hidden scars of domestic violence. In Vietnam, Ms. Dinh had endured sporadic physical and verbal abuse, justified by societal norms that demanded her unconditional obedience and dependence for survival. Relocating to America, with its stringent laws against IPV and a more critical stance on traditional power dynamics, her husband's behavior shifted. Deprived of the control he once wielded, he resorted to even more pervasive verbal and psychological abuse in a desperate effort to reassert dominance.

For years, Ms. Dinh suffered in silence, choosing to “keep peace in the family” in order to avoid the stigma of being labeled an unvirtuous wife. Finally, after enduring prolonged torment, she summoned the courage to depart, seeking independence and safety for herself and her children. Yet, the scars of her past linger, and even in her newfound freedom, she wrestles

³⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2201–2205.

with profound questions of faith: would God and the Catholic Church understand her decision? Could she continue to find solace within the Church while living apart from her abuser?

Ms. Dinh's story is both a testament to resilience and a call to action. It underscores the urgent need for the Church to address the realities of IPV within Vietnamese American communities, where cultural and religious norms often compound the suffering of victims. Her journey highlights the critical need for informed pastoral care and the Church's responsibility to provide not only spiritual guidance but also practical support for women like her. As I reflect on her experience, I am compelled to ask: how can we, as a Church, better serve women like Ms. Dinh? How can we ensure that our teachings on the sanctity of marriage do not inadvertently trap women in cycles of abuse?

These pressing questions form the foundation of my thesis, a heartfelt plea and a plan to harness the transformative power of preaching and catechesis. My goal is to break the silence surrounding IPV by educating and empowering preachers and catechists to address IPV with conviction and confidence. By giving them a model for culturally sensitive and theologically grounded preaching and teaching, I aspire to help them bridge the chasm between doctrine and lived experience, offering Vietnamese American women who are enduring the unthinkable a path toward healing, justice, and renewed hope.

Intimate Partner Violence is not only a growing epidemic in Vietnam, but also an escalating concern within the Vietnamese American community. Until recently, there has been a lack of attention to IPV in this community, primarily due to the relatively few incidents reported to authorities.³¹ However, emerging research indicates that IPV is a significant issue and one of

³¹ Christine K. Ho, "An Analysis of Domestic Violence in Asian American Communities," *Women & Therapy*, 9:1-2, (October 1999): 129-150.

the main causes of separation and turmoil in many Vietnamese American families and communities.³²

While IPV research is expansive, there is a lack of comprehensive studies on IPV among Vietnamese immigrant women, who are particularly vulnerable. It is known that IPV is a significant issue among Asian immigrants, with 41 to 61 percent of women experiencing either physical or sexual violence or both, though this is likely underreported due to cultural attitudes.³³ Similarly, recent studies in Vietnam show nearly 40 percent of married men admit to committing IPV.³⁴ If this pattern holds true in the parish I serve, as many as one thousand families are impacted by IPV.

The alarming phenomenon of IPV in this community stems from cultural differences between Vietnamese and American traditions. Conflicts, tension, and violence arise when the traditionally dominant role of the husband, as dictated by patriarchal norms and values, is diminished or removed. Conversely, Vietnamese women have begun to achieve success in the new society, gaining financial independence from their husbands.

Intimate Partner Violence remains a deeply entrenched and often overlooked issue within the Vietnamese American community. Cultural norms dictate that family matters, including abuse, should remain private and never be shared with outsiders. Seeking external assistance, whether through the legal system, counseling, or law enforcement, is commonly viewed as

³² Mikyong Kim-Goh and Jon Baello, "Attitudes toward Domestic Violence in Korean and Vietnamese Immigrant Communities: Implications for Human Services," *Journal of Family Violence* 23, no. 7 (October 2008): 647–54.

³³ Gina Dillon, Rafat Hussain, Deborah Loxton, and Saifur Rahman, "Mental and Physical Health and Intimate Partner Violence against Women: A Review of the Literature," *International Journal of Family Medicine* (January 2013): 1–15.

³⁴ Kathryn M. Yount et al., "Men's Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnam," *Men & Masculinities* 19, no. 1 (April 2016): 64–84.

unacceptable, as it may bring shame upon the family.³⁵ As a result, many Vietnamese women endure IPV in silence, prioritizing the preservation of their family's reputation over their own safety and well-being.³⁶ This enduring cycle of violence violates fundamental human dignity and rights, inflicting profound physical, emotional, psychological, moral, and even sexual harm.³⁷ Addressing IPV in these communities requires significant cultural awareness and proactive efforts to break the pervasive silence and ensure that survivors receive the support and protection they desperately need.

Equally critical is the vital role of clergy, catechists, and religious leaders, who are uniquely positioned to guide their communities yet often lack the requisite theological grounding, cultural understanding, and practical training to confront IPV effectively. A preliminary survey of clergy, religious brothers, sisters, and catechists in my community revealed significant deficiencies in their readiness to address IPV, with many feeling ill-equipped to incorporate the topic into their teachings or provide adequate support for victims. In response, I developed comprehensive, culturally sensitive seminars that integrate Biblical mandates, Canonical directives, and Papal teachings with practical strategies for prevention, intervention, and survivor support. I also developed a Prophetic Pastoral Narrative model as an effective framework for preaching and teaching about IPV. My initiative aims to address the urgent need for targeted education and actionable pastoral guidance, ensuring that faith leaders within the

³⁵ Amy Pan, et al, "Understanding the role of culture in domestic violence: the Ahimsa Project for Safe Families," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* vol. 8, 1 (2006): 35-43.

³⁶ Bessel A. Van Der Kolk, Alexander C. Mcfarlane, and Lars Weisaeth, *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society* (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 31.

³⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Preventing Intimate Partner Violence," February 8, 2024, accessed June 23, 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/prevention/index.html>.

Vietnamese American Catholic community are empowered to foster informed dialogue, effective intervention, and systemic change.

Assessing the Problem before the Seminar

A Pre-Seminar Questionnaire of twenty-four participants—including one priest, two deacons, one religious sister, and twenty catechists and religious leaders—revealed a sharp divide in perceptions of IPV within the Vietnamese American community. While 41.7% acknowledged IPV as common, nearly 60% either were uncertain whether IPV was common (29.2%) or dismissed its prevalence (29.1%). This ambiguity highlights the insidious nature of IPV, concealed by cultural norms that suppress open discussion, prioritize family reputation over individual safety, and limit awareness of non-physical abuse. The widespread uncertainty suggests that many unknowingly reinforce a cycle of silence, either by normalizing harmful behaviors or failing to recognize them. Though these findings do not definitively measure IPV's extent, they underscore the urgent need for education and pastoral engagement to raise awareness, foster informed dialogue, and challenge prevailing misconceptions.

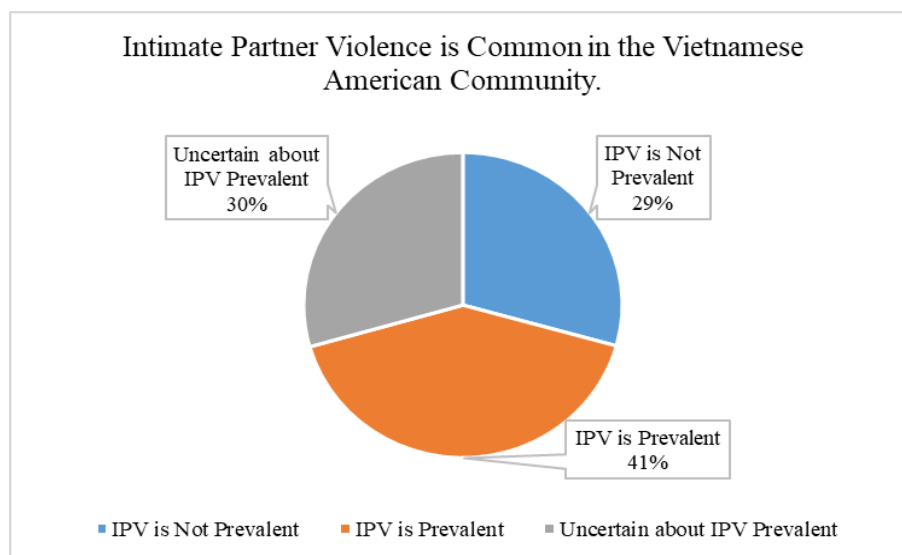


Figure 1. Pre-Seminar Perception of Prevalence of IPV Among Vietnamese Americans

Participants were also asked whether they perceived the Church's efforts to preach and teach against IPV as ineffective. Responses revealed a near-even divide: 38.0% agreed that the Church's efforts are ineffective, while 37.0% disagreed—suggesting either confidence in current initiatives or differences in pastoral experience. The remaining 25.0% were neutral, indicating uncertainty or limited awareness. These findings underscore the need for clearer communication, deeper formation, and more visible action in addressing IPV within faith communities.

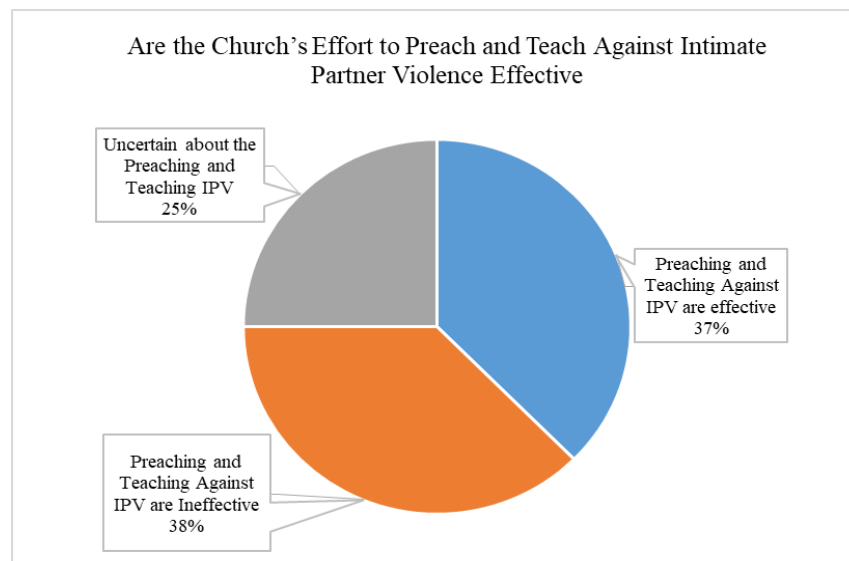


Figure 2. Pre-Seminar Perception of the Effectiveness of the Church's Efforts in Preaching and Teaching Against IPV.

When assessing whether participants felt they had sufficient knowledge to effectively discuss IPV in their preaching and teaching, the results were striking. Only 20.8% expressed confidence in their ability to address IPV, while 29.2% were neutral, suggesting partial knowledge but lacking full assurance, and a full 50.0% acknowledged insufficient knowledge to discuss IPV effectively. This significant knowledge gap underscores the necessity of further education, training, and resources to equip clergy and religious leaders with the understanding required to address IPV meaningfully.

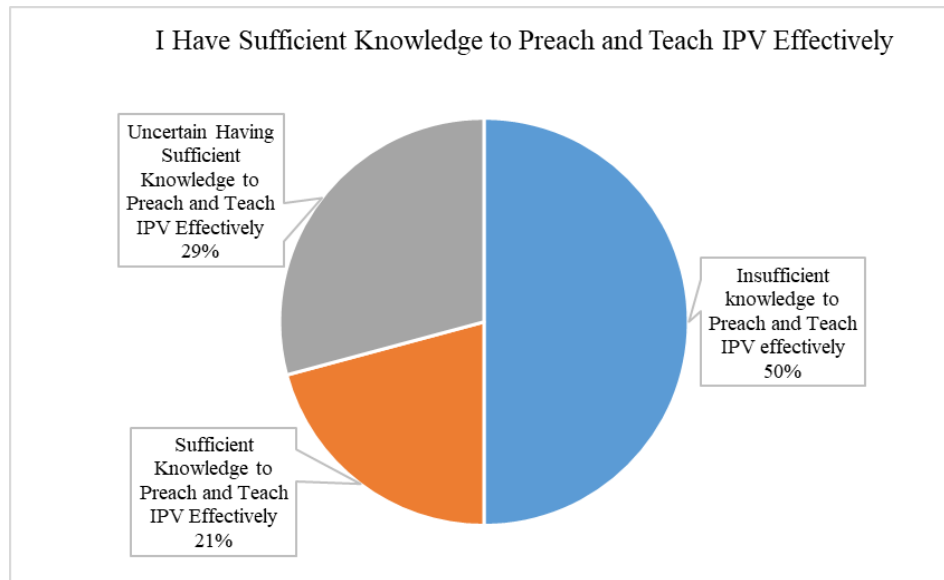


Figure 3. Pre-Seminar Confidence in Discussing IPV in Preaching and Teaching

The assessment of clergy engagement in addressing IPV in their preaching and teaching underscored the problem, as illustrated in Figure 4. Only 4.2% of participants actively incorporate IPV in their discussions, while 29.2% remain neutral, acknowledging the issue but hesitating to integrate it into their teachings. Most notably, a significant majority (66.7%) do not address IPV at all, signaling a critical lack of engagement on this pressing matter. These findings highlight the systemic absence of IPV discourse within religious settings, leaving congregants without essential guidance and support. The low rate of active engagement (4.2%) suggests that IPV is not recognized as a priority in faith-based discussions, while the high percentage of non-engagement (66.7%) underscores an urgent need for enhanced awareness, specialized training, and educational initiatives to equip clergy and catechists with the confidence and knowledge to address IPV effectively. Strengthening theological discourse on IPV is vital in creating a more informed and responsive faith community, ensuring that religious leaders become advocates for awareness, prevention, and support.

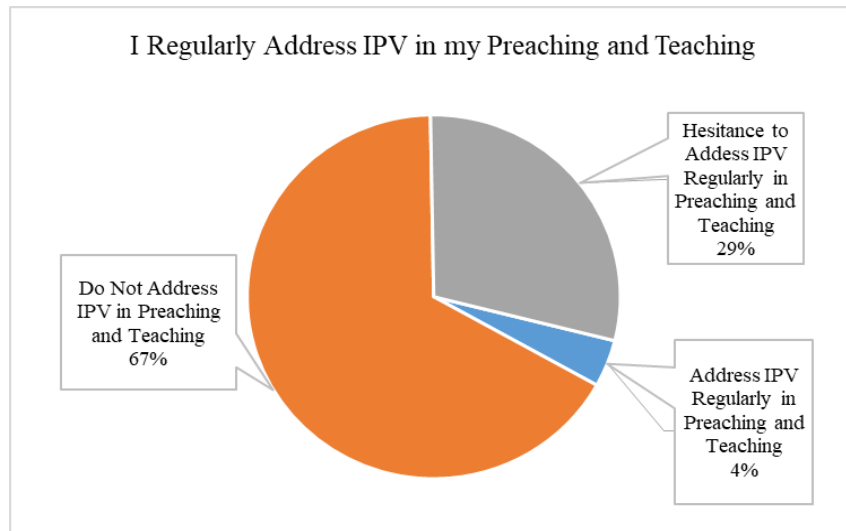


Figure 4. Preacher Engagement in Preaching and Teaching About IPV.

The results of this assessment reveal a striking reality: IPV remains widely unaddressed in religious preaching and teaching within the Vietnamese American community. With 50.0% of respondents acknowledging their lack of knowledge and 66.7% confirming they do not regularly discuss IPV, the findings demonstrate a profound gap in faith-based engagement on this pressing issue. Religious leaders have a unique opportunity to educate, inspire, and advocate for survivors of IPV; yet, without the necessary tools, knowledge, and confidence, this responsibility remains largely unfulfilled. Strengthening theological training on IPV, incorporating it into sermons and religious education, and fostering open discussions within faith communities are essential steps forward. By equipping clergy and religious leaders with resources, education, and confidence, the Church can move toward becoming a vital source of guidance, empowerment, and support for those affected by IPV. Addressing this urgent issue within religious discourse will not only break the silence but also transform faith communities into safe spaces of healing, dignity, and justice.

Purpose

My thesis will investigate the phenomenon of IPV against Vietnamese American women and make the urgent case for speaking out against this injustice by drawing on comprehensive scientific and theological research. Central to this effort is the use of a transformative Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model, designed to equip preachers to challenge the deep-seated patriarchal cultural biases that perpetuate violence against these women. Additionally, the study will empower Vietnamese clergy, religious leaders, and catechists with robust, contemporary insights from sociocultural, psychological, and theological disciplines, enabling them to effectively address IPV from the pulpit, in classrooms, and in community meetings. Without exception, the thesis underscores the critical necessity of protecting, supporting, embracing, and empowering abused Vietnamese women, while also calling for abusers to repent, assume responsibility, and commit to personal transformation. Finally, it will seek to correct common misunderstandings about Church teachings on the indissolubility of marriage, especially for women in dangerous, life-threatening situations, by clarifying that legitimate causes, including IPV, can absolve a spouse from the obligation to remain in an abusive relationship.

Hypothesis

Preaching about IPV to the Vietnamese American community offers a comprehensive theological, moral, and pastoral framework to address the profound yet often concealed tragedy of violence against Vietnamese women. By fostering awareness and understanding of IPV in light of God's just and merciful love for couples, women survivors are liberated from all forms of abuse, abusers are urged to transform, and the Church community is empowered to support parishioners in comprehending and dismantling the culture of IPV within Vietnamese families.³⁸

³⁸ Dereck Daschke and D Andrew Kille, *A Cry instead of Justice: The Bible and Cultures of Violence in Psychological Perspective* (New York; London: T & T Clark International, Cop, 2010).

Assumptions

This thesis posits that while Vietnamese American Catholic families largely retain their traditional culture, prolonged exposure to American society may influence their behaviors. Drawing on data representative of the broader Vietnamese Catholic community in America, it becomes apparent that previous preaching has inadequately addressed IPV. Consequently, there is an urgent need for a new, systemic, theological, and pastoral approach, one that employs a transformative Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model to equip preachers in combating the patriarchal cultural biases that perpetuate violence against Vietnamese American women.

Central to this approach is the strategic use of two primary preaching contexts: the homilies delivered during Mass, which reach thousands of parishioners each Sunday, and the targeted teachings provided in Sunday School classes, where teenagers and families are actively engaged in learning. By integrating these vital settings, the Church holds significant potential to shape and transform attitudes, fostering a faith community that not only denounces IPV but also actively supports and empowers survivors. This thesis, therefore, calls for a renewed commitment to justice, compassionate pastoral care, and the transformative power of the word to rebuild lives and reshape cultural narratives.

Definitions and Limitations

Given that 81% of reported IPV cases in Vietnamese families involve women being abused by their current or former husbands or boyfriends,³⁹ this thesis will focus exclusively on violence against women.

³⁹ National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), “Domestic violence,” accessed Mar 31, 2023, https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/domestic_violence-2020080709350855.pdf?1596811079991.

Chapter Outline

This chapter sets the stage by addressing IPV as a critical issue within the Vietnamese American Catholic community. It highlights the devastating effects of IPV, alongside the cultural, systemic, and theological barriers that foster silence on the matter. The chapter explores the genesis of the Thesis, drawing on the author's pastoral experiences and commitment to supporting affected families, and presents the ministry context, outlining the unique demographics and challenges of this community. It identifies the problem of IPV, emphasizing its hidden prevalence and severe impact, and articulates the purpose of equipping clergy, religious leaders, and catechists with the tools to effectively preach and teach against IPV. Concluding with the Hypothesis, it proposes preaching as a transformative tool for raising awareness, fostering healing, and promoting communal renewal, while also detailing the assumptions, definitions, and limitations that frame the scope of the study.

Building on this foundation, Chapter Two delves into fifty years of theoretical and practical insights into IPV. It examines biological, psychological, psychiatric, feminist, trauma-informed, and social learning perspectives, providing a comprehensive framework for preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. Special focus is placed on the sociocultural and psychological dimensions of the Vietnamese community's response to IPV. This chapter aims to deepen understanding of IPV's nature and causes, inform prevention and intervention strategies, enhance support services, improve Church policies, and promote education and advocacy for IPV awareness.

Shifting from a theoretical perspective, Chapter Three investigates the roots of IPV among Vietnamese American Catholics. It examines the theological foundations of systemic gender inequality, tracing its origins to biblical creation narratives and historical theology as

understood within Vietnam's patriarchal culture. The chapter also addresses the profound spiritual wound of trauma and moral injury caused by IPV, reinterpreting biblical lament texts and exploring allegorical biblical characters as pathways to healing and forgiveness.

Emphasizing the Church's role in promoting recovery, it highlights the importance of liturgical celebrations and theological hope for Vietnamese American Catholic women impacted by IPV.

Focusing on practical solutions, Chapter Four introduces the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model as a holistic framework for preaching and teaching against IPV. This model integrates Paul Ricoeur's threefold mimesis with prophetic and pastoral elements, aiming to raise awareness, reject IPV, challenge systemic inequality, and empower abused women. It highlights the unique experiences of Vietnamese American women, emphasizing a vision of healing, hope, and the creation of a supportive Christian community. Preachers and catechists are envisioned as narrators who guide individuals and communities in reshaping their self-perception through biblical values, restoring their identity in God's image, and fostering transformation in Christ.

Chapter Five presents a concise exposition of the ministerial intervention process aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of IPV workshops. Structured as four consecutive 90-minute sessions, these workshops are designed to heighten awareness of IPV and equip religious leaders with effective pastoral and preaching strategies. The chapter delineates every phase of the seminar's design, from the preparation of presentation materials, scheduling of sessions and recruitment of participants, to the selection of a seminar venue that ensures an optimal learning environment. It further describes the sequence of activities during each sessions, including expert presentations and in-depth discussions, and details a rigorous data collection methodology that employs pre-seminar surveys, post-session questionnaires, and guided discussions with due consideration for ethical standards.

To conclude the study, Chapter Six presents the findings from the research, drawing from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to substantiate the hypothesis. The data demonstrates that preaching about IPV to Vietnamese American communities enhances awareness, supports victims, motivates abusers to reform, and empowers the Church to address IPV effectively. Additionally, this chapter reflects on lessons learned, explores future opportunities, and identifies areas for improvement in subsequent workshop trainings for Vietnamese American communities.

Chapter 2

Interdisciplinary Framework: Social, Psychological, and Psychiatric Dimensions of IPV

“Coercive control is not just about violence—it is about domination, entrapment, and stripping away a partner’s sense of autonomy.”⁴⁰

—Evan Stark

Introduction

I first met Tim Nguyen in 2013 when I began working at the Dallas Independent School District. At the time, I heard from my colleagues that he had recently married and was joyfully preparing to settle into a new home with his wife, Michelle. However, their happiness had been shattered in the summer of 2011 during a family birthday celebration in Grand Prairie, where Michelle was tragically killed by Tim’s brother-in-law, Tan Do—a devastating day that left an indelible mark on many lives.

According to the *Dallas Morning News*, Tan Do and his wife, Trini, appeared to lead an ordinary life with their two children. Yet beneath the surface, their marriage was plagued by conflict.⁴¹ Relatives described Tan as increasingly volatile, and court records detailed years of abuse: physical violence, threats with a handgun, and relentless emotional cruelty. Though Trini sought protection and left twice, she ultimately returned, rescinding her restraining order.

On the day of their son’s 11th birthday, Tan seemed calm as he decorated Forum Roller World. But beneath this facade, he hid a semiautomatic weapon. In a horrifying turn, he opened

⁴⁰ Evan Stark, *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5.

⁴¹ Dallasnews Administrator, “Vietnamese’s Quest for Better Life Turns to Sorrow after Roller Rink Slayings,” accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2011/07/26/vietnamese-familys-quest-for-better-life-turns-to-sorrow-after-roller-rink-slayings/>.

fire, killing Trini, her siblings—Michelle Ta, Lynn Ta, and Kenny Ta—and injuring other family members before taking his own life. Tim narrowly escaped, delayed by a broken garage door.

Today, although Tim has rebuilt his life, the shadow of that day remains, a painful testament to the devastating impact of IPV.

Tim’s story offers a vital lens through which to examine the complex realities of IPV. This chapter builds on his experience to explore IPV through a multidisciplinary framework, encompassing biological, psychological, psychiatric, feminist, trauma-informed, and social learning perspectives. Special attention is given to the Vietnamese American Catholic community, where cultural and religious factors uniquely shape responses to IPV. By integrating these diverse perspectives, this chapter deepens our understanding of IPV’s roots and far-reaching effects, informing prevention, intervention, and the development of culturally sensitive, theologically grounded pastoral care. Ultimately, it seeks to bridge doctrine and lived experience, charting pathways toward healing, transformation, and empowerment.

Intimate Partner Violence, now the preferred term among service providers, encompasses a broad spectrum of abusive behaviors within intimate relationships, extending beyond traditional labels such as “wife abuse” or “battered woman.” This more inclusive framework accounts for cases involving unmarried partners, female perpetrators, and non-physical forms of abuse. IPV is both a product and a perpetuator of systemic gender inequality: perpetrators wield violence to assert control, while societal norms—and the pervasive fear of assault—silence victims and deter resistance. This entrenched cycle deepens victims’ vulnerability, reinforcing patterns of subjugation and oppression.⁴²

⁴² Charlotte Watts, and Cathy Zimmerman. “Violence against Women: Global Scope and Magnitude,” *Lancet* 359, no. 9313 (April 6, 2002): 1232-33.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines IPV as “behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors.”⁴³ The most recent WHO data (2000–2018) on violence against women reveals that at least 1 in 3 women, approximately 736 million worldwide, have experienced physical or sexual violence from either intimate or non-intimate partners.⁴⁴

The Enduring Impact of IPV

Intimate Partner Violence is the most widespread form of violence against women, with severe health, social, and economic repercussions for individuals and society. Studies reveal that 20% to 68% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. According to the WHO, IPV not only contributes to injury and mortality but also heightens the risk of other serious health conditions, affecting women’s physical and mental well-being across diverse cultural, racial, and societal contexts.⁴⁵

Beyond its high prevalence, IPV disproportionately affects women, who suffer injuries at three times the rate of male victims.⁴⁶ In general, women experience sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner roughly six times more than men during their lifetime. According to the U.S. Department of Justice in a 2003 report, men committed 85% of

⁴³ World Health Organization, *Violence Against Women*, last modified March 9, 2021, accessed May 31, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.

⁴⁴ World Health Organization, *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2021).

⁴⁵ Mary Ellsberg, et al, “Intimate Partner Violence and Women’s Physical and Mental Health in the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence: An Observational Study,” *The Lancet* 371, no. 9619 (January 1, 2008): 1165–72; K. M. Devries, et al, “The Global Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women,” *Science* 340, no. 6140 (June 28, 2013): 1527–28.

⁴⁶ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “Domestic violence,” accessed June 20, 2023, https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/domestic_violence-2020080709350855.pdf?1596811079991.

the 691,710 reported cases of nonfatal IPV-related violence.⁴⁷ A 2006 Commonwealth Fund survey reports that nearly one-third of American women reported being abused physically or emotionally at some point.⁴⁸ Indeed, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), IPV is a significant and costly public health problem with a wide range of devastating personal and social consequences for victims, perpetrators, and society.⁴⁹

As with other types of interpersonal violence, the true extent of IPV is hard to estimate given cultural differences and taboos in responding to research questions. For instance, Women's Advocates Inc. (2002) calculated that IPV costs the US economy \$12.6 billion annually, the equivalent of \$22.03 billion in 2024. This estimate included costs for legal and medical services, the judicial system, and lost productivity. Another advocacy group, Womankind Worldwide, estimated in 2004 that legal services and lost productivity related to IPV alone cost \$3.5 billion a year—\$5.83 billion in 2024.⁵⁰ The economic burden of IPV spans multiple sectors, including criminal justice, healthcare, social services, education, employment, and intergenerational impact costs.⁵¹

Intimate Partner Violence constitutes an urgent public health crisis with severe personal, social, and intergenerational consequences. IPV survivors, both male and female, experience a

⁴⁷ Callie Rennison, “Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001,” February 2003, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv01.pdf>.

⁴⁸ K. J. Wilson, *When Violence Begins at Home: A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding and Ending Domestic Abuse*, (Brainerd, Minnesota: Bang Printing, 2006), 8.

⁴⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “About Intimate Partner Violence,” Intimate Partner Violence Prevention, May 16, 2024, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/index.html>.

⁵⁰ H. Waters et al., *The Economic Dimensions of Interpersonal Violence* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2004), accessed June 19, 2025, <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/42944/9241591609.pdf>.

⁵¹ Cora Peterson et al., “Lifetime Economic Burden of Intimate Partner Violence Among U.S. Adults,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 55, no. 4 (October 2018): 433–44.

broad spectrum of health complications, including physical injuries, chronic pain, respiratory issues, mobility impairments, cardiovascular disease, and increased risk for HIV. Additionally, IPV is linked to poor sleep quality, disability, and limited access to routine medical care.⁵² They also experience a range of mental health consequences, with high rates of PTSD, depression and suicidality, anxiety, and substance misuse and abuse. Women, in particular, also suffer from unexpected or unwanted pregnancies due to reproductive coercion.⁵³

Theoretical Approaches to Intimate Partner Violence

Understanding and addressing IPV perpetration is urgent given its devastating health, social, legal, financial, and psychological consequences for perpetrators, victims, and exposed children. Over the past 50 years in the U.S., various theories have emerged to explain the causes and contributing factors of IPV.⁵⁴ Such theories and frameworks can be categorized under various perspectives, which include biological, psychological, psycho-pathological, attachment, cognitive behavioral, feminist, trauma-informed, social learning, and ecological accounts.

Biological Perspectives

Biological theories attribute male-perpetrated violence to such factors as brain structure abnormalities, chemical imbalances, dietary deficiencies, and hormonal influences, particularly testosterone. Studies have explored how genetic defects, brain injuries, neuropathology,

⁵² Matthew J. Breiding, Michele C. Black, and George W. Ryan. "Chronic Disease and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence - 18 U.S. States/Territories, 2005," *Annals of Epidemiology* 18, no. 7 (July 2008): 538–44.

⁵³ Jacquelyn C Campbell, "Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence," *Lancet* 359, no. 9314 (April 13, 2002): 1331; Ann L Coker, "Does Physical Intimate Partner Violence Affect Sexual Health?" *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 8, no. 2 (April 2007): 149–77.

⁵⁴ Richard J. Gelles, "Violence in the Family: A Review of Research in the Seventies," *Journal of Marriage & Family* 42, no. 4 (November 1980): 873.

infections, and medical conditions may alter brain function, increasing the risk of aggression.⁵⁵ Head trauma, for instance, is associated with impaired impulse control, heightened aggression, and personality shifts;⁵⁶ however, not all violent individuals have a history of head injury, and not all with head injuries become violent.⁵⁷

Research also examines the roles of neurotransmitters—testosterone and serotonin—in modulating aggression. Elevated testosterone has been linked to increased aggression and relational difficulties, though evidence connecting these factors directly to IPV remains limited and inconsistent.⁵⁸ Twin studies suggest genetic influences on aggression and impulse control, indicating a potential predisposition in certain individuals.⁵⁹ While some infections and illnesses have been correlated with violent behavior, biological explanations for IPV remain underexplored, partly due to ethical concerns about excusing male violence. Further research is essential to clarify these complex biological pathways.

⁵⁵ Parveen Azam Ali, and Paul B. Naylor, “Intimate Partner Violence: A Narrative Review of the Biological and Psychological Explanations for Its Causation,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 18, no. 3 (May 2013): 373–82.

⁵⁶ Alan Rosenbaum et al., “Head Injury in Partner-Abusive Men,” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 62, no. 6 (December 1994): 1187–93, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006x.62.6.1187>.

⁵⁷ Emilie E Godwin, Jeffrey S Kreutzer, Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, and Tara J Lehan, “Marriage after Brain Injury: Review, Analysis, and Research Recommendations,” *The Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation* 26, no. 1 (January 2011): 43–55.

⁵⁸ Kimberly Saudino, and Denise Hines, “Etiological Similarities Between Psychological and Physical Aggression in Intimate Relationships: A Behavioral Genetic Exploration,” *Journal of Family Violence* 22, no. 3 (April 2007): 121–29.

⁵⁹ G. Carey, Goldman D, “The genetics of antisocial behavior,” in *Handbook of antisocial behavior*, ed. David M. Stoff, James Breiling, and Jack D. Maser (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Son Inc., 1997), 243–254.

Psychological Perspectives

Although models differ on the origins of IPV⁶⁰ and effective intervention strategies,⁶¹ psychological theories of IPV perpetration have been conceptually and empirically significant for decades.⁶² These theories inform interventions aimed at modifying IPV offenders' behavior.⁶³ Extensive psychological research examines various factors contributing to IPV, including psychopathology, trauma, attachment needs, and individual attributes such as assertiveness, communication, and problem-solving skills.

Psycho-Pathological Theory

The psycho-pathological model attributes IPV to personality traits and intra-individual factors of both perpetrators and victims. It links violent behavior to mental health issues such as depression, impulsivity, and emotional dysregulation, portraying perpetrators as pathologically jealous, insecure, and struggling with low self-esteem and masculine identity. The theory also suggests that victims' psychological vulnerabilities may play a role in perpetuating abuse.⁶⁴

However, the model faces significant limitations. Small sample sizes hinder its generalizability, and many individuals with mental illness do not engage in violence, while many

⁶⁰ D. G. Dutton, and K. Corvo, "Transforming a Flawed Policy: A Call to Revive Psychology and Science in Domestic Violence Research and Practice," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 11, no. 5 (September 1, 2006): 457-83.

⁶¹ Julia Babcock, Nicholas Armenti, Clare Cannon, Katie Lauve-Moon, Fred Buttell, Regardt Ferreira, Arthur Cantos, et al., "Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs: A Proposal for Evidence-Based Standards in the United States," *Partner Abuse* 7, no. 4 (October 2016): 355-460.

⁶² Daniel G. Saunders, "Helping Husbands Who Batter." *Social Casework* 65, no. 6 (June 1984): 347-53.

⁶³ Christopher I. Eckhardt, Christopher Murphy, Danielle Black, and Laura Suhr, "Intervention Programs for Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: Conclusions from a Clinical Research Perspective," *Public Health Reports (Washington, D.C. : 1974)* 121, no. 4 (July 2006): 369-81.

⁶⁴ Parveen Ali, and Michaela M. Rogers, *Gender-Based Violence: A Comprehensive Guide* (Cham: Springer: 2023), 20-21.

violent offenders have no diagnosable psychopathology. Critics argue that the model oversimplifies IPV by ignoring broader social, cultural, and structural influences. Its inability to specify which personality traits reliably predict violence further weakens its explanatory power, and an overemphasis on mental illness risks obscuring the complex realities of IPV.⁶⁵

Attachment Theory

A cornerstone of developmental psychology, attachment theory posits that violence and abuse often arise from disrupted or maladaptive attachment patterns.⁶⁶ John Bowlby's foundational work highlights the innate human drive to form emotional bonds with caregivers, shaping internal models for future relationships. Bowlby identified three attachment styles—secure, avoidant, and anxious⁶⁷—later expanded to include a fourth: disorganized. The latter three, classified as insecure, are linked to relational instability and heightened risk for IPV.

Empirical studies confirm strong associations between insecure attachment and IPV perpetration in both men and women,⁶⁸ though mechanisms differ. Avoidant individuals may use violence to enforce emotional distance, while anxious or fearful types may act out aggressively to restore perceived security. Jealousy and anger often escalate when attachment bonds feel threatened. Bowlby observed that insecurely attached individuals tend to interpret neutral events

⁶⁵ David S. Chester, and C Nathan DeWall, “The Roots of Intimate Partner Violence,” *Current Opinion in Psychology* 19 (February 2018): 55–59.

⁶⁶ John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 77–98.

⁶⁷ Chelsea M. Spencer, Brooke M. Keilholtz, and Sandra M. Stith, “The Association between Attachment Styles and Physical Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration and Victimization: A Meta-Analysis,” *Family Process* 60, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 270–84.

⁶⁸ Donald G. Dutton, and Katherine R. White, “Attachment Insecurity and Intimate Partner Violence,” *Aggression & Violent Behavior* 17, no. 5 (September 2012): 475–81.

as hostile, triggering intense emotional responses. For many perpetrators, violence becomes a maladaptive attempt to allay fears of abandonment.⁶⁹

Insecure attachment also impairs emotional regulation, particularly anger management, increasing the risk of violence.⁷⁰ By contrast, secure attachment fosters trust, effective communication, and healthy conflict resolution. Individuals with borderline personality organization (BPO), marked by insecure attachment, are notably prone to IPV, underscoring the link between attachment disturbances and aggression. Therapeutic interventions, including cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic approaches, show promise in reshaping maladaptive attachment patterns rooted in early development.⁷¹

Nevertheless, attachment theory alone cannot fully explain IPV. While it illuminates interpersonal dynamics, it does not account for other key factors such as neurobiology, cultural norms, patriarchal structures, and learned behaviors. Thus, while valuable, attachment theory represents just one facet of IPV's complex etiology.⁷²

⁶⁹ Brittney R. Chesworth, "Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: Moving Toward a Comprehensive Conceptual Framework," *Partner Abuse: New Directions in Research Intervention and Policy* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 75-100.

⁷⁰ Colleen J. Allison, Kim Bartholomew, Ofra Mayseless, and Donald G. Dutton, "Love as a Battlefield: Attachment and Relationship Dynamics in Couples Identified for Male Partner Violence," *Journal of Family Issues* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 125.

⁷¹ David M. Lawson, Melanie Kellam, Jamie Quinn, and Stevie G. Malnar, "Integrated Cognitive-behavioral and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy for Intimate Partner Violent Men," *Psychotherapy, Cognitive-Behavioral Psychotherapy*, 49, no. 2 (June 2012): 190-201.

⁷² Brittney R. Chesworth, "Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: Moving Toward a Comprehensive Conceptual Framework," 75-100.

Cognitive Behavioral Theory

Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) asserts that individuals' perceptions and interpretations of social interactions influence their emotional and behavioral responses.⁷³ In the context of IPV, CBT links abusive behavior to cognitive distortions, emotional dysregulation, and maladaptive behavioral patterns. Since the 1980s, CBT has been widely used as an effective intervention for perpetrators,⁷⁴ focusing on cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills to promote personal accountability and self-control.⁷⁵

Several cognitive-behavioral frameworks, such as social learning theory, behavioral genetics, reactive aggression theory, and learned helplessness, offer insight into the development and perpetuation of aggression.⁷⁶ Social learning theory emphasizes that exposure to violence—whether familial or societal—significantly increases the likelihood of future abusive behavior.⁷⁷

⁷³ Christopher I. Eckhardt, and Andrea A. Massa, "Psychological Theories of Intimate Partner Violence." In *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse across the Lifespan: A Project of the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV)*, ed. Robert Geffner, Jacquelyn W. White, L. Kevin Hamberger, Alan Rosenbaum, Viola Vaughan-Eden, and Victor I. Vieth (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG: 2022), 2375–97.

⁷⁴ L. K. Hamberger, Jeffrey M. Lohr, Dennis Bonge, and David F. Tolin, "A Large Sample Empirical Typology of Male Spouse Abusers and Its Relationship to Dimensions of Abuse," *Violence and Victims* 11, no. 4 (January 1, 1996): 277–92.

⁷⁵ D. J. Sonkin, Martin, D., and Walker, L. E., *The male batterer: A treatment approach* (New York: Springer, 1985).

⁷⁶ M.E. Hyde-Nolan, Juliao, T, "Theoretical Basis for Family Violence," in *Family Violence: What Health Care Providers Need to Know*, ed. R.S. Fife, S. Scharger (Ontario: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2012), 5-16.

⁷⁷ Christopher I. Eckhardt, and Andrea A. Massa, "Psychological Theories of Intimate Partner Violence." In *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse across the Lifespan: A Project of the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV)*, ed. Robert Geffner, Jacquelyn W. White, L. Kevin Hamberger, Alan Rosenbaum, Viola Vaughan-Eden, and Victor I. Vieth (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG: 2022), 2375–97.

Behavioral genetics suggests that biological predispositions, combined with environmental stressors, contribute to the cyclical nature of IPV.⁷⁸

Learned helplessness theory explains why victims often stay in abusive relationships, asserting that repeated exposure to harm fosters powerlessness. However, critics argue this view oversimplifies victims' experiences by ignoring crucial social, economic, and cultural factors such as financial dependence and fear of social ostracization. Additionally, framing passivity as a psychological deficit may undermine survivors' agency and resilience.

While CBT offers valuable strategies for addressing IPV, effective interventions must also address the systemic factors that sustain abuse, ensuring a holistic, multidisciplinary approach that avoids pathologizing victims.⁷⁹

The Cycle of Violence

Psychologists, notably Lenore E. Walker in *The Battered Woman* (1979), formalized the recurring patterns observed in abusive relationships into the "Cycle of Violence," explaining why victims often remain with their abusers despite severe harm. This cycle, rarely a one-time event, typically unfolds in three phases: a *Tension-Building Phase*, characterized by the abuser's escalating irritability and the victim's attempts to placate; an *Acute Battering Incident Phase*, where verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual violence erupts; and a subsequent *Kindness and Contrite Loving Behavior Phase*, marked by the abuser's remorse, apologies, and promises of change, which fosters the victim's hope and leads to forgiveness and a resetting of the cycle.⁸⁰ This behavioral loop emotionally entraps victims through emotional conditioning, learned

⁷⁸ Denise A. Hines, and Kimberly J. Saudino, "Intergenerational Transmission of Intimate Partner Violence: A Behavioral Genetic Perspective," *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 3, no. 3 (July 2002): 210.

⁷⁹ Parveen Ali, and Michaela M. Rogers, *Gender-Based Violence: A Comprehensive Guide* (Cham: Springer: 2023), 23-24.

⁸⁰ Lenore E. Walker, *The Battered Woman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 57-68.

helplessness, cognitive dissonance, and trauma bonding, reinforcing the pattern through intermittent kindness. For Vietnamese American women, this cycle is particularly insidious, as Confucian-influenced traditions and collectivist cultural norms—such as filial piety, the “three subordinations,” and the prioritization of family harmony and reputation over individual safety—reinforce submission and discourage disclosure. The *Kindness and Contrite Loving Behavior Phase*, in particular, aligns with cultural ideals of patience and endurance, making it a potent tool for manipulation and further entrenchment of abuse, thereby rendering the cycle not merely psychological but deeply culturally conditioned and, at times, inadvertently reinforced by Church teachings or practices.

Feminist Perspectives

Since the 1970s, feminist theory has been a dominant framework for studying IPV, influencing intervention programs, advocacy, and public policy. Rooted in the belief that IPV reflects male dominance within patriarchal systems, feminist theory positions men as the primary perpetrators and women as the principal victims.⁸¹ Patriarchy, as a system of male dominance, subordinates women, often reducing them to property.⁸² This hierarchical structure pervades societal institutions such as workplaces, churches, schools, and legal systems, where gender inequalities are upheld and violence against women is normalized.

Patriarchy theory asserts that legal and cultural traditions perpetuate gendered power imbalances, with men controlling laws, moral codes, and societal norms.⁸³ This imbalance is

⁸¹ R. Emerson Dobash, and Russell Dobash, *Violence against Wives : A Case against the Patriarchy* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 1-13.

⁸² K. A. Yllo, and Straus, M. A, “Patriarchy and violence against wives: The impact of structural and normative factors,” in *Physical violence in American families*, ed. M. A. Straus, R. J. Gelles, & C. Smith (New York: Routledge, 2017), 383-400.

⁸³ Patricia Becker, Katherine Kafonek, and Jamie L. Manzer, “Feminist Perspectives of Intimate Partner Violence and Abuse (IPV/A).” In *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse across the Lifespan: A Project of*

evident in gendered labor divisions, wage inequality, and the systemic marginalization of violence against women. Patriarchal ideology often frames IPV as a private family matter, discouraging intervention and institutional support. Feminist theory calls for dismantling these structural inequalities to address IPV at its root.⁸⁴

Feminist perspectives challenge the traditional framing of IPV as a private issue, advocating for public accountability, survivor services, perpetrator rehabilitation, and legal reforms to ensure justice. Empirical studies show a strong correlation between patriarchal beliefs and IPV, with men who endorse sexist attitudes⁸⁵ or rigid gender roles⁸⁶ more likely to perpetrate violence.⁸⁷ IPV is often driven by a desire for control as well as hostile sexism and the acceptance of violence.⁸⁸

Research highlights that men are over four times more likely than women to engage in *intimate terrorism* (IT), a pattern of coercive control in relationships.⁸⁹ Feminist theory has

the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV), ed. Robert Geffner et al. (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022), 2327–52.

⁸⁴ R. Emerson Dobash, and Russell Dobash, *Violence against Wives : A Case against the Patriarchy* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 31-47.

⁸⁵ G. B. Forbes, L. E. Adams-Curtis, A. H. Pakalka, and K. B. White, “Dating Aggression, Sexual Coercion, and Aggression-Supporting Attitudes Among College Men as a Function of Participating in Aggressive High School Sports,” *Violence Against Women*, January 1, 2006.

⁸⁶ M Christina Santana, Anita Raj, Michele R Decker, Ana La Marche, and Jay G Silverman, “Masculine Gender Roles Associated with Increased Sexual Risk and Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration among Young Adult Men,” *Journal of Urban Health : Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 83, no. 4 (July 2006): 575-85.

⁸⁷ Kenneth E. Leonard, and Marilyn Senchak, “Prospective Prediction of Husband Marital Aggression within Newlywed Couples,” *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 105, no. 3 (August 1996): 369–80.

⁸⁸ M. Pippin Whitaker, “Centrality of Control-Seeking in Men’s Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration,” *Prevention Science* 14, no. 5 (October 2013): 513–23; Nicola Graham-Kevan, and John Archer, “Does Controlling Behavior Predict Physical Aggression and Violence to Partners?” *Journal of Family Violence* 23, no. 7 (October 1, 2008): 539–48.

⁸⁹ Michael P. Johnson, Janel M. Leone, and Yili Xu, “Intimate Terrorism and Situational Couple Violence in General Surveys: Ex-Spouses Required,” *Violence Against Women* 20, no. 2 (February 2014): 186–207.

shaped key intervention models, such as the Duluth Model,⁹⁰ which combines feminist and cognitive-behavioral principles to challenge perpetrators' patriarchal views.⁹¹

Despite its influence, feminist theory faces limitations. While patriarchy significantly contributes to IPV, research shows that both male and female perpetrators may share similar motivations for control.⁹² The increasing number of women involved in Batterer Intervention Programs (BIPs) challenges gendered assumptions,⁹³ and feminist theory has expanded to address IPV in same-sex relationships, where male dominance is not a factor.⁹⁴ Contemporary feminist scholarship has adapted by incorporating these complexities, ensuring the theory remains relevant in a more nuanced and inclusive framework for understanding and addressing IPV.

IPV and Trauma-Informed Perspective

The ongoing trauma caused by IPV constitutes a significant public health crisis with far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and society. IPV inflicts severe physical and psychological harm on victims of all genders, often resulting in chronic health conditions, functional impairments, and heightened vulnerability to cardiovascular, immunological, and

⁹⁰ Michele Schmidt, Jane Kolodinsky, Gwyneth Carsten, Frederick Schmidt, Mark Larson, and Cate MacLachlan, "Short Term Change in Attitude and Motivating Factors to Change Abusive Behavior of Male Batterers after Participating in a Group Intervention Program Based on the Pro-Feminist and Cognitive-Behavioral Approach," *Journal of Family Violence* 22, no. 2 (February 17, 2007): 91-100.

⁹¹ Christopher I. Eckhardt, Christopher M. Murphy, Daniel J. Whitaker, Joel Sprunger, Rita Dykstra, and Kim Woodard, "The Effectiveness of Intervention Programs for Perpetrators and Victims of Intimate Partner Violence," *Partner Abuse*, The partner abuse state of knowledge project part 5, 4, no. 2 (2013): 196-231.

⁹² Jana Jasinski, Lindsey Blumenstein, and Rachel Morgan, "Testing Johnson's Typology: Is There Gender Symmetry in Intimate Terrorism?" *Violence and Victims* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 73-88.

⁹³ Sadie Larsen, and L. Hamberger, "Men's and Women's Experience of IPV Part II: A Review of New Developments in Comparative Studies in Clinical Populations," *Journal of Family Violence* 30, no. 8 (November 2015): 1007-30.

⁹⁴ Murray A. Straus, "Dominance and Symmetry in Partner Violence by Male and Female University Students in 32 Nations," *Children and Youth Services Review* 30, no. 3 (January 1, 2008): 252-75.

other serious medical issues. Psychologically, survivors frequently suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, with substance abuse commonly emerging as a maladaptive coping mechanism. For women, reproductive coercion may compound the trauma, leading to unintended pregnancies and deepening both physical and emotional distress. These interconnected harms highlight the pervasive impact of IPV and underscore the need for a trauma-informed, integrative approach to prevention, intervention, and sustained recovery.⁹⁵

Trauma-Informed Psychology

Dr. Judith Herman, a clinical psychiatry professor at Harvard Medical School, defines trauma as “an affliction of the powerless,” occurring when an individual’s self-defense mechanisms are overwhelmed by an inescapable threat.⁹⁶ Trauma disrupts the mind’s protective systems, resulting in fragmented emotional responses such as intense feelings without memory or vivid recollections devoid of emotion. These disruptions are central to the understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, a psychiatry professor at Boston University, describes trauma as “unbearable and intolerable,” fundamentally altering brain function, cognition, and perception.⁹⁷ It severely impacts emotional and bodily awareness, particularly among those who have

⁹⁵ Jacquelyn C Campbell, “Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence,” 1331; Ann L Coker, “Does Physical Intimate Partner Violence Affect Sexual Health?” 149–77.

⁹⁶ Judith L. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (London: Hachette UK, 2015), 33.

⁹⁷ Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 1.

experienced violence, neglect, or abandonment.⁹⁸ Over half of psychiatric patients report histories of such trauma, highlighting its widespread psychological and physiological impact.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) defines trauma as exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence.⁹⁹ The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) expands this definition, highlighting trauma's impact on physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.¹⁰⁰ Trauma indiscriminately affects individuals across all demographics, overwhelming coping mechanisms and engendering pervasive fear, vulnerability, and helplessness.

Dr. Herman's trauma recovery model consists of three stages: safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection. The first stage, establishing safety, involves creating an environment free from ongoing harm, allowing survivors to reclaim a sense of control. Without this foundation, particularly when abusers maintain power, progress is impeded. The second stage encourages survivors to construct coherent narratives of their trauma and mourn their losses, fostering resilience. The final stage, reconnection, involves reclaiming agency, cultivating trust, and re-engaging meaningfully with life.¹⁰¹

Dr. van der Kolk stresses that healing requires restoring both bodily and mental autonomy. Trauma disrupts the balance between rational and emotional processing; healing requires attunement to one's internal experience and compassion toward bodily sensations.

⁹⁸ Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, 21.

⁹⁹ American Psychiatric Association, *Desk Reference to the Diagnostic Criteria from DSM-5* (Arlington: American Psychiatric Association Publishing, 2013), 271.

¹⁰⁰ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *SAMHSA's Working Definition of Trauma and Principles and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach* (Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012).

¹⁰¹ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 155-213.

Mind-body practices like yoga facilitate reconnection, helping survivors remain present. As awareness deepens, they recognize sensations as transient, fostering resilience and renewed agency.¹⁰²

Vietnamese Immigrant Women in America: IPV in Cultural Context

Although IPV has been extensively researched across diverse populations, studies specifically addressing Vietnamese immigrant women remain scarce.¹⁰³ As a growing demographic, these women face heightened vulnerability to abuse, exacerbated by cultural norms that often normalize male dominance and condone violence.¹⁰⁴ In Vietnamese communities, IPV is often regarded as a private issue, upheld by traditions that favor family reputation over individual well-being.¹⁰⁵ This dynamic silences victims, impedes disclosure, and restricts access to essential resources. Intergenerational patterns of abuse, particularly among men exposed to IPV in childhood, further normalize violence.¹⁰⁶ The lack of scholarly attention to IPV within this group highlights a critical gap in public health and social justice efforts.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*.

¹⁰³ National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRDV), “What do we know about domestic violence within immigrant communities? National Resource Center on Domestic Violence,” accessed May 31, 2023, <https://www.dvawareness.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Immigration&DV-TalkingPointsForm.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ Neely Mahapatra, “South Asian Women in the U.S. and Their Experience of Domestic Violence,” *Journal of Family Violence* 27, no. 5 (July 2012): 381–90.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Viet Nam, *Journey for Change: Second National Study on Violence against Women in Viet Nam 2019 Released*, United Nations in Viet Nam, July 14, 2020, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://vietnam.un.org/en/53665-journey-change-second-national-study-violence-against-women-viet-nam-2019-released>.

¹⁰⁶ Yount et al., “Men’s Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnam,” 64–84.

¹⁰⁷ Hoan N. Bui, “Help-Seeking Behavior Among Abused Immigrant Women,” *Violence Against Women* 9, no. 2 (February 2003): 207; Kathleen H. Krause et al., “Why Do Women Justify Violence Against Wives More Often Than Do Men in Vietnam?” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 31, no. 19 (November 15, 2016): 3150–73.

Cultural Factors Influencing Intimate Partner Violence

Like many ethnic communities, Vietnamese immigrants carry longstanding legal, familial, and social frameworks, yet integrating these traditions into American society often leads to cultural stress and dissonance. While the U.S. largely condemns IPV, many Vietnamese immigrants arrive with deeply ingrained cultural norms that discourage disclosure, framing it as shameful or disloyal.¹⁰⁸ In Vietnam, IPV is often not regarded as a violation of rights but as a tolerated norm within familial hierarchies, and these attitudes can persist within Vietnamese American communities.¹⁰⁹ As a result, violence remains normalized and is concealed under communal values that prioritize harmony.¹¹⁰ A World Health Organization study across 15 sites in 10 countries reported IPV prevalence rates ranging from 4% to 54%, illustrating the profound influence of culture in shaping attitudes and responses to violence.¹¹¹ Within Vietnamese American communities, cultural pressures to maintain familial honor further compound the invisibility of IPV, hindering both prevention and intervention.

Confucianism and Patriarchal Hierarchy

Confucianism, introduced in 111 B.C. and later institutionalized as state doctrine, profoundly shapes Vietnamese cultural values. This system promotes hierarchical relationships, ruler over subject, father over son, and husband over wife, establishing a rigid patriarchy. Men

¹⁰⁸ K. M. Devries, et al, “The Global Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women,” 1527-28.

¹⁰⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Fast Facts: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence,” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, October 11, 2022, Accessed June 19, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>.

¹¹⁰ Neely Mahapatra, “South Asian Women in the U.S. and Their Experience of Domestic Violence,” *Journal of Family Violence* 27, no. 5 (July 2012): 381–90.

¹¹¹ Claudia Garcia-Moreno et al., “Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence,” *Lancet* 368, no. 9543 (October 7, 2006): 1260–69.

are designated as household heads while sons are favored over daughters as inheritors of the family lineage. Women's roles center on caregiving and obedience, dictated by the "three subordinations"¹¹²: father before marriage, husband after marriage, and son in widowhood. This framework reinforces male authority, often rationalizing IPV as a form of corrective discipline. Confucian ideals of order and obedience thus perpetuate gender inequality and sanction abuse, embedding violence within the cultural fabric and impeding reform.¹¹³

Collectivist Culture – Family Harmony and Unity

Vietnamese culture embraces collectivism, prioritizing communal identity and family cohesion over individual autonomy.¹¹⁴ Shame and saving face profoundly shape behavior, discouraging confrontation and public acknowledgment of IPV. Separation or divorce carries heavy stigma, perceived as personal failure and a threat to communal integrity. To uphold family reputation, many women endure abuse in silence, concealing their suffering and perpetuating the cycle of violence. Additionally, Vietnamese cultural norms emphasize peacefulness and communal harmony, discouraging public disputes or open disagreements.¹¹⁵ Addressing IPV

¹¹² Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee, *Confucianism and Women: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 95–118.

¹¹³ Thanh-Lan Bui, *Vietnamese Women and Confucianism: Creating Spaces for Women* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2004), <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstreams/2f4f2b14-c180-4f17-beb9-6645e3ddd0a0/download>; Nguyen Thi Phuong, "Gender Issues in Confucian Ethics in Contemporary Vietnam," *RUDN Journal of Sociology* 21, no. 3 (2021): 493–504, <https://journals.rudn.ru/sociology/article/view/33931>; P. B. Ebrey, "Confucianism," In *Sex, marriage, and family in world religions*, ed. D. S. Browning, M. C. Green, and J. Witte (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2006), 367–450; Neil L. Jamieson, *Understanding Vietnam* (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1993), 86.

¹¹⁴ Mimi Kim, Beckie Masaki, and Gita Mehrotra, "A Lily Out of the Mud: Domestic Violence in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities," in *Domestic Violence : Intersectionality and Culturally Competent Practice*, ed. Lettie L. Lockhart and Fran S. Danis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 100–127.

¹¹⁵ Hyeouk Hahm, Judith Gonyea, Christine Chiao, and Luca Koritsanszky, "Fractured Identity: A Framework for Understanding Young Asian American Women's Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviors," *Race and Social Problems* 6, no. 1 (March 1, 2014): 56–68; Oanh Thi Hoang Trinh, et al, "Changes and Socioeconomic Factors Associated with Attitudes towards Domestic Violence among Vietnamese Women Aged 15–49: Findings from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, 2006–2011," *Global Health Action* 9 (January 2, 2016): 1–7.

directly risks disrupting the perceived tranquility of the home and community, which is culturally undesirable.¹¹⁶ As a result, conflicts are often avoided, and IPV is handled in non-confrontational ways that may fail to address the root causes or provide meaningful support to victims. This cultural aversion to conflict perpetuates silence around IPV, leaving many women trapped in cycles of abuse.

Enculturation and Acculturation of Vietnamese American Women

Migration disrupts traditional gender roles, particularly as Vietnamese men struggle with diminished socioeconomic status in the U.S. Barriers such as limited language proficiency and job prospects challenge their role as providers, leading to frustration, shame, and sometimes violence.¹¹⁷ Women's growing economic independence challenges patriarchal structures, often intensifying marital conflict as men perceive their authority as threatened.¹¹⁸ In some cases, this results in a "patriarchal bargain," where women endure male dominance for financial security while subtly asserting autonomy.¹¹⁹

Like other IPV survivors, Vietnamese immigrant women experience a continuum of physical, emotional, economic, and psychological abuse, often intensified by restrictive gender roles, immigration-related vulnerabilities, and inadequate legal protections. Abusers exploit these

¹¹⁶ Hoan N. Bui, "Domestic Violence in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community: An Exploratory Study," *Violence Against Women* 5, no. 7 (July 1999): 790.

¹¹⁷ Cristina M. Alcalde, "Masculinities in Motion Latino Men and Violence in Kentucky," *Men & Masculinities* 14, no. 4 (October 2011): 450–69.

¹¹⁸ Nazli Kibria, *Family Tightrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 8-9.

¹¹⁹ Nazli Kibria, "Power, Patriarchy, and Gender Conflict in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community," *Gender and Society* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 1990): 9–24.

structural inequities, using cultural taboos, financial dependency, and immigration status to maintain control.¹²⁰

Consequences and the Imperative for Change

Intimate Partner Violence leaves lasting scars—physical injuries, psychological trauma, and economic instability. The CDC reports that 75% of female IPV survivors sustain injuries, with IPV accounting for 34% of female homicides in 2021.¹²¹ Marginalized women face even greater risks, underscoring the urgency for culturally competent, trauma-informed interventions.¹²² Addressing IPV in Vietnamese immigrant communities requires policy reforms, legal protections, and outreach strategies that challenge harmful norms while respecting cultural values.

Prevention and Intervention Programs

Over the past three decades, interdisciplinary research has refined strategies for IPV prevention and intervention. Developed in the late 1970s, Relationship Violence Intervention Programs (RVIPs) were influenced by men’s consciousness-raising initiatives, social services, and the battered women’s movement. Grounded in feminist theory, these early models framed systemic sexism as the root cause of IPV, emphasizing male accountability and structural gender reform. By the early 2000s, RVIPs grew from around 80 programs in 1980 to over 2,500, with

¹²⁰ A. Raj and J. Silverman, “Violence Against Immigrant Women: The Roles of Culture, Context, and Legal Immigrant Status on Intimate Partner Violence,” *Violence Against Women* (January 1, 2002): 8(3), 367-398. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778010222183107>.

¹²¹ Erica Smith, “Just the Stats Female Murder Victims and Victim-Offender Relationship, 2021” (The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice, December 2022), accessed June 19, 2025, <https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/fmvvor21.pdf>.

¹²² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Fast Facts: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence.” According to the CDC, “The lifetime economic cost associated with medical services for IPV-related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice and other costs, is \$3.6 trillion. The cost of IPV over a victim’s lifetime was \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men.”

frameworks such as the Duluth model and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) central to intervention strategies.¹²³

Despite widespread adoption, traditional RVIPs face criticism for misalignment with modern psychotherapeutic research, ineffectiveness for resistant participants, and inadequate support for marginalized victims. In response, newer IPV interventions integrate methods such as motivational enhancement therapy, trauma-informed CBT, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and restorative justice. These innovations reflect a shift toward individualized, evidence-based practices that better address the complexities of IPV and support more sustainable healing and behavioral change.¹²⁴

Preventing IPV

Despite its severe consequences for survivors, children, perpetrators, and society, IPV remains preventable. Primary prevention is essential to improving public health and societal well-being. Further empirical research is needed to refine IPV prevention strategies, yet the CDC's *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan* offers a comprehensive, evidence-based framework.¹²⁵ This approach emphasizes teaching healthy relationship skills, engaging influential adults and peers, and early intervention to disrupt childhood risk factors linked to future perpetration. It also promotes creating protective environments that foster social connectedness, strengthening economic supports to mitigate stressors, and empowering survivors

¹²³ Christopher M. Murphy, Alan Rosenbaum, and L. Kevin Hamberger, "Relationship Violence Perpetrator Intervention Programs: History and Model," in *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse across the Lifespan: A project of the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV)*, ed. R. Geffner, J. W. White, et al. (Cham Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022), 3410.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 3387-3411.

¹²⁵ P. H. Niolon, M. Kearns, J. Dills, K. Rambo, S. Irving, T. Armstead, and L. Gilbert, *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices*, (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 2017).

through safety planning and trauma-informed care. Together, these strategies form a robust foundation for IPV prevention and community resilience.

Intervention Programs

Addressing IPV effectively requires a multidisciplinary, integrated approach. Collaborative models between IPV organizations and law enforcement establish structured partnerships across sectors such as criminal justice, healthcare, mental health, human services, and community-based agencies. These coalitions aim to develop localized strategies that address both survivor support and perpetrator accountability. This model unifies expertise and resources, advancing coordinated responses that enhance holistic care and community safety.

The Coordinated Community Response Model. Widely recognized for its transformative impact, the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model focuses on two primary objectives: improving survivor safety and ensuring offender accountability. A third key goal is fostering professional collaboration across systems to enhance victim outcomes.¹²⁶

Developed in the early 1980s through the Duluth IPV Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Minnesota, CCR implemented systemic reforms that reshaped institutional responses to IPV.

CCR incorporates mandatory arrest policies, expedited prosecution, victim advocacy services, civil court remedies, probation monitoring, and intervention programs for offenders. CCR integrates risk assessments, interagency communication, community prevention strategies, and systematic case tracking to enhance response effectiveness. It strengthens legal protections,

¹²⁶ Melanie D. Hetzel-Riggin, “System Response to Intimate Partner Violence: Coordinated Community Response.” In *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse across the Lifespan: A Project of the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV)*., ed. Robert Geffner, Jacquelyn W. White, L. Kevin Hamberger, Alan Rosenbaum, Viola Vaughan-Eden, and Victor I. Vieth, (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022), 2911–37.

expands access to essential services such as healthcare, housing, and employment training and unifies diverse stakeholders under a shared framework.¹²⁷

Despite its success, DAIP's implementation has posed challenges, including dual arrests, coercive court mandates for victims, involvement of child protective services and immigration systems, and compulsory survivor treatments. Questions remain regarding the long-term efficacy of batterer intervention programs. Despite these issues, CCR models continue to gain support from public health and ecological perspectives,¹²⁸ reinforcing their potential as powerful tools for systemic change.¹²⁹

Pence and Shepard's refinement of the DAIP model outlines eight essential components for effective CCRs. These include a victim-centered philosophy, standardized intervention protocols, interagency collaboration, and system-wide monitoring. CCRs also emphasize community support for survivors, sanctions with rehabilitation for perpetrators, addressing the impact on children, and continuous evaluation of effectiveness.¹³⁰ Extensive research confirms CCRs' ability to build accessible networks, enhance legal protections, and support localized strategies adaptable to community needs.¹³¹ By promoting coordinated efforts and resource

¹²⁷ M. Gamache, and Asmus, M. "Enhancing networking among service providers: Elements of successful collaboration strategies" in *Coordinating community responses to domestic violence: Lessons from Duluth and beyond*, ed. M. F. Shepard, and E. L. Pence (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999), 65–87.

¹²⁸ Jennifer L. Hardesty, and Brian G. Ogolsky, "A Socioecological Perspective on Intimate Partner Violence Research: A Decade in Review," *Journal of Marriage & Family* 82, no. 1 (February 2020): 454–77.

¹²⁹ S. Tayton, R. Kaspiew, S. Moore, and M. Campo, *Groups and Communities at Risk of Domestic and Family Violence: A Review and Evaluation of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention and Early Intervention Services Focusing on At-Risk Groups and Communities* (Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2014), accessed June 24, 2025, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30673375.pdf>.

¹³⁰ M. F. Shepard, and E. L. Pence, eds., *Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), 16.

¹³¹ Jacquelyn W. White, Holly C. Sienkiewicz, and Paige Hall Smith, "Envisioning Future Directions: Conversations with Leaders in Domestic and Sexual Assault Advocacy, Policy, Service, and Research," *Violence Against Women* 25, no. 1 (January 2019): 105–27; U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women,

sharing across sectors, CCRs remain a benchmark for sustainable IPV intervention.

Perspectives on Couple Therapy. Clinicians are crucial in recognizing and addressing the underlying dynamics of IPV. Research indicates that 36% to 58% of therapy-seeking couples have experienced physical IPV.¹³² However, therapeutic interventions must be judiciously applied. Couple therapy is unsuitable for unidirectional violence, particularly Intimate Terrorism (IT), where power dynamics are highly imbalanced.¹³³ Such cases present heightened risks and require individualized safety-focused interventions. Conversely, couples experiencing bidirectional, low-intensity violence—categorized as Situational Couple Violence (SCV)—may benefit from therapy focused on communication, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution.¹³⁴

While conjoint therapy remains controversial due to limited empirical support, growing evidence indicates that SCV is more prevalent than IT¹³⁵ and may be effectively addressed through systemic interventions. Unlike IT, SCV stems from poor conflict management and emotional dysregulation rather than coercive control.¹³⁶ Distinguishing these forms is critical, as

FY2021 Congressional Justification, accessed on July 22, 2023:
<https://www.justice.gov/doj/page/file/1246436/download>.

¹³² A. Jose and K. D. O’Leary, “Prevalence of Partner Aggression in Representative and Clinic Samples,” in *Psychological and Physical Aggression in Couples: Causes and Interventions*, ed. K. D. O’Leary and E. M. Woodin (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009), 15–35.

¹³³ S. M. Stith, McCollum, E. E., and Rosen, K. H., *Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence: Finding Safe Solutions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2011), 7-19.

¹³⁴ Sandra M. Stith, and Chelsea M. Spencer, “Couples Counseling to End Intimate Partner Violence,” in *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse across the Lifespan: A Project of the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan (NPEIV)*, ed. Robert Geffner, Jacquelyn W. White, L. Kevin Hamberger, Alan Rosenbaum, Viola Vaughan-Eden, and Victor I. Vieth (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022), 3471–89.

¹³⁵ Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Tiffany A. Misra, Candice Selwyn, and Martin L. Rohling, “Rates of Bidirectional Versus Unidirectional Intimate Partner Violence Across Samples, Sexual Orientations, and Race/Ethnicities: A Comprehensive Review,” *Partner Abuse: New Directions in Research Intervention and Policy* 3, no. 2 (January 1, 2012): 199–230.

¹³⁶ Michael P. Johnson, *A Typology of Domestic Violence: Intimate Terrorism, Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2008).

IT victims often endure severe harm, coercion, PTSD, and fear, rendering couple therapy unsafe and inappropriate. As Johnson and Leone emphasize, identifying coercive control, psychological trauma, and persistent violence is key to clinical decision-making and safeguarding survivors.

Conclusion

More than three decades since the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), IPV continues to be a pervasive global crisis.¹³⁷ Predominantly affecting women, IPV inflicts profound physical, psychological, and societal harm,¹³⁸ often concealed until reaching lethal extremes.¹³⁹ Its substantial economic burden underscores IPV as a major public health and social justice issue. Transcending boundaries of race, culture, and class, IPV demands collective, sustained efforts for eradication.¹⁴⁰

While scholarship has advanced, prevailing theories and intervention models remain fragmented, often failing to capture the complex, intersectional nature of IPV or deliver culturally responsive solutions. Addressing IPV among Vietnamese immigrants requires nuanced, culturally informed strategies to challenge patriarchy, gender oppression, and systemic barriers like racism and xenophobia. Practitioners must support survivors in overcoming isolation, leveraging familial and communal strengths, and rebuilding autonomy. A holistic,

¹³⁷ The United Nations' (UN) first Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) wasn't published until 1979, recording the UN's action plan on gender equality. Violence against women was officially added as a form of gender-based discrimination in the updated 1992 version, recognizing this as a violation of women's human rights (OHCHR).

¹³⁸ Campbell, "Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence," 1331.

¹³⁹ Julie McGarry, Chris Simpson, and Smith, Kathryn Hinchliff, "The Impact of Domestic Abuse for Older Women: A Review of the Literature," *Health & Social Care in the Community* 19, no. 1 (January 2011): 3-14.

¹⁴⁰ Roxanne C. Keynejad et al., "Research, Education and Capacity Building Priorities for Violence, Abuse and Mental Health in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: An International Qualitative Survey," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, March 25, 2021, 1-11.

trauma-informed, and culturally responsive framework is essential for protecting survivors, promoting healing, and driving transformative social change.

Chapter 3

Theological Foundations for Intimate Partner Violence Against Women

“He said in reply, ‘Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator “made them male and female” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”?’”

—Matt. 19:4-5

Introduction

I was deeply moved when Ms. Julie Le Miller courageously revealed the years of IPV she had endured at the hands of her former Vietnamese husband. Having known her for years as an active parishioner and Bible study participant, I never suspected the silent suffering she carried. Now married to Thomas Miller for over twelve years, Julie has sought counseling to heal from the cruelty and degrading words inflicted upon her. Her willingness to break the silence challenged my understanding of resilience and survival, powerfully illustrating that abuse often hides in plain sight.

Having recently graduated from private school in Vietnam, Julie and her family immigrated to the United States because of her father’s service in the former Republic of Vietnam. Soon after arriving in Dallas, Texas, she hastily married a Vietnamese man, hoping for a better future. Their Catholic marriage quickly unraveled when her pregnancy announcement triggered threats, financial demands, and escalating violence. The abuse culminated in a horrifying incident where her husband threw boiling chicken soup at her while she was six months pregnant, leading to his arrest.

Despite this, burdened by guilt and societal expectations, Julie requested the charges be dropped and allowed him to return home, hoping to preserve her family. Tragically, he exploited her to secure U.S. citizenship before abandoning her. Julie continues to struggle with the physical and emotional scars of her past, exacerbated by the Vietnamese Catholic community’s

lack of support during her darkest moments, despite her relentless efforts to preserve her family's dignity.

Intimate Partner Violence against women has become a central concern in contemporary moral theology and Catholic bioethics due to its devastating effects, including marital breakdown and mortality.¹⁴¹ While recognizing the harrowing realities faced by survivors like Julie Le Miller, this chapter focuses on the systemic roots of IPV rather than individual narratives. It explores how gender inequality, shaped by misinterpretations of biblical creation narratives, historical theology, and Vietnam's patriarchal traditions, has inadvertently contributed to IPV within Vietnamese American Catholic communities.

This chapter examines Catholic teachings on marriage, emphasizing mutual love, respect, procreation, and the unequivocal rejection of violence. Beyond doctrine, the chapter delves into the spiritual wounds inflicted by IPV, trauma, moral injury, and loss, and offers pathways for healing through biblical lament texts, allegorical figures, and themes of forgiveness and renewal. Anchoring this discussion is the Church's vital role in fostering healing and theological hope through liturgical celebrations. Ultimately, this work challenges gender-based domination that sustains violence, advocating for liberation through the transformative Christian promise of healing found in Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Gender Inequality in Church Tradition: Effects on IPV

The institutionalization of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire marked a pivotal shift from the early Christian emphasis on universal equality (Gal. 3:28) to the adoption of Greco-Roman marital hierarchies that subordinated women to men. This shift, rooted in

¹⁴¹ Lauren L. Baker, "Domestic Violence in the Domestic Church-an Argument for Greater Attention to Intimate Partner Abuse in Catholic Health Care," *Journal of Moral Theology* Vol.7, no. 2 (2018): 18–35; James F. Keenan, "Towards an Inclusive Vision for Moral Theology Part II: An Agenda for the Future," *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies* 13, no. 1 (February 2000): 67–83, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1030570x0001300106>.

patriarchal interpretations of biblical texts and philosophical traditions, has profoundly shaped Christian theology and contributed to systemic gender inequality, with significant implications for IPV.¹⁴² This section examines how historical theological frameworks have reinforced power imbalances that enable IPV, highlighting the urgent need for reform to promote justice and dignity in Christian communities, particularly among Vietnamese American Catholics.

Historical Roots of Gender Inequality in Christian Thought

Christian tradition's subordination of women arose from the fusion of biblical interpretations with Greco-Roman philosophy.¹⁴³ Early church fathers, influenced by Plato and Aristotle, adopted views that portrayed women as inherently inferior.¹⁴⁴ Plato's *Timaeus* portrayed women as a consequence of men's moral failings, lacking full rational capacity, while Aristotle's claim that women are "misbegotten males" reinforced perceptions of their intellectual and moral inferiority.¹⁴⁵ These ideas permeated Christian theology, with figures like Augustine (354–430 CE) articulating a hierarchical vision of gender roles. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:3, Augustine wrote: "For Christ is the head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman... The woman was made as an illustration of this, for the order of things makes her subject to man."¹⁴⁶ Influenced by Platonism, Augustine equated male reason with divine

¹⁴² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); Beth Allison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2021).

¹⁴³ Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History*, 11-35.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 92, art. 1.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth A. Clark, *St. Augustine on Marriage and Sexuality* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 39-40.

authority, subordinating women to male governance to preserve cosmic and domestic order.¹⁴⁷

Similarly, Tertullian (c. 160–225 CE) drew on Genesis 3 to cast women as “the devil’s gateway,”¹⁴⁸ perpetuating a narrative that blamed Eve, and by extension all women, for humanity’s fall.¹⁴⁹ This theological vilification entrenched women’s subordination, framing their submission as both natural and divinely ordained.¹⁵⁰

Medieval theologians reinforced these ideas. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE) asserted that women’s “defective nature” made them unfit for leadership, including ordination, requiring their subjugation to male authority for their own good.¹⁵¹ Rooted in Aristotelian principles, scholastic theology reinforced gender hierarchies, defining masculinity as the ideal standard of humanity and relegating women to roles as wives, mothers, or daughters under male authority.¹⁵² These theological constructs not only marginalized women within the Church but also shaped societal norms that justified male dominance in the family.

The Church’s role in witch hunts (1400-1800 CE), which disproportionately targeted women and led to an estimated 60,000-100,000 executions, further exemplified these biases.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. and intro. Robin Waterfield and Andrew Gregory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), section 40; Plato, and Albert A. Anderson, *Plato’s Republic* (Mills, MA: Agora Publications, 2001).

¹⁴⁸ Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent* (New York: Random House Inc., 1990), 88; Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum*, trans. S. Thelwall (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 1.12.

¹⁴⁹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, “The Western Religious Tradition and Violence against Women in the Home,” in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York, NY: Pilgrim, 1989), 31-41.

¹⁵⁰ Georgios Anagnostopoulos, and Gerasimos Xenophon Santas, *Democracy, Justice, and Equality in Ancient Greece: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018).

¹⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Supplement to Part III, q. 39, art. 1.

¹⁵² Susanne M. DeCrane, *Aquinas, Feminism, and the Common Good* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004).

¹⁵³ Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

While figures like Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179 CE) demonstrated women's spiritual authority, their influence was exceptional.¹⁵⁴ These developments entrenched gender inequality, reinforcing societal structures that enabled violence against women.

Although the Reformation challenged certain Catholic doctrines, it largely maintained patriarchal gender roles. Martin Luther (1483–1546 CE) asserted women's physical and intellectual inferiority, though his later reflections on Genesis recognized Eve's equality with Adam before the Fall.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Luther emphasized women's domestic roles, stating, "The wife is compelled to obey [the husband] by God's command."¹⁵⁶ This view, prevalent in both Catholic and Protestant traditions, reinforced the expectation of female submission, embedding gender inequality in Christian teachings on marriage.¹⁵⁷

The Catholic Counter-Reformation, through the Council of Trent (1545-1563 CE), reaffirmed traditional marriage teachings, prioritizing female obedience.¹⁵⁸ The continued association of women with sin, rooted in misinterpretations of the *imago Dei*, fueled ongoing witch hunts and societal acceptance of IPV. The Church's silence on domestic abuse during this period reinforced male dominance, perpetuating patterns of violence within households.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992).

¹⁵⁵ Laura Jurgens, *Martin Luther and Women* (New York: Peter Lang, 2020), 7, 35.

¹⁵⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Western Religious Tradition and Violence Against Women in the Home," in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York, NY: Pilgrim, 1998), 33.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-41.

¹⁵⁸ Council of Trent, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848).

¹⁵⁹ Ruether, "The Western Religious Tradition and Violence Against Women in the Home," 33.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965 CE) marked a significant shift, with *Gaudium et Spes* reaffirming the *imago Dei*'s equality among all people.¹⁶⁰ Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* linked human rights to this doctrine, challenging gender biases.¹⁶¹ Pope John Paul II's *Mulieris Dignitatem* emphasized gender complementarity and equal dignity, reframing women's roles as partners in God's plan. Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia* explicitly condemned IPV and promoted mutual submission in marriage.

Recent decades have seen progress in applying the *imago Dei* equally. Women increasingly participate in advisory roles, such as the Synod on Synodality and Vatican dicasteries, reflecting a shift toward inclusion.¹⁶² Pope Francis has emphasized women's dignity, challenging patriarchal norms, though resistance to egalitarian reforms persists, particularly regarding the male-only priesthood.¹⁶³ Feminist theology continues to advocate for structural change, aligning Church practices with the *imago Dei*'s egalitarian vision.¹⁶⁴

Theological Justifications and IPV

The theological endorsement of marital hierarchy established a moral framework that normalized women's subordination, contributing to IPV's persistence. As historians Rebecca and Russell Dobash note, selective readings of Eph. 5:22–24, 1 Tim. 2:13, and 1 Cor. 11:8–9 shaped

¹⁶⁰ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes*, 12, 29.

¹⁶¹ John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html.

¹⁶² Synod on Synodality, "'Preparatory Document.' Vatican City: Synod of Bishops," 2021, <https://www.synod.va/en/documents.html>.

¹⁶³ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*.

¹⁶⁴ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse, Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition*, Third Edition (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2018).

a “moral ideology” that justified women’s subjugation and reinforced gender inequality.¹⁶⁵ Often extracted from their broader context of mutual love and equality (e.g., Eph. 5:21, Gal. 3:28), these passages were weaponized to reinforce male authority, perpetuating power imbalances that sustain IPV.¹⁶⁶

During the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation, Christian teachings frequently legitimized violence against women as marital discipline. Societal stability was thought to hinge on a wife’s submission, legitimizing husbands’ perceived right to “correct” their wives through socially sanctioned physical or psychological discipline.¹⁶⁷ Feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether argues that Greco-Roman and medieval theological traditions perpetuated systemic inequality, constraining women’s roles and silencing their voices in both Church and home.¹⁶⁸

Effects on IPV

Male-dominated Church structures excluded women from leadership, marginalizing their voices and delaying institutional responses to IPV. Among Vietnamese Americans, where 36% identify with the Catholic faith, Confucian norms reinforcing male superiority exacerbate IPV, often normalizing it unless extreme.¹⁶⁹ Church responses, including the USCCB’s *When I Call*

¹⁶⁵ R.E. Dobash and R.P. Dobash, *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 40-43.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶⁷ Mary Potter Engel, “Historical Theology and Violence against Women: Unearthing a Popular Tradition of Just Battery” in *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Marie Fortune (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 243-258; Ruether, “The Western Religious Tradition and Violence Against Women in the Home,” 33-38.

¹⁶⁸ Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History*, 11-35.

¹⁶⁹ Shannon Greenwood, “Vietnamese Americans: A Survey Data Snapshot,” Pew Research Center, August 6, 2024, accessed Mar 31, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2024/08/06/vietnamese-americans-a-survey-data-snapshot>.

for Help, condemn IPV and advocate pastoral support through counseling and shelters.¹⁷⁰

However, cultural barriers such as stigma and family pressure often deter Vietnamese American women from seeking help, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.¹⁷¹

Empirical studies underscore the link between patriarchal religious beliefs and IPV. Research indicates that women in communities with rigid gender roles are at higher risk of experiencing abuse, with one in three women globally reporting physical or sexual violence, often by an intimate partner. In religious contexts, teachings that emphasize female submission can normalize coercive control, discourage victims from seeking help, and prioritize family unity over safety. For example, misinterpretations of biblical submission may lead clergy to counsel abused women to endure suffering or reconcile with abusive partners, exacerbating harm.¹⁷²

Gender Equality in Biblical Creation Narratives

Creation Accounts and the Divine Image

Genesis presents two distinct accounts of human creation, each offering a unique theological perspective. Gen. 1:1–2:3, known as the Priestly narrative, contrasts with Gen. 2:4–25, the earlier Yahwist version. These narratives reflect different cosmologies and emphasize distinct attributes of the Creator. Genesis 1 portrays God as Elohim, the all-powerful Creator who speaks the cosmos into being (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Ps. 33:6, 9). This account emphasizes God’s transcendence and portrays Him as a sovereign and majestic Creator who establishes order through His word. In contrast, Genesis 2 presents YHWH, a deeply personal

¹⁷⁰ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “When I Call for Help”.

¹⁷¹ Truc Ngoc Hoang Dang and Duc Dung Le, “Socioeconomic Inequalities in Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from Vietnam,” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 40, no. 1–2 (April 15, 2024): 31–55.

¹⁷² Catherine Clark Kroeger and James R. Beck, eds., *Women, Abuse, and the Bible: How Scripture Can Be Used to Hurt or Heal* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 15–27.

and immanent God who shapes humanity from the dust, breathes life into human beings, and cultivates an intimate relationship with creation (Gen. 2:7–8, 15–19, 21–22).¹⁷³

These two perspectives, though distinct in focus, are not contradictory but rather complementary. Together, they offer a profound and multifaceted portrayal of God, both supreme and beyond human comprehension, yet profoundly engaged with His creation.¹⁷⁴ In the first creation account, Elohim creates the first human beings (hā-’āḏām) as male and female and commands them to be fruitful, multiply, and exercise dominion over the earth. Being created in God’s image and likeness confers upon them a unique vocation: they are divinely appointed as God’s representatives to steward creation. Gen. 5:2 affirms that the Hebrew term hā-’āḏām denotes humankind: “He created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and named them humankind.” This verse highlights the shared dignity and purpose of both genders in fulfilling God’s mandate.¹⁷⁵

Phyllis Tribble highlights Gen. 1:27’s grammatical shift, where singular and plural pronouns intertwine: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” This confirms that male and female are distinct persons, equally bearing the divine image. The parallel structure of hā-’āḏām and “male and female” underscores the symmetry and mutual dignity of both genders. Far from advocating hierarchy,

¹⁷³ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta, Georgia: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 22–39. For further insights into the Priestly and Yahwist creation accounts, the following works offer key analyses: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, International, 2011); Roland E Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2002); Jean Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984); and John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One : Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009).

¹⁷⁴ Abigail Favale, *The Genesis of Gender, A Christian Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2022), 20-21.

¹⁷⁵ Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, 147–155.

the text affirms that men and women share equally in resembling the divine and in exercising dominion over the created order.¹⁷⁶

The Yahwist Account and the Foundation of Marital Union

The second creation account shifts in tone and purpose, establishing the foundation for Catholic teachings on marriage. Here, humanity's formation precedes the earth's full flourishing. God shapes hā-'ādām from the dust and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life, revealing a truth about the dual nature of humanity: we are earth and spirit, body and soul. Our physical form is essential to our existence, yet our being is also animated by the immaterial soul gifted by God. This interplay between the physical and the spiritual highlights the depth of human nature, rooted in both material creation and divine transcendence.¹⁷⁷

This narrative progresses to a pivotal moment: "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper suited to him" (Gen. 2:18). The inadequacy of other creatures to fulfill this role underscores the uniqueness of human companionship. God puts the man into a deep sleep and forms the woman from his side—not his head to dominate him, nor his feet to be trampled—but from his side to stand as his equal. John Paul II describes this sleep as a return to non-being, through which God restores humanity in its dual unity. The man's poetic exclamation, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," marks the recognition of shared humanity, and the concluding statement ("they become one flesh," Gen. 2:24) reinforces their intrinsic unity.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 12–21; Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man—Is Woman Included?" *Harvard Theological Review* 72, no. 3–4 (October 1979): 175–206.

¹⁷⁷ Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 40–46.

¹⁷⁸ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 162–167.

The Catholic Church has historically interpreted this passage as establishing the marital union's divine purpose: a covenantal partnership rooted in mutual love, equality, and shared mission. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, marriage is described as a sacred institution ordained by God, designed for the mutual help of spouses, the procreation and education of children, and the reflection of God's covenantal love.¹⁷⁹ This vision, however, has often been obscured by misinterpretations that emphasize male dominance, contributing to IPV when hierarchical views distort the mutual self-giving intended in marriage. The failure to uphold the equality of spouses can fracture the family, undermining the stability and love meant to nurture both partners and their children.¹⁸⁰

Sin's Impact and the Distortion of Marital Harmony

In Matt. 19:5, Christ invokes the Genesis creation texts while addressing the Pharisees' question on divorce, saying, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." By invoking both Genesis 1 and 2, Jesus reaffirms God's original design for human sexuality and marital union, calling attention to the goodness of sexual difference and the reciprocity it entails.¹⁸¹ Yet sin disrupted this original harmony. The Fall fractured relationships—both between humanity and God and between man and woman. Gen. 3:16 describes desire and dominion, distortions absent from God's original plan: "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Tragically, this rupture is often misinterpreted as divine endorsement of male dominance rather than a lament over sin's consequences.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1602–1605.

¹⁸⁰ Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Family: A Christian Social Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 78–85.

¹⁸¹ Favale, *The Genesis of Gender, A Christian Theory*, 26.

¹⁸² Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 94–105.

These misinterpretations have profoundly influenced theological tradition and marital teachings. Claims such as “woman is a helpmate to cure man’s loneliness,” “woman introduced sin into the world,” or “her desire shall be for her husband, and he shall rule over her” (cf. Gen. 2:18–3:16) have been misused to justify hierarchical gender roles. When removed from their historical and cultural context, these interpretations have fueled practices that subordinate women, often reinforcing power imbalances that enable IPV within marriage. The Church’s early teachings, while affirming marriage as a sacrament, often failed to fully counter these distortions, allowing cultural patriarchal norms to shape family dynamics.¹⁸³

New Testament Echoes and Early Church Interpretations

This distorted legacy persisted into the New Testament era, where certain Pauline passages have been interpreted to reinforce male superiority. 1 Cor. 11:7 (“Man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man”) remains a subject of considerable debate.¹⁸⁴ While some have viewed this as affirming ontological hierarchy, others, with a more contextual hermeneutic, suggest that Paul was responding to specific cultural concerns rather than articulating a universal doctrine.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, Eph. 5:21–33’s marital imagery—often cited to uphold male headship—also calls for radical mutual submission and self-giving love, modeled

¹⁸³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, 229–235.

¹⁸⁴ Jean-Bosco Matand Bulembat, “Was Not the Woman Created in the Likeness of God? Pauline Midrashic Reading of Gen 1–3 in 1 Cor 11:7–12,” *The Biblical Annals* 12, no. 3 (July 15, 2022): 410. Cf. chapters 9, 10, and 11 of Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Keys to Second Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010). These chapters critically examine the arguments surrounding head coverings, the respective images of God and man, and the broader implications for gender and authority in the Corinthian church.

¹⁸⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Women in the Church (Third Edition)* (Crossway, 2016), 182–183; Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), 77–124.

on Christ's sacrifice.¹⁸⁶ Gal. 3:28—a cornerstone of Pauline egalitarianism—proclaims: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Though later spiritualized by ascetic commentators, its original intent was revolutionary, affirming unity across entrenched social divides.¹⁸⁷

Influenced by Greco-Roman philosophy, early church fathers often reinforced gender hierarchy in their marital teachings. Philo of Alexandria associated masculinity with reason (*nous*) and femininity with sense-perception (*aesthesis*), casting women as bound to the lower, material realm. Origen suggested that the divine image resides solely in the soul, with feminine traits denoting weakness. Ambrose and Augustine, while affirming marriage as a divine institution, echoed Aristotelian views of female inferiority, portraying women as less capable of embodying the divine image independently.¹⁸⁸ These views shaped early sacramental theology, which, while recognizing marriage's sanctity, often subordinated women's roles within the family, contributing to dynamics that could foster IPV when mutual respect was absent.¹⁸⁹

Medieval and Reformation Perspectives on Marriage

Medieval theology, exemplified by Thomas Aquinas, maintained these tensions. Aquinas affirmed that women bear the *imago Dei* and are directly created by God but distinguished between primary and secondary expressions of that image, regarding female subordination as

¹⁸⁶ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1984), 367-396; Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 170-187; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 405-438.

¹⁸⁷ Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 46–52; John M Rist, *What Is Truth? From the Academy to the Vatican* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 89.

¹⁸⁸ Rist, *What Is Truth? From the Academy to the Vatican*, 81.

¹⁸⁹ Elizabeth A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 15–28.

part of the divinely ordered family structure.¹⁹⁰ Aquinas saw marriage as both a natural and sacramental institution; however, its hierarchical framework often relegated women to a subservient role, limiting their agency and, at times, enabling abusive dynamics within families.¹⁹¹

The Reformation brought new perspectives but did not fully escape traditional biases. Martin Luther acknowledged that woman, like man, was made in God’s image and was perfect in paradise. However, he asserted that Eve’s vocation was primarily domestic and subordinate to man. Luther viewed marriage as a divine ordinance; however, the Fall entrenched gender hierarchy, which redemption softened but did not abolish. This perspective, while valuing marriage, often failed to challenge the power imbalances that could lead to IPV, as women’s subordination was seen as normative.¹⁹²

Modern Catholic Teaching and the Restoration of Marital Equality

Since the seventeenth century, theological discourse has progressively explored the *imago Dei*’s dimensions—embodiment, relationality, and reflectivity—challenging rigid, hierarchical views. The modern Catholic Church has made significant strides in affirming the equality of man and woman in marriage. Pope John XXIII’s encyclicals *Mater et Magistra* (1961)¹⁹³ and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) linked human rights to the doctrine of creation, affirming autonomy and justice. Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) defined marriage as an “intimate

¹⁹⁰ Horowitz, “The Image of God in Man—Is Woman Included?” 199-200.

¹⁹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947), I, q. 93, a. 4.

¹⁹² Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1–5*, in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 1, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 68–70.

¹⁹³ John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1961), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html.

partnership of life and love” grounded in spouses’ equal dignity (GS 48–49), marking a shift from hierarchical models to mutual responsibility.¹⁹⁴

Pope John Paul II’s seminal contributions in *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988) and *Familiaris Consortio* (1981) have been instrumental in advancing contemporary theological discussions on gender equality. In *Mulieris Dignitatem*, he reaffirms that men and women are equally created in the image and likeness of God, emphasizing that the differences between them are not markers of inferiority but of divine complementarity.¹⁹⁵ By introducing the concept of the “female person” in place of the traditional notion of an inferior “female soul,” he challenged entrenched hierarchical biases and redirected the discourse toward mutual dignity and respect. His vision, which models human relationships on the interpersonal communion of the Triune God, underscores that individual worth is inherently relational, a perspective that has resonated deeply within theological circles and set the stage for a broader debate on gender roles in both the Church and society.¹⁹⁶ In *Familiaris Consortio*, he outlined marriage’s dual purpose: the mutual self-giving of spouses and the responsible transmission of life, both grounded in equal dignity and Trinitarian communion. These teachings underscore that IPV contradicts God’s plan, as it violates the mutual respect and love essential to the marital covenant. By affirming women’s equal dignity, the Church seeks to restore the family as a place of love and stability, countering the destructive effects of violence.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 48-49.

¹⁹⁵ John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 6.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6-10.

¹⁹⁷ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 19–22.

Complementary or Egalitarian Visions?

Contemporary scholarship on gender equality generally navigates between two interpretive frameworks: egalitarianism and complementarianism. Both affirm the equal dignity of men and women, yet differ in how they understand roles within marriage and the Church. The egalitarian model, citing Gal. 3:28 and Eph. 5:21's call for mutual submission, promotes shared authority and responsibilities across all spheres of life. It contends that hierarchical readings of Scripture must be reexamined in light of cultural context and Paul's radical redefinition of relationships.¹⁹⁸ In contrast, the complementarian model, drawing from Eph. 5:22–33, Genesis 1–3, and magisterial teachings, maintains that men and women are entrusted with distinct but complementary vocations. This view interprets “headship” as a call to sacrificial leadership, not domination, and sees the wife's submission as a voluntary act of devotion modeled on the Church's response to Christ.¹⁹⁹

Importantly, both interpretations recognize Eph. 5:21—“Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ”—as the governing principle of the passage. Paul's instructions to husbands to love sacrificially were counter-cultural in the patriarchal Roman world, and his vision of marriage culminates in unity: “the two shall become one flesh” (5:31). The Catholic

¹⁹⁸ Cynthia Long Westfall, *Paul and Gender - Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016); Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*; Philip Barton Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015).

¹⁹⁹ Carrie Gress, *The End of Woman - How Smashing the Patriarchy Has Destroyed Us* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2023); Andreas J Köstenberger and Thomas R Schreiner, *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*; John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012).

Church traditionally embraces a complementarian perspective, emphasizing differentiated vocations as essential to marriage's natural law and sacramental order.²⁰⁰

Together, these perspectives enrich theological dialogue, offering nuanced interpretations that honor both shared human dignity and the unique contributions of each gender. This dialogue is especially vital in addressing contemporary feminist concerns, including the elimination of gender-based violence and the promotion of women's agency within the Church and society.²⁰¹ When properly understood, the Church's complementarian vision affirms women's equal dignity while celebrating their distinct roles in the marital and ecclesial community.²⁰²

Recent teachings, including Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), reinforce this trajectory. Francis emphasizes marriage as a partnership of equals, where mutual love and respect foster family flourishing. He explicitly condemns IPV, noting that "unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated," including "various forms of violence" within families. This reflects a growing recognition that misinterpretations of creation narratives have historically justified abuses, and the Church must actively promote equality to support healthy family dynamics.²⁰³

The creation narratives in Genesis reveal God's original design for humanity: men and women, created equal in dignity, bear the divine image and are called to a shared vocation of stewardship and communion. The Yahwist account establishes marriage as a covenantal partnership, rooted in mutual love and equality, a vision reaffirmed by Christ and developed in

²⁰⁰ Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Early Humanist Reformation, 1250–1500* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 423–430.

²⁰¹ Michelle Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian - a Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016).

²⁰² Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 212–220.

²⁰³ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 54.

Catholic teaching. However, sin's disruption introduced relational fractures, and misinterpretations of these texts have historically justified gender hierarchies, sometimes enabling IPV by distorting the marital union's purpose.

From the church fathers to the Reformation, theological traditions often perpetuated these distortions, subordinating women within marriage and family life. The modern Catholic Church, through Vatican II, John Paul II, and Francis, has progressively reaffirmed the equal dignity of spouses, emphasizing marriage as a partnership of mutual self-giving and love. By correcting misreadings of Scripture and promoting a complementarian vision that honors both equality and distinct vocations, the Church seeks to restore the family as a place of flourishing, where mutual respect counters the destructive effects of violence and upholds God's plan for human communion.

Gender Equality for Vietnamese American Women

Genesis proclaims that both man and woman are created in the divine image, sharing equal dignity and a common vocation of love and communion (Gen. 1:27). This truth, woven into the fabric of Catholic teaching, stands as a beacon of hope for Vietnamese American women, whose lives are often shaped by cultural and historical forces that obscure their God-given worth. In the Vietnamese American Catholic community, where over a third identify as Catholic, Confucian traditions reinforcing male authority and familial hierarchy intertwine with misinterpreted Scripture, perpetuating IPV that silences and subordinates women.²⁰⁴ Through its magisterial teachings, the Church unequivocally condemns such violence, calling for the empowerment of abused women and the full recognition of their dignity as God's children.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Pew Research Center, "Vietnamese Americans: A Survey Data Snapshot," August 6, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2024/08/06/vietnamese-americans-a-survey-data-snapshot/>, accessed June 18, 2025.

²⁰⁵ John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*; Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*.

Yet, despite these inspiring ideals, the Church's vision often remains unrealized, lacking concrete policies and comprehensive plans to dismantle patriarchal structures and liberate women from abuse. By reclaiming the Creation stories' affirmation of mutual dignity and drawing on God's words and miracles, the Church can empower abused women to reclaim their sacred identity, fostering a renewal that challenges cultural biases and restores justice in family, Church, and society, though much work remains to translate this calling into transformative action.

Confucian ideals in Vietnamese American families frequently relegate women to submissive roles, where silence amid abuse is mistaken for virtue.²⁰⁶ When combined with selective readings of Eph. 5:22-24, this cultural lens distorts the Church's call to mutual love, leaving women vulnerable to IPV and societal marginalization.²⁰⁷ Against this backdrop, the words of Christ resonate with redemptive power: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). This promise invites abused women to see themselves not as victims bound by cultural or familial expectations, but as daughters of God, endowed with inviolable dignity. The miracle of the Canaanite woman's faith (Matt. 15:21-28), where a marginalized woman's persistence moves Jesus to act, serves as a divine affirmation of female agency. Vietnamese American women, inspired by such accounts, can find courage to break the silence of abuse, trusting that their voices echo in the heart of a God who hears the oppressed, even as the Church struggles to provide systemic support to realize this empowerment.

²⁰⁶ Ersheng Gao et al., "How Does Traditional Confucian Culture Influence Adolescents' Sexual Behavior in Three Asian Cities?" *Journal of Adolescent Health* 50, no. 3 (2012): S12-17.

²⁰⁷ Ashley Theuring, "Intimate Partner Violence as a Theological Crisis: Race, Gender, and Suffering," *Theological Studies* 83, no. 3 (2022): 447-67.

Rooted in the Creation narrative's vision of equality, Catholic teaching urges the Church to address the theological and cultural roots of IPV with pastoral wisdom. The complementarity articulated in recent teachings redefines gender roles as a mutual self-gift, not a hierarchy of power, aligning with the Gospel's call to love as Christ loves the Church (Eph. 5:25).²⁰⁸ This vision challenges Confucian norms that prioritize male authority, inviting Vietnamese American communities to reimagine family life as a communion of equals.²⁰⁹ While the Church unequivocally denounces violence and champions women's dignity, its advocacy remains hindered by a lack of concrete policies for clergy training, shelters, and accountability mechanisms for abusers.²¹⁰ The miracle of the loaves and fishes (John 6:1–15), where Jesus transforms scarcity into abundance, mirrors the Church's potential to transform wounded relationships into spaces of healing. By fostering catechesis that illuminates Genesis 1-2 as a celebration of shared dignity, the Church can empower women to reject the stigma of abuse, embracing their role as co-creators of God's kingdom alongside men, though it must develop concrete plans to make this vision a reality.

The persistence of IPV, affecting one in three women globally, underscores the urgency of pastoral transformation within Vietnamese American parishes.²¹¹ Studies highlight that cultural norms in Vietnamese contexts often normalize such violence unless it is frequent and severe, compounding women's silence.²¹² The Church's call to justice, echoed in its

²⁰⁸ John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*.

²⁰⁹ Gao et al., "How Does Traditional Confucian Culture Influence Adolescents' Sexual Behavior in Three Asian Cities?"

²¹⁰ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*; Theuring, "Intimate Partner Violence as a Theological Crisis."

²¹¹ World Health Organization, "Violence against Women," World Health Organization, March 25, 2024, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.

²¹² Dang and Le, "Socioeconomic Inequalities in Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from Vietnam."

condemnation of all forms of violence, demands safe spaces where women can share their stories and find solidarity, yet many parishes lack the resources or training to implement such initiatives effectively.²¹³ The story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:7-30), transformed by Jesus' recognition of her worth, offers a powerful model for ministry. Just as Jesus met her in her brokenness and restored her dignity, so too must clergy and lay leaders meet abused women with compassion, prioritizing their safety and affirming their equality. Training priests and religious leaders to address IPV with cultural sensitivity, informed by the Church's teachings on mutual respect, is a vital step, but without structured programs and institutional commitment, these efforts remain aspirational.

Cultural engagement forms the cornerstone of this renewal, bridging Catholic and Confucian values to redefine complementarity as reciprocal respect. The Church's wisdom, drawn from Gal. 3:28's declaration that "there is no longer male and female," challenges Vietnamese American communities to transcend patriarchal norms.²¹⁴ While the Church's teachings inspire a vision of equality, the lack of concrete policies, such as mandatory IPV training for clergy or partnerships with domestic violence organizations, hinders progress, leaving women trapped in cycles of abuse.²¹⁵ The miracle of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11), where the Spirit empowers diverse voices to proclaim God's deeds, inspires parishes to create community programs that amplify women's voices. These initiatives, grounded in the Church's commitment to the divine image, foster healing by offering abused women resources, support, and the assurance that their dignity is inviolable. By weaving together the Church's scriptural heritage

²¹³ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*.

²¹⁴ Theuring, "Intimate Partner Violence as a Theological Crisis."

²¹⁵ Ibid.,

and pastoral care, Vietnamese American Catholics can begin to dismantle the barriers of bias, though the Church must prioritize actionable plans to fully realize this divine harmony of equality and love.

From Vision to Moral Imperative

The promise of gender equality, grounded in the *imago Dei* and the Church's complementarian vision, transcends theological idealism—it is a moral imperative demanding direct confrontation with IPV. For Vietnamese American women, IPV—whether physical, emotional, or spiritual—mirrors the moral injuries of biblical figures like Sarah, Hagar, and Tamar, whose stories expose the devastation of betrayal and abuse.²¹⁶ Often silenced by cultural shame and patriarchal norms, these women endure not only the visible scars of violence but also the profound spiritual wound of moral injury, fracturing their sense of self and faith. As the Church seeks to embody Christ's healing presence, it must address the moral implications of IPV, offering hope and restoration through a theology of grace and community. This section explores the moral dimensions of IPV, the concept of moral injury, and the pathways to healing, drawing on Scripture, Catholic tradition, and the resilient faith of Vietnamese American women.

Moral Implications of IPV among Vietnamese American Women

Raising awareness of IPV within Vietnamese American Catholic communities is essential to breaking its pervasive cycle of harm. Rooted in the truth of Gen. 1:27, which declares that God created men and women equally in His image and likeness, Christian communities must uphold Christ's teachings, Vatican II directives, and recent papal encyclicals on social justice.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Brad E. Kelle, *The Bible and Moral Injury: Reading Scripture alongside War's Unseen Wounds* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020), 123–130.

²¹⁷ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 48–49.

Simultaneously, they must extend special care to victims of IPV, offering sanctuary and support, while calling those who perpetrate abuse to repentance, accountability, and transformation. The Church's mission is twofold: restoring dignity to the oppressed and calling oppressors to repentance through God's transformative grace.²¹⁸

Intimate Partner Violence is both a global health crisis and a human rights violation, with profound moral implications. It is not only destructive but often deadly, inflicting physical, spiritual, and psychological harm. Studies reveal that a significant proportion of women exposed to IPV, over half in Vietnamese communities, suffer from poor physical health, alongside mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, phobias, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidality.²¹⁹ Beyond PTSD, IPV inflicts moral injury—a profound spiritual wound defined as “an act of transgression that creates dissonance and conflict because it violates assumptions and beliefs about right and wrong and personal goodness.”²²⁰ This trauma arises when actions, whether committed, witnessed, or endured, contradict deeply held moral values, leaving victims struggling with guilt, shame, and a fractured sense of self.

For Vietnamese American women, cultural shame often exacerbates moral injury. Unlike PTSD, which is frequently associated with physical battery, moral injury may arise from prolonged isolation, deprivation, or humiliation, forms of coercive control that are less visible but equally devastating.²²¹ Coercive control, which forces a spouse to act against her conscience

²¹⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1929–1933.

²¹⁹ Wendy N. Duong, “Gender Equality and Women’s Issues in Vietnam: The Vietnamese Woman—Warrior and Poet,” *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal* 10, no. 2 (2001): 191–326.

²²⁰ Brett T. Litz et al., “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy,” *Clinical Psychology Review* 29, no. 8 (2009): 695–706.

²²¹ Cahill, *Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics*, 212–215.

to maintain family or social ties, inflicts a psychological cruelty that erodes moral personhood.

Psychologists Brock, Lettini, Graham, and Litz identify symptoms of moral injury as “guilt, shame, feelings of betrayal, moral concerns, loss of trust, loss of meaning/purpose, difficulty forgiving, self-condemnation, religious struggles, loss of faith and hope.”²²² In Vietnamese American communities, where shame exacerbates these struggles, women often internalize blame, agonizing over what they could have done differently and believing they are responsible for their abuse.²²³

Moral Injury and Biblical Narrative Studies

Moral injury, stemming from violations of deeply held religious or cultural ethical ideals, necessitates both secular and religious interventions, with scripture providing profound resources for healing. Although moral injury is widely examined in pastoral and theological contexts, few works engage biblical scholarship directly.²²⁴ Biblical texts—particularly lament and penitential psalms, alongside narratives of ritual purification—offer essential frameworks for addressing moral grief, spiritual loss, and self-condemnation. Characters like Sarah, Hagar, and Tamar serve as allegorical guides, offering themes of healing and forgiveness for Vietnamese American women wounded by IPV.²²⁵

Brad E. Kelle’s *The Bible and Moral Injury* reinterprets the stories of Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 11–23), exposing the moral injuries of betrayal and abuse. Sarah, forced by Abraham to pose as his sister in Egypt and Gerar (Genesis 12, 20), endures vulnerability and shame, her

²²² Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 45–50.

²²³ Duong, “Gender Equality and Women’s Issues in Vietnam,” 210–215.

²²⁴ Kelle, *The Bible and Moral Injury*, 10–12.

²²⁵ Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 94–105.

silent wounds deepening over time. Her subsequent mistreatment of Hagar, driven by insecurity and mistrust, reflects the moral dissonance of acting against one's values.²²⁶ Hagar, expelled into the wilderness, embodies the trauma of rejection, yet both women are ultimately rescued by God's intervention, offering hope for Vietnamese American women.²²⁷

Tamar's story (Genesis 38) further resonates, as her betrayal by Judah, who denies her Levirate rights, inflicts moral injury through public dishonor and isolation. Her courageous defiance, conceiving a child through strategic action, leads to Perez, an ancestor of Christ, demonstrating that God can transform evil into good.²²⁸ Ruth's loyalty to Naomi (Ruth 1-4), choosing faith over cultural security, models resilience for marginalized women. By revealing the moral drama of IPV, its aftermath, and God's healing hand, the narratives of Tamar and Ruth provide Vietnamese American women with scriptural models of agency and restoration.²²⁹

Hope and Healing for Victims of IPV

How can IPV survivors find hope and healing? Christianity offers a definitive answer through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unjustly condemned to death on the Cross, Christ was raised by God, vindicating His innocence and reaffirming His teachings on love and justice.²³⁰ The poor, abandoned, oppressed, and victims of injustice have always been united with Christ's suffering, looking to the resurrected Lord for healing, justification, and salvation.

²²⁶ Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 110–115.

²²⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 280–285.

²²⁸ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36: A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 290–295.

²²⁹ Linda Trinh Võ, *Mobilizing an Asian American Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 88–94.

²³⁰ Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 148–152.

Yet, the Cross's historical association with imperial power and colonization, including in Vietnam, complicates its meaning, as it has been wielded to oppress rather than liberate.²³¹ Vietnamese American women, burdened by patriarchal Confucian traditions and often overlooked by religious authorities, carry these complexities, their voices frequently lost in the Church's disorder.

Hope and Healing in the Community of Grace

Vietnamese American Catholic communities, especially women, play a crucial role in helping IPV victims confront trauma, reclaim agency, and pursue healing. Informed by abuse survivors' experiences, feminist theologians Jennifer Beste and Flora Keshgegian challenge traditional views of grace by asserting that God mediates healing through human care and love.²³² Beste argues that "God may have ordered creation and redemption in such a way that God depends on the cooperation of other persons' free choices to love their neighbors for mediating divine grace."²³³ For IPV victims whose trauma disrupts relationships with God, self, and others, the community becomes the locus of grace, restoring their sense of personhood.

Theologians such as Monica Coleman, Pamela Cooper-White, and Shelly Rambo situate their work within communities affected by trauma, emphasizing context-specific responses to violence.²³⁴ For Vietnamese American women, the cultural propensity for shame, exacerbated by the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic as abusive spouses remained home, underscores the

²³¹ Monica A. Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 55–60.

²³² Jennifer Beste, *God and the Victim: Traumatic Intrusions on Grace and Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 120–130.

²³³ Beste, *God and the Victim*, 125.

²³⁴ Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 40–50.

need for communal support.²³⁵ Small groups of women in parishes, gathering to cook, share stories, and offer mutual encouragement, mirror the Lukan women in Luke 24 and Acts 1-2, who faithfully witnessed Christ's resurrection despite dismissal by male disciples.²³⁶ These gatherings become sacred spaces where grace is embodied through listening, solidarity, and shared resilience.

Yet within these communities, survivors often wrestle with the spiritual and emotional weight of forgiveness. Forgiveness, frequently preached as a Christian imperative, can become a source of distress for IPV victims. Many Vietnamese American women, shaped by cultural expectations of endurance and religious ideals of mercy, feel profound guilt when they cannot forgive their abusers. This internal conflict—between faith and trauma—can deepen their sense of isolation.

The Church must affirm that the inability to forgive is not a spiritual failure. As trauma theologians remind us, wounds from abuse run deep, and healing is not linear. The desire to forgive—even when one cannot—is itself a sign of grace. Survivors must be reassured that God does not demand premature reconciliation, but instead offers compassion, justice, and space for lament. In communities of grace, forgiveness must be reframed not as an obligation, but as a possibility that may or may not unfold over time.²³⁷ This reframing is especially vital for Vietnamese American women, whose cultural and ecclesial contexts often silence their pain and

²³⁵ Oxfam in Vietnam, "Gender Equality and Women's Agency," *Oxfam in Vietnam*, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://vietnam.oxfam.org>.

²³⁶ Ashley E. Theuring, *Fragile Resurrection: Practicing Hope after Domestic Violence* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 10-23.

²³⁷ Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 135-137; Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 165-168.

spiritual struggle. The Church must become a sanctuary where survivors are free to grieve, heal, and reclaim their dignity without guilt.

Biblical Foundations for Hope and Healing

Luke's final chapter and Acts' opening highlight Jesus' female disciples' resilience, offering Vietnamese American women a scriptural model of strength and perseverance. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and others remained steadfast through Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, proclaiming the Easter message despite disbelief (Luke 24:1–11). Their “practice of resistance,” as Ashley Theuring describes, embodies “radical solidarity” with Christ, holding both suffering and hope in tension.²³⁸ Theuring's “fragile resurrection” concept reflects Vietnamese American women's reality as they endure crucifixion-like suffering—abuse, shame, and betrayal—while experiencing renewal through faith and communal support.²³⁹

The Lukan narrative underscores the transformative power of encountering the risen Christ in the breaking of bread (Luke 24:30–31). For Vietnamese American women, this encounter occurs in the Eucharist and in parish small groups, where sharing stories and meals fosters healing. In scripture, the women's fidelity contrasts with the male disciples' failures, Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal, and the Emmaus disciples' despair, highlighting their role as bearers of hope.²⁴⁰ Their presence at the empty tomb, despite terror and confusion, mirrors the courage of IPV survivors who, though traumatized, seek God's healing voice through angelic messengers and communal support.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Theuring, *Fragile Resurrection*, 82.

²³⁹ Theuring, *Fragile Resurrection*, 90–95.

²⁴⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII–XXI*, Anchor Bible 29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 1095–1100.

²⁴¹ Ivone Gebara and Nancy Pineda-Madrid, “Crucifixion and Resurrection: A Feminist Perspective,” in *Feminist Theology from the Third World*, ed. Ursula King (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 200–210.

Liturgy and Assembly: A Communal Framework for Hope and Healing

Luke's model of encountering the risen Lord through Scripture and the Eucharist must be enacted in Vietnamese American parishes—particularly in small groups where women gather after Mass to cook, eat, and share their stories. These gatherings, reflecting the Lukan women's fidelity (Luke 8:1–3; 23:49; 24:6), enable victims to name the evil of IPV, denounce its injustices, and reclaim their God-given dignity.²⁴² The Church must reject cultural norms that perpetuate violence, honoring women's roles in liturgy and leadership, as called for in *Gaudium et Spes*.²⁴³

Recovery from trauma requires persistent effort, as women oscillate between “fragile resurrection” and “fragile crucifixion.” Theuring's framework acknowledges that neither suffering nor healing is totalizing; both are transient, woven into daily life.²⁴⁴ The risen Christ, bearing His wounds yet glorified, accompanies disciples for forty days, opening their minds to God's plan (Luke 24:39–46; Acts 1:3). Similarly, the Church must journey with IPV victims, showing Christ's presence through pastoral care and outright condemnation of abuse.²⁴⁵

Conclusion

While the promise of hope and healing for IPV survivors within the community of grace speaks directly to the need for a tangible transformation in Vietnamese American Catholic parishes, the latent potential of existing women's gatherings as loci of grace remains largely untapped. To move beyond traditional roles and actively champion these survivors, intentional, trauma-informed training and resources are essential. The Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching

²⁴² Theuring, *Fragile Resurrection*, 100–105.

²⁴³ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 48–49.

²⁴⁴ Theuring, *Fragile Resurrection*, 145–157.

²⁴⁵ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 54.

Model offers religious leaders and communities a pathway to foster this vital shift, by (1) illuminating the profound impact of IPV, (2) challenging the cultural norms that perpetuate its insidious cycle, and (3) cultivating safe, supportive havens where women can share their narratives, reclaim their inherent dignity, and encounter Christ's healing presence through communal solidarity. This preaching model provides a concrete framework for translating the Church's teachings on equality and justice into actionable realities, ensuring that these gatherings become genuine wellsprings of hope and healing. It is to this transformative framework—the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model—and its potential to unlock liberation and sacred equality within Vietnamese American Catholic communities that we now turn, exploring the power of this model as a call to transformative action.

Chapter 4

Homiletic Foundations for Preaching Against IPV: A Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Model

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed.”
—Prov. 31:8

Introduction

Following a recent Mass, a group of Vietnamese American women approached me with an urgent and heartfelt inquiry. Moved by a homily on IPV I delivered during October’s awareness month,²⁴⁶ they questioned why the Church rarely addresses this critical issue—especially within Vietnamese American families, where cultural silence and stigma further isolate victims. The tragic story I shared—a young Vietnamese American woman murdered by her older American husband and her body concealed in a freezer—was emblematic of many hidden tragedies.²⁴⁷ Their plea was unequivocal: the Church must shatter its silence, assume a prophetic voice against violence, and provide both spiritual and practical support for victims while holding perpetrators accountable.

The Church has a moral duty to intervene against IPV, especially where patriarchal attitudes prevail.²⁴⁸ Hindered by discomfort and an overemphasis on familial unity, its response requires a paradigm shift. This shift transcends occasional homilies and includes impactful

²⁴⁶ Catholics for Family Peace, “National Catholic Partners for Domestic Violence Awareness Month,” *Catholics for Family Peace*, accessed July 24, 2025, <https://www.catholicsforfamilypeace.org/national-catholic-partners-for-domestic-violence-awareness-month.html>.

²⁴⁷ Jessica Willey, “Houston Man Gets 10-Year Sentence for Killing Wife and Stuffing Her Body in Freezer, Records Show,” ABC13 Houston, June 11, 2024, <https://abc13.com/post/husband-sentenced-10-years-killing-wife-stuffing-body-freezer/14932843/>.

²⁴⁸ Francis, “50th World Day of Peace 2017: Nonviolence—A Style of Politics for Peace,” message, January 1, 2017, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-preghiera-per-la-pace-2017.html.

preaching, catechesis, sacramental preparation, and pastoral care.²⁴⁹ In accord with Vatican II, combating IPV must become integral to Catholic practice, empowering clergy and laity to champion justice, healing, and equitable family relationships.²⁵⁰

To address these challenges, I have developed a Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, a homiletic framework inspired by Paul Ricoeur's Threefold Mimesis (Prefiguration, Configuration, and Refiguration).²⁵¹ This framework links lived experiences to biblical narratives, challenges injustice through prophetic exhortation, and offers faith-based guidance. This chapter defines the model's components, examines its application in homilies, catechesis, and ministries, and analyzes preaching methods and implementation challenges. Through this approach, the Vietnamese American Catholic community can experience transformative renewal embodying justice and mercy.

²⁴⁹ John Paul II, "To the Bishops of the Dominican Republic on Their 'Ad Limina' Visit," (Speech, Vatican City, December 11, 1999), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_11121999_ad-limina-dominican-rep.html.

²⁵⁰ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium* (November 21, 1964), in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations: A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 18-29; 30-37; John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988), 33, accessed June 19, 2025, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html; Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World* (Vatican City: Vatican Publishing House, 2013), 102, accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

²⁵¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 52; Nikita Nankov, "The Narrative of Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*," *The Comparatist* 38 (October 2014): 227-249.

The Prophetic Preaching Model

“What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

—Mic. 6:8

Prophetic preaching, as Jorge Presmanes articulates, is a dynamic *dialogos* between the divine and humanity—a discourse of righteous indignation against injustices that degrade both humanity and ecology. It involves a compassionate God who calls preachers forth to proclaim divine mercy, especially to the marginalized and oppressed.²⁵²

Leonora Tubbs Tisdale elucidates that prophetic discourse, anchored in Scripture, summons communities to embody God’s vision of justice, peace, and equality.²⁵³ Such preaching conveys grace and pronounces divine judgment, challenging oppressive societal norms and structures.²⁵⁴ Walter Brueggemann posits that prophetic ministry’s core is to “nurture, nourish, and evoke an alternative consciousness and perception,” countering cultural narratives that obscure divine justice.²⁵⁵ Similarly, Luke Timothy Johnson describes prophetic preaching as embodying God’s vision, compelling believers to radically reorient their worldview toward divine justice.²⁵⁶

Prophetic preaching is a transformative act that confronts systemic injustice, disrupts norms, and calls communities to moral renewal. Rooted in biblical witness and the tradition of

²⁵² Jorge Presmanes, “Prophetic Preaching,” in *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching*, ed. Edward Foley (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016), 210–20.

²⁵³ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 4.

²⁵⁴ Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach*, 7.

²⁵⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination 40th Anniversary Edition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 13.

²⁵⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church: The Challenge of Luke-Acts to Contemporary Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 92.

Hebrew prophets and Jesus Christ, it demands justice and liberation for the oppressed. As Tisdale asserts, it is inherently countercultural, challenging entrenched oppressive structures and emphasizing collective accountability,²⁵⁷ while offering a vision shaped by divine justice and mercy. Beyond confrontation, it inspires hope, empowering victims and mobilizing communities toward transformation. It requires preachers to embody divine compassion and humility, relying on the Holy Spirit in their fearless proclamation of truth.

Prophetic Preaching Traditions

The terms prophet (*prophetes*, masc.) and prophetess (*prophetis*, fem.) derive from the Greek *prophetes*, translating to the Hebrew *navi* (masc.) and *nebiah* (fem.) in the Old Testament. To prophesy (*propheteno*) signifies speaking on behalf of another—specifically, on behalf of God.²⁵⁸ Biblical prophets such as Moses (Exod. 4:1), Jeremiah (Jer. 1:9), and Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:7) communicated God's will, confronting societal corruption and moral failures. They also served as intercessors, mediating between divine revelation and human society (Jer. 7:21–23).²⁵⁹

Biblical Witness: the Source of Prophetic Preaching

The foundation of Prophetic Preaching lies in both Old and New Testament traditions,²⁶⁰ where God's messengers articulated truth amid injustice.²⁶¹ The Hebrew prophets—Isaiah,

²⁵⁷ Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach*, 25-26.

²⁵⁸ J. Philip Wogaman, *Speaking the Truth in Love: Prophetic Preaching to a Broken World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 3.

²⁵⁹ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: HarperPerennial Modern Classics, 2007), chaps. 1, 3, and 6.

²⁶⁰ Mary Donovan Turner, "Prophetic Preaching," in *The New Interpreter's Handbook of Preaching*, edited by Paul Scott Wilson (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 101.

²⁶¹ Phil Snider, *Preaching as Resistance: Voices of Hope, Justice, & Solidarity* (Saint Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2018); Jonathan C Augustine, *When Prophets Preach* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2023); Phillis-Isabella Sheppard, Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, and Ronald J. Allen, eds., *Preaching Prophetic Care: Building Bridges to Justice: Essays in Honor of Dale P. Andrews* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018).

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, and Malachi among them—and New Testament figures including John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the early Church, delivered messages that catalyzed ethical, social, and theological renewal. Their words reoriented the community toward its covenantal obligations, extending justice to the marginalized.²⁶²

Importantly, Hebrew prophets emerged from diverse social strata. Standing outside entrenched institutional power,²⁶³ they challenged the establishment by reminding both the leaders and the people of their covenantal responsibilities to Yahweh and warning against neglecting divine justice.²⁶⁴ Their prophetic mission continued in the New Testament, with Jesus’ modeling prophetic preaching by calling for repentance, confronting inequities, and heralding the Kingdom of God as a radical alternative to oppressive structures.²⁶⁵

Prophetic Preaching and IPV

Catholic families worldwide grapple with the devastating realities of IPV and sexual abuse, crises that demand a prophetic response from the Church. Clinical psychologist Dr. Christaوريا Welland estimates that 125 million Catholic women have experienced physical or sexual abuse in their lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated IPV through increased stress, financial strain, and prolonged isolation.²⁶⁶ With approximately 28.8 million Catholic

²⁶² V. H. Matthews, “Prophecy and Society,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, edited by Mark J. Boda and Gordon J. McConville (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 623–34; Terence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016).

²⁶³ Bruce C. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991).

²⁶⁴ Victor H Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World* (Baker Books, 2012), 29; John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

²⁶⁵ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996).

²⁶⁶ Devin Watkins, “WMOF: ‘Domestic Violence Affects Millions of Catholic Families,’” *Vatican News*, June 24, 2022, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2022-06/wmof-family-violence-interview-christaوريا-welland.html>.

women in America²⁶⁷ and global data indicating that at least one in three women has endured abuse,²⁶⁸ an estimated 9.6 million Catholic women in the United States suffer from IPV.²⁶⁹

This pervasive violence, often within the domestic Church, violates women's dignity. The Church must reclaim its prophetic voice, heeding the call to “bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners ... and comfort all who mourn” (Isa. 61:1–2; Luke 4:18–19). For the Vietnamese American Catholic community, addressing IPV is a moral imperative: silence must be broken, victims supported, and perpetrators called to repentance and transformation. Prophetic preaching is essential to ensure that Catholic families confront this injustice with truth, courage, and love.

The Preacher as God's Prophet

Breaking the silence on IPV is an urgent prophetic call, best realized through preaching that raises awareness in liturgical and catechetical settings, particularly within Vietnamese American congregations. Like the Hebrew prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the early disciples, Catholic priests and deacons are called to proclaim divine truth and confront injustice, including violence within Catholic families. Rooted in the prophetic tradition, preaching against IPV must be spiritually clear and pastorally effective. Catechists and religious leaders share the responsibility to equip communities to recognize and address abuse, liberate women from

²⁶⁷ Mark Gray and Mary Gautier, *Beliefs, Practices, Experiences, and Attitudes* (report, 2018), accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.americamagazine.org/sites/default/files/attachments/CatholicWomenStudy_AmericaMedia.pdf.

²⁶⁸ Lettie L Lockhart and Fran S Danis, *Domestic Violence: Intersectionality and Culturally Competent Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 33–34.

²⁶⁹ There isn't a precise statistic exclusively for Catholic women experiencing IPV in the United States. However, the CDC's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reports that about 41% of women in the U.S. have experienced IPV in their lifetime. Given that there are approximately 28 million Catholic women in the U.S., a rough estimate suggests that millions may be affected by IPV.

systemic violence, and offer healing and empowerment through the Gospel's transformative message via education, pastoral care, and other faith-based initiatives.

To address IPV within Vietnamese American Catholic communities, preachers must adopt a prophetic stance that moves beyond awareness to transformative action. They must encourage Vietnamese American Catholics to reject IPV, embracing God's justice and love for women. They must confront abusive men, guiding them toward repentance and accountability and challenging patriarchal biases that sustain violence. They must empower abused women, mobilizing pastoral care, advocacy, and systemic intervention to uphold God's justice. These prophetic imperatives must aim to bring about tangible change and awaken communities to their moral duty.

Rejecting IPV: Embracing God's Love and Justice

Throughout salvation history, prophets have called God's people to justice, righteousness, and covenantal faithfulness. In ancient Israel, idolatry led to moral corruption and social injustice (Mic. 6:7-8; Isa. 1:11-13; 58:4-7; Jer. 5:28-29). The Deuteronomic laws exemplify God's commitment to protect the vulnerable. They commanded the Israelites to defend widows, orphans, and foreigners (Deut. 10:17-19; 15:1-11; 24:17-22; 26:12-13), ensuring fair trials, preventing exploitation, and preserving human dignity (Deut. 19:15-21; 24:14).

Scholars affirm that the Hebrew prophets preserved and restored the covenantal moral order, resisting corruption and assimilation,²⁷⁰ not by inciting revolution but by holding leaders and citizens accountable.²⁷¹ John the Baptist called for repentance and righteousness (Matt. 3:3;

²⁷⁰ Matthews, "Prophecy and Society," 627.

²⁷¹ John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 194-202.

Luke 3:7-14), and Jesus Christ proclaimed liberation, renewal, and divine justice for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19).

Raising awareness of IPV in Vietnamese Catholic Communities. In prophetic preaching, the first imperative is to raise awareness about the prevalence and consequences of IPV among Vietnamese women. Many Vietnamese Catholics mistakenly reduce IPV to physical harm, overlooking its insidious forms—psychological, verbal, financial, and sexual—that quietly erode human dignity and defy God’s call for justice. While the Church must unequivocally denounce these abuses, its deeper prophetic mission is to help victims recognize their own stories. Many remain in abusive marriages due to financial dependence, fear of retaliation, concern for their children, depression or low self-esteem, embarrassment, and a mistaken belief that Catholic teaching demands silent endurance.²⁷² Vietnamese cultural norms—especially around female submission, family honor, and saving face—further entrench their silence. These layered burdens often leave victims unseen, unheard, and spiritually disoriented.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) defines domestic violence as a pattern of control through fear and intimidation, encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, and economic abuse, violating human dignity and demanding urgent pastoral response.²⁷³ Because many Vietnamese Catholic women silently endure oppression, unaware that they are experiencing IPV, the Church must unambiguously define and denounce and eradicate these injustices (Ps. 11:5).

²⁷² Fr. Chuck Dahm, “Homily on Domestic Violence,” accessed August 15, 2025, <https://pvm.archchicago.org/documents/87254/354005/2.2.1.+Homily+on+Domestic+Violence+by+Fr.+Chuck+Dahm+++English.pdf/da122032-85ae-4f28-b523-4dee680e12c7>.

²⁷³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “When I Call for Help”.

Biblical foundations for God's justice against IPV. Preachers addressing violence must contrast human actions with God's justice, exploring biblical narratives of divine intervention and apparent silence. Scripture reveals God defending the oppressed, yet also instances where justice seems deferred, compelling human action. Hagar's rescue (Genesis 16) exemplifies divine care, while Sodom's destruction (Gen. 19:1–11) illustrates retribution for communal sin. However, in tragedies like Dinah's rape (Genesis 34) and the Levite's concubine (Judges 19–21), God's absence underscores the devastation of unchecked violence and the need for advocacy. Tamar's suffering and Absalom's vengeance (2 Samuel 13) show injustice spanning generations, highlighting human accountability.

In contrast to these Old Testament complexities, Jesus' ministry embodies a restorative justice that prioritizes dignity and compassion. The woman with the issue of blood embodies desperation for renewal (Mark 5:25-34). The sinful woman receives mercy (Luke 7:36-50), and Jesus redefines justice as protection for the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11). These narratives illuminate the realities women faced and affirm the prophetic duty to confront IPV, particularly within Vietnamese American communities. Through preaching and advocacy, the Church must amplify the voices of survivors, ensuring justice, compassion, and liberation shape its mission.

Confronting Abusers and Patriarchy: A Call to Repentance

The prophetic tradition critiques social injustice, denouncing oppression, exploitation, and violence as idolatry and rendering ritual sacrifice without justice devoid of true sanctity. Isaiah's denunciations (Isa. 1:11–17), Amos' lamentations (Amos 5:21–24), and Micah's ethical imperatives (Mic. 6:6–8) repudiate practices failing to uphold divine justice. Jesus' discourse on hypocrisy (Matt. 23:23; Mark 12:33) and Hebrews' call for transformation (Heb. 10:8–10)

emphasize that righteousness and social equity must actively shape religious practices, requiring human commitment and intentionality.

The prophetic role, exemplified by Nathan's rebuke of King David (2 Sam. 12:1–14), underscores the duty to hold leaders accountable. Hosea (Hosea 1–3) denounces societal infidelity, while Isaiah (Isa. 1:17) calls for justice, a theme echoed by Jeremiah (Jer. 22:3, 13–17) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 22:2–7, 12, 29). Together, these prophets condemn corruption and demand righteousness.

Contemporary prophetic preaching must mirror this legacy to confront violence against women. Drawing upon Luke's account of Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:18–19), preachers must denounce abusive practices entrenched in cultural norms. Statistical evidence may reveal that roughly one-third of Catholic women silently bear the burden of IPV, underscoring the urgent need for pastoral interventions that acknowledge suffering and demand repentance.

Confronting Patriarchy and Gender-Based Violence: A Prophetic Call for Societal Transformation

Entrenched patriarchal structures shape Vietnamese communities, reinforcing male dominance and relegating women to subordinate roles in a way that perpetuates coercion, control, and abuse and obstructs justice for survivors. Preachers must confront this reality by denouncing all justifications for violence and reaffirming the Gospel's call to dignity and equality.

Today's prophetic ministers face a dual mandate: acknowledging institutional complicity in neglecting IPV victims and advocating for systemic renewal. Church leaders must engage in self-examination, express contrition, and restructure parish systems to combat IPV, dismantling patriarchal interpretations that reinforce male supremacy.

Guided by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:1–2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3), preachers must confront IPV by urging abusers to reject violence and seek repentance, for without conversion, they remain unworthy of God’s promises (1 Cor. 6:9–10). Beyond exhortation, clergy should educate communities, advocate for justice in homilies and ministry, and connect victims with support resources to break cycles of abuse.

Prophetic ministry demands unwavering advocacy, confronting institutional neglect, challenging injustice, and reshaping narratives through Gospel ethics. As prophets, preachers must empower survivors, call abusers to accountability, and dismantle biases, fostering justice, renewal, and solidarity, ensuring oppression is exposed, the wounded are restored, and reconciliation prevails.²⁷⁴

Empowering Women: Mobilizing the Church for Justice

In continuity with Christ’s prophetic mission (Luke 4:18–19), by articulating the Gospel’s transformative values for Vietnamese women who have experienced abuse, preachers can break the silence around IPV. In the process, they can awaken survivors to God’s compassion and justice and empower them to reclaim dignity and righteousness through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:10–11; Eph. 4:22–24).

Like prophets, preachers can proclaim God’s love, extending solace to those hurt by violence (Ps. 34:18) and lifting up the inherent worth of every human being (Gen. 1:27). They can proclaim that though sin may mar that divine imprint, it never extinguishes fundamental goodness (Ps. 139:14; Rom. 8:38–39). They also can remind their parishioners that in Christ’s

²⁷⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Catholic Response to Sexual and Domestic Violence and Abuse: A Report Compiled by the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth*, 2017, accessed June 19, 2025. <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/domestic-violence/upload/Catholic-Response-to-Sexual-and-Domestic-Violence-Report-Final.pdf>.

rising, division is shattered, and unity and equality are forged (Gal. 3:28; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17)—that within the Christian family, husbands and wives are to mirror Christ's love, embodying mutual respect and devotion (Eph. 5:21–33; Col. 3:18–19).

As prophets, preachers must assure IPV survivors of their worth, emphasizing that abuse is never their fault. Concurrently, the congregation should mobilize to advocate for justice by raising awareness, facilitating access to support, and pressing for legal protections.

Although difficult, prophetic preaching is vital in addressing IPV. The traumatic nature of abuse, intensified by shame and stigma, can generate resistance.²⁷⁵ To combat this, preachers can draw upon Leonora Tubbs Tisdale's insights, speaking truth in love while maintaining sensitivity, cultivating empathy, and incorporating narratives.²⁷⁶ Notwithstanding its challenges, prophetic preaching is indispensable for raising awareness, dismantling norms, urging repentance, empowering survivors, and galvanizing communities, fulfilling the Church's prophetic vocation of building a just and compassionate society oriented toward God's Kingdom (Rom. 14:17).

The Pastoral Preaching Model

“The preacher must be a physician of souls.”

— St. Augustine

From its beginning, the Church has nurtured the faithful in its mission of proclaiming the Gospel. This nurturing—the essence of pastoral preaching—meets people where they are with compassion and love. Such tenderness enables them to hear and confront hard truths that stand in the way of the peace, joy, and abundant life Christ offers us (John 10:10). This pastoral

²⁷⁵ Marvin McMickle, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone? Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006), 3–4, 15.

²⁷⁶ Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach*, 63–88.

preaching, intrinsically linked to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20; John 21:15–17),²⁷⁷ finds early exemplars in Peter and Paul, who combined preaching with shepherding (Acts 10, 13–20) and instructed Gentile believers through their epistles (1 & 2 Peter; Acts 15, 18:23).²⁷⁸ Following Constantine’s Edict (313 CE), structured pastoral preaching flourished under church fathers like Basil, Gregory, and Augustine. Pope Gregory the Great’s *Regula Pastoralis* (written c. 590 CE) further shaped pastoral instruction, emphasizing the responsibilities of clergy.²⁷⁹

Throughout the Middle Ages (500-1500 CE), pastoral preaching thrived alongside liturgical traditions, influencing sermons by theologians like Bernard of Clairvaux, while the Franciscans and Dominicans refined homiletic rhetoric.²⁸⁰ From the Reformation to modern times, pastoral preaching took diverse forms. Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin emphasized biblical exposition, while Catholic figures like Ignatius of Loyola, Alphonsus Liguori, and John Henry Newman shaped homiletics through spiritual formation, moral theology, and theological reflection.²⁸¹ In the modern era, Popes John XXIII, John Paul II, and

²⁷⁷ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 1: The Biblical Period* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998); Benedict XVI, “First Vespers of the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls),” *Vatican.va*, June 28, 2010, accessed June 19, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20100628_vespri-pietro-paolo.html.

²⁷⁸ Jonathan Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017).

²⁷⁹ Andrew Hofer, *The Power of Patristic Preaching - the Word in Our Flesh* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2023); Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church. Volume 3, the Medieval Church* (Grand Rapids (Mich.): W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 450.

²⁸⁰ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church. Volume 3, the Medieval Church*, 15-18.

²⁸¹ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 4, the Age of the Reformation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002); Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 5, Moderatism, Pietism, and Awakening* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2004).

Francis advanced pastoral preaching by addressing social issues.²⁸² Concurrently, digital ministry, interdisciplinary approaches, and trauma-informed preaching have broadened the scope of pastoral preaching, focusing on spiritual formation, social justice, and relational ministry.²⁸³ Thus, through history, pastoral preaching has served to help believers mature, guard against errors, foster perseverance, instill hope, and build resilient communities grounded in truth and compassion by encouraging fellowship and mutual support.

Pastoral Preaching: A Response to Suffering

As pastoral preaching evolved, it adapted to address believers' spiritual and social crises. Today, a pressing challenge lies in addressing the trauma and moral injury experienced by Vietnamese American women facing IPV, systemic oppression, and culturally imposed silence. The Church must respond prophetically and pastorally, offering theological guidance and safe spaces for healing, empowerment, and advocacy. Traditional approaches must be reexamined through the new lens of trauma-informed theology, ensuring pastoral preaching restores dignity, strengthens faith, and fosters solidarity among survivors.

Trauma-Informed Pastoral Preaching

Trauma stems from distressing events involving threats to life, injury, or violations of bodily autonomy that leave lasting consequences.²⁸⁴ It is a multifaceted wound affecting identity,

²⁸² Gregory Heille, *The Preaching of Pope Francis: Missionary Discipleship and the Ministry of the Word* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015); Charles E Curran and Richard A McCormick, *John Paul II and Moral Theology* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2013); Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 7: Our Own Time* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010).

²⁸³ Karen A McClintock, *Trauma-Informed Pastoral Care: How to Respond When Things Fall Apart*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2022); Kimberly R Wagner, *Fractured Ground: Preaching in the Wake of Mass Trauma* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2023).

²⁸⁴ American Psychiatric Association, *Desk Reference to the Diagnostic Criteria from DSM-5*, 271.

relationships, and safety.²⁸⁵ Trauma-informed preaching recognizes this impact, ensuring that homilies offer compassion, facilitate healing, and inspire hope. Ministers must approach congregations with sensitivity, addressing unseen scars and fostering a safe space for restoration.

Intimate Partner Violence inflicts lasting trauma on the Vietnamese American community, shattering families. The murders of My Thai Dang²⁸⁶ and Nhu Quynh Pham²⁸⁷ exemplify the dangers women face escaping abuse. Survivors endure psychological scars, while tragedies like the Ta family killings expose failures in IPV intervention.²⁸⁸ The case of the woman found in a freezer is a testament to IPV's brutality.²⁸⁹ These tragedies demand awareness, intervention, and systemic change.

Trauma manifests diversely, impacting one's sense of self. As Wilson and Keane emphasize, it alters perception and regulation, disrupting identity and intimacy.²⁹⁰ This dislocation can shake faith, leading to despair. Preachers must address these wounds to help survivors reclaim dignity. Trauma-informed preaching seeks to restore agency by inviting survivors to reclaim their voice. More than providing answers, preachers must be witnesses who

²⁸⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *SAMHSA's Working Definition of Trauma and Principles and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*.

²⁸⁶ FOX 26 Digital, "Cypress Man Bludgeoned Wife to Death with Nail Gun, Sentenced to 40 Years," FOX 26 Houston, September 8, 2023, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.fox26houston.com/news/cypress-man-sentenced-to-40-years-in-prison-for-killing-wife>.

²⁸⁷ Snejana Farberov, "Florida Man Xichen Yang Denied Bond after Allegedly Slitting Wife's Throat, Watching Her Die," *New York Post*, June 24, 2022, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://nypost.com/2022/06/24/xichen-yang-denied-bond-after-allegedly-slitting-wifes-throat-watching-her-die/>.

²⁸⁸ Ken Kalthoff, "Family United after Roller Rink Rampage," NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth, July 26, 2011, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/family-united-after-roller-rink-shootings/1899081/>.

²⁸⁹ Willey, "Houston Man Gets 10-Year Sentence for Killing Wife and Stuffing Her Body in Freezer."

²⁹⁰ John Preston Wilson and Terence Martin Keane, *Assessing Psychological Trauma and PTSD* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2004), 12.

hold space for lament and hope, stand in solidarity, and embody the Church's call to justice and redemption.²⁹¹

Pastoral Preaching as Witness and Lament

Vietnamese American Catholic women often silently endure IPV, their trauma deepened by cultural factors that normalize physical, verbal, financial, and sexual abuse. Many, wounded in moral sensibilities and living with unrecognized trauma, cry out to God over years of pain, unsure how to overcome their injuries. Trauma-informed preachers are called to witness to these women.

Pastoral preachers as witnesses. Before ascending, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would empower disciples to witness His life, death, and resurrection (Acts 1:8). As preachers, we witness through word and deed, extending Jesus's message (Matt. 28:18-20). Scripture calls us to bear witness to God's love, justice, mercy, and compassion (1 Pet. 2:9-10), not only to the resurrection but also to Christ's earthly journey, including His suffering and death.

Preaching about trauma demands the courage to witness "the depth of trauma in our lives and society and a boldness to speak the truth."²⁹² Because trauma robs victims of clarity, preachers must be sensitive to avoid re-traumatizing them. For instance, as Travis writes, "The text was Matthew 2—Herod's killing of the young children in Bethlehem ... can trigger memories and emotions that are extremely painful for some listeners."²⁹³ Moreover, preachers

²⁹¹ Sarah Travis, *Unspeakable - Preaching and Trauma-Informed Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021), 40–41. Sarah Travis poignantly asks, "How do we preach to those whose identities have been displaced, who feel powerless?"

²⁹² Baldwin, *Trauma-Sensitive Theology*, 71.

²⁹³ Travis, *Unspeakable*, 35-36.

must caution against urging survivors to forget the past (Phil. 3:13),²⁹⁴ since such admonitions can cause guilt, shame, isolation, and hopelessness.²⁹⁵

The trauma-informed preacher must find words to speak truth, answer questions about suffering, witness trauma and grace, and name their “presence and power in the places where life is least discernible.”²⁹⁶ Trauma impacts faith, dismantling frameworks and confronting the Church with questions about suffering. As Serene Jones explains, trauma can cause cognitive and emotional breakdown that hinders victims from experiencing God’s presence. Pastoral preaching must meet this reality with compassion and depth, creating space for survivors to reclaim faith.²⁹⁷

The preacher must present the brutal face of trauma, acknowledging that IPV’s suffering women cannot even feel love, raising questions about a sovereign God allowing such things. Violence, suffering, and injustice make us wrestle with God’s justice, grace, sin, and redemption.²⁹⁸

Trauma is real, and there is no easy way out. The trauma-informed preacher must witness IPV’s effects and allow abuse stories to break through the isolation and estrangement that victims often experience. The preacher must also boldly witness God’s redemptive grace through Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. Preaching between death and resurrection, sin and grace, “already” and “not yet,” is at the heart of eschatology, helping us navigate life with its sin, grace, suffering, joy, death, life, despair, and hope.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Van der Kolk, *Body Keeps Score*, 13.

²⁹⁶ Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 13.

²⁹⁷ Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, xii.

²⁹⁸ Travis, *Unspeakable*, 52-53.

Trauma-informed preachers can draw upon traumatic events in biblical narratives as a launchpad to address their congregation's needs and deliver compassionate messages. Preachers can use stories of women in the Old Testament: Eve (Genesis 3), Sarah (Genesis 16, 21), Hagar (Genesis 16, 21), Dinah (Genesis 34), Tamar (2 Samuel 13), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1–4), and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11–12), and the Levite's concubine (Judges 19). In the New Testament, grief lingers in Mary (John 19:25–27), the bleeding woman (Mark 5:25–34), the Samaritan woman (John 4:1–26), the Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:24–30), and Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2; John 20:11–18). Although these women are marked by trauma, they are not forgotten. Through preaching, their suffering is seen, their voices honored, and their wounds met with redemption. For the trauma-informed preacher, these narratives can serve as sacred echoes of restoration, offering survivors a path toward healing through God's promise.

Proper interpretation of biblical trauma stories benefits victims. By relating these stories to victims' experiences, preachers validate their pain, help them feel understood, and reduce their isolation and shame. Victims find comfort and solidarity with figures who experienced similar traumas. Biblical stories highlighting God's presence amid trauma can bring healing, reassuring victims of God's presence and offering a path to recovery.

The Church's tradition of lamenting with victims is the most spiritual explanation and practical wisdom a preacher can offer. Traumatized Vietnamese American women are lamenting indescribable pain and injustice—paralyzed, suffering, and confused. Can a trauma-informed pastoral preacher witness to Christ by lamenting with traumatized women?

Pastoral preaching as lament. Scripture's lament is a profound cry of pain, sorrow, and confusion voiced before God.²⁹⁹ This cry creates sacred space for believers to confront suffering,

²⁹⁹ Carleen Mandolfo, "Daughter Zion's Trauma: Reading the Book of Lamentations with Insights from Trauma Studies," in *Lamentations in Ancient and Contemporary Cultural Contexts*, ed. Nancy C. Lee and Carleen

trusting in God’s mercy amid doubt. Lament embodies the paradoxical relationship between frailty and faithfulness³⁰⁰—a raw petition shaped by hope.³⁰¹ As Dr. Soong-Chan Rah affirms, “Laments are prayers of petition arising out of need.... Lament in the Bible is a liturgical response to suffering and engages God in the context of pain and trouble. The hope of lament is that God would respond to human suffering that is wholeheartedly communicated through lament.”³⁰²

Theologically, biblical lament sustains believers, directing hearts toward trust in divine justice and echoing Christ’s suffering. Modeled in Jesus’ life, lament becomes a spiritual practice for finding orientation when affliction fragments identity.³⁰³ Yet, despite its centrality, lament is strikingly absent from much of the American ecclesial imagination.³⁰⁴

Lament permeates the biblical canon; it is woven through Psalms, Lamentations, Job, Jeremiah, Isaiah, the Gospels, and Revelation, finding its richest expressions in the Psalms. For Vietnamese women survivors of IPV, lament can be meaningful when it is grounded in the

Mandolfo (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 47–64. Mandolfo explores lament as a dialogic and theological act that holds God accountable while remaining in relationship.

³⁰⁰ Nancy C. Lee, “Lament and the Postcolonial Imagination: A Cross-Cultural Reading of Lamentations,” in *Lamentations in Ancient and Contemporary Cultural Contexts*, ed. Nancy C. Lee and Carleen Mandolfo (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 65–84. Lee highlights how lament holds together vulnerability and covenantal trust, especially in postcolonial and cross-cultural contexts.

³⁰¹ Lori Stanley Roeleveld, “What Does Lament Mean in the Bible and Why Is It Important?” *Crosswalk.com*, May 9, 2024, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/what-is-a-lament-in-the-bible.html>.

³⁰² Soong-Chan Rah, *Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2015), 21.

³⁰³ Elizabeth Lewis Hall, “Suffering in God’s Presence: The Role of Lament in Transformation,” *Biola University Center for Christian Thought / The Table*, March 25, 2019, accessed June 19, 2025, <https://cct.biola.edu/suffering-gods-presence-role-lament-transformation-elizabeth-lewis-hall/>.

³⁰⁴ Rah, *Prophetic Lament*, 21-26.

conviction that “God is listening” and that divine mercy does not recoil from grief.³⁰⁵ Still, many Christians hesitate, fearing it signals a loss of faith. Preachers must challenge this fear, breaking open Scripture’s lament hymns and inviting all to grieve with those who suffer.

Trauma-informed preaching must name the “dis-grace” marking our cultural landscape. As Mary Catherine Hilkert notes, “Silence and the suppression of pain are not limited to crimes of IPV . . . there is a massive suppression of anguish.”³⁰⁶ She reminds us, “The sacramental imagination celebrates God’s presence, but that presence is available for many in the mode of absence.”³⁰⁷ In naming disgrace and brokenness, preachers help give voice to pain embedded in the ancient human language of lament, breaking the prison of silence and bringing suffering into communal prayer.³⁰⁸

The 42 to 56 lament psalms chart anguish, supplication, longing, and praise. Psalm 13 exemplifies lament yielding to trust, offering hope to the traumatized. Yet preachers must not reduce lament to a prelude to praise, risking a flattening of its depth and a dismissal of the slow journey of healing. Psalms such as 31, 35, 59, and 71 alternate lament and praise, mirroring life’s rhythms. Psalm 31 weaves shame, trust, pain, and hope, reminding us that recovery is rarely swift. For some, healing unfolds over years; for others, it may never fully arrive. Yet in each lament, trust flickers, even when joy is elusive.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ Travis, *Unspeakable*, 133.

³⁰⁶ Mary Catherine Hilkert, *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 110.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁰⁹ Tremper Longman III, “Lament,” in *Cracking Old Testament Codes*, ed. D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese Jr. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1995), 213.

In these texts, preachers find solidarity, walking alongside the wounded, holding space for grief, and bearing witness to the cry of the oppressed. As Ps. 130:7 declares, “Put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.” Sarah Travis echoes this duty, stating, “We find that our lament begins to transform the world.”³¹⁰ This sentiment aligns with activist Angela Davis’s call to action: “‘You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.’ When we lament we are claiming that God has the power to transform the world and we are refusing to stay silent until God acts.”³¹¹

In lament, the preacher joins the people in their pain, not to hasten healing but to dignify sorrow. Together, they dare to hope that even through the deepest cries, God is already at work.

The Narrative Preaching Model

“Stories shape our understanding of God, ourselves, and the world. Narrative preaching allows the congregation to step into the biblical story and find their place within it.”³¹²

— Johan Janse van Rensburg

Despite significant advances in civilization, our contemporary society continues to face pervasive problems of violence, hatred, bigotry, and racism that disrupt the common good and worsen human development and well-being. In particular, our culture is replete with tragic incidents of IPV against women. How do we, as preachers, respond to these terrible acts of violence, social injustices, and hatred? How do we proclaim a narrative of God’s loving-kindness, justice, and full of compassion to the world “in ways that connect with people whose

³¹⁰ Travis, *Unspeakable*, 140.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Johan Janse Van Rensburg, “Narrative Preaching: Theory and Praxis of a New Way of Preaching,” *Acta Theologica* 23, no. 2 (March 2, 2010), accessed June 19, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v23i2.49702>.

storyline of struggle and disorder seems so far from the story of God's intent for humankind?"³¹³

These are crucial questions preachers must discern to see what is of God and what is not so they can adequately address these social injustices. I believe that the Narrative Preaching model is the right approach to addressing the dreadful problems caused by IPV among Vietnamese American women. Narrative preaching bolsters the biblical imagination, allowing the listeners to rediscover the most incredible stories of God's salvation and redemption through biblical characters' tragedies and triumphs. More importantly, narrative preaching enables listeners to enter into these divine stories so that they may connect their lived experiences with biblical narratives and be transformed by their power.

What is Narrative Preaching?

Narrative Preaching is a branch of homiletics developed over the last several decades. This type of preaching is not entirely new since we observe what Walter Brueggemann calls "primal narratives" in the Bible, such as in the Book of Exodus. We also observe Jewish rabbis' engagement in both *halakhah* (the way) and *haggadah* (narration) to apply legal and practical aspects of religious life to new situations and to weave the listeners' circumstances into biblical narratives.³¹⁴

Narrative Preaching is often called the "New Homiletic" due to its association with Fred Craddock, who reacted against deductive propositional preaching and advocated for an inductive approach. Writing in the early 1970s, Craddock worried about the declining influence of preaching. He believed that sermons often failed to connect with listeners in a way that enabled

³¹³ Herbert Anderson, "Narrative Preaching and Narrative Reciprocity," in *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching*, ed. Edward Foley (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016), 202.

³¹⁴ K. A. Beville, *Preaching Christ in a Postmodern Culture* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 66.

them to experience the Gospel's transforming power. Preaching, he argued, should mirror the inductive process of human experience—where we live, reflect, and conclude.

Craddock emphasized two essentials: first, that all concrete experiences should be included in the sermon as ingredients that lead to conclusions, insights, and decisions; second, that “induction is movement of material that respects the hearer as not only capable of but deserving the right to participate in that movement and arrive at a conclusion that is his own, not just the speaker's.”³¹⁵ His vision opened the door to narrative preaching, where preacher and listener journey together toward resolution.

Narrative Theory Progresses in Recent Research

According to recent research in the empirical study of human lives, many narrative theorists assert that “we are all storytellers, and we are the stories we tell.”³¹⁶ Psychologist Antonio Damasio states that we become conscious when our brains acquire the power to tell a story.³¹⁷ Our stories grow in complexity as we mature, forming an autobiographical self—a narrative identity.³¹⁸ David Herman, a key voice in cognitive narratology, explains that “narrative helps people fashion the vicissitudes of personal experience into a more or less coherent life story.”³¹⁹ Narrative enables self-conceptualization and helps us understand

³¹⁵ Fred B Craddock, *As One without Authority, Revised and With New Sermons*, 4th ed. (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 64.

³¹⁶ Dan P. McAdams, Ruthellen Josselson, and Amia Lieblich, *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006), 3–9.

³¹⁷ Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 30.

³¹⁸ Robyn Fivush and Catherine A. Haden, *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self: Developmental and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Robyn Fivush and Catherine A. Haden (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2003).

³¹⁹ David Herman, *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences* (Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications, 2003), 4.

ourselves and others. Through shared narratives, individuals are able to imagine others' experiences and thus communicate with empathy and understanding. Narrative, then, is foundational to shared communication and social interaction.³²⁰

In his major work *Time and Narrative*, Paul Ricoeur, a prominent French philosopher, offers insight into how humans constantly narrate and re-narrate experiences to create meaning and define both personal and communal identities.³²¹ He identifies three *aporias* of time that challenge human meaning-making: first, the disparity between how we experience time and how it flows; second, the dissociation among the future, past, and present; and third, the inscrutability of time, which we cannot observe objectively because we are immersed in it.³²² These limitations hinder our ability to make sense of life.

Fortunately, Ricoeur finds that humans overcome these challenges by crafting narratives that integrate past and present while anticipating the future.³²³ He calls this process *emplotment*, the act of arranging human experiences into coherent narratives. Drawing from Aristotle's concept of *mimesis* (creative representation of life), Ricoeur describes three stages:

*Mimesis*₁ refers to the *prefiguration* or pre-understanding of human action and its temporality. This stage recognizes that action itself contains temporal structures that prefigure narration. Ricoeur explains that if plot is a *mimesis* of action, it is because we already grasp its meaningful structure, symbolic resources, and temporality.³²⁴

³²⁰ Herman, *Narrative Theory*, 185.

³²¹ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 52-90; 175-225.

³²² Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 249–250.

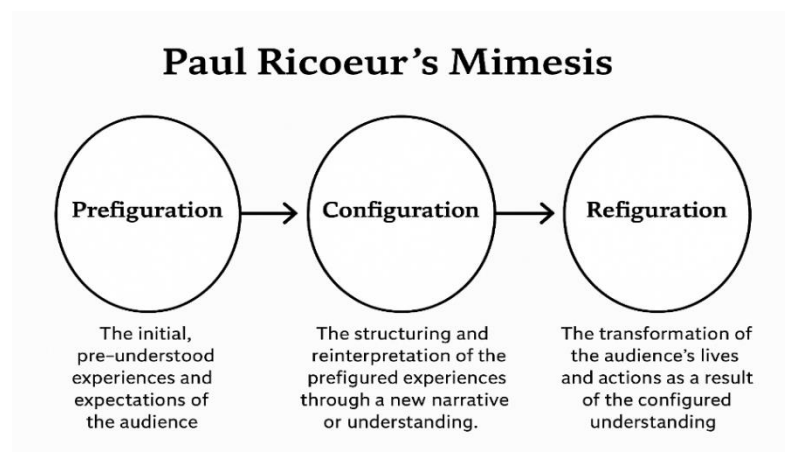
³²³ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, xi.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

*Mimesis*₂ represents *configuration* or *emplotment* within narrative. It acts as the mediating point between the pre-comprehension of the world that came before (*mimesis*₁) and the later actions that will follow, the transfigured understanding of a reordered temporality (*mimesis*₃). Ricoeur considers *mimesis*₂ the most significant part in the meaning-making of the emplotment.³²⁵ In this process, the interpreter decides and selects which details to include, discard, refine, aggrandize, or fabricate.

*Mimesis*₃ is the process *refiguration*, the final intersection between the world configured by the text and the world of the reader. Ricoeur asserts that in this process, narrative is not mere decoration but the powerhouse enabling the readers to achieve a new evaluation of time and reality.³²⁶ He states, “[*M*]imesis₃ names the way the reader’s own life narrative interacts with and is transformed by the encounter with the narrative text.”³²⁷

This diagram outlines Ricoeur’s threefold mimesis, showing how lived experience becomes transformative through narrative.



³²⁵ Ibid., 65.

³²⁶ Ibid., 70.

³²⁷ Lance Pape, *The Scandal of Having Something to Say: Ricoeur and the Possibility of Postliberal Preaching* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2013), 96.

See Figure 30 in Appendix 17 for a visual representation of Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Circle of Three Stages of Mimesis. This diagram illustrates the cyclical interplay of prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration, emphasizing how each stage informs the others in interpreting text, context, and meaning.

As humans being bound in time, we are defined by the emplotment of our experiences and action that unfold temporally. We become the narratives we tell. As Ricoeur describes, "The story of a life continues to be refigured by all the truthful or fictive stories a subject tells about himself or herself. This refiguration makes this life itself a cloth woven of stories told."³²⁸ If narrative shapes individual identity, it also constitutes communal identity. Community experiences are gathered into plots, collectively forming a shared history. Ricoeur writes, "Individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history."³²⁹

Narrative Preaching in Human Experience

Taking on the challenges and concerns of narrative preaching regarding the distortions of both human life and divine revelation, discerned from both the pew and the academy, theologian Mary Catherine Hilbert asserts that while it is true that the story of salvation is uniquely revealed in Jesus' death and resurrection, the Bible also proclaims that Christ is mysteriously active and present in creation from the beginning to the end. All things were created through Him and for Him (John 1:1–3; Eph. 1:3–10; Col. 1:15–16).³³⁰ Furthermore, Hilbert explains, "the purpose of the homily as described in multiple liturgical documents is precisely to connect ordinary human

³²⁸ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 264.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 247.

³³⁰ Hilbert, *Naming Grace*, 90-92; 103-107.

experience with the scriptures and liturgy of the day.”³³¹ To connect daily human stories with the Gospel requires the preacher to listen attentively for echoes of the Gospel in the lives of individuals and communities, and to attend to those echoes with care. Preachers listen attentively to human experience because they believe in the Incarnation: that God’s revelation is discovered in the depths of human history and everyday life.³³²

In the context of IPV in the Vietnamese American community, there are many stories of sexual abuse, mistreatment, suffering, trauma, and the struggle for survival. How can preachers proclaim God’s presence in the depths of sorrow, pain, and despair? Turning to how the early Christian story was told in the Gospel of Luke, Hilkert analyzes the Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-35) and shows how Ricoeur’s threefold mimetic structure can guide the proclamation of God’s word in a way that leads to conversion.

In *mimesis1*, Jesus walks with the two disciples and listens to their prefigured experiences—their broken hopes that the Messiah would redeem Israel (24:13–24). Only after engaging their preunderstanding does Jesus begin to *configure* their story (*mimesis2*) by interpreting the Scriptures, transforming their understanding through a new vision of the “suffering Messiah” (24:25–27). This configuration reframes their past and reveals a divine narrative that includes both cross and resurrection. Finally, through *mimesis3*, their lives are refigured by the encounter with the risen Lord. They recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread (24:28–32) and return to Jerusalem to proclaim the Good News (24:33–35). They have been transformed.³³³

³³¹ Hilkert, *Naming Grace*, 92; cf. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 52, and Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 4, in Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: America Press, 1966).

³³² Ibid., 49.

³³³ Hilkert, *Naming Grace*, 92-94.

The Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Engages IPV

“Every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offence against the creator of the individual.”³³⁴

—John Paul II

The Preacher as Narrator

Using the structure of Paul Ricoeur’s threefold mimetic process and inspired by Mary Catherine Hilkert’s focus on human experience, I have developed and propose a Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model for addressing IPV. This model unfolds in three movements: narrating to raise awareness, configuring renewed identities through the Gospel, and refiguring lives through transformation in the Word. In this model, the preacher becomes a faithful narrator—one who reports, interprets, and evaluates the full range of human experience in light of divine revelation.³³⁵

Prefiguration: Re-Visioning Narratives, Re-Awakening Consciousness on IPV

Drawing from Ricoeur, to effectively address IPV, the narrator must first inhabit the "world of action." This demands that the narrator have a nuanced comprehension of IPV’s complex realities: the dynamics between abuser and survivor, manipulative strategies, and the constraints faced by those experiencing violence. Further, it requires that the narrator grasp the aims and methods of each party, the societal conditions that enable IPV, and the existing legal and social countermeasures. This pre-understanding necessitates a critical awareness of symbolic resources: the language framing IPV, values that can be perverted to justify abuse and leveraged to promote healing, and traditions shaping gender roles and familial bonds. Finally, the narrator

³³⁴ John Paul II, *On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World* (1988), no. 176.

³³⁵ David Herman, et al., *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 34. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz observe that “narrators perform three primary tasks: they report (along the axis of facts, characters, and events), interpret (along the axis of knowledge or perception), and evaluate (along the axis of ethics).”

must be attuned to IPV's temporal dimensions, recognizing its cyclical nature, potential for escalation, enduring impacts, and disruption of life's rhythms. This comprehensive prefiguration forms the bedrock upon which a resonant and transformative narrative can be built.

To awaken a renewed consciousness of IPV, the preacher, as narrator, must attend to the community's socio-cultural particularities. They must learn its vernacular, heed its voices, and recognize its lexicons. Immersing themselves in the congregation's experiences affirms the community's identity, paving the way for introducing new meanings that foster reconfigured identities. A detailed understanding of the community's experiences with IPV enables the preacher to select resonant scriptural passages, effectively addressing anxieties and facilitating a transformative configuration.³³⁶

For the Vietnamese American community, a primary challenge lies in comprehending and acknowledging the gravity of IPV. Catholic Vietnamese women in America often grapple with their status and roles within family and society, exhibiting uncertainty regarding the equal dignity of men and women as revealed in Scripture and Church teachings. Such misconceptions, often culturally ingrained, historically taught, and reinforced by institutions favoring Confucian patriarchal hierarchies, perpetuate the sinful reality of IPV against women. Thriving in a culture of prejudice and bias, IPV wreaks havoc on families and society, contributing to moral depravity.

To counter the distressing experiences of abused women, the preacher must curate scriptural passages illuminating God's will. The biblical narrative provides a potent foundation, beginning with the affirmation of human dignity (Gen. 1:26–27). Narratives like Dinah's,

³³⁶ According to Pape, "The text-to-sermon process begins with the preacher engaging the biblical text through the lens of the congregation's prefigured narrative self-understanding, but it moves toward presenting to the church a depiction of itself in light of this particular biblical text," Pape, *The Scandal of Having Something to Say*, 116.

Tamar's, and the Levite's concubine expose sexual violence, compelling the faithful to confront injustice. The psalmist's plea for refuge echoes the anguish of those seeking sanctuary (Ps. 55:4–8), while Malachi decries violence and betrayal (Mal. 2:16). Jesus deepens righteousness, cautioning against anger and fostering reconciliation (Matt. 5:21–22), while Paul affirms unity in Christ, transcending division (Gal. 3:28) and God's impartiality (Rom. 2:11). The epistles encourage mutual respect (1 Pet. 3:7) and interdependence (1 Cor. 11:11–12). This ethic of mutual subordination, rooted in reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21), guides action toward justice and restoration.

Furthermore, preachers may interweave concrete narratives drawn from personal experiences with IPV, enabling the congregation to engage deeply with human pain and resilience. These narratives grant access to “experiences that exceed the boundaries of other human language,” weaving together the destinies of many persons.³³⁷ By engaging community members through interviews, focus groups, and consultations with IPV experts, the preacher can thoughtfully select scripture passages and theological themes that resonate with specific anxieties while offering a vision for reconfigured identities and relationships. This empathetic, context-sensitive approach not only highlights the sinful nature of IPV but also fosters a renewed communal consciousness aimed at disrupting deeply embedded prejudices and catalyzing transformative change.

Configuration: A Prophetic Call to Re-imagine Identity and Meaning

In this second configuration, the preacher rises as a prophetic voice that illuminates the moral and spiritual abyss of IPV within the Vietnamese American Catholic community. Bearing God's justice, the preacher shatters the silence shielding oppression, calling abusers to repentance

³³⁷ Hilbert, *Naming Grace*, 96.

and offering survivors a path to reclaim their inherent dignity. Scripture becomes a beacon, revealing a divine narrative that renounces violence and exalts love. The preacher dismantles ingrained biases, confronting social inequalities and the scars of discrimination. With urgency and grace, they summon a renewal of identity, urging perpetrators to confront their brokenness and inviting the wounded to embrace their worth through faith. This is not mere individual reckoning, but communal awakening. The preacher cultivates a culture of mutual care and respect, where each soul is seen and uplifted. Through the Gospel's tapestry, identities are re-woven into a divine narrative of justice, belonging, and renewed life.

As narrator, the preacher interprets biblical narratives, offering new meanings by attending to hermeneutical layers: the socio-historical context of the passage, its literary context, and the liturgical context of its proclamation.³³⁸ Recognizing the Word's composition by human authors within specific settings, the preacher employs historical-critical methods—alongside textual, source, form, literary, and redactional criticism—to reconstruct historical events with fidelity. This rigorous approach ensures the biblical message is understood in its originality and applied responsibly to the contemporary context.

Drawing upon creation and redemption, the preacher exegetes passages concerning the creation of man and woman (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:4-25; 5:1-2; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; Gal. 3:28), emphasizing inherent equality. Passages concerning mutual submission (1 Cor. 11:11-12; Eph. 5:21-33) are interpreted prudently, challenging interpretations that promote domination.

Furthermore, the preacher integrates insights from contemporary studies on IPV—psychology,

³³⁸ Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), Sections I.A, I.B, and IV, accessed June 27, 2025, https://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/PBC_Interp-FullText.htm; Raymond E. Brown, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), chaps. 1–2, 5; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), chaps. 5–6.

social work, public health, criminology, healthcare, and law—offering deeper understanding of this silent epidemic.³³⁹

Acknowledging the Vietnamese Catholic community's unique context, the preacher addresses the Confucian-influenced patriarchal system that has created a significant gap in gender roles and ethical values. This system often positions men as dominant heads of families, while women are expected to be submissive. The preacher challenges social perceptions that view women as inferior, justify violence, and stigmatize help-seeking, recognizing these perceptions perpetuate IPV.

In this phase of configuration, the preacher offers new insights from carefully exegeted passages, inviting reflection on personal stories of abuse, violation, disrespect, and shame. As narrator, the preacher configures the congregation's experiences of IPV "in a new pattern or plot,"³⁴⁰ weaving together disparate events, redescribing reality by probing presuppositions and introducing new images that might form a new configuration with new meanings for the community. This prophetic act challenges power structures and norms perpetuating violence, offering a new understanding of identity rooted in equality, respect, and inherent dignity.³⁴¹

Refiguration: A Pastoral Call to Healing, Justice, and Transformation

The culmination of this Prophetic Pastoral Narrative model arrives in the stage of refiguration, where the transformative power of the Gospel intersects with the lived realities of

³³⁹ Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juárez* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), chap. 3; Mary Jo Iozzio, "Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenge of Domestic Violence," in *Violence, Transformation, and the Sacred: "They Shall Be Called Children of God"*, ed. Margaret R. Pfeil and Tobias L. Winright (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 117–29; 158–171; 172–185; Claire M. Renzetti, Diane R. Follingstad, and Ann L. Coker, eds., *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2017), chaps. 2, 5, and 7.

³⁴⁰ Hilkert, *Naming Grace*, 94.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

Vietnamese American Catholic women experiencing IPV. This stage is a call to action—a pastoral summons to reimagine relationships and community through the lens of faith, justice, and compassion. Through refiguration, the preacher affirms the deep trauma experienced by victims, validates their suffering, and stands in solidarity with them. This act of empathetic ministry communicates that their pain is seen, their dignity upheld, and their healing possible. Healing takes root in fellowship—a supportive Christian community that surrounds survivors with care, affirms their worth, and nurtures their hope.

This refiguration begins by connecting the Gospel to lived experience, weaving together sacred Scripture and personal testimony. Survivors are encouraged to see themselves reflected in the stories of Scripture, finding strength and resilience in their faith and within the broader Christian tradition. This connection offers a profound encounter with Christ, who suffers with the afflicted and brings justice to the oppressed. At the same time, this stage challenges cultural norms that enable IPV. The preacher calls into question long-held beliefs about gender, submission, and silence. Refiguration demands that the community not only walk with survivors but also examine and change the attitudes that normalize or excuse abuse.

A key aspect of this stage is ethical engagement. The preacher proclaims that IPV is both a grave sin and a criminal offense. Justice demands accountability: perpetrators must be named and their actions addressed. Legal protection, advocacy, and reporting are essential components of pastoral care. While Christian teaching embraces forgiveness and reconciliation, the preacher must distinguish between grace and enabling harm. Reconciliation must follow genuine repentance and restoration, never serving as a license for continued abuse.³⁴²

³⁴² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2000), esp. “Scriptural Foundations” and “Catholic Social Teaching” sections; Mary Jo Iozzio, “Catholic Social Teaching and the

Refiguration also opens space for dialogue—an honest, critical conversation within the Vietnamese American Catholic community about the realities of IPV. This space encourages survivors to speak, invites theological reflection, and fosters cultural change. Through critical thinking and the freedom to tell their stories, women discover their voices and reclaim their identities in light of the Gospel. This transformation extends to the entire community, fostering a renewed moral vision grounded in Gospel values: compassion, accountability, and the restoration of human dignity.³⁴³

Ricoeur’s Three-Stage of Mimesis and Their application to IPV are summarized in the following table:

Stage (Ricoeur)	“Prophetic Pastoral Narrative” Preaching Model	What It Means in General	How It Applies in Your IPV Homily Analysis
Prefiguration	<i>Narrative Method: Before the Word</i>	The world and understanding the listener already inhabits — shaped by culture, faith tradition, and life experience.	Vietnamese Catholic beliefs about marriage, biblical familiarity, and cultural attitudes toward IPV that frame how the homily will be heard.
Configuration	<i>Prophetic Method: Word in Story</i>	The act of crafting a narrative — arranging events, themes, and scripture into a coherent message.	Weaving scripture, Catholic teaching, and a real-life IPV narrative into a homily that invites reflection and empathy.
Refiguration	<i>Pastoral Method: Word into Life</i>	The change in the listener’s perception or action after engaging with the story.	A victim recognizing herself in the story, a parishioner feeling called to offer support, or a shift in community awareness about IPV.

Challenge of Domestic Violence,” in *Violence, Transformation, and the Sacred: ‘They Shall Be Called Children of God’*, ed. Margaret R. Pfeil and Tobias L. Winright (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), chap. 5.

³⁴³ Pape, *The Scandal of Having Something to Say*, 112-113.

To understand how these values translate into practical action, consider the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, visually represented in Figure 31 (Breakout Stages and Tasks) and Figure 32 (Hermeneutical Lens). These figures, detailed in Appendix 17, illustrate how the three stages of Mimesis (Prefiguration, Configuration, and Refiguration) are integrated into a concrete framework for addressing IPV. Note particularly the specific tasks associated with each stage and the lens through which IPV is critically examined.

Conclusion

This chapter has articulated the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, highlighting its unique role in confronting IPV within the Vietnamese American Catholic context. Narrative preaching raises awareness, fostering communal consciousness against gender biases. Prophetic preaching demands justice, challenging oppressive structures while shaping new identities. Pastoral preaching offers hope and healing, refiguring both personal and communal identity through lived experiences and sacred story. Though challenges remain—particularly in navigating cultural nuances and scriptural interpretation—this integrated approach provides a faithful, holistic strategy for breaking silence, empowering women, and transforming the Church. The next chapter will outline a seminar/workshop designed to equip clergy, catechists, and pastoral leaders with the tools to implement this model with courage, clarity, and compassion in addressing IPV.

Chapter 5

Preaching about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Vietnamese American Catholic Communities: A Training Seminar for Catholic Preachers and Teachers

“The opposite of justice is not only injustice, but also indifference.”

—Attributed to Justo L. González

Introduction

In early 2023, observations within my local community revealed that numerous families were affected by Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), compounded by a lack of adequate support from the Church and its leaders. Recognizing this urgent need, I undertook this thesis project, “Preaching about Intimate Partner Violence against Women in Vietnamese American Catholic Communities,” dedicating significant time to studying and addressing this critical issue.

This chapter comprehensively details the ministerial intervention, including seminar design, presentation materials, scheduling, participant recruitment, and location selection. It outlines the activities of the four seminar sessions—speakers, presentations, topics, and discussions—and elaborates on the data collection process, from pre-seminar questionnaires to post-session evaluations.

The Ministerial Intervention

This intervention aimed to equip preachers and catechists to address IPV effectively, guided by Church teachings and Christian principles. Twenty-four Vietnamese clergy and catechists from the Dallas Diocese were recruited for a four-day workshop held at the Alphonse Education Center in Garland, Texas.

Two weeks prior to the seminar, participants signed informed consent forms (Appendix 8) and completed a pre-seminar questionnaire. Coordination with the facilitator and members of 'The Charity Group' from my local parish ensured adequate orientation and logistical support.

The seminar comprised four sessions. I presented the first three sessions: “Interdisciplinary Perspectives of IPV,” “Theological and Biblical Foundations of IPV,” and “Homiletical Perspectives of IPV.” The final session featured presentations by three participants—a homily, a Catechism lesson, and a faith-sharing lecture on IPV in the Vietnamese American community. Seminar participants evaluated these presentations using the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model rubric.

The first three sessions occurred on consecutive evenings (February 11-13, 2025), and the final session was held two weeks later on February 26, 2025. Each 90-minute session was structured as follows:

- 6:30 p.m. – 6:35 p.m.: Opening Prayer
- 6:35 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. First Presentation
- 7:00 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. Group Discussion
- 7:15 p.m. – 7:40 p.m. Second Presentation
- 7:40 p.m. – 7:50 p.m. Group Discussion
- 7:50 p.m. – 7:57 p.m. Homily
- 7:57 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Prayer Conclusion
- 8:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Optional Dinner

This schedule facilitated thoughtful presentations, engaging discussions, and spiritual reflection, while the optional dinner provided a space for informal networking and continued conversation.

The First Seminar Session

This workshop actively explored the sociological, psychological, and psychiatric dimensions of IPV, aiming to challenge assumptions and promote change. To set the tone, I posed the question: “How has violence touched our lives?” Acknowledging that many participants may have witnessed or experienced IPV within their families, I aimed to create a space for empathy and shared understanding.

I then presented the story of a young Vietnamese woman admitted to Parkland Hospital with severe burns due to IPV. This narrative served as a stark reminder of the human cost and urgency of addressing IPV, highlighting a life shattered rather than merely a statistic.

Statistics reveal the widespread impact of IPV. Globally, at least one in three women—736 million—have experienced physical or sexual violence.³⁴⁴ This prevalence extends to the United States, with significant public health implications, including physical injuries, PTSD, depression, anxiety, suicidality, and substance misuse.³⁴⁵ The economic costs are also staggering, with a lifetime economic burden of \$103,767 per female victim and \$23,414 per male victim, totaling approximately \$3.6 trillion for 43 million U.S. adults with a history of victimization. These figures underscore the urgent need for action.³⁴⁶

To understand the drivers of IPV, I explored contemporary frameworks and decades of research, including:

- The Biological Theory: Is IPV rooted in brain structures and chemical imbalances?
- Psychological Perspectives: How do psychological and psychiatric conditions, and trauma contribute?
- Feminist Theory: What role do gender inequality and power dynamics play?
- Social Learning Perspectives: Are violent behaviors acquired through observation?

Participants were encouraged to critically consider the multifaceted nature of IPV and reflect on which framework resonated most with them and why.

³⁴⁴ World Health Organization, *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates*, 2018.

³⁴⁵ Matthew J. Breiding, Michele C. Black, and George W. Ryan, “Chronic Disease and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence—18 U.S. States/Territories, 2005,” 538–44.

³⁴⁶ Cora Peterson et al., “Lifetime Economic Burden of Intimate Partner Violence Among U.S. Adults,” 433–44.

Next, I explored Trauma-Informed Psychology, focusing on how traumatic events—threats to life, injury, or sexual violence—can leave individuals feeling powerless, disrupt sensations, alter cognitive abilities, and cause intense emotions and fragmented memories.³⁴⁷

To address potential healing approaches, I examined the work of Judith Herman and Bessel van der Kolk:

- Herman's Three-Stage Model:
 1. Safety and Stabilization: How do we create physical and emotional stability for survivors?
 2. Remembrance and Mourning: What does it mean to process traumatic memories?
 3. Reconnection: How can we help survivors rebuild their lives and relationships?
- Van der Kolk's emphasis on reclaiming the body and mind through yoga, mindfulness, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and neurofeedback to restore the brain's capacity for adaptive responses.

Participants discussed what resonated most with them from these approaches, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive, holistic, and individualized approach to supporting survivors in reclaiming wholeness and dignity.

The first segment concluded with group discussions to deepen participants' cultural awareness and understanding of IPV.³⁴⁸

The second part focused on the social and cultural factors influencing IPV among Vietnamese American women in Catholic communities. Despite limited research in this area,

³⁴⁷ Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, 21.

³⁴⁸ The Group Discussion Questions can be found in Appendix 9.

IPV is recognized as a critical issue among Asian immigrants, with 41-61% experiencing physical or sexual violence.

I explored cultural attitudes contributing to underreporting, the perception of IPV as a private matter rooted in Confucianism, and the vulnerability of women in a society where men are often valued as superior. The question became: How can these harmful norms be challenged?

I also addressed the trauma and moral injury endured by Vietnamese American Catholic women, recognizing that shame and family prestige often compel victims to remain silent, exacerbating their suffering and creating barriers to seeking help.

Participants engaged in a dialogue to propose solutions for IPV prevention and intervention. The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model was highlighted as an effective approach, with acknowledgment of the challenges requiring sustained collaboration and resources.

IPV is multifaceted and complex, lacking a universally accepted definition or comprehensive framework. I emphasized the commitment to examining the interconnected mechanisms of gender oppression, cultural norms, patriarchy, and exclusionary social structures to assist Vietnamese immigrant victims in breaking isolation and addressing the roles of family, community, and culture in perpetuating violence.

The seminar culminated with a homily focusing on IPV's social and psychosocial dimensions and the trauma experienced by victims.³⁴⁹ This encouraged a deeper understanding and fostered intervention and prevention strategies, aiming to ignite change and create a community of advocates ready to challenge assumptions, break down barriers, and support survivors of IPV.

³⁴⁹ The Homily can be found in Appendix 10.

The Second Seminar Session

This session built upon the previous interdisciplinary foundation to focus on the theological and biblical dimensions of IPV.

The session began by exploring the practical implications of theology for women facing IPV. Core principles of Christian marriage—indissolubility, equality, mutual love, and respect—were examined, along with a critical analysis of how IPV contravenes these principles, contributing to marital dissolution and, in severe cases, mortality. Perspectives from contemporary moral theology and Catholic bioethics underscored the profound consequences of IPV.

A comparative analysis of the biblical creation accounts emphasized that both man and woman are created equally in God's image (Gen 1:26). The significance of Gen. 2:18 (“It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suited to him”) underscored the human need for companionship, while the creation of woman from man’s rib (2:21-22) was presented as a symbol of equality, partnership, intrinsic worth, and destined unity (2:23-24).

Problematic interpretations of Gen. 2:18, 22-23, historically used to justify the subordination of women, were addressed. The writings of Paul (Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Tim. 2:13; 1 Cor. 11:8-9), often misconstrued to support female subservience, were critically examined, revealing that biases against women were significantly influenced by Greco-Roman philosophical traditions, particularly the views of Plato and Aristotle, who considered women to be incomplete beings.

The perpetuation of these views by Christian philosophers and theologians reinforced female submissiveness and prioritized male dominance. The discussion addressed how such attitudes have contributed to normalizing violence against women within Christian families,

mirroring patterns in secular contexts. By deconstructing these biases, the session fostered reflection on cultural and theological forces shaping gender inequality and advocated for equality and mutual respect.

The focus shifted to the Second Vatican Council and subsequent papal directives that champion equality, dignity, and mutual submission within marriage. The session highlighted the Church's ongoing reevaluation of teachings perpetuating biases against women and its call for reassessing prevailing moral attitudes.

The contributions of Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia*, which addresses the detrimental effects of patriarchal culture and acknowledges the suffering of IPV victims, were examined. The emphasis on mutual submission and love as cornerstones of marriage was underscored, along with the USCCB's condemnation of violence against women, reinforcing the Church's commitment to upholding dignity, equality, and justice in addressing IPV.

Following a break, participants engaged in small group discussions on the misinterpretations and manipulations of theological foundations of marriage contributing to inequality and violence among Vietnamese Catholics in the United States. Group leaders used curated biblical passages to facilitate identifying biased teachings justifying male dominance, exploring socio-cultural contexts exacerbating these issues, and understanding the appropriate theological context of these passages. This structured approach enhanced theological literacy, cultural sensitivity, and inspired reflection and action within the Vietnamese Catholic community.

The session addressed the profound wounds of trauma and moral injury shaping the lives of Vietnamese American women within Catholic communities. The discussion acknowledged

constraints imposed by tradition, pervasive stigma, and the fear of being labeled “unvirtuous” for leaving a violent marriage.

The guiding question was: “What sources of hope and healing are available to women trapped in cycles of pain and seemingly insurmountable circumstances?” This question illuminated the theological and biblical dimensions intensifying vulnerability and moral injury, emphasizing the need for effective intervention strategies.

Insights from Feminist Theologians like Jennifer Beste and Flora Keshgegian, who challenge traditional theological frameworks by emphasizing human nurturing as a conduit for God's grace, were explored. The session highlighted Beste's assertion that God's grace is manifested through supportive relationships, enabling victims to rebuild connections with themselves, others, and the divine. The contributions of Monica Coleman and Pamela Cooper-White, who develop theologies informed by trauma, were also examined.

These perspectives offered a pathway to healing, emphasizing relational support and grace in addressing IPV's aftermath. Building on the emphasis on community articulated by Feminist theologians, a model of Vietnamese community gatherings was proposed, centering on small group meetings integrating daily life and activities and drawing inspiration from the Lucan narratives of female disciples (Luke 24 and Acts 1 and 2). This model envisioned abused women encountering the risen Lord through shared engagement with God's word and the Eucharist, listening to one another's stories, sharing meals, and offering mutual support, mirroring the dynamics observed among Jesus' disciples.

Participants were reminded that recovery is a protracted process with moments of resurrection and persistent pain. The session advocated for a Lucan theology of the community as witnesses to hope for marginalized women. Just as Jesus appeared to his disciples, revealed

His wounds, and guided them to a deeper understanding of Scripture, the community must mediate Christ's healing, journeying alongside those who suffer, engaging in empathetic dialogue, and demonstrating Christ's abiding presence.

The session concluded with a call for the Vietnamese Catholic Church to actively uplift the roles and contributions of women while unequivocally condemning all forms of violence. This call was reinforced by a pivotal question: “What concrete steps can the Church undertake to provide effective pastoral care to women experiencing moral injury and trauma due to IPV, while promoting a culture of love, respect, and equality within marriage?” This question sparked a robust discussion, particularly among women who had directly benefited from pastoral care and small group support initiatives, highlighting the urgent need for sustained and compassionate pastoral engagement.

While women's gatherings hold immense promise as spaces of grace and empowerment, their full potential remains largely unutilized. The Prophetic Pastoral Preaching Model offers a concrete response to the challenges revealed in our theological exploration, providing a framework for transforming these gatherings into dynamic centers of healing and advocacy. This model equips group leaders and faith communities with a clear strategy to embody the Church's commitment to justice and equality, moving beyond conventional roles to become true advocates for survivors through trauma-informed practices and resources.

The seminar concluded with a homily synthesizing the theological foundations of IPV and articulating the Church's essential role in addressing this critical issue.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ The Homily can be found in Appendix 11.

The Third Seminar Session

In the third workshop, I reviewed the Interdisciplinary Frameworks (social, psychological, psychiatric perspectives) and the Theological and Biblical Foundations. I then introduced the Homiletical Foundations for addressing IPV through the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, guiding participants in its application using a preaching rubric. The session concluded with a sample homily integrating all stages and features of the model, tailored to address IPV.³⁵¹

The Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model inspires a renewed identity within Vietnamese American Catholic communities, empowering them to confront IPV against women. This model equips preachers and ministers to raise awareness, deepen understanding, and offer spiritual and practical remedies to promote healing and prevent future occurrences, serving as agents of transformation.

Drawing from Paul Ricoeur's narrative mimesis, I presented the structure of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model. This framework unfolds in three phases—Prefiguration, Configuration, and Refiguration—to craft homilies addressing IPV with prophetic conviction and pastoral compassion.

- *Prefiguration:* In this stage, the preacher assumes a narrative voice that recalls and interrogates entrenched patterns of IPV, exposing the cultural, theological, and patriarchal structures that perpetuate abuse. By cultivating awareness and fostering new consciousness, the sermon challenges deeply held beliefs and attitudes, prompting reflection and dialogue that dismantle harmful ideologies. A thorough exploration of the sociocultural and historical context of the biblical narrative provides a foundation for

³⁵¹ The Homily can be found in Appendix 12.

understanding how systemic oppression operates within sacred texts and lived experiences.

- *Configuration*: In this stage, preachers take on the prophetic functions weaving narratives of justice, redemption, and love drawn from biblical texts, directly challenging societal biases against women and advocating for systemic changes, urging abusive men to repent and transform, empowering women to overcome adversity through faith, and rallying community to promote a culture of mutual support, love, and respect.
- *Refiguration*: In this stage preachers apply the pastoral preaching in providing compassionate support for survivors, offering spiritual encouragement, communal solidarity, and tangible resources for healing. Together, these prophetic and pastoral dimensions empower victims to reclaim their identity, foster communal restoration, and nurture relationships grounded in mutual love and respect.

This model addresses the needs of IPV survivors and challenges the community to engage in transformation, embodying Christ's teachings.

In essence, the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model intertwines narrative mimesis with prophetic boldness and pastoral care. By adopting this Gospel-centered approach, preachers confront IPV, raise awareness, and foster healing. This model inspires transformation, advocates for justice, and embodies compassion in addressing IPV.

To help participants grasp the role of prophets, I explored prophetic preaching in addressing IPV. Rooted in biblical traditions, it is a courageous response to IPV, emphasizing justice, repentance, and healing, challenging communities to condemn abuse as contrary to God's will. Prophetic preaching calls out biases, urging accountability, while fostering transformation.

By affirming survivors' dignity, this approach empowers women to heal and renew, mobilizing communities to pursue justice and provide support. The strength of prophetic preaching lies in harmonizing the confrontation of injustices with pastoral care, inspiring respect, love, and alignment with God's justice, preparing communities to live in His Kingdom. Through this lens, prophetic preaching is a catalyst for addressing IPV and advocating for change.

I outlined the functions of pastoral preaching within the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model. Anchored in Church history, pastoral preaching emphasizes the Gospel, guidance, and addressing challenges. Since its inception, this approach has evolved to meet communities' needs, fostering support and providing direction.

Trauma-informed pastoral preaching builds on this mission by engaging with wounds inflicted by violence. It calls preachers to witness suffering, lament with victims, and proclaim God's justice and grace. This approach inspires support and challenges communities to confront injustices with empathy, embodying Christ's love and providing hope and healing.

In the workshop's second part, participants collaborated in three groups to develop Homiletic Explorative Exercises addressing IPV. Each group was assigned a biblical passage and guided through the three stages of Prefiguration, Configuration, and Refiguration from the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, helping preachers and educators structure homilies with coherence, accuracy, and relevance.³⁵²

Many catechists and religious leaders found the material and integration of new concepts overwhelming, encountering difficulties in constructing coherent lectures/Catechism lessons aligned with the model. Recognizing these challenges, I offered reassurance that mastery would come with practice.

³⁵² Biblical topics for three groups can be found in Appendix 9, "Seminar Group Discussion Questions and Homiletic Explorative Exercises."

The Fourth Seminar Session

For the final seminar session, I selected three representatives—a Deacon, a Sister, and a Deacon Candidate—to prepare teachings, homilies, and faith-sharing sessions on “IPV Against Vietnamese American Women.” After assigning passages and topics, I provided them with the “Mapping Method for IPV Homily Creation,” a framework I developed to help preachers systematically integrate their ideas into each stage of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching.³⁵³

During the fourth seminar session, participants attended presentations on IPV—a homily, a Catechism lesson, and a faith-sharing session—each delivered by a different presenter. Participants then provided feedback, using the Rubric for Assessing the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model (Appendix 5) and the Presentation Workshop Questionnaire (Appendix 6).

First presenter. Deacon Dominic Hoang preached on the story of King David and Bathsheba from 2 Samuel 11. Interpreting David's actions through a modern lens, he highlighted them as an abuse of power akin to IPV, presenting David's misuse of authority, disregard for Bathsheba's autonomy, and manipulation leading to Uriah's death as reflections of the coercion, exploitation, and harm inherent in abusive relationships. This narrative served as a potent reminder of the destructive consequences of unchecked power and the critical need for justice and accountability.

Deacon Dominic composed his homily, “Healing and Hope: Lessons from Bathsheba's Trauma,” in three stages of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, highlighting the main points and scriptural passages:³⁵⁴

³⁵³ The “Mapping Method for IPV Homily Creation” can be found in Appendix 16.

1. *Prefiguration Stage* (Introduction - Cultivating Awareness & Understanding): Deacon Hoang introduced Bathsheba's story (2 Samuel 11) as a reflection on the abuse of power and violence against vulnerable women, highlighting the urgency of addressing family and community violence, the test of faith, and the need for healing. He used World Health Organization (WHO) statistics to illustrate IPV prevalence.
2. *Configuration Stage* (Body - Sound Teaching & Challenging Bias): Deacon Hoang explored the cultural context of Bathsheba's story, condemning David's actions and connecting them to contemporary IPV. He emphasized that silence equals complicity and called for standing for women's equality and dignity, referencing Gal. 3:28 and 1 Cor 12:24–25. He called for prayer for the repentance of abusers, referencing Luke 15:4 and 2 Sam 12:13.
3. *Refiguration Stage* (Conclusion - Compassionate Support & Transformation): Deacon Hoang emphasized the need to restore dignity, honor, and well-being to abused women. He called for communities to provide safe environments for victims to share their pain and find healing through friendship. He emphasized God's message of equality and called for participation in ministry to restore dignity, referencing John 13:34 and invoking Our Lady of La-Vang for intercession.

Deacon Hoang received the highest score (93.87/100) for his exemplary adherence to the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, demonstrating both theological depth and pastoral sensitivity. Participants lauded his skillful connection of Bathsheba's traumatic experience to the challenges faced by many Vietnamese American women enduring IPV, noting that his homily resonated deeply, offering hope and healing and illustrating the model's transformative potential.

³⁵⁴ Deacon Hoang's Homily can be found in Appendix 13, First Presenter's Homily on IPV.

Participants assessed Deacon Hoang's homily using the “Rubric for Assessing the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model,” resulting in the following scores:

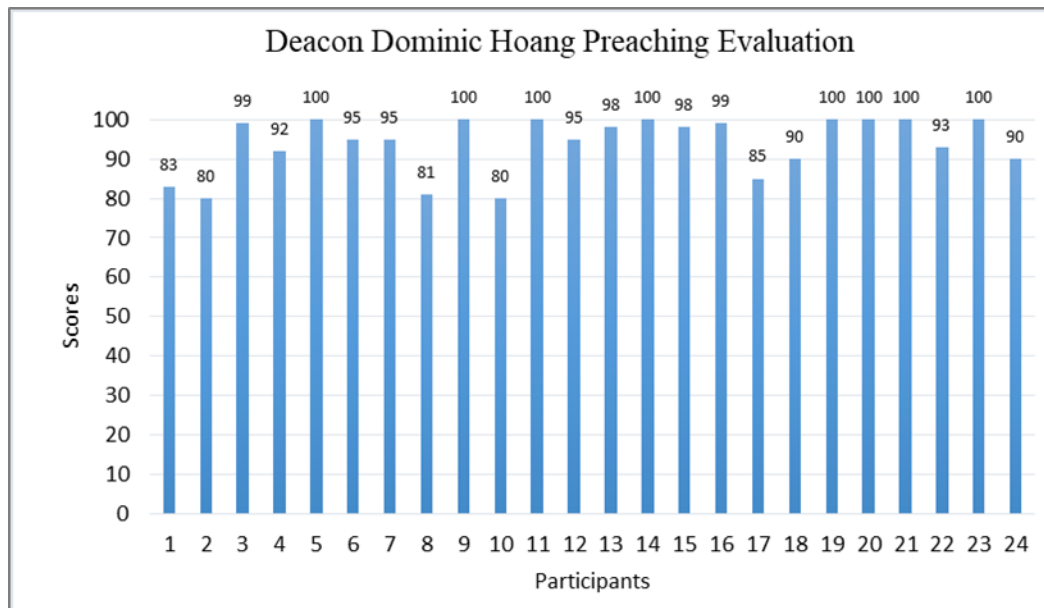


Figure 5. Deacon Dominic Hoang Preaching Scores

While Deacon Dominic's homily was commendable for its theological depth and pastoral care, participants identified opportunities to enhance its impact.

In the *Prefiguration Stage*, one participant suggested that while the story of Bathsheba is powerful, opening with a contemporary anonymized account of a Vietnamese American IPV survivor could immediately capture the audience's attention and underscore the urgency of the issue.

During the *Configuration Stage*, several participants criticized the lack of explicit naming and challenge of patriarchal biases within the Vietnamese American community, such as female obedience expectations, undue emphasis on male authority, and cultural acceptance of physical discipline. Some recommended that Deacon Hoang provide more concrete, actionable steps, such

as forming support groups, offering counseling services, and providing financial assistance for survivors, to help the community translate intention into action.

Finally, while acknowledging David's repentance was appreciated, participants felt a more direct call for abusive men to seek accountability, alongside an emphasis on God's boundless forgiveness and transformative grace, would resonate more deeply.

Second presenter. Sister Mary Ngo delivered a Catechism class on IPV to young adolescents, earning high praise for her skillful application of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model. Her lesson, which achieved an impressive average score of 90.19 out of 100 from 24 attendees, provided a thoughtful and impactful exploration of abuse within families, particularly husbands against wives, while emphasizing the transformative power of faith, reflection, and community.

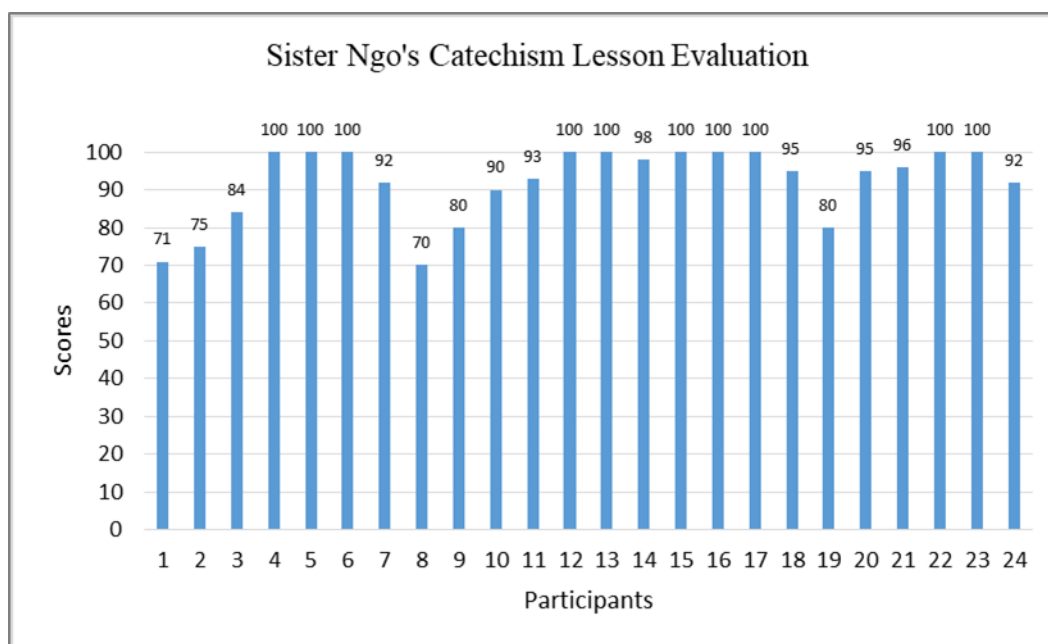


Figure 6. Sister Ngo Catechism Lecture Scores

The lesson opened with a vivid story to illuminate the pain caused by IPV, connecting this issue to the foundational values of marriage and family. A reading from John 8:1-11 (the

story of the adulterous woman) underscored the compassionate and just response modeled by Jesus.

In the *Prefiguration Stage*, teenagers were guided to cultivate awareness through reflection questions and sobering statistics, fostering empathy for peers impacted by IPV. Sister Mary challenged harmful beliefs, presented the family as the “Domestic Church,” and connected the marginalized status of women in the Gospel to contemporary struggles.

In the *Configuration Stage*, Scripture served as the cornerstone, with verses like Gen. 1:27 and Eph. 5:25 emphasizing love, dignity, and equality within marriage. The lesson inspired change by urging abusers to repent, empowering women to seek safety and support, and calling young Christians to challenge societal prejudices and commit to building a just and loving society.

In the *Reconfiguration Stage*, the focus shifted to compassionate support, encouraging victims to embrace healing through counseling, prayer, and solidarity within a faith community. Fellowship spaces and family counseling were highlighted as essential tools for recovery. Jesus’ restoration of dignity for the adulterous woman served as a model for transformative ministry, inspiring both victims and the community to honor equality, respect, and love.

Sister Mary effectively integrated Scripture, reflection, and practical steps to equip teenagers with empathy and a commitment to ending violence, embodying Christ’s compassion and justice. However, participants noted areas where each stage of her Catechism lesson could be refined.

One participant suggested using trauma-informed language to avoid sensationalizing violence and instead focus on the survivor’s resilience and strength. Another noted the broad nature of her questions, recommending more direct prompts connected to youth experiences,

such as: “Have you ever witnessed violence in your family or community?” and “How can you foster peace and respect in your home and school?”

Some participants emphasized the need for both directness and cultural sensitivity when challenging prejudices. They recommended concrete examples like: “How can you respectfully challenge a joke about domestic violence?” and “How can you address a friend's harmful behavior in relationships?” One participant felt Sister Mary should provide more explicit resources for abusers seeking change, such as counseling services, support groups, and anger management programs. A few participants suggested correcting misinterpretations of Scripture that justify male dominance, with questions like: “What does it truly mean to ‘submit to one another out of reverence for Christ’ (Eph. 5:21)?”

In the *Refiguration Stage*, several participants proposed more concrete steps for youth engagement, such as volunteering at shelters, raising awareness in schools, challenging gender stereotypes, and creating safe spaces for open discussions.

By addressing these areas, Sister Mary’s Catechism lesson could further strengthen its impact, ensuring that young people not only understand IPV but are actively empowered to confront it.³⁵⁵ Her PowerPoint lecture was praised for its clarity and depth, offering valuable guidance for catechists teaching this delicate subject to youth.³⁵⁶

Third presenter. Deacon Candidate Vinny Hoang delivered a compelling faith-sharing homily on IPV against women. Grounded in 1 Pet. 3:1-7, his homily emphasized God’s call to reject violence and embrace love and justice, thoughtfully highlighting the vulnerability of

³⁵⁵ While this thesis focuses on preaching to raise awareness, call perpetrators to repentance, and foster transformation within the Vietnamese American Catholic community, resources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Dating Matters curriculum (for grades 6–8) provide age-appropriate guidance to help youth identify healthy and unhealthy relationships and respond constructively.

³⁵⁶ Sister Mary Ngo’s Catechism Lecture on IPV for Teenagers can be found in Appendix 11.

women in the cultural context of Peter’s time and contrasting it with the scriptural mandate for husbands to honor their wives as co-heirs of grace. Skillfully drawing parallels to modern struggles against inequality, he urged communities to confront harmful beliefs and advocate for change.³⁵⁷

Participants found inspiration in the transformative power of repentance for abusers and the empowerment of victims through faith, with biblical examples, such as Mary, Mother of Jesus, serving as poignant reminders of courage and resilience. Mr. Hoang concluded by urging Christian communities to offer support, establish safe spaces, and provide pastoral care to victims, fostering a culture of respect and healing, and calling on all to embrace Christ’s teachings and become agents of reconciliation and justice, reshaping lives and relationships to reflect the Gospel’s values of love and dignity.

While the Deacon Candidate’s message resonated with all participants, several noted areas for improvement. In the *Prefiguration Stage*, a few participants suggested a stronger connection to the Vietnamese American community by opening with a brief, anonymized IPV survivor’s story or directly addressing cultural factors, such as family honor, “saving face,” and traditional gender roles that place women in a subordinate position.

One participant emphasized the importance of explicitly naming patriarchal biases that fuel IPV, particularly societal expectations of female obedience and male control over wives. Several voices called for concrete pathways for abusive men to seek change, such as counseling, intervention programs, and support groups. Others raised concerns about common misinterpretations of Scripture, particularly Eph. 5:22, underscoring the need to highlight mutual submission in Eph. 5:21 and Jesus’ consistent challenge to societal norms that diminish women’s

³⁵⁷ Deacon Candidate Vivian Hoang’s Faith-Sharing Speech can be found in Appendix 12.

dignity. These concerns likely influenced Mr. Hoang’s final evaluation, as he received an average score of 86.58 out of 100 from 24 attendees.

Despite these needed improvements, Deacon Candidate Hoang’s sincere dedication to addressing IPV was appreciated, particularly by women in attendance, as it reflected Christ’s compassion and commitment to the wellbeing of victims. Figure 7 illustrates the scores for his faith-sharing speech.

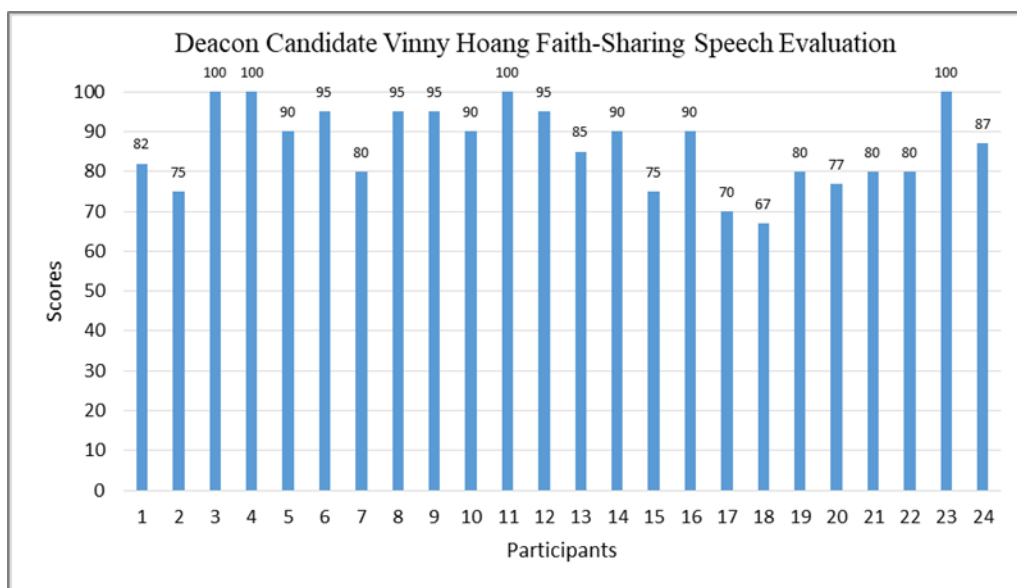


Figure 7. Deacon Candidate Vinny Hoang Faith-Sharing Scores

Following the three presentations, I introduced the “Mapping Method for IPV Homily Creation”—the same method I used to coach the presenters (Appendix 16). This method enables preachers to effectively structure their homilies on IPV, using its three stages (Prefiguration, Configuration, and Refiguration) to systematically integrate their ideas into the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, ensuring a comprehensive and impactful message for their congregations.

After explaining the Homily Mapping Method, I distributed the presenters’ homilies, Catechism lesson, and faith-sharing materials, providing concrete samples of preaching about

IPV. Participants expressed relief and newfound confidence in their ability to address IPV more effectively. Several commended the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model's unique structure, noting its skillful integration of social, historical, and scriptural perspectives to offer profound, faith-rooted solutions.

At the conclusion of each workshop, questionnaires were conducted to evaluate participant experiences and outcomes. A moderator facilitated the training sessions, and a dedicated group of coordinators managed logistical tasks. For the final workshop, the Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire (Appendix 7) was distributed to all participants for completion and prompt return, allowing for further insights.

Data Collection

The data collected throughout this research study aims to evaluate whether workshop training effectively changes attitudes and behaviors regarding preaching and teaching about IPV. It also examines the ability of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model to motivate and empower preachers to address the lived experiences of Vietnamese American women affected by IPV. Data were gathered through pre- and post-workshop participant surveys, seminar evaluation questionnaires, and presentation workshop participant discussions. The surveys provided both quantitative data, using a five-point Likert scale, and qualitative insights through open-ended questions.

Detailed information on each data collection tool includes:

Pre-Seminar Questionnaire (Appendix 1): Completed by all seminar participants, this questionnaire is divided into three sections: general information (e.g., age, gender, years ordained/in ministry), knowledge and experiences, and motivation, engagement, and

expectations regarding IPV. Open-ended questions captured additional perspectives on addressing IPV in the Vietnamese American Catholic community.

Post-Seminar Questionnaires (Appendices 2, 3, and 4): Administered at the conclusion of each workshop, these questionnaires collected participant feedback and suggestions for improving future workshops.

The Presentation Workshop Questionnaire (Appendix 6): Following presentations on IPV by three representative preachers, participants engaged in discussions focused on assessing whether preaching and teaching influenced their attitudes and perspectives on IPV and whether the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model empowered preachers to address IPV more effectively.

Ethical Procedures:

To ensure the protection of participants' rights, welfare, and well-being, I adhered to the regulations and guidelines established by the Office for Human Research Protection throughout the study. Prior to the sessions, all seminar participants signed an informed consent form, which clearly outlined that participation was voluntary and that they could decline or withdraw from the program at any time without facing any negative consequences. The consent form detailed the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, benefits, and measures to maintain confidentiality. Copies of these consent forms are provided in Appendix 8 for reference.

Data Analysis

Data from the Pre- and Post-Seminar Questionnaires, the Presentation Workshop Participant Questions, and the Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire were collected and analyzed to assess whether the seminar successfully equipped participants, particularly Catholic leaders in Vietnamese American communities, with the tools, knowledge, and motivation to effectively

preach and teach against IPV against women. The analysis focuses on the seminar's goals of fostering cultural transformation, promoting spiritual growth, and advancing faith-based advocacy through a structured, interdisciplinary approach.

Pre- and Post-Seminar Questionnaires

In the Pre- and Post-Seminar Questionnaires, changes in participants' knowledge and understanding of IPV, as well as their willingness and comfort in addressing the topic, were assessed. Comparing pre- and post-survey results allowed for an evaluation of the workshop's effectiveness in enhancing participants' readiness to engage in discussions about IPV. A total of 24 participants attended the seminars, and their demographic information was recorded in the first section of the seminar questionnaire. The data were grouped by categories such as age, gender, marital status, vocation (ordained, Religious, lay leaders, Catechist), and years of service.

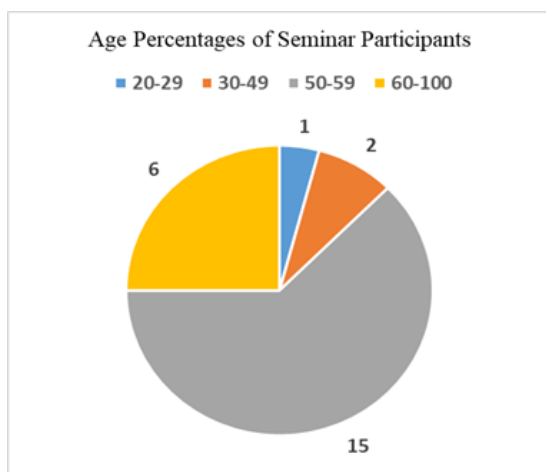


Figure 8. Participants' Year of Age

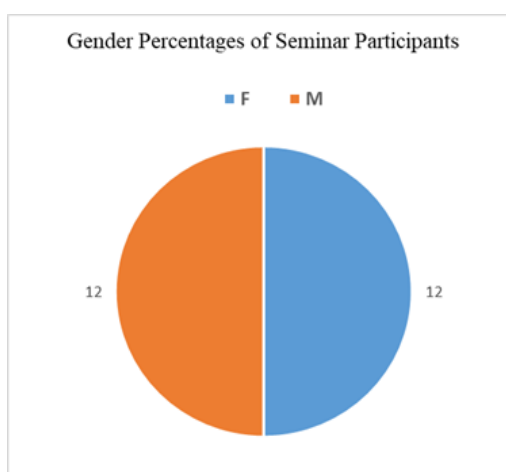


Figure 9. Participants' Gender

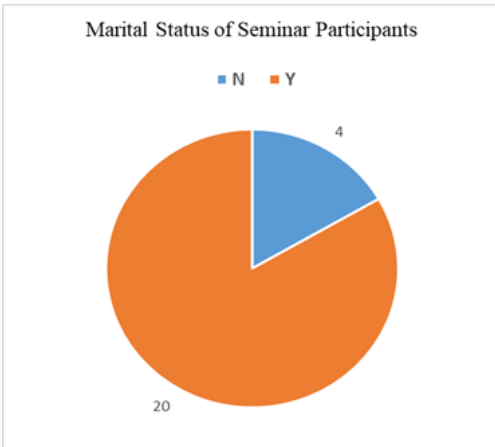


Figure 10. Participants' Marital Status

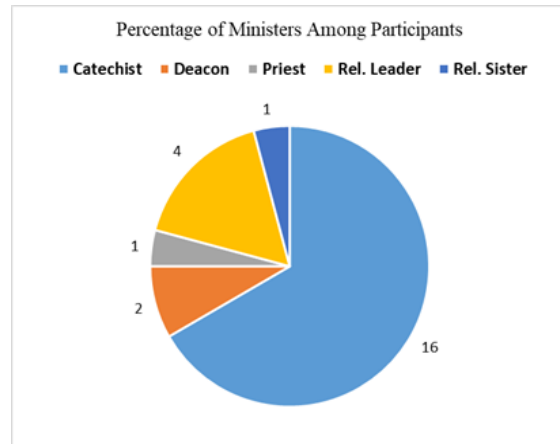


Figure 11. Participants' Vocations

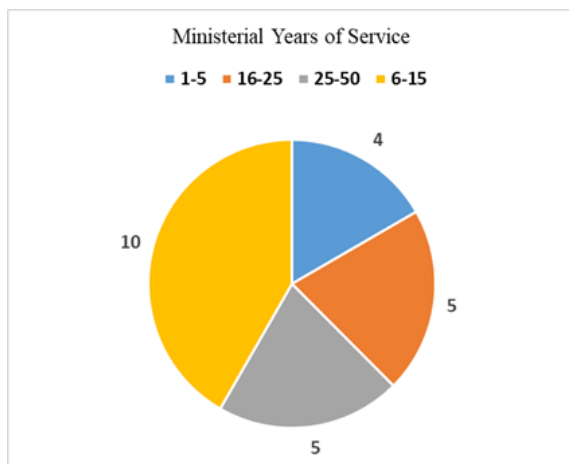


Figure 12. Participants' Years of Service

In the second section of the Seminar Questionnaire, participants' knowledge, understanding, and experiences of IPV against women were quantitatively measured. Five statements each on knowledge, understanding, and experiences were rated on a scale from 1 (least) to 5 (most). Scores ranged from 5 to 25, with higher scores indicating greater knowledge. Similar calculations applied for understanding and experiences. Comparing pre- and post-workshop questionnaires revealed changes in understanding, confidence, and readiness to address IPV, as well as identified additional resource needs for effective preaching.

The third section measured participants' attitudes, including motivation, engagement, and expectations about preaching/teaching IPV. Five statements for each category were rated from 1 (least) to 5 (most), with scores ranging from 5 to 25. By comparing attitudes before and after the workshop, changes in concern for IPV issues, desire to transform Vietnamese culture, willingness to help families, and eagerness to preach or teach about IPV were identified. The workshop's impact on interest in IPV topics, attentiveness, motivation to learn more, and eagerness to preach was determined. Additionally, whether addressing IPV offers hope and promotes biblical equality, and the workshop's impact on understanding and ability to preach about IPV effectively were evaluated.

In the fourth section of the seminar questionnaire, open-ended questions were qualitatively analyzed to gain deeper insights into participants' views and beliefs about the role of Catholic preaching and teachings on IPV. By comparing participants' qualitative insights before and after the workshop, the workshop's influence on their understanding, integration of social, psychological, and religious perspectives, and impact on their views on supporting victims were determined. The effectiveness of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, changes in preaching or teaching, community support, resource needs, and suggestions for future workshops were also assessed. This analysis helped conclude whether the workshop effectively enhanced participants' understanding and ability to address IPV.

Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire

The Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire (Appendix 7) included five statements, rated on a scale from 1 to 5, to measure satisfaction with the workshop, and five open-ended questions to gauge overall satisfaction. These questions assessed presentation relevance and effectiveness, evaluated the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative model, and measured the likelihood of applying the

workshop's knowledge. Written comments aimed to identify program highlights, assess ministry relevance, evaluate instructor effectiveness, determine preparation for preaching, and gather suggestions for future improvements.

Presentation Workshop Questionnaire

In addition, workshop participants evaluated the three representative preachers based on the Preaching Rubric and discussed ten questions about IPV after hearing IPV preaching and teaching (Appendix 6). By analyzing participants' responses, changes in perceptions toward IPV were identified, and the effectiveness of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model, when used by IPV-informed ministers, was assessed. Input from workshop participants was incorporated in future training sessions.

Conclusion

This seminar provided an extraordinary opportunity to empower Vietnamese American Catholic preachers and catechists in addressing IPV against women with greater confidence and compassion. Participants delved deeply into IPV's complexities, gaining invaluable insights that fostered empathy, awareness, and practical ministry skills. The Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model became a transformative tool, equipping participants to confront IPV effectively, raise awareness, support victims, and challenge harmful norms. By integrating theological and socio-historical perspectives, the seminar inspired hope and paved the way for meaningful change. The heartfelt feedback from participants reinforced the profound impact of this program, which not only shaped attitudes but also encouraged cultural transformation and strengthened community solidarity. Through this experience, a deep commitment to furthering this vital mission was solidified. The data collection and analysis validated the program's success in achieving its goals and illuminated areas for growth, ensuring that future efforts will be even

more impactful. The next chapter will present the seminar's findings, reflections, and future directions, highlighting its transformative impact on combating IPV and fostering hope and renewal for victims.

Chapter 6

Findings, Reflections, and Future Directions

“The Gospel is not neutral. It takes sides—with the poor, the oppressed, the abused.”

—Leonardo Boff, Catholic Liberation Theologian

Introduction

Upon seeking permission from my local parish pastor to conduct a four-session seminar, his enthusiastic support was tempered by a concern regarding the extended duration, as most workshops are single events. He anticipated difficulties in maintaining engagement over four sessions. This challenge was further underscored by the demanding schedules of both the pastor and parochial vicar, which limited their ability to attend each session. Despite these potential obstacles, the pastor's gracious introduction of the seminar to the parish, coupled with divine providence, led to the recruitment of twenty seven participants. This group included a priest, two deacons, a Dominican sister, two deacon candidates, as well as several catechists and religious leaders. These dedicated individuals actively participated in the workshops, which were held across four sessions from March 11th to 13th and March 26th. Regardless of my pastor's concern, 24 participants completed these transformative workshops, which addressed the critical issue of IPV perpetrated by husbands against wives within the Vietnamese American Catholic community.

The primary objective of this seminar was to empower Catholic preachers, catechists, and religious leaders by providing them with the necessary knowledge, comprehensive understanding, enhanced motivation, and practical tools to effectively preach, teach, and advocate against IPV within Vietnamese American communities. The ensuing results will demonstrate the program's success in achieving this objective. This will be accomplished through an analysis of data collected from Pre- and Post-Seminar questionnaires, as well as qualitative

insights gathered throughout the four sessions. These sessions covered sociocultural, psychological, theological, and biblical perspectives, and incorporated the Homiletic Preaching Model, along with presentations of homilies and Catechism lessons on IPV. Furthermore, the overall satisfaction level of the attendees will be presented.

I will also offer key insights and identify shortcomings, gleaned from attendee feedback during the program, which are crucial for enhancing future seminars for Vietnamese American communities. Finally, I will share my vision for the program's future development and ongoing efforts to equip preachers and teachers to more effectively combat IPV within these communities.

To rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of each session, a comparative analysis was conducted, contrasting Pre- and Post-Seminar responses across six key criteria: Knowledge, Understanding, Experiences, Motivation, Engagement, and Expectation. This approach facilitated the assessment of participants' progress and achievements while also identifying areas for improvement. These six interrelated criteria offered a multidimensional framework for evaluating whether participants acquired factual knowledge about IPV, developed contextual understanding, applied their learning practically, found motivation to act, engaged meaningfully, and set and attained tangible goals.

Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale—a widely used psychometric tool presenting statements with symmetrical options ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5)—enabling the quantification of subjective attitudes and perceptions.³⁵⁸ Within this structure, change was considered notable or significant when participants consistently shifted from the neutral midpoint (3) toward higher agreement levels (4 or 5),

³⁵⁸ Allen Rubin and Earl Babbie, *Research Methods for Social Work*, 9th ed. (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017), 311.

reflecting increased conviction, clarity, or confidence. This upward shift across multiple criteria is widely recognized in pastoral and educational contexts as a marker of effective formation.

To evaluate the effectiveness and multidimensional impact of the formation program, participant data were collected through one Pre-Seminar Questionnaire and three distinct Post-Seminar instruments. For clarity and consistency throughout this analysis, the Pre-Seminar Questionnaire (Appendix 1) will be referred to as Pre-Seminar, while the three follow-up instruments will be abbreviated as follows: Post-Seminar IPV for the Post-Seminar Intimate Partner Violence Questionnaire (Appendix 2), Post-Seminar Theology for the Post-Seminar Theological Questionnaire (Appendix 3), and Post-Seminar Homiletics for the Post-Seminar Homiletical Questionnaire (Appendix 4).

Knowledge of IPV Before and After Seminar Training

This section (Appendix – Section 2: Background) evaluates the seminars' effectiveness in enhancing participants' knowledge of IPV by comparing their understanding before and after the training. The analysis assesses gains in factual awareness, cultural, sociological, and theological dimensions, and practical strategies for community intervention. It also identifies areas for future program refinement.

To assess participants' awareness of IPV prevalence in Vietnamese communities, statement prompt #1 from the Pre-Seminar was strategically aligned with prompt #1 in both the Post-Seminar IPV and Theology. The graded responses are visually represented in the accompanying charts for analysis.

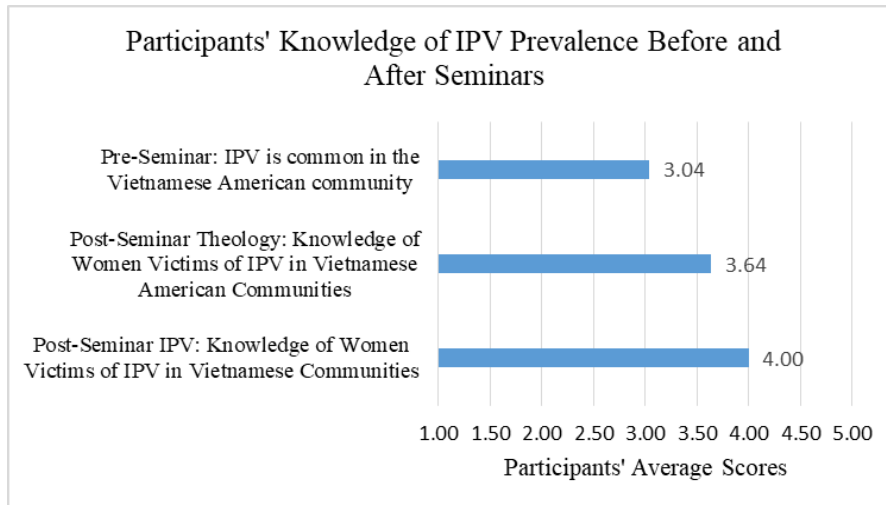


Figure 13. Participants' Knowledge of IPV Prevalence Before and After Seminars.

Figure 13 illustrates a marked improvement in participants' knowledge of IPV within the Vietnamese American community. The average score rose from a neutral baseline of 3.04 in the Pre-Seminar to 4.0 in the Post-Seminar IPV, reflecting increased understanding of IPV's prevalence and implications. While the Post-Seminar Theology score reached a more modest 3.64, it still suggests meaningful growth in participants' theological awareness of IPV in their faith context. Participants demonstrated greater clarity, identified specific victims, and affirmed the importance of a culturally and pastorally grounded response. These findings underscore the seminar's effectiveness in deepening knowledge and shaping attitudes that support compassionate community engagement.

To examine how participants' understanding of IPV progressed across personal, cultural, and theological dimensions, responses to Pre-Seminar Prompt #3, Post-Seminar IPV Prompt #6, and Post-Seminar Theology Prompt #1 were compared. This alignment traces a shift from baseline awareness to culturally informed and faith-integrated knowledge. The accompanying chart presents the average scores for each prompt to illustrate this multidimensional development.

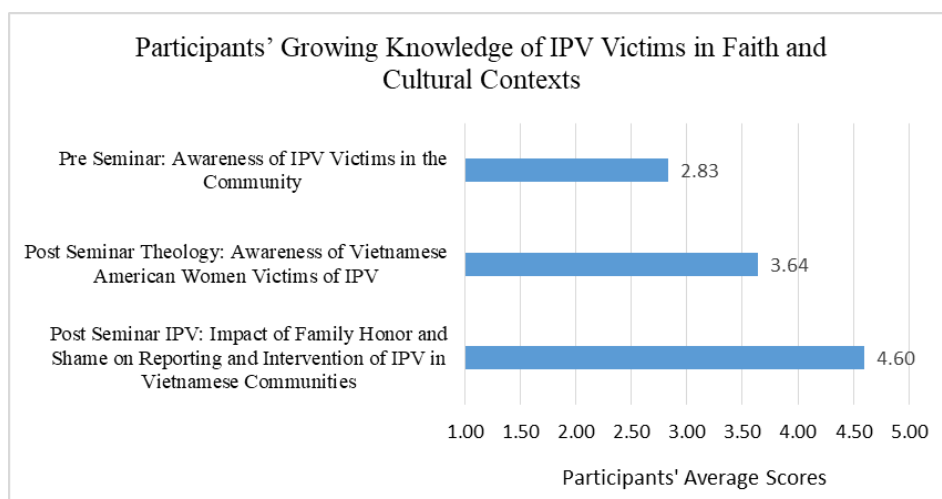


Figure 14. Participants' Growing Knowledge of IPV Victims in Faith and Cultural Contexts.

These scores reflect a significant progression in participants' understanding of IPV. Initial awareness was limited (2.83), but increased following the theology sessions (3.64), suggesting greater recognition of IPV within cultural and faith-based contexts such as the Vietnamese American Catholic community. The subsequent rise to 4.60 indicates deeper comprehension of how cultural values—particularly around family honor and shame—shape IPV reporting and intervention. Collectively, these results demonstrate the seminar's effectiveness in cultivating nuanced, contextually informed insight into IPV dynamics.

To evaluate participants' evolving understanding of traditional gender roles and cultural norms related to IPV, Pre-Seminar statement prompt #4 was aligned with Post-Seminar IPV prompt #3 and Homiletics prompt #2. Figure 15 visually presents the data, highlighting key insights and developments.

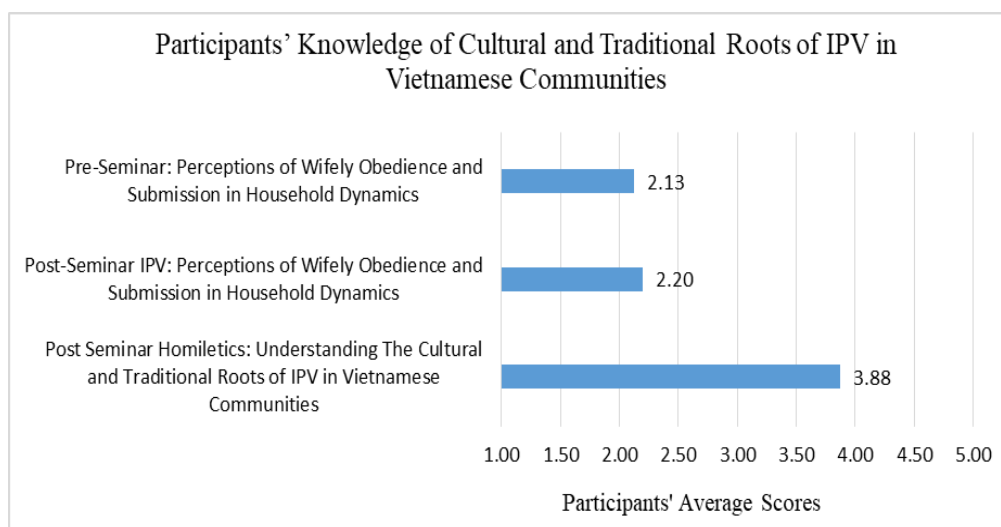


Figure 15. Participants' Knowledge of Cultural and Traditional Roots of IPV in Vietnamese Communities.

The average scores reflect a layered progression in participants' engagement with traditional gender norms and their cultural implications for IPV. The low Pre-Seminar score of 2.13 on wives' expected obedience suggests that participants largely rejected this patriarchal norm from the outset—indicating prior personal disagreement rather than limited awareness. The slight rise to 2.20 in the Post-Seminar IPV prompt implies that while the seminar may not have significantly shifted personal attitudes, it sustained critical attention on the issue. The marked increase to 3.88 in the Post-Seminar Homiletics prompt, however, reveals a strong recognition of the need to understand how traditional beliefs—including Confucian-rooted expectations—contribute to IPV within Vietnamese communities. This suggests participants moved beyond personal opinion to a broader ministerial and pastoral awareness, recognizing these norms as operative in their communities even if not personally endorsed. Taken together, the scores affirm the seminar's impact in expanding theological and cultural insight rather than altering already-formed personal values.

In conclusion, participants began with a foundational awareness of IPV as a community concern, particularly its prevalence and ties to gender norms. Post-Seminar sessions significantly deepened their understanding, equipping them with sociocultural context, theological insight, and faith-based strategies. This progression reflects the program’s success in fostering a nuanced and actionable grasp of IPV within Vietnamese communities.

Understanding IPV Before and After Seminar Training

This section (Appendix – Section 2: Understanding) evaluates the seminar’s effectiveness in deepening participants’ understanding of IPV. Building on a baseline of general awareness, Post-Seminar findings revealed expanded insight into IPV’s psychological impacts, systemic barriers, and theological dimensions. Participants also developed practical strategies—including pastoral guidance and use of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Model—reflecting a formative process that prepared them to engage IPV more effectively within their communities.

To evaluate participants’ enhanced awareness of IPV as a community issue and its moral unacceptability, Pre-Seminar statement prompts #1 and #2 were aligned with Post-Seminar IPV prompts #1–6. This comparison assessed participants’ progression in contextualizing IPV as both a moral concern and a societal issue, with particular emphasis on its psychological impacts and communal dynamics within Vietnamese communities. The accompanying charts provide a visual representation of these advancements achieved through the seminar sessions.

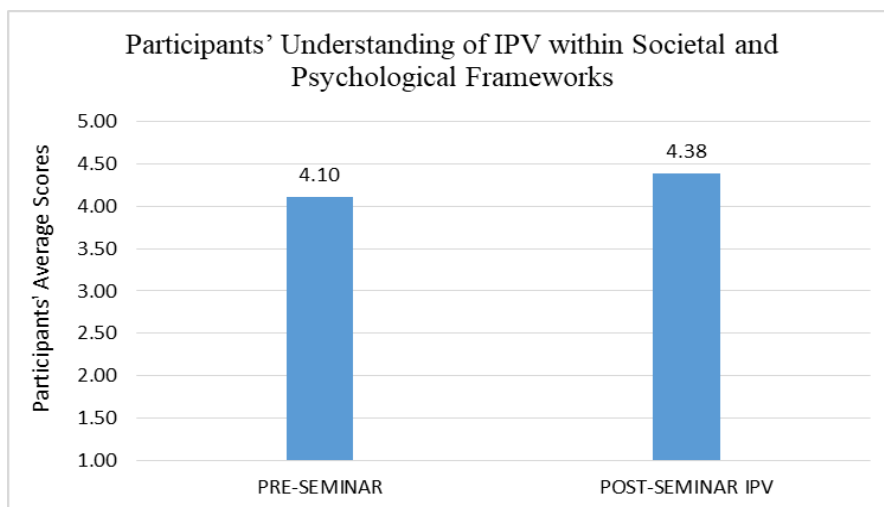


Figure 16. Participants' Understanding of IPV Within Societal and Psychological Frameworks.

Figure 16 illustrates participants' already strong understanding of IPV as a societal and psychological issue, with high Pre-Seminar scores (4.10) suggesting a solid baseline—likely shaped by their ministerial experience and prior exposure to IPV-related concepts. The modest increase to 4.38 Post-Seminar IPV does not signify a dramatic conceptual shift but instead underscores that the real challenge may lie elsewhere: not in recognizing IPV's complexity, but in confidently addressing it, challenging stigma, and promoting healing within their communities. This finding affirms the need for seminar content to emphasize not just understanding, but applied strategies and the pastoral courage required to speak out.

To assess participants' theological development, this mapping aligned Pre-Seminar prompts #3 and #4 with Post-Seminar Theology prompts #1–5. It captured their progression from confronting scriptural misinterpretations—such as justifications for male dominance—to embracing faith-based principles of mutual respect and submission in marriage. This comparison illuminated shifts in theological understanding and their practical implications for addressing IPV, as reflected in the accompanying chart.

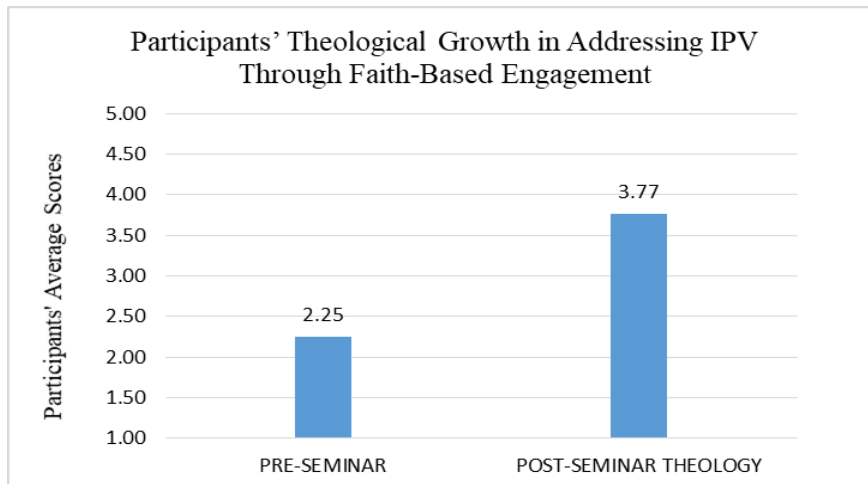


Figure 17. Participants' Theological Growth in Addressing IPV Through Faith-Based Engagement.

Figure 17 illustrates a substantial shift in participants' theological engagement with IPV. Scores rose from 2.25 to 3.77, reflecting a deepened ability to confront misinterpretations of Scripture that justify male dominance and to embrace faith-informed principles of equity and mutual respect. Combined with prior findings, this growth suggests that while participants may have already recognized IPV as a problem, they previously lacked the theological language and confidence to address it. The seminar helped bridge that gap, transforming implicit concern into articulated understanding and actionable ministry.

This section evaluates participants' growth in confidence and competence in preaching and teaching about IPV. By aligning Pre-Seminar prompt #5 with Post-Seminar Homiletics prompts #1–5, the analysis traces progress in core homiletic skills, including addressing scriptural misconceptions, raising communal awareness, and offering pastoral support. It also highlights participants' integration of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Model, reflecting a more holistic, faith-informed approach to IPV. The accompanying chart illustrates this progression across the two seminar phases.

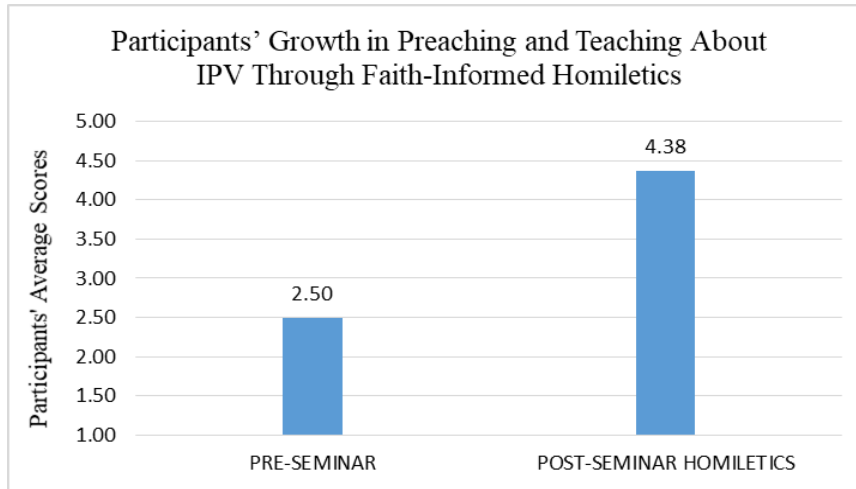


Figure 18. Participants' Growth in Preaching and Teaching About IPV Through Faith-Informed Homiletics.

Figure 18 illustrates significant growth in participants' homiletical confidence and competence, with scores rising from 2.50 to 4.38. This sharp increase reflects participants' expanded ability to challenge harmful theological narratives, correct scriptural misinterpretations, and meaningfully connect biblical teaching to contemporary IPV realities. They also demonstrated greater readiness to foster awareness, offer pastoral care, and apply the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model. These gains signal the seminar's success in moving participants from silent concern to empowered, faith-based action through preaching and teaching.

This section captures the holistic impact of the seminar by mapping Pre-Seminar understanding of IPV to Post-Seminar insights across the IPV, Theology, and Homiletics domains. The aggregated improvements in average scores reflect a transformative educational experience, demonstrating participants' expanded capacity to contextualize, interpret, and address IPV through cultural, theological, and pastoral lenses.

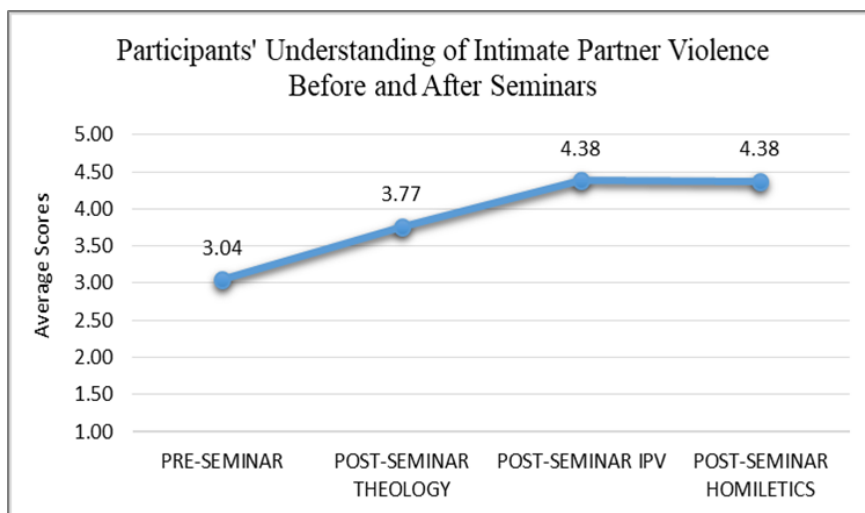


Figure 19. Participants’ Understanding of Intimate Partner Violence Before and After Seminars.

The pre-seminar IPV average of 3.04 indicates a foundational awareness shaped by prior ministerial experience, but with room for growth. The post-seminar IPV score of 4.38 marks a significant shift in participants’ understanding of IPV’s psychological, systemic, and theological dimensions, and greater confidence in addressing it pastorally. In the Theology domain, the increase from 3.04 to 3.77 reflects moderate but meaningful progress—deepening participants’ engagement with justice-focused theology and strengthening their ability to challenge harmful interpretations and apply redemptive readings of Scripture. The post-seminar Homiletics score of 4.38 reveals substantial growth in preaching with theological clarity, pastoral compassion, and cultural awareness. Participants demonstrated renewed confidence and creativity in addressing IPV from the pulpit. Together, these outcomes affirm the seminar’s success in moving participants from awareness to action—equipping them to respond to IPV with theological depth and pastoral courage.

Experiences with IPV Before and After Seminar Training

The “Experience with IPV” (Appendix – Section 2: Experiences) prompts evaluated participants’ growth, attitude shifts, and readiness to address IPV. By focusing on experiences,

these prompts captured personal and contextual dimensions, including confidence, knowledge, emotional impact, and practical application. They highlighted real-life challenges, cultural pressures, and spiritual influences, essential for assessing the seminars' effectiveness in fostering theological and practical understanding, resource readiness, and confidence to integrate IPV teachings into ministry.

I evaluated the seminars' effectiveness in enhancing participants' knowledge and confidence through a structured analysis. By aligning Pre-Seminar prompts #1 and #2 (Section 2: Experiences, Appendix 1) with Post-Seminar IPV prompt #4, Theology prompts #1–4, and Homiletics prompts #2 and #3, the assessment measured their progress in understanding IPV, recognizing victims' spiritual struggles, and honing homiletic skills. The accompanying chart visually depicts the growth in confidence across the three seminar sessions.

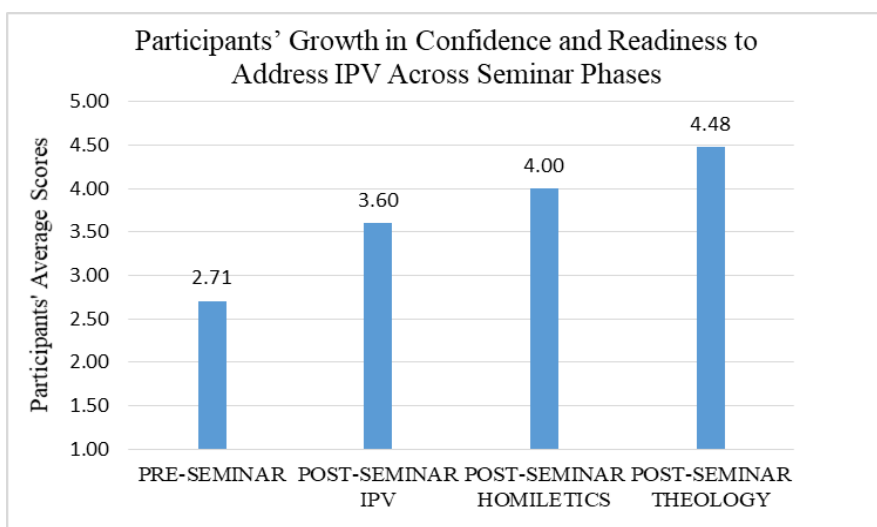


Figure 20. Participants' Growth in Confidence and Readiness to Address IPV Across Seminar Phases.

Figure 20 illustrates a clear progression in participants' confidence throughout the seminars. Beginning with a baseline of 2.71—indicating limited readiness—their confidence rose to 3.60 following IPV-focused sessions. The theology module contributed a notable increase to 4.48, reflecting deeper engagement with IPV's spiritual and moral dimensions. Homiletics

training further developed participants' ability to integrate this understanding into preaching practice, reflected in a score of 4.00. While this growth affirms the seminar's effectiveness in building theological and pastoral insight, it also suggests that cultivating sustained confidence in preaching may require ongoing practice and support. These results validate the program's overall impact while pointing to valuable directions for future development.

The "Experience with IPV" section evaluated participants' growth in addressing sensitive IPV issues using culturally grounded strategies. By aligning Pre-Seminar prompt #1 with Post-Seminar IPV prompts #1–3 and Homiletics prompt #1, this analysis traced their evolving ability to navigate cultural pressures such as family honor and gender norms, while also recognizing IPV's psychological toll. It further assessed their readiness to challenge patriarchal biases within Vietnamese American communities, demonstrating the emergence of faith-informed, transformative approaches to IPV.

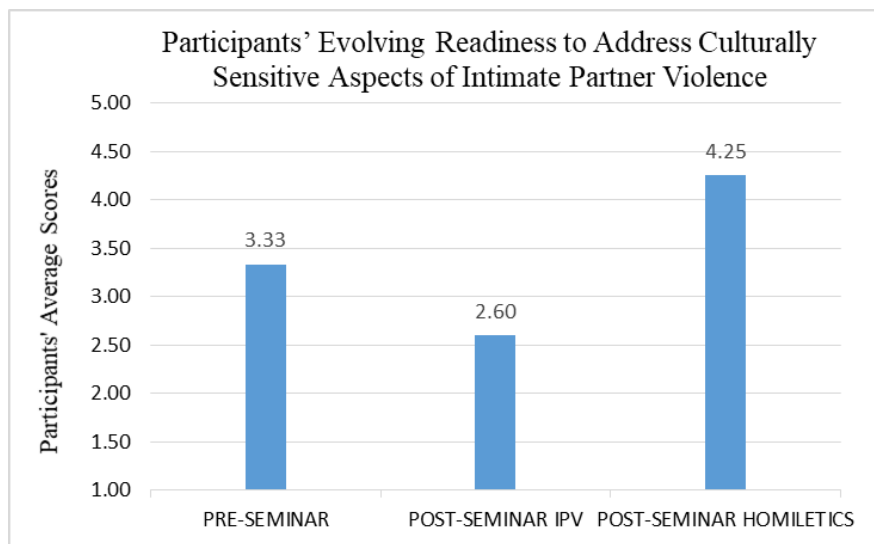


Figure 21. Participants' Evolving Readiness to Address Culturally Sensitive Aspects of Intimate Partner Violence.

Figure 21 presents a nuanced view of participants' evolving relationship to cultural and emotional dimensions of IPV. Initially, their Pre-Seminar confidence in addressing IPV through

preaching or teaching registered at 3.33—indicating ambivalence likely shaped by fear of controversy or internal conflict. Post-Seminar responses to personal experience statements revealed a decline to 2.60, suggesting that participants—after engaging social and psychological content—were less likely to identify personally with pressures such as family honor or rigid gender norms that hinder IPV disclosure. This could reflect greater theological clarity, emotional processing, or internal distance from cultural constraints. Notably, the Homiletics session produced a marked increase in confidence (4.25), signaling participants’ growing readiness to challenge patriarchal biases and translate these reflections into public witness and pastoral support. Collectively, these results affirm that the seminars not only expanded knowledge but also helped participants reframe their own experiences, moving from culturally imposed silence to faith-informed courage.

This evaluation examined whether attendees gained resources, materials, and practical strategies to effectively address, preach, and teach about IPV following the seminars. Pre-Seminar prompts #4 and #5 were aligned with Post-Seminar IPV prompt #5, Theology prompt #5, and Homiletics prompts #4 and #5, assessing their growth in preparedness and application. The accompanying chart visually captures the progression achieved through this mapping.

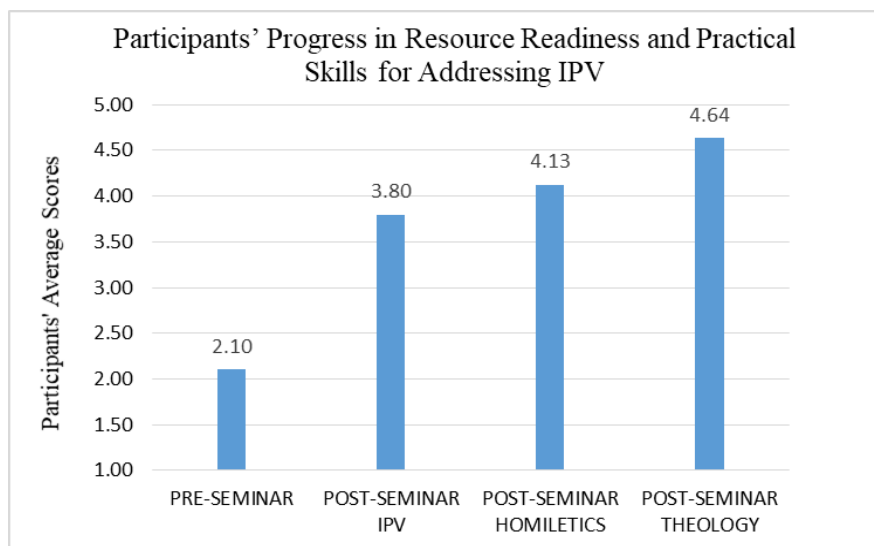


Figure 22. Participants' Progress in Resource Readiness and Practical Skills for Addressing IPV.

Figure 22 highlights participants' growth in preparedness to address IPV through resources, materials, and practical strategies. The Pre-Seminar average of 2.10 reflected limited readiness, while the Post-Seminar IPV score of 3.80 indicated marked improvement in utilizing educational tools and support materials. The Theology session produced the most substantial gain (4.64), demonstrating participants' ability to integrate IPV-related teachings into homilies and Catechism instruction with theological depth. Similarly, the Homiletics score of 4.13 reflected increased confidence in applying the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model to foster pastoral engagement. These outcomes affirm the program's effectiveness in cultivating practical, faith-informed strategies and offer valuable guidance for refining future workshops.

Motivation for IPV Before and After Seminar Training

This section (Appendix – Section 3: Motivation) examines participants' evolving internal drive throughout the seminars, capturing initial priorities, shifts in perspectives, and the program's effectiveness in fostering commitment and actionable change. By analyzing motivations, it highlights participants' readiness to address IPV-related challenges across cultural, theological, and practical dimensions, showcasing the transformative impact of the training.

From concern to conviction, participants moved through the seminars with growing clarity and purpose. What began as general awareness deepened into a theologically grounded commitment to dismantle sociocultural barriers, confront IPV with compassion, and offer restorative guidance. This transformation included a renewed vision of marital equality, a rejection of violence as morally and theologically indefensible, and a readiness to proclaim these convictions through preaching. To assess this motivational arc, Pre-Seminar prompts #1–4 were

aligned with corresponding Post-Seminar IPV prompts #1-4, Theology prompts #1-4, and Homiletics prompts #1–3, and #5. This structured mapping revealed growth in commitment, theological clarity, and pastoral readiness to address IPV across diverse ministry contexts. The accompanying chart illustrates these developments.

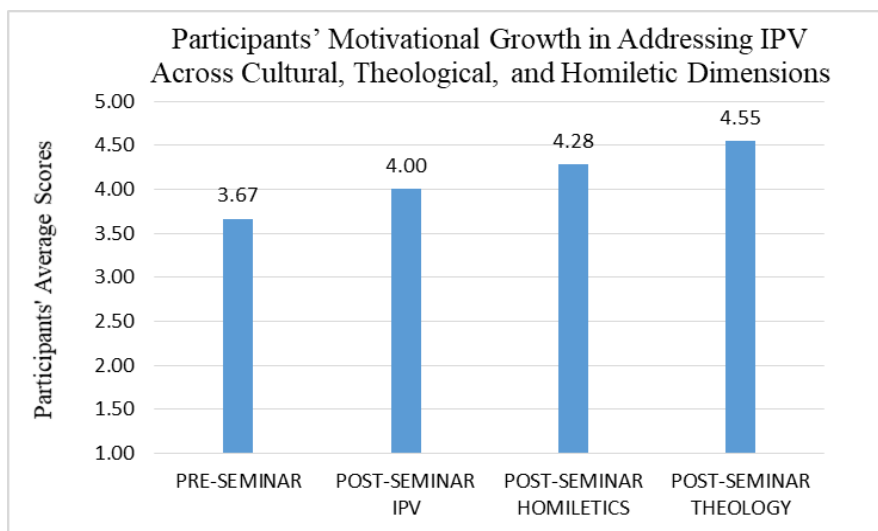


Figure 23. Participants' Motivational Growth in Addressing IPV Across Cultural, Theological, and Homiletic Dimensions.

Figure 23 traces a transformative journey shaped by Vietnamese cultural values, theological reflection, and homiletic formation—charting participants' evolving motivations to address IPV. Beginning with a spark of awareness (3.67), grounded in a desire to challenge cultural norms, their commitment strengthened (4.00) as they became more equipped to confront barriers and support victims. This deepened into a theological awakening (4.55), inspiring them to affirm Christian principles of mutual respect and reject marital violence. Finally, homiletics training fostered confidence (4.28) in proclaiming these convictions, as participants learned to integrate prophetic, pastoral narratives into their preaching—signaling a readiness to spark cultural transformation.

This assessment measured participants' growing readiness to address IPV through transformative preaching and teaching strategies. By aligning Pre-Seminar prompts #3 and #5 with Post-Seminar IPV prompt #5, Theology prompt #5, and Homiletics prompt #4, the evaluation captured the development of essential homiletic skills, including correcting scriptural misconceptions and applying the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model—a critical approach for Catholic ministers in confronting IPV. The resulting chart visually illustrates participants' progress in fostering meaningful change within their communities through impactful preaching.

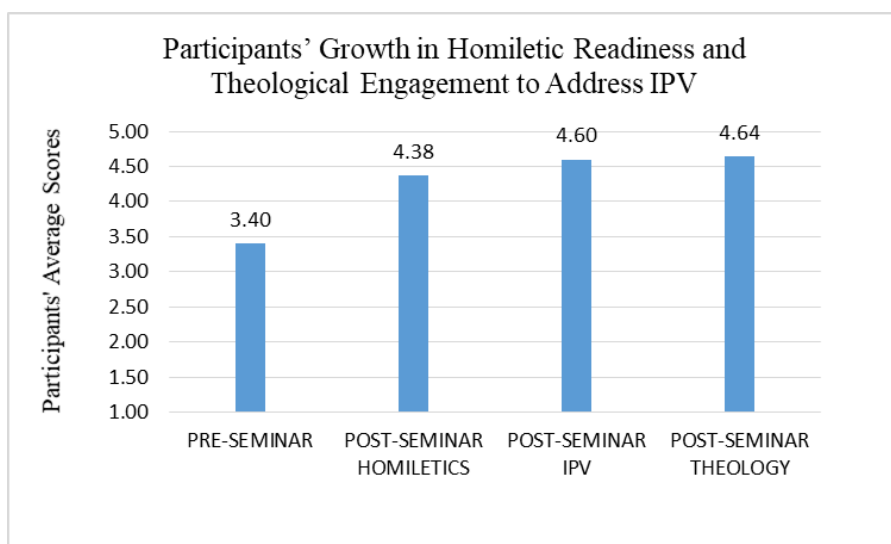


Figure 24. Participants' Growth in Homiletic Readiness and Theological Engagement to Address IPV.

Figure 24 illuminates a journey from hesitation to homiletic empowerment, charting participants' readiness to preach and teach about IPV within Catholic ministry. From an initial unease (3.40), targeted training ignited a passion for change. Post-seminar scores rose steadily: a deeper understanding of IPV's interdisciplinary aspects (4.60), strengthened advocacy for pastoral care (4.64), and enhanced homiletic skills (4.38). These gains reveal a newfound motivation and ability to challenge scriptural misconceptions, confront cultural norms, and

employ transformative preaching models, validating the seminar's effectiveness in equipping Catholic ministers to become voices of hope and healing in their communities.

Engagement with IPV Before and After Seminar Training

This section (Appendix – Section 3: Engagement) traces participants' journey of engagement, from initial attentiveness to active advocacy in addressing IPV. Through analysis of Pre- and Post-Seminar responses, the evaluation highlights the seminar's role in deepening understanding, strengthening motivation, and fostering ministerial readiness. Participants moved beyond passive awareness, embracing theological and homiletic insights—especially the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model—as they grew into advocates for victims and catalysts for community transformation.

Participants' engagement across seminar stages was mapped, tracing their evolution from initial interest to deep understanding and practical application. By aligning Pre-Seminar prompts #1–4 with Post-Seminar IPV and Homiletics prompts #1–4, the analysis captured their growth in homiletic skills, theological insight, and structured strategies for addressing IPV. The accompanying chart visually captures their progression—from initial attentiveness to confident pastoral engagement, highlighting the deepening of their commitment across seminar stages.

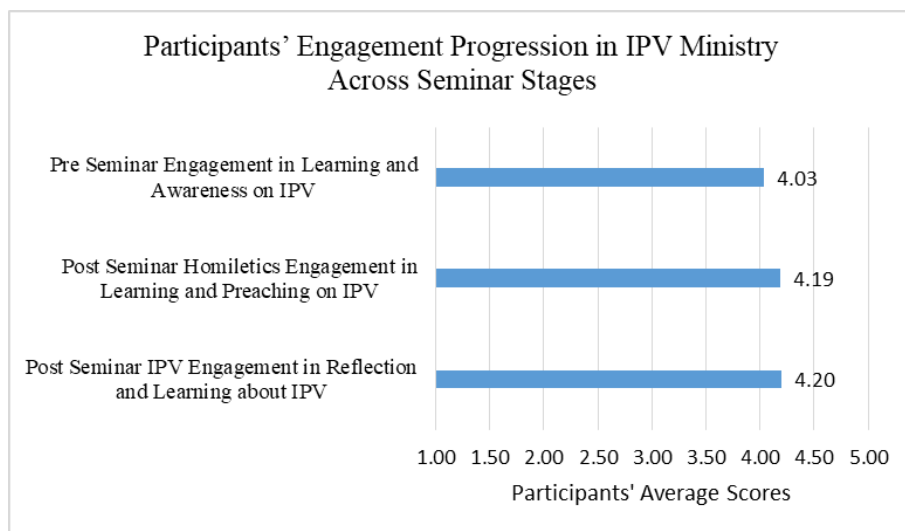


Figure 25. Participants' Engagement Progression in IPV Ministry Across Seminar Stages.

Figure 25 charts participants' engagement with IPV-related ministry—from strong initial interest (4.03) to deeper insight into IPV's social and personal dynamics (4.20), followed by growing confidence in practical ministry application (4.19). While the numerical changes are modest, the consistency of high scores reflects the seminars' effectiveness in sustaining commitment and strengthening capacity for action. Through interdisciplinary content and homiletic formation, participants affirmed their readiness to move from listening to advocacy within their communities.

This section analyzed participants' transition from interest to action in preaching and teaching about IPV. By aligning Pre-Seminar prompt #5 with Post-Seminar IPV prompt #5, Theology prompts #1–5, and Homiletics prompt #5, the evaluation traced growth in pastoral engagement—from supporting victims and initiating theological reflection to challenging gender norms and applying the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model. This mapping offers key insights into how the seminar translated learning into practice, with the accompanying chart illustrating participants' development into active agents of transformation.

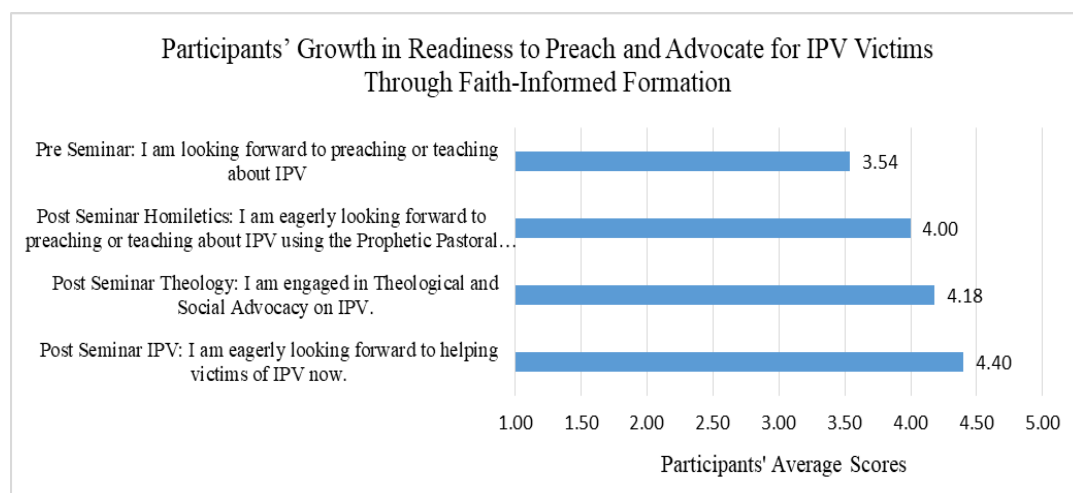


Figure 26. Participants' Growth in Readiness to Preach and Advocate for IPV Victims Through Faith-Informed Formation.

Figure 26 illustrates participants' progression from initial anticipation to empowered pastoral action in addressing IPV. Their Pre-Seminar commitment to preaching or teaching (3.54) deepened post-seminar, as scores rose in relation to helping victims (4.40), engaging in theological and social advocacy (4.18), and proclaiming through the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model (4.00). While the numerical gains are modest, they reflect growing theological conviction and ministerial readiness. This upward trend underscores the seminars' formative impact—shaping participants into pastoral agents of healing, justice, and faith-driven advocacy.

These findings reflect a steady deepening of engagement, as participants moved from strong initial interest to confident ministerial action. Through consistent commitment across IPV and homiletic sessions, the seminars reinforced their readiness to preach, support, and advocate—translating learning into embodied pastoral response.

Expectation for IPV Before and After Seminar Training

This section (Appendix – Section 3: Expectation) evaluates whether participants' initial aspirations matured into actionable commitments—aligned with the seminar's vision to empower them as voices of healing and justice. It examines growth in readiness to transform hearts, challenge injustice, and cultivate mutual respect through faith-informed engagement. Pre-Seminar prompts captured foundational expectations regarding preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. Aligned with Post-Seminar IPV, Theology, and Homiletics prompts (#1–5), the analysis traced growth in spiritual comprehension, awareness of IPV's impact, and readiness to support survivors. It also assessed understanding of sociocultural barriers, mental health, and legal challenges affecting Vietnamese American communities. This full-spectrum mapping reveals a shift from aspiration to applied advocacy—visually illustrated in the accompanying chart.

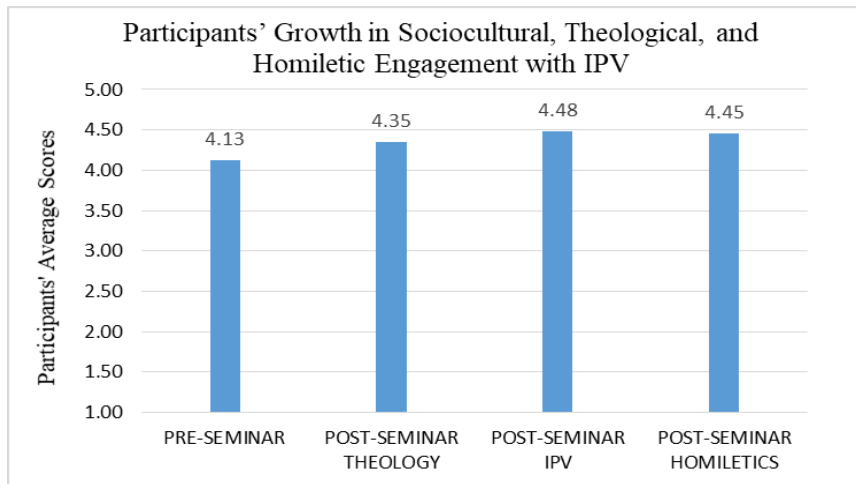


Figure 27. Participants' Growth in Sociocultural, Theological, and Homiletic Engagement with IPV.

Figure 27 charts participants' growth from foundational awareness (4.13) to committed pastoral engagement with IPV affecting Vietnamese American women. As understanding of sociocultural norms, psychological effects, and survivor challenges deepened (4.48), participants cultivated faith-informed responses to violence. Theological formation (4.35) grounded this shift in values of mutual respect and healing, while homiletic training (4.45) equipped them to preach prophetically—translating conviction into action and advocacy within their communities.

Together, the findings trace a coherent arc of transformation—from informed awareness to embodied pastoral action. Participants not only deepened their knowledge and theological understanding of IPV, but integrated those insights into lived experience, motivation, and ministerial readiness. Across each dimension—experiential, intellectual, and spiritual—the seminars fostered faith-informed conviction and practical confidence, equipping participants to serve as courageous advocates, compassionate caregivers, and prophetic voices within their communities.

Qualitative Insights and Participant Comments on IPV

Pre- and Post-Seminar Training

Section 4 of Appendix 1 gathers qualitative insights into the IPV seminars' progress and outcomes. The Pre-Seminar questionnaire, comprising ten questions, explores participants' experiences, knowledge, and attitudes toward addressing IPV. These questions assess readiness, identify barriers, highlight training needs, and evaluate understanding of IPV's prevalence, causes, and the Church's stance, while also exploring motivations and expectations for fostering meaningful change.

The findings reveal a silence on IPV within participants' preaching and teaching, stemming from limited knowledge and experience. While some disclosed firsthand exposure to IPV, many attributed its causes in the Vietnamese American Catholic community to patriarchal attitudes. Despite acknowledging the Church's condemnation of IPV, participants noted a lack of active discourse from the pulpit. Encouraged by this opportunity, they expressed eagerness to deepen their understanding and acquire tools for personal growth and community support. This underscores the seminar's pivotal role in filling knowledge gaps, promoting cultural transformation, and equipping participants to confront IPV effectively.

Post-Seminar IPV Training

The Post-Seminar IPV evaluation aimed to assess the workshop's impact on participants' understanding of IPV, focusing on sociocultural, psychological, and religious perspectives. The questions (Appendix 2, Section 4) gathered feedback on the teachings' resonance, evaluated views on preaching's role in supporting victims, and solicited suggestions for future workshops.

The alarming realities of IPV deeply struck many participants, fostering greater empathy for those traumatized by abuse. Despite the stark statistics and immense financial toll,

participants appreciated the opportunity to learn about IPV's psychological, sociocultural, and psychiatric dimensions, inspiring them to become more vocal advocates while remaining sensitive to victims' needs.

Participants suggested incorporating video clips to vividly illustrate the severity of abuse and allocating more time for discussion, believing that sharing personal stories would enhance the workshop's impact and provide valuable insights. These reflections underscore the workshop's transformative effect and participants' eagerness to translate learning into action.

Post-Seminar Theology Training

The theological questionnaire (Appendix 3, Section 4) explored participants' perspectives on theological, cultural, and pastoral approaches to addressing IPV. It assessed how Church teachings and biblical narratives influence IPV, identified ways to support victims spiritually and emotionally, examined the integration of cultural practices into pastoral care, and sought insights on promoting Scripture's message of mutual respect, love, and equality to combat IPV effectively.

Most participants believed that authentic teachings on Christian marriage, aligned with Vatican II, would significantly reduce IPV within Christian families. However, some shared negative experiences and hoped for thorough training for clergy and educators to approach IPV with greater sensitivity and understanding.

To support IPV victims, participants suggested establishing trained, confidential groups of Catholic women to provide spiritual and emotional aid. They also recommended regular biblical studies and Catechism classes promoting mutual love, respect, and equality in marriage, making these classes mandatory for engaged couples. Furthermore, they emphasized that priests and deacons should openly address IPV during homilies, actively preaching against abuse and

encouraging community prevention and intervention. These reflections underlined a desire for a more proactive Church role in combating IPV through education, advocacy, and pastoral care.

Post-Seminar Homiletics Training

The questions (Appendix 4, Section 4) aimed to assess the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model's effectiveness in addressing IPV. They explored participants' understanding of IPV through sociocultural, historical, and theological contexts, evaluated the role of personal stories and biblical narratives in fostering awareness, and examined how the model's stages challenge biases, promote justice, and address victims' experiences. Finally, they identified the impact of preaching on community attitudes, inspired hope and transformation, and encouraged actionable changes in participants' teaching and ministry.

Participants deeply appreciated storytelling about IPV, particularly personal accounts of resilience and healing through faith and community support. They also resonated with biblical narratives depicting courageous women who endured abuse and mistreatment, finding these stories both revealing and inspiring, and drawing connections to their current situations.

Though initially hesitant, participants ultimately valued the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, recognizing its logical and comprehensive framework for addressing IPV. They believed its three stages would effectively guide their ministry, fostering healing and transformation within their communities, particularly when tackling sensitive issues within Vietnamese families.

Overall, the seminar received a positive response, though satisfaction levels varied among the 24 participants. While 17% expressed moderate satisfaction (scoring 60%), the majority reported high contentment, with 33% scoring 80% and 50% reaching full satisfaction.

With an average satisfaction score exceeding 60%, the data suggests that the seminar effectively engaged participants while highlighting opportunities for further refinement.

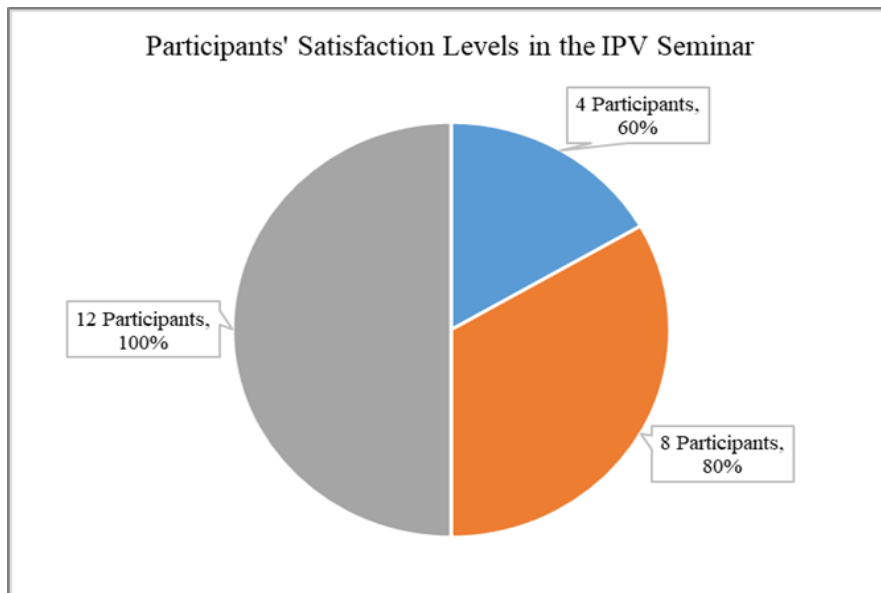


Figure 28. Participants' Satisfaction Levels in the IPV Seminar.

Figure 29 illustrates participants' positive response to each session in the seminar training.

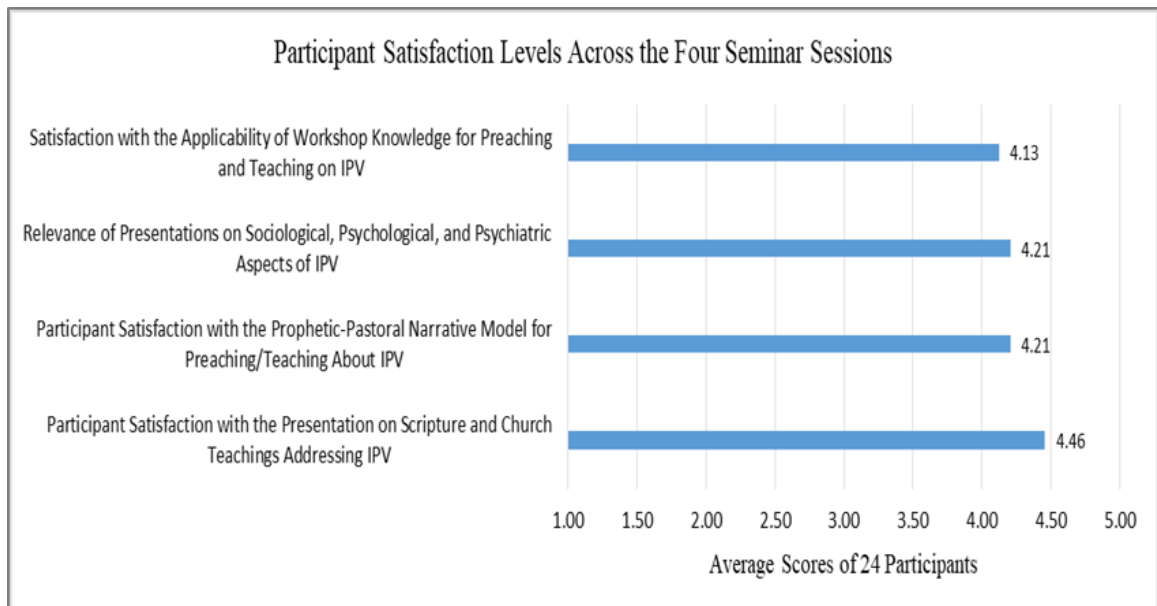


Figure 29. Participants' Satisfaction Levels Across the Four Seminar Sessions.

Across the four seminar sessions, average satisfaction scores (1-5 scale) from 24 participants demonstrated the seminar's effectiveness while identifying areas for refinement. The Scripture and Church Teachings session achieved the highest score (4.46), indicating strong resonance with theological content. The Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model and Sociological, Psychological, and Psychiatric Aspects sessions were closely rated (4.21), reflecting their significance in providing actionable insights into IPV's cultural and systemic dimensions. The Applicability of Workshop Knowledge session (4.13) suggested a need for enhanced strategies to connect theory to practical implementation. These scores affirmed the seminar's success in fostering meaningful learning experiences while pointing to opportunities for strengthening practical application and interdisciplinary integration, further equipping Catholic leaders to effectively advocate against IPV.

Drawbacks

Despite providing invaluable insights and frameworks, the seminar revealed several challenges that merit careful attention for future success.

One challenge was the complexity of the content. Despite efforts to simplify interdisciplinary and theological frameworks, the limited time made it difficult for participants to fully grasp their nuances or practical applications. Similarly, some found the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model overwhelming, despite phased introductions and practical examples.

Time constraints further hindered the seminar's effectiveness, leaving insufficient opportunity to thoroughly explore and internalize the material. To address this, I plan to extend each session to two hours to allow for deeper engagement and application.

Finally, transitioning from theory to practice posed another difficulty. While valuable, participants struggled to integrate tools like the preaching rubric and Prophetic Pastoral Narrative

Preaching Model into exploratory exercises of homilies without additional practice. Many desired follow-up sessions incorporating practical exercises, real-world case studies, and mentorship to bridge this gap, empowering them to effectively apply these models.

Addressing these challenges in future seminars will build on the program's strengths, ensuring a more impactful and supportive learning experience that equips participants to address IPV and drive cultural transformation with confidence.

Insights

After the seminar, three profound insights emerged: the urgent need for cultural and social renewal to address patriarchal norms; the significance of theological foundations in challenging scriptural misinterpretations; and the transformative potential of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model in equipping participants to confront IPV and cultivate systemic renewal.

The first insight underscored the necessity of a spiritually-rooted approach to support IPV victims. This model centered on parish-based groups of trained women, providing emotional, spiritual, and practical care in a safe environment that fostered healing and transformation. Inspired by Luke's Gospel, these gatherings integrated pastoral care with trauma-informed practices, creating confidential spaces for survivors to share their experiences, reflect on Scripture, and reclaim their dignity, embodying the resilience and faithfulness of Christ's female disciples and nurturing a culture of mutual respect, love, and justice.

The second insight revealed the pivotal role of theological foundations in addressing IPV by integrating Christian principles and challenging patriarchal misinterpretations of Scripture. Seminars and discussions on Papal teachings reinforced the Church's commitment to mutual respect in marriage, uncovering how cultural norms intensified the moral injury and trauma

endured by Vietnamese women. This illuminated the necessity of equipping leaders with theological and pastoral tools to challenge these harmful dynamics. Biblical narratives, particularly Christ's ministry to the marginalized, offered victims profound hope and a compassionate framework for recovery, underscoring the Church's ability to actively address IPV through faith-based healing and advocacy for justice.

The third insight revealed the transformative potential of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model as a crucial framework for addressing IPV and fostering systemic renewal. Participants discovered the importance of integrating Vietnamese cultural attitudes with Biblical teachings to confront harmful norms and support victims. The model's three stages guided preachers and catechists to deliver compassionate yet challenging messages. New Testament narratives provided profound examples of resilience, hope, and Christ's healing power, resonating with the trauma experienced by IPV survivors. This underscored the critical role of pastoral sensitivity in equipping leaders to create safe spaces where victims could process moral injury, reclaim their dignity, and find strength through the Gospel's transformative grace, leading communities toward justice, healing, and renewed relationships grounded in mutual respect and Christ's love.

Future Directions

To extend the impact of this study, I will translate its core findings into practical, culturally contextualized training programs that serve the Vietnamese American Catholic community. At the parish level, I plan to lead short workshops for catechists and Sunday School leaders—delivered in two-hour sessions over a two- to three-week cycle—anchored at the start of each formation year. These trainings will provide theological and pastoral tools to help lay ministers recognize signs of IPV, respond compassionately, and integrate redemptive themes into

formation materials. Sessions will remain light, narrative-based, and culturally responsive to ensure wide accessibility and participation.

To deepen this work within communities, I will develop peer formation teams in parishes—small, trained groups who will serve as IPV awareness and support leaders. These teams will facilitate seasonal reflection nights, distribute homily kits, and cultivate safe, grace-filled spaces for conversation. To ensure lasting accessibility, I also plan to launch a digital resource hub featuring downloadable workshop materials, bilingual articles, homily outlines, a theological glossary, and testimony-based media supporting ministers and educators nationwide.

Public engagement will extend through large-scale gatherings such as Marian Days in Carthage, Missouri³⁵⁹ and the Eucharistic Days at Thien Tam Monastery in Texas.³⁶⁰ With tens of thousands of Vietnamese American Catholics attending annually, these events provide powerful platforms for panel discussions, storytelling forums, and the distribution of culturally resonant educational materials. Concurrently, I will collaborate with the Vietnamese Diaconate Community in the U.S. to lead homiletic training at their annual retreat, equipping deacons to preach with theological clarity, pastoral sensitivity, and cultural awareness.

To support broader formation, I will make available a series of bilingual, easy-to-read articles to Vietnamese American parishes to publish in their bulletins. These reflections will address IPV in Vietnamese families, correct common misreadings of Church teaching, and offer clear pastoral guidance. I also intend to translate and adapt my thesis into Vietnamese,

³⁵⁹ “Marian Days,” *City of Carthage*, accessed June 26, 2025, <https://www.carthagemo.gov/o/carthage/page/marian-days>; *Marian Days: A Spiritual and Cultural Homecoming – Vietnamese*, KQED, accessed June 26, 2025, <https://video.kqed.org/video/marian-days-a-spiritual-and-cultural-homecoming-vietnamese-kzuks8/>.

³⁶⁰ “Đàn Viện Biển Đức Thiên Tâm Texas,” *Thien Tam Monastery*, accessed June 26, 2025, <http://thientamosb.org/>.

simplifying theological language without compromising depth, to make this work fully usable for lay leaders and ministry teams.

A core contribution of this project is the development and application of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model. This model weaves prophetic proclamation, pastoral sensitivity, and culturally relevant storytelling into a preaching approach that names injustice, accompanies suffering, and invites transformation. I plan to promote this model through all my teaching contexts—whether in diocesan workshops, festival presentations, or deacon formation programs. Participants will be guided in applying this method through hands-on exercises, case studies, and collaborative homily development rooted in lived experience and Scripture.

Institutionally, I will work with the Office of Diaconal Ministry and Formation in the Diocese of Dallas to create a course on trauma-informed preaching, with potential adaptation for other immigrant and patriarchal contexts. Partnering with institutions such as the University of Dallas, I hope to offer this material in a hybrid or online format. Looking ahead, I envision organizing a one-day national training workshop in collaboration with the Federation of Vietnamese Catholics in the USA. This initiative would showcase the study's insights and invite clergy, educators, and lay leaders to adopt responsive preaching and pastoral care practices rooted in justice, dignity, and faith.

Looking further, I will record short bilingual video homilies and testimonies for use in parish formation and social media outreach. As part of broader pastoral integration, I also plan to contribute IPV-focused sessions to diocesan marriage preparation programs, inviting couples to reflect on Catholic teachings around mutuality, consent, and emotional safety.

These directions represent not only an extension of this thesis but a pastoral commitment to culture change—equipping communities to break silence, uphold dignity, and proclaim the Gospel as a source of healing, justice, and restoration.

Conclusion

The "Backgrounds and Attitudes" and "Qualitative Insights Questionnaire" findings revealed significant progress in participants' understanding, motivation, and engagement in addressing IPV within Vietnamese American Catholic communities. Participants demonstrated an enhanced recognition of IPV's multifaceted nature, encompassing sociocultural, psychological, and theological dimensions, empowering them to critically examine traditional Scriptural interpretations that have historically perpetuated gender inequality. The Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model provided a structured approach to addressing complex issues, enabling impactful ministry.

The seminars fostered empathy and commitment among participants, motivating them to actively support victims, advocate for equity within marriages, and confront cultural norms that sustain IPV. By integrating personal storytelling with biblical narratives, the program enriched engagement and inspired actionable strategies. Theological sessions illuminated the centrality of Scriptural teachings—mutual respect, sacrificial love, and equality—and underscored the need for proactive pastoral care and Church advocacy in addressing IPV. The Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model empowered participants to counter biases, promote justice, and foster healing within their communities.

These findings substantiated the hypothesis that preaching about IPV to Vietnamese American communities enhances awareness, supports victims, motivates reform, and empowers the Church to address IPV. The seminars transformed participants' knowledge into practical

applications and inspired cultural and theological transformation, strengthening the Church's response to this critical issue.

Appendix 1

Pre-Seminar Questionnaire

Section 1: General Information

1. Age
 - ☐ 20 to 29
 - ☐ 30 to 49
 - ☐ 50 to 59
 - ☐ 60 and older
2. My gender is: _____
3. Are you married
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
4. Your Church position
 - ☐ Priest
 - ☐ Deacon
 - ☐ Religious Sister
 - ☐ Religious Brother
 - ☐ Religious Leader
 - ☐ Catechist
 - ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
5. Year Ordained/Years in Ministry
 - ☐ Less than 6
 - ☐ 6 to 15
 - ☐ 16 to 25
 - ☐ 25 and over

Section 2: Background

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Knowledge:

1. _____ Intimate Partner Violence is common in the Vietnamese American community.
2. _____ I know where to seek help if I or someone I know experiences Intimate Partner Violence.
3. _____ I know people who have been victims of Intimate Partner Violence.
4. _____ In the household, a wife is expected to be obedient and submissive to her husband.
5. _____ Traditional gender roles contribute to Intimate Partner Violence against women.

B. Understanding:

1. _____ Intimate Partner Violence should be addressed openly and not kept within the household.
2. _____ It is never acceptable for a husband to discipline his wife under any circumstances.

3. _____ Scripture and the Church teach that the man is the head of the household, potentially leading to violence against women.
4. _____ I think the Church's effort to preach and teach against Intimate Partner Violence are ineffective.
5. _____ I feel qualified as a preacher or minister to speak and teach about Intimate Partner Violence.

C. Experiences

1. _____ Preaching or teaching on Intimate Partner Violence will not cause controversy and division.
2. _____ I feel confident in my ability to preach or teach about Intimate Partner Violence.
3. _____ I have sufficient knowledge about Intimate Partner Violence to discuss it effectively in my preaching and teaching.
4. _____ I regularly address Intimate Partner Violence in my preaching or teaching.
5. _____ I feel equipped with resources and materials to address Intimate Partner Violence in my homilies or lessons.

Section 3: Attitudes

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Motivation

1. _____ I care about Intimate Partner Violence issues because it impacts the people I serve.
2. _____ I want to change Vietnamese culture against Intimate Partner Violence.
3. _____ I have sometimes avoided addressing Intimate Partner Violence in my preaching or teaching.
4. _____ I want to understand the sociocultural, psychological, and theological aspects of Intimate Partner Violence.
5. _____ It is important for Catholic ministers to learn to preach and teach about Intimate Partner Violence more effectively.

B. Engagement

1. _____ I am interested in knowing the roots of Intimate Partner Violence against women.
2. _____ I will be attentive during the workshop because Intimate Partner Violence is of vital concern to my ministry.
3. _____ I will actively participate in the pre- and post-workshop surveys.
4. _____ I am motivated to learn more about Intimate Partner Violence.
5. _____ I am looking forward to preaching or teaching about Intimate Partner Violence.

C. Expectation

1. _____ Addressing Intimate Partner Violence in homilies or teachings will deepen my spiritual growth.
2. _____ Preaching or teaching against Intimate Partner Violence will raise awareness and offer hope to victims.

3. _____Preaching or teaching against Intimate Partner Violence will encourage abusers to seek help.
4. _____After the workshop I will more frequently preach and teach about the biblical equality of men and women.
5. _____The workshop will improve my understanding and preaching/teaching on Intimate Partner Violence.

Section 4: Qualitative Insights Questions

1. Have you ever addressed Intimate Partner Violence in your teachings or discussions (e.g., from the pulpit, in OCIA programs, catechesis classes, or sacramental preparations)?
2. If not, why? If yes, why?
3. What do you need to feel better able to preach or teach about Intimate Partner Violence?
4. How familiar are you with the prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence within the Vietnamese American Catholic community?
5. Can you identify the common causes of Intimate Partner Violence in the Vietnamese American Catholic community?
6. What is your understanding of the Catholic Church's stance on Intimate Partner Violence?
7. How are priests, deacons, and religious leaders, and catechists trained to handle cases of Intimate Partner Violence within their communities?
8. What key messages should be included to address Intimate Partner Violence effectively?
9. How effective do you think preaching about Intimate Partner Violence will raise awareness and promote change?
10. Why have you agreed to participate in this workshop?

Appendix 2

Post-Seminar Intimate Partner Violence Questionnaire

Section 1: General Information

1. Age
 - ☐ 20 to 29
 - ☐ 30 to 49
 - ☐ 50 to 59
 - ☐ 60 and older
2. My gender is: _____
3. Are you married
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
4. Your Church position
 - ☐ Priest
 - ☐ Deacon
 - ☐ Religious Sister
 - ☐ Religious Brother
 - ☐ Religious Leader
 - ☐ Catechist
 - ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
5. Year Ordained/Years in Ministry
 - ☐ Less than 6
 - ☐ 6 to 15
 - ☐ 16 to 25
 - ☐ 25 and over

Section 2: Backgrounds

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Knowledge

1. _____ I know women in the Vietnamese communities who have been victims of Intimate Partner Violence.
2. _____ I know where to seek help if I or someone I know experiences Intimate Partner Violence.
3. _____ In the household, a wife is expected to be obedient and submissive to her husband.
4. _____ Economic status affects the incidence and reporting of Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnamese families.
5. _____ Traditional gender and cultural roles contribute to Intimate Partner Violence against women.
6. _____ Family honor and shame impacts the reporting and addressing of Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnamese communities.

B. Understanding:

1. _____ Intimate Partner Violence impacts the mental health and well-being of Vietnamese women.
2. _____ Intimate Partner Violence should be addressed openly and not kept within the household.
3. _____ It is never acceptable for a husband to discipline his wife under any circumstances.
4. _____ Common psychological effects of Intimate Partner Violence on Vietnamese women include anxiety, depression, and PTSD.
5. _____ Barriers to accessing mental health services for Intimate Partner Violence survivors in Vietnamese communities include cultural stigma and lack of resources.
6. _____ Community support systems influence the experiences of Intimate Partner Violence survivors in Vietnamese communities.

C. Experiences

1. _____ I experience pressure to maintain family honor, which affects the reporting of Intimate Partner Violence.
2. _____ I experience traditional gender roles that contribute to the acceptance of Intimate Partner Violence.
3. _____ I experience anxiety, depression, or PTSD as a result of Intimate Partner Violence.
4. _____ I have gained sufficient knowledge about Intimate Partner Violence to discuss it effectively.
5. _____ I feel better equipped with resources and materials to address Intimate Partner Violence in my daily life after attending the workshop.

Section 3: Attitudes

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Motivation

1. _____ I care about Intimate Partner Violence issues because it impacts the people I serve now.
2. _____ I am dedicated to changing Vietnamese culture to stand against Intimate Partner Violence.
3. _____ I am now committed to help the victims of Intimate Partner Violence obtain legal assistance and protection in the Vietnamese American communities.
4. _____ I now have a strong desire to understand the sociocultural and psychological aspects of Intimate Partner Violence.
5. _____ I recognize the growing importance for Catholic ministers to understand the interdisciplinary aspects of Intimate Partner Violence.

B. Engagement

1. _____ I was interested in knowing the roots of Intimate Partner Violence against women.
2. _____ I was attentive during the workshop because Intimate Partner Violence is of vital concern to my ministry.
3. _____ I actively participated in the pre- and post-workshop surveys and questions.

4. ____ I am motivated to learn more about Intimate Partner Violence.
 5. ____ I am eagerly looking forward to helping victims of Intimate Partner Violence now.
- C. Expectation
1. ____ Gaining a deeper understanding of how cultural norms and family honor influence attitudes towards Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnamese communities deepens a preacher's spiritual growth.
 2. ____ Understanding the psychological effects of Intimate Partner Violence on Vietnamese American women raises awareness and support to victims.
 3. ____ I anticipate gaining insights into how to create a supportive environment for Intimate Partner Violence survivors within Vietnamese American communities.
 4. ____ I expect to learn about the challenges faced by Vietnamese American women in accessing mental health services and legal assistance for Intimate Partner Violence.
 5. ____ The workshop improves my understanding on Intimate Partner Violence.

Section 4: Qualitative Insights Questions

1. How has the workshop influenced your understanding of Intimate Partner Violence from a sociocultural and psychological perspective?
2. What role do you believe religious teachings should play in preventing Intimate Partner Violence?
3. Can you share any specific moments or teachings from the workshop that deeply resonated with you?
4. How do you feel the workshop has impacted your views on the role of preaching/teaching in supporting victims of Intimate Partner Violence?
5. Can you share any suggestions for improving future workshops on this topic?

Appendix 3

Post-Seminar Theological Questionnaire

Section 1: General Information

1. Age
 - ☐ 20 to 29
 - ☐ 30 to 49
 - ☐ 50 to 59
 - ☐ 60 and older
2. My gender is: _____
3. Are you married
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
4. Your Church position
 - ☐ Priest
 - ☐ Deacon
 - ☐ Religious Sister
 - ☐ Religious Brother
 - ☐ Religious Leader
 - ☐ Catechist
 - ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
5. Year Ordained/Years in Ministry
 - ☐ Less than 6
 - ☐ 6 to 15
 - ☐ 16 to 25
 - ☐ 25 and over

Section 2: Backgrounds

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Knowledge

1. _____ I know Vietnamese American Catholic women who have been victims of Intimate Partner Violence.
2. _____ The Church condemns any form of violence within marriage.
3. _____ Marriage is intended for mutual love, respect, and procreation.
4. _____ Ecclesial teachings emphasize the equal dignity of men and women in marriage.
5. _____ The Church's teachings on marriage include the condemnation of Intimate Partner Violence.

B. Understanding:

1. _____ The creation of Eve from Adam's rib has been misinterpreted to justify male dominance.

2. ____ Paul's writings have been misquoted to suggest the subordination of wives to husbands.
3. ____ Scripture and the Church teach that the man is the head of the household, potentially leading to violence against women.
4. ____ I think the Church's effort to preach and teach against Intimate Partner Violence are ineffective.
5. ____ A holistic interpretation of Scripture reveals a call for mutual submission and respect within marriage.

C. Experiences

1. ____ Trauma from Intimate Partner Violence can lead to significant physical and mental health issues.
2. ____ Victims of Intimate Partner Violence may experience spiritual turmoil and question their worth and God's presence.
3. ____ Culturally relevant liturgical practices empower Vietnamese American women and foster healing.
4. ____ Small group meetings and faith-based activities foster resilience and recovery for Intimate Partner Violence victims.
5. ____ I feel better equipped with resources and materials to address Intimate Partner Violence in my homilies or lessons after attending the theological workshop.

Section 3: Attitudes

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Motivation

1. ____ I am encouraged to motivate the Vietnamese American community to discuss Intimate Partner Violence and its theological implications.
2. ____ I am inspired to promote mutual love and respect within marriages.
3. ____ I am motivated to emphasize the condemnation of violence within marital relationships.
4. ____ I am driven to highlight the equal dignity of men and women as created in the image of God.
5. ____ I am encouraged to advocate for pastoral care and support for Intimate Partner Violence victims.

B. Engagement

1. ____ I am engaged in facilitating discussions on the theological foundations of marriage.
2. ____ I am committed to addressing the misconstrued biblical narratives that perpetuate gender inequality.
3. ____ I am engaged in promoting a holistic reading of Scripture that calls for mutual love and respect.
4. ____ I am dedicated to highlighting the roles of Jesus' female disciples in witnessing and proclaiming salvation.

1. ____ I am involved in fostering a supportive community for Vietnamese American women affected by Intimate Partner Violence.

C. Expectation

1. ____ I am expected to establish clear standards for behavior and attitudes towards Intimate Partner Violence based on theological teachings.
2. ____ I am encouraged to promote accountability for actions and attitudes towards Intimate Partner Violence.
3. ____ I am expected to foster continuous learning about the theological foundations of marriage and Intimate Partner Violence.
4. ____ I am committed to fostering a culture of mutual respect, love, and support within the community.
1. ____ I am expected to provide pastoral care and support for those affected by Intimate Partner Violence, particularly Vietnamese women.

Section 4: Qualitative Insights Questions

1. How do you perceive the Church's teachings on marriage and their impact on addressing Intimate Partner Violence within the Vietnamese American Catholic community?
2. In what ways have biblical narratives been misinterpreted to justify gender inequality and Intimate Partner Violence, and how can these interpretations be corrected?
3. How can the Church better support Vietnamese American women who suffer from Intimate Partner Violence, both spiritually and emotionally?
4. What role do cultural and communal practices play in helping Vietnamese American women heal from Intimate Partner Violence, and how can these practices be integrated into pastoral care?
5. How can the Church promote a holistic understanding of Scripture that emphasizes mutual love, respect, and equality within marriage to combat Intimate Partner Violence?

Appendix 4

Post-Seminar Homiletical Questionnaire

Section 1: General Information

1. Age
 - ☐ 20 to 29
 - ☐ 30 to 49
 - ☐ 50 to 59
 - ☐ 60 and older
2. My gender is: _____
3. Are you married
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
4. Your Church position
 - ☐ Priest
 - ☐ Deacon
 - ☐ Religious Sister
 - ☐ Religious Brother
 - ☐ Religious Leader
 - ☐ Catechist
 - ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
5. Year Ordained/Years in Ministry
 - ☐ Less than 6
 - ☐ 6 to 15
 - ☐ 16 to 25
 - ☐ 25 and over

Section 2: Backgrounds

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Knowledge

1. _____ Knowledge of the pervasiveness of Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnamese American communities is crucial.
2. _____ Knowledge of the cultural and traditional roots of Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnamese communities is necessary.
3. _____ I am aware of biblical texts that address love, respect, and justice.
4. _____ I know the theological foundations of marriage and Intimate Partner Violence.
5. _____ I am aware of the need for a comprehensive approach to preaching/teaching about Intimate Partner Violence.

B. Understanding:

1. _____ I grasp the importance of correcting erroneous beliefs about Scripture.

2. ____ Recognizing the importance of connecting biblical narratives to contemporary issues of Intimate Partner Violence is essential.
3. ____ I understand the significance of fostering new consciousness about Intimate Partner Violence.
4. ____ I comprehend the importance of providing pastoral guidance and nurturing faith in Intimate Partner Violence victims.
5. ____ Comprehending the stages of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Model is essential in preaching or teaching effectively about Intimate Partner Violence.

C. Experiences

1. ____ Experience in challenging patriarchal biases within the community is crucial.
2. ____ I feel more confident in my ability to preach or teach about Intimate Partner Violence after attending the workshop.
3. ____ I have gained sufficient knowledge about Intimate Partner Violence to discuss it effectively in my preaching/teachings.
4. ____ Practical experience in using the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Model is essential to preaching or teaching Intimate Partner Violence.
5. ____ I feel better equipped with resources and materials to address Intimate Partner Violence in my homilies or lessons after attending the workshop.

Section 3: Attitudes

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

Strongly Disagree/Least	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Most
1	2	3	4	5

A. Motivation

1. ____ I care about Intimate Partner Violence issues because it impacts the people I serve now.
2. ____ Emphasizing the importance of correcting erroneous beliefs about Scripture and Church teachings is key.
3. ____ Advocating for the empowerment of Vietnamese American women who have endured Intimate Partner Violence is necessary.
4. ____ I recognize the increased importance for Catholic ministers to preach and teach about Intimate Partner Violence more effectively.
5. ____ I am motivated to apply the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model to transform Vietnamese culture and stand against Intimate Partner Violence.

B. Engagement

1. ____ I was interested in knowing the roots of Intimate Partner Violence against women.
2. ____ I was attentive during the workshop because preaching or teaching about Intimate Partner Violence is of vital concern to my ministry.
3. ____ I actively participated in the pre- and post-workshop surveys and interviews.
4. ____ I am motivated to learn more about the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model for Intimate Partner Violence.

5. _____ I am eagerly looking forward to preaching or teaching about Intimate Partner Violence using the Prophetic Pastoral Preaching Model now.

C. Expectation

1. _____ Addressing Intimate Partner Violence in homilies or teachings deepens a preacher's spiritual growth.
2. _____ Preaching or teaching against Intimate Partner Violence using the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model raises awareness and offers hope to victims.
3. _____ I am committed to apply the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching model to foster a culture of mutual respect, love, and support within the community.
4. _____ The Prophetic Pastoral Preaching model offers a holistic approach to support women victims of Intimate Partner Violence and to foster healing and transformation in Christ.
5. _____ The homiletic workshop improves my understanding and preaching/teaching on Intimate Partner Violence.

Section 4: Qualitative Insights Questions

1. How effective do you find the Prefiguration stage in raising awareness about Intimate Partner Violence within the Vietnamese American community?
2. In what ways can understanding the sociocultural and historical context of biblical narratives enhance the awareness of Intimate Partner Violence?
3. How can personal stories and testimonies be used to foster new consciousness about Intimate Partner Violence in your community?
4. How does the Configuration stage help in challenging patriarchal biases and promoting God's love and justice for women?
5. What impact do you think exhorting abusive men to repent has on the community's overall stance on Intimate Partner Violence?
6. How can Gospel stories be used to renew and reshape individual and communal identities in alignment with values of love, justice, and equality?
7. How does the Refiguration stage address the unique experiences of Vietnamese American women who have endured Intimate Partner Violence?
8. In what ways can bearing witness to trauma and mourning with victims foster healing and transformation within the community?
9. How can the preacher-narrator inspire steadfast faith and instill hope in God's promises among Intimate Partner Violence victims?
10. What changes, if any, have you made or do you plan to make in preaching or teaching as a result of attending this workshop?
11. What additional resources or support do you think are necessary to effectively address Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnamese communities?
12. Can you share any suggestions for improving future workshops on this topic?

Appendix 5

Rubric for Assessing the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative preaching Model

Total: 100 pts	Grade A: 25-21 pts	Grade B: 20-16 pts	Grade C: < 15 pts
Prefiguration Stage 25 Pts.	• Good Cultivating Awareness: Highlight Intimate Partner Violence urgency through statistics, stories, and testimonies. • Good Fostering New Consciousness: Challenge beliefs and attitudes towards Intimate Partner Violence through questions, reflections, and discussions. • Good Understanding Context: Provide a thorough understanding of the sociocultural and historical context of the biblical narrative. • Good Connecting to Contemporary Issues: Draw parallels between the biblical narrative and contemporary issues of Intimate Partner Violence.	• Adequate understanding of the audience's culture. • Less adequately addresses the struggles and needs of the assembly concerning Intimate Partner Violence. • Acceptable understanding of the sociocultural and historical context of the biblical narrative. • Adequate connection between the biblical narrative and contemporary issues of Intimate Partner Violence.	1. Limited knowledge of the audience's culture. 2. Limited understanding of the struggles and needs of the assembly concerning Intimate Partner Violence. 3. Limited knowledge of biblical narrative passages. 4. Abstract message lacking a foundation in understanding the biblical narrative and issues of Intimate Partner Violence.

Configuration Stage 25 Pts.	• Sound Scriptural Teachings: Reject Intimate Partner Violence and embrace God's love and justice. • Challenging Bias: Denounce social inequality and discrimination against women. • Exhorting Repentance: Urge abusive men to repent and transform. • Empowering Women: Help women overcome adversity through faith. • Community Rally Effort: Promote a culture of mutual support, love, and respect. • Renewing Identities: Align identities with Gospel stories.	1. Some Scriptural and Church teachings to reject Intimate Partner Violence and embrace God's love and justice. 2. Some effort to reject Intimate Partner Violence and injustice against women 3. Some effort to challenge patriarchal biases and call abusive men to repent 4. Some effort to empower abuse women and rally the community for God's justice 5. Some effort to renew and reshape identities in alignment with Gospel stories	1. Poor Scriptural and Church teachings addressing Intimate Partner Violence issues 2. No clear effort to reject Intimate Partner Violence and injustice against women 3. No effort to challenge patriarchal biases and call abusive men to repent 4. No effort to empower abuse women and rally the community for God's justice 5. No effort to renew and reshape individual and communal identities in alignment with Gospel stories
Refiguration Stage 25 Pts.	• Compassionate Support: Offer pastoral hope and healing to Intimate Partner Violence victims. • Acknowledging Trauma: Validate victims' trauma and show deep solidarity. • Promoting Fellowship: Provide hope and healing, fostering a supportive Christian community. • Facilitating Transformation: Inspire personal and communal transformation aligned with Gospel values.	1. Provides some pastoral support of hope and healing to Intimate Partner Violence victims. 2. Adequately acknowledges and supports traumatized victims. 3. Occasionally promotes a resilient Christian community rooted in mutual support. 4. Infrequently facilitates life transformation through Holy Scripture narratives.	1. Provides no pastoral witness to the trauma of Intimate Partner Violence victims. 2. Fails to acknowledge and support Intimate Partner Violence victims in maintaining steadfast faith and instilling hope in God's promises. 3. Rarely promotes a resilient Christian community rooted in mutual support. 4. Weakly facilitates life transformation through the impact of Holy Scripture narratives.

Performance 25 Pts.	• Speak to/with assembly. • Good eye-contact and gestures. • Style is clear and personal. • Express conviction. • Motivate and inspire the community. • As ease with self and assembly.	1. Some eye-contact and animation 2. Some connection with the assembly 3. Fairly clear and personal 4. Expresses some conviction	1. Verbose pontification 2. No eye-contact 3. Inarticulate, mumbling speech 4. Monotone speech 5. Nervous and ill at ease 6. Appears above the people
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Appendix 6

The Presentation Workshop Questionnaire

1. How have your perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence within our community changed after hearing the preaching/teaching?
2. How effectively does the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model address Intimate Partner Violence challenges and promote biblical values, identity in God, rejection of abuse, and support for women?
3. How effectively do you think the preacher/teacher addressed the issue of Intimate Partner Violence?
4. What additional support or resources do you think are necessary to better address Intimate Partner Violence in future homilies/teachings?
5. How did your understanding of Intimate Partner Violence evolve from before to after hearing the preaching?
6. What specific aspects of the preaching/teaching influenced your change in perspective on Intimate Partner Violence?
7. How did the homily/teaching challenge or reinforce your understanding of Intimate Partner Violence?
8. What new insights or approaches did you gain from the preaching/teaching that you didn't have before?
9. How do you think the community's response to Intimate Partner Violence will change as a result of the preaching/teaching?
10. What would you suggest to improve the preacher's homily or teaching on Intimate Partner Violence?

Appendix 7

Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire

Part I – Questions

Instructions: Please use the following scale to answer the questions:

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

1. _____ How satisfied are you with the entire training program?
2. _____ How relevant were the presentations on the sociological, psychological and psychiatric aspects of Intimate Partner Violence?
3. _____ How satisfied are you with the presentation on Scripture and Church teachings related to Intimate Partner Violence?
4. _____ How satisfied are you with the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative model as a way to preach or teach about Intimate Partner Violence?
5. _____ How satisfied are you with the likelihood of using this workshop's knowledge in your preaching or teaching about Intimate Partner Violence?

Part II – Written Comments

1. What did you like most about the program?
2. How relevant was the program to your ministry?
3. How effective was the instructor in delivering the material?
4. How well did the program prepare you to preach or teach about Intimate Partner Violence?
5. What suggestions do you have for improving future programs?

Appendix 8

Consent Form for Seminar Participants

“Preaching about Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the Vietnamese American Catholic Community”

Researcher: Deacon Vincent Thu Dam, Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Candidate, Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, MO.

Purpose: Evaluate an Intimate Partner Violence preaching training program for Vietnamese American Catholic communities, preparing clergy and religious leaders to preach and teach effectively about Intimate Partner Violence.

Duration and Procedures: 7 hours over three weeks. Includes pre-workshop questionnaire, a 4.5-hour workshop, and post-workshop questionnaire. Plus an additional 4 hours for the three designated preachers to prepare and deliver homilies/teaching.

Risks: Minimal risks. Participants may feel discomfort confronting trauma or social injustices. Withdrawal is allowed without consequences, and data will be deleted.

Benefits, Incentives, and Costs: No financial benefits. Participants will gain understanding of Intimate Partner Violence in Vietnamese American communities, grow spiritually, and contribute to best preaching practices. No costs to participate.

Alternatives: Participants may withdraw at any time without consequence.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality is strongly encouraged. Questionnaires and assessments are confidential. Legal obligations require reporting imminent harm or child abuse. By attending this seminar, you agree to be recorded on audio and video for study purposes only.

Contact: For information, contact tdam11@yahoo.com.

Consent: I have read and understand the study details. I can ask questions and withdraw at any time without consequence. By signing, I confirm I am at least 18 years old and agree to participate.

Date

Print Name

Signature

Appendix 9

Seminar Group Discussion Questions and Homiletic Exploratory Exercises

I. Seminar on IPV: Discussion Question

1. Why does “Husband's Violence Against Wife” remain a serious and dangerous issue, with the risk of increasing silently within the Vietnamese American community?

Suggested Discussion Points:

- Vietnamese cultural and traditional influences
 - The transition between Vietnamese and American cultural norms
 - The impact of changing gender roles
 - Lack of awareness and education about domestic violence within the community: Domestic violence has severe consequences, potentially leading to death for victims, perpetrators, and even affecting the broader community.
2. How can we change cultural attitudes toward seeking external support and reduce the shame and loss of dignity experienced by victims of domestic violence?

Suggested Discussion Points:

- The importance of raising community awareness
- The role of religious and social organizations in supporting victims
- Culturally sensitive approaches to providing support services

II. Seminar on Theological Foundations: Discussion Question

1. Is it reasonable and appropriate to say that the Church acknowledges instances of power and authority abuse within its structures, including patriarchal abuses, where male power and status have been misused? However, the solution is not to eliminate patriarchy entirely, but rather to address and correct these abuses.

Suggested Discussion Points:

- Is addressing and correcting these abuses a constructive approach?
- Is completely dismantling a system realistic? Since improving and repairing abuses is a crucial step toward building a fairer and more ethical environment.
- Should the power structure be fundamentally changed to ensure justice and prevent future abuses?

- Should broader reforms be implemented within the Church's structure to ensure that power is not misused? This could include re-evaluating roles and responsibilities within the Church's patriarchal system.

III. Group 1: Exploratory Preaching Exercise on Ephesians 5:21-33

Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So [also] husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man shall leave [his] father and [his] mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

Introduction: What are the key facts and impacts of IPV, and how must the faith community respond?

I. Prefiguration Stage

1. **Cultivating Awareness:** What statistics and survivor testimonies can awaken the audience to the reality of IPV?
2. **Fostering New Consciousness:** What misconceptions and biases exist about IPV in the community?
3. **Understanding Context:** How does Ephesians 5:21-33 frame relationships in its historical and sociocultural setting?
4. **Connecting to Contemporary Issues:** How does Ephesians 5:21-33 speak to IPV today and advocate for mutual respect?

II. Configuration Stage

1. **Sound Scriptural Teachings:** How does Scripture reject IPV and uphold love, respect, and justice?
2. **Challenging Bias:** How do we confront social inequalities and historical injustices that perpetuate violence?
3. **Exhorting Repentance:** How can perpetrators be called to repentance and transformation?

4. **Empowering Women:** How can biblical stories of resilience inspire hope and action for women facing IPV?
5. **Community Rally Effort:** What concrete actions can the community take to support survivors and prevent abuse?
6. **Renewing Identities:** How can biblical teachings help individuals reclaim dignity and self-worth?

III. Refiguration Stage

1. **Compassionate Support:** What words of hope and resources can be offered to IPV survivors?
2. **Acknowledging Trauma:** How do we validate survivors' experiences and encourage healing?
3. **Promoting Fellowship:** How can the Church foster a community of support and restoration?
4. **Transforming Identities:** What actions will ensure that IPV is no longer tolerated in faith communities?

Conclusion: How does Ephesians 5:21-33 call us to cultivate love, respect, and mutual support in relationships, rejecting all forms of IPV?

Group 2: Exploratory Preaching Exercise on Matthew 19:1-6

When Jesus finished these words, he left Galilee and went to the district of Judea across the Jordan. Great crowds followed him, and he cured them there. Some Pharisees approached him, and tested him, saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?" He said in reply, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

Introduction: How does Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) contradict human dignity and biblical principles of love and justice?

I. Prefiguration Stage

1. **Cultivating Awareness:** What statistics and survivor testimonies can awaken the audience to the gravity of IPV?
2. **Fostering New Consciousness:** What misconceptions and biases exist regarding IPV within the community?
3. **Understanding Context:** How did Jesus challenge patriarchal norms and advocate for justice and compassion?

4. **Connecting to Contemporary Issues:** How do Jesus' teachings affirm marriage as love and mutual commitment, not harm or domination?

II. Configuration Stage

1. **Sound Scriptural Teachings:** How does Matthew 19:1-6 reinforce the sanctity of marriage while also demanding justice and protection for victims?
2. **Challenging Bias:** How does Genesis 1:27 affirm equality, and how do we challenge biases that perpetuate IPV?
3. **Exhorting Repentance:** How can abusive individuals seek repentance and transformation in light of Proverbs 6:16-19 and Ephesians 5:25?
4. **Empowering Women:** How do biblical stories affirm the dignity and strength of women, and what steps can they take to seek safety?
5. **Community Rally Effort:** What actions can the faith community take to support victims and prevent future IPV?
6. **Renewing Identities:** How can biblical teachings reshape individuals' understanding of marriage, love, and personal worth?

III. Refiguration Stage

1. **Compassionate Support:** What words of comfort and resources can be offered to IPV survivors?
2. **Acknowledging Trauma:** How do we validate survivors' experiences and encourage healing in a safe, non-judgmental environment?
3. **Promoting Fellowship:** How can the Church foster a community of acceptance, support, and restoration?
4. **Transforming Identities:** What collective actions ensure that IPV is actively rejected and justice is upheld in the community?

Conclusion: How does Matthew 19:1-6 call us to cultivate love, respect, and mutual support in relationships, ensuring IPV has no place in a Christian community?

Group 3: Exploratory Preaching Exercise on Matthew 5:21-22

You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna.

Introduction: How does violence—both public and domestic—impact Vietnamese American women, and why must the Church confront cultural expectations of silence and submission?

I. Prefiguration Stage: Cultivating Awareness & Understanding

1. **Cultivating Awareness:** How do societal violence and IPV affect families, and what data can awaken the community?
2. **Fostering New Consciousness:** How does unchecked anger lead to destructive behaviors, and what biases must be challenged?
3. **Understanding Context:** How does Matthew 5:21-22 frame IPV as more than physical violence but a spiritual crisis?
4. **Connecting to Contemporary Issues:** How does unresolved anger escalate into abusive behaviors within households?

II. Configuration Stage: Sound Teaching & Challenging Bias

1. **Sound Scriptural Teachings:** How does Jesus call for transformation rather than passive restraint?
2. **Challenging Biases:** How do patriarchal customs reinforce IPV, and how does Jesus advocate for dignity over dominance?
3. **Exhorting Repentance:** How must abusive individuals recognize their wrongdoing and seek reconciliation?
4. **Empowering Women:** How must the Church break the silence and provide tangible support for IPV survivors?
5. **Community Rally Effort:** What collective actions must the faith community take to reject IPV and support victims?
6. **Renewing Identities:** How must men redefine masculinity as servant leadership, and how must women embrace their God-given dignity?

III. Refiguration Stage: Compassionate Support & Transformation

1. **Compassionate Support:** How can the Church become a sanctuary for healing and restoration?
2. **Acknowledging Trauma:** How must IPV survivors have their pain validated and supported in their recovery?
3. **Promoting Fellowship:** How must faith communities foster mutual accountability, justice, and healing?
4. **Transforming Identities:** How must men and women reshape their roles in alignment with Christ's teachings on love and dignity?

Conclusion: How does Matthew 5:21-22 challenge us to reject IPV, embrace God's justice, and build a community of reconciliation, hope, and healing?

Appendix 10

Seminar Preaching: Homily 1 from the First Seminar Session

“Breaking the Silence: Preaching Against IPV with Christ’s Compassion”

Deacon Vincent Thu Dam

Mark 5:25-34 - *There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, “If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured.” Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched my clothes?” But his disciples said to him, “You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”*

Homily Text:

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Father Charles Dahm, a beacon of hope for victims of domestic violence, often shares a poignant story from his ministry in suburban Chicago. He speaks of a man consumed by the green-eyed monster of jealousy, relentlessly contacting him with accusations of infidelity against his wife, demanding an accounting of her every breath and movement.

One day, Father Charles had the privilege of meeting this man’s wife. As she spoke, the weight of her suffering became palpable – a woman ensnared in a 15-year marital prison, where jealousy was wielded as a cruel weapon of control and subjugation.

Brothers and sisters, I, too, have encountered husbands mirroring this tragic figure, souls deeply wounded in their capacity to love. They stand on a false pedestal of superiority, demanding unwavering respect and obedience, expecting their wives and children to dance to the tune of their every fleeting desire.

Recently, a woman from our own parish, her voice trembling like a leaf in a storm, reached out to me in desperation. She had unearthed the bitter truth of her husband's infidelity. Confronted, he erected a wall of denial, turning to anger and leveling baseless accusations against her. The situation spiraled into a vortex of violence, leaving her not only physically bruised but also emotionally scarred. Though fleeting apologies and insincere gestures of affection followed, she perceived them as mere attempts to quell the storm, devoid of genuine remorse or lasting transformation.

She confided, her voice barely audible, that she dared not share her story with others, fearing the indelible stain it would leave on her children's perception of their father and the dishonor it would cast upon both families.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we gather to confront a deeply troubling reality that casts a long shadow over our society: Intimate Partner Violence. This silent epidemic, often lurking behind the façade of closed doors, inflicts profound trauma and suffering upon countless individuals, especially our sisters in Christ. How poignantly does the Gospel narrative of the woman with the hemorrhage in Mark 5:25-34 mirror the agonizing experiences of these silent victims!

The passage from Mark offers us a stark glimpse into the traumatic violence and moral injury endured by so many, particularly women, in our world. We encounter a woman who has suffered for twelve long years from a debilitating condition. Her illness not only caused her physical pain but also left her socially isolated, deemed “unclean” and ostracized from community life. This echoes the experience of countless victims of domestic violence, whose pain is often compounded by social rejection and the heavy weight of stigma.

Like the woman in the Gospel, victims of Intimate Partner Violence often find themselves physically weakened, socially isolated, and financially vulnerable. They seek solace and assistance, only to find themselves trapped in a relentless cycle of abuse and despair. This woman, having exhausted all avenues of help without finding a cure, must have felt utterly abandoned and hopeless. Yet, in her desperation, she reached out, almost tentatively, touching the hem of Jesus' garment, daring to touch the Lord, whom Mark describes as "the Holy One of God".

Immediately, her bleeding ceased. No elaborate ritual, no earthly power could deliver her; it was simply the transformative touch of God. Mark tells us that Jesus, feeling power (*dynamis*) go out from him, turned to the crowd and asked, "Who touched my garments?" The disciples, despite witnessing countless miracles, remained veiled to Jesus' transcendent nature, continuing to misunderstand Him. But the woman, realizing the magnitude of the miracle she had received, trembled with a mixture of fear and profound gratitude, falling in love with the boundless power of God.

Do you notice the tenderness in Mark's description of Jesus "looking around to see the woman who had done this?" Jesus, in His divine omniscience, knew who had been healed; yet, He sought her out, gently inviting her to share her story with the multitude. He listened without judgment, without interruption, and without condemnation. And after she had bared her soul, He spoke words of liberation: "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction." In acknowledging her touch and pronouncing her healed, Jesus restored not only her physical health but also her dignity and worth, affirming her as a beloved child of God.

But let us also turn our gaze towards those men who have inflicted such pain. To those husbands, fathers, and partners who have succumbed to anger, control, and violence: know that

there is a path to redemption. Recognize the harm you have caused, the trust you have broken, and the love you have shattered. Repentance is not a sign of weakness, but of strength – the strength to confront your failings, to seek forgiveness, and to commit to a life of respect, compassion, and love. The Church stands ready to support you on this difficult journey, offering guidance, counseling, and the unwavering grace of God.

Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, and Teachers, as a community of faith, we are called by Jesus himself to continue his mission of “healing the sick and preaching the Gospel to all nations.” We are called to recognize and respond to the cries of those who are suffering from Intimate Partner Violence. We must extend to them the same compassion and unwavering support that Jesus extended to the woman, listening to their stories with empathy, believing their experiences without reservation, and providing them with the resources and support they need to find safety and healing. We are called to challenge and resist social norms that perpetuate silence and shame, and to fight for healing and justice for our sisters and brothers who are suffering physical and emotional abuse.

Let us also mourn with them, acknowledging the deep pain and injustice they have endured. Let us pray for their healing and the courage to stand against all forms of violence and abuse. May we be instruments of God’s peace and love, bringing hope and restoration to those in need.

Lord, may we be vigilant in our efforts to support those who have suffered Intimate Partner Violence, ensuring that no one feels alone in their pain. May our communities be an extension of your healing power to bring peace, joy and hope to all families in need of your love.

Mary, our Mother, pray for us and for all who are suffering, that they may find comfort and strength in your loving embrace. Amen.

Appendix 11

Seminar Preaching: Homily 2 for the Second Seminar Session

“The Unspoken Suffering”

Deacon Vincent Thu Dam

Luke 13:10-17 – *He was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath. And a woman was there who for eighteen years had been crippled by a spirit; she was bent over, completely incapable of standing erect. When Jesus saw her, he called to her and said, “Woman, you are set free of your infirmity.” He laid his hands on her, and she at once stood up straight and glorified God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, said to the crowd in reply, “There are six days when work should be done. Come on those days to be cured, not on the Sabbath day.” The Lord said to him in reply, “Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it out for watering? This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years now, ought she not to have been set free on the Sabbath day from this bondage?” When he said this, all his adversaries were humiliated; and the whole crowd rejoiced at all the splendid deeds done by him.*

Homily Text:

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Have you ever felt a burden so heavy that you hesitated to seek help, wondering if anyone could truly understand? Have you ever feared that your vulnerability might be met with indifference or judgment, leading you to retreat into silence? I have encountered this hesitation twice in recent months.

Earlier this year, a woman approached me, her eyes a blend of hope and trepidation, seeking counsel for a friend enduring unspeakable mistreatment by her husband. Yet, she felt paralyzed, unsure how to intervene or offer solace.

More recently, another woman, a stranger, also sought my help for a relative trapped in the insidious cycle of Intimate Partner Violence.

I waited, prayerfully, for their calls, but neither reached out.

From this poignant experience, I learned a profound lesson: When someone tentatively extends a hand, we, as Christ's disciples, must take the initiative. We must actively seek them. Within our community, cultural norms often dictate silence, leading many to suffer in isolation until their situation becomes unbearable.

In our Vietnamese American community, patriarchal cultural biases often compound this silence. Traditional values that prioritize male authority and family honor can pressure women to endure abuse rather than risk bringing shame upon their families. This is further exacerbated by a blind cultural bias that avoids discussing or acknowledging domestic issues, leading to a collective silence that traps women in cycles of violence. The fear of social stigma, coupled with the expectation of female passivity, can prevent women from seeking help, leaving them feeling isolated and without recourse.

A Gospel of Liberation: Luke 13:10-17

Dear brothers and sisters, today's Gospel from Luke offers a powerful reflection on suffering, liberation, and divine compassion.

Jesus, teaching in the synagogue, encountered a woman disabled for eighteen years, bent over and unable to straighten herself. Recognizing her suffering, Jesus declared, "Woman, you are freed from your disability," and she immediately straightened up, praising God.

Does this narrative not resonate with countless women enduring the hidden torment of Intimate Partner Violence? Does it not call us to confront this issue, to fight for justice, love, and healing within our communities?

The Global Crisis of Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner Violence is a global crisis, affecting millions across all boundaries. The World Health Organization reports that one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.

These statistics represent real lives, real fear, and deep trauma. As a faith community, we must listen to survivors, bring their experiences to light, and address the root causes and devastating consequences of Intimate Partner Violence.

Challenging Our Beliefs and Biases

To combat Intimate Partner Violence, we must examine our attitudes and biases. Ask yourselves:

- Do I recognize the signs of abuse, whether physical, emotional, or financial?
- Am I willing to speak out against Intimate Partner Violence, even when it challenges cultural norms?
- Do my biases contribute to harmful attitudes that perpetuate victim-blaming or minimize abuse?

By engaging in honest conversations that promote understanding and empathy, we can reject violence and uphold the dignity of all.

Jesus' Call for Justice and Liberation

The story of the bent woman unfolds within a context where women were often marginalized.

Jesus' healing, performed on the Sabbath, challenged societal norms and religious laws, demonstrating compassion and commitment to justice.

Understanding this context allows us to grasp Jesus' radical ministry and his call to advocate for the vulnerable. Just as the bent woman was physically bound, many women today are bound by the chains of Intimate Partner Violence—chains of fear, isolation, and control.

By connecting her story with modern realities, we recognize that Jesus' message of liberation extends to all who are marginalized and denied their rights.

Restoring Dignity and Demanding Systemic Change

Jesus heals the woman, declaring, “Woman, you are freed from your sickness.” This symbolizes God’s love and justice, freeing her from suffering and bondage.

Just as Jesus refused to ignore the suffering of the bent woman, we must refuse to ignore Intimate Partner Violence. Abuse contradicts God's love and the dignity of every human being.

All people are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and deserve respect and compassion. Violence violates this truth and must be condemned.

A Call to Action: Transforming Ourselves and Our Communities

Throughout history, women have endured inequalities that have left them vulnerable to abuse. The bent woman was ignored by those who prioritized religious law over compassion. But Jesus saw her and restored her.

His actions challenge us to confront injustices that sustain oppression. We are called to stand against gender injustice, whether in the workplace, homes, or society. This includes fighting against:

- Unequal pay and economic disparities.
- Barriers to education and advancement.
- Victim-blaming cultures in Intimate Partner Violence cases.

The Path to Repentance and Transformation

Scripture calls us to repentance and renewal. Ezekiel urges, “Repent and turn away from all your offenses; otherwise sin will be your ruin. Get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.” Men who inflict violence must heed this call and undergo personal transformation. True repentance requires:

- Acknowledging the harm caused and taking responsibility.
- Seeking forgiveness from God, victims, and the community.
- Committing to change and rejecting violence, seeking professional help.

This transformation is essential for healing relationships, restoring justice, and creating peace.

A Word to Those Who Inflict Harm

To the men who have chosen violence, know that your actions are a grave offense. The power you wield to control and harm is a perversion of strength. There is no honor in dominance through fear. But even in darkness, hope remains. Turn away from violence, seek repentance, and embrace redemption. The Church offers healing, support, and God's grace.

Faith as a Source of Strength and Resilience

The story of the bent woman reveals the power of faith in adversity. Jesus' healing restored her dignity and belonging.

Scripture offers examples of courageous women who triumphed through faith, like Esther and Ruth. These women remind us that faith can be a source of strength and hope for survivors of Intimate Partner Violence.

A Collective Commitment to Healing and Justice

As a community, let us reject Intimate Partner Violence, challenge biases, promote repentance, empower women, and cultivate a culture of support and justice in Christ. Together, we can build a community rooted in love and equality, where all are treated with dignity. Just as

Jesus reached out to the bent woman, we are called to offer survivors a safe haven and unwavering support.

Our churches must be sanctuaries where victims find comfort and assistance. Pastoral care must be grounded in empathy and understanding. We must offer hope and healing through our presence and resources.

Breaking the Silence and Transforming Communities

Acknowledging the trauma of Intimate Partner Violence is essential for healing. Jesus affirmed the bent woman's worth. We must validate the experiences of survivors, standing in solidarity with them. By listening with compassion, we affirm that their pain is real and they are not alone.

Breaking the silence creates belonging and hope. The healing of the bent woman reveals the power of communal support. Our churches must be sanctuaries where victims find comfort and assistance.

By raising awareness and providing education, we can build a culture that refuses to tolerate abuse. Through counseling, support groups, and legal aid, we can offer practical assistance, helping survivors rebuild their lives. Through the Gospel, victims can reclaim their lives, finding strength and support.

Conclusion: A Prayer for Healing and Justice

Dear brothers and sisters, the story of the bent woman is a reminder of Jesus' commitment to healing and justice. As we reflect on this message, may we be inspired to confront Intimate Partner Violence, advocate for a world where all are treated with dignity, and become instruments of God's healing within our families and communities. May Christ guide us

as we bring hope and love to those in need, and may we never tire of working towards a world free from violence.

Amen.

Appendix 12

Seminar Preaching: Homily 3 for the Third Seminar Session

One in Christ: Confronting Intimate Partner Violence through Faith and Unity

Deacon Vincent Thu Dam

Galatians 3:28 - *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Homily Text:

I. Prefiguration Stage: Cultivating Awareness & Understanding

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Intimate Partner Violence within the Vietnamese American community remains a hidden wound, veiled by cultural stigma and the pressure to preserve family honor. Studies suggest that nearly 40% of Asian American women experience some form of IPV, yet less than 10% report their abuse, silenced by cultural barriers.

Kim, a Community Liaison for the Equitable Neighborhoods Initiative, has spent over a decade walking alongside Vietnamese American women in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. Her work has unveiled a painful truth—Intimate Partner Violence is not merely an external force, but an internalized belief, deeply rooted in the soil of culture.

Time and time again, Kim encounters women who, despite enduring abuse, do not recognize it as such. “They were brought up in the belief that once you’re married, you have to accept what is given to you, what is thrown at you,” she shared. This acceptance of suffering is not just taught—it is inherited, passed down through generations, a silent tradition veiled as duty, a sorrowful inheritance.

Yet, beneath this silence lies the unspoken fear of independence, a fear that whispers of inadequacy. Vietnamese women are often taught that they must be subordinate to their

husbands—educationally, financially, socially. Their husbands are expected to soar, and they are expected to stand behind them, unseen, their own light dimmed. For many, marriage is not a dance of partnership but a rigid hierarchy, leaving them convinced that they would be nothing without their husbands, their identities intertwined to the point of invisibility.³⁶¹

But what does God say to this sorrowful inheritance?

II. Configuration Stage: Sound Teaching & Challenging Bias

Paul declares in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus”.

These words are more than ancient theology; they are a divine decree, a call to action, an undeniable truth that must reshape our understanding of marriage and relationships. They are a beacon, illuminating the path toward equality and mutual respect.

Christ does not call us into bondage. He does not command women to endure suffering as a prerequisite for salvation, nor does He grant men divine authority to dominate and oppress. In Christ, all are equal—all are one, a tapestry woven together by love and grace. Yet today, this message of unity is distorted, ignored, and even weaponized, twisted to justify control and abuse. Marriage should reflect love, mutual respect, and dignity, a sanctuary of shared dreams and equal partnership, yet for too many, it has become a cycle of control, a prison built on fear. Intimate Partner Violence is not a private matter—it is a crisis, a violation of God’s intention for human relationships, a desecration of the sacred bond.

In Paul’s time, rigid societal structures dictated who was worthy and who was lesser—rules that separated Jew from Greek, slave from free, man from woman. But Paul shattered those

³⁶¹ Kim-Lien Tran, “Vietnamese Women Trapped between an Abusive Home and a Global Pandemic,” *Enialabama.org*, 2023, accessed June 19, 2015, <https://enialabama.org/vietnamese-women-trapped-between-an-abusive-home-and-a-global-pandemic/>.

barriers, proclaiming that no person should be valued less, treated as inferior, or forced into subjugation, each soul a precious gem in God's eyes. And yet, centuries later, Intimate Partner Violence flourishes in the shadows of silence, a dark stain on our community.

Women are taught to endure rather than speak, their voices stifled by fear and tradition. Families urge victims to stay rather than seek refuge, prioritizing appearances over well-being. Churches, at times, have focused on reconciliation without first demanding justice, offering forgiveness without accountability. But reconciliation cannot exist where there is no repentance, a turning away from harm. Healing cannot exist where wounds are still being inflicted, where pain is a constant companion. Love cannot exist where control has taken root, choking the life out of the relationship.

But to those men who have chosen the path of violence, who have used their strength to dominate and control, I say this: There is another way. Recognize the pain you have caused, the trust you have broken, the love you have destroyed. Repent, turn away from violence, and seek transformation. It takes courage to admit wrongdoing, but in doing so, you open the door to healing and restoration. Seek help, learn to love with respect and compassion, and become the man God intended you to be. The Church is here to support you on this journey, offering guidance, counseling, and the unwavering grace of God.

What must we do? We must stand, speak, and act, becoming instruments of God's love and justice. As followers of Christ, we must reject the notion that suffering is a woman's calling, a twisted interpretation of faith. We must empower victims to reclaim their dignity, providing them with support, sanctuary, and solidarity, surrounding them with a community of love and understanding.

Imagine a Vietnamese American wife who has suffered in silence for years, her spirit dimmed by abuse. One day, she finds the courage to seek help, her heart trembling with fear and hope. Rather than shame her, the church welcomes her with open arms, offering counsel, emotional support, and the resources she needs to rebuild her life, brick by brick. In that sacred space, she discovers the truth of Galatians 3:28—that in Christ, she is seen, valued, and embraced in full dignity, her worthiness affirmed.

The church must not be a place where suffering is buried, a tomb of silence—it must be a place where wounds are healed and voices are amplified, a chorus of hope and resilience.

III. Refiguration Stage: Compassionate Support & Transformation

If we are to embody Christ's love, we must ensure that every person—regardless of gender, status, or background—is treated with dignity and respect, their inherent worth recognized and celebrated. How do we enact this transformation, turning words into action?

- We create safe spaces, sanctuaries of trust and understanding. No woman should feel abandoned by her faith community, left to navigate the darkness alone.
- We challenge harmful cultural norms, dismantling the structures that perpetuate silence and shame. Silence must be broken, shattered by the force of truth. Shame must be cast out, replaced by acceptance and support.
- We offer financial assistance and counseling, providing practical resources for healing and independence. A victim's ability to leave must not depend on economic circumstance, their freedom hindered by financial chains.
- We educate husbands and fathers, fostering a culture of respect and equality. Love must be taught, modeled, and lived. Control must be unlearned, replaced by empathy and compassion.

Paul's words demand action, a commitment to justice and equality. We must confront oppression, proclaim justice, and restore dignity, becoming advocates for those who have been silenced. Intimate Partner Violence must never be tolerated, never excused, never ignored. The Church must rise as a beacon of hope—offering support, advocacy, and unwavering love, a testament to God's transformative power.

Let us turn to the Lord in prayer: Lord, may your love be a refuge for the wounded, a balm for their aching hearts. Let Your justice bring light into the shadows, breaking the chains of oppression, setting the captives free. May your Church rise as a sanctuary of healing, where every heart is seen, valued, and protected, a testament to your boundless love. Guide us in fostering justice, peace, and restoration, empowering us to be instruments of your grace. Amen.

Appendix 13

First Presenter's Homily on IPV

“Healing and Hope: Lessons from Bathsheba's Trauma”

Deacon Dominic Hoang Thuong

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, we give thanks to the Lord for the opportunity to gather here and reflect on the heartbreaking story of Bathsheba, the wife of King David and mother of King Solomon, as recounted in 2 Samuel, Chapter 11.

This story is not only a historical account in salvation history but also a profound reflection on the abuse of power and violence inflicted on the vulnerable—particularly women.

When we place ourselves in Bathsheba's position, we begin to grasp her suffering and misfortune, which challenges us to recognize:

1. The urgency of addressing family and community violence,
2. The test of our faith,
3. The necessity of seeking healing, reconciliation, and moral and spiritual renewal for ourselves and our communities as the people of God.

Statistics from the World Health Organization (2000–2018) show that 1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence. These figures highlight the immense suffering and despair faced by countless women.

Bathsheba's story illustrates this pain when King David abused his power to force her into a sexual relationship. Bathsheba's trauma underscores the importance of addressing family violence today.

Her story also challenges us to examine our faith in relationships between men and women, husbands and wives, and our attitudes toward family violence victims. It calls us to ask:

1. What do we believe about gender roles in relationships?
2. How can we support victims in their suffering?
3. Should we join discussions about violence to deepen our awareness of human dignity and build respectful, loving friendships?

In the cultural context of King David's time, women lived in subordination, especially to powerful men. Bathsheba, the wife of the loyal soldier Uriah, was seen bathing from King David's rooftop. Driven by desire, the king exploited his power to summon her and force her into a sexual relationship.

While Uriah risked his life on the battlefield, King David not only violated Bathsheba but also plotted to kill her husband to cover his wrongdoing. Uriah, a man of integrity and devotion, refused to return home to his wife while his comrades and the Ark of the Covenant were in battle.

David schemed further, sending Uriah to the front lines to ensure his death. Can we imagine Bathsheba's anguish as she endured sexual violence and the murder of her husband by the same man?

Bathsheba's story is not confined to scripture - it persists in our time. Facing any injustice, especially against women subjected to sexual violence, silence equals complicity. We must stand for women's equality and dignity. Bathsheba was dehumanized and reduced to mere physical beauty, contrary to God's teaching: "God created male and female in His image."

As baptized members of Christ's body, scripture assures us: "In Christ, there is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for all are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Together, we are parts of Christ's body, and if one part suffers, all suffer (1 Corinthians 12:24–25).

Violence in any form defies God's teachings. When it occurs within our Catholic communities, we harm the body of Christ itself. If one part injures another, it is akin to one hand cutting the other.

As members of Christ's body, we are responsible for helping abused women restore their dignity, honor, and well-being. Among these victims, many are morally injured, traumatized, and unable to think clearly due to fear and anxiety caused by violence.

Our communities must provide a safe, trustworthy environment for victims to share their pain. This support will alleviate their loneliness and sorrow. Let us cultivate a space of genuine friendship, where victims can heal and rediscover love and mutual respect. Friendship is a powerful tool for healing, reminding us that we are never alone in our struggles.

The Lord calls us not only to advocate for women's equality and respect but also to pray for the repentance of abusers. God is willing to leave ninety-nine sheep to search for the one that is lost (Luke 15:4).

For example, King David repented after the prophet Nathan confronted him, exclaiming, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13). God forgave David when he earnestly sought forgiveness.

But without Nathan's wisdom and courage to expose David's crime, would he have repented? It is time for us, too, to condemn IPV and call for repentance among abusers, so they may seek forgiveness and healing from God.

God desires to abandon no one. He created us all with the hope of eternal life with Him. David's journey reminds us of the need to recognize our sins and amend our ways. It emphasizes human fallibility, the transformative power of repentance, and God's boundless mercy.

Conclusion:

Brothers and sisters, Bathsheba's story and David's sin occurred within Christ's lineage. It also reflects the struggles of countless women suffering violence today within their homes.

As members of Christ's body, let us boldly proclaim God's message of equality between men and women, both created in His image. We are also called to participate in ministry to heal and restore the dignity of abuse victims.

Let us share the fellowship received through Christ, who said, "I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you." Finally, let us turn to Our Lady of La Vang, who comforted persecuted Vietnamese Catholics. May she intercede for us now, praying for healing and restoration of the God-given dignity within us. Amen.

Appendix 14

Second Presenter's Catechism Lesson on IPV

"Catechism Lesson on Intimate Partner Violence by Husbands against Wives"

Sister Mary Ngo, O.P.

A. Introduction:

- Hang, a teenager, has grown up in a home filled with conflict, constantly overhearing her parents' arguments over various issues. Too often, she has witnessed her father brutally beating her mother, leaving her injured and humiliated. Hang herself has suffered from his violence, struck repeatedly for reasons she does not understand. Filled with deep resentment, she confides in others about her hatred toward her father and vows to leave home as soon as she comes of age.
- As you've just heard, IPV is a critical and urgent issue. It not only causes physical and emotional harm but also destroys the foundational values of marriage and family. Now, let's stand together to listen to the Word of God.
- **Content:** Read the Gospel of John 8:1–11:

While Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin anymore."*

I. Prefiguration Stage:

1. **Fostering Awareness:**

- Ask questions to engage the youth:

a) What do you think about IPV, and why is it such a serious issue?

Purpose: To help them understand the urgency of addressing IPV and its importance.

b) Why do some people remain silent and avoid fulfilling their prophetic mission against IPV? What can we do to change this mindset? *Purpose:* To encourage reflection and discussion on beliefs and attitudes toward IPV and ways to transform them.

c) How do you feel knowing that some of your peers live in fear, depression, and stress due to witnessing IPV? What can we do to help them?

Purpose: To foster empathy and inspire the youth to take responsibility in building loving and peaceful families and communities.

- Share statistics: One in three women experiences IPV. In 100 families, 30 face IPV. Nearly two out of three women have endured at least one form of violence—physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or controlling behavior. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2023, the female population in the U.S. was estimated at 167 million. Based on a 24.3% rate, approximately 40.6 million women have experienced IPV in their lives. This alarming figure demands attention.

2. **Fostering New Awareness:**

- What is IPV? It occurs when a family member intentionally harms or threatens another. Simply put, it's using power to dominate others to resolve family issues.

- What is family? According to the Apostolic Exhortation *Lumen Gentium*, family is the “Domestic Church” (*LG 11*), reflecting God’s love and forming a lasting community of love. Any act of violence within the family contradicts Church teachings and God’s intentions.
- Despite alarming statistics and tragic consequences, IPV persists in society today. With technological advancements, human relationships have grown distant. IPV worsens when we remain indifferent, fail to act, and dismiss it as “someone else’s problem.”

3. Understanding Context:

- Reflect on the Gospel story of the adulterous woman during Jesus’ time. Women were undervalued and had no societal standing as they do today. Men treated women as property, using them at will. In Jewish society, women couldn’t participate in religious or social activities.
- Imagine the fear, shame, and pain of the woman accused of adultery. She likely suffered severe trauma and emotional distress. People accused her without hearing her story. Where was her husband? Or was she being used to trap Jesus and challenge His teachings in the temple?

4. Connecting to Contemporary Issues:

- Dear youth, like the woman in the Gospel story, many women today face the risk of assault in society and discrimination within their families. When husbands abuse their wives, they often believe they have the right to do so, justifying their actions as acceptable.

II. Configuration Stage

1. **Biblical Teachings:**

- Scripture upholds love and charity, strongly condemning any form of IPV, especially by husbands against wives, as it contradicts God's desire for love, respect, and justice in marriage.
- *Gen 1:27*: "God created mankind in His image, male and female He created them." Everyone has intrinsic dignity; no one has the right to violate or demean another, especially within the family.
- *Eph 5:25*: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her." Violence contradicts Christ's call to love. Husbands are called to love their wives as themselves, not to dominate or harm them.
- *Col 3:19*: "Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them." This teaching forbids cruelty, abuse, or any harm toward one's wife.
- *1 Pet 3:7*: "Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." IPV not only harms wives but also disrupts a husband's relationship with God.

We must learn from Jesus the importance of respecting others' dignity and honor. Even those condemned and marginalized by society remain God's children, redeemed by Christ's blood.

2. **Challenging Prejudices:**

- Why, as Christians, do we hesitate to fulfill our prophetic mission against IPV? How can we combat inequality when women are still discriminated against in families and society?

- We must denounce violence, advocate for gender equality, eliminate discrimination across all spheres of Church and social life, and reject patriarchal systems that perpetuate IPV.
- As young people, we are called to build a fairer society where everyone is respected and has equal opportunities to thrive.

3. **Urging Abusers to Repent:**

- Alongside condemning abusive husbands, we must encourage them to acknowledge their faults and commit to becoming better husbands and fathers.
- Priests and religious leaders must accompany families, especially abusive husbands, and guide them toward nonviolent solutions. Leaders must help abusers recognize that IPV is a grave sin against both their wives and God.
- Scripture clearly condemns family violence, advocates for the wounded, and calls spouses to live in love, respect, and harmony. The Church urges victims to seek help and rejects silence in the face of injustice.
- The Catechism emphasizes the family as the foundation of society and a place where people learn to love and be loved. IPV damages not only families but also society as a whole.
 - *CCC 2204*: “The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”
Violence destroys this image of God.
 - *CCC 1603*: “God created man and woman to live in a loving, enduring union, not in oppression or domination.”
- Church leaders consistently speak out against IPV.

- St. John Paul II, in *Familiaris Consortio*, emphasized: “Domestic violence violates human dignity and contradicts God’s intention for marriage and family.”
- Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in Veritate* warned: “Love cannot coexist with violence; any form of oppression in the family is a betrayal of true love.”
- Pope Francis, in *Amoris Laetitia* (141), strongly condemned family violence, especially against women and children, and called Christian communities to protect the vulnerable.
- The U.S. Bishops have also condemned domestic violence, urging communities to act decisively against it. Many dioceses, parishes, and organizations have prioritized addressing family violence since then.

4. Empowering Women:

- The Catholic Church condemns family violence and encourages victims to protect themselves and ensure their safety.
- Parishes must advocate for victims, denounce all forms of violence, and provide resources and support, ensuring victims do not suffer in silence.
- Just as Jesus defended and forgave marginalized women who sought Him, parish communities must protect and support abuse victims.
- Victims and faithful communities must not remain silent or believe they must endure abuse for religious reasons. Pope Francis has said: “Domestic violence is unacceptable. God does not will it.”

5. Building Community Support:

- Our parish must foster a loving, respectful community where abused wives feel safe, supported, and protected.
- The U.S. Bishops' 1992 pastoral letter reminds us to build a caring community that uplifts families by:
 - Inviting victims to seek help from family, Church, and society.
 - Recognizing that many abused women turn to the Church first as a safe place where they can escape pain and isolation.

6. Renewing Identity:

- As we see in the Gospel story of the accused adulteress, Jesus did not condemn the woman. He healed her and renewed her because His Word saved and transformed her.
- What if we, too, learn from Jesus to respect the dignity of others as He did for this woman? Might Jesus be calling us to let His Word transform us, guiding us to treat one another with equality, respect, and love to prevent and eliminate violence within our parish communities?

III. Refiguration Stage

1. Compassionate Support:

- Many of you have already helped and comforted friends in times of distress. Likewise, parish communities must provide pastoral care to bring hope and healing to IPV victims.
- This care includes counseling, prayer, and practical support, sending a clear message that hope and healing in Christ are always possible. Through the faith community, victims will never be alone.

- A powerful healing source is prayer. *Psalms* 55 is particularly meaningful for women facing IPV.
- Parish communities should also guide victims toward social and legal support when needed. Counseling centers for marriage and family can provide psychological and spiritual aid.

2. Acknowledging Trauma:

- Many abused wives unknowingly suffer from trauma or spiritual injury. Their moral compass has been damaged, leaving them uncertain about how to overcome this harm.
- Trauma impacts behavior and psychological responses, altering victims' self-concept. They may lose trust and avoid intimate relationships because of their distressing experiences. Trauma changes not just how we think, but also our ability to think.
- In such painful situations, our community is called to witness deeply to these women's experiences by acknowledging their trauma and standing in solidarity with them. Recognizing their pain is the first step toward healing.

3. Promoting Fellowship:

- Women who have suffered IPV need to hear Christ's words to the adulterous woman in John 8:1–11. As Jesus restored her dignity, forgave her, and invited her to live according to His ways, so must our parish community.
- We must create a supportive community where victims can find hope and healing. This includes providing safe spaces for sharing and fellowship, reflecting Christ's compassion.

4. Transforming Identity:

- As a faith community, we must inspire abused and marginalized women to reclaim their dignity, boldly stand for equality, and reject violence and its perpetrators.
- Together, like Christ, we can create a community of healing and transformation, helping victims overcome pain and trauma, bringing smiles after tears.
- Abused women may have cried much due to their suffering, but with God's Word and the support of our faith community, they can be transformed and live new lives in Christ. They can find happiness and success as they encounter God through us.

B. Conclusion

- Dear students, IPV is a grave issue that the Catholic Church cannot ignore. Based on Scripture and Church teachings, all forms of family violence are condemned. To build a Christian family rooted in love and respect, we must rely on Church guidance while actively supporting victims and working to end IPV in society.
- IPV not only harms individuals but also weakens the Christian community. Families should be places of love, not violence. Inspired by Scripture, such as the story of the adulterous woman in *John 8:1-11*, and the Catechism's teachings on human dignity and the sanctity of marriage, we are called to act against Intimate Partner Violence. Through raising awareness, promoting change, and providing support, we can build a community of love and justice that reflects God's love.
- Each of you is called to cultivate a culture of love, protect the vulnerable, and eradicate family violence. Let our families become true signs of God's love and genuine

communities of love in today's world. May God empower us to be agents of reconciliation, hope, and healing, creating a Christian community that reflects the compassion and love of Christ. May the Holy Spirit guide us in bringing healing and love to all.

Appendix 15

Third Presenter's Lecture on IPV

“Honoring Your Wives: A Call to End Intimate Partner Violence”

Deacon Candidate: Mr. Vivian Hoang

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, we gather to reflect on an urgent issue that deeply impacts many families and communities: Intimate Partner Violence by husbands against their wives. Guided by the words of St. Peter in his first letter, Chapter 3, Verses 1–7, we are called to recognize, understand, and act against this grave injustice. Let us pray for the wisdom and guidance of the Lord, so our response reflects His love and justice.

In 1 Peter 3:1–7, we read: “Wives, in the same way, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (NIV).

The Reality of Intimate Partner Violence

Brothers and sisters, Intimate Partner Violence is a global crisis affecting millions. Statistics reveal that one in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. These numbers represent real lives, families, and suffering. Stories of women enduring in silence, feeling trapped and powerless, remind us that this is not a distant issue. It exists within our communities and demands our attention and compassion.

Reflecting on these realities, we must challenge our beliefs and attitudes toward Intimate Partner Violence. What assumptions do we hold about abusive relationships? How do we view the roles of men and women in these dynamics?

We are called to have honest conversations about harmful patterns and to cultivate a culture of respect and equality. We must ask ourselves: How can we become advocates for change in our families and communities?

Scriptural Teachings on Love and Respect

Scripture unambiguously calls us to reject violence and embrace God's love and justice. The greatest commandment is to love God and love one another.

As a married man himself, St. Peter offers teachings rooted in deep understanding. He exhorts wives to love and respect their husbands with sincerity and inner beauty, rather than relying on outward appearances. To husbands, he gives a clear charge: to love their wives with understanding and respect.

To fully grasp St. Peter's message, we must consider the cultural and historical context of the times. In Peter's era, social norms often relegated women to subordinate roles. Yet, the call for mutual respect and love transcends cultural boundaries. Scripture invites us to reflect on the inherent dignity of every person, created in the image of God, and to confront societal norms that perpetuate violence and inequality.

Lessons for Today

The call for respect and love in marriage remains just as relevant today. As St. Peter urged wives to demonstrate faith through their actions, we are invited to embody compassion and justice in our relationships. We must recognize that love and respect are foundational to healthy relationships, and any form of violence contradicts these principles.

Consider the relationship between St. Joseph and Mary as an example of faithful love and mutual support. Joseph deeply respected and cared for Mary. When he learned of her pregnancy, he planned to quietly separate from her to spare her shame (Matthew 1:18–19). However, after the angel revealed the truth, Joseph embraced Mary as his wife and cared for his family (Matthew 1:20–24).

A Call to Action

We must denounce social inequality and discrimination against women. The historical injustices faced by women, both in biblical times and today, demand our action. We cannot remain silent in the face of oppression. Instead, we must work toward a society that values every individual equally, regardless of gender.

For those in positions of power, particularly abusive husbands, repentance and transformation are essential. Scripture compels us to change our hearts and actions. Both the Old and New Testaments warn of the consequences of violence and call for forgiveness and healing. It is never too late to turn toward love and respect.

As a faith community, we are called to foster a culture of mutual support, love, and respect. Church teachings emphasize the importance of building relationships grounded in equality and compassion. We must create safe spaces where individuals feel empowered to share

their experiences and seek help. By participating in meaningful pastoral ministry, we become holy and transform ourselves and our communities through God's Word.

Supporting Victims of Abuse

For those who are victims of violence, our community must provide pastoral care, offering hope and healing. We must acknowledge the pain and trauma many women have endured and provide counseling, prayer, and practical support. As a source of comfort and strength, we remind victims they are not alone in their struggles, and we affirm the hope of healing in Christ.

Conclusion

May the teachings of Christ inspire us to transform our lives and our communities. May His love reshape our hearts and relationships, leading us to healthier and more loving interactions.

The message in 1 Peter 3:1–7 serves as a powerful reminder of the call for mutual respect and love in marriage and the broader community.

Let us commit to participating in parish ministries, receiving God's blessings, and living lives of holiness in every context, including our families and marriages. May we become agents of reconciliation, witnesses of faith, and devoted spouses in the Christian community, reflecting the compassion and love of Christ.

Let us pray for all those affected by Intimate Partner Violence, asking God to grant us His wisdom so that we may become agents of change, standing against violence and advocating for a world where everyone is treated with dignity and love.

Appendix 16

Mapping Method for IPV Homily Creation

Preachers can effectively structure their homilies on IPV following the three-stage structure of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model—Prefiguration, Configuration, and Refiguration—which provide a logical and insightful framework for delivering meaningful sermons. This structured approach enables preachers to integrate theological reflection and pastoral guidance in a coherent manner.

To facilitate this process, a mapping method can be utilized, allowing preachers to systematically plug their ideas into each stage of the Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model, ensuring a comprehensive and impactful message that resonates with their congregations.

Homily Mapping Method: A Guide for Preaching Against IPV

I. **Prefiguration Stage** (Introduction - Cultivating Awareness & Understanding)

1. **Goal:** To capture the audience's attention, create a sense of urgency, and establish a foundation of understanding about IPV.
2. **Preaching Method:** Narrative Preaching
3. **Mapping Prompts:**
 - a. **Statistics & Stories:**
 - *What statistics about IPV in the Vietnamese American community can I share to shock and awaken the audience?* (e.g., prevalence rates, underreporting, impact on children)
 - *What compelling, anonymized story or testimony of an IPV survivor can I share to humanize the issue and evoke empathy?* (Focus on the survivor's experience, not sensational details of the abuse.)
 - *What are the cultural factors that contribute to IPV in the Vietnamese American community?* (e.g., family honor, gender roles, communication styles)
 - b. **Challenging Beliefs:**

- *What common misconceptions or harmful beliefs about IPV exist in the community?* (e.g., “It’s a private matter,” “She must have done something to provoke him,” “Divorce is always wrong.”)
 - *What questions can I pose to the audience to encourage self-reflection and challenge these beliefs?* (e.g., “Is silence truly golden when it protects an abuser?” “What does it mean to honor family when it comes at the cost of someone's safety?”)
- c. **Biblical Narrative Context:**
- *What Old Testament or New Testament narrative can I use as a starting point?* (e.g., Tamar in 2 Sam 13, the woman caught in adultery in John 8, the Canaanite woman in Matt 15)
 - *What was the sociocultural and historical context of this narrative?* (e.g., what were the power dynamics at play? How were women viewed in that society?)
- d. **Connecting to Contemporary Issues:**
- *How does the power dynamic in the biblical narrative mirror the dynamics of IPV today?*
 - *What are the parallels between the challenges faced by the biblical character and the challenges faced by IPV survivors in the Vietnamese American community?*

II. Configuration Stage (Body - Sound Teaching & Challenging Bias)

1. **Goal:** To present clear biblical teachings that condemn IPV, challenge harmful cultural norms, and offer a vision of hope and justice.
2. **Preaching Method:** Prophetic Preaching
3. **Mapping Prompts:**
 - a. **Scriptural Teachings:**
 - *What specific Bible verses clearly condemn violence, oppression, and abuse?* (e.g., Gal 3:28, 1 Pet 3:7, Mic 6:8)
 - *What Church teachings affirm the dignity of women and the equality of all people?* (e.g., *Mulieris Dignitatem*, statements from the USCCB)
 - *How can I interpret these teachings in a way that is relevant and accessible to the Vietnamese American community?*
 - b. **Challenging Bias:**
 - *What are the specific patriarchal biases that contribute to IPV in the community?* (e.g., expectations of female obedience, emphasis on male authority, cultural acceptance of physical discipline)

- *How can I challenge these biases in a way that is both direct and culturally sensitive?*
- *How can I call abusive men to repentance and accountability without shaming them or alienating the audience?*

c. Empowering Women:

- *What stories of strong, resilient women in the Bible can I share to inspire hope and courage? (e.g., Mary, Esther, Ruth)*
- *How can I affirm the value and dignity of women as created in God's image?*
- *What practical steps can women take to seek help and protect themselves from abuse?*

d. Community Rally Effort:

- *What can the community do to support IPV survivors and prevent future abuse? (e.g., create safe spaces, offer counseling, provide financial assistance, challenge harmful cultural norms)*
- *How can I call the community to action in a way that is both inspiring and practical?*

e. Renewing Identities:

- *How can I help individuals align their identities with Gospel stories?*
- *How can I help them to see themselves as beloved children of God, worthy of love, respect, and dignity?*

III. Refiguration Stage (Conclusion - Compassionate Support & Transformation)

1. **Goal:** To offer pastoral hope and healing to IPV victims, inspire personal and communal transformation, and leave the audience with a sense of hope and empowerment.

2. **Preaching Method:** Pastoral Preaching

3. **Mapping Prompts:**

a. Compassionate Support:

- *What words of comfort and hope can I offer to IPV survivors?*
- *How can I validate their trauma and show them that they are not alone?*
- *What resources are available to help them heal and rebuild their lives?*

b. Acknowledging Trauma:

- *How can I acknowledge the long-term effects of trauma on IPV victims?*

- *How can I encourage them to seek professional help and support?*
- *How can I create a safe space for them to share their stories without fear of judgment or shame?*

c. Promoting Fellowship:

- *How can I foster a supportive Christian community where IPV survivors feel loved, accepted, and valued?*
- *What practical steps can the community take to create a culture of healing and hope?*
- *How can I encourage mutual support and accountability among believers?*

d. Facilitating Transformation:

- *What specific actions can individuals and the community take to challenge IPV and promote justice?*
- *How can I inspire personal and communal transformation that is aligned with Gospel values?*
- *What is my vision for a future where IPV is no longer tolerated in the Vietnamese American Catholic community?*

By using this mapping method, preachers can systematically develop homilies that are both biblically grounded and relevant to the lived experiences of IPV survivors in the Vietnamese American Catholic community. Remember to always approach this topic with sensitivity, humility, and a deep commitment to justice and compassion.

Appendix 17

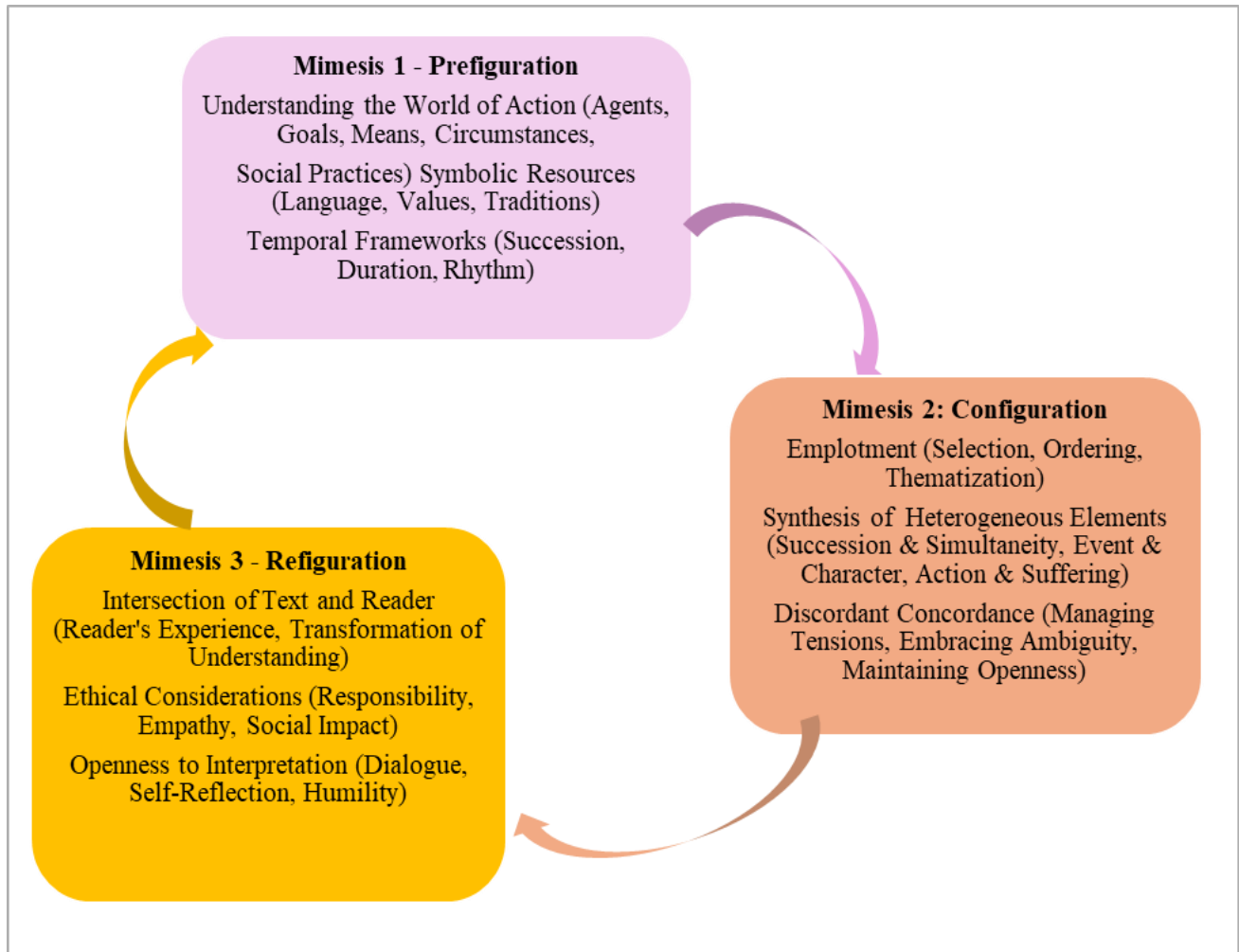


Figure 30. Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Circle of Three Stages of Mimesis.

The diagram elegantly captures the cyclical interplay of Ricoeur's threefold mimesis, illustrating how each stage builds upon and informs the others in an ongoing process of interpretation and understanding.

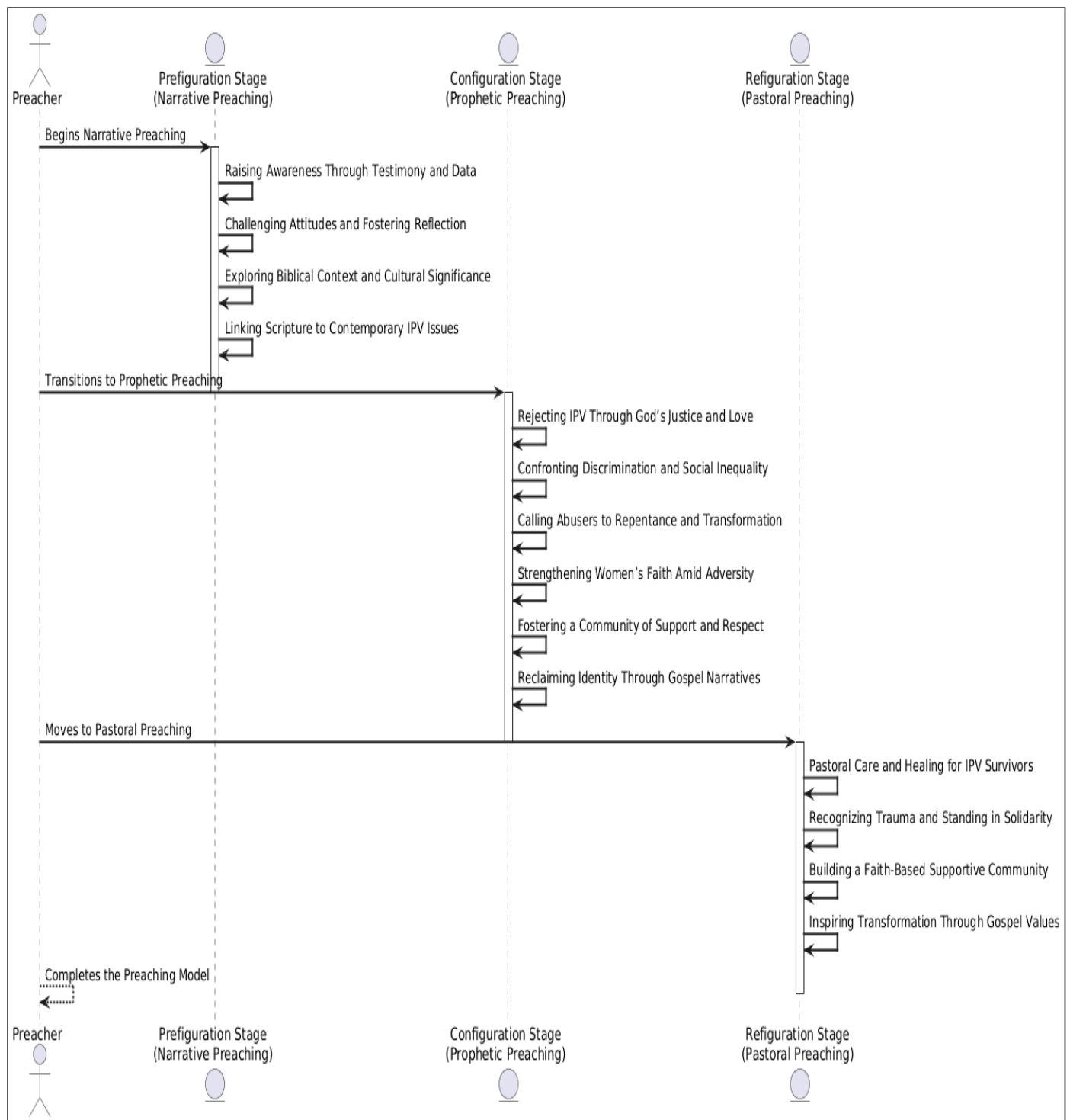


Figure 31. Breakout Stages and Tasks in Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching Model.

Stage (Ricoeur)	What It Means in General	How It Applies in Your IPV Homily Analysis
Prefiguration	The world and understanding the listener already lives in — shaped by culture, faith tradition, and life experience.	Vietnamese Catholic beliefs about marriage, biblical familiarity, and cultural attitudes toward IPV that shape how the homily will be heard.
Configuration	The act of crafting a prophetic narrative — arranging events, themes, and scripture into a coherent message.	How you weave scripture, Catholic teaching, and a real-life IPV narrative into a sermon that invites reflection and empathy.
Refiguration	The change in the listener's perception or action after engaging with the story.	A victim recognizing herself in the story, a parishioner feeling called to offer support, or a shift in community awareness about IPV.

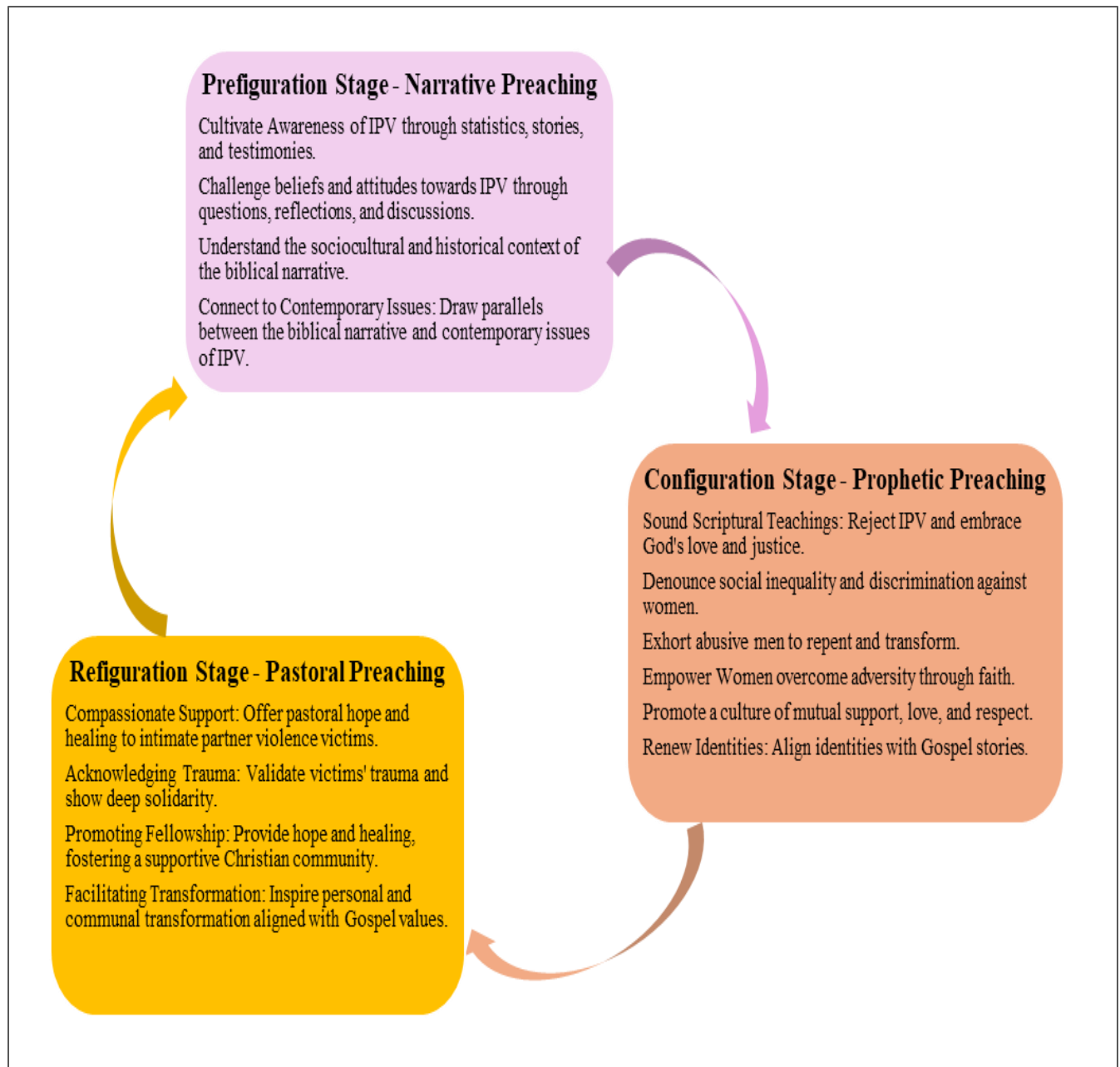


Figure 32. The Hermeneutical Lens of Prophetic Pastoral Narrative Preaching in Addressing IPV.

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