This 25 November is the twentieth International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, on the assumption that violence against women is a violation of human rights.

The Istanbul Convention, signed and ratified by Italy, is "the first legally binding international instrument that creates a comprehensive legal framework to protect women against all forms of violence". But according to the Council of Europe, which monitors the application of the convention, Italy, our country, "does too little to combat gender-based violence".

The violence we see every day is not just physical, it is mostly invisible. There is an aggression that offends the dignity of an existence in the first person, the intimate substance of life. It is an opaque, annihilating, mysteriously pervasive violence, which insinuates itself above all in the folds of the family environment. As in the past, it blames the victims themselves; it is the product of a culture that refers to the dominant, as in a mirror, its image of "legitimate Lord" and denies the life essentially proper to the dominated.

For all this, how much are religions responsible? Is the original inspiration extraneous to this? The wisdom of faiths contains an inspiration respectful of creatures, whatever sex they belong to and celebrate their dignity. The cultures and religious institutions of our world, however, as they have historically developed and been constituted, represent the eclipse of the alliance between male and female and the progressive plunge into injustice between the two sexes. Therefore, religions, until they become aware of this theft and until they change this unjust and exclusive order, are jointly responsible for the iniquity - and sin - of violence against women.

As women of Interreligious Observatory on Violence against Women (OIVD), and therefore as women of faith, we are committed to ensuring that attention is given to the responsibility of religions in violence and discrimination against women, and that everyone in the religious world cooperates to this end, in the conviction that faiths can make a fundamental contribution to the germination of the value of difference, respect, dignity and reciprocity in gender relations.

As women of Observatory we have prepared the dossier Women of faith against violence (Combonifem November-December 2019, year 85 - n. 11-12); we appreciate every useful initiative to fight violence against women, such as the notebook "16 days to win violence" promoted by the FDEI (Federation of Evangelical Women in Italy) entitled this year: Don’t forget the Istanbul Convention.

We join the associations of women, the associations of men (engaged in the theme of masculinity: we "observed" with satisfaction the growth of them) and the different realities, secular and religious, which on the national territory organize events on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to raise awareness as much as possible and hurry the day when there will be no need to celebrate it.

Interreligious Observatory on Violences against Women (O.I.V.D.)

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