

Vigils kit VeSO\ViOH 2026

Optional resources
for the preparation of
ecumenical prayer

Vigils for Overcoming Homotransbiphobia

**Together with our churches and
within the Church.**

**“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I
have called you by name” (Isaiah 43:1)**

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This document is meant to accompany different communities, whether experienced, at their first experience, or in difficult contexts. It is a collection of freely usable guidelines and advice.

- Those with little experience can use the complete script without adding anything.
- Those with more familiarity can adapt texts, timing, and gestures, or just be inspired.

Use the contents of this guide freely.

Introduction

Keeping vigil is

A vigil or worship service for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia is a shared time of prayer, Scripture, silence, and intercession, in which Christians stand before God, bringing joys, and struggles, personal and communal strengths. To keep vigil means to be with our churches.

Keeping vigil is not

A vigil or worship service for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia is not a demonstration, not a debate. Precisely because it is prayer, it becomes a space for change: it entrusts to God what causes harm and asks the churches to be a home, a safe place, a community capable of listening.

The story

In 2007, after the suicide of a young gay man in Turin, some groups of LGBT+ Christians and their parents, starting in Florence, chose to respond to violence with prayer. Thus the first vigils for the overcoming homophobia were born.

In the following years these vigils spread to many Italian cities, involving parishes, evangelical churches, religious communities, and ecumenical groups. They became moments of shared prayer capable of generating listening, relationships, and pastoral paths.

Today

Many churches in Italy have recognized the value of the vigils. The Catholic Church, for example, following the Pilgrimage of LGBT+ people and their families, in the synodal document “Leaven of peace and hope”, calls for overcoming discriminatory attitudes toward gay and transgender people (30c) and for supporting initiatives against violence and in favor of those who are wounded and discriminated against (30d). The President of the Italian Bishops’ Conference (CEI) has clarified that this participation takes place in the form of prayer and reflection, recognizing the vigils as a legitimate ecclesial practice and a pastoral responsibility.

The Church is a home for everyone.

Pastoral guidelines

The power of prayer

Four pillars

- The Word of God (brief, carefully chosen readings)
- Real silence (space for listening)
- Intercession (praying for people and communities)
- Ecclesial care (sobriety, respect, protection)

The language

- Words of dignity, listening, care, communion
- Short, verifiable statements
- A prayerful tone, not a confrontational one
- Attention to families and local communities

Style

- Sobriety: few, precise words
- Nonviolence: no one is humiliated
- Communion: "here you can pray without fear"
- Clear timing: 60 minutes

Avoid

- Aggressive slogans
- Hurtful irony
- Generic labels ("you are...")
- Names and details that expose third parties
- Unmoderated open mic

Vigils or worship services for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia are held throughout the month of May, with each community choosing the day that best fits its context.

Objective: to safeguard lives, foster peace, and educate the community in listening.

The vigils are ecumenical: born and lived together by different Christian communities, united in prayer.

The Verse

Each year a verse accompanies the vigils.

*“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name.”*

(Isaiah 43:1)

The verse that accompanies the vigils emerges from a shared process: an initial selection proposed by an ecumenical and interfaith commission of pastors, ministers, and volunteers, followed by an online vote involving associations, groups, and individuals.

For 2026, Isaiah 43:1 was chosen: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name.” It is a word addressed to wounded and uprooted people, speaking of recognition, dignity, and liberation. In the vigils it resounds as a word against every form of erasure, and in favor of a horizon in which no LGBT+ person has to be afraid to exist, to believe, and to live.

In the vigils, Isaiah 43:1 accompanies names and stories and becomes a public word against homotransbiphobia. It is a shared responsibility: allowing ourselves to be called by name and learning to call one another by name, through words and gestures that say, “do not fear, you are not alone”.

Isaiah 43:1 arises in a situation of fractured identity. This section of the Book of Isaiah was composed during the Babylonian exile, when many people had lost land, name, social role, and shared memory. For this reason the expression “I have called you by name” is striking: it goes against imperial logic, which erases differences, and instead restores personal recognition.

The verb “to redeem” refers to a concrete legal practice in ancient Israel. The go’el, the redeemer, was the relative who intervened when someone had lost freedom, land, or dignity. Applying this language to God means affirming that liberation depends above all on a relationship of belonging.

The text does not promise that suffering will disappear, but that identity will not be erased. It is a word that does not deny the wound, but affirms that it does not have the final word.

Recap

Brief

- The vigil is an act of prayer, prayer as a response to violence.
- The vigils take place with our churches, as missionary churches, leaven of peace and hope.
- The vigils arise from the ground up, from local communities.
- The recognition of the vigils within the Catholic Church is reflected in official acts and statements by Church authorities.
- Many Christian communities, such as the Baptist, Methodist, and Waldensian churches, support the vigils.
- Keeping vigil means standing with, not against: it is not a demonstration, a debate, or a seminar.
- The four pillars of the vigil are: the Word, silence, intercession, and ecclesial care.
- The style is calm, respectful, nonviolent, inclusive, with clear and sustainable timing.
- The biblical verse is chosen each year by the communities, as a shared spiritual core.

Safeguarding

In some countries or local contexts, publicly organizing a vigil for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia may expose people to legal, social, or physical risks. Where gathering openly is not safe or lawful, safeguarding takes priority over visibility.

In such cases, it is appropriate to **avoid public announcements**, precise dates and locations, **names** of participants, **photos** or **recordings**, and any **identifying details**. The vigil may take place in small, discreet forms, or be integrated into broader moments of prayer, without explicit external labeling.

Protecting people is not a lack of courage, but an act of responsibility and care. No one should be exposed to harm in order to pray.

Pastoral foundation: respect for dignity and rejection of all violence and discrimination.

Organizational aspects

Collaboration with local communities and pastors

It is within churches that prayer takes shape. Involving the parish priest or pastor, a local deacon, or another ecclesial reference person is an important part of the process. When possible, it is good to plan the vigil together, even across different communities, because the journey against homotransbiphobia runs through the whole Christian experience and does not belong to a single denomination.

It is preferable to ask for a face-to-face meeting. In many contexts, meeting in person fosters listening, trust, and clarity more than a phone call or an exchange of emails. Bring a simple proposal, with an indicative duration (about 60 minutes) and an essential outline, and ask which pastoral or liturgical guidelines are most appropriate for the local context.

If the response is negative, it is important not to see it as a failure. Often a refusal stems from fears, pressures, or a lack of familiarity with this kind of initiative. Thank them for their time, leave open the possibility of revisiting the conversation in the future, and, without forcing the issue, continue knocking elsewhere. Many vigils were born this way, by finding a door that could open.

Short e-mail example

Dear Father _____,

We are writing to you as the _____ group/community to share a proposal for prayer that we feel is meaningful for our ecclesial journey.

On the occasion of the Vigils for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia, we would like to ask whether it might be possible to hold a prayer vigil in your parish, lasting about one hour. The vigil would be structured in a sober way: listening to the Word of God, silence, a brief meditation, moments of song, intercessions, and a simple prayer gesture. This is not a demonstration or a debate, but a time of communal prayer.

We would be glad to present the proposal to you in person and to reflect together on the style most appropriate for the parish context.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to your response.

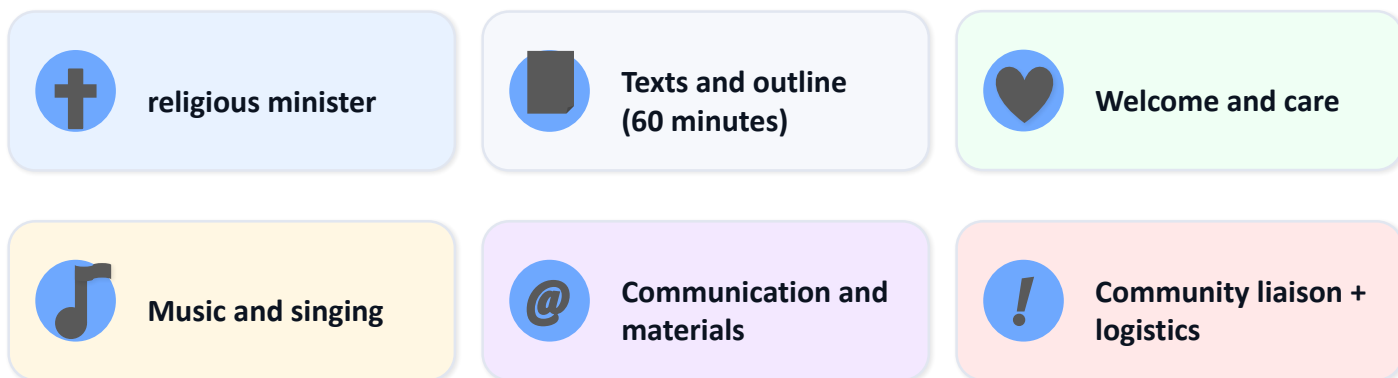
Kind regards,

“If any place will not welcome you or listen to you, as you leave, shake the dust off your feet.” (Mark 6:11)

Organizational aspects

Micro-team: essential roles

A team of three to six people is enough to organize a vigil



Don't forget to invite people from supportive communities, as well as allies.

From the decision to the vigil in few simple steps



It is simple.

Just knock politely until you find a church willing to host the event, form a small team, and invite people from your communities.

Checklist

Protect people, protect prayer.

Checklist – Startup

- Vigil simple proposal formulated (spirit, style, indicative duration).
- Community/parish contacted.
- Availability of the hosting community confirmed.
- Micro-team formed (3–6 people).
- Venue and date agreed upon.

Is organizing a vigil complicated?

No, because there is a recommended spirit, but no single format that must be followed. A vigil can be more or less elaborate.

*Involve your parish, your church, your community,
your parish priests, ministers, deacons, and bishops*

Suggested script (60min)

These contents may be used in full or adapted to the context.

Recommended readings are those that recognize dignity and open the way to communion.

10'	15'	15'	15'	5'
Welcome and introduction	Liturgy of the Word	Meditation and testimonies	Symbolic gesture and intercessions	Sending forth and conclusion

Songs and music: choose a repertoire that fosters communion. If there is no choir, a single voice with guitar or keyboard is sufficient. Suggested set may include Opening: Gather Us In (or a local equivalent); Meditation: Ubi Caritas or Where Charity and Love Prevail; After testimonies: Be Not Afraid or On Eagle's Wings; Sending forth: Prayer of Saint Francis "Make me an channel of your peace").

Welcome and introduction (10')

Soft background **music**, discreet welcome, distribution of sheets with texts and songs.

A designated person says: "We are here for a prayer vigil for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia. This vigil is a time of the Word, silence, and intercession. We wish to bring real wounds before God and to pray for a world without violence. We pray with our churches, a home where the dignity of every person is to be safeguarded. (Where necessary: To protect those present, we ask that no photos or videos be taken.)

Let us now enter into prayer.
If planned, a brief greeting from the hosting minister.

Liturgy of the Word (15')

First Reading, Psalm, Gospel or second reading. After the readings, one minute of silence. If a short framing is needed (30 seconds): "Let us allow the Word to reach us without defenses."

Option A (Acts 10)

- Acts 10:34–48 (selected excerpts)
- Psalm 33 or Psalm 34
- Luke 10:25–37 or John 8:1–11
- Silence: one real minute

Option B (Reconciliation)

- Romans 12:9–18
- Psalm 130 or Psalm 139
- 2 Corinthians 5:17–20
- Intercession: peace and care

Option C (Listening)

- Acts 8:26–39
- Psalm 23 or Psalm 27
- Galatians 3:26–28
- Key question: "What is preventing it?"

Suggested script

Meditation and Testimonies (15')

MEDITATION

Example: “Keeping vigil is not only about staying awake; it is about remaining human. It means allowing another person’s pain to interrupt us, refusing indifference. It is asking God for a world that knows how to make space, as Christ does: by caring for the person and making room for complexity without turning it into conflict. Let us pray.”

TESTIMONIES

This moment of the vigil is intended as a time of listening, structured in two movements: darkness and light. Testimonies should be agreed in advance, kept within 3–4 minutes each, and should avoid provocations, naming third parties, or details that could expose individuals or communities.

Suggested questions: What do I bring before God this evening? Where have I encountered a helping hand? What hope do I entrust to prayer?

From darkness

The first part makes space for testimonies of experiences of lgbt+phobia rejection. This is the time of darkness, in which wounds are named without provocation and without unnecessary exposure. The aim is not to denounce anyone, but to allow pain to emerge and to be brought before God and the community.

Into the light

The second part opens toward the light. Here there is space for stories of relationships that have passed through conflict and change, especially experiences of parents and sons and daughters, or of family and community bonds that have found new forms of listening and welcome. These are not “happy ending” stories, but real journeys that show how it is possible to overcome loneliness and rebuild trust.

Between the two parts, a brief transitional meditation may be included, helping to hold together darkness and light without setting them against each other, and recalling that the vigil does not seek quick solutions, but a space in which to make room for pain, hope, and above all, faith.

Suggested script

Symbolic gesture, prayer and intercession (15')

GESTURE

The gesture should be briefly explained, it should accompany the prayer without replacing it. It may consist in the lighting of candles, in placing anonymous notes with prayer intentions, sharing a meaningful word, or a gesture involving water as a baptismal remembrance.

Some possible symbols Suggestion: accompany the gesture with a repetitive chant (e.g. Ubi caritas / Taizé).



Candles

Shared light, memory and hope



Written words

One word for each person



Anonymous notes

Intentions at the foot of the altar



Water (baptismal)

Sign of new life



Pebbles

Symbol of wounds or of building up.



Ribbons

Symbol of journeys

PRAYER

Opening prayer (1):

“Faithful God, who listens to the cry of your sons and daughters, tonight we come before you with what is fragile and real: wounds, fears, silences, a longing for home. Grant us a clear gaze, sober words, and a heart capable of care. May this vigil be a place of communion and peace, and may our churches be a home for all. Amen.”

Opening prayer (2), short:

“Lord Jesus, you were not afraid of wounded people. Teach us to keep vigil with you: to listen and not judge, to protect and not wound. Stay with us. Amen.”

Penitential act, sober (optional):

“Lord, when we remained silent before words that wounded, have mercy on us.

Christ, when we chose comfort over listening, have mercy on us.

Lord, when we confused truth with harshness, have mercy on us.”

Rule: one gesture, clearly explained. The sign serves the prayer, not the spectacle.

Suggested script

INTERCESSIONS

For people who have suffered violence or exclusion because of their orientation or identity, that they may find protection, justice, and peace, we pray.

For families living with misunderstanding and fear, that they may learn a love that listens and does not humiliate, we pray.

For Christian communities, that they may be safe places where no one has to hide in order to pray, we pray.

For those with pastoral responsibility, that they may have wisdom, sober words, and the courage to care, we pray.

For those tempted by contempt or violence, that they may change their path and learn the dignity of others, we pray.

For those who feel distant from faith because they have been wounded by ecclesial experiences, that they may encounter open hands and not walls, we pray.

For young people, that they may grow in a culture of respect and nonviolence, we pray.
For us gathered here, that what we pray may become a way of life and a daily responsibility, we pray.

Prayer for peace in our communities:

“Holy Spirit, make our churches capable of listening. Where there is fear, grant trust; where there is rigidity, grant wisdom; where there is wounding, grant care; where there is anger, grant nonviolence. Let no one feel like a stranger in the house of prayer. Amen.”

Concluding prayer:

“God of life, we entrust to you those who are wounded and those who feel alone. We entrust to you families and communities. Grant us the grace of right words and concrete gestures, so that our faith may not become a burden but a home. Bless our journey and make us instruments of peace. Amen.”

Prayers of those present

At the entrance, a slip of paper is provided on which participants may freely write a prayer to be placed anonymously in a container. During the vigil, some of these prayers are read, chosen with discretion. If a prayer contains precise personal details, avoid reading them aloud.

Final song and blessing (5 minutes)

A simple song, followed by a blessing or concluding prayer. Possible sending forth (one sentence): “Let us carry outside what we have prayed here: sober words, gestures of respect, care for people.”

Suggestion: fewer readings, more space to breathe (silence and meditative song).

The vigils are prayers for peace, not places for debate or polemics.
A peaceful vigil is already in itself a political act.

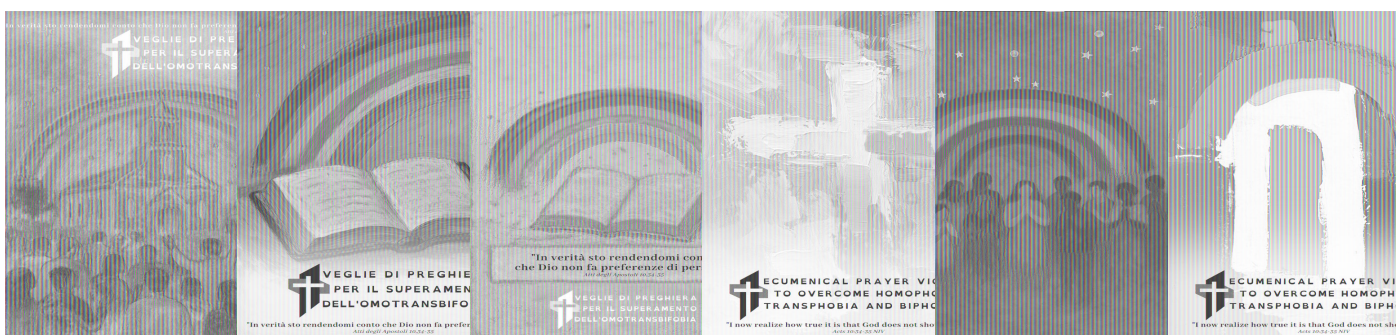
Checklist – Program

- Vigil structure defined (about 60 minutes).
- Biblical readings selected.
- Time of silence included.
- Meditation defined (brief, non-polemical).
- Testimonies agreed upon (number and length), if applicable.
- Symbolic gesture chosen and explained.
- Intercessions written.
- Opening and closing prayers defined.
- Songs selected, if planned.

Communication and networking

Communication package

Free communication materials are available to communities organizing vigils. These materials are designed to support and ease local work; to help those preparing a vigil. The communication package includes posters, social media images, ready-to-use short texts, illustrations, and logos, in pre-set versions or formats that can be easily adapted. Each community is free to use these materials as they are, modify them, or not use them at all. The goal is not to standardize, but to lighten the workload and offer practical tools. Visit <https://www.gionata.org/inveglia/kitgrafico/> to download the kit. **Additional materials will be added over time.**



Some examples

Useful advice

Communication should serve prayer, not replace it or turn it into display. Give priority to symbols and signs of communion. Avoid provocation, polarizing slogans, and sensitive themes. Photographs should never be taken or shared without consent. The protection and well-being of people always come first.



Suggested Hashtag
#INVEGLIA

Communication and networking

Vigils are a shared journey

Vigils are born and grow as a shared journey, not as isolated initiatives. For this reason, it is important to signal each vigil through the dedicated form. This helps make the network visible, keep the map updated, coordinate dates, and offer support to local communities.



Let us know about your vigil

If you are organizing a vigil or have already celebrated one, please let us know. Collecting this information helps give visibility to the vigils, strengthen the network among communities, and support those who, in different contexts, choose to pray and walk together against homotransbiphobia.

WWW.GIONATA.ORG/INVEGLIA/FORM



Stay updated

The **mailing list** is the main information channel for receiving news in English. To subscribe, write to PROGETTI@GIONATA.ORG with the subject line “subscription”.



Get in touch

A **Telegram group** is available to get to know one another and stay updated.

EN: <https://t.me/+3T7FoFRhfQ5iNDRk>

FR: <https://t.me/+pxBUxtQs2dswOTQ0>

DE: <https://t.me/+IR8IQR1gd-41ZDE0>

IT: <https://t.me/+kreBtIsKLw1lZGE0>

ES: <https://t.me/+WPSGg5HqvwEyMThk>

W

WWW.GIONATA.ORG/EN/INVEGLIA

(available in multiple languages) brings together graphic assets, interviews, articles, the vigils' map, and the FAQ; it serves as a point of reference.

A companion page can be found at www.rainbowcatholics.org/vigils

The Vigils for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia are gatherings of Christian prayer, often ecumenical, born as a response through prayer to violence, exclusion, and wounds experienced by individuals and communities. They began in Italy in 2007 and today are present in many cities and across different denominations. Each year they are accompanied by a shared biblical verse; in 2026 it is Isaiah 43:1:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name.”

Each community is free to organize the vigil in the way most suited to its own context. It generally lasts about an hour and follows a simple structure: an introduction that clarifies the spirit of the prayer; several biblical readings; a time of silence; a brief meditation or one or two agreed testimonies; a simple symbolic gesture; prayers of intercession; and a conclusion with a song and a prayer or blessing.

It is recommended to prepare everything in advance. Testimonies, if included, are personal, brief, and respectful. A symbolic gesture, such as lighting a candle, can accompany the prayer without replacing it. In sensitive contexts, such as small towns, neighborhoods where everyone knows each other, or situations in which someone might be exposed or targeted, discretion is preferred: internal communication, no public photos or videos, and care not to make people or stories identifiable. The protection of people comes before visibility.

The vigils are part of a shared journey. Before organizing one, it is helpful to check whether other local communities are doing the same and, when possible, to join efforts. Optional and adaptable materials are available online, provided by groups that accompany this path.

Knock. On parish doors, on church doors, on community doors. Knock. Ask simply; if one door closes, give thanks and move on to the next. Many vigils exist because someone continued to knock with patience and respect.

To learn more and find useful materials: gionata.org/inveglia

Final checklist

- Essential roles assigned.
- Location, date, and times confirmed.
- Final texts and outline ready.
- Testimonies confirmed, if planned.
- Rules regarding photos, videos, and privacy communicated.
- Connection to the vigils' information channels established.
- Practical communication completed.
- Technical rehearsal carried out or scheduled.

Praying together builds community.

FAQ

- **Can a Vigil for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia really be organized in a “normal” church?** Yes, it requires the hospitality of a community and the agreement of those who lead it, whether a priest, pastor, or other responsible person.

Try reaching out to communities of other denominations as well, such as Waldensian, Methodist, Baptist, Evangelical, or to local ecumenical groups. If no place is found, a vigil can be held online, or a small and simple vigil can be led by lay people, with two or three persons, remembering: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20).

- **Do I need to be an expert?** A vigil does not require expertise. It requires care.
- **Symbols, flags, signs?** Only if they support prayer. Anything that distracts should be avoided. A sober style almost always works best.
- **And politics?** The vigil is not a conference or a debate. It is a time of prayer for nonviolence.
- **The parish priest or pastor has doubts. How can we reassure them?** Listen to what truly concerns them. Reassure them and propose to build the vigil together.
- **Is permission from the bishop or a higher level required?** It depends on the context. Start from the local relationship. If the host believes it is appropriate to inform higher authorities, they will do so.
- **Does it have to be large?** No. Even a small vigil is valuable.
- **What if someone hostile shows up?** It is rare. If they are not aggressive, invite them to pray with you or leave. If they are aggressive, seek support from the authorities.
- **What if insults or provocations arrive on social media?** Avoid responding. Reduce visibility by hiding or removing comments, block and report if necessary. If a public position is needed, one sentence is enough: “Insults are not tolerated on this page; then close the matter and move on.”
- **How much does it cost?** A vigil can be organized without any financial cost. It can rely on what is already available: a space offered by a community, time freely given; communication can be done via email, and social media.
- **How much time is needed to organize it?** The main step is finding a community and a priest, pastor, or other responsible person open to hosting the vigil, and this should begin early. Once a place is confirmed and the flow is agreed upon, preparation is simple. As a general guideline, about three weeks are sufficient.

Ready to keep vigil

To keep vigil is
to remain before God.
With our wounds and our hope.
With our churches.

In the night but not in the dark,
we keep vigil together,
leaven of peace and of hope.

Vigils are prayer:
listening, silence, care,
pilgrimage.

To keep vigil is to be an open community, leaven of peace and hope

