

# 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)**

# INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared with care, patience, and attentive listening, to serve as a simple and reliable guide for the preparation and celebration of prayer vigils.

It is born from the lived experience of those who have prayed in these vigils, and of those who have planned, organized, and guided them over time.

It gathers words, gestures, and attentions that have matured through encounters with many communities, in different contexts, both simple and more difficult.

The texts presented here have been reread, reviewed, and refined with the help of priests, sisters, pastors, and other people involved in the life of their communities, from different Christian traditions, so that they might be faithful, clear, and truly useful.

It is not meant to be a rigid model, but a reliable tool that can be used as it is or adapted freely with prudence and discernment.

It is offered with simplicity, in the hope that it may support prayer, help those who lead, and help everyone feel welcomed into a moment that is meaningful, reverent, and shared.

Those less familiar with preparing vigils may wish to let the complete order guide them throughout.

Those with greater familiarity may find in these pages ideas, suggestions, and inspiration, and may freely draw on the proposals offered here.

To learn more and find useful materials: [gionata.org/inveglia](https://gionata.org/inveglia)

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# INDEX

<b>THE VIGILS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE VERSE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SAFEGUARDING</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CONTACTING</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SUGGESTED SCRIPT - STRUCTURE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SUGGESTED SCRIPT - MEDITATION</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SUGGESTED SCRIPT - THE GESTURE</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SUGGESTED SCRIPT - INTERCESSIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FAQ</b>	<b>15</b>

*Use the contents of this guide freely.*

# THE VIGILS

## 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 bring before God joys and wounds, personal and communal strengths and struggles. To keep vigil means to be with our churches.

## The story

In 2007, after the suicide of a young man in Turin who had been the victim of homophobic bullying, some groups of LGBT+ Christians and their parents, beginning in Florence, chose to respond to that violence with prayer. Thus the first *Vigils for overcoming homophobia* were born.

In the following years the 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.

## Four pillars

Word of God: carefully chosen readings.

Real silence: space for contemplation.

Intercession: praying for people and communities.

Care: attention, respect, safety.

## Style

Clarity: few, precise words.

Nonviolence: no one is attacked.

Communion: "here you are safe and can pray without fear".

Clear timing: 60 minutes.

Ecclesial: words of faith.

## Keeping vigil is not

A vigil or worship service for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia is not a protest nor a debate, but because it is prayer, it is 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.

## Today

Many churches in Italy have recognized the value of the Vigils. The Catholic Church, for example, in the synodal document "Leaven of peace and hope", calls for overcoming discriminatory attitudes toward homoaffective and transgender people and for supporting initiatives against violence and in favor of those who are discriminated against. The President of the Italian Bishops' Conference has clarified that this participation takes place in the form of prayer, recognizing the Vigils as a legitimate ecclesial practice and pastoral responsibility.

## The language

Words of dignity, care, communion.

Short, verifiable statements.

Prayerful, not a confrontational.

Attention to families and communities.

## Avoid

Aggressive slogans.

Hurtful words and irony.

Generic labels ("you are...").

Names and details that expose individuals.

Unmoderated open mic.

## THE VERSE

Each year a different 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: it begins with an initial selection proposed by an ecumenical and interfaith commission of pastors, ministers, and volunteers, and it is 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.

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.

*The Church is a home for everyone.*

# SAFEGUARDING

## 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.

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.

In dangerous contexts, if your community desires to pray in vigil, the Vigils may take place in small, discreet forms, or be integrated into broader moments of prayer, without explicit external labeling or with an alias.

The protection of people comes before visibility. 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.

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

## A real risk

Today, around 60 countries in the world criminalize same-sex relationships, and in about 10 to 12 countries people suspected or prosecuted for this can be punished with the death penalty. It is also estimated that more than 360 million Christians live in countries where they face high or extreme levels of persecution, including legal restrictions, violence, or widespread social discrimination in about 50 countries. In several of these contexts, people who are both Christian and LGBT+ face a double pressure: legal, religious, and social, often with the risk of isolation, violence, blackmail, extortion, torture, arrest, or death.

*Protecting people is not a lack of courage,  
but an act of responsibility and care.*

# CONTACTING

## 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.

Sample E-mail

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, testimonies, 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.

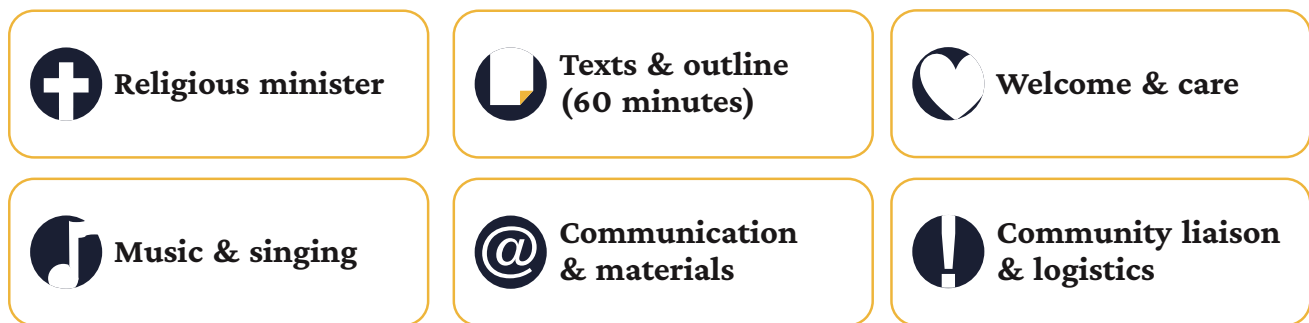
Thank you for your attention. We look forward to your response.

Kind regards \_\_\_\_\_

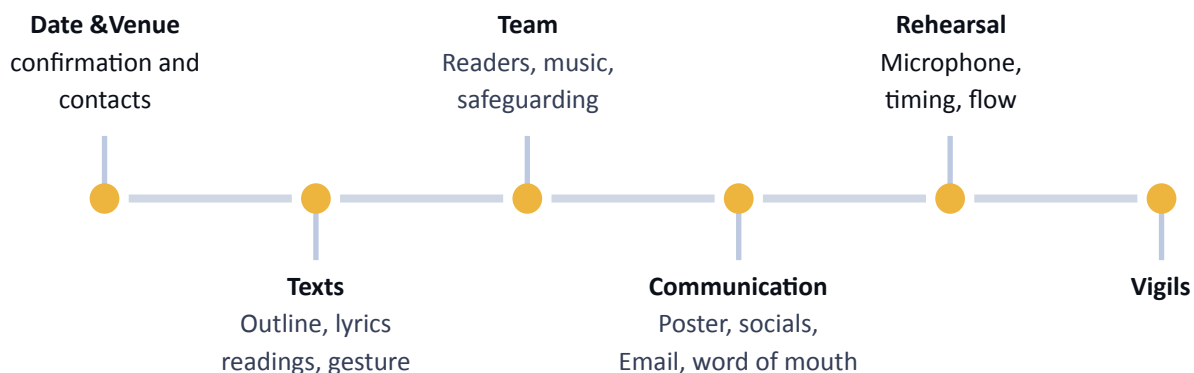
*“If any place will not welcome you or listen to you, as you leave, shake the dust off your feet.”  
(Mark 6:11)*

# ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

**Team and roles:** a team of three to six people is enough to organize a vigil.



## From the decision to the vigil in few simple steps



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

### 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.

A vigil can be large or very small; what matters is not how many people gather, but that people gather to pray.

*“Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20).*

# SUGGESTED SCRIPT - STRUCTURE

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

For music and singing, choose a repertoire that helps sustain a sense of communion. If there is no choir, a single voice accompanied by guitar or keyboard is sufficient. We suggest the following set: **Introduction:** *Il tuo popolo in cammino*, or a similar local song. **Meditation:** *Ubi caritas*. After the **testimonies:** *Su ali d'aquila*, as an expression of trust. **Sending forth:** *Prayer of Saint Francis*, as an invitation to become instruments of 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, communities 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)	Option B (Reconciliation)	Option C (Listening)
Acts 10:34–48 (selected excerpts)	Romans 12:9–18	Acts 8:26–39
Psalm 33 or Psalm 34	Psalm 130 or Psalm 139	Psalm 23 or Psalm 27
Luke 10:25–37	2 Corinthians 5:17–20	Galatians 3:26–28
or John 8:1–11	Intercession: peace and care	Key question: “What is holding us back?”
Silence: one real minute		

**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.**

# SUGGESTED SCRIPT - MEDITATION

## Meditation and Testimonies (15')

### Meditation

Example: “Keeping vigil is not only about staying awake; it is about staying human. It means allowing another person’s pain to reach 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 anti-LGBT+ violence, exclusion, and 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.

*The Vigils are ecumenical: lived together by Christian communities, united in prayer.*

# SUGGESTED SCRIPT - THE GESTURE

## 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.

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

### 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.”

### Some possible symbols

 <b>Candles</b> Shared light, memory and hope	 <b>Written words</b> One word for each person
 <b>Anonymous notes</b> Intentions at the foot of the altar	 <b>Water (baptismal)</b> Sign of new life
 <b>Pebbles</b> Symbol of wounds or of building up.	 <b>Ribbons</b> Symbol of journeys

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

# SUGGESTED SCRIPT - INTERCESSIONS

## 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 to recognise 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.*

# SUMMARY

## Summary

The Vigils for the overcoming of homotransbiphobia are gatherings of Christian prayer, born as a response to violence and exclusion. They take place in many countries and cities, often with the support of local churches and communities.

Many Christian communities, including: Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, and Waldensian churches, support the Vigils. This recognition is also reflected in official acts and statements.

They arise from the ground up, from local communities, and each community is free to organize the vigil in the way most suited to its own context.

Each year the communities share a biblical verse as a common spiritual core.

To keep vigil means standing with, not against: it is not a protest, a debate, or a seminar, but an act of prayer marked by a respectful, nonviolent and inclusive style. The four pillars of the vigil are the Word, silence, intercession, and ecclesial care.

A vigil usually lasts about one hour and follows a simple structure: an introduction, biblical readings, silence, a brief meditation or one or two agreed testimonies, a simple symbolic gesture, intercessions, and a final prayer, blessing, or song. It is best to prepare everything in advance.

Testimonies, if included, should be personal, brief, and respectful, and symbolic gestures should accompany the prayer without replacing it. Before organizing a vigil, it is helpful to check whether other local communities are doing the same and, when possible, to join efforts. Many Vigils exist because someone knocked patiently on parish, church, or community doors and kept going with simplicity and respect.

## Checklist

- Simple proposal for the vigil prepared (spirit, style, approximate duration).
- Community or parish contacted.
- Availability of the hosting community confirmed.
- Small organizing team formed (3–6 people).
- Venue, date, and time agreed.
- Structure of the vigil defined (about 60 minutes).
- Biblical readings, silence, intercessions, and opening and closing prayers prepared.
- Meditation, testimonies, symbolic gesture, and songs agreed, if included.
- Essential roles assigned.
- Final outline and practical communication completed.
- Rules regarding photos, videos, and privacy communicated.
- Safeguarding
- Technical rehearsal carried out or scheduled.

*Praying together builds community.*

# COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING



Create your poster:

If you are organizing a vigil, you can design your vigil poster for free. Visit [gionata.org/inveglia/kitgrafico](https://gionata.org/inveglia/kitgrafico) to download backgrounds and logos, or go to [gionata.org/inveglia/editor](https://gionata.org/inveglia/editor) to create a poster directly online. All materials are free and can be freely used for Vigils.



Tell us about your vigil: if you are organizing one or have already held one, please inform us. Gathering this information helps raise awareness of the Vigils, strengthen the network among communities, and support those who, in different contexts, choose to pray and stand against homotransbiphobia.

[WWW.GIONATA.ORG/INVEGLIA/FORM](https://www.gionata.org/inveglia/form)



English mailing list: the main communication channel to receive news in English about the Vigils and much more. Simply send an email to [progetti@gionata.org](mailto:progetti@gionata.org) with the subject line “subscribe” to receive updates on events, initiatives, and resources.



**Telegram groups:** Spaces to connect 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>



**Discover more at:** [www.gionata.org/en/inveglia](https://www.gionata.org/en/inveglia)

Here you will find graphic materials, interviews, articles, the vigil map, and FAQs. It serves as a stable reference point and is available in multiple languages.

## **Can a Vigil 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 and by lay people.

## **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 what about 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. 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 a large scale event?**

No. Even a small vigil is valuable. “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20).

## **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.

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, a leaven of peace and hope.

LA TENDA  
di GIONATA  
ETS.ORG

otto  
per  
8 mille  
CHIESA VALDESE  
UNIONE DELLE CHIESE METODISTE E VALDESE



COORDINAMENTO  
TEOLOGHE  
ITALIANE  
APS



Drachma  
Growing Holistically