

From the Vatican to the White House and back on Child Abuse

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International virtual ['Symposium on Child Abuse'](#) dedicated to the prevention and healing of victims of child abuse, sponsored by 45 NGOs and interfaith organizations on national and international levels gathers more than 1600 participants to listen to 73 speakers from around the world from April 8-10.

“

the Symposium will contribute to a greater awareness of the gravity and extent of child sexual abuse and promote more effective cooperation at every level of society in eradicating this profound evil”

*Pope Francis, Pontifex,
Vatican*

After her visit with the Pope Francis in 2018, Jennifer Wortham has dedicated her life to the creation of April 8 World Day initiative, which aims at establishing April 8 as a U.N.-recognized World Day for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse. The initiative, now housed at Harvard University's Human Flourishing Program, has yielded an unprecedented virtual 'Symposium on Child Abuse.'

“It's a conference that is focused overall on the issue of child sexual abuse and the engagement of the faith community, and helping to prevent and heal victims who have been impacted by child sexual abuse,” said Dr. Wortham.

Today the White House acknowledged the aims of the Symposium on Child Abuse. “In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month and @April8WorldDay, the Administration joins efforts in calling everyone to stand against every form of child abuse and to protect all children from child sexual abuse,” [reads the tweet posted](#) by the White House Gender Policy Council.

President Joe Biden responded to an open letter signed by a coalition of over 40 CEO's, including national, and international child welfare advocacy groups, and international faith-based organizations in collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse America requesting he acknowledges the April 8, World Day for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Healing, and Justice as a national day of observance in the US.

Only two hours later, Pope Francis offered [his official blessing](#) for the Symposium:

“by bringing together Religious Leaders, Scholars, and experts from various fields in order to share research, clinical and pastoral experiences and best practices, the

Symposium will contribute to a greater awareness of the gravity and extent of child sexual abuse and promote more effective cooperation at every level of society in eradicating this profound evil.”



Human Flourishing Program

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2021-04/pope-message-symposium-child-sexual-abuse-cardinal-omalley.html>

<https://twitter.com/WhiteHouseGPC/status/138017276707744645>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/03/31/a-proclamation-on-national-child-abuse-prevention-month-2021/>

<https://april8worldday.org/>

<https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/Faith-Flourishing-Symposium-On-Child-Abuse>

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