



International Solidarity Reflection

Women

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Introduction

“For nearly a century International Women's Day has been celebrated on March 8. However there is still much lacking in our culture so that the value of the woman is not only spoken about and celebrated on one day, but is part of everyday reality. Our culture remains patriarchal, with various manifestations of violence against women and marginalization; on the other hand, women are frequently burdened with many duties that should be shared. I invite you to renew attitudes and concrete actions in the different areas in which you move, in order to recognize and value the dignity and participation of women in the family, society, the Church.” (Monsignor Rodrigo Aguilar Martínez, Bishop of Tehuacan, 7 March 2009, ZENIT.org)

Call to Prayer

Called to solidarity among ourselves and with all of creation, we are willing to give our lives to be bread blessed, broken and shared for the life of the world. May we, as consecrated women, be a presence of the dignified life for so many women whose rights are not respected.

Experience

Monica Carranza, an example of solidarity, died today at age 63 after struggling for four months with cancer of the uterus. She was born in Parque Patricio, where she lived until age nine with her eleven brothers, who after the death of their father were separated and placed in various schools. Because of the circumstances, Mónica chose to live in the streets where she endured hunger, cold and suffered violence. After marrying she founded her own home in Mataderos, and established the community soup kitchen, “The Dirty Face”. She was an example of struggle and solidarity, and for that reason was chosen “Woman of the Year” in 1997. Mónica was a street child and after much effort succeeded in establishing the soup kitchen, where they feed more than two thousand families in the port neighborhood of Mataderos. We recall her words: “I do not belong to any political ideology, I have nothing, I do not know how to read or write, I have no religion because no one taught me, I only have faith in God and much love.” (Buenos Aires, 28 December [Telam - infobae.com - TN Noticias])

Reflection

The above news item reminds us that there are many women in the Bible, in history, in the world, who despite their suffering and need, give their lives, give what little they have to help others, are “examples of solidarity”. Women who “forget themselves” and struggle for their rights, the rights of other women, young people and girls.

“In an age of marked male chauvinism, the practice of Jesus was decisive in signifying the dignity of women and their indisputable value: he spoke with them, he was singularly merciful to women sinners, he healed them, he defended them in their dignity, he chose them as first witnesses of his resurrection... The figure of Mary, disciple par excellence, is essential in the recovery of women's identity and her value in the Church.” (Aparecida Document 451)

“The Church is called to share, guide, and accompany projects for promoting women with already existing organizations in society, recognizing the essential and spiritual ministry that women bear within themselves: receiving life, welcoming it, nourishing it, giving birth to it, sustaining it, accompanying it, and deploying their being as women by creating habitable spaces of community and communion.” (Aparecida Document 457)

Action

The Word of the Lord came to Elijah ... Go to Zarephath ... I have ordered a widow there to give you food ... The jar of flour was not exhausted nor the bottle of oil emptied, according to the word uttered by the Lord through Elijah. (1 Kings 17, 7-16)

- The widow gives us an example of generosity without limits. Are we able to risk even the little we have?

Jesus, sitting in front of the temple offerings, observed how a few people who lived and dressed well gave what they did not need or what they had to spare. He also observed a poor widow and valued the sacrifice and love she had, offering to God all that she had to live. (Mk. 12, 41-44)

- Jesus calls us to be supportive, including to share what we need. What gesture of solidarity do I offer?

Mary left and went immediately to a mountain village in Judah ... Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit exclaimed, “You are blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” (Lk. 1, 39-45) There was a lack of wine, and the mother of Jesus said to him: “They have no wine”... His mother told the servants: “Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn. 2, 1-12)

- Mary teaches us to begin the journey without delay, although the road is winding and long, to be of service to others; she teaches us to be “attentive” to the needs of others and to act, to make known the need and “to do “ and “to dedicate ourselves”.

In each of the texts we reflect and bring to mind examples of so many women who live these experiences and teachings of the Word of God.

Closing Prayer

Lord, through these Beatitudes of Women, we pray for all women of the world, so that from their place, their dignity, their mission, their profession, they may be happy, joyful, blessed: Happy those who work for equality because it engenders a new way of living. Happy the rescuers of freedom because with their lives they win justice. Happy those who convert to the Gospel because they make credible that God lives among us. Blessed are you women, strong, generous and supportive, who in a common search with men testify that it is possible to be equal in the differences. Blessed are you loving women, entrepreneurs, who build a more humane world. Blessed are you tender, diligent women, who with your work and effort, bring about the transformation that you dreamed. Blessed are you who, expressing your sympathy, recover the maternal face of God. Blessed are you who with your strength and perseverance glorify God transforming the world. Blessed are you who, remaining faithful to the Spirit, recover for our time the Life of the Church of the poor. Rejoice when with a prayerful and contemplative step, you know how to discover the history of revelation and interpret it for others. Rejoice when you anticipate the utopia of liberation, cultivating, harvesting, spreading the bread of community and solidarity. (Adapted Prayer: Recursos-pps, www.escolapias.org)