



04 MARCH 2022

“IN THE FOOTSTEP OF OUR FORE MOTHERS, THE BIBLICAL WOMEN”

(The Theme and Reflections of the Holy Hour is dedicated to the International Women’s Day)

HYMN: 123 Father we love you, we worship and adore you. (*Joyful Celebration*) or any other.

INTRODUCTION: Dear Friends, we have come to our burning bush, the holy ground, sanctified by the living presence of the Lord, the great I AM. We bring into community worship, our total self, our positive life events for which we are thankful to God and also our needs and concerns, praying for God’s intervention. With an open heart and a silence that is rich in attentive listening, let us gaze at our Eucharistic Lord and adore him.

(Pause for silent personal prayer....)

LEADER:

“Most Holy Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
I adore you profoundly.

I offer you the most precious body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ,
present in all the Tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages,
sacrileges and indifferences whereby He is offended.

And through the infinite merits of His most Sacred Heart
and the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

I beg of you the conversion of poor sinners.”

– *(Angel’s Prayer at Fatima)*

PERSON-1:

The theme and reflections of today’s Holy Hour is dedicated to the international Women’s Day. Women in the Bible were both victors and victims who changed the course of historical events, who played a powerful role in God’s story of redemption throughout the ages. To name a few: Mary of Nazareth, Abigail, Esther, Judith and Jael were involved in the overturning of human power structures and bringing about a reversal. These Biblical women represent not only the kind of bravery motivated by faith in the face of suffering, evil and oppression, but they represent a uniquely powerful purpose which God has designated for

women to achieve. Mary our Blessed Mother stands out above all Biblical characters, as a model of total availability to God's will.

Mary set perfect example of contemplative and active apostolate. Mary was a mother, servant, queen, disciple and guardian of the incarnate Word, a missionary who gave Jesus the way, the Truth and the Life, (*Jn 14: 6*) to the world in its totality. Jesus remarkably related to women with compassion, dignity and respect, which undoubtedly sprang from his filial relationship with Mary his mother and Mary was the first disciple, and a disciple par excellence. If Jesus preached, Mary walked the talk: lived and attested it day by day.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE FOR WOMEN

RESPONSE: *Blessed be the Lord our God.*

Blessed be the God of Ruth and Naomi, who found courage to leave behind the land and things they cherished, daring to hope for safety and newfound love rather than simply waiting to die. **R/-**

Blessed be the God of Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth who knew that only God has the power to give them, the child their hearts cry for, and who knew how to offer back to God what they received. **R/-**

Blessed be the God of Prophetess Anna who waited, Apostle Junia who led, Deacon Phoebe who provided, Joanna who ministered with good deeds, Priscilla and all others who ministered. **R/-** (*Lk 2:36-38; Rom 16: 7; Rom 16: 16: 1-2; Acts 18: 1-3*)

Blessed be the God of the bent woman of the gospel: such a God shall straighten girls and women of all ages, bound by debilitating spirits of their own times. **R/-** (*Lk 13: 10-17*)

Blessed be the God of Mary of Nazareth, the lowly handmaid whose womb became the cradle of her Creator and whose heart, the dwelling of 'love incarnate'. **R/-** (*Lk 1:26 -38*)

Blessed be the God of Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and others, who followed, cared, prayed and provided, out of their resources and Mary Magdalene, Salome and Mary, mother of James and Joses who followed Jesus beyond the tomb. **R/-** (*Lk 8: 2-3; Mk 15:40; 16: 1*)

HYMN: 263 Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. (*Joyful Celebration*) or any other.

SCRIPTURE READING: Proverbs 31:25-31

REFLECTION: The "strength" reference in *Proverbs 31* indicates strength of character. The *Proverbs 31* woman has the fortitude of character to be prudent and fair inside the home as well as in her outside interactions.

In particular, the *Proverbs 31* woman spends her days vigorously tending to her responsibilities and making discerning choices so that she and her family can have the best life possible. She spends her days honing her craft, nourishing her household, investing, selling, planting, volunteering, mentoring, worshipping God, and generally uplifting those around her with her work ethic and generous spirit. Her selfless diligence leads her husband

and children to praise her “and call her blessed” The woman is a go-getter who understands the opportunity each day brings to reflect God’s glory in her everyday conduct. It’s her faithful reverence for God that guides her attitude and actions, and brings her honour and praise. The ideal woman understands the importance of living life with courage and virtue, and “wears” these qualities in the way she carries herself and interacts with others.

HYMN: ‘I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live’: ‘Yet not I but through Christ in me’ by *City Alight*. Or *any other appropriate hymn*.

As a Catholic woman, do my priorities and choices of life reflect my sense of eternal values? Is prayer a vital part of my life?

Giving and nurturing is part of being a woman but do I also set aside personal time for spiritual, physical and emotional self- rejuvenation? We are called to give but we can’t pour from an empty cup.

Do I invite Jesus to walk with me through all the circumstances of my life, the tough times as well as the good times?

Do I find it easy to talk about God’s goodness to me and to my loved ones, or is my focus always on the lacking and problems of life?

(Moments of Silence for self examination of Life)

(HYMN: 272 Mercy Lord, we have sinned, listen to our plea, V-1 *(Joyful Celebration)*

PERSON -2: BEATITUDES FOR WOMEN. - Lori J Tisdale.

Blessed is the woman of faith and hope: She will be a sign of the presence of God among us.

Blessed is the woman of relationships: She will be a bond of unity and a sign of the fullness of God.

Blessed is the woman who welcomes: She will be kindness, the sign of the love of the Lord.

Blessed is the woman of the Word: She will be a Word of God for others.

Blessed is the woman of discernment: The wisdom of God will be her riches.

Blessed is the woman of peace and reconciliation: The strength and joy of the Lord will be hers.

Blessed is the woman who journeys towards the fullness of Christ: She will live in the freedom and light of the Lord.

Blessed is the woman of prayer: She will live in communion with God and her brothers and sisters.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

We bring to the Lord, women who played a vital part in our lives; women who nurtured us, taught us, inspired and motivated us and loved us in life. **R/-**

We pray that women all over the world may experience a sense of dignity, freedom and equality in all areas of life, especially in the areas of health care, education, social, political and economic rights. **R/-**

We pray for all the courageous women of our days, who after the example of Biblical women, strive to root out social evils of unjust oppression, corruption and moral decadence in our society today. **R/-**

We pray that all our girl children and youth grow up feeling safe, valued, included and empowered, so as to be able to live and offer the world their feminine genius. **R/-**

Bl. James Alberione said to his spiritual daughters, “Go and preach according to your nature, according to what a woman, a Sister can do. As most of pastoral theology reflects the experiences of men, so the Sisters have the beautiful mission of reflecting and communicating the spiritual experiences and insights of women and promote life to its fullness.” We pray that all religious women take to heart this mandate today. **R/-**

St Paul suggests dressing in the wardrobe God picked out for us: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. And above all, to put on love. We pray that these be our Christian women dress code. **R/-** (*Col 3: 12-14*)

We pray for peaceful solution among all the conflicting nations, especially remembering Ukraine and Russia. May God intervene and hear the cry of his people. **R/-**

CONCLUDING PRAYER: Lord God, you created us in your image and likeness. You desire that each of us live life to the full, embracing your love for us and sharing it with others. May we safeguard the daily quiet time with you in the midst of our busy schedule. May we deeply feel your infinite love for us. May we use our time, gifts, and energy in the sphere you have placed us for your glory. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: 121- Jesus my Lord, my God, my all. (*Joyful Celebration.*) or any other.

**Commission for Liturgy
Archdiocese of Bombay.**

