



03 MARCH 2023

“My Soul magnifies the Lord - Lk 1: 46”

(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.

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)*

INTRODUCTION:

The theme and reflections of today’s Holy Hour is dedicated to the coming International Women’s Day. The United Nations Observance of International Women’s Day 2023 has announced the theme as, **“DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality”** highlighting the need for inclusive and transformative technology and digital education. In our increasingly digitalised world, the widening digital gender gap can impact the economic and social inequalities. Often a healthy body results in a healthy mind and we can’t expect a sound spirituality from an unsound mind and disoriented hearts. The event also will highlight the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing online and Information, Communication Technology (ICT) facilitated gender-based violence. Just as we all need a safe and healthy home, school, Church and public places for a peaceful living; equal, safe and healthy digital space for all its inhabitants is a must for today’s generation.

A Home certainly is a domain of joy, mutual love, freedom, training and influence. If a man/father is the backbone of a Home, the woman/mother is the heart. She is the first teacher who for her intimate and sustained contact with the child, recognises and nurtures the child’s

special traits, aptitudes and attitudes which subsequently shapes the child's personality and society at large. In the presence of a mother, the home becomes an inviting, restful and cheerful place for all family members. Jesus remarkably related to women with compassion, dignity and respect, which undoubtedly sprang from his filial relationship with Mary his mother and other women disciples. Mary was the first disciple, and a disciple par excellence. If Jesus preached, Mary walked the talk by His side: lived and attested it day by day. During this Eucharistic adoration, we pray specially for all women in our lives that stand by us and are part of our own story: Our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, daughters, sisters, colleagues and friends.

(Pause for silent personal prayer....)

LEADER:

Pope John Paul II, in his letter to the Women during the United Nations Conference in Beijing, 1995 rightly said, *"Necessary emphasis should be placed on the "genius of women", not only by considering great and famous women of the past or present, but also those ordinary women who reveal the gift of their womanhood by placing themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives"* With exultant hearts, let us pray the Canticle of praise for women.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE FOR WOMEN *(Inspired by the letter to Women by Pope John Paul II-29 June, 1995)*

RESPONSE: Blessed be the Lord our God.

Blessed be the God who endowed mothers with His own tender love and nurturing care.

Blessed be the God who inspires and prepares young women to be wives, capable of sharing their future with their husbands in mutual giving, testifying to perfect love that knows sacrifice at the service of life.

Blessed be the God of daughters and sisters who are endowed with joy, sensitivity and intuition in the heart of the family.

Blessed be the God of working women who undertake multiple roles with diligence and utmost dedication; contributing to the welfare of humanity with their gifts and in their unique fashion.

Blessed be the God who sets apart and consecrates to Himself, women from every race and time to the service of God and humanity through diverse ministries and charisms of the Church.

Blessed be the Trinitarian God who manifests perfect unity, unselfish and reciprocal love and communion as a model for all Christian friendship and fellowship within the universal Church and with people of all faiths.

Blessed be the God in Jesus, who treated women with openness, respect, acceptance and dignity.

LEADER:

The Holy Spirit is our teacher (John 14:26), who gives us knowledge and wisdom. He is our guide (John 16:13), who leads us in the right path. He reveals things to come (John 16:13), making us wise, and capable of discerning God's plan for us. Let us invoke the Holy Spirit before we listen to God's word.

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

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 1: 46-55

REFLECTION

Mary stands as an icon of unconditional faith and commitment. The *Magnificat* is totally permeated not only with the faith and hope of Israelites, but also a personal and intimate experience of the Blessed Virgin Mary who is overwhelmed by the presence of God within her soul. Mary's virginal pregnancy evolves into a unique faith experience; which permeates the total person, the physical, psychological and mental dimensions of her being. For Mary, faith no longer enhances quality of life, it becomes life itself. An authentic encounter with God generates a deep sense of gratitude to God and a desire to serve fellow beings. The *Magnificat* announces not only the birth of the Messiah, but also the birth of a new liberated people.

Being mindful of the past roots helps one to be open to the unexpected ways that God works through the life of His chosen ones. The *Magnificat* points out that God is on the side of the poor, the oppressed, the hungry and the lowly and this is the God that Jesus came to reveal. Our present-day world too, is infested with constant inequality and so many injustices that go unchallenged. However, we can still hope in the Lord and with mother Mary, recount our blessings, not as a matter of pride or achievement, but to recognise where God continues to work in our daily lives.

HYMN: 453. When I look into your holiness (*Joyful Celebration*) or any other.

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? Can I write my own *Magnificat* today?

As a Catholic, do my priorities and choices of life reflect my faith? Is habitual prayer a vital part of my life?

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

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.

(Moments of Silence for self examination of Life)

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

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 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/-**

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 dress code. **R/-(Col 3: 12-14)**

We pray for peaceful solutions among all the conflicting nations and for a peaceful co-existence among people of different races, religion and castes. **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.**

BENEDICTION:

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

**-Commission For Liturgy
Archdiocese of Bombay.**

