



01 MARCH 2024

“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 hymnal)* Or any other.

Leader:

“Most Holy Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we adore you. We thank you Jesus our Divine Master, whose saving love embraces us all. We thank you for welcoming women into your inner circle breaking all societal barriers, for listening to their voices, and giving utmost dignity like no other Rabi. You empowered them to serve alongside you, recognizing their unique feminine gifts and talents. Your interactions with women, from the Samaritan woman at the well, to Mary Magdalene, reflect your deep understanding of their hearts and souls. You entrusted them with important roles in your ministry, inviting them to be active participants in your work of redemption and reconciliation. May we, like You, Jesus, strive to honour and respect all, without any exception. Help us to emulate your example of love and equality, standing against injustice and oppression wherever we encounter it. Amen.

(Pause for silent personal prayer....)

Introduction:

The theme and reflections of today’s Holy Hour is dedicated to the International Women’s Day. The United Nations Observance of International Women's Day 2024 has announced the theme as, ‘**Count Her In: Accelerating Gender Equality through Economic Empowerment**’ Women’s contributions, often undervalued, are indispensable to the progress and well-being of human family. Women have continually defied odds, broken barriers, and reshaped societies with their unwavering determination and resilience. Whether it's balancing work and family, supporting loved ones through tough times, or advocating for a better future, even ordinary women exhibit extraordinary resilience, inspiring generations with their selflessness and tenacity. “*The world and the Catholic Church must respect and defend women and foster a motherly care for others to end dehumanizing cycles of violence*” said Pope Francis on the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day, 2024. A home certainly is a domain of joy, mutual love, freedom, training and influence. If the 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.

At this Eucharistic adoration when we are ‘**at home with our God**’, we pray specially for all women in our lives that are part of our own story: Our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, wives, daughters, sisters, friends and colleagues.

(Pause for silent personal prayer....)



Leader:

Pope John Paul II, 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. (*This Canticle of praise for women is 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.

(Pause for silent personal prayer of praise and thanksgiving....)

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 hymnal*) or any other.

Scripture Reading: Luke 1: 46-55 (*The Magnificat*)

Reflection: Despite living in a patriarchal society, we find extraordinary women whose lives have left an indelible mark throughout the Biblical history. From different walks of life and circumstances, these women have demonstrated courage, resilience, wisdom, and faith, influencing not only their immediate surroundings but also shaping the course of nations and spiritual movements. Their stories serve as enduring examples of strength and inspiration for women in our own days and generations to come. Blessed Virgin Mary stands as an icon of unconditional faith and commitment. Mary’s ‘*Magnificat*’ points out that God is on the side of the lowly and the oppressed.



Jesus' remarkable relation with the women in the Gospels speaks of God's own tender heart. Mary, though His mother, 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 for all to see. We find several other notable women for inspiration such as:

Deborah, a judge and prophetess who rose to a position of leadership. She provided wise counsel, and faith in God's guidance, leading Israel into a victorious battle against their oppressors.

Esther, a Jewish orphan raised by her cousin Mordecai, whose faith, bravery and strategic thinking enabled her to use God given power and influence as a Queen, to intercede for her people, averting a genocide plotted by the wicked Haman.

Ruth, a Moabite woman, offers yet another compelling narrative of resilience and loyalty whose unwavering devotion and integrity won her a key figure in the lineage of King David and, ultimately, Jesus Christ.

Mary Magdalene who was a prominent disciple of Jesus, whose unwavering love and devotion to her Divine Master, made her the first to announce the news of the Lord's resurrection.

Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, is noted several times in the New Testament as sharing a partnership with St Paul, in the ministry of teaching and mentoring early Christian leaders, including Apollos and Junia was another Woman leader mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans. We pray that women in our time find a welcome space for their contribution and leadership so as to create a more balance and a just world.

Hymn: 121. Jesus my Lord, my God, my all. (*Joyful Celebration hymnal.*) Or any other.

(Pause for Moments of Silent self examination of Life...)

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.

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

General Intercessions:

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the leaders of our Church, country and the world that they may adopt just, inclusive, equalitarian and humane policies. **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.**

Hymn: Let Us Bow In Adoration.

Benediction:

The Divine Praises:

(After the Benediction)

Blessed be God.
 Blessed be His Holy Name.
 Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
 Blessed be the name of Jesus.
 Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.
 Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.
 Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
 Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.
 Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
 Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
 Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
 Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
 Blessed be God in His angels and in His Saints.

Hymn: O Sacrament most holy, o Sacrament divine