



**10 March 2024**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

*(Liturgy for International Women's Day Celebration)*

**Opening Introduction:**

As we come in God's presence today, especially to observe and celebrate International Women's Day with the theme: "Invest in Women, Accelerate progress", let us worship our creator who created women in God's powerful image. Let us thank Him for the wisdom that has been bestowed upon women and celebrate this day with dignity and joy. Let us thank God for all the gifts and talents that our women are gifted with. We are called to accelerate the progress of women in the professional world, especially of migrant women who are generally deprived of equality in all spheres of life: economic, social and political.

**Readings:**

**First Reading:** Second Chronicles 36: 14-16, 19-23

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 137: 1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

**Second Reading:** Ephesians 2: 4-10

**Gospel:** John 3: 14-21

**Homily:**

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we gather today to delve into the depths of God's unbounded love and the transformative essence of faith, let's embark on a journey that explores the call for social justice. In the passages echoing in our hearts, we're reminded of the relentless love God holds for all humanity and His fervent desire for the liberation and redemption of every soul.

God's love doesn't discriminate. It flows freely and abundantly, embracing men and women alike in its warm embrace. Women may face discrimination in various walks of life, but as followers of Christ, we are summoned to dismantle these oppressive structures and construct a society where women are revered, respected, and granted equality in every sphere of life.

Jesus Christ, our beacon of hope, didn't tiptoe around societal expectations; He shattered them. He defied norms by engaging with women on equal footing, recognizing their intrinsic worth as cherished children of God. He sat at tables with them, listened intently to their voices, and honoured their invaluable contributions to His ministry.



In a world where women were often relegated to supporting roles, Jesus elevated them to positions of prominence and influence. He entrusted them with the sacred task of spreading the gospel, making them the heralds of His resurrection and empowering them to proclaim His message to the ends of the earth.

And so, as beneficiaries of God's boundless grace and mercy, we're called to emulate Christ's example by championing gender equality in every facet of our lives. Let us boldly confront the systemic injustices that breed discrimination and inequality, labouring tirelessly to fashion a world where women can soar unhindered, fulfilling their divine destinies without inhibition.

God willed for humanity to see the light of his word and will in Jesus. It was his will for us to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, irrespective of gender, and labouring together to craft a world where everyone can bask in the sunlight of equality and justice.

So, let's move forward, emboldened by our faith and enlightened by the light of the world, Jesus Christ. On the occasion of International Women's Day, let's stand shoulder to shoulder with our sisters, amplifying their voices, and advocating ardently for their rights.

May the grace and serenity of God envelop us all as we strive to build a world where gender equality reigns supreme. Amen.

### **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

**Celebrant:** Come, let us share our joys and surrender our worries and needs at the feet of our Lord, as we pray. **BLESS US ALL, O LORD!**

We pray for Holy Father, Bishops, Priests, and Religious. May they consistently strive to uphold the dignity and value of all, with a special focus on nurturing and empowering the girl child and women....Our response.

We pray for the political leaders worldwide, that their policies may be directed to promote the universal well-being, with a special emphasis on the health and empowerment of the girl-child and women.....Our response.

Lord, we present before You every Woman - daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers in their diverse roles. Grant us the strength to uphold their dignity and empower each woman to fulfil her rightful role in society...Our response

We earnestly pray for the safety of girls facing vulnerability, especially those trafficked into the sex trade, exploited, oppressed, and distressed. May they find protection, support, and the strength to overcome these challenges. ...Our response



We pray for all the victims of abuse discrimination and violence who feel unloved and rejected. May their wounds be healed, and may they find the strength to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. ...Our response

### **THANKSGIVING PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord, make each of us an instrument of peace. Bless all women who tirelessly strive to bring harmony to their communities, homes and hearts. Grant them the strength to transform conflict into understanding. We pray for women facing prejudice, inequality, and gender disparities. Comfort those women enduring the pain of war, violence, and abuse. Forgive those who let differences foster hate and discrimination. Let your example of valuing all creation guide us to recognise that we are equal partners in the stewardship of your world. AMEN.

Contributed by:  
**Archdiocese Women's Commission**