“My beloved daughters, you have in some ways, the same vocation of the Mother of God”  
(SJE. Lect. 26)

From the moment that the arrival of a son or daughter is announced, independent of the age of the expectant mother and above all when it is a first-timer, special feelings are experienced. This is interspersed with a whirlwind of doubts and emotions, since this implies a change of life, habits, and responsibilities, which often influence the way of looking at the world. Questions arise such as: Will I be able to be a good mother? How can I arrange for baby care? How can I reconcile my life and motherhood? Who can support me in raising my son? In summary, a series of questions, concerns and expectations - which mothers are facing gradually.

Today many liberal ideas or situations of violence have subverted this gift of motherhood and strongly influence important decisions, forgetting that the children are a precious gift that God has entrusted to us, a valuable gift put in our hands and in our hearts, whom we must take care of and serve with love and responsibility. A gift, which in a profound way, involves a mystery which we are going to discover gradually - although never in its entirety, because before becoming our children, they are children of God.

**READING:**  *The Annunciation* (Luke 1: 26-38)

- What is Mary’s place in this reflection?
- What challenges do we see for the mission?

The mother of the Redeemer precedes us and continually confirms us in the faith, vocation and mission. Her example of humility and availability to the will of God, helps us to activate our faith in a proclamation of the Gospel, happily modeled on Mary's maternity.

But in the world, we now meet great evil, robbing many girls and adolescents of their innocence, since they have been subjected to abuses and human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes. As a result of this, a life has been engendered in her womb … A CHILD who comes when the youngster’s tender body is not prepared physically or emotionally for motherhood ... this fragile mother, who has not recovered from the pain of this trauma at such an early age, and has had to live with and defy the reproaching looks of society and her own guilt. She must bravely accept this gift from God, the gift of giving new life, and slowly attempt to discover her vocation as "mother".
How does life change for a teenage mother? (Refer to page 3 for a possible addition to this prayer)

**PREPARING THE ARRIVAL (OF THE BABY):**

**Activity:** Give a symbolic gift that is a poem and invite a participant to read it loud.

Prepare for the birth with flowers. Be brave as a Mother. Don’t keep crying, look to the God of life, Who is cradling a baby in your womb. Others condemn you... God has heard your plea and has forgiven you.

A baby never is a mistake, it is a beautiful life. The child to be born is a mystery of a human being. Prepare for the arrival with flowers in your heart. Do not despair. Do not believe that you were abandoned. Have faith and smile again.

Show to your baby the strength of a woman. He can look in your eyes and see that he is blessed, and feel your safe hands. God does not want nine months of crying and doubt. He wants to see you walk toward life, looking for peace, wisdom and harmony.

With these discrete "twigs", you are building your nest. Learn with your baby to live the joyful secret of silence. Think, that in your path, Jesus of Nazareth is coming to meet you and he greets you peacefully and respectfully. Maybe your baby will jump with joy in your womb with his greeting.

Go, walk with your baby, fight, shout, sing! Let the whole world know that this new flame will be born, flesh of your flesh. And when he is born, take care of him, because he is yours and he is of God.

**To finish we pray together:**

God, we are your Body, your children! We are aware of this scourge of human trafficking and sexual violence against girls -especially adolescents. We see it as a problem that all of us must take a stand against. We repent by our selfishness, indifference and apathy. Anoint us and give us the strength to fight against this tide of human trafficking in our countries!

*Submitted by: Sister Sonia Baltierra and Ana Silva, JP Contact, Province Chile - Bolivia*
How does life change for a teenage mother?

Studies published in various magazines show that violence is a frequent and everyday reality during pregnancy in adolescent girls, and it often takes the form of verbal violence such as: insults, shouting, mockery. In addition, there is the torture of constant pressure to make a decision to have an abortion. The girls may also experience physical violence (pulling by the arm, hair, shoving or pushing) by the partner or anyone else. A significant percentage of them have suffered direct aggression (punches, slapping, kicking, burning or other similar forms) and finally, they point out that they were victims of sexual violence at least once during the pregnancy.

As to the person who exercised this violence, in the most aggressive forms, in many cases it has been the partner, the father or the mother, even then being responsible for a non-consensual sexual relationship with the partner, a relative, and in some cases the father.

Compared to violence against adult mothers, the figure in adolescent girls is higher, so it is a known fact that teenage mothers, as well as being more vulnerable because of their age, their legal, economic and social dependence, are also the most affected by the violence.

When life beats in the womb of a teenager, the defense of that life is a blessing from God and a call for support from others. Raise the voice for those who have no voice! Defend the rights of the deprived!