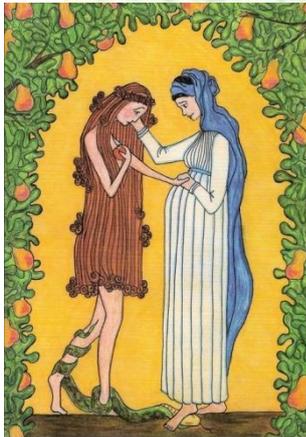


WOMEN IN THE HEART OF GOD

The women representative of God who cares for creation as a hen for its chicks.

Main Event: International Women's Day. Chose the group for this gathering (we will welcome both genders, no age bar, mission orientant).

I INTRODUCTION:



Let us begin this gathering with an acknowledgment to the Divine Spirit, as the feminine energy of God, empowering us and inviting each one of us to a deeper consciousness of living out our Birth - Call for a mission on earth as the very basis of our identity as women.

In spite of the very oppressive system that existed through the ages, there were women who were contributing to the salvation-history; they were intimidated yet they did not give up to live up to their call for mission, for a purpose the Creator made them. They were aware of their inner energy and inner strength; they grew in their power through various struggles; they were filled with the Divine Energy and Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge. *They were lights to the Nations.....*as we see, listen, read , experience personally and collectively even through others struggles; reading of various writings especially for us Christians in our holy book the "BIBLE", we feel very empowered .We understand the role of women in the salvation history of Israel.

God has revealed an incredible heart of love and compassion, appreciation and respect for God's daughters; God has used them to accomplish great acts of honor in the biblical salvation history and history of the world for liberation in various fields; the women play great role in the salvation history We seem to be prone to focus on the negative on women in the Bible and we take an attitude of submissiveness We set our minds that it is written only by men, and may be even only for men those days. We need to take an initiation to re-write the Word of God in inclusive language even the prayer of the church.

Let us therefore meditate consciously on some passages from the bible as we are going to celebrate "International Women's day on the 8th of March.

SUGGESTION: Personal reading, reflection, taking on the role of the particular woman one is reflecting on. "How will I be a reflection of my women-role model in my life, today?" / "What is this (reflection) passage saying to me?"

My thought, my feelings, my actions in my life as well as in my mission.

COLLECTIVE REFLECTION: Read and reflect; enact the different roles from the reading to understand the women of that time and translate into today's situation, share each other or make a prayer.

1st March –**Shiphra** and **Puah** Exodus.Ch.1:15-22

2nd March –**Daughters of Zelophehad**. They declared their rights. Numbers.Ch.26; 27:1; 36:11.Joshua.17:3

3rd March – **Zipporah** . Wife of Moses the great Law giver. Exodus.2; Ch.4 and Ch.18.

4th March - **Rahab**. Woman of faith who aided Joshua’s Army. Joshua Ch.2; 6:17-25; Heb.11:31; Jas.2:25

5th March - **Deborah** .The Lord goes before us...Judges.Ch.4

6th March- **Jephthas** . Daughter-Example of noble submission. Judge.Ch.11

7th March -**The queen of Sheeba** “Blessed be the Lord your God” to Solomon. 1King Ch.10:2 Chron Ch..9

PRAYER ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY- 8TH MARCH

Method and content: Soft meditative music according the culture of your place to be played in the background.

Light a lamp/candle in the middle of the circle of people.

Chairs or Mats to be kept around the lamp to sit down.

Keep some items as such holy books from various religions, water, oil, mud, plants, seeds etc. for the congregation to pick up later to conclude the prayer on the side.

Welcome to all with few words or a song or any other jester of your culture appropriate for the women’s day.

MORNING PRAYER

FAITH and HOPE

O GOD OPEN MY LIPS:

And we shall praise your name in faith and confidence;

We shall worship your name; we trust you

We shall engrave your name in our hearts; we believe you are holding us in the palm of your hands.

We shall speak of your name all over, we speak of your goodness to all those who are in captives, chained and misused.....blindly in faith in you my God and Creator..

O GOD, OPEN MY EARS:

That we may hear your name in all the earth; chirping of the birds, the gentle breeze, the traffic sound;

That we may hear your voice in the laughter's of children; in those who fight for justice and truth, in those who are working in healing ministry.

That we may hear your cry in my sisters in the womb, in the streets, in the brothels.

That we may hear your cry in my sisters, being burnt, being beaten up, being harassed, being raped.

O GOD, OPEN MY EYES:

That we may see you in every one we meet, with the eyes of FAITH

We may see you in every old and abandoned, in every dying; we may see you in the single mothers, in the widows who have no more rights in the society, in the uneducated, in the imprisoned, in the sick.

That we may see you in all rejected ones;

That we may see you in all poor and rich.

That we may see you in the holy Eucharist.

O GOD, OPEN MY HEART

That we may welcome the whole creation into our hearts

So that all will be loved, cared, helped to grow closer to the Shepherd God and integrate into the Spirit

That we welcome all people, so that they may experience kindness, compassion and forgiveness, which will lead them to the Truth and the Way.

That we welcome all seasons of the year so that everyone's need for nourishment, water and sun be fulfilled.

All together: *Because your power is our guarantee. Your strength is our boast. We are happy to be your people, you are our mother and father. Your story is our story and your spirit is our life. We thank you for making us as your people on earth; it is the expression of your divine will and the co-operation of our brothers and sisters in this world.*

Three members: Glory be to the Father who is our creator and all,

Glory be to the son who is caring for us like the mother hen,

Glory be to the Spirit who is our wisdom and guide,

As it was in the beginning with unconditional love,

Now continuing to mold us, to empower us in your great acceptance and wisdom. **Amen.**

PSALM : A PSALM FOR WOMEN REFLECTED **FROM THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S BIBLE.**

I: Divine wisdom, out of love and compassion you created me
And called me “woman”, Bone of bones and flesh of flesh
Companion and partner with man.
You created me in your Own image to be fruitful
And to fill the earth with life, leading, ordering and empowering
The created universe.



II: Together with the holy women and men,
Created and infused with your spirit of love.
You have drawn me into a web of woven threads with the ancient ones
Eve and Esther; Ruth and Naomi; Sarah and Rebecca.

III: You have drawn me into a sisterhood of pieces and patterns
Designed by holy women.
Mary and Elizabeth
Martha of Bethany and Mary of Magdala
Priscilla and Lydia.

IV: You have drawn me into a kinship with the wild, daring, holy women
Whose lives flavor my own.
Therese of Lisieux and Catherine of Siena; Clare of Assisi and Teresa of Avila
Margaret of Hungary and Brigit of Kildare; St. M. Euphrasia and Blessed Maria Droste.
Dorothy Day and Thea Bowman; Edith Stein; Simone Weil and
Catherine de Hueck Doherty;

V: Draw me into a union with the wise women
Of my own time and culture
In their company I will spring up, blossom and grow
Into the women of wisdom
You have molded and formed
From the beginning of time.
Blessed Rani Maria, Sr. Valsa John, Sr. Augusta

VI. We join the Women of ‘Nobel Prize for ‘Peace’ winners
Bertha von from Austria, Jane Addams from USA;
Betty Williams from UK, Mother Theresa from India;
Alva Myrdal from Sweden
Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan;
Shirin Ebadi from Iran, Wangen Masthal from Kenya ..

(Add some names of the women from your own experience)

Reading: IS. 49:15. Can a woman forget her suckling baby that she should have no compassion for the child of her womb. Zion had felt forsaken by Yahweh during her seventy years of exile. The prophet through the imagery of a mother assures the people that Yahweh cannot and will not forget Zion. The Prophet compares God’s love with love of a mother. God consoles the

people; “does a woman forget her baby at her breast, or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you” [Is.49:15.] What is motherly love? We can recall the love of our mother or caretaker, who have sacrificed their life for us. How do we cherish our motherhood/womanhood? A burden or a grace to be a woman.....further....

Our Creator God finally sends themselves to be the Savior of the world, born of a WOMAN. Mary our mother, therefore,

Our response is:

A WOMEN’S CREED!

Side to side

Side1:I/we believe in God who created man and woman in God’s own image, who created the world and gave both sexes the care of the earth.

Side 2: I/we believe in Jesus Child of God, Chosen of God, born of the woman Mary who listened to women and like them, who stayed in their homes, who discussed the reign of God with them, who was followed and financed by women disciples.

Side 1: I/we believe in Jesus who discussed theology with a woman at a well and first confided in her, his messiah-ships, who motivated her to go and tell her great news to the city.

Side 2. I/we believe in Jesus who received, anointing from a woman at Simon’s house, who rebuked the men guests who scorned her.

Side 1: I/we believe in Jesus who said this woman will be remembered, for what she did, minister for Jesus.

Side 2: I/we believe in Jesus who healed a woman on the Sabbath and made her straight because she was a human being.

Side 1: I/we believe in Jesus who spoke of God as a woman seeking the lost coin, as a woman who swept seeking the lost.

Side 2: I/we believe in Jesus who thought of pregnancy and birth with reverence not as a punishment but as a wrenching event a metaphor for transformation born again-anguish into joy.

Side 1 : I/we believe in Jesus who spoke of himself as a mother hen who would gather her chicks under her wing.

Side 2: I/we believe in Jesus who appeared first to Mary Madeline who met her with the bursting message ‘GO and TELL’

Side 1: I/we believe in the wholeness of the Savior in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female for we are all one in salvation.

Side 2: I/we believe in the Holy Spirit as she moves over the waters of creation and over the earth.

Side 1: I/we believe in the Holy Spirit the woman spirit of God, Sofia, who like a hen created us and gave us birth and covers us with her wings.

All: Amen, Amen, Amen (sing or) [“Jesus and the freed woman”]

Guide: Choose an item now. Bring forward your items around the lamp in the middle that will represent your longing to be an empowered, liberator; your contribution to be part of the wholesome creation.

Each member will express her/his desire to ‘BE’ with a word, phrase, a song etc.

To conclude hold hands wish each other peace and joy to self, others, the world.

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