



**Day of prayer for women victims of violence
25 November 2017**

Standing up against violence against women, Pope Francis insists on the fruits of feminism in the service of "equal dignity". "The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity. We must see in the women's movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recognition of the dignity and rights of women."

Following our founders, we, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, are committed to serving women who are victims of violence of all kinds.

"Jesus Christ came incarnate into the world, the tenderness of the Heart of God. He calls us to welcome and share it, to devote ourselves without reserve to the wounded or threatened in their dignity, with a priority to the marginalized women that we want to recognize, respect and love like sisters. (Constitutions OLC No. 35 - 36)

Lord, you who dared to speak to the Samaritan woman, you who defended the adulterous woman threatened with death, we come to present to you all the hopes that sleep or cry in the hearts of millions of women:

Women victims of violence and wars,
Peaceful women, smile of God.

Women prostitutes and victims of rape,
Creative women of beauty and harmony.

Women who, willingly or forcibly, are torn apart by abortion
Women who carry life and faith in the future of the world.

Women oppressed by religions, customs or superstitions,
Women - prophets who forge history; Impoverished and unemployed women.

Women, sharing and welcoming,
Older women, alone, sick and forgotten.

Little girls and teenage girls, Promise of tomorrow,
Women of all races, Peoples and Nations
Women of thanksgiving in the way of Mary. Amen!

Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John 4 : Jesus left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

The violence of our world does not obscure the confidence in the infinite goodness and faithfulness of God. God's will for love and peace, manifested in the dead and risen Christ, is the foundation of hope for all women and men.

You are Ruler, God, and your crown is of thorns.....

We entrust to you all the women who are victims of verbal, psychological, physical, and sexual violence... That they find the strength to break the silence that imprisons them, in order to externalize all their distress, their bad life, and that they accept to be supported and accompanied to be able to rebuild.

Christ, Ruler of the Universe, we pray!

You are Ruler, and your power is to share our poverty ...

We entrust to you the voiceless of our world, and in particular the women who are detained in our prisons, who suffer from intellectual and moral loneliness ... Watch over those who go to visit them, who try to relieve their suffering by helping them to believe in possible tomorrows...

Christ, Ruler of the Universe, we pray!

You are Ruler, God, and your scepter is a reed ...

We entrust to you all the children who are victims of violence, excluded from the social life, who are failing in school, in often fragile families, without work ... Children without prospect of a future. Open our hearts to their distress and their desire to live... They are the hope of the world to come!

Christ, Ruler of the Universe, we pray!

Holy Creator, Merciful God, have mercy on so many injustices. Spread in the heart of every woman, every man, the mighty breath of your Holy Spirit, so that together, day after day, they form a great family, where all are welcomed and recognized as your children.

Personally, communally, with others ...

We know how much women who are victims of violence have to struggle and draw on themselves to keep their deep identity healthy, to regain control of their lives amid the flow of injuries they have sustained. Their marks are often visible, but assumed, they become **paths of light and inspiring places** for our own journeys. What experience can we share?

We are on the journey with them with the conviction that God does not abandon anyone by the side of the road (Exodus 15). How are these women "the way to God" for me? For us? For the Congregation?

Prayer prepared by Sisters Annie Golas, and Marie Establier, Province of Europe-BFMM

