

## VIOLENCE EMPOVERISHES

*The reality of Chalchihuitan Chiapas, Mexico; a small indigenous community in the southeast of the country, is a mirror which reflects the different multicultural realities of the women of the world; today this reality summons us to pray.*

**At this time, let us look at our reality:**

Women live gender poverty: Because they are women, they are perceived as inferior to men. Moral poverty: Their words have no value in the community, in the family, in the church. Economic poverty: They do not have resources for a higher quality of life, they do not have the right to land, they are employed in the fields just like men and they are paid less. Affective poverty: They are not loved, they are disposed of, abandoned by partners, boyfriends, and many times children, grandchildren and family members, or suffer polygamy of their partner. Poverty of knowledge: They cannot continue in their studies for being female, for being poor, for being abandoned or orphaned.

The single woman in Chalquihuitan needs to push herself with double effort to get up, otherwise she is among the excluded and disposable of a community, of a village, of a society, of her homeland. And when she manages to get ahead and empower herself, she is seen as a loose woman, a man-seeker, a prostitute.



**At this time, let us be enlightened by the Word of God.**

**From the prophet Habakkuk (1:2-3 and 2:2-4)**

*How long, O LORD, must I cry for help and you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" and you do not intervene? Why do you let me see iniquity? Why do you simply gaze at evil? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and discord.*

*Then the LORD answered me and said: Write down the vision; Make it plain upon tablets, so that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is a witness for the appointed time, a testimony to the end; it will not disappoint. If it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late. See, the rash have no integrity; but the just one who is righteous because of faith shall live.*

**At this time, let us show solidarity, united together with the heart of each woman who has experienced violence.**

### IN YOUR SANDALS

In your sandals, woman who cries, marginalized just for being a woman

In your sandals, woman who suffers, because you do not have enough to feed your children, because your partner left you to be with another

In your sandals, woman who squeezes your heart because it burns with pain, the one you loved and thought would make you happy hit you, humiliated you, spit at you, and threw food in your face because he doesn't like it

In your sandals, woman who's partner only allows you a little money for the household expenses in order to control you

In your sandals, woman who hears from her partner daily words of abuse and insult

In your sandals, young, mature or older woman who walks in the street to satisfy the desires of your clients while you shed your dignity

In your sandals, woman kidnapped and sold, abused, poisoned by drugs

In your sandals, little girl separated from your parents, your life taken to harvest and sell your organs

In your sandals, single mother and widow, abandoned and criticized by neighbors, harassed by men

In your sandals, single mother, you give birth to your child with courage and tenderness and decide not to abort because your boyfriend abandoned you

There, in your supplications, from your immense loneliness and emptiness, in the depths of your pain, in the smallness of your soul let me stand with you, and together ask God for shelter, company and protection.

As you walk, may God grant your soul strength so that the overwhelming weight of the search for a better and more dignified life may be wisdom in your heart

As you walk, may God who grants you his continuous presence, accompany you tenderly, and speak to your heart in the darkest moments of your life

And in your sandals allow me to support you compassionately, joining you who seek, suffer, and cry just because you are women, in your search for new life.

### **At this time, let us celebrate**

We celebrate each woman who manages to face violence with courage and attains a fuller life free of violence.

We celebrate women who fight for peace, justice, solidarity and human rights.

We celebrate the mothers who leave an education of greater equality for their sons and daughters, thus building a more just world.

*We remember and celebrate other women...*

### **We sing the Magnificat!**

**Prayer prepared by Ma. Juana Urbina Guerrero  
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