**PRAYER: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION**



As we celebrate International Women's Day, we join with our sisters around the world, and remind ourselves that "the care we disposed towards each other also unites us with the pain and suffering of all people and all creation."

50% of the world population are women.  
66% of women take all the work itself. They earn 10% of the world's income and own 1% of all assets.  
5% of world government leaders are women.  
65% of women on this earth are illiterate and 75% of women live in poverty. 75% of the group of refugees are women.  
Figures from which we are silent for a moment.

There is still work to be done!  
That is why International Women's day is always marked by solidarity with women everywhere.  
The aim is to draw attention to issues such as economic independence, health and labor, discrimination, racism and sexual violence against women.  
Change is really possible! Small initiatives often testify of courage. Sometimes from a surprising angle organized but still hopeful feeling.

**Prayer of Blessing.**God bless the people who never had a voice and endure in silence, pain and injustice.  
God bless the people who never had a chance and suffering their vulnerability in innocence.  
God bless the people who never had a hope, and died inwardly; death before old age.  
God bless the people who caused this suffering and whose selfishness deprived others live.  
God bless the people who have to endure all this, and lifelong need to worry with memories and pain.  
God bless the people who need love, Who are looking for love, and live in disappointment.  
God bless all men who are created in your image, all your children, let them experience Your love, preserve them and heal them.

**Gospel: Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath - Luke 13,10-17**

10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” 13 Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”

15 The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

17 When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

**Silence to meditate the gospel**

**Reflection - The Woman Next To You.**

Look around you, sisters, look around you.  
WHO IS THE WOMAN sitting next to you?  
The woman sitting next to you is an inexhaustible source  
... possibilities that have never been fully realized ...  
full necessity and possibility ... dread and desire ...  
smile and frown ... laughter and tears ... fears and hopes ...  
all struggling to express themselves.  
The woman next to you is trying to BE something special,  
to reach a destination ... to have a story ...  
to be known and to know ...

he woman next to you believes in something ... something precious ...  
stands for something ... counts for something ...  
lives for something ... runs towards something.  
  
The woman next to you ... has problems and fears,...

and does not feel very confident ...  
is often disorganized and sometimes close to chaos ...  
but gifted with strong toughness if she must resist ...  
and be able to survive great difficulties.

The woman next to you is a community of persons ...  
people she met during her lifetime ...  
father and mother, friend and foe.  
The woman next to you has something she is very good at ...  
something she's better than anyone else in the world ...  
something she, and only she, can do ...  
but she may not dare to talk to you about it.

The woman next to you can sympathize with you, not just beside you,  
she can live not only for herself but also for you ...  
she can comfort you, meet you, understandyou, if you want ...  
and in its turn she must also be understood.  
The woman sitting next to you ... can never be fully understood ...  
she is also more than any description or explanation ...  
she can never be fully tamed, and that is not desirableeither .

The woman sitting next to you is a MYSTERY.  
and the WORD THAT BECAME FLESH is MYSTERY.  
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ...  
and so, my brothers and sisters look around you ...  
Because CHRIST IS HERE!



**Blessing:**

Know that God weeps with you together, through our tears.  
Know that He embraces you, through our touch.  
Knows that He helps you to persevere day afther day,  
by our efforts to assist you.  
Know that He hears your cry, through our prayer.  
And in the desolation you suffer, know that we bring you God's love  
to fill all your emptiness with His compassion and understanding.  
May God bless you and be near you, today and always. Amen.

**Song: "Langs beelden van hoop"**

**Along images of hope** (English translation of a Dutch song)  
  
Refrain:  
We go on a journey along the road of desire.Join us along to the images of hope.  
We go on a journey along the road of desire.Join us along to the images of hope.  
  
 At the beginning sounding words of life. Flowers of hope bloom in the desert.  
Because our Lord has expelled evil, when he chose to be human.

Light from heaven! A shining morning opens for people a view.  
So you can go. secured in peace. dreaming a dream of catching light.

refrain

Do not stay too long in the lost land. Do think carefully and become who you are. For we are born out of God.s love,He is the Father, our God who knows us.

