International Women's Day

8 March 2016



Introduction:

In our country, we are currently witnessing the spread of violence towards women, violence often perpetrated by the very men who say they love them. Very young women are thrown into the streets after misleading promises of honest work…abandoned women…women of all origins and age, Italian women united in suffering.



At the same time, there is increase awareness of the dignity of woman, her defense, her rights and the respect which is due to her.

Institutions and Associations are mobilizing to help them, to adopt laws to protect and support women in difficult situations.

In Italy, some Daughters of Wisdom work in this field bringing their collaboration with the public services, the health services, Caritas, the Office of Immigration, and the Bureau of Employment etc.; let us listen to what these Sisters say:

“We immediately welcome, listen, participate and accompany; we become close to those who are lost, wandering without purpose and who come knocking at the door.

We stand as companions on the road where “together” we can catch a glimpse of light”



Guide:

An attentive study of Scripture reveals that despite the differences in nature, man and woman are equal ontologically. This condition is explicitly stated in the first page of Genesis, in this splendid hymn of the creation of the universe: “God created man in the image of self, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them” to be one flesh, blessed and saved, chosen to be the dwelling of the Spirit. Man and woman are therefore co-creators of the plan of God that concerns the salvation of human kind and all of creation. God created them and blessed them. **Cf. Gn 1, 27-28**

Thank you, women

Reading - 2 voices:

Thank you, *women-mothers, who sheltered human beings within yourselves in a unique experience of joy and travail that makes you become God's own smile upon the newborn child, the guide for its first steps, the support to help him grow and the landmark along the child's journey of life.*

Thank you, *women-wives; you irrevocably join your future with that of a man in a relationship of mutual giving at the service of communion and life.*

Thank you, *women-daughters and women-sisters; you bring into the heart of the family and of all society the richness of your sensitivity, your intuitiveness, your generosity and fidelity.*

Thank you, *women who work; you are present and active in every area of life - social, economic, cultural, artistic and political. You make an indispensable contribution to the growth of a culture* which unites reason and feeling to a model of life ever open to the sense of "mystery", to the establishment of economic and political structures ever more worthy of humanity.

(Letter to Women, by John Paul II)



2 choirs

Psalm 5

[1] Lord, let my words come to your ears
spare a thought for my sighs,
[2] listen to my cry for help, my King and my God!
I say this prayer to you
[3] Lord! At daybreak you listen for my voice;
And at dawn, I hold myself in readiness for you, I watch for you.
[4] You are not a God who is pleased with wickedness,
You have no room for the wicked;
[5] boasters collapse under your scrutiny.
You hate all evil human beings,
[6] liars you destroy; murderers and frauds,
You detest.
[7] But I, so great is your love, may come to you house;
And before your holy temple, bow down in reverence to you.
[8] Lord, lead me in the path of your righteousness, for there are
men lying in wait for me,
make your way plain before me.
[9] Not a word from their lips can be trusted, deep within them lies ruin,
their throats are yawning graves; they make their tongue so smooth.
[10] Pronounce them guilty, God, make their intrigues their own downfall!
Hound them for their countless crimes, since they are rebelled
against you.
[11] But joy for all who shelter in you, endless shouts of joy!
Since you protect them, they exult in you those who love your name.
[12] It is you who bless the virtuous, Lord,
Your favor is like a shield covering him.



IN THE LIGHT OF YOUR WORD *(Wisdom 6: 12-22)*

12 Wisdom is brilliant, she never fades. By those who love her, she is readily seen, by those who seek her, she is readily found.

13 She anticipates those who desire her by making herself known first.

14 Whoever gets up early to seek her will have no trouble but will find her sitting at the door.

15 Meditating on her is understanding in its perfect form, and anyone keeping awake for her will soon be free from care.

16 For she herself searches everywhere for those who are worthy of her, benevolently appearing to them on their ways, anticipating their every thought.

17 For Wisdom begins with the sincere desire for instruction, care for instruction means loving her,

18 loving her means keeping her laws, attention to her laws guarantees incorruptibility,

19 and incorruptibility brings us near to God;

20 the desire for Wisdom thus leads to sovereignty.

21 If then thrones and scepters delight you, monarchs of the nations honor Wisdom, so that you may reign forever.

22 What Wisdom is and how she was born, I shall now explain; I shall hide no mysteries from you, but shall follow her steps from the outset of her origin, setting out what we know of her in full light, without departing from the truth.

Silence - sharing

LET US PRAY

Leader:

Our world thirsts for Good News, for dignity, humanity and respect. Let us ask Christ, sent by the Father to make us witnesses of the Gospel Values.

- So that our actions and our words bring your presence to the world,
  Lord, fill us with the joy and courage of the Gospel
- So that we may be able to bring respect and support to women, especially those in difficulty,
  Lord, fill us with the joy and courage of the Gospel
- So we can invent new paths to reach today's youth and make them aware of the need to respect every human being,
  Lord, fill us with the joy and courage of the Gospel
- So we can proclaim the Good News of consolation to those who lost the light of hope
  Lord, fill us with the joy and courage of the Gospel
- So our prayer feeds our testimony
  Lord, fill us with the joy and courage of the Gospel

Song

