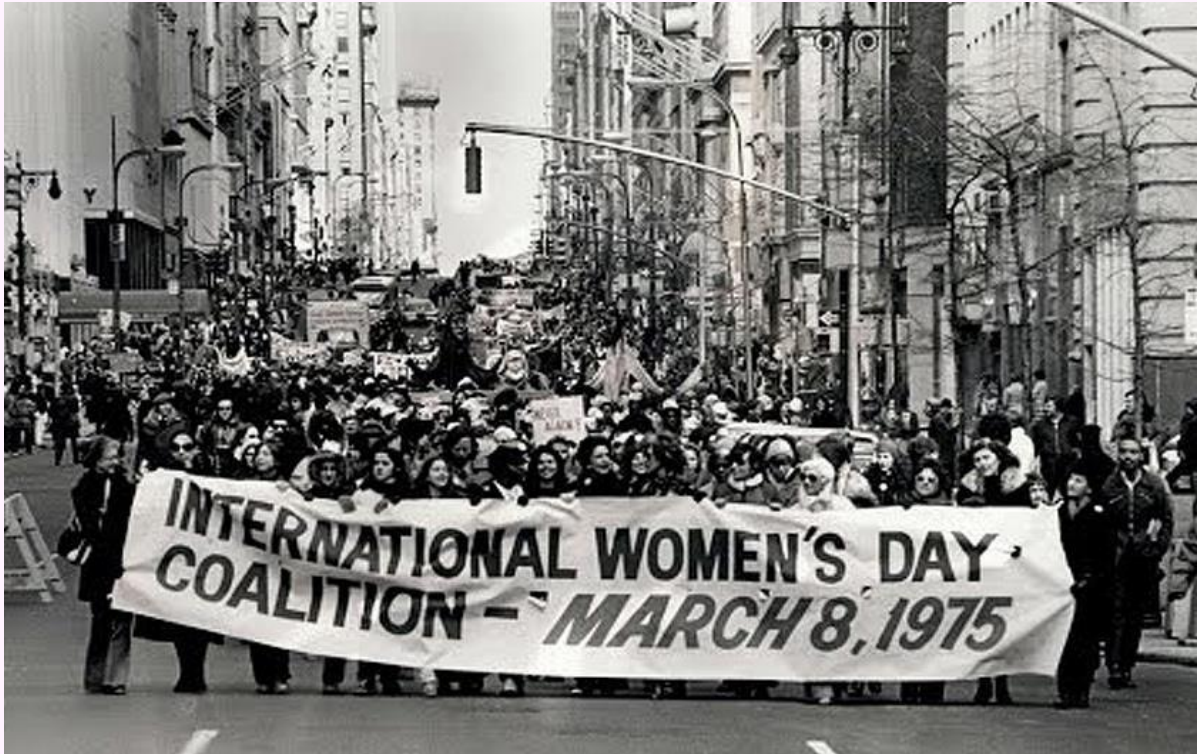


March 8

International Women's Day

#ChooseToChallenge



HISTORICAL REVIEW

International Women's Day has its roots in the labour movement of the mid-19th century, at a time of great expansion and turmoil in the industrialized world, when women began to raise their voices more and more.

The life of women in the West at that time was a continuous story of limitations: neither the right to vote, nor to manage their own accounts, nor training and with a life expectancy much lower than that of men due to childbirth and mistreatment.

An example of this growing concern and debate among women is found in 1848, when the Americans Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott brought together hundreds of people at the first national convention for women's rights in the United States.

Both maintained "all men and women are created equal" and demanded civil, social, political and religious rights for the group.

They were ridiculed, especially regarding the right of women to vote, but thus they planted a seed that grew in the following years.

In this context, historians coincide in highlighting as a direct prelude to International Women's Day the women's march that took place in New York in 1908, when some 15,000 demonstrated to ask for fewer hours of work, better wages and the right to vote.

A year after that, the Socialist Party of America declares National Women's Day, which is celebrated for the first time in the US on February 28.

In this context, a woman who would go down in history as the promoter of international women's day comes on the scene: The German communist Clara Zetkin

Zetkin suggested the idea of commemorating a global women's day in 1910 at the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Her proposal was heard by some hundred women from 17 countries and approved unanimously, although without agreeing on a specific date.

A year later, the first International Women's Day is celebrated, on March 19, 1911, bringing together more than a million people in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Switzerland.

In addition to the right to vote and to hold public office, the right to work for women, to professional training and to non-discrimination in employment was demanded.

Are there reasons to keep celebrating this date today?

The answer is given with the most recent data from the UN:

- *2.7 billion women cannot access the same job options as men.*
- *In 2019, less than 25% of parliamentarians were women.*
- *One in three women continues to suffer gender-based violence.*
- *Of the 500 people in executive leadership positions who lead the world's highest-earning companies, less than 7% are women.*
- *In the 92-year history of the Oscars, only five women have been nominated in the category of Best Director; of the five, only one won the award (Kathryn Bigelow).*
- *And until 2086 the wage gap will not be closed if the current trend is not counteracted.*

PRAYER

Setting

It is proposed to view the video of

[Pope Francis on women victims of violence](#)

INTRODUCTION

The memory of today is an opportunity to give thanks to God, Father and Mother of Mercy, for the women who continue to fight and bet for a more humane, more equal and just world. But, this day also tells us about the situation in which many women live ... Too many suffer and mourn the injustices of this world that condemns them to continue being discriminated against, excluded and victims of violence, for the fact of being a woman.

In the Gospel, the liberating practices of Jesus update the value, place and dignity of women in his life, in society and in the construction of the Kingdom of God and his justice. Today especially remembers that his heart has the face of a woman.

Look! We are all around him:

We are in every place and work, in every situation of daily life, invisible, however, we know it is not like that.

Look! We are all around him:

Contributing, changing the course of history, preparing, supporting, challenging those resentments of our claims of rights and capabilities.

Look! We are all around him:

Women, brave, compassionate, patient, our number is legion, our gifts are diverse, our goal is one and the same: Let history hear...

Singing

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke 8. 1-3

Monition: The Gospel of Luke was always considered the gospel of women. In fact, Luke is the one who highlights Jesus' relationship with women and places the disciples on an equal footing, since they both follow Jesus. He also kept the names of some of them.

The following days, Jesus went through many towns and cities announcing the good news of the kingdom of God. His twelve disciples and some women were also with Jesus. These women helped Jesus and his disciples with money. Some of them had been healed by Jesus from various diseases and evil spirits. Among those women was Mary,

whom they called Magdalena, who had previously had seven demons. Juana and Susana were also there. Joan was the wife of Cuza, the administrator of King Herod Antipas.

The word of the Lord.

We now invite you to think about those women who have left their mark in our lives, so that today we honor and name them, we do not leave them anonymous. Let us present them to the Lord with grateful memory, sharing the mark they have left in our lives.

Silence

-We honor the women of the time of Jesus who cared for the community of believers; those who followed Jesus to Calvary; those who buried him; those that proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus

Singing

LITANIES OF THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

We pray together the Litanies of the women of the bible answering:

R / Walk with us making a new world.

- Midwives of Egypt, who defended the descendants of the chosen people.
- May **EVE** give us hope to choose life and keep it after losing bread.
- That **SARA** transmits her great faith to us, to stop believing that the impossible is possible.
- May **AGAR** grant us full and safe freedom to get out of slavery.
- May **REBECA** help us to overcome the oppression of custom.
- That we learn from **DINA** to take the risks of breaking the silence and coming out of isolation.
- May **RAJAB** teach us to open the doors of our home and our hearts to foreigners, to those who are different, and to understand the good news that they bring us.
- May **MIRYAM** give us his prophetic look of the sentinel to take care of life before the enemy.
- May **RUTH** fill us with solidarity to share pain and loneliness with women who suffer.
- That with **ANA** we have the audacity to ask God for the impossible in order to be generators of life.
- That **JUDIT** encourage us to participate in the liberation paths of our people.
- May you **DEBORA** infect us with your wisdom and resistance in times of conflict and pain.
- May the **SAMARITAN WOMAN** give us clarity to meet Jesus as the source of living water.

- May **MARIA MAGDALENA** give us the courage to announce the Resurrection in a society of death.
- That as **MARTA** we express our profession of faith as women followers of Jesus.
- That the **STOOPED WOMAN** transmits to us her courage to get out of personal oppressions.
- May the **WIDOW OF NAIN** help us to denounce death and proclaim life.
- May **ISABEL** encourage us to love women and contribute to total liberation.
- May **FEBRE, PRISCILA, EVODIA, and PABLO's** followers give us creativity to build communities with reciprocal relationships.
- **HOUSEWIVES** from the first communities, who opened their houses for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
- **LIDIA**, a worker who communicated the faith to your whole family and offered the hospitality of your home to those who carried the gospel.
- **MARY**, mother of Juan Marcos, who in your house you gathered the Christian assembly to keep it in prayer.
- May **MARY OF NAZARETH, WOMAN OF THE MAGNIFICAT** teach us to proclaim and rejoice in God, our Saviour, who exalts the humble, filling the poor with good things and raising the helpless from the dust.

Singing

WORD OF THE CHURCH

Every time we look at Maria, we again believe in the revolutionary nature of tenderness and affection. In it we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong, who do not need to mistreat others to feel important. Looking at it, we discover that the one that praised God because "he overthrew the powerful from his throne" and "dismissed the rich empty" is the one that brings home warmth to our search for justice. She is also the one who carefully preserves "all things by meditating them in her heart." Mary knows how to recognize the footprints of the Spirit of God in great events and also in those that seem imperceptible. She is contemplative of the mystery of God in the world, in history and in the daily life of each and every one. She is the praying and hardworking woman in Nazareth, and she is also our Lady of promptness, the one who leaves her town to help others "without delay." This dynamic of justice and tenderness, of contemplating and walking towards others, is what makes it an ecclesial model for evangelization. We ask you to help us with your maternal prayer so that the Church becomes a home for many, a mother for all peoples, and makes possible the birth of a new world. It is the Risen One who tells us, with a power that fills us with immense confidence and firm hope: "I make all things new."

EG 288.

-We honour the women of Hebrew writing; especially Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whose availability, courage, love and fidelity kept the lineage of faith alive.

Singing

CLARET AND WOMEN

At the time that Father Claret lived, women did not have a great role in social and ecclesial life. Claret tried to put women at the center of evangelization, at the center of pastoral care, women of ecclesial and community law.

Claret's commitment to the social and cultural development of Cuba is confirmed, through his participation in the Board of Friends of the Country, a secular institution to spread the light and promote the development of peoples. Claret accepted to be its president and looked for the progress of his town, forming it and believing in its possibilities.

He wrote pastoral letters addressed to men and women, without distinction, instructing them according to the norms of the time. He was concerned about issues such as agriculture and savings banks.

For the family, how the woman should run the house, her work, the education of her children; for ordering the irregular situation of the concubines where the woman was in a situation of inferiority, trying to train the people for marriage.

Evangelization of women, dignifying their being a woman and a mother. He cared about the training of poor girls. To promote the education and training of girls and young women, Claret invited Maria Antonia Paris and her companions to Cuba. The announcement of the Good News, to all, the living of the Sacraments and a religious life. Devotion to Mary.

In Spain he was in charge of the spiritual direction of Queen Isabel, whom he instructed in a liberal court, where he had to suffer much persecution. Wherever he was, he evangelized and trained the people, men and women, with his sermons and letters. Claret always has in his heart the concern for women and it is because his life is marked by the presence of Mary, the Woman, the Mother.

-Let us honour the women of our time who put us back on track; who remind us of the promises of Jesus and preach the reality of integrity. To women who work for those most vulnerable to oppression or neglect; those who give birth to their children in uncertainty, those who commit their lives for refugees and victims of war and those women who fight daily for basic life needs, nourishing food, clean water, clean air, housing and lovingly take care of the common home... Those who challenge us to believe and grow!

FINAL PRAYER

God, Father and Mother who in the beauty of this mystery is present in our stories, drawing new life from destruction; hope, despair, development of difficulties, we want to thank you for your love, your tenderness. Help us to perceive your visible hand throughout our lives and to know how to listen to the sweet guidance of your Spirit. Open our eyes and hearts so that we can accompany each other and be aware of the realities that turn us off. May the power of your resurrection raise our hopes and vindicate our stories ...

May the blessing of God mother, father, sister, brother and Spirit, be with all of us, us and our ways!

Singing