

March 1-15, 2015

“Listen to Women”

Young women - studying, working - respond to the question: What is your experience of being a woman in the Church and in the Indian society?

Listen to women and celebrate IWD, 8 March.



Alfreda Dhanraj
B.com, III Year,
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When my mother conceived me, she says she always wished it was a girl. I used to wonder what difference did it make then to her if it was a girl or a boy. I do understand now. When you educate a man; you educate a single person but when you educate a woman; you educate a generation. My experience of being a woman today in the Indian society is very distinguished, full of responsibility and pride. Pride of being who I am, pride of fulfilling a number of responsibilities, pride of being a WOMAN.

It is after all the end result of all that we have been taught in the Church. God has a plan for everybody and that is exactly how Mother Mary being a simple woman was a part of God's master plan. It's been said that it's hard to understand a woman's mind as you can lock up one's library if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of a woman's mind. ●



Bodhitha Joseph
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Each and every individual in this universe is created in such a manner that it reflects the beauty and intention of the creator. The Bible says, "So God created human beings, making them in His image. He created them male and female (Gen 2:27). It gives me a mixed feeling to write about my experience as a woman in this century. When I still hear the cries of thousands of women who are raped, discriminated or abused, the pain in my heart deepens. But when I hear the stories of women becoming empowered and standing for their rights, my mind flies like a falcon in the sky of hope. My experience as a woman in Church and society is the story of love and compassion. I believe in the power of womanhood from the great life of Mother Mary. It asks my spirit to listen to God and to the society. The lives of Ruth, Joan of Arc, St. Maria Goretti strengthen me to lead a life of loyalty and spirituality. A woman can do wonders when she believes in herself. It has the magic to create a better world. ●

Priya Angel Demetria
B.ed,
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Chennai.



Gone are the days when women were judged by their remarkable abilities to move between family, career and personal life. Earlier, women were not given freedom to take their own decisions but now we have outgrown that era. Now women are treated equally most of the time. I always consider myself very 'blessed' for being a woman.

Right from my childhood I am oriented with the Church and society in several aspects. When I was eight years old I was allowed to serve God as an altar girl. I had been serving at the altar for eight years. Memories never fade. Those moments are very precious. I was fortunate to stand near the holy tabernacle to experience God's presence during every Mass.

I'm also proud of three aspects. I'm a woman! I'm a daughter! I'm a sister! These simple words have much to convey. My parents are very much oriented with Church. This has increased in me a zeal to follow Christ. I am able to see Christ in everyone. The society too has helped me in every step of life. I feel blessed.

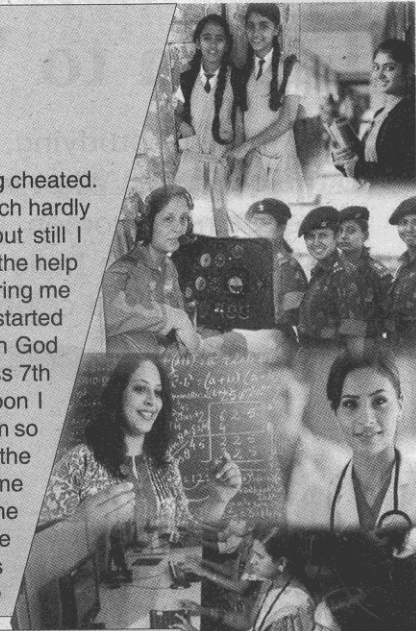
As a woman, I have felt that I am safe guarded, receiving care and concern. But when I step out, I encounter different environments, unfortunately, women's place in society and family is in conflict. I want to state that without women the world will be empty. ●



Annu Mary Joseph

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I was scared to face the world and people because of the fear of being cheated. I grew up as a very pampered child, at the same time I faced problems which hardly anyone could think of. I was not strong enough to face the problems but still I carried myself with a smile on my face, hoping to see a better future, with the help of God. The problems I faced in the society and in the family started bothering me deep inside. It affected me so much that I became very hot tempered and started isolating myself from everyone. Only two things didn't change: 'My hope in God and my smile.' That was my strength. I was staying in the hostel since class 7th standard which taught me to take care of myself by trusting the Lord. Soon I became independent and sociable. My prayer life also became stronger. I am so grateful to God because He changed me and gave me the courage to face the problems in life. He turned my hatred into love. I can feel that God is with me always and I am not worried even if I am left alone. All I do is to spend some time with God everyday in my life and be thankful to him. Today I can face this world boldly because "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4: 13).



Kathleen Mary

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Stella Maris College, Chennai*

Its been almost 8 months now and I am still not used to the crowded buses in the city... Reason? Because I want to avoid embarrassing situations! Because there is no assurance for my safety! Because I am a girl!

My experience of being a girl? No I would rather call it "surviving being a girl." It's a pity that we live in a world where most women are looked down, mistreated, misplaced. But you know what! Everybody who thinks like that is wrong. We are strong both at mind and heart but the sad truth is that in modern India "woman" has always been a second grade citizen no matter what its esteemed leaders have said or done. Unless this kind of mindset of some of our leaders change this will go on for ages. We should Stand up... Stand up for what we believe in because the only time a woman is helpless is when her nail polish is drying. A real man never hurts a woman because he knows God counts her tears. Woman came out of man's ribs not from his feet to be walked over!! She wasn't made from his head to be superior but from his side to be equal. So next time you hurt a woman keep in mind that you are hurting someone's mother, someone's wife or maybe even someone's daughter! And remember what you would do if that "someone" was you! For you always reap what you sow.

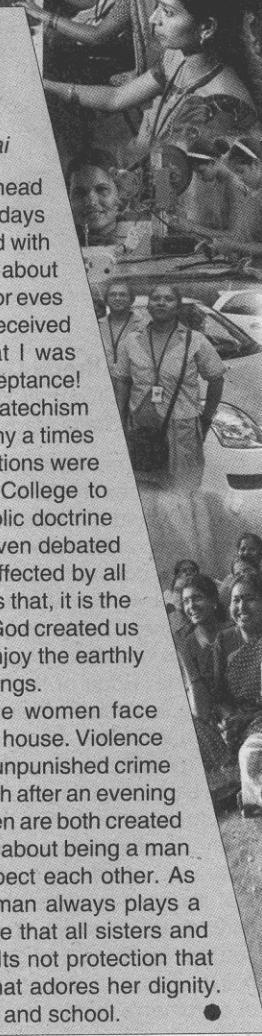


Rinika Francis

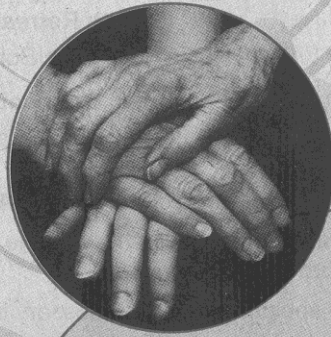
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When I stand in the Church with my head covered, it takes me back to the good old days when I was a kid and I loved to play around with other kids. Those days Eucharist was all about fancy exhibit and the confessional a place for eves dropping. As years passed by when I first received Jesus in the Holy Communion I felt that I was also a part of the Church, a complete acceptance! Thereafter I started listening to Sunday catechism and homilies preached by the priests. Many a times I felt why can't a nun do that? Those questions were answered when I came to Stella Maris College to pursue my Post Graduation. In the Catholic doctrine class the same was questioned and we even debated on the same. My faith in God never got affected by all these. It is not just the service or who does that, it is the prayer and trust which is more important. God created us and we are sent to this world not just to enjoy the earthly things but to love and serve the fellow beings.

In the Indian society, most of the women face inequality; be it the work place or their own house. Violence against women is the most universal and unpunished crime of all. Even when women walk out of Church after an evening Mass people stare at them. Men and women are both created in the image and likeness of God. It is not about being a man or woman; they should know how to respect each other. As a daughter, sister, mother or wife, a woman always plays a vital role in every man's life. It is high time that all sisters and mothers are valued and treated equally. Its not protection that women need but rather an acceptance that adores her dignity. This should start from their home, church and school.



The Power of Women



**Treasa Alphonsa
Joseph**

*B.A, English Literature, III Year
Stella Maris College*



The Phases

A strong lady in the twilight of her life,
Warm, loving and caring.
Her lullabies, tales added
to the beauty of each starry night.
I called her grandmother.

There is a beautiful lady I know.
Her lips never moved to complain.
The joys she sacrificed sparkled
as bliss in others' lives.
She was my first tutor,
My nurse, my friend and more
I called her mother.

I, a carefree, pampered girl,
now realize - I have more roles
yet to be played in my life.