



# International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated around the world on the 8th of March and is a day to reflect on how far we have come and how far we still have to go to truly achieve gender equality.

UN Women's global theme for IWD 2019 is 'Think equal, build smart, innovate for change', linking with the UN Commission on the Status of Women's focus on social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure.

Australia's IWD 2019 theme, More Powerful Together, recognises the important role we all play, working in collaboration and across that which sometimes divides us, breaking down stereotypes and gendered roles to create a world where women and girls everywhere have equal rights and opportunities.

<https://unwomen.org.au/campaign/international-womens-day-2019/>

## **Opening Prayer**

God of every race and nation

In the beginning, you fashioned humanity in your image

And watched over us with love as the families of the world

Grew in your sight.

In Jesus you revealed your will that we should

Love one another as you have loved us in Christ.

This day your Holy Spirit inspires us to break down the walls

That divide us and join as one people, one family of love,

Proclaiming your glory.

We make this prayer through Christ who

Binds us together in unity and love.

Amen

## Readings

If we reflect on all the various traditions which we embrace, our own ideas, values and convictions are clarified, redefined and confirmed: our differences are understood; our commonalities are celebrated, and we are empowered for life in an ecumenical age and a pluralistic society.

Sr Thea Bowman

Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society.

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (#27)

For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27-28

*Take time to reflect on these readings and to share your thoughts.*



## **Intercessions**

God has created us to live in harmony and love and to bind all people into the one family of grace. With all those who work for justice and gender equality, we bring our needs before the God of all graces, as we pray: **Keep us mindful of your love.**

1. For all Christians, that our efforts to build up the one Body of Christ may be a witness to all of the unity of the human unity, let us pray. **Keep us mindful of your love.**
2. For all those who work for gender equality, that the Holy Spirit may always strengthen their hands, let us pray. **Keep us mindful of your love.**
3. For women and girls who suffer at the hands of human hatred and sexism, that our efforts may bring about them release, let us pray ... **Keep us mindful of your love.**
4. For governments, that there be greater commitment towards access to education for girls, let us pray. **Keep us mindful of your love.**

*Your own intercessions.*

## **Closing Prayer**

God of all creation, you fashioned us in love.

You bid us to love one another with the same passion  
with which Jesus poured out your presence in our midst.

In the spirit of those who work for justice,

breathe forth your power of creation and

break down the walls of hatred and discrimination.

Bind us always, women and men,

in Christ Jesus as one people. Amen.

# ➤ INVEST IN EQUALITY



WOMEN MAKE UP **HALF** OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION AND YET REPRESENT

**70%**  
OF THE WORLD'S POOR.

**64%**

OF ILLITERATE ADULTS ARE WOMEN.



{ THAT'S  
2 OUT  
OF 3 }

Women work **2/3** of the world's hours yet earn **1/10** of the world's income.



## VIOLENCE



**ONE IN FOUR** WOMEN is physically or sexually abused during pregnancy.

Globally, **NEARLY 40%** of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner.

EVERY DAY, **39,000 GIRLS** ARE FORCED INTO EARLY MARRIAGE.

THAT'S  
26 GIRLS  
A MINUTE

## INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

Women make up only **21.4%** of Parliamentary seats, and **8%** of the world's executives.

**95%** of countries have a male head of state.



More than **100** countries have laws on the books that restrict women's participation in the economy.



**WOMEN IN POWER = GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND EQUALITY**

➤ **WOMEN DELIVER**

WHO WINS? EVERYBODY.