



UNIVERSAL PRAYER INTENTION
FEBRUARY

“We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.”



PRAYER INTENTION COMMENTARY

HOMILY ON THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD²

Francis

1st January 2020

Born of woman. The rebirth of humanity began from a woman. Women are sources of life. Yet they are continually insulted, beaten, raped, forced to prostitute themselves and to suppress the life they bear in the womb. Every form of violence inflicted upon a woman is a blasphemy against God, who was born of a woman. Humanity's salvation came forth from the body of a woman: we can understand our degree of humanity by how we treat a woman's body. How often are women's bodies sacrificed on the profane altars of advertising, of profiteering, of pornography, exploited like a canvas to be used. Yet women's bodies must be freed from consumerism; they must be respected and honoured. Theirs is the most noble flesh in the world, for it conceived and brought to light the love that has saved us! In our day, too, motherhood is demeaned, because the only growth that interests us is economic growth. There are mothers who risk difficult journeys desperately seeking to give a better future to the fruit of their womb, yet are deemed redundant by people with full stomachs but hearts empty of love.

² See full message:

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html

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POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

AMORIS LAETITIA³

Francis

19 March 2016

54. In this brief overview, I would like to stress the fact that, even though significant advances have been made in the recognition of women's rights and their participation in public life, in some countries much remains to be done to promote these rights. Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice. The verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages contradicts the very nature of the conjugal union. I think of the reprehensible genital mutilation of women practiced in some cultures, but also of their lack of equal access to dignified work and roles of decision-making. History is burdened by the excesses of patriarchal cultures that considered women inferior, yet in our own day, we cannot overlook the use of surrogate mothers and "the exploitation and commercialization of the female body in the current media culture".

[42] There are those who believe that many of today's problems have arisen because of feminine emancipation. This argument, however, is not valid, "it is false, untrue, a form of male chauvinism".

[43] The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity. If certain forms of feminism have arisen which we must consider inadequate, we must nonetheless see in the women's movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recognition of the dignity and rights of women.

³ See full message:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html

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