



Justice and Peace

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PORT ELIZABETH

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Justice and Peace

To Priests, Reverends, Religious Brothers and Sister Coordinators of Justice and Peace,

Celebrating Women's Month.

In commemoration of the thousands of **women** who marched to the Union Building in Pretoria, on 9 August 1956, August is **celebrated** as Women's **Month**.

Our being male and female is grounded in the universal honour of God. God made us different and ordained different roles for us in society and in His order (Gen. 1:26-31).

Before sin came into the human story, humankind lived in a perfect paradise. Sin was our rebellion against God as sovereign. The oneness of harmony and mutuality for which God made his dual-gendered human creature was replaced by a power-hunger which turned woman into man's property. Men general suffer from superiority complex and women suffer from inferiority complex.

Jesus came to redeem creation from the bondage of sin. Man and woman are equal in Christ. The real women's liberation movement starts with Jesus and Mary, in fulfilment of God's promise (Genesis 3). As the Mother of Christ, Mary is the new Eve, just as Jesus is the new Adam.

Jesus had a liberated attitude to women.

Education is the basis for a profound respect for every human person. It raises the human spirit by giving both training and opportunity for flourishing. The Church, throughout its long history, has been peopled with empowered women, many of whom are now revered as saints.

The monasteries have produced great women scholars. Many modern women in government and international agencies have been educated by the Church. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity maintains shelters for battered women, orphanages for girls and boys, and homes for destitute and dying women and men around the world.

"If you and Peace, work for Justice"

In his Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II proposes a ‘new feminism’ which rejects the temptation of imitating models of ‘male domination,’ in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation”

The truth is that men cannot be men without the strength of a woman. But liberation from sin is a continuous exercise. It requires effort, and struggle, and time. The family is indeed the first and the most basic institution where human rights of the girl child, are fostered and protected.

Women need to reclaim their womanly dignity and authenticity. “Where the woman is faithful, no evil can befall. The woman is the root and the man is the tree. The tree grows only as high as the root is strong.” says philosopher Confucius. Jesus is renewing our minds. By His resurrection power, we are able to conquer mightily. (By Msgr. John Wynand Katende)

In remembrance of what South African women achieved on that day, 9 August has been declared as **National Women's Day** and is a public holiday in South Africa. Women's month is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on women's achievements, as well as the problems they have faced in the struggle to be free and the important role they continue to play in society. Apart from their traditional roles as mothers, wives and caregivers, statistics show that women are making great progress in business, politics, academic and economic careers with more and more women reaching top positions.

‘Woman Celebrating Campaign’

All too often when we read about women, it is in the context of abuse or some other form of denigration! Don’t get me wrong, we cannot write and petition enough about the atrocities done to women and girl children. We hardly made a dent in turning this tide. But too often we forget to celebrate the women; our sisters, aunts, mothers and grannies.

During this month let us undertake to celebrate by **profiling at least one woman** (our own parishes), from all walks of life, every Sunday during the month of August, in our parishes.

They transform our communities, our parishes, our lives, and still manage to go on without uttering anything. Yet they fight to be noticed or recognised for the sterling roles they play.

Let us model the behaviour we want to see in our boy children and men.

There has never been a better moment to join our voices, share experiences and celebrate the power of women than now.

- By using someone’s journey with cancer as a story to inspire ladies to either go for a check-up, or for those fighting
- Focusing on health as a woman rather than on my appearance as a woman

“If you and Peace, work for Justice”

- By joining the support groups to be an active supporter to those ladies going through a difficult journey.

This month we show love and support for all women who has diligently continued their work in our lives - we celebrating these women and their stories and their journey to discovering their own strength, grit and grace.

Deacon Roland Dace
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