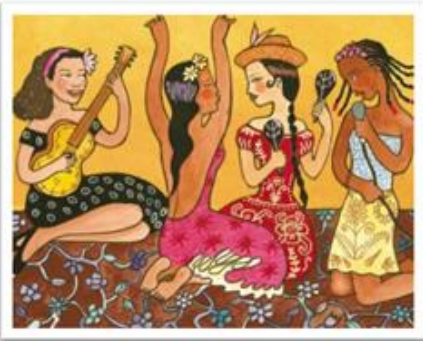


## **MARCH 8<sup>th</sup>, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**OPENING SONG:** *We Will Rise* - Bernadette Farrell (or song of choice)

**INTRODUCTION:** **March 8, 1911: The past that built the present**

It was 1911 when the International Working Women's Day was first celebrated, with its demands for the the right to vote, the right to work and for non-discrimination at work. The choice of March 8th can be explained by the events that occurred on the same date in 1908. 146 women, workers of the Cotton textile factory in New York burned to death. The fire was caused by the incendiary bombs thrown at them in response to their refusal to discontinue their protest against the low wages and the infamous conditions of work that they suffered.



In Mexico, this day was commemorated for the first time in 1932, through the Women's Action Orienting League that had Elvia Carrillo Puerto as Secretary General. She, with the support of Frida Kahlo and other women, managed to bring together female workers in the country to celebrate this day. It was Frida who claimed the right to vote for women.

In 1975, the United Nations Organization recognized this day as a worldwide celebration - with the First World Conference of Women in Mexico. From that date on it has been a special day for all the women of the world.

**SCRIPTURE READING: John 8:1-11 ... followed by a time of reflection and sharing**

1. - How is God's Word speaking to me today?
2. - What is Jesus' attitude towards the woman?
3. - What does his response invite from me?

Today we can ask what is the point of celebrating International Women's Day?

It is more than a celebration of womanhood

- it is an invitation or challenge to reflect on the situation of invisibility, oppression, poverty of many women in our world and to ask 'What can we, as Marists, do to help change this situation?

## TIME FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

**The "spirit" of Mary is Mary's way of judging reality,  
of making decisions and acting upon them.**

**As Marist Women ... how do we:**

- ❖ recognise and celebrate our own resources as women?
- ❖ let go of our fear and work for the rights of all women in society?
- ❖ stand alongside women who suffer the consequences of injustice, poverty and violence and to commit ourselves, as Church, to denounce these situations?
- ❖ embrace a new image of God, expressed through feminine symbols, of the earth and of nature?
- ❖ acknowledge the right to critical reflection of our tradition and approach biblical studies from gender perspectives?
- ❖ creatively use readings from the lectionary and the liturgy and incorporate an inclusive language into our speech?
- ❖ work towards sustainable development for all without degrading the planet?
- ❖ promote an affective-sexual education with a broad vision that encourages real encounter, deep love and mutual pleasure?
- ❖ recognise the political dimension of the private sphere?
- ❖ hold sacred the historical memory of invisible and silenced women?
- ❖ work for a change in human relations based on equality, respect and democracy?
- ❖ create women's networks in dialogue with other movements and groups in defence of justice?



In this new millennium, we must ask ourselves:

**'What can I do today for women in order to be a witness of the Gospel of Jesus?  
What can we do together?**

**TIME FOR SHARING:** *This could be done at another time if the group prefers...*

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

### Response: Liberating God, hear us

1. For all those women throughout history who, risking their lives, have contributed to conquering the struggle for recognition and equality...
2. For all women, that we may help one another to discover new ways of liberating others in the style of Jesus...
3. For the millions of women who support their families in the areas of education, shelter and food, economy ... that God might give them strength and patience as they continue to nurture life...
4. As we work for peace and justice, we pray that one day all forms of discrimination against women will disappear and the rights and dignity of women will be respected...

Please feel free to add your own intentions ...

### PRAYER OF BLESSING: *Let us raise our right hand and bless our sisters in the community saying:*



I bless you in the name of Esther who prayed, in the face of the enemy's power, for the liberation of her people.

I bless you in the name of Elizabeth who recognized the value of another woman's friendship.

I bless you in the name of Mary Magdalene, first evangelist of Christ.

I bless you in the name of Saint Scholastica who taught her brother to listen to the spirit enlivening the rule.

I bless you on behalf of Ita Ford, Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel and Jean Donovan, religious and lay women working together for peace and justice, who were raped and murdered in El Salvador.

I bless you in the name of Saint Rose of Lima who fought against discrimination and racism both in the Church and in her world.

I bless you in the name of Sr. Juana Ines de la Cruz, who defended the rights of all women to have access to study.

I bless you in the name of Mary - daughter of Anne and first disciple of Jesus - who initiated his mission in Cana, was present in the midst of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and continues to be the mainstay of the Church.

I bless you in the name of the Nurturing God – Creator, Sustainer and Life-giving Spirit. Amen.

### CONCLUDING SONG: *Magnificat (Taizé)*