

# Liturgy of the Word for A Church for Our Daughters

## INRODUCTORY RITES

### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:**

**A PLACE AT THE TABLE** music by Lori True, text by Shirley Erena Murray  
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**ALL ARE WELCOME** by Marty Haugen  
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### **Sign of the Cross**

LEADER (while making the sign of the Cross):

The grace of Jesus the Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

**ALL: And also with you**

LEADER: Let us welcome one another with a sign of peace.

### **Call to Prayer:**

LEADER: In every generation, women have and continue to faithfully and generously respond to the call to serve God and God's holy people. They have been apostles and disciples, leaders, preachers, educators, counselors, musicians, artists, writers, comforters, pastoral ministers, chaplains and yes, priestly people offering their gifts to the Body of Christ.

Yet, our Church now suffers a poverty of spirit brought about by the exclusion of women from full participation in the life, ministry, and leadership of the church.

Today, we women and men, sisters and brothers, grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers, godparents – members of the Body of Christ -- gather together as one family to pray for a Church that is truly inclusive and alive with the gifts, spirit and potential of all its members.

SIDE A: We gather in thanksgiving for and celebration of the women who came before us – our foremothers in faith -- whose too often forgotten stories instruct and inspire us.

SIDE B: We gather in solidarity with the women of today whose demands for justice and inclusion call us to conversation.

ALL: We gather in hope for our daughters, the next generation, whose God-given possibility and potential compels us to work for a Church for Our Daughters.

**Opening Prayer:**

LEADER: Let us pray

Good and Loving God, Creator of women and men in your own image,

**ALL: Create in us a desire for the wholeness you planned;**

LEADER: Word made flesh and born of a woman,

**ALL: Empower us to hear and speak Your redeeming truth**

Leader: Spirit companion of women throughout space and time,

**ALL: Guide us as we work to build a Church for our daughters, AMEN.**

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### **First Reading: On our Foremothers in Faith**

#### **A Reading by Christine Schenk in Catholic Women Speak**

Contemporary biblical scholarship has uncovered important roles held by women in the early Jesus movement. Luke tells us that Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Susanna and many other women accompanied Jesus and ministered with him in Galilee. Yet this Lukan reading is rarely heard on Sunday. Mary of Magdala's commissioning to "go and tell my brothers" that Jesus has risen does not appear on Easter or on any Sunday in the Easter Season in the United States but is relegated to Easter Tuesday.

St. Paul worked closely with women leaders like Phoebe, Junia, Lydia, and Prisca. Unfortunately, Romans 16, a passage that names ten women and identifies some of them as deacons, apostles, and coworkers, is never proclaimed on a Sunday. Nor are the accounts of women leaders in the Acts of the Apostles.

And where are the biblical stories of the strong women leaders of salvation history? Couldn't we include the story of Shiprah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives who saved a nation of boy children, perhaps even Moses, by defying Pharaoh's law to kill all male infants born to enslaved Hebrews?

Proclaiming Lectionary texts that exclude or distort the witness of women, particularly in a church where all priestly liturgical leadership is male, is dangerous for our daughters and our sons. Young girls can hardly avoid internalizing the notion that God must have created them less important than their brothers. If all-male liturgical leadership and Sunday Lectionary readings are subtly seeding subordination in our daughters, what is being planted in our sons?

From: "It's Not All About Eve: Women in the Lectionary" by Christine Schenk, in *Catholic Women Speak*. Edited by the Catholic Women Speak Network. Copyright © 2015 Catholic Women Speak Network. Used with Permission.

## **Second Reading: From Catholic Women Today**

### **A Reading by Rhonda Miska in Catholic Women Speak**

As women raised in the 1970s and 1980s, we were taught that there was no limit to what we could be when we grew up. The Church is one of the last places where that rings false and where we struggle to be seen as what we are: professional Catholic women, serving in ministry. This tension becomes particularly clear in interfaith settings, working alongside women leaders in other traditions; do we “count” as clergy or not?

While I personally have never felt a call to ordination, I have seen peers (after much difficult discernment) seek ordination in other denominations. This is a tremendous loss to the Church because these are smart, committed, talented women. I trust their response to God’s call, yet it saddens me that they have to leave their tradition in order to serve.

We young Catholic women, hope for the acknowledgement of our dignity as women with a call to ministry and for the respect of our voices and experiences. The blessings that enlarge our hearts and the challenges that wound us are equally real. Many of us have been deeply formed in, and treasure the riches of, different streams of Catholic tradition – Franciscan, Ignatian, Dominican. As millennials in a postmodern world, we appreciate the deep, rich grounding our Catholic identity offers. We have been graced in our encounters with God mediated by the Church and treasure our calls. And yet our experiences of sexism and injustice within our Catholic identity create internal struggles. We hope our naming of that struggle can be heard and creatively engaged.

From: “Young Catholic Women Working in Ministry” by Rhonda Miska in *Catholic Women Speak*. Edited by the Catholic Women Speak Network. Copyright © 2015 Catholic Women Speak Network. Used with permission.

### **Third Reading: On Our Daughters**

#### **A Reading by Gina Messina-Dysert from Faithfully Feminist**

It was and is important to me that my daughter be raised within my community and with the same rituals, values, and teachings I learned because of my Catholic culture. Yet, I confess that I fear I am indoctrinating her into a tradition that will abuse her. And so, becoming a mother has led me to many questions about my faith and feminism, and thus, feeling the need for multiple confessions:

*I confess that I wanted to claim the Spirit of Christ within myself and baptize my daughter.*

*I confess that I didn't.*

*I Confess that I want my daughter to embrace our Catholic identity.*

*I confess that I fear being Catholic will make my daughter feel "less than" because of her gender.*

*I confess that it brings me joy to see my daughter make the sign of the cross.*

*I confess that it brings me sadness to see my daughter make the sign of the cross.*

*I confess that when my daughter talk about God "He" I correct her and tell her it is God "She."*

*I confess that I still imagine God as male.*

*I confess that my daughter told her teacher that Jesus was a woman.*

*I confess that I was embarrassed.*

*I confess that I posted a YouTube video of my daughter singing "Ordain a Lady."*

*I confess that I ignored my daughter when she asked me why there were no women priests at our church.*

*I confess that our family attends the same conservative Gatholic church I grew up in.*

*I confess that attending the same conservative Catholic church I grew up in brings me comfort.*

*I confess that I enrolled my daughter in Catholic school.*

*I confess that I continue to struggle with having my daughter in Catholic School.*

I confess, I am a Catholic feminist, and though some may not understand how these identities intersect, I cannot separate them. I am not one or the other. I am both. That being so, I am committed to change, to activism, and to giving my daughter both the beauty and comfort of family and tradition, and the empowerment and strength of feminism. With these intentions, I believe she will have a different experience, one that is not damaging or abuse, but that is just.

From: "Confessions" by Gina Messina-Dysert in *Faithfully Feminist*. Edited by Gina Messina-Dysert, Jennifer Zobair, and Amy Levin. Copyright © 2015 by I Speak for Myself, Inc. Used with permission.

## **Gospel Acclamation:**

### **Gospel: Luke 13:10-17**

READER: God is with you

**ALL: And also with you**

Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

**Time for Shared Reflection:** *the leader or some other person may offer a brief reflection on the readings or on the topic of building a Church for our daughters. Then she may offer a few suggested questions for response from those gathered.*

*Alternatively, you may wish to download the Declaration for Our Daughters with Discussion Guide (available at [achurchforourdaughters.org](http://achurchforourdaughters.org)) and read the Declaration together and engage in conversation using the supplied questions. If your group is particularly large, you may consider breaking out into smaller discussion groups.*

## **Prayers of the People: RESPONSE: HEAR US, O GOD**

LEADER: Inspired by the hope that our daughters may know radical inclusion and justice, equality without qualification, and a Church institution that transforms oppression into love without bounds, we place our needs before our good and loving God.

*\*Here it would be appropriate to invite women – especially young women – to offer these prayers of petition...*

For leaders of the institutional Church, that they may recognize that all people are created in God's image and strike down every oppressive practice, teaching, and law that assigns women and girls to a subordinate status. We pray:

For the Christian community, that we may come to know God and ourselves more deeply through spirituality, language, and imagery that is more fully representative of our inclusive God, we pray:

For those who work for justice for women in the world, that the Church may stand with them to build structures that support and sustain the basic needs of all including access to clean water, clean air, adequate housing, food, security, education, the workforce, political and social engagement, and freedom of movement, we pray:

For the poor and those most vulnerable, the majority of whom are women, that the Church may stand in solidarity with them and work to dismantle all structures, systems, customs, forces and manifestations of human oppression and exploitation, we pray:

For those in our communities who are marginalized by the institutional church because they are LGBTQ, belong to diverse families, have divorced, or follow their conscience on reproductive health; and for those whose voices have been silenced because they support women's equality in the Church including ordination. That they may come to know the Church as a place of radical inclusion that defers to the primacy of conscience; affirms the spirit of the divine in their identity, gifts, needs and dreams; and welcomes them to every table including the Eucharistic and decision-making tables, we pray:

For those who have died and particularly our foremothers in faith --those in Scripture, those in our tradition, and those who have walked with us in our time. That their stories and witness may always be remembered, celebrated and honored and that they may know the peace of complete unity and wholeness with God, we pray:

For all of us gathered here, that our vocations and ministries, expertise and experience, and contributions of mind, body, and spirit may be welcomed and celebrated for the benefit of all God's children, we pray:

For what else shall we pray?

LEADER: Loving God, Mother and Father,  
We make these prayers confident in your endless and transformative love for all  
your children, for our daughters and yours.

**ALL: AMEN**

**OUR MOTHER, OUR FATHER**

LEADER: Together we pray as Jesus taught us:

**ALL: Our Mother, Our Father  
on earth and in heaven  
blessed be your  
compassionate presence,  
Your images and names.  
Fill us with your Spirit,  
Show us the wisdom of Your  
ways.  
Forgive us.  
Teach us to forgive.**

**Shield us from temptation  
and protect us from all harm.  
Prevent us from hurting the  
ones we love,  
from injuring other in word  
or in deed,  
from desecrating our planet.  
Be with us and within us now  
and always. Amen.**

**CONCLUDING RITES**

**CLOSING PRAYER: A PSALM OF PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTRY**

by Miriam Therese Winter, MMS in *WomanWord*, © 1990, The Crossroad  
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SIDE A: We are partners in the mystery of redemption, partners in the  
mystery of reconciliation, partners in the misery of the world's population,  
partners in the way of the cross.

SIDE B: We are partners in the ministry of service, partners in the ministry of  
justice and peace, partners in the liturgy of church and life, partners in  
healing and hope.

SIDE A: Together we reach out to touch the untouchables.

SIDE B: Together we move out to teach the taught.

SIDE A: Together we stand up to preach right practice.

SIDE B: Together we practice what we preach.

SIDE A: Ours is the gift of good company on days when there's nobody else  
there beside us.

SIDE B: Ours is the gift of affirming the ways of the God Who is working  
within us.

SIDE A: Blessed is the partnership rooted in love that spills over, spreads  
over, covers over everything negative and uninspiring.



SIDE B: Blessed is the partnership that shares with its circle of friends and supporters.

SIDE A: God of Relationship, bless this relationship, strengthen this partnership and deepen this fellowship. Let it be a symbol of Your mode of Being and sign of your own noncompetitive ways.

GROUP B: God of Companionship, may we be supportive, may we be effective, bringing to life all the best in each other so that we might help others see good in themselves.

**ALL: AMEN**

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