



UP TO THE SOURCE

Adoratio with St. John Paul II

— FOR WOMEN —

The Feminine Genius

From “Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women”

June 29, 1995

After creating man male and female, God says to both: “*Fill the earth and subdue it.*” Not only does he give them the power to procreate as a means of perpetuating the human species throughout time, *he also gives them the earth, charging them with the responsible use of its resources...* In this task, which is essentially that of culture, *man and woman alike* share equal responsibility from the start... To this “unity of the two” God has entrusted not only the work of procreation and family life, but the creation of history itself.

It is my hope, dear sisters, that you will reflect carefully on what it means to speak of the “*genius of women...*” in order to let this genius be more fully expressed in the life of society as a whole, as well as in the life of the Church... *The Church sees in Mary the highest expression of the “feminine genius” and she finds in her a source of constant inspiration* (Letter to Women, 8.10).

“Mary is the new Eve. Mary means, in a sense, a going beyond the limit spoken of in the Book of Genesis (3:16) and a return to that “beginning” in which one finds the “woman” as she was intended to be in creation,

and therefore in the eternal mind of God: in the bosom of the Most Holy Trinity. Mary is “the new beginning” of the *dignity and vocation of women*, of each and every woman.

A particular key for understanding this can be found in the words which the Evangelist puts on Mary’s lips after the Annunciation, during her visit to Elizabeth: “He who is mighty has done great things for me” (Lk 1:49). These words certainly refer to the conception of her Son, who is the “Son of the Most High” (Lk 1:32), the “holy one” of God; but they can also signify *the discovery of her own feminine humanity*. He “has done great things for me:” *this is the discovery of all the richness and personal resources of femininity*, all the eternal originality of the “woman,” just as God wanted her to be, a person for her own sake, who discovers herself “by means of a sincere gift of self.”

This discovery is connected with a clear awareness of God’s gift, of his generosity. From the very “beginning” sin had obscured this awareness, in a sense had stifled it, as is shown in the words of the first temptation by the “father of lies” (cf. Genesis 3:1-5). At the advent of the “fullness of time” (cf. Gal 4:4), when the mystery of Redemption begins to be fulfilled in the history of humanity, this awareness bursts forth in all its power in the words of the biblical “woman” of Nazareth. *In Mary, Eve discovers the nature of the true dignity of woman, of feminine humanity.* This discovery must continually reach the heart of every woman and shape her vocation and her life” (*Mulieris dignitatem* – On the Dignity of Women, 11).



Litany of Women Saints

Saint Mary, Mother of God	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Anna, Prophetess	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Mary Magdalene, Disciple	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Agnes, Virgin	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Helena, Mother	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Monica, Mother	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Olga of Kiev, Regente	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Bridget of Sweden, Widow	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Widow	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Joan of Arc, Heroine	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Elizabeth of Portugal, Empress	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Catherine of Siena and	
Saint Teresa of Jesus, Doctors of the Church	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Marianne Cope and	
Saint Catherine Drexel, Religious	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Catherine Tekakwitha, Lay Woman	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, Religious	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Theodore Guerin and	
Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, Religious	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, Wife	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Luigi and Saint Maria Beltrame	
Quattrochi, Spouses	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Religious	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross,	
Philosopher, Carmelite, Patron of Europe	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, Patron of Missions and	
Doctor of the Church	<i>Pray for us</i>

A Woman's Prayer

Thank you Lord for having created us as women.

We are well aware that in our culture it is unclear what the gift of being a woman means. That is why we approach your Son, Jesus Christ, confident that He will enlighten and confirm us with regard to the mystery and depth of our being.

We were created in complementarity with man, as a sign of mutual help. It is in receiving ourselves as a gift and giving ourselves as a gift that we fulfill our vocation, welcoming at the same time the gift of man, and the gift of human being. Through Motherhood we are filled with wonder at the uniqueness of each person.

Lord, you have made us capable of seeing people and the world around us from the heart, uniting reason and feeling. Our vision shares in Yours, for we see others in their greatness and limitations, placing ourselves at their service.

May the Virgin Mother, model of every woman, help us so that our feminine genius may creatively enrich the life of our families and society. Amen.

Marian Mass

Join us every Saturday at 8:15 am for **Marian Mass**. We are journeying with the encyclical of St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris mater*.



Visit our St. John Paul II web page at stmarylitleton.org/stjohnpaul2.