



UP TO THE SOURCE

Adoratio with St. John Paul II

FOR WOMEN

The Feminine Genius as a Service of Love

From “On the Dignity of Women” (*Mulieris dignitatem*)

10. It is my hope, dear sisters, that you will reflect carefully on what it means to speak of the “*genius of women*”, not only in order to be able to see in this phrase a specific part of God’s plan which needs to be accepted and appreciated, but also 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... This is another aspect—different from the conjugal aspect, but also important—of that “help” which women, according to the Book of Genesis, are called to give to men.

The Church sees in Mary the highest expression of the “feminine genius” and she finds in her a source of constant inspiration. Mary called herself the “handmaid of the Lord” (Luke 1:38). Through obedience to the Word of God she accepted her lofty yet not easy vocation as wife and mother in the family of Nazareth. Putting herself at God’s service, she also put herself at the service of others: a service of love. Precisely through this service Mary was able to experience in her life a mysterious, but authentic “reign.” It is not by chance that she is invoked as “Queen of heaven and earth.” The entire community of believers thus invokes her; many nations and peoples call upon her as their “Queen”. For her, “to reign” is to serve! Her service is “to reign”!



This is the way in which authority needs to be understood, both in the family and in society and the Church. Each person's fundamental vocation is revealed in this "reigning," for each person has been created in the "image" of the One who is Lord of heaven and earth and called to be his adopted son or daughter in Christ. Man is the only creature on earth "which God willed for its own sake," as the Second Vatican Council teaches; it significantly adds that man "cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self" (*Gaudium et spes*, 24).

The maternal "reign" of Mary consists in this. She who was, in all her being, a gift for her Son, *has also become a gift for the sons and daughters of the*

whole human race, awakening profound trust in those who seek her guidance along the difficult paths of life on the way to their definitive and transcendent destiny. Each one reaches this *final goal* by fidelity to his or her own vocation; this goal provides meaning and direction for the earthly labours of men and women alike.

12. Necessary emphasis should be placed on the "*genius of women*," not only by considering great and famous women of the past or present, but also those *ordinary* women who reveal the gift of their womanhood by placing themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives. For in giving themselves to others each day women fulfil their deepest vocation. Perhaps more than men, women *acknowledge the person*, because they see persons with their hearts. They see them independently of various ideological or political systems. They see others in their greatness and limitations; they try to go out to them and *help them*. In this way the basic plan of the Creator takes flesh in the history of humanity and there is constantly revealed, in the variety of vocations, that *beauty*—not merely physical, but above all spiritual—which God bestowed from the very beginning on all, and in a particular way on women.

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.