



UP TO THE SOURCE

Adoratio with St. John Paul II

FOR WOMEN

The Feminine Genius

From “On the Dignity of Women” (*Mulieris dignitatem*, 18)

“The human being - both male and female - is the only being in the world which God willed for its own sake. The human being is a person, a subject who decides for himself. At the same time, man “cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self...” This truth about the person also opens up *the path to a full understanding of women’s motherhood.*

(Motherhood is the fruit of the marriage union of a man and woman, of that biblical “knowledge” which corresponds to the “union of the two in one flesh...” Biblical “knowledge” is achieved in accordance with the truth of the person only when the mutual self-giving is not distorted either by the desire of the man to become the “master” of his wife or by the woman remaining closed within her own instincts.)

This *mutual gift of the person in marriage* opens to the gift of a new life, a *new human being*, who is also a person in the likeness of his parents. Motherhood implies from the beginning a special openness to the new person: and this is precisely the woman’s “part.” In this openness, in conceiving and giving birth to a child, the woman “discovers herself through a sincere gift of self.” The gift of interior readiness to accept the child and bring it into the world is linked to the marriage union... According to the Bible, the conception and birth of a new human being are accompanied by the following words of the woman: “I have *brought a man into being with the help of the Lord*” (Genesis 4:1). This exclamation of Eve, the “mother of all the living,” is repeated every time

a new human being comes into the world. It expresses the woman's joy and awareness that she is sharing in the great mystery of eternal generation.

Motherhood is linked to the personal structure of the woman and to the personal dimension of the gift... Mary's words at the Annunciation—"Let it be to me according to your word"—signify the woman's readiness for the gift of self and her readiness to accept a new life.



The eternal mystery of generation, which is in God himself is reflected in the woman's motherhood and in the man's fatherhood. Human parenthood is something shared by both the man and the woman... Although both of them together are parents of their child, *the woman's motherhood constitutes a special "part" in this shared parenthood, and the most demanding part.* Parenthood—even though it belongs to both—is realized much more fully in the woman, especially in the prenatal period. It is the woman who "pays" directly for this shared generation, which literally absorbs the energies of her body and soul. It is therefore necessary that *the man* be fully aware that in their shared parenthood he owes a *special debt* to the woman.

Motherhood involves a special communion with the mystery of life, as it develops in the woman's womb. The mother is filled with wonder at this mystery of life, and "understands" with unique intuition what is happening inside her. In the light of the "beginning", the mother accepts and loves as a person the child she is carrying in her womb. This unique contact with the new human being developing within her gives rise to an attitude towards human beings—not only towards her own child, but every human being—which profoundly marks the woman's personality. It is commonly thought that *women* are more capable than men of paying attention to *another person*, and that motherhood develops this predisposition even more. The man—even with all his sharing in parenthood—always remains "outside" the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth; in many ways he has to *learn* his own "fatherhood" from the mother.

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.