

WOW Liturgy from Catholic Women's Ordination (CWO)

Saturday, 4 November 2023: 5.30 pm CET/4.30 pm (UTC)

Very brief introduction including call out for 4 volunteer participant readers for final blessing.

Opening hymn - Enemy of Apathy by John L Bell & Graham Maule

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EmkyT6uUZE>

She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,
Hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
She sighs and she sings, mothering creation,
Waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.

She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,
Lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;
She nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,
Nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.

She dances in fire, startling her spectators,
Waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;
She weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,
Nor can she be captured, silenced, or restrained.

For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
Gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
She is the key opening the scriptures,
Enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

Introduction/Reflection (Developing the theme 'Nor can she be captured, silenced, or restrained', focusing on CWO's history, present, future, its wider connections and shared purpose with WOW and other movements.)

Invitation

All: May we all be strengthened by the presence of God in this place.

Opening prayers

1. The CWO Prayer

Moved by a compulsion of the Holy Spirit, we cannot remain ignorant of this injustice in our midst.

We long for all humanity to be acknowledged as equal, particularly among your community of the church, so we pray grieving for the lost gifts of so many women.

We ask you, God of all peoples, to bring insight and humility to all those in positions of dominance, and an understanding that the ascended Lord called us all to act doing Christ's work here and now. (Moment of silence)

We ask this of you, God our Creator,
Jesus our Redeemer, Spirit our Sustainer.

2. God Who Knows No Boundaries

As our Church prays for vocations to the priesthood,
We challenge them, asking.
“Where are the women?”
We know that you call women.
To baptise, to reconcile, to confirm in the faith;
To preach, to marry and to anoint the sick;
To consecrate the Eucharist, to live the Gospel.
Faithful, but fed up;
Baptised, yet barred from ordained ministry.
When we ask, “Where are the women?” you answer.
They are here!
May our Church at last welcome them as equals.
Amen.

3. God, our mother and father, creator of women and men in your own image, may we be blessed with:
The strength to persevere.
The courage to speak out.
The vision to seek a renewed ministry.
The faith to believe in you beyond all systems and institutions.
So that your face on earth may be seen in all its beauty.
All: Amen

The Word and Women's Voices

2 Chronicles 15.7 So be strong, do not be discouraged, for your deeds will be rewarded.
Isiah 40:31 But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

Women's Voices

1. From Sr Joan Chittester's Litany of Women for the Church

Give to the women of our time
the strength to persevere,
the courage to speak out,
the faith to believe in you beyond all systems and institutions
so that your face on earth may be seen in all its beauty,
so that men and women become whole,
so that the church may be converted to your will in everything and in all ways.

2. In her book *The Discipleship of Equals*, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza sees two models of church, the first the patriarchal model can admit women into its ordained ranks only when they are willing to accept their wife-role as it is defined by the patriarchal family.

Feminist theology compels feminists to raise the issue of sexism as a structural evil and sin so that the incorporation of women into the ministry of the church does not lead to women's further alienation and oppression.

The second model of church understands the church as the people of God....All the baptized constitute church and are empowered and responsible for building up church. Ministry in this model of church is outer directed toward the “world” in proclaiming the gospel and in ministering to those who are weak and powerless. At the same time ministry is inner-directed toward the church in nourishing, empowering, and enabling the faith

community. Ministry is not a prerogative or privilege of a clerical class or of one sex, but it is rooted in the baptism of all believers. This second model of church as the people of God is the participatory-inclusive (Catholic) model of church.

Creed from the Iona Community, an international, ecumenical Christian movement working for justice and peace, the rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship.

Iona, where the community is based, is a tiny island off the southwest coast of Mull in the Inner Hebrides, Scotland.

We believe that God is present in the darkness before dawn,
in the waiting and uncertainty where fear and courage join hands,
where conflict and caring link arms, and the sun rises over barbed wire.
We believe in a with-us God, who sits down in our midst to share our humanity.
We affirm a faith that takes us beyond a safe place into action, into vulnerability, and onto the streets.

We commit ourselves to work for change and put ourselves on the line,
to bear responsibility, take risks, live powerfully, and face humiliation.
To stand with those on the edge.
To choose life and be used by the Spirit for God's new community of hope.

Personal intercessions. Please place these in the chat if you wish to. After our communal intercessions, we'll pray in silence for these our personal ones.

Intercessions – communal: participants muted. Readers include 'Hear our prayer'.
Grateful for the gift of life, we pray for those whose lives are diminished by physical or mental ill health, abuse, grief, or rejection. We ask for the listening, the affirmation and the healing which will encourage and restore them.

God in your mercy
All: hear our prayer

We give grateful thanks for the courage and determination of victims and survivors of church-related abuse. Who in sharing their stories of spiritual, sexual and other forms of violence, show us that if the church is to become a safe place for all, there needs to be deep-rooted changes which transform the church into a discipleship of equals.

God in your mercy
All: hear our prayer

We pray for those who have no peace, because of war or the fear of war, the threat of violence, the fear of hunger, or the loss of hope. We pray especially for the women who are caught up in war as victims or non-combatants.

God in your mercy
All: hear our prayer

We pray for the earth, especially where it is damaged by human carelessness, and threatened by human greed. May we be active stewards of the earth, caring and speaking up for all of creation.

God in your mercy
All: hear our prayer

We give thanks for Jesus of Nazareth who loved so greatly and equally, respected women without equivocation, and taught clearly and courageously, that he was able to set people free from images and ideas and religious practices that bound them into fear and a false sense of the separation from the Spirit of Life.

God in your mercy
All: hear our prayer

In a time of silence, let's pray for our personal intercessions in the chat and in our hearts.

The Peace. You are invited to share the pace using the sign of Namaste, I love you in Sanskrit. If you wish, join your hands, and make a bow to our community

The Eucharistic Sharing

Gracious God may this meal be for us, as it was for your disciples on their way to Emmaus, an encounter with you. As you shared your life with them, may you now share your life with us. In our homes, across the world, we gather as sisters and brothers in the holy family of God. Lord, send your Spirit among us and upon this bread and drink; that we may taste and see your goodness, be embraced by your love, and be engaged in your service. As Jesus commanded us, we share our Eucharistic meal together. As we break this bread and share this drink, may we become one in the body of Christ.

We break this bread: may we become your body.
We share this drink as a sign of sharing your life-giving blood.
(All raise their bread and drink)

Graciously nourish us, O Christ, so that we who try to follow you may receive food for the journey and be bound in solidarity with each other as we work for justice and equity for all.
Amen

Final blessing: An Untraditional Blessing: Sr Ruth Fox

May God bless you with discontent with easy answers, half-truths, superficial relationships, so that you will live from deep within your heart.
May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, abuse, and exploitation of people, so that you will work for justice, equality, and peace.
May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and to change their pain to joy.
May God bless you with the foolishness to think you can make a difference in this world, so that you will do the things which others tell you cannot be done.

Sending Forth. Closing Message

Let us go forth and continue to raise up women. Let us speak their names, (All: sound out the name of women you want to raise up)
Tell their stories and thank them for sharing their unique gifts with the world.
Let us be women and men who inspire others. (All: call to mind a woman who inspires)
We are the women who refused to keep silent.

We are the ones who claimed our power.
We named ourselves, we shared our tunes.
We spoke the words of life.

Come, Holy Spirit. Diarmuid O'Murchu

Enflame once more the dying embers of our weariness.
Shake us of our complacency.
Whisper our names once more, and scatter your gifts of grace with wild abandon.
Break open the prisons of our inner being, and let your raging justice be our sign of liberty.

Come, Holy Spirit,
Breathe down upon our troubled world.
Shake the tired foundations of our crumbling institutions.
Break the rules that keep you out of all our sacred spaces, and from the dust and rubble, gather up the seedlings of a new creation.

Come, Holy Spirit,
whose justice outwits international conspiracy;
whose light outshines spiritual bigotry,
whose peace can overcome the destructive potential of warfare,
whose promise invigorates our every effort to create a new heaven and a new earth, now and forever.
Empowered by the Spirit, we continue the mission entrusted to us.

4. Come, Holy Spirit,

and lead us to places we would rather not go;
expand the horizons of our limited imaginations.
Awaken in our souls dangerous dreams for a new tomorrow, and rekindle in our hearts the fire of prophetic enthusiasm.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come!
Let justice and equity roll on like a river, your peace like a never ending stream.
Strengthen the resolve of these your rebels, Amplify the voices of these your prophets,
And God, have mercy on your creation.

Joan Baez - We Shall Overcome (BBC Television Theatre, London - June 5, 1965) -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nM39QUiAsoM>

Thank you for joining us and
May God bless and keep you always
May your wishes all come true
May you always do for others
And let others do for you
May you build a ladder to the stars
And climb on every rung. (Bob Dylan)