
International Women's Day 2025



International Women's Day 2025, observed on March 8, adopts the campaign theme "Accelerate Action," emphasising the urgency of advancing gender equality. It is an annual global celebration that aims to educate society on the remarkable women's rights movement while celebrating the cultural, political, and socio-economical achievements of women and girls.

Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph

jmjjpic@outlook.com

Introduction....This year's theme focuses on creating a world where everyone has equal rights, power, and opportunities. It highlights the importance of empowering young women and girls, as they play a key role in bringing lasting change.

"Accelerate Action" encourages individuals, organisations, and governments to collaborate on effective strategies that have already shown positive results. Supporting grassroots movements and advocacy groups working for women's rights is a key focus.

Additionally, to accelerate women's empowerment, a campaign theme called 'Accelerate Action' has been launched. This theme emphasises the need for swift and decisive steps to address the systemic barriers and biases that women face in various spheres of life.

By supporting initiatives that empower women and challenge discrimination, we can collectively accelerate the journey toward a more equitable world.

In Biblical Perspective..... "Women are made in God's image. We know from Genesis 1 that God made Adam first. While that was indeed good, it wasn't complete. It wasn't good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18). The creation of Eve tells us there is something about womanhood that is necessary to fully express God's image. Genesis 2 says Eve was made to be a helper.

women are made in God's image and therefore each and every girl has immeasurable worth. Beyond the creation narrative, we see women prized and treasured by Jesus throughout the gospels. We see women esteemed for their faith and contributions in the early church. In historical contexts like first century Rome, when girls and women were often mistreated and devalued, myriad Biblical accounts stand in stark, counter-cultural contrast. From creation to restoration, from Genesis to Revelation, women are honored in the Bible because women are created by God and in his image.

Because our good and kind God in heaven imparted immeasurable worth to each and every little girl, we must protect and uphold that worth in each and every context. In our fallen world, many seek to oppress, abuse, and denigrate women. The goals of IWD to elevate women are good and right, but it's in the pages of Scripture that we find a rock solid foundation and motivation for truly upholding women—namely, that we have been created by God, in his image, and therefore every woman has immeasurable value.

This IWD, let's do as Romans 12:10 instructs, "outdo one another with honor." Let's spur one another on (Heb. 10:24) to encourage and advocate for women both near and far.

Our Founder's Perspective..

As we celebrate International Women's Day 2025 with the theme Accelerate Action, we are reminded of the urgent need to empower women, ensuring that their voices and contributions shape society for the better. This resonates deeply with the vision of our Founder, Fr. Mathias Wolff, who believed in the strength of women, particularly the sisters he formed, to be fearless in all things except in their reverence for God. He encouraged them to step forward with courage, shedding the fears that arise from human frailty and societal expectations, and to place their trust in divine providence.

Fr. Wolff's words echo the call for women to take bold steps: "To succeed in those undertakings that concern the honor of God, one must also rid oneself of the vain fear that is instilled in us by pettiness, as well as the audacity that leads to conceit. One should not fear anything with the help of Heaven, but one should also hope nothing of one's own strength"(Wolff, 1868). His vision was not one of passivity but of action—an invitation to move beyond hesitation and actively engage in the mission entrusted to them.

Fearless Women in Action: The Legacy of Dutch Missionaries

The Dutch sisters who set foot on Indian soil carried with them the fearless spirit Wolff envisioned. They entered an unfamiliar land, embraced new cultures, and endured hardships—harsh climates, linguistic barriers, and limited resources—not for personal gain but for the greater glory of God. They did not shrink back in fear but accelerated action, establishing schools, hospitals, and missions that empowered countless women and children. Their work was not simply service; it was a testament to the power of faith-filled action.

Among them, Mary Glowrey stands as a shining example of detachment and fearless commitment. A woman of extraordinary intellect and medical expertise, she chose to leave her flourishing career in Australia to serve the poorest in India. She did not fear the challenges that lay ahead—lack of medical infrastructure, extreme conditions, or the unknown future. Instead, she placed her trust in God and devoted herself entirely to those in need. She walked miles to treat the sick, worked tirelessly with minimal facilities, and persevered despite the odds. Her only fear was the fear of failing in her divine mission.

A Call to Fearless and Purposeful Action

Today, Pope Francis continues this call for women to embrace their mission with courage. Like Fr. Wolff, he urges women not to be hindered by fear but to use their strength in service to God and humanity. Sr. Raffaella Petrini, Secretary-General of the Governorate of Vatican City, and Simona Brambilla, the first woman prefect, embody this spirit of leadership, demonstrating that the role of women in the Church and society is indispensable.

As we reflect on this year's theme, Accelerate Action, let us ask ourselves: How can we, like the pioneering sisters before us, move beyond hesitation and into fearless action? How can we detach from worldly fears and attachments to make room for God's work?

Fr. Wolff's message remains ever relevant—do not fear anything when relying on Heaven. With faith, detachment, and unwavering trust in God, let us accelerate our mission to transform lives and build a future where all women can thrive.

Conclusion

In our own homes we can speak words of life to our girls and point out the good ways God made them. We can pay attention to their unique gifts, endowed by God, and pursue their growth and flourishing.

In our communities, we can applaud the women in our midst who are serving their families, their businesses, their nonprofits, their friends, and their churches for the good of their communities and to the glory of God. We can reach out with a word of appreciation or public proclamation of the grace of God through our moms, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, daughters, female teachers, doctors, businesswomen, volunteers, athletes, whoever—women are diverse because God is creative. Across the nation and around the world we can recognize and emulate the daughters of God in our midst who are “like corner pillars” in their communities (Ps. 144:12).

And finally, we can look for ways to serve women who are oppressed and hurting, denied the opportunity to thrive. We can pray, give, and even go to marginalized women in Jesus’s name. A brief glance at global headlines reveals a bleak picture for girls in many places. In many countries there is a limited access for girls to education and healthcare, physical and sexual violence against women, human trafficking, the exclusion of women in civics and politics, and various cultural practices that put women and girls at risk.

There is work yet to be done on behalf of millions of our sisters around the world. Seeking their protection and honor is a worthy and biblical endeavor. Girls and women are created in God’s image, they are precious to our Savior, and their well-being is vital to the well-being of all people everywhere.

So let’s celebrate IWD not just because it’s a catchy social trend, but because we have the best reason to celebrate. We, the people of God, know better than anyone else the value of females made in God’s image. This IWD, let’s honor the Creator of the world by honoring his daughters around the world.

Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of peace:

Bless all women who daily strive to bring peace to their communities, their homes and their hearts.

Give them strength to continue to turn swords into ploughshares.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love:

We pray for all women who face prejudice, inequality and gender disparities. Help us to see and to face the discrimination against women in all the many forms it may take.

Where there is injury, pardon:

Comfort all women who suffer from the pain of war, violence, and abuse. Help them to become instruments of their own reconciliation and peace.

Where there is division, unity:

Forgive all women and men who let differences breed hate and discrimination. Let your example of valuing all of creation help us to see that we are equal partners in the stewardship of your world.

Where there is darkness, light; where there is untruth, truth:

Comfort all women who struggle in the darkness of abuse, poverty, and loneliness. May we stand with them in light to acknowledge their suffering and strive to remove the burdens of shame or embarrassment.

Where there is doubt, true faith:

We pray for all women who live in fear of their husbands, fathers, and forces that control their lives. Help them to be empowered to be their true selves through your everlasting love and faith.

Where there is despair, hope:

We pray for all women who live in the despair of poverty, violence, trafficking, slavery, and abuse. May the light of your love bring them hope.

Where there is sadness, new joy:

Help us to see the strength and goodness in all women and men.

Transform our hearts to celebrate the love and grace of all people.

Amen