

Pope's April prayer intention: 'for the role of women'

Pope Francis releases his prayer intention for the month of April 2024, and invites everyone to pray for the role of women.

By Deborah Castellano Lubov

Pope Francis' monthly prayer intention this April is for "the role of women."

The Pope invited the Church to pray for this intention in this month's *The Pope Video*, which is entrusted to the entire Catholic Church through the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#).

In *The Pope Video* for April, the Holy Father insists on the steps today's society needs to take, and asks Christians to join him in prayer "that the dignity and worth of women be recognized in every culture, and for an end to the discrimination they face in various parts of the world."

Pope Francis' denunciation

The Pope in his video illustrates the huge gap that exists between declared principles and actual practice.

"In theory, we all agree that men and women have the same dignity as persons. But this does not play out in practice," he noted.



Pope Francis blessing a woman

The Pope provides concrete examples, citing “discriminatory laws” currently in force: mandatory dress codes, impediments to ongoing education, denial of assistance for job opportunities. And he recalls that “in many countries, genital mutilation is still practiced.”

Thus, he said, “governments need to commit to eliminate” this discrimination and “work toward guaranteeing women’s human rights.”

He asks us all to respect women, who unfortunately continue to be treated “like something to get rid of,” and who are often victims of violence and abuse in many parts of the world, even in countries claiming to be more advanced. “And if we don’t [respect women],” the Pope adds, “our society will not progress.”

Contradictions still exist

According to a press release by the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, contradictions are not lacking in today’s world.

Whereas in some countries, women have access to education and employment, and occupy leadership roles in businesses and organizations, many still do not enjoy the same opportunities as men.

In the job market, less than one in two women in the world, work, and women earn 23% less than men. The same goes for education, when we consider that women who are literate are in the minority in some countries. For example, the rate is 23%; in Niger, 27%.

Fewer opportunities translate into enormous economic difficulties.

According to UN Women, it is estimated that by 2030 8% of women and girls will live in extreme poverty, and 25% of women will not have enough to eat.

Heroines of all times

Father Frédéric Fornos S.J., International Director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, reflected on this month's intention, recalling that "from the beginning, Jesus welcomed women as His disciples. This was a novelty in the society of that time."

"As the Gospels testify," he stressed, "Jesus' mother Mary held a prominent place among the Apostles and in the early community." He also observed that Jesus entrusted the mission of announcing His Resurrection to a woman, Mary Magdalene.

Throughout history, Fr. Fornos reminded, women have contributed to the spiritual dynamism in the Church, citing in a special way Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Catherine of Siena, and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, all of whom are Doctors of the Church, along with countless other female saints.

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

The Pope Video is an official global initiative with the purpose of disseminating the Holy Father's monthly prayer intentions. It is carried out by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer). Since 2016, The Pope Video has had more than 203 million views across all the Vatican's social networks and is translated into more than 23 languages, receiving press coverage in 114 countries.

The videos are produced and created by The Pope Video Prayer Network team, coordinated by Andrea Sarubbi, and distributed by La Machi Communication for Good Causes. The project is sponsored by [Vatican Media](#).

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network is a Vatican foundation, with the mission of mobilizing Catholics through prayer and action in response to the challenges facing humanity and the mission of the Church. These challenges are presented in the form of prayer intentions entrusted by the Pope to the entire Church.

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