



Current Issues in Prayer

May 2016

Welcome! The Pope invites people of different faiths to come together and pray:

That in every country of the world, women may be honored and respected and that their essential contribution to society may be highly esteemed.



Getting started:

I find a quiet place and close my eyes, listening to the sounds I hear around me. I think about the women that come to my mind and reflect on my attitude towards their contribution to society.



Short story:

Nargis, a 41-year-old woman from Pakistan, shares her story

As a child, Nargis lived at home with both parents and her three sisters. She was the second born. Like her siblings, she received little education since her parents were not able to afford to pay for their daughters' secondary education.

In Pakistan, a woman needs to provide sufficient dowry in order to marry. At the age of 16, Nargis married her cousin, Nabeel. After three years of marriage, their first son Samir was born. Samir was born prematurely and was suffering from certain secondary complications. Disappointed, Nabeel just up and left, never to return. Nabeel got married to another woman and set up another family for himself. His relatives all supported Nabeel in this. Nargis had to go back to her family. She became the sole breadwinner at home and could hardly earn enough just to make ends meet. Just as happened to her in her childhood, she was now unable to pay for her growing son's education.



Time to reflect:

How hard it must be for a mother who cannot afford to pay for her children's education because she can never earn enough, no matter how hard she works.

Why is it that at times we look at others according to their material possessions? Is a dowry more important than the woman herself?

What about situations where women are not offered real, equal opportunities as men in the area of work?



Let us pray:

Dear Lord grant that all around the world people learn to appreciate the equality between humans and that everyone be given equal opportunities of work, irrespective of their gender or socioeconomic background.



Inspiration:

'Democracy does not guarantee equality of conditions – it only guarantees equality of opportunity'.
Irving Kristol



Hands on:

Every day try to think about a different woman who comes to mind. Reflect about her contribution to society. Is it appreciated? *Think about the little things that many women do ... e.g., that grandmother who helps out by taking the children to school while their parents are off to work.*