



International Solidarity Reflection

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Shalom

Women and Girls

March 2022

Introduction

The 2022 #BreakTheBias campaign is about challenging structures, that keep women and girls excluded and prevents them from risking innovative responses in playing their role in society. Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, a world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Together we can forge women's equality today for a sustainable tomorrow for all.

Call to prayer

Awake, O powerhouse of faith!
Awake, O woman you are born to take,
Everything that God has bestowed upon,
Everything God has filled in your heart, The
tremendous power to win the hearts,

And the unbelievable art of making everything
true. The amazing shower of love that you
inspire,
Unlock the power, that God has given you,
Prove your worth, prove your existence.

(Women's Day Prayer)

Experience

Many say the world has made great progress against poverty in the last few decades. To what extent is that real? Millions of women and girls are still trapped in lives of hardship and fear by discrimination and abuse. But we have seen also how women who can get an education, earn a fair living and enjoy independent lives can leave poverty behind. They transform the 'faces of the mountains' of the gender inequality, oppression, violence and injustice. There is hope!

This paraphrase of a story of a woman from the African proverb *Changing the Face of the Mountain*:

The children of a village climbed a mountain secretly because their parents had forbidden these outings. During these forays they met the old woman who was bending over, digging a little hole in the ground, and dropping a 'tiny something' into it. The outspoken children asked, "Granny, what are you doing?" Her reply was always the same, "I am changing the face of the mountain."

As the children matured, most left the village for large cities. After several years one of these former residents returned with her husband and children so they could see the harsh environment of her youth. When she came to the mountainside, it was ablaze with an impressive assortment of colorful flowers swaying in the breeze. Bushes and young trees provided shade along the foot of the mountain. The woman who returned to the village of her youth asked when and how did this happen. She was told it was the work of the old woman who planted the seeds. She recalled the woman's words—"I am changing the face of the mountain."

Reflection

The 2022 International Women's Day theme "Changing Climates: Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow," celebrates the contribution of women and girls around the world who are working to change the climate of gender inequality. Harnessing the skills and knowledge of women to conserve our natural resources and create a healthier, more sustainable planet, is central to achieving the [2030 Sustainable Development Goals](#). Women and girls face greater vulnerability to disasters and conflicts, yet they remain largely left out in developing solutions. The most impacted women cannot be excluded. They are a critical part of the solution.

1. How do women in the area/country you live help change the climate of inequality in their communities during times of crisis and conflict?
2. Who are the women in your area/country who advocate for social and ecological change and are committed to accelerating the pace of transformation for a more sustainable future?

Action

There are many ways we can shine a spotlight on activity encouraging women to pursue goals without barriers, forge inclusive work cultures where women's careers thrive and their achievements are celebrated, acknowledge digital advancement and champion the women forging innovation through technology, assist women to be in positions of leadership to make decisions about their health, celebrate women athletes and applaud when equality is achieved in pay, sponsorship and visibility.

- How can you show your support for women and girls who are standing up and changing the climate for gender equality, contributing today for a more just socio-ecological sustainable tomorrow?
- Is there any activity that you can undertake? For example, you may be considering: holding an event, launching a social media campaign, making a video, speaking at a local school or Church, collaborating with the media, etc.
- Consider joining the campaign [#BreakTheBias](#) from where you minister.

Prayer

Woman! Hear the voice and awake! O mother,
O sister, O wife, O woman,
Relinquish, what holds you back.
You are the one, who can make the difference.
If you obey the voice of your heart, you can
conquer the doubts that put you down.
For you will for sure transform with each
passing day, God within you increase! You are

born with the ignited fire. God has made you to
come at the front and face the fears fire.
God has made you to come at the front and
face the fears.
God wants you to bring about the change.
Let God in you and through you do the much
needed transformation. Amen.

(Adapted from [Women's Day Prayer](#))

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