




DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

Fifth Sunday of Lent, April 7, 2019

They were ready to stone the woman to death—but not her partner in the act. Discrimination and violence against women—both physical and structural—continues to be all too common in our world. May we hear and heed the call this Lent to empower women, knowing that is one of the surest paths to the common good and a flourishing society.

	Goal 5 Gender Equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls What is my part in promoting greater equality and access for girls and women?
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While some forms of discrimination against women and girls are diminishing, gender inequality continues to hold women back and deprives them of basic rights and opportunities. Empowering women requires addressing structural issues such as unfair social norms and attitudes as well as developing progressive legal frameworks that promote equality between women and men.

1. Globally, the gender gap is one of the most pervasive forms of inequality. Women are undervalued, underpaid, and undereducated.
2. Prioritizing girls' education provides a high return on investment in the developing world. An educated girl is more likely to postpone marriage, raise a smaller family, have healthier children, and send her own children to school. She has more opportunities to earn an income and to participate in political processes, and she is less likely to become infected with HIV. It is often said the education of the mother is the surest way to help a child out of poverty.
3. Illiteracy is highest amongst females. In more than 20 developing countries, illiteracy rates amongst women exceed 70%.
4. Globally, the percentage of women in single or lower houses of national parliament has increased from 19% in 2010 to around 23% in 2018.
5. The gender pay gap can vary depending on industry. In general, in the U.S. white women earn about 79 cents per dollar compared with white men. African American women earn 62.5 cents on the dollar, and Hispanic women earn 54.4 cents on the dollar.
6. If women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million.
7. Starting in 2000, the United Nations has adopted resolutions calling for nations to include women in all decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.
8. It was only in 2008 that the nations of the world joined together to condemn rape as a weapon of war and declare that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

“We need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church. Because ‘the feminine genius is needed in all expressions in the life of society, the presence of women must also be guaranteed in the workplace.’”
- Pope Francis,
Evangelii Gaudium, 2013, §103

Gracious God, you created woman and man in your own image and gave to both the care of Earth. We pray that all may be heard as equals in their community and valued for their contributions.

We give thanks for women who challenge the stereotypes of society, who dare to step forward as leaders despite opposition, and who minister to those who are hurt, disadvantaged and alienated in our land.

Spirit of God, give us the grace to honor the dignity and gifts of each person. Help us all to end discrimination against women and to work collaboratively for the common good. We long for peace and justice in our lives and in our world. Amen.