

A Note for the Organizer of the Prayer Service:

This year we celebrate the gift of Wisdom by creating a display of Wisdom's Daughters and Sons. We encourage you to find a place to post this display after it is created at your service to promote continued conversation about the work of Wisdom in our church today. For your altar display, we suggest a poster board or tri-fold board with the word "Wisdom" written on it, a candle, and a Bible for the readings. To complete the ritual you will also need name tags for all present plus Mary of Magdala and the 23 women auditors. The name tags of Mary and the women auditors can be placed on the board prior to the celebration or added during the Call to Worship or readings where they are named. Invite participants to fill out their name tags prior to the service or have them available for those who wish to participate in the ritual.

We suggest you fill out name tags for Mary of Magdala and the women auditors prior to the celebration.

Women Auditors:

Luz-Marie Alvarez-Icaza
Constantina Baldinucci, SC
Pilar Bellosillo
Jerome Maria Chimy, SSMI
Gertrud Ehrle
Cristina Estrada, ACJ
Claudia Feddish, OSBM
Henriette Ghanem, SSCC
Rosemary Goldie
Ida Grillo
Suzanne Guillemin, DC
Marie de la Croix Khouzam, RESC

Catherine McCarthy
Alda Miceli
Marie-Louise Monnet
Marchesa Amalia di Montezemolo
Margarita Moyano Llerena
Gladys Parentelli
Anne-Marie Roeloffzen
Hedwig Skoda
Juliana Thomas, ADJ
Mary Luke Tobin, SL
Sabine de Valon, RS

The Women of Vatican II: daughters of Mary of Magdala

FutureChurch Prayer Service
Celebrating the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala

Leader: Please join us as we begin our celebration of the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala

Call to Worship: Come Sophia* (*MT Winter 1999 to the melody "Sing a New Church"*)

All Sing: *Come Sophia Holy Wisdom, gateway to eternity. Sacred source of all that is from long before earth came to be. In Your womb the primal waters from below and from above gently rock your sons and daughters born to wisdom and to love.*

Leader: As the Second Vatican Council opened its first session in 1962 the Council sought to discuss the roles of the laity in the church. There was one problem; the laity were not in attendance. So, for the second session of the council male auditors were added. The next question raised would change council practice: Where were the women?

On September 25, 1964 **Marie-Louise Monnet**, an "ordinary woman" of France was the first woman auditor to enter the council. She was nominated by French bishops who knew her well as the founder of Catholic Action groups for youth and adults. Her presence in St. Peter's marked a new beginning for women in the church. She, and the other 22 women who would join her, paved the way female theologians and leaders in our Church. As a lay woman, Marie-Louise believed that a new spirituality was forming in the laity. She said it called for us to recognize "Christ at work, living in us, in everyone we meet, allowing him to transform our minds, our outlook, our actions." (51)

All Sing: *Come Sophia, be a clear compelling presence everywhere. Still the terror, dry the tears; come, ease the burdens that we bear. From the first faint light of morning through the dark when day is done, be the midwife of our birthing and the rising of our sun.*

Leader: The council "mothers," as they were called, lent their voices to the questions that could only be fully answered by those **living in the world**. Young and old they brought their experiences as

1. leaders of religious communities –**Mary Luke Tobin, Constantina Baldinucci, Sabine de Valon, Juliana Thomas, Cristina Estrada, Marie de la Croix Khouzam, and Marie-Henriette Ghanem;**
2. leaders from catholic and secular institutes- **Alda Miceli, Pilar Bellosillo, Catherine McCarthy, Gladys Parentelli** ; and
3. leaders from rights organizations around the world – **Gertrud Erle, Anne-Marie Roeloffzen, Margarita Moyano Llerna.**

All Sing: *Come Sophia, institution weaving wisdom deep within, bringing promise to fruition through the prophets that have been, pleading justice for tomorrow and forgiveness for today for the images we borrow and the roles we often play.*

Leader: These women were called to represent the worldwide church, born anew in the promise of the council.

1. They brought a sense of unity to the church with Sr. **Claudia Feddish** and Sr. **Jerome Maria Chimy** whose religious orders were from the Eastern rite.
2. They brought a reminder of the destructive nature of war with the widows of WWII **Ida Grillo** and **Marchesa Amalia di Montezelmolo**.
3. Other auditors were well known by the leaders of the church: **Rosemary Goldie** whose work at COPECIAL helped redefine lay leadership, and **Suzanne Guillemain**, leader of the over 45,000 Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and pioneer for the Sister Formation Movement.
4. For researchers **Hedwig Skoda** remains a mystery.
5. The group even included a married couple, **Luz-Marie Alvarez-Icaza** and her husband Jose. From all walks of life, for the first time Catholic women were called to enter the decision making halls of the church even though, for now, they came only as observers.

All Sing: *Come Sophia, we believe you are the shaman of the soul. Break us open to receive you, fill us up and make us whole. You inspire us to envision all the fullness of shalom on a path through tradition that will surely lead us home.*

(*Available from Medical Mission Sisters mms@hartsem.edu. Permission granted for one time use)

Opening Prayer

Leader: We gather here today to remember and honor these women of Vatican II as wisdom daughters of Mary of Magdala. We give thanks for their example and their witness. A witness that opened the windows and let in the fresh air of your Holy Spirit already long at work in the witness of Mary of Magdala. But now, your Holy Spirit-fire broke down ancient barriers to theological study for women. We give you thanks that today we have many gifted female theologians and biblical scholars who alongside their brothers are helping us appreciate ever anew the breadth and length and height and depth of your love at work in us and in our world

Sung Response: Holy Wisdom Spirit, fall afresh on us. (Repeat)

First Reading: Wisdom 7: 7- 25-8.1

And so I prayed and understanding was given me; I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me. I esteemed her more than scepters and thrones; compared with her, I held riches as nothing. I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer, for compared with her; all gold is a pinch of sand, and beside her silver ranks as mud. I loved her more than health or beauty, preferred her to the light since her radiance

never sleeps.

For with her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, active, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, beneficent, sharp, irresistible, beneficent, loving, steadfast, dependable, unperturbed, almighty, all-surveying, penetrating ...for Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion; she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things.

She is a breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; hence nothing impure can find a way into her. She is a reflection of the eternal light, untarnished mirror of God's active power, image of God's goodness.

Although alone, she can do all; herself unchanging, she makes all things new. In each generation she passes into holy souls, she makes them friends of God and prophets' for God loves those who live with Wisdom. She is indeed more splendid than the sun, she outshines all the constellations; compared with light, she takes first place, for light must yield to night, but over Wisdom evil can never triumph. She deploys her strength from one end of the earth to the other, ordering all things for good.

Sung Response: Holy Wisdom Spirit, fall afresh on us. (Repeat)

Reader One: "On the last day of the council, a great outdoor Mass was celebrated in front of St. Peter's. At its conclusion, part of the program involved presenting certificates of honor to distinguished persons in various categories. Four philosophers ... four literati, four musicians ... Finally, four women ..." **Sr. Mary Luke Tobin, leader of the US Sisters of Loreto** recalls this event: "I turned to my nearest neighbor in the bleachers, Father Godfrey Diekmann, and said, "But women are not a *category* in the church. They should not be honored as women more than men should be honored as men. Men *and* women are the church, aren't they?" Father Godfrey looked at me and said, "You're right, Sister; you women need to help us see this." (226)

Reader Two: Sr. Constantina Baldinucci, leader of the Sister of Maria Bambina and president of the Italian Sisters Union wrote to Paul VI a letter of thanks on behalf of all the women auditors, "Now we know the church. We have felt its pulse, we know its problems, which are to be solved in the light of the gospel. WE feel ourselves to be in the heart of the church. We know better now how to insert ourselves into the church in a way that is both docile and capable. We do not want to disappoint your hopes. What we had the grace to hear during the council will become a program for all of us at this important, delicate turning point, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At the base of our renewal will be the conciliar decrees. The theological foundation and methodology of our apostolate will come from the new enthusiasm engendered by the council, and will be our sure spring for love of neighbor, love of the cross, and the hope for future glory. Your humble and devoted daughters, *auditoras*." (197)

Sung Response: Holy Wisdom Spirit, fall afresh on us. (Repeat)

Reader One: During an interview in 1994 **Luz-Marie Alvarez-Icaza** reflected on the set-backs experienced after the council: "The spirit of the council was much wider and open. Now to go back to the strict marching along with everything controlled seems a contradiction to what the council wanted. Some restrictions might be necessary so as not to go out too much on a limb, but the limits are not always clearly marked. Now theologians are asked to swear to a tremendous commitment under oath. I feel that's going back to the time of the Inquisition." Her husband, Jose, agrees, " Until women are able to participate fully in the life of the church today, the church won't be able to solve either its own internal problems or those of the world. Women are separating themselves from the church because they feel underestimated and undervalued. They constitute the greater half of the world. We need equality, not domination." (246)

Reader Two: Amalia di Montezemolo Dematteis, a widow of WWII is described by her son Archbishop Andrea di Montezemolo: "My mother left nothing in writing, only the profound memory, among those who knew her, of a simple, open woman, bound to her home, family, and church. A woman who was always seeking to do good, and who possessed a deep trust in God's help, even when the war and widowhood had left her in great difficulties of every kind. " (68)

Sung Response: Holy Wisdom Spirit, fall afresh on us. (Repeat)

Reader One: Gladys Parentelli, was vice-president of the female branch of the International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth and just 32 years of age when she observed at Vatican II. When asked decades later about the progress begun at the council she had this to say: 'Fundamentally, I hoped that Vatican II would orientate itself toward an opening to the world, that the church would "open itself to the signs of the times, that it would go along with the life of the more active and progressive Christians, that it would give a greater participation to the laity in all the structures of the church, that woman would be considered a member with full rights in the church, that the hierarchy would be less authoritarian, that the church would have an organizational charter that was more democratic and less hierarchical. To the contrary, the current Roman Curia is the most authoritarian, dogmatic, inhuman, and hard-hearted that the church has had in this century' (248).

Reader Two: Alda Miceli, invited as president of the Italian Women's Center, explained in an interview that the council was an example of " how the church is deeply united in solidarity with humankind and their story. It gave indications of how people should have a stronger, more active, responsible and constructive presence, not only with a view to eternal salvation, but out of concern for the whole social reality where

women and men are working. The council committed us all to human cooperation in the fields of science, technology, and work generally. This was an inspiration which makes all our social commitment a service which we offer sincerely in truth and freedom for the elevation and liberation of humankind, with religious respect for the sacred dimension of their life and destiny." (240)

Sung Response: Holy Wisdom Spirit, fall afresh on us. (Repeat)

Gospel Acclamation: use a familiar Alleluia

Gospel: John 20:1-18

Homily (please take this opportunity to invite a woman or lay minister to preach)

Ritual: Taking Our Place as Wisdom's Children

Leader: Holy Wisdom, as we are gathered here to celebrate your daughters, Mary of Magdala, Gladys Parentelli, Sr. Mary Luke Tobin, and their sisters at the Council, we recognize that your work continues in our world today. We are all called to be your daughters and sons.

At this time we invite each of you to add your name to the display of Wisdom's daughters and sons and to acknowledge aloud that you are a daughter or son of Wisdom.

(The leader would then model the ritual by placing their name tag on the display as they say "I _____ am a daughter/son of Wisdom" followed by the readers and other participants.)

Closing Blessing of Participants:

(after all name tags have been placed, the leader should then divide the gathering into "side a" and "side b" and invite each "side" to stand and turn to face the other, extending a hand in blessing over them)

All: Daughters and Sons of God,
on whom the Spirit of God has hovered, breathed, and shown favor,
blessed are you, for you hear and do the word of God.
Spirit of God, ignite and enflame us, once again.
Mark us as your very own,
crackling with life,
that we might warm frozen hearts,
and subvert frozen structures for the sake for your reign and your kingdom.
This we ask, in communion with you,
source of all life, Eternal Word, and Holy Spirit,
both now and forever.
Amen.

(Gloria Ulterino, *Walking with Wisdom's Daughters*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2006)

Closing Song: Canticle of the Turning (*Text: Luke 1:46-58; Rory Cooney; Tune: Star of the County Down 1990, GIA Publications*)

or a song of your choosing