

Reflection Guide for Celebrating Women Witnesses

This guide is especially useful for small groups but it may also guide individual prayer.

Begin with a prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Come Holy Spirit. Open my heart and mind to see your grace and wisdom at work in the life of _____ (name woman you are learning about today). Help me discover what it is that you wish me to learn from her. Guide me to see what you are calling me to witness this day. Amen.

Read the essay and notice the following:

- a. What excites or inspires me about what I am reading?
- b. What confuses me?
- c. What challenges me? (What don't I like about what I am reading or what makes me stretch beyond my usual way of thinking?)

Spend time with each of the above questions:

- a. Write in your journal what excites or inspires. What makes it that way for you? Can you apply this inspiration to some situation or concern in your own life? Is there something you feel you are now able to address that you couldn't before because of this woman's life? What is it? What can you do about it?
- b. Write down what is confusing and explore where to find more information (from books in the bibliography) or ask someone in your faith community.
- c. Write in your journal what challenges you, makes you stretch or what you dislike. What makes it that way for you? Is there a value or belief you hold that is being challenged? Do you wish to hang on to that belief, think more about it, or let it go?

Ask yourself the question: If _____ (name of woman witness) were living today what would she say or do about the challenges confronting our world? (poverty, war, racism, exclusion and marginalization of women and the poor etc.).

What wisdom would _____ have to share with you as you struggle to witness to Jesus' Good News in our world and in our church?

Take time now to pray . Remember that these women witnesses are part of the communion of saints and so remain with us always. These could be prayers of intercession for the needs and values dear to the heart of your woman witness, or prayers asking that the strengths and virtues exemplified by each woman be more present in your own life.

Close your time of reflection with the following prayer. But first identify the most difficult struggle faced by your woman witness and three gifts which most exemplify her life.

God of compassion and surprises. Thanks for the life of _____. Thanks especially for her gifts of _____ and _____. Help me this day to take heart in my own struggles after learning about how you helped _____ in the struggles of her life, especially _____ (name the woman's most difficult struggle). Help me especially to recognize your grace, strength and ultimate victory despite the difficulties I face. I ask for the guidance of your Wisdom Spirit to see the power of your sustaining love all around me this day and all the days of my life. Amen

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Celebrating Women Witnesses was developed by FutureChurch

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