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**PRAYER FOR MARCH 8 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY**

(Adaptation of Miriam Therese Winter's "Valiant Women" by Cathy O'Keefe)

**Reader 1:**

Look! We are all around you:

in the work rooms of industry,

and of every functioning enterprise,

unheralded, invisible,

some say nonexistent,

but we know otherwise.

**ALL: Who shall find a valiant woman?**

**Reader 2:**

Look! We are all around you:

contributing, setting standards,

changing the course of history,

preparing, supporting,

challenging those resentful of our collegial claims and capabilities.

**ALL: Who shall find a valiant woman?**

**Reader 3:**

Look! We are all around you:

Woman of courage, compassionate, patient.

Our number is legion, our gifts diverse,

our goal one and the same:

that history hear, that history is cognizant of,

that history will one day recall our names.

**Reader 1:**

We honor the women of the Hebrew scriptures,

especially Mary, the Mother of Jesus,

whose courage, persistence, love, and fidelity

kept the lineage of faith alive.

**Reader 2:**

We honor the women of Jesus' time

Who cared for the community of believers;

Who followed Jesus to Calvary;

Who buried Him;

Who proclaimed Jesus' resurrection

Who passed the Gospel to their families, friends and strangers;

**Reader 3:**

We honor the valiant women of our own time

Who nudge us back on track;

Who remind us of the promises of Christ'

Who claim the Gospel for women, too;

Who preach the reality of wholeness;

Who strain against a patriarchal church

Who challenge us to grow!

**Leader:**

Living God, Today we gather in and among Your Presence.

Valiant women throughout the world,

and all gathered here, raise our voices in global petition

for your promise of wholeness --fullness of life--

to be realized in all our world, in our nations and in our lives.

This we pray in Your Name. AMEN.

**PETITIONS**

**Leader:** Loving God, be with us as we gather together, one in heart and spirit. We pray for all those in need of your mercy.

**Leader:** For all world leaders, that they may be moved to work for peace and justice by ratifying the United Nations Convention, to eliminate all forms of Discrimination against Women, and carry out its terms ,we pray.

**All:** Loving God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** For those most vulnerable to oppression or neglect, especially women and children, we pray.

**All:** Loving God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** For women who bring forth their children in uncertainty ; for refugees and for victims of war, we pray.

**All:** Loving God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** For all those who go hungry while others feast in plenty, and for those who struggle to support families in the midst of economic injustice, we pray.

**All:** Loving God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** For all who struggle for the basic necessities of life - nourishing food, pure water, fresh air, and adequate housing, we pray.

**All:** Loving God, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** (Invite additional petitions.)

Loving God, you have heard the cries of your suffering people. Open our eyes to see the immensity of your love for us and the wonder of what you have done for us. Give us the courage to be your hands and heart for those who are in pain. Give us the wisdom to speak out for justice and righteousness. May your will be done in us today and always. AMEN.

**CLOSING PRAYER TOGETHER**

Let us go forth then, O Living and Loving God,

Let us go forth in the power of Your Presence deep in our hearts,

and the power of your presence overflowing in our communities,

Let us go forth confirmed and strengthened in our vision

Let us go forth named in Hope and Love, and sustained in these challenging times.

Let us go forth as valiant women of justice and peace.