

## **Prayers for Peace, Hope and Justice**

Celebration of Women's Day – 70 years since March 1956.

Introduction: Today we acknowledge the group of women's contribution to the liberation of our country, and we thank them greatly. Sadly, discrimination based on gender, race and class continues to impede women's full realization of their freedom and constitutional rights.

The struggle continues; food prices increasing, cost of living escalating; wages are low; adding pressure on women and households; creating food insecurity. Women continue to be affected the most.

Let us pray:

God, you have given us the spirit of power, help us to make use of it; to have a strong sense of justice and compassion. We pray for gender equality and an end to gender-based violence, and an end to all harmful patriarchal practices, manipulation and exploitation of the feminine identity. We pray for female equality in the workplace. We pray too, for an end to economic inequality, discrimination and violence that continue to destroy women's lives.

Loving gracious God as we celebrate Women's month our hearts and minds are consumed by the impact that we experience and feel through the ongoing gender-based violence and femicide in our land that is affecting families and gendered persons.

All embracing God grant us the courage and insight to work at healthy gender relations based on partnerships of honesty and integrity, that nurture gender justice and positive caring masculinities. Spirit of God make us mindful of the deep roots that violence and abuse have in the shaping of a sense of identity and self.

We pray for those who are vulnerable to sexual violence, because of; poverty. We pray for the organisations and NGOs who are responding positively to the needs of the survivors of sexual violence.

Forgive us loving God for our cultural, religious and social patterns of behaviour and practices that continue to play a role in teaching patriarchal gender roles. Challenge us God to use our voices to name and call out sexist policies and behaviour that destroy life.

Thank you, Jesus, that you call 'the other', who continues to be discriminated against because of race, ethnicity, culture, creed, language, gender to come closer. Open our hearts and minds so that we can reflect your light and example and spirit of inclusivity and integrity. We pray this prayer in the precious name of Jesus Christ the lover of peace, hope and Justice.

God bless Africa; Guard our children; guide our leaders and grant us your peace. Amen.