

The true dignity of women

We are witnessing extremely lively discussions about women's rights and dignity. Various programs for women were created, and feminist circles consistently and noisily impose their ideology. Catholic Women and their organizations participate in these discussions, trying in many ways to show the beauty of women's vocation and to promote their authentic dignity. For them, however, one of the most important questions that they seek answers to is what the Lord Jesus wants, not how the world today feels or understands this issue. Hence it is necessary to bend over the revealed word and seek an answer to the question of how the Master of Nazareth treated women and how he manifested their dignity.



On the pages of the Gospel, we meet many women, of different ages and states. There are suffering women who Jesus heals, comforts, brings back to life, to whom he shows compassion and, above all, a great appreciation for their faith. There is a harlot who anointed Jesus' feet with oil, and He answered to the scandalized host: "her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love." (Lk 7:47). Finally, a woman caught in adultery: Jesus responded to the provocation with the power of truth. After this answer, everyone left, and the woman heard: "Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin any more" (Jn 8:11). Sometimes female appear in Jesus' parables, in which the Teacher explains the truth about the Kingdom of God: about the lost drachma, about leaven, about sensible and imprudent virgins, about the widow's penny.

In all of Jesus' teaching and behavior, there is nothing encountered that is a manifestation of the mistreatment of a woman. On the contrary, his words and deeds always express the respect and reverence due to women. His way of speaking about women and to women and referring to them is a clear novelty among the then prevailing customs at that time. This is particularly evident in the case of those women whom public opinion despised as sinners.

All scenes are arranged in one transparent whole. Christ is the One who knows what is hidden in man. He knows the dignity of man and his price in the eyes of God. Each of the women He meets is the only creature on earth that God wanted for His own sake. From the beginning, each one inherits the dignity of the person, and Jesus confirms, recalls, renews and makes the content of the Gospel and the Redemption for which he was sent into the world. The Gospel of his deeds and words is a consistent opposition to everything that offends the dignity of women. Women who are near Christ find themselves in the truth that He proclaims, even if it be the truth of their sinfulness, and they feel liberated by this truth, restored to themselves, loved by eternal love. Within the reach of Christ's action, their social position changes.

A special sign of trust and recognition of the role of women in the work of salvation is the entrustment to them of the Gospel message. Jesus talks to them about things that had not been discussed with a woman at the time, such as the Samaritan woman at the well of Shechem, Martha and Mary of Bethany, finding in them an understanding of these matters, an authentic resonance of mind and heart, a response of faith. Their living faith is set as an example for the disciples.

And at the moment of the final trial, which determines the whole messianic mission of Jesus of Nazareth, at the foot of the Cross there were all women. Of the Apostles, only John was faithful. There were many women. In the most severe test of faith and faithfulness, women proved to be stronger than the Apostles.

This particular sensitivity to Jesus and his mystery is most evident on Easter morning. The women were the first at the tomb. And they were the first to hear the words: " He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said " (Mt 28:6). They were the first to embrace Him. They too are called first to bring this truth to the Apostles. Mary Magdalene has a special role here. Hence, she is sometimes called the Apostle of the Apostles. This event is the best synthesis of Jesus' attitude towards women and the trust he placed in them and shows how much value and dignity every woman presents in Jesus' eyes. So, if we really want to express respect and love for women; if we are genuinely committed to defending their dignity, let us imitate Jesus and recognize their feminine genius.

