

What Could the World Have Been Without Women?

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Women had always been with men throughout the existence of humans on Earth. Religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam had proclaimed that Eve came from the rib of Adam. However, another biblical tradition has expressed that God created them together at the same time. To name the other living beings had been given to them by God as their share in God's creative power. This involved caring for them as humans also reciprocate with them in sustaining our survival on Earth. Other classical religions and indigenous belief systems had the female dimension of the deities as well. A few cultures have women as the rulers of their societies rather than the general perspective that men had been the rulers of society in classical times.

Women had been recognized to have equal rights with men in the general human consciousness as alerted by the libertarian philosophers in modern times. Some religions, cultures, and political persuasions that used to relegate women to secondary roles in society had gradually been awakened to the reality that women are equal to men. Even in family life, the duties of spouses have become shared and no longer discriminate which one is more powerful between male roles and female roles. Both parents who unconditionally love each other participate in imparting God's unconditional love to the children.

Women taking social roles of leadership, work, and tasks that used to be perceived as only deserved by men have already broken the power divide between women and men. We ask today the essential question: "What could the world have been without women?" We all recognize that women's presence in human life is good not only for the women themselves but for the men as well. Equally, the complementary question could be asked: "What could the world have been without men?" As in Islam, there is a belief that whoever is present among us in our lives has not been our own choice but has been given by God.

In Christianity in recent times, the complementary roles of women and men in society have become emphasized. The mutual service of women and men to each other in various arenas of life presents to us the complementary need for each one's presence.

Women's and men's strength and affection in diverse social roles attest to what both can learn from each other. Women's and men's sense of assertiveness and receptiveness has contributed to averting violence and wars to promote world and local peace. Women's and men's commitment and compassion can bring humanity to social transformation for social welfare. Integration of women's and men's complementary traits, gifts, skills, and intelligences develops sustainability of genuine meaning of the Earth's shared resources. Leadership towards a consensus of life-long and inter-generational goals for a shared vision of international development can foster our common human and spiritual values of mutual understanding, support, cooperation, caring for the marginalized sectors, importantly the farmers, fisherfolks, daily wage workers, differently abled and diverse social sectors, races, ethno-linguistic communities, age groups, of the universal human dimension of well-being.

At the local level of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), the tripeople of Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous Filipino people together with people of diverse hybridities, international, national, religious, cultural, linguistic, professional, social, and political origins continue to engage in dialogue for mutually respectful cooperation in proceeding to consensus of shared integral human-spiritual development of every person with ecological relations to the environment hand-in-hand aspiring for peace and good harmonious interpersonal relations. Social structures that we form together promote justice of fair share in rights and duties to social services. Better quality educational provisions, capacity-enhancing, creative work opportunities, as well as fair economic exchanges of natural and produced goods and efficient services, would effectively be mediated by women and men as agents in equal leadership and citizenship or social and religious membership.

We can altogether at this time hope, pray, and work for the shared presence of every human individual to assist and accompany fellow human beings who do not share the same quality of life basic

to human existence as daily sufficient food, land, shelter, education, affordable health care, work to express one's creative talents, freedom to decide for one's social participation, sustainability of human interdependence and living in faith or belief in the common good that brings to fruition every person's life integrated with all living beings and the human spiritual aspiration for eternal happiness in communion with an ultimate dimension of Being.

Without women, as also without men, we would have not had the balance and integration that we can find in each person to contribute to the various aspects of society.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fr. Jaime D. Del Rosario is a teacher of A.B. and M.A. Philosophy students at Notre Dame University in Cotabato City and a formator at the De Mazenod Community/Seminary. He is an ordained priest and is a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate religious congregation. He has degrees as a Doctor of Ministry from the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A., and a Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, where he also served as a College Instructor at the Department of Philosophy for two academic years after his baccalaureate graduation. He has degrees as a Master of Arts in Theology from the Ateneo de Manila University, a Master of Arts in Educational Management from Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City, a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from U.P. Diliman, a Bachelor of Theology from the Loyola School of Theology at Ateneo de Manila University, and a Certificate in Japanese Language Studies from Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan during his missionary ministry earlier in his ministerial life. He had several ministerial assignments at various times in the Philippines such as Chaplain and teacher at Notre Dame of Midsayap College, parish priest in Kulaman mission in Senator Ninoy Aquino town in Sultan Kudarat province simultaneously as Director of Notre Dame of Kulaman (Basic Education school), Farmers' Cooperative manager and Manobo scholarship director. He was also a Chaplain at Notre Dame of Jolo College while also serving in the Jolo Vicariate in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.