



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

General Secretariat

Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry

Pastoral Letter for International Women's Day 2026

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we mark International Women's Day, I invite us to look again at the Gospel and notice the women who surrounded Jesus throughout his life and ministry.

Women were disciples, prophets of faith and witnesses. Mary of Nazareth opened her heart to God's plan with courage. The Samaritan woman dialogued with Jesus in theological reflection and became a missionary to her community. Women remained steadily with Jesus at the Cross. Mary Magdalene was entrusted with proclaiming that Christ was risen. These are examples that remind us women have always lived out their faith with responsibility, agency, and a deep sense of mission.

Across Australia today, women continue to witness to God's care and compassion whilst carrying immense responsibility. Women lead organisations and classrooms, serve in health care and public life. Women raise children, care for the elderly, contribute to our economy, and sustain the life of the Church. In rural communities, in cities, in remote regions, women's participation and leadership is grounded, steady and often sacrificial.

Yet we also know that many women experience injustice, violence, economic disadvantage, and exclusion from decision making. The dignity of women calls for more than listening. It calls for action and the courage to examine how power is exercised in our homes, workplaces and Church communities.

In our synodal journey, we speak of walking together. Walking together means shared responsibility for the mission. It means that women participate not as an afterthought, but as coworkers in God's vineyard in shaping our Church's life now and into the future.

The Gospel calls us to conversion, open to fresh ways of honouring all women. May the Holy Spirit give us courage for this work. May Mary, Mother of the Church, guide us with her strength and faith. And may we continue to grow into our Church in Australia where the dignity and capacity of every woman is not only affirmed but fully lived out in the mission of Christ.

With prayers and hope,

Bishop Michael Morrissey

Bishop of Geraldton

Bishop Delegate for Women, Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry