
WOMEN OF FAITH (1)



At their recent diocesan congress, the Daughters of Isabella asked me to introduce them to different categories of women of faith, which I gladly did. In doing so I wanted to express my deep gratitude to all those women who have committed themselves heart and soul to the cause of humankind and of the Church.

GRATITUDE

I first want to congratulate you for holding this diocesan congress, and tell you that there is much hope connected with this sign of faith and solidarity.

You have asked me to speak to you of «women of faith», and I will do this in six steps.

If we let the movie of our lives unwind, several scenes would show us a number of women of faith who have marked our lives. And so, I ask you to let this movie roll in your minds and to identify some of these women of faith.

OUR MOTHERS

First and foremost I am reminded of those who have brought us to life: our mothers had to be women of faith, of faith in God, of faith also in humankind, in order to carry us to term and give us birth, as well as to guide us and journey with us throughout our lives. I invite you to offer in your heart your deepest gratitude to those who gave you birth.

Robert Lebel dedicated this beautiful song to his mother:

It is you who put me together
On the bench of your patience
Daily, steadily,
To the very day of my delivery.

Mother, it is for you that I sing.
I love you, I love you with a child's heart.

You taught me about love
From the open book of affection,
From the time of childhood happiness
To the crazy age of intoxication with life.

You taught me the name
Of God who is Father
And who, as such,
Gave me bread and brothers.

You dried my tears
And bound my wounds,
Preparing me
For struggles to come.

You now keep watch
At the door of my presence...
But I am slow to open...
Forgive the long silences!

Mother, it is for you that I sing.
I love you, I love you with a child's heart.

YOURSELVES

The second category of women of faith I would like to introduce is... yourselves, and why not? Come to think of it, you are the heiresses of your mothers... women of unity, love, charity, and holiness; you were given the gift of life, the gift of faith. Another song of Robert Lebel describes this reality of women of faith that you are:

After all, who are we to you, that you would break through the clouds and show your face?
Truly, who are we, that you would distill the dewdrops of the sun?

After all, who are we to you, that you look kindly on this world?
Truly, Lord God, who are we that your wandering star would lead us to the Child?

Amazed at so much love, how do we express our joy?
You visit us each day to draw us closer to you.

After all, who are we in your eyes that you love us as a father,
As a mother, too?
Truly, Lord, who are we that you hear our prayers, our laments, our thanks?

After all, who are we to you to have made us your people, those you have chosen?
Truly, Lord, who are we that our hearts become a temple, a dwelling for your Son?

It is this kind of loving look at yourselves that I invite you to do, women of faith, because God has faith in you, He has given the world to your care, beginning with your own life, your own family, your husband, your children and grandchildren.

+ François Thibodeau

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Bishop of Edmundston

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