

**Women
Leaders**

Towards
a brighter
future



British Embassy
Holy See

 **Caritas**
Internationalis



Australian Embassy
Holy See

International Women's Day Conference



Programme

Wednesday 6 March 2024

9.30am - 5pm CET

*Aula della Congregazione, Jesuit Curia
Borgo Santo Spirito 4 - 00193 Rome*

Morning

09:15 Registration & arrival

09:30-10:30 **Opening session: Women as builders of hope**

Welcome and housekeeping: **Giulia Isabel Cirillo** (Moderator)

Welcome: **Rev. Father Arturo Sosa Abascal SJ**, Superior General of the Society of Jesus

Welcome: **H.E. Chiara Porro**, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See

Opening remarks: **Sister Patricia Murray, ibvm**, Executive Secretary, International Union of Superiors General

Opening remarks: **Kirsty Robertson**, CEO of Caritas Australia and Vice President Caritas Internationalis (video message)

International Survey of Catholic Women - Tracy McEwan & Kathleen McPhillips, University of Newcastle, Australia (video)

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:30 **Session 1: Women's empowerment in the Catholic Church**

This session will explore the role and contribution of lay and religious women in the Catholic Church, including in the synodal process and in leadership positions at the Vatican and beyond.

Sister Nathalie Becquart xmcj, Under-Secretary, General Secretariat of the Synod

Cristiane Murray, Deputy Director, Holy See Press Office

Patricia Adèle Félicité, Secretary General, Caritas Île Maurice

Dr Maeve Heaney, Director, Xavier Centre of Theology, Australian Catholic University

Q&A

12:30 Media point

12:30-13:45 Buffet lunch

Afternoon

14:00-15:15 **Session 2: Women leaders: Education, economic empowerment and developing skills - Success stories**

This session will look at success stories of women's empowerment, be it through education programmes, basic healthcare, innovative economic initiatives or rebuilding lives and developing the skills of vulnerable women.

Sister Maria Nirmalini AC, National President, Conference of Religious India (virtual)

Dr Nontando Hadebe, Theologian, Board Member of Christian Aid (virtual)

Sister Espérance Bamiryio, former Director of the Catholic Health Training Institute, Wau, South Sudan

Sister Ruperta Palacios Silva, Carmelite Missionary of Santa Teresa, Mexico; Secretary of the Afro-Mexican Pastoral, Cáritas Mexicana

Q&A

15:15 Media point

15:15-15:45 Coffee break

15:45-16:50 **Session 3: Women's empowerment: how can faith and government actors increase collaboration?"**

This session will look at how the Catholic Church, faith-based organisations and governments can work in greater partnership on the shared agenda to empower women and girls.

Sister Helen Alford OP, President, Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences; Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas

Alistair Dutton, General Secretary, Caritas Internationalis

Elisa Chavez, Human Rights Adviser, Stefanus Alliance International

Q&A

16:50 **Conclusions: H.E. Christopher Trott**, British Ambassador to the Holy See

17:00 Conference ends

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