



*Reflection from Deacon Ross 3/8/2020*

### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2020**

A few years ago some women of the Micronesian community invited me to attend local events celebrating International Women's Day. I said "Okay." But I didn't have a clue.

I asked what International Women's Day was. They said, "We learned about it in our home country.

We hold gatherings and celebrations on March 8."

Why hadn't I heard about this before? Over the years I didn't recall having seen any announcements of Women's Day celebrations in Kansas City. And I do not remember hearing about it from the Church. (But, I've been known to be brain-dead at times, too..)

Well, as time has passed, I have come to think that those of us not "tuned in" to International Women's Day may be missing something important.

International Women's Day has been celebrated since 1911. It is not specific to any single country, culture or organization. International Women's Day belongs to all. It is a global day of celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality. International Women's Day is all about unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy and action to advance the status and opportunities of women everywhere.

International Women's Day developed in 1908 out of the Women's Social and Political Union in Great Britain and the Women's March for equality in work, pay and voting rights in New York. By 1911 more countries began to acknowledge this special day – and women and men joined together to celebrate and promote the status and role of women.

Where's the Catholic Church regarding the status and role of women? I believe that the place of women in the Catholic Church is very complex and

that it is evolving. There have been women instrumental in the life and development of the Church from the very beginning. Think of Mary "Mother of God," Mary Magdalene "apostle to the apostles," Priscilla, Monica, Scholastica, Clare, Catherine of Siena, Joan of Arc, Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Kateri Tekakwitha, Katherine Drexel, Mother Xavier Ross, Edith Stein, Josephine Bakhita, Dorothy Day, Theresa Kane, Thea Bowman, Mary McNellis. add your own names. Google some of these remarkable women you may not be familiar with, and see what a rich heritage the Catholic Church has in its members who are women. Yet, has the Church come to acceptance of women as full and equal members in all respects?

This International Women's Day we gain inspiration from the women in our lives and in our heritage, and we celebrate them. We also pray for and seek ways that we can promote the equal status of women in all corners of society and the Church.

*Blessings, Deacon Ross*