Faith

April 17, 2024

Communiqué #08

Here I am Lord, send me!

URGENT

FOR:	**Chairpersons of Faith at All Levels** (new structure) **and Chairpersons of Spiritual Development at All Levels** (old structure)
THROUGH:	**Presidents and Secretaries at All Levels**
CC:	**National Executive (for information)**
	National Life Member Liaison
FROM:	**Rolande Chernichan, National Chairperson of Faith**

According to the *Constitution & Bylaws*, chairpersons of faith shall evangelize, promote spiritual growth, and encourage members in matters of faith. "Stress[ing] the importance of the role of women in the church" is one of the various ways the *Handbook for Chairpersons of Faith, Service and Social Justice* offers for members to attain a deeper knowledge and experience of faith. One need only revisit the Easter readings about the resurrection in the gospels and the accounts of the early church in the *Acts of the Apostles* to have a renewed appreciation of the importance of the role of women in the church.

What is the role of women in the church today? How does it differ from that of our mothers and grandmothers? Do we recall and honour the contributions of women in sacred scripture and over the millennia of the church to draw inspiration from them? What clues does Chapter 9: Women in the Life and Mission of the Church of a recent synodal synthesis report give regarding the future role of women in the life and mission of the church?

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) recognizes the vital role of women in the church. It maintains relations as an international public association of the faithful with various pontifical agencies through its permanent direct relationship in the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. By being officially affiliated with WUCWO since 1921, the League has given its membership involvement in international life.

Members have received a special invitation! WUCWO's World Women's Observatory invites members to participate in an online event, "Conversation in the Spirit." The event, offered in English, Spanish and French, brings participants together from more than 50 countries (from five continents) to share ideas, to listen to the experiences and insights of others and to discern on Chapter 9 of the synthesis report.

What is “Conversation in the Spirit?” It is a discernment model of encounter, active listening, shared silence and collaborative discernment of the Spirit that promotes wider participation, deeper communion and increased attention on the gospel mission. The model had been recommended for synodal consultations as part of the Synod on Synodality and was used by delegates at the first session in Rome in October 2023.

To share in this WUCWO experience, please register for the event being held on Tuesday, April 23rd. Please note the two timetable options: 13:00–15:00 CEST (Rome) or 18:00–20:00 CEST (Rome). A synthesis of these meetings will be sent to the general secretariat for the synod of bishops. It will be publicly disclosed, thereby making known women’s voice as to their participation and mission in the life of the church. I would appreciate hearing from members who participate in “Conversation in the Spirit.”

Each year on May 13th, 91 member organizations celebrate WUCWO Day, an opportunity to unite in prayer with millions of other Catholic women around the world. Chairpersons of faith are urged to promote this day, making councils aware they can access the complete liturgy program, the theme of which is *A Synodal Church in the light of Laudato si*’. The liturgy may be adapted to each council’s particular circumstances.

Pope Francis has called on the church to pray for the ‘role of women’ during the month of April. May we discern how God is calling us to participation in the life and mission of the church. May we recognize his call and be ready to respond, *Here I am Lord, send me*.

Rolande Chernichan
National Chairperson of Faith