

# By Grace, Through Faith

A Service to Acknowledge and Celebrate the Women in our Lives  
Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom  
Sevika Sanghom Day

**P:** Heavenly Father, Sovereign Lord, We are so grateful to be able to come together and worship in truth and spirit on this Sevika Sanghom Day, with all the Sevika Sanghom members of the Mar Thoma Church, Nationally and Internationally. We are thankful for their boundless grace and unshakeable faith that has carried many generations through good times and bad. May we as a church cherish and uphold our women and girls and empower them to be pillars of strength and virtue in this ever-changing world. Lord, help us as a community to foster meaningful relationships with you and among ourselves so that we may reflect your love, peace and hope today and always. Amen

## Opening Hymn

God of the women who answered your call,  
Trusting your promises, giving their all,  
Women like Sarah and Hannah and Ruth  
Give us their courage to live in your truth.

God of the women who walked Jesus' Way,  
Giving their resources, learning to pray,  
Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and more  
May we give freely as they did before.

O God of Phoebe and ministers all,  
May we be joyful in answering your call.  
Give us the strength of your Spirit so near  
That we may share in your ministry here.

Tune: Traditional Irish melody ("Be Thou My Vision")  
Text: Copyright © 1998 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

## Kauma

**P.** †Glory be to the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

**C.** As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**P.** Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

**C.** Blessed is He that has come and is to come again in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

**P.** Holy art thou, O God.

**C.** Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.

**P.** Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.

**C.** O Lord, the Messiah who was crucified for us † have mercy on us.

## (To be repeated thrice)

**P.** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C.** O Lord, have mercy on us and bless us.

**P.** O Lord, accept our prayers and worship and have mercy on us.

**C.** Glory be to you, O God.

**P.** Glory be to you, O Creator.

**C.** Glory be to you, O King the Messiah; who has mercy on us sinners. Bless us, O Lord.

(Let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us)

**All: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is done in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, Forever. Amen.**

**(Cong to be seated)**

1<sup>st</sup> Lesson: Numbers 27:1-11

2<sup>nd</sup> Lesson: Acts 16:11-15

### **L: Meditation: Unnamed but unforgettable women of the Bible**

Women figured importantly in Jesus' ministry. Many of them we know by name—Martha and Mary Magdalene, for instance, and are remembered and celebrated often. But there are many women who go unnamed and yet, they are unforgettable.

These women wore who they were on their sleeves — both the good and the bad. How these women interacted with God and approached their own faith makes them relatable and real. They were ordinary people, they were not that different, emotionally, from us. They responded to God; sometimes with faith, sometimes with very little faith. That is what makes scripture all the more meaningful.

#### **i) The Widow with Two Mites**

All those rich people who gave large sums at the temple—and hoped everyone would notice—were nothing compared to the widow who gave only two copper coins. They gave out of their abundance, and she gave abundantly from what little she had. Jesus calls her out because true generosity can only be measured by the heart.

#### **ii) The Woman Healed by a Touch**

Jesus was surrounded by a crowd but when this woman touched His cloak, he felt it. For 12 years she had suffered from a haemorrhage. All at once the haemorrhage stopped. Jesus looked to find her and said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well..."

#### **iii) The Woman Caught in Adultery**

To test Jesus, the Pharisees brought Him a woman who had been caught in adultery. According to the law, they said, she should be stoned. "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her," Jesus said and then bent down and continued writing with His finger on the ground. When He looked up, they were all gone. No one had condemned her. Neither would He.

#### **iv) The Widow of Nain**

The status of a widow was perilous in Jesus' time. She would depend on her children for support. This widow in Nain was in dire straits, weeping because her only son, her only means of support, had died. Jesus took compassion on her. He touched the bier where the young man lay and said "Rise." The young man did rise, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

#### **v) The Woman at the Well**

Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for a drink, at a time when Jews would have nothing to do with Samaritans. They talk about water but not the sort that could be found in a well. "Those that drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty," Jesus says. She wants this water. He tells her to call her husband. When she says she has no husband, Jesus points out that she has spoken the truth: she has had five husbands and that the current man is not her husband. It is a mystical meeting that must have changed the woman's life. Is Jesus the Messiah? Jesus answers, "I am."

The woman went back to her town and told everyone she saw about Jesus, the One who knew everything about her.

May we as a community of women and as a community that supports women, learn from their perseverance, dignity and grace so that we too, may lead our lives by example.  
Rick Hamlin

### **Hymn**

She only touched the hem of His garment  
As to His side she stole,  
Amid the crowd that gathered around Him;  
And straightway she was whole.

*Oh, touch the hem of His garment,  
And thou, too, shalt be free!  
His healing pow'r this very hour  
Shall give new life to thee!*

She came in fear and trembling before Him,  
She knew her Lord had come,  
She felt that from Him virtue had healed her,  
The mighty deed was done.

He turned with "Daughter, be of good comfort,  
Thy faith hath made thee whole";  
And peace that passeth all understanding  
With gladness filled her soul.  
George Frederick Root (1820-1895)

### **L: A Teacher for all Seasons**

A teacher is like Spring,  
Who nurtures new green sprouts,  
Encourages and leads them,  
Whenever they have doubts.

A teacher is like Summer,  
Whose sunny temperament  
Makes studying a pleasure,  
Preventing discontent.

A teacher is like Fall,  
With methods crisp and clear,  
Lessons of bright colors  
And a happy atmosphere.

A teacher is like Winter,  
While it's snowing hard outside,  
Keeping students comfortable,  
As a warm and helpful guide.

Teacher, you do all these things,  
With a pleasant attitude;  
You're a teacher for all seasons,  
And you have my gratitude!

For most of us, our first teachers are our mothers. They also retain the role of teaching far longer than most others in our lives. Today, we submit into prayer, teachers of all kinds and are grateful for their immeasurable contributions towards us.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

***Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson***

***Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy***

**P:** Lord we are thankful for all the women who served You with sincere devotion, love and commitment. We thank you for using them to be the carriers of Your glory in this world.

**C:** Lord, we are thankful for all the women who play an important role in the family and keep the love and unity in the home intact. Thank you, Lord, for all our praying mothers. Thank you for women taking different responsibilities in education, health sector, administration, and other roles of nation building. May we refrain from holding our women back from paths they wish to tread. Thank You Lord for all your goodness, and faithfulness in helping our women to be a blessing to others. Teach us to be accepting of all people, whether they are like us or not. Inspire our hearts, heal our wounds, bring your peace into our worries and your hope into our disappointments. Come Lord and weave your love together into our fellowship, that we may overflow with grace and allow your truth to light up our lives anew. Amen.

***Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson***  
***Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy***

### **Intercessory Prayers**

**L:** You have handpicked us to spread the Message of Christ our Saviour. As we ponder and meditate upon the theme: "Women: Apostles of Christ", help us not to compromise in fulfilling our calling as Your Apostles. Help us to be filled with the passion to be part of the Great Commission and to continue the rich legacy we received from the Apostle of Christ, Kandamma Varghese Kochamma, who birthed the idea of this great Women's Ministry now known as the Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom. We thank You for helping this organization which is being used greatly for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

We thank You for sustaining the Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom for the past 104 years. We pray for the various institutions functioning under the Sevika Sanghom. We thank you for all the selfless lives of visionary Mothers. We thank God for our Metropolitan, The Most. Rev. Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan and our President Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos Episcopa for their blessed leadership to the Sevika Sanghom. Lord, we are grateful to You for all the office-bearers of Sevika Sanghom at the Kendra, Diocese, Centre and Parish levels. Let us pray for the Diocese, Zone, Centre and Shakha Office-bearers, Young Women Fellowship and every Sevika Sanghom Member.

Amen.

***C: To be Sung***

**Faith of our mothers, living still  
In cradle song and bedtime prayer;  
In nursery lore and fireside love,  
Thy presence still pervades the air:  
Faith of our mothers, living faith!  
We will be true to thee till death.**

**L:** Today, we remember the women living in dangerous situations. We remember the women and young girls whose bodies have been violated by rape and degradation, for those who are bought and sold as commodities. We remember the women of Afghanistan who are fighting for the bare minimum of occupying their place in society. We hope that you will answer their prayers and attend to their desires. We submit into your care the women of Manipur, who are living in a reality we cannot even begin to fathom. We remember those whose lives are plagued with uncertainty and anxiousness. We pray for those who yearn for children, expectant mothers and new mothers who are struggling to care for their children. We pray for them when they are tired and discouraged, when they feel futile and small and ridiculous, when it is tempting to shrink back and give up, we pray for rest, we pray for renewal, we pray for faith, for fearlessness, for boldness, for new courage, for new vision, for new life to come to them in ways that surprise them and bless them.

***C: To be Sung***

**Faith of our mothers, loving faith,  
The fount of childhood's trust and grace,  
Oh, may thy consecration prove  
The wellspring of a nobler race:  
Faith of our mothers, living faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.**

**L:**

Let us bring before the Lord the various ministries of the Sevika Sanghom, namely, Mission Fields at Annakara, Nilambur, Mookuthala, Nedavaloor, Vanitha Mandiram and the courses run by the Vanitha Mandiram, Vanitha Bhodhini, Salem Bhavan, Ballika Bhavan, Snehatheeram Halfway Home, Vishranti Bhavan, Sthreejana Vikasana Samithi, Tailoring Center, Hostels, Nursery Teachers Training School, Kindergarten and Upper Primary School.

We pray especially for the Hostel for Working Women at the Galilean Centre that is being run by our Sevika Sangham and we pray that you will continue to bless their Services to our Church and the community. We pray that our Church continues to provide more opportunities for women to rise and shine.

Dear God, we submit the women from all walks and stages of life into your loving arms. We ask you to let them know that their lives need not always be lived for others, but can be led with dreams and hopes of their own too. Let their innermost needs be granted, may their relationship with you be strengthened. We pray that women both young and old, find solace in the fact that you are a God who provides and nurtures, a God that sustains and never forsakes.. We pray that every woman in this congregation and this world finds their place in the big story of redemption, rescue and renewal that God is weaving together.

**C: To be Sung**

**Faith of our mothers, guiding faith,  
For youthful longing, youthful doubt,  
How blurred our vision, blind our way,  
Thy providential care without:  
Faith of our mothers, guiding faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.**

Text: A. B. Patten, Music: Henri F. Hemi1865

### **Gospel Reading**

**P:** †Peace be with you all.

**C:** May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

**P:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world as recorded by the Apostle John

**C:** Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent him for our Salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

**P:** In the days of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Word of life, God incarnate of the blessed Virgin Mary, it happened in this way.

**C:** So, we believe and affirm.

### **John 4:27-30**

(After reading the Gospel, the priest says, †'Peace be with you all')

**C:** We thank you, Lord, that you have given us your gospel which is indeed the light of the world, that we may be drawn closer to you through the living words from your gospel which we have now heard.

## **The Nicene Creed**

**P:** We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

**C:** We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all world; Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified† also for us in the days of Pontius Pilate; suffered and died and was buried. The third day He rose again, by His Father's holy will, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead and of His kingdom there will be no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets and the apostles. We believe in one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the new life of the world to come. Amen.

### **(Cong. to be seated)**

#### **Birthday, Wedding Anniversary & Thanksgiving**

Sarah laughed to hear the promise-  
God would bless her with a son;  
Sarah laughed and Sarah doubted  
Till she saw what God had done.

*God, we praise you for the women  
Who have taught us to be strong,  
Who have held us, who have raised us  
With a prayer and with a song.*

As her life drew on toward evening,  
After she had raised her own,  
Lois held her baby grandson,  
Told him of God's love made known.

Mary watched the killing madness  
as her son died on the cross;  
she who knew the joy of childbirth  
now was torn by bitter loss.

Daniel Charles Damon Words © 2011 Hope Publishing Company

## **Announcements**

### **Offertory**

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;  
For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign;  
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou,  
If ever I loved Thee, Lord Jesus, 'tis now.

I love Thee, because Thou hast first loved me,  
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;  
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;  
If ever I loved Thee, Lord Jesus, 'tis now.

In ages eternal of endless delight  
I'll ever adore Thee in glory so bright;  
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow,  
If ever I loved Thee, Lord Jesus, 'tis now.

Words: William Featherstone(1846), Music: Adoniram Gordon (1836)



Every woman who walks with God has a story to tell. One of passion, determination, despair and of faith. These stories mould us even today, years after they unfurled. These stories inspire us even today, to implement their lessons into our lives.

Sarah will tell you, "Nothing is too hard for God".

Hagar will tell you, "Even in the wilderness God is there".

Rahab will tell you, "God can use anything".

Hannah will tell you, "My God answers prayers".

Ruth will tell you, "It's not over until God says so".

Esther will tell you, "God can turn a nobody to a somebody".

Elizabeth will tell you, "You will give birth to greatness".

Mary will tell you, "It shall be unto you according to God's word".

The woman with the issue of blood will tell you, "When all fails, God never fails".

Mary and Martha will tell you, "The dead will live again".

Dorcas will tell you. "God never forgets".

Let's have a purpose to walk with God in these trying times; and we shall have a story to tell at the end of it all. Stay Blessed, Mighty Women of God.