

The World Doesn't Need What Women HAVE, But the World Needs Who Women ARE.

This is often cited as a quote from Edith Stein (it's not quite exactly what she said but it is the essence). Edith Stein was a German Jewish philosopher who was teaching in Poland prior to and during WWII. She converted to Catholicism, became a Discalced Carmelite nun under the name Theresa Benedicta of The Cross, and was put to death in Auschwitz in 1942. Prior to being sent to the concentration camp, she often wrote about the plight and strength of women.

"We cannot evade the question as to what we are and what we should be. The world inundates us with opinions on what women should or should not be, and contemplating the reality of who we are is helpful in navigating those opinions. Quite frankly, it is exhausting to be on the receiving end of so many contradictory messages: "Get up early and work harder." "Slow down and practice self-care." "Have kids, but not too many." "Have a job, but also be fully present at home." "Be sexier, but also love your body the way it is.""

The world wants us all to be gender neutral. The process of masculinizing women has been going on since women entered the workforce. And the feminization of men continues through deprecating jokes and "man-bashing." This is one of the top priorities of the Marxist agenda. By the "deterioration of their character" and "eliminate the distinction of genders" they can abolish family and accomplish their goals. (Communist Manifesto) Most recently people are even having a hard time defining what a woman is!

We have so much identity confusion in our world today. Who am I as a human? As a woman? Are we losing the dignity of the human person as a unique creation? As children of God? What's my dignity?

As a hobby, I love to create art. One of the most basic concepts in art is CONTRAST. Grey next to grey just blends together in shadow. But when you have contrast suddenly your eye is drawn to it. The white shines against the black, the orange is brighter next to blue. The beauty is not in the muddy colors but in the contrast. God, our divine creator, painted contrasts in his most precious creation. "Male and female He created them."

Feminine Genius All Her Own

At the Angelus July 23, 1995, Pope Saint John Paul II said "In fact, woman has a genius all her own, which is vitally essential to both society and the Church. It is certainly not a question of comparing woman to man, since it is obvious that they have fundamental dimensions and values in common. However, in man and in woman these acquire different strengths, interests, and emphases, and it is this very diversity which becomes a source of enrichment." He writes in his Apostolic letter, "The Church gives thanks for all the manifestations of the feminine "genius" which have appeared in the course of history, in the midst of all peoples and nations; she gives thanks for all the charisms which the Holy Spirit distributes to women in the history of the People of God, for all the victories she owes to their faith, hope, and charity; she gives thanks for all the fruits of feminine holiness." (*Mulieries Dignitatem* par 31, 1988) So what are these "charisms of the Holy Spirit" that bring forth "the fruits of feminine holiness?"

- Receptivity: To be a gift, the gift must be received. It is in our receptivity of the gifts we have received that we discern to make the best use of them.
- Sensitivity: For women, sensitivity means taking our receptivity, our “tuning in” to other people, and then responding with love and caring.
- Generosity: A spiritual attitude which focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong.
- Maternity: The feminine genius isn’t exclusive to physical motherhood. It encompasses what, in his 1995 Letter to Women, Pope Saint John Paul II describes as an “affective, cultural and spiritual motherhood which has inestimable value for the development of individuals and the future of society.” Ultimately, women’s maternity bears fruit when we carry Christ to others.

Councils of Catholic Women

Being Catholic changes the very essence of who we are. Through the Sacraments we are changed from merely beloved creatures of God into members of His very own family. They open our hearts to the gifts of the Holy Spirit that bring forth the fruits of feminine holiness. It is in our own Councils of Catholic Women where women develop their full potential. When we must keep our eyes on Christ, the agendas, the budgets, the officers, minutes, and reports will all fall into place, because what we do flows from who we are.



We are Made for Relationship

We are made to know people, not just know about them, but to encounter them truly and honestly on a deeper personal level with love. We need to make connections. We are made in God’s image and likeness not to be alone, but for community. We can only enter this communion through self-gift. When you make yourself a gift to others, you find yourself, and your own meaning in life.

“If anyone has this task of advancing the dignity of women in the Church and society, it is women themselves, who must recognize their responsibility as leading characters”. (Christifideles Laici, Pope St JP II)

The closing message of the Second Vatican Council states, “at this moment, when the human race is undergoing so deep a transformation, women imbued with a spirit of the Gospel, can do so much to aid humanity in not falling.”

Women, become who you are. Believe in who you are. Believe in your vocation to be luminous signs of God’s love. Then you will shine like stars in a dark and perverse world.