



THE MADELEVA MANIFESTO: *A Message of Hope and Courage*

In the tradition of Sister Madeleva Wolff, CSC, we 16 Madeleva lecturers have been invited to speak a message of hope and courage to women in the church. Reflecting the diversity of gifts bestowed on us by the Spirit, we speak from our particular experiences and vocations, yet share in a universal vision that is faithful to our Catholic tradition.

TO WOMEN IN MINISTRY AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES WE SAY:

Re-imagine what it means to be the whole body of Christ. The way things are now is not the design of God.

TO YOUNG WOMEN LOOKING FOR MODELS OF PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP, WE SAY:

Walk with us as we seek to follow the way of Jesus Christ, who inspires our hope and guides our concerns. The Spirit calls us to a gospel feminism that respects the human dignity of all, and who inspires us to be faithful disciples, to stay in the struggle to overcome oppression of all kinds whether based on gender, sexual orientation, race, or class.

TO WOMEN WHO ARE TEMPTED BY THE DEMONS OF DESPAIR AND INDIFFERENCE, WE SAY:

Re-imagine what it means to be a full human being made in the image of God, and to live and speak this truth in our daily lives.

TO WOMEN WHO SUFFER THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP WE SAY:

You are not alone. We remember those who have gone before us, who first held up for us the pearl of great price, the richness of Catholic thought and spirituality. We give thanks to those who continue to mentor us.

TO THE YOUNG WOMEN OF THE CHURCH WE SAY:

Carry forward the cause of gospel feminism. We will be with you along the way, sharing what we have learned about the freedom, joy, and power of contemplative intimacy with God. We ask you to join us in a commitment to far-reaching transformation of church and society in non-violent ways.

We deplore, and hold ourselves morally bound, to protest and resist, in church and society, all actions, customs, laws, and structures that treat women or men as less than fully human. We pledge ourselves to carry forth the heritage of biblical justice which mandates that all persons share in right relationship with each other, with the cosmos, and with the Creator.

We hold ourselves responsible to look for the holy in unexpected places and persons, and pledge ourselves to continued energetic dialogue about issues of freedom and responsibility for women. We invite others of all traditions to join us in imagining the great *shalom* of God.

SIGNED BY THE MADELEVA LECTURERS 1985 – 2001

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Mary Collins, OSB
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Maria Harris
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