

Invitation to Prayer:

As I look around this beautiful community I am filled with so much joy!

Let us come together as one with one collective breath - inhale, hold, exhale

Place your hand on your heart, and feel your own heart beating here in this space,
among this community of wonderful strong women.

Inhale...hold...exhale

Keep your hand on your heart knowing you're living in rhythm with all the amazing
faith-filled women around you

Inhale...hold...exhale.. (3x)

Let us begin in prayer...

Reflection:

When I was born, the first thing my mother said to me as she held me in her arms, the
first thing my minute old ears heard was, "Hello Tinamarie, I'm your mommy.

The first thing she did was call me by name. Like God created the first humans and
named them. During the annunciation, the angel tells Mary that she will have a son
and to call him Jesus before the angel says this baby will be God.

Names are important. They're crucial. They call us forth into the world. They are the foundations of our identities. And when we are named and known, our dignity is recognized.

In the Bible, the names of women are not often proclaimed. In our Catholic tradition, women's names are not often proclaimed - even though they are providing wisdom and guidance and labor. But they're intentionally ignored. Nameless. And when they are named, they are often not proclaimed in their fullness, especially on the pulpit. Or (maybe worse) women are named in ways that stuff us back into boxes - we'll crumple Mary the mother of God into submission and never discuss how Saint Hildegard fought the patriarchy or how Phoebe was a deaconess!

When I first got into ministry in college, (Christian feminist group called G4G, girls for God) I did this activity with my peers, that I continue to do every semester to this day as a professor when I teach on feminist theology. I asked students to name as many people in the bible as they can in 2 minutes. Then I ask them to count how many are women. In 10 years, TEN YEARS, it is always the same. Zero to 2 women max - some of them remain nameless - that aduulturess women

But in this scripture women are named

the ministry of women is named

the ministry of lay people and lay women is named.

It is called up and out and serves as a living testimony of the body of Christ in action,
in motion.

We need more of that! We need women to name other women.

I had a crisis of Church in graduate school, while studying theology. Yea, that was rough. One of my professors, the brilliant Dr. Sandra Yocum, opened up my world. She taught me about women in the Church. She named those who came before me, who battled the same battles, who asked the same questions, and who had some answers. And I befriended those women who came before me.

When I graduated Dr. Youcum gave me this book about the women I had learned about and wrote in it, "You have many fore mothers." And she is right.

So let's take a moment to not just say, but to CALL AND YELL OUT THE NAMES OF OUR FORE MOTHERS, like in this Scripture, women who have guided us in our faith. CAN YOU THINK OF HER, CAN YOU HOLD HER IN YOUR MIND!

On the count of three yell it out - 1, 2 3.... Amen

Closing Prayer:

- Our gathering today is another step on the synodal path, as we continue to walk together as a community without borders and our Church, let us conclude with this prayer, which has invoked the Holy Spirit at synodal gatherings, for hundreds of years including every session of Vatican II *and* is being prayed around the world, even now, as we learn and practice the ways of becoming a synodal Church.