



VOICES
OF FAITH

22 January 2018

Dear Pope Francis,

International Women's Day is an annual global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Voices of Faith warmly invite you to come and listen to young Catholic women's voices on this day, **Thursday March 8, in the Aula of the Jesuit Curia**. Please find our invitation enclosed.

Voices of Faith is comprised of Catholic women from around the world passionate about creating a prophetic Catholic Church where women's voices count, participate and lead on equal footing with men. This year, through our International Women's Day event we are bringing especially young Catholic leaders from across the globe to Rome to share their stories, hopes and dreams for the future of our Church. You can view all our speakers via www.voicesoffaith.org.

We were so inspired by your honest observation in your speech to the Chilean youth outside Santiago's Basilica of Our Lady of Carmen on January 17th. In your speech you mentioned that the voices of young people arrive often "very filtered" to Rome.

Voices of Faith have been bringing together Catholic women leaders to the door steps of the Vatican on International Women's Day since 2014. During these years, some cardinals of the Roman Curia have been privately encouraging us, but none have ever come publicly to our event. We hope and pray that 2018 will be the year this changes.

Perhaps, like in many other areas, it will take your example to overcome this outdated fear of women's voices. Only when we listen to each other and are not afraid to speak openly, can we start making practical steps towards the more incisive presence of women that you have called for already in 2014.

Humbly, we ask you for your presence, to listen to our voices as an honoured guest. Listen to our stories, our struggles, our hopes for a more just and equal world fuelled by a prophetic faith. Be an example also for the Synod Fathers gathering in October 2018. You yourself have said in the letter to the youth. *"The Church wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and criticisms. Make your voice heard."*

We are making our voices heard - will you come and listen?

With prayers for you, our Church and our world.

Chantal Goetz
Director, Voices of Faith

