



VOICES
OF FAITH

PRESS CONFERENCE INVITATION
Why Women Matter, International Women's Day
28 February 2018
Rome, Italy

Time for change is now - Pope Francis has said "It is necessary to broaden the opportunities for a stronger presence of women in the church". Catholic women agree but want to know when and how.

Today, women are questioning why the Church is so slow to recognize their value. Today, women are asking why the Church has not found a way to open key governance and ministerial roles to them. Today, women are calling on the Church to incorporate their faith, gifts, expertise and education into structures of authority at all levels. Today women deserve answers to Pope Francis's plan for a stronger presence of women in the church. They will not wait any longer.

"Women are systematically overlooked for roles in the Catholic Church that they are qualified for, simply because of their gender." This statement is part of a [promotional video](#) created by [Voices of Faith](#) to galvanise support for their "Why Women Matter" International Women's Day event in Rome, March 8, where [Pope Francis has been invited to attend as a guest of honour](#).

Former president of Ireland, [Mary McAleese](#), young Polish theologian [Zuzanna Radzik](#), American journalist [Nicole Sotelo](#), Jesuit Father Luke Hansen and Ugandan LGBT rights advocate [Ssenfuka Joanita Warry](#), are flying in from across the globe to be guest speakers at the event. They, [amongst others](#), will speak on the need and urgency to broaden the leadership within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, or risk losing the current generation of women and girls. *"If the Catholic Church is to remain relevant in the lives of its people, we must find ways to incorporate the faith and gifts of women into positions of authority and decision making at all levels of governance," said Chantal Goetz, managing director of Voices of Faith. "We invite everyone to view our latest [video](#) in order to understand the challenges we face and to learn how to be part of the solution," said Goetz.*

Pope Francis has been invited to attend as a guest of honour according to Goetz. *"We hope Pope Francis and other cardinals and bishops will join us. As Pope Francis has expressed so beautifully in his letter in preparation for the October 2018 synod, 'The Catholic Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls.'"*

A new addition to this year's event is a live-broadcast from Dzaleka refugee camp, Malawi where educational opportunities are provided by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), long-time partner of Voices of Faith. Despite the reality of their displacement, refugee women are now becoming powerful agents of change in their new communities thanks to education. Tomorrow they could be leaders of change in the world.

Media invitation:
When: **Voices of Faith "Why Women Matter" Press Conference**
7th March 2018
Where: **La Stampa Estera, Rome**
Time: **11:30am (light lunch and individual interviews with speakers available following the public press conference)**

Email for media pass and to arrange interviews: info@voicesoffaith.org





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Access to dropbox with full biographies and further information:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10jULw7fVzI3a8pELPHJrHKWSq0MfoV_x?usp=sharing

ENDS

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Event Details:

All journalists are welcome to attend the event but must email for access:

info@voicesoffaith.org

Thursday 8th March

2 pm-6.30pm

The Aula, of the Jesuit Curia

Borgo Santo Spirito 4, Rome

LIVE-STREAM via our website

starts at

14:00 CET

08:30 EST

18:30 IST

