



Current Issues in Prayer

April 2024

Welcome! The Pope invites people of good will to come together and pray **that the dignity and worth of women be recognized in every culture, and for an end to the discrimination they face in various parts of the world.**



Getting started:

I look at the picture of the four smiling women from different cultures. I try to imagine the occasion and why they are smiling. They surely are enjoying themselves together. I think of the respect and loyalty shown among them.



Short story:



The God of Small Things is a novel on suffering, that, as the novel goes, is not restricted to the women. The aspects of discrimination emerge in the relationship between Velutha and Ammu. Both Ammu and Velutha face the same discrimination of being shunned for their actions and forced into silence. Velutha is punished because he is an 'untouchable' in the caste system while Ammu is punished and sent away by her family for having an extramarital affair with an 'untouchable'. Ammu's former husband had also tried to make her offer herself for sex with his boss in order to keep his job. When Ammu did not comply, he "grew uncomfortable and then infuriated by her silence ... he lunged at her, grabbed her hair, punched her and then passed out from the effort." (41-42)

The God of Small Things is about suffering, and therefore the aspects of women's suffering do not go unnoticed in the novel. Along with Ammu's forced silence and shame over the details of her affair with Velutha, the novel tells of Mammachi who suffers at the hands of Pappachi, her abusive husband. A number of other instances of women being treated as inferior are also presented. Apart from the various sufferings endured by Ammu and Mammachi, a number of other female characters in the novel are subjected and subordinate to their male counterparts. The women in this novel are shown not to be seen as their equals by the men.



Time to reflect:

Have I ever witnessed women suffering due to belonging to a different culture from mine? How do I treat people of different cultures? Do I truly believe that these, like myself, are all created in the image of God?



Let us pray:

Dear God, help me realise how important it is to welcome all the persons that I meet, be they from my own culture or from a different one. Help me see you in their eyes and to accept them as being sent by you in order that I may grow in love towards you and your creatures.



Inspiration:

Where love reigns, the impossible may be attained.

Indian Proverb



Hands on:

While going along the streets, on your way to different places, smile at all those walking towards you on their way to other places ... no matter who they are, especially those from different cultures to yours.