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Title Young Catholic mothers paving the way of leadership.

Abstract

In this evolving world of individualism, women's empowerment being related only to their contributions to the socio-economic growth of society; there is a gap for women leaders specifically in major life transition periods such as singlehood to young mothers. This is a concern faced by women not only in the secular society but also in the Catholic Church. As lay missionary movements provide an open space for people to explore and experience their Catholic faith, it is especially important for it to be equitable. In this paper I will analyse the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10: 38-42) and compare their roles and responsibilities in the formation and leadership of faith with women transitioning from singlehood to motherhood. By understanding the historical and post-modern context of this story and characteristics of both women I will be able to provide a lens through which the Catholic Church and subsequently lay missionary movements will be able to provide a supportive and inclusive space for young women leaders as they transition and grow into motherhood.

As the Church transitions into an individualistic focus in faith formation and leadership over the historical communal structures, this is having detrimental effects on women leaders especially in transitional stages of life such as motherhood. Therefore, women who held spaces as leaders in the time of being single find it difficult to hold leadership spaces as young mothers in juggling multiple responsibilities. In understanding and exploring the true roles of Mary and Martha as two pivotal women in the Bible, this paper will show how women in distinct stages of life are able to provide imperative input in leading the Church.

In secular society according to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, although women make up half of the Australian workforce, they occupy only 18-30% of leadership positions; whilst In the Catholic Church perspective, women only make up 26% of the Curia. Despite women being in decision-making positions in the offices, to this day there is not a single Vatican office that has a women leader. By providing an inclusive and supportive environment for young mothers to hold spaces of leadership in the Church, we as a community will be able to grow the Church in a wider context and promote a Church of equality and equity. This focus will also assist to foster a more community-spirited approach to the Catholic faith. This paper will focus on the importance of the community spirit that is requires to help continue to grow missionary movements and the Church especially with the supportive leadership of young mothers. Focusing on the gap that is present in the Church today as young Catholic mothers are not in leadership roles is pivotal to the future movement and growth of the Church. As God has met women in their ordinary busy lives exactly where they are, now it is time for the Church to do the same!