



WOMEN'S CULTURES: EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCE



4-7 February 2015 the Plenary Assembly looked at **Women's cultures: equality and difference**.

The meeting had four sessions:

1) Between equality and difference: the quest for an equilibrium

An historical overview through cultural anthropology and sociological analysis to outline the condition of women in different cultures today, especially women in difficulty. Referring to the categories of reciprocity, complementarity, diversity and equality, this is a reflection trying to avoid the two risky extremes of this process: uniformity on one hand and marginalisation on the other.

2) "Generativity" as a symbolic code

Beginning with the fundamental steps of generativity (desiring, bringing to the world, looking after and letting go), this is a reflection on the ways of "giving life" beyond maternity.

3) The female body: between culture and biology

The body expresses the being of a person, more than an aesthetic dimension closed in on itself: the reflection is on the value of the female body and its communicative force and the relational ability of women. Other aspects were not overlooked: freedom of choice, aggression against women's bodies, domestic violence, commercialisation, reduction to a unique model of being.

4) Women and religion: flight or new forms of participation in the life of the Church?

The reflection looks at the spaces proposed to women in the life of the Church, and if women are made to feel welcome in light of specific and changed cultural and social sensibilities. The pastors asked themselves whether the way women participate in the life of the Church functions today.

Access was limited to the members and consultors of the Pontifical Council and a group of women advisors. A public open event took place at the *Teatro Argentina* on 4 February (in Italian).

The text of the working document on Women's Cultures is made available at the links below:

A forthcoming edition of the Dicastery's Review "Cultures and Faith" is being prepared with a view to making the fruits of the conversations more widely available.