NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://www.ncronline.org)

Francis talks about women and the faith

Thomas C. Fox | Apr. 3, 2013 NCR Today

Catholics scrutinizing ever papal utterance for hints about how Pope Francis will view the roles of women in the church will certainly be studying his first comments on women, made today in his general Wednesday audience.

He spoke about ?Resurrection of Jesus as the center of the Christian message that has resounded since the beginning and has been handed down so that it may reach us today.?

?The Resurrection of Christ is our strength!? Francis said.

?But how was the truth of faith in Christ?s Resurrection transmitted? There are two kinds of witness in the New Testament: some are in the form of the profession of the faith, namely, synthetic formulas that indicate the center of the faith. Instead, others are in the form of an account of the event of the Resurrection and the facts connected to it.?

He goes on:

Today, however, I would like to dwell the second, on testimony in the form of the accounts that we find in the Gospels. First, we note that the first witnesses to this event were the women. At dawn, they go to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, and find the first sign: the empty tomb (Mk 16:1). This is followed by an encounter with a Messenger of God who proclaims: Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified One, he is not here, he is risen (cf. vv. 5-6). The women are driven by love and know how to accept this proclamation with faith: they believe, and immediately transmit it, they do not keep it for themselves. They cannot contain the joy of knowing that Jesus is alive, the hope that fills their heart.

This should also be the same in our lives. Let us feel the joy of being Christian! We believe in the Risen One who has conquered evil and death! Let us also have the courage to "go out" to bring this joy and light to all the places of our lives! The Resurrection of Christ is our greatest certainty, it is our most precious treasure! How can we not share this treasure, this beautiful certainty with others! It?s not just for us it?s to be transmitted, shared with others this is our testimony, the professions of faith of the New Testament, only men are remembered as witnesses of the Resurrection, the Apostles, but not the women. This is because, according to the Jewish Law of the time, women and children were not considered reliable, credible witnesses.

In the Gospels, however, women have a primary, fundamental role. Here we can see an argument in favor of the historicity of the Resurrection: if it were a invented, in the context of that time it would not have been linked to the testimony of women. Instead, the evangelists simply narrate what happened: the women were the first witnesses.

This tells us that God does not choose according to human criteria: the first witnesses of the birth of Jesus are the shepherds, simple and humble people, the first witnesses of the Resurrection are women.

This is beautiful, and this is the mission of women, of mothers and women, to give witness to their children and

grandchildren that Christ is Risen! Mothers go forward with this witness! What matters to God is our heart, if we are open to Him, if we are like trusting children. But this also leads us to reflect on how in the Church and in the journey of faith, women have had and still have a special role in opening doors to the Lord, in following him and communicating his face, because the eyes of faith always need the simple and profound look of love.

The Apostles and disciples find it harder to believe in the Risen Christ, not the women however! Peter runs to the tomb, but stops before the empty tomb; Thomas has to touch the wounds of the body of Jesus with his hands. In our journey of faith it is important to know and feel that God loves us, do not be afraid to love: faith is professed with the mouth and heart, with the word and love.

Source URL (retrieved on *2016-05-30 15:41*): http://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/francis-talks-about-women-and-faith