

## DAY ELEVEN: December 5<sup>th</sup> **Widows and Property**

*Some traditional cultures do not easily concede recognition of a widow's human rights. In practice, especially in some rural areas, it is widely assumed that only men should own or inherit land and that widowhood terminates a woman's social legitimacy.*

### Michelle's Story

Shortly after Michelle, 57, was widowed in 2012, her in-laws took over the fields she had tilled for decades. They stole fruit from the trees in her kitchen garden and sold the harvest, leaving her without any livelihood. Then they intimidated and insulted her and attempted to chase her away.

Michelle's neighbours advised her that the *Legal Resources Foundation* (LRF) could help her to protect her inheritance. The LRF took the matter to court where Michelle obtained restraining orders against her in-laws, so she was able to go back to tilling her fields. Her in-laws continue to threaten her, so Michelle still worries about the future: "I am fearful and my heart is unsettled."  
(Source: Human Rights Watch (HRW))

### Question

What is your reaction to this true story?

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Widow evicted from home, Zimbabwe (Photo HRW)

### Global Facts\*

- One in seven widows globally (38 million) lives in extreme poverty, due to denial of property rights.
- A significant number of girls are widowed in childhood - a reflection of the custom of marrying off young girls to much older men.
- Women own less than 20% of the world's land, yet farm and produce most of the world's food supply. *World Economic Forum, January 2017*

\* (Source: *World Widows Report*, published by The Loomba Foundation)

**LAUDATO SI (229)** - Pope Francis calls us to look at all our relationships: 'We must regain the conviction that we need one another -we have a shared responsibility for others and the world and being good and decent is worth it.'



pixabay.com: [stevepb](#)

### UN Sustainable Development Goals

Most of the SDGs reference Women.

Of significance is:

**SDG 5.a:** *Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.*

### CEDAW

[Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)

**Article 15 1.2:** *States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men .... they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property*

**Article 16 1.h:** *The same rights for both spouses in respect of ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property ...*

(Suggest you read the Convention during **16 Days**)

### UN DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**Article 12:** *Everyone has the right to own property alone and in association with others.*

**Article 17:** *No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of (his) (her) property.*

### ACTION:

**1.** Visit the following website -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=IvADol8C0ak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=IvADol8C0ak) - **'Women's Land Rights: giving women the opportunity to change the world.'**

**2.** Actions to end abuses of women's property rights:

<http://pantheon.hrw.org/legacy/campaigns/women/property/action.htm>

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Prepared by 'Future We Need' (FWN), a faith-based group with members from the Columbans, Franciscans, Josephites, Mercy, Presentation and Salesians

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

is a systematic and widespread human rights violation. It cuts across age, socio-economic, educational and geographic boundaries.

## ***16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence...***



[www.google.ie/search?q=images+of+orange+the+world+for+free](http://www.google.ie/search?q=images+of+orange+the+world+for+free)



**49** Countries have no laws to protect women from domestic violence.

***DAY 11...***

***5<sup>th</sup> December***

## **CHILD MARRIAGE....**



[www.google.ie/search?q=Photos+of+child+brides+pixabay](http://www.google.ie/search?q=Photos+of+child+brides+pixabay)

15 million girls under the age of 15 are married each year.

***Widows and Property***



See: [www.columbansisters.org](http://www.columbansisters.org)