



CANDLELIGHTING CEREMONY 2026

Protocol

We have come together to participate in a special tribute to one of the world's most influential organizations, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, which unites women around the world. Although its members speak in many languages and live in countries with differing traditions they share the same determination of purpose.

More than 90 years ago, BPW was founded by Dr. Lena Madesin Phillips from the United States of America and a few years later she conceived the idea of the Candle Lighting Ceremony. As we perform this ceremony, we will evoke historical memories, the many accomplishments and celebrate today's achievements.

The members of the United States of America made good-will tours to Europe to share their interests and their beliefs with women of Europe. Through their efforts and influence, groups were organized in several countries. In 1930, women from sixteen countries met in Geneva where a long cherished dream – the forming of the International Federation – became a reality.

The candles symbolize the ambitions and endeavors of dedicated women in every country around the world.

Each WHITE candle represents a Federation. Each BLUE candle stands for a country where there is at least one Associated Club, and the PINK candles for Individual Members.

The candle in the middle represents the oldest group of BPW Affiliates of the United States of America (Light the USA candle).

The tallest candle represents the International Federation. (Light the tallest candle). In the warmth and glow of its tolerant light, Business and Professional Women in all parts of the world come together to share memories in friendship and reflect on the founding principles envisioned by Lena Madesin Phillips, that govern the International Federation which stands out as a beacon to women everywhere. Using our combined abilities and strength we renew our commitment for the attainment of the following objectives to:

1. Work for women's:
 - a. Economic independence
 - b. Equal opportunity and representation in economic, civil and political life

2. Encourage and support women and girls to:

- a. Develop their professional and leadership potential
- b. Undertake lifelong education and training
- c. Use their abilities for the benefit of others, locally, nationally and internationally

3. Advocate:

- a. For the elimination of all discrimination against women
- b. For human rights and the use of gender-sensitive perspectives

4. Undertake:

- a. World-wide networking and co-operation between business and professional women
- b. Non-profit projects that help women gain economic independence
- c. To present the views of business and professional women to international organizations and agencies, and to business, governments and civil society.

Let us now light the other candles and remember our members on every continent who will be celebrating in the same manner. As we light the candles for them, they will light the candle for our country.

First we light candles for each of the FOUNDING Federations of BPW International (Light a WHITE candle as each country is named):

AUSTRIA, CANADA, FRANCE, ITALY, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Today, there are also AFFILIATE FEDERATIONS in (light the remaining WHITE candles as each country is named):

Argentina	Germany	New Zealand
Australia	Indonesia	Nigeria
Bahrain	Ireland	Pakistan
Belgium	Japan	Philippines
Brazil	Jordan	Portugal
Burkina Faso	Korea	Singapore
Cyprus	Kuwait	Spain
Ecuador	Lebanon	Sweden
Egypt	Malaysia	Switzerland
Estonia	Mexico	Taiwan
Finland	Morocco	Thailand
Gabon	Myanmar	United Arab Emirates
	Nepal	

We also honor our AFFILIATE CLUBS in the following countries (light the BLUE candles; name each country slowly and clearly):

Albania	Hong Kong	Poland
American Samoa	Hungary	Republic of Congo
Armenia	Iceland	Romania
Barbados	Iraq	Russian Federation
Benin	Jamaica	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Bermuda	Kenya	Saint Martin
Botswana	Kosovo	Senegal
Bulgaria	Latvia	Sierra Leone
Cameroon	Liechtenstein	Slovenia
Cayman Islands	Lithuania	Slovakia
Chile	Madagascar	South Africa
Colombia	Malta	South Sudan
Croatia	Moldova	Syria
Czech Republic	Monaco	Tanzania
Djibouti	Mozambique	The Bahamas
D. R. of the Congo	Namibia	Togo
Dominica	Niger	Türkiye
Dominican Republic	Palestine (State of)	Ukraine
Ethiopia	Panama	Yemen
Georgia	Papua New Guinea	Zambia
Haiti	Paraguay	Zimbabwe
	Peru	

We also honor our INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS in (light the PINK candle): -----

BPW International is a dynamic and powerful organization of world importance. Public opinion and legislation in many countries have been influenced by its work. It has broadened our horizons and skills. It has increased our rights and our opportunities, and it has expanded our service to one another and to the community. As our voice at the United Nations Organization, it presents to that world body information and opinions obtained from our Affiliates worldwide. It enjoys Category 1, Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It also has Consultative Status with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Labor Office, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Health Organization. It works closely with the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Council of Europe and other specialized agencies.

As we come to the end of another Candle Lighting Ceremony, let us light the last candle – the candle of the FUTURE (light the last candle).

As we light this candle, let us reaffirm our aim to go forward with faith, with courage, and with enthusiasm, to take our place in economic, social and political fields of endeavor, helping us to bring into being a world of social justice for all, and the peace to which all humanity aspires.

Follow the ceremony with the INTERNATIONAL COLLECT

The International Collect

Keep us O Lord from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word and deed.

Let us be done with fault finding and leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretenses and meet each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice.

Let us take time for all things: make us grow calm, serene and gentle.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses straightforward and unafraid.

Grant that we may realize that it is the little things that create differences; that in the big things of life we are one.

And may we strive to touch and know the great human heart common to us all, and O Lord God let us not forget to be kind.

La Prière Internationale

Gardez-nous, Seigneur, de toute mesquinerie; que nous soyons larges en pensée, en parole et en action.

Que nous ne trouvions pas à redire et abandonnons tout intérêt personnel. Que nous laissons de côté nos prétentions et que nous nous rencontrions face à face sans nous apitoyer sur nous-mêmes et sans préjugés.

Que nous ne fassions pas des jugements hâtifs et que nous soyons toujours généreuses dans nos jugements.

Laissez-nous prendre le temps pour toutes choses : faites que nous devenions calmes, sereines et douces.

Apprenez-nous à mettre en pratique nos meilleures initiatives, honnêtement et sans peur.

Faites que nous nous rendions compte que ce sont uniquement les petites choses de la vie qui provoquent les différences et que dans les grandes nous avançons à l'unisson.

Et puissions-nous déployer nos efforts pour toucher et connaître le grand cœur humain, commun à nous toutes ; et, Seigneur, faites que nous n'oublions pas d'être bonnes.

La Plegaria Internacional

Líbranos, Señor, de toda mezquindad, ayúdanos a ser magnánimas en pensamiento, palabra y acción.

Que no busquemos defectos en otros y que dejemos de ser egoístas. Ayúdanos a desechar toda pretensión y a enfrentarnos cara a cara, sin ser auto compasivas y sin tener prejuicios. A no juzgar apresuradamente y a ser siempre generosas.

Deja que nos demos tiempo para todo: haz que seamos tranquilas, serenas y amables. Enséñanos a poner en práctica nuestras mejores iniciativas, honestamente y sin temor.

Ayúdanos a darnos cuenta de que son las pequeñas diferencias las que provocan desacuerdos; que en las grandes cosas de la vida estamos unidas.

Y esforcémonos para alcanzar y conocer el gran corazón humano común a todas; y, Señor, haz que no nos olvidemos de ser bondadosas.

La preghiera internazionale

Allontana da noi, o Signore, ogni meschinità, aiutaci ad essere magnanime nel pensare, parlare e agire. Fa che superiamo gli interessi personali senza rilevare i difetti degli altri. Fa che abbandoniamo le nostre pretese e ci incontriamo a viso aperto senza vittimismo e senza pregiudizi. Fa che non giudichiamo astiosamente e siamo sempre comprensive.

Facci trovare il tempo per ogni cosa, e che possiamo essere calme, serene ed amabili.

Insegnaci a tradurre in azione i nostri propositi con lealtà e coraggio. Fa che ci rendiamo conto che sono le piccole cose a creare differenze fra noi, ma che nelle grandi cose della vita siamo unite.

E fa che possiamo arrivare a toccare e conoscere il grande cuore umano comune a tutti noi e, Signore, non farci dimenticare mai di essere generose.

ALTERNATIVE BPW INTERNATIONAL COLLECT

The following as an alternative version of the International Collect:

was adopted at the XXVI Congress in Mexico City

COLLECT

We ask

That we meet together as women,

Not allowing beliefs, religion, nationality, ethnicity or language to come between us.

That these meetings enable us to move forward and advance the status of women throughout the world.

That the value of women be recognized in our families, our communities, our workplaces, our country and the world.

That we use our good ideas, our knowledge, our experience to promote the worth of women.

That we combine our strengths to move forward in peace, in serenity and in love.

That women of all generations will do their part to achieve harmony and equality among all human beings.

Text by Suzanne Garant, BPW Québec Métropolitain (Canada) Translation by Leslie West, BPW Montréal (Canada)

INVOCATION POUR LES FEMMES D'UN CLUB

(Approuvée lors du congrès 2000 de la FCCFCCP, tenu à Sault Ste. Marie)

Sans égard au Pouvoir créateur invoqué,

nous demandons d'être réunies en notre qualité de femmes

et qu'aucune croyance, religion, nationalité, couleur ou langue ne nous sépare.

Que ces réunions nous permettent d'aller de l'avant

et de faire avancer le statut de la femme dans le monde entier.

Que la valeur des femmes soit reconnue

dans la famille, la collectivité, le lieu de travail, le pays et le monde.

Que nos bonnes idées, nos connaissances et notre expérience nous permettent de défendre la valeur de la femme.

Que nous puissions allier nos forces pour progresser dans la paix, la sérénité et l'amour.

Enfin, que les femmes de toutes les générations fassent leur part pour que tous les êtres humains aient droit à l'harmonie et à l'égalité.

Suzanne Garant, BPW Québec métropolitain

Traduit par Leslie West, BPW Montréal (Canada)

VERSIÓN ALTERNATIVA DE LA PLEGARIA DE LA BPW INTERNATIONAL

PLEGARIA

La siguiente es una versión alternativa de la Plegaria Internacional: fue adoptada en el 26° Congreso en Ciudad de México

Pedimos

Reunirnos como mujeres,

Sin permitir que nuestras creencias, religión, nacionalidad, raza o lenguaje, se interpongan entre nosotras.

Que estos encuentros nos permitan avanzar y hacer avanzar la condición de las mujeres en el mundo.

Que el valor de las mujeres sea reconocido en nuestras familias, nuestra comunidad, nuestros lugares de trabajo, nuestro país y el mundo.

Que utilicemos nuestras buenas ideas, nuestro conocimiento, nuestra experiencia, para promover el valor de las mujeres.

Que unamos nuestras fortalezas para avanzar en paz, serenidad y amor.

Que las mujeres de todas las generaciones pongan de su parte para lograr la armonía y La equidad entre todos los seres humanos.

Texto por Suzanne Grant, BPW Quebec Metropolitano (Canadá)

Traducido al inglés por Leslie West, BPW Montreal (Canadá)

Italian translation of Alternative BPW International Collect

PREGHIERA

Chiediamo

Di riunirci come donne

Senza che la nostra fede, religione, nazionalità, eticità o lingua ci condizionino.

Che questi incontri ci rendano possibile di andare avanti

E far avanzare lo status delle donne di tutto il mondo.

Che il valore delle donne sia riconosciuto nelle nostre famiglie, la nostra comunità, il nostro posto di lavoro, la nostra patria ed il mondo.

Che usiamo le nostre buone idee, la nostra conoscenza, La nostra esperienza per promuovere il valore delle donne.

Che uniamo le nostre forze per proseguire in pace, in serenità e con amore.

Che le donne di tutte le generazioni possano fare. La loro parte per raggiungere l'armonia e l'uguaglianza tra tutti gli esseri umani.

Testo di Suzanne Garant, BPW Quebec Metropolitan (Canada)

Traduzione di Lesile West, BPW Montreal (Canada)