

Women in Theology Demonstration Sketch
Written by Jeanine Viau, Melissa Browning, and Teresa Calpino

This sketch calls for 4 letters, which can be read by students who have reflected on Gebara's work and have written a "letter" to her expressing their appreciation for her writings.

Gebara: My name is Ivone Gebara. I am a Brazilian Sister of Our Lady and a Latin American, ecofeminist theologian. I am committed to the objectives of liberation theology, which, as a critical reflection on historical praxis, does not stop with reflection, but attempts to participate in the process through which the world is transformed. I am especially concerned with the struggles of poor, Latin American working women.

As I stated in a magazine interview, because of the extreme poverty of many women in Brazilian favelas and the overpopulation in cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, more births would result in extreme hardship for mothers and children, increased strain on natural resources due to population pressures, decreased access to potable water, and many other devastating problems. For these reasons, I do not think abortion is necessarily a sin for poor women. The world has left them with few choices if they and their children want to survive. Therefore, I believe that a "preferential option for the poor" calls for more tolerance of women's choice for abortion than that of official Church teaching

Magisterium: By order of the ordinary and universal magisterium, Ivone Gebara is officially silenced. Sr. Gebara, our investigation has found your theological position to be unsound and radically divergent from Church teaching. Therefore, you will not teach, speak, or write for a period of two years, during which time, you will be RE-EDUCATED in Church theology and tradition.

Gebara: [Either turns around, or covers her mouth to represent being silenced]

Peter: I've told you twice already, I do not know the one they arrested.

Mary: I am so sad. My friend and my teacher has died so cruelly. I saw him tortured and beaten and crucified. All I could do was stand by and watch and hope that he could see that I was there, that I would never desert him as the men had done, but that I would be with him until the end. I thought that I was prepared for the loss, but when he was really gone and they had rolled the stone in front of the tomb, I knew that he was really gone and that we had to somehow carry on without him.

Letter 1

Peter: They will come for us too. We must retreat to the upper room. All is lost.

Mary: The men were so afraid that the officials were coming for us next. They locked the doors and had meetings about what needed to be done to stay out of jail. The women also had meetings, but we were not afraid, we were planning how we would keep teaching the word of our Lord-the Word that tells people that oppression and dictators cannot keep us down. We are many. We deserve to be able to feed our families and to live decently. This is the kingdom of God that our teacher preached- a kingdom where "the many" have justice.

Letter 2

Mary: While the men kept watch or slept, I walked with some of my sisters to the teacher's tomb. We wanted to be near to him, to remember his words and his kindness and have them inspire us and give us the courage to go on. It is such a big job to change the world and we are just a few women with few rights and very little power. When I came closer to the tomb, I saw that the stone had been removed. I ran as quickly as I could to tell the men. I woke them all up and told them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him!" When the men saw that the tomb was empty, they were very afraid and they went back to the house immediately and prepared to meet the soldiers if they were coming. But I could not leave. I could not believe that the Romans would have taken my teacher away to a place where I could not even visit his

grave to remember him. I felt so sad that I just stood outside the door of the tomb and wept.

Letter 3

Mary: As I was weeping, I saw a light coming from the tomb, and I bent down and looked inside and saw two men dressed in white sitting in the tomb. They spoke to me and asked me, "Woman, why are you weeping?" I answered, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." As I said this, I felt that someone was standing behind me. I turned around and the gardner was there. He asked me, "Woman, why are you weeping?" I thought that if I begged him, perhaps this gardner would help me find the Teacher's body and I could bury it properly where the Romans could not find it again. "Sir, please, if you carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." I was prepared to stand there until he complied. I was prepared to do whatever it took to help my Teacher.

Peter: I do not understand. The cloths were just lying there. Where is the corpse? I am afraid. I must go home and think about this.

Letter 4

Mary: But then, I looked into this man's eyes and I felt that I knew him. I felt my anger and my sadness leave my body and I felt strong and at peace. He said, "Mary!" My heart lept because I knew it was him, "Rabbouni!" "Teacher!" [Embraces Gebara]

Gebara: [Laughing gently] Sister, you do not have to hold me so tightly. [Addressing the group] Go, tell the others that I am always with you. Do not be afraid. Remind the others, we are all children of God and recipients of revelation. We must continue our work, God's work.

Peter: What does the Teacher want with a woman? I am Peter, the rock! I am the foundation of the Church!! ME!!!

Mary: [Turn to address the group] I have seen the Teacher. The Message lives and continues to ascend from earthly oppression and domination. I am God's chosen witness to the Resurrection, the witness to Hope for a transformed society. I am Magdalene. I am the one sent. I am all women seeking justice. I will testify courageously, and I will be heard.