

New Women New Church

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A Voice for Women in the Catholic Church

The Ordination of Women: Can the Horizons Widen?*

By Bishop Kenneth E. Untener

Editor's note: WOC has obtained permission to print the following abridged version of the 1991 article written by Bishop Untener and published by the Most Reverend Thomas J. Gumbleton in The Practical Prophet: Pastoral Writings (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007).

We live in a galaxy called the Milky Way. The Milky Way is about a hundred-thousand light-years from one end to the other, which means that something traveling the speed of light would take a hundred-thousand years to cross our galaxy. The earth is about thirty-thousand light-years from the center.

Until the 1920s it was thought that the vast expanse of our galaxy was the whole universe and included all created reality. Some suggested that there might be more out there, perhaps even another galaxy, but most argued against it. In arguing against it and attempting to prove the cogency of their data, they probed the edges of this galaxy and looked at it from different angles. In the course of doing so they found something they were not looking for: another galaxy. Actually, they found more than another galaxy. They found many galaxies, and we have since come to know that there are billions of galaxies. This opened up an entirely new horizon, a totally different perspective.

* Bishop Untener wrote this article in 1991, prior to the publication of the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* (OS), issued by Pope John Paul II in 1994. *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* is a non-infallible document that gives a definitive teaching on ordination to be held by all of the faithful. The pope stated: "I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful" (OS, 4).



Rabbi Susan Talve and WOC Board member Gerry Rauch take a moment to smile after their major roles in the historic ordinations in St. Louis. Read about the ordinations on page 13 and about the fruition of Gerry's vision for WOC's Network of Support for Women Called to Ordination on page 12.

I think that there is some parallel here to the discussion on the ordination of women. Perhaps there are wider horizons that can give us a new perspective. Let me illustrate with an example from another area of church doctrine. In the year 1441, the Council of Florence, the seventeenth ecumenical council of the church, decreed the following:

The Holy Roman Church believes, professes, and preaches that no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not just pagans, but also Jews or heretics or schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the "everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41) unless before the end of life they are joined to the Church. ... No one can be saved, no matter how much alms he has given, even if he

Giving the Gift of Women's Leadership

April 15, 2008
Washington, D.C.

Join us as we give the gift of Catholic women's leadership to the church and to Pope Benedict XVI for his 81st birthday. On the night he arrives, we'll celebrate an inclusive Eucharistic liturgy with Donna Quinn, OP, Andrea Johnson, and other special guests.

We need your help! Attend the event in D.C. or plan an event in your community. For more information, contact Nidza Vázquez at the WOC national office, 703-352-1006 or nvazquez@womensordination.org

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Dear WOC Members,



These cold winter months offer us time to reflect and prepare for Easter. On page 6, Mary Ellen Chown describes her experiences of Lent both past and present. In addition to giving us a spiritual boost, she suggests a new way to advocate women's ordination and to "change the heart" of many in our church both locally and internationally.

The main feature of this issue is an abridged version of the late Bishop Ken Untener's 1991 article on women's ordination. He raised questions and called for further investigation on the theological underpinnings of the Vatican's ban on women's ordination. This article reminds us that courageous leaders in the hierarchy have indeed advocated for women's ordination before the Vatican tried to close the official discussion.

To complete our coverage of the Women-Church conference last August, Marissa Valeri shares with us the intergenerational issues that arose there. She synthesizes them into five suggestions to help collaborate across generations more effectively.

WOC was a major part of organizing this conference and since we want to model diversity and inclusion in every event and program we organize, Valeri's insights offer new ways for WOC and other feminist Catholic organizations to create space not only for younger people, but for newer members of all backgrounds.

Megan Heeney, one of the organizers of the November ordinations in St. Louis and a Catholic social justice activist, offers her perspective on those historic ordinations. Heeney interviewed Rabbi Susan Talve after the event, and our Jewish sister offers some hard-earned wisdom and gives us her blessing. This is interfaith work at its best.

We also continue to print stories of women called to ordination, and in this issue we feature Olivia Doko, who was ordained in the Roman Catholic Womenpriest (RCWP) movement. Doko also co-wrote the article about the launch of the National Network of Support for Women Called, on page 12.

Join us in Washington, D.C. on April 15th to welcome Pope Benedict XVI and urge him to recognize women's leadership in the church, including the ordained ministries. And don't forget to register for the Joint Conference in Boston; see page 9 or go to our website. This event will be an unprecedented collaboration of the women's ordination and married priests movements. You won't want to miss it!

May you be blessed in your work for justice. Thank you for your continued work to promote women's leadership in the Church.

Blessings of peace and love,
Aisha S. Taylor

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In principle and practice WOC values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

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Reflection Resource for Women Called to Ordination – Now Available!

Where the Spirit Moves Us Reflections for Women Considering Ordination

During the first meeting of the National Catholic Ministries Alliance (NCMA), whose members include WOC, CORPUS, the Roman Catholic arm of the Federation of Christian Ministries and Roman Catholic Women Priests, a clear need emerged. Representatives from the member organizations were present, as well as Mary Ramerman of Spiritus Christi Church. Since many Catholic women are choosing the path of ordination and different groups are emerging to ordain them, the NCMA saw the need to put forth a resource that women considering Catholic ordination could use as they prepare for their ministries.

As a result of this meeting, the NCMA produced a resource that includes short essays on each of nine elements of preparation for ministry, as well as a section of frequently asked questions. Many women have found this helpful in their journey to answer God's call in their life.

NCMA asks for a \$10 donation for the 23-page 8 1/2 by 11- inch booklet with full color front and back covers. All proceeds go directly to NCMA to enable us to promote inclusive Catholic ministries. To order the resource, contact WOC at 703 352-1006 or woc@womensordination.org.

WOC Honors the Life of Sr. Joan Campbell, SL

Joan Campbell grew up in the Depression era in Chicago. After graduating from Loretto Heights College, she worked at Continental Oil Company for a year. However, the desire to become a priest, which she first experienced in seventh grade, kept nagging at her. She wrote: "I went to see the pastor at Presentation Parish and told him I wanted to be a priest. He explained that only men were priests, so I entered the Sisters of Loretto in 1951."

In the fall of 1954, she began her teaching career in Mobile, Ala. She attended Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and earned her M.A. in English in 1965. Joan taught one semester at Webster College before setting off to the University of Iowa where she earned her doctorate in English in January 1970.

Joan's call to priesthood inspired her to work actively for women's ordination. In September 1974, she called the first meeting of the Task Force of the Ordination of Women which was held at the offices of the National Coalition of American Nuns (NCAN). Joan provided one of the sparks that ignited the flame that resulted in the first Women's Ordination Conference in 1975. She also played a major role in leading the conference. She wrote about the experience, "The Task Force chose me as one of their executives, and I moved to Detroit, Michigan, where I organized the first Women's Ordination Conference, held Thanksgiving weekend of 1975. When I

closed the office in Detroit, the files I retained comprised the complete collection of materials necessary for future research on the topic of ordination of women in the Roman Church."

Joan actively advocated many social justice issues throughout her life. In addition to her passion for women's ordination, she traveled with an organization called "Promoting Enduring Peace," whose members believed that getting to know individuals living in countries whose governments were hostile to the United States government would bring about peace in the world. Joan also attended the International Women's Year meeting in August of 1995 held in Beijing, China.

In 2006, Sr. Joan's autonomic nerve, which controls the body's ability to balance itself, was malfunctioning. She moved to the Loretto Center in St. Louis, and on December 31, 2007, she passed away. She is remembered fondly by the women in her community and by women's ordination activists across the country.

Sr. Kate Misbauer, SL wrote this obituary, basing it on Sr. Campbell's 2007 vita and her biographical record.



Sr. Joan Campbell, SL

WOC in the West: Activities of the Los Angeles WOC group

By Cheryl Ortega



Ernest Brooks assists as Olivia Doko presides at the community celebration in Los Angeles, Calif.

On September 30, 2007 the newly formed group of WOC activists in Los Angeles (WOC-LA) celebrated a Mass, presided by Roman Catholic Womanpriest Olivia Doko, in the chapel of the Claremont School of Theology. Ordained women from various denominations joined Doko at the altar, accompanied by a number of laywomen who are members of WOC-LA. A student at Sacred Heart of Jesus Girls' High School, where WOC board member Theresa Yugar teaches, proclaimed one of the readings and her younger brother was an altar server. Everyone was invited to wear purple stoles as a symbol of our baptismal priesthood and sign of hope for women's ordination.

The Mass was the third communal celebration in the Los Angeles area since WOC's gathering in Santa Barbara in February of 2006. Victoria Rue, Jane Via and Monika Wyss celebrated the first liturgy and Rue the second. After meeting Aisha Taylor and other WOC board members in Santa Barbara, it was almost immediately decided that it was time for WOC to become active on the west coast.

Los Angeles, the largest diocese in the country, needed voices to speak for women's ordination. The group has been meeting monthly and has elected Kay Akers of Santa Monica as director. Since some of the members live in the central Los Angeles Area and others near Claremont, a distance of about 30 miles, the meetings are held alternately in each of the areas. All of the members have active histories in ministry, in parishes or schools. Anyone interested in WOC-LA should contact Kay Akers at mkwsa@earthlink.net.

Letter to the Editor



Dear Members of the Women's Ordination Conference,

At the first meeting of the Conference in Detroit in

1975, friends from Minnesota and I, initiated a lottery in which anyone could participate in selecting the date the first women would be ordained. A donation of \$1.00 was suggested.

Seventy-five individuals selected dates ranging from 1976 to 2001. \$75 was collected, 32 years have passed, and while the selected dates have come and gone, the issue continues...

With news of the growing number of women ordained and the recent ordination in Minneapolis, it is time to retire the lottery and use the small amount for its intended purpose—to support women studying for priesthood and to increase visibility of the ordination of women in the Roman Catholic Church.

I have had the \$75 in an interest bearing bank account since that first gathering. Enclosed is a check for \$360. I also enclose the original guidelines for the lottery.

In Peace,
Mary M Wagner

Guidelines for Ordination Now

1. The date chosen for the first woman ordained a Catholic priest must fall between Dec 1, 1975 and Dec 31, 2000.
2. Donations received will be dispersed as follows:
 - a. 50% to a seminary scholarship fund for women
 - b. 25% to a diocese that has the first Catholic woman priest
 - c. 25% to increase efforts in making visible the issue of women in ministry

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sheds his blood for the name of Christ, unless he remains in the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church (DB 714).

Five hundred and twenty-three years later, the Second Vatican Council referred to those whom the Council of Florence had called “heretics” and “schismatics” as brothers and sisters. Vatican II then said of the Jewish people: “...this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts He makes (LG 16). The council then went on to speak about non-Christians: “But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these are the Moslems. Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God...Nor does providence deny the help necessary for salvation to those without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God...” (LG 16).

These conclusions that seem totally opposite were reached by two councils, both which affirmed the traditional principle: Outside the church no salvation. How was it possible for Vatican II to affirm this same principle and take a position that apparently contradicted the Council of Florence? The horizons widened. Our understanding of “church” and the ways of relating to the church broadened and provided a new perspective that would now include those who formerly were thought to be excluded from salvation. We can apply this, at least as a possibility, to the issue of the ordination of women.

I would now like to focus on a theological question — a question I believe to be a key one for this issue. It centers around the Latin phrase, *in persona Christi*. It is now commonplace to speak of the ordained priest as acting “in the person of Christ.” Where does the phrase from, and how has it come to be understood?

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its “Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood” says that in the Mass the priest “acts not only through the effective power conferred on him by Christ, but *in persona Christi*, taking the role of Christ, to the point of being His very image, when he pronounces the words of consecration.” The declaration goes on to say that those who would take the role of Christ must have a natural resemblance to him and therefore be of the male sex.

Does it mean that the priest “impersonates” Christ at the Eucharist? Let us go back and look at the origin and meaning of this key phrase.

Scripture. This phrase appears to be used once in the New Testament, but closer examination shows this to be a faulty rendering of the original Greek. In 2 Corinthians 2:10, Paul writes: “For indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for you *in the presence of Christ*...” The Greek reads, *en pro opo Chris tou*. St. Jerome translated this into Latin “*in persona Christi*.” This carried over into English as “in the person of Christ.”

Biblical scholars from early on recognized that in this passage the phrase really meant “in the presence of Christ.” The sense would be something like saying “before the face of Christ.” Current English translations done under Catholic auspices read as follows:

Jerusalem Bible: “in the presence of Christ”

New American Bible: “before Christ”

Revised New American Bible: “in the presence of Christ.”

We can say, then, that the use of this phrase in scripture allows for a much broader horizon than is often understood.

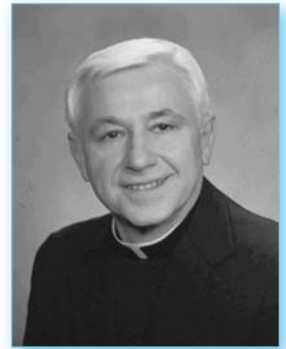
Thomas Aquinas. In the early centuries we do not see this phrase used to describe the role of the ordained priest. The first significant theological use of this phrase in the context of ordained priesthood was in the thirteenth century by Thomas Aquinas. He says that the priest acts “*in persona Christi*” because Christ acts through the priest in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. It is very important to note that Aquinas explains this in terms of instrumental causality. Referring to the Eucharistic words of consecration, he says “...for since these words are uttered in the person of Christ, it is from His command that they receive their instrumental power from Him” (*Summa Theologica*, III, 78, 4).

Aquinas says that an instrument acts not by the power of its own form, but by the power of the one who moves it. The interpretation that Aquinas gives to his use of this phrase is significant. As we shall see, in recent years the phrase has been used in a way that goes far beyond the notion of instrumental causality.

Council of Florence and Council of Trent. In the middle of the fifteenth century we have the first use of the phrase *in persona Christi* by a council. Referring to the Eucharist, the Council of Florence says, “The priest effects this sacrament by speaking in “the person of Christ.” The council does not give a reference for this phrase and does not explain it.

Strangely enough, the Council of Trent did not use the phrase, although it might have served well in its efforts to counter some of

the teachings of Martin Luther on the priesthood. Perhaps the council was reluctant because it was known at the time that the phrase itself came from Jerome’s questionable translation.



Bishop Kenneth E. Untener

Mediator Dei.

Some five hundred years after the Council of Florence the magisterium picked up this phrase and began to use it with increasing frequency. In 1947, Pius XII used it in *Mediator Dei*: “Christ is present at the august sacrifice of the altar both in the person of His minister and above all under the Eucharistic species” (no. 20).

There are two other closely related uses of the phrase in the encyclical: “Only to the apostles, and thenceforth to those on whom their successors have imposed hands, is granted the power of the priesthood, in virtue of which they represent the person of Jesus Christ before their people” (no. 40). “The priest (in the sacrifice of the altar) is the same, Jesus Christ, whose sacred Person His minister represents...” (no. 69). It is interesting that Pius XII does not cite 2 Corinthians. His only reference is to Aquinas. This means that despite what the language itself might seem to say, the meaning does not go beyond Aquinas who, as we saw, says that the minister is an external, instrumental cause.

It is also interesting that we have the beginning of something that has continued right up to the present, namely the use of the phrase “in the person of Christ” as accepted theological terminology, without necessarily giving any reference. Whereas Thomas Aquinas had cited 2 Corinthians, and Pius XII cited Thomas Aquinas, subsequent use of the phrase will be increasingly without reference. It will also be used much more frequently.

Vatican II. Vatican II explicitly uses the phrase in reference to the ordained priesthood five times.

Vatican II does not cite 2 Corinthians or Aquinas. The council reflects the increasing practice of using the phrase without any reference, or with a reference to the Fathers who do not explicitly use the phrase, or with a reference to contemporary usage—as in the case of *Presbyterium Ordinis*, which cites *Lumen Gentium*.

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Post-Vatican II. After Vatican II the phrase begins to be used very frequently. We find it in the writings of Pope Paul VI, in the 1970 *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, and in the 1971 Synod of Bishops. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith began using it in 1973 and has used it repeatedly after that. John Paul II uses it frequently.

Thus a phrase used very infrequently for nineteen centuries has become standard terminology in our own times. This raises a theological question that deserves careful examination. Theologically speaking, the usage of this phrase is relatively recent and relatively unexamined. A great deal of work is needed on this crucial point.

In a 1975 article, Edward Kilmartin probed the question and asked whether the priest directly represents the church and thus represents Christ, or whether the priest represents the church, *and also* directly represents Christ. It is his position that the former is the case. "As an activity of the Church, pastoral office can only represent and act in the name of the Lord when it represents the life and faith of the Church."

He then goes on to apply this to the question of the ordination of women:

Since the priest directly represents the church united in faith and love, the old argument against the ordination of women to the priesthood, based on the presupposition that the priest directly represents Christ and so should be male, becomes untenable. Logically the representative role of priest seems to demand both male and female office bearers in the proper cultural context: for the priest represents the one church, in which distinctions of race, class, and sex have been transcended, where all are measured by the one norm: faith in Christ.

This is an interpretation that needs theological examination. It suggests the possibility of a broader horizon for understanding the way in which the ordained priest represents the person of Christ.

It should be noted that even if one understands the priest as directly representing Christ there are problems with "in persona" as solely a male representation of Christ. St. Irenaeus taught that what was not assumed has not been redeemed. Christ has assumed the whole of human nature, and to say that a male has to represent the whole of human nature raises many questions. Gregory of Nyssa, in his *Great Catechism*, says, "He united himself with our nature so that by its union with the divine it might become divine." Again, if Christ has united himself to the whole of human nature, one

has to ask why a man has to undertake this representative role.

Independent of the historical usage of the term "in persona Christi," one can also understand the phrase in a wider horizon when it is viewed from a liturgical perspective. In the old rubrics, when the priest bent down and directed the words "*Hoc est enim Corpus meum*" to the host, it seemed as though he were speaking to the bread in the first person and thus "impersonating" Christ. But the priest is not speaking to the bread or to the wine. He is speaking *to* the Father *about* Christ.

From beginning to end, the eucharistic prayer is primarily addressed to God the Father in thanksgiving. In so doing the priest recalls the great events of our salvation, and recalls in a particular way what Christ did at the Last Supper. Rather than impersonating Christ, he is recalling to the Father and to the assembly what Christ did. The priest proclaims all of this, to use St. Paul's phrase, "in the presence of Christ" (2 Cor 2:10). If one understands "in persona Christi" in this sense, and if one looks carefully at what is actually taking place, it is difficult to see why the person proclaiming these words to the Father must be understood as impersonating Christ.

Another helpful liturgical perspective comes from a careful examination of the epiclesis in the eucharistic prayers. The words in the eucharistic prayer that become absolutely critical are those that call forth the Spirit upon the bread and wine, transforming them into the body and blood of Christ. In speaking these words it is even clearer that the priest is addressing God the Father, and there is less of a tendency to see him as "impersonating" Christ:

"And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist" (Eucharistic Prayer 3).

When these words are given their proper importance and meaning, the representative role of the priest is seen in a different light.

These are areas that deserve further examination, with the possibility of broadening our horizons in understanding the phrase "in the person of Christ."

As has been noted, the phrase "in persona Christi" has been used much more frequently in recent times. More significantly, there has been a major shift in the way it is interpreted. Thomas Aquinas interpreted it in terms of instrumental causality. A major shift came about when "in the person of

Christ" was used to describe the priest as taking on the role of Christ, that is, not simply representing him as an ambassador represents someone (Corinthians in another place used the term "ambassador") but "impersonating" Christ in somewhat the same way that an actor takes on a role "in the person of" someone else. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith interprets it in the latter way when it says "His [Christ's] role must be taken by a man." Based on the historical and liturgical meaning of that phrase, such an interpretation is open to much discussion.

Finally, I would like to add a brief thought about the manner in which this discussion is conducted. The truth is we believe that each of the baptized is configured to Christ. "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:27-28). In this discussion, as in many others going on in the church today, we must remember, all of us are acting "in persona Christi." I would hope that we could conduct the discussion with an openness and a spirit that expresses the fullest and most authentic meaning of what it means for the church to be the body of Christ, and for all of the baptized to act in the person of Christ.

I do not claim to be able to predict where this discussion will lead us. However, we must at least accept the possibility that there may be new horizons out there. The astronomers in the 1920s diligently pursued their research and discovered broader horizons that they had not anticipated. We, who ponder great mysteries beyond our comprehension, must always be open to the possibility of new horizons. If together we focus on the deeper questions, rather than engage in a tug-of-war confined to our own turf, we may find a new perspective and a truth more comprehensive than we now perceive.

Bishop Kenneth E. Untener was born in Detroit and earned an STD from Gregorian University in Rome. He was ordained bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, Mich. in 1980, where he served until his death from leukemia. He was a true pastor, practical theologian and a prophet who sought to call his church back to its roots. He was a prolific and inspired author and speaker, and his writings have touched, inspired, and challenged Catholics in all walks of life.

A Tuesday Fat with Possibility

Giving up old ways of thinking as a new kind of Lenten sacrifice

By Mary Ellen Chown



“What are you giving up for Lent this year?”

This question was raised annually over a supper of pancakes in our Catholic home, the night before Ash

Wednesday. As one of five kids in our family, I would choose to abstain—for 40 days—from soda pop, chips, candy, or watching television. As Lent went along, debates sometimes ensued among us about our fasting regimens. For example, was gum also included in abstaining from candy? Did giving up TV mean you couldn't go to the movies? Was St. Patrick's Day really a day of fasting? We also wondered if it was a sin if you got halfway through a chocolate bar before remembering (or being reminded) that you had “given it up.”

One year, I decided to give up the whole gamut of forbidden foods and fun. It definitely became more about finishing that Lenten marathon of deprivation in a blaze of sibling moral superiority than it was about my seeming altruist piety.

Although it seems a little quirky for a kid, I always looked forward to this somber season of the Christian year. The church was suddenly awash in the color purple, a dramatic symbol of sorrow and repentance. As I held my breath at Mass on Ash Wednesday, the priest would make a sooty sign of the cross with ashes on my forehead, declaring: “Man, you are dust and unto dust you shall return.”

This mortality wake up call (albeit a sexist one) certainly got me thinking. If I wanted a chance at a happy eternity, I had better step up the self-reformation program. Also during Lent, a light-blue “aerogram” would arrive from a Jesuit priest in Darjeeling, a childhood friend of my father. One such letter from 1971 is imprinted in my memory: “Four last night, eight this morning, God knows how many by noon. If one could or should get used to death, it ought to be while working in refugee camps where cholera, dysentery, or just plain mal-

nutrition claim victims daily.” It wasn't too hard after hearing that to offer up my entire allowance, knowing that it might make a small dent in someone else's real misery.

This childhood experience of Lent hard-wired my imagination for stories and cycles, symbolic color and ritual. It also embedded in me a tension between continuity and change. Lenten reflection caught me moving between believing and asking all kinds of questions. I started wondering why I'd been lucky enough to be born in bountiful, peaceful Canada. I wondered why Jesus had to die, and why a loving and omnipotent God permitted any suffering at all.

I also wondered why girls could not be altar servers.

The spiral of my years, a blink in the life of the Catholic Church, has seen ancient ritual interpreted in new ways. Now we are called to “Repent and believe the Good News” as we receive ashes from either a priest or lay minister on Ash Wednesday.

Our three children have been encouraged in their Catholic formation to make a “Lenten promise.” This promise focuses on a “change of heart” (perhaps rather than a change in diet).

A wise Catholic friend told me she has given up Lenten “artificial crosses” altogether. She strives instead to face the real challenges of her life with grace and compassion.

The light-blue airmail letters from our Jesuit friend continue to arrive and prod us to find small ways to help. I have also had the opportunity to “live Lent” in parishes across Canada that have, I am happy to report, plenty of keen young women as altar servers.

My questions have led me back to the university for truly exhilarating biblical and theological courses. I also really enjoy membership in the longest-standing reform movement in the Canadian Catholic church, the Catholic Network for Women's Equality.

As I journey through Lent this year, I, too, will be wearing purple: a purple lapel button that says Ordain Women.



I will wear my button because I now have read for myself that there were undeniably women ministers in the early church. I will wear this button because I know women who would be terrific Catholic priests. Some of them don't have time to wait for the next Pope or the machinations of Canon law to grind forward. Instead, they are being ordained without the Pope's blessing so that they may serve in their communities and be catalysts for change in the wider church.

I will wear my purple “Ordain Women” button because while the Catholic all-male hierarchy continues to forbid even dialogue on the subject, we have to start somewhere. I have come to believe that the advancement of women to full dignity and equality in all sectors of society, including religious ministry, is humanity's most hopeful path for the future and surely the desire of a loving God.

I wonder what would happen if Catholics, who would never tolerate gender discrimination at work, for example, stopped to consider the injustice they accept at church on Sunday. What if they gave it up for Lent? What if they, too, started wearing purple lapel buttons to mass? Could that spark the “change of heart” needed for our church's vibrant transformation?

Mary Ellen Chown lives in Oakville, Ont. The above article was printed in the Canadian newspaper “Globe and Mail” on February 20, 2007. It is re-printed here with permission. To order WOC's “Ordain Women” button pictured above, see page 16.

Five Points to Ensure the Future of Feminist Catholic Ministries

By Marissa Valeri

The Women-Church conference this past August in Chicago was an amazing and inspiring experience for everyone who attended. For those like myself, who were new to the Women-Church movement and had never before attended one of their events, it was also eye-opening and unique. Before the conference, many of us never had the opportunity to be in the room with so many feminist Catholics to hear their experiences.

As we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Women-Church, we connected to a broad group of Catholic feminists from all across the spectrum—younger and older, ordained and non-ordained, those who had taken religious vows in community and those who had not, etc. Together, we gained a greater understanding of the issues within the Church, a greater respect for our fellow sisters in this struggle, and a new appreciation for the work and the space that Women-Church provides.

Joining my fellow young Catholic feminists was truly moving, yet during some ongoing discussions with them, issues arose that we have yet to fully address within our movements. Primarily, the issues dealt with the gaps between the generations of feminist Catholic women. These gaps reflect the same issues that are present between generations of feminists in secular organizations, and between generations outside of the movement as well. But from the perspective of feminist Catholic ministries, there is uniqueness that bears further comment.

A strong positive step forward in addressing these differences was in the intergenerational breakout session that took place on Saturday night during the conference. It is vital for the future of Catholic feminist ministries to enter into intergenerational dialogue more fervently. From that session, five key points emerged that can help us create a roadmap to ensure the future of the work that we do and to make certain that the work that has already been done is passed along to future generations.

1. Create space for the inclusion of young Catholic feminists.

Young Catholic feminists did not feel included at many points over the course of the conference. They did not know the people pictured in the slide show, which

It is vital that we create space for a wide variety of experiences.

laid out the history of Women-Church. It was difficult for younger women, as well as for some older participants, and even new members, to connect to the images because we did not have the historical background to know the importance of the people or events that were shown.

Many young Catholic feminists felt that their voices were not being recognized or respected during the course of the program. It was encouraging that in these instances, young women stood up and shared their feelings, but it is our duty to create open spaces that allow for all voices to be heard.

It is vital that we create space for a wide variety of experiences. Young Catholic feminists from various ethnic, social class, gender, sexuality, educational, geographic and regional backgrounds should feel welcomed and safe.

2. Create liturgies that are inclusive of the experiences, music and spirituality of young Catholic feminists.

We need to construct liturgies that reflect a variety of paths and experiences in order to more fully include all our voices. Many young women felt disconnected from the liturgies—by the choice of certain songs, as well as the format. Music and words were not always familiar and seemed to come from an older musical tradition rather than reflecting the music of younger people with more contemporary rhythms and concerns.

3. Include voices of young Catholic feminists as keynote speakers, plenary speakers and leaders.

Not one young Catholic woman was invited to be a plenary speaker—the young Catholic feminist voice was missing from engaging open questions.

It is also important that we do not set up educational hierarchies as we celebrate a discipleship of equals. Each plenary session speaker was a theologian, thus setting up an educational class system. The experiences and wisdom of non-theologians is an

important voice for discussion of feminist Catholic ministries.

4. Use inclusive language, and share information and ideas in inclusive ways.

Language is vital to ensuring that everyone feels included. The use of acronyms and not explaining different terms or names of important people in Women-Church also made it difficult to connect in some instances—unless one was a theologian, well-versed in the history of feminist, *mujerista*, or womanist theologies.

5. Recognize that the feminism that young Catholics connect to is not a mirror of second-wave feminism.

Young women today are defining their paths differently, based on their own life experiences and worldviews, which is not to say there is not a deep respect for our foremothers. Young Catholic feminists want to know the history of Women-Church and Catholic feminism, and feel that it is powerful and important. At the same time, they are going to continue to define their feminism in new ways.

This five-point roadmap is offered in the spirit of cooperation. Young Catholic feminists want to be engaged, involved, and connected, but the puzzle pieces representing the younger Catholic feminists do not fit into the current picture as it currently stands.

It is time to change the pieces so that all our voices fit. This will ensure the future of Catholic feminist ministries, while honoring what has taken place in earlier times.

Marissa Valeri is the Outreach Program Officer of Catholics for Choice, a member organization of the Women-Church Convergence.



Marissa Valeri

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REGISTRATION DESK

Friday	3:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Saturday	7:00 am – 11:00 am

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY 5:30 pm Reception
6:45 pm Opening of conference and dinner

SATURDAY..... 8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Keynote, several workshops, general session
5:15 pm – 7:00 pm reception

SUNDAY 7:00 am – 10:00 am

Individual meetings of each sponsoring organization with continental breakfast
10:30 am - Liturgy and Worship
12:00 Noon Close of conference

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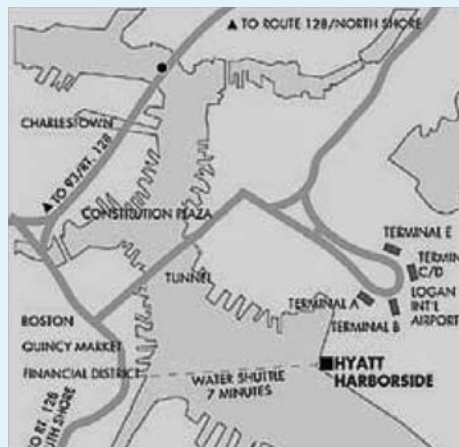
INFORMATION

See websites of sponsoring organizations or contact Conference Co-Chairs at quinnems@aol.com.

FederationOfChristianMinistries.org
WomensOrdination.org
RomanCatholicWomenpriests.org
CORPUS.org

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Inclusive Ministry and Renewal *in a Complex Age* REGISTRATION

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Summer Registration Fee\$260	June 15, 2008
Late Registration Fee.....\$280	after June 15 or on-site
Saturday only\$190	

\$50 fee if written cancellation before June 15. No refunds after June 15.

2 CONTRIBUTION \$

Contribution to help another attend (optional). Tax Deductible.

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Friday, July 18.....	Reception	Cash bar
Friday, July 18.....	Dinner	Included
Saturday, July 19.....	Continental Breakfast	Included
Saturday, July 19.....	Lunch	Included
Saturday, July 19.....	Reception, hors d'oeuvres	Cash bar
Saturday, July 19.....	Dinner on your own	Free time
Sunday, July 20.....	Continental Breakfast	Included
Sunday, July 20.....	Box lunch @ \$24 pp: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No...	Optional

Pay for optional box lunch at hotel

4 TOTAL (CHECK ONLY PLEASE, PAYABLE TO - "2008 JOINT CONFERENCE") \$

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Journey to Priesthood

By Olivia Doko

Editor's Note: As it has always been WOC's tradition, we publish stories about women who are called to ordination into an inclusive priestly ministry. We do this both for the archival record and to lift up and support women in a church that institutionally does not recognize what they experience as a call to priesthood. Secondly, while these stories are featured under Walking With Women Called, readers will note that some of these women have been ordained, which would technically put them in the Ministry of Prophetic Obedience because they have made a decision about what to do with their call. Walking With Women Called is a place where women usually begin "walking with WOC," that is, they express their initial yearnings and join with others discerning how to respond. Once they have completed their discernment process and have made a decision about how to move forward with their call—whether it is through ordination by a group like RCWP or the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, among others, commissioning by their faith community, or continuing to work for justice in other ways—they move out of this ministry. We print their stories here, however, for this is the place of discernment and preparation. This is the place where women might see their stories, or situations similar to their lives. As well, WOC walks with all these women wherever their stories lead them.

Following years of hope, often mixed with periods of near despair, a way to realize my dream of becoming an ordained Roman Catholic woman priest opened for me. Early in 2005, through a series of referrals from other women, I was brought into contact with Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP), headquartered in Bavaria, Germany. I applied and was accepted into its program of preparation for ordination. In the summer of 2006, I was ordained to the priesthood in Pittsburgh.

I have taken a long journey to arrive at this point in my personal history, as well as in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. I am grateful to WOC and to all women and men, living and deceased, who have labored to birth the dream of women priests, making it possible for me and countless other women to take their rightful place in the ministry of the church.

My journey toward priesthood involved an interior awakening to my call coupled with the simultaneous recognition of the call by other persons close to me, including some members of my family. Persons, including priests, began to speak to me about priesthood and women's ordination, referring to me as a priest, seeking me out for reconciliation with God through open confession of sins, turning to me to lead them in prayer and worship, asking me to anoint them and to pray with them for healing. I have experienced many memorable moments in these sacramental experiences.



Olivia Doko passes out communion with her husband, Slavo, in the summer of 2006.

One personally treasured moment was in 1978 when my then 80-year-old mother-in-law, Sima Doko, who had never been more than 10 miles from her village in Yugoslavia (now known as Bosnia-Herzegovina), asked me during my visit there to anoint and pray with a dying villager, since no parish priest could be found to administer that sacrament. Sima did not know how to read or to write, but this deeply spiritual woman knew how to read the signs of the times and she knew how to read my heart and to cultivate seeds sown there by the Spirit. Whenever I pause to review the steps leading and calling me to ordination, I fondly recall the role that Sima played in concert with the Holy Spirit.

For a long time I pushed back from hearing my call to priesthood because I was focused on the impossibility of the call for a woman in the Roman Catholic Church. It was during my graduate studies in theology in the late 1980s that I could no longer deny the call God had planted deep within me. While participating in a future imaging process in one of my classes, I discovered and—most importantly—named that my greatest dream was to serve as a priest within the Roman Catholic Church. From that day forward I began to work toward the possibility of women's ordination, joining WOC, deepening my personal spiritual and theological formation and education, listening to the Spirit in contemplation, and feeling the pain of being denied the official sacrament of Sacred Orders. I was longing to say, "Here I am. I am ready."

At varying times and to various persons, I expressed my hopes, joys and pains around the issue of women's ordination and women's roles in the church. One such time was in an address to the Council of Priests in my diocese, where I, together with other committee members spoke on behalf of instituting a permanent diaconate study

program open to women as well as men in the diocese. Here is that address:

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, I am here today in peace...but I am not here in a peace that is free of pain. In prayer, I have labored long in order to discern the words to be spoken forth from my heart to your hearts.

My prayer, in this season of jubilee, has been like the prayer of "a woman in childbirth, who knows her hour has come," and who, in an interior night, waits with great sighs and cries for the appearance of her child. That child's name will be "Justice."

My prayer, in this season of jubilee, has been like the prayer of an old crone, who having dug the earth and planted seeds with her hands, presses her face to the ground in order to hear the sounds and smell the fragrances of new growth from within the heart of the soil. That soil is the church and that new growth is freedom born of equality.

To pray these prayers, in this season of jubilee, has been to enter with Jesus Christ...who remains the same yesterday, today and forever...into that time and place before humankind formed "knowledge" of false divisions between the male and the female. I believe it is in that sacred space that a vision in which to live and breathe and move can be found. I believe that it is only in movement from that sacred space that a movement toward justice can be most fully initiated.

The vision I hold in my heart, the vision that I carry forth, for the present moment in our diocesan history is a just process which will honor the call of men and of women for a deeper life in service to God and to the church, especially to the poor. Without a just process, any process, no matter how noble its goals, will not bear the lasting fruit of a just result.

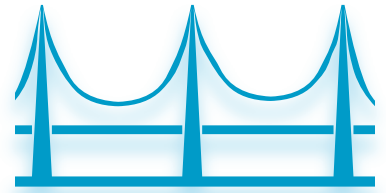
The vision I hold in my heart, the vision that I carry forth, for the future life of the church is a community of believers, a community of men and women, equally carrying and breaking open the Word, Who is Jesus, to one another and to all who arrive hungry at their table.

I know that you must not solely rely on my vision or even the vision of this

continued on page 11

Building Ecumenical Bridges: Women's Ordination Supporters across Denominations Meet in Pittsburgh

By Chava Redonnet



We are at an exciting moment in history—women are becoming Roman Catholic priests. They are not yet recognized by the hierarchy, but it will come. In this moment we have an opportunity to dream about how the priesthood might be different, how the church might change, and to begin to model the new church.

One of the opportunities we have is to work on building more bridges with our Protestant sisters and brothers. As Catholic women become clergy, we have the opportunity to build relationships and to work with Protestant clergy as our colleagues, our partners in ministry.

On October 5, four women met in Pittsburgh at Joan Houk's house to talk about building bridges between WOC and the International Association of Women Ministers (IAWM), which has been a resource for Protestant women clergy since 1919. Houk of Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP), Nidza Vázquez of WOC, Linda Brebner of IAWM, and I felt the Spirit among us as we dreamt of ways to go forward. Our meeting had the breath

The most exciting discussion centered on the possibility of organizing a joint conference in 2010, with the purpose of building relationships among women in ministry across denominations to help heal the church by recognizing our common faith in God, our common work as ministers, and learning from each other's experience.

of the Holy Spirit all through it: when I first contacted Linda, asking about a possible IAWM/WOC connection, having gotten her name from one of my divinity school professors, she wrote back right away saying, "I was supposed to be getting in touch with you!"

We decided to link to each others' websites and to send representatives to each other's

conferences. (IAWM will send at least five people to the joint conference in Boston this summer, see pages 8 & 9 for more information). The most exciting discussion centered on the possibility of organizing a joint conference in 2010, with the purpose of building relationships among women in ministry across denominations to help heal the church by recognizing our common faith in God, our common work as ministers, and learning from each other's experience.

Membership in IAWM is open to women in ministry, ordained or not. IAWM advocates on behalf of women whose denominations don't recognize the ordination of women. Visit their website, www.womenministers.org, for more information.

Chava Redonnet is a member of the Ministry of Prophetic Obedience, and serves the committee as chair of the International / Interfaith Relations Project. She writes to us from Rochester, N.Y. and is an active member of Spiritus Christi Church.

Journey to Priesthood...continued

entire study committee to reach a decision. So, I encourage and trust each of you to enter once again into your sacred spaces of prayer, taking with you this great question about the permanent diaconate that is before all of us, taking with you the information we have shared with you today. I encourage and trust each of you to come into those sacred spaces within you and to see and hear for yourselves. I encourage and trust each of you to tell each other what you see and what you hear in the sacred spaces of your hearts about a permanent diaconate for our diocese...and, then, I encourage and trust each of you to act together as community with courage in response to the Spirit of God.

Over time I came to understand and believe that an entirely new paradigm of priesthood is being called and created for Catholic men and women. I do not believe that a more feminist model can simply be superimposed over the current patriarchal model. Rather, I

believe a new model of priesthood is being birthed. With countless others, I believe a cosmic shift is occurring on multiple levels and that women's ordination is now being made manifest through programs and organizations such as WOC and RCWP. Together with all the members of RCWP, I have no desire to leave the church, and I continue to see myself as a vital member of the church, seeking to awaken it to the prophetic call of God in this current period of history.

I accept that being ordained outside the structure, but inside the heart of the Roman Catholic Church, has placed me at risk. Even as many doors of opportunity opened for me, others, which I valued, have closed. However, I believe I must fully live who I am on the outside with who I am on the inside. The priest within me must serve as priest in, with, and through the community of which I am a part.

My ordination is an outward sign of the deep and loving connection I feel with the heart of the Catholic Church, and it has been

the most significant prophetic action that I have taken in my spiritual journey. This action, which I experience as being born of faithfulness to God, is a positive and loving response to the deepest place of union with the Divine. It is an offering of all that God has given me, hopefully for the good of the Church and the world.

I believe that one day the patriarchal structure of the church, not the church itself, will crumble. Justice will reign—even rain down—for women in the Roman Catholic Church, and when it does, the mercy of God will flow and fill and flood the Temple. With every woman who is ordained to the priesthood, the heavens open to pour forth this rain. I believe this is part of a latter day rain of harvest. May God be glorified.

Olivia Doko is a long-time WOC member who writes to us from San Luis Obispo, Calif.

WOC Launches National Network of Support for Women Called

By Gerry Rauch and Olivia Doko

One of WOC's ministries, Walking with Women Called (WWWC), launched a new, but long envisioned project at a training held on November 1-2, prior to the Call To Action Conference in Milwaukee. The event was held for newly selected Regional, State, and City Coordinators to form a network of support for women called to ordination into an inclusive and truly catholic priestly ministry.

A successful pilot program of this nature was facilitated in the St. Louis area by Gerry Rauch, a member of WOC's Board of Directors. Gerry dreamed of such a project becoming a vital part of WOC's ministry, and her vision has guided the formation of much of the network.

As evidenced by the growing number of women being ordained in North America, there is a great need for this ministry. The project provides a safe space for women to dialogue, share, and discern their callings in a church where this space is emphatically closed to them. Gerry's example in St. Louis has been critical in helping us understand what others may need to provide similar support in their own communities. As more and more women discern how they will live out their call to priestly ministry, the role of accompanying these women is becoming vital. This Network of Support is part of what makes the renewed, inclusive priestly ministry so unique.

The November training covered a number of topics through interactive sessions, including an introduction to feminist theology; WOC's commitment to anti-oppression and anti-racism; the diversity of Catholic feminist ministries; options for formation, ministry, and ordination; theology of ordination from a feminist perspective; how to interview and gather information from women seeking to enter WWWC support groups; how to develop support and referral networks; and how to work with the WOC staff and utilize the resources of the WOC national office. Participants also spent time in community prayer and guided faith sharing sessions.

Gloria Ulterino participated in the training, and she had this to say about the project, "God came into the world in the most human way, with a laboring mother crying out in agony. It has always been true that the precious gift of new life is preceded by such labor. I am honored to be a small part



Participants and organizers of WOC's innovative training.

of the laboring energy to birth a new and better church, one that is more in tune with the Spirit of Jesus."

Sarah Lasseter of Milwaukee enjoined with the following: "The enthusiasm of the participants for the Network of Support was expressed in so many ways—the energy was tangible through our prayers, conversations, stories, questions, and attentive listening. The training was my first involvement with the Women's Ordination Conference, and what a wonderful introduction it was to the people and principles of the movement!"

It is important that women called have a support network as they break pioneering ground in each new city.

The training concluded with a commissioning service for the participants. Each received a beautiful, hand-knit stole that was blessed during the service and that symbolized their new ministry. Sr. Theresa Harpin delivered the stoles from the faith community in California that made them, and each of the women who organized the event blessed them. The spiritual connection we created during this retreat was deep and meaningful for each of us. Now, our Ministry of Walking with Women Called is not only a networking project, but a sacred grid of human souls, who are illuminating the path for others into the body of Christ.

The following women participated in the training and are serving as either Regional, State, or City Coordinators of the Network: Toni Tortorilla of Portland, Ore., Dana Reynolds of Carmel, Calif., Sarah Lasseter

of Atlanta, Ga., Gloria Ulterino of Rochester, N.Y., Katy Zatsick of Chicago, Ill., Paula Tusiani-Eng of New York, and Elsie McGrath of St. Louis, Mo. A few people were not able to make it to the training, but they are coordinators in the network as well, including Juliana Donofrio in Newton Center, Mass.; Becky Chabot in Cambridge, N.Y.; Lisa Gill Gardner in Cuming, GA; and Dagmar Celeste in Cleveland, Ohio.

A group of committed WOC members served as the facilitating/organizing team, including Gerry Rauch, Theresa Harpin, CSJ, Olivia Doko, Celine Goessl, SCSC, Jeanne Steele, Ruth Steinert Foote, Nidza Vázquez, and Aisha Taylor.

It is important that women who experience a call to priesthood have a support network as they break ground in each new city. At present, there are four regional coordinators, and we need one for the southwest region. We have coordinators in a number of places around the country, but **we still need coordinators in many states**, particularly in the northwest and southwest regions.

Future training sessions will be held as we continue to grow.

For additional information, especially if you are a woman called or if you are interested in serving as a Regional, State or City Coordinator, contact Nidza Vázquez at the WOC office.



Gloria Ulterino joyfully prepares for the closing service as Toni Tortorilla, RCWP womanpriest, looks on.

Gerry Rauch has served on the WOC Board for six years and is the chair of the Ministry of Walking with Women Called. She is a Nurse Massage Therapist in St. Louis, Mo., is active in her parish and in social justice issues, including the most recent local RCWP ordinations. Olivia Doko is a Roman Catholic Womanpriest serving as the Regional Program Coordinator for the Western Region of RCWP-USA. She has served as member of the Walking with Women Called committee for the last two years and previously served as a WOC board member.

All Are Welcome

By Megan Heeney

Over 600 people gathered in St. Louis in early November at the Central Reform Congregation to be part of a historical event—to witness and participate in the priestly ordinations of Rose Marie (Ree) Hudson and Elsie McGrath. Bishop Patricia Fresen presided over the sacrament and many participated by blessing them with a laying-on of hands. Some of us had been waiting for this moment for three months, some for a year, some for a decade, and Ree and Elsie had been waiting their entire adult lives. We gathered in the Spirit of God to call them forth.

I had met Ree and Elsie through the St. Louis Catholic Action Network (CAN). Last year, I was hired as a CAN staff member, and Ree and Elsie participated in the working group, *Justice for Women in the Catholic Church (JWCC)*. They often presided at liturgy or gave homilies at the JWCC women-led prayer sessions. Both women have an extraordinary presence about them. They are strong leaders, steadfast in faith, wise with experience, and generous in spirit.

Gerry Rauch, a WOC board member and chair of the Walking With Women Called ministry, played an instrumental role in accompanying these women. She spent countless hours with them—listening, sharing, and supporting them in their struggles to finally fulfill their dreams of a renewed priestly ministry.

Ree and Elsie's ordination brought together an entire community that modeled inclusion and shared decision-making. The community included fellow female and male priests, college students, the bishop, people of all backgrounds, a Jewish rabbi, and her congregation.

Rabbi Susan Talve and the leadership of the Central Reform Congregation provided the sacred space for the ordination. A few months prior, Ree and Elsie approached Rabbi Talve and asked if the congregation would host their ordination. Rabbi Talve felt a connection to the women; she has also worked as a minister within a patriarchal system so she knew what it was to be considered an outsider. When she was a child, women were not rabbis. The idea that she might have a calling was unthinkable because being a rabbi wasn't possible.

When I asked Rabbi Talve what advice she would give to those whose personal truths are in conflict with the official position of their faith traditions, Rabbi Talve said,



Rose Marie Hudson and Elsie McGrath walk past over 600 guests after at the end of their ordination ceremony, and Patricia Fresen follows behind them.

Search your own soul, make sure it is really your faith tradition. Make sure you don't have a choice. I wanted to serve as a Rabbi and I am a Jew, it is my soul song. They [Patricia, Ree and Elsie] are Catholic. There are consequences when you are part of something slow to change. But you know you are standing on the shoulders of others, and you have the privilege of knowing that others will stand on yours. The best you can do is serve God in a way that is right for you. There is a way that is right for each of us.

The St. Louis ordinations brought a lot of heat on the Central Reform Congregation, and in particular on Rabbi Talve. Archbishop Raymond Burke wrote a statement against the ordination and distributed it throughout the archdiocese of St. Louis. His letter claimed that the Congregation was "acting outside the bounds of interreligious dialogue" and "not showing proper respect for the teaching of the Catholic Church." It also stated "the Archdiocese will no longer partner with them in any future endeavor."

Despite the pressure from the archdiocese and other Jewish congregations, who were told by archdiocesan employees that hosting the ordinations would strain Catholic-Jewish relationships, the Central Reform Congregation remained steadfast and courageous in their decision to offer hospitality. The synagogue received hundreds of letters regarding the ordinations that were overwhelmingly positive.

In the opening of the ordination ceremony, Rabbi Talve welcomed everyone into their Sukkat Shalom—Shelter of Peace. Before she even began speaking, the entire congregation gave her a standing ovation. After the thunderous applause subsided,

she told us that the synagogue was founded to be a shelter of peace that would be extended to all. She said Jewish people know what it means to be exiled, and the Central Reform Congregation sees part of its mission to be a home for those who are exiled. She talked about the Jewish model of hospitality from Genesis 18, where Abraham and Sarah offered shelter to the strangers in their midst. She reminded us that all are welcome.

In the past two months, Ree and Elsie have celebrated Eucharist weekly with the Therese of Divine Peace Inclusive Community in St. Louis. They gather in a rented room at the First Unitarian Church, coincidentally the same place the Central Reform Congregation gathered in their first years as a congregation. The Therese Community strives to be an inclusive church that radically embodies Christ's gospel message to love God and one another. The community attracts many people who haven't participated in Catholic worship or even thought of themselves as Catholic for years. They are coming with renewed faith to a church focused on justice. Ree and Elsie invite people to live out their faith and give witness to what it means to be an inclusive community of believers.

Each week, Elsie and Ree make sure that everyone knows that all are welcome in this place. The newly formed church community demonstrates the power of visioning, community participation, and standing up for our deeply held beliefs.



Alta Jacko and Marjorie Reiley Maguire socialize after the ceremony.

Megan Heeney is the staff member of the St. Louis Catholic Action Network for Social Justice and a WOC supporter.

**Victoria Rue, *Acting Religious: Theatre as Pedagogy in Religious Studies*.
Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005. 163 pp. \$28.00**

Reviewed by Olivia Doko



In a clear, straightforward, and creative manner, Victoria Rue invites readers, through a series of practical exercises and examples, to interact with and explore text as both “a call to experience meaning and a theatre method to embody it.”

Rue successfully lays a foundation for the importance of using drama and theater to open individuals to a deeper understanding and lived wisdom of their ideas and beliefs. In the process, she applies a strong

feminist approach to recognizing the body as the site of the Holy, to bringing one’s life experiences to the table of the many dimensions of theater, and to holding in unity and relationship the diversity of wholeness and brokenness in each person’s journey as revealed in the personalities of the characters she portrays.

The end result, or perhaps it might better be said, the beginning result of engaging oneself in the exercises and practices outlined in the text, is an enriching, innovative, and challenging journey into one’s faith and spirituality.

Acting Religious is a must-read for religious educators, spiritual retreat facilitators, and workshop presenters who are seeking effective and creative ways to engage others in spiritually transforming ways.

Victoria Rue is an ordained priest through the Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP) program and she currently serves on the WOC Board of Directors. She also teaches religious studies and women’s studies at San Jose State University, having received her Ph.D. from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., and an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She can be reached at www.victoriarue.com.

Olivia Doko is an RCWP priest and recently served on the WOC Board of Directors. She writes for us from San Luis Obispo, Calif.

On Our Bookshelf

The following books have arrived, and we thought you would like to see what is coming—many of these books will be reviewed in upcoming issues. Stay tuned!

Laurie M. Cassidy and Alex Mikulich, eds. *Interrupting White Privilege: Catholic Theologians Break the Silence*. New York: Orbis Books, 2007. 194 pp.

Choi Hee An and Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, eds. *Engaging the Bible: Critical Readings from Contemporary Women*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006. 150 pp.

Sharon Delgado. *Shaking the Gates of Hell: Faith-led Resistance to Corporate Globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007. 284 pp.

Julia K. Dinsmore. *My Name is Child of God ... Not “Those People.” A First-Person Look at Poverty*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 2007. 176 pp.

William M. Jennings. *Storms Over Genesis: Biblical Battleground in America’s Wars of Religion*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007. 149 pp.

Robert Blair Kaiser. *Cardinal Mahony. A Novel*. Phoenix, AZ: Humble-bee Press, 2008. 257 pp.

Catherine Keller. *On the Mystery: Discerning God in Process*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008. 208 pp.

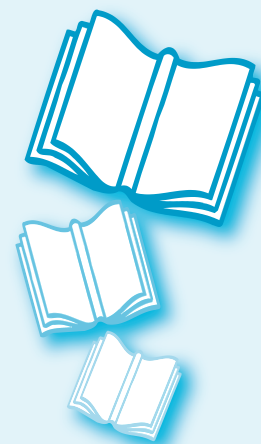
Dorothy Lee Porter. *Dear Christ, A Call for Lay Christian Responsibility in Christ’s Ministry*. Lexington, KY: MDLP and Associates, Inc., 2005. 216 pp + 2 cds.

Barbara E. Reid, O.P. *Taking Up the Cross: New Testament Interpretations Through Latina and Feminist Eyes*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007. 263 pp.

Monika Rice. *Vessel of the Fish*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc. 2007. 266 pp.

Joy A. Schroeder. *Dinah’s Lament: The Biblical Legacy of Sexual Violence in Christian Interpretation*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007. 317 pp.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007. 280 pp.



Upcoming events

March

March 25: 15th Annual World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination, celebrations nationwide. This year's theme is "**Imagining and Creating an Inclusive Church.**" Every year, WOC members and international partners host events on March 25, the feast of the Annunciation, to advocate women's ordination into a renewing priestly ministry. Myra Brown from Spiritus Christi Church, helped develop this year's liturgy, and she shares the following thought, "An inclusive church is a place where no one group will get everything, but everyone will get a share of something familiar and meaningful to them when they come together." **Join us in prayer and share your vision by hosting an event in your community!** Free Toolkit, including prayer service, is available online at www.womensordination.org. For more information or to inform us about your event, contact the WOC office.

April

April 15: Inclusive Mass to advocate women's ordination during Pope's visit to the USA, Washington D.C. For more information, see the front cover or contact the WOC office.

July

July 18-20: Joint conference hosted by WOC, RCWP, CORPUS and FCM, Boston, Mass. For more information and to register for the event, see pages 8 and 9 or visit www.womensordination.org.

July 22: Feast Day of Mary Magdalene, celebrations nationwide. Contact FutureChurch at 216-228-0869 or www.futurechurch.org for more information.

To have your event listed here, contact
nvazquez@womensordination.org or 703-352-1006
or 888-476-9196.

Like what you read? Join WOC today! Women's Ordination Conference — Membership Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____
E-mail _____

Type of Membership

Individual: \$45 Regular (\$25 Student/Limited Income) \$50 International (USD)

I am also enclosing an additional gift of: \$20 \$35 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

I am paying by: Check (payable to WOC) Credit Card US Money Order

Card: Visa MasterCard

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

I am called to ordination. Yes No Maybe I have included names and addresses of friends who might be interested in WOC.
 I am in my 20's or 30's and would like information about Young Feminist Network.

Can we trade your name with other church organizations for use in direct mail campaigns? Yes No

Can we give your name and contact information to WOC members in your area who are trying to do grassroots organizing?* Yes No

** Only requests from WOC members and donors are honored.
In addition, the data will be limited to a reasonable geographic region solely for the purpose of local organizing.*

Please send with check to:

Women's Ordination Conference, P.O. Box 2693, Fairfax, VA 22031

WOC Merchandise

T-Shirts – 100% Sweat Shop Free

Front: “Good Catholic Girls...”
Back: “Stand Up for Women’s Ordination!”
Mini Tees: \$20
(Ts3, Baby Pink: S, M, L, XL or
Baby Blue: S, M, L)

Regular Tees: \$18
(TS4, Black Youth: M, Lavender Youth M, L
Adult Black or Lavender: S, M, L, XL, XXL;
Pink: S, M, L)



Front: **Small WOC Logo**
Back: **Priestly People Come in Both Sexes**
Regular Tee: \$18 (Ts5, Purple: S, M, L, XL,
XXL; Black: XL, XXL)



Women’s Work - Inspiring scene of 12
historical women celebrating the Last
Supper, short sleeve (Item Ts7, White, L, XL
\$18), long sleeve (Item Ts10, White, XXL, \$5)

To view WOC’s merchandise online, visit www.womensordination.org under Merchandise

To place your order, call 703 352-1006, email woc@womensordination.org or visit our
website to print an order form. Standard shipping and handling costs (\$3 for most orders) are not
included in the price of the merchandise. Please allow up to three weeks for delivery.

Women’s Ordination Conference

P. O. Box 2693
Fairfax, VA 22031-0693
USA

Baseball Hats

Great Quality, 100% Sweat Shop Free

One size fits all purple hat with WOC logo
embroidered on front (H1 \$15)



Purple Stoles

Made by women in Nicaragua

The purple stole was adopted as the international symbol for women’s ordination in 2001. The women who made these stoles are a part of a sewing cooperative in Nicaragua called Taller de Corte y Confección Mujeres (Women’s Workshop of Cutting and Sewing). WOC thanks Mary’s Pence for connecting us with these women. (Item St1, \$15 ea.)

Rainbow Purple Stoles

Made in Mexico, these handwoven stoles are brilliant purple with touches of all colors of the rainbow. (Item St2 \$30 ea.)

Bumper Stickers - Guaranteed to

turn heads (\$1 ea., 6/\$5, 20/\$15)

- Ordain Women or Stop Baptizing Them (Item Bs1) blue
- Ordain Women or Stop Dressing Like Them (Item Bs3) red
- Priestly People Come in Both Sexes (Item Bs4) purple

Books

- Angela Bonavoglia, *Good Catholic Girls: How Women are Leading the Fight to Change the Church*, 2005, hardcover, signed by the author. (Item Bk1, \$12.50)
- Miriam Therese Winter, *Out of the Depths: The Story of Ludmila Javorova, Ordained Roman Catholic Priest*, 2001 (Item Bk3, \$5)
- William Cleary, *Prayers to She Who Is*, 1997 (Item Bk4, \$5)
- WOC, *Liberating Liturgies*, 1989 (Item Bk2, \$5)

Buttons - Great for stimulating conversation

- Ordain Women (Item Bt1) \$2
- Equal Rites - Ordain Women (Item Bt2) \$2
- Priestly People Come in Both Sexes (Item Bt3) \$2
- Poped Out (Item Bt5) \$1



Cards

- Women’s Work Note cards: A 10-pack of cards depicting 12 historical women at Da Vinci’s famous “Last Supper” painting. (Item Cr1, \$12/pack)
- Equal Justice Reserve Note: WOC’s “funny money” calls for the equality of women and men as “common currency” in the life of the Church. (Item Cr3, \$5/10 bills)

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