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# New Women New Church

Spring 2007

A Voice for Women in the Catholic Church

## Largest World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination Ever

By Aisha S. Taylor

On March 25, the 14<sup>th</sup> annual World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination, an unprecedented number of Latin American Catholics called for women to be priests and for renewal of the Roman Catholic Church. Every year on March 25, the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Catholics take action around the world to bring attention to the fact that Catholic women are banned from being priests. This year, there were a total of 22 events in the USA, including Puerto Rico, and 28 international events in Peru, Chile, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, Spain, Mexico, South Africa, Ireland, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada.

The dramatic increase in participation of so many Latin American countries, in addition to the events in South Africa, North America and Europe, is a testament to the fact that Catholics around the world support women's call to spiritual leadership and ordination. The call for women to be priests is a call for our church to follow Jesus' example. Jesus told all his followers they would "receive the power" of the Holy Spirit and "be (his) witnesses to the ends of the earth," as stated in Acts 1:8.

"Mother Mary has a profound meaning in the hearts of Hispanic Catholics. As a compassionate mediator, Our Lady of the Americas represents the female image of God," stated Nidza Vázquez, program director of WOC.

In addition, two weeks before the World Day of Prayer, WOC sent a letter with the signatures of twenty-four Catholic organizations to Pope Benedict XVI calling for women to be priests and for renewal of the Roman Catholic Church. Organizations from Japan, France,



On March 25th, 60 members of We Are Church, Germany, celebrated the World Day for Prayer for Women's Ordination by wearing purple stoles and participating in a Eucharistic liturgy led by women in front of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Dresden.

Germany, the USA and more, signed onto the letter.

This type of collaboration among Catholic organizations to publicly call for women's ordination is a benchmark in efforts to improve the church. It demonstrated that Catholics around the world support women's leadership in all aspects of the church, including ordained ministries.

In the letter, Pope Benedict XVI was invited to lead the way in presenting a fair and equitable model of how women should be treated in our world by taking the necessary steps to open all doors to women within the Roman Catholic Church, including admission to all ordained ministries. Here is an excerpt of the letter:

We also ask that you work to renew church structures in order to involve all members in governance. By acting justly within our own ranks, we, the body of Christ, can affect society.

### Celebrating Catholic Feminist Ministries: A Women-Church Forum



August 17-19, 2007  
Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago

### Creating Justice with Joy in our Church and Society:



A Young Feminist Network Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion Training Retreat

August 16-17, 2007  
Cenacle Retreat House in Chicago

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## From the Executive Director

### Dear WOC Members,



As spring brightens our street corners, I hope this issue of *NewWomen, NewChurch* brightens your spirits.

We are proud of the incredible growth in participation of Latin American countries for the World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination, which was largely due to Nidza Vázquez's efforts to build bridges between the English- and Spanish-speaking movements for women's ordination and church renewal. Thank you, Nidza!

On the next page, you will see WOC's financial report for fiscal year 2006. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our members and donors who make our work possible. We thank many of you for your indispensable support on page 6.

Myra Brown defines racism and provides us with valuable information to work for racial justice in ourselves, our faith communities, and our church. WOC continues doing our own work this spring with the second full-day anti-racism, diversity and inclusion training in May with the entire board and staff. As a

member of the Call to Action anti-racism team, I also want to take this opportunity to announce the theme of the 2007 national CTA conference, "From Racism to Reconciliation: Church Beyond Power and Privilege."

Marian Ronan writes about the worldwide water crisis and how it relates to the women's ordination movement on page 7, and Sr. Kate Kuenstler raises questions about the RCWP ordinations in her article on page 10.

Some of the articles in this issue may raise questions for you, or you may disagree with the perspectives shared by our authors. NWNC offers this forum for expression because we know that WOC members are not all on the same page on every issue, and we welcome a diversity of opinions and voices. If an article raises your eyebrows and elicits a response, please send it to me at [ataylor@womensordination.org](mailto:ataylor@womensordination.org) or mail it to the WOC office.

With the approach of the annual election of the WOC Board of Directors, all dues-paying members of WOC will receive a ballot in May. Please take the time to read about the candidates—your vote brings your voice and perspective to our table. Exercise your rights as a member and vote.

I apologize for the late delivery of the winter edition of *NewWomen, NewChurch*. There was a mistake at the mail house, and we are working to ensure this does not happen again. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

I hope you enjoy the beauties of spring and the spiritual springs of perspectives in this issue of NWNC.

Your Sister in Christ,  
Aisha S. Taylor

*NewWomen, NewChurch* is published quarterly by the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC). WOC works for the ordination of women as deacons, priests and bishops into a renewing priestly ministry in the Roman Catholic Church.

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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.

A subscription to *NewWomen, NewChurch* is included in the WOC membership fee of \$45. WOC is incorporated under 501(c)(3) as a nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible accordingly.

WOC archives, including microfilms of *NewWomen, NewChurch*, are held at Marquette University. For more information, contact Philip Runkel at the Department of Special Collections & University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI 53201-3141, 414.288.5903, or [phil.runkel@marquette.edu](mailto:phil.runkel@marquette.edu).

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### Beatitudes for Women who are Excluded from Ordination

By CeCe Miller

Blessed are you who take time to listen to the laments of women who are excluded from ordination, for you help us to continue in our struggle to be included.

Blessed are you who stand with us in public places, for in your friendship we are empowered.

Blessed are you who never bid us to "give up" and more blessed, you who do not snatch away our dreams for equality in the church.

Blessed are you who will stand beside us as we enter new ventures, when we are invited to share the space "inside," instead of ignored, to stand "outside" the assembly.

Blessed are you who ask for our help and acknowledge our giftedness, for our greatness is in our creativity and our connection with Mother Earth.

Blessed are you who honor us as we are also the Body of Christ, called to preside, to preach, to serve and to sacramentalize this life.

Blessed are you when, by all things, you assure us that what we do makes a difference and however long we struggle, the struggle is worth the time.

Rejoice and be glad for your understanding and love have been a gift to us as we enjoy the life that comes through believing and valuing who we are!

## “Quotable Quotes”

Recognizing the need for justice leads to “a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women.”

~ Pope Benedict XVI in *Sacramentum Caritatis, the Sacrament of Charity*, released on March 13, 2007, as the final result of the 2005 Synod of Bishops

In the first Christian communities, “the female presence was anything but secondary. [St. Paul] starts from the fundamental principle according to which among the baptized ‘there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female.’”

~ Benedict XVI, in his catechesis with the theme “the role of women in the history of the Church,” given at the Paul VI Hall in Vatican City on February 14, 2007, in the presence of 20,000 people.

“Clearly, if we can believe in the virgin birth and that the body and blood of Christ are in the eucharist, then we can certainly believe that a woman can be a priest. The church is full of possibilities.”

~ Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the eldest of the Kennedy grandchildren, daughter of Robert Kennedy, as quoted by Lisa Miller in the March 12, 2007 issue of *Newsweek*.

“What better way to speak out against stoning in Nigeria, or dowry fires in India, than to raise women to ordained dignity in the Catholic Church? How better to counter genital mutilation in sub-Saharan Africa, or female infanticide in China, than to state broadly and loudly that women are made in the image and likeness of Christ?”

~ Phyllis Zagano, as quoted in her article “It’s time for the Catholic Church to ordain women as deacons” printed in the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* on April 4, 2007.

## Bishop Gumbleton Forbidden to Speak without Permission

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton was recently removed as pastor of St. Leo Parish in Detroit, where he had served since 1986. In his last Mass at the parish, he suggested that the removal was the result of the “openness with which I spoke out last January on behalf of victims of sex abuse.”

The papal nuncio to the United States has forbidden Bishop Gumbleton from speaking in other dioceses without the local bishop’s permission, according to the Tucson Citizen. The restriction came to light after Gumbleton cancelled two talks in the Dioceses of Tucson and Phoenix.

~ April 2007 *US Catholic Magazine*

## Make a New Tax Law Work for You and WOC!

We would like to inform you of some changes Congress recently made to IRA withdrawals. These changes are designed to make it more beneficial for those who are charitably inclined to make donations from their IRAs. If you are at least 70.5 years of age, you are able to make tax free distributions from your IRA for charitable purposes. You can even use part of your minimum distribution for this purpose. How-

ever, the transfer must be directly from your IRA to the charity. You are allowed to make contributions up to \$100,000 from your IRA to charity without having to include it in your personal income. Currently this is only good for 2007. We hope you consider investing in WOC if you plan to take advantage of this law!

## Women’s Justice Coalition: Report Card Project Update

Women’s Justice Coalition (WJC) leaders have analyzed the results of 23 diocesan surveys on the status of women in the US. As a result of these surveys conducted by more than 100 volunteers using the Internet as a base for coordination, WJC will issue a national report card and provide local report cards and media kits for volunteers to publicize in their community. The Report Card Project casts the first-ever spotlight

on how women are faring as employees, church members, and decision-makers in the everyday operations of churches and diocesan offices. The final report will be released in May.

Individual participant’s names will not be publicized unless explicit permission has been provided. For additional information contact Rea Howarth at reawrite@gmail.com

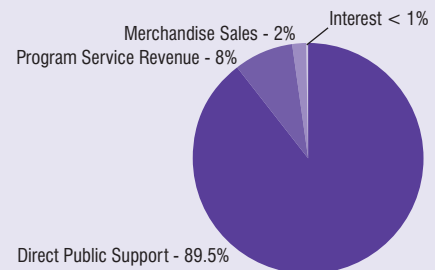
## Women’s Ordination Conference Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2006  
June 30, 2005 – June 30, 2006

### Revenue

Direct Public Support	\$131,331
Program Service Revenue	\$ 12,240
Merchandise Sales	\$ 3,174
Interest	\$ 169

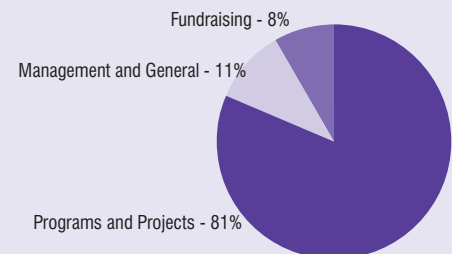
**TOTAL \$148,075**



### Expense

Programs & Projects	\$119,637
Membership Services and Outreach	\$ 23,927
NewWomen, NewChurch	\$ 17,945
Media Outreach	\$ 15,553
Local Organizing & Coalition Work	\$ 14,356
World Day of Prayer for Women’s Ordination	\$ 11,964
Three Ministries	\$ 11,964
Young Feminist Network	\$ 11,964
Bishop Murphy Scholarship	\$ 5,982
Women’s Ordination Worldwide	\$ 5,982

Management and General	\$ 15,785
Fundraising	\$ 12,218

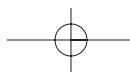


**TOTAL \$147,640**

**Net Income in Fiscal Year 2006 \$ 435**

Fund Balance at beginning of year \$ 18,740

**Net Assets at end of Fiscal Year \$ 19,153**



## Feature

# Racial Justice in Ministry

By Myra Brown



## Racism

Racism is race prejudice plus the use of power in systems and institutions. For those anticipating and working toward ordination, as well as those currently in pastoral leadership, it is imperative to create dialogue about racism in the church and in the world. Racism is a moral sin that eats at the fiber of our souls, and when allowed to continue, it mis-shapes us from what we were created to be. As members of the body of Christ called to be faithful to Christ's teachings, it is our social and moral responsibility to work toward dismantling it. Racism symbolizes a misunderstanding of the nature and reality of God.

## The challenge

Beginning the conversation can be challenging if you are in a predominately white parish or intentional community. The first step is to accept the reality that racism impacts the lives of both white people and people of color. Whiteness has been so normalized that it has blended into the background of society and many white people don't feel the need to talk about what it means to be white in the United States or abroad. People of color have to talk about what it means to be a person of color all the time with their families and friends in an attempt to figure out how to maneuver in a rigged system of privilege and preference.

Having open, transparent, and honest dialogue about race in the church and society inspires and encourages everyone to get in on the conversation and learn from those conversations. When we are enlightened, we are better prepared to actively work for racial justice and we are better able to be the way God created us to be. We are also more ready to be leaders in ministry. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere."

## What is it really about?

Racism is billed to be about the gripes of people of color. It's much more than that. The oppression of people of color is only one

dimension of the purpose of racism. We must be careful not to reduce it to just a matter of skin color or ethnicity. It really has to do with power and privilege.

In the church and in the world if you are white, you are given the ability to universalize "your" experience and "your" perspective on the world in the dominant discourse and that perspective is often unquestioned. This manifestation of white supremacy and privilege has played out in our church for centuries.

## Manifestations of racism

You may ask how that perspective plays out in the church. One of the first ways is how our worship is filled with white icons of spirituality, including prayers from the white cultural experience and perspective. The angels on the walls and the ceilings are predominantly white. Most of the office, staff positions of power, and significant committees are typically white. The priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and the Pope are disproportionately white. The choral music most often reflects

*Racism symbolizes a misunderstanding of the nature and reality of God.*

white culture—saturating the whole religious experience with whiteness. Once during a black history month mass celebration at my church, I displayed a large portrait of a black Jesus carrying the cross. Parishioners loved the artistry of it but, one person came up to me and said, "This is beautiful, but we all know that Jesus wasn't black." Do we all know that or have we normalized the whiteness of Jesus to the extent that our parishioners are poorly prepared to embrace any other version of him in the worship experience?

Another way it's manifested is in the way the church responds to its parishioners and priests of color. In many dioceses, people of color carry histories of oppression and are left with little support for the issues they are facing amid a sea of white, male celibate priests. Ask yourself, "If the Roman Catholic church decided today to embrace women priests, how would the dynamic of racism in the church change?" Who would we consult to change that paradigm? How would we make the systemic change so priests and parishioners of color would feel just as at home as those who were white within every aspect of the church? What would we do to make sure the issues are relevant to where they live too? What would

be the make up of the group? Who would be responsible for defining worship expectations and rules for change?

## What is the cost?

These are important questions to ponder as it relates to the future of our church—questions that have been inadequately addressed for the purposes of bringing about racial justice. If we do not answer these questions thoroughly, we will forfeit the opportunity to develop authentic relationships with people of color and foster the level of trust needed to heal our church and make more wholesome communities.

## Don't let it die in the water

Leaders will be the first to be challenged in this work. Good leaders need to develop their own inner peace around these issues and they will need to be open to listening to some hard truths without being defensive or judgemental. But those steps will be vital for any progress in undoing racism. This is the work of transformation—and while it can be painful, it is ultimately beneficial. Anti-racism work requires courage and a willingness to be honest and vulnerable. It is hard work, but it is also sacred work.

## What does God require of us?

Micah 6:8 says, "To act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." Incorporated in this passage is the work of dismantling institutional and systemic racism. People in our ancestry created racism, but we, the people of God, can and must deconstruct and dismantle it. We cannot undo the past, but we can do something about the future.

Together we can be the change we want to see in the world. As we embrace the problems and realities caused by racism in our systems, we can chart new ways of being in relationship with all peoples. We have what we need now to break free from the cycle of oppression. The church should lead the way. So let's get to work; time is ticking!

*Myra Brown is the Hospitality Minister of Spiritus Christi Church, an inclusive Catholic church in Rochester, N.Y. Myra is also a nurse of 21 years and a member of CTA's National Anti-Racism team. Her commitment to racial justice is reflected in her work within the church as well as the greater Rochester community where she lives. This selection is an excerpt of a longer article, which is printed in full with references at [www.womensordination.org](http://www.womensordination.org) under "Articles."*



# WOC's Soul Work: Creating the Inclusive WOC\*

*An excerpt of the plan to incorporate anti-racism, diversity and inclusion in WOC*

*Written and presented by Aisha S. Taylor*

*Approved by WOC's Board of Directors February 2006 unless otherwise noted*

## VISION

Rooted in the gospel values of bringing about justice, Women's Ordination Conference members affirm that our identity as an anti-racist, diverse and inclusive movement for systemic reform and justice is fundamental and core to our mission to bring about women's ordination into a renewed priestly ministry in the Catholic Church.

## STRATEGY

In order to transform Women's Ordination Conference into an authentic anti-racist, diverse and inclusive movement for reform and justice, WOC's Board of Directors and Staff will participate in anti-racism training. WOC will also gather a team of committed individuals to lead WOC toward development and implementation of vision, strategies, systems and tasks to dismantle institutional racism within WOC's structure and within our church community.

The following sets forth a plan of action to fulfill the previously stated vision and strategy, which fulfill our mission of bringing about women's ordination to a renewing priestly ministry.

### WOC's Institutional Commitment

The Board of Directors shall become the primary owner and defender of the anti-racist, diverse and inclusive vision and strategy.

- **Board to modify and approve** Vision and Strategy, above, to provide clear direction for WOC (completed November 2005)
- **Board and staff to participate in two one-day trainings** on anti-racism, diversity and inclusion during Spring 2006 and 2007 Board meetings
  - Agree on definitions of terms for anti-racism work, such as racism, white supremacy, white privilege, etc, and a common analysis of racism
  - Develop awareness of racism and white privilege within ourselves, WOC, and society
  - Develop institutional commitment to anti-racism work
- **Board to initiate anti-racism team** composed of Catholics committed to anti-racism work in 2007 contingent upon funding
  - Recommended: team of 6-7 to focus on anti-racism, and two or three Board members on team

- Board and staff activate and utilize expertise of National Advisory Board

In order to support the change process, we will take a phased approach. This will provide us with a clear strategy and allow us to monitor our progress. The phases below enable the Board and Staff to gather a team of committed individuals while simultaneously developing our understanding of what it means to be an anti-racist, diverse and inclusive institution.

## PLAN of ACTION

### Phase 1: What we want to do – Planning and Design

- Staff to request input from Advisory Board and Board of Directors about Vision and Strategy, then gain Board approval for both
- Staff and Board to participate in two one-day anti-racism trainings
- Staff to recruit and select anti-racism team
- Staff and Board committed to seek out and secure funding for team formation process
- Board to release public statement commissioning work of team
- Board and staff to publicly commission team at major WOC event

### Phase 2: How we do it – Analysis and Strategy Development

- Board develops understanding of racism on personal, group and cultural levels
- Team agrees on definitions of terms that relate to anti-racism work
- Team to review and modify Board Vision
- Team to begin to create analysis of racism within WOC
- Team to develop Strategic Plan to implement Vision

### Phase 3: Include others – Educate WOC Community for Buy-In

- Educate wider WOC community on Vision and Strategic Plan to get buy-in from stakeholders within WOC
- Align the Vision and Strategy by creating systems that will carry out Strategy, which is based on the vision



WOC Board of Directors, February 2007 in San Francisco, Calif.

### Phase 4: Try it Out – Pilot, Evaluate and Revise Strategy

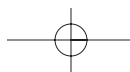
- Pilot the Strategy to test the assumptions behind its formation
- Listen to feedback from participants and evaluate the Strategy
- Adjust and improve the Strategy and systems according to feedback from WOC members who participated in the pilot

### Phase 5: Go for it! – Implement Strategy and Continue Renewal

- Implement revised Strategy with revised systems
- Evaluate results
- In the spirit of continuous improvement and renewal, this will be a cyclical process. Use results of the evaluation to take Vision to the next level by returning to Phase 1 to re-evaluate and revise Vision, perhaps taking a deeper commitment to anti-racism, or changing focus to include class, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, etc.

*To view the entire plan, visit [www.womensordination.org](http://www.womensordination.org) under "Programs" then "Diversity and Inclusion."*

*\*Inspired by Carmen Lane's article "Creating the Inclusive WOC" published in *NewWomen, NewChurch*, Spring 2002*



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WOC is extremely thankful for the generous contributions of our benefactors,  
**MR. HARRY R. HALLORAN, JR. and MS. MARY CATHERINE BUNTING**

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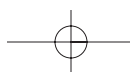
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Laurie Cummings	Lauren Ivory	Connie Molbeck	James Rue	Robert Woodrick
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Charles Davis	James Jepson			



# Women's Ordination and the World Water Crisis

By Marian Ronan

I have been a Catholic women's ordination activist for many years. I am an active member of the Southeast Pennsylvania Women's Ordination Conference (SEPA-WOC); I served on the WOC Board of Directors from 1998 to 2002, and as president of that Board from 2000-2002. There are now 1.12 billion Catholics in the world, and more than half of them are women. Their exclusion from sacramental leadership and the highest levels of church governance is immoral.

In recent years, however, I have been forced to nuance my position on women's ordination. One of the speakers at WOC's national conference in 2000, African American religious studies scholar Sheila Briggs, got my attention by highlighting the problem of the elitism inherent in the ordination of women and men: it requires a level of education that is beyond the reach of most of the world's Catholics. "Why do the poor never get to celebrate the Eucharist?" Briggs asked.

The plot thickened when a few years later I learned about the world water crisis. Nearly 1.5 billion of the world's people lack access to clean water and double that number lack sanitation. In addition, by 2025, according to UN estimates, the world will house an additional 2.6 billion people, a 56% increase over the current population. Yet people, especially here in the West, use increasing amounts of water in wasteful industrial agriculture, in manufacturing massive amounts of consumer goods, and for personal consumption. Water, as we know very well, is not optional. The planet is facing a crisis of catastrophic proportions.

Not surprisingly, this crisis in the world's supply of clean water falls disproportionately on

women, especially women in the Global South. Women spend hours every day collecting water from communal taps or rivers and streams, most of them polluted. Exposure to contaminated water causes women to miscarry or die, and causes their children to contract water-borne diseases; 6,000 children a day die of malaria, diphtheria, diarrhea, and other water-related maladies.

*Learning about the world water crisis has led me to revise my assessment of the exclusion of Roman Catholic women from ordination.*

Furthermore, even polluted water sources are almost always some distance from these women's homes; in the Global South, women spend an estimated 40 billion hours a year collectively hauling water. Hauling water is estimated to be the single biggest obstacle to women and girls in the Global South attending school or, if they are in school, finding the time to study. In addition, the water these women and girls carry on their heads and hips gives them headaches, exhaustion, and chest, neck and waist pain. Try carrying a bucket or two of water around the block one of these days. It's neither easy nor fun.

Learning about the world water crisis has led me to revise my assessment of the exclusion of Roman Catholic women from ordination. I still believe that this exclusion is wrong. I continue work to end it. But I am forced to admit that the majority of Catholic women in the world are excluded from ordination long before the



Pope and the bishops get a shot at them. They are excluded from ordination and very much else because they are spending their lives hauling polluted water instead of learning theology, or even learning to read and write.

I look forward to the day that the Roman Catholic priesthood is open to women and men on the basis of their gifts, not their gender. But I am beginning to think that white, seminary-educated Catholic women in Europe and North America—women like me—ought to promise to refuse ordination until it is also available to our Catholic sisters around the world whose lives are so brutally diminished for lack of clean water.

*Marian Ronan is Associate Professor of Contemporary Theology and Religion at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, Calif.*

*For more information on the world water crisis, see Marian Ronan, "The World Water Crisis: A Position Paper." [http://www.absw.edu/docs/ABSW\\_RonanWorldWaterCrisis2005.pdf](http://www.absw.edu/docs/ABSW_RonanWorldWaterCrisis2005.pdf)*

WOC proudly signed on to the following Declaration, a project of the Faith Trust Institute. For more information about their work, visit [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)



## National Declaration by Religious and Spiritual Leaders to Address Violence against Women

We proclaim with one voice as national spiritual and religious leaders that violence against women exists in all communities, including our own, and is morally, spiritually and universally intolerable.

We acknowledge that our sacred texts, traditions and values have too often been misused to perpetuate and condone abuse.

We commit ourselves to working toward the day when all women will be safe and abuse will be no more.

We draw upon our healing texts and practices to help make our families and societies whole.

Our religious and spiritual traditions compel us to work for justice and the eradication of violence against women.

We call upon people of all religious and spiritual traditions to join us.

On April 5, 2006 forty-two national religious leaders from around the country declared violence against women as intolerable and pledged their commitment to its eradication

(sadly, none of these leaders were Roman Catholic). The National Declaration by Religious Leaders to Address Violence Against Women will be distributed to every battered women's program in the U.S. Women will see this list and determine whether their faith community supports them in seeking safety for themselves and their children. When people of faith join with other community leaders to address domestic violence, we will see ancient roadblocks turn into resources that save lives and bring healing. Please join other people of faith in signing the Declaration.

# 14<sup>th</sup>\* Annual World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination

## Dublin, Ireland: BASIC Balloon Drop

By Diarmuid UaConaill

This year, to publicize World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination, Brothers and Sisters in Christ (BASIC) handed out 100 purple balloons in Dublin's O'Connell Street. It was a fun project, and pretty funny in the way it worked out, too.

The message on each balloons was the following:

**World Day of Prayer for  
Women's Ordination  
25<sup>th</sup> March [www.basic.ie](http://www.basic.ie)**

We also had a printed leaflet explaining the message, and offering a liturgy that supporters could use in their own homes. Also on offer were Sean O'Brien cartoon postcards.

The logistics of the operation proved much more formidable than I had anticipated. The 25<sup>th</sup> was a Sunday, and the supplier is open Monday to Friday. We were advised that rubber balloons filled with helium will stay up for about 12 to 18 hours at most; so on Friday I collected the empty balloons, a cylinder of helium, and 500 meters of yellow ribbon. Cutting 100 lengths of ribbon and tying a non-slip loop in each took two hours on Saturday. I began to worry about the time it would take to inflate the balloons and tie them off.

There were four of us available to carry out the project on Sunday. One of us has an apartment in the city center, and I arrived there at 11:00 a.m. with all the gear. The two of us got a good working rhythm going, and had everything in the air in an hour and a half. The other two joined us, and we set off for O'Connell Street, towing our balloons. Their yellow on purple made a glowing sight in the sunshine.

But nice as the day was, it was breezy. The balloons swirled round and round, and before ever we got to give one away, the ribbons got caught up in a ferocious tangle. It was clear none of us had tried to do this before. A few balloons slid out reasonably easily, others had to be hauled out as far as we could and break the ribbon. Some of them ended up with very short ribbons indeed!

Balloons make people smile. Our clientele—mostly children and young people—was in good humor, and it was all very fun. Nowadays the proportion of Irish people among the Sunday crowd in O'Connell Street is fairly low, so our message went out to many cultures as well as to many parts of the city. Most were happy to take a leaflet along with a balloon. We completed our mission shortly



after two o'clock, and went off satisfied to the BASIC liturgy in the Regency Hotel.

*Diarmuid UaConaill lives in Portmarnock, just outside Dublin. A professed agnostic, he was drawn into BASIC ([www.basic.ie](http://www.basic.ie)) in 1995 through a sense of outraged justice, creating the website and later serving as Secretary. He is married, with four daughters and five grandchildren.*

### World day of prayer...continued from page 1

On the same day that we celebrate Mary saying "yes" to God, we are saying "yes" to women's leadership in the church. Mary's decision was conscious and deliberate, and it made her an active partner in bringing about the reign of God. By praying for women to be priests, we embrace Mary's spiritual power and our church's tradition of strong female leadership.

Because Mary is a spiritual leader and some even call her a priest, on March 25, we will pray for women's ordination to a renewed priestly ministry. We will also pray for the difference women in church governance would make by addressing the issues of social justice that disproportionately affect women, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, HIV/AIDS, genocide and more. The exclusion of women and lay men from the full decision making and sacramental life of the Church is linked to these issues in that — while the impact has extremely different levels of intensity — the root

cause is the same: male domination and sexism.

As this day of prayer approaches, we urge you to open the discussion on women's ordination and the need for change in Church structures. To bring our beloved Church closer to the gospel values that Jesus modeled for us, we need all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in women as well as in men, to be fully integrated into every aspect and ministry of the Church.

The theme of this year's World Day of Prayer in the U.S.A. was "Opening Hearts, Creating Justice." WOC provided community organizers across the country with resources to plan public demonstrations, home prayer services, and presentations about women's ordination and structural change in the church. You can read more about the events in the USA and around the world on these pages.

*Aisha S. Taylor is the executive director of the Women's Ordination Conference.*

\* Ireland celebrated the first World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination in 1994. The first event in the USA was in 1996, so the winter issue of *NewWomen, NewChurch* stated this would be the 12<sup>th</sup> annual day of prayer. To honor Ireland's foresight and creativity, we are joining with them and the rest of the world to acknowledge this year as the 14<sup>th</sup> annual celebration.

## Huancayo, Peru

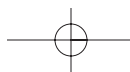
By Mons. Erman Colonia

Our progressive Catholic community, which works for the renewal of the church according to the model presented in the New Testament, celebrated the World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination with the following slogan: "With Jesus and Mary, we say yes to God." The majority of the attendees to our Eucharist were women—nothing unusual in our community. There were men, of course, a little afraid like Peter and some disciples in Jesus' times.

A children's choir enhanced our celebration, while the homily was nuanced by the Annunciation of the Angel to Mary and hope for the announcement of women's ordination in our Church. If Mary was able to say yes to God in a patriarchal culture, why do we doubt the yes from the women of today? Mary made Jesus' presence possible in the midst of His people, "poor among the poor," born in a manger in the suburbs of the big city, far from the temple of Jerusalem. "Female friends, who have the vocation to the priestly ministry, do not wait for this gestation to occur near the big city of the clergy, or close to the 'temple' built by humans, once

*continued on next page*





# Women's Ordination – Opening Hearts, Creating Justice



## St. Louis, Mo.

By Gerry Rauch

Action without a nurturing faith community is a prescription for burnout. That's what was happening here in St. Louis after years of prayer vigils on the steps of our cathedral calling for justice for women in the church. Under the wise leadership of Jenny Truax, Catholic Action Network coordinator, we have set out for the last six months to build a nurturing community of women and men through our monthly women led prayer.

Gathered in a circle in the sanctuary of a local Catholic Church on March 17, we prayed the Stations of the Cross, written by Gloria Ulterino for WOC several years ago. There we were, twelve of us, half middle-aged, half in their twenties, some of us excited and challenged by issues of justice for women, and some of us just weary. We listened as the well-read readings introduced us to Therese of Lisieux, Ludmila Javarova and a contemporary woman called to ordination. We heard about their lives, their calls, and their longings for ordination.

We moved from the circle to the inside walls of the church that held the familiar sculptures depicting Christ's persecution and forced march to Calvary. After each traditional station was read, we would hear examples of this suffering from contemporary women, who have been silenced, beaten down, persecuted.

Stations completed, we returned to the circle and shared our own experiences of struggle and suffering, taking strength, solace, and encouragement from each other. As we gathered for refreshments, the renewed hope and energy were palpable. We mid-lifers were energized by the enthusiasm of the young. They were touched by our stories. Thus the founda-

tion for a renewing community is being laid. One nurturing woman led prayer at a time, and then another, and another.

A week later, on the vigil of the World Day of Prayer, Sts. Clare and Frances, an Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC) community, gathered to celebrate their weekly liturgy. With their priest on vacation, they held a "Table Sharing Liturgy" with two women co-presiders and a woman homilist. This is a community of 75 people who meet weekly and are part of the ECC.

They chose the story of Mary at Bethany to help set up the story of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and the prophetic role that Mary played in that gospel reading. Lisa von Stamwitz gave a powerful reflection on the reading, highlighting the boldness of Mary's presence at Jesus' feet, and her refusal to stay in the role to which women of her time and culture were assigned.

Jessica Rowley, a deacon who will be ordained a priest in September, and Cathy Luebbering, co-presided and led us through the service with a presence that beckoned us to come and join in the mystery. For me, they were another "Moses on the mountain top" experience. Here was a community of Catholic believers, willingly led and inspired by three gifted women leaders. One is soon to be ordained. The others will continue to lead. Like Moses, I may not make it to the Promised Land, but I've seen a glimpse of it. Women leading prayer, women leading liturgy.....it is good.

*Gerry Rauch serves as Vice President of the WOC Board of Directors.*

## Huancayo, Peru...continued



*Mons. Erman Colonia celebrates the Eucharist with his community on the day his wife, Yanet Zeballos, was ordained to the priesthood in August 5, 2005 in the city of Huancayo, Peru.*

more this announcement is happening among the 'disinherited,'" proclaimed Yanet Zeballos, our woman priest.

By welcoming all people of God—like Jesus called us to do—to love each other as we love ourselves—five women shared their call to ordination during the liturgy. "Honey is abundant and laborers are few," added Zeballos. "Let us pray so the owner of the harvest sends laborers."

*Monsignor Erman Colonia, Archbishop of Perú in the Catholic, Apostolic and Latin American Church Our Lady of Guadalupe, is a resident of the city of Chimbote. He served the Roman Catholic Church for seven years ministering to the poor. Since 1989, he has advocated for married priests, optional celibacy and women's ordination.*

## Chicago, Ill.

By Laura Singer

Over thirty people gathered for Mass in a small inclusive Catholic community on the north side of Chicago to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination on Sunday, March 25, 2007. Katy Scott, a former WOC board member, presided and led the group in a prayerful and inspirational celebration. Small groups engaged in energetic discussion of the Gospel of the Annunciation after some opening comments from a local theology graduate student. This graduate student reminded us of the silencing that continues in our church because this student cannot be named due to the risk of losing a scholarship and church job.

After some fellowship and refreshments, the day continued with a public prayer service at the steps of Holy Name Cathedral in downtown Chicago. About fifteen people participated in the service, which WOC member Drina Nikola created around the theme of "Rise Up" and included the story of the resurrection of Lazarus and an excerpt from a speech by Joan Chittister, O.S.B. Our small, but vocal group drew more attention than in years past due to having a new microphone that really projected. Despite a few challenges to our presence, we received many more comments of support from people exiting Mass at the Cathedral.

Chicago area WOC members are considering a follow-up to the Day of Prayer activities with a day of reflection in the late spring and by attending the Women-Church conference that will be held in Chicago this August.

*Laura Singer has been a WOC member for 13 years, and she currently serves on the WOC Board of Directors.*



*Members of Chicago WOC projected their message for women's ordination outside the Holy Name Cathedral with a banner that states: Priestly People Come in Both Sexes.*



## Counterpoint on the Riverboat Rituals of Ordination

By Kate Kuentler, PHJC

The ritual of ordination of women that has taken place on the riverboats has the potential to be counter productive for those eager for women's ordination. Not all of those who have in the past supported ordination of women are ready for the rituals of ordination that took place on the riverboats. Others, who do not question ordination of women, do question if a sacrament was conferred at those times. And others question the advisability of performing this ritual of ordination at a time that could be seen as "premature and out of season."

A child born premature is not able to sustain life without a series of artificial life support measures. Fruit picked out of season is not yet mature enough to be palatable. It needs the heat and light of the sun to bring it to full sweetness.

Those so eager for the ordination of women need to act with prudence. They may have caused a deep divide in the Church because the rituals of ordination on the riverboats may have been premature and performed out of season. Actions, claimed to be based on the leadings of the Spirit of God, need to be carefully weighed. For a change of this magnitude to become a customary reality in the Church universal, many other steps need to first take place.

In 1995, the Canon Law Society of America published a paper "Ordaining Women to the Permanent Diaconate." This study clearly showed that there is nothing in canonical history of the Catholic Church to prevent this role for women in the church today. A Newsweek poll (April 1, 2002) found that 64% of Catholics in the United States supported the ordination of women, despite the definitive ruling from the Church to the contrary (May 22, 1994). During the cold war, the Vatican gave permission for five women to be ordained (December 28, 1970) in the underground Catholic Church of Czechoslovakia so that women in prison would be able

to receive communion. Now that the Iron Curtain has been dismantled, the Roman Catholic Church is in a serious dilemma about the permanent sacramental character of ordination/validity and the place these ordained women have in public ministry.

The Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II (May 22, 1994) intended to end further discussion about ordination of women but has not done so. The clergy stand on the principle that women's ordination is a litmus test for their obedience to the Pope. Only the hierarchy has been silenced and is no longer able to shape the question. What the Apostolic Letter has not been able to do is stop the Christian faithful from discussing this issue. The laity, and some others, continue to ask that ordination of women be considered as valid in the Roman Catholic Church.

*Those so eager for the ordination of women need to act with prudence. They may have caused a deep divide in the Church because the rituals of ordination on the riverboats may have been premature and performed out of season.*

The United States of America is not the center of the universe. The issue of ordination of women is not a primary issue for women whose priorities are survival for themselves and their children. Basic needs of women need to be met first.

Until and unless women are seen and valued as human beings, women as ordained clergy will not be possible in the global Church. Women still suffer in Darfur, they are still dying in "kitchen fires" at the hands of their mothers-in-law in India, and girls in various parts of the world are mutilated, often times by their own women relatives. As well, women in the United States still experience

hidden physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their husbands and male relatives.

Women need to be seen as truly benefiting in the right of baptism when applying the rights of baptism to all the Christian faithful in the Catholic Church. The laws of the Church are changed by organic, gradual change. Canon 27 affirms that, "Custom is the best interpreter of law." The custom needs to be normative in the global Church for a period of 30 years before it has the possibility of becoming a law in the Church.

The recent riverboat rituals of ordination have the potential of placing a wedge within the heart of the Church. These rituals have caused pain for some women who desire to be more involved in the present ministry in the Church, by sharing in the baptismal role as the laity as canon lawyers, chancellors, parish administrators, and other roles named in the Code of Canon Law, 1983. The discussion concerning the rightful role of the laity in the church becomes more difficult when these rituals of ordination cause deeper negative attitudes in some clergy and the conservative laity. Unfortunately this can cause difficulty for women to be in leadership roles at all levels in the Church.

What is also unfortunate is that as a result of these rituals of ordination, those who have grave concern and are against ordination of women are becoming more entrenched in their negative stance. This could cause an even longer period of time to be needed for women's ordination to become acceptable.

The large group of Roman Catholics who are more neutral about the ordination of women may well be pulled into opposing camps and thus the wedge within the Church could become deeper and wider. This would be unfortunate. This would be counter productive to what seems to be the desire of those seeking ordination for women.

*Kate Kuentler, PHJC, JCD is a Canon Lawyer who lives in East St Louis, Ill.*

### "Creating Justice with Joy in our Church and Society"

**A YFN National Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion Training Retreat**

August 16-17, 2007  
Cenacle Retreat House  
in Chicago

Join the Young Feminist Network at the second consecutive national annual retreat, which will be held in conjunction with the Women-Church Convergence conference in Chicago. The training will include workshops on essential leadership skills that will enable participants to successfully advocate the YFN issue agenda and implement the YFN action plan at a local level.

Participants will engage in interactive activities in the following areas:

- Forming Faith Sharing CommUnions
- Diversity and inclusion
- Strategic planning
- Grassroots activism

The entire retreat will have a strong emphasis on providing spiritual nourishment. Don't miss it! Contact Nidza Vázquez for more information at [nvazquez@womensordination.org](mailto:nvazquez@womensordination.org) or call 703-352-1006.

## Ministry of Irritation Proposes a Name Change

By Diana Wear

About five years ago, the board of directors creatively named our "Ministry of Irritation" to foster a new attitude away from angry protest to having fun, and to liken this work to being "sand in an oyster that 'irritates' against the shell to bring about pearls"—pearls being the metaphor for women priests.

While this latter image has been constructive, and the word "irritation" has brought chuckles from people with whom we have used this word, the people who have been working in this ministry feel that the word has come to cause more discomfort for those doing the work and that it is not reflective of the values or principles we want to put forth in this area. That is, if this is a *ministry*, we want to be mindful of the people to whom we are ministering, as well as the ministers doing this work.

We would like to better define the set of actions to be included in this ministry as well as renew this program with a new name that better reflects our values and principles. While any work of social justice necessarily entails confronting outrage, we would like to commit

ourselves to doing that in ways those of us carrying out this ministry feel comfortable. That is, we want to be the change for which we are working.

We also want to consider pedagogy: how are we delivering our message and what is being communicated? Is real learning or ministry taking place? We want to see this program reflect good, healthy, positive teaching methods.

The following is a list of descriptors that we think speak to our vision of this ministry: witness (being where one is not welcome but in a positive way), presence, advocacy, direct action, agents of change, transformative, networking, advertising, teaching, proclaiming, demonstrating (in positive ways), affirming, knowledgeable about the church's true teachings and documents, fostering, personal relationships, preaching the good news (as it relates to women's ordination).

The following is a list of names generated by the committee. They are not meant to be exhaustive; they are simply suggestions meant to stimulate conversation and generate more names. With this brief update, we would like

to illicit WOC member's ideas and thoughts about this ministry. The committee is still working on some basic issues regarding the ministry itself that might, in fact, render none of the current names as possibilities, but we list them to encourage your input:

Easter Morning Ministry  
Ministry of Advocacy  
Ministry of the Advocate  
Ministry of Change  
Ministry of Presence  
Ministry of Prophetic Witness  
Ministry of Resurrection  
Ministry of the Renewing Spirit  
Ministry of Transformation

*Diana Wear has been active with the Ministry of Irritation for the last few years. She also serves on the WOC board of directors and lives in Richmond, Calif.*

### May is Ordination Month!

Organize an event to bring attention to women's ordination and influence the Roman Catholic Church to create a renewing priestly ministry during the month of May—the season of male ordinations.

Let us know about your event by contacting the WOC office at 703-352-1006 or email [Nidza Vázquez at nvazquez@womensordination.org](mailto:Nidza_Vázquez@womensordination.org).



### Young Feminist Network



## Young Catholics Meet with Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza For a Conversation About Re-Imagined Priestly Ministry

By Nancy Olivas and Theresa Yugar

On Tuesday, February 24, the Young Feminist Network of Los Angeles co-sponsored an event with Claremont Graduate University and The Claremont School of Theology. It was a conversation between Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza and young Catholic women. Nearly forty individuals participated, many of whom were high school youth from a Catholic parochial school in East Los Angeles. The themes that were discussed included definitions of church and priesthood. Dr. Schüssler-Fiorenza challenged the young women to re-imagine what it means to be the church and to try on new views of what it means to be a priestly non-ordained person. She presented them with the question, "Since most individuals do not work

directly within the church, how will you bring your faith into your future education and vocation?" The students shared their aspirations and dreams, committed social justice inside and outside of the church.

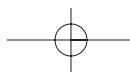
The fact that most of the participants were young adults demonstrates progress in the women's ordination movement. We believe the newer generation exhibits more freedom to observe and question the antiquated practices of the church. Dr. Schüssler-Fiorenza shared her experience growing up as Catholic and female in Germany, which on many levels paralleled the experiences of American women.

The group was also joined by a Lutheran pastor, and a young woman called to ordination

in the Lutheran church. This brought a surprising outside dynamic on how other denominations face a similar issue. A local woman religious was present and shared her knowledge, both as someone who works within the church, and as someone who uses her career as a social worker to further her dedication to service.

Hope and understanding ultimately prevailed at this meeting of great minds. Dr. Schüssler-Fiorenza was very receptive to this bright audience, and the audience was grateful that she reached out to them.

*Nancy Olivas and Theresa Yugar write to us from Los Angeles, Calif. Nancy serves on the national Leadership Team of WOC's Young Feminist Network, and Theresa serves on the WOC Board of Directors.*



## Ministry of Walking With Women Called

# My Call to Ordination

By Chava Redonnet

When I was twelve years old, I left the Catholic church and began attending a small Wesleyan church, which was where I found my faith and first felt the call to ministry that has continued ever since. I went to college intending to be a Protestant minister, but while there re-converted to Catholicism. I let go of plans for ministry because at that time I knew no women in Catholic pastoral ministry and I had no role models. I let go with a deep assurance that the way to answer my call was going to become clear in time.

The way began to open in 1998 when my parish underwent an upheaval over several issues, including women in ministry, which led to the formation of Spiritus Christi Church. Driving past Colgate Rochester Divinity School one day, I felt it pulling me like a magnet. The morning of my first class, I had a vision: a cloak was taken from a box and put around my shoulders. That night in class I first heard of the mantle of the prophets, and figured that was what my vision was about. Taking classes two at a time, it will take seven and a half years for me to get my degree... seven years, passing like a few days, like Jacob waiting for Rachel... seven and a half good years. I have just one more year to go. I'm almost there.

I don't know how I will be ordained, but I know that God doesn't play practical jokes. Besides, ministry is what I'm already doing.

Ordination is a sacrament for us as Catholics, and a sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace. I figure the grace should be there long before the sacrament confirms it, and with the length of time it's taking me to get to priesthood, I better start doing the work I'm called to *now*. So here I am, spring of 2007, balancing my job in a research lab with seminary, doing my ministry at the Catholic Worker, and trying to build community with a little Baptist congregation in El Salvador... life is good.

In my work at the Catholic Worker I'm exploring a new way of priesthood. I'm asking the questions: what does it mean to be a spiritual leader in a community of equals? How might the priesthood of the future be different? What exactly am I called to? Clearly, my call is to Catholic priesthood. Being in a Protestant seminary, I have learned how Catholic I am: the church with seven sacraments, the church of Dorothy Day, and Saints Francis and Clare, and Thomas Merton, and Daniel Berrigan. This is my church. Being in school with Protestants is a great gift; I respect the different flavors of faith. Someday I will have colleagues in many denominations. Already, my classmates are graduating well before me and becoming pastors.

And there's my frustration. My classmates have a clear path: hoops to jump through, tests to take, a way to follow. Not me. Once a couple of years ago on retreat we did a

guided imaging: a lovely imaging in which we were to see ourselves on a grassy hill in the sunshine with trees and grass... and thousands of people, and Jesus, and we were to hear what Jesus said to us, and his desire for us to feed the people... that was the guided imagery. If you have experienced one before, you know they can be very productive. I usually love them, but that night, the image I got was that Jesus told me he had work for me to do, and sent me off into the woods alone, away from the people, told me to follow the path and gave me some bread for the journey. Oh, and to trust him, which is good because it was a very lonely and alienating imaging. And I think a pretty weird one to get when you're in seminary – unless of course the path *is* seminary. But for crying out loud, it's such a long path, and the woods are dark and I can't see the way. I just have that bread and those words, "trust me."

In the meantime, there are people to be fed along the way... a community to be nurtured at the Rochester Catholic Worker... preaching to be done, loving and listening and learning. God is in charge, and the way will open up in time.

*Chava Redonnet is a member of the Ministry of Prophetic Obedience and she is the 2006 recipient of WOC's Bishop Murphy Scholarship for Women in Ministry award.*

## WOC Leadership

# WOC Board to Stir Things Up: Calling All Members to Vote for Diversity

By Diana Wear

Like many Catholic social justice and reform groups in our country, WOC has wrestled with the fact that its leadership and membership is mostly made up of one demographic group—middle-to-older-aged, heterosexual, middle-to-upper class, educated, white women. We recognize that this limits our perspectives and does not adequately represent the voices we need to hear from in order to effect the changes in helping to renew the Roman Catholic priesthood.

Some years ago, Katy Scott, a former WOC board member, wrote an article in *NWNC*, asking if it was time to change the all-women leadership to include men. WOC members, and eventually the board, responded affirmatively. The membership has not yet voted in a man, but our structures have been opened for that change to come about.

We need to do much more for our organization and for the church of the future. We need other people's perspectives as well as their communities represented around our leadership table. The WOC board has had a modicum of success in the last decade of bringing on its board a small number of people who come from groups outside the aforementioned ranks. The time has come to make significant steps to change the make-up of our board.

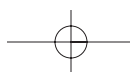
The WOC board is currently taking on the challenge to be educated and trained in anti-racism and we plan to put those lessons into action by incorporating diversity and inclusion into every aspect of our organization. We enlist your help by asking you to consider voting in a broader spectrum of people for our board.

For those of you who are WOC members, this May you will receive a ballot in the mail to

vote for new members for our board. The prospective board members have written about what they would bring to the board in terms of diversity—economic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, or experience working with these issues on other boards.

Jesus sought out people on the margins of society. He touched and was touched by people from various walks and states of life. He invited everyone to the table. We hope you will help us make the leap into these new waters and stretch our borders to include a wider spectrum of voices. Please vote.

*Diana Wear serves as the WOC board president and she lives and breathes the Bay Area—Richmond, Calif.*



**Gloria Ulterino. *Walking With Wisdom's Daughters. Twelve Celebrations and Stories of Women of Passion and Faith.* Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2006. 220 pp. \$19.95 ppbk.**

*Reviewed by Diana Wear*

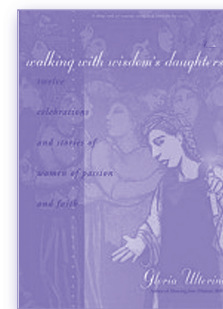
Good liturgy and enchanting storytelling are rarely found in one place but they are here to greet readers and users of Gloria Ulterino's latest book, *Walking with Wisdom's Daughters*. This book is a treasure-trove for anyone looking for fresh ideas for women's ritual groups, parish liturgies, or adult education series. Each chapter includes an introduction, a fully outlined liturgy (set-up, materials, a gathering, the Word, a reflection, suggested music, participatory activities, and a closing), background information, and notes. Ulterino's scholarship is thorough and good, and she reveals a deep faith, knowledge of her material both as subject and liturgist, as well as Catholic experience.

What drew me into this book was Ulterino's fabulous storytelling. I was familiar with most of the women she celebrates, yet found myself delighted again and again by her fresh approaches to telling these stories and offering a variety of ways to gather and remember these women. This is Catholic feminist liturgy at its best without pretense, dogma, or political agenda. She gives us the benefit of her gifts as a liturgist by simply helping us set the scene and offers us the tools for prayer and worship.

Many of the women Ulterino covers are old favorites: the woman with the hemorrhage, Lydia, Eve, Catherine of Siena, the woman caught in adultery, Teresa of Avila, Elizabeth, and the four women who were slain in El Salvador—Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, and Jean Donovan. But some of the women are less familiar: Jochebed, Miriam, and Bithiah, and Brigit of Ireland.

She also includes larger groups: the communion of saints, using Elizabeth Johnson's *Friends of God and Prophets* and women who have been wounded by violence. She tells these stories not simply to educate or narrate, but to bring their stories to life in ways that bring healing, hope, and inspiration. This is some of the best of Catholic heritage writ large.

What is also notable about this book is that it is user-friendly. The book is well laid out and organized for both novice and experienced liturgist. For the parish administrator or adult ed instructor, many of these liturgies will be easy to execute since most of the materials and music can be found on hand in a church. For people who want to put these liturgies on at home, however, the music selections might be a little more difficult to find. That should not



be a hindrance—readers might just be advised to choose their own music. What is nice about Ulterino's selections is simply that she has done the homework by providing complete liturgical experiences, choosing music that matches the Scripture, story, and message. It is only meant to enhance.

This book is not just for women, of course. Every parish can find a story here to have enacted in a number of settings that include both women and men. But the book is special for women—to uplift stories that need to be told and re-told, "re-remembered," and celebrated. Walk with Ulterino and experience the wisdom of these prophetic women in our midst.

*Diana Wear is president of WOC's board of directors and Book Review Editor for NWNC.*

**Cynthia-Preston Pile and Irene Woodward. *Traveling with the Turtle: A Small Group Process in Women's Spirituality and Peacemaking.* Oakland, California: Pace e Bene Press, 2006. 283 pp. \$25**

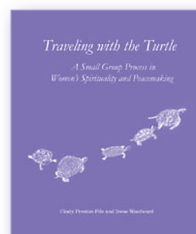
*Reviewed by Kaye Ashe, O.P.*

The third wave of the feminist movement has transformed the way that women understand ourselves and our relationship to the Divine, to others, and to the earth that sustains us. We have been reclaiming ourselves and our past, all the while gaining courage from our foremothers to create a world in which dominance, control, and violence will give way to equality, mutuality, and peace.

The work of freeing ourselves and all from violence and injustice is, however, far from having been accomplished. That's where *Traveling with the Turtle* comes into play. The authors, well-versed in the literature of feminism and nonviolence, invite us to come together in circles to draw sustenance from our spiritual moorings; heal wounds; join in rituals; and hone our peace-making skills. The turtle is a good companion on this journey, the authors explain, because it symbolizes women's wisdom, strength, and power to create new life.

The book provides thirteen sessions. Two introductory sessions explore women's spirituality as a force for nonviolent peacemaking. Subsequent sessions invite women to connect with their personal power and to use it to effect personal and social transformation.

The beauty of this book is that it brings together between two covers so many resources: short, provocative readings; guided meditations; rituals; and various exercises and life practice—all designed to foster integrity, compassion, and wholeness. The authors suggest in detail how facilitators can prepare for each session; they outline materials needed, and suggest the timing for each item on the agenda. So, the book is not only inspiring, it is eminently practical as well. Participants needn't worry that time will be consumed in pointless chatter, and facilitators needn't worry about dreaming up the kind of environment



and activities that make for a smooth and productive small group process.

Further help is provided for facilitators in the form of eleven pages of "Facilitation Guidelines" with hints on how to create a safe and productive environment, and to encourage everyone's participation. While information and resources are provided in detail, it is expected that groups will adapt the process to their own gifts and needs. Finally, the authors provide three pages of resources: books as well as hotlines, coalitions, and websites focusing on domestic violence and violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

I strongly recommend this book to women who are serious about the spiritual quest and who want to counter the violence that plagues our homes, our neighborhoods, and our world by cultivating peace and loving-kindness.

*Kaye Ashe, O.P. resides in Berkeley and is the author of The Feminization of the Church? To order *Traveling with the Turtle*, see [www.turtle.paceebene.org](http://www.turtle.paceebene.org).*

*continued on page 14*

## Book Reviews



### Nicole Sotelo. *Women Healing from Abuse: Meditations for Finding Peace.* New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 98 pages, \$10.95

*Reviewed by Mary E. Hunt*

If only this book did not need to be written. But because it does, because so many women suffer abuse, Nicole Sotelo's work is a welcome addition to the literature. It is a gentle, practical invitation to women from the Christian tradition to use spiritual resources to overcome the devastating affects of violence.

Nicole wisely draws on the work of Judith Herman (*Trauma and Recovery*. NY: Basic Books, 1992) to outline three stages of healing: safety, remembrance and mourning, and re-connection. She lays out a four-week process that readers can use for their healing. For each day she chooses a theme, cites a scriptural text, offers a reflection and prayer, and concludes with some concrete ways to respond. It is all geared to help the survivor deal with the injustice of violence by accessing the deep resources of one religious tradition. I daresay it will help many women.

The reader is immediately drawn in by Nicole's pastoral sensitivity. Her choice of texts is helpful as most are well known citations understood through the lens of feminist biblical

interpretation. The prayers are lovely—"Love for myself is something that nobody can take away from me" (p. 37). I can imagine many women finding solace in this work, touching deep places in themselves that had been obscured by sexual, domestic, psychological, and/or spiritual violence. An evening discussion with Nicole at WATER proved that women across the age spectrum (women in their 20's to their 80's that night!) respond with gratitude to this book.

The Christian content of this book is both a plus and a minus in my view. Of course it is meant to help Christian women find in their tradition resources for healing. Jesus is portrayed as a healer; his example becomes the norm. But what to do about the many Christian sources of violence and abuse? What to do about the language and imagery that declare women's subordinate status, women's exclusion from ministry? This is not even to mention the myriad ways Christian churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church, have abused women spiritually as well as, in some cases, physically. It is hard to rely on that same tradition for healing without some substantive critique. Of course a book of this sort is not meant to do that, and Nicole Sotelo is surely aware of those problems. But that reality lingered in my mind as I read this book. Such is the nature of abuse that we are never far from it.

Few graduate theses turn out to be as useful as this one. The Appendix includes addresses and phone numbers of organizations that can provide further assistance. This reflects the best advice to most religious professionals who come into contact with survivors: refer them to organizations specializing in anti-violence work. While pastoral support is necessary, it is rarely sufficient. Likewise, the bibliography includes some of the "classic" texts in the field (I would add Marie M. Fortune's *Sexual Violence: The Sin Revisited*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005) which will help both survivors and religious professionals.

This is a small, compact book, suitable to slip into a purse or backpack. I suggest that Christian pastoral ministers buy several copies and hand them out to women who share their stories of abuse. I guarantee that those women will share the book with others. Then, strengthened by their healing, the women will join together to prevent abuse from happening any more. Or so I pray.

*Mary E. Hunt is Co-Director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), and is a WOC National Adviser.*

## VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Coming to a mailbox near you...

### The WOC Board of Directors Ballot!

As a privilege of membership, WOC members elect the governing body of the organization, the Board of Directors. Look for your ballot in the mail during the month of May.

If you do not receive a ballot, please contact the WOC office at 703 352-1006 or [woc@womensordination.org](mailto:woc@womensordination.org)

## VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!



## Honor St. Mary of Magdala

**JOIN** our worldwide effort to reclaim her role as the first witness to the Resurrection and to advocate for women's roles in the Church today.

**ORGANIZE** a special celebration of her feast day, **JULY 22ND**, to honor this great woman witness of faith known in the early Church as the "Apostle to the Apostles."



**FOR INFORMATION** on St. Mary of Magdala & how you can organize a special celebration: go to [www.futurechurch.org](http://www.futurechurch.org), call 216-228-0869 (x3) or email [magdala@futurechurch.org](mailto:magdala@futurechurch.org).



## Celebrating Catholic Feminist Ministries: A Women-Church Forum

**August 17-19, 2007**  
**Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago**

On the eve of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Women-Church will gather to creatively celebrate various feminist ministries. As a founding and active member of Women-Church Convergence, WOC is excited to participate, and we hope people of all faith-traditions will participate in this exciting gathering.

We envision the conference as a public forum where many women can share their struggles, insights, creativity, and hope for the future. In panel discussions, working groups, feminist liturgies, and a Eucharistic banquet on Saturday night we will reflect on our experiences, name critical issues, set priorities, discuss, strategize, organize and dance.

We will explore our Feminist Ministries with insights from colleagues including **Mari Castellanos, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Patricia Fresen, Diana Hayes, Mary E. Hunt, Theresa Kane, Bridget Mary Meehan, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Marissa Valeri, Aisha Taylor**, and many more. We need your insight as well!

Working Groups will explore:

- Community Building Ministries
- Gender and Anti-Racist Justice Ministries
- Ministries of Feminist Theology
- Political Ministries
- Spiritualities for Justice Ministries

*We invite your presence and voice to remember the past, to identify the struggles today and to envision a more just future.  
Come experience the power of Divine Wisdom-Spirit in our midst!*

**For more conference information, updates, and registration forms:**

**web:** [www.women-churchconvergence.org](http://www.women-churchconvergence.org)  
**email:** [wccconference2007@yahoo.com](mailto:wccconference2007@yahoo.com)  
**phone:** (415)381-7144

## Upcoming events

### Summer 2007:

Roman Catholic Womenpriests will celebrate four ordinations this summer. Two women will be ordained to the diaconate and two to the priesthood in the northeastern region. In the western region four will be ordained to the diaconate and two to the priesthood.

### August 16-17:

**Young Feminist Network Retreat**, Chicago. For more information, see page 10.

### August 17-19:

**Celebrating Catholic Feminist Ministries: A Women-Church Forum**, Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago. For more information, see announcement in adjacent box.

### November 2-4:

**Call to Action National Conference: From Racism to Reconciliation: Church Beyond Power and Privilege**, Milwaukee, Wisc. The CTA national conference will focus on anti-racism.

## 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 reform 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 shared 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! Baseball Hats

#### NEW!

Front: "Good Catholic Girls..."

Back: "Stand Up for Women's Ordination!"

Mini Tees: \$20

(Ts3, Pink S, M, L, XL; Blue: S, M, L, XL)

Regular Tees: \$18

(Ts4, Black & Lavender: Youth M, L

Adult S, M, L, XL, XXL; Pink: S, M, L)



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 Confeccion Mujeres (Women's Workshop of Cutting and Sewing). In the struggling community of Amatitan, where families live on a dollar a day, the women of the cooperative specialize in making school uniforms, baptismal and communion gowns and folk dancing costumes. WOC thanks Mary's Pence for connecting us to these women.

(Item St1, \$15 ea.)

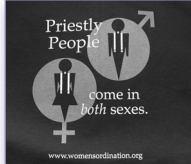
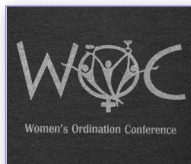
#### NEW!

Front: Small WOC Logo

Back: Priestly People Come in Both Sexes

Regular Tee: \$18 (Ts5 Black or Purple:

all Ts4 sizes available [see above])



**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, XL, XXL, \$5)

### Bumper Stickers - Guaranteed to turn heads!

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

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

### Books

- Angela Bonavoglia. *Good Catholic Girls: How Women are Leading the Fight to Change the Church*, 2005 (Item Bk1, \$15)
- Miriam Therese Winter. *Out of the Depths: The Story of Ludmila Javorova, Ordained Roman Catholic Priest*, 2001 (Item Bk3, \$10)
- *Prayers to She Who Is*, by William Cleary, 1997 (Item Bk4, \$6)
- 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
- Women's Ordination, Yes (Item Bt6) \$1



### Cards

- Women's Work Note cards: A ten pack of cards featuring 12 historical women throughout history presiding at the Eucharistic table responding to Jesus' call to "Do this in memory of me." (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)

To view WOC's merchandise online, visit [www.womensordination.org](http://www.womensordination.org) under "Merchandise"

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

### Women's Ordination Conference

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