

New Women New Church

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A Voice for Women in the Catholic Church

WOC Rises Like the Phoenix after Fire Destroys Office

By Aisha S. Taylor



The old office was destroyed by fire on February 15, 2008.



Erin Hanna and Aisha Taylor enjoy the comforts of the new office in Washington, DC.

On February 15th a three-alarm fire broke out in the WOC office building in Fairfax, Va., and the office was completely destroyed. Thankfully, no one was hurt and we were covered by insurance.

The place that WOC called home for 20 years was nearly unrecognizable. The stench of smoke hovered in the air, and everything was covered with soot; nothing was left untouched by the fire. Thick wires hung from the ceiling and charred walls collapsed into the hallway. Our computers melted and our library of nearly 1,000 books burned completely.

Within days of informing our community about the fire, we received an outpouring of prayers, calls, letters, donations, and office supplies. A coalition partner offered us free office space for three months until we got back on our feet. It was because of this outpouring of love that, despite the chaos, we were able to organize for the arrival of Pope Benedict XVI and launch our incredibly successful national campaign, *Giving the Gift of Women's Leadership*, which you can read about on pages 4 and 5.

Five months have passed since the tragedy, but we are happy to report, with your help, we are rising from the ashes! Our insurance claim has been finalized and we have moved into our new office in Washington, DC.

While we have many blessings to count, we are still catching up. Because we had leased space in our former office for such a long time, the rent in our new office is significantly higher. We recovered the full limits of our insurance coverage, but there was nearly \$20,000 worth of merchandise, books, banners, resources and more that was not covered.

We are reaching out to our members and supporters to help us recoup our losses. Thank you for your generous support, and if you can help us cover our increased rent and the insurance shortfall, we would be incredibly grateful. There are three ways you can help:

1. **Donate to WOC:** Call our new office number (202) 675-1006 or visit www.womensordination.org. Recovery is a long process, so please consider

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WOC at World Synod of Bishops

Join us in Rome

October 15-19, 2008

- Educational Forums
 - Tours
 - Social Events
 - Demonstrations
 - Liturgies
- And much more!**

For more information, see page 7.

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Dear WOC Members,



What a whirlwind these past few months have been—firestorms for both WOC and the Church.

We begin this issue with an account of the fire that destroyed our office on February 15, 2008. The pictures show some of what we have been through. And yet we have also emerged—with tremendous support from WOC members, coalition groups, and generous donors.

While the WOC office went up in flames and we were without a permanent office for months, some church officials did not stop firing at our movement. The March 12th excommunications of Rose Marie Hudson and Elsie McGrath were only the beginning and they were painful and needless enough. On May 30th, the Vatican chose to excommunicate *all* the Roman Catholic ordained women and the bishops who had ordained them. As if piling up excommunications was not enough, just hours before Archbishop Raymond Burke was appointed head of the Vatican's highest court, he penalized Louise Lears, a Sister of Charity, for her support of women's equality in the Church. This resulted in her immediate removal from her positions as member of the pastoral team at St. Cronan's Catholic Church and as the Coordinator of Religious Education. On top of all that, on June 25, we learned that a male priest from Madison, Wisconsin had banned female altar servers.

These events have not gone by unnoticed! We have responded with action and continued to move our proactive agenda forward. Beginning with the successful "Giving the Gift of Women's Leadership" campaign during Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Washington, DC, which you can read about on pages 4 and 5, we raised awareness about women's ordination through excellent media coverage and well-attended grassroots activities. After the Vatican decree of excommunication, we released a statement, which you can read on page 3. Directly following the announcement of penalties imposed on Sister Louise, we created an online petition, and within a week, we broke our goal of obtaining 1,000 signatures. That same

week, we sent out an action alert urging our members to call the parish in the Madison diocese where female altar servers had been banned. Within days, dozens of WOC members called and voiced their opposition.

Despite the clamoring of a few church men, WOC continues to move forward. We honor one of our foremothers, Arlene Swidler, on page 5, and recount a touching memorial for Don Cordero. As well, we helped plan the Joint Conference in Boston in July, which you can read more about on page 8 and 9. We are also planning an event for the World Synod of Bishops that will take place in Rome this October; find out more on page 7.

This issue also features Frederick J. Parrella's review of *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West* by Gary Macy. This is an important book for the women's ordination movement. Macy presents the case that women were ordained according to practices and definitions of ordination at earlier times—until the reforms of the 11th and 12th centuries, but were subsequently excluded from ordination from the 13th century onward. He also describes how, up until the 12th century, ordination meant something fundamentally different than it does today—as Parrella puts it, "ordination served a function in and for the community; it did not confer privileged status or unique power on an individual." Macy's book adds to the mounting scholarly evidence collected by Dorothy Irvin, Uta Eisen, and others which demonstrates that the full inclusion of women is the rightful tradition of our Church. The priesthood as it is now, and our understanding of ordination, needs to be renewed, brought back to reflect the example of Jesus, and ultimately, should serve the needs of the people.

We also cover a few other important WOC topics in this issue. The finance report from our last fiscal year is included in the name of financial transparency—we believe it is important to make this information ready and available to you, our members, who keep us thriving. And speaking of thriving, read about a new young adult faith group that is blossoming in Washington, DC, on page 12.

It has been a busy five months—decrees, penalties, and lots of events following the fire. But we have shown perseverance, the ability to adapt to change, and continued resilience in the face of challenges. We were able to do this because of the support and generosity of our wonderful community—I am deeply grateful and give thanks to all of you who came forward to help in this time of crisis.

May God bless you all with abundant love and peace,
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 an inclusive and accountable 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.

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WOC Statement on Vatican's Immediate Excommunication of Ordained Women

On May 30, Aisha Taylor, executive director of WOC, issued the following statement about the Vatican's decree that ordained Roman Catholic women and the bishops who ordained them incur latae sententiae excommunication, which means excommunication that is immediate and self-imposed.

The Women's Ordination Conference is outraged by yesterday's Vatican decree, which reminds Catholic women once again of the animosity they face from the hierarchy, despite being the backbone of most Catholic parishes throughout the world.

Out of fear of the growing numbers of ordained women and the overwhelming support they are receiving, the Vatican is trying to preserve what little power they have left by attempting to extinguish the widespread call for women's equality in the church. It will not work. In the face of one closed door after another, Catholic women will

continue to make a way when there is none.

We reject the notion of excommunication. In our efforts to ordain women into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church, we see it as contrary to the gospel itself to excommunicate people who are doing good works, responding to injustice, and meeting the needs of their communities. While the hierarchy prattles on about excommunication, Catholic women are working for justice and making a positive difference in the world.

This inappropriate use of excommunication and the Vatican's stance on ordination are based on arguments that have been refuted time and again. In 1976, the Vatican's own Pontifical Biblical Commission determined that there is no scriptural reason to prohibit women's ordination. Jesus included women as full and equal partners in his ministry, and the institutional church would do well to follow suit.

The call for women's equality in the Catholic Church is reverberating loudly in the public consciousness. Around the world, over sixty women have been ordained as priests, deacons or bishops by the group called Roman Catholic Women-priests (RCWP), and there are nearly 100 women in the RCWP preparation program. There are 16 national organizations from 11 different countries that advocate women's ordination, and the vast majority of U.S. Catholics support the ordination of women.

The refusal to ordain women is nothing more than an egregious manifestation of sexism in the church. It is time for the Vatican to listen to its own research, its own theologians and its own people who say that women are equally created in the image of God and are called to serve as priests in a renewed and inclusive Catholic Church.

Sister of Charity Penalized, Archbishop Promoted to Highest Vatican Court

Women's Ordination Conference Statement on Penalties Imposed on Sister Louise Lears, SC by Archbishop Raymond Burke

Aisha Taylor, on June 30, issued the following statement about the penalties imposed by the Archbishop of Saint Louis, Raymond Burke, on Sister of Charity, Louise Lears, on Thursday, June 26. After six months of proceedings, the decree was issued the day before Pope Benedict XVI appointed Archbishop Burke to head the highest court in the Catholic Church, as the prefect of the Apostolic Signatura in Rome.

The Women's Ordination Conference supports Sister Louise Lears and her ministry in the Church. We oppose the penalties Archbishop Raymond Burke imposed on her as a way of dealing with differences. Sister Louise remains steadfast in her faith and loyalty to the Church, and we will do everything in our power to lift these unjust penalties.

Archbishop Burke imposed two penalties on Sister Louise, "1) the penalty of interdict," which means that she cannot participate in public worship in a ministerial capacity and cannot receive the Sacraments and "2) the prohibition of receiving any mission in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, effective immediately," which means she can no longer serve in her positions as a member of the pastoral team at St. Cronan's Catholic Church or as the Coordinator of

Religious Education.

This is not the first time Archbishop Burke has used the sacraments as weapons, stepping way beyond the line of his pastoral duties and out of sync with most of his brother bishops. In addition to these unnecessary penalties, he has consistently worked to denigrate Catholics who use their conscience to inform their actions, as canon law requires. From the excommunications of Rose Marie Hudson and Elsie McGrath on March 12 to his disputes with members of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Saint Louis, Archbishop Burke has done nothing more than violate every aspect of the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

It is long overdue for the Vatican to respond to the church's need for an inclusive clergy, which embraces women – all of whom are created equal and can be called by God to serve God's people as priests in an accountable and inclusive Catholic Church.



Sister Louise Lears

WOC Supporters Take Action

In response to the penalties imposed on Sister Louise, WOC issued a petition directed at Pope Benedict XVI, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, and Archbishop Burke. The petition surpassed its goal of 1,000 signers from around the globe within just one week, and received recognition in media outlets including National Catholic Reporter online.

The petition states:

We the undersigned believe the penalties callously imposed on Sister Louise Lears—a Sister of Charity who has dedicated her life in service of the Catholic Church—is a prime example of the way women are often wrongly treated by the hierarchy in the Roman Catholic Church.

We support Sister Louise Lears in her life and ministry in the Church. We oppose these penalties as way of dealing with differences and dissent. Such misuse of Church discipline will not extinguish the widespread call for women's equality nor intimidate women into accepting marginal status within the Church.

Sister Louise has the support of millions of Catholics who seek only the gospel promise of equality and we demand that these penalties be revoked as quickly as possible.

To sign the petition, visit www.womensordination.org or <http://www.thepetition-site.com/10/Take-Action-for-Sister-Louise>.

WOC Events Make a Splash during Pope's U.S. Visit

By Erin Saiz Hanna

"Let's just imagine a church that is shaped not like a pyramid, but rather like a circle; Jesus, God's Anointed One, is not out of reach at the top of a pyramid, but rather, is at the center of the circle, just as he was when he preached and healed in Galilee and Judea. All are invited to be with him at the center of things. No one is excluded because of age or gender, sexual orientation or economic status, or for any other reason. It is an inclusive community—one that listens to all voices."

These are the words spoken by Andrea Johnson, Roman Catholic Womanpriest, during her homily at WOC's April 14, 2008 inclusive liturgy, which was held on the evening prior to Pope Benedict XVI's arrival to the U.S. Over 100 people gathered at Foundry Methodist Church in Washington, DC, to welcome the pope and to share in a united vision for an inclusive church.

The liturgy was part of WOC's campaign, *Giving the Gift of Women's Leadership* urging Pope Benedict XVI to open the doors for women's ordination. The campaign was covered by the Associated Press, and was picked up in 130 news outlets nationwide, including *USA Today*, *Boston Globe*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. Additional coverage included interviews by the *National Catholic Reporter*, BBC World Radio Service, NPR's *Interfaith Voices*, and a featured video on *WashingtonPost.com*, among others.

A press conference at the National Press Club kicked off the campaign. "The failure to ordain women is a blatant manifestation of sexism in the church that has wider repercussions in the world," said Aisha Taylor, WOC's executive director. "In the three years of his papacy, Pope Benedict XVI has made a few encouraging statements about women, but he has done nothing that suggests willingness to even re-open the discussion on women's ordination. That's why for his 81st birthday, we are offering the Pope the gift of women priests, women's leadership, and women's experience."

Additional speakers included the president of WOC's Board of Directors, Gerry Rauch, recently excommunicated Rose Marie Hudson and Elsie McGrath, and RCWP spokesperson and priest, Bridget Mary Meehan.



Launch of mobile billboard calling for the pope to open the doors to women's ordination. From left to right: Evelyn Hunt (former WOC President), Joan Houk, Bridget Mary Meehan, Gerry Rauch (WOC Board President), Aisha Taylor (WOC executive director), Elsie McGrath, and Rose Marie Hudson.

Following the conference, Taylor led the press and attendees outside the National Press Club where the WOC mobile billboard was launched. The sign said "Pope Benedict XVI, How Long Must Women Wait for Equality? Ordain Catholic Women." The billboard followed the pope throughout his Washington, DC engagements.

WOC members coordinated liturgies and events to coincide with the DC events in 13



Bridget Mary Meehan, Gerry Rauch, Aisha Taylor, Elsie McGrath, and Rose Marie Hudson at April 14 press conference to launch the "Giving the Gift of Women's Leadership" campaign at National Press Club in Washington, DC.

cities around the country, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Rochester, Portland, and three cities in California—San Jose, Watsonville, and Calimesa. Additional events included a vigil calling for women's ordination outside the National Basilica and presence at the Mass where the pope presided at Nationals Park with an assembly of over 45,000 people.

"The Women's Ordination Conference was disappointed that the pope missed an opportunity to demonstrate Jesus's message of inclusion for women at the stadium Mass," Taylor remarked to multiple media outlets following the stadium liturgy. "The lack of women as altar servers and Eucharistic ministers, both of which have been approved by the Vatican for years, and the lack of inclusive language is a tragically familiar and sexist pattern in the church. A sea of men surrounded the pope, but only a few women were 'allowed' to participate in the liturgy—as lectors. The Vatican once again barred women from the holy altar."



Rose Marie Hudson, Erin Hanna (WOC assistant director), Andrea Johnson (past WOC executive director), Elsie McGrath (observed in the photo), Gerry Rauch, and Judy Heffernan during consecration at April 14, 2008 liturgy.

Taylor was not the only spokesperson for women's inclusion following the liturgy. In her CNN interview during the pope's events, Joan Chittister stated, "Only men [surround the pope]. Only men. As far as I know, there is not even a meeting with women about this issue. The church should be leading in this issue, not the Fortune 500 companies. When little girls who are in first grade now grow up, what they're going to find is they're welcome everywhere, but



WOC LA Organizing member Nancy Olivas and Angelina Correos (granddaughter of Alma and Mary Alice Salinas)

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From left to right: Theresa Yugar (WOC LA committee), Sr. Roberta White, BVM, and Sr. Mary Jean Ferry, BVM at LA Giving the Gift of Women's Leadership sponsored action.

they're not going to feel really welcome in the church. If this stays the way it is, God is going to be the only sexist left on the planet."

While the *Giving Gift of Women's Leadership* campaign has come to end, WOC will continue to advocate for equality until our voices are heard. Taylor concluded, "In the face of one closed door after another, Catholic women have been innovative, courageous and faithful to the church.

They continue to make a way where there is none, and our campaign demonstrated how Catholic women answer God's call and minister to the needs of their communities. Women have been leaders in the church all along. When will the Vatican begin to honor the tradition that Jesus began?"



From left to right: Kay Akers (WOC LA organizer), Jacqueline Drummond (WOC LA committee), and Mary Therese Casey Fyran

Pope Benedict spoke of hope over and over again during his time in the U.S. and our hope and prayer is that one day he will open the doors for women and end the



Participants of WOC's inclusive Eucharistic liturgy in Washington, DC enjoy the reception that followed.

injustices that occur against women every day in the church.

For more information on the campaign, watch our You Tube footage at www.womensordination.org/popevisit2008.html.

Erin Saiz Hanna is the assistant director of the Women's Ordination Conference.

Honoring the Life of Arlene Anderson Swidler

By Judy Heffernan

I take great consolation from the gospel passage that recounts when Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist—he withdrew to a deserted place by himself.

When I heard of the recent death of Arlene Swidler, this is just what I did. Streams of memories raced through me, and I was so grateful that the Southeastern Pennsylvania WOC chapter (SEPA WOC) honored Arlene at our Holy Thursday Witness this year as the recipient of our Mary Magdalene Award. Together, we remembered, shared and celebrated Arlene's life. Jenny Ratigan, who, with Gaile Pohlhaus, accepted the award for Arlene, said, "I just received a call from Eva Swidler that her Mom had passed away quietly and peacefully this morning. Knowing Arlene, she has entered that great 'campground' beyond with the same interest and excitement as on any of her other travels. Finally, dear Friend, you are free!"

Arlene died on Saturday, May 24, 2008, after suffering for many years with Alzheimer's disease. She was teacher, writer, author, translator, editor, lecturer; she was beloved daughter, marriage partner, mother, mentor, and faithful friend.

Arlene was dedicated to the full equality of women everywhere in every way. She called for inclusive language (for God and us!), ecumenical dialogue, and women's ordination.

We once presented Arlene with a purple stole, the international symbol of women's ordination, because Arlene was our symbol.

Arlene's last teaching position was in English with Temple University, in Japan.

I then thought of an English assignment I once had about Ranier Rilke, and I remember he wrote that we must live the questions now—and then, some distant day, we will live along into the answers.

We do not know why Arlene was so ill for so long, but may we live along some distant day into that answer.

One thing we know is that there was great power from her life of working for justice and understanding.

I once named Arlene "God's Nudger." She wanted our hearts to be moved and do the work that needs to be done.

There are excommunications to reject, sexism to be overcome, bridges to be built.

This summer we will hear Psalm 85, "Justice and peace shall kiss." We will also hear Romans 8, "All things work for good for those who love God."

Arlene, in your life, justice and peace did kiss, and, in your life, all things worked for good, because you loved God.

We pray for Arlene and her family, including her husband, Leonard.

Arlene, we love you, we give thanks for you and we celebrate the Communion of Saints. Keep pulling for us!

Judy Heffernan is a long-time member of WOC and an active member of SEPA WOC. She writes to us from Philadelphia, Penn.



Arlene Anderson Swidler

WOC Rises Like the Phoenix after Fire Destroys Office...continued from page 1

joining WOC's monthly giving program. In one easy step, you can pre-authorize monthly contributions to WOC from your bank account or credit card. Simply call 202-675-1006 or email ataylor@womensordination.org.

2. **Go Green:** By going green, you can help WOC minimize costs while working to preserve our planet. Turn to page 10 for more information.
3. **Send Books:** To rebuild our feminist Catholic resource library, we have created a wish list of books on Amazon.com, which you can find by visiting our home page at www.womensordination.org

Remarkably, our database and archives are safe. We were able to recover our membership database, and most of the WOC archives are safely located at Marquette University, where they have been since 1988. We sent some boxes a few months before the fire, and most of our current documents were saved on my laptop computer.

As for the cause of the fire, it began in the office across the hall from us when a piece of equipment accidentally caught fire.

Our tenacious spirit is an integral part of our foundation and will continue to be at the core of all our work. It is this tenacity

that is seeing us through our current challenge. With your help, we are emerging stronger and more committed than ever. In the long journey of rebuilding, I have become even more aware of the depth and strength of the WOC community. I am grateful and honored to serve as a leader

during this important time in WOC's history. Thank you for all of your support. We will keep you updated on our progress.

Aisha S. Taylor has been the executive director of the Women's Ordination Conference since December 2005.

Special thanks to the following people and organizations for their incredible generosity:

Mary Yelenick
Harry R. Halloran, Jr.
The Patricia Crowley Foundation
Judith Yeakel
Stuart Riddle
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Amy Hagedorn
Rita and James Mize
Shirley Tung
Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church
Catholics for Choice
CORPUS
Roman Catholic Womenpriests
Sisters of Charity, New York
New Ways Ministry

Brothers and Sisters in Christ (BASIC, Ireland)
Call to Action of Northern California
Dana Reynolds
Frances Kissling
Beth Rindler
Charles Ripp
Mary Robinson
Ann Carberry
All monthly donors to WOC, including those who recently signed up!
All WOC members for their consistent support through out the years
Many anonymous generous contributors



Letters from Members

In the days and months following the fire, WOC received an outpouring of letters. Below is just a sampling of those that touched our hearts and helped us rise. We are incredibly grateful for your support.

Dear Aisha and WOC Staff,

Find enclosed a donation to

help you rise from the ashes. Please use part of this to treat yourselves in the midst of all of this. Your spirit and commitment is truly appreciated at this challenging time. I find it amazing how you can be so "up-beat."

I am so grateful for your amazing leadership at WOC in carrying our organization through this difficult time.

My prayers and best wishes are with you.

Gratefully,
Beth

Dear Aisha and WOC,

I'm so sorry about the devastating fire!!

I did appreciate your "Phoenix" reference. So true!

Onward,
Mary

Dear Women's Ordination Conference Members,

Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you pick up the scraps and pieces and patch up the quilt of peace, justice and love.

Peace and prayers,
Joan

Dear Aisha et al,

It's so heartening to see and hear so many WOC women and men calling for justice in the church! From the widespread media coverage of the past week, I'd say we are really being heard (at last)!

As for the fire, the purest gold is to be found at the center of the crucible! Hang in there!

Mary

Dear friends,

I am sorry for the terrible fire, but WOC will rise from the ashes.

Thank you for all you do to help sisters like myself keep the dream alive. I am spreading the word so I hope others will donate.

Sincerely,
Florence

Dear Aisha,

Thinking of you and everyone involved in starting anew from the ashes. I know, Aisha, that the fire of your passion for women's ordination continues to warm and light our spirits.

Much love,
Danielle

Dear Aisha,

I was so distressed to hear about the fire and to see the pictures. Blessings on your rebuilding efforts! You are all very brave.

Yours,
Jeanette

Dear friends,

Peace and all good!

I am so, so sorry about the fire. I am enclosing my check and my prayers that things will turn out OK.

I'm 85 years old and will try to send something again soon.

God bless and help you.

Love and prayers,
Jeanne

WOC Decries Ban on Altar Girls in Wisconsin Diocese

By Erin Saiz Hanna

On Tuesday, June 24, Rev. John Del Priore of St. Barnabas Parish in Mazomanie, Wisconsin declared that he would no longer allow girls to serve at liturgy. Rev. Del Priore was assigned to the parish on June 1, 2008. In response, WOC issued a press release, and requested that Bishop Robert C. Morlino, of the Madison diocese, overturn Rev. Del Priore's decision and reinstate female altar servers in that parish. In addition, WOC supporters made dozens of calls to the church, asking to speak to Rev. Del Priore to express their serious concerns about this decision.

"With this policy, Rev. Del Priore brings the Madison diocese into the infamously sexist ranks of only one other diocese in the country that bans young women and girls from faithfully serving their church in this capacity," said Aisha Taylor. "Around the country, young women have been lawfully serving at the altar for well over a decade."

Since 1994, the Vatican and the U.S. bishops have allowed female altar servers. There is no restriction in canon law for women to help at the altar during the liturgy.

"Rev. Del Priore has told our members that he banned female altar servers because he wants only boys to prepare to be priests in this way. This is not only untenable, it is impractical. Women comprise at least 80 per cent of church lay ministers, and they are the backbone of most parishes around the world," continued Taylor. "If young women in the Madison diocese want to grow up to work for the Church — or even aspire to the priesthood — I, and the vast majority of U.S. Catholics, don't see the harm in that."

For more information or to take action, visit <http://www.womensordination.org/actionalert.htm>



Women's Ordination at the 12th World Synod of Bishops

Rome, October 15-19, 2008

The theme of the 12th World Synod of Bishops, which takes place from October 5-26, 2008, is "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church."

WOC joins Women's Ordination Worldwide, the international coalition that advocates women's ordination, beginning on the feast day of Saint Theresa of Avila, October 15, for a press conference and action in St. Peter's Square. We will specifically call for women's ordination into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church.

Join us in Rome, October 15-19, 2008

- Oct. 15: Press conference on the feast day of Saint Theresa of Avila
- Oct. 16: Promote visible demonstration for women's ordination into an inclusive Catholic Church
- Oct. 17: Education forum
- Oct. 18: Tour of women's leadership sites in Rome, social event with other church reform groups
- Oct. 19: Evening liturgy

Ways you can help:

1. **Join WOC in Rome for the Women's Ordination Worldwide action during the Synod of Bishops**
2. **Donate your frequent flyer miles to WOC staff and members**
Contact Erin at ehanna@womensordination.org for more information on how to support WOC members and staff.
3. **Sign the petition:** Join Women's Ordination Worldwide efforts by urging Pope Benedict XVI to return to the community of the faithful the gift of ordained women deacons. To add your name to the thousands of signers, visit www.womenpriests.org/dreamshareact/phpPETITION/.
4. **Send an E-Postcard**
Join WOC, FutureChurch, and feminist partners in calling on archbishops to:
 1. Invite feminist biblical experts. No feminist theologians were included in the 2005 Synod.
 2. Devote more pastoral attention to Jesus and St. Paul's inclusion of women leaders.
 3. Expand opportunities for women preachers so both women and men can hear the Word through the lens of women's voices and experiences.
 4. Restore biblical women leaders to lectionary readings in which their witness have been diminished or deleted.

To send an e-postcard to Pope Benedict XVI and US synod delegates, visit <http://futurechurch.org/watw/postcards/>

Inclusive Ministry and Renewal *in a Complex Age*

July 18-20, 2008

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WomensOrdination.org
RomanCatholicWomenpriests.org
CORPUS.org

Join Women's Ordination Conference at
the 2008 Joint Conference for
Women's Ordination in Transition:
Young Catholics, Diversity, Inclusion, and Human Rights
with Aisha Taylor and Kate Braggs
Addressing Racism Within An Inclusive Church
with Myra Brown
Featured Speakers: Jane Via, Jean Marchant, Matthew Fox
And much more!!!
Visit www.WomensOrdination.org to register or for more information

ROOM RATES
A block of rooms for conference registrants will be held until all blocked rooms are booked.

Single.....\$129/night	Double.....\$129/night
Triple.....\$154/night	Quad.....\$179/night

The above rates are valid for up to three days pre and post conference, pending availability. Upgrades to harbor view available. 24-hour free shuttle to and from Logan airport. See map below.

REGISTRATION DESK
Friday.....3:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Saturday.....7:00 am – 11:00 am

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY5:30 pm Reception
6:45 pm Opening of conference and dinner

SATURDAY . . . 8:30 am – 5:00 pm; 7:00 pm – 9:45 pm
Keynote, 27 workshops, general session
5:15 pm – 7:00 pm reception

SUNDAY 8:00 am – 10:00 am
Individual meetings of each sponsoring organization
10:30 am – Noon Liturgy and Worship
12:00 pm Close of conference

All conference events are at the Hyatt Harborside Hotel at Boston Logan Airport
To make a hotel reservation, call 888.421.1442 • **GROUP NAME - 2008 JOINT CONFERENCE**

Inclusive Ministry and Renewal *in a Complex Age* REGISTRATION

PLEASE PRINT

ONE FORM PER PERSON

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Organization(s) of which you are a member:

FCM CORPUS WOC RCWP Other _____

1 CONFERENCE FEE \$

	<i>Postmarked by:</i>
Advance Registration Fee\$195	March 1, 2008
Early Registration Fee\$225	May 1, 2008
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.

3 MEALS \$

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'oervres	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") \$

SPECIAL NEEDS If you need special accessibility or meals, please specify _____

Mail this registration form and check to: (U.S. Currency only)

2008 Joint Conference
Thomas and Michaelita Quinn
93 Post Road
Danbury, CT 06810

Confirmation will be mailed.

PHONE 203.792.4848
EMAIL quinnems@aol.com

Don Cordero

By Juanita Cordero

My call to ministry began when I was about six years old. I vividly remember playing priest in our backyard. Those dreams were tucked away and after high school I entered the Sisters of the Holy Names in Los Gatos, Calif. where I remained for ten years. In 1969 I left and went to Phoenix, Ariz. to teach. What lay ahead of me was a mystery that would slowly unfold.

In 1971 I married Don Cordero, a former Jesuit and was immediately kicked out of teaching in the parish school. Needless to say neither of us had a job as Don too was told to pack his bags and leave his parish in Santa Clara. We managed to return to California and together raised a family of five children.

Music liturgies were very much a part of my call to ministry, so Don and I began one of the first music groups at the Mission Church at the University of Santa Clara (in California). Don led the group every three weeks while I played the bass and helped plan many liturgies. We also started a prayer group that lasted over thirty years. In 2000 Don was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

In 2003 Don and I visited his nephews in Chicago where we attended mass at an Episcopal church. There I met my first woman priest. She seemed so natural in presiding over the Eucharist. I again felt the call to the priesthood but I quickly dismissed it. Besides I was teaching full time at De Anza College and I was no spring chicken.

Then one afternoon Don began mentoring Victoria Rue who was preparing for diaconate ordination. Later, in 2005, Don and I traveled to the St. Lawrence Seaway for Victoria's ordination (this time to priesthood in the RCWP movement). He was the emcee, along with Victoria's partner, Kathryn Poethig. A few days before, Don had attended the gathering of Women's Ordination Worldwide in Ottawa



Don and Juanita Cordero

and heard women theologians speak. That experience convinced him this movement was here to stay.

Just before that ordination, I had participated in the Witness Wagon, a bus trip that linked the women's movement with the movement for women's ordination. On the bus, I listened to the stories of women from around the world and realized that my call to priesthood was surfacing again. I would wake up in the middle of the night and keep saying, "no God this can't be happening. I'm too old for another life change." Later, the people in our prayer group encouraged me to answer that call. Don was less sure of the whole process until we sat down one night and talked. Afterwards he said, "I support you one hundred per cent." So I had some long conversations with God and said, "If You want me to do this, then I will write to Bishop Patricia Fresen and see what happens." Soon afterward, I was accepted into the Roman Catholic Womenpriests program.

Don had always wanted to be called back to the priesthood as a married priest, but when Victoria invited him to co-preside during Sunday Masses at San Jose State with her, he realized that he was being called back to serve others as a priest.

In 2006 Don began feeling the effects of his cancer spreading, but he didn't know that

was what it was. That same year, I was ordained a deacon in Pittsburg with eleven other women. Soon after, Don and I started a home church, joined by Kathleen Kunster, who had been ordained a priest in Pittsburgh. We named our church the Magdala Community.

Don began six months of chemotherapy in January 2007. In the last of those chemotherapy months, on July 22, 2007, I was ordained a priest in Santa Barbara. Don was really there for me at my ordination. We had both been up all night, though he was very sick at that time. By then the cancer had spread to his bones. On September 15, 2007 I celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving. Don was very weak, but he insisted on giving the homily. It was also our 36th wedding anniversary.

Thanksgiving Day 2007, Don officiated at the marriage of our third daughter Rebecca. The day before we had gone to Kaiser for a blood transfusion just so he could have the strength to go through the ceremony.

December 1st was the last time Don worshipped with us at the Magdala Community. I knew it was going to be his last liturgy. Everyone individually anointed him with oil. When all had blessed and anointed him, Don suddenly sat straight up and with determination and utter fragility gave everyone his last blessing.

He died a week later.

On January 5, 2008, I presided at Don's funeral Mass. I had made Don promise two things: that he not die alone (which he didn't, the three girls and I were present) and that he give me a sign after he died. The day of the funeral, we were standing waiting to process into the church and a huge thunderbolt hit. I turned around and said, "Thank you, Don."

Juanita Cordero has been a WOC member for many years. She writes to us from Los Gatos, Calif.

WOC Goes Green

The greenest paper is no paper at all. WOC is on a mission to keep things digital and dematerialized whenever possible. In our efforts to "go green," WOC now offers our members the option to receive membership notices, donation acknowledgements, and *New Women, New Church* electronically.

If you would like to receive this information from WOC via the web and e-mail, send an e-mail to ehanna@womensordination.org and note in the subject: "Go Green."



Walking Together: Woman Priest and Married Priest

By Victoria Rue

All Saints Day, 2007: Anointing Don Cordero

[Four women priests gather around Don Cordero who is sitting in a rocker]

Don: [with a little laugh to himself]

Let the women be there

Let the women be there by my side

It's the darndest thing this dying. But I'm so grateful for you being here.

Victoria: How can we minister to you today, Don?

Don: It's the night that's the hardest. It's so long and dark. That's when I have a lot of fear. And I just want peace.

Victoria: We hear that, dear friend, and in this anointing we will pray about that.

Kathleen: In the name of God, our Mother and Father, And of Jesus our brother, and of the Holy Spirit, Wisdom Sophia. The peace of God be with you.

R: And also with you.

[Dana, Kathleen, Juanita, and Victoria place their hands on Don's head, his shoulders, his hands and his heart]

Dana: With your breath, breathe in the peace that God is giving you.

As you exhale, release the fear.

In peace, release fear.

Juanita: Let your wonderful mind listen to your heart. Remember all the love of your children, all our children, that we brought into the world.

Victoria: These hands that have blessed, touched, offered, these hands that have caressed Juanita, these hands that have clapped with joy, these hands that hold on to God...bless these hands. And God bless your groin for all the love you've helped to bring into the world!

[All laugh—Don smiles, chuckles, nods his head up and down]

[The women in silence anoint Don's body]

Kathleen: May Christ be with you to protect you.

Amen.

Dana: May Christ guide you and give you strength.

Amen.

Victoria: May God, Mother and Father, and Jesus our brother

Juanita: ...and the Holy Spirit bless you. **Amen**

Don: [a soft laugh, with his eyes closed] my groin...that's exactly right.

As a woman preparing for priesthood, Don was my mentor. Bill Manseau of CORPUS had linked us up after the first male married priest he had assigned me had died suddenly before we had had a chance to meet. Don later said, "hope this is not a cycle!" But in retrospect, perhaps it was meant to be that way, to walk with Don in his dying, as did so many others who loved this philosophical, charismatic, quirky, spontaneous, breaker of all decorum, married priest.

Don and I met almost every Wednesday for a year and a half. The planned hour always went longer because we would get to talking, laughing, enjoying the spark that happened between us. Juanita would sometimes join us too. How amazed I was when I found out that Juanita had been in the same religious order I had entered for one brief year of my life. It's like that at the Cordero house—a place of connectivity.

I remember at the first meeting with Don, after I'd sent him my statement written to Bishops Christine Mayr Lumetzberger and Gisela Forster about why I wanted to be ordained. Don chuckled as he turned the four pages, smiled, and said, "I didn't really get why you wanted to be ordained until page 3! That's where you said 'I want to

consecrate my life to God.' That's it, Victoria. That's the real stuff right there."

At one meeting Don said, "You know, they'll try to invalidate you. We've got to be assertive with the validity of your ordination. So if the diocese or anyone repudiates it, you could say right back to them—how do you know my ordination is not valid? Have you talked to God?" That was quintessential Don, cutting to the quick, but always with humor.

Another day we discussed the sacrament of reconciliation. Don said, "As a priest you'll communicate the goodness of the person. Compassion. Not pious-isms. Like the Buddha, compassionate with no judgments, because forgiveness is fundamental to human beings." Another time, "One thing I've learned, you can't be a priest 24 hours a day. It's too much. You've got to give yourself some time off too." So true, Don.

And then I remember the day he wanted me to "practice" the Mass with him. He had given me a Sacramentary as a gift. We'd gone back to the house. We got out the bread and wine. He showed me how to navigate the "priestly manual." But as I began, I kept stopping, "Don, this language does not fit in my mouth! It's all exclusive language!"

"Yeah, I know," he said. "Change it as you go along." So I did. Later he cautioned, "But, really, Victoria, if you look you'll find some very, very beautiful prayers in there."

As a married priest, Don knew how to hold the old with the new; he knew the tension of the past and a future yet to be realized.

As our meetings multiplied and our friendship deepened, it was clear to me that without contemporary models, I was inventing my priesthood, but for Don he was re-inventing his own.

As an astronomer, Don always looked to the immensity of the cosmos for philosophical reflection. Now he is the stardust of which he marveled.

And this woman priest, in every sacrament at which I preside, feels the guidance of her mentor and hears his faith-filled laughter, as she continues to hold in tension the tradition and the not yet, right now.

Victoria Rue is a WOC board member and writes to us from Watsonville, Calif. She was ordained a Roman Catholic Womanpriest in 2005.

Washington, DC Faith Sharing CommUnion: My Spiritual Home

By Kate Braggs

In January 2008, a small group of progressive Catholics in their 20s and 30s living in the Washington, DC metro area formed a Faith Sharing CommUnion. I have been privileged to be a part of that group since its formation. We meet every other Thursday to break bread together and share our faith. We come from all walks of life. We are social justice activists, parish workers, teachers, graduate students, and seminarians. We are drawn to the progressive Catholic movement for various reasons—to seek women’s rights, LGBT rights, lay leadership, Church democracy, and justice for survivors of sexual abuse.

At each meeting, we spend the first hour sharing a meal and informal conversation. We laugh and catch up and get to know each other personally. After dinner, we shift into a prayerful space. We have found various ways of sharing our faith during this time. When we first started meeting, we broke open the weekly Gospel during this time. More recently, we have taken time to share our own faith journey. Whether around the Gospel or our own journey, our conversations are always rich. Certainly, we do not always agree, but we allow enough space for there to be multiple truths.

At our first meeting, we decided that we wanted this group to exemplify “faith in action.” The papal visit gave us the opportunity to do just that! A few weeks before the papal visit, I was offered tickets, as a Catholic University alum, to get an up-close and personal look at Pope Benedict XVI as he came to talk to the bishops at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. I decided to take the tickets and see what our Faith Sharing CommUnion might want to do with them. So, six of us met on the Friday night before the pope arrived in our nation’s capitol. Together, we painted big banners that read “Equal Rites for All” and “Women: The Answer to the Priest Shortage.”

We arrived at the lawn hours before the pope arrived. We waited in anticipation with the multitudes who were gathered to welcome him. We made sure not to stand in front of anyone, so that we would not block their view. Then, as the crowd could



From left to right: Christine Haider, Kate Braggs, Ariana Grebe, Johanna Hatch, and Katie Jones outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

see the Popemobile in a distance, we held up our banners — one toward the Pope and one toward the media. The people in front of us were angry with our message. They chanted, “Hide the Sign!” Peacefully, we did not engage and continued to stand strong.

Reporters from various television stations and newspapers began to flock us — wanting to know our message. Our message was simple: “Because of our love for the Church, we are seeking women’s rights and gay and lesbian equality in the Church.” We were quoted in several papers, including a front page article in the Washington Post. One of our members described our action as being “filled by the Spirit.” She was right — the Spirit was definitely among us.

And so, our group continues to grow. We started with about ten people and have grown to more than fifteen in these five short months. To me, this is proof that young, progressive Catholics are yearning for a spiritual home that aligns with their values. I have certainly found my home in our Faith Sharing CommUnion.

Women’s Ordination Conference, FutureChurch and Call to Action have been working to create and support Faith Sharing CommUnions (FSCs) in cities throughout the United States. These FSCs bring together progressive Catholics in their 20s and 30s to share their faith. So far there are groups in Chicago, Boston, Washington, DC, Cleveland, and Los Angeles. If you are interested in joining or creating a FSC, please email kate.braggs@gmail.com.

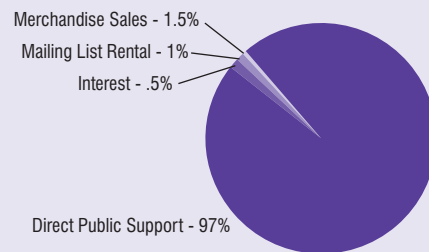
Women’s Ordination Conference Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2007
July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

Revenue

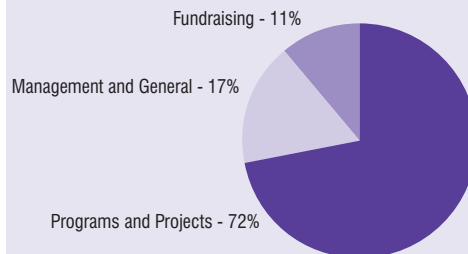
Direct Public Support	\$173,614
Merchandise Sales	\$ 2,633
Mailing List Rental	\$ 1,222
Interest	\$ 721
Program Service Revenue	\$ 646

TOTAL \$178,836



Expense

Programs & Projects	
Three Ministries	\$ 36,490
Membership Services and Outreach	\$ 35,313
Local Organizing & Coalition Work	\$ 15,891
NewWomen, NewChurch	\$ 11,771
Young Feminist Network	\$ 8,240
World Day of Prayer for Women’s Ordination	\$ 4,708
Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative	\$ 3,531
Bishop Murphy Scholarship	\$ 1,766
	\$117,710
Management and General	\$ 28,240
Fundraising	\$ 17,995



TOTAL \$163,945

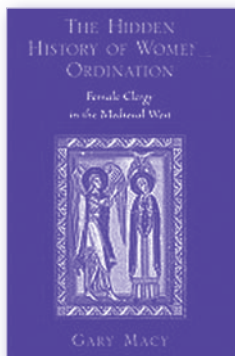
Net Income in Fiscal Year 2006 \$ 14,891

Fund Balance at Beginning of Year \$ 19,561

Net Assets at End of Fiscal Year \$ 34,452

Gary Macy, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. 280pp. \$25.00 ISBN 978-0-19518-970-4

Reviewed by Frederick J. Parrella



All doctrines of the Church live in history, not in eternity. This important fact is often forgotten by the average Catholic and by the theological and ecclesiastical *initiati* as well. Examining a teaching historically deepens and enriches our present understanding

of the mystery in question by addressing the range of possible interpretations in light of the community's historical experience; it also relativizes any reigning doctrinal expression because it makes clear the specific and conditional context of every doctrinal formulation. In this time of radical transition more than forty years after Vatican II, nothing could be more salutary for the Church than Gary Macy's judicious historical study of women's ordination in the Medieval West. Macy, the John Nobili, S.J. Professor of Theology in the Religious Studies Department of Santa Clara University, has researched and written a masterful study of the medieval period's understanding of the ordination of women.

Macy clearly establishes the parameters of the book: "how it happened that women came to be considered as incapable of ordination"; and "whether the definition changed in such a way that it excluded women and, if so, how it changed." Thus, Macy is concerned exclusively "with the meaning ordination had for women...from roughly the sixth through the thirteenth centuries." Macy concludes that women were ordained as abbesses and deaconesses according to the definition of ordination at the time until the reforms of the 11th and 12th centuries, but were excluded from ordination from the 13th century onward.

For more than half of Christian history, ordination meant something fundamentally different than it does today. Ordination, a word that was often used interchangeably with consecration and benediction, referred to "the appointment and consecration to a particular charge or function." Even kings and queens were sometimes "ordained" to their position. Certainly, women as abbesses and deacons were ordained to their offices, as men were ordained as priests and abbots. (Macy includes two appendices on the rite of ordination for

abbesses and deaconesses; these rituals were often interchangeable with men's.) In this period, the "question of who had the power to perform rituals was less important than whom the community had chosen as their ministers." Ordination served a function in and for the community; it did not confer privileged status or unique power on an individual. Thus, today's concept of the priest as a celibate male who alone possesses sacramental power, one ordained permanently to a personal and private way of life, did not develop until the late middle ages.

What took place in the reform movement of the 12th and 13th centuries that so profoundly changed the idea of ordination and the concept of the priesthood? Macy carefully examines the historical, theological, canonical, and socio-cultural issues that created such a narrowing of thought. "Rarely in history," he writes, "has ritual practice and understanding changed so completely." The results of this change created an idea of the priesthood, and therefore of the church, which survives into this third millennium, in many ways untouched and unquestioned except for a heroic group of people who now support the ordination of women in the Church. One has to wonder if the concentration of power into a celibate male clergy and hierarchy had not occurred, would the tragic separation of the Western Church in the 16th century have happened and what shape would it have taken? With the reform movement, from approximately 1130 to 1230, women were "defined out" of ordination; ordination was conceived as exclusively male, celibate, and narrowly concentrated on the power to consecrate the Eucharist. Men were no longer ordained for a particular community, as both women *and* men had been before, but now they received a permanent ontological and universal power. To support this shift culturally, women were severely denigrated at this time as inferior to men, creating a new age of misogyny. Other factors included the influence of Roman law on canonists, and the battle between clergy and lay lords to control society and the church. The first formal ecclesiologies (theologies of the church), written at the beginning of the 14th century, reflected a narrow defense of papal—and male clerical—power. The church, once an extended family, became modeled on a monastery, with all the abbots and monks, who were themselves declared "lay" in the

reform, now ordained to the clerical state. What was most startling was the expunction from the record of history of any memory of women's ordination in the first millennium. Any such references that were found were explained away as a simple blessing or consecration, not true and valid ordination. This is our church almost a millennium later.

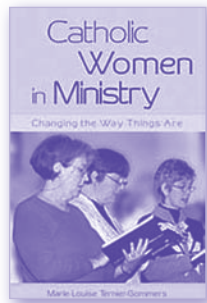
Macy's book, grounded solidly in historical research, presents and enlightens, more than it advocates. By deepening our understanding of the Western medieval church's ordination of women until the 12th century, such historical knowledge is itself a powerful form of advocacy. Macy himself, admits that the form of ordination of the first millennium, one that included women, makes much more sense in this third millennium. While Macy makes extensive use of both primary and secondary sources, he is wise to keep all of the scholarly details and critical apparatus in his endnotes that comprise a third of the book. He also presents a helpful bibliography for the scholar. By distinguishing between the story of women's ordination and its scholarly foundations, he creates a book for both the professional historian and theologian and any interested and intelligent reader. Clearly and succinctly written, his history reads more like a masterful medieval mystery than ponderous scholarship. Anyone, scholar or popular reader, will be nourished by this important work. It is a *vade mecum* for persons interested in the ordination issue; it also serves as a lucid lens into the whole history of the church's self-understanding in the first two millennia.

Vatican authorities may naïvely believe that if no one speaks about ordination of women, the problem will go away. If so, they are sadly mistaken: they have failed to look to the signs of the times, to see that the great Catholic tradition continues to live only when the community's experience of the Christ event changes and grows with the knowledge of history. Perhaps Vatican authorities need to learn that in this multicultural and global third millennium, it is no longer your great grandmothers' late medieval church just about everywhere.

Frederick J. Parrella is a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Santa Clara University.

Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers. *Catholic Women in Ministry: Changing the Way Things Are*. Ottawa: Novalis, 2007. 204 pp. \$21.95 ISBN 978-2-89507-839-5

Reviewed by Susan Roll



Canadians constantly struggle to define their own national identity in contrast to the great behemoth to the south, but often are not quite certain what that identity is, though they are quite sure that being Canadian must mean more than ice and snow, moose and geese, Tim

Horton's doughnuts and Dudley Do-right. The importance of a book like this for Canadian women in ministry is precisely that they hear their own peers reflecting authentic lived experiences of ministry in the Catholic Church in a Canadian context, or better, *contexts*. For example, several women doing pastoral ministry among First Nations (Native) peoples report that they are much more effortlessly accepted as women in authority than in a typical parish.

The author, Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers, has walked an interesting path to ministry herself: born in the Netherlands and raised in an urban setting, she married a Saskatchewan farmer and found herself raising three children amid such daily chores as drawing water, chopping wood and preserving home-grown food for the winter. She started theology courses at a Lutheran seminary and discovered a welcome and a call to ministry for which few if any Catholic models existed.

The book's source material is drawn from interviews and correspondence with twenty-six Catholic women, some lay, some religious and some former religious, engaged in pastoral

ministry in a variety of settings. The chapters are arranged topically under such headings as "Nourishing the Spirit," "Called and Commissioned," "Together in Ministry," and "Woman Why Are You Weeping?" While this plan permits some general themes to emerge, it prevents the reader from getting to know each woman in depth since snippets of quotes and first-person stories are distributed to correspond with the subject headings, interspersed with the author's own autobiographical reflections. A chapter on each woman, or on those engaged in similar ministries, would have provided a series of vivid, compelling portraits of strikingly strong women.

As I read through the book I found my spirit growing heavy from the weight of honestly-recounted pain, sleepless nights, tears, frustration and the blatant injustice these women experienced in their ministries. I recalled similar accusations in my campus ministry work twenty-five years ago: "Who gave you the authority to do this?" There seemed no way out. The women persisted in response to a deeply-felt call, they suffered numerous setbacks, and barely survived on a diet of informal support, personal prayer and hope for institutional change, a diet often appallingly thin.

Interestingly I shared this perception with my local CNWE group (Catholic Network for Women's Equality) and they pointed me to a letter that Ternier-Gommers had written to the *Catholic New Times* in October 2005, not long after the WOW gathering in Ottawa. She condemned both WOW and the ordinations on the St. Lawrence River as "shock-tactics" that would "alienate church leaders, while ordinary Catholics may ridicule the

women who are ordained." She found "dramatic events such as the WOW conference and river ordinations [to be] infused with an eclectic mix of what most Catholics recognize as 'New Age' rather than Catholic elements."

"Meanwhile," Ternier-Gommers wrote in *CNT*,

"countless Catholic women in the trenches of ministry are bringing a new paradigm to birth, bleeding and sweating. Many parishes and dioceses, in particular in northern and western Canada, depend on, and make possible, ministerial leadership exercised by women.... What I am discovering through the research for my next book is that such women often serve in courageous and faithful ways with a quiet subversion clothed in love, love of God in Jesus Christ, love for the church and for the pilgrim people of God."

This is, of course, that book.

This book will serve as fine reading for women in ministry that would meet the same needs for solidarity and recognition of common pain that the 1970s consciousness-raising groups did – the "yeah, yeah" experience. But, perhaps inadvertently, Ternier-Gommers demonstrates the deep need for solid, palpable, well-founded hope for change, a hope that will not leave us isolated to soak our pillows at night in utter despair.

Susan Roll, an American by birth, teaches liturgy, sacraments and feminist theology in Ottawa, Canada.

Elections and Appointments—Send Us Your Feedback

By Amy Scanlon

While the presidential election race is capturing headlines across the country, the WOC Board would like to draw your attention to another election: the election of the WOC Board of Directors.

The WOC Board is composed of both elected and appointed members. Our bylaws state that we must present candidates for election by the membership each year. In addition, the Board may appoint up to two people to serve.

There are costs to holding an election: namely the time and expense involved in preparing the ballot, sending it to our full membership, and tallying the returns. There are also benefits: transparency, participation, ownership of the results, and accountability.

Over the years, we have had times when the number of candidates running for the Board was equal in number or less than the available slots, thus guaranteeing every candidate a place.

We have also noticed that few WOC members participate in elections. In 2007, 128 votes were cast; half that in 2006. These circumstances prompt us to come to you, our membership, to ask whether you think it is a good use of our resources to hold annual elections, even in situations where every candidate is guaranteed a seat on the Board.

One alternative is to change our bylaws, not to do away with elections completely, but to allow the Board discretion to fill seats through appointments in lieu of an election during the years when the number of available seats is equal to the number of

candidates. We respectfully would like to hear your thoughts on the matter of shared governance.

Beyond this narrow issue, we also want to solicit your thoughts about the Board elections in general. Overall, we are in good shape as an organization—better than ever, in fact, with stable membership numbers and relatively solid finances—but we are finding that less people are stepping up for Board positions. What do *you* think might be behind the low levels of participation? How might we reinvigorate the Board nominations and elections process?

We are eager to hear from you. Send your comments to woc@womensordination.org or to the WOC office.

Amy Scanlon serves as Treasurer of WOC and writes to us from Pittsburgh, Penn.

Upcoming events

July

July 9: WOC New Office Blessing and Open House:

Celebration will take place from 5:30-6:30 pm, Blessing of New Office at 6:30 pm. Women's Ordination Conference Office, 418 10th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003. To RSVP or for more information, contact Erin at ehanna@womensordination.org or call 202.675.1006.

July 18-20, 2008: Joint Conference sponsored by WOC, RCWP, CORPUS and Federation of Christian Ministries, Boston, Mass. Hyatt Harborside Hotel at Boston Logan Airport. To register, visit www.womensordination.org or call Thomas and Michaelita Quinn at quinnems@aol.com

July 21: RCWP Ordinations in Boston: 4:00 pm after the conference. Contact Erin at ehanna@womensordination.org.

July 22: Feast of Mary Magdalene, nationwide celebrations. Contact FutureChurch at 216.228.0869 or www.futurechurch.org for more information.

August

August 9: RCWP Ordination in Lexington, Ky.: Janice Sevreduszynska will be ordained a priest. Contact Erin at ehanna@womensordination.org.

September

September 10: WATER Meditation Gathering, Silver Spring, Md. Join WATER for communal meditation, a time of silence and reflection, from 7:30-8:30 pm. Gathering and tea at 7:00 pm. Contact 301.589.2509 or annabeth@hers.com to RSVP or for more information.

October

October 15-19: Join WOC in Rome for a Women's Ordination Worldwide Action: WOC joins with Women's Ordination Worldwide, beginning on the feast day of Saint Theresa of Avila, October 15, for a press conference and action in St. Peter's Square. We will specifically call for women's ordination into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church. Contact ehanna@womensordination.org.

November

November 7 -9, 2008: Call To Action National Conference: "Our Earth, Our Church, Ourselves: Embrace the Beloved Community," Milwaukee, Wisc. For more information, visit www.cta-usa.org.

*To have your event listed here, contact
Erin at ehanna@womensordination.org.*

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 15057, Washington, DC 20003

WOC Merchandise

Due to the office fire, we apologize that several items are currently out of stock. Check our website soon for merchandise updates.

T-Shirts – 100% Sweat Shop Free

Front: “Good Catholic Girls...”
Back: “Stand Up for Women’s Ordination!”

Regular Tees: \$15
(TS4, Black or Pink: S, M, L, XL, XXL)



Front: **Small WOC Logo**
Back: **Priestly People Come in Both Sexes**
Regular Tee: \$18 (TS5, Black or White, L, XL, XXL; Black: XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL)



Women’s Work - Inspiring scene of historical women celebrating the Eucharist at a Supper, short sleeve (TS6, Black or White, L, XL, XXL, \$18), long sleeve (TS7, Black or White, XXL, \$5)



Baseball Hats

Great Quality, 100% Sweat Shop Free
One size fits all purple with WOC logo embroidered (TS8, \$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 brilliant purple stoles are available in all colors of the rainbow (Item St2, \$15 ea.)

Bumper Stickers - Guaranteed to turn heads (\$1 ea., 6/\$5, 20/\$15)

- Ordain Women or Stop Banning Them (Item Bs1) blue
- Ordain Women or Stop Dressing Like Them (Item Bs2) 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, \$12.95 by the author. (Item Bk1, \$12.95)
- Miriam Therese Komorowski, *Out of the Depths: The Story of Maria 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
- Priestly People Come in Both Sexes (Item Bt3) \$2



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)
- Equal Money Note: WOC’s “fun 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 under Merchandise

To place your order, call 202.675.1006 , 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. Allow up to three weeks for delivery.

Women’s Ordination Conference

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