Our Strength Comes from Our Stories of Witness and Action

By Erin Saiz Hanna and Kate McElwee, WOC Co-Executive Directors

Last month we celebrated women’s history month. The National Women’s History project declared the 2015 theme as “weaving the stories of women’s lives,” a perfect theme as WOC prepares for our 40th anniversary celebration in Philadelphia this September.

Nearly forty years ago, two thousand faithful gathered for the first Women’s Ordination Conference in Detroit, Michigan and a movement was born. “Women in Future Priesthood Now,” was organized to embolden education and create new strategies for both those women who felt called to ordination in the Roman Catholic Church as well as their supporters. The first conference was inspired by “the power of one woman asking one question,” noted conference coordinator Nadine Foley.

One woman, asking one question, learned very quickly that she was not alone. Mary B. Lynch’s journey of questioning was pioneering and familiar, amazing, and simple. Mary wanted to be closer to God, and would reflect in her writings that access to God through the priesthood would be the ultimate relationship, a thought that made her feel “most alive.” (See Mary Jeremy Daigler, Incompatible with God’s Design: A History of the Women’s Ordination Movement in the U.S. Roman Catholic Church [Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012], 39).

While theology has developed and expanded around this issue, undoubtedly Lynch’s quest brought her closer to the people of God. It was by her example of creating and nourishing communities that WOC has thrived as a grassroots, member-supported organization. This is where we gathered and maintained our strength over the years.

Nearly forty years later, we stand on the shoulders of Mary Lynch and the first attendees of that conference, whose litany of names can be found on pages 12-15.

Our founders could not have predicted the path our movement would take. It has not been an easy one, but throughout it all we have continued to serve as a voice for women’s equality in the Roman Catholic Church.

As we prepare to celebrate WOC’s 40th anniversary, we will celebrate one woman who questioned an injustice, and the countless women who, throughout history, refuse to allow their equality to be questioned, as well as their deeply held experiences of calls to ordination in our church.

Our anniversary celebration will take place during the Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW) third international conference, Gender, Gospel & Global Justice in Philadelphia, scheduled just days before Pope Francis arrives in the U.S. This gathering will bring together the people of God: feminists of faith who decry the discrimination of women in church and society today. For more on the upcoming conference see pages 8-9.

The list of speakers continues to grow daily with legendary advocates for women’s equality taking part.

Save the Date

Gender, Gospel & Global Justice
Philadelphia
Sept. 18-20, 2015
From the Executive Directors

Dear WOC Members,

It has been a long, cold winter for many of you, and we want to be among those who wish you a very happy Spring. As we watch the snow melt with ever-warming sunshine, and nature sprouting green around us, we can celebrate nature’s resilience and the newness of each seasonal cycle. At WOC we are ready to bloom in the coming months, as we prepare to celebrate our 40th anniversary this fall, and welcome hundreds of feminists of faith to the Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW) Conference in Philadelphia in September.

We are especially pleased to share that we are now working as co-directors (see formal announcement on page 5). Co-directors is a feminist leadership model we are proud to pioneer in our organization. With leadership around the world we are unequivocally rooting our mission in the global Church, and sending the message that women’s equality in the church is a global justice issue.

Our cover story in this issue highlights the seeds that were planted at our first conference in Detroit, lifting up the names of those who attended (pp. 12-15), and our founder Mary B. Lynch. Please share the list of names and look for people you may know — if you find your name, tell us about your experience and share your reflections. We hope to honor those who attended the first conference in a special way at WOW 2015.

On page 3 you will find a reflection on Roman Catholic Woman Priest, Georgia Walker, ordained in Kansas City, and communicated through a personal letter from Bishop Robert Finn. We have included a copy of the decree he sent her. We stand with Georgia in her ministry and pray that she finds other support in her community.

It is with some reluctance that page 6 is devoted to Cardinal Raymond Burke’s recent comments about the feminization of the Church, however Louise M. Doire masterfully dismantles his assumptions and conclusions, and she brings both intelligence and humor to an otherwise ridiculous proposition by the cardinal.

An interview follows from a young woman based in Vienna, Austria, Jacqueline Straub. Jacqueline experiences a call to the priesthood and she offers both a freshness and a resolute directness illustrating insights from the next generation in our church, confronting injustice in their way. This is a hopeful read.

We are fortunate also to feature the Ministry of Prophetic Obedience of Kathleen Gibbons Schuck, RCWP, who beautifully writes about the messages she modeled for her daughter while compromising herself in a traditional parish, and the awakening that is possible when a community called her to “show up as my deepest, most authentic self” (p. 8).

On page 9, we have a reflection piece from Kate McElwee, on the “Women’s Culture’s” meetings that took place at the Vatican, which Kate attended. Importantly, Kate also raises up the cultural disassociation between Rome and the U.S., and the struggle of the unpopular stance of hope, over sarcasm.

We have dedicated two full pages (pp. 10-11) to the WOW conference, where you will find all the information you will need on registration, speakers, workshops, and accommodations. Read through our exciting programming and share the information with your communities. This is an incredible time for both WOC and WOW—the women’s ordination movement is stronger than ever! We hope many women and men in all walks of church and life will join us in making this conference a success.

After the conference’s opening ceremony, we will commence with WOW’s anniversary—our 40th year—and celebrate with vigor our seeds, roots, and springtime of new life and growth. We look forward to gathering with everyone this September in Philadelphia. Thank you for supporting WOC and ensuring the growth and development of our vibrant movement.

Warmly,
Erin Saiz Hanna & Kate McElwee
Co-directors

New Women, New Church

NewWomen, NewChurch is published three times a year 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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Georgia Walker’s Journey to New Life
By Janice Sevre-Duszynska (ARCWP)

I just got off the phone with newly ordained ARCWP priest Georgia Walker of Kansas City, Missouri where I’m visiting. She tells me she’s in the middle of talks trying to get a $300,000 building donated for homeless women just out of prison and their children. “Could you write the WOC piece about my journey to priesthood?” she asks.

“It’s all your fault,” she jests. “Ever since I’ve gotten to know you, I’ve been in trouble.”

“Hey,” I answer. “You hang around with troublemakers.”

Georgia has been getting people out of trouble for a long time in her native Kansas City. She’s been working with prisoners and former prisoners for close to two decades. Her vision of a social services agency for former prisoners is currently being actualized from her numerous grant requests. The agency is now a year-and-a-half old, and named “Journey to New Life.” They have a staff of counselors who provide one-on-one personal guidance, housing, and employment possibilities for women and men just out of prison. Many suffer from addictions, mental illness, and chronic health conditions. Using what is known as the “housing first” model of treatment, individuals are provided with a safe permanent home and wrap around services to help them chart and follow their own journey to a new life.

During the week leading up to her ordination on January 3rd, I got to be with her on Troost Ave., the historical dividing line in Kansas City between black and white, where the agency is located. I got to see Georgia in action. A client was talking about a difficult situation. You could see from the way he walked up to her and they hugged, that he trusted her, and he perceived her as a real friend. Georgia listened to his entire lengthy story. She asked him questions for clarification and talked with him further. Here was safety and community.

Georgia cares about community. She is on the board of Peaceworks, Kansas City, a group that works for local, national, and international peace. During its Trifecta Resist (three days of nonviolent resistance) last spring, Georgia crossed the line at the old Bannister Municipal Complex, what locals call the city’s “toxic dump,” the site of the former nuclear weapons complex. The contaminants in the soil and air have poisoned the community’s nearby Blue River and Indian Creek. Before crossing she wept as she recalled two aunts who had worked in the IRS building who died in their early sixties. Like other workers, they had died of bizarre cancers people attribute to the toxins produced by the making of parts for nuclear weapons at the complex.

The next day we sat together on the bus to Whiteman AFB, a major drone base. She told me she had been discerning about crossing the line there, as well. “Do you think I could survive prison?” she asked. I nodded, and shared with her my thoughts from my three-month experience. That’s when I asked her if she had ever thought about becoming a priest. “Yes, I have,” she replied in a snap, looking me straight in the eye.

That afternoon she and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Kathy Kelly walked onto the base. Each carried a loaf of bread for the guards and an indictment of the people involved in drone killings, from the President to the remote control drone operators.

During their December 10th trial in federal court, Georgia testified: “We were grieved about the killing of women and children from that base….I’ve been concerned about the large amount of civilians being killed. I object to extrajudicial killing, outside a court. It’s immoral, illegal, and unconscionable.”

U.S. Federal Magistrate Judge Matt Whitworth sentenced Kathy Kelly to three months in federal prison but Georgia got just one year of supervised probation.

Georgia was born and raised in Kansas City. She has four degrees in sociology from continued on page 4
Georgia Walker’s Journey...continued from page 3

Georgia plans to minister as a priest with men and women in five Missouri state prisons located in the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese.

She still lives in community with five religious sisters. Here’s some of what her friend Sr. Rose said about Georgia to Bishop Bridget Mary Meehan and the community gathered for her ordination: I whole-heartedly recommend Georgia Walker for ordination to the priesthood. There are two words that define Georgia: courageous and leader. I have known Georgia since 2000. Since that time we have shared community with one another, been co-workers, worshipped together and been friends. Once Georgia is convinced of the need for something she makes it happen. She has taken an idea and brought it to fruition despite many barriers. An example is the One World Neighborhood Café, a catering business that hired ex-offender women and refugee immigrants at a sustainable wage.

Georgia Walker’s Journey...continued from page 3

grant women at a sustainable wage.

When our parish in Kansas City had a change of pastors that threatened to change the culture of the parish, Georgia remained on the Leadership Team and initiated direct dialogue with the priest to challenge the hierarchical approach. She is well respected within the leadership circle.

When Bishop Finn fired a friend of Georgia’s because she is lesbian and married, Georgia did not hesitate to be the one to stand up to the bishop and deliver the petition in support of the woman with 33,000 signatures. She believes it was wrong and felt called to speak out for justice and compassion.

Georgia will give any endeavor she believes in, her time and energy. She is a quick learner and studious. I have seen her reading book after book recommended by the Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests (ARCWP). She not only is pleased with the charism and mission but passionate and excited.

I have no doubt that once ordained, Georgia will continue to pursue practices and worship that are theologically sound. She will be dialogic and provide leadership in a non-hierarchical manner.

Georgia plans to minister as a priest with men and women in five Missouri state prisons located in the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese. She has begun presiding at Eucharist in Kansas City and hungered for this. Georgia chose the Feast of the Epiphany for her ordination because she entered into the Sisters of St. Joseph on that feast day, so it has many special memories for her.

Georgia said, “It feels special to me because of the strong image of light...not just a reflective kind of light marking the incarnation of Jesus as God’s love in the world, but a kind of luminosity shining out from us as the embodiment of the Divine in our world. As co-heirs and co-creators, we are compelled to bring hope and dignity to all without exception, especially those who are on the margins of our church and society.”

Janice Sevre-Duszynska (ARCWP), is a former WOC board member who led the Ministry of Irritation, witnessing to the USCCB. She serves as an activist priest for peace and justice and celebrates Eucharist at Catholic Worker Houses, the SOAWatch Vigil, and in various communities across the country, including Lexington, KY and Cincinnati. As media representative for ARCWP, in 2013 she represented women priests during the Conclave in Rome and celebrated Eucharist there five hours before Francis was elected Pope.
Kate McElwee Named WOC Co-Executive Director, Stationed in Rome

WOC’s Board of Directors is pleased to announce the promotion of Kate McElwee as Co-Executive Director, joining her colleague Erin Saiz Hanna in shared leadership of the organization. Kate, 29, joined WOC in 2011 and served as Membership Director and Associate Director prior to being named to her new title. Stationed in Rome since August 2014, Kate brings an international voice and expertise to the WOC’s leadership and to the movement at large.

“As we advocate for renewed leadership models in our Church, we need to pioneer new ways of leadership in our organization,” stated Jeannette Mulherin, WOC Board President. “Having Kate in this role is an exciting moment in WOC’s story.”

“Kate has shown herself to be an exemplary leader, and we are confident she will bring a much needed international perspective and voice to our work. We see this development as an opportunity to send the message that WOC is a player in Rome, poised to act and respond on the spot to Vatican initiatives and the media.”

Kate has increased public awareness for women’s ordination in the U.S., and now in Rome through her work as a member of the Leadership Circle of Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW), and several lay and women religious movements in Italy. WOC is the first women’s ordination organization to have an advocate stationed in Rome.

Based on Kate’s innovativeness, organizing skills, and dedication to the mission of WOC, as a board we want to recognize Kate in her tireless work, and affirm this expansion of our mission and our voice.

Kate earned her bachelor’s degree in religion from Mount Holyoke College, the oldest women’s college in the U.S., as well as a master’s degree in International Human Rights Law from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. She divided her time between Washington, D.C. and Rome for the past year in preparation for this move.

Kate will continue her work on many of WOC’s U.S. campaigns and coalition work, in addition to fostering grassroots support throughout Europe. Kate blogs for WOC at www.womensordination.org/blog

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equality including, Sr. Teresa Foracdes, Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Sr. Theresa Kane, Dr. Tina Beattie, Dr. Patricia Fresen, Dr. Mary Hunt, Fr. Roy Bourgeois, Jamie Manson, Sr. Mary John Mananzan, Kate Kelly, Asra Nomani, Sr. Maureen Fiedler, Fr. Tony Flannery, Barbara Blaine and many more.

In addition to renowned, energizing speakers, participants will also enjoy social events, engaging workshops, inclusive, welcoming prayer and other liturgies, and opportunities to participate in grassroots action. There is still time to propose a workshop or host an exhibit booth should you feel inspired (find out how on pages 8-9).

If you have not yet registered for the conference, there is still time. Your presence and witness at this historic event is important to us. We hope to see you there!

Rochester Inclusive Parish...continued from page 3

When Fr. Jim said his first Mass in 1974, he called for the ordination of women in his first sermon. Throughout his priestly ministry Fr. Callan has lifted women up by recognizing their gifts and listening to them. At Spiritus Christi there are girl altar servers, women preachers, and a woman priest and woman lay pastor. Fr. Callan has always understood the need for women in the parish to have women role models of leadership and strength and who give them hope, especially to those women who are in abusive relationships or are made to feel marginalized by the church and men in their lives.

Marilu Aguilar is a member of the WOC Board and Spiritus Christi Church in Rochester, New York.
Theological Perspectives

Raymond Cardinal Burke on the Problem of Women in the Church
By Louise M. Doire

When I first read Matthew James Christoff’s interview of Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke published on the New Evangelization Project website, I laughed heartily. Cardinal Burke’s ridiculous suggestion that men have been turned off by the Church because the sanctuary is “full of women,” and “the activities in the parish and even the liturgy have been influenced by women and have become so feminine in many places that men do not want to get involved,” seemed too outrageous to take seriously. When asked about “the state of men in the Catholic Church,” the recently demoted Cardinal added, “It’s due to a number of factors, but the radical feminism which has assaulted the Church and society since the 1960s has left men very marginalized.” This sentence really gave me pause. I notice that churchmen like Burke often qualify feminism as “radical.” I wonder what kind of feminism would not seem radical to them. I feel it incumbent upon myself to remind the Cardinal that his use of the word radical is more appropriate than even he would realize, for the word’s origins point to the foundational roots of a thing; “of, relating to, or proceeding from a root.” Dear Cardinal Burke, “radical” feminists, are merely calling you [the hierarchical church] back to the roots of our own tradition and of the Gospel imperative. That the Cardinal understands this challenge to equality as an assault on the Church and society is reminiscent of the 2004 Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World, signed by Pope John Paul II but written by then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “Recent years have seen new approaches to women’s issues. A first tendency is to emphasize strongly conditions of subordination in order to give rise to antagonism: women, in order to be themselves, must make themselves the adversaries of men. Faced with the abuse of power, the answer for women is to seek power. This process leads to opposition between men and women, in which the identity and role of one are emphasized to the disadvantage of the other, leading to harmful confusion regarding the human person, which has its most immediate and lethal effects in the structure of the family.” The man who would be Pope Benedict XVI chose his words carefully. The words antagonism, opposition, adversaries, and lethal are themselves the tools of a misinterpreted and misrepresented perception of feminism, which bring about images of violence. It is no wonder then, that Cardinal Burke characterized feminism as an “assault.”

The Cardinal went on, “Men are often reluctant to become active in the Church. The feminized environment and the lack of the Church’s effort to engage men has led many men to simply opt out.” Following my brief period of amusement, I stopped laughing. I stopped laughing because I understood these comments to be part of a long history in which women are blamed during turbulent times. Women, via “radical feminism” have ruined everything, even the attendance of men at church. If the numbers of men at worship has declined it must be because women are there. It does not take much analysis to notice that the Cardinal’s unsubstantiated conclusions about the motivations of men are actually quite insulting to men. “Aspects of the Church’s life that emphasized the manlike character of devotion and sacrifice have been deemphasized. Devotions that required time and effort were simply abandoned. Everything became so easy and when things are easy, men don’t think it is worth the effort,” he said. At another point in the interview he recalled conversations with men in the 1970s, “they were, in a certain way, frightened of marriage because of the radicalizing and self-focused attitudes of women that were emerging at that time. These young men were concerned that entering a marriage would simply not work because of a constant and insistent demand of rights for women.” The Cardinal certainly does not display a very good opinion of men. In one moment of reflection, they are uninterested and retreat into boredom if there is no challenge (rather than create their own). In another, they are frightened away by the challenge of women and their relentless demands for equality. It is difficult to understand what qualifies as “manly character,” a phrase that Burke frequently invokes.

Glaringly absent in the Cardinal’s rant is the presence of any sociological or ecclesiastical research data to support his claims that if men are slacking in church attendance it is because of the presence of women. His conclusions constitute what my friends and I call “M-U-S,” or “Made Up Stuff.” In fact, his declaration that men are opting out of church because of the presence of too many women is not supported by data. The research actually indicates that what was once a gender gap in church attendance has actually disappeared. “There is emerging evidence that women’s long-standing loyalty to the church can no longer be taken for granted,” researchers William D’Antonio of Catholic University of America, Michele Dillon of the University of New Hampshire, and Mary Gautier wrote in their 2013 publication American Catholics in Transition. Gautier, of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University stated, “It’s troubling. The difference between men and women is just gone.” There you have it. The Cardinal’s assertions are simply wrong. There are no more women than men in the Church. The Church has not been “feminized” by the overwhelming disproportionate presence of women. The Cardinal would do well to pay attention to the facts and concern himself with all potential members of the Church, not exclusively men.

So, why would the Cardinal jump to such conclusions? Perhaps it is convenient to scapegoat women. If he simply blames this presumed lack of male interest on the women, he does not have to consider other possibilities. He does not have to look internally to the issues within the Church that might be turning men (and, for that matter, women) away. He does not have to consider that men and women might opt out because of the pedophile scandal or the Church’s treatment of its LGBT members, or the Church’s inherent sexism, or simply because some might find the Church irrelevant in some key areas of their lives. He does not have to think about complex and diverse possibilities. It is much easier to blame women. This is a time-honored tactic in the Church, of course, dating back to the Patristics, throughout the ages to the Vatican’s recent assault on the LCWR and American nuns.

Welcome to the witch hunt, Your Eminence.

Louise M. Doire, M.Div. in Department of Religious Studies at College of Charleston Charleston, SC.
Walking With Women Called, an Encounter with Jacqueline Straub

By Kate McElwee

On a rainy February day I had the opportunity to meet with Jacqueline Straub, a young woman visiting Rome with her parish from Vienna. I first learned of Jacqueline, vocal about her call to the priesthood, from a German documentary series called #For ChristsSake, which highlights the stories of three people who experience calls to ministry in their faith traditions, but because of their gender, sexuality, or relationships are not able to officially pursue their vocation.

As soon as I saw the video, I wrote to Jacqueline on behalf of WOC to commend her bravery and offer our prayers and support for the prophetic witness she brings our church. While she was in Rome we sat down together with her priest and talked about the women’s ordination movement and our hopes for the future. What I loved about meeting Jacqueline was that she says things so few people in the movement say today: “I have time. I can wait. Things will change.” Her optimism was a shot in the arm, especially in what can feel like a lost game. While her words and story may seem simple, there is a resolute directness (and perhaps a Millennial confidence) that brings insight to another generation of women called, confronting injustice in their way. It was an honor to share the stories and supportive networks of WOC with Jacqueline, as she is excited to be more connected to the global movement.

Here is some of our conversation and further correspondence, translated from German and edited for clarity.

When did you recognize your call to priesthood?

I have had this desire, and experienced this call from God, in my heart since I was fifteen years old. As I started my theology studies, I believed that by the time I graduated, I would be able to become a priest. The problems and challenges of achieving this dream quickly became clear. I knew it would not be easy, as a young woman, to take on the entrenched hierarchy but I also knew God had called me. God gives me great strength and determination, and the certainty that I will achieve something—what that entails will likely become clearer when I look back years from now. I am confident that I am a beloved child of God within the Catholic Church.

How does this affect your spirituality and day-to-day life?

Ever since I carried this calling in my heart, I have lived in hope and trust that my dream of being recognized as a Roman Catholic priest will come true. Only God knows how we will achieve this goal. And so I am trying—with the abilities and possibilities I have to make an impact: I speak publicly on the topic to make people more aware. I am always standing up and speaking out for the equality of women in the Catholic Church. I take small steps with patience, humility, and modesty but they are clearing a path that will cut through the rigidity and fear of the hierarchical arm of the church.

You have mentioned the importance of working within the Church for change, a difficult path. How does this manifest for you?

I am absolutely convinced that the church—where I am most at home—carries forth the message of Jesus Christ, and so it is precisely because of the church’s imperfections that I criticize its administration, in the hope that we can all grow and develop as the faithful. I want the church to be a place where future generations will be at home. A place where people feel nourished and accepted, not excluded. In order to bring the lost sheep back within the fold, there will need to be radical changes—changes that are long overdue.

The church is like other areas of life where we need to find new ways to treat each other, and rejuvenate ways to express our faith. Language needs to be updated so that young people can also understand the message of Jesus; the out-dated power structures also need to be broken down; the approach to marginalized groups needs to be compassionate and more like Jesus; problems must be openly discussed and not only among theologians and lay people but within the Curia as well.

There needs to be a radical cleansing of old clichés and repeated gender roles that have long ago been shown no longer useful or correct. It is important to find a collective path toward dialogue.

How is women’s equality regarded in your country, including talking about the issue openly?

I live in a country where women have every opportunity in their professional and personal lives. I, too, am free to do almost anything, except, of course, become a priest. I am taking a class on human rights and want to write my thesis on the exclusion of women from the priesthood as a human rights issue.

The Catholic Church cannot and should not be able to close down the debate about the equality of women in their own ranks. The complete equality of men and women in the church is not an illusion or desire that doesn’t feel equal—no, the complete equality of men and women is a fundamental message of Jesus Christ, an essential Christian teaching.

You seem optimistic about the future. It is refreshing to hear, but…

Of course, I will not become a Roman Catholic priest tomorrow—of this I am fully aware. I understand the theological discussions and the official teaching on “authority,” and recognize that it is not speedy but it is also not impossible. The pursuit of the truth must go on. All of the faithful in the church can call on the strength of the Holy Spirit in this search. If the church stops seeking the truth, she will stand still, but the faithful simply don’t have the luxury to stand still and not serve—as women called to be priests we must advance our discipleship!

The arguments from Inter Insigniores have been disproved, and the dogmatic binding order from Ordinatio Sacerdotalis are highly questionable. It is a costly present that God has given me, but I would be betraying God and myself if I stay silent. The truth must be sought anew because the exclusion of women from the priesthood is unbearable.

I will continue to stand up for my calling to the priesthood and continue on this path, one that many other women have travelled. I will not give up. I know my dream of becoming a priest will only be realized in the future, and yet dreams come true when you actually take part in helping them come about. And that is exactly what I will continue to do—stand up and be brave!
Ministry of Prophetic Obedience

What We See and Say Matters
By Kathleen Gibbons Schuck

I hear the chimes. They awaken me from deep and restful sleep. Grateful to begin a new day, I savor the exquisite warmth of being wrapped in the safety of a supportive mattress, comfy sheets and a warm comforter. I roll back the covers and step into the new day.

Can You Hear Me Now?
Our daughter completes her first week of high school theology. That evening, she asks, “Mom, why is it that Monsignor treats Dad so differently than he treats you? You’re much more involved in our parish.” I respond perhaps it is because Monsignor is older and more comfortable dealing with men than women, to which Annie responds, “Grandpa’s older than Monsignor and he treats you the same as he treats Uncle Brendan and Uncle Jim.”

When truth is spoken, it resonates deeply. I look, and in that moment realize, at fifteen, our daughter notices her parents being treated differently by the man who leads our faith community. She questions this apparent inconsistency. In that moment, I see clearly I am complicit in a system I no longer believe in. I see my ministry, I see clearly I am complicit in a system I no longer believe in. I see it will apologize to the people who are treated unfairly. I see it will apologize to the people who are treated unfairly. I see it will apologize to the people who are treated unfairly.

Flashback to 1979 when a different Monsignor yet he treats you the same as he treats Uncle Brendan and Uncle Jim.”

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I wonder, “Where would I find an alternative?” An internet search and due diligence surfaces the community of Saint Mary Magdalene in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. The co-pastors are ordained Roman Catholic WomenPriests. Even though it’s a forty-minute drive, I decide I owe it to myself to investigate. I park on School Lane, just off Burmont. I notice the sign out front. I walk in the door, up the steps, and open the fire door.

What I see are smiling folks chatting with each other, a circle of chairs, colorful banners, and scaffolding. Looks like they’re doing some work on the windows I conclude.

I take two steps into the room when a woman about my age walks over and introduces herself as Eileen. She invites me to make a nametag. Within three minutes, I meet multiple men and women, learn Eileen is one of the pastors, and discover I’m really curious about what happens in this space.

I hear, “We use inclusive language... in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Liberating Spirit... our homilies are interactive... we say the words of consecration together...blessed is the One who comes... all are welcome to communion...” Intrigued, this experience feels closer to a twelve-step meeting than a Catholic Mass. We sit in a circle sharing from our hearts. Feels like I belong here.

When Mass ends, Fritz announces there’s a community meeting. He facilitates. I stay. This community makes decisions after listening to the voices of the people. Everyone is seen. Everyone is heard. Everyone gets a vote. Feels natural. The irony does not escape me: Until a week ago, I didn’t even know this community existed.

I remember the principal telling us the pastor vetoed the idea of parents blessing their children during the eighth grade graduation mass. No conversation. The pastor was clear; he would do any blessing.

When I look in my daughter’s eyes, it takes my breath away. The intensity of the message hits me like a ton of bricks. Feels like, “Engage even when you compromise yourself in the process” is the message I model. This is not the legacy I choose to pass on to my daughter.

Which Way Do I Turn?
I wonder, “Where would I find an alternative?” An internet search and due diligence surfaces the community of Saint Mary Magdalene in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. The co-pastors are ordained Roman Catholic WomenPriests. Even though it’s a forty-minute drive, I decide I owe it to myself to investigate. I park on School Lane, just off Burmont. I notice the sign out front. I walk in the door, up the steps, and open the fire door.

What I see are smiling folks chatting with each other, a circle of chairs, colorful banners, and scaffolding. Looks like they’re doing some work on the windows I conclude.

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It is 1980 when I first tell myself engagement is the key to changing the system. I enthusiastically serve as a lector, Eucharistic Minister, member of the parish council, Chair of the Liturgy Committee, minister of hospitality, script seller; you see me working in the kitchen at the carnival, coordinating pictures with Santa at the Christmas bazaar, planning special liturgies, taking photos at the play, coaching CYO sports, and facilitating fundraisers.

During a training session a year before the rollout of the Latin Missal changes, Monsignor suggests I must be a “radical feminist” due to my response to his musings that some people in the pews change the pronoun “He” to “God” when they respond. When the training ended, six people approached me and apologized for how Monsignor treated me. I saw the pattern clearly: the protocol is not to mention anything to the man who leads our faith community. She questions this apparent inconsistency. In that moment, I see clearly I am complicit in a system I no longer believe in. I see my ministry, I see clearly I am complicit in a system I no longer believe in. I see it will apologize to the people who are treated unfairly. I see it will apologize to the people who are treated unfairly. I see it will apologize to the people who are treated unfairly.

Kathleen Gibbons Schuck

What We See and Say Matters
By Kathleen Gibbons Schuck

I remember the principal telling us the pastor vetoed the idea of parents blessing their children during the eighth grade graduation mass. No conversation. The pastor was clear; he would do any blessing.

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"Women’s Cultures” Meetings at the Vatican Unsurprisingly Come Up Short

By Kate McElwee

The Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Culture took on the task of organizing a four-day event in Rome on “Women’s Cultures,” calling for wider discussions on the place for women in societies, “between equality and difference.”

For one, ill-timed twelve-day period (December 23-January 4), the Council asked women to respond to the prompts by submitting one-minute videos or photographs: “At what point are we today, as women? I am sure you have asked yourself many times, who you are, what you do, what you think about your being a woman, your strengths, your difficulties, your body, and your spiritual life. If you want to, you can share your vision.”

Italian actress Nancy Brilli was featured in two YouTube videos calling for women to participate (using the social media hashtag, #LifeofWomen), one in Italian and one in English. The English language video was removed within days of release after storms of confusion and disgust over the “coquettish” Brilli. However, the video was well received in Italy: another reminder that “the Vatican often forgets it’s a global institution, not an Italian one.”

Cardinal Ravasi, president of the Council, later admitted that the Council “made a mistake” with the video and actress, but I suspect he had little to do with it, as an unnamed ad hoc Consulta Femminile have been reported instrumental in the production of this effort. Nevertheless, the Council for Culture’s members are all ordained men, and while there is a group of “consultors” that include women (as well as Spanish Fr. D’Ors, who has spoken out for women’s ordination), it is unclear how engaged any of them are as non-members.

Mary Hunt described this effort in a recent article and photos of Italian politician Marco Buselli were used. These insensitivities to the loss of women’s narratives is not only jarring, but inexcusable.

We Are Church Ireland takes action Dublin nunciature, February 17, 2015.

Low points:

• While men played music on a stage, men read quotes from other men: John Dunne; Joseph Conrad; Vittorio Zucconi. A young married couple came to the stage and only the husband spoke. In discussing how women are treated in the workplace, politician Marco Buselli were used. These insensitivities to the loss of women’s narratives is not only jarring, but inexcusable.

• Stock images of women of color in colorful clothes without context, without a voice, without their stories (and I am assuming without their consent), flashed on a screen to uppity jazz music. Displaying images of women in war-torn countries, with children, praying, crying: who are these women?

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From Rome

What We see and Say Matters... continued from page 8

The Permission Slip

The following week Mary invites me to serve as Eucharistic Minister. As I pour water and say, “By the mingling of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity,” I feel a jolt as something releases deep in the center of my body. Now I get it; this is where I belong. As I drive home, the questions begin, “Who signed the permission slip that allowed you to say those words out loud? Who do you think you are?”

“Shame on you” is the graffiti chiseled in the backyard of my soul. Sometimes it dominates when my critical inside voice alternately yells at me, “You’re not good enough” and “Who do you think you are?” Here’s the amazing thing: The people in the community of Saint Mary Magdalene reflect and call me to show up as my deepest, most authentic self. That energizes me. It is incredibly freeing!

I tell myself animating community is my role. I begin a local community. I wrestle with the idea of pursuing ordination. I come to discover my deepest desire mirrors God’s desire for me. Even though I never thought of myself as a priest or in a prophetic role, I give myself permission to apply to be ordained a Roman Catholic WomenPriest. The whole-hearted journey heals my body, mind and soul.

Mother May I

When I initially share my plans with my mother, she responds, “Women priests: not in your life time!” and pleads, “Kathleen, can’t you find a way you can live in Blue Bell, PA, with her partner, Stan, and their daughter, Ann. Contact Kathy at kschuck55@gmail.com or www.smmcommunity.org.
Women’s Ordination Worldwide Third International Conference

WOW’s third international conference will take place in Philadelphia, 18-20 September 2015. Advocates for women’s equality in the Roman Catholic Church from around the world will gather to celebrate, be inspired, and join together as we grow our movement. The theme of the conference is Gender, Gospel, and Global Justice. In addition, we will celebrate WOC’s 40th anniversary!

Over three days, you will have the opportunity to:

• Network with individuals and groups working for women’s equality in the Catholic Church
• Participate in women-centered, feminist theology, liturgies, and leadership in prayerful interfaith action
• Learn more about the impacts of the Catholic Church on women and girls around the world
• Take a stand against misogyny and sexism in religion

Register, propose a workshop, or obtain exhibitor information can be found at www.womensordinationworldwide.org

Registration

Registration includes all conference workshops, academic seminars with renowned theologians, special events and receptions, and opportunities to take action.

• $275 Early Bird Registration (available until April 15, 2015)
• $300 Registration (April 16, 2015 to July 31, 2015)
• $350 Late Registration (After August 1, 2015)

In order to be reimbursed for conference costs, cancellations must be received in writing by July 31, 2015.

Hotel Information

The WOW Conference will be held at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, 1201 Market Street, Philadelphia, Penn. Hotel room reservations for the conference will be accepted by until Wednesday, August 12, 2015, 4:00 pm CST. Sleeping room reservations made after this date may not be eligible for the group rate and the hotel may be full.

Please book your room via the WOW booking form operated by NIX — they need a credit card to reserve and secure a room but no money will be taken from that card until the conference. The reservation serves to guarantee the booking. Rooms will be paid at the hotel at checkout.

Do not book your room directly through Marriott. WOW has negotiated the conference rate of $159 per room per night, plus tax. The current rate offered by the Marriott on-line is $259 so if you book via WOW it is a big saving.

Exhibit

Would you or your organization like to exhibit at our conference? One booth includes one conference registration. Exhibit space applications will be accepted through Wednesday, 26 August 2015.

Submit a workshop proposal on the theme of Gender, Gospel or Global Justice

We encourage workshops that address the theme of the conference through multicultural, international, feminist, and intersectional lenses.

Deadline is April 15, 2015.
Speakers

Teresa Forcades, nicknamed “Europe’s most radical nun” is a Catalan physician, a Benedictine sister and social activist. Her international reputation includes her politics on Catalan independence, her criticism of the pharmaceutical industry, and her writings on misogyny in the Roman Catholic Church.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, feminist theologian, writer, and Stendahl Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School. She is credited for coining the word “kyriarchy” in her book But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation.

Theresa Kane, Mercy sister, professor, and former president of the LCWR who issued a public plea to Pope John Paul II calling on him to include women in all ministries of the church.

Tina Beattie, British theologian, writer, and broadcaster. She is the Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Roehampton in London and Director of the Digby Stuart Research Centre for Religion, Society and Human Flourishing.

Patricia Fresen, South African writer and Roman Catholic theologian. Dr. Fresen was excommunicated and expelled from her Dominican order following her ordination with Roman Catholic Womenpriests.

Mary Hunt, feminist theologian, writer, co-founder and co-director of the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Shannen Dee Williams, historian of the United States and the black Catholic diaspora. She teaches courses in U.S., African-American, women’s, religious, and civil rights histories.

Roy Bourgeois, social justice advocate, Noble Peace Prize nominee and founder of the School of the Americas (SOA) Watch. He served as a Roman Catholic priest for forty years as a member of the Maryknoll community until he was expelled for refusing to recant his support for women’s ordination

Jamie Manson, writer and nationally recognized media commentator on issues related to LGBT Catholics, young adult Catholics, and women in the church.

Kate Kelly, Mormon feminist, human rights lawyer, and former member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) who was excommunicated for starting the LDS Ordain Women Movement.

Asra Nomani, feminist activist and former reporter for the Wall Street Journal for fifteen years, is the author of Standing Alone: An American Woman’s Struggle for the Soul of Islam. Nomani’s story is surveyed in the documentary, The Mosque in Morgantown.
Litany of Names • First Women's Ordination Conference

ALABAMA
Sera Butler MSBT

ALASKA
Andrea Neupert

ARIZONA
Lois Alers AP, not since inland

ARKANSAS
Rosie Roosevelt OSB

AUSTRALIA
Pamela, New Guinea, Wendy Flannery

BELGIUM
Odette de Buve, OP

CALIFORNIA
Anita Hughes OF, Catherine Ivancos, Diana Lamb FSC, Hellen Hammer OF, Mary O'Neill, Margaret Rose Nolan, Charlene Tschurich, Patricia Bruno OF, Cecilia M. Williams CSJ, Sally M. Brand, Rose Cecilia Harrington, Joan Josephson CSJ, Linda Rieker, Linda Zelazny, Dorothy Donovan CSJ, Elizabeth Thomas CHM, Patrick L. LaBelle, OP, Patricia Hinz CSJ

CANADA
Theresa Carmel Sklif, OP
Alice Marie McDonald
Mary Ann Ebbett BHM, Rosamaria Catalano
Jeanne Egan
Mary E Kline SND, Patricia Smith RSM
Sheila Hammond
Mary T. Malone, Gloria Elliott, Rev. Mother Dominitia, Gladys Johnson
Ellen Leonard, Judy Atherton, Patsy Turner, Michael Doyle CSP, Janet Leonard, Elliott D. Allen CSP
Nina Gennies LCN, Nancy Hesse, Carmel McIntyre, B. Murphy, Martin Heldsinger
Anne Johnson, Michelle Lutter, Cecilia Coraggio GNSH
Brenda O'Neil, Margaret McCarthy, Mary M. Schaefer
Dorothy Kunz, Kunga Zonzohn, Marie Claude Wepenny, Linda Spear, Katherine McKeough
J. Gregory Harran, H. W. Dugger, Nola Kenny, MD
Anne Fairey, Elizabeth Billerbeck, Marion Jovanovic CSJ, Therese Leliac CSJ

COLORADO
Heidi Sanders SL, Mary Anne Marlin SL, Pauline Buntington, Theresa Amore, Heidi Flaherty SC

ILLINOIS - Continued
Loretta Konkel, Rachel Reid, Mary Elizabeth McAlister OF, Judy Henson, Drusilla M. Carter, Virginia Donnelly RSCJ, Betty欲性 OF, Ann E. Patrick JSM, Avila Clarence RSM, Marilyn Quinlan BVM, Anne Marie Kane BVM, Joy Jeffel, Mary Ann Setter, Charlotte Dahm OF, Carol Craig, Wendy Yancey, A. M. McGrath, Ann Marie Kilgore, Elizabeth Rose, M. Elizabeth McManus, Nora D'Amico OP, Eleanor M. Seitz OF, Margaret Smale
Monica Stuhlsater, Patty Cowley, Mary Cecile Quirk, Penny Dullard, Mary Sharon Egan, Georgann Imbert, Terese Terry OF, Margaret Dewey OF, Susan M. Van Blerkom, Mary Ann
Marie H. Bair, Peg Dunn, Jane McKinley, Amice Callahan RSCJ, Marilyn Ray BM, Mary Ruth Rent, Mary Anne Zuber, Paula M. Fitzmaurice, Margaret Tuttle, Sam Ealy, Dorothy Dyer SSF, Lenora Maier, Elaine Haller, Kathy Brysma, Peg Murphy, Brenda McCarty, Wayne L. Fahn, Bruce McNeala, Sallie Watkins EFCC, Mary Canilla Huber, Marie Catherine Falconer, Susan M. Lamb, Rose Weeks OF, Patricia Kennedy, Gabe Mack, Susan Sherrill SC, Marian McIlroy SL, Mary Catherine Rabbit SL, Rose Ann Hanaman OSB, Barbara Huber SL, Rose Collier SL, Maureen McCormick SL, Diane Faust SL, Evelyn Houshian, CONNECTICUT
Ginny Bauk RSI, Janet Labrecque, Nancy Nutter, Nancy Rose Choo, Marchelle Marie Tucker OF, Claire Bonneau SSMH, Mary Elizabeth RDS, Maggie Ann Purtill, Patricia Cook RSM, Roberta McGrath RSM, Mary Anne Fahey CND, Eleanor Ray, Lynne L. LaBracio, Gail V. Rina, Anne Fahey, Margaret Farley RSM

ENGLAND
Christine O'Neil, Jean Morris

FLORIDA
Mary Angela Goodson

GEORGIA
Lynda Naccio, Mary Ann Lacy GNSH, Sheila Kelly GNSH, Janet Yelton GNSH, Marcella Donahue

GERMANY (Federal Republic)
Gudrun Diezel

IDAHO
Hele Mary S., OP

ILLINOIS
Barbara L. Wernke, Barbara Nolan BVM, Jane Frances DeChirico IBVM, Mary Lou Weld IBVM, Mary Lipkus Boply BVM, Frances J. Brown, Margaret Heim OF, Mary Casey OP, Theora Sage RSM, Marion Cooper RSM, Mary Kavanagh, Helen J. Asch, OP, Mae W. Flood, Eugene M. Sleisfeld, OP, Anne Gillis, Maggie Fisher, Kathleen Keane OSF, Jacqueline Wetherbee, Georgene Wilson OFSFP, Kathleen Ash OF, Mark Snajd OF, Joan Bedroska OSF, Bob McCown OF, Rosemary Abramowski OF, Jane O'Shay, Larry Eidenbeck, Maude Hernandez, Margaret M. Kopych ASC, Therese Anne Kiefer ASC, Dolores Asample ASC, Mary M. McNamee, Constance Campbell, Claudia Huber, Ursula Kennedy, Carol Singer OSF, William G. Goldsmith SL, Patricia Crowley SL, William G. Thompson SL

KANSAS
Betty Jean Good, Rosemary Kott, Barbara Overman OSF, Joann Gourley OF, Karen J. Smith, J. Shirley Knoell RSCJ, Diane Lutzke OSF, Mary dePaula Combs, Ellen L. Burke, Mary Collins, Louise Hogenauer, Margaret Zeller CB

KENTUCKY
Aster Margaret Cahill, Jan Ferra Farkas, Mary J. Richardson R, Lori Williams, Pat Clark SCN, Stephen Hengst SC, Mary Justin McCrae OF, Mary Susie B., Helen A., Adrian M. Hufsteter, Sarah M. Connors, Mary Briga Gregory OF, Patrice Rent PSK, Susan Sweeney, Carol KeesLER SC, Mary Kelly RSM, Joan Yollin OSB, Nancy Yumacon SL, Mary Francis Leute SL, Diane Dornay, Rev. Antoni Ladd, Helen R. Iderell, M. Catherine Hunt, Mary Rose Baring, Madeline Fitzgerald, Joan Campbell SL

LOUISIANA
Mary Anne Heen SSND, Theresa Drago O.CARM.
Allison Callahan HSC, Faye Ippolito OF, Mary J. Richardson, Jacqueline Treppe OSF

MAINE
Camille Poulin FSC, OF
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MARYLAND
M. Clarence Webb RSM,
Jeanine Gramacki,
Dominic Gutierrez RSM,
Catherine Lano,
Rosemary B. Chao,
Philip S. Krause SJ,
Sarah T. Neale SSND,
Carol A. Gallagher RSM,
Janet Erlene Walsh MSHS,
Daniel Murphy MSHS,
Charm Walsh,
Elizabeth Haire,
Carol E. Smith,
Dolly Pomerleau,
Eliza Marshman OSF,
Eden Quinn OSF,
William Callahan OSF,
Julia A. Hope.

MASSACHUSETTS
Chloe F. Lowrey RSCJ,
Margaret McDonnell RSCJ,
Teresa Morse,
Madeline T. Webster,
Jean Pat Farnbach OSF,
Nancy Burke,
Camille Nord,
Anne Weste RSCJ,
Jean Marie Burns RSM,
Diane Stro, 
Sister Mary Hart,
Bethany Prusin CSJ,
Mary M. Maione OSF,
Annette Rafferty SSJ,
Barbara Ann Thomas,
Loretta Maloney RSM,
Humbert McGrath RSM,
Harold Harrington,
Gonzaga Landigan SC,
Joseph Loughlin,
Barbara Zanetti,
Margaret,
Maureen Keneary,
Carol McCarthy OP,
Susan L. Costa,
Kathryn Picard,
Kathleen Daly SSD,
Nancy Young,
Newton Centre Virginia Bayne.

MICHIGAN - Continued
Mary Elizabeth Odell OP,
Frances Belmonte OP,
Juliette Bouquet,
Julie Kelly SND,
Louis Moretti,
Hein Wright,
Robert Marie CSI,
Kevan G. O’Connell SJ,
Barbara Ferraro SND,
Barbara Kelly SND,
Marie Del Duca SND,
Deborah Johnson,
Nancy Sondors,
Evelyn Conley,
Carol Cato,
Lauren C. Driscoll,
Marie McDermott,
Eileen Kelly SND,
Theresa Ahmad MBST,
Mary Matthews,
Rita Rice,
Thomas Calandra SJ,
Richard Howard SJ,
Jean Carol SND,
Peggy Combe,
Brian McDermott SJ,
Margaret Hussey,
Jeanne Marie Allen,
Marie Quinlan EM,
Irene Dorey CSM,
Barbara Homan,
Eileen C. Huber OP,
Mary Kenneth,
Jane Redmond,
Elaine M. Schmidt,
Evelyn Glare,
Robert Brumba OP,
Richard McBrien,
Christine Lamment,
Gail Marie Beauvais SSD,
Marcia Huei,
Catherine Calm.

MICHIGAN
Mary H. Smithbrook OP,
Esther Kennedy OP,
Mary Lou Petrov OP,
Margaret Andrzejewski OP,
Mary E. Foley OP,
Nancy Bauer SSJ,
Sister Mary Joseph,
William G. Petron.

MICHIGAN - Continued
Bonnie Moore OP,
Barbara Jackson,
Annie Guinan OP,
Cmins Flowers OP,
Mary Markus,
Elizabeth Mary Burns,
Olg M. Bonfiglio,
Patty Angel OP,
Patricia Smith,
Elaine Sprecher,
Barbara E. Sprecher,
Mary C. Hiltz,
Dianne Chun,
Kathleen Marlo,
Lena B. Mergulich,
Mary Margaret Hennard OP,
Janet Schifferlee OP,
Elizabeth Marie Burns,
Mary More,
Mary Theresa Mackey,
Annie Conners,
Lois Morgan,
Mary Jacques Rau OP,
Jeanette Walter HMA,
Marcia Godenburg,
Glen Busch,
Clare Anne OP,
Barbara Walsh OP,
Sister Mary Catherine CSI,
Margaret Burns HMA,
Adele St. Clair,
Rita T. Schaefer OP,
Steven Clark,
John Vittone,
Annie C. Gannon,
Stevie B. Musgrove,
Mary Margaret Hennard OP,
Janet Schifferlee OP,
E. M. Barrer OP,
Mary Zimmermann,
Robert L. Reid OP,
Kathleen McNeil OP,
Vicki Kapkowski,
Patty Fray,
Joyce O’Farrell,
Barbara Edgar,
Kathleen Reilly,
Kitty Joachim HM,
Dominic Keene RSM,
Wanda Epp OP,
Sister Karen Kopyingu OP,
Sheila Powers OP,
Sandra K. Boyd,
Vicki Hoh,
Alice Malin,
Ann Curtemp HM,
Barbara Rehse,
Francine Bonnwell,
Krista Gillings HM,
Jen Ryan,
Mary Ann Feather.

MICHIGAN - Continued
Annette Smitt OP,
Wanda Hanus,
Ghita Kiefer OP,
Jackie Cullen HM,
Gretchen Elliott RSM,
Diane Kelly OP,
Maureen Coleman OP,
Margaret O’Neill OP,
Roberta Kolman,
Mary Alphonse OP,
Mary Louise Watkins,
Maureen Koly.

MINNESOTA
Mary Lou O’Neill OP,
Carolyn Erickson,
Mary Ann Muehlhoff,
Vicki Kate SSSD,
Elene Feist,
Ila Lang,
Renee Smith,
Ken Rogers,
Mary Anthony Wagner.

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### Litany of Names • First Women's Ordination Conference

**NEW MEXICO**
- Catherine Stewart Roche, M.D.
- Kathryn A. Lerner
- Elizabeth Beugler
- Dorothy Newman

**NEW YORK**
- Regina S. Bechtel, J.D.
- Jean Flannery, J.D.
- Elaine Ostrin
- Isabel M. Foster, J.D.
- Charlotte Hartline
- Barbara Fox, Ph.D.
- Amadae McNeill
- Evelyn A. Landstrom, M.D.
- Helene Malley
- Patricia McKeehan, O.S.U.
- Linda Jones
- Mary Jane Mitchell
- Ursula Joyce O'Sullivan
- Adelle Myers, Ph.D.
- Suzanne E. Lieberson
- Patricia Harrigan
- Ann Patricia Ware, S.L.
- Jeanne Clark, O.P.
- Dorothy Kane, O.P.
- Kathleen McKernan, O.P.
- Kathryn Waters, O.P.
- Patricia Wolf, R.S.M.
- M. Therese Kane, R.S.M.
- Mary Anna Marie Faughnan, R.S.M.
- Letitia Brown, O.S.U.
- Helen Hoffmann
- Patricia Jeffry
- Kristen Wenzel, R.S.M.
- Caroline D'Amico, R.S.M.
- Margaret Voss, O.S.U.
- Mary Boyle, S.N.D.
- Elizabeth Gorga
- Kathy Veitch
- Annamaria Priglio, V.O.L.
- Virginia Lee Ossie
- Peter R. Richey, Ph.D.
- Marilyn Del Rey
- Rhoda Louise Beem, R.S.M.
- Doris Dombey
- Maureen McCullough, O.P.
- Mary Lake Toben, S.T.
- Veronica Greeler, O.P.
- Regina Fabritius, O.P.
- Patricia O'Neill
- Margaret Langley
- Janet Wahl, R.S.M.
- Joan Schlosberg
- Marlene J. Vigen, R.S.M.
- Barbara A. Howard
- Marcela Huestel, O.M.
- Marie Kevin, S.S.
- Michelle Breiter, S.J.
- James Rice
- Frances Flanagan
- Catherine Walsh
- Agnes Boyce
- Hilene Loqui
- Janice Andrea Bredel
- Barbara Powers
- Eilers Burke, O.P.
- Mary Elizabeth Early
- Patricia Neone, O.S.U.
- Mary Anne Daily, O.S.M.
- Patricia Connors
- Regina Murphy
- Mary Donahue
- Mary Louise Bink, O.P.
- Susan Shorlinski, O.S.U.
- Margaret Collins, O.S.U.
- Cecilia McLaughlin
- Marie-Cecile Miranda, O.S.U.
- Gena J. McCrudden, O.P.
- Rita Catherine Young
- Valarie Lord, O.P.
- MaryAnn Verheyne, O.S.U.
- Anne Marie Filippimova, R.S.M.
- Conessa, R.S.M.
- Patricia Portuk, R.S.M.
- Rosemary Mahoney, R.S.M.
- Jaclyne Horan, O.C.N.
- Frances Bauer, O.S.U.
- Janet Farro, O.S.U.
- Leota, R.S.M.
- Paul Bevers
- Louise Collins
- John W. Copplege
- Joseph M. Jankowski
- Anne Marie Dunley, S.S.U.
- Efta Zurecki
- Carla Dobke, O.S.U.
- Nicholas Connolly, S.J.
- Lawrence Collins, O.P.
- Denise W. Mace

**NEW YORK - Continued**
- Renee Krisko, C.S.J.
- Mary Kathleen OSF
- Mary Anne Houck, S.J.
- Eileen St. Anthony
- Hyriel Bailey
- Meredith Valley, O.P.
- Diane Cullerton, O.S.F.
- Edith Kasten, O.S.F.
- Maryanta Coyne, S.C.
- Lynn O'Reilly
- Jannet Sheffler, C.L.
- Kim White
- George Tarpey, A.A.
- Eleanor Kiefer, O.S.F.
- Tina Thompson
- Barbara Flipo, R.S.M.
- Francine Theresa, S.S.P.
- Mary Benedict, O.S.U.
- Sheila Marie Tobbe, O.S.U.

**OKLAHOMA**
- Sylvia Schmidt S.F.F.C.
- Bridget Bernard, O.P.
- Jane Marie Lorel, O.S.B.
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Litany of Names • First Women's Ordination Conference

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Book Review

Reviewed by Sheila Peiffer

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz has finally begun to achieve the recognition she deserves as an accomplished poet, philosopher, theologian, advocate for women’s rights and first published feminist of the New World. Living in the last half of the 17th century, Sor Juana navigated the complex waters of a class-dominated society where women were not considered worthy of education, let alone being published or engaged in academic pursuits and where the citizens of “New Spain” (contemporary Mexico) vied for a voice in a traditional culture constructed by strict secular and Church hierarchies that excluded most people of mixed race backgrounds. As a woman who was the illegitimate daughter of a Spaniard absent father and a respectable, landed Creole mother, Sor Juana was automatically assigned a certain social role. Nonetheless, she managed not only to bridge those different cultures and worldviews, but also to make lasting contributions to the literary and theological disciplines of her time and beyond.

Yugar’s new book, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz: Feminist Reconstruction of Biography and Text provides an insightful entry into the many influences on Sor Juana and the place that she occupied in her particular historical and social milieu. Yugar’s book provides apposite biographical and sociological analysis for us to appreciate the weighty challenges that faced Sor Juana and the impact that her wit, literary fluency, wide-ranging knowledge, and accomplished writing had on both her contemporaries and present day search for models of feminist accomplishments. Sor Juana not only operated in a system that maintained male superiority over women, but also in one that favored a white, privileged ruling class. Her restless intelligence and relentless pursuit of the inner life of God’s people daily, diriamente.” (p. 23)

Yugar evinces a thorough familiarity with burgeoning sorjuanista scholarship. Her own particular emphases are stated at the outset: to demonstrate that “Sor Juana is not only a precursor feminist but also an ecofeminist and theologian.” (p. 22) Yugar draws on the methodologies of two prominent Catholic feminist theologians in this endeavor, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Rosemary Radford Ruether. Fiorenza’s “feminist historical reconstruction” and Ruether’s “feminist liberationist and ecological approach” provide the heuristic lens through which Yugar examines “the intersection of Sor Juana’s life and texts with her subsequent censure of patriarchally-based inequalities in 17th-century New Spain.” (p. 95)

In the biographical section, Yugar emphasizes the importance of three different communities of women who played in her formation: being raised in a household predominantly composed of sisters, aunts, grandmother, and single mother; serving as one of a bevy of ladies-in-waiting in the Vicereina’s court as a teen; and, finally, entering the convent in young adulthood, where she remained until her death in her late forties. Her Meso-American mother managed a large hacienda, the politically savvy Virreina encouraged her literary voice, and the strong religious women at St. Paula’s who lived behind convent walls, all supported and nurtured a spirit that was, from all accounts, independent, passionate, curious, inventive, and determined from early childhood.

Given all these characteristics of Sor Juana’s “her-story” it seems inevitable that she ran into trouble with the Church hierarchy. The nuances of the controversy are complex and interwoven with both ecclesial and political intrigue. All agree that she was “treated like a pawn in a quarrel between two powerful princes of the Roman Catholic Church.” (p. 67) The Spanish Inquisition was a contemporary reality of which Sor Juana was all too familiar. Nonetheless, she dared to write La Respuesta (The Response), which not only publicly refuted accusations about herself, but also repudiated the “misogynistic and patriarchal assumptions that women are incapable of reason and are subordinate in status to men.” (p. 70) Yugar points out Sor Juana’s advocacy for different sources of wisdom beyond Scripture and even beyond books, to include “the intricate structures of this world” and all of God’s creation (p. 73), demonstrating one aspect of Sor Juana’s emerging holistic, ecocentric approach to her 17th-century New Spain world.

Yugar also analyzes another major work of Sor Juana, El Sueño (The Dream). Here, Yugar concentrates on one major metaphor in the poem, that of noise and silence, in order to explore what it means to be human and to ponder “the tensions that co-existed in her land while at the same time envisioning a renewed society where all relationships between humans, earth, and the divine are equal.” (p. 93) Yugar argues that Sor Juana’s sueño is panentheistic, where “[G]od permeated all of creation” and she presciently call for the “interrelatedness of all people with the cosmos.” (pp. 93-94)

Yugar’s slim work on Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz will give those unfamiliar with this “first feminist” of the New World a good basic introduction to her life, work, and times, but also will pique the interest of those more knowledgeable about Sor Juana with some astute insights into her place in feminist herstory. Sor Juana deserves the attention of scholars like Yugar, for, as Rosemary Radford Ruether states in the introduction, “Sor Juana challenged the Church to affirm a fuller vision of what the mission of the church is all about, for both equality and justice for women with men and care for God’s creation.” (p. xii) Reading this account of a 17th-century search for justice and equality reminds us how much of Sor Juana’s sueño remains unfulfilled.

Sheila Peiffer is currently on the WOC board and lives in Connecticut with her husband.
Women’s Cultures...continued from page 11

- The event concluded with screenshots from social media, highlighting those who used the hashtag #LifeofWomen: a very selective sampling, void of the overwhelming numbers of those from Women’s Ordination Conference members and for those in favor of women’s ordination. Again, this political editing undermines the Council’s very “attempt” to amplify the voices of women; women have been anonymous voices and instrumental players erased and silenced throughout history, and this was no different. As a colleague recently said, “There are good intentions. But the barriers are up against women.”

High points:

- This happened. Yes, it is a crumb. But fighting the forces of Italian, Vatican, and patriarchal norms, a public forum where women were discussed, with women in the room is significant.
- Some of the work that women religious do to fight sex trafficking, domestic violence, poverty, and inequality was highlighted, although in a strange, “Vagina Monologue” starkness—three women religious were able to hold a microphone and talk about their life’s work, with Cardinals and ambassadors in the same room.
- Clips from public policy expert Anne Marie Slaughter’s TED talk on why women “still can’t have it all,” where she discusses “real equality” as not valuing women on male terms. This excerpt expanded on the issue of childcare, maternity and paternity leave, “a culture of care,” socializing men and women to embrace roles within the family and the workplace, and generally how women (and family life) are treated in the workplace.
- Theologian Marinella Perroni’s #LifeofWomen video was included in the final screening. Perroni was president of the Italian Women’s Theologian collective, and is a strong advocate for women in the Church and society.

Overall, this exercise shows us how clumsy the Vatican can be with anything to do with women.

And the uniqueness of this event and its intentions are undermined by two other factors: the Preliminary Report on Women’s Cultures, submitted by the Italian Consulta Femminile and the accompanying image Man Ray image, Venere Restaurata (1936.)

When this image was first noticed by Women’s Ordination Worldwide organizers, we thought perhaps it was someone subversively acknowledging the role of women in the Church, or even giving more credit than is due, perhaps meant to depict the struggles of women in the Church and society. However, We Are Church Ireland organizer, Solime Humbert added some context:

Like many other male Surrealist artists, Man Ray tended to objectify women and define them as subordinates…there is a recurrent sadistic streak in his artwork, as well as in his relationships with women, characterized by domination and aggression. Mary Hunt agrees: “Unless the document writers are willing to concede (which they do not) that the Roman Catholic Church’s theology and policies on sex and reproduction tie women in knots (except for their Fallopian tubes), I respectfully suggest that this image, like the YouTube video, be retired before it causes more scandal….For too many people such imagery is not fifty shades of anything but violence and oppression.”

The report, which bears no “official” teaching or endorsement is divided into four disjointed categories, essentially acknowledging that women are different; generativity, explained only in terms of a woman’s womb; the pressure of “culture” on women’s bodies; and roles women might take on in the life of the church, if they haven’t already fled.

While the report acknowledged some gender-specific violence against women, it was fraught with socially-constructed stereotypes and attempts to say they are “natural,” with corresponding gender-defined roles and an extraordinary focus on a woman’s womb. This thinking and language have been challenged and rejected in scholarship for decades, and are wildly culturally and spiritually unacceptable.

The report also categorically rejected the idea of women’s ordination, stating that “statistically it is not something that women want,” despite the reports that said “a number” of the submission for the #LifeofWomen Campaign were from ordination advocates… and no statistics are cited. I must admit that watching the event in Rome, and the subsequent responses from feminists in the U.S., I developed a sort of protective stance toward the whole “Women’s Cultures” experience. While I overwhelmingly agree with the outrage, when it comes to women, the Vatican is a walking target: a huge, easy target. The immediate disdain and sarcasm, followed by familiar canned responses removes any light from gray areas, which I believe exist. Perhaps the human attached to the voice gets lost from Rome to Washington, but when we lose sight of the human element, we lose sight of nuance and the possibility for change.

I had the experience recently of asking in a social media forum for self-identified Catholic women if any had received a response from the Pontifical Council for Culture from their videos or photos. The response was immediate sarcasm, snark, and did you really think you would? Of course not. I know the internet is cruel, but when seasoned or older feminists shut down a woman who is still asking questions, who is still willing to entertain hope, perhaps this calls for some self-reflection and openness.

I recognize that it can be unpopular to say, “it’s complicated,” even just as an observation and not as a justification, but that is my sense of the efforts from the Pontifical Council for Culture. It is complicated. I believe they are receiving bad advice and playing a safe (and frankly insulting) game, but in some sense are doing something new. Not enough, yes, and patriarchy is a slow beast. But as feminists we must continue our refrains against the beast, and at least for now, this feminist wants to shed a little light and remain hopeful for the movement.

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Recent Events

Interfaith Feminists Joined Together to Challenge Gender Discrimination in Religion on International Women’s Day

Women of faith marked International Women’s Day on Sunday March 8, 2015 by joining together in a global, interfaith fast and social media campaign (#EqualInFaith) for gender justice and the equality of women in their faith communities. The day-long fast and social media campaign culminated in interfaith prayer services and regional gatherings more than 20 cities across 4 continents. Local groups debuted a video compilation of photographs from dozens of advocates around the world holding “I am Equal in Faith” signs and banners.

Equal in Faith organizers embraced the official theme of International Women’s Day 2015, “Make it Happen,” as a call for all people of faith to stand with women everywhere in the struggle for equality.

“When women are denied equitable leadership positions in their faith, it is part of a larger culture of sexism that not only silences women’s vocations and voices, but implicitly gives permission to the rest of the world to discriminate against women,” stated Kate McElwee.

“Equality shouldn’t stop at the doors of our churches, synagogues or mosques,” asserted Lorie Winder. “We refuse to tolerate discrimination against women in our secular institutions. Why, then, do we accept it in our religious institutions? Since religion significantly impacts the broader culture, the marginalization of women in our faith communities affects all of us.”

Equal in Faith organizers include representatives from Ordain Women (Mormon), the Women’s Ordination Conference (Roman Catholic), and Ordain Women Now (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod). Launched on U.S. National Women’s Equality Day in 2013, we call attention to the marginalization of women in faith communities and foster solidarity across faith traditions in the struggle for gender justice in religion. For more information see www.equalinfaith.org.

Women’s Cultures...continued from page 17

Kate McElwee is WOC Co-Executive Director, based in Rome. Follow Kate at WOC’s Blog, The Table: www.womensordination.org/blog

Notes

1 Vatican hits sour note with women, but progress may come, AP http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU_RE_L_VATICAN_WOMEN/SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

2 Vatican’s smartest kid in the class keeps making waves, Crux http://www.cruxnow.com/church/2015/01/08/catholic-cardinal-vaticans-smartest-kid-in-the-class-keeps-making-waves/


4 Vatican Council on Women would be Funny were it not so Insulting, Religion Dispatches http://religiondispatches.org/vatican-council-on-women-would-be-funny-were-it-not-so-insulting/


7 See Marinella Perroni’s YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sh0luidrW

8 We are Church Ireland, “Outrage at Vatican’s choice of image” http://wearechurchireland.ie/outrage-at-vaticans-choice-of-image/

9 Vatican Council on Women (ref. 4).

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I am called to ordination. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ I have included names and addresses of friends who might be interested in WOC.
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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

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If you are an active member, you can get your username and password to log into our “For Members Only” section on our new website by emailing ehanna@womensordination.org and note in the subject: “Go Green.” You can also receive membership notices and donation acknowledgements electronically.

If you’re not a member, see page 15 for a membership form.
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