

# New Women New Church

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## On the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*

By Erin Saiz Hanna



Erin Saiz Hanna

Just before Thanksgiving, Pope Francis released his *Evangelii Gaudium* known as a blueprint for his papacy. Like Pope Francis's humble, pastoral nature, much of this 84-page

document will win over the hearts of many Catholics. As I read the document, I found myself really rooting for Francis when he said: "How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?" Yes. This is what Jesus would say. This is being Catholic. This is social justice.

When he stated "I readily acknowledge that many women share pastoral responsibilities with priests, helping to guide people, families and groups and offering new contributions to theological reflection. But we need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church" I was filled with hope. If only he had stopped there.

But he didn't. In his very next statement, he would break my heart like so many popes of the past. He followed that glorious statement by trying to put women back in their place and declaring to the world that women's ordination won't happen under his watch. He was even sure to iterate that we're not even supposed to discuss the issue.

Francis goes on to say, "The reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the Spouse who gives himself in the Eu-

charist, is not a question open to discussion, but it can prove especially divisive if sacramental power is too closely identified with power in general."

Where Francis misses the mark is suggesting that we are seeking ordination simply as means to gain power. While women's decision making and leadership is certainly vital, and something WOC has been advocating for decades, the fact of the matter is women are called by God to serve all people alongside their brother priests. For a pope who seems so in tune with the marginalized, how does he not see that the marginalized also need to be served by women as well as men; that women are part of the faithful and fully ready, willing, and able to serve God's people? How can his sense of social justice not extend to the women of the church and their capacity for ordained ministry?

This May marks the twentieth anniversary of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, the apostolic letter written by John Paul II, which declared all discussion on women's ordination officially closed. In his now infamous interview given to reporters en route to Rome from World Youth Day, Pope Francis referred to this document saying "on the ordination of women, the church has spoken and said no. John Paul II, in a definitive formulation said that door is closed."

The use of the expression "definitive" is important to note, because *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* was never declared an infallible document nor was word infallible ever used in the document, not to mention that it was also signed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, not Pope John Paul II (which means that it can more easily be undone). Pope Francis could, in fact, officially reopen



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Erin Saiz Hanna



Dear WOC members,

Happy New Year! I am proud to share with you this edition of the NewWomen, NewChurch. It reflects the progress we have made during the last few months. As you continue to read through the pages of this issue, I believe you will find equal inspiration in the stories of WOC supporters who continue to advocate on behalf of women both in our church and in the world.

You will meet some distinguished new board members on page 3. We are honored to have their expertise and energy. All of our board members recently underwent an intense strategic planning process with a consultant. Using your comments and input gathered earlier in the year, our board is in the process of drafting a plan to strengthen and increase membership programs and campaigns. Stay tuned for more developments in upcoming issues of NewWomen, New Church. Also, if you are interested in joining the board, let me know and I will put you in touch with our nominations committee. We are accepting board nominations until February 15th, 2014.

On page 4, we remember one of our sheroes and founders, Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt, who passed away on October 6, 2013. Muschal-Reinhardt actively fought to eliminate all forms of sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and ageism in church and society.

Rabbi Tamara Miller recounts our interfaith Equal in Faith day of prayer and fasting on page 5. This event, which was held in Washington, DC. on Women's Equality Day last August, gave WOC a special opportu-

nity to join hands with our sisters in the struggle who are also fighting patriarchy in their religious institutions. We learned a great deal from each other and found that our stories have much in common. Equal in Faith will be held again in 2014. If you are interested in hosting a prayer service in your community, let me know.

Kate Conmy, WOC Assistant Director, helps address some tough questions regarding Pope Francis and role of women in church on page 6 in her article responding to the challenge in an NCR article to "Put Ordination Aside." Throughout February and March, Kate will be blogging from Rome. Be sure to follow her organizing adventures through our web site on the WOC blog, called The Table.

On page 7, we publish an article by Ida Raming, a renowned theologian and one of the founders of the RCWP movement. Many of our long time readers will be familiar with the story Raming recounts but we thought to print it here for newcomers to the movement for that grounding of the activist women who stood their ground at the Second Vatican Council, reforms that we're still implementing even today.

We also continue to print and celebrate the stories of women who experience calls to ordination. In this issue we feature Donnieau Synder, who was recently ordained in the Roman Catholic Womenpriest (RCWP) movement. Snyder shares her very moving story on page 10.

In closing, thank you your prayers, activism and contributions to WOC. Your feedback is critical in making NewWomen, NewChurch a forum for public discussion about the women's ordination movement and the church and world we envision. Send your thoughts and suggestions to me at ehanna@womensordination.org

On behalf of all of the women of church we speak out for every day, thank you for your ongoing generosity and partnership.

Blessings,

Erin

Erin

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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## Meet Our Newest WOC Board Members

**Tracy Garrison-Feinberg** has been an educator since 1990, and a committed Catholic for far longer. After five years as a high school social studies teacher, she had a rich and rewarding career at the international non-profit organization Facing History and Ourselves, and recently joined the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County as the director of their Friedlander Education Institute, where she manages educational programs for students and schools.



Tracy was raised Catholic in an ecumenical setting by her Catholic mother, Baptist-raised and Catholic convert father, and Methodist grandparents. The informal theology lessons she got from her mother on the car ride home from church each Sunday helped form the basis for inquiry that Tracy nurtured throughout her college years in Austin, Texas at the University Catholic Center (UCC). She credits the Paulist priests there for “keeping me Catholic,” and she learned that a questioning Catholic could also be a faithful Catholic. Her work with the music program at UCC, particularly with Sister Margaret Andre, introduced her to feminist theology which has remained an important part of her spiritual journey. At Facing History and Ourselves Tracy worked with interfaith scholars, clergy and lay people who helped to connect the lessons of history to ongoing conversations of ethics, morality, and spirituality. Tracy brings this back-

ground to her commitment to WOC’s mission and is excited to work for an inclusive and accountable Church.

**Marion Flynn** from Evanston, Illinois, is an active parishioner at St. Nicholas parish in that town, lives with the tension of being a lesbian Catholic called to the priesthood. She earned an MBA from Northwestern University and is a former Senior Vice President with the Bank of America. She has spent the last few years as a fundraiser for a large, interfaith Catholic school in Chicago and for the United Way. She has experience as a board member of several nonprofits, has served as a city commissioner, led her parish council, and currently serves on the board of CROSO, an organization that supports college education for former street children in Uganda. She is not new to WOC, having served on the Event Committee for WOC’s 35th Anniversary.



**Margaret Johnson** from Washington, D.C., serves as a pastoral associate in the social justice ministry of a Catholic parish. After completing a B.A. in Theology and Religious Studies with a Minor in Peace Studies at The Catholic University of America, Margaret lived as a Jesuit Volunteer in Los Angeles, followed by four years in Catholic Worker communities. Inspired by the spirit that the Nun-justice Coalition in support of LCWR sparked in the summer of 2012, Margaret continues to follow her passion of delving deeper into the intersecting spheres of feminism, spirituality, community, and accountability in justice work.



WOC board meeting, October 2013 in Cleveland, Ohio

### *On the 20th Anniversary of Ordinatio Sacerdotalis...continued from page 1*

the discussion if he wanted to, but instead keeps offering the Catholic faithful refutable rationales instead of re-reading those documents and discovering for himself that they have no basis theologically, philosophically, scripturally, nor ecclesiastically. This pope needs to become educated on women’s ordination rather than stay stuck in the past and repeat unsubstantiated rules and practices that no longer serve our church or world.

For a pope who does not want “sacramental power too closely identified with power in general” he has indeed tried to exert his power over the discussion on women’s ordination. Pope Francis stated that the

“church has spoken and said no.” Pope John Paul II tried to end the conversation on women’s ordination in 1994 when issued this document. He did not succeed—we’re still talking. Neither will Pope Francis end the discussion. We will keep talking, serving in ministerial and sacramental roles, and WOC-ing our talk.

Throughout the coming months as we prepare for the twentieth anniversary of this outdated document, WOC, in partnership with WOW (Women’s Ordination Worldwide), will collect letters from the faithful Catholics who support the ordination of women and recognize that women, like men are both created in God’s image as

well as called by God to serve all God’s people, and in all ways, including holy orders. A delegation of women’s ordination advocates will hold a prayerful vigil and hand deliver to the Vatican the letters of women called and those standing up for justice in the church.

If you are interested in submitting a letter or joining us on this delegation, email me at [ehanna@womensordination.org](mailto:ehanna@womensordination.org). Pope Francis has been known to answer a letter or two—perhaps he will answer yours.

## Vatican Seeks Parish-Level Input: Catholic Organizations Launch Online Survey

On November 12, 2013 representatives from a coalition of 15 Catholic reform organizations traveled to Baltimore to the U.S. Conference of Bishops (USCCB) meeting to announce the launch of an online petition, set up to gather parish-level support for the Vatican's Synod on the Family, to be held in October, 2014. Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Vatican's Synod of Bishops, asked bishops' conferences to commence a survey "immediately as widely as possible to deaneries and parishes so that input from local sources can be received," something that the USCCB is unable or unwilling to do nationally. Largely based on the questions sent to the bishops, the coalition's

survey was altered to include inclusive and affirming language in both English and Spanish. Within just one week, the survey has collected over 7,000 responses, which will be independently and professionally analyzed, and sent to Cardinal Sean O'Malley; the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Carlo Maria Viganò; Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, President of the USCCB; and Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Vatican's Synod of Bishops.

In the weeks following the release of the survey, several diocese throughout the country have made similar survey questions available locally, some online and some in print only. Collection from the lay-lead survey will continue until December 15, 2013; the initial results will be sent by

the Vatican's deadline of December 31st, followed by an independent analysis by February 1, 2014.

This project is sponsored by the following members of Catholic Organizations for Renewal (COR): American Catholic Council; Call To Action; CORPUS; DignityUSA; Federation of Christian Ministries/Roman Catholic Faith Community Council in the Church; FutureChurch; New Ways Ministry; RAPPORT; Roman Catholic Women-priests; Southeastern Pennsylvania Women's Ordination Conference; Voice of the Faithful; and WOC.

Co-sponsors include: Catholic Church Reform; Fortunate Families; WATER: Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual.

## Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt 1933-2013

By Jeannette Mulherin

On October 6, 2013 WOC lost a founding mother with the passing of Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt, 80 years old, in Webster, New York.

A co-founder of WOC and a prominent leader in the Catholic feminist movement, Muschal-Reinhardt served on the first ordination conference task force and WOC's first core commission. She was a facilitator at the 1975 Detroit Conference and in 1978 took charge of the national WOC office, then in Rochester, New York, with her colleague and close friend, Ada-Maria Isasi-Diaz.

Muschal-Reinhardt's activist spirit was nurtured in childhood by a mother who worked outside the home (atypical in the 1930's) and a father who did housework, both of whom encouraged her to question injustice. After graduating from Cathedral High School in Trenton, New Jersey, she entered a Sisters of Mercy convent, but left a year later to attend Rider College where she was awarded a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Education. She went on to earn a Master of Arts in Religious Education at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School and a Master of Divinity degree from the Jesuit School of Theology at Loyola University Chicago.

Staunchly committed to the church as a young woman, Muschal-Reinhardt enthusiastically responded to the Second Vatican

Council by visiting parishes to educate fellow Catholics on the changes. Further involvement in education included work as a public school teacher and consultant to religious education programs in Puerto Rico, Argentina, and Rochester.

Muschal-Reinhardt spent the latter part of the 1970's attempting to establish a meaningful dialogue between the Catholic women's movement and the U.S. bishops. This effort included lobbying at annual National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) meetings and participating in official dialogues between the NCCB's Committee on Women and WOC. She was the keynote speaker at the National Organization of Women (NOW) New York conference in 1978.

As her awareness of Catholic women's inequality grew, Muschal-Reinhardt ceased financial support to the church, explaining that she would not contribute to her own oppression. She ultimately broke ties with the institutional church but remained close to other movement women and eventually became a Covenant member with the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters in Wheaton, Illinois.

Muschal-Reinhardt's tremendous contribution to the cause of women's equality continued throughout her lifetime. She served as the national coordinator for the Women's Church Coalition, later re-named Women-

Church Convergence and in 1988 she co-founded Mary's

Pence, an organization that collects funds for women's ministries. By the early 1990's she was co-coordinating the Prism Collective, the purpose of which was to "foster feminist scholarship for adolescent women," "to publish books on women-affirming spirituality," and "make the world safer and saner for all women." Prism Collective published and produced several mixed-media projects including the video, "Choices at the Crossroads" in 1994.

Catholic feminists owe a debt of gratitude to Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt, on whose shoulders we now stand. The words she spoke at the Detroit conference in 1976 still inspire those who continue the work she began, "We convene this conference as an act of faith, hope, and love in you and in the community of the people of God. We come because we must. We have heard your good news."

### Reference:

Mary J. Henold, *Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).



Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt

# Equal in Faith: Fasting for Gender Justice

By Rabbi Tamara Miller

## Yom Kippur Reading: Isaiah 58:4-9

Surely this is the fast I choose: To break open the shackles of wickedness, to undo the bonds of injustice, to let the oppressed go free and annul all perversion... Then your light will burst out like the dawn and your healing will speedily sprout... Then you will call and God will respond. You will cry out and God will answer 'Hineni, I am here!'

Holy troublemakers disturbed the peaceful setting inside the church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Northwest Washington, DC on Monday, August 26, when dozens of men and women concluded their fasting for gender equality in faith with a closing interfaith hour-long service. Hundreds of others joined the live online streaming event from across the country.

I represented the Washington Friends of Women of the Wall (WOW). This organization's central mission is to achieve social and legal recognition of our right, as women, to wear tallit and tefillin, worship and read from the Torah collectively and aloud at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

For my Catholic sisters, it means Women's Ordination Worldwide, aka WOW.

In the Lutheran Church, Ordain Women Now works to promote open discussion within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod about the ordination of women.

The Mormon group, Ordain Women, advocates for the ordination of women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Over lunch, Erin Saiz Hanna, WOC's Executive Director, Lorie Winder and a group of Mormon feminists, cooked up Women's Equality Day, a nation-wide fasting for gender justice and the equitable inclusion of women in all religious traditions.

The five all-women speakers sat together in the front pew. I sat next to Rabia Chaudry, a Muslim woman and local attorney, who spoke cogently about women in the Islamic tradition.

"What is painful to me as someone who loves Muhammad, that today, the treatment of women in Muslim lands and by Muslim men is known to be unforgiving, constricting, and sometimes brutal. Whereas centuries ago faith liberated the



*Equal in Faith Leaders meet in DC: Lorie Winder, Ordain LDS Women; Kate Conmy, WOC; Carol Schmidt, Ordain Women Now-Lutheran Church; Rabbi Tamara Miller, Women of the Wall; Rabia Chaudry, local Muslim feminist; Erin Saiz Hanna, WOC; Kate Kelly, Ordain LDS Women*

Muslim woman, today it is used to oppress her. The misogyny found in Muslim communities is nothing but a defamation of the life and message of the Prophet Muhammad."

*Speaking up and speaking out can agitate for advancement and inclusivity in our religious establishments.*

Carol Schmidt's voice pleaded for a thoughtful discussion on the possibility of the ordination of women by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, an auxiliary of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

"Our greatest challenge in gathering people to join in this call for discussion is the heavy handed threat that the Missouri Synod holds over its workers and their families. To openly advocate for the ordination of women can bring charges of heresy, excommunication and job loss...we are moving backward."

Erin Saiz Hanna, WOC's Executive Director, spoke on behalf of "the millions of Catholics worldwide who stand firm in the knowledge that God created women and men equally." Unfortunately, she stated, the new pope, St. Francis, reiterated what the papacy has repeatedly professed. "Women are special but not equal." The injustices continue.

Lorie Winder, an organizer of Ordain Women from California, stated that the

fight for women's equality in the Mormon Church has only just begun.

"Why do we women remain in religious institutions that marginalize us? There are many reasons—belief, conviction, the desire to serve, cultural identity, family ties, political and societal influences, to name a few. The point is if we care about a just society and recognize that religions significantly impact the broader culture, we all have a stake in this... we have a choice. We can either perpetuate inequality through silence and inaction, or we can faithfully agitate and make holy trouble."

Listening to the women from other faith traditions, I realized that what we do as a Jewish group for equitable rights for women in Israel or around

the world, affects all women of all faiths who struggle to find a way to serve God in equal measure.

Rabia Chaudry gave voice to this message. "Whether your struggle is ordination or raising your voices at a sacred wall, know that your Muslim sisters are with you as we find our way to God."

Many of my female contemporaries have witnessed significant progress in all our religious traditions. However, the tide can turn away from the privileges and the responsibilities we as women have obtained not just for ourselves, but also for future generations of daughters and granddaughters. Speaking up and speaking out can agitate for advancement and inclusivity in our religious establishments.

Our sacred unorthodox service ended with a song and a clarion call for sisterhood as we each added our names and our ribbons to the wreath symbolizing gender justice.

"Sister, carry on. Sister, carry on. It may be rocky and it may be rough, but Sister carry on." (Written by Carolyn McDade)

*Rabbi Tamara Miller, is one of the founders of Washington Friends of the Women of the Wall, WOW. She currently lives in Washington, D.C.*

*This article originally ran in Washington Jewish Weekly on September 11, 2013.*

# Some Thoughts on the Suggestion to "Put Ordination Aside"

By Kate Conmy



Kate Conmy

In "investigating further the role of women in the Church,"<sup>1</sup> leaders in the Catholic Church are asking women to put ordination aside. "If you remove it [the issue of women priests], you're able

to talk about other really important matters,"<sup>2</sup> Kerry Robinson, Executive Director of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management explained at the launch of the "women's issue" of the Jesuit-run magazine, *America*. Robinson and a small cohort of women (who have family connections with some cardinals) have participated in private discussions with Vatican officials and cardinals on "what obstacles exist to prevent women from being included"<sup>3</sup> and detailed possible solutions. Reportedly, their suggestions included expanding the number of women in professional roles in major Vatican departments; increasing the number of women advisers to pontifical congregations and councils; restoring women to diaconal ministry; and appointing women to the Vatican diplomatic corps and communications apostolate.

"Since ordination is off the table, some other solution must be sought that will lead to a church in which women are, if not more important than priests and bishops, at least equally so, sharing equally in the governance and guidance of the people of God."<sup>4</sup>

The problem isn't that women already share equally in the governance and guidance of the people of God, but that even if women become part of these administrative and leadership roles equally with men, it is still a support system surrounding an exclusively male hierarchy. Simply advocating for women's leadership, or "feminine genius," in the Church is like saying you can play baseball, but your team doesn't get a bat. As Catholics we are responsible for our clerical culture, if we do not address the clergy, who decides who is part of the clergy, and who is allowed to "be clergy," then we simply dance around an altar of oppression. If women cannot stand in the place of Christ at the altar then we perpetuate the false notion that God's incarnation

was most supremely about maleness, instead of humanity.

"But, putting [women's ordination] aside for the moment (which *NCR* does not do lightly), there are plenty of other stained-glass ceilings in this church that women could break if only he'd let them."<sup>5</sup>

In the same breath, *NCR* puts women's ordination aside, and firmly places the control in the hands of "he," Francis. When we put ordination aside, we put aside the power to question what is most threatening to those whom the status quo affirms. Putting ordination aside is putting God and God's call aside, something we cannot afford to do.

*"But throwing our own agenda out is neither nuance nor negotiation, but a compromise on our understanding of the Body of Christ"*

"You have to take interim steps to bring women into participation in the church, and you don't start off by getting ordination. Personally, I think we need to look at what we can do now and not lose opportunities that are right in front of us."<sup>6</sup>

In a recent *Tablet* article, "Women in the Church, How Far Can We Go?" Fr. Peter Day urges his readers: "Indeed, as aspiring Christ-followers, are we not compelled to challenge the ongoing patriarchal constraints being imposed upon women today? And, like him, must we not also refuse to allow custom, or habit, or closed minds, or the way we have understood things in the past, to hinder us from giving women a voice; or, at the very least, having a mature and respectful debate about the issue?"<sup>7</sup> A thousand times yes, but Fr. Day concludes his article with the question: "Have you noticed how women are marginalized in our Catholic Church?"

The double-take required to read these recent articles is astounding. It is so clear that women and men understand that the Vatican has a gender problem and yet with that knowledge and lived experience, we are asked to pivot away from the priesthood. Mary Daly wrote of the reforms of Vatican II: "It had appeared that a door had opened within patriarchy which could admit an endless variety of human possibilities."<sup>8</sup>

Daly describes a "cloud of optimism" surrounding, fogging the Church that allowed even herself to become addicted to archetypal manipulation.

A similar weather pattern, the "Francis-effect," has a public relations light so bright that after the rain storms of Benedict, Catholics only wish to see rainbows. These rays have blinded even progressives who are all too happy to open the windows (not a door, for "the church has spoken and that is closed") for any new air, just wide enough as to not disturb the sexism. These windows for greater leadership roles for women are indeed opportunities, but sweet euphemisms ring hollow when consecration is still gendered. Patriarchal institutions, Daly suggests perpetuate an "artificial environment of spiritual deprivation and illusion" that wrongly attribute spiritual energy to "the very males who have betrayed us."<sup>9</sup> Francis is a phenomenon in Rome, on the Internet, and on the agenda of every progressive Catholic organization I know. But throwing our own agenda out is neither nuance nor negotiation, but a compromise on our understanding of the Body of Christ. The mistake here is to think that we are involved in a negotiation, where sides come together to sort out a deal: everything but ordination pitted against "radical feminism hostile to the Church."<sup>10</sup> Yet "everything but ordination" asks Catholics to get excited about decorating a tree with new lights, ornaments, bobbles and balls, without looking at the root system, or worse, not looking to see that the tree itself has been long dead.

If ordination is really to be put aside, let us look to what and who else is cast aside in our society and know that that is always where our work lies.

*Kate Conmy is the Assistant Director of WOC. She currently lives in Washington, D.C.*

## Notes

- 1 Spadaro SJ, Antonio. , *America Magazine* (New York) "Big Open Heart to God," Sep 30, 2013 (Accessed November 15, 2013).
- 2 Griffin, Beth. "Speakers See Vatican Openness to Including More Women in Church Roles," *Catholic News Service*, November 8, 2013 (accessed Nov 15, 2013).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Cones, Bryan. "Finding Leadership Roles for Women in the Church," *US Catholic Magazine* 78: 11 (2013), p. 8.

*continued on page 9*

# Women as Pioneers at Vatican II

By *Ida Ramming*

## Introduction

As an event of vast scope concerned with church policy, even after 50 years the Second Vatican Council still exerts a determinative influence on theological discourse within and outside the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, due consideration is scarcely ever given to the fact that 50 per cent of the “people of God” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* 9), weren’t even present at the Council initially. It was only from the third session (September 1964) that a small group of carefully selected women were allowed entry as so-called “auditors.” In a gripping book with the significant title *Guests in Their Own House*,<sup>2</sup> Carmel McEnroy describes the impressions and testimonies of this tiny group of auditors. She tells of the very considerable misogyny of many conciliar “Fathers” at the beginning, and how, with the aid of a few courageous theologians (such as Bernard Haring) and bishops (Suenens, Malula, Coderre), they were able to exert a definite though very limited influence on a few formulations in the conciliar documents, in the last two phases of the Council. Through the no more than symbolic presence of a few women, an outside initiative was able to affect this closed male conciliar society.

A number of legally and theologically trained women, who had observed the preparations for the Council attentively, confronted this entirely male church assembly with their call for women to be ranked and valued in accordance with the times we live in.

## The first petition to the Council for the ordination of women

Swiss lawyer Gertrud Heinzelmann (1914–99), holder of a doctorate in law, first raised the demand for women’s ordination publicly and emphatically. In May 1962, even before the Council began, she sent a comprehensive submission to the preparatory Commission, which she introduced with these rousing words: “I address you as a woman of our own times who is well aware of her sisters’ needs and problems... I trust that what I say will be taken as intended: as the grievance and appeal of half the human race; of female humankind, oppressed for thousands of years and suffering a repression to which the Church with its theory about women has contributed and still contributes in a way deeply harmful to the Christian conscience and awareness.”<sup>3</sup> As a Catholic woman and lawyer

who had already campaigned for many years for political voting rights for women in Switzerland, she was conscious of the fateful influence of misogynistic church attitudes on society in general. While working on her thesis on constitutional law and church–state relations, she also prepared an extensive collection of texts from the works of Thomas Aquinas with her own critical commentaries, to which she referred when preparing her contribution to the Council.

*“I address you as a woman of our own times who is well aware of her sisters’ needs and problems...”*

Her submission includes a critical rejection of the ontic depreciation of women (under the influence of Aristotelian ideas) in the works of Aquinas<sup>4</sup>, as well as deriving the possibility in principle and requirement of women’s ordination from the favourable pronouncements of Aquinas on the spiritual nature of humans and on the sacraments in general.

In this she was guided by the hope that: “if the official Church were now to discard formally the ballast of medieval natural doctrine on women, the way to women becoming priests would be open on the basis of purified Thomist teaching, of the actual philosophy rationalis with regard to humanity.”<sup>5</sup>

## Further submissions to the Council: the debate becomes more intense

As might be expected, Heinzelmann’s petition elicited strong reactions for and against. Some Swiss newspapers made offensive attacks on the author and poured scorn and derision on her. On the other hand, positive reactions showed that “many people had been thinking along the same lines ... at the same time.”<sup>7</sup> This was the source of the first contacts with

German women theologians. In 1959 one of them, Josefa Theresia Munch, a qualified theologian, had already sent the Vatican several (unpublished) requests for changes in canon law (c. 968 §1 CIC/1917) that excluded women from sacramental ordination. At the first Germanlanguage press conference (October 1962), she posed the well-grounded question whether women

too should not be invited to attend the Council. The reaction to this question was a mixture of embarrassment, indignation and laughter. Finally the director of the German press centre, Bishop Kampe, half-reassuringly and half in jest, replied that women too would be able to attend “Vatican III!”<sup>8</sup>



*Ida Ramming*

## A petition to the Council (1963)

In our student days in the early 1960s at the Catholic theology faculty of the University of Munster, Müller and I critically examined the grounds for excluding women from ordination and this became part of the basis for our submission to the Vatican Council in 1963. At that time, the following were the arguments opposing ordination:

1. Women were subordinate to men in the order of creation;
2. Women’s nature prevents them from exercising a priestly ministry;
3. Christ entered the world as a man;
4. Christ chose only men as apostles;
5. The apostle Paul’s pronouncements on the position of women, especially his instructions on their behaviour during divine service (cf. 1 Cor. 11.2–16; 1 Cor. 14.34; 1 Tim. 2.11–15), and his interpretation of woman as the image of the Church (Eph. 5.22ff), are irreconcilable with the transmission of the priesthood to women;
6. Even Mary herself as the Mother of God did not receive the priesthood;
7. The polarity of the sexes would have a disturbing effect in the sanctuary;

To date the church has kept unequivocally to its traditional views in this respect. Müller and I refuted all these arguments using the latest theological critique of that time period.<sup>9</sup>

It is remarkable that nowadays the church leadership should still cite most of these arguments, especially those derived from the New Testament, as evidence against the admission of women to the priesthood, even though, according to the report of the Papal Bible Commission of 1976, the New Testament yields no sustainable arguments for excluding women from the priestly ministry.

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Women as Pioneers at Vatican II...continued from page 7

Nevertheless, in its Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood (*Inter insigniores*; 1976, published 1977), the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith disregarded this research finding.

A serious deadlock is apparent in the thinking and judgement of the Vatican church leadership, which still ignores the results of exegetical, dogmatic and historical research that have been available for a long time. For instance, the declaration *Inter insigniores* still stresses the following: "...when Christ's role in the Eucharist is to be expressed sacramentally, there would not be this 'natural resemblance' which must exist between Christ and his minister if the role of Christ were not taken by a man: in such a case it would be difficult to see in the minister the image of Christ. For Christ himself was and remains a man".<sup>10</sup>

*A serious deadlock is apparent in the thinking and judgement of the Vatican church leadership, which still ignores the results of exegetical, dogmatic and historical research that have been available for a long time.*

The two women theologians had already argued against this notion in their submission: "it is to be asserted decisively that fundamental significance is to be assigned only to the fact that Christ (or the *Logos*) became human; the aspect of gender is wholly irrelevant here; for it is not Christ 'becoming a man' that has a redemptive function, but solely his becoming a human being, in accordance with the evidence of Scripture in Jn. 1.14; Phil. 2.6ff, and so on...."<sup>11</sup>

Heinzelmann's contribution to the Council reached Iris Muller and myself in a roundabout way. We were overjoyed that a Catholic woman from Switzerland was responsible for this courageous initiative. In 1963 a personal meeting took place in Munster between the women theologians Munch, Muller, myself and Heinzelmann. In 1963 news of the submission also brought an announcement from the USA by Dr Rosemary Lauer, who taught at St John's University (New York). She published several articles on the theme of 'Women and the Church' in the journal *Commonweal*. She also commissioned an English translation of Heinzelmann's sub-

mission for the American press, which alerted Mary Daly for the first time to the existence of Heinzelmann's submission. In the 1960s Daly studied theology at the University of Fribourg, and in 1964 became the first woman and American to be awarded a doctorate in theology there.

### Collected petitions to the Council

Contacts with the abovementioned six women led to the German-English book edited by Heinzelmann: *Wir schweigen nicht länger! Frauen äussern sich zum II. Vatikanischen Konzil* (1964). In addition to Heinzelmann's petition, it contains the conciliar submissions of Munch and that of Muller and myself, as well as articles by Lauer and Daly from the time of the Council. For the first time, the book offers a systematic critical analysis of the various biblical and dogmatic grounds for excluding women from the priesthood. This analysis is the basis of a demand for full equality of rights in the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church. The book also insists on a reform of male-biased liturgical language (J. T. Munch's contribution). This publication gave considerable impetus to discussion of women's ordination and their admission to the priestly ministry, and influenced conciliar proceedings, though at a later point.

### *Pacem in terris*: human rights for women

With his 1963 encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963), John XXIII, gave a firm impetus to the women's movement, which was at an early stage of development in the Church. For the first time a papal encyclical treated women as subjects and bearers of human rights, for John XXIII assessed the movement for women's emancipation as a "sign of the times that demanded consideration: Women, who are now increasingly conscious of their human dignity, are very far from allowing themselves to be treated as some soulless material or as mere instruments; instead they seek to ensure that they are accorded rights and duties, in domestic life as in the State, that are appropriate to the dignity of the human person." (22) "...if humans become conscious of their rights, they must become equally aware of their duties. Thus those who possess certain rights have likewise the duty to claim those rights as marks of their dignity, while all others have the obligation to acknowledge those rights and respect them." (24).

These were encouraging words, but also an urgent warning that could not be passed over entirely, even in the conciliar assem-

bly. The programmatic declaration from the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world, *Gaudium et spes* (29), seems to echo the words of the encyclical: "All humans are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny; there is here a basic equality between all humans and it must be given ever greater recognition... forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design."

*All humans are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ...*

Although this programmatic pronouncement contains several important points of reference as well as prerequisites for overcoming the severe discrimination against women within the Church (in particular their exclusion from all offices of the ordained priesthood merely because they are women), no reforms in this regard are deduced from those indications and conditions, or even contemplated in any way whatsoever.

### Positive effects of "We won't keep silence any longer!"

The topic of women's ordination was not heard directly but was in fact taboo at the Council assembly itself. This theme was raised expressly in only one intervention at the Council (October 1965), by Archbishop Paul Hallinan (Atlanta, GA). He not only requested that women should undertake the offices of readers and acolytes during divine service, but that women should be admitted to the office of deacon; and suggested furthermore that women should take part in theological instruction and in the revision of the *Codex iuris canonici* (Code of Canon Law). His courageous proposal could be attributed to the direct influence of the journalist and *peritus* (for the American bishops) Placidus Jordan OSB, who had disseminated the collected conciliar petitions in the American bishops' conference and outside.<sup>12</sup> But this was shortly before

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# Women Human Rights Defenders Resolution Passed at UN — Strong Resistance from the Vatican

By Kate Conmy

Late November 2013, the first-ever resolution on women human rights defenders was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee, taking a step forward in protecting those who face risks and attacks for their work to promote human rights, including women's rights. The landmark resolution draws attention to the extraordinary threats faced by women human rights defenders, and calls on states to stop criminalizing, stigmatizing and hindering the work of women human rights defenders.

Member states are asked to review and amend their laws to ensure consistency with international human rights law. All UN member states should publicly acknowledge the role of women human rights defenders and condemn violence and discrimination against them.

According to the ATP report, several African nations, the Vatican, Iran, Russia, China and conservative Muslim states sought to weaken the resolution. In order to reach a consensus, the Norwegian-led coalition, which prepared the resolution, deleted language that said states should "strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and women human rights defenders and refrain from invoking any customs, traditions or religious consideration to avoid their obligations." The Vatican led the opposition to this text, additionally refusing any reference to the risks incurred by activists working on the issue of sexual and reproductive rights.

More than thirty European countries, including Britain, France and Germany, withdrew as co-sponsors of the resolution in protest of the concession.

Amnesty International called the concessions "deeply regrettable." The consensus came at the expense of a crucial paragraph containing language that had previously been agreed to by the General Assembly in Resolution 67/144 on the Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women. Activists sadly highlighted the irony that such language could not be included in the very week of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, marked on 25 November.

Geir Sjoberg, the Norwegian government's lead negotiator on the resolution celebrated the adoption, but added that the focus now must be to make sure governments are held to commitments made in the text: "There is a great mismatch between realities for brave women on the ground and what was agreed today. The real work starts now."

A report by Margaret Sekaggya, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, creates a damning picture of just how dangerous it is to be a woman human rights defender: documented cases of death threats, rape, smear campaigns, and the criminalization of their work by state authorities. The report notes that male human rights defenders do not experience the same high rates of violence.

Women human rights defenders often "challenge traditional religious and cultural values and practices which subordinate, stigmatize or restrict women" when they take up gender and sexual rights, said Eleanor Openshaw of the International Service for Human Rights. The resistance of state actors, including the Vatican, exposes the deep fear of the work of women's rights activists, and the high political price nations will pay to ensure women remain second-class citizens.

It should come as no surprise that the Vatican is threatened by this resolution, but their continued blindness to the lives of women threatens the Church's very livelihood. The African Union declared 2010-2020 the Decade of the Woman—reflecting the increasing political, economic, and leadership roles women play in society.

A recent *Der Spiegel* article reported that African women are not only making strides as peacemakers, entrepreneurs, and politicians but are also considered more reliable and successful international partners. In crisis and war zones, women are not only more affected by conflict, but are the primary peace and reconciliation workers. Reportedly, international organizations prefer to employ women, and women-led businesses and programs as more sustainable, more successful, and less susceptible to corruption.

Lindiwe Mazibuko, 33, is the opposition leader in South Africa's National Assembly. She is the first Black woman to hold that office in the history of country's overwhelmingly male-dominated parliament.

"Africa has millions of young, talented women, but most of them don't want to go into politics, because they are marginalized there," Mazibuko said. "Many African presidents are older than 70, while the average age in Africa is about 19. These men know nothing about the realities of life for young men and women." A dissonance familiar to many Catholics who both struggle to relate to their bishops, and find practical relevance to Church teachings, particularly on the family.

Mazibuko fights resistance and harassment from her colleagues, and even President Jacob Zuma, who publicly called her a derogatory Zulu term for "little girl."

"Those are the usual sexist and racist insults coming from men who perceive a threat to their dominant position," says Mazibuko. "But it isn't something that can shock a feminist."

It may be hard to shock a feminist these days, but it may shock the Vatican that, as international lobby group, the ONE campaign claims: "Africa's future is female." And so is the future of the Church.

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## *Some Thoughts on the Suggestion to "Put Ordination Aside" ...continued from page 6*

5 Editorial, "It's Time for Real Authority for Women in the Catholic Church," *National Catholic Reporter*, October 5, 2013 (accessed Nov 15, 2013).

6 Dunne, Colleen and Meghan Fincher, "Women Resistant to Pope Francis' Call for New Theology," *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City), November 4, 2013 (accessed November 15, 2013).

7 Day, Peter. "Women in the Church: How Far Can We Go?" *The Tablet* (London), November 21, 2013 (accessed November 15)

8 Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 17.

9 *Ibid.*, xiv.

10 Preparatory Document for the Extraordinary General Assembly Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20131105\\_iii-assemblea-sinodo-vescovi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20131105_iii-assemblea-sinodo-vescovi_en.html) (accessed November 25, 2013).

# The Start of the Journey for a Stranger in a Strange Land

By Donnieau Snyder



Donnieau Snyder

With a loving heart I humbly submit to you a glimpse of how God is working in my life as I continue to listen to the call to ministry. I am a candidate to the Roman Catholic

Women Priesthood. It is an intriguing and amazing path and I am so happy to share some of my experiences of my lifelong journey following the call that God engraved in my heart. I joyfully share with you some of my experiences of how being a Catholic has had an impact not so much my answering God's call but rather the impact of answering God's call. This journey is in God's hands and I willingly and passionately gravitate toward the call.

I knew from a very early age there was a stirring in my heart to be of service to others. Even as early as the second grade I knew the stirring was the Holy Spirit working within me and I knew I was called to be a priest but for someone so young the message for the journey ahead was yet to reveal itself. The call to ministry transformed as I became older. The call began as a beautiful stirring in my heart until it manifested into a message that has become as loud as the roar of the ocean. During my childhood and teen years I would share God's beautiful message with those with whom I felt safe with but my fondest and most profound "a-ha moment" happened during my first public profession of my call.

During that public moment I was not condemned—I was lifted up. In that moment something transformational happened. I felt as if my entire being was on fire — not consumed by it rather a fire that had stirred from the deepest part of myself and it spread and danced as it moved throughout my entire body. During that experience my mind was flooded with an overwhelming sense of joy and the two—the fire and the joy—could not be separated nor could they be described separately. The fire continues to burn within me.

With that public profession came questions. I am often asked why I want to become a priest if the road ahead leads to sacrifice

*"Why a Roman Catholic priest? My brief answer is that I am called..."*

and suffering. Why a Roman Catholic Priest? My brief answer is that I am called to liturgical (sharing and spreading the Gospel) and sacramental service. I have been asked why don't I leave the Catholic faith and join another Christian denomination [that ordains women]. You might as well ask to me to change the color of my skin —Catholicism cannot be removed from the core of who I am. My Roman Catholic faith teaches me to follow Christ as well as to follow my conscience. Where I was rooted is where my heart has been planted. One of the teachings regarding following conscience that I turn to comes from St. Thomas Aquinas. He strongly supported the rights of conscience when he said, "Anyone upon whom the ecclesiastical authority, in ignorance of the true facts, imposes a demand that offends against [sic] his clear conscience, should perish in excommunication rather than violate [sic] his conscience." To my very root I fear God not those who dare to stand in God's way.

*"You might as well ask me to change the color of my skin—Catholicism cannot be removed from the core of who I am"*

I provide ministry in much of the work I do. It has taken the form of working with mothers in need of someone who believed in their abilities as they were working hard to get clean and sober while trying to get their children back from social services system. I may not have been able to provide the sacrament of the anointing of the sick in a formal manner but for every foster child I held tightly while in the emergency room past midnight because she or he was too sick and needed immediate medical care was just one way of how I shared Christ's message of love and caring for others. My call to serve God took place for every child

whose hand I held while we walked and talked going to and from supervised parental visits or for those who were going through an adoption process. For every teenager that ran away from a group home that I would go and find I took the time to let them know that they are special beyond what they could ever imagine regardless of what they thought or felt about themselves and the experiences they had endured. I also provide mental health services to youth and young adults experiencing schizophrenia and early onset of psychosis and I walk with them in their journey that is often times filled with fear but it is the hope that we discover together that brings about a healing for their soul. In the mental health field we are now recognizing that one's faith should not be discounted and through my interfaith dialogues much hope and healing takes place for the wounds that no medicine can mend. It is in all of those moments I recognize my obedience of my call to serve God.

I have worshipped with a Roman Catholic community presided by a women priest and now I have begun forming another worship community where I live. These experiences and blessings give me my grounding and help me to see I am no longer a stranger in a strange land. When I am asked if men and women equally represent Christ in ministry I can say, "the heart has no gender, and if God is love, then regardless of biological differences, women and men rightly represent Christ in ministry."

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# El Inicio del caminar de una extraña en una tierra extraña

By Donnieau Snyder



Donnieau Snyder

Con corazón amoroso, humildemente les presento a ustedes un destello de cómo Dios está actuando en mi vida mientras continúo escuchando la llamada al ministerio. Soy una

candidata al Sacerdocio de Mujeres de la Iglesia Católica Romana. Es un caminar fascinante y maravilloso, y estoy tan feliz de compartir algunas de mis experiencias sobre mi jornada de vida siguiendo el llamado que Dios ha grabado en mi corazón. Comparto gozosamente con ustedes algunas de mis experiencias de cómo el ser una católica ha tenido un impacto no tanto en mi respuesta al llamado de Dios sino en el impacto que el responder a la llamada ha tenido. Este viaje está en manos de Dios, y yo con pasión, tiendo hacia la llamada.

Supe desde tierna edad que en mi corazón había una agitación para servir a otros. Tan temprano como en segundo grado de elemental, supe que esta agitación era el Espíritu Santo actuando dentro de mí y que era llamada a ser una sacerdotisa. El llamado al ministerio se transformó con la edad. El llamado comenzó como una hermosa agitación en mi corazón, hasta que se manifestó como un mensaje que se ha hecho tan ensordecedor como el estruendo del océano. Durante mi niñez y adolescencia, compartía los hermosos mensajes de Dios con quienes me sentía segura, pero mi momento de revelación más profunda ocurrió durante la primera declaración pública de mi llamado.

Durante ese momento público, no fui condenada – fui elevada. En ese instante sucedió algo transformador. Sentí como si mi ser entero estaba en llamas – no consumida por ellas sino un fuego que surgía de lo más profundo de mí, que se expandía y danzaba mientras se movía por todo mi cuerpo. Durante esa experiencia mi mente estaba inundada con una sobrecogedora sensación de alegría y los dos – el fuego y la alegría – no podían ser separados ni descritos aparte. El fuego sigue ardiendo dentro de mí.

Con esa declaración pública llegaron las preguntas. A menudo me preguntan por qué quiero convertirme en sacerdotisa si el camino a seguir conduce al sacrificio y sufrimiento. ¿Por qué una sacerdotisa de la Iglesia Católica Romana? Mi respuesta breve es que estoy llamada a lo litúrgico (a compartir y propagar el Evangelio) y al servicio sacramental. Me han preguntado por qué no dejo la fe Católica y me uno a otra fe [que ordena mujeres]. Por qué más bien no

*¿Por qué una sacerdotisa de la Iglesia Católica Romana? Mi respuesta breve es que estoy llamada a lo litúrgico (a compartir y propagar el Evangelio) y al servicio sacramental.*

me piden que cambie el color de mi piel – el Catolicismo no se puede quitar, está en lo más profundo de mí. Es parte de mi ser. Mi fe Católica Romana me enseña que debo seguir a Cristo tanto como mi propia consciencia. Allí donde eché raíces es donde ha sido plantado mi corazón. Una de las enseñanzas sobre seguir tu propia consciencia viene de Santo Tomás de Aquino. Él apoyaba firmemente los derechos de la consciencia cuando dijo: «Cualquier persona a quien las autoridades eclesiásticas, en ignorancia de los hechos verdaderos, impongan una demanda que vaya contra su clara consciencia, debe perecer en excomunión antes que violar su propia consciencia». En lo más hondo de mi ser yo temo a Dios no a aquellos que se atreven a interponerse en su camino.

Yo brindo ministerio en gran parte del trabajo que hago. Ha tomado la forma de trabajar con madres necesitadas de alguien que crea en sus habilidades mientras trabajaban duro para recuperarse de adicciones y recobrar la custodia de sus hijos del sistema de servicios sociales. Quizás no he podido dar el sacramento de unción de los enfermos de una manera formal, pero por cada niño/a que se encontraba en un hogar de acogida, a quien abracé fuertemente en

la sala de emergencia pasada la medianoche porque él o ella estaba demasiado enfermo/a y necesitaba cuidado médico inmediato, fue solo una de las maneras en que compartí el mensaje de Cristo de amar y cuidar a los demás. Mi llamado de servir a Dios tuvo lugar por cada niño cuyas manos sostuve mientras caminábamos y hablábamos, yendo y viniendo a visitas supervisadas de padres o aquellos que estaban atravesando por un proceso de adopción. Por cada adolescente que se escapó de un hogar de grupo al que yo fui y encontré, tomé el tiempo de hacerles saber que eran especiales, mucho más de lo que pudieran imaginar, sin importar lo que pensarán sobre sí mismos y de las experiencias que habían tenido que soportar. También, doy servicios de salud mental a jóvenes y adultos jóvenes que experimentan esquizofrenia e inicios de sicosis, y camino junto a ellos en su viaje que está a menudo lleno de temores, pero es la esperanza que descubrimos juntos lo que conduce a una sanación de su alma. En el campo de la salud mental ahora estamos reconociendo que la fe de una persona no debe ser descontada y a través de mis diálogos interreligiosos se produce mucha esperanza y sanación para las heridas que ninguna medicina puede proporcionar. Es en todos esos momentos que reconozco mi obediencia al llamado de servir a Dios.

He rendido culto con una comunidad Romana Católica presidida por una mujer sacerdote y ahora he iniciado la formación de otra comunidad de culto en donde yo vivo. Estas experiencias y bendiciones me arraigan y me ayudan a ver que ya no soy una extraña en una tierra extraña. Cuando me preguntan si los hombres y las mujeres representan igualmente a Cristo en el ministerio puedo decir: «El corazón no tiene género, y si Dios es amor, entonces sin considerar diferencias biológicas, las mujeres y los hombres representan con todo derecho a Cristo en el ministerio».

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# En el vigésimo aniversario de *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*

By Erin Saiz Hanna

Justo antes de Acción de Gracias, el Papa Francisco publicó su *Evangelii Gaudium* conocido como un plan de acción de su papado. Como la naturaleza humilde, pastoral del Papa Francisco, la mayor parte de este documento de 84 páginas se ganará el corazón de muchos católicos. Al leer el documento, yo también estaba realmente haciéndole barra a Francisco cuando él dijo: «No puede ser que no sea noticia que muere de frío un anciano en situación de calle y que sí lo sea una caída de dos puntos en la bolsa de valores». Sí. Esto es lo que Jesús diría. Esto es ser católico/católica. Esto es justicia social.

Luego él señaló: «Reconozco con gusto cómo muchas mujeres comparten responsabilidades pastorales junto con los sacerdotes, contribuyen al acompañamiento de personas, de familias o de grupos y brindan nuevos aportes a la reflexión teológica. Pero todavía es necesario ampliar los espacios para una presencia femenina más incisiva en la Iglesia». Me sentí llena de esperanza. Si sólo se hubiese detenido allí.

Pero no lo hizo. Con su oración siguiente, me rompería el corazón al igual que tantos Papas del pasado. Él continuó esa gloriosa oración tratando de poner a las mujeres de regreso en su propio lugar y declarando al mundo que la ordenación de la mujer no ocurrirá bajo su pontificado. Hasta se aseguró de reiterar que ni siquiera deberíamos discutir el asunto.

En el documento Francisco declara: «El sacerdocio reservado a los hombres, como signo de Cristo Esposo que se da en la Eucaristía, es una cuestión que no se pone en discusión, pero puede volverse particularmente conflictiva si se identifica demasiado la potestad sacramental con el poder».

En donde Francisco se equivoca es en sugerir que estamos buscando la ordenación simplemente como un medio de conseguir poder. Mientras que el poder de decisión y

de liderazgo de las mujeres es vital, y algo que la Conferencia de Ordenación de la Mujer (WOC de sus siglas en inglés) ha defendido por décadas, el hecho es que las mujeres son llamadas por Dios para servir a todo el mundo, al igual que sus hermanos sacerdotes. Para un Papa que parece estar muy en sintonía con los marginados, ¿cómo es que no ve que los marginados también necesitan ser servidos por mujeres al igual que por hombres; que las mujeres son parte de los fieles y están completamente listas, dispuestas y son capaces de servir al pueblo de Dios? ¿Cómo no puede ser su sentido de justicia social extendido a las mujeres de la Iglesia y a su capacidad para el ministerio de las santas órdenes?

Este mayo que viene se celebra el vigésimo aniversario de *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, la carta apostólica escrita por el Papa Juan Pablo II, la cual declaró toda discusión sobre la ordenación de la mujer oficialmente cerrada. En su tristemente célebre entrevista, ofrecida a reporteros en ruta a Roma de la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud, el Papa Francisco se refirió a este documento diciendo: «sobre la ordenación de las mujeres, la Iglesia se ha pronunciado y ha dicho que no. Juan Pablo II, en una formulación definitiva dijo que esa puerta está cerrada».

Es importante notar el uso de la expresión «definitiva», porque *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* nunca fue declarado un documento infalible, tampoco se utilizó la palabra infalible en el documento, sin mencionar que fue firmado por el Cardenal Joseph Ratzinger, y no por el Papa Juan Pablo II (lo que significa que es más fácil de revertir). El Papa Francisco podría, de hecho, abrir oficialmente la discusión si él así lo quisiera, pero en su lugar ofrece a los fieles católicos explicaciones refutables en vez de volver a leer esos documentos y descubrir por sí mismo que no tienen bases teológicas, filosóficas, eclesiológicas, ni en las Escrituras. Este papa necesita educarse sobre el tema de la

ordenación de las mujeres, en vez de mantenerse atascado en el pasado y repetir las prácticas y reglas no sustentadas que ya no sirven a nuestra Iglesia ni mundo.

Para un Papa que no quiere «potestad sacramental demasiado identificada con el poder», de hecho, él sí ha tratado de ejercer su poder sobre la discusión de la ordenación de la mujer. El Papa Francisco dijo que «la Iglesia ha hablado y ha dicho que no». El Papa Juan Pablo II trató de darle término a la conversación sobre la ordenación de la mujer en 1994 cuando publicó ese documento. Él no triunfó, todavía estamos hablando del tema. El Papa Francisco tampoco pondrá fin a la discusión. Seguiremos hablando, sirviendo en roles sacramentales y ministeriales, y haciendo camino con nuestra palabra.

En los meses que vienen, mientras nos preparamos para el vigésimo aniversario de este documento anacrónico, WOC en conjunto con WOW (Women's Ordination Worldwide/Movimiento Mundial a favor de la Ordenación de la Mujer), recogerá cartas de fieles católicos que apoyan la ordenación de la mujer y reconocen que las mujeres, como los hombres, son ambos creados a imagen y semejanza de Dios, y también llamadas a servir a todo el pueblo de Dios, en todas formas y maneras incluso las órdenes sagradas. Habrá una vigilia de oración realizada por la delegación de defensoras de la ordenación de la mujer; ellas entregarán personalmente al Vaticano las cartas de mujeres que sienten la llamada y de aquellas personas que se hacen presentes para defender la justicia en la Iglesia.

Si te interesa enviar una carta o unirse a nosotras en esta delegación, envíame un mensaje electrónico a [ehanna@womensordination.org](mailto:ehanna@womensordination.org). El Papa Francisco es conocido por responder a algunas de las cartas que recibe. Quizás responda la tuya.

*the Table*

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**Carol Ganim. *Being Out of Order: The Prophetic Generation of Nuns and Sisters*  
St. Petersburg, FL: Vandamere Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-918339-77-5. \$19.95**  
*Reviewed by Kate Conmy*

*Being Out of Order: The Prophetic Generation of Nuns and Sisters* by Carole Ganim is a refreshingly practical retelling of her journey as an Ursuline sister from 1956 to 1972. Offering verisimilitude to the often-obscured life of a young novitiate, Ganim's voice brings color to a generation who transitioned from "Sister Formation" to the changes of Vatican II to the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. Interviewing over twenty sisters and friends, Ganim traces her own formation from breaking up with her high school boyfriend and being so nervous that she ran her yellow Studebaker convertible into a curb, to her eventual "breaking" of her vows sixteen years later.

*Being Out of Order* is a generous reflection. Ganim dances a line of irreverence and comedy to describe the sincerity, confusion, and genuine vocation of her time in the convent. Using only first names, the story trustingly resembles a familial storytelling session, leaving no adolescent curiosity unturned (e.g., "do nuns menstruate?"). These are the voices of friends, of women you know, and of the arrested development of so many Catholics.

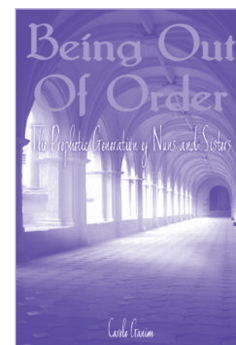
There is a sense of cinema to some of Ganim's stories, as the young novices trip over themselves to be obnoxiously pious ("No, Sister, after you!"), to a note delivered to the girls with an annual "God's Will" update (Ganim's was terrifyingly left blank one year). But unlike many cinematic portrayals of nuns and sisters—flat caricatures often assigned to women—depth comes as our narrator encounters the three dimensions of systemic oppression as a sister: poverty, chastity, and obedience. The Church took a generation of "unwitting prophets," confronting medieval and contemporary patriarchy, and asked them to make full commitments without being fully in the world, or fully human. No longer sublimating subservience with holiness, Ganim dismantles each vow and how each "took us away from our humanity... and therefore our godliness" (124).

When Ganim left the convent in 1972, not only was society asking new questions about the roles of women, but "theology was asking new questions" (165). In her early thirties, Ganim had earned her Ph.D. in English, a couple hundred dollars, and a lot of "worldly" experience to gain, shared in stories of dating fumbles, style faux pas,

and self-empowerment trials. The book traces the losses of those who left the convent and those who stayed, and the losses of a Church unable to truly know women. Ganim also sketches some conclusions of what the future of religious life might look like as women continue to define commitment on their own terms.

The most common question our author hears now is: "Are you sorry you left? Do you miss it?" Questions that many Catholics ask themselves as the locus of a life-giving religion drifts farther and farther from the parish steps. Of course, the answer is always yes and no, yes and no. But in a time of "Nuns on the Bus" celebrity, and flushes of a genre of "sister-stories," this work reminds us of the true breath of vocation: the yes and no of an institution, the ordinary and the extraordinary journey of women who follow God.

*Kate Conmy is the Assistant Director of WOC and currently lives in Washington, D.C.*



**Review of *Sister Trouble: The Vatican, the Bishops, and the Nuns* by Marian Ronan. North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. 119 pages, \$10.64.**  
*Reviewed by Mary E. Hunt*

*Reviewed by Mary E. Hunt*

Longtime WOC colleague Marian Ronan has done a real service with her book *Sister Trouble: The Vatican, the Bishops, and the Nuns*. This collection of her essays on American nuns and their struggles with the Vatican functions as a good overview of a bad situation.

The story is well known—U.S. women religious took Vatican II seriously and live in a wide variety of faithful, committed ways. It is hard to find sisters who are living the high life—the occasional new fleece jacket and eco-conscious cars are more like it—and easy to find "green nuns" whose simple lifestyles presaged today's trend toward lighter footsteps on the planet. Still, in the midst of priest pedophilia and cover-ups by bishops the Vatican unleashed both an Apostolic Visitation of many of the active communities and a Doctrinal Investigation of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).

The LCWR case ended with a watchdog committee assigned to oversee it. The other shoe remains to drop, or not, on the visitation process with Pope Francis a wildcard

in the equation. Still, the damage has been done to even suggest that U.S. women religious are anything but stalwart citizens of church and world. Happily, the women themselves report that the intrusion only served to reinforce ties among them and to enhance their clarity about what is really important.

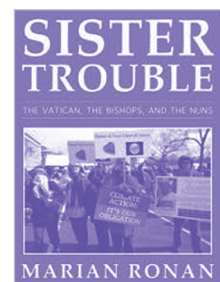
Ronan captures the sentiment of many Catholics, indeed of those who push for Nun Justice, when she writes that her purpose is "helping U.S. Catholic sisters, now and in the future, to say what they need to say when they are ready to say it, and to feel supported by Catholics like me who owe them a very great deal" (p. 9). Much remains to be said by the nuns themselves that prudence dictates they guard for now. So this kind of forthright assessment by someone who is not a nun, albeit a member of the Grail and a church historian, is welcome.

Ronan is not sentimental in her assessment of strong, smart women who have done good work in health, education, and social welfare, not to mention ministry and spiri-

tuality, over decades. Like any group, the nuns will have the occasional weak link in the chain, but for the most part their history as told in the marvelous exhibit *Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* is a proud and unique one. That they have been put upon by the likes of Vatican types remains scandalous.

She writes with a Philadelphia Catholic's good grammar and clear prose, leaving no question where she stands. We learn about her own commitments, her passion for Joan of Arc, and the positive impact of Catholic education on her subsequent life. It is an oft told story but one that Ronan tells with panache. I recommend this book as a reminder that good work resounds for generations while dastardly deeds find no echo.

*Mary E. Hunt is director of WATER, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual in Washington, D.C.*



Marie S. David. *Sacred Heart Songs*. Bloomington, IN: Balboa Press, 2013.

ISBN 978-1-45257-884-2. 202 pages. \$14.95 paperback; hard copy \$33.95; E-book \$3.99.

Reviewed by Andrea M. Johnson

*Sacred Heart Songs*, by Marie S. David, is a book for spiritual seekers who want wholeness in their lives—who seek to integrate all of their experience—whether perceived as positive, negative or somewhere in between. It is for people who want to hold their life experience in the light of their relationship with the Divine.

Author Marie David is an accomplished teacher and administrator in the field of special education. She is also a spouse and a mother, a Reiki Master, and a Roman Catholic woman priest. Raised in the Catholic faith of her New England family of French ancestry, David shares with us the joys and the struggles of her growing up years; of her love for the religious tradition, shared with her by her beloved grandmother; and also, her difficulty (not unrelated to her childlike conceptualization of feminine virtue), in finding her own voice.

In *Sacred Heart Songs*, David shares the growth in her way of understanding her own self-realization, by first finding a new and more intimate way to relate to God in prayer. In so doing, she taps into unexplored riches of Christian spirituality—

specifically, the healing effect of energy work known as Reiki.

The elements of prayer that became key for her transformation from hard-working and successful, yet always exhausted seeker, to contemplative listener, focusing on God's love and compassion, forgiveness and healing, and Source of unconditional acceptance, are explored. David stresses solitude, going within, realizing that God is waiting for us to enter that sacred space willingly, letting go of control over the outcome. Truth and peace can be lost, says David, in the busyness of life. Only by opening ourselves to letting go of what is "not truly us" can we release unfinished business from the past, and turn our souls into that healing space we so desire. It is both a great joy and very empowering to read her account of this inward journey.

In the latter part of the book, she turns her attention to how the practice of Reiki—or the prayerful sharing of energy—can heal us by bringing us out of our perceived isolation, and into the realm of health and wholeness meant for all living things. Accepting this healing is consciousness-

changing and a spiritually rich experience which can be shared with others in a way that is more "being with" than "doing for."

The author relates these new understandings of health and healing to issues such as dealing with work overload, with loss and grief, and with many other phenomena we have in common as human beings. We have a choice, says David. We can either absorb our pain back into ourselves, or we can share it with the Divine within, releasing it to the One who can heal, and transform it into blessing.

Finally, discussing the five basic principles of Reiki (having to do with worry, anger, gratitude, letting go, and kindness), Rev. Marie David offer her readers an opportunity for true and expansive spiritual growth in compassion and wholeness. *Sacred Heart Songs* is a wonderful read, and a resource you will want to keep handy in your prayer space.

Andrea M. Johnson, RCWP, is a former WOC Executive Director, served on the WOC board for many years, and now lives in Annapolis, MD.

*Women as Pioneers at Vatican II...continued from page 8*

the end of the Council, so that the Archbishop's intervention was not reflected in the conciliar documents.

**Reactions to "We won't keep silence any longer!"**

Women and the church certainly became a more vital topic outside the actual Council in its final phase. Immediately before the end of the Council (November 1965), with express reference to "We won't keep silence any longer..." though significantly without any more detailed bibliography, the *Osservatore Romano* published an entire series of articles on *La donna e il Sacerdozio* (Women and the Priesthood) by the traditionalist Franciscan priest Gino Concetti. He wrote in his introduction: "The atmosphere of zealous initiatives which preceded and accompanied Vatican II led to many others, including one that attempts to draw the attention of the responsible hierarchy to the extension of the ministerial priesthood to women."<sup>13</sup>

His final conclusion, based on traditional texts discriminating against women, is as follows: "If he had wanted to, Christ would have singled out women...for elevation to

the priesthood. He did not elevate them thus, not in order to accord with a human tradition of the world around him at the time, but out of respect for the order of creation and God's plan of salvation, both of which call for male dominance: the supremacy of the old Adam and the new Christ..."<sup>14</sup> The entire article is so to speak a harbinger of later pronouncements of the Vatican church leadership directed against the notion of women priests (*Inter Insigniores*, 1977; *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 1994). Both before and during the Council, those pioneer women, and later many other major theologians, men and women, have offered reasoned objections to these ideas. It is scandalous that the positive consequences of these analyses, insights and claims are still outstanding.

Translated by J. G. Cumming

**Notes**

1. The article is based on: Ida Raming, 'Frauen stehen auf gegen Diskriminierung und Entrechtung des weiblichen Geschlechts in der Kirche', in: Iris Muller & Ida Raming, *Unser Leben im Einsatz für Menschenrechte der Frauen in der römisch-katholischen Kirche*, Munster, 2007, pp. 220-48.
2. *The Women of Vatican II*, New York, 1996.

3. G. Heinzelmann, *Wir schweigen nicht länger! We Won't Keep Silence Any Longer! Frauen äussern sich zum II. Vatikanischen Konzil*, Zurich, 1964, p. 20.
4. 'Women are subject to men on account of their inherent natural weakness and because of the strength of the male intellect and physique .... Man is the principle for woman and her objective just as God is the principle for the creature as a whole and its objective...' G. Heinzelmann, *op. cit. supra*, pp. 25-6.
5. G. Heinzelmann, *Die geheiligte Diskriminierung. Beiträge zum kirchlichen Feminismus*, Bonstetten, 1986, p. 97.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
9. Cf. G. Heinzelmann, 'Wir schweigen...', *op. cit.*, pp. 61-76 and I. Muller & G. Raming, *Unser Leben im Einsatz...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-54.
10. *Inter Insigniores*, No. 5.
11. G. Heinzelmann 'Wir schweigen...', *op. cit.*, p. 66; cf. I. Muller & G. Raming, *Unser Leben im Einsatz...*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
12. Cf. G. Heinzelmann, *Die geheiligte Diskriminierung...*, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
13. G. Heinzelmann, *Die getrennten Schwestern. Frauen nach dem Konzil*, Zurich, 1967, p. 99.
14. *Ibid.*

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