



New Women, New Church

WOMEN'S ORDINATION CONFERENCE

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Challenging the Holy See at the United Nations

BY KATE MCELWEE

On March 14, as the United Nation's 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) gathered to focus on the human rights and empowerment of women, WOC and a coalition called Catholics for Human Rights: Challenging the Holy See at the United Nations, did just that.

We offered a powerful Catholic voice as a counter to the Holy See, which in its non-state member status too often acts as a blockade to international agreements and policies that affect women's rights and health. We challenged their legitimacy as a state-actor, and filed an official complaint with the United Nations as to why an institution that does not practice gender equality should have any place at a U.N. meeting on women's rights.

The lobby to challenge the Holy See's role at the United Nations, and more specifically at CSW is not new. Seasoned Catholic feminists will recall the Catholics for Choice "See Change" campaign and its iterations as well as the calls from WOC and Saint Joan's International Alliance for the Holy See to "stop sinking women's rights/rites!" The waves of these campaigns still rock at the U.N., however there is a renewed energy in challenging the international privileges the Holy See enjoys, particularly in light of the current revelations of a well-established culture of abuse, violence, silencing and evading legal and criminal consequences.

First, we held an official parallel event with experts who interrogated the role of the Holy See at the United Nations through theological, historical and legal analyses.



Left to Right: Amanda Ussak, Barbara Dorris, Carla Rivera, Mary E. Hunt, Sara Orviedo, Kate McElwee, Virginia Saldanha and Sheila Peiffer.

Mary Hunt, WOC advisor and co-founder of Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER), suggested that the Holy See "make a graceful exit and focus on its own priorities including financial, criminal, and ministerial problems." Theologian and activist Virginia Saldanha from Bombay, India, shared tales of hierarchical resistance to change or uphold their own principles from decades of working within the Indian Church's "Women's Desk." Saldanha aptly highlighted the symbiosis of unequal family structures, with men as "head of household," and Church structures, both resulting in disempowerment of women, violence, and abuse. Lastly, Professor of Law, Mary Anne Case, interrogated the Vatican's historical roots of gender ideology. Refusing the adjective "Holy" when referring to the Holy See, she said: "I take Holy very seriously." The room at the Church Center in New York was at capacity, with more than

200 people in attendance and 50 turned away. I moderated the panel alongside Amanda Ussak, director of international programs at Catholics for Choice. Ussak outlined the fluke of history that brought the Vatican to the United Nations, which is a good reminder for any generation to reconsider:

As an owner of independent postal and radio services, Vatican City was able to become a member of these unions. The U.N. invited these unions to attend U.N. sessions on an ad-hoc basis, and by virtue of this, the Holy See began attending U.N. meetings. When these unions formally became U.N. bodies, between 1948 and 1964, the Holy See began accessing, attending, and participating in various U.N. bodies including the U.N. General Assembly, the World Health Organization and the U.N. Educational and Social Council.

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From the Executive Director



DEAR WOC MEMBER,

WOC has long maintained that supporting women's ordination is not just about women priests. This issue of *NWNC* offers a complex vision of how we envision women's ordination, bringing to light the intersectionality of justice movements, the far-reaching consequences of oppressive structures, and the very intimate conversations about vocation. While we center the experiences of women called to ecclesial ministry and leadership in our efforts to challenge patriarchy, we also need to deconstruct and interrogate the church's claims of domination, exclusion, and inequality. In this issue, we aim to balance both global and local Church, including their impacts on those communities.

Our cover story reports on a collaborative campaign to discredit the assumed moral authority of the Vatican at the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meetings, for the obvious reason that the Holy See does not practice gender equality. With a team of lawyers, theologians, and experts, we delivered the message to the U.N. that the Holy See perpetuates gender-based discrimination and violence and does not merit inclusion as a State at a meeting on women's rights.

In our Emerging Voices section, Abby Rampone challenges readers to consider the roots and global reaches of Catholicism, with a focus on climate change and colonialism (p. 5). This is further enhanced by an article in our

series by the RAPPOR group (Renewing and Priestly People, Ordination Reconsidered Today), "A Declaration of Sentiments Regarding Women in the Church" (p. 8), followed by the call stories of two women of RAPPOR, Gloria Ulterino and Rev. Gabriella Velardi-Ward who have been working on women's ordination for many decades (pp. 9 and 10).

Regina Clarkin brings our issue back to the parish level with her piece, "The Role of Clothing as Identity," in ecumenical settings (p. 7). Lilian Medina-Romero reports on our new Spanish-language campaign, *Escuchando a las Mujeres*, printed in both English and Spanish.

We walk with many women in their priestly vocations, first with Margaret Wright as a "Jesuit Woman," in her journey of spiritual direction (p. 4). We also celebrate a native of Hawaii, Rev. Puanani Lalkea's ordination through the RCWP (Roman Catholic Women Priests) movement (p. 13). Bob Shine reviews Sheila Durkin Dierks' book, *Called and Chosen*, featuring the courageous paths of ten women called to ministry.

I hope you enjoy this issue knowing that supporting women's ordination is about supporting women so that we might transform oppressive structures to liberate our calls to equality and celebrate the Church we are building. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Blessings and gratitude,

Executive Director

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News and Notes

(RE)IMAGINING CATHOLIC VOCATIONS

WOC had a strong presence at the recent (Re)Imagining Vocations conference at Union Theological Seminary in New York City on March 29-30. The conference was dreamed up and organized by Abby Rampone, one of the newest members of WOC's Board of Directors and a current student at UTS. The goal of the conference was to create a space for progressive young Catholics to explore and (re)imagine how they might serve and challenge their church and the world.

One highlight was a keynote address by Jamie Manson, a member of WOC's advisory board, with a response by two of our most recent Lucile Murray Durkin Scholarship recipients, Allison Connelly and MaryClare O'Brien-Wilson. All three shared their experiences as queer, Catholic, women who experience calls to priesthood, including their joys and challenges.

WOC also interviewed women studying theology for our "Mainstreaming Women's Ministries" research project, exploring how the Catholic Church in the U.S. can mainstream, rather than marginalize, women's ministries and gifts. We left energized and inspired by the courageous, spiritual women who were willing to share their stories. Learn more about the project, and find a link to a survey for young women who are studying or have completed an advanced degree in theology on this page (see below).



Jamie Manson giving her keynote address

MAINSTREAMING WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

WOC is undertaking a year-long, grant-funded research project "Mainstreaming Women's Ministries," with the premise: To create a viable and vibrant future, the Roman Catholic Church must find ways to mainstream instead of marginalize the ministries of women so that parishes throughout North America may be nourished by the leadership and gifts of women.

We seek to give voice to the stories of lay women who are called to ministry and the paths of formation they pursue. We will explore opportunities available to women; barriers, both perceived and tangible; and support currently available to discerning women. We will situate this in the larger context of the Catholic ministerial landscape within the U.S. and examine whether the status quo is institutionally or spiritually sustainable.

Our project will include a survey of Catholic women students and alumnae at universities and seminaries across the U.S.; follow-up interviews and video stories from select respondents; and the publication of our survey results as well as a booklet of liturgical and prayer resources gathered from the people we survey. Our results will be shared with the USCCB and at Catholic conferences nationwide. It is our hope that our resource will become a "Liberating Liturgies 2.0" - an updated version of the 1989 WOC publication for our current times.

We are currently seeking survey responses from people who identify as female, are between the ages of 21 and 40, and are pursuing or have completed an advanced degree in theology. If this describes you, or someone you know, use or share the following survey link to help us continue our research: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/mwmwoc>.



Left to Right: Olga Segura, Mary Kate Holman, Karen Gargamelli-McCreigh and Bob Shine.

A "DUTY OF JUSTICE" CONVERSATION IN NEW YORK CITY

The XV Ordinary Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment approved a final document calling the inclusion of women in decision-making structures a "duty of justice" and "recommends making everyone more aware of the urgency of an inescapable change."

WOC hosted a dialogue in New York City on March 23rd to explore this language with theologians, journalists, and activists: Jesuitical Podcast co-host and Associate editor of *America*, Olga Marina Segura; Ph.D. candidate and Senior Teaching Fellow in Fordham University's Department of Theology, Mary Kate Holman; Co-Founder of Benincasa Community and Catholic Worker in NY, Karen Gargamelli-McCreigh; and New Ways Ministry Associate Director and WOC Vice President, Bob Shine. Thanks to everyone who came out for the conversation and reception.

Jesuit Woman

BY MARGARET WRIGHT

With God, all things are possible.
(Mt 19:26)

This is the story of how God called me to be a Jesuit, and what happened when I finally said yes. It's only the beginning of the story. For the last two years I have lived as a Jesuit novice, recording experiences, reflections, and lessons learned at www.jesuitwomen.net, which is intended as a discernment resource and conversation-starter for women who feel called to be Jesuits.

What has my novitiate looked like so far? It grew out of the novitiate process described in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuit novice participates in a series of experiments in prayer, apostolic service, and community life. The purpose of these experiments is to help the novice shape a heart that is sensitive to God's desire, and available for mission. It is a time primarily of prayer and discernment. One motto of the novitiate is, "All you have to do is eat, sleep, and pray." This is not strictly true, but it does serve to communicate the spirit of this phase of a Jesuit's life.

Every novitiate has a dynamic structure, shaped by the spiritual needs of the novices and the practical needs of mission. These have been the bones of my novitiate:

- 1) Pray with the Constitutions
- 2) Make a devotional vow
- 3) Make the 30-day Spiritual Exercises
- 4) Live a rhythm of daily prayer and Eucharist, weekly spiritual direction and reading, monthly confessions, silent retreat days, and regular written reflection
- 5) Rest, recreate, and enjoy being social
- 6) Make a series of experiments in ministry
- 7) Live in community
- 8) Let go of work, home, and possessions to make a 5-week pilgrimage without money
- 9) Enter into a long experiment of 6 months' voluntary service in a Jesuit apostolate
- 10) Discern a deeper commitment to mission, and prepare for studies.

So there you have the bones. But what about the flesh, the blood, the marrow—the life and origin of this experiment? To find that, we need to talk about God.

God has been both the instigator and the main character in my Jesuit vocation story. The life of this experiment is an ongoing conversation with God. I have learned a lot during the novitiate process about how God communicates personally with me. I have just begun to scratch the surface of how God communicates personally with all of us, all the time.

As a human being, I'm finite. I tend to think in images and linear processes. But God thinks differently. God thinks in processes too complex for a human being to follow rationally, and too simple for a human being to trust. Because of this, my relationship with God can feel like a comedy of errors, fraught with forgetting, misunderstanding, and homecoming. God kindly and continuously seeks new ways to bridge the gap. My Jesuit vocation story is a story of God using images to lead me into processes of transformation. This vocation is a deep, dynamic mystery—a relationship into which God invites me with a smile and a twinkle in God's eye!

Novitiate has been a rich and humbling time. Every aspect of it has been important in its own way to the development of my relationship with God and my readiness for mission. The foundational experiment, though, was making the 30-Day Spiritual Exercises, because these Exercises created a silence into which God could speak directly from my heart, beginning to heal my deepest interior obstacles to discernment. I remember...

It is Day 13. The silence is deep. In the first two weeks of retreat, God has held me, smiled on me, caressed me, and sung to me. Walking through the sacramental pastures of St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, I have rediscovered the simplest version of myself - a 10-year-old girl who loves cats and cows, who can walk for hours completely absorbed in thinking up ways to make beloved people laugh. God has walked with me in these pastures.

God has also wept with me, joked with me, and stuck around to bear all the fear, rage, and sorrow that are the shadow side of my Jesuit vocation. Along with my great desires, I have harbored a deep fear that I am not enough; a deep rage at feeling on the outside looking in, and neglecting parts of who I am in order to try and belong; a deep sorrow that I do not fit anywhere, that there seems to be



Margaret Wright

no place in the known world for what I feel called to be and do.

God and I talk it through and I cry until there is nothing left. There are no secrets between us. God has totally won my trust, as has my spiritual director. A woman who has been praying for the opportunity to give the Long Retreat to young women, she says with a grin, "Isn't it GREAT to be in a relationship with Someone who lets you be angry??"

Today, with the ground prepared and my heart softened, God makes the big move. I am talking with my director about last night's walk under the live oak trees. As I was looking up at the stars, totally in love with God and at peace, the thought had floated gently into my consciousness: What if I just went home and lived the Gospel?

This Gospel that God has shown me through the Exercises turns the world on its head. Through memories, scriptures, and moments of deep bodily insight, God is revealing a new set of priorities that are anchored in the experience of being completely loved. My greatest gifts are not talents, security, education, or professional opportunity, as I had previously assumed. No, God's greatest gifts to me are my body, my vulnerability, my inherent dignity, and all of the personal encounters that have caused me discomfort; every chance that I have had to go beyond myself and share who I am and what I have with others; every chance to give and receive love. "What if," I muse now to my director, "I went home and lived that? What if my Jesuit vocation is simply a Gospel call?"

She, who has been listening closely for signs of an election these past few days, raises her pencil and says with delight, "New plan! We've got a new plan!"

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Climate Change, Colonialism, and the Grassroots Church

BY ABBY RAMPONE

Talking about Pope Francis among progressive Catholics sometimes feels like a broken record. “Well, *Laudato Si*’ is great,” we say, “and he talks about the economic exploitation of the poor, but what about women’s ordination or LGBTQ liberation?”

I’ve probably said this sentence word-for-word when asked for my take on Francis. It reflects my values (more or less), but lately, I’ve been thinking about what goes unsaid in such conversations.

In my experience, many progressive Catholics pat the Vatican on the back for its understanding of climate change and move on to other issues. Unspoken here is the historic whiteness of much large-scale progressive Catholic organizing in the U.S. Gender and sexuality issues may sometimes be more accessible to white people: there are white women and white LGBTQ folks, after all. White progressive Catholics may be less likely to address colonialism, capitalism, racism, and environmental degradation, all entwined systems that directly or indirectly impact people of color more than white people.

Furthermore, neither women’s ordination nor LGBTQ sacramental equality inherently require a holistic overhaul of the institutional church: taken at face value, both of these steps toward a more just Catholic Church could be liberal reforms that leave its hierarchical structure intact. Most of us understand that a victory for women’s ordination would not be a cure-all for the institutional Roman Catholic Church but it’s a problem that’s easy to name. It has a straightforward solution. I say this not to minimize the issue but to emphasize that an all-male, celibate priesthood is a straightforward problem to diagnose and rally around.

Climate change and environmental degradation are especially pernicious because it’s hard to wrap our heads around their sheer scope. Some scholars have argued that the human mind can’t quite grasp the magnitude of the issue. Novelist Amitav Ghosh beautifully names the failure of his chosen literary genre to describe climate change in *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. We constantly ingest propaganda that exalts growth and “progress” – to question the goodness of expansion is considered absurd, even heretical.

While I appreciate arguments about the limits of the imagination, I also know that there are significant material obstacles to halting climate change. Dismantling the massive extractive machine runs contrary to the interests of fossil fuel companies and powerful elite institutions. For many people in the world, resisting environmental degradation, climate change, and colonial occupation represent grave risks precisely because resistance threatens corporate interests. The assassination of Honduran indigenous environmental activist Berta Cáceres is just one recent example.

Feminist theorists have long helped us understand the resonance between the domination of the earth and the domination of women. Patriarchy is an extractive structure that exploits women’s domestic, sexual, and reproductive labor. In the logic of colonialism and capitalism, land is treated as an object to be conquered, possessed, and mined for its oil or gold. To the colonizer or capitalist, land and its inhabitants exist to be used. To the patriarch, women exist to be used.

When we objectify another person or another organism, we fail to see them as sacred beings made in the image and likeness of God. We reject Christ’s incarnation as being. We neglect the deep sacramentality of our tradition.

The roots of oppressive systems grow deep and knotted, and as any gardener knows, you can’t simply pull up an invasive weed. Unless you dig down deeper and unearth the entire subterranean root system, the pest will grow back again and again. No individual can address every problem – it’s okay to focus your work and activism! But when we pick apart the intertwined roots of systems of oppression, we do better, more intersectional work. We see the patterns that emerge when we treat others as objects rather than kin. We build stronger coalitions.



Abby Rampone

Since the institutional Catholic Church has participated in colonial violence, Catholics are called to anticolonial action. Since Pope Francis has explicitly called on the Church to address climate change, we must ensure that it is living that call.

What are the material, educational, spiritual, and theological resources that we can draw upon to better address environmental degradation within the movements for a more just Catholic Church? Moving beyond “reduce, reuse, recycle,” I’ll end with “three Rs” that help me think about my responsibilities as a white Catholic woman who attends a seminary on occupied Lenape land.

Dig up the roots. How exactly does the Catholic Church aid and abet colonial violence? What theologies justify the exploitation of the earth? How is all of this connected? We can study and support the movement calling on the Pope to rescind the Doctrine of Discovery, read the work of indigenous theologians like Vine Deloria, Jr, and study ecotheology like Elizabeth Johnson’s *Creation and the Cross*. Examining the roots also entails self-examination of our privilege. How do our identities shape how we move through the world? What issues do we neglect or not even see?

Make reparations: As my Christian Scriptures (New Testament) class is reading the Gospels, I’m reminded that the coming of the kingdom of God is not just spiritual but material. Jesus calls upon us to give up our wealth and follow him. Paul urges Gentile Jesus-followers to donate money to struggling Jewish Jesus-followers in a cross-cultural act of solidarity (see Sze-kar Wan, “Collection for the Saints as Anticolonial Act”). Are there indigenous-led groups in our communities that we can financially support? Can we give money to support water protectors (pipeline resisters)? What about land-based reparations? As many Catholic institutions close, dioceses and communities have tough decisions to make about what to do with unused land or buildings. Returning church land to indigenous peoples is a concrete act of repentance for centuries of religiously-sanctioned colonial occupation.

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Laughing with Godde

THE REV. PUANANI LALAKEA



Rev. Puanani Lalkea

I have had what a pastor once called “a promiscuous faith journey.”

I was raised Roman Catholic in a world filled with Native Hawaiian wisdom. I lived Christian traditions, while the blood that coursed through my veins bore the memories of my Chinese ancestors and the air I breathed instilled Native Hawaiian values into my soul. As I grew, I tried to make sense of this seeming contradiction, exploring a variety of different faith traditions.

My experience of the Roman Catholic Church as a child was less about spirituality and more about social connection. As an adult, I found myself pushing against the confines of the doctrines, angry with the entrenched positions of some of the Church leaders. This made it difficult for me to embrace the goodness in the Roman Catholic Church. So I began to explore. I began with other Christian faith traditions. I worshipped for a time with an Episcopal congregation. The high Church rituals felt familiar and comforting, but the different understanding of the Eucharist left me feeling as though something was missing. The Lutheran Church near my home was lively and inviting, but I missed the incense, stained glass and other ritual objects. Although I met lovely people in each of these Christian settings, I found that, in a more global context, I was disappointed by the behavior of many Christians I met, and for several years, I chose to practice with a Buddhist sangha. Here, the use of ritual, incense, and meditation offered me a way to “be still and know.” This time away helped me to get quiet enough to hear the voice of Godde calling me home.

This is the faith that turns *why* into *what* and encourages me to live into my own divinity.

My faith journey has gone full circle. In July 2018, I returned home to Hawai'i and this past February I celebrated my priestly ordination with Roman Catholic Women Priests (RCWP). As a priest serving in my island home, I will continue to stand on the edge inside the church that I love, embracing the rituals, lifting my voice in song, worshipping and serving in community and encouraging the Church to grow into the expansive, inclusive, welcoming and accepting body that was exemplified so well by Jesus.

I have come home to Hawai'i because for me, this is the place that physically represents Godde. The trade winds softly caress everything, a gentle reminder of the Breath of Godde that moves in, around, and through us. And the sea that surrounds Hawai'i on all sides serves as a constant reminder of birth and transformation; after Godde created Night and Day, Godde separated water from water, separating the water above from the water below (Gen: 1:6-7). The ocean, the embryo of Life, embraces my island home, a constant offering of blessing and baptism.

I have come home to the Roman Catholic Church as embodied by RCWP because this is the faith that is big enough to hold my growing understanding of the Holy. This is the faith that sanctifies my personal relationship with Godde as the foundation of my relationship with others and with all of Creation. This is the faith that turns why into what and encourages me to live into my own divinity.

Being comfortable with where I stand has allowed me to let go of the need to justify myself. This freedom has given me the opportunity to invite others into a space that is open and peaceful, where there is room to breathe, where primacy of conscience and honoring of that still small voice that rests within each of us is the light that guides us.

I believe in Godde, the Divine Breath, the Light and Love that is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. I believe that Godde is in all people and all things and that this is what connects us to one another. I believe that Godde loves each of us, unconditionally; that the Divine sees us as the perfect, light beings created in Godde's own image. I believe that Godde uses everything...everything for good. In a world filled with suffering, it is sometimes difficult to understand how a loving Godde could allow such misery. Some people attempt to explain it away by citing free will.

Others believe that an evil and malevolent being is at war with Godde and that this being is causing the pain. I believe that this sort of duality, this need to separate good from evil, is a human condition that misses the mark. Godde made us perfect, not as in without blemish, but perfect as in whole; each of us, a unique amalgamation of light and dark. The challenge is to stop defining and separating, stop judging and expecting, and to live into the more perfect world into which Godde invites us as co-creators with, in, and through Love.

Being comfortable with where I stand has allowed me to let go of the need to justify myself.

As embodiments of Divine creation, each of us is loved. Godde even loves those with whom I feel I have reason to quarrel or those whom I feel have done me an injustice.

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The Role of Clothing as Identity

BY REGINA CLARKIN

In the end, it was the clothing or lack thereof, that got to me. I minister in a Roman Catholic community in upstate New York, serving as the parish's faith formation director. A while ago, I presented the idea of holding an Easter sunrise service on the banks of a body of water in our area to the pastor. He suggested I speak to the clergy interfaith council which meets regularly to talk and plan communal events around issues of the day and express our shared beliefs.

And so began my relationship with the interfaith council where I have attended meetings, participated in discussions and hosted interfaith services for the past five years. In other words, I was on par with clergy leaders from the Unitarian Universalist, Methodist, Jewish, Muslim, Episcopal and Lutheran houses of worship. It has been extremely fulfilling work and I have not let the fact that I am not the "official leader" of our parish diminish my energy and enthusiasm for the relationship building that is interfaith dialogue. Naturally, I keep our pastor apprised of the conversations and events, many of them hosted by a rabbi and a Methodist minister, both of them women.

In my diocese there are no Lay Ecclesial Ministers or leadership formation programs for the non-ordained. There are no rites conferring leadership on a layperson, much less a woman. This has not been an obstacle for me because I know I serve in a leadership role in the "lower church" where I give weekly talks to parents while their children are in religious formation sessions. I have always known my ministry is co-essential to that of our parish priests.

When I was invited to do a reading from the book of Jeremiah ("God called me and gives me strength") at the installation ceremony of the new male Lutheran minister on a recent Sunday afternoon, I was honored. The female Unitarian Universalist minister was asked to read from Ephesians ("we will accomplish far more than imagined by the power within us"). The recently ordained female Methodist minister preached at the installation. Along with the male Lutheran minister who administered the office on the new pastor, there were five other Lutheran ministers present, all female. We were asked to process in together.



Regina Clarkin

It was immediately apparent to me that I was the only one of the group that didn't have an outer garment over my street clothes. What made it even more noticeable is that earlier that morning at my parish, I heard a priest explain the vestments he was putting on to the boys and girls before celebrating the children's Mass. He explained that the white alb was what servants wore in the time of Jesus. And that a priest is a servant. Then he put on the cincture and explained its role, along with the stole and chasuble.

His words came flooding back as I sat in the quaint Lutheran church. I hadn't expected to feel so out-of-place because I was not wearing a robe. It was an unfamiliar feeling, because when I'm at my parish I am fully present and operating in my role as a faith formation minister. For that reason I never thought to put on an alb. Also, it is simply not within the realm of possibility. Catholic women are not yet allowed to serve God fully. But among the Lutheran congregation with female members of other Christian denominations, all wearing vestments, I stood out like a sore thumb.

After the service, I spoke to the Methodist minister who has become a friend. I told her how much I enjoyed her sermon and was familiar with all the references she used. "Sometimes I feel like I'm in the wrong denomination," I quipped. She replied, "Oh, there's no doubting your call." Her response was balm for my spirit and made me feel a bit more "dressed."

I've come to realize the feelings underneath my sense of being "left out" of the clergy dress code coalesce around discrimination.

I've come to realize the feelings underneath my sense of being "left out" of the clergy dress code coalesce around discrimination.

What has become glaringly obvious is that I was exposed. My ministry is not visibly upheld by my church. There, sitting among women of deep faith and sharp intellect, I couldn't hide my denomination's insistence on excluding women from leading worship.

I am truly a servant to the community I serve, with or without a robe. By virtue of my baptism, I am a priest, a prophet and a leader, clothed with the garment of Christ, even if I can't dress the part.

Before Regina Clarkin was a faith formation director, she founded a weekly newspaper in her hometown of Peekskill, NY where she currently blogs at PeekskillHerald.blog.

Leaving a Legacy



Prayerfully consider supporting the future of the Women's Ordination Conference to empower the next generation of women leaders working for equality in our Church.

Learn more about planned giving and bequest options by viewing our brochure online at www.womensordination.org or by calling 202.675.1006.

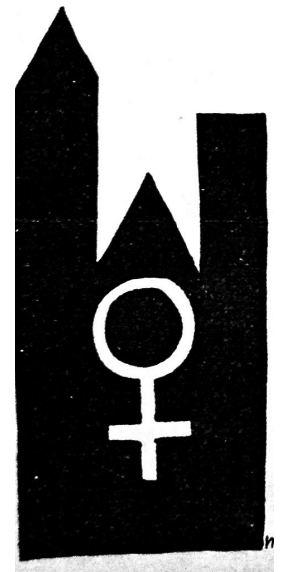
A Declaration of Sentiments Regarding Women in the Church

BY RAPPORT (RENEWING AND PRIESTLY PEOPLE, ORDINATION RECONSIDERED TODAY)
APRIL 10, 2019

- **Whereas** Proverbs' Wisdom Woman of old—a bold preacher, presider at Table, provider of sound advice, wisdom and strength—would become recognized in the first century before Jesus as “a spotless mirror of the working of God,”¹
- **Whereas** Jesus welcomed women as well as men among his followers,²
- **Whereas** Mary of Magdala, first to see the Risen Christ and first commissioned directly by Jesus to bring the Good News of his resurrection to her brother apostles, was pre-eminent among the early followers of Christ,³
- **Whereas** the apostle Paul praised Prisca (Priscilla in Acts), along with her husband Aquila, as his co-workers;⁴ they led house churches in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus.⁵
- **Whereas** the apostle Paul commended Phoebe as deacon (diakonos) of the church of Cenchreae,⁶ the only woman so named among 11 men elsewhere,⁷
- **Whereas** the apostle Paul named Junia and Andronicus as “prominent among the apostles,” for they endured prison with him for the sake of the Gospel,⁸
- **Whereas** Lydia prevailed upon Paul to baptize her and her entire household, after which she became leader of her house church in Philippi,⁹
- **Whereas** the apostle Paul asserted: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”¹⁰

Therefore, let it be recognized, affirmed, and resolved:

- That there is nothing in Scripture to deny ordination to women.¹¹
- That women, throughout church history, have served from the time of Jesus to this present day as preachers, leaders of communities, teachers, and deacons, often despite opposition from officials of the Roman Church.
- That Pope Gelasius I, for example, complained bitterly in a letter of 494 CE to the bishops of Basilicata, Calabria, and Sicily: “With impatience we have heard that divine things have undergone such contempt that women are encouraged to serve at the sacred altars, and that all tasks entrusted to the service of men are performed by a sex for which these [tasks] are not appropriate!”¹²
- That God’s call to women for ordained ministry in the Roman Catholic Church continues into the present, through their faith communities.
- That such women respond by becoming fully prepared (academically, spiritually, pastorally, and psychologically tested) for ordination.
- That the dynamic Spirit of God hovered over the Second Vatican Council, producing four Constitutions—the pillars of our faith—thereby breathing new life into our church, as noted below.
- That the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (December 4, 1963), in order to increase “vigor to the Christian life of the faithful”¹³—acknowledging Christ’s presence in God’s Word and in God’s praying people, as well as in the priest and Eucharistic species—“earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.”¹⁴
- That the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (November 21, 1964) declared that Church is first and foremost the new People of God, reborn in Baptism “from water and the Holy Spirit;”¹⁵ as such, they must all be able to fully participate in the life of God’s Holy Spirit. Furthermore, they are empowered and sometimes obliged “to manifest their opinion on those things which concern the good of the church.”¹⁶
- That the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965) declared: “At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task” of making meaning of our lives in this life and the next. The Church, therefore, “must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live.”¹⁷ Pope John XXIII, in his April 11, 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, proclaimed women’s rising consciousness as one of three major signs of our times: “Women are gaining an increasing awareness of their natural dignity. Far from being content with a purely passive role or allowing themselves to be regarded as a kind of passive instrument, they are demanding both in domestic and public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons.”¹⁸
- That Ludmila Javorova was ordained a priest during Communist rule in Czechoslovakia on December 28, 1970. This ordination was conferred in a Vatican-approved underground Church in good standing in order to serve women in prison.
- That the Roman Catholic Church needs more ordained leadership.
- That the majority of faithful Catholics are now prepared to accept and honor women as ordained deacons and priests.¹⁹
- That Roman Catholic Womenpriests, in faithfulness to their call, have expanded in number, location, and expertise since their initial ordination on the Danube in 2002 by a bishop in apostolic succession; they currently number 264 priests and 18 bishops worldwide.²⁰
- That the time, therefore, for women’s ordinations has arrived and must be acted upon now by the official leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. To this end, Canon 1024 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, re-stating male-only ordination, must be changed to include women. Women must be welcomed to discern their call to ordination (to the diaconate or priesthood), and seminary formation must include women fully.
- That the excommunication *latae sententiae* of all those involved in the ordination of women as Roman Catholic Womenpriests be lifted.



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My Call Story

BY GLORIA ULTERINO

My call is still evolving. It all began as a youngster in Church, listening to what I called “all the gibberish.” My name back then was Gloria O’Toole. Then, inevitably, I would hear the priest say, “Gloria tua,” Latin for Your glory. I belonged!

Fast forward to college years, class of 1962. I had found a home with the Newman community, but Vatican II was just getting underway. So, as I pondered how best to use my history studies, I became a high school history teacher. Marriage and three much loved children followed in quick succession. Until God turned my life upside down!

At age 41, when some are embarking on a second career, I returned to school to study theology. Out of nowhere, two significant people crossed my path and left their mark: a newly assigned priest and a Director of Faith Formation. Both intensely human. Charismatic. Funny and articulate. Committed to their faith in ways I had seldom experienced. So it was that I fell head over heels in love with liturgy and Church. And gorged myself on program after program that our diocese put before us. (It was the early 80’s, still basking in the light of Vatican II.) Not only that, but our diocesan seminary had just shuttered its doors, only to re-open as a lay institute. When I marched myself into my first theology class, “The Church of the Future,” I knew I had come home, for good. Where would it lead? Only time would tell.

Four years later I entered parish ministry as Adult Faith Coordinator, and I loved it! The ministry, the variety, the people, all of it, even with the usual struggles. Then, after another seven and a half years, I was appointed the first temporary pastoral administrator in a parish, to lead folks for four months in between priest pastors. What a fit! What joy! What hope for the future, or so I thought. Surely, as some people had said, and I would agree, God was calling me to the priesthood. One of my sacred responsibilities over these years had been preaching on a regular basis. And I gave it everything I had! (Yes, women had been preaching in our diocese since the 1970’s.)

But, of course, there were bumps in the road. Pressure from the Vatican on our bishop. Increasing limitations from what had been. So I formed a storytelling group, “Women of the Well,” intended to accurately and creatively tell stories of women in Scripture and Tradition, to lift up the half of the sky that was drooping. And wrote two published books. This was exciting work, hard work, fulfilling work. And yet: what was my calling now? Indeed, from the time I had joined RAPPORt in 1999, this question was prominent in my mind.

Of late, I have come to recognize that my calling is to the diaconate. When I look at the vision of the Second Vatican Council on a restored diaconate, I can connect. Deacons “receive the imposition of hands, ‘not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry’ (going back to the early church). For, strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity.” (LG 29, the document on the Church.) Yes, this fits! Yes, this is what I’m about!

It was the liturgy of the Church that propelled me into the study of theology. It’s been the Word of God that has become my very core: a love of Scripture caught from one of my professors, seven years of weekly Bible study with the folks, preparing for and growing into the holy ministry of preaching, and faithfully writing about women whose lives we discover anew in the Scripture. My program, “Women of the Well” is now twenty years old, continuing to grow and evolve into an inspiring ministry for many. All this has been for the service of people to whom I’ve been sent. To empower them. To name their gifts and call them forth, for the life of the community.



Gloria Ulterino

All this has been for the service of people to whom I’ve been sent. To empower them. To name their gifts and call them forth, for the life of the community.

Are there questions? And doubts? Yes, of course. What about obedience to the bishop? This much I can say: we must both respect each other, be able to speak to and listen to each other, and then reach an agreement on the way forward. What about considering this “second best to the priesthood”? No, this love of God’s Word, this service of God’s Word in the liturgy, this service (meaning empowerment) of the community fuels my call. Even at my advanced age, I long to feel God’s power in the sacramental laying on of hands and anointing.

Gloria Ulterino lives in Rochester, New York. Her two books, Drawing from Wisdom’s Well: Stories, Celebrations, and Explorations of Courageous Women of Faith and Walking with Wisdom’s Daughters: Twelve Celebrations and Stories of Women of Passion and Faith were both published by Ave Maria Press (in 2002 and 2006 respectively) and these books have been reviewed and well-received by WOC readers.

My Story of Call

BY REV. GABRIELLA VELARDI-WARD

God does not choose based on appearance. Samuel went through Jesse's seven sons before God chose the last and considered the least, David, to be king. God does not see as humans see. God does not see race, or financial position, or fame or cultural standing or gender. God's call is not bound by rules or doctrines or Canon Law 1024.

As a very young child I had lots of talents that this society ascribed to the male gender. I was mechanically inclined, I was good at math, and more. At the age of five, I told my sister that I was going to be a priest when I grew up. I thought that boys and girls are equal and that abilities are not assigned according to gender.

My call to priesthood was serious. I fell in love with the Divine at a very young age. But, with my sister's words, "Ha! You Can't. You're a girl!" came the feeling that I did not belong in this world. I felt that I was rejected because of who I was. It was as if the universe groaned the day I was born female. I did not fit into society's expectations of me. And the door slammed shut!

At that age, I knew the depth and mystery of God. I knew that symbols used during Mass pointed to a higher reality. I wanted to get closer to that reality. I wanted to dedicate my life to God as a priest.

And so, I turned to the convent. I joined a vocation club. It was not fair that girls were limited to ways that are not their call. And I turned toward things that have kept me company throughout my life, books and drawing. I began drawing chalices and monstrances and tabernacles. And at age ten, I began reading religious philosophers.

Because of that incident at five, my life took on a quest for justice. I asked the question of how females fit into this Church and society. I asked, what else was unfair. I began to see racism, poverty, and privilege. I saw the hypocrisy in the Roman Catholic Church. If I were going to be rejected by the Church, I would search for God in other faith traditions. I wanted to know more about God. And other faith traditions offered me that opportunity.

At sixteen, I began to read the *Bagavad Gita*, the life of Mahatma Gandhi and books on Buddhism. Later in my life, I joined an indigenous people's prayer group.

At twenty, I had my beautiful son who brought joy into my life. Ten years later I had my beautiful daughter who brought me meaning and purpose and reason to survive.

When she was two months old, I left a very disastrous marriage with my two children, the clothes on our backs and a car full of whatever I could carry. We were very poor.

After a series of low-paying jobs, I went back to college and studied architecture. Seven years later, I graduated Summa cum Laude with a degree in architecture. I encountered much sexism along the way and my call to seek justice for others felt as strong as my call to the priesthood.

When I graduated in 1989, I could not find a job. Soon, I turned back to God and began attending church. Since I was so prominent in so many church activities many parishioners thought I was on staff. I even had keys to the church buildings.

I spent many hours there alone at night, praying. And soon my call to priesthood came back. I was again experiencing this call, with no way to fulfill it. I spent many hours at the altar, saying the words that were forbidden to women. I was living with a broken heart. And I continued to minister to three multi-lingual communities.

There was a hole in my soul that could not be filled. I began, as I did as a child, to discern entry into women's' vowed religious communities. And, I began attending a diocesan seminary. This call was strong, urgent, and persistent. I did not know how to live it out. I began attending an Episcopal church. But, the hole in my soul persisted.

God was so present to me during those days. Once when I came back from receiving communion, I heard a voice say, "You will be priest." I asked, "how is that possible? I am female." The response came, "All things are possible with God."

So, why did I still not feel valued and normal? This suffering went on for several years, until a lovely and generous woman asked me if I would like to go to a CTA conference. She would make it possible. I went and it was there that I found WOC and RAPPOR T. Through RAPPOR T, I found the Roman Catholic Women Priest movement.



Rev. Gabriella Velardi-Ward

The first ordination on this continent was on the St. Lawrence River. I was there. Tears streamed down my face and I applied to the program. The first ordination in the U.S. was in Pittsburgh. I was there and again tears streamed down my face. The first ordination on land was at the Judson Memorial Church in Manhattan in 2007 and I was ordained to the diaconate.

As I lay prostrate on the floor, turning my life over to God, the hole in my soul began to fill up. I began to be healed of the feelings of rejection and anger that I had toward the Roman Catholic Church. Just as the woman who touched the garments of Jesus was healed, I was healed when the Spirit touched me. And this time, I felt the Holy One filling up the emptiness in my soul. The following year I was ordained to the priesthood. A few weeks ago while I was preaching, people noticed a deer running in the field outside the church behind the altar. I couldn't help thinking this was a sign that, as a deer runs to living water, our hearts continue to run to a God who loves us.

This is not the end of the story, of course. Ontologically changed or not, I am the same person I was before ordination. I am still very much called to the sacraments and working toward social justice. And now I do all that as a Roman Catholic Woman Priest.

Rev. Gabriella Velardi-Ward lives in Staten Island, NY. She pastors the St. Praxedis Catholic Community and is the founder and coordinator of the Coalition for Wetlands and Forests working to protect the Graniteville forested wetland, present in an Environmental Justice community.

Escuchando a las Mujeres

BY LILIAN MEDINA-ROMERO

Escuchando a las Mujeres (Listening to Women) is a project that seeks to create opportunities for a more inclusive church through constructive feedback to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops about the Latinx experience in the Church.

One of the things that make this project so powerful is that it recognizes the relevance and influence of the Latinx community in our society. About 10% of the U.S. population self-identify as Latin@ and Catholic (CARA, n.d.). Studies have shown that women display higher levels of faith and commitment to the church than men do (Pew Research Center, 2014). Therefore, we have begun efforts to work with women in this community all across the nation to elevate their voices, share their stories and call for acceptance, inclusivity, and equality within the church.

We are currently working in the D.C. metropolitan area to engage Latina Catholic women in safe conversations about their encounters with the church. These women are eager to engage in these discussions and share their experiences. Local community leaders have welcomed the initiative and we will be working with them to host events that empower Latina Catholic women to share constructive feedback based on their personal experiences with the church. They have shown great appreciation for this opportunity because there are very few spaces where they can engage in safe conversations about faith and church. At the same time, they look forward to seeing the impact that their feedback will have in creating a more diverse leadership in the church that represents their faith.

In addition, we are also working to reach out to parishes, women's groups and community leaders in fourteen other cities in the United States. Based on initial conversations, I am confident that this outreach effort will produce amazing results. Latinas want to express the fullness of God's presence in their lives. However, for many of them it is difficult to find that fullness in the Catholic church. Many decide to explore other faiths and leave the church and some just learn how to live with a feeling of emptiness and worthlessness. Escuchando a las Mujeres is a great opportunity for Latinas to find support through a shared experience while making an impact in building a more diverse and inclusive church that represents the true love of God.

WOC has received a grant from JustPax Fund to sponsor this project, Escuchando a las Mujeres, as part of the collaborative effort "Listening to Women" (www.listeningtowomen.org).

Lilian Medina-Romero serves as the Outreach Coordinator for this project.



Escuchando a las Mujeres es un proyecto que busca crear oportunidades para una iglesia más inclusiva a través de comentarios constructivos a la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos sobre la experiencia de las Latinas en la iglesia.

Este proyecto reconoce la relevancia y la influencia de la comunidad Latina en nuestra sociedad. Alrededor del 10% de la población de los EE. UU. Se autoidentifica como Latin@ y catolic@ (CARA, n.d.). Además, estudios demuestran que las mujeres tienen niveles más altos de fe y compromiso con la iglesia que los hombres (Pew Research Center, 2014). Por esto, hemos empezado a trabajar con las mujeres Latinas del país con el fin de elevar sus voces, compartir sus historias y exigir aceptación, inclusión e igualdad dentro de la iglesia.

Actualmente estamos trabajando en el área metropolitana de DC para involucrar a las mujeres católicas latinas en conversaciones seguras sobre sus encuentros con la iglesia. Estas mujeres están ansiosas por participar en estas discusiones y compartir sus experiencias. Líderes locales han acogido con satisfacción la iniciativa y empezaremos a organizar eventos que permitan a las mujeres católicas compartir sus experiencias personales con la iglesia. La comunidad ha mostrado un gran aprecio por esta oportunidad porque hay muy pocos espacios donde puedan participar en conversaciones seguras sobre la fe y la iglesia. Al mismo tiempo, esperan ver el impacto que sus comentarios tendrán en la creación de un liderazgo más diverso en la iglesia que representa su fe.

Además, también estamos trabajando para colaborar con diferentes parroquias, grupos de mujeres y líderes comunitarios en otras 14 ciudades de los Estados Unidos. Después de compartir la iniciativa con la comunidad, estoy segura que Escuchando a las Mujeres producirá resultados muy positivos. Las mujeres latinas quieren vivir a plenitud la presencia de Dios en sus vidas. Sin embargo, para muchas de ellas es difícil encontrar esa plenitud en la iglesia católica. Algunas deciden explorar otras religiones y abandonan la iglesia y otras simplemente aprenden a vivir con sentimientos de vacío y de culpa. Escuchando a las Mujeres es una gran oportunidad para que las latinas encuentren apoyo a través de una experiencia compartida y con esto contribuir a la construcción de una iglesia más diversa e inclusiva que represente el verdadero amor de Dios.

WOC ha recibido patrocinio de JustPax Fund para Escuchando a las Mujeres, como parte del proyecto colaborativo "Listening to Women" (www.listeningtowomen.org).

Lilian Medina-Romero es nuestra Coordinadora de Alcance Comunitario.

Challenging the Holy See at the U.N. ... continued from page 1

Today, they are the only non-state member of these organizations. Contrary to many claims, the Holy See was not invited to participate at the U.N. Upon inquiring about full membership, the Holy See was informed in 1944 by US Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the Vatican would not be capable of fulfilling all the responsibilities of full membership at the U.N. Instead, in 1964, the Holy See established a permanent observer mission at the U.N.: the Holy See informed the U.N. Secretary-General that it had dispatched a permanent observer to the U.N.'s New York headquarters.

U Thant, then Secretary-General, used his discretion as Secretary General to accept the Holy See's representative and grant the Holy See permanent observer status through custom, but this decision was not in accordance with U.N. policy. According to the U.N. Office of Legal Affairs, a non-member state at the U.N. must be members of one or more specialized agencies and be recognized by a majority of members of the United Nations. The Holy See meets the first requirement through its membership in U.N. organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency. The latter requirement, however, is not met given the minority of countries that have diplomatic relations with the Holy See. In 1959, only 14 states out of the 82 U.N. members at the time had formal relations with the Vatican. By 1985, only 53 of the 159 U.N. member states had diplomatic relations with the Holy See."

We continued our program in the afternoon with a second event to champion the stories of survivors of abuse and advocates, linking the harmful policies of the Vatican to the experiences of women and girls. Barbara Dorris, formerly of SNAP, shared her story of rape by a priest that began when she was just six years old and continued for many years. Venezuelan lawyer and Executive Director of *Grupo Parlamentario Interamericano sobre Población y Desarrollo-GPI* (Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development), Carla Rivera, works with the Secretariat of a parliamentary network that seeks to promote and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the Americas. Rivera brought urgency to the campaign's efforts by exposing the role of the Holy See at the legislative and parliamentary levels, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Finally, Sara Oviedo, an Ecuadorian expert on international protection of children and board member of Ending



Clerical Abuse (ECA), gave her impressions of the recent summit of bishops in Rome, and a wide perspective on the reach of the Holy See. Far from a one-day event, the collaboration resulted in a comprehensive report and case studies of the role of the Holy See and its interference with the rights and security of women and girls, as well as a formal complaint to the U.N. Secretary General to review their membership in light of non-compliance with treaties and resolutions, and ongoing criminal practices and human rights violations. Pam Spees, Senior Staff Attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights concluded the event presenting her work on the complaint and a commitment to pursue this effort.

The silencing and disempowerment of women in Church structures, governance and diplomacy impacts not only our faith and religious practices, but risks the livelihood of women and girls around the world by upholding systems of oppression and violence. The Holy See has an important role on the international stage, and should be uniquely positioned to address issues of migration, climate change, poverty, nuclear disarmament, and all sustainable development goals. However, because the Holy See fails to recognize the inherent intersectionality between these issues and gender, and through its own policies of limiting the role of gender (and defining the roles of women in Church and society), not only is the Church ineffective in addressing global issues, it violates the human rights of women. The consequences are further compounded by diplomatic impunity and lack of accountability the Holy See enjoys through its hybrid status as a State.

As a Catholic, I want my Church to do better and be a model for good in the world. Faith and religion can be a source for liberation when it inspires collective action, challenges oppressive power structures, and centers those who are marginalized. In the Catholic Church, we must first rebuild our credibility by recognizing and empowering women as equals just as Jesus did. That begins with the Holy See leaving the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women.

Kate McElwee serves as the Executive Director of WOC.

Climate Change, Colonialism, and the Grassroots Church... continued from page 5

Ritualize: When indigenous writer Robin Wall Kimmerer spoke at my seminary recently, she commented that white people long for rituals to express their love for the earth and mourn climate change. She urged us to cultivate those rituals. White people who lack the spiritual means to process the trauma of climate change often turn to the indigenous traditions of the lands that their own ancestors colonized but the appropriation of indigenous traditions perpetuates violence against indigenous communities. How can we draw upon our own traditions' roots to process and mourn? Greenfaith.org, for example, offers resources like prayers, hymns, scripture, and sermons that center care for creation. "If God is male, then the male is God," Mary Daly famously wrote; similarly, if the exploitation of the earth is of God, then God is exploitative. I believe that our tradition teaches otherwise, but it is our collective responsibility to resurrect radical love for all creation in our hearts and our communities.

Readers of *New Women, New Church* are dedicated to recognizing and resisting patriarchy that oppresses women. So, too, let us become more aware of our Church's complicity in the exploitation of the earth and forge new practices to reverse the exploitation that has brought us to this dire state.

Abby Rampone is an M.Div. student at Union Theological Seminary in NY. She also serves on the WOC Board.



Jesuit Woman... continued from page 4

I cannot speak. She sees that something is up and extends our session by a few minutes so that I can find words to talk about it. I realize that up to this moment, I have sincerely thought that the main purpose of this fledgling Jesuit novitiate process was to convince Jesuit women to speak publicly about their vocations, in order to convince Jesuit men to accept me and other Jesuit women. I have ardently wanted the Society of Jesus to see us, receive us, form us and mission us. But this desire is based on the belief that to live a Jesuit life, I need Jesuit men to take the initiative, to accept and approve of me. This belief is so deeply rooted that I didn't even see it until now. And I am completely attached to it. Attached is not even the word. I am enslaved by this belief! It has dominated my world.

For nearly twenty years I have kept the Gospel call just at arm's length, believing that an institute, the Society of Jesus, was the gatekeeper of that call. I have also created a mental idol, a Great Jesuit Man ideal, who served as the reference point for my formation up to this moment of retreat. The ideal is not bad in itself; it provided the earliest image of vocation that I could understand. It served as a positive reference point for the life that God was calling me to live. However, over time it became a suffocating impediment to truly and freely living that Gospel life. This inflated image of the Great Jesuit Man, and the belief that I need his initiative, acceptance and approval, thickened and hardened like a well-intentioned scab over my wounded heart. Years and years of continual pressure had hardened this shield, muffling God's voice; but now, with two weeks of unconditional love and two words: "New plan!" God strips it off.

With my director satisfied that I can grieve openly, I go outside for a walk under the live oaks and weep. In the evening I lie in bed, the area over my heart now open, soft, fresh, and still bleeding. I can feel God with me, keeping gentle pressure on the right parts of the wound, irrigating the space with cool water, letting the organs rearrange themselves in the absence of my hardened attachment to the acceptance, brilliance, and authority of the Great Jesuit Man. I know that I will be okay. I know that this is only the beginning of a healing process. I weep and rest and feel my heart alive and humming with gratitude. I fall asleep before the sun sets.

Just before sleep sets in, as God keeps watch over my body, another seed of reconciliation is planted. The thought floats in that perhaps my brother Jesuits struggle with this same ideal.

Maybe this inordinate attachment to the Great Jesuit Man is something God heals in them too, with time and care and a sense of humor. Maybe their formation, like my formation, facilitates this healing, clarifying and empowering the Gospel call in each of us. What if Jesuit women and Jesuit men are in exactly the same boat?

A new image arises: me, with all of my brother and sister Jesuits, in the same boat. God help us!

God smiles.

It has been eighteen months since the Spiritual Exercises, and I am in transition from novitiate to the studies phase of my formation. Saying yes to God has brought freedom, growth, and many possibilities that did not seem available when I used to say, "If I were...I would." Now, because of God, I can truthfully say, "I am a woman in formation. I am a Jesuit woman, called to a Jesuit life."

A Jesuit life is a life whose aim is total surrender to both the desire and the love of God. The fruit of my surrender is mission. I am called to embody Ignatian spirituality in our Jesuit apostolates, and in the world at large. I recognize that in this undertaking, total surrender cannot be achieved. It must be found out, as I deepen my friendship with Jesus and allow God to take the initiative in my life. As a Jesuit woman, I have entered a formation process that creates the conditions for learning to love my wounded self and the wounded world as we are. I see my brokenness and complicity in a suffering and unjust world. And yet I am inspired because I can always do better. More and more I am aware that with God, all things are possible.

Maggie Wright is an American Jesuit woman on mission in Malta. She can be reached at amicaejesu@gmail.com or www.jesuitwomen.net.

Laughing with Godde... continued from page 7

My task, then, is to learn to see all of Godde's creations through the eyes of the One who created us and to be a mirror of that Love so that all with whom I come into contact can see that perfection in themselves. This is either the hugest task I have ever undertaken...or the easiest and the one that most closely honors my true nature. Perhaps, it is both.

My current theological understanding includes aspects from each of the places I have visited on my faith journey. My prayer is to live with aloha (alo - "in the presence of"; ha - "breath").

When I am able to live from, with, and through aloha, I become aware of Divine Breath, the seed that animates all of Creation. This Love – for each other, for the planet, for all sentient beings, for the Divine – is the unifying factor in all faith traditions and is the element that I hold at the core of my belief system. I use a theology of acceptance to embody my understanding of living with and in Divine Spirit. In order for me to become that which I have been created to be, I have made a commitment to examining my own woundedness and cultivating my self awareness. My yoga practice has been invaluable in helping me to be present. It has helped me to experience the mind-body-soul connection. Daily contemplative prayer offers me the opportunity to be still and know Godde.

In the work that I do, I encounter a lot of people who understand themselves as broken. My challenge has been to reframe this image as one of strength. Henri Nouwen noticed that the pieces of a broken chalice are so much more able to capture the light than a cup which remains intact. When we are able to understand ourselves as broken open – like a seed – rather than broken apart – like Humpty Dumpty – we have a greater chance of using our challenges as opportunities for transformation rather than as reasons for despair.

And so I continue to travel down the road on which I am being led. I am not certain where it is leading, but I am certain that this road is exactly the right road for me. I am like the driver on a country road at night; the road is completely dark except for that little piece of road that my headlights illuminate, beyond that is darkness.

Yet, I continue to drive down the road, confident that the road will continue to unfold in front of me, confident that the darkness will provide a firm foundation. As I live my faith and continue my travel home, I sing with Hafiz:

God and I have become like two giant fat people living in a tiny boat.

We keep bumping into each other and laughing.

The Rev. Puanani Lalakea M.Div., Board Certified Chaplain (BCC), serves as Chaplain for Pacific Health Ministry at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children in Honolulu, HI.

MISSING

**Where are the women?
Last seen in leadership:
Hundreds of years ago**

If found, report to the Vatican - women are here!



Mary Magdalene
Apostle to the Apostles



Phoebe
Deacon at Cenchreae



Theodora
Bishop

Global "Vocations Sunday" witnesses (May 12) will remind the hierarchy that women have always been here - ready to break bread, ready to break the silence, and ready to break down "closed doors."

A Declaration of Sentiments... continued from page 8

1 Wisdom of Solomon 7:26.

2 Luke 8:1-3.

3 John 20:1-18.

4 Romans 16:3.

5 Romans 16: 3-5 for their house church in Rome; 1 Cor. 16:19 for their house church in Corinth; Acts 18:1-4, 18-21 for their house church in Ephesus; it is believed that Paul's letter to the Romans was delivered to their house church in Rome by Phoebe.

6 Romans 16:1; to him this meant that she was an outstanding preacher and servant leader of her community; he describes himself in these terms, as well (see 1 Cor. 3:5 and 2 Cor. 6:4).

7 Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Missionaries, Apostles, Coworkers: Romans 16 and the Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History," *Word and World*, 6:44 (1986), 431.

8 Romans 16:16:7.

9 Acts 16:11-15, 40.

10 Galatians 3:28.

11 In 1976 the Pontifical Biblical Commission concluded that the New Testament alone will not "permit us to settle in a clear way and once and for all the problem of the possible accession of women to the presbyterate."

12 Pope Gelasius I, Letter to the bishops of Lucania (494 CE) in J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum consiliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Paris, 1901) vol. 8:44, chapt. 26, as cited on www.womenpriests.org/tradition/can_pops.asp, accessed 20 Aug 2018.

13 The Sacred Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #1.

14 *Ibid.*, #14.

15 The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (LG) #9.

16 LG #37.

17 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, #4, 7 Dec 1965.

18 *Pacem in Terris*, #41.

19 Associated Press-Ipsos Poll, Apr 2005, and Gallup Organization survey, Sep 2005.

20 Numbers supplied by Rev. Andrea Johnson, a Roman Catholic Womanpriest and bishop.

Sheila Durkin Dierks. Called and Chosen: Ten Catholic Women Tell Their Stories of Invitation and Ordination. Boulder, CO: WovenWord Press, 2018. 154 pages. ISBN 9781543955576. \$15.00 pbk.

REVIEWED BY BOB SHINE

Holy Week is beginning as I write. The church is entering into these holiest days of heartbreak and hope that begin with a celebration of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday. But between that meal and today, layers of clericalism crusted over Jesus' egalitarian and prophetic table ministry. Unconcerned with historicity, clerics pilfered Holy Thursday and made it an exaltation of the priesthood, too. This shift, from a focus on living eucharistically to lauding clerics, is why Holy Thursday is so deeply heartbreaking for me. For me it has become a yearly requiem Mass to grieve rejected vocations. But my heartbreak is not without hope. Soon, the Easter Vigil will commence. People will pass candlelight one to another and suddenly the darkness in which the liturgy began will be dissipated by a hundred glowing flames.

Reading *Called and Chosen: Ten Catholic Women Tell Their Stories of Invitation and Ordination* has been its own paschal experience for me. It is not the first anthology of vocations stories I have read, for similar books were gifted to me during the men's discernment group in high school. But this anthology—created and edited by Sheila Durkin Dierks, telling the stories of ten ordained Catholic women—is powerfully different. The stories contained within are not the canonically-sanctioned and individualistic tales of male clergy I once read. *Called and Chosen* is at once vulnerable and courageous, a work of truth-telling and prophetic witness. It is a work of heartbreak and hope.

The authors' paths to ordination are inherently not traditional. Theologian Mary Hunt, in the book's introduction, writes that each woman "found a creative way to exercise ministry well beyond the boundaries of an excluding community that rejected her because of her gender." None of these women raised Catholic were eagerly recruited from their teenage years onward to be priests. For many of them, years passed before they could admit God's call even to themselves. Communities recognized their gifts, but the authors' participation in the church was restricted. Their studies in ministry were (expensively) self-funded. Pursuing ordination meant adding commitments to lives already well underway. How many young male seminarians dressed in cassocks would sacrifice so greatly for the People of God?

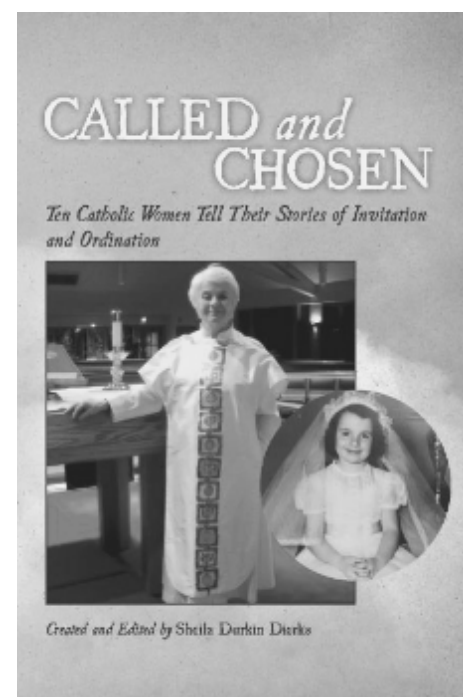
Therein lies the heartbreak.

These ten authors expose the torment innate in being a woman called by God and dismissed by the institutional church.

As I read, I kept thinking about my friends and colleagues denied priesthood because of their gender identities. They are younger and newer to this discernment of how to exist in a church that does violence to them. But they are no less ready to give themselves in service to the faithful. The stories presented in *Called and Chosen* are a reminder of how painful this vocation of being a Catholic woman called to priestly ministry can be. They indict the devastatingly unjust structures of the church and those clerics who maintain patriarchy.

But *Called and Chosen* is fundamentally a work of redemption and renewal. Sheila Durkin Dierks notes in the book's opening pages, "The radical imagination of these women is an ever-deepening dream of how the love of Jesus will be acted out in our time." This dream, told through these stories, is interlaced with spirited hope. The authors share the joy, peace, and life that has come with ordination, always in view of the communities from which they were called and whom they now serve. These priests enact ministries that welcome every person without condition or question. I join Mary Hunt in praying this book is but the first volume in a series detailing these experiences of Catholic women called to priesthood—those who seek ordination, those who do not, and those still journeying.

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This year as I experience the heartbreak of Holy Thursday and the hope of Easter, I will remember these ordained women and their communities with gratitude. Like Paschal candles, from them come the flames of Christ's light, passed among the People of God, one to another. Despite the Vatican's best efforts, Catholics are talking about gender equity, and Catholic women are being ordained. The stories in *Called and Chosen* valuably contribute to this movement of glowing flames that refuse to be silenced. May the witness of ordained Catholic women worldwide strengthen us all to bear Christ's light and redeem the church we love.

Bob Shine serves as WOC's Vice President and is the Associate Director of New Ways Ministry.

*NWNC note: Sheila Durkin Dierks has also been a leader who supports young women called to ordained ministry through WOC's Lucile Murray Durkin Scholarship Fund. Consider supporting the fund at <https://www.womensordination.org/programs/scholarship/support-the-lucile-murray-durkin-scholarship-fund/>

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