



BREAKING BREAD AT THE TABLE OF JUSTICE:
A CELEBRATION OF

prophetic persistence

WOMEN'S ORDINATION CONFERENCE, SINCE 1975

45TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

NOVEMBER 27-30, 2020



45
Years of WOC



SEXISM
IS A SIN
REPENT!

Pope Benedict XVI,
How long must women wait for equality?
Ordain Catholic Women



Women's Ordination Conference



From the Executive Director

Welcome to the 45th anniversary celebrations of the Women's Ordination Conference!

This weekend is about the journey we are on together toward ordination justice, equity, and transformation as protagonists in our faith. It is not about closed doors or oppressive systems, but all the ways we – together – have cultivated joyful resistance, prophetic persistence, and renewed priesthood. You and I both know that this is challenging and often lonely work, so I hope this weekend reminds each of us just how important your place is in our story, our tapestry, and our future. May we be reminded of the possibilities within ourselves, know the solidarity we share with one another, and find courage on our path as Church in praxis.

Serving as the Executive Director of the Women's Ordination Conference is a great privilege in my life, and preparing for this anniversary was no expectation. Even in such a challenging and painful year, or perhaps because of it, WOC members have generously shared their gifts, ministries, and energies to truly celebrate at the Table of Justice. I would like to especially thank my board of directors, the advisory board, our growing staff, and all those who submitted video messages, for their efforts and creativity.



We stand on the shoulders of those visionary and courageous members of the first Organizing Task Force, and the collective energy of the more than 1,200 people who gathered Thanksgiving weekend in 1975 to claim their ministerial equality and embark on a path of renewal and hope. We honor the faith-filled and fearless leaders who took up the torch for WOC and marched, prayed, chanted, and challenged male-dominated spaces and structures not just as fabulous activists, but as feminist, mujerista, and womanist theologians, ministers, lobbyists, insiders and outsiders, and modern-day prophets.

As we honor our roots, I am also incredibly proud of the ways in which WOC has grown as an organization and a movement.

- As our understandings of feminism(s) have deepened, so has WOC's commitment to intersectionality and inclusion, especially of those of the trans and non-binary communities,

for whom WOC should be considered a place of acceptance.

- With our office in Rome and ever-growing international connections, WOC is a respected voice and witness on the global stage. In 2019, we became an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations.
- We have a dedicated Spanish-language program, Escuchando a las Mujeres, for Latinx outreach, community-building, and resources.
- Through our scholarship, we have awarded women and non-binary persons in theology studies \$24,000 to support their discernment on their spiritual and academic paths.
- We revived the Young Feminist Network to be a supportive place for Catholic-rooted people to find each other, question, and explore their relationship with faith, social justice, and the Church.
- We've become skilled video editors, bringing our message of Gospel equality to new and emerging platforms on social media.

Nevertheless, as our organization becomes more robust and vibrant through new initiatives, we remain uncompromisingly committed to our mission, working tirelessly for the ordination of women into a renewed priesthood. To do so, the "Ministry of Irritation" is where we shine: as bold, creative, radical, faithful witnesses for gender justice. Our demonstrations change conversations, impact the media, and reach the highest levels of the Vatican. A staff-favorite quote to this point is from Pope Benedict XVI's secretary, Georg Gänswein: *"I am of course*

aware that there is a noisy movement which has as its main ideological goal the fight for the female priesthood." That's us.

Not unlike those of the early Church who gathered in their homes to break bread, this weekend we will celebrate together from our homes in communion with one another. Please join us on Friday for a toast, herstory quiz, and storytelling from some of our founding members; enjoy a day of short videos of activists, theologians, staff members, and friends of WOC who have been inspired by our mission on Saturday; and join us to break bread at the table of justice during our Sunday liturgy. Throughout the weekend we will have an online auction filled with creative pieces and collections of women's ordination-inspired items.

We have an ambitious fundraising goal for the weekend (\$45,000 for our 45th year!) and I hope that you will take this opportunity to renew your membership or make an anniversary gift to be counted as one of the members of the Women's Ordination Conference during this important moment in our Church.

We are able to mark this milestone because of you and your unwavering commitment to baptismal equality. Your gifts, ministries, prayers, activism, and financial contributions sustain our collective vision for renewal and transformation. Thank you for being part of WOC's story and the story that will be told of how women came to be ordained in the Catholic Church.

In living hope,

Kate McElwee





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**Text WOC45 to 44321 or
donate online at
womensordination.org/gala
to help us reach our
fundraising goal!**

Gala Schedule

All times are listed in Eastern Standard Time

Friday, November 27: Purple Friday

12:00 PM : Opening toast, interactive quiz, and celebration!

Saturday, November 28: Prophetic Voices

9:00 AM : Jennifer O'Malley and Liz Carlin; Kate McElwee; Sr. Margaret Farley, RSM; Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL;

11:00 AM : Natalia Imperatori-Lee, PhD.; Miriam Duignan; Fr. Roy Bourgeois;

1:00 PM : Erin Saiz Hanna; Fr. Luke Hansen, SJ; Nontando Hadebe, PhD.; Sr. Martha Ann Kirk CCVI;

3:00 PM : Sr. Teresa Forcades, OSB; Fr. Tony Flannery CSsR; Lilian Medina Romero; We Are Church Ireland;

5:00 PM : Our closing message!

Sunday, November 29: Inclusive Liturgy

10:30 AM : Liturgy begins on Zoom

Monday, November 30:

11:59 PM : Auction closes

womensordiantion.org/gala



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We are so grateful to all the sponsors who make our prophetic persistence possible!

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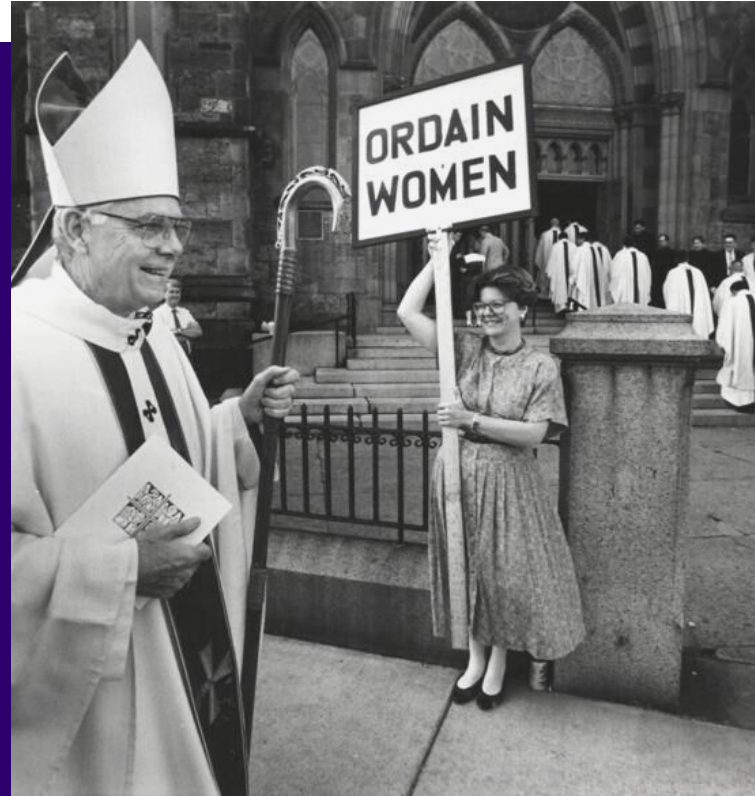
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Bob Shine
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A Prayer for 45 Years

by Katie Lacz

Persistent, Uncontainable Spirit,
In every age you have called faithful
women,
As you called our foremothers all those
years ago,
out of bondage to old ways,
calcified traditions,
and unjust institutions
Into exodus in a wilderness that was as
yet uncharted.

They did not know what they would find,
But they knew you promised living water.
They did not know when the journey
would end,
But knew you enlivened each step along
the way.

Since that time,
We have found the wilderness to be a
place of unhindered growth.
Of new forms of life and ministry
flourishing,
Nourishing us
As the journey continues.

We have found ourselves,
and found You, O God,
among that which is untamed.
There, we are free:
to be priests to your people
To speak prophetically to power
To persist until justice abounds in the
Church that we love.

Many have traveled on this
unfinished path
And have returned to the embrace
of your arms.
Still new sojourners arrive with fresh
energy and hope,
Reminding us that our continued
exodus is a journey of promise.

We re-commit ourselves to fidelity
to this journey
And to the Spirit in the wilderness
who has formed us
So that, at the sound of our voices
and the sight of our arms raised in
prayer
The stony institutions of patriarchy
will crumble
Revealing the living Body of Christ
arisen in our varied bodies.

Wild Companion, Earth-Shaker,
May Your fierce love continue to
embolden us
To share your sacramental presence
so freely
That the Church is drawn out of the
sanctuary
And into the holy wilderness with us
and with You.

Amen.

A Liturgy for Prophetic Persistence

Prelude

Welcome: Kate McElwee, Executive Director

Opening Song: "Keep on Moving Forward/Siguemos Adelante" by Emma's Revolution

Opening Prayer

God of her-story, Divine Future Hope,

We gather, like our ancestors on this journey did 45 years ago,

On this first weekend of Advent.

We say, as they did: "We are alive in joy and hope and have cause for celebration -- yet near us, even within us, death, in many and varied forms is ever present."

Carry with us the joy and the pain that this year, in particular, has deepened in us.

We recall the living hope you poured into that overflowing room,

Spilled out now into this global community gathered today.

Open our hearts to this time of joyful hope, as we transform all that is unjust into a new reflection of God's creative love.

We are grateful for this time of celebration:

We celebrate - because the love of Christ leaves us no choice.

All: Amen.

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First Reading: 1 Samuel 2:1-10

A Reading from the First Book of Samuel:

Then Hannah prayed:
"My heart delights in You, O God.
My horn, my dignity, is exalted in You.
I have swallowed up my enemies. I rejoice
in my victory.
There is no one holier than you, O
Compassionate One.
There is no Rock like our Loving God.
All bragging must cease.
Boastful arrogance must come to an end.
For the Holy One is all-knowing,
and weighs all mortal deeds.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
while the tottering put on strength.
The well-fed hire themselves out for
bread,
while the hungry feast on spoil.
The barren wife bears seven children,
while the mother of many languishes.
The Source of All puts to death and gives
life,
casts down and raises up again.
The Divine makes the poor and makes the
rich, humbles and exalts.
Our Beloved raises the needy from the
dust,
lifting the poor from the ash heap,
seating them with nobles
and making a glorious throne their
heritage.
The foundations of the Earth belong to
God,

and God sets the world upon them.
The Holy One lights the ways of the
just
And delivers the evildoer to
judgment.
It is not by strength that the just
prevail;
It is God who shatters foes.
The Creator thunders against them in
the skies.
God judges the ends of the Earth.
Now God will endow the ruler with
strength
And exalt the head of the anointed
one."

*Hear what the Spirit Sophia is saying
to Her people.*

All: Thanks be to God.

Reflection from Allison Connelly

Interlude: "The Circle's Larger" by
Colleen Fulmer

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Second Reading: Acts 2:16-18

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

In the days to come - says our God -
I will pour out my spirit on all humankind
Your children of all genders shall
prophesy
Your youth shall see visions;
your elders shall dream dreams.
Yes, the Holy Spirit shall come upon all my
servants-
Women, men, people of all genders -
and they shall prophesy.

*Hear what the Spirit Sophia is saying to
Her people.*

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation:

"Alleluia, Raise the Gospel" by Bernadette
Farrell

Gospel: Luke 1:46-55 (*Magnificat,
Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary
translation*)

*A reading from the Holy Gospel attributed
to Luke.*

My soul proclaims Your greatness, O God.
My spirit rejoices in You who make me
whole.

*"Is it time, in the International Women's
Year, to raise the question of ordination
for women in the Roman Catholic
Church?" — Mary B. Lynch, Chicago,
1974*

*"We convene this Conference as an act
of faith, hope and love in you and in the
community of the people of God...
Touch each of us, enable us to speak
with your will written on our hearts and
our minds, so that we may joyfully and
fearlessly speak the prophecy." —
Detroit 1975, Liturgy of Invocation by
Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt, co-founder
of WOC*

For You have looked with favor upon me
despite my insignificance.
Amazingly, from now on, all generations
will call me blessed.

*"One of the other parts of the story of
Joshua is that after the people took the
city of Jericho, Yahweh said to them,
"Never build in this palace again, a city
like this." So if you go through the walls
and you take the city, then don't build
the same city again." — M. Shawn
Copeland, OP, Black Sisters Response,
Detroit WOC Conference 1975*

You, O God, have done great things for
me
and holy is Your name.

(continued on next page)

"If the church ended gender discrimination and proclaimed the equality of all human beings loud and clear, it would send a message to the world that would reverberate across oceans." — Maureen Fiedler

You extend mercy and compassion
from age to age
to all those who hold You in awe.

"We don't have to acquiesce to oppressive and violent relationships as the unchangeable order of things either for the church, for American society or the global world. Against all odds, we can continue to stand up for an alternative, more life-giving, more redemptive way of being in relation to one another as people of God/ess, as people of love and justice, as people who remember the vision of our brother Jesus who preached good news to the poor, the liberation of the captives, the setting at liberty of those who are oppressed." — Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Church as Liberation Community from Patriarchy: The Praxis of Ministry as Discipleship of Equals," Ottawa, 2005

You have shown
Your sacred strength,

*"La vida es la lucha." — Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, co-founder of WOC in 1978, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century**

"The radical generation of black sisters who came of age during America's civil rights and black power years left us a revolutionary blueprint on how to confront racism and sexism in the Church and demand meaningful change in our world. I challenge the teaching body of the Church to finally use it." — Dr. Shannen Dee Williams, "Dear U.S. Catholic Theologians: The Lives of Black Women and Girls Always Matter," December 13, 2014

dispersing the arrogant of mind and heart,
casting rulers from their thrones and
lifting up the lowly;

"I have come to a conviction that anything less than all women in the Catholic community having the possibility of being in all ministries of our church is not only a deficit, not only wrong; it is a scandal to our church and to our world." — Theresa Kane, RSM, Message to Pope Francis in Philadelphia, September 18, 2015

filling the hungry with good things
and sending the rich away empty.

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“The people need more prophets of equality, not more pretenders to a priesthood of male privilege. They need discipleship, not canonical decrees.” — Joan Chittister, OSB, “Discipleship for a Priestly People in a Priestless Period,” Dublin WOW Conference, 2001

You have come to the aid of Your servant Israel,
mindful of Your mercy
and the promise You made to our ancestors,
to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.

“The truth is women should be priests and we should be unafraid to say so, because it is simply the just and right thing to do.”
— Jamie Manson, “I got a glimpse of the future of women deacons, and it's troubling”, NCR Jan 25, 2019

The Gospel of Our God and the Wisdom of our Beloved Community.

All: Praise to you, Jesus the Christ.

Reflection from Mari Soco Castañeda

Ritual of Anointing

Prayers of the People

Response: Persistent Spirit, hear our prayer.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Eucharistic Prayer

Acclamation: “Holy, O Holy, Wisdom Sophia, the power and presence of God.”

Blessing Song: Sung by Marsie Silvestro, National Coordinator of WOC, 1980-1984

Closing Prayer

Ruah, breath of life,
Breathe your love into the upper rooms
in which we are all gathered
And send us your gifts of peace and of boldness.
Instill in us a spirit of endurance
Knowing that the journey is long, but
never without companionship.
Grant us the ability to not just wait, but
persist, in readiness and in growing joy.
We ask this of you in gratitude, our
Many-Named, Mysterious God.
Amen.

Closing Song: "Sister, Carry On" by Carolyn McDade