

PRESS RELEASE

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Catholic Representatives from around the world call for women's ordination during Bishop's Synod in Rome

Women's Ministry: a reality in the early Church – indispensable in today's Church!

ROME, Italy – Today, at 11:00 o'clock in the office of redazione di ADISTA, Via Acciaioli 7, 00186 Roma, representatives of Catholic organizations from around the world call for the full and equal participation of women in the Roman Catholic Church, including ordination as deacons, priests and bishops. The press conference takes place on the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, one of only three female Doctors of the Church, and will launch a weeklong campaign of events, including a **demonstration at Saint Peter's Square immediately following**. These events occur as 240 delegates continue the Synod of Bishops on the "Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church." **Representatives from Britain, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United States are participating in the campaign events.**

"Just as Saint Theresa of Avila demanded over 400 years ago for the hierarchy to stop rejecting talented women simply because of their gender, we urge the delegates of the synod to recognize that the Bible itself calls for the full and equal participation of women and that any other interpretation is incorrect and unjust," stated **Angelika Fromm of *We are Church and the Purple Stole Movement in Germany***. "In 1976, the Vatican's own theologians – and theologians the world over since that date – have found that there is no scriptural reason to prohibit the ordination of women."

"By including women as priests, the Church would not only model Jesus' radical example of equality as recorded in the Bible, it would have a powerful and positive impact on solving the complex problems we face today," stated **Aisha Taylor, executive director of the *Women's Ordination Conference in the United States***. "In a world divided by poverty, stunned by economic crisis, and continually reeling from sexism, racism, homophobia, and many forms of oppression, it is long overdue for the Vatican to use all of its resources to work toward a solution."

"While I agree with synod delegates who have stated the importance of combining spirituality with critical scholarship when studying the Scriptures, it is paramount that Church leaders preserve the historical-critical method of study," stated **Marleen Wijdeveld of *Roman Catholic Womenpriests in the Netherlands***. "Following the highest standards of contemporary scholarship has enabled theologians the world over to discern women's rightful place in the Church—as equal partners in ministry. In this day and age of the Roman Catholic Church, that means women should be ordained as deacons, priests and bishops."

“I am called by God to serve through priesthood, and our loving and all-powerful God who created women and men of equal stature and dignity is capable of empowering women to be priests,” stated **Anne Brown, of *New Wine in Great Britain***. “There is no reason to exclude women from ordination and every reason to include us.”

“We are heartened by the fact that the bishops were addressed by Shear Yashuv Cohen, of Israel, because this is the first time a representative of another faith has addressed a synod of bishops,” stated **Jennifer Stark, coordinator of *Women’s Ordination Worldwide***. “The hierarchy needs to expand its interfaith and ecumenical work and follow the example of those Christian Churches and other religions that now include women on terms of full equality in all ministries. This issue has implications for the well-being of women *everywhere* and the worldwide Roman Catholic Church should be leading the way, not lagging behind.”

The Pontifical Biblical Commission determined in 1976 that there is no scriptural reason to prohibit the ordination of women. The Bible describes how women were prominent leaders in Jesus’ ministry and early Christianity. In all four gospels, Mary Magdalene was the primary witness to the central event of Christianity—Christ’s resurrection. The Scriptures also mention women who led small house churches, including Lydia, Phoebe, Priscilla, and Prisca.

"It is our hope that the synod delegates heed the call of Catholic theologians and Scripture itself, which proclaims women are equally created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and that there is no distinction between men and women through Jesus (Gal 3:28)," Taylor concluded.

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The “Purple Stole” Movement (“Lila Stola”) intercedes for equal access of women to all church functions, for an equal mentioning of women and men in church publications, for a female image of God and a female liturgy.

***Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP)** is an international initiative within the Roman Catholic Church that advocates for a new model of priestly ministry united with the people with whom they serve. The movement is an initiative within the Church that began with the ordination of seven women on the Danube River in 2002. Women bishops ordained in full apostolic succession continue to carry on the work of ordaining others in the Roman Catholic Church.*

*Founded in 1975 and based in Washington, D.C., the **Women's Ordination Conference** is the oldest and largest national organization working solely for the ordination of women as priests, deacons, and bishops into an inclusive Catholic Church. WOC also promotes new perspectives on ordination that call for more accountability and less separation between the clergy and laity.*

*Founded in 1996, the **Women's Ordination Worldwide** is an ecumenical network, whose primary mission at this time is the admission of Roman Catholic women to all ordained ministries. Member groups represent thirteen countries and reach many others through international groups.*