



ROMAN CATHOLIC WOMENPRIESTS, USA & CANADA
WWW.ROMANCATHOLICWOMENPRIESTS.ORG

The goal of Roman Catholic Womenpriests is to bring about the full equality of women in the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time we advocate a new model of priestly ministry based on union with the people with whom we minister. We desire neither a schism nor a break from the Roman Catholic Church, but instead are rooted in a response to Jesus who called women and men to be disciples and equals in living the Gospel.

According to Roman Catholic teaching, any bishop in good standing with the pope has apostolic succession and has the authority to ordain. Roman Catholic womenpriests believe that our orders are valid because our bishops have apostolic succession. To be in “full apostolic succession” means that a bishop’s authority is passed down in a direct line from the first apostles of Jesus Christ.

In obedience to the Gospel of Jesus, we are disobeying an unjust law that discriminates against women. Canon laws, the rules that govern Catholic life are contradictory. While canon 1024 states that only a baptized male may receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, canon 849 affirms Gospel equality: “Baptism (is) the gateway to the sacraments.....” Thus, Baptism opens all the sacraments to all the baptized including ordination. Baptism is the foundation of the validity of ordination - not the (male) sex!

Womenpriests are leading the Catholic Church into a new era in which the identity of priest reflects the experiences of women, as representatives of the sacred. Womenpriests remind us that women are equal symbols of the holy. Reclaiming our ancient spiritual heritage, womenpriests are shaping a more inclusive, Christ-centered church of equals in the twenty-first century.

The Vatican is a patriarchal/hierarchical structure. The structure itself must be renewed through accountability and by creating a discipleship of equals. The present gap between clergy and laity needs to be eliminated. As ordained women, we must find a way to call forth the gifts of each member of the community. We All are church, not just some. We are offering a vision where All are welcome. Womenpriests and deacons must be the rainbow – we reflect the people we serve: married, celibate, domestic partners, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and transgendered.

Roman Catholic womenpriests are aware that our stance may result in threats and punishments, even in some instances excommunication. We hold up role models in the church who practiced holy disobedience to hierarchial oppression. One role model of holy disobedience was St. Joan of Arc. When Joan was asked whether she was subject to church authorities, she replied “yes, but our Lord must be served first.” There is reason for hope that more contemporary church officials will follow the teaching of Cardinal Walter Kasper, who said, “Some situations oblige one to obey God and ones own conscience, rather than the leaders of the church. Indeed, one may even be obliged to accept excommunication, rather than act against one’s conscience.” (*CORPUS REPORTS* November/December 2005)

Like Joan of Arc, and other courageous people who endured condemnation and excommunication during their lifetimes by the church for their holy disobedience, it is our hope that Roman Catholic women priests will one day be affirmed as faithful daughters of the church who created new models of discipleship in 21st century.

We invite our Roman Catholic Church leaders to join us in an open, respectful dialogue so that together we may serve the church faithfully and lovingly.

For more information visit our website at www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org or contact one of the members of the Leadership Circle:

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