

The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Traditions

A Select Annotated Bibliography

Works listed here address the biblical, historical, theological, ecumenical, and psychological issues surrounding the ordination of women to the priesthood. For the modern history of ordination movements in the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, consult separate bibliographies available from the Libraries (see address below). The works listed in this bibliography reflect a stance which is in favor of the ordination of women to the priesthood.

BIBLICAL ISSUES

The Bible and the Role of Women. Krister Stendahl. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966. A classic and authoritative discussion of issues of biblical interpretation in and for the modern world, specifically as they relate to the biblical view of women.

"Women and Priestly Ministry: The New Testament Evidence." Catholic Biblical Association of America, Task Force. Catholic Biblical Quarterly 41 (October 1979): 608-613. Addresses the biblical arguments commonly advanced in the discussion on women and the priesthood and concludes that ... "the New Testament evidence ... points toward the admission of women to priestly ministry."

Did Christ Rule Out Women Priests? J. N. M. Wijngaards. Great Wakering, England: Mayhaw-McGrimmon, 1977. (Available from The Attic Press, Inc., Stony Point, Route 2, Greenwood, S.C. 29646.) Concluding that the answer is "no", this Roman Catholic scholar analyzes various issues which are based on scripture, male representation of Christ, Paul's attitudes, Christ's priesthood, ministry, and the Spirit.

HISTORICAL ISSUES

Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration. Leonard and Arlene Swidler, eds. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. Paragraph by paragraph commentary on the Vatican Declaration against the ordination of women as priests. The commentary addresses tradition, the attitude of Christ, the practice of the Apostles, contemporary application of these attitudes and practices, the ministerial priesthood, the mystery of Christ, and the mystery of the Church.

The Exclusion of Women from the Priesthood: Divine Law or Sex Discrimination?: An Historical Investigation of the Juridical and Doctrinal Foundations of the Code of Canon Law, Canon 968, 1. Ida Raming. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976. Tracing the historical development of canon law from the early church forward, Raming finds evidence of a deep-seated negative attitude towards women based on incorrect Biblical exegesis, false biological principles, misreading of documents, and manipulation of spurious sources.

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

Woman in Christian Tradition. George H. Tavard, A.A. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973. Analyzing the attitude toward women in Christian theological tradition, Tavard describes the stance in the Old and New Testaments, the Church Fathers, and in more recent history. He argues that the church

progressively abandoned the principle of freedom in its treatment of women.

Women Priests in the Catholic Church?: A Theological-Historical Investigation. Haya van der Meer, S.J. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973. Addresses the major theological objections to the ordination of women, including the divine law argument, Paul's adoption of rabbinic attitudes toward women, and the use of the image of the bridegroom.

"The Ordination of Women and the 'Maleness' of Christ." Richard A. Norris. Anglican Theological Review. Supp. Series No. 6 (June 1976): 69-80. Discusses the presuppositions behind the refusal to ordain women on the ground that Jesus was a male and maintains that such an argument rests on a questionable understanding of Christian redemption.

ECUMENICAL ISSUES

"Ordination of Women? — An Ecumenical Meditation and a Discussion." Franz Jozef van Beeck, S.J. In Toward a New Theology of Ordination: Essays on the Ordination of Women, Marianne H. Micks and Charles P. Price, eds. Somerville, Mass.: Greeno, Hadden and Co., 1976, pp. 90-100. Believes that true ecumenism means developing and tolerating differences in community rather than attempting to achieve political compromise at the level of church order.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

"The Feminine Priestly Symbol and the Meaning of God." Urban T. Holmes, III. St. Luke's Journal of Theology 17 (Sept. 1974): 3-22. In traditions where the priest is seen as symbolic of the sacred, the sexuality of the priest has something to say about the sexuality of the Godhead. Holmes sees the desire for women priests as a healthy attempt to return a dynamic balance to what has been for centuries an almost exclusively masculine symbol system for God.

Called to Break Bread? A Psychological Investigation of 100 Women Who Feel Called to Priesthood in the Catholic Church. Fran Ferzer. Mt. Ranier, Md.: Quixote Center, 1975. Psychologist Ferzer directed this study which tested the women by the same methods used for an earlier study of priests and subjected them to in-depth clinical interviews. Over 90% of the women showed a high level of psychological stability (compared to 24% of the men) and scored higher on most of the tests given.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Studies on Women Priests." Anne E. Patrick. In Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration. Leonard and Arlene Swidler, eds. New York: Paulist Press, 1977, pp. 70-74. Updates her earlier bibliographic survey on women and religion, 1965-1974 (Theological Studies 36 (1975): 737-765) and focusses on recent works available in English.

Women and the Priesthood: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography. Patricia A. Kendall, comp. Philadelphia: Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, 1976. Includes books, articles, study reports and tape cassettes ranging from general materials to specific items on the ordination issue. Full coverage, items annotated.

Compiled from an extensive bibliography by Sandra H. Boyd, Episcopal Divinity School/Weston School of Theology Libraries, 99 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138, October 1980, rev. July 1981

VATICAN DECLARATION and commentary

On January 27, 1977, the Vatican released a document stating reasons why women could not be admitted to the ministerial priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. The Declaration stimulated an extensive body of response and commentary which in itself touches upon many of the contemporary issues being raised about women and the church. This select annotated bibliography of commentary appearing in books and articles thus provides access to a variety of opinion about this subject.

THE DOCUMENT

Declaration of the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood.

Catholic Church, Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidel. London: Catholic Truth Society, 1977. Also found in: Catholic Mind 75 (May 1977): 52-64; The Jurist 37 (Su.-Fall 1977): 325-39; The Furrow 28 (March 1977): 173-85; Origins 6 (Feb. 3, 1977): 517-24; The Pope Speaks 22 (No. 2, 1977): 108-22; L'Osservatore Romano (English) No. 5 (462) (Feb. 3, 1977): 6-8; Sexism and Church Law, James A. Coriden, ed. New York: Paulist Press, 1977, pp. 173-87; Women and Priesthood, Carroll Stuhlmuehler, ed. (see below); Women Priests, Leonard and Arlene Swidler, eds. (see below); Tablet 231 (Feb. 5, 1977): 141-42 and 231 (Feb. 12, 1977): 165-67 (without notes).

COLLECTIVE COMMENTARY AND COLLECTIONS OF COMMENTARY

Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood.

October 15, 1976, with Commentary. Catholic Church. Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidel. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1977. Commentary also found in: L'Osservatore Romano (English) No. 5 (462) (Feb. 3, 1977): 9-12 and Origins 6 (Feb. 3, 1977): 524-31 (without notes).

"In Context: Declaration on Women in Ministerial Priesthood." Origins 6 (Feb. 10, 1977): 545-48. Includes commentary by The Women's Ordination Conference, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Cardinal William Baum, Archbishops William Borders and John Quinn, and Bishop Francis Reh.

"Messages of Support for the Declaration Inter Insigniores; from the United States of America." L'Osservatore Romano (English) No. 6 (463) (Feb. 10, 1977): 8. From Joseph Bernardin, Terence Cooke, Joseph McNicholas, and others.

"Theology of Paper on Women Disputed." Claudia Baskerville. National Catholic Reporter 13 (Feb. 11, 1977): 16. Three Ottawa theologians at symposium comment: Robert LaPlante, Martin Moser, and William Marrison.

"Women's Rights in the Church: Symposium." National Catholic Reporter 13 (April 1, 1977): 9, 11, 14-16. Includes contributions by David Burrell, Margaret Farley, Colman McCarthy, Arlene Swidler, Leonard Swidler, and Hugh McCabe.

"The Vatican Declaration: Another View." David Burrell. America 136 (April 2, 1977): 289-92. Reply by Donald Gelpi America 137 (Aug. 13-20, 1977): 75-77. Rejoinder America 137 (Aug. 13-20, 1977): 77-78. About the use of "natural symbols."

"Letter to the Delegate: By Theologians on the Faculty of the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California." Origins 6 (April 7, 1977): 661, 663-66. Reply by Archbishop J. Jadot: Origins 6 (April 7, 1977): 665. Letter also found in: Commonweal 104 (1 April 1977): 204-206. About the letter: National Catholic Reporter 13 (April 1, 1977): 6.

"Haring: Tradition Strongest Argument against Women Priests." Jerry Buckley. National Catholic Reporter 13 (April 15, 1977): 24. Five theologians respond: Bernard Haring, Jean Marie Hiesberger, Mary Buckley, Peter Ellis, and Donald J. Keefe.

Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration. Leonard and Arlene Swidler, eds. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. Commentary by Nadine Foley, Elizabeth Carroll, Anne Patrick, Carolyn Osiek, Francine Cardman, George Tavard, Michael Fahey, Elisabeth Schussler Florenza, J. Massyngberde Ford, Bernadette Brooten, Madeleine Boucher, Anne Carr, Rosemary Ruether, Helen Wright, Sonya Quitsland, Sidney Callahan, Margaret Farley, et. al..

The Order of Priesthood: Nine Commentaries on the Vatican Decree Inter Insigniores. Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1978. "Occasion and Purpose of the Declaration: Commentary Prepared at the Congregation's Request by a Theologian Expert," and commentary by Raimondo Spiazzi, Albert Descamps, Hans Urs von Balthasar, A. G. Martimort, Gustave Martelet, Joseph L. Bernardin, Joseph Ratzinger, and M.-J. Nicolas.

Women and Priesthood: Future Directions: a Call to Dialogue from the Faculty of the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago. Carroll Stuhmueller, ed. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1978. Multidisciplinary approach to commentary including contributions by Carroll Stuhmueller, Robert Karris, Carolyn Osiek, Dismas Bonner, Gilbert Ostiek, Ralph A. Kiefer, Hayim G. Perelmutter, Sebastian MacDonald, Thomas More Newbold, Dennis J. Geaney, Alcuin Coyle. Also includes a bibliography.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTARY

"Women, Priesthood and the Vatican." America 136 (April 2, 1977): 285-89. Editorial addresses problems and questions concerning the Declaration's use of Scripture, description of the tradition, and theological argumentation.

"Fathers and Priestesses: Footnotes to the Roman Declaration." Michael Slusser. Worship 15 (Sept. 1977): 434-445. Questions appeals to Irenaeus and Tertullian.

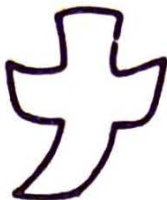
"The Question of Admitting Women to the Ministerial Priesthood." Louis Ligier. L'Osservatore Romano (English) No. 9 (518) (Mar. 2, 1978): 5-8, 12. Ligier was "consultor of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith." His commentary addresses scripture, revelation and theology, practice of the church, and theological reflections. Also in: Origins 7 (April 20, 1978): 694-702.

"On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Cor. 11:2-16)." John P. Meler. Catholic Biblical Quarterly 40 (April 1978): 212-26. Raises questions concerning the hermeneutical procedure presupposed by the Document when it treats scripture.

"The Role of Women in the Old Testament." Marie de Merode de Croy. In Women in a Man's Church. Virgil Elizondo and Norbert Greinacher, eds. New York: Seabury Press, 1980, pp. 71-79. On the use of the Old Testament as evidence.

"Women and the Priesthood." Karl Rahner. In his Concern for the Church, New York: Crossroad, 1981, pp. 35-47. Questions whether the historic practice of the church in this case rests on a truly divine revelation or represents merely a human tradition.

This list was compiled from a longer bibliography by Sandra H. Boyd, Weston School of Theology Library, 99 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138, 5/1980, rev. 11/1981.



EPISCOPAL WOMEN'S CAUCUS, INC.

affirming the role of women in the changing church

Volume 5:4

Summer 1984



Left - Right: The Rev. Eleanor McLaughlin, The Rev. Paul Washington, The Rev. Lee McGee, The Rev. Gayle E. Harris, The Rev. Nina Olmedo Alazraqui, The Rev. Columba Gilliss, and The Rev. Lauren Gough.

"BEARING THE FRUIT"

They moved in deliberately - in pairs, in clusters, women, men and children, clergy and lay - processing into the Cathedral for the Eucharist celebrating women's ministries-past, present and future. Everyone seemed to be smiling shyly, concerned that they appear serious in such an overwhelming setting. After a period of silence, the opening hymn began slowly, then picked up as it went along.

"Come as the dove, and spread they wings,
The wings of peaceful love; And let thy church
on earth become
Blest as the Church above."

Those who were participating in this service created a striking tableau not soon forgotten. Again and again, I was thrilled by the imagery surrounding me. Lacking a camera, I can only provide a verbal sketch of, for example, the sight of Deacon Miriam Acevado-Naters as she read the Gospel, enclosed on three sides by cross bearer and acolytes; four women robed in black and white against the white stone wall. Or the view of six priests of different races and genders behind the altar; the tears streaming down the face of the woman from whom I took communion; the true magnificence of the interior of the Cathedral. Off to one side, signing the service, Jan Nishimura spelled by Columba Gilliss, and across the aisle a camera set up to tape the entire service. It was, indeed, a visual feast.

Concelebrants included The Rev. Nina Olmedo Alazraqui, Director of Centro Hispano of the Diocese of California; The Rev. Columba Gilliss, Order of St. Helena, Rural team ministry, Diocese of New York; The Rev. Gayle E. Harris, Urban Resident, Chapel of St. Philip the Evangelist, Washington DC; The

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Left - Right: Linda Grenz, Dee Beggs, Gigi Conner, Carol Flanagan, Portie Johnson.

Membership Task Force Formed at Annual Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of The Episcopal Women's Caucus, held on Saturday, May 26, 1984, at Hearst Hall Auditorium, Washington, D.C.

The Annual Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President Carol Cole Flanagan, followed by opening prayer and the reading of many letters and notes of support and thanks for the Caucus' sponsorship of the Celebration.

Treasurer's Report: (Printed Elsewhere)

Discussion centered on the possibility of continuing staff person and question was raised about JOB LETTER in regard to listing lay positions. Women who want to be appraised openings or who know of openings should contact Treasurer Judith Upham.

President's Report: Carol Cole Flanagan

After last year's meeting in Gainesville, the Board met to review the agenda of the Caucus. It was decided there was a need to accomplish certain things, to motivate others, and to work through other organizations. Some of the issues discussed were:

1. Laying groundwork for publication of issues for General Convention.
2. Expanding Canons on Civil Rights.
3. Resolutions that need to be networked for General Convention so other Dioceses will be involved.
4. Deployment workshops for women.
5. Producing Conference and Celebration.

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NEW WOMEN, NEW CHURCH

WOMEN'S ORDINATION CONFERENCE
Working for the Rights of Women in Our Church

Vol. 3, No. 4 December, 1985

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE

Vol. 9, No. 1 February, 1985

"Ordination Reconsidered"

Mary Jo Weaver's Keynote *Called to a New Land*

By Mary Jo Weaver

One of the astonishing features of God's call to Abraham and Sarah was its gratuitousness: out of the clear blue and for no discernible reason, Abraham and Sarah received an invitation they did not understand. Their positive response to divine initiative made it possible for Jews, Christians and Muslims to participate in the search for transcendence which in part characterizes the Western religious tradition. Let me remind you that God asked Abraham and Sarah to leave the house of their fathers in order to go to a new land, there to become a new people. I suggest that you, too, are called away from the house of your fathers, but I believe the new land may be more spiritual than geographical, more an act of redefinition than a leaving behind of cherished traditions.

I think we have to adopt more than one interpretive framework as we explore

our history and try to imagine the future in its light. I have in mind two competing perspectives. On the one hand, the remarks of Marjorie Tuttle after the "Bishops' Dialogue" on women's ordination. At the end of that process - which Rose-



photo by Ruth Fitzpatrick

Mary Jo Weaver Keynotes problems women encounter in their desire for ordination.

mary Ruether characterized as a "non-meeting of minds" - a bedraggled Marjorie Tuttle told a group assembled in Indianapolis.

"They don't want us. They have never wanted us. And they never will want us!" On the other hand, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza's stunning reinterpretation of early Christianity, the new good news, that women are not marginal in the Jesus movement. Both of these observations are true and the ability to live within the tension they create for us requires the "wisdom of serpents and the innocence of doves," a strategy Jesus himself once suggested to a ragtag group of disciples embarking on their own ministry.

Most of you are here because you feel yourselves called to priesthood in the Catholic church. In your hearts and in the minds of your supporters you have a clear vocation to sacerdotal ministry which has been tested, schooled, and made available to an institution which denies its reality. You have been reared in a church with unlimited spiritual possibilities but have been rejected by its supremely devastating canons. You may

Theresa Kane "Our Time Is Now!"

Theresa Kane's farewell reflections at Ordination Reconsidered

"Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets so that one can read it readily - for the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment - it will not disappoint - if it delays, wait for it - it will surely come; it will not be late."

We gather today as faith-filled women, women of vision. A vision has been written down. A vision has been inscribed within our hearts, our minds, our very beings. The vision which draws us together for these few days in St. Louis is a spirited, enlivened, creative vision. It is the profound realization that Catholic women are called to be in all ministries within our church - to be ministers within a renewed priesthood. The vision of a renewed priesthood contains within it three sacred challenges - challenges which press us to the fulfillment of our visions. They are:

- to be women who know that our time has come.
- to be women who speak with authority.
- to be women who believe and act upon the promise that nothing is impossible with God.

1. The fullness of time for women has come - the fullness of time for women is now.

Our foremothers and sisters for centuries struggled, dreamed and lived for this moment. I am convinced that our time has come. This vision became clear and compelling at the exhilarating world experience that was mine to be with 15,000 women from 159 nations this past summer at the Women's Conference in Nairobi, Kenya - women who knew in the depths of their being that our time has come. Women of every culture, race, religion, economic and social situations converged - and amidst rich and wide diversities - were clear that women are called to be fully engaged and responsible to shape, influence and formulate decisions for every sphere of life - to be fully engaged in decisions which affect family, nation, religion, economics and the social sphere. Women recognized in a profound

way at this gathering that heretofore they have assumed the overwhelming responsibilities of the world's care of children, growth of children to adulthood, concern for water, food, shelter, education and all the necessities of life without any access to shaping the decisions which implement those responsibilities. It is no wonder that we experience an intolerable level of frustration and despair in the face of such distorted realities. The time is indeed now for women to experience and claim their equality with men, to be corresponsable for the decisions and the shape of church and society.

The fullness of time for women brings with it the realization that forces will attempt to prevent us from assuming the



Theresa Kane, RSM, delivers homily at closing liturgy of Ordination Reconsidered, serious responsibility that is ours. The fullness of time for women - in regard to decisions, behavior and attitudes necessary to assume our rightful place in every sphere of human activity - will be filled with challenges, excitement and tremendous creativity. As the vision presses us on to fulfillment it will involve risks, fear, failure, hostility, suffering - perhaps even death. The fullness of women's time invites us to create a renewed church. The former church has passed away - a new church - a holy church needs to be born. As in all creation there is sorrow, tears, pain - there is also new life, joy and creation. In the fullness of time God has promised us that all of this will happen - now is that time for women.

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