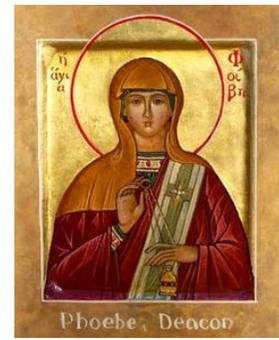




# DEACONCHAT

A CONVERSATION ABOUT WOMEN DEACONS



## Frequently Asked Questions -- Using These Materials

**Who Created the DeaconChat Initiative?** DeaconChat is a joint initiative of The Association of US Catholic Priests (AUSCP), FutureChurch, and Voice of the Faithful.

**Why DeaconChat?** On May 12, 2016 Pope Francis -- responding to a question posed by members of the International Union of Superiors General (IUSG) -- said that he would establish a commission to study the question of ordaining women deacons in the Roman Catholic Church. That commission was formally announced in August and began its work in November of 2016. As the commission undertakes its work, it is important that Catholics -- lay and ordained -- undergo their own study and discernment of the history and present possibility of ordaining women to the diaconate. Unfortunately too many Catholics -- clergy included -- are under-educated on this topic. **Our goal is to bring the ordained and the laity together in conversation to continue to learn and discern together.**

**What are we asking you to do?** We are asking you to engage a local member of the clergy (your parish priest, deacon, or your local bishop) in a conversation about women deacons.

**Learn:** Begin by taking some time to educate yourself. This packet includes a Brief History of Women Deacons, biographies of women who served as deacons in the early Church, and articles by Phyllis Zagano, Ph.D. who was named by Pope Francis to serve on the study commission and by retired auxiliary Bishop Emil Wcela of Rockville Centre, NY.

**Share:** Consider sending your local clergy member a copy of Dr. Zagano's *Women Deacons Past Present and Future* which includes essays by Church historian Gary Macy, Ph.D. and Deacon William Ditewig, Ph.D. Copies can be purchased directly from the publisher, Paulist Press, at <http://www.paulistpress.com/Products/4743-4/women-deacons.aspx> or through other retailers. Please note that each bishop in the U.S. has already been sent a copy of this text. Alternatively, we also welcome you to print or make additional copies of any of the resources in this packet to send. We have also included a sample letter that you can customize to send with these materials.

**Connect:** After you have sent the materials and letter to your local clergy member, follow up by inviting them to discuss them with you. You might suggest meeting for coffee or lunch. During this conversation you might consider asking them to host an information session or educational gathering on women deacons for local Catholics. If you yourself experience a call to the diaconate, you may wish to tell your story.

**We Will Contact You with a Brief Survey** In the months ahead, we will email you a very brief survey to get your feedback about how your conversation went and what follow-up actions you and clergy were able to take together to learn and educate others about the history and present possibility of ordaining women deacons.

Thank you for becoming a part of this important ministry!