



DEACONCHAT

A CONVERSATION ABOUT WOMEN DEACONS



Association of U.S. Catholic Priests Statement Regarding Ordination of Women Deacons

August 22, 2016

We who are entrusted with leadership on behalf of the one thousand members of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, welcome with praise and prayer the recent decision by Pope Francis to establish a commission regarding the possible ordination of women deacons. We praise the openness of this discussion and offer our prayers that the Holy Spirit will guide the members of the commission. We are pleased to learn that Professor Phyllis Zagano from Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY, is one of the six women who have been named to serve with six men as members of the commission.

We enthusiastically welcome these developments.

We believe the ordination of women deacons will enhance pastoral ministry and serve the common good of the People of God. Our association has supported the ordination of women to the diaconate with a resolution adopted in our 2013 assembly, and with a letter to the U.S. bishops in 2014. We noted that many priests "find ourselves very stretched in ministry with more and more demands being made on us daily . . . One way to help assist us in our duties would be to allow the ordination of women to the diaconate, a practice that was familiar to the early church, in order to help us better serve the people entrusted to us."

We believe that ordination is a matter of justice for women who are our associates and partners in providing ministry. Women have traditionally done 80 to 85 percent of the ministry of our Church. Since the restoration of the permanent diaconate following the Second Vatican Council male candidates were chosen among those who were already performing diaconal service. We see it as a matter of justice that women who likewise are leaders in such ministries not be deprived of the graces of the Sacrament."

Today we continue to speak on behalf of our members serving in dioceses and religious communities with day-to-day ministerial joys and challenges. Our experience leads us to believe that having men and women deacons as parish administrators would be more effective than closing parishes and establishing super parishes.

We value the position of FutureChurch and other organizations of Catholics concerned about pastoral ministry. FutureChurch states that many women who lead parishes and serve as catechists and chaplains and in other ministries should be ordained. "In light of mission opportunities and pastoral needs, local Churches should be empowered to call forth women for the ordained diaconia of liturgy, word and charity."

(over)

(Signed)

The Leadership Team: On behalf of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests

Father Louis Arceneaux, Congregation of the Mission

Father Bob Bonnot, Diocese of Youngstown

Father Kevin Clinton, Archdiocese of St. Paul - Minneapolis;

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Father Frank Eckart, Diocese of Toledo;

Father Jim Kiesel, Archdiocese of Baltimore

Father Daniel Ramirez Portugal, Diocese of Laredo

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Sister Jackie Doepker, a member of the Franciscan Sisters, Tiffin, Ohio, serves the AUSCP as Executive Secretary.

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