

Bulletin Insert on Women's Ordination

- ‡ According to an organization called “Roman Catholic Womenpriests,” a ceremony will take place on the rivers of Pittsburgh on July 31, 2006 that is represented to be an “ordination” to the priesthood. **The Roman Catholic Church and the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh do not and cannot recognize this ceremony.**
- ‡ **As Catholics, we should pray for the people who present themselves for such an invalid ritual, those who conduct it, and those who participate in it as witnesses, since their actions will place them outside the Church.**
- ‡ **Though Jesus was a priest unequaled and excelling all others, the New Testament also affirms that Jesus chose to share elements of that priesthood with all the faithful.** All Catholics, lay and clergy alike, belong to a common priesthood and are called to offer our lives to God, serving Christ in all that we say and do.
- ‡ **The Church also teaches that from among those who share the common priesthood of the baptized, some are chosen to exercise the ministerial priesthood.** The ministerial priesthood is a gift from God, not something that someone “earns,” “deserves” or has a “right” to receive by completing advanced education or through devoted service to the Church.
- ‡ **From the beginning, the Church has ordained only men to the priesthood.** This is not a matter of Church law subject to change, nor is it a relic of the past we can summarily discard. The Church believes that it cannot confer priestly ordination on women because it has not been authorized by Christ to do so.
- ‡ **Christ’s reservation of the priesthood to men does not mean that the Church demeans women or ignores their presence in the Body of Christ.** Beginning with his mother, Mary, Jesus honored women and their gifts in revolutionary ways. The early church followed Jesus’ example.
- ‡ **Ministerial priesthood is not required for a significant and fulfilling life of service to Christ.** Women serve the Church everywhere: as readers of the Word of God, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, counselors, catechists, spiritual directors, scholars, and educators. Women are leaders in decision-making and policy-setting processes in parishes, chancery staffs and Catholic educational and health care institutions worldwide.
- ‡ **We should focus instead on the work that women already do so well in the Church.** As a Church, we need to be grateful for the witness and service of women, lay and religious, who have offered us so much through twenty centuries. We should all follow their example.