



Pastoral Recommendations Project  
By the baptized - For the baptized

## **Expanding Women's Roles in our Church**

### **The people's concern:**

As baptized members of our Church, Roman Catholic women hear the call of the Holy Spirit to serve the reign of God. These calls of the Spirit manifest in many different ways according to the charisms of each individual woman. To be fully alive and relevant to our modern world, our Church, which is the People of God, must welcome and support women as they seek to live out their various calls to serve.

The tradition of our Church, which has its roots in the patriarchal systems of prior centuries, has rules and structures in place that prohibit women from pursuing the full range of possibilities to which the Holy Spirit may be calling them. These rules and structures create barriers to women who are called to a variety of leadership or ministry roles, including decision-making roles in Church governance. This not only prevents women from living their full baptismal call, it also deprives our Church of a great wealth of Spirit-filled servant leaders.

Vatican Council II called upon our Church to engage with the modern world. It is time to let go of the restraints created by a patriarchal system and embrace equality between women and men. By embracing and supporting women in roles of leadership and ministry, we better reflect the changing times and needs of our modern Church.

In an effort to better support women in answering their calls to service and to nurture our Church through expanded service by women, we call upon our archbishop to act upon the following recommendations.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1) Work toward full integration of women into archdiocesan leadership positions.
  - a. Identify women exercising leadership in our archdiocesan parishes.
    - i. Dialog with them to understand the nature of their pastoral service.
    - ii. Find ways to actively support them.

- b. Create an equal balance of women and men as archdiocesan employees and leaders. Ensure just employment practices.
  - c. Support training and formation of women leaders across the spectrum of voices. Call upon women from the ACCW, League of Catholic Women, women religious, reform minded women, Women in the New Evangelization (WINE) and others.
- 2) Reinstate a Women's Commission in this archdiocese.
- a. In 1979, Archbishop Roach created the Women's Commission to advise him as he sought to explore and understand the many roles of women in our Church. We call upon Archbishop Hebda to create a similar commission to advise both himself and our clergy on ways to promote justice and equality for the women in our Church.
  - b. This new commission should reflect the mission of the previous commission:
    - i. Promote justice and equality for women in the Archdiocese.
    - ii. Serve as a prophetic voice and advisor to the Archbishop.
    - iii. Collaborate with others concerning the status of women.
    - iv. Respond to issues involving women's leadership and contributions to the Church.
- 3) Promote expanded opportunities for women in ministry
- a. Create an atmosphere of dialog that welcomes exploration of the roles of women in all forms of ministry.
    - i. Invite theologians and laity to offer their perspectives on scripture, tradition, and current Church realities regarding women in ministry.
    - ii. Talk with and listen to women who hear the call to the priesthood, including those women ordained as Roman Catholic Women Priests.
  - b. We call upon Archbishop Hebda to promote and encourage the USCCB and the Vatican to open all forms of ministry to women.
    - i. Open the permanent diaconate to women.
    - ii. Promote women's ordination to the priesthood.

*Prepared by Mary Beth Stein  
[marybsaint@hotmail.com](mailto:marybsaint@hotmail.com)*