



WIJNGAARDS
INSTITUTE
FOR CATHOLIC
RESEARCH



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Letter from the Director

Like all living institutions the Roman Catholic Church needs those who love her without question, and those who love her with questions. In order to survive as a force for good in the world, the Roman Catholic Church needs to update herself, and to do so she needs uncensored original and constructive thinking.

As an independent think-tank, the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research (WICR) promotes such thinking. We produce cutting-edge theological research by coordinating leading academics to collaborate on reports tackling the Church's officially uncomfortable, difficult, and disputed areas: women's ordained ministries, sexual ethics, and church authority. These 'no-go' areas affect Roman Catholics every day of their lives.



Among the reasons why I agreed to join the Institute as director in September 2014 were precisely the achievements of the Institute since its establishment in 1983. What makes me even more excited, however, are our future prospects. Far from becoming less relevant with the passage of time, what we are doing is, if anything, more urgent than ever.

In effect, in an ideal world the work of the Wijngaards Institute would be carried out within that wonderful galaxy of educational and research institutions that Catholics throughout history have set up.

Sadly, this is only rarely the case. Many Catholic authorities – bishops, educational institutions, individual theologians – are reluctant to allow free public discussion concerning some of those issues, for fear of antagonizing the Vatican or undermining their careers and even jobs.

As long as this situation persists there will be a need for institutes such as ours. WICR is a private educational charity, and can therefore maintain full independence from external pressures. This has made it possible for us to build vast online libraries of high quality academic research on precisely those issues which are the least openly discussed in the Catholic Church.

We have been conscious that integrating with the worldwide academic community would help the credibility of our research findings and educational material. The University of Roehampton has now offered us an Honorary Research Fellowship in Catholic theology at their Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

The provisional agreement is for the Institute to fully fund that position on a rolling monthly basis, while maintaining its independence in determining its research agenda: namely, the debated issues around women's ordained ministries, Christian sexual ethics, and church authority.

I cannot over-emphasise how important both concessions are. On the one hand, academic Catholic theology is often affected by self-censorship (Catholic theologians need an official "mandate" from their local bishop in order to be able to teach). Our post will be free from such a constraint.

On the other hand, sponsoring a research position at a university ordinarily requires the upfront creation of an endowment fund upwards of £2 million. The proposed alternative agreement does not require that, and so makes this an exciting and unique opportunity for potential donors to make an impact. Our target is £500,000 so as to secure that research position for the foreseeable future.

This is an exciting and unique opportunity to establish a permanent research position in Catholic theology in a subject which is often affected by self-censorship and in a city, London, where the forthcoming closure of the Jesuit Heythrop College in 2018 will leave a considerable gap in the educational market.

Greater religious literacy and theological education among the laity is necessary in order to equip the next generation of Catholics, to make them more active participants in both church and society. It is also necessary for the task of purifying the Catholic tradition itself, by examining its consistency with the relevant biblical, historical, theological and scientific evidence. This is what our rigorous, independent academic research can do.

This booklet is designed to show you the variety and value of what we do. But we will only be able to continue our work if we increase our financial support from people like you. Our tiny staff ensures small contributions go a long way. I invite you to review our development plan, and continue with us on our journey.

Luca Badini Confalonieri

Dr. Luca Badini Confalonieri
Director of Research

Executive Summary

The Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research (WICR) is one of the leading independent think tanks focusing on debated issues in Catholic theology.

As a clearing house of theological research worldwide, we coordinate leading academics worldwide to cooperate on interdisciplinary research reports tackling the Catholic Church's officially uncomfortable, difficult, and disputed areas: *women's ordained ministries, Christian sexual ethics, and church authority*. These "no-go" areas affect Roman Catholics every day of their lives.

Our research agenda is informed by the latest findings in theology and other relevant disciplines, and is driven by the questions and suggestions of ordinary Catholics from across the world. The experiences and insights of both laypeople and experts help us identify problems and develop solutions to help the Roman Catholic Church reform.

We are committed to ensuring that the interdisciplinary reports we produce enjoy the authority assigned to peer-reviewed, evidence-based, and academically rigorous scholarship.

Such reports are aimed primarily at the Catholic hierarchy and at Catholic academics. Their purpose is to offer "green papers" – aimed at consultation (of the theological community, the entire church, or of a specific section of it) – and "white papers" offering authoritative reports on theological issues.



Professor René van Eyden, Utrecht University:

I wholeheartedly support the valuable work you are doing. Religious organizations are always in need of purification, and the Catholic Church is no exception. Our Church harbours unacknowledged cultural prejudices and sexist biases that need to be identified and addressed. That is what you do. In your work you show rigorous scholarship, unwavering loyalty, and courage – all in great measure. I wish there were more prophetic institutions like the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research!



WE DO RIGOROUS ACADEMIC RESEARCH AND PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL ON THOSE CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS WHICH ARE THE LEAST DISCUSSED BY AUTHORITIES IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

WICR also produces more accessible summaries of its key findings, as well as educational material of a pastoral nature to help ordinary Catholics discern the main ethical issues being debated in their church.

Our oldest and largest website is www.womenpriests.org, now the most comprehensive online library in the world on that topic. It brings together the historical evidence about women's ordination to the diaconate and the priesthood.

In 2007 we founded the Catherine of Siena Virtual College (CSV), which offers affordable university-level online courses on leadership and the role of women in society. Under our direction more than 1,100 students enrolled, mostly women (90%), and from developing countries. Such a rapid growth has meant that it became difficult for our small team to provide an adequate infra-structure to do justice to its great potential. For this reason, in September 2014 we decided to hand over the management of CSV to the University of Roehampton, London.

In March 2017 the same university has also offered us an Honorary Research Fellowship in Catholic theology at their Department of Theology and Religious Studies. The provisional agreement is for the Institute to fully fund that position, while maintaining independence in determining its research agenda. This will continue the focus on the above mentioned issues: *gender equality*, a more enlightened *Christian sexual ethics*, and more democratic and accountable exercise of *church authority*.

This is an exciting and unique opportunity to establish an independent research position in a subject, Catholic theology, which is often affected by self-censorship; and in a city, London, where the closure of the Jesuit Heythrop College in 2018 leaves a gap in the educational market in Catholic theology.

Our target is £500,000, to secure that research position for the foreseeable future. Because of its worldwide network of parishes, educational institutions, and health care facilities the Catholic Church exercises a very large influence in many parts of the world. Our research and educational material supporting *reform from within* on the above mentioned issues can have a very significant impact.

And with your help, they will.

Who We Are



Dr John Wijngaards, founder
of the institute

Research is at the heart of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research (WICR), an international not-for-profit Christian educator. Founded in 1983 by Dr John Wijngaards, then a Mill Hill missionary, WICR has grown to become a small but global network of volunteers. Our focus has been the provision of academic and educational resources to Christians in general and Catholics in particular: laypeople as well as clergy; academics as well as non-experts; from the first as well as the developing world.

We have been doing so by means of a series of videos, books, websites and online courses. While our original focus was producing educational material on Christian spirituality, since 1998 we have expanded our mission to providing both scholarly research and more accessible summaries about

those controversial topics which are the least discussed by authorities in the Catholic Church:

- *Ordained ministries for women* (e.g. traditional arguments against women in holy orders, the position of modern scholarship);
- *Church authority and governance* (e.g. collegiality, the meaning of ordination, the integration of expertise in ecclesial decision-making);
- *Christian sexual ethics* (e.g. the meaning and purpose of sexuality; sexual orientation and LGBT; family planning and artificial contraception; and so on);
- *the relationship between science and faith;*
- *the interpretation of the Bible.*

Academic Partnerships

WICR is an academic partner to the Centre for the Study of Religion & Politics at the University of St Andrews and the Dialogue Institute, Temple University (USA), and in the process of applying for UN-observer status, as well as membership of the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD, see www.partner-religion-development.org/).



WE HAVE BEEN INTERNET PIONEERS, THE FIRST TO SYSTEMATICALLY ORGANIZE ACADEMIC MATERIAL ON THE WEB ABOUT THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM ORDAINED MINISTRY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Impact and Media Coverage

Our research has featured in publications such as the *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post* (USA), *The Sunday Times* (UK), *The Irish Times*, the *National Catholic Reporter* (USA), *The Tablet* (UK), *Nederlands Dagblad* (Netherlands), *America* (USA), *Religi3n Digital* (Spain), *Adista* (Italy), the www.voxfeminae.net website (Croatian and English, 2017), as well as on the radio on ABC Radio "Religion and Ethics" program.

WICR is also an academic consultant for a video documentary on women's ministries in early Christianity, forthcoming for Channel 4 (UK) in 2018.

Developing the Magisterium: A Scholarly Wikipedia on Theology

Methodology

We are developing a ground-breaking initiative which builds on our past experiences bringing together Catholic scholars in drafting and signing of agreed statements. We employ the potential of the wiki software to enable professional theologians to cooperate in drafting research reports. These will come in the form of both “green papers” – aimed at consultation (e.g. of the entire church or of a specific sector such as medical doctors, economists, laywomen, etc) – and “white papers”, offering authoritative reports. The latter will enjoy the authority generally assigned to peer-reviewed, independent, evidence based, academically rigorous scholarship.

Increasingly since the 1950s most secular democracies have set up Scientific Advisory Committees precisely to enable governments and civil society to access scientific knowledge in the most independent, impartial and comprehensive manner. Our initiative aims to achieve a similar goal in the field of Catholic theology. Indeed, it is our hope that the theologians and other experts participating in these collaborative endeavours will eventually contribute to setting up a peer-reviewed, independent Theological Advisory Committee at the service of the hierarchy and the Catholic Church at large.

Case Study: The Ethics of Using Contraceptives

The most significant recent impact of our research has focused on the issue of reforming papal teaching prohibiting any use of so-called “artificial” contraceptives for family planning. This was presented at a side-event of the UN General Assembly in 2016, and enjoyed considerable media coverage. The process by which we got there illustrates how we choose our research agenda, the methodology we have fine-tuned, and the impact our findings can have.

The papal prohibition against using “artificial” contraceptives for family planning still guides the policy of Catholic schools and health care facilities worldwide. An initial survey of existing research suggested such a policy has several negative consequences for millions of people in the developing world.

Accordingly, in early 2015, we decided to kick-start a comprehensive research report on the meanings and purposes of human sexuality, the ethics of using contraceptives, and the real-world consequences of contraceptive non-use, from within the Catholic tradition. To that end, we gathered an interdisciplinary task force of 23 experts. The goal was to have a substantial piece of research revising the papal document on which current Catholic policy is based – the 1968 *Humanae Vitae*: On the Regulation



WE CRITICALLY EXAMINE RECEIVED CATHOLIC TEACHINGS WHENEVER THEY APPEAR TO GO AGAINST RELEVANT EVIDENCE FROM THE BIBLE, HISTORY, OR THE SCIENCES

“WE ARE LEVERAGING THE POWER OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE TO PRODUCE THEOLOGICAL REPORTS BENEFITING FROM THE LATEST SCHOLARLY RESEARCH”

of Birth” by Pope Paul VI – ready in time for its 50th anniversary in 2018.

The resulting research report is entitled “The Ethics of Using Contraceptives.” Its conclusions are based on interdisciplinary scholarship which can be verified independently. Created using the Wikipedia model, its text, hosted on www.wijngaardsinstitute.com, remains open to amendments and expansions from qualified contributors.

The next step has involved writing an executive summary of the findings of the interdisciplinary research report: the so-called “Catholic Scholars’ Statement on the Ethics of Using Contraceptives” (“Statement”), signed by more than 160 Catholic academics with expertise in relevant disciplines.

The Statement was presented at a side-event to the UN General Assembly on 20th September 2016, entitled “Keeping the Faith in Development: Gender, Religion & Health,” and jointly organised by

UNAIDS, UNFPA, UN Women (as part of the United Nations’ Inter-agency Task Force on Religion and Development), the World Council of Churches, the Wijngaards Institute & Islamic Relief USA.

The UN launch resulted in excellent media coverage on both the Catholic and the secular media. An executive summary of our research report on the ethics of using contraceptives has been submitted to the Pontifical Academy for Life in the Vatican, with whom we want to establish a working relationship.

The research report is routinely updated, with plans to publish it as a book in 2018. A follow-up project is under way to prepare an educational resource for Catholics, to help their moral discernment on that topic (please see next page).

THE GOAL IS TO CREATE
A SORT OF SCHOLARLY
WIKIPEDIA ON DEBATED
THEOLOGICAL ISSUES,
POWERED BY THE CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY AT LARGE, AND
ACTING AS A CLEARING-
HOUSE FOR SIGNIFICANT
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
ESTABLISHED AND BUDDING
SCHOLARS ALIKE, AND
EXPERTS FROM ANY RELEVANT
DISCIPLINE

“Improving the religious literacy of the average Catholic is necessary to nurture doctrinal development” Luca Badini, WICR Director

OUR MAIN TOOL FOR CHANGE IS RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY IN THOSE
AREAS WHERE INSTITUTIONAL CENSORSHIP
WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE
STRONGEST



Research Projects

Catholics & Contraception: Promoting Good Health and Good Conscience

Following on the success of the interdisciplinary research report on the ethics of using contraceptives, one of our ongoing projects aims to develop an authoritative educational resource to help Catholics reflect and discern whether and when to use contraceptives for family planning (and, when necessary, prophylaxis).

The educational material will be centred on short moral dilemmas, inspired by true stories, describing couples and families in different situations who need to make a decision concerning what's the best course of action towards what papal teaching calls "responsible parenthood." The use of moral dilemmas around family planning aims at helping people develop their moral thinking on that issue.

Those stories will be accompanied by questions for reflection, and commentaries on topical themes by high-profile Catholics. The project envisages piloting this material in three different cultural contexts (Poland, the Philippines and S. Africa), via community-based focus groups organised by local partners. The feedback received will be used to develop appropriate versions of the educational material in local languages.

To our knowledge, no Catholic educational institution has developed educational material of a pastoral nature on the ethics of using non-abortifacient contraceptives for family planning. This is due to their reluctance to publicly challenge current Catholic teaching on the subject. There is an unmet need for such pedagogical material, and our project – which is scalable – wants to address that need.

WICR has also agreed to make those educational resources accessible to all UN departments and development agencies who are trying to navigate the relationship between religious belief and women's health as they work towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The endorsements – from members of the hierarchy, academics, high-profile Catholics – as well as partnerships with UNFPA and UN Women will enhance the standing of the educational material in the eyes of many of its recipients, and increase the possibility for it to have a truly global impact.

The Roots of Gender Equality Across Religions

Surveys by UNESCO show that women are still seriously disadvantaged in more than half of the world. There are many reasons for this, one of which is the denial of women's equal rights. This denial is



Women in a remote area in southern Malawi queuing to be registered for free family planning services.

still considered by many to be religiously mandated. As Jimmy Carter observed in 2009, "This view that women are somehow inferior to men is not restricted to one religion or belief. Women are prevented from playing a full and equal role in many faiths."

While researching the historical arguments about gender inequality (both those in favour and those against) in the Catholic tradition, we noticed many similarities with those advanced on the same issue in other Christian denominations and other major religions. Why then not learn from each other?

The project we plan to run will have both a constructive and a healing element. The *constructive* element will examine the religious grounds *in favour of* gender equality. These may need to be re-discovered, their significance explored again and, hopefully, their centrality within the belief systems appraised anew.

In contrast, the *healing* element will look at the roots of religious *opposition to* women's equal rights. The hypothesis is that such roots often stem from deeply embedded cultural and social prejudices rather than from the tenets of the religions themselves. These prejudices may have encrusted religious beliefs and practices in the course of time to the extent that they may now be considered part of sacred traditions.

In partnership with UN Women, WICR is bringing together scholars from different religions to challenge those views in what will be a long-term project.

AT A TIME WHEN "EXPERTS" ARE OFTEN DISMISSED, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT ACADEMIC FINDINGS RELEVANT TO CATHOLIC DOCTRINE BE CRITICALLY ASSESSED AND, IF CORRECT, MADE AVAILABLE TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE

History and Achievements

Our Institute was established as an educational charity in 1983 by Dr John Wijngaards. Named “Housetop Centre for Adult Faith Formation” (“Housetop”), it was based in the Catholic archdiocese of Westminster, England. The inspiration for the name came from Jesus’ injunction that we should proclaim his message from the housetops (Matthew 10:27).

Work on Spirituality

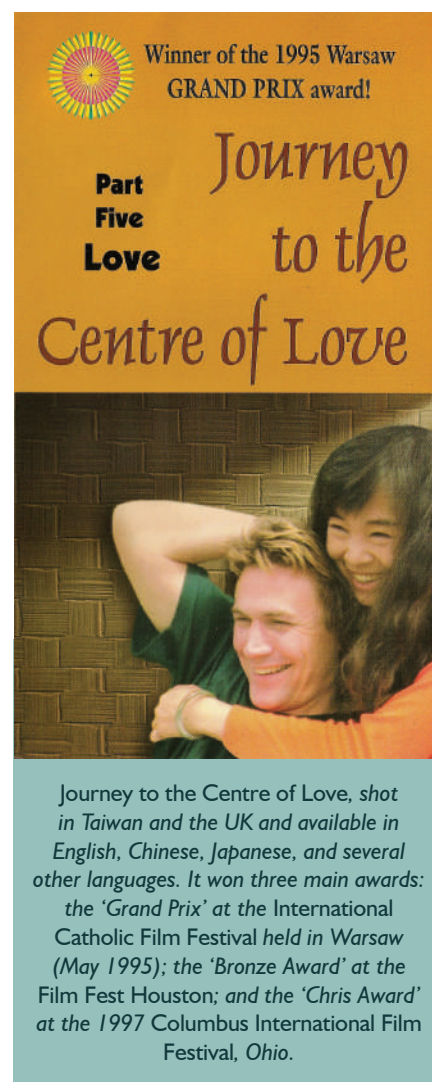
During our early years we focused on producing resources for spirituality. Nation-wide research in the UK produced material for a video course on the practice of meditation: *The Seven Circles of Prayer* (1987), winner of the award for “Creative Excellence” at the 1987 Video Festival in Elmhurst, Illinois, USA.

It was followed by two other video courses: *Peace in your Home* (1988) on fostering prayer in the family, and *Loaves of Thanksgiving* (1989) on re-vitalising the celebration of the weekly Eucharist.

Our *Walking on Water* (1990-1992) video courses for training community leaders has been adapted by catechetical centres in all continents and translated into 14 languages. They comprised three textbooks and nine 30 minute short stories on an accompanying video. The stories were filmed in Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya and the UK. Again, several of those videos won awards.

In 1995 we published *How To Make Sense of God*. The course book received a prize from the Catholic Press Association (USA) for “best adult reading”. The accompanying video film *Journey to the Centre of Love* comprises 5 episodes of approximately 45 minutes each. It won two major awards, and we have made its English version freely available on our YouTube channel and on our website www.mysteryandbeyond.org.

Our latest video course focused on Christian marriage. We produced *For Better, For Worse* in 2000 with academic advice from INTAMS. It was broadcast on the Belgian Catholic television network KTRC in autumn 2000 under the title *Tussen Man & Vrouw* (“Between Man & Wife”). It is being distributed in the UK and Ireland by Veritas Publications.



“

Cardinal Basil Hume OSB, Archbishop of Westminster (1976-1999), was one of our friends. In 1977 he welcomed the publication of *Did Christ Rule Out Women Priests?* by John Wijngaards as useful for discussion. In 1989 he presided over the launch of our video course *Loaves of Thanksgiving* and said:

“This is an excellent tool for reflection and discussion on the Eucharist. It leads to a further exploration of the deeper meaning of the Eucharist. This course helps to achieve what the Church is looking for: that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious and active participation that is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.”



We have created video-courses and books on the practice of Christian prayer

Work on Women's Ordained Ministries


The initial focus of "Housetop" on creating educational material on Christian spirituality eventually expanded to tackle the discrimination against women in the church, as one of the biggest factors affecting Catholics' material and spiritual growth worldwide. Our clash with traditional views came to a head in 1994 when the Vatican declared that the exclusion of women from the ordained ministries was definitive and should no longer be discussed (John Paul II, "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis").

There, the Pope's judgment seemed not only to overlook key evidence from the New Testament and church history, but also to be based on mistaken theological arguments indebted more to embedded patriarchal prejudices and ideology than to the liberating Good News. It provoked a conscientious objection from John Wijngaards who in 1998, in protest, resigned from exercising his priestly ministry.

WWW.WOMENPRIESTS.ORG HAS GROWN TO BECOME THE LARGEST ONLINE LIBRARY IN THE WORLD ON THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE ABOUT THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE DIACONATE AND THE PRIESTHOOD. IT COUNTERS THE "ALTERNATIVE FACTS" OFTEN UNCRITICALLY REPEATED BY PRIESTS, BISHOPS, AND EVEN POPES

Our specific contribution to the debate in the Church has focused on critically examining the relevant evidence behind the theological arguments, whether from the bible, history, or science.

The Housetop team decided to make full use of the then rapidly growing potential of the internet,



Barbara Paskins
MA Deputy Chair of Trustees:

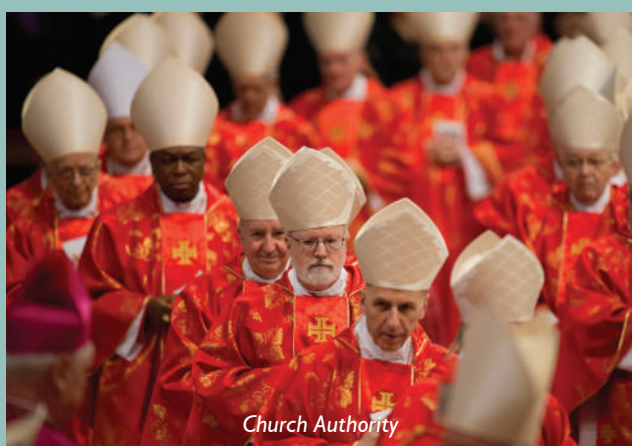
From an early age I have been conscious of a missionary streak - a desire to pass on my faith. Now, as part of the Housetop team I feel I am working to change attitudes in the Church. I believe passionately that our faith is not irrational and that freedom to debate and development of doctrine are essential in the Church. Our knowledge and understanding of the universe and of human beings is growing and our faith must develop alongside. I am horrified that in the Church attitudes to women can still be coloured by the study of St. Thomas Aquinas who thought that women were sub-human.

and in 1999 created a website gathering the historical evidence as well as the scholarly arguments for and against the ordination of women.

This first website, womenpriests.org, has grown to be the largest collection of academic material on that topic in the world, with over 10,000 documents accessed annually by more than 500,000 visitors from 212 different countries: lay Catholics as well as clergy; academics as well as non-experts; from the first as well as the developing world. Through it we present in full the case for women's ordination from the points of view of scripture, theology, tradition and church teachings. We also provide all the reasons the Vatican gives to justify the exclusion of women. In doing this, WICR serves the Roman Catholic Church worldwide by helping its members judge for themselves what makes sense on either side of the debate.

Work on Church Authority; Sexual Ethics;

Our Areas of Research At a Glance:



Spirituality, Science and Faith

Research on the arguments advanced since the Middle Ages against the ordination of women brought to the attention of the Housetop team the extent to which many of them stemmed from mistaken ideas affecting other areas of Christian thought and practice, from sexual ethics to church governance. As a result of this realization, Housetop decided to develop websites tackling some of those issues:

Umbrella Website	www.wijngaardsinstitute.com
Historical Evidence about the ordination of Women to the Diaconate and the Priesthood	www.womenpriests.org www.womendeacons.org
Christian Sexual Ethics	www.thebodyissacred.org
Church Authority and Governance	www.churchauthority.org
Spirituality, Science and Faith	www.mysteryandbeyond.org
Natural Law & Conscience	www.natural-law-and-conscience.org
Catholics & Contraception	www.catholicsandcontraception.org
Interpretation of Scripture	www.interpretingscripturecorrectly.com

Since 1999 our team has been at the heart of a successful online campaign of education and awareness-raising on some important topics of debate within the Catholic Church. Through our websites we provide a unique collection of books, articles, PowerPoint presentations, and videos of both a scholarly and a pastoral character.

Among the scholarly material we have relevant extracts from the works of the Fathers of the Church, conciliar decrees, papal documents, early, medieval, and modern theologians, saints, etc. We have also carried out original research which has brought to light previously unpublished primary sources: for example, the [womendeacons.org](http://www.womendeacons.org) website presents evidence of more than 100 women deacons, mostly from headstone inscriptions whose drawings lay forgotten in the British Library.

The more pastoral content, on the other hand, comprises videos, podcasts, picture galleries, online interactive courses, historical analyses, facilitated discussion groups, agreed statements by renowned Catholic scholars as well as key-point summaries of the academic content. Those summaries we have translated into 26 languages, including several widely used in developing countries, so as to reach as many sections as possible of our large Catholic community. This was made possible thanks to volunteer translators from all over the world.



Impact and Publicity

Interdisciplinary Research Reports

Our research agenda is driven by the questions and suggestions of ordinary Catholics from across the world, and topics are selected on the basis of their potential to make an impact on their lives.

For example, Catholic schools, especially in developing countries, often teach that modern contraceptives are an immoral means of family planning. In turn, Catholic health care facilities, which account for approximately one-fourth of the worldwide total, cannot by statute offer modern contraceptives for the purpose of family planning. In the developing world they are often the only providers of health care for large sections of the population.

The consequences are, often enough, unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Both our interdisciplinary research report on the ethics of using contraceptives, and our follow-up project to develop educational resources on that topic, aim to fulfill two goals: 1. help ordinary Catholics make informed decision about the morality of using modern non-abortionifacient contraceptives for family planning; 2. help Catholic teachers, priests, and health care workers respond to the educational and health needs of those they exist to serve.



“ Lord Hylton, Patron, said about our work during a public meeting in the Houses of Parliament, 5 March 2013:

“You wonder if the Catholic Church will ever learn from its past? The injustices committed against people in the name

of Christ? At present millions of third-world families, particularly the women, suffer because of the Church’s doctrine on contraception . . . A key reason is that church authorities don’t listen to theologians and its workers on the ground.”

Websites

With regard to Catholic teachings on women’s equality, www.womenpriests.org offers an online academic library of more than 10,000 historical, scholarly and pastoral documents, and attracts over 600,000 unique visitors a year, from some 200 countries.

Accessible summaries of key findings are also provided in 26 languages, including Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, and Urdu.

What is also unique about our online material is that, unlike most online library catalogues, we have obtained permission from authors and publishers to scan and upload complete texts. The fact that we provide that material for free is particularly beneficial to students and scholars from developing countries, who may not otherwise have a way of obtaining the original texts.

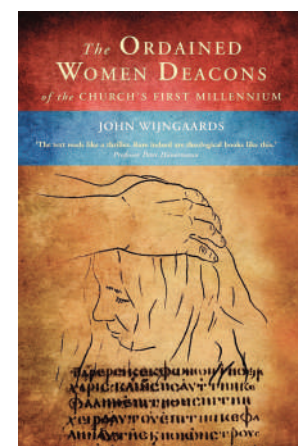
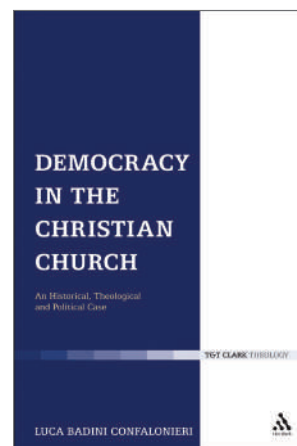
Media Coverage & Publications

Our research has featured in publications such as the *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post* (USA), *The Sunday Times* (UK), *The Irish Times*, the *National Catholic Reporter*, *The Tablet* (UK), *Nederlands Dagblad*, *America* (USA), *Religión Digital*, *Adista* (Italy), as well as on the radio on ABC Radio “Religion and Ethics” program.

WICR is also an academic consultant for a video documentary on women’s ministries in early Christianity, forthcoming for *Channel 4* (UK) in 2018.

Among our publications are:

- John Wijngaards, *The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Church: Unmasking a Cuckoo’s Egg Tradition* (London: DLT, 2001), 208pp. ISBN: 0232524203;
- John Wijngaards, *The Ordained Women Deacons of the Church’s First Millennium* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2012), 262pp. ISBN: 9781848251212;
- Luca Badini Confalonieri, *Democracy in the Christian Church: An Historical, Theological and Political Case* (London: Continuum/Bloomsbury, 2012), 298pp. ISBN: 978-0-567-52815-5.



Academic Declarations and Media Appearances

John Wijngaards' work recovering the ancient sacramental ordination rites of women has been instrumental in raising the profile of the cause seeking restoration of the ordained women's diaconate. In 2004 the Orthodox Church in Greece did just that. In 2008, womenpriests.org spearheaded an international petition asking Pope Benedict XVI to reinstate the sacramental diaconate for women, which was eventually endorsed by 26 Catholic movements representing more than 30,000 people from around the world. The petition was delivered to the Pope on October 2008.

OUR FINDINGS HAVE APPEARED IN SEVERAL NEWS OUTLETS INCLUDING *THE TIMES* (UK), *THE IRISH TIMES*, *THE WASHINGTON POST*, *THE HUFFINGTON POST*, *THE INDEPENDENT* (UK), *THE TABLET*, *THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER*, *BBC RADIO 4*, AND *ABC RADIO*.

In September 2015 the Institute sent a "Documented Appeal to Pope Francis to Request the Re-instatement of the Ordained Diaconate for Women" comprising a short appeal (a sort of executive summary), backed by a lengthier "Documentation" section with the relevant evidence. It is fully available at <http://www.wijngaardsinstitute.com/documented-appeal-reinstatement-ordained-women-deacons/> in Dutch, English, German, Italian, and Spanish.

In March 2013 we launched in the British House of Commons the *Declaration on Authority in the Church*, signed by 216 Catholic scholars including Leonardo Boff, John N. Collins, Hans Küng, as well

as members of the hierarchy such as Bishop Tom Gumbleton.

In preparation for the October 2014 extraordinary Synod on the Family, Pope Francis invited all Catholics to submit their experiences, insights, and evaluations on that subject. In response we prepared, with the help of moral theologians, the *Catholic Scholars' Statement on Marriage and the Family*, which was signed by 87 academics, and sent to the Pope. This is a professional assessment of current Catholic doctrine and practice with regard to sexuality in life and marriage. It is available online at <http://www.wijngaardsinstitute.com/statement/>

Some of our staff have been interviewed by or published articles for several news outlet including, most recently, BBC Radio 4, the AP, the *Washington Post*, *The Independent* (UK), *The Tablet*, and the *National Catholic Reporter*, among others.

Catherine of Siena Virtual College

Finally, in 2007 we founded **Catherine of Siena Virtual College** (CSVC), which has been providing leadership courses to over 1,000 students in developing countries, 90% of them women. It grew to such an extent that it became difficult for our small team to provide an adequate infra-structure to do justice to its great potential. For this reason, in September 2014 we decided to hand over its management to Roehampton University, London.

CSVC has been one of many success stories achieved by WICR on a budget which is a fraction of that available to similar think-tanks. Thanks to a wonderful network of generous volunteers, freely giving of their time, it managed to punch far above its weight.

IN 2007 WE FOUNDED THE CATHERINE OF SIENA VIRTUAL COLLEGE (CSVC), WHICH OFFERS AFFORDABLE UNIVERSITY-LEVEL ONLINE COURSES ON LEADERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY. UNDER OUR DIRECTION MORE THAN 1,100 STUDENTS ENROLLED, MOSTLY WOMEN (90%) FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.



“ Pam Wearing, member of our Core Team:
Our greatest challenge in the Church today, is to develop our understanding of the truths we have inherited in the light of knowledge beyond the ken of our forebears. Taking baptism seriously means being clear that the Church is the living Body of Christ and not a Vatican Museum. And actions speak louder than words. To paraphrase Eckhart, what use is it that Mary gave birth to Jesus 2000 years ago if we do not do so in our own time, as men and women who are called to change the world?”

Is it legitimate to re-examine some papal teachings?

The Second Vatican Council reminded us that “The church journeying through history is called by Christ to the continual reformation which, as a human and earthly institution, she always needs” (*Unitatis Redintegratio* §6). The laity should be encouraged to contribute to theology. In that undertaking they should be accorded “a lawful freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought and of expressing their mind with humility and fortitude in those matters on which they enjoy competence” (*Gaudium et Spes* §62). The Code of Canon Law later added that all Catholics “have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful” (canon 212 §3).

Such an openness to critical debates is the result of some lessons from the past. History shows that church authorities - bishops, and even popes - have at times made serious doctrinal mistakes. Teachings were vigorously advanced as true, even as “divine law”, which were later to be rejected as erroneous and, ironically, even un-Christian. The attitude of key teachers in the Catholic Church towards slavery is a good case in point.

A Case Study - Is slavery God's will?

In 1866, the Vicar Apostolic of the Galla region in southern Ethiopia asked the then Holy Office: “Is slavery in harmony with Catholic doctrine?” It should be remembered that at the time slavery had already been abolished in Great Britain and all its dominions, in the USA, in Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Chile, Ecuador, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela and most other civilized countries. In spite of this, the Congregation answered with an emphatic “Yes”.

Slavery itself, considered as such in its essential nature, is not at all contrary to the natural and divine law, and there can be several just titles of slavery and these are referred to by approved theologians and commentators of the sacred canons . . . It is not contrary to the natural and divine law for a slave to be sold, bought, exchanged or given.

*Instruction of the Holy Office, signed by Pope Pius IX, 20th of June 1866. **Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide**, no. 1293, 719, Rome 1907*

In other words, slavery is (a) in harmony with natural law, that is: human nature as created by God; and (b) in harmony with divine law, that is: with God's will as revealed in Scripture. The present teaching of the Church is, of course, quite the opposite. Vatican II declared every form of discrimination - never mind slavery - as being “contrary to God's intent” (*Gaudium et Spes* §29, also §27, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §2414), and the Church endorses the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which rejects all slavery as contrary to human nature. Furthermore, in December 2014 Pope Francis co-signed the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* which reiterates that point even more forcefully and which urges all people of good will to actively fight against slavery.

How much has official Catholic teaching changed in little more than a century! This should make us aware that even papal teachings which may have been upheld for centuries and by different popes can be wrong and need to be challenged. We do so with an appreciation for, rather than disregard of, the authority of the Pope, the Bishops and others with responsibility in the Catholic Church. Hence we support reform through its legitimate authority structures.



Prof Catharina Halkes, Nijmegen, one of our Patrons, pioneer of

feminist theology in the Netherlands.

She left us a legacy when she died in 2011.

Her message to us was:

“I want you to achieve your aims. You are doing great work. It will take time. Don't give up!”



WE BELIEVE THAT IF A TEACHING IS SOUND, IT CAN ONLY BE STRENGTHENED BY EXPOSURE TO THE RELEVANT SCRIPTURAL AND HISTORICAL EVIDENCE AS WELL AS THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS, EVEN AND INDEED ESPECIALLY WHEN IT APPEARS TO GO AGAINST PRESENT-DAY CATHOLIC BELIEFS

We Make A Difference

In an ideal world the work of the **Wijngaards Institute** would be carried out within that amazing galaxy of educational and research institutions that Catholics throughout history have set up. Sadly, this is only rarely the case. Many Catholic authorities – bishops, educational institutions, individual theologians – are reluctant to allow free public discussion concerning some of these issues, for fear of antagonizing the Vatican or undermining their careers and even jobs.

As long as this situation persists there will be a need for institutes such as ours. WICR is a private educational charity, and can therefore maintain full independence from external pressures. This has made it possible for us to build vast online libraries of high quality academic research on precisely those issues which are the least openly discussed in the Catholic Church.

WE HAVE BUILT VAST
ONLINE LIBRARIES
OF ACADEMIC
RESEARCH ON THOSE
ISSUES WHICH ARE
THE LEAST OPENLY
DISCUSSED IN THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH

If a teaching is sound, it can only be strengthened by exposure to the relevant scriptural and historical evidence as well as theological arguments, even and indeed especially when it appears to go against present-day Catholic beliefs. Our websites provide both the academic research which should inform those discussions, and a first-class online forum to facilitate that discussion.

We cannot stress enough how timely what we are doing is. Since the election of Pope Francis in 2013, the Catholic Church has been gently encouraged to pick up the critical self-examination started with the Second Vatican Council. But unless Catholics deepen their knowledge of theology, the task of purifying their tradition will be severely hindered. This is what we have been working towards for more than 30 years now, and with your help we will continue to do so for many more years.



“ Miriam
Duignan,
Trustee:
I was in
St. Peter's Square
when the election
of Pope Francis
was announced.

He asked us to pray for him ... The Pope needs us. The Church needs us. Aren't we all leaders, prophets and priests with Christ?

We have to help the Church rediscover Jesus' original intentions and face up to reforms that are so needed. Please, remain an active partner in our ministry by leaving us a legacy”



Through our websites we provide both academic and pastoral resources on family planning and birth control

Financing, and How You Can Help

Over many years the Wijngaards Institute has operated with only one paid administrator and relied on very generous support from many volunteers, not least John Wijngaards himself, acting unpaid as Director. But John Wijngaards (b. 1935) is aware of the need to provide for his succession and we have to restructure in order to continue our work. In late 2014 we appointed a new director and we are also investing in modernizing our websites.

These additional costs mean that in summary our annual expenditure has risen considerably from about £50,000 per year to about £90,000. Our needs are not excessive, but we do need to fundraise an extra £40,000 a year.

We work almost entirely with volunteers. We employ only two people, our director and our administrator. Their combined salary amounts to less than £60,000 a year. The only other expenses are the basic ones related to essential overheads. We are delivering very good value for money.

Planning for the future

Our current annual revenue comes in part from a small investment (about £10,000 a year), in part from grants from major donors (around £30,000 in 2016), and in part from a modest number of small supporters. Combined, they only cover about half of our current annual costs (about £90,000). So far we have tried to meet these costs by recruiting more sponsors and donors who each give us larger or smaller grants for

a number of years. Our sponsors, who give us annual grants, are at present two religious congregations and some individual donors.

We are also trying to increase our revenue from crowd-funding. We are seeking to increase the support of small regular donors over the next five years; however, this piecemeal fundraising makes heavy demands on the time and energy of our staff, energy that could more efficiently be devoted to creative work.

Endowment for Research Position at Roehampton University

Roehampton University has agreed for WICR to sponsor a research position at their Department of Theology. The research agenda will be determined independently by WICR itself, and will continue focusing on the debated issues around women's ordained ministries, Christian sexual ethics, and church authority. The only condition is for WICR to fully fund the salary of the researcher on a rolling monthly basis.

This is a very generous concession on the part of Roehampton University: usually, sponsoring a research position at a university requires the upfront creation of an endowment fund, often upwards of £2 million. The willingness to forgo that requirement makes this **an exciting and unique opportunity for potential donors to WICR to make an impact.**

Please help us raise £500,000 to secure that research post for the foreseeable future!

WE ARE COMMITTED
TO KEEPING COSTS TO
A MINIMUM AND HAVE
ONLY 2 EMPLOYEES,
SUPPORTED BY A
WORLDWIDE NETWORK
OF VOLUNTEERS.

YOUR MONEY WILL
BE SPENT ONLY ON
ESSENTIAL COSTS
OF DOING GROUND
BREAKING RESEARCH
AND EDUCATIONAL WORK



Among the topics we address is the Christian understanding of sexuality.

Financial Donations

We have charitable/non-profit status in the Netherlands (ANBI), UK, and USA. Donations coming from taxpayers in any of those three countries are tax deductible. If donors are UK taxpayers, we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 donated via GiftAid!

Small donors pay for the central office facilities that enable more than twenty volunteers to work for our websites. The estimated commercial value of the time voluntarily donated to our various projects, we believe, amounts to well over £150,000 a year. Any donation will benefit from such a multiplier/leverage effect.

Donors can either make a one-off donation, or they can enlist as monthly donors in one of the following categories:

- **Supporter (£5);**
- **Friend (£10);**
- **Sponsor (£25);**
- **Golden Sponsor (£100).**

How to Make a Donation

Donations can be made in many ways:

- **Credit Card or PayPal**, at

www.wijngaardsinstitute.com/donations

using either a Credit Card or PayPal, for either a one-off or recurring monthly donations;

- **JustGiving:** www.justgiving.com/housetopcare/
- **Cheque:** payable to “Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research,” and posted to Dr Luca Badini Confalonieri, 111A High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 1AN;
- **Phone:** by calling +44(0)1923 779446 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

WE PROVIDE
RESOURCES IN 26
LANGUAGES AND
OUR WEBSITES
ARE ACCESSED
FROM MORE THAN
220 COUNTRIES



Alicia Baranowska, volunteer translator:

“I am a Polish-born Roman Catholic now working in Brussels. I can’t exactly remember when it occurred to me for the first time that women could be ordained. I think it must have been around 2004, when I found in the Bible information of Phoebe the deaconess. I am happy to help because I strongly believe women should be ordained and the Catholic Church updated.”

As a small thank you for your charitable gift annuity, you will receive our **quarterly newsletter**, with advance notice of any initiative we organise (e.g. academic conferences, online petitions; academic “white papers” or public statements).

Finally, you will always be most welcome to meet-and-greet our volunteers and director at our offices in Rickmansworth. Your journey and stay are not included, but we are happy to advise you. Please consider making a donation today. If possible, please set up a recurring monthly or yearly donation to us via PayPal.

Legacies

It is always best to make a will in order to plan for future ownership of our material belongings and to minimize potential inheritance problems. If you live in the UK, and are thinking of leaving us a legacy, you may be interested in the information below on Inheritance Tax.

What is Inheritance Tax?

In the UK, Inheritance Tax replaced the so-called Capital Transfer Tax. Currently it is levied on estates



Rev William Baynes,
Ecumenical Associate:

“I believe that the survival of catholic Christianity – possibly even of Western Christianity – depends upon the ability of the Roman Church to use the Petrine Keys [Matt. 16:19] to ‘unbind’ herself from modes of culture, philosophy and governance which are no longer appropriate. The Institute supplies consistent torque.”



with a “net value” (i.e. the value after debts have been paid, the costs of administering your Will settled and all tax exempt gifts distributed) at over the sum of £ 325,000 at a rate of 40% (UK rate for 2017/2018).

Cutting your Inheritance Tax Bill

Leaving a part or your entire estate to a charity such as the WICR can reduce – and in some situations eliminate – the Inheritance Tax liability.

All gifts to charities are free of Inheritance Tax so, almost invariably, the estate will pay less tax if gifts are given to charities.

Secondly, if you leave something to charity in your will, then it will not count towards the total taxable value of your estate. If, for example, the “net value” of your estate is £350,000 and you leave £25,000 in your will to the Institute, your estate will remain below the £325,000 threshold and so will not be liable to Inheritance Tax.

Finally, if you leave at least 10% of your “net estate” to a charity, the rate of Inheritance Tax is reduced to 36% (from 40%).

The rules on how to work out what you can give away to charity to secure the lower tax rate are not always straightforward, so it is a good idea to get the advice of a solicitor or accountant who specialises in estate planning.

“Siobhain McDonagh, MP, Patron:
“Our Catholic Church has no theological case for barring women from the priesthood. If a woman can be a Speaker in the House of Commons without the world collapsing, the Catholic Church should be able to survive women priests. We know it won't be easy. Those who have power won't want to give it up without a struggle, but speaking openly about the matter will bring the reality of women priests a step forward.”



“Sr Anne Miller FMM, Chair
Housetop Trust: “I was
working in India when
the Vatican Council took
place and felt it was indeed a new
beginning, a Spring. The Church
had opened its doors and windows
for fresh air to come in. Now I
thought there will be so much more inclusiveness,
teamwork and collaboration between the clerics and
the lay people. It did not happen. Prejudice and
ignorance still prevail. Our job is not finished.”

What Types of Legacies can You Leave the Institute?

There are three main types of legacies:

- a **residuary legacy** which is the gift of all or part of the residue of your estate. The residue is what is left after all debts, taxes, costs and specific and pecuniary bequests have been paid;
- a **pecuniary legacy** which is a specific sum of money;
- a **specific legacy** which is a specific item (such as jewellery).

Finally, an addition to an already existing will is called a *codicil*.

You will find a template for each of those kinds of legacies in Appendix I.

Volunteering

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, “The harvest is abundant but the labourers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out labourers for his harvest. Go on your way!” Luke 10:1-3

Nowadays, the possibilities of working remotely are much greater than they were even twenty years ago. And the flexibility involved is also very great. Our greatest need is for translators, moderators of online discussion forums, and web-developers. Whether you are able to contribute only a few hours a month or you can work almost full time, if you are passionate about what we do, if you have talents that you think we need to have, please get in touch. Wherever you are, whatever your native language, chances are you can help.

Appendix 1- Types of Legacies

Residuary bequest

“I give **all / a % share of** (please state fraction/percentage) the residue of my estate to the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, RCN 1053251, of 111A High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 1AN, to be used for its general charitable purposes, and I declare that the receipt of their Treasurer or other proper officer shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors.”

Pecuniary Legacy (i.e. a cash gift), or Specific Legacy (i.e. a specific item)

“I give free of tax to the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, RCN 1053251, of 111A High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 1AN, absolutely, **the sum of** [£amount, in both figures and words] / **specific item to be given** to be used for its general charitable purposes, and I declare that the receipt of their Treasurer or other proper officer shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors.”

A codicil [= an addition to a will]

“I [Name] of [Address] declare this to be a [first/second/etc.] codicil to my will dated [date]. In addition to any legacies given in my said will I give the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, RCN 1053251, of 111A High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 1AN, absolutely, **the sum**

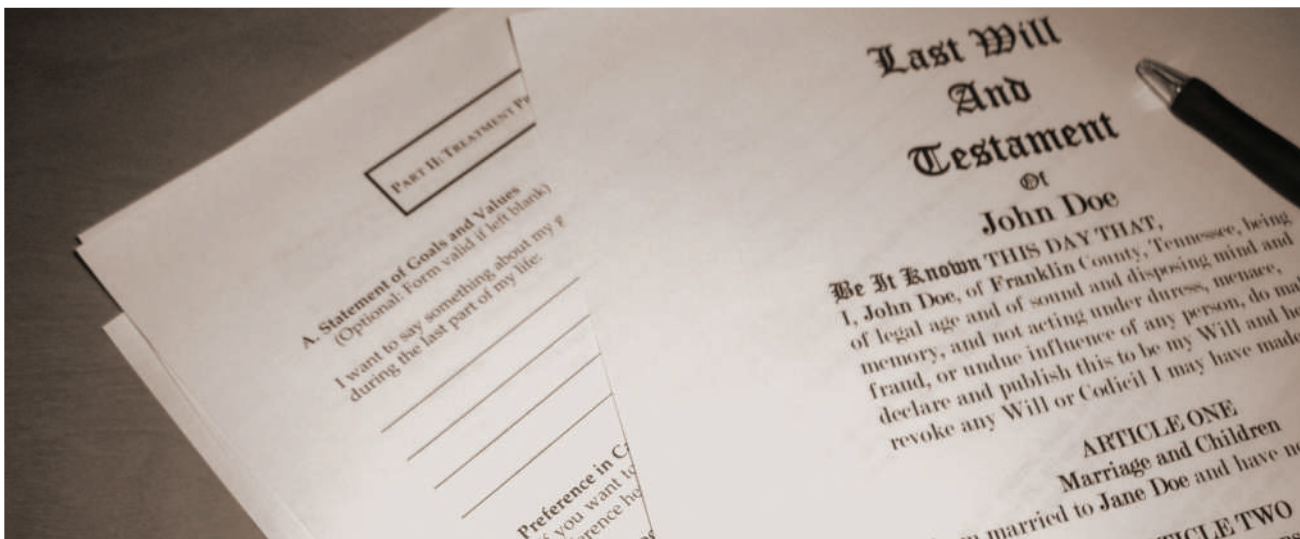
“Baroness Françoise Holvoet Bourguignon: “Progress since Vatican II? Yes, there have been shifts in the meaning of words, attenuations, understatements, declarations of good intention (e.g. *Mulieris Dignitatem*), but a woman is nevertheless still disqualified from dealing with the sacred. She may be a consumer of it, but she has only access to it through middlemen. The sacred is controlled by men who create their own hierarchy, who fix the rules, who organize its ceremonies and bestow its honours, who co-opt themselves; it is they who plan and publish its documents, who meet in synods, it is they who count on the fear they never cease to instil.”

of [£amount, in both figures and words] / **specific item to be given** to be used for its general charitable purposes, and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or duly authorised officer shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors. In all other respects I confirm my said will and any other codicils thereto. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this [number] day of [month/year].”.

[Your signature]

“Signed by the said [name] as a codicil to his/her last will in the presence of us who at his/her request in his/her presence and of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses”

[Signatures, Names and Addresses of both witnesses]



Appendix 2 - Cerula & Bitalia: Women Leaders in the Early Church



It is often assumed that women only played minor roles in the early Christian church. Not so. At times they possessed influence and responsibility. Witness two frescos that have been recently rediscovered (in 1971) and restored (in 2011) in the catacombs of San Gennaro in Naples, Italy.

Dated to the late 5th – early 6th century, those frescos represent two Christian women, named Cerula and Bitalia, and display the following characteristics:

- The women are represented with their hands raised;
- They have the “chi-rho” symbol of Christ over their heads.
- Open volumes of the four Gospels were painted above their hands. This is a unique occurrence in early Christian art.
- The Gospel volumes are depicted with what appear to be scarlet tongues of fire.

The only known reference that could explain those last two details comes from the descriptions of the rituals for the ordination of bishops. In both the East and the West the volume(s) of the Gospels were placed over the ordinand’s head, either closed (in the East), or indeed open (in the West, and specifically in Rome).

Even more extraordinary is the explanation for the flaming books in that ritual as “a symbol of the descent of the Spirit on the ordinand.” Here is how Severian, bishop of Gabala (before 380 – after 408), put it:

because the descend of the Holy Spirit is invisible, the Gospel is placed on the head of him who is to be ordained high-priest; and when this is done, one must not see anything other than a tongue of fire resting on his head – a tongue, because of preaching, a tongue of fire, because of the saying, “I have come to cast fire on the earth.”

Could those two women have ministered as bishops in one of the Christian communities in Naples? There is one contemporary piece of evidence that lends support to that possibility. In 495 CE, Pope Gelasius I wrote to the bishops of Southern Italy (an area which included Naples), famously complaining that under their watch

divine things have undergone such contempt that women are encouraged to serve at the sacred altars, and that all tasks entrusted to the service of men are performed by a sex for which these [tasks] are not appropriate (Epistola 14, original Latin text available at womenpriests.org)

Dr. Ally Kateusz, researcher in ancient Christian iconography, commented:

Pope Gelasius’ letter highlights the presence of a tradition of women priests in Southern Italy. We might therefore expect a corresponding tradition of women bishops in the same area. We know from Epiphanius of Salamis that *New Prophecy* Christians had both women priests and women deacons, and that they were present in Gaul, northern Africa and Rome already by the turn of the third century. It appears that WICR has identified the portraits of two women for whom the best (only?) explanation for the open gospel books over her head is that they were an ordained bishop.

WICR is working to make those frescos better known among both academics and ordinary Catholics. For more information, please go to www.womendeacons.org/cerula-and-bitalia/

Appendix 3 - Catholic Scholars' Declaration on Authority in the Church

Available at www.churchauthority.org. Its 216 academic signatories include Professors Ursula King, Paul Knitter, Paul Lakeland, Francis Oakley, and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, among others.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) we call on all other members of the People of God to assess the situation in our church.

Many of the key insights of Vatican II have not at all, or only partially, been implemented. This has been due to resistance in some quarters, but also to a measure of ambiguity that remained unresolved in certain Council documents. A principal source of present-day stagnation lies in misunderstanding and abuse affecting the exercise of authority in our Church. Specifically, the following issues require urgent redress:

The role of the papacy needs to be clearly re-defined in line with Christ's intentions. As supreme pastor, unifier and prime witness to faith, the pope contributes substantially to the health of the universal church. However, his authority may never obscure, diminish or suppress the authentic authority directly given by Christ to all members of the people of God.

Bishops are vicars of Christ, not vicars of the pope. They carry immediate responsibility for people in their dioceses, and joint responsibility, with other bishops and the pope, for the world-wide community of faith.

The central synod of bishops should assume a more decisive role in planning and guiding the maintenance and growth of faith within our complex world. To execute its task, the synod of bishops needs to be given appropriate structures.

The Second Vatican Council prescribed collegiality and co-responsibility on all levels. This has not been realised. Priestly senates and pastoral councils, as envisaged by the Council, should involve the faithful more directly in decision making concerning the formulation of doctrine, the running of the pastoral ministry and evangelization in secular society.

The abuse of choosing for leadership offices in the church only candidates of a particular mindset, should be eradicated. Instead, new norms should be laid down and supervised to ensure that elections to such offices are conducted in a fair, transparent and, to the extent possible, democratic fashion. The Roman curia requires a more radical reform, in line with the instructions and vision of Vatican II. The curia should be retained for its useful administrative and executive roles. The congregation for the doctrine of the faith should be assisted by international commissions of experts who have been independently chosen for their professional competence. These are by no means all the changes that may be required. We also realise that the implementation of such structural revisions will need to be worked out in detail according to the possibilities and limitations of present and future circumstances. However, we stress that the seven reforms outlined above are urgent and their implementation should be started immediately.

The exercise of authority in our church should emulate the standards of openness, accountability and democracy achieved in modern society. Leadership should be seen to be honest and credible; inspired by humility and service; breathing concern for people rather than preoccupation with rules and discipline; radiating a Christ who makes us free; and listening to Christ's Spirit who speaks and acts through each and every person.



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Page 18: 'Pope Francis with Lutheran Bishop Ante Jackelen' | credit: Andrew Medichini/Associated Press, <http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/APTOPIX-Sweden-Pope/c6109c9d23a14b2d926ed5a1c25e41ca/2/0>.

Page 21: 'Episcopal Ordination of John Sherrington as Auxiliary Bishop in the Diocese of Westminster', credit: Catholic Church England and Wales/Flickr.com, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 license, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/catholicism/6148386282/>.

Academic Patrons (selected)

<p>Prof Mario Ignacio Aguilar, Chair of Religion and Politics at the School of Divinity of the University of St Andrews, Edinburgh, Scotland.</p>	<p>Prof Hille Haker, Richard McCormick S. J. Chair of Moral Theology at Loyola University Chicago; President of <i>Societas Ethica</i>.</p>	<p>Prof Leo Laeyendecker, Sociology (Emeritus), Universities of Leiden and Amsterdam, the Netherlands.</p>	<p>Prof Peter C. Phan, Ignacio Ellacuría Chair of Catholic Social Thought, Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA.</p>
<p>Prof Maria Pilar Aquino, Theology and Religious Studies at San Diego University, USA. Co-founder of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States.</p>	<p>Dr Irina Pollard, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science & Engineering, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; Head of the Australian Unit of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics.</p>	<p>Dr Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, Head of the Tissue Bank, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, India.</p>	<p>Prof Rosemary Radford Ruether, Carpenter Emerita Professor of Feminist Theology at Pacific School of Religion and the GTU, as well as the Georgia Harkness Emerita Professor of Applied Theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, USA.</p>
<p>Prof Sharon A. Bong, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University, Selangor, Malaysia. Expert on Religion and Sexuality.</p>	<p>Prof Michael Hornsby-Smith, Sociology (Emeritus), the University of Surrey, England. Expert on the history of Catholicism in England.</p>	<p>Prof Kathleen Maas Weigert, Carolyn Farrell BVM Professor of Women and Leadership, Loyola University, Chicago, USA.</p>	<p>Prof Joseph Selling, Moral Theology (Emeritus), Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium.</p>
<p>Prof René van Eyden, Dogmatic Theology (Emeritus), University of Utrecht, the Netherlands. Leading member of Dutch Catholic reform groups.</p>	<p>Raymond Hervey Jolliffe Lord Hylton, House of Lords, London, England.</p>	<p>Siobhain McDonagh MP, Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden. London, UK</p>	<p>Prof Leonard Swidler, Institute for Interreligious, Intercultural Dialogue, Philadelphia, USA.</p>
<p>Prof Mary Gray, professorial research fellow at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, London, UK.</p>	<p>Prof Erik Jurgens, Government Law (Emeritus), Free University of Amsterdam; former Assistant President of the Senate (<i>Eerste Kamer</i>) of the Netherlands.</p>	<p>Prof Thomas O'Loughlin, Historical Theology, University of Nottingham, England.</p>	<p>Prof J. Milburn Thompson, Systematic Theology, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky, USA.</p>
<p>Prof Jan N M E Jans, Theology of Ethics, School of Humanities, University of Tilburg, the Netherlands.</p>	<p>Prof Ursula King, Theology and Religious Studies (Emerita), University of Bristol, UK.</p>	<p>Prof Teresa Toldy, Feminism and Ethics, Fernando Pessoa University, Porto, Portugal.</p>	<p>Prof Guus Wijngaards, eLearning, Inholland University, Rotterdam, Netherlands.</p>

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