

Guests in Their Own House : the women of Vatican II (1996 Carmel McEnroy)

1964 – 1966 – third and Fourth sessions of the Council

A paper written for Stand Up For Vatican II by Myra Poole and -January 2010

Introduction – setting the scene of the Council

I based my talk mainly, but not completely, on the book *Guests in Their Own House: the women of Vatican II* by Carmel McEnroy (1996). This book is well known in the USA but less well known in Britain and other parts of the world. This paper formed the basis of a twenty minute talk where I tried to connect the experience of women in the 21st century with that of the women of Vatican II. My purpose was to illustrate, from the women who were auditors at the Council, the position of women in the RC Church in the nineteen sixties, their involvement in the Council and whether attitudes towards women had changed since then.

Vatican II was a 'pastoral and ecumenical Council' in the nineteen sixties, and its ideas were revolutionary for its time. John XXIII himself said he had no idea so much dust had gathered on the 'see of Rome' and described the Church of that time as being covered with barnacles that needed to be scraped off. It had been in dry dock too long and required to be re-fitted out for the high seas. John XXIII opened the Council, from the beginning, to Protestant and Orthodox observers. A great ferment marked the first session of Vatican II, when the Catholic progressives discovered how numerous they were. John XXIII became so frustrated with those still in the 'strait-jacket of Vatican I' that he called to the Council, Jean Guitton (a well known French philosopher) 'to cast a ray of sunshine across the Council' (33) by his presence and thoughts. A breakthrough was made on the 400 year old clerical image of the church. Small numbers of the male laity were to be called to the second session ; initially they consisted of 29 auditors. At last a return to the ancient traditions of the church had begun. These lay auditors were in addition to the 500 peritus already present and the 2,500 council fathers . The language on the floor of the Council was Latin and there was no simultaneous translation for Council Fathers. The conversational language was French.

The power of a Papacy with vision and courage

One point I stressed strongly was that the two Popes at the time of the Council, John XXIII (1958-1963) and Paul VI (1963-1978) were wonderful examples of how, when the power of the Papal office is used for the good of the whole church, it is not only powerful but very effective. John XXIII laid the groundwork for a pastoral Council and issued *Pacem In Terris* (1963) before his untimely death in stating, 'those who know they have they have rights must claim them' (36:17). Paul VI went against considerable opposition, especially from Italian Bishops, in his decision to include women auditors in the Council. At that time this was a great act of bravery and probably something some of these Bishops never forgave him for. Paul VI himself was very courteous to the women calling them 'experts on life' and stating 'they must come nearer to the altar'. No wonder this shocked many Bishops since it had been considered a sin, for many years, for a woman to come anywhere near the altar. Moreover, Paul VI often gave women private audiences to enhance their position.

The women were ready for the Council

Cardinal Suenens broke the silence of the Council and disturbed many with his explosive words 'Women too should be invited as auditors: unless I am mistaken, they make up half the human race'. Yves Congar, French theologian and author of *Lay People in the Church* and Archbishop Hurley were also great supporters but they too learnt from these women when they initially said 'they were the flowers in the church'. The women made it clear they did not want to be flowers but to be treated on an equal basis. This last feisty request has still not been satisfied - witness *Mulieries Dignitatem* (1994) which claimed that 'women are equal but special'. A note of warning about the difficulties that the women were going to face was the treatment of the young journalist from the little known *Grail* news, Eva Fleishner. In the early days journalists were allowed to attend the opening mass of the day. However, when Eva tried to go up to Communion, the Swiss Guard refused to let her go forward because she was a woman. The next day there was no apology from the Vatican only a statement that no journalists would be allowed to attend this daily Mass in future!

The women were ready for the Council. They were well read, had travelled widely, more widely than many Bishops, and wanted greater involvement with the Church. All were either Presidents of International organisations or Heads of their Religious Congregations. Many had attended the Preparatory Commissions before the Council, especially the Fribourg meeting (July 17th, 1960) which met in secret. The purpose of this meeting was to bring together an international lay group to contribute to the work of Vatican II. Many of their findings were incorporated into their recommendations for the subcommissions of the Council, especially the one on the Laity. The married couple Senores Alvarez – Icasaz, in preparation for the Council, had travelled to 36 countries gathering answers to questions. They divided the answers to their questions into 17 major topics, including family break up, the spirituality of the family, the structure of the church, the liturgy of the Church, other faiths, social communication and media.

The women auditors, who were initially invited as 'symbols of women', were lucky because they sat in St Andrews Tribune next to the periculi (the theologians of the Council) who did the translations for them, on one side, with the Cardinals on the other. The women's seats were also more comfortable, plush red seats, well upholstered, whereas the Council Fathers sat on wooden benches - perhaps to stop them going to sleep. It was clear that not all had read the text of every document, as one woman found out when she raised a point on the document on 'Religious Life'.

When women auditors were invited to the third session in 1964, the Carmelite Donal Lamont declared 'it was like spring coming to the Arctic'. Women now emerged 'from the fog of clerical blindness' (19)¹. Lamont noticed however that some Bishops and clergy 'jump ship when things begin to change because they think things are falling apart'.

¹ All page references are from the following book unless otherwise stated: Carmel McEnroy *Guests in their Own House: the women of Vatican II, A Crossroad book, New York:1996.*

Women auditors at the Council

23 lay women, who included Religious women, represented one percent of all women, from many parts of the world, including North Africa and South America and different branches of the Orthodox traditions. (See complete list as appendix to this paper). The women were well known leaders of international groups, and represented between them 40 international organisations. The women auditors only attended from 1964 – 1966 during the third and fourth sessions of the council. Not all were present at both sessions. Many of the women were well known to Paul VI, such as Rosemary Goldie (Australian), whom he called, 'a co-worker' as she had spent considerable time in Rome as a lecturer at the Lateran University and at Regina Mundi. Another was Constatina Balducci, a foundress of a Milanese congregation, who was a personal friend of his.

Although all the women were strong, some made a greater impression than others and we know more about these. The research on these women is still in its early stages for unfortunately the archives on them are scarce. It is due to Rosemary Goldie that we owe any reference to them in the archives of the Vatican, or silence would prevail. Carmel McEnroy set herself the task of meeting as many of these women as she could but at least one had already died. Their average age at the time was 60 plus except for three in their thirties, one Dutch, one Argentinian and one from Uruguay.

Some of the more prominent women are as follows:

Pilar Bellosillo was Spanish and President of WUCWO, World Union of Catholic Womens Organisations for 13 years, represented by far the largest number of women – 36 million. She was humble enough to acknowledge how much she learnt from the council especially in the ecumenical field. She had had little exposure to this developing side of the church. Pilar admitted that 'sometimes it was a matter of establishing a new hierarchy of values, getting rid of her outdated ideas was painful but getting the new was very rewarding' (202). Her experience at the council made it clear to her the importance of solid foundations on which new values and reconstructions can be built: 'The church', she said, 'can never be a closed system with all the answers pre-packaged in microwave style. It must always leave room for the Spirit to slap one in the face anew. The importance of the grassroots must be realized, and little by little we must reweave together the communitarian material of the church through re-evangelisation and catechising' (237). Dare to risk yourself, she said' if you have to wait until everything is 100 percent clear before you act, you won't do anything' (237).

Rosemary Goldie was an Australian whose parents were journalists who travelled the world a great deal. Goldie was later to be as travelled as they but for different reasons. She herself gained a scholarship to the Sorbonne, worked on a doctorate of French Literature and became a member of the Grail. Her career included a job in Pax Romana, Fribourg, a nine year lecturership at the Lateran Council and a visiting lecturer at Regina Mundi. She was a prominent lay member of pre- conciliar commissions and Pius XII's permanent committee of the laity in Rome. She travelled to organise meetings on the lay apostolate in Africa, Asia and Europe. In 1957 she organised the second world conference of the laity. She was made 'executive secretary' of Copecial (Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate). She felt it deeply when she was not given the correct title of her position as 'General Secretary' to which her predecessor, a man, had been entitled. Her committee served as a clearing house for many conciliar matters. She was well known to the then Cardinal Montini, who called her 'the child of the Vatican' because of her stature ' tiny, wise,

spirited and elfin'. Goldie worked in Rome in various capacities for 40 years and she holds the 'dubious honour of having been a curial woman for nine years' (56). She was a living witness, with encyclopaedic knowledge on the laity and their Roman connections.

Marie- Louise Monnet was well known to the French Bishops and was a member of the famous internationally recognised Cognac- Monnet family. She spoke only French and considered herself to be an ordinary woman. Her brother Jean was the English speaking secretary of the United Nations in Geneva. Her background gave her an open mind, and an understanding of the importance of internationality and the role of hospitality. The latter allowed free and unstructured conversation where new ideas were exchanged and modified in a relaxed environment. Monnet had a long history of lay involvement in founding action groups for Youth and Adults. As these youth groups grew up they were expanded into 'The International Federation of the Independent Social Welfare Organisation' and finally into the 'International Movement for the Apostolate in the Independent Milieux, MIAMSI, in 1963. From her experience as a wandering nomad, especially in Africa, she was convinced of the importance of ministry in ordinary life. But in spite of her call for 'independence', she always modified her statements with her well known phrase - 'nothing without the bishops'.

Sr Mary Luke Tobin was the Superior General of the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross and newly elected President of the Conference of Major Superiors of Women in the USA. She was well known for her work and demonstrations for peace and justice issues. She combined a deep seriousness with environmental and other global issues with a light heartedness which enabled her to keep her balance on such serious matters. On her eightieth birthday she donned her ballet shoes and engaged in a liturgical dance. With her acute mind and vast experience she reflected on the situation for women at the Council, in the following words: 'There was none of the pedestal mentality. I would say there was something else – either we were ignored or trivialised. Tobin explained the situation, as she had experienced it, in the following three categories: 1. A minority of good guys, from different parts of the world, displayed respectful support 2. The majority acted indifferently, some were scared and shied away from us. 3. Some clearly disapproved and avoided us' (97).

It is clear that while the lay men auditors (30) and most of the peritus worked well with the women. The women acted as equal partners with the men except in one regard - the women auditors were never allowed to speak at the Council. They were to be hearers of the word only. In contrast Pat Keegan, a leading layman, presented the Decree on the Laity on the Council floor during the third session, even though Marie-Louise Monnet, a French auditor, was responsible for a large input into that document. In contrast to some laymen Cardinal Felici, who had the overall responsibility for the oversight of all proceedings of the Council, was known as a 'woman hater'. He never acknowledged their presence and never spoke to any of them. Other Bishops did likewise and a few even covered their eyes.

There was also defiance on the part of some women at the Council, for example Gladys Parentelli, 32 years of age, who was only called for the fourth and last session. The Council changed her name to Claudia as they considered Gladys a secular name!! She worked in Louvain but was representing 'International Rural Women in Uruguay'. She defied the rules by not covering her head and by wearing short sleeves, a rule few at that time broke in Italy. She also left before the last session ended and summed up the Council as she had experienced it as a woman: 'Fundamentally, I hoped that Vatican II would orientate itself toward an opening to the world, that the church would "open itself to the signs of the times, that it would go along with the life of the more active and progressive Christians, that it

would give a greater participation to the laity in all the structures of the church, that woman would be considered a member with full rights in the church, that the hierarchy would be less authoritarian, that the church would have an organisational charter that was more democratic and less hierarchical. To the contrary, the current Roman Curia is the most authoritarian, dogmatic, inhuman, and hard-hearted that the church has had in this century' (248).

The only married couple asked to attend, Jose and Luz Alvarez – Incazas from Mexico, were an example of the different treatment of women and men. They were not invited as a married couple and it was Jose who insisted that his wife should also be invited. They were 'Co-Presidents of the Latin American Christian Family Movement' . Their entry to the Council arm in arm through the main door, caused quite a stir. The Bishops thought they were tourists. They also went to Communion arm in arm, infuriating the Swiss Guards, the watchdogs of the Council. There were also two coffee bars – Bar-None for women and Bar Jona for the men etc. Jose Alvarez always went to the women's bar as a form of protest against the segregation. The privileges of the Council included monetary concessions for travel around Rome and for cigarettes and alcohol!

Some of the women, Marie- Louise Monnet (France), Rosemary Goldie (Australia), Pilar Bellosillo, Jose and Luz Alvarez- Incazas, spoke at meetings with Bishops outside the Council and to women journalists, in particular Betsy Hollants (Belgium). Hospitality was a particular way that these women gained influence over the Council. All had open houses for Bishops and seminarians. The Alvarez family, guided by the advice of Hollants , made hospitality their main aim. They rented a large house cheaply and two of their teenage daughters joined them. The Council Fathers and seminarians were invited to come freely and relax, even if they fell asleep due to age and exhaustion. By the end of the Council over 1,000 Bishops had shared their hospitality . In this relaxed atmosphere all got to know each other better and conversation flowed freely.

Women non - auditors who attended part of the Council

Other better known women attended the Council in a specific capacity but were not there as auditors notably, the famous economist Barbara Ward whose paper on world hunger and poverty had to be read by a man, James Norris, in impeccable Latin. It was not until the Synod of 1971 that Ward was allowed to speak in an assembly of the Council fathers. Donal Lamont said twenty years later 'They broke the mould when they made her' (157). It was not till the Synod of 1971 that she was allowed to speak in such a gathering. Others were Dorothy Day, well known for her Worker's Movement, Eileen Egan, of the Peace Movement, who hoped the council would ban nuclear weapons, just as the Second Lateran Council , 1139, had banned the crossbow, and Patricia Crowley of Chicago, an authority on birth control.

Influential women outside the Council

Outside the Council forum, St Joan's Alliance, formed in 1911 and the first Catholic organisation to support the vote for women and women's ordination throughout the 20th century, hovered in the background recommending changes to women's status and urging

the auditors on. Dr. Gertrude Heizelman (a German Lawyer) sent a cautious and respectful resolution to the Pope on the admission of women to the priesthood after writing a pamphlet entitled 'We shall no longer be silent'. The same group also asked for women's admission to the Diaconate and a revision of Canon Law. St Joan's Alliance were well in advance of human time but not God's time. This group is still in existence today but their focus on 'women's ordination' has been taken over by other groups and has now spread worldwide in an organisation called Women's Ordination World-Wide, WOW, that links all the various groups. (www.womensordinationworldwide.org www.womenpriests.org)

Women on Subcommissions

Father Bernard Häring, nicknamed 'Häring the daring', the well known German moral theologian, risked his reputation and single handedly invited women onto the subcommissions of the Council, especially Gaudium et Spes, the Decree on the Laity and their input on birth control. Two prominent women auditors, Pilar Bellosillo and Rosemary Goldie, again insisted that women should play a full part and be listened to and respected as equals. In the end a female and a male auditor were included in every subcommission, along with larger groups of Bishops and Peritus.

Birth Control

The question of birth control was very much alive throughout the Council. Patricia Crowley from Chicago, who was called with her husband to be a part of the Commission on birth control, was one of four women on this Commission but only for its fourth and fifth meetings. Her thoughts were similar to those of Luz Marie who played a notable part in changing the attitudes of Bishops, at the Council, on the question of birth control as part of her contribution on the subcommission of Gaudium et Spes. The majority of Bishops viewed sex as a result of concupiscence and sin and not as an act of love. She herself had 14 children, all born in love, and she addressed the Bishops in the subcommission: 'I tell you when your mothers conceived you it was also an act of love'. When her Spanish words were translated, the Bishops first looked wide-eyed and then turned red and then they laughed. Their response was 'We never thought of that; you have spoken the truth' (McEnroy 144). Such was the ability of one married woman to sweep away, in a few sentences, centuries of an ill-informed damaging moral perspective not based on 'inductive moral theology'.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church (Gaudium et Spes)

A Canadian Bishop remarked that G&S was the only document not conceived in the original sin of clericalism and it is also the only document based on the theology of induction – experience. Häring asked Pilar Bellosillo to submit a list of women who would be part of the G&S subcommission. She suggested the following 'big four' besides herself: Rosemary Goldie, Sister Suzanne Guillemin, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, the largest female congregation- 46,000 women, Sister Mary Luke Tobin, Marie-Louise Monnet and Maria Vendrik (Netherlands, the only woman invited as a peritus). Other women participated in the other ten subcommissions of G&S. Also in the subcommission were thirty council fathers, forty-nine periti, and ten laymen.

The presence of women in this commission meant that their influence was more extensive, especially in Section 29 G&S, 'every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language of religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent' McEnroy's italics (150) The same imperative is

found in LG 32, establishing the equality and dignity of all human beings: 'Hence there is in Christ no inequality ... there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians: 3:28).

Bellosillo noted a very important development in these subcommissions, the fathers really listened to the laity and included points when they did not always agree with them. There was at least one layman and one woman on each commission so their influence became all pervasive.

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity- (Apostolicam Actuositatem)

Bellosillo reflected that Apostolicam Actuositatem, while on a different level from the four dogmatic constitutions, fulfilled an important function in two ways: 1) It was the practical application of the richness of the two major constitutions on the church (LG and G&S). 2) It was the door-hinge between the doctrinal principles of LG and the action of the laity in G&S. (128). Here the laity were able to translate conciliar doctrine into daily life- the ministry of the workplace.

The women's input was included but because men and women worked together it is hard to differentiate the contributions of women in the final texts. However, we do know that Marie-Louise Monnet played a prominent part on her emphasis on the 'independent milieu' of the laity. Nearly all her ideas were incorporated into the document that Patrick Keegan read out to the Council, including the promotion of the working class, the independence of peoples and the place of woman in the world who is 'equal in her dignity to man and that she should be free in her vocation'. She also protested against rigidity and formality of language and recommended a pastoral and fluid style. It is to the credit of those Bishops on this subcommission that they continually asked the laity, male and female: How do you live your spirituality?

However Gladys Parentelli had a copy of the original Schema 13 of G&S. She analyzed it and found many of the parts that took doctrine forward had been discarded in its final form (151).

In the drafting of this document an amendment was added that mentioned women specifically. Although most commentaries on the Council make no mention of women, including Alberic Stacpole's well known and respected Vatican II Revisited by Those Who Were There, Walter Abbott, general editor of the most widely used English translation of the documents of Vatican II, included footnote (27). This footnote drew attention to the fact that this was one of the few places where special attention is given to the contribution of women to the mission of the church. In his appended list of important events, he notes the arrival of Protestant observers but not the lay auditors, not even the historical event of the arrival of women. However he does note ten religious women and twelve lay women were present at the end of the Council as auditors : 'it was clearly the mind of the Council that they were included and eminently so , whenever the general role of the laity was discussed' (Walter Abbott, 1966, American Press: 250).

The public silencing of women continues today, although not in quite such an extreme form. Progress has been made. Women are now allowed to read in Church but even that right has been under threat in the present Papal climate. However, the women at Vatican II were called by some Bishops to share public meetings with them. Here Rosemary Goldie, who was a lecturer at the Lateran University as well as staff member of Regina Mundi, played an important part.

Concluding reflections

The Canadian Bishops as a group were, in my opinion, the most ardent and reforming group of Bishops. Their preparation had included opening discussions within ten Canadian Dioceses on the need for change in many areas of the church's life, including the position of women. It was these Bishops who advocated women priests in the early 1970s and it nearly got through until the earlier reforming Paul VI was overtaken by pressure and fear, as he had done over *Humanae Vitae*, 1968, now considered a footnote of history. The result of these discussions, which no women attended, ended in 1976 with *Inter Insigniores* stating women could never be priests because they were not 'icons' of Christ. Only males could image Christ by reason of their physical sexuality. This is theology based on biology not on the whole giftedness of the person or the call of the Spirit.

Some of the men who attended the council acknowledged how the presence of the women had changed their understanding the position of women in the church. Among the most eminent were Karl Rahner SJ and the Canadian theologian Gregory Baum, who admitted he had been a 'male chauvinist pig', during and around the council (96). The British Archbishop Roberts was one of the main supporters of the women. Although I know nothing, at this time, of the views on women of Abbot Bishop Butler OSB, the outstanding British theologian at the Council, his thought reflects the influence of the laity of which they were an important part. Before his death in 1986 Butler issued a dire warning if collegiality and the spirit of Vatican was not implemented. He feared the Church's destiny could be like that of the coelacanth – a last remaining fossil of an extinct South African fish (www.vatican2.org/3aboutButler/voicefor.htm).

The women's gains were few, in spite of all their work, but they were a formidable presence, at the Council and were pioneers and role models to women of their time and beyond. Women auditors, along with those who lived through the council from the outside, had great expectations of the possibilities of an 'open church'. These expectations for immediate change were too high and inevitably resulted in deep disappointment. But history shows that it takes a long time, even centuries, for reforms of any Church Council to be implemented. However, the great legacy of the council for women and some men, was a greater awareness of the deep-seated patriarchy that had taken root in the Church over many generations. This growing consciousness, in all cultures of society can never be put back into a bottle the genie is out. Change is now, in time, inevitable.

This consciousness emerged in the birth of a new branch of inductive academic theology -- Feminist Theology. In the first instance by Mary Daly, in her book released straight after the council, *The Church and the Second Sex* (1967). In her later more radical writings she would say 'patriarchy is everywhere even in outer space'. It is not by chance, given the few gains women had obtained at the Council, that RC women were the early leaders in this new branch of theology and scripture. Women such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, known as the 'mother of feminist theology', and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, and her foundational scriptural method in her book entitled *In Memory of Her* (1986). A method based on imaginatively restoring the women to biblical texts by continually posing the question to all biblical texts - Where are the women?

This academic discipline has now spread to every part of the globe. Women are writing their own theology and understanding of scripture, according to their cultural circumstances. A new concept of church and being a Christian is being formed under the crust of the old. The

'patriarchal' church is being challenged at its roots, hence the many audits against theologians, male and female, and the reform groups that have arisen out of this new understanding. An even greater challenge is given to the laity today – the reform of the very institution it has helped to build by being complicit, often unknowingly, with its sinful elements and theological fault-line on women. More and more people are calling out for the de-clericalisation of the church, especially as a result of the muddled handling and the silencing of the paedophilia crisis in the church. The time for deep change is approaching and it will be painful for all as the laity and non-clericalised clergy give birth to a more Christ-like and mature church by developing the understanding of its doctrines, teachings and morality in a new age. 'Caritas Christi Urget Nos', the love of Christ impels us forward.

Books

1. Guests in their Own House: the women of Vatican II, Carmel McEnroy, foreword by Bernard Haring, A Crossroad Publication, New York:1996.
2. The Documents of Vatican II, Walter Abbott S.J. (General Editor), An Angelus Book, The American Press: 1966.
3. Pacem in Terris, John XXIII: 1963.
3. Highly recommended internet sites on Vatican II

www.Vatican2voice.org/7reception

www.womensordinationworldwide.org

Other women auditors not mentioned in the text

Argentina: Margarita Moyana a member of the same organisation as Anne-Marie Roelaffzen, The World Federation of Young Women and Girls.

Canada : Sister Jerome Maria Chimy, SSMI, Superior General of the community of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate, a Ukrainian Byzantine rite who started the first Ukrainian hospital in Canada.

Czechoslovakia: Hedwig Skoda, little known about her.

Egypt: Marie de la Croix Khouzam, RESC (Coptic rite) Superior General of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Egypt, was invited as the chair of the Union of Teaching Sisters in Egypt.

France: Suzanne Guillemin General of the Sisters of Charity, 46.000 Sisters. A modern woman cast in the mould of John XXIII. She collaborated with Cardinal Suenens in the 'nun in the world'. She was likened to a Cardinal because of her vast experience within her Congregation.

Germany : Gertrude Ehrle the German President German of the Catholic Women's League , and a member of WUCWO and Sister Juliana Thomas ADJ, Secretary to UISG and worked with the Handicapped.

Italy : Two war widows: Ida Grillo, a leader in Italian Catholic Action, Amalia Cordero, President of the Spiritual Welfare Organisation for the Armed Forces, Sabine de Valon, RSCJ,

President of Italian Sisters, forerunner of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), Alda Miceli (Secular Institute).

Lebanon: Henriette Ghanem, SSCC (Coptic rite, Lebanon)

Netherlands: Maria Vendrik, the only woman peritus for Gaudium et Spes because of her extensive world experience, especially with young women and girls. Anne- Marie Roelaffzen- a young 30 year old Dutch lawyer, who was the World Secretary of the World Federation of Young Women and Girls . She only attended the last session.

Spain: Cristina Estrada ,Cuban born and General of the Sisters of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart. In contrast to Pilar , the other Spanish representative she was a quiet woman, who said little and took the secrecy of the Council to heart.

USA - Mrs Cathy McCarthy President of National Council of Women (lived in Boston) , Claudia Feddish, from a small Pennsylvanian town ,near Scranton. Superior General of the Sisters of St Basil the Great, a Congregation of Slavonic speaking sisters from the Ukrainian Byzantine rite with some 180 sisters behind the Iron Curtain in Russia. She took up her appointment in recognition of the Eastern Rite.

Women auditors in text: Pilar Bellosillo, Spanish, Marie Louise Monnet (France), Rosemary Goldie (Australia) Sister Mary Luke Tobin (USA), Gladys Parentelli (Uruguay).