

Catholic Women's Ordination - Response to the ROME SYNOD, 2023.

CWO believes in a reformed, declericalised priesthood for women working alongside men in smaller, less hierarchical communities. We welcomed the Synod discussions about reducing clericalism. Clericalism excludes women, is less transparent and can encourage power being used abusively and it can only be effectively tackled once women are recognised as truly equal to men and restored to shared ministry as peers.

We want to see decentralisation, with more decision making happening in local areas, responding to local needs. We see glimpses of this in the Early Church tradition upon which our faith is based

CWO noted there was discussion about Women Deacons but no decisions were made. This is now the third recent attempt to further a case to restore the women's diaconate. How much longer can this possibly take?

CWO is, however, ambivalent about Women Deacons because it would likely entail "bolting us on" to the current hierarchical structures but in a way that limits the vocations of women. CWO is concerned that if women are made Deacons it might be a lesser form of the Diaconate without ordination, and with no possibility of consecrating the Eucharist -which is at the centre of Catholicism, the heart of church life and of which parishes are in desperate need.

CWO is pleased to note that reforming Seminary Training is on the future agenda. Few men are coming forward as candidates for priesthood so we soon envisage vast parishes with occasional brief visits from exhausted priests to say Mass. CWO believes further shortages may in fact accelerate positive change for women's equality in priestly ministry. CWO envisages flourishing, inclusive, active Eucharistic Communities, where women, alongside men, will be ordained in sacramental and pastoral care.

We support optional celibacy for all priests.

We support inclusive language in the Liturgy.

In conclusion, we support the equality of women in the Catholic Church.