

VATICAN- ELLE

IS THE CHURCH ALLOWED
TO ORDAIN MEN TO
PRIESTHOOD?

Saturday

12

2:45 pm

OCTOBER

**CASA MARIA IMMACULATA,
VIA EZIO 28, ROME**



VATICANELLE

Synodal Council Meeting

ROME, OCTOBER 2024

Is the church allowed to ordain men to priesthood?

ATTENTION: PARODY!

This parody exclusively reproduces clerical statements on women's issues - **but in reverse**. The texts originate from: Inter insigniores (1976), Mulieris Dignitatem (1988), Ordinatio sacerdotalis (1994), Querida Amazonia (2020), from popes, Church fathers and Church teachers (Augustinus, Bonaventura, Tertullian, Thomas Aquinas....)

The parodic reversal of Vatican deliberations and announcements on the full equality of women makes their absurdity clear.

Holy See Press Office:

Signore e signori, rappresentanti della stampa.

Benvenuti a questa conferenza stampa, in un'occasione di grande attualità.

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives of the press. In the name of her holiness, Pope Martha, I welcome you all to this press conference.

As today's topic is not just affecting Rome but the whole world, we will take care of our international guests and talk in English not in Italian today. We hope for the understanding of all Italian-speakers.

As you all know, it turned out, that the signs of the times are stormy. The men are crowding into the sanctuary. And so there is growing concern among women bishops about the future of the Church in the face of increasing pressure in society - especially from the male movement.

That is why the Holy Mother has decided to demonstrate transparency within the framework of a synodal church. So for all people interested it will be possible to listen to the today's council meeting of the women bishops together with her Holiness, the pope when they are talking and praying about the question: Is the church allowed to ordain men to priesthood?

Just a short organisational point: Please note that Her Holiness has given you the option of listening and watching, not joining in the discussion or interrupting the meeting. Disruptive persons will be removed from the audience hall immediately.

Thank you for your understanding and your attention. Grazie per l'attenzione e vi auguro di trascorrere un momento emozionante al Sinodo.

ENTRANCE MUSIC: ARRIVAL OF THE QUEEN OF SHEEBA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TGKJ9MgCOQ>

(Entrance procession of the Bishops & as the last Sister Pope)

Two men waving their umbrellas (Ordain men!!)

When Sister Pope arrives: Bishops and audience: Viva Mama!

Sister Pope greets everybody graciously.

All sit down.

Sister Pope Martha

Good afternoon, beloved sisters! I am glad you could come from so different parts of the world to discuss this important question.

To make it clear from the outset, the position is crystal clear. None of us will seriously expect to introduce the priesthood of men. That is not within the realm of our power.¹ That door is closed!²

Bishop Elza

But we are a synodal church. We want to listen to each other and consult with each other. Of course, the decision then lies with our Council and our sister Pope will hopefully agree.

Bishop Kate

Of course we must hear both sides for our deliberations: some of us are firmly in the tradition of our beloved Church. Nevertheless, some others among us believe that the signs of the times should be seen and taken into account. Well then, let us consider!

Bishop Margaret Mary

We have thoroughly researched and meditated on the nature of man - always from the perspective of man's personal dignity. We would like to emphasise that his dignity must be preserved at all costs. But men belong to the ruling class.

Bishop Pat

You are right, dear sister! Every simple Christian woman knows the important reason why the priesthood must be closed to men: The forms of society and government we know are almost exclusively patriarchal. Men are in charge everywhere. And it is precisely this that makes them appear completely unsuitable as representatives of the priestly-sacramental ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Sister Pope Martha

We should always refer to the Bible. In both the Old Testament and New Testament, the theme of the 'exodus' - the exodus from enslaving constraints - is a leitmotif: God hears the cries of the oppressed (Sirach 35, 16-22) while God topples the 'mighty' from their thrones and exalts the lowly (Luke 1:52)

Bishop Renate

The prophets of the Old Testament always proclaimed that God is the protector and helper of the weak (Ez 34:4.16). Despite the inferior position of women, YAHWH was pleased to give women special influence and impact on the history of her chosen people. Moses, for example, owes his life to four women: the two midwives Shiphrah and Puah, the courage of his mother and the wisdom of his sister Miriam (Exodus 1-2).

Bishop Katie L.

What would the history of Israel have been like without the progenitors Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel, without the priestesses and prophetesses Miriam and Huldah? What

¹ So that every doubt concerning the important matter which concerns the divine constitution of the of the Church itself, I declare, by virtue of my office of strengthening the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) that the Church has no authority whatsoever to authority to confer priestly ordination on women, and that all the faithful of the Church faithful of the Church must definitively abide by this decision; Ordination Sacerdotalis 4, JohPaul II

² Pope Francis during a flight

would Israel have become if God had not given them Deborah, Judith and Esther as saviours?

Bishop Margaret Mary

And for the climax of YAHWH's work for her people, it says: 'when the time was fulfilled, God sent her Son, born of a woman ...' (Gal 4:4). It was the divine plan to choose a woman to begin the divine act of redemption *without the intervention of a man*.

Bishop Katie L.

Incidentally, the role of St Joseph, Mary's husband, cannot be overlooked. He served the mother and the child quietly and devotedly. St Joseph is recommended as a role model for all men – it is called the “Josephine principle”!!³

Bishop Pat

And Jesus chooses a woman to be the first witness of his resurrection: Mary of Magdala: she is one of the women whom Jesus healed and counted among his disciples. She played a leading role in the group of disciples and had an integrating effect. She was among the many women who stood under the cross of Jesus, helped with the burial and was clearly chosen by God to bring the message of the resurrection to the frightened apostles who were locked behind closed doors.

Sister Pope Martha

That's right! And these men, who were his friends, didn't believe her. It's unbelievable, they were always together with him and yet they were so slow to understand! How could it happen that they were fighting over who was the greatest and first among them - typical of men! Only power and dominance on their minds!

Bishop Renate

Likewise the Zebedee sons James and John. The two asked Jesus to sit on his left and right. Jesus rejected them and said, 'You know that those who are considered rulers oppress their peoples, and the powerful abuse their authority over people. But it shall not be so with you!'

Bishop Margaret Mary

Yes, unfortunately, men are the unenlightened, the unintelligent ones across the board.

Bishop Katie L.

Men like to do business, with everything, everywhere, even in places that are sacred to others. Jesus drives them out of the temple. You see, Jesus did try to empower men for this ministry, but they were always unfaithful to him and betrayed him. So how could men be credible priests?

³ In an interview last year, Francis contrasted the Marian with the Petrine dimension of the Church, assigned priestly ordination to the Petrine dimension and thus rejected the ordination of women, but at the same time described the Marian dimension in the Church as far more important than the Petrine dimension. Vatican news

Sister Pope Martha

Yes, the Bible is quite clear. But let us now look at the signs of the times. Unfortunately, the paternalism and exploitation of women continues mercilessly in our societies, even in predominantly Christian countries. It is therefore all the more necessary that women continue to administer the priestly ministry in the Roman Catholic Church, as a sign of the contrasting society of Christianity.

Bishop Kate

I understand that. But I wonder whether this statement is still sufficient today to exclude men from the priesthood. If tradition has rejected the priesthood for men, this does not mean that this circumstance is unchangeable. And even today, the situation is not so clear-cut. Is that enough to exclude men?

Bishop Marianne

Oh yes, my dear! A very important question. In Galatians we read: 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female, for you are all "one" in Christ Jesus'.

Can we still justify masculinity as the main obstacle to the priesthood? Surely it is first and foremost about passing on revelation!

Bishop Elza

I totally agree with you, beloved sisters! Temporal and cultural patterns of behaviour can be changed - the Bible shows us that! Isn't the New Testament much more about the equality of men and women? So our concern should also be the equality and equal value of all people, including women and men! We should be an example for society!

Bishop Kate

And on the argument of exercising power: aren't there already men today who show and nurture the gentle side of themselves, and even dedicate themselves professionally to these tasks - think of the nursing profession or men in childcare. We could help to make these developments a reality!

Sister Pope Martha

But, but, beloved sisters!

If we don't ordain men to the priesthood that doesn't mean any discrimination. We esteem them. We realize that men are the strawberries on the cake!⁴

But I ask you, can men really be priests when we think of the many peculiarities of the male sex? Can men be priests when they are more used to thinking in terms of laws and are often not used to asking for mercy?

Bishop Renate

Can men be priests if they so often make women invisible, even in subtle ways, in texts, in writings, in translations, even trivialising their concerns and not taking their wishes seriously?

Can men be priests if they want to lead instead of serve?

⁴ Pope Francis during a flight

Bishop Katie L.

Can men be priests if they have made covenants for centuries from which women were and are excluded? How can they speak for the poor and marginalised - indeed, how can they speak for all people?

Bishop Margaret Mary

Can men be priests if their history is a chain of atrocities against women: rape, oppression? Above all, can men be priests if they are so easily victimised by male instincts? One would have to fear that they would take advantage of their position and sexually exploit women and children, especially nuns and altar servers?

Bishop Pat

I would like to be clear and ask the question: why do we actually baptise and confirm them? I think they should only be allowed to marry, because that's what they were born for! To support their wives and love them! As our fore-mothers said: the man is basically only necessary for the purpose of producing children and in everything else, as comfort in loneliness, as help with work, a woman can provide better service and help to a woman!

Bishop Renate

And they are much too emotional. You only need to watch them at sporting events!

Bishop Kate

Well, dear sisters, you paint a rather bleak picture of the world of men - in history and today! Unfortunately, our society is still patriarchal and men sometimes exercise power in an extremely brutal way, but there are already signs of change everywhere. He already exists, the 'new man'. We should do everything we can to support men on this path. Perhaps the priesthood can also help.

Sister Pope Martha

That may be true, dear sister, but more important is the argument that we have a two-thousand-year-old tradition that priestly ministries may only be exercised by women. There are good reasons for this! We can't simply abandon this tradition! That is not within the realm of our control!!

Bishop Marianne

Oh, I would like to talk to you about our tradition, which has not always been free of domination and hostility towards men.

We can no longer accept much of what our foremothers said about men today. We know that the 'spirituality versus corporeality' debate began in early Christianity, and from the very beginning we regarded men as more clearly determined by the 'body' due to their dominant sexuality and therefore considered them inferior.

Bishop Renate

But remember: from the very beginning there was a strict dualism: Man was regarded as the bearer of evil. Just like this world, which is under the spell of the masculine, a man is

determined by evil matter in his being. The man therefore embodies the world and its vices. Conversion is only possible by turning away from the world and thus from man.

Bishop Elza

But Christianity had to be resolutely opposed to such dualism! Nevertheless, this philosophical tradition has repeatedly found its way into theology, and I am not sure whether our fear of men has not sometimes made us very susceptible to it.

Bishop Kate

I am thinking in particular of the teachings of our female Doctors of the Church. 'It was through men that poison entered the world', they say. They basically assign man to the lower, the physical, the material, and attribute the spiritual, the higher, to woman.

Bishop Marianne

And time and again this opinion has been taken up, reinforced and quoted in a positive light. It has even been expanded: it should always be girls who are born, it is said, but unfavourable external circumstances, damp southerly winds and the like, result in boys by chance, not planned, not intended. So a boy has no intrinsic value, but is rather a 'failed woman'. For this reason, the man is ascribed a multiple inferiority. (Thoman von Aquin)

Bishop Elza

They said, men are mentally the weaker, physically the more active, therefore also morally the more vulnerable - and becomes a temptation for the woman. - I don't think we can call this a Christian doctrine!

Bishop Kate

We must learn from this history of prejudice and ask ourselves how we can deal with this issue differently. First of all, we must admit our guilt and mourn the fact that such hostility towards men has existed and continues to exist in the church for so long. We must also mourn the fact that our church mothers have joined in this chorus. We must admit that our important female teachers also had limitations, blind spots, their 'shadows'. And we must not conceal, trivialise or marginalise this.

Bishop Marianne

But when men today feel the call to the priesthood, we must no longer invoke our centuries-old hostility towards men.

Remember our beloved Doctor of the Church, Catharina of Siena. After all, God said to her: 'The grace of my Spirit I give to whomever I will; there is no male or female, commoner or noble, for all are equal before me.'

(INTERRUPTION as two men rush on stage:

Hey! Hey! Hey!

Men! Men! Men!

Ordain Men as Priests Today!

4 Bishops and the Pope stand up slowly, point towards the Exit and say:

Out! Out! Out!

(Elza, Kate and Marianne remain seated and look very sorry to the two men)

Hey! Hey! Hey!

Men! ...

Out! Out! Out! Out you go!

The men exit)

Sister Pope Martha

Tz, tz, tz...

Well, that may all be true, I understand that our tradition needs to be reconsidered and that it has been widely characterised by hostility towards men. But nevertheless: we already know that the discussion about the admission of men to the priesthood is made particularly difficult when we consider the symbolic approach to the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Bishop Katie L.

Oh yes, yes! We find the most important symbolism in the celebration of the Eucharist. The priest celebrates Mass as the head of the congregation and represents the Church as the bride of Christ, who marries the bridegroom Jesus Christ on behalf of the whole community.

⁵

Bishop Renate

It is immediately obvious that this position can NEVER be held by a man. If a man, who can never be the bride but only the bridegroom, were to take the position of the head of the community, this could give the impression that a man is marrying a man. We are still a long way from that in our church!

Bishop Margaret Mary

Even worse would be the impression that a man is standing at the altar on behalf of Jesus Christ, 'in persona Christi' so to speak. Imagine this strange exaggeration! A man stands up and presents himself as Jesus! That would mean wanting to be like God! That would be a second fall from grace!

Such a symbolic misunderstanding, such presumption would certainly be rejected by all believers.

Bishop Pat

Besides, it really has to be said that it would sometimes be difficult to see men standing at the altar when they are so prone to obesity and hair loss. And on the other side: some of them are so handsome, they would distract women worshipers.

⁵ “In this view, all people - women and men - are called by the Church to be the ‘bride’ of Christ, the Saviour of the world . Christ is the bridegroom. ...It is above all in the Eucharist that the act of redemption of Christ, the Bridegroom, is expressed in a sacramental way to the Church, his bride . This becomes transparent and very clear when the sacramental service of the Eucharist, where the priest acts ‘in persona Christi’ , is performed by the man“. **Mulieris dignitatem**)

Bishop Kate

That may both be true, my dear, but the more important thing is, that in the past, it was argued, especially by the mothers of the church, that only a woman is capable of symbolising the sacramental acts in their full scope due to her natural disposition.⁶

From today's perspective, we cannot accept this biological argument without additions. We are aware that there are male and female sides to every human being.

Bishop Renate

It remains undisputed, however, that the typically female activities of caring, the ability to reconcile and to work together are still far more pronounced in women. Men have not been able or willing to sufficiently develop the feminine side of their humanity. Who normally looks after a baby? Who cares for the sick? Who keeps the peace in the family? Who cooks?

Bishop Margaret Mary

From these considerations we must conclude that men could never adequately convey the symbolism of baptism, reconciliation, the meal and the anointing of the sick.

Bishop Marianne

It is almost impossible to counter these weighty arguments. However, it cannot be denied that interesting developments have recently been observed outside the Church. Men seem to be learning certain jobs that were previously almost exclusively carried out by women.

Bishop Elza

Since women in society are to some extent abandoning their purely ministerial attitude, men are also having to do the work of caring, nursing and even cooking within the family. This development cannot be ignored by Mother Church, she has even to welcome it.

Bishop Kate

The fact that men are even prepared to look after small children, that there are men who no longer insist on their position of power, that even in society the equality of women is recognised by men in some places - all this indicates that female abilities can also be developed in men.

Bishop Margaret Mary

That is why the Church does not refuse to allow them to bring their previously unutilised qualities to bear in various pastoral areas. This represents a considerable enrichment for the church community. They clean the churches, they prepare parish festivals, they shovel the snow from the churchyard. They clean the priestesses' clothes.

⁶ Only men can receive ordination because they are naturally similar to Christ and can represent him. 'No one is capable of receiving the ordinance who does not bear the image of God; ... but man is the image of God by virtue of his sex'; **Bonaventura**

"This symbolism or 'natural resemblance between Christ and priest is only given in a man. Consequently, only a man can act in the person of Jesus Christ, the head, 'take his place', in a word: represent him". **Inter insigniores**)

Bishop Katie L.

The male physiology indicates that they are even more suited to tasks like chopping down trees, unearthing rocks, wrestling with wild animals. So they can be helpful in many different aspects. This certainly helps them in their development! And so they can find meaningful church roles without being ordained.

Bishop Pat

But there is another important point that I would like to mention: we have been exposed to the danger of clericalism throughout history and are still fighting against it today. Why should we now also expose men to this danger? It is probably only for their own good if they realise their value, which lies elsewhere than in an ordained ministry.⁷

Bishop Elza

However, it could be a considerable enrichment for the church community if men could also take on leadership roles in our parishes, if they could even preside at the Sunday Mass. Men who believe that they feel a vocation to the priesthood as a result of their commitment are certainly sincere in their endeavours to serve God and the community.

A little break, all lost in thought (10 sec). Everyone looks around somewhat helplessly.

Sister Pope Martha

Oh, we can all see how difficult this question is to answer. Our views diverge widely. I would therefore urge our church to have any endeavours by men in this regard seriously examined by female theologians. There really should be a separate commission. Perhaps then, in two or three decades, we will come to a good result that everyone in our church can identify with.⁸

Bishop Kate

I don't think we have that much time left to find a fair solution. Men are running away from us in droves. We also have a responsibility towards future generations. I don't want later generations to reproach us for having been too cowardly and for having pushed back strong and gifted spirits just because they are men.

Bishop Elza

Yes, dear sisters, out of concern for our Church and to take the wind out of the sails of a possible schism, I would be in favour of allowing men to be ordained as priests and deacons - *only in their own community - ad experimentum!!*

⁷ "Women in the Church must be valued not "clericalised". Whoever thinks of women as cardinals suffers a bit from clericalism." <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/en/2013/12/15/>;

'Such reductionism would lead us to believe that women would only be granted status in the Church and greater participation if they were admitted to Holy Orders. But such a view would in fact be a limitation of perspectives: it would direct us towards a clericalisation of women, diminishing the great value of what they have already given and subtly leading to an impoverishment of their indispensable contribution. **Querida Amazonia 100**)

⁸ The *Study Commission on the Diaconate of Women* which Pope Francis created in 2016

This is following the Gamaliel Principle: If the ordination of men is of human origin, then it will fail. But if the ordination of men is from God then you will find yourselves fighting against God.

Bishop Marianne

Let's not be afraid! Let's dare to experiment! The divine ruah will stand by us.

After years of experimentation, we will be able to come to a good decision that does justice to our beloved Church. I am very convinced that this would also correspond to the will and teachings of Jesus!

Bishop Kate

Yes! Let's allow a few men to administer the sacraments in their own community and see what comes of it. What could possibly happen? But nothing bad!

Sister Pope Martha

Well then, I'm not happy about this proposal, but I can see some merit in it. After carefully weighing up all the pros and cons I actually believe that we have more to gain than to lose by trying. I know that all of you - and me too, of course - have prayed a lot about this. So now the Holy Spirit will help us with the decision.

Let us pause for a moment and ask the Holy Spirit again.

(Everyone lowers their heads for a spiritual moment. Then:)

So let's vote!

I support this proposal to ordain suitably qualified men as priests and deacons in their own community – ad experimentum! I call for this motion to be voted on by our Council:

The MOTION appears on the wall:

MOTION: THAT SUITABLY QUALIFIED MEN MAY BE ORDAINED AS PRIESTS AND DEACONS – AD EXPERIMENTUM - IN THOSE COMMUNITIES THAT WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY.

All those in favour raise their hands (some of them very hesitant):

Sister Pope Martha; Bishop Kate; Bishop Marianne; Bishop Elza; Bishop Katie L.; Bishop Renate.

Those opposed raise their hands:

Bishop Pat and Bishop Margaret Mary.

The result appears on the wall:

Sister Pope Martha:

APPROVED BY 6 VOTES IN FAVOUR AND 2 AGAINST. AS THIS EXCEEDS TO REQUIRES 66% threshold the motion is passed.

Sister Pope:

I thank you very much, beloved sisters, for your engagement. Please enclose us in your prayers as we do for you. GOD HELP US!

All remain seated and whisper fiercely with each other - without a sound while the presenter speaks:

Holy See Press Office:

Signore e signori, rappresentanti della stampa.

Benvenuti a questa conferenza stampa, in un'occasione di grande attualità.

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives of the press. In the name of her holiness, Pope Martha, I welcome you all to this press conference.

As today's topic is not just affecting Rome but the whole world, we will take care of our international guests and talk in English not in Italian today. We hope for the understanding of all Italian-speakers in the room.

With opening the council meeting on the question if the church is allowed to ordain men to priesthood, Pope Martha showed that she is taking synodality very seriously. Apart from a few interruptions, which were quickly resolved, the meeting took place without any problems but with many constructive discussions. Pope Martha will now present the result, not just to the press, but especially to the men all over the world. Their dignity is untouchable.

Read by Sister Pope Martha

It is particularly important to us to express our gratitude to our brothers. This gratitude goes to all of them - husbands, fathers, brothers, and also to those who have chosen to be male virgins and thus want to serve God in a special way⁹. We sincerely hope that they express the masculine gender in their existence through the special gifts that God has given them and that they carry out their tasks - in accordance with their masculine nature - for the service of all.¹⁰

⁹ “The Church thus gives thanks for all women and for each one of them: for mothers, sisters, wives; for women who have consecrated themselves to God in virginity”; **Mulieris Dignitatem**

¹⁰ “The personal possibilities of being a woman are certainly not less than the possibilities of being a man; they are just different. Woman, like man, must therefore strive for her ‘realisation’ as a person, her dignity and vocation on the basis of these possibilities, in accordance with the richness of womanhood that she received on the day of creation and inherited as her own expression of the ‘image of God’. **Mulieris dignitatem**

We recognise with respect and great gratitude the special services that men make available to the Church and want to continue to encourage them not to tire in their sacrifice for the Church. And we assure every man: God loves you too!

The Synod of bishops has decided to allow the ordination of men – in some special circumstances: they have to be chosen from their own community and for their own community. They have to be suitably qualified and the authorisation is only valid as an experiment for the time being. With great seriousness we ask these men: Fight against your striving for power and domination! Have your male instincts under control! Do not forget that you hold an office of service!

With this temporary authorisation, we want to make it clear that, above all, however, we emphasise that the dignity of men remains inviolable. The Church defends the dignity of men. The Church makes itself the guarantor of human dignity for all.¹¹
DIGNITAS INFINITA!!!!

CLOSING MUSIC: “HALLELUIAH CHORUS” FROM HANDEL’S MESSIAH. (Max 2 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUZEtvBJT5c>

Zum Nachlesen:

Ida Raming, Kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den Gründen des Lehramtes für den Ausschluss von Frauen von der Ordination

IN: Wir sind Kirche (Hg.), Frauen schenken der Kirche Leben; Frauenherdenbrief und Begleittexte.

Thaur Druck, 1999

ISBN 3-85400-097-9

¹¹ “The Church proclaims, promotes and makes itself the guarantor of human dignity”. **Dignitas infinita**