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*Mouvement international*  
**Nous sommes Eglise**

*Internationale Bewegung*  
**Wir sind Kirche**

Press release

# *International Movement* **We are Church**

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## **We Are Church statement on the Decree of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) against Women's Ordination**

**We are Church! Jesus Christ did not ordain men or women to the ministerial priesthood but to care for and nurture each other as brothers and sisters.**

**“As long as the attitude of our church leadership hardens in this way, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Christian church overall, lose credibility and the ability to evangelise effectively”, says the International Movement We Are Church about the latest Decree of the Holy Office on women's ordination.** In the month of May, dedicated to the foremost woman in Christianity, it is shameful that the Vatican can employ such weak and inadequate reasoning to deny women the opportunity to minister to the People of God. **The whole Catholic reform movement has called consistently for the removal of the Can. 1024 from the Roman Catholic Church law (Codex Iuris Canonici CIC) and the repeal of the excommunication of women who have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders.**

Although decided in December 2007, the Decree has only just been published. It condemns both the women who “attempt” to receive Holy Orders and the Bishops who “attempt” to confer the Sacrament. Disgracefully, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith maintain they are promulgating the wishes and will of Jesus Christ.

**However, nothing survives to demonstrate that Jesus expressed such wishes or particularly favoured men.** Jesus sent both women and men out to announce his teachings and to remember His example and teaching in celebrating the Eucharist together. One of the tragedies in the Roman Catholic Church today is that more and more of its members are deprived of this central Sacrament of the Christian life because there are not enough Pastors to assist and lead them.

In the early church there were female Apostles (Mary of Magdala, Thekla, Nino), female Presbyters (eg Ammion, Epikto, Laeta) and even Bishops (Theodora and another unnamed woman) and other female office holders. There is evidence up to the 9th Century of inscriptions on tombs, churches and in literary texts. (See the dissertation by Ute E. Eisen,, “Amtstraegerinnen im fruehen Christentum“ "Female ministers /officeholders in early Christianity", Goettingen/Germany 1996)

Academic study and archaeological research over the last two centuries has shown the error in the arguments put forward by the Roman Catholic hierarchy to exclude women from Holy Orders. History shows that the Church does change its mind over its doctrine and thus Can. 1024, “Only a baptised man can validly receive sacred ordination” can be seen as sexist, discriminatory and thus worthy of amendment.

In 1994, Pope John Paul II in the Apostolic letter "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis" stressed that only men could be validly ordained. The ban he placed on further investigation and discussion has had no effect. On the contrary, the question of the ordination of women is increasingly raised. **Statements by the hierarchy that women cannot receive Holy Orders which they say are “absolutely necessary and irreplaceable in the life and mission of the Church” no longer convince anyone but the most gullible of believers.**

Wording of the Decree in Latin: <http://www.radiovaticana.org/ted/Articolo.asp?c=208819>

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