

In case I have failed to mention it recently, please subscribe and contribute to the sites and sources you see in these pages (especially *America* magazine, *Commonweal* magazine, *NCR*, and the *Whispers in the Loggia* Web site). These media are performing a tremendous service for the church and deserve your support. And, if you are so inclined, join the *Women's Ordination Conference* and *Corpus*.

Some very important articles follow – dealing with the issues of world hunger, the shape of the church to come, and the upcoming American election.

Haiti. Somalia. Bangladesh. Afghanistan. Soaring food prices have resulted in deadly riots and forced families to go hungry around the world. As usual, women and children are the most vulnerable. CARE, a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty, is already on the ground, providing food to families to help them survive and create lasting solutions to hunger.

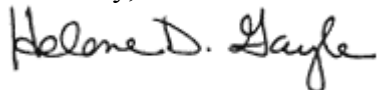
We place special focus on working with poor women because, equipped with the proper resources, women have the power to help whole families and entire communities escape poverty.

Whatever you can afford will save lives now, and help create a healthy future for millions of people living on the edge of hunger and poverty. For example, in Somalia, CARE is increasing food support to reach 1.9 million people and providing water to drought-affected communities. In Ethiopia, CARE is working with farmers on sustainable agriculture, helping communities build water storage facilities and fighting rising malnutrition rates by making sure children get the food they need to grow healthy and strong.

The situation is likely to worsen in the coming months as food and transportation prices climb even higher, countries hold back food from export and droughts threaten crops from Africa to Australia. Your generous gift today can help us save lives by providing food and water, and helping families around the world create lasting solutions to poverty.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Helene D. Gayle, MD, MPH
President and CEO, CARE

To contribute, please go to: https://my.care.org/05/foodcrisis_moj

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recently released this document. The responses from the *Women's Ordination Conference* and *We Are Church* follow.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to protect the nature and validity of the sacrament of holy orders, in virtue of the special faculty conferred to it by the supreme authority of the Church (see canon 30, Canon Law), in the Ordinary Session of December 19, 2007, has decreed:

Remaining firm on what has been established by canon 1378 of the Canon Law, both he who has attempted to confer holy orders on a woman, and the woman who has attempted to receive the said sacrament, incurs in *latae sententiae* excommunication, reserved to the Apostolic See.

If he who has attempted to confer holy orders on a woman or if the woman who has attempted to receive holy orders, is a member of the faithful subject to the Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches, remaining firm on what has been established by canon 1443 of the same Code, they will be punished with major excommunication, whose remission remains reserved to the Apostolic See (see canon 1423, Canon Law of the Eastern Churches).

The current decree will come into immediate force from the moment of publication in the *L'Osservatore Romano* and is absolute and universal.

William Cardinal Levada
Prefect
Angelo Amato, S.D.B.
Titular Archbishop of Sila
Secretary

Aisha Taylor, executive director of the Women's Ordination Conference, issued the following statement about the Vatican's decree that ordained Roman Catholic women and the bishops who ordained them incur latae sententiae excommunication, which means that the excommunication is immediate and self-imposed.

The Women's Ordination Conference is outraged by yesterday's Vatican decree, which reminds Catholic women once again of the animosity they face from the hierarchy, despite being the backbone of most Catholic parishes throughout the world.

Out of fear of the growing numbers of ordained women and the overwhelming support they are receiving, the Vatican is trying to preserve what little power they have left by attempting to extinguish the widespread call for women's equality in the church. It will not work. In the face of one closed door after another, Catholic women will continue to make a way when there is none.

We reject the notion of excommunication. In our efforts to ordain women into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church, we see it as contrary to the gospel itself to excommunicate people who are doing good works and responding to injustice and the needs of their communities. While the hierarchy prattles on about excommunication, Catholic women are working for justice and making a positive difference in the world.

This unreasonable excommunication and the Vatican's stance on ordination are based on arguments that have been refuted time and again. In 1976, the Vatican's own Pontifical Biblical Commission determined that there is no scriptural reason to prohibit women's ordination. Jesus included women as full and equal partners in his ministry, and so should the hierarchy.

The call for women's equality in the Catholic Church is reverberating loudly in the public consciousness. Around the world, over sixty women have been ordained as priests, deacons or bishops by the group called Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP), and there are nearly 100 women in the RCWP preparation program. There are 16 national organizations from 11 different countries that advocate women's ordination, and a vast majority of US Catholics support the ordination of women.

The refusal to ordain women is nothing more than a blatant manifestation of sexism in the church. It is time for the Vatican to listen to its own research, its own theologians and its own people who say that women are equally created in the image of God and are called to serve as priests in a renewed and inclusive Catholic Church.

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Founded in 1975, the Women's Ordination Conference is the oldest and largest national organization that works to ordain women as priests, deacons and bishops into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church. WOC represents the 63-70 percent of US Catholics that support the ordination of women as priests.

WOC also promotes new perspectives on ordination that call for more accountability and less separation between the clergy and laity.

June 4, 2008

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

“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 (“Only a baptized male validly receives sacred ordination.”) 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.

Background information

The *International Movement We Are Church* - a grassroots church reform movement of lay persons, priests, and persons in religious orders - was started in Austria and Germany in 1995 and then spread out in Europe and all continents. *We Are Church* is represented in more than twenty countries and is in touch with other reform movements all over the world. Its goal is to keep continue the process of reform in the Roman Catholic Church, a process which has been opened with Vatican II Council (1962-1965) and came to a standstill in recent years. Website: <http://www.we-are-church.org>

Taking a Toll of War on Memorial Day

By Bill Moyers and Michael Winship

From consortiumnews.com, May 24, 2008

Editor's note: In recent years, Memorial Day, “like other patriotic holidays,” has been exploited to glorify war, rather than treated as a moment for reflection about war's horrible costs.

In this guest essay, Bill Moyers and Michael Winship argue that on this Memorial Day, Americans should stop and take a measure of the pain, brutality and sacrifice that war exacts:

We honor our war dead this Memorial Day weekend. The greatest respect we could pay them would be to pledge no more wars for erroneous and misleading reasons; no more killing and wounding except for the defense of our country and our freedoms.

We also could honor our dead by caring for the living, and do better at it than we are right now.

There has been a flurry of allegations concerning neglect, malpractice and corner cutting at the Veterans Administration, especially for those suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or major depression brought on by combat.

A report released by the Rand Corporation last month indicates that approximately 300,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans suffer PTSD or major depression. That's one of every five military men and women who have served over there.

The Washington Post last week reported the contents of an e-mail sent to staff at a VA hospital in Temple, Texas. A psychologist wrote, "Given that we are having more and more compensation seeking veterans, I'd like to suggest that you refrain from giving a diagnosis of PTSD straight out."

She further suggested that a diagnosis of a less serious Adjustment Disorder be made instead, especially as she and her colleagues "really don't have time to do the extensive testing that should be done to determine PTSD."

Now PTSD is not a diagnosis arrived at without careful, thorough examination. But to possibly misdiagnose such a volatile and harmful disorder for the sake of saving time or money is reprehensible.

Veterans Affairs Secretary James Peake immediately said the psychologist's statement had been "repudiated at the highest level of our health care organization." Nonetheless, there's plenty of other evidence to raise concern.

The rate of attempted and successful suicides is so scary, the head of the VA's mental health division, Dr. Ira Katz, wondered in a February e-mail how it should be spun.

He wrote, "Our suicide prevention coordinators are identifying about 1,000 suicide attempts per month among the veterans we see in our medical facilities. Is this something we should (carefully) address ourselves in some sort of release before someone stumbles on it?" [See Consortiumnews.com's "VA Debated PR Plan of Vets' Suicides."]

This apparent cover-up prompted the House Veterans Committee to hold hearings earlier this month. Congressman Bob Filner, committee chairman, questioned Dr. Katz and Veterans Affairs Secretary Peake.

“What we see is a pattern that reveals a culture of bureaucracy,” Filner angrily said. “The pattern is deny, deny, deny and when that fails, it’s cover up, cover up, cover up. There is clear evidence of a bureaucratic cover-up here.”

Rep. Filner raised the question of criminal negligence. “We should all be angry about what has gone on here,” he declared. “This is a matter of life and death for the veterans that we are responsible for and I think there was criminal negligence in the way this was handled. If we do not admit, assume or know, then the problem will continue and people will die. If that’s not criminal negligence, I don’t know what is.”

Secretary Peake said, “I can appreciate that the number of 1,000 suicide attempts a month might be shocking but in a system as large as our’s, and consistent with the literature, we might well expect a larger number of attempts than that.”

The front page of Sunday’s *Houston Chronicle* featured an in-depth study of just one of the suicides -- Bronze Star recipient Nils Aron Andersson of the 82nd Airborne Division. “A victim of the war within,” reads the *Chronicle* headline. Andersson returned home from two tours in Iraq and was reassigned to duty as an Army recruiter.

“Did he come back different?” his father asked. “I don’t think there’s anybody who goes over there and fights on the front lines who ever comes back the same.”

In March 2007, Andersson sat behind the wheel of his new Ford pick up, “less than 24 hours after his wedding” and fired a single round from a .22 caliber semiautomatic into his right temple. He was 25 years old.

“I don’t think Aron let the Army down,” his father said. “I think the Army let him down. I think the care wasn’t there that he really needed.”

Only about half of those service members diagnosed with PTSD or depression have sought treatment and about half of those received what the RAND study describes as “minimally adequate treatment.”

Minimally adequate treatment for what could be a matter of life and death. Once upon a time, kids asked their fathers, “What did you do in the war, daddy?”

It’s a question the next generation could ask all of us who stood by as our government invaded Iraq to start a war whose purpose and rationale keep shifting and whose end is nowhere in sight, and who look now with nonchalance upon the unseen scars of those who are fighting it.

Bill Moyers is managing editor and Michael Winship is senior writer of the weekly public affairs program Bill Moyers Journal, which airs Friday night on PBS. Check local airtimes or comment at The Moyers Blog at www.pbs.org/moyers.

Four years ago, I addressed this letter to the Editor of the (Brooklyn) *Tablet*.
Some things have not changed.

To the Editor of the (Brooklyn) *Tablet*:

I take strong exception to your assertion that the Democratic Party is not hospitable to the right-to-life agenda.

For Republicans to claim the high ground in the right to life debate they would first have to renounce their support for laws and policies that compel women to choose between a life of poverty for their children and terminating a pregnancy.

Often those who wish to legally restrict abortion provide the least assistance for families with children.

Republicans have bankrupted the Federal government with handouts to corporations and the wealthy so that we are now virtually incapable of caring for our poor and vulnerable, most of whom are mothers and dependent children.

This is in direct violation of Catholic social teaching, which demands that all economic policies must be predicated on a “preferential option for the poor.”

Many Democrats feel that by providing increased social services for mothers and infants we can ultimately make abortion a rarity.

I want to see a society in which a woman will never have to terminate a pregnancy because she is afraid that she will not be able to provide adequate food, shelter and health care for her children. This is a life issue.

Furthermore, it may be heretical to assert that the God “who sends the sun to shine on the good and the bad, the righteous and the unrighteous” would value the life of the innocent over the life of the guilty, the life of the infant over the life of the soldier, the life of the American over the life of the Iraqi. Every human life (innocent and “guilty”) is precious in the eyes of God, whose perfection we are asked to strive for.

I would like to see the Republican Party distance itself from a White House that is making personnel changes that will assuredly result in an even more belligerent foreign policy. This is a life issue.

I would also like to see the Republicans distance themselves from their support for the death penalty, and its champion, the former Governor of Texas. This is a life issue.

We don’t need a Democratic Party that moves to the center. We need one that is, and continues to be, radically pro-life.

I am proud to be a pro-life Democrat. And I feel welcome.

Four years later, the only thing I would add to this letter is that I would *never* be pro-choice if it simply were a choice. It is seldom a choice. More often it is an act of desperation. What will you do today, right now, so women will not feel compelled to make this desperate decision?

I am grateful to Joe for passing along this article (and many of the others that appear here). He continues to perform a real service for our church.

For an 'Obamacon,' Communion Denied

By E. J. Dionne Jr.

Washington Post

Tuesday, June 3, 2008

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/02/AR2008060202591.html>

Word spread like wildfire in Catholic circles: Douglas Kmiec, a staunch Republican, firm foe of abortion and veteran of the Reagan Justice Department, had been denied Communion.

His sin? Kmiec, a Catholic who can cite papal pronouncements with the facility of a theological scholar, shocked old friends and adversaries alike earlier this year by endorsing Barack Obama for president. For at least one priest, Kmiec's support for a pro-choice politician made him a willing participant in a grave moral evil.

Kmiec was denied Communion in April at a Mass for a group of Catholic business people he later addressed at dinner. The episode has not received wide attention outside the Catholic world, but it is the opening shot in an argument that could have a large impact on this year's presidential campaign: Is it legitimate for bishops and priests to deny Communion to those supporting candidates who favor abortion rights?

A version of this argument roiled the 2004 campaign when some, though not most, Catholic bishops suggested that John Kerry and other pro-choice Catholic politicians should be denied Communion because of their views on abortion.

The Kmiec incident poses the question in an extreme form: He is not a public official but a voter expressing a preference. Moreover, Kmiec -- a law professor at Pepperdine University and once dean of Catholic University's law school -- is a long-standing critic of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision.

Kmiec, who was head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel in the late 1980s, is supporting Obama despite the candidate's position on abortion, not because of it, partly in the hope that Obama's emphasis on personal responsibility in sexual matters might change the nature of the nation's argument on life issues.

Kmiec has drawn attention because he is one of the nation's leading 'Obamacons,' conservatives who find Obama's call for a new approach to politics appealing. Kmiec started life as a Democrat. His father was a soldier in the late Mayor Richard J. Daley's Chicago political machine, and Kmiec's earliest political energies were devoted to Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 campaign.

But like many Catholic Democrats, Kmiec was profoundly attracted to Ronald Reagan. For him, five words in Reagan's 1980 acceptance speech summarized the essence of a Catholic view of politics: 'family, work, neighborhood, peace and freedom.'

In an interview over the weekend, Kmiec argued that 35 years after Roe, opponents of abortion need to contemplate whether 'a legal prohibition' of abortion 'is the only way to promote a culture of life.'

'To think you have done a generous thing for your neighbor or that you have built up a culture of life just because you voted for a candidate who says in his brochure that he wants to overturn Roe v. Wade is far too thin an understanding of the Catholic faith,' he said. Kmiec, a critic of the Bush administration's Iraq policy, added that Catholics

should heed 'the broad social teaching of the church,' including its views on war.

Kmiec shared with me the name of the priest who denied him Communion and a letter of apology from the organizers of the event, but he requested that I not name the priest to protect the cleric from public attack.

The priest's actions are almost certainly out of line with the policy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. In their statement 'Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,' issued last November, the bishops said: 'A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, if the voter's intent is to support that position.'

The 'if' phrase in that carefully negotiated sentence suggests that Catholics can support pro-choice candidates, provided the purpose of their vote is not to promote abortion.

Already, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City has played an indirect role in the 2008 campaign by calling on Kathleen Sebelius, the popular Democratic governor of Kansas who has been mentioned as a possible Obama running mate, to stop taking Communion because of her 'actions in support of legalized abortion.'

But because Kmiec is a private citizen and has such a long history of embracing Catholic teaching on abortion, denying him Communion for political reasons may spark an even greater outcry inside the church.

Kmiec says he is grateful because the episode reminded him of the importance of the Eucharist in his spiritual life, and because he hopes it will alert others to the dangers of 'using Communion as a weapon.'

In a Feb. 23 op/ed piece in the Washington Post, former NCR Washington correspondent Joe Feuerherd summarized the message of “Faithful Citizenship” this way: “Tap the touch screen for a pro-abortion-rights candidate, and you’re probably punching your ticket to Hell.”

Gregory, however, said that’s not what “Faithful Citizenship” teaches. “Defending the right to life is obviously a primary concern,” Gregory said. “It’s the point of departure for everything else.”

Nonetheless, Gregory said, it is “at least possible” that a Catholic who carefully weighs the issues could decide that, on balance, a candidate who is not explicitly pro-life is preferable to one who opposes the legalization of abortion but who does not share Catholic positions on other matters of moral importance. Gregory was speaking in the abstract, without reference to any specific candidate. In that sense, Gregory said, “Faithful Citizenship” cannot be reduced to an absolute obligation to vote for a pro-life candidate, regardless of his or her stances on anything else.

“It’s a complicated document,” Gregory said. “It suggests that people have to think hard about their choices.”

Do you need help making up *your* mind? Do you want to know what the Church teaches, rather than what others will tell you about what the Church Teaches? Then, please visit these sites:

<http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/FCStatement.pdf>

<http://www.coc.org/election2008>

<http://www.networklobby.org/resources/index.html>

Published on Monday, June 2, 2008 by [The Boston Globe](#)

The War-Hero President and the Pacifist by James Carroll

‘I may not be able to see you,’ the partially blind, stroke-impaired Ted Sorensen told a crowd at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston last week, “but I have more vision than the president of the United States.” Over 1,000 people gathered to hear JFK’s speechwriter discuss his new book, “Counselor: A Life at the Edge of History.” Those who expected a satisfying draught of the old Kennedy mystique were not disappointed. In the conclusion to his book, Sorensen writes, “Today’s sorry political leadership, so

different from JFK's, spurred me on as I wrote, rekindling my memory and reinvigorating my conscience."

Sorensen draws credit as Kennedy's soaring wordsmith. But perhaps that vigorous conscience was more to the point than rhetorical flair. Coming of age during the unquestioned World War II, the young Nebraskan took for granted that he would serve in the army, but the war ended when he was 17. The next year, registering for the draft, Sorensen applied for noncombatant service as a conscientious objector. He would serve his country in the military, as a medic perhaps, but, he explained to the draft board, "I could kill no man . . . I am what is called a pacifist."

Sorensen's application for conscientious objector status would be used against Kennedy, would feature in Sorensen's secret FBI file, and, eventually, would destroy his chances of becoming Jimmy Carter's CIA director in 1976. An underappreciated fact of history is that Kennedy, remembered as the paradigmatic cold warrior, so intimately depended on a man who boldly renounced any glorification of belligerence. No surprise, then, that the most important Kennedy-Sorensen collaboration is equally unappreciated — the resounding declaration of peace that Kennedy delivered as a commencement address at American University 45 years ago next week.

After staring into the abyss of nuclear war over Berlin and Cuba, Kennedy chose that June as the "time and place to discuss a topic on which ignorance too often abounds and truth is too rarely perceived — yet it is the most important topic on earth: world peace." That speech went beyond the reviled Neville Chamberlain ("peace for our time") by calling for "not merely peace in our time, but peace for all time." Instead of aiming, with Woodrow Wilson, to "make the world safe for democracy," the speech proposed to "make the world safe for diversity," a step back from triumphalist claims made for American democracy during the Cold War.

Most momentously, the speech broke with the Cold War judgmentalism that always blamed the attitudes of the other side, proposing instead "that we must examine our own attitudes — as individuals and as a nation — for our attitude is as essential as theirs" in causing conflict. The speech rejected Cold War demonizing, for "no government

or social system is so evil that its people must be considered as lacking in virtue.” Here was an American president proclaiming the need for self-criticism, and affirming the possible goodness of the enemy.

In calling for new structures of international law and negotiations toward disarmament, and in declaring a moratorium on atmospheric nuclear testing, the American University speech marked the end of JFK’s rhetoric of toughness. “For in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s future. And we are all mortal.”

The speech was heard loud and clear in the Soviet Union. Little more than a month later, the Partial Test Ban Treaty was agreed to, the beginning of the arms control regime that saved the world — what Kennedy called a shaft of light cutting into the darkness.

Ted Sorenson was never more himself than in the work he did for the American University speech. Neither, he believes, was Kennedy. The journey of the war-hero president and the pacifist he trusted was a progression this nation desperately needs to resume. No accident that it was at American University in January that Senator Edward Kennedy endorsed Barack Obama. “A new leader and a new era are on the way,” Sorensen concludes in his book, and I will continue to fight, to write, and to hope.”

[James Carroll’s column appears regularly in the \(Boston\) *Globe*.](#)