



Roman Catholic Women Priests

"A New Model of Ordained Ministry in a Renewed Roman Catholic Church"



The mission of Roman Catholic Women Priests is to prepare, ordain in Apostolic Succession, and support primarily women who are called by the Holy Spirit and their communities to a renewed priestly ministry rooted in justice and faithfulness to the Gospel.

Advent 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

*Nearly two decades ago, a visionary movement was born on the Danube River with the ordination of the first Roman Catholic women priests in modern times. Since that miraculous day, more than 200 women worldwide have answered the call of prophetic obedience to the Spirit. **And our church is better, stronger, more inclusive, and more holy because of their ordinations.***

*This year, RCWP communities around the globe were called, once again, to prophetic leadership in the face of Covid-19. Inclusive, intentional Eucharistic communities transitioned from in-person churches to zoom liturgies. Our priests ministered to God's people via phone and video; praying, counseling, guiding, and in the spirit of Jesus, accompanying and blessing those who seek God in joy and in sorrow. Our communities have grown in creativity and support of one another. **And our committed presence as messengers and ambassadors of God's great love has served as an antidote to the loneliness and isolation created by the pandemic.** As you will read in this year's report, our work continues!*

*Even during this unusual year, more women are answering the call – we currently have **more than a dozen new inquirers and ten candidates** awaiting their diaconal ordinations! **God is so good, all the time.***

*While not everyone is called to priesthood, each of us is called to witness the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. **You are God's witnesses in this sacred work,** joining with us to build a renewed Roman Catholic Church.*

*On behalf of our priests and the communities in which they serve, I thank you. **And I invite you to make a financial gift to help us grow and sustain this life-giving ministry of the Church.** Your contribution makes our work possible. Thank you for your generous support.*

Wishing you grace and blessings this Advent and Christmas season,

Donna Burke

*Rev. Donna Burke, President
Roman Catholic Womenpriests-USA, Inc. Board of Directors Circle*



Kathy Schuck, Eastern Region, celebrating the baptism of baby Juliana!



Community members in the Great Waters Region celebrate Eucharist prior to Covid-19.



Eastern Region priests celebrate the Episcopal ordination of RCWP's newest Bishop Jean Marchant, June 2019

Awakening

Reflection by Bishop Jane Via, Western Region

At a September 2018 retreat, the Western Region began its anti-racism work. It was painful, grueling, and an awakening. We believed we weren't racist because we support equality and the empowerment of minority peoples. We were unaware of systemic racism, the extent of white privilege, and the disadvantages and harm people experience daily because they aren't white.

Our African American priest shared with us what it was like for her to be among us – and we were shocked to the core. Our retreat facilitator kept us focused on *our sister priest's* experience of discrimination and micro-aggression, *her* pain rather than ours. As a region, we committed to educate and expand our awareness about the myriad effects of systemic racism.

In May 2020 came the death of George Floyd. As we grappled with Covid-19, natural disasters, and deep political division in our country, several members of the region began to meet on Zoom, to further our awakening. As we begin to understand how racism is systematized in government, law, education our economy, culture and religion, we move toward action. ***How can RCWP become more racially inclusive? How can we encourage anti-racist work within and outside our parish communities?*** To date, our actions are small, but we have begun.

Diversity is a Divine invention, evident throughout creation. Jesus lived a life of radical inclusivity. In Jesus the Christ, all humanity is one. Radical inclusion is difficult to bring to life in a world fraught with division; but we strive to make our contribution to God's kin-dom. We hope you will join us in this important work.

RCWP Leading Justice-Building



Paula Hoeffler, Great Waters Region, getting into good trouble with the late Congressman John Lewis.



Juanita Cordero, Western Region, brings the blessings of ashes to God's people.



Beatitudes Catholic Community, Santa Barbara, CA: Vandenberg Air Force Base - Non-Nuclear Proliferation Protest

Pastoral Ministry in 2020, from Our Priests in Colombia

Reflections by María Elena Sierra and Judith Bautista Fajardo

Until March 16, when the Colombian authorities decreed a mandatory quarantine for all citizens, María Elena lived her ministry responding to the call of the community near the educational institution where she works as a teacher. During the quarantine, she has virtually supported many families by praying the Holy Rosary, celebrating funerals, and assuming a stronger spiritual leadership within the educational institution.



María Elena celebrates Eucharist with families.
María Elena celebra la Eucaristía con las familias.

Judith has continued the pastoral commitments she developed in Bogotá. Among them the human, educational, and pastoral accompaniment of university students, spiritual counseling to individuals and families, and Eucharistic celebrations in family homes. She also continued her commitment to Theologies and Diversities, an interreligious network that works for the inclusion of the LGBTI population in churches and the accompaniment of people living with HIV. During the quarantine, this work intensified through telephone or virtual spiritual interactions with people emotionally affected by the confinement, support to families with one or more members affected by Covid-19, and families dealing with grief and death.

We bless and thank the creator for allowing us a new year of human and ministerial service in the particular circumstances that accompanied this year worldwide.

Ministerio Pastoral en 2020, de Nuestros Sacerdotes en Colombia

Reflexiones por María Elena Sierra y Judith Bautista Fajardo



In order to spiritually support this time, Judith began sharing poetry, prayers, songs, and reflections on social media. Con el fin de apoyar espiritualmente este tiempo, Judith comenzó a compartir poesía, oraciones, canciones y reflexiones por las redes sociales.

Hasta marzo 16 cuando las autoridades de Colombia decretaron la cuarentena obligatoria para todos los ciudadanos, María Elena vivió su ministerio atendiendo al llamado de la comunidad cercana a la institución educativa donde trabaja como docente. Durante la cuarentena ha apoyado de manera virtual a muchas familias con el rezo del Santo Rosario, celebración de exequias y asumiendo un liderazgo espiritual más fuerte dentro de la institución educativa.

Judith ha continuado los compromisos pastorales que desarrollaba en Bogotá. Entre ellos el acompañamiento humano, educativo y pastoral a Jóvenes universitarios, asesoría espiritual a personas y familias y celebraciones eucarísticas en casas de familias. También continuó su compromiso con Teologías y Diversidades, una red interreligiosa que trabaja por la inclusión de la población LGBTI en las iglesias y el acompañamiento a personas que viven con VIH. Durante la cuarentena

esta labor se intensificó mediante acompañamiento espiritual y terapéutico telefónico o virtual a las personas afectadas emocionalmente por el confinamiento y apoyo espiritual a familias con algún miembro o varios afectados por el covid-19, y familias en duelo o procesos de muerte.

Bendecimos y damos gracias al padre creador por permitirnos un nuevo año de servicio humano y ministerial en las circunstancias particulares que acompañaron este año a nivel mundial.

Called by the Spirit

Reflection by Kori Pacyniak, Western Region, the last priest to be ordained before Covid-19



Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community welcomes new priest Kori Pacyniak!

It was a bright, warm, sunny, winter day in February when we gathered at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul in San Diego, overlooking Balboa Park. It was a day I had dreamed of for years and yet never imagined would actually happen. It was the day I – a non-binary, transgender individual – was ordained to the priesthood through RCWP by Bishops Jane Via and Suzanne Thiel, with family, friends, my parish community of Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community, and other guests in attendance. None of us knew that this would be one of the last times we would gather as such a large community in 2020.

Within weeks of my ordination, we in San Diego, like much of the U.S., found ourselves under shelter-in-place orders. In March, I was still a newly-ordained priest as our community found itself transitioning to online worship. Eight months later, we have settled into a rhythm of sorts, and mass via Zoom opens up as many doors as it closes. Although we cannot hug, although we cannot sing together, although we cannot link arms

as we pray or lay hands in anointing, we have discovered new ways of being in community together – through the phone and the internet, pre-recording music, using online clips, inviting guest speakers and homilists from afar. It has allowed us to welcome people who might not be local to us and forced us to become more comfortable with technology.

On that sunny day in February, when hands were laid upon me and my own hands were anointed, I did not envision saying mass over Zoom. I am fairly certain that none of us imagined that our priesthood would call us to this level of technological proficiency. But that is, perhaps, the crux of our vocation – sometimes it leads us to places we would not have dreamed of, places we might not desire to go. In discerning our vocation, we are asked to listen to the Spirit, to listen for the voice of God in the wilderness, calling us to venture to the margins, to those people and places that need us most.

When I came out as transgender, I was not sure where or how God was still calling me to the priesthood. I am grateful, however, that RCWP has welcomed me, in all of my transgender and non-binary nature, into the fold of its prophetic priesthood. As we move into 2021, let us continue to be open to the whisperings of the Spirit, to the new directions and new frontiers that the Spirit may lead us to.



Bishop Suzanne Thiel lays hands on Kori Pacyniak.

We invite you to support Renewal, Inclusivity, and Re-Imagining of the Church

Your gift will help nourish our growth and sustain our development in the following ways:

- Preparing candidates for ordination.
- Underwriting ordination events and activities.
- Developing ministerial, educational, social justice, and outreach programs.
- Producing publications and educational materials.
- Maintaining our website.

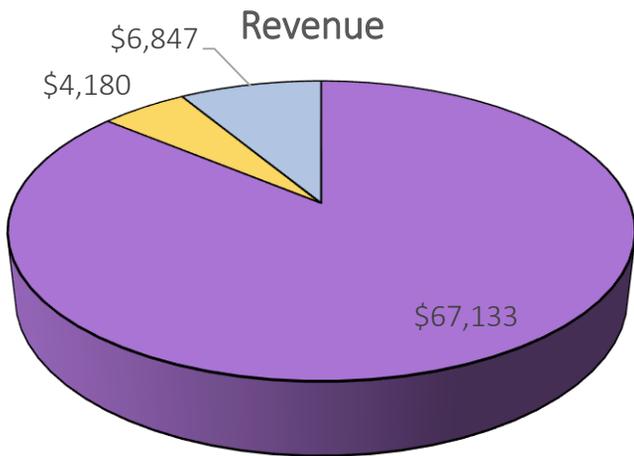
There are many ways to make your tax deductible contribution:

1. Visit our website www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org to make a secure gift via credit card.
2. Return your check, payable to RCWP-USA, using the enclosed envelope.
3. Contact us at rcwpusa@gmail.com to make a gift of appreciated securities.
4. Designate a gift to be disbursed from your Donor Advised Fund.
5. Make a tax-free transfer of funds from your IRA directly to RCWP.

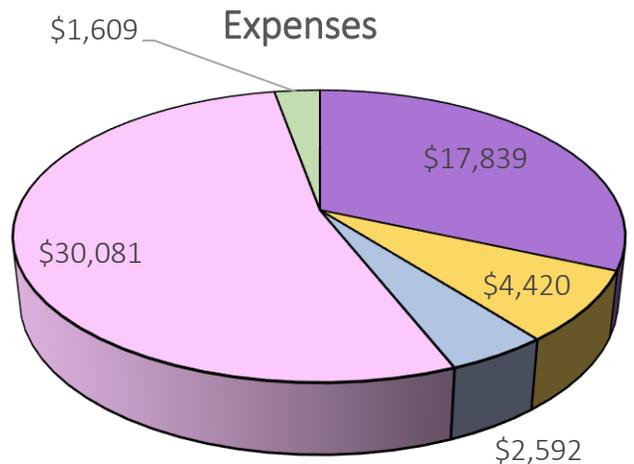
We are grateful for your support!

THANK YOU

RCWP by the Numbers, for the Fiscal Year Ending 06/30/2020



- Donations
- Preparation Income
- Retreat Income



- Administration
- Conferences, Meetings, Education
- Preparation & Ordinations
- Retreats
- Grants & Gifts

Zooming Right Along

Reflection by Marc Oleynick, St. Mary Magdalene Community, Drexel Hill, PA



Weekly zoom liturgies at St. Mary Magdalene regularly have 50-60 participants!

In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, the St. Mary Magdalene (SMM) community accomplished a small miracle: it complied with state mandated stay-at-home restrictions, and at the same time held the group together over Zoom.

We've adapted, and in a way, Zoom has saved us. One of the most distinctive aspects of the SMM community is its interactivity. We speak up during liturgy; we comment on the homilies; we take our time sharing the sign of peace. Zoom preserves these traditions. Yes, we miss real world socializing, but Zoom gives us access to a wider circle of friends, enabling community

members living in foreign countries and far-flung states to join. It's also a terrific tool for members with hearing difficulties, illnesses, and mobility constraints.

I believe Zoom is here to stay for our community, even after the pandemic ends. It's made us more inclusive. It takes us back to Christianity's humble beginnings: home services performed by a loving community, in which weakness becomes a source of strength.

A Call for Vocations!

Roman Catholic Womenpriests are at the forefront of a model of service that offers Catholics a renewed priestly ministry in vibrant grassroots communities where all are equal and all are welcome. Our members minister to God's People in many ways:

- Pastoring house and parish worship communities
- Presiding at Eucharistic liturgies
- Blessing sacramental occasions such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals
- Serving as chaplains to the sick and elderly
- Leading retreats and offering spiritual direction
- Serving the homeless, disabled and all who are vulnerable
- Marching and raising voices for justice

Do you know a woman who would make a good priest? Have you asked her?



"THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES AND TO THE COMMUNAL LIFE, TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD AND TO THE PRAYERS."

-SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER LECTIONARY TEXT

#ORDAINWOMEN