



Co-Responsibility in the Church

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WOMEN'S TASKFORCE REFLECTION AFTERNOON

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What is the Mission of the Church?

- ▶ To preach the Good news to all nations
 - ▶ In this role lay people – women and men – are EQUAL to the ordained
 - ▶ Fundamental to our effectiveness in achieving this is our relationship to Jesus and the Church

Encountering Jesus leads to discipleship

- ▶ Master, Where do you live? [Jn 1:38]
 - ▶ Come, follow me
- ▶ Encountering Jesus in the Church and in the Sacraments
 - ▶ Eucharist nourishes us for our journey
 - ▶ Baptism, Confirmation
 - ▶ Not just about belonging, but through these sacraments we are sent OUT
 - ▶ we are anointed for mission

Anointing

- ▶ Gives us a share in the role of prophet, priest and king – AS LAY PEOPLE – AS WOMEN
- ▶ In baptism all God's people are EQUAL
- ▶ Ordination circumscribes and limits the freedom we have as laity

Baptism & Confirmation

- ▶ In baptism and Confirmation we receive:
 - ▶ Sanctifying grace (for us to keep)
 - ▶ Charisms (for us to give away)
 - ▶ Supernatural gifts supernatural results
 - ▶ These sacraments equip us for our vocation as Christians
- ▶ Where is this vocation lived out?
 - ▶ In the world (cf Lumen Gentium)



Through baptism we are made **co-responsible** for the mission of the Church



▶ The future of the Church

“... demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as "collaborators" of the clergy but truly recognized as "co-responsible", for the Church's being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity.” *Benedict XVI*

Co-responsibility: working together as equals with a common baptism – distinct not the same roles

Ordained: Sacramental Priesthood: for the sake of the Church

- ▶ Authority confined to the Church
- ▶ Receive formation for mission
- ▶ Receptive to expertise of laity in the world
- ▶ Leadership in Church
- ▶ Make Christ present on the altar

People of God: Sharing Christ's Royal Priesthood: for the sake of the World

- ▶ Authority in the world
- ▶ Need formation for mission – which is distinctly for lay people
- ▶ Leadership in the world – represent the concerns of the world to the Church
- ▶ Make Christ present in the world

Dorothy Day

- ▶ 1897: Born Brooklyn, NY
- ▶ 1906: homelessness after San Francisco earthquake leaves lasting impression
- ▶ 1915-26: New York 'drifting years': leaves uni, journalist for socialist newspaper; Communist; string of love affairs, abortion
- ▶ 1926: Pregnant with only child; stirs feelings of redemption; embraces Catholicism; relationship with de facto, Forster Battingham ends
- ▶ Pacifist; opposes Nuclear weapons
- ▶ Involved in American Civil Rights movement
- ▶ 1965: travels to Rome to fast and pray during closing session of Vatican II
- ▶ 1973: Joins Cesar Chavez in campaigning for worker's rights
- ▶ 1980: dies in NY
- ▶ 2000: Cardinal O'Connor initiates cause for beatification
- ▶ Able to do all this because she acted as a layperson – she was not committing the whole Church to a particular course of action

Mission of the Laity

- ▶ *Bestowed* through Baptism & Confirmation
- ▶ Lived out in a uniquely *individual* way.
- ▶ Freer to *experiment* and *be innovative* than the ordained.
- ▶ Be prepared to take *risks*

Caroline Chisholm

First woman in Australia to

- Publish on a matter of social policy
 - *On Female Immigration* (1841)
- Take a case to court and win
 - Sued Captain and surgeon of *Carthiginian* for maltreatment of passenger
 - ‘most significant case in colony so far’
- Assist government by appearing before three enquiries on immigration

Caroline Chisholm

- ▶ Settled immigrant girls
- ▶ Returned to England and established FCLS
- ▶ Mother of 9 children
- ▶ Caroline and Archibald: Model of Christian Marriage
- ▶ Her work not supported by Archbishop Polding who did not understand that Australia was ready for the a social ministry led by women ... he did not have the language for the concept of her work
- ▶ Settled more than 11,000 people in Australia (Sydney was only a city of about 30,000 when she arrived in the late 1830s)
- ▶ Died in poverty

Woman of Faith

- ▶ *During the season of Lent of that year, I suffered much; but on the Easter Sunday, I was enabled, at the altar of our Lord, to make an offering of my talents to the God who gave them. I promised to know neither country nor creed, but to try and serve all justly and impartially.*
- ▶ Faith shapes action

Conclusion

- ▶ Co-responsibility for mission
 - ▶ Primarily in the world
 - ▶ Family
 - ▶ Work
 - ▶ Society
 - ▶ Also, but secondarily, in the Church
 - ▶ As lay ecclesial ministers – assists in the work of the ordained.
 - ▶ Laity are not primarily “Father’s helpers” They have their own specific role in the Church.
- ▶ All has its source in our relationship with Christ and his Church