



## **July 18, 2008 - Vicar General Comments and Archdiocese Statement on Organization Calling itself “Roman Catholic Womenpriests”**

In a message to the clergy of the Archdiocese and all Catholic faithful, the Vicar General for the Archdiocese of Boston, Fr. Richard Erikson states:

This weekend, July 18-20, 2008, the organization calling itself “Roman Catholic Womenpriests” is planning to hold a conference in Boston. As part of this gathering, the organization also plans to conduct ordination ceremonies for three women on Sunday, July 20th. The ceremonies will take place at a local Presbyterian Church and are intended to “ordain” three women as priests within the organization.

Roman Catholic Womenpriests is not an entity of the Roman Catholic Church.

Below is a statement from the Archdiocese of Boston, which you are free to share with your parishioners in the event that they have questions pertaining to these events.

I am also including an article I wrote for The Pilot in May 2007, which highlights the formative role of faithful and inspirational women in my life and in the life of the Church. In the article I stated, and I reaffirm today, “The women in ministry and leadership of the Catholic Church in Boston are one of the key reasons we are on the road to recovery.”

Blessings,

Very Reverend Richard M. Erikson, Ph.D., V.G.

Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia

For two thousand years, the Catholic Church has served to carry on the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church is made up of women and men, equal in rights and diverse in gifts and ministries. Following our devotion to Mary, the Church is committed to, and sustained by the many important contributions of women each and every day.

As members of our religious communities, lay members in leadership roles within the Church, educators, canon lawyers, and as pastoral and social service providers across many other critical areas, women are helping to shape the course of our Church in following the will of God. The ordination of men to the priesthood is not merely a matter of practice or discipline within the Catholic Church, but rather, it is part of the unalterable Deposit of Faith handed down by Christ through his apostles.

The organization calling itself “Roman Catholic Womenpriests” is not recognized as an entity of the Catholic Church. Catholics who attempt to confer a sacred order on a woman, and the women who attempt to receive a sacred order, are by their own actions separating themselves from the Church.

That said, the Catholic Church is prepared and eager to welcome back those who seek reconciliation. As a faith community rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus Christ, we pray for those who have willingly fallen away from the Church by participating in such activities. And, we pray that they find reconciliation through and comfort in the Catholic Church by willingly returning to the community of believers.

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### **Friday, May 18, 2007 edition of The Pilot**

*Blessed are we among women*

Father Richard Erikson

During this month devoted to Mary, I find myself reflecting on the many women God has placed in my life who have followed Mary’s example as faithful disciples of the Lord and as exemplars of faith and leadership. St. Augustine



stated Mary was even more blessed in being a disciple of the Lord than she was in being the mother of our Lord. We have so much to learn from Mary's discipleship and from those who have adopted Mary's way as their own. I offer a few reflections on some faithful women who have helped me throughout my life and I invite you to reflect on the women who have blessed your life.

I think of my mother every day. Three years ago she passed to the Lord. One of the primary reasons I am a Catholic Christian today is because of my mother's example and her teaching me the faith. She lived the promises she made at the baptism of her four children and was our first teacher in the ways of faith. She was the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what she said and did in Jesus Christ. My remembrances of my mother have taken on a new significance over the past 11 months, as my mother worked in the finance office at the chancery from 1987 to 1997. I can't help but look on our chancery workers with love and admiration, for when I see them, I see reflections of my mother.

God has blessed me particularly with two other women who showed a mother's love to me. In 1980, fresh out of college, I thought I was hiring a secretary when I took on a "senior aide" from the local agency on aging, but instead I gained a lifelong friend. Mrs. Madlyn Duquet became a key person in our efforts to enhance the care of nursing home residents in Massachusetts. She was the glue that kept our volunteers invested and motivated. When I went to the seminary, Madlyn became my "number one cheerleader" (her words). She continued to support me, as she would say, "every step of the way" as I engaged in various challenges in ministry. She never shined so bright as when I was deployed to Iraq in 2004 and she deployed an army of support and care for me and all the other troops. I proudly call Madlyn "my other mother."

In 1988, I moved to Southern California to begin a program of study in sociology. I knew very few people there, but Sister Ann Veronica Murphy all but adopted me. She was nearing the end of her work in active ministry at St. Monica's Parish in Santa Monica, but she prayed me through graduate studies and turned her care into action, as she became the primary proofreader of my dissertation and book. I called her "Eagle Eyes Ann." I had the privilege of presiding at her 50th and 60th jubilee celebrations and at her funeral Mass.

Throughout my life, my two sisters, Deborah Plumer and Carol Hernandez have been an inspiration and heroes to me. The depth of their personal and professional commitment continues to stun me. Both of these women juggle the challenges of home and work with extraordinary grace. I may not have a family of my own, but watching Deb and Carol has taught me a lot about fidelity, perseverance and the way families face the good times and the bad. I am a better priest, counselor and preacher because Deb and Carol have shared so freely from their life experiences.

And now, each day at the chancery, extraordinary women of faith and leadership surround me. Anything I have been able to accomplish as vicar general over the past 11 months is directly attributed to one of the greatest administrative assistants on this planet: Mrs. Felicia Forger. Earlier this month another woman who exemplifies Catholic faithfulness and professionalism, Mrs. Marie VanRemortel, joined our team as special assistant to the vicar general. The women in ministry and leadership of the Catholic Church in Boston are one of the key reasons we are on the road to recovery.

The congregation at daily Mass at the chancery is comprised of a core of faith-filled women. Often when I look at the congregation I think of so many other faith-filled women in our archdiocese: grandmothers, aunts, teachers, religious, caretakers, pastoral associates, wives, sisters and friends and I think to myself: Blessed am I among women.

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