



## GETTING READY FOR THE COMING AMERICAN CATHOLIC COUNCIL

A number of members of the International Board of ARCC have from the beginning several months ago been deeply involved in the creation and development of the American Catholic Council (ACC). The ACC has been brought into existence in conjunction with leaders from a number of the American Catholic reform organizations, including ARCC, VOTF, CTA, FutureChurch, Corpus—but also many more. The focus is, in the spirit of Vatican II, on making the governance of the Church more participatory, transparent, accountable, and law-not-boss-based.

Some were concerned that not every American Catholic will agree with all the positions of some Catholic reform groups, and hence will not come on board ACC. The response to that, legitimate, concern is that the aim of the ACC is sharply focused: Governance. That's it! "You" do not need to agree with all the articulated positions of Dignity, or Women's Ordination Conference, or Catholics for Free Choice, or Catholics United for the Faith.... to join with ACC's efforts to make every American Catholic's voice heard and respected.

"You," each of "you," however, must be involved in making this happen! And the "you" includes not only members of ARCC, but every Catholic in the United States—you see, we are being "modest" and are not presuming to plan what the rest of the Catholic world should do. Just us Americans! The ACC aims at utilizing every possible path and technology to make the voices of as many of "you" heard as possible. To begin, ACC has launched a web site: <http://american.catholiccouncil.org>. Go and look at it, and then add your voice by writing in and joining. Among other approaches, plans are being laid to have "hearings" around the country. However, the creative, energetic participation of all the "you"s is needed to make the "democratization" (that is, "people-ization") of the American Catholic Church a reality.

Don't be like the mythical Rabbi Sol who desperately wanted to win the lottery just once in his life. He prayed to God fervently for years before each selection, but never won. He then took to complaining to God in his prayers: "Most Holy One,

not even once....?" Finally, the clouds parted, and God thundered: "Sol, give me a break! Buy a ticket!"

Let's hear from each of you —by writing an email to me ([dialogue@temple.edu](mailto:dialogue@temple.edu))— about the creative ways you are going to activate yourself and the other Catholics around you to make your/their voices heard!

Leonard Swidler, President

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: IS "VISITATION" WITCH-HUNT BY ANOTHER NAME?

It's not exactly a surprise to regular readers of *ARCC Light* that, while respecting his intelligence and erudition, I am not enamored of Pope Benedict XVI, his views or many of his associates. I restate this obvious fact here in the interest of open disclosure: while I will try very hard to be as journalistically fair as possible, I recognize that I have a bias.

Having said that, the occurrence of three major visitations being carried out by the Vatican at the same time is too unusual not to invite comment and even some speculation, some of it perhaps unfavorable.

One visitation is frankly very wise. The rise of the Legionaries of Christ and its lay arm, *Regnum Christi*, was surprisingly rapid and not without worrisome aspects. The authoritarian Polish Pope, John Paul II, seems to have found a kindred soul in the authoritarian Mexican founder of a large group of almost unquestioningly obedient priests who looked and thought in an amazingly similar manner and who solemnly vowed to report any criticism of a superior, especially "the Founder." Thus, accusations of the Founder's penchant for pedophilia with his young seminarians could be squelched both legally and within the rules of the Order. Cookie-cutter Legionaries became more and more prominent in Vatican media and PR works, as well as getting choice parishes and the running of seminaries. Pope John Paul II consistently stonewalled any serious Vatican investigation of the pedophile charges against Maciel, virtually to the day of his death. Interestingly, and to his credit, it was JP II's successor, the present Pope Benedict XVI, who reopened the stymied investigations and almost immediately found the evidence against the Founder overwhelming. Maciel

was forbidden to say Mass, speak or preach in public, and was invited to retire to a life of prayer and penance. Since no formal verdict, complete with charges, was announced, the Order was able to portray the silencing as yet another cross to be borne by the saintly Founder. The same could not be done with the next scandal.

In February 2009, the Legionaries announced to the world on their website that Maciel had fathered a child, a girl, out of wedlock. There was no attempt to silence the story and it appears that many of the Legionaries were stunned, to say the least. Commentators began to wonder if the Legion should be disbanded or if it might simply implode on its own. Some leaders within the Legion appear to have requested some kind of Vatican intervention, and when the Vatican's planned visitation was made public, they seemed relieved, to say the least. While this might be pure p.r. for appearances' sake, an evaluation by clerics outside the order could be helpful in deciding how the Legion should proceed. A favorable report by the Vatican would probably be the only hope the Legion has to regain some credibility, which is of no small import to both the Legion and the Vatican, as intertwined as they have become in the public eye.

"Wise" is definitely not the word that immediately springs to mind in relation to the Apostolic Visitation of U.S. Women Religious that the Vatican announced last December. All of the women's congregations in the U.S., with the exception of cloistered, contemplative orders, will be examined to determine their "quality of life" and to try to understand why American women's religious vocations have decreased from an all-time high of 180,000 in 1965 to approximately 68,000 today. Visitations have always been of specific orders in response to specific situations. Why such a broad visitation now? The Vatican works slowly, but that such a question on a massive downturn in vocations would only occur to the Vatican after 45 years strains one's credulity. What makes that explanation all the more unconvincing is that Pope John Paul II ordered a visitation of U.S. religious orders which was conducted in 1983-86 under the direction of Archbishop John Quinn. The Quinn Commission concluded "Religious life in the United States is in good condition." No, the reasons are likely to be found elsewhere.

The visitation of American women's religious orders was officially set in motion by Franc Cardinal Rodé, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the

Vatican congregation with jurisdiction over religious and religious orders. Some of Cardinal Rodé's view of American religious was clear in a talk he gave at a symposium on Apostolic Life last September near Chicago. Cardinal Rodé deplored the remnants of what he called an "outmoded liberal feminism" and he called on American sisters to leave this feminism behind. His basic view of American religious was not positive. "Despite [its] past greatness and present vitality we know . . . that all is not well with religious life in America."

The Visitation of religious orders will be carried out by a team headed by Mother Clare Millea of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus assisted in the area of public relations by Sister Eva-Maria Ackerman of the Franciscans of the Martyr St. George. They are in two of the newer and more traditional congregations. The process will have four phases: first, Mother Clare will solicit information on orders from superiors in person, either in Rome or in the United States; second, superiors will be asked for specific information: statistics, activities, goals, community practices, etc.; third, there will be selected on-site visits by members of the commission—selected by the visitors; finally, a report will be written for Cardinal Rodé. Ironically, there is no central listing of all the religious orders and congregations in the U.S., so there is no way of knowing if all American women religious will be examined.

Anyone who finds the "what is the quality of life in American convents" explanation a bit weak on its own might well find a link with the Vatican's latest "visitation" a more likely additional motive. On February 20, 2009, William Cardinal Levada, Pope Benedict's favorite student and handpicked successor as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, (formerly known as the Holy Office) penned a letter to the officers of the Leadership Conference for Women Religious (the LCWR) announcing a forthcoming "doctrinal assessment." The LCWR's 1500 members represent approximately 95% of the women religious in the United States. The other, much more conservative, 5% of American women religious are represented by the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious.

Cardinal Levada stated in his letter and in a subsequent conversation with the officers of the LCWR that the CDF was concerned most of all with its progress toward compliance - or lack thereof - in three theological areas: the position of the Church on the ordination of women as priests, as set forth in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994); the centrality of Christ for salvation, as set forth in *Dominus Iesus* (2000); and

the Church's position on homosexuality, as set forth by then-Cardinal Ratzinger in a letter to the world's bishops in 1986. In a Press Release issued immediately after their conversation with Cardinal Levada, the LCWR said, among other things, that although it had no specific information on what questions the CDF might have, it would of course comply with its requests. The LCWR also said it regretted to learn that the Committee on Doctrine of the Bishops' Conference had a hand in requesting the inquiry.

Interestingly, the doctrinal assessment will be conducted by Bishop Leonard P. Blair, bishop of Toledo, Ohio, and a member of the USCCB's Committee on Doctrine. A glance at Toledo, Ohio's diocesan website relates some of Bishop Blair's recent positions, and give a hint of his theological orientation. This year he ordered the Superior of the Sisters of Saint Francis to cancel a scheduled three-day workshop with New Ways Ministry, which ministers to homosexuals, as well as writing a strong letter against Notre-Dame's invitation to President Obama to speak at commencement. He also seems to be a supporter, along with Archbishop Raymond Burke, of Our Lady of America, a devotion based on a private revelation to a woman in Ohio, of the wish of the Virgin Mary for a statue in the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC and a new devotion to her with statues of Mary as Our Lady of America. When approached by the press, Bishop Blair refused to comment on the forthcoming doctrinal assessment of the LCWR. One would assume that he is likely to interpret the Vatican's positions quite strictly.

The deck certainly seems to be stacked in favor of critical reports on American women religious and the Leadership Conference for Women Religious based on the announced topics and the previous positions of the people conducting the investigations and writing the reports. It is, of course, possible that the Vatican will not make the reports public but, given the tones of animosity already voiced on both sides, it seems unlikely that we won't at the very least have massive "leaks." One example of the kind of thing to be expected was when the highly respected theologian, Sister Sandra Schneider, IHM, suggested in private emails to friends that sisters "passively resist" the investigations and not give the investigators ammunition to throw back at them in their reports. The emails were leaked to the *National Catholic Reporter*, which asked Sister Schneider if they could be published. She agreed and the entire matter was

revealed in an article in the *NCR*. One cannot assume that in the future every newspaper or blog will have the decency of the *NCR* and ask before printing.

Conservative Catholic blogs have been rejoicing over the visitations of women's orders and the LCWR. (Interestingly, rather little attention seems to be given in the press to the Legionnaires' visitation.) George Weigel, the darling of the American Catholic right wing, called Sister Schneider a heretic in his blog and insisted that she and any dissenters who agreed with her views were in schism from the Church. The blog of the British Telegraph crowed "Great News: Vatican to Investigate America's bossy feminist nuns."

Mother Millea originally estimated that the entire process of the Visitation would take about two years, including the writing of reports. She announced recently that she had already met with almost 40% of the superiors. In mid-May, Mother Millea sent a letter to all Superiors of American orders inviting them to send her up to three names of religious of their or other congregations who would be suitable to assist in the on-site visits phase of the Visitation. On the face of it, that sounds very positive, as an opening of the process to volunteers from among the visitees. But, there is a catch, a potentially serious catch. As members of the Visitation team, these additional religious will be representatives of the Holy See: therefore, they will have to take the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity taken by teachers, pastors, deacons and bishops. Since these texts are a little difficult to find, we reprint them here. This is the 1998 version written by then-Cardinal Ratzinger (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFOATH.HTM>):

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PROFESSION OF FAITH and THE OATH OF FIDELITY ON ASSUMING AN OFFICE TO BE EXERCISED IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH  
 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

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As conforming to Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio Ad Tuendam Fidem*, this Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity supercedes the Profession and Oath of 1989.

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#### I. PROFESSION OF FAITH

I, N., with firm faith believe and profess everything that is contained in the Symbol of faith: namely:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from

true God, begotten not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgement or by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed.

I also firmly accept and hold each and everything definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.

Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise their authentic Magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim these teachings by a definitive act.

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## II. OATH OF FIDELITY ON ASSUMING AN OFFICE TO BE EXERCISED IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH

*(Formula to be used by the Christian faithful mentioned in Canon 833, nn. 5-8)*

I, N., in assuming the office of, promise that in my words and in my actions I shall always preserve communion with the Catholic Church.

With great care and fidelity I shall carry out the duties incumbent on me toward the Church, both universal and particular, in which, according to the provisions of the law, I have been called to exercise my service.

In fulfilling the charge entrusted to me in the name of the Church, I shall hold fast to the deposit of faith in its entirety; I

shall faithfully hand it on and explain it, and I shall avoid any teachings contrary to it.

I shall follow and foster the common discipline of the entire Church and I shall maintain the observance of all ecclesiastical laws, especially those contained in the Code of Canon Law.

With Christian obedience I shall follow what the Bishops, as authentic doctors and teachers of the faith, declare, or what they, as those who govern the Church, establish.

I shall also faithfully assist the diocesan Bishops, so that the apostolic activity, exercised in the name and by mandate of the Church, may be carried out in communion with the Church.

So help me God, and God's Holy Gospels on which I place my hand.

(Variations in the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the formulary, for use by those members of the Christian faithful indicated in can. 833, n. 8).

I shall foster the common discipline of the entire Church and I shall insist on the observance of all ecclesiastical laws, especially those contained in the Code of Canon Law.

With Christian obedience I shall follow what the Bishops, as authentic doctors and teachers of the faith, declare, or what they, as those who govern the Church, establish. I shall also — with due regard for the character and purpose of my institute — faithfully assist the diocesan Bishops, so that the apostolic activity, exercised in the name and by mandate of the Church, may be carried out in communion with the Church.

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NOTE: Canon 833, Nos. 5-8 obliges the following to make the profession of faith: vicars general, episcopal vicars and judicial vicars; "at the beginning of their term of office, pastors, the rector of a seminary and the professors of theology and philosophy in seminaries; those to be promoted to the diaconate"; "the rectors of an ecclesiastical or Catholic university at the beginning of the rector's term of office"; and, "at the beginning of their term of office, teachers in any universities whatsoever who teach disciplines which deal with faith or morals"; and "superiors in clerical religious institutes and societies of apostolic life in accord with the norm of the constitutions."

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Among other things, these oaths bind the individual to uphold the kind of non-defined positions some excellent theologians have dubbed "creeping infallibility." And the Profession clearly binds for the individual's life, not just for the term of the particular assignment. It is a very neat way of assuring total compliance with whatever the "Magisterium" wishes to say, even to the point of not being able to disagree with an individual bishop.

Taking all of the above into consideration, John Allen's comment on the reaction of some women religious to the visitations and assessment might qualify as the Catholic understatement of the year: "When news of a Vatican 'investigation' drops essentially out of the clear blue sky, with no prior conversation about its motives or scope, the subjects of that investigation will naturally be on edge." One certainly cannot blame American sisters for feeling apprehensive at being the subjects of a hierarchical "double whammy" despite being ruled "in good condition" after a three-year examination in the 1980s. And, given the contributing role of the American bishops in requesting an investigation, could it possibly be that they want the 68,000 sisters in the U.S. to behave more like a humble, submissive body of cheap, unquestioning labor waiting for their lords to tell them what to do rather than intelligent, educated, and dedicated members of the People of God? Such a goal would explain why there seem to be so many intimidation factors in these investigations: multiple simultaneous inquiries; the participation of the CDF when a committee of the Bishops' Conference obviously has sufficient jurisdiction; creating a new entity, a doctrinal assessment, with its implication of the possibility of a finding of heresy, under the cloak of a Visitation; and the attempt to impose extremely restrictive professions of faith and loyalty oaths on anyone even helping in the visits. Make way for the big guns!

Pope Benedict has indicated on more than one occasion that he would be comfortable with a smaller, "purer" Church. If he continues his policies, he might get his wish.

Christine M. Roussel

REVIEW OF GARY MACY, *THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION: FEMALE CLERGY IN THE MEDIEVAL WEST* (OXFORD, 2008)

Gary Macy, who is a prominent, respected historian and theologian teaching at Santa Clara University, has written a meticulously scholarly work on an important

period of transition, approximately the sixth through the thirteenth centuries, which brought an end to the nearly one thousand years in which women ministered as bishops, priests, and deacons in the Catholic Church, and the amazingly rapid burying of the fact that those female sacerdotal ministries ever existed.

This is, needless to say, a very important topic today - whether women were ever ordained Catholic ministers. One would expect to find reviews and discussions of this book in every major Catholic publication.

Surprise! Surprise! There are interesting and laudatory reviews of this book in university journals, Anglican journals, publishing houses' notices, a long and insightful analysis by Phyllis Zagano in the Jesuit-sponsored *Theological Studies*, and reviews in the journals of the so-called "dissident" groups such as FutureChurch, Women's Ordination Conference, and RCWP (Roman Catholic Women Priests), but not one in the mainstream non-academic Catholic journals: *America*, *Commonweal*, or the *Tablet*. There is one small, cautiously-written paragraph buried in a summer issue of the *National Catholic Reporter*.

Lest anyone doubt it, censorship, intellectual duress and political pressure are alive and functioning in the Catholic Church of our supposedly intellectual recent popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. In 1994, John Paul II, seconded by the present pope, Benedict XVI, proclaimed in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* that the Church had never ordained women, did not have the power to do so, and that the question was closed: it was not even to be discussed. And so now, fifteen years later, these prominent respected publications dare not even review and discuss a book on the topic. Are we really in the 21st century or the 13th? The Papacy has never, to my knowledge, had the canonical power to forbid discussion of a subject.

In keeping with its purpose and the spirit of its name, the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church, will review and assess this book, and it makes no apologies for doing so. Catholics have the right to information. The free exchange of knowledge is the lifeblood of a free society.

As Zagano says so aptly in her review, Macy's book is a tour de force. This is not an exaggeration, for Macy's care and scholarship are awesome.

Macy's book is 260 pages long, of which 130 pages are text and 130 pages are substantiating materials: these include 25 pages containing the entire Latin texts of the Rites for the Ordination of a Deaconess and several rites for the Ordination of

Abesses. It also contains 80 pages of detailed notes relating to the relevant secondary materials and reproducing a great deal of original source material, mostly in Latin. Macy has unearthed a great deal of valuable source material, and he believes there is a great deal more waiting to be found.

Some readers, especially non-historians or non-theologians, may find Macy's book a bit difficult to read. This is not because it is poorly written—quite the contrary—but because it is dense and extremely thorough. The scope of Macy's research and his command of the sources is breathtaking.

Macy's purpose, as he states it, is

"This study is concerned first and foremost with the historical question whether women were ordained in the past, that is to say, whether they were considered ordained by their contemporaries according to the definition used at that time." (5)

But, given the current theological view of the Catholic Church:

"The purpose of this book is to help uncover how it happened that women came to be considered as incapable of ordination. Implied in this question is the broader question of whether the definition of ordination changed in such a way that it excluded women, and, if so, how it changed." (6)

Although one cannot do justice to Macy's discussion and analysis in a review, a basic summary is that from the earliest years of the Church until the 12th century

" . . . ordination in the ancient church did not involve the conferral of priestly power but was rather the installation (ordinatio) into a new job or position (ordo) in the church. Ordination was not limited to the priesthood and so was less sacramental than functional. (16)

The scholar Marie-Joseph Aubert, building on the analysis of one of the greatest ecclesiologists of our time, Yves Congar, wrote

"Theologians pose themselves the question if eastern deaconesses received the sacrament. In fact, this would be reading an ancient institution using a much later frame of analysis . . . . (15)

"The continued use of the word "ordination" (in Latin, *ordinatio*) for rites of initiation into Christian ministries gives the illusion of perfect continuity. Yet for men and women ordination had a far different meaning for the first half of Christian history than it would come to have in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries." (15-16)

". . . Further, the terms ordination, benediction, and consecration were used nearly interchangeably, and only after the change did theologians and canonists distinguish between non-sacramental consecration reserved, for instance, for religious women and sacramental ordination reserved exclusively for priests and deacons." (30)

This "change" was the concentration of the power to confect the Eucharist and eventually, the concentration of all the sacraments into the hands of the priest. By the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, its creed declared on transubstantiation:

"And this sacrament no one can effect except the priest who has been duly ordained in accordance with the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ Himself gave to the Apostles and their successors." (46) (All of whom were men.)

The great Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx situated the change to giving a spiritual power to the priest without appointment to a particular congregation to the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils (1179 and 1215). He saw it as rooted in the feudal system and concepts of jurisdiction from newly-discovered Roman Law. (31)

I found this passage from Schillebeeckx particularly powerful:

"The priesthood was seen more as 'a personal state of life,' a 'status' than as a service to the community; it was personalized and privatized. . . . a priest is ordained in order to be able to celebrate the eucharist; in the ancient church it is said that he is "appointed" as minister in order to be able to appear as leader to build up the community, and for this reason he was also the obvious person to reside at the Eucharist. . . . it is a narrower legalistic version of what the church believed." (31-2)

The restriction of priesthood to men only was a gradual process over this period. Tracing it is complicated by the additional question of the functions of Deaconesses and of Abbesses who kept some symbols and rites beyond service at parish altars. From the early twelfth century, masters of the Schools of Paris, Chartres, and Laon began to copy ideas revising St. Paul's comments on women deacons which they thought were written by St. Ambrose of Milan. They were not, but that is a relatively modern determination. Other writings extremely restrictive of women appeared more and more frequently, some of them the misogynous laments of small Merovingian and Carolingian councils. Eventually, during various medieval reform periods, these became seen as

descriptive of all the Church of those periods, rather than the expressions of small local gatherings.

Canon lawyers and theologians began to believe in the course of the thirteenth century and beyond that women had never been ordained priests or deacons, and abbesses were another order. If women had never been ordained, it was for good reasons: they were not serious, truthful, trustworthy or wise: God was protecting His Church. So women had never been truly ordained: those records had been anomalies or misunderstood. As the view of women of the High Middle Ages developed, more reasons were given why ordination and service at the altar were above women. Add to all this Aristotle who became very influential in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and his view that men were far more perfect than women. Gratian wrote in his *Decretum*

"This image of God exists in the male that he might be made the one from whom all others originate having the dominion of God; in some sense as His representative as he has the image of the one God. And therefore woman is not created in the image of God. (121)

Macy's focus in this book is on the existence and then exclusion of women from ordination, but this process also affected laymen and nobles who had been considered "ordained" in the earlier Middle Ages. Macy's conclusion is interesting.

"In earlier centuries . . . kings, queens, emperors and empresses were considered ordained. They too were laicized by default when the new definition reduced ordination to those who serve at the altar. The debate then was not so clearly between clerics and laity, but rather who was going to decide what constituted clergy and laity. The issue was power. . . . All sacramental power was consolidated into the hands of the presbyterate, and the presbyterate defined itself to be exclusively male and celibate. Laity were defined as married, female (at least in relation to the power of the priest) and dependent on the priesthood for their salvation. . . . This was not a simple, well-planned and crude grab for power. The reformers believed that they were purifying the church. They believed that they were merely enforcing laws long in place, but long ignored. . . . They believed that scripture supported their position and that this is what God wanted and what God intended." (126)

Some readers may find the depth of the analysis of texts in this study a bit daunting. Macy is open, careful, and meticulous in his methodology. In analyzing all the crucial texts for ordination of male

and female bishops, abbots, priests and deacons, for example, he translates and evaluates the key terms in every way critics could raise, examining and evaluating every possible translation and interpretation. Once he has eliminated every variant or objection, his case that women were indeed ordained, as that was understood in pre-thirteenth century theology, is absolutely ironclad. Macy takes on the conservatives' own arguments and demolishes them. This makes for occasionally difficult reading but irrefutable conclusions.

This is an important book, an important contribution to a burning question. It is not the final word on this topic nor is it meant to be. Macy's hope is clearly that other scholars will follow up on his insights, and most of all that they will diligently work to unearth the source materials still buried in archives, monasteries, and libraries all over Europe and the middle East. But, even at this stage, which Macy considers unfinished, his materials and analysis show the great weakness of Rome's sloppy, over-simplistic, prejudice-driven pronouncements on women's ordination.

May this excellent, groundbreaking book have many readers and many, many children.

Christine M. Roussel

### Report on the Spring Meeting of the ARCC Board of Directors

The ARCC Board of Directors held their Spring meeting on April 24-26 in Washington DC. Sandra Bellon was elected to the board. Sandra has an MBA and is retired from the Human Relations area of a large corporation. She directs retreats and is active in a large St. Louis parish. She will add her real-world business skills and grass-roots parish experience to help us address the needs of Catholic in the pew. Welcome Sandra, and thank you for your willingness to serve.

Reports were made on the four goals established at the Fall 2008 meeting:

1. Design and distribute instruments enabling Catholics to express their perspectives and empower them to be prophets, especially in parishes and ecclesial communities.
2. Develop and/or recommend materials that foster a spirituality of reform.
3. Provide full support for the American Catholic Council project, its planning and implementation.
4. Identify forms of violence in the Church and develop non-violent responses. Ways to package and distribute ARCC materials were proposed to address goals

No.1&2. This also included efforts to distribute the Bishop Geoffrey Robinson book, *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Proclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*, and the newly available DVD of his presentation.

Considerable time was spent discussing ARCC's contribution to the pending American Catholic Council (ACC) and our recommendations. Suggestions included having the Detroit Conference in 2012 as opposed to 2011 to allow more preparation time and also to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. We suggested to the planning group of the ACC that a Constitution for the Catholic Church be a major theme of the Conference as a means of insuring lasting reforms and on which ARCC has already done much work (see the ARCC web site for extensive details of a Proposed Constitution for the Church).

ARCC will establish a web page to document and list the incidence of mental and spiritual

violence in the Church where rights and actual survival of Catholics have been ignored or disregarded. More information on this list and where you might post examples will come later.

The meeting ended Saturday evening to allow the guest of honor and board members to participate in a special celebration in honor of Dr. Leonard Swidler's 80th birthday and his outstanding accomplishments on Sunday afternoon at Temple University in Philadelphia. ARCC is very proud and privileged to have Professor Swidler as our president. Congratulations, Len and hope to be around for the 90th.

Robert Schutzius, Secretary

ARCC *Light* is published by the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church. For membership information, contact ARCC, 3150 Newgate Drive, Florissant, MO 63033, send email to [ARCC@ARCCsites.org](mailto:ARCC@ARCCsites.org), or visit our website, <http://ARCCsites.org/>. Suggested donations are \$25.00 per year.  
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