



National Association for an Inclusive Ministry www.corpus.org

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Priesthood serves the People of God by bringing healing and hope through sacramental celebration and pastoral care. It is God's People who must discern their leaders and it is the bishops of the Church who are called to validate this in the normal course of events. When that validation is withheld for reasons which have nothing substantial to do with ministry, then the baptized community must call bishops to respect biblical norms and Gospel imperatives. The life of a community and of the Eucharist cannot be held hostage to Church policies which undermine them. A baptized community has a human and evangelical right to community, pastoral care and Eucharistic celebration.

For these reasons, CORPUS stands in solidarity with those ordained women who followed their calling and were selected for priesthood when bishops rejected them. When rejection is based on weak theological reasons and on a refusal to dialogue with or hear these women, then the community must act against what it sees as an injustice, indeed discrimination, and behavior which Christ could not endorse.

To excommunicate all these women, "latae sententiae", automatically, without a hearing and due process, is the mark of a frightened and absolutist leadership. No democracy or humane government in the world employs its harshest penalty automatically against its citizens, without due process, redress, appeal, open courtrooms, judicial restraint and equity. It astonishes us that a Church we love can act in so desperate and destructive a manner. We, therefore, in the conviction that the future church will find this action shameful and unworthy, stand in solidarity with our sisters who seek to serve God's People and are treated as criminals. They are branded as sinners to be excluded from the very sacramental life of the Church which their ordination was intended to make more abundantly available. Irony is too weak a word to describe this; tragedy is a more accurate description.