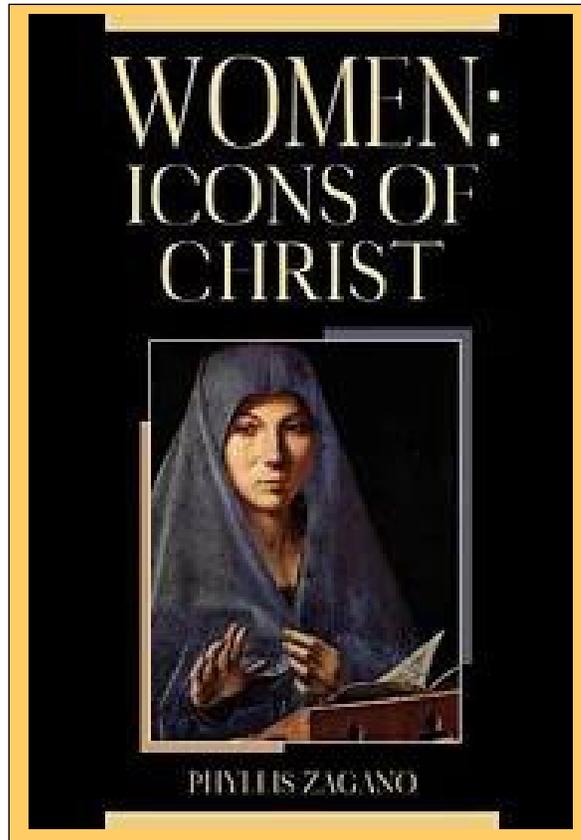


***Women: Icons of Christ***  
**By Phyllis Zagano**



**Reflection and Study Guide**  
**Donna L. Ciangio, OP**

## Acknowledgements

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Scripture texts in this work are taken from the  
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)  
unless otherwise noted.

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## How to Use This Study Guide

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**Women: Icons of Christ** offers a way to explore the history of the ministry of women deacons in the Church and presents some questions surrounding the restoration of women to the ordained diaconate today.

The purpose of this *Reflection and Study Guide* is to help the reader digest and reflect on the materials presented in the book. This *Study Guide* is best used for group discussion, with the expectation that each group member will read and prepare ahead of time. The group can decide on how many sessions it might need to complete the book and the *Study Guide* questions.

**Women: Icons of Christ** has five chapters, an introduction, and conclusion, and each chapter has sub-chapters. *Study Guide* reflection questions can assist in reading and discussing the material. While the *Study Guide* is aimed at group discussion, it is also an effective tool for individual study.

**Women: Icons of Christ** is a groundbreaking book in which Dr. Zagano has documented the history of the ministries of women deacons and the need for them today in a changing world. The deacon is called to an ordained, non-priestly ministry of the Word, the liturgy, and charity. The hope is that the *Reflection and Study Guide* will help you participate more fully in the Church's ongoing discussions about women in the diaconate.

### Timing of the Group

The group should meet for about one and one-half hours for at least six sessions. Virtual sessions, using Zoom or a similar program, can be used effectively.

### Facilitators

Having a facilitator or co-facilitators for the group is suggested. The facilitator who creates a welcoming and prayerful atmosphere will help members participate, keep the group focused, and monitor time. The facilitator should choose key questions from each chapter to deepen the conversation and keep the discussion moving. Key questions can re-focus groups that may stray off the topic.

### Group Members

Group members share responsibility with the facilitator for each session. Members should participate, listen, and allow others to participate fully. Meeting space should be comfortable and allow all participants to participate in the discussion. The facilitator also needs to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

### Reflection/Study Questions

Each chapter in this *Reflection and Study Guide* contains many questions intended to help participants get the most out of reading the book. Each chapter is very dense with information, and the questions provide a guide to get the most out of each section. The groups need not discuss each question; the facilitators and group members should select a few to guide the discussion. The page numbers listed before each set of questions refer to the pages for that particular topic.

### The Glossary

It can be helpful to quickly review the glossary at the back of the *Study Guide* before beginning discussion so that everyone understands the terminology in the book and the *Study Guide*.

**Prepare Ahead**

Group members should prepare each chapter in advance of each session by reading and reflecting on the given chapter and questions. This ensures good discussion and full participation.

**Sharing in the Group**

Each person is invited to share and contribute, but no one is forced to speak. It is important that everyone who wants to speak be given an opportunity to participate in the sharing. It can be helpful to ask group members to share once and then wait until everyone has had the opportunity to speak before speaking again. Be careful to listen to each other.

**Keeping Focused**

From time to time, it can be helpful to say, *“Let’s look at the question (or topic) again to see if we are really getting to the heart of the matter.”* If one person dominates or presents himself or herself as an “expert,” the facilitator (or even other group members) may gently remind the group of its primary purpose and redirect the conversation. For example, *“That’s very true”* or *“You’ve really thought about that - let’s hear what others have to say.”*

**Evaluation**

The facilitator should help the group evaluate each session. Key learning and evaluation questions are at the end of each session. It is also a good idea for the facilitator or another group member to contact those who could not make the meeting to let them know they were missed and encourage them to come the next week.

**Prayer**

Each section has three parts: (1) gathering prayer; (2) ice breaker; (3) discussion. If you would like to begin prayer with a song or meditative music, choose according to the discussion topics. You may wish to create a prayerful environment with a candle, a bible, and a seasonal cloth or symbol to enhance the call to prayer.

**A Word about Confidentiality**

What is said in the group stays in the group! People grow in their depth of sharing as the trust level grows in the group, so each member should show the utmost respect for each other and for God who lives in each person. Respect each other by commitment to the meeting time and by honoring the personal stories and thoughts that are shared.

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## Session One: Introduction to the Book

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### Welcome and Purpose of the Gatherings

Facilitator

**Introductions:** Your name, family, ministry, parish – Why did you join this discussion group?

**Ice Breaker:** Who are the women in your life who have had the most effect on your life and faith? Why?

### Gathering Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the Hearts of Your faithful  
and enkindle in us the Fire of Your love.

Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be recreated  
—And You will renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

God, Creator of all women and men,  
you have created us to know  
and live in your truth.

Give us your vision, so that through us,  
you will indeed renew the face of the earth.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.



Woman at Prayer - Cristiano Museum, Vatican  
(Wikimedia Commons/Miguel Hermoso Cuesta)

### Scripture **Luke 8:1-3 (NAB)**

Afterward [Jesus] journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources.

### Loving God,

We gather in the name of all the women  
who have ministered in the Church for centuries.  
Their dedication to Jesus was from the very beginning.  
In their name we gather tonight to remember  
and to move forward in ministry in the Church.  
Amen.

## *Introduction Study Questions*

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### **Icons**

Iconographers speak about writing an icon rather than painting an icon. Icons are meant to reflect Scripture and relate the meaning of the passage or the strength and spirituality of a person through images. Iconographers spend time in prayer meditating and being one with the Scripture or saint they wish to portray. It is said that icons contain grace and spiritual powers for those who pray with them.

1. What does being an icon of Christ mean?
2. Who is an icon of Christ for you? Explain.
3. How do you see yourself as an icon of Christ?
4. Half of the Church population is female, yet in some ways the Church teaches that women cannot image Christ. What does that say to you?
5. How aware are you of the plight of women in many places around the world? What can and should the Church do to protect the rights of women?
6. How aware are you about the roles women played in the early Church? What would help you to learn more about them?
7. Jesus had women followers and disciples. Can the Church today accept that Jesus, the apostles and Paul, and other disciples chose women as ministers? Why or why not?
8. Pope Francis often speaks about the importance of having women in significant leadership roles and he has appointed many in the Vatican. What would you like to see happen locally in your parish or diocese? How can you help that happen?
9. How has the Introduction to ***Women: Icons of Christ*** given you an overview of women deacons in the early Church?

## Session Two

### *Chapter One – Baptism*

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**Welcome** – Welcome the group and, if you have new people, have them introduce themselves. It is always a good idea to have people say their names again even if no new people are present.

**Ice Breaker** – When were you baptized? Do you know the date and why you were given your name?

#### **Gathering Prayer**

#### **Remembering the Call to Discipleship through Our Baptism**

**Leader:** Let us recall the day we were baptized and claimed for Christ. On this day, we were welcomed as Christians by our families, and by the Church. Today we begin with the sign of the cross, to remember that we were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let us listen to the words of Scripture.

#### **Scripture Galatians 3:26-29 (NAB)**

For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendant, heirs according to the promise.

The Word of the Lord.  
All: Thanks be to God.

**Leader:** **Loving God,**  
In Baptism you have filled us with the light of Christ. May we walk always as children of the light and keep the flame of faith alive in our hearts. May we live each day knowing that we are called as disciples of Jesus. Help us to fulfill this calling and announce the Gospel with our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** **Amen.**

## *Session Two Study Questions*

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1. All baptized persons image Christ. How and why?
2. How did the institutes of apostolic women religious (sisters) fulfill and expand roles of early women deacons? Why is this important?
3. What do you know about the present and former steps to priesthood?
4. Early women deacons had specific roles in the Church. Name these roles and the roles women have in your parish today.

### **Development of the Hierarchy**

**Pages 8-10**

5. It is interesting to note that the Church's hierarchy developed based on the Roman army's structure. Eventually, Church leaders were called *episcopi* (bishops), presbyters (priests), and *diakoni* (male and female deacons). How does this continue or not continue today?
6. There is evidence that women were called to be leaders of communities and ordained by bishops. What were their roles? What do you feel should be happening today?

### **Phoebe of Romans 16:1**

**Pages 10-14**

7. Read Romans 16:1-2 – Paul's introduction of his messenger:

*I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.*

It is apparent that some early Church fathers took issue with Phoebe being called deacon. What did you learn from Origen, John Chrysostom, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus?

**The Women of 1 Timothy 3:11****Qualifications of Deacons****Pages 14-16**

8. *Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

How does this passage describe the seriousness of the call to the diaconate?

9. Is there an historical difference between male and female deacons?

10. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) footnote on this passage reads:

*“Women: this seems to refer to women deacons but may possibly mean wives of deacons. The former is preferred because the word is used absolutely; if deacons’ wives were meant, a possessive “their” would be expected. Moreover, they are also introduced by the word “similarly,” as in 1 Tm 3:8; this parallel suggests that they too exercised ecclesiastical functions.”*

- What conclusion do you draw from this statement?
- Why is this important to the discussion on women deacons?

**Acts of the Apostles 6:1-6 (NAB) The Calling of Deacons****Pages 16-26**

11. *At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”*

*The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.*

It became apparent to the apostles and disciples that they needed more help with the growing communities. How aware have you been about the choosing of new disciples for this particular ministry of assisting those in need?

12. An important point in this passage is that those who were to be deacons were put forth by the assembly of believers. In what way is this different from church leadership today?
  
13. Are you aware of any persons in your parish who have been “called forth from the assembly” to be leaders in various ministries? List them and the leadership qualities that describe them.
  
14. What is the importance and significance in the “laying on of hands” for those who were called to the ministry of service with the Apostles and disciples?
  
15. There were certainly women called forth for this ministry of service and charity. Women ministered to women as well as became leaders of house churches. Why is this important to discuss and inform others about this history?
  
16. As time went on, diaconal ministry was continued through women religious, especially throughout Europe and later other parts of the world. Women religious, mostly cloistered (nuns) performed works of charity and service even from their monasteries. Later, apostolic women religious (sisters) were founded to work outside of their convents to feed the poor, found hospitals and clinics to tend to the sick and elderly, create educational institutions to form and teach all ages, and were in fact leaders and CEOs in today’s understanding. What do you know of the roles of women religious then and now?
  
17. How do you understand the diaconal ministry of women religious then and now?
  
18. How did women religious pave the way for women to play more significant roles in Church ministry?
  
19. How do you think that the Church and parishes would function if not for the roles of women in charity and service as well as leadership?

## Session Three

### *Chapter Two – Catechesis and Catechisms*

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**Welcome** – If you have new people, have them introduce themselves. It is always a good idea to have people say their name again, even if no new people are present.

**Ice Breaker** – Who were your first teachers in the faith and how did they influence you?

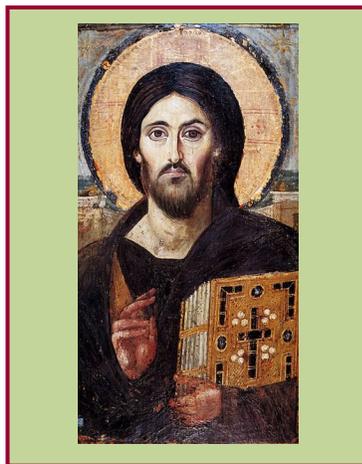
#### **Gathering Prayer**

**Leader:** We begin with the sign of our faith:  
+ In the name of the Father,  
the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As we gather,  
Let us remember all of those  
who have influenced our faith: *pause for silence or to mention names...*

Let us pray together:

**All:** Jesus, the great teacher,  
as we begin our gathering  
inspire our conversation and sharing  
so that we may find the best ways  
to share the Gospel and the call to discipleship  
with those you have given us to teach and inspire.  
Amen.



Christ Pantocrator  
Sinai Monastery, Egypt  
(Wikimedia Commons/K. Weitzmann: "Die Ikone")

## *Session Three Study Questions*

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### **Catechesis**

#### **Women Should Be Silent**

**1 Corinthians 14:34–35**

**Pages 27-31**

*Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.*

1. When you read this passage from 1 Corinthians attributed to Paul, how does this relate to our contemporary understandings of the role of women?
2. In what ways have women been the primary catechists in the Church?
3. Describe your experience as a catechist or of being taught by catechists. How have these experiences influenced your life?

### **Catechisms**

**Pages 31-35**

4. Why and how did the catechism come to be?
5. What is the importance of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*?
6. The diaconate was created by the Church through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to meet a need. What do you believe the Holy Spirit is calling for in our time?

### **Explaining the Catechism**

**Pages 35-44**

7. Study what Cardinal Ratzinger wrote on pages 38-41. How is the deacon an icon of Christ? How could a woman deacon be an icon of Christ as well?

### **Women Preaching**

**Pages 44-45**

8. Saint Catherine of Siena, a Dominican tertiary, was one of the greatest preachers of all time. She preached in different ways through her varied ministries. Why do we need women preachers today?
9. What do your parishioners say about the need for women preachers?

### **Homilies**

**Pages 45-51**

10. In what ways are you aware of persons other than priests or male deacons preaching a homily or reflection at Mass?
11. Lay persons, including men and women religious, preach in many ways. How are you a preacher or “herald of faith?” Why does this matter to you?
12. What is one thing that you learned from this chapter that is formative for you?

## Session Four

### *Chapter Three – Altar Service*

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**Welcome** – Welcome the group and if you have new people, have them introduce themselves. It is always a good idea to have people say their name again, even if no new people are present.

**Ice Breaker** – Who are the women who “visibly” serve at the altar in your parish?

#### **Gathering Prayer**

**Leader:** As we gather,  
let us pray for women of all ages  
who are in service to the altar,  
that is Jesus, our Lord and brother.

**All:** Lord God,  
in your love, you gave us Jesus,  
who came not to be served, but to serve.  
Continue sending generous workers  
to your people.

Send your Holy Spirit  
to strengthen and inspire them  
as they take up their responsibilities  
among the people of our parish.

We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.



Women Disciples  
by Pat Marrin  
NCR Online

Used with permission.

## Session Four Study Questions

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### Altar Service

Pages 52-56

1. What are the ways women serve and influence the larger parish community?  
Create a chart to illustrate how many women are involved in the various ministries of altar service, charity and outreach, and societies or other organizations in your parish. What does this say to you?
2. While not mentioned in the book, the October 2019 Synod on the Amazon proposed that women be installed formally in lay the ministries of lector and acolyte. How could such moves influence the stature of women in the church?
3. Why do some parishes or dioceses bar women from serving in altar service ministries? Have you ever had an experience of not being included in such ministries? Describe.

### Barred from the Sacred

Pages 56-62

4. Today, many of the arguments about women deacons seem obsolete in terms of the strides that women have made. How do ancient taboos about menstruation still pertain to women not being allowed to serve at the altar, or enter the sanctuary, or be near the holy? In what ways?
5. How do arguments that women are “unclean” strike you?
6. We often hear the word “clericalism” today. Pope Francis often speaks about this as he says:  
*"Clericalism arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation, that interprets the ministry received as a power to be exercised rather than as a free and generous service to be given. This leads us to believe that we belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or learn anything. Clericalism is a perversion and is the root of many evils in the Church: we must humbly ask for forgiveness for this and above all create the conditions so that it is not repeated."*

Pope Francis's Address to the Synod Fathers at Opening of Synod 2018 on Young People,  
the Faith and Vocational Discernment

How do you understand clericalism in the light of this section?

7. Have you ever had an experience of clericalism? What was that experience like?

## **Women Are Unclean**

**Pages 62-65**

8. The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) states: *“No woman under forty years of age is to be ordained a deacon, and then only after close scrutiny. If after receiving ordination and spending some time in the ministry she despises God’s grace and gets married, such a person is to be anathematized along with her spouse.”*

Notice the part of the second line, which states **“after receiving ordination.”** What does this say to you about women deacons?

9. Often, in various dioceses, women carried the Eucharist to the sick and were recommended to be ordained as deacons. Other places saw women as totally unclean, forbidden to touch sacred vessels, let alone touch the Eucharist.

What does this tell you about the apparent confusion on the part of the Fathers of the Church who could not agree on the place or value of women?

10. Are you aware of any similarities in the Church today, locally or globally?

## **Clerical Celibacy and Misogyny**

**Pages 65-72**

11. The rule of celibacy was not really in place in the Western Church until after the Second Lateran Council in 1139. Even if priests were married, they were not to have relations with their wives because they would then be rendered unclean.

Again, what does this say to you about women and how the gift of intimate relations between husband and wife were viewed?

## **Modern Misogyny**

**Pages 72-76**

12. When we read of the misogyny in the Church and society in recent times (and even now in parts of the world), it is amazing that women have not rebelled against this. Why do you think this pushback has not happened?

13. How have clerical structures benefitted from keeping women apart from altar service in the ordained state as women deacons? What has the Church lost?

## Session Five

### *Chapter Four—Spiritual Direction and Confession*

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**Welcome** – Welcome the group and if you have new people, have them introduce themselves. It is always a good idea to have people say their name again even if no new people are present.

**Ice Breaker** – Who is a woman who has been a companion who guided you in your faith? Why did that make a difference for you?

#### **Gathering Prayer      Prayer for Communal Discernment in a Meeting**

By Debra Mooney, PhD

**Leader:**      Good and loving God,  
our source of love and light,  
thank you for bringing us together today  
in a spirit of generosity.

**All:**            May we honor one another  
by keeping an open mind.  
May we voice our truth  
and listen with an open heart.  
May we discern your will  
to unite in fruitful outcomes.  
We ask for your wisdom and grace,  
to use our talents for the betterment of others.  
With gratitude, we offer this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Source: <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/discernment>

#### **Scripture      Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)**

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

#### **Reflection**

There are many things that our world and Church need today. What do you hear God calling the Church to at this time?

What can each of us do to listen deeply to the movement of the Holy Spirit?

**Leader:**      Come Holy Spirit,  
**All:**            Give us your spirit of fortitude and resiliency  
that we may listen deeply  
to the needs of our Church and world,  
and know the way to make a difference  
and renew the face of the earth. Amen.

## *Session Five Study Questions*

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### **A Brief History of Spiritual Direction**

**Pages 80-82**

1. How many early Church women are you aware of? What do you know about these women now?
2. Medieval abbesses often presided over large, active monasteries that served the people of the area. They offered spiritual direction and even governmental advice to reigning monarchs and key secular leaders. What more would you like to learn about these monastic leaders that could inform you about the “hidden” leadership of women?
3. Do you have any experience with spiritual direction and with women spiritual directors?
4. What experiences have you had with retreats or days of reflection led by women? How have these experiences influenced you?

### **Confession**

**Pages 86-93**

5. What did you learn from reading the history of confession and its development as a sacrament?

### **Women’s Stories Are Important**

**Pages 93-96**

6. Why is woman-to-woman ministry in the Church critical today?
7. What can you do to encourage women sharing stories and Scripture reflections with each other through small groups? What help would you need in this area?

## Session Six

### *Chapter Five – Anointing of the Sick*

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**Welcome** – Welcome the group and if you have new people, have them introduce themselves. It is always a good idea to have people say their names again even if no new people are present.

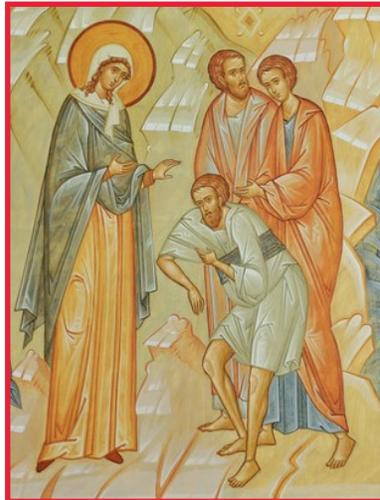
**Ice Breaker** – Have you ever been anointed? What was that like? Describe.

#### **Gathering Prayer**

**Leader:** Let us pray for the grace and encouragement of Jesus:  
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement,  
who encourages us in our every affliction,  
so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction  
with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God.

**All:** For as Christ's sufferings overflow to us,  
so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow.  
If we are afflicted, it is for our encouragement and salvation;  
if we are encouraged, it is for our encouragement,  
which enables us to endure the same sufferings that all suffer.  
Our hope is firm, for we know that as we share in the sufferings,  
we also share in the encouragement. Amen.

Adapted from 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 (NAB)



Fresco (detail) St. Genevieve, Russian Orthodox Seminary in France (Wikimedia Commons/Daniel Naberezhnyy)

**Healing and Forgiveness**

**Pages 104-108**

1. According to the late Cardinal Jean Dainélu, women laid hands on and prayed over ill women and anointed them with sacred oil. What would that particular ministry say to people today?
2. How would the ability for women to anoint help the Church and priests today in the light of priest shortages or for priests who do not feel comfortable in these roles?

**The Sacrament of the Sick**

**Pages 108-113**

3. Only a bishop or priest may sacramentally anoint an ill or dying person because the Sacrament of the Sick is understood to include forgiveness of sins. What other kinds of healing comfort could a lay person or deacon offer?
4. In what ways would a woman deacon be helpful? Would she be accepted?

**Deacons and Women in Chaplaincy**

**Pages 113-117**

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many nurses and doctors prayed with the very ill and dying and sought to give them comfort. Neither families nor chaplains were allowed to visit people's rooms; therefore, nurses and doctors quickly found themselves to be the last persons with the dying. Many Catholic nurses and women chaplains suggested that they wished they could anoint the dying.

5. What would be the benefit of a woman deacon in the hospital and nursing home ministries?

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## *Conclusions*

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Dr. Zagano writes, “There is a deep need for Christian ministry around the world and a deeper need for the Church to recognize its past in preparation for its future.” (p. 120)

1. What can the Church do to restore women to the ordained diaconate?
  
2. What are the things that you can do to help Church leaders be more inclusive and collaborative?
  
3. Where do we go from here? What can you do to advance the discussion?

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### *Closing Prayer*

**Leader:** As we finish our learning sessions,  
let us pray to the Holy Spirit for the recognition  
of women in service and leadership in our Church...

**All:** Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the Hearts of Your faithful  
and enkindle in us the Fire of Your love.  
Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be recreated  
–And You will renew the face of the earth.

God, Creator of all women and men,  
you have created us to know  
and live in your truth.  
Give us your vision, so that through us,  
you will indeed renew the face of the earth.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

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*For there is still a vision for the appointed time;  
it speaks of the end, and does not lie.  
If it seems to tarry, wait for it;  
it will surely come, it will not delay.*

Habakkuk 2:3

*Where there is no vision,  
the people perish.*

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

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*Let us pray for the continuing movement of the Holy Spirit in our Church and world.  
We pray for the rightful recognition of the gifts of women so sorely needed today.*

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## **Glossary of Terms**

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### **Abbess**

An abbess is a female superior of an abbey or monastery of nuns. Hers is generally an elected position.

### **Abbot**

An abbot is a male superior of an abbey or monastery of monks. His is generally an elected position.

### **(Arch)bishop**

The (arch)bishop oversees the (arch)diocese and is the chief administrator of the local church. The (arch)bishop, known as the local ordinary, administers the sacraments of ordination and confirmation. Auxiliary bishops share in the (arch)bishop's ministry.

### **Canon Law**

The Catholic Church has two codes of Canon Law, one for the Roman or Latin Church, the other for the Eastern Catholic Churches.

### **Cardinal**

A cardinal is an advisor to the pope, usually but not always a bishop, who is one of the 120 papal electors. Cardinals older than 80 cannot participate in the election of a pope.

### **Cleric**

Today, clerics are deacons, priests, and bishops. The ordinary means of entering the clerical state is by ordination to the diaconate.

### ***Cursus Honorum***

The former requisite path toward priesthood. The minor orders of porter, lector, exorcist, and acolyte were replaced by the installed lay ministries of lector and acolyte, and the major order of sub-deacon was suppressed in 1972 with *Ministeria Quaedam*.

### **Deacon**

Deacons are sacramentally ordained to minister through the Word, the liturgy, and charity. While there is only one order of deacon, some men are ordained as deacons as a step on the way to priesthood and are called transitional deacons. Other deacons live the diaconate as a permanent vocation.

### **Deaconess**

In some languages, sometimes used to denote a woman ordained as deacon.

### **Episcopal, Episcopacy**

Episcopal signifies things pertaining to bishops, who as a group belong to the Episcopacy.

### **Lay Ecclesial Minister**

Lay ecclesial ministry is the term adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to identify non-ordained professional pastoral ministers who are coworkers with the bishop, priests, and deacons and other diocesan and parish staff members.

### **Homily**

Formally a part of the Mass, a homily or sermon is the preaching following the Gospel only given by an ordained cleric participating in the Mass.

**Magisterium**

The teaching authority of the Catholic Church. The Ordinary Magisterium is the consistent teachings of the Church, what is taught always and everywhere. The Extraordinary Magisterium is comprised of decrees of councils and formal papal pronouncements.

**Nun**

Nuns are women who live solemn vows, typically of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a cloistered (enclosed) abbey or monastery. Their contemplative life is one of prayer and they support themselves with simple silent work, such as baking altar breads, light farming, and creating greeting cards.

**Parish Life Coordinator**

A deacon or layperson entrusted by the bishop with the care and administration of a parish in accord with the provisions of Canon 517.2 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

**Priest**

Priests are men ordained to sacerdotal ministry and given the right to perform certain rites and administer certain sacraments. In parish work, priests are pastors or parochial vicars and are representatives of the diocesan bishop. Also called presbyters, they belong to the grouping of priests called the presbyterate.

**Sister**

Sisters are women religious who live simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, typically in convents of religious institutes dedicated to apostolic works. Both nuns and sisters use the term "sister" as a form of address.

**Viaticum**

The Eucharist given to a dying person.

## Evaluation

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### Key Learnings for You and the Group

- Take a moment to look over your notes. What did you learn about the history of women in the diaconate?
  
- What did you learn from the group discussion?

### Evaluation of Your Group Experience

- In what ways did this *Reflection and Study Guide* aid your reading and discussion?
  
- What most surprised you in your discussion?
  
- What ideas are you leaving with?

### Group Dynamics

- In general, the meeting was:            Excellent            Good            Fair            Poor
  
- What worked well?
  
- What might we improve?
  
- Are there any questions or problems that need further attention?

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