



## Media Release:

### **Vatican Miscategorizes Women's Rights Advocates with Child Abusers**

*International Catholic organizations issue statement denouncing the oppression of women and the inadequate response to child sex crimes*

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Friday, June 16, 2010**

**Yesterday, the Vatican issued a clarification of its canonical procedures for how dioceses should handle priests who sexually abuse children. As part of the statement, they have added that the "attempted ordination of a woman" has now been added to the list of "delicta graviora," or most serious crimes in church law, alongside the sexual abuse of minors.**

**This morning, twenty-seven international Catholic organizations issued the following joint statement in response:**

We, the undersigned, express our solidarity with Catholics who continue to seek equality, including those who practice feminist ministries and those who are ordained. We know these women and men to be firm in their faith and courageous in their work as they seek an inclusive and accountable church, undeterred by threats of excommunication or other canonical penalties. In addition, we stand with our brother priests and bishops who are also being threatened by this new policy for their support of women's equality in the church. Furthermore, we take great offense that good faith struggles for gender equality could be misunderstood as a sacrilege and placed on par with the sexual abuse of children. In 1976, the Vatican's own Pontifical Biblical Commission concluded there is no valid scriptural reason for denying ordination to women. Therefore, we welcome such efforts to expand the scope and variety of ministry and we celebrate women's faithfulness despite huge institutional obstacles.

We are gravely disappointed that the Vatican would largely repackage its sexual abuse policy norms from 2001 in yesterday's re-issued statement without adding many meaningful changes to canonical procedures on how to handle the sexual crimes of its religious leaders. We stand with survivors in calling for the release of the names of all credibly accused Catholic religious leaders and for the Vatican's immediate adoption and implementation of global child protection policies. Nothing less is adequate to the crying needs of a community torn asunder by its own leaders' crimes.

#### **Catholic Organization Signatories**

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To view the Vatican document, click [here](#).

An [online petition](#) has been started so that other groups or individuals may register their support of this statement.

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