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Leaky roofs in the church? Some work at the Vatican

Maureen Fiedler | Feb. 7, 2013 NCR Today

Catholic News Service reports on [1] an interview on the possibility of women priests with Dominican Fr. Wojciech Giertych, the "theologian" of the papal household. (Yes, the quotes around "theologian" are intentional.)

After repeating some of the same tired old arguments that have long since been dismissed by competent theologians (e.g., Jesus was male, so a priest has to be male to "image" Jesus), he came up with a whole new angle: Priests love the church in a characteristically "male way" when they show concern "about structures, about the buildings of the church, about the roof of the church which is leaking, about the bishops' conference, about the concordat between the church and the state."

Huh? There is so much wrong with this, it's hard to know where to start. In what century is this man living? The very thought that women don't deal with buildings or structures or conferences or international concordats is straight out of the 19th century, maybe earlier.

This man needs to meet women who are professional architects, building contractors, executives of roofing companies, or roofers themselves. He should also meet the women who work in parishes and take great care to monitor structural problems with church buildings. Finally, it should not be hard to find priests who can't tell gutters from roofing shingles or tiles.

Next, he should make the acquaintance of women (journalists, employees of NCCB, nuns, whomever) who monitor meetings of the bishops' conference every year, many of them yearning to change the discussions to something meaningful. And of course, there are tens of thousands of women political scientists (including myself) who study a broad spectrum of relationships between "church and state" (today it's properly called "religion and state"), not merely the old "concordats."

The very thought that these concerns are "male" is so dated and so crazy, it should be embarrassing to the Vatican. Every time I read something like this statement, I wonder if anyone over there is vetting what becomes public.

And we wonder why the Catholic church is having problems keeping people -- especially women -- these days?

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[1] http://ncronline.org/node/44251