

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

March 26, 2010 at 4:20pm

Women's ordination advocates bring message to Vatican embassy

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NCR Today



The Vatican embassy in Washington D.C. probably has other

matters on its mind with the publication in *The New York Times* of articles drawing into greater question the pope's role in the handling of clergy sex abusing priests while he headed the Munich archdiocese and while he headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

Nevertheless, embassy staffers looking out the embassy window yesterday had to contend with some 20 supporters of the Women's Ordination Conference who were there with signs to celebrate the 16th Annual World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination.

WOC members made the point that this year's day of prayer coincides with the Vatican declared "Year of the Priest" - a year of honoring the priesthood that ends with a jubilee celebration at St. Peter's this June.

Now, let's be clear, a WOC statement read. Nowhere in this celebration will you see the name of any womanpriest, married priest, or openly gay or lesbian priest. To the Vatican, there is really only one kind of priest - the celibate male type who is ordained in a specific fashion.

WOC lamented that the Vatican continues to refuse to recognize the calls of those who do not fit their mold ? ?women, married people, gays, lesbians, and many others.?

?Today on the 16th Annual World Day of Prayer for Women's Ordination,? a WOC statement read. ?We are called to put forth a renewed image of the priesthood - one that is inclusive and welcoming of women's leadership. When women are full and equal partners in every aspect of the Catholic Church, only then, will the Roman Catholic Church be associated with accountability, transparency and justice rather than hierarchy, exclusion, and scandal. Until then, we will continue to raise our collective voices and organize actions that will bring our church closer to the gospel values of Jesus.?

Founded in 1975, the Women's Ordination Conference is the oldest and largest organization that works on behalf of the ordination of women as priests, deacons and bishops into an inclusive and accountable Catholic church.

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