



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns Online

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Vatican summit tackles women's ordination with a nod from Pope Francis

The Synod on Synodality addresses the question of female clergy

By Claire Giangravé
Religion News Service

Vatican City (RNS) — Discussions about women's ordination to the priesthood have become livelier in the waning days of the synod on synodality, Pope Francis' month-long summit to discuss pressing issues facing the church. While there's a consensus that women's roles need to be promoted, participants remain divided on how to achieve that goal.



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

The Vatican's synod, which ended October 29, is the result of a two-year-long process engaging Catholics at every level, from faithful at the local parish to continental leaders. The 364 lay and religious participants addressed questions ranging from sexual abuse to LGBTQ welcoming to hierarchal structures, but few topics captured the attention of attendants more than the question of women's roles in the church.

In many ways, this synod has seen many firsts for women. In the past, synod events were exclusively attended by bishops and a few priests who acted as secretaries and writers. This time, 54 women participated, and voted, during the synod, which was presided over by Sister Maria de los Dolores Valencia Gomez, a sister of St. Joseph of Lyon. Also, for the first time a woman, Sr. Nathalie Becquart, is undersecretary of the synod office at the Vatican. In the months leading up to the summit, the resources of the Women's Ordination Worldwide advocacy group were made available for the first time on the synod website.

Pope Francis has so far avoided tackling the complexities of dogma directly, opting for his signature pastoral approach instead. But if gestures speak louder than words under Francis, then his meeting with Sr. Jeannine Gramick on Oct. 17 at the Vatican made a clear statement. The Philadelphia-born nun has called for women to

continued

Vatican summit tackles women's ordination, continued

become cardinals and is the founder of New Ways Ministries, a Catholic network promoting the welcome and inclusion of LGBTQ Catholics. In 1999, she was banned from pastoral work by the Vatican's doctrinal office. The meeting signaled that the pope is welcoming "not just LGBT people but those who have been shunned by society and the church," Gramick said in an interview with National Catholic Reporter shortly after the audience. Answering a series of questions, or dubia, sent by conservative prelates regarding the synodal discussions, the pope recently opened an unprecedented opportunity for debate on the topic, saying there is no "clear and authoritative doctrine" on the question of ordination, and it can be "a subject of study." To that end, he created two commissions to study the possibility of the female diaconate, which would allow women to preach at Mass and perform marriages and baptisms but not celebrate the Eucharist or hear confessions. Opponents fear allowing women to the diaconate would open the door to women being ordained as priests.

"I think Pope Francis is trying to get us to move forward, to open our eyes and look to the future and to the changes in the world," Sr. Gramick added.

While synod officers, and the pope, have encouraged synod participants to be creative in the search for solutions to the church's woes, there have so far been few inspired solutions to the much-needed promotion of women's roles. Some participants at the synod, and Catholics looking in from the outside, seek alternative roles and ministries for women in the church. They argue that if the church is going to defeat clericalism, a term used to describe the special status held by Catholic clergy, then the solution is not to ordain more people. For others, the solution is already there: allowing women to become priests or deacons.

For advocates for female ordination who have looked at this event with hope, the result of this first consultation might be disappointing. For conservatives, the final document might be the latest sign of how this pontificate has exposed the church to an unbridled liberal shift. Debates are likely to evolve ahead of the second part of the synod, when participants will meet again in October of 2024.



SET YOUR
CLOCKS
BACK ONE
HOUR!

DAYLIGHT
SAVING
TIME ENDS
ON SUNDAY!

Music Notes for November 5

This week's anthem, *Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether*, was written by Harold W. Friedell (1905-1958). The American composer spent his entire life in New York: born in Queens, studied at the Juilliard School and Union Theological Seminary (where he also taught music theory and composition) and served at Calvary Episcopal and St. Bartholomew's on Park Avenue. While at St. Bart's, Friedell composed *Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether* for Pentecost in 1945, with text by Percy Dearmer (1867-1936), a chaplain who taught at King's College in London and also served as canon of Westminster Abbey. Although Dearmer's text was originally sung to a different tune, it is Friedell's music setting that has elevated *Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether* to the "contemporary classic" that it is today.



Friedell.



VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

In step with the Veterans Day National Ceremony, Fishburne Military School will host a ceremony intended to honor and thank all who served in the United States Armed Forces.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Saturday, November 11
at 11:00 a.m.**

**Fishburne Military School
225 S Wayne Ave, Waynesboro, VA**

WORSHIP THIS WEEK

PSALM 43

MATTHEW 23:1-12

SERMON: THE NEGATIVE EXAMPLE.



*St. Matthews Elementary School
Louisville, KY*

OUR WORSHIP CHANNELS

CLICK ON THE LOGOS





BETTER TOGETHER

Bible Study

**MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 6**

**SMYRNA PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

1:00-2:00 p.m.

**COME OUT AND JOIN
WESTMINSTER'S DCE, JOHN TINDALL,
AND EXPLORE TOGETHER
THE GREAT STORIES
AND THEMES OF THE BIBLE.**

This Week in History.

British explorer **Sir Walter Raleigh** is executed for treason by order of King James I.

OCTOBER 29, 1618



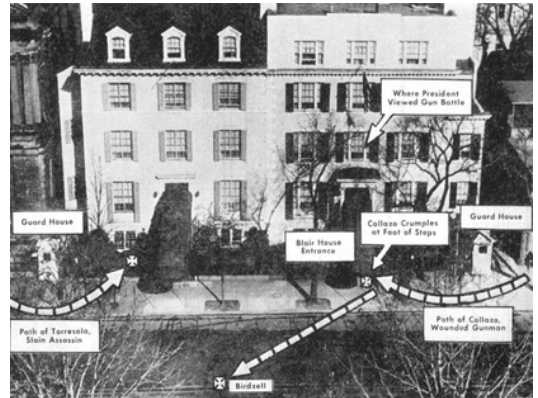
John Adams is born in Braintree, MA. A revolutionary leader, he would serve as the first Vice President and Second President of the United States. His son, John Quincy Adams, would be the 6th President.

OCTOBER 30, 1735



Following an unsuccessful coup in San Juan, President **Harry S. Truman** is targeted for assassination by Puerto Rican nationalists. Oscar Torresola would mortally wound White House Police officer Leslie Coffelt, who would kill him in return fire. Secret Service agents also wounded Griselia Collazo.

NOVEMBER 1, 1950



The U.S. detonates its first **hydrogen bomb** at the Elugelab Atoll in the Pacific Marshall Islands.

OCTOBER 31, 1952



Parliament passes the Act of Supremacy, making **King Henry VIII** Supreme Head of the Church of England.

NOVEMBER 3, 1534



The first **electrified underground railway** system officially opens in London.

NOVEMBER 4, 1890



American frontiersman **Daniel Boone** is born in Berks County, near Reading, Pennsylvania.

NOVEMBER 2, 1734



Aviator **C.P. Snow** completes the first transcontinental flight, landing at Pasadena, CA. He had taken off from Sheepshead Bay, New York, on September 17th and flew a distance of 3,417 miles..

NOVEMBER 5, 1911

