We are Church: Women in the Catholic Church – Vatican's consequent change-in-mind concerning the

Press note

Rome / Munich, February 9, 2008

Commentary on the international congress of the "Papal Council for the Laity", Rome, February 7-9, 2008, held on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Apostolic Letter "Mulieris Dignitatem" (August 15, 1988)

The International Movement We are Church, a Catholic reform movement, hopes and expects that the congress in Rome shows a consequent change-in-mind in the question of gender and of women's rights. This international congress bears the great chance of

- granting women to speak for themselves with their charismas,
- focussing the reality of life of women in the various continents,
- placing new accents for gender justice in the roman catholic church.

This would be an inspiring model especially for those countries, in which women are still oppressed and abused. For the sake of our church's future, the catholic reform movement wishes on the conference the blessing and wisdom of God's Holy Spirit.

The individual topics of the meeting like

- "Reflections about the changes in the question of women's rights since 1988",
- "Mary and the position of women in the Bible",
- "Meaning of man and woman being image of God",
- "Responsibility of women in church and society" or
- "Social situation of women in diverse cultures and countries"

should offer enough space for open discussions in order to take up and judge contemporarily today's problems.

"Moreover, a factual dialogue with feministic theology and recognition of gender justice inside church structures are overdue and have to appear on the agenda of this conference", demands Angelika Fromm, speaker of the women group of "We are Church" in Germany. "The roman catholic church keeps on addressing appeals to politics and society, but inside her own structures church refuses establishing gender justice and instead disguises the real degradation of women by idealising woman's image. This behaviour is not credible."

If this congress intends to encourage women to put their treasure of "female genius" into service of apostolate, family, world of labour and culture, this has to be realized also in church structures and hierarchy. The mere talking of "woman's dignity" is no longer sufficient, whilst treating women in the same church as they were incapable of ordination and refusing them equal rights of participating in church development, using antiquated argumentation, Angelika Fromm points out.

It would be extremely unfortunate not dealing with all trends of roman Catholicism and the congress being held by the Vatican only as "alibi event", putting only into scene a participation of women, but in reality preventing it completely.

Background:

The congress "Woman and man, the humanum in its entirety" is held by the "Papal Council for the Laity" in

Rome from February 7 to 9, 2008 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Apostolic Letter "Mulieris Dignitatem" published by Pope John Paul II on August 15, 1988. At that time, the Pope personally meditated about a specific topic concerning women; now, after all, 250 women and men of all five continents were selected and invited to reflect on the position of women in church and society.
The International Movement We are Church, a Catholic reform movement, intercedes for equal access of women to all church functions, for an equal mentioning of women and men in church publications, for a female image of God and a female liturgy. The movement "Lila Stola" ("purple stole") stands for these activities worldwide.

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Links:

> International Movement We are Church
www.we-are-church.org

> International Congress „Woman and man, the humanum in its entirety"
www.laici.org

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