

NEWSLETTER



Dear Catholic Women’s Council members,

We are pleased to greet you during the Advent season. We wish you hope, peace, and joy in your lives.

As we approach the end of 2024, we are reflecting with gratitude on a year filled with dynamic activism for women's equality in the Catholic Church and in society. Many thanks to those who have participated in our work! Here is a summary of what we have created, experienced, and shared together as CWC.

The **Executive Committee**

welcomed three new members to our team!

Thanks to Patrizia Morgante (Italy), Kochurani Abraham (India), and Philippa Wicksey (Australia) whose gifts strengthen our work and deepen our diversity.



Also, Rachael Alphonso was employed as an administrative assistant. Her energy and skills are being felt in the work of the Executive. We are enhancing our [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) profiles. And our webpage is improving with resources and news being uploaded daily.



LISTENING SESSIONS

Throughout the course of the year we held four fascinating **listening sessions**. These sessions provided our global network the opportunity to study with great speakers and to discuss important themes. If you were not able to join these sessions, they are available on our [YouTube channel](#).

Our first session in March brought together Prof. Mary Anne Case from Chicago and Dr. Cecilia Francisco-Tan from Australia to address the theme: **“Critiquing the Anthropology of the Catholic Church and its Impact on Women’s Dignity and Equality”**. Their voices come from two of the most distant places on the planet and this forced us to hold two meetings at different times. Both speakers questioned an anthropology that renders women’s rights and dignity lesser than men. Attendees had a rich opportunity to reflect and propose ideas to challenge this patriarchal understanding of gender.

In May, we continued **“Moving ahead with women’s sacramental ministries”** with an interesting panel of three speakers: Kate McElwee, Executive Director of the Women’s Ordination Conference, and professors and researchers Dr. Olga Consuelo Vélez, from Colombia and Agnes M. Brazal, from the Philippines. Through diverse lenses, the speakers addressed the need to advance women’s full right in the Church and their access to all ministries.



In our third session, we explored the topic of **“Violence against women in church and society,”** and we had the opportunity to listen to Dr. Elissa Roper and Sr. Scholastica, who brought us testimonies of women from Papua New Guinea who suffer from sexual violence. Virginia Saldanha offered a reflection about clerical spiritual power and abuses, and Sofia Chipana Quispe spoke

about violence against women, especially experienced by Indigenous communities in Bolivia, due to patriarchy and colonialism. Finally, Patrizia Morgante spoke from a European perspective, sharing the situation of gender violence in Italy.



Our last listening session was in September, and we heard Professor Dr Ilia Delio OSF, founder of the Centre for Christogenesis, presenting a new vision of God in evolution with her talk: **“An Unfinished God in an Unfinished Universe.”**

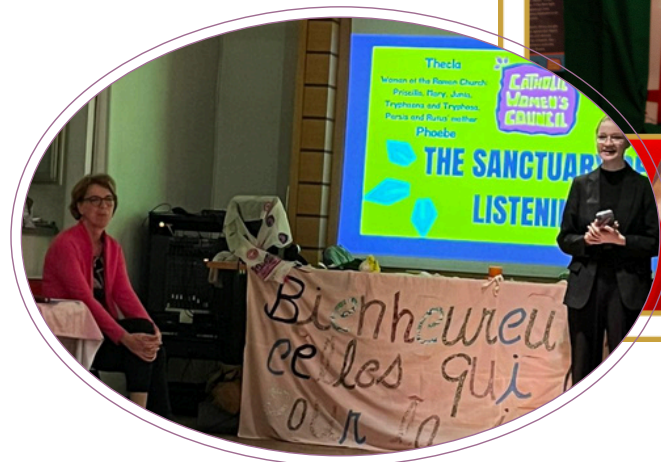
850 people registered for this session! And the recording has 4,900 views on YouTube! Many thanks to Ilia for opening us up to a new vision of God, one that is more inclusive and in line with the advances of science and knowledge.

ROME 2024



In October, several of the women who make up the Executive were able to meet in Rome. As in the fresco located in Santa Maria in Trastevere, we participated from the margins of the synod, watching from the borders and demanding that the urgent need for women’s equality be addressed.

We had a beautiful prayer session at Casa Internazionale della Donna, organized by the youngest women of the CWC called **"The sanctuary of listening"**. Various altars were constructed to connect the protagonism of early Christian women such as Thecla, Phoebe, and Junia to women's experiences today. Through art, multimedia, and text, the altars created an immersive experience highlighting women's stories across time.



We invited many people to this prayer, including women delegates to the Synodal Assembly. Two of them joined us for dialogue and prayer. It was very enriching and inspiring to hear the experience and commitment of Julia Osęka, the youngest woman in the synod. She is Polish and is participating in the synod as a delegate from the United States. As she shared with us, she demonstrated that she took her mission very seriously, organizing meetings with young people of her generation in order to bring their sentiments to the synodal assembly. Helena Jeppesen infected us with her energy, optimism, and clear vision of the change needed in the Church. It was a very special time during which we could feel the power of the Ruah blowing upon and in us.



We also joined the call of the Women **Ordination Conference** and **Comite de la Jupe** to march to the Vatican with the question "Why not me?", "Why not her?" To our great surprise, we found ourselves surrounded by a huge police presence, who put all their energy into diverting the route of our peaceful march, to prevent us from carrying our banners and "fans" near the Vatican. It was a moment of unity and strength, which made us think that if less than 50 non-violent women singing and praying pose such a threat to the Vatican institutions, then perhaps we are underestimating our strength and the discomfort of our demands.

The **meeting of women from all over the world** who are committed to equality in the Catholic Church is a very significant opportunity.

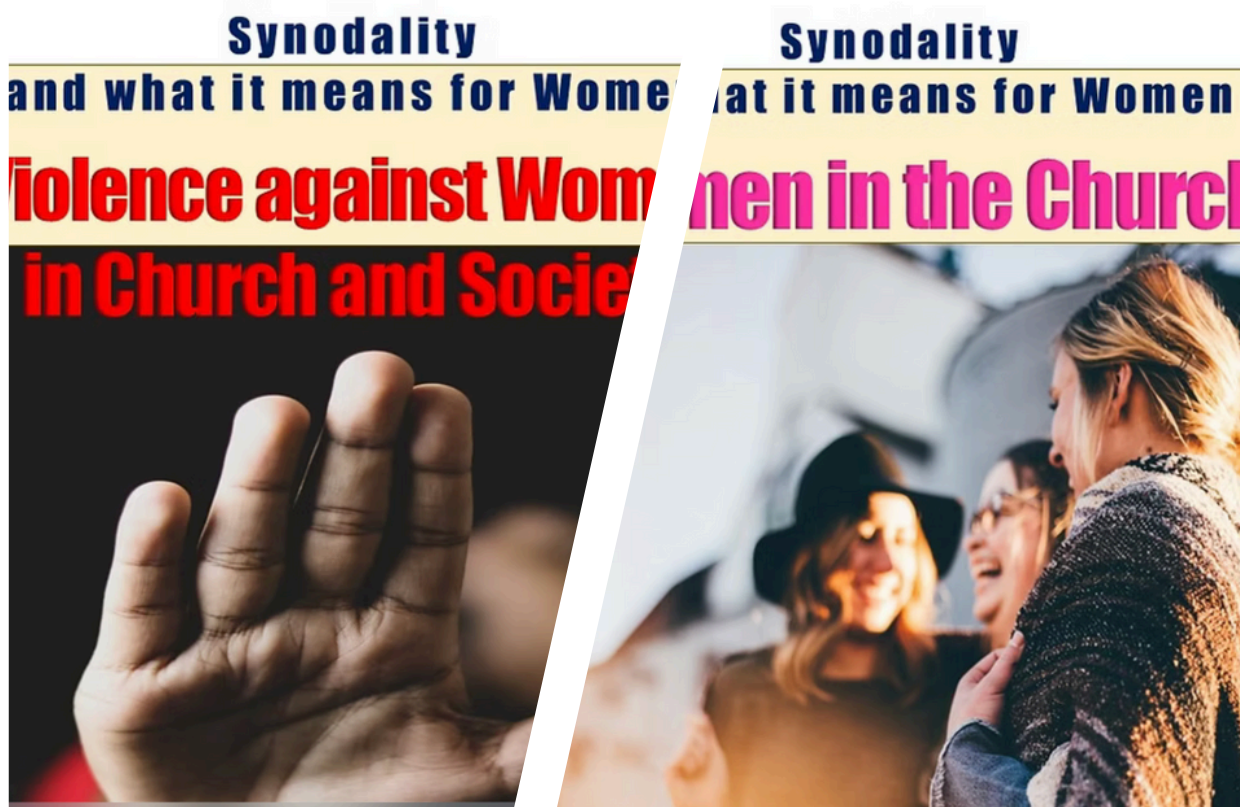
It encourages and empowers us to see that we are not just a few women with "capricious" desires, but there are many demanding the justice due to us as human beings and baptized people. It is a source of hope for many Catholic women who have a feminist outlook and rebel against discrimination in the Church. An example of this empowerment is the birth of the Thecla group in Poland, partly inspired by their participation in our meeting last year. These meetings have also helped us to strengthen the organization of the CWC by consolidating our structure and goals.



During our time in Rome, we were astonished by the attitude of Cardinal Víctor Fernández and the lack of transparency of Study Group 5, which is meant to take up the question of women in ministry.

Before the opening of the Synod, the CWC had already published **two reports on the topics of ministries for women and violence against women in the Church and society**. The reports were sent to all delegates, the synod office, and journalists represented in Rome with a corresponding statement.

Following Fernández's statement that there are insufficient studies on the diaconate of women, we have provided Cardinal Fernández and Group 5 with more than 500 bibliographical references to studies and publications in 5 languages on the subject of women in ordained ministries.



Synodality will not be complete and authentic until the full participation of women is clarified and implemented. We will continue to work tirelessly to achieve this equality because, in Fernández's words: "what comes from the Holy Spirit cannot be stopped"

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

More than 50 women from the **Donne per la Chiesa** association met in Genoa on 16 and 17 November to reflect on the 'complex and fruitful' relationship between women and the Catholic Church. **'Roots and wings: women who cultivate the future of the Church'** was the motto that accompanied the two-day event in Italy. They wish to be an oasis, a safe space for all women who wish to find sisters with whom they can share sorrows and joys. But also, to be a 'disturbance' for a church that is too comfortable in clericalism and patriarchy, in the management of a centralized and exclusionary power.



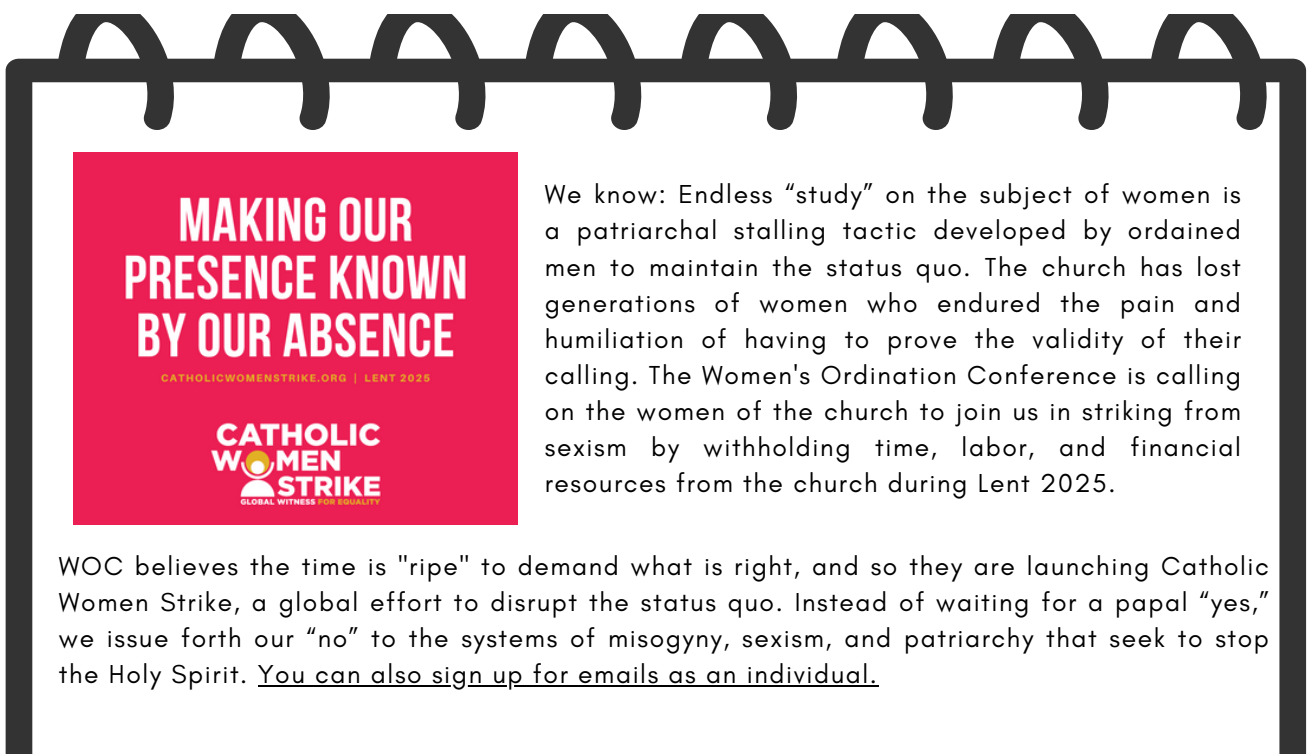
In Guatemala, on September 20 and 21, the **Núcleo Mujeres y Teología** joined 149 women and 5 men participating in the **XXVII Women and Theology Conference**. They discussed "the socio-political and theological challenges of women," Divine Wisdom continues to invite those who, under the discourse of "gender ideology", transmit an ideology of hate towards women, to question and change their beliefs and their mental schema; to dialogue, debate and listen to the cries of women. Only in this way will they feel invited to participate in the table of the kin-dom, where everyone has a place.



Happy 2025

Another year full of activism, sharing and spirituality is waiting.
These are our proposals for the next year

- ✓ We are planning more Listening Sessions about our priorities and offering reports about them.
- ✓ We will also support campaigns such as the following:



MAKING OUR PRESENCE KNOWN BY OUR ABSENCE
CATHOLICWOMENSTRIKE.ORG | LENT 2025

CATHOLIC WOMEN STRIKE
GLOBAL WITNESS FOR EQUALITY

We know: Endless “study” on the subject of women is a patriarchal stalling tactic developed by ordained men to maintain the status quo. The church has lost generations of women who endured the pain and humiliation of having to prove the validity of their calling. The Women's Ordination Conference is calling on the women of the church to join us in striking from sexism by withholding time, labor, and financial resources from the church during Lent 2025.

WOC believes the time is "ripe" to demand what is right, and so they are launching Catholic Women Strike, a global effort to disrupt the status quo. Instead of waiting for a papal “yes,” we issue forth our “no” to the systems of misogyny, sexism, and patriarchy that seek to stop the Holy Spirit. You can also sign up for emails as an individual.

We need your support to continue the struggle for **dignity and equality**

All campaigns and events are financed exclusively by donations. Your donation helps us to work for reforms in the Catholic Church worldwide.

Donate:

CWC- Support Association:
IBAN: CH09 0077 8216 2740 4200 1
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