



“Last Supper” with all disciples

## Include Women’s full equality in the Synod on Synodality, October 2024

Dear Brother Francis,

The exclusion of women from Church ordination (canon 1024); Church governance (cc.129 and 274§1), and from preaching the homily (c.767§1) are discriminatory, contrary to Jesus’ inclusion of all, and deprives the Church of the benefits of gender diversity and balance in leadership.

All have received the same Baptism, the Same Spirit, and the Same Calling. The exclusion of women to respond to that Calling is hurtful to women’s dignity and unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

You have rightly called the Church to Walk together in Communion, Participation and Mission. However if women continue to be kept in an infantile position, then women can never hope to be part of a synodal Church where they are in communion, participating equally in mission. A synodal Church requires change in the structures where women participate equally in decision taking, **not just** in decision making processes.

We understand that the topic ‘women deacons’ has been assigned to one of the 10 study groups reporting in 2025. We call for transparency about the synod working groups, their members, and their mandates. We are aware of the abundance of study, research, history etc., that supports the restoration of women deacons, and therefore wonder why you continue to stall on this issue.

The role of women is **key** to the synodal process and should be discussed as a whole and not portioned out into women deacons, women in decision making, women needing care, etc. To ignore the question of women’s equality which means their access to ordination to the priesthood, is to exclude women from synodality and ignore the voice of the ‘sensus fidei’ of the people of God.

Why do we ask this?

- Jesus treated women as equals and had many women disciples
- The “natural inferiority” of women is today totally unacceptable
- There is worldwide support for women to be ordained
- The Pontifical Biblical Commission (1976) found nothing in scripture preventing the ordination of women
- The blunt “No” in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994) is based on power and not on scripture

We place our request before you, Pope Francis as it is you who has set out a synodal church which “walks together”, listens and dialogues; and therefore, invites everyone to “speak with courage and candour” (preparatory document p. 20). It is in this spirit that we place our appeal for due consideration of women’s position of full equality in the Church to be kept on the table for the Synod of 2024.