

## Summary by Regina Franken

At the end of this interesting and inspiring discussion, I would like to summarise a few key points again.

We are celebrating the Holy Year 2025 under the theme 'Pilgrims of Hope'. But women ask themselves, what is a holy year worth if women are discriminated against and if women are denied their rights to sacramental ordination?

For more than 50 years, women around the world have been full of hopes, and guided by this hope, they have discussed, debated, researched and lectured on the subject of the ordination of women, and for at least as long women have been hoping that bishops and popes will finally be prepared to listen to them. Whoever says now, at the end of this synodal process, that the time has come to listen, is only saying that during his entire time as a priest and bishop, in his self-righteousness, he was not prepared to listen to women - he is saying that he has betrayed almost three generations of women of their hopes.

Throughout the synodal process, the equality of women and the ordination of women has been addressed and discussed worldwide. Yet women continue to face numerous delaying and stalling tactics from the church. These include:

- Statements that the priesthood is not so important for women, indeed that it would be much more important to empower women and strengthen them in their competence to act accordingly. Yet women all over the world have long been taking on pastoral work independently, on their own responsibility and characterised by the Christian faith. Women preach in a biblical and authentic way, women lecture theologically and academically, women lead congregations and communities on their own responsibility. And all over the world, it is precisely women who hold worship services, prepare young people for communion or confirmation and are not only a blessing, but also give blessings.
- Women from the Global South in particular point out that the argument of a lack of empowerment, insufficient competence to act and a lack of theological education not only reveals the sexist nature of these arguments, but also shows how closely linked sexism, racism and the effects of colonialism still are in the Catholic Church.
- The stalling tactics also include exhausting and demoralising women by setting up more and more commissions and new expert groups in order to conceal the delaying strategies of the Vatican and the bishops.
- This includes fobbing women off with discussions about the establishment of new special forms of the diaconate and the priesthood, which ultimately leads to the fact that women are dependent on the goodwill of the respective bishop.

- This includes forms of assignments and appointments that only serve to increase the utility value of women for priests and bishops and systematically exploit the charisms and vocations of women for their own goals, careers and recognition.

Women demand nothing more and nothing less than a recognition of their equal rights to sacramental ordination, in order to participate side by side with men in the fulfillment and exercise of the ministry in the sacred service and thus also to awaken in themselves the grace of God that has been granted to them through baptism.

So that the holy year will be a truly holy year and hope will not again become disappointed and destroyed hope. Because a holy year that is based on the foundation of discrimination and sexism and that continues to deny the ability of women for sacramental ministry cannot be a truly holy year.

As a kind of transition to our next listening session, I would like to draw your attention to another point that we repeatedly experience in connection with the demand for equal ordination for women.

Please allow me to read out an extract from an email that I received from an anonymous Italian-speaking author via our email address.

'If you think you will be helping to encourage women to become priests (...) you are mistaken, because (...) Pope Francis will veto it and the next pope will excommunicate you so that you will end up in hell, remember Sodom and Gomorrah.'

Women are constantly threatened when they stand up for their rights, when they stand up for the sacramental ordination of women. Women are put under pressure and fear being excluded from participating in community events, professional opportunities, access to social benefits or even exclusion from aid projects.

The reference to Sodom and Gomorrah also points to another danger to which women are exposed, that of sexualised violence.

In the next listening session on 29 June, we therefore want to take an in-depth look at the topic of 'Violence against women in the church and in society'. We will send the link for registration to all interested parties in good time.

If you still have examples on the subject of 'Women in ministries', you can send them to us. The website will be constantly updated until October so that bishops and members of the Synod cannot say in October that they were not aware of the importance of the topic.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who helped to make this event possible. Especially our speakers, our technical team (Rachel, Reena), our translators, my colleagues from the CWC Board and of course all of you for attending. I wish us all a happy, spiritual and reflective Pentecost.