

## 10 years of ordaining women

NCR Staff | Jun. 29, 2012



Historic ordination of seven women on the Danube River, June 29, 2002 (Erwin Wodicka)

Ten years ago today, this story led the news at *NCR*:

Passau, Germany -- Seven Roman Catholic women, along with two bishops not in communion with Rome but claiming apostolic succession, attempted June 29 to break through the debate in the Catholic church over women's ordination by presenting a fait accompli: women validly ordained according to the Roman rite, holding themselves out as priests. ([Read the full story.](#) [1])

See also: [Seven women ?ordained? priests June 29: In ceremony they term ?not licit, but a fact?](#) [2]

According to Roman Catholic Woman Priest Bridget Mary Meehan, Shortly after the Danube ordinations, "a male Roman Catholic bishop, in apostolic succession, agreed to ordain two of the women priests, Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger and Gisela Forster, as Roman Catholic Bishops. the male bishops granted this ordination in the presence of witnesses, but otherwise in secrecy to avoid reprisal from the Vatican. Patricia Fresen was ordained by this same male bishop and Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger and Gisela Forster in 2005. So our orders are valid, but violate church law."

Today, about 130 women in half a dozen countries belong to the Roman Catholic Woman Priest movement. To mark the anniversary, we offer the following commentary by Bridget Mary Meehan.

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I'm Bridget Mary Meehan. I am a Roman Catholic Woman Priest. This year, the women priests' movement celebrates our tenth anniversary. The first public ordination of Roman Catholic women took place ten years ago on June 29th 2002 on the Danube River.

From this small beginning, when seven women were ordained as priests, an international movement has developed that is rocking the Catholic Church.

At present there are about 130 members in various countries.

In 2012, hundreds of priests and theologians in Austria, Germany, Ireland and elsewhere have expressed public support for women's ordination.

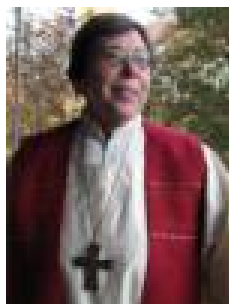


On Holy Thursday in April 2012, Pope Benedict issued a

stinging public rebuke to the priests for their disobedience to the Church's Magisterium on the question of women's ordination. One could argue that the Vatican is the gift that keeps on giving. In spite of their harsh punishments, our movement continues to grow.

Women priests minister to people in small house churches, in larger communities, in hospitals, hospices, retreat centers, and prisons. We serve the homeless, migrants, and those on the margins of church and society. We stand in solidarity with all those who are working for justice in the church and in the world.

All are welcome to receive sacraments in our inclusive communities. Women priests are transforming a male dominated patriarchal church into a more women-friendly, partnership model, rooted in Jesus example. Even the Vatican's own scholars, the Papal Biblical Commission, in 1976, concluded that no grounds can be found in the New Testament for excluding women from priestly ordination. Nevertheless, in 1994 Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* declared definitively that women are excluded from priesthood.



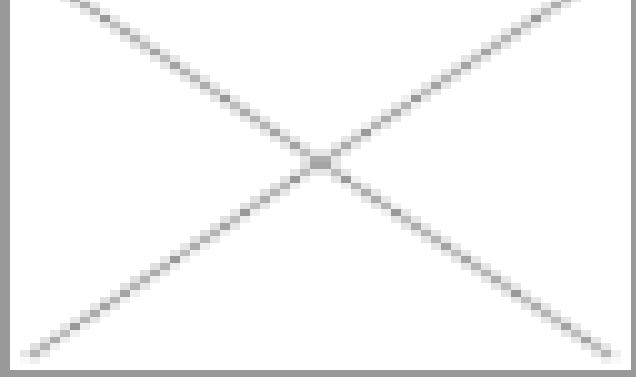
Dr. Ida Raming, a prominent theologian has written scholarly articles and books on women's

ordination.. Ida and her friend Iris Mueller, are often referred to as the "grandmothers of the women's ordination movement." Ida co-authored *Women Find a Way*, the story of the first women in the movement which is available in English and German.

In a statement commemorating the 10th anniversary, theologian Dr. Ida Raming, one of the women priests ordained on the Danube, said: "The rejection of women's ordination by the Vatican is clearly based on antifeminist, theologically unfounded arguments. In answer to this we are seeing an increasing wave of resistance among Catholic women and within church reform movements as they demand equal rights for women and justice within the Roman Catholic Church."

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Women priests are living prophetic obedience to the Spirit as

we disobey an unjust, man-made, canon law that prohibits women's ordination. In order to change an unjust law, we must break it. For some, like the hierarchy, women priests are a spiritual uprising, but for millions, the time has come for a holy shakeup that brings new life, creativity, and equality to our church. Let us give thanks to God for the international women priests movement leading the way toward a renewed priestly ministry on our tenth anniversary!

Visit us on our websites: [www.arcwp.org](http://www.arcwp.org) and [www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org](http://www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org) Friend us on facebook and on Bridget Mary's Blog. <http://bridgetmarys.blogspot.com/>

[The photos in the video and blog below are the property of Erwin Wodicka and used with his permission. For more information on obtaining copies, please email: [info@bilderbox.com](mailto:info@bilderbox.com)]

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[2] [http://natcath.org/NCR\\_Online/archives2/2002c/071902/ordinations.htm](http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2002c/071902/ordinations.htm)