

**\* Women and the Church, Practically Speaking**

By Mary Rice Hasson

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Presenter:

- \* Mary Rice Hasson, JD
- \* Director, The Catholic Women's Forum
- Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C.
- [mhasson@eppc.org](mailto:mhasson@eppc.org)

**The mission of the Catholic Women's Forum is to amplify the voice of Catholic women—in the culture and in the Church—in support of Catholic teaching.**

- \* Annual Catholic women's symposium for scholars
- \* Leadership and networking events for Catholic women
- \* writing, speaking, and media work
- \* consultation services for dioceses, parishes, and apostolates
- \* *New:* expert presentations on gender ideology

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- \* Introduction
- \* Women and the Church - Context
  - \* Cultural framing
  - \* Reality - global, historical, teachings
  - \* Teachings highlights
  - \* Vatican II, Mulieris Dignitatem, Letter to Women, CDF
- \* Women and the Church - Practically speaking
  - \* Goal - holiness (not ordination), service (not power), discipleship!
  - \* Getting past clericalism
  - \* Collaboration of men and women (consultation, collaboration, communication)
  - \* Reaching women, incorporating women
  - \* Get Real: know the cultural landscape
  - \* Charity above all

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\*Women and the Church - Context: Cultural framing

\* Sept. 22 University of Notre Dame panel



Is Christianity Bad for Women? "Women and the Church: An Inter-Tradition Dialogue"

Center for Philosophy of Religion

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\*Women and the Church - Context: Reality - GLOBAL

\* -Church consistently elevates dignity of women worldwide



Life  
Freedom  
Dignity



Education  
Health  
Work

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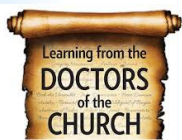
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\*Women and the Church - Context - Reality: historical



Women doctors of the Church:

- Hildegard of Bingen (1100s / 2012)
- Catherine of Sienna (1300s / 1970)
- Teresa of Avila (1500s / 1970)
- Therese of Lisieux (late 1800s/1977)

Women's Leadership esp.  
Women Religious  
Education  
Health Care Service/ Care of Poor Missionaries



"martyrs, saints, and mystics"

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\*Women and the Church - Context: Teachings

- \*Vatican II (Paul VI)
- \*JP II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (encyclical, 1988)
- \*JP II, *Letter to Women* (apostolic letter, 1995)
- \*JP II, *Evangelium Vitae* (encyclical, 1995)
- \*JP II *Christifideles Laici* (exhortation, 1988)
- \*CDF, *On the Collaboration of men and women* (letter to bishops, 1984)
- \*JP II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, (apostolic letter, 1994)  
("held definitively" CDF 1995 - Ratzinger; reiterated by Pope Francis.)
- \*Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (apostolic exhortation, 2013)
- \*Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* (encyclical, 2015)

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\*Women and the Church - Context: Teachings

- \*Who we are - Equal in Dignity and Vocation
- \*Pinnacle of the Christian life - holiness, not ordination
- \*Vatican II: women are to "save the peace of the world"  
Baptism - priest, prophet, king > mission "make disciples"  
(distinct from priestly ordination)
- \**Mulieris Dignitatem*: equal dignity / complementarity
  - \*"essential" equality b/c dignity of persons; "fundamental" =
  - \*Motherhood, according to state in life: spiritual (all); bio (some) - sincere gift of self
  - \*Marian / Petrine Church -- complementary
- \*Letter to Women
- \*genius of women ("apt") - see the person with eyes of the heart

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\*Women and the Church - Context: Teachings

- \*How are we to serve? To live discipleship?
  - \*Goal - holiness (not ordination), service (not power), discipleship!
- 4 "Cs"**
  - \***Clericalism** (get past it)
  - \***Complementarity** - equality / difference
    - \*inequality towards women diminishes man as well. Fundamental equality
  - \***Collaboration** of men and women  
consult, collaborate, communicate
  - \***Charity** above all (prayer, speech, presumptions)

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\* Women and the Church -Context: Teachings - Complementary in Action

\* Identity: Equal in dignity, uniquely women  
Pinnacle of the Christian life - holiness, not ordination

\* Presence

\* Pope Francis: "more incisive female presence"

- \* "where decisions are made"
- \* "valued not clericalized"

\* As women - give from our unique perspectives

- \* Not a quota / 50- 50

\* Mission

\* *Laudato Si* - integral human ecology --value of the person

- \* Acknowledge difference: our culture seeks "to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it".

\* *Christifideles Laici*:

- \* give value to conjugal life, marriage, motherhood
- \* shape moral dimension of culture)

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\* Cultural Landscape: **Gender Ideology**

\* *Laudato Si* - recognizes that "valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment.

\* Sept 2016: gender ideology = "global war" on marriage; threatens to "annihilate the family" (2015)

\* Sept 2016: Person to person: Accompany with love

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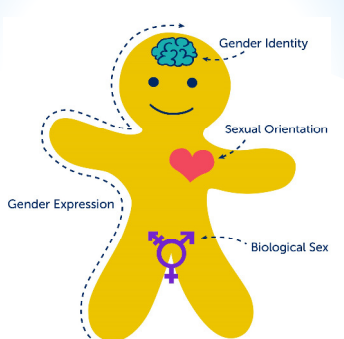
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\* The Gender Bread person



The diagram shows a yellow gingerbread man figure. A dashed line outlines the figure, labeled "Gender Expression". Inside the figure, a brain is labeled "Gender Identity", a heart is labeled "Sexual Orientation", and a purple symbol representing biological sex is labeled "Biological Sex".

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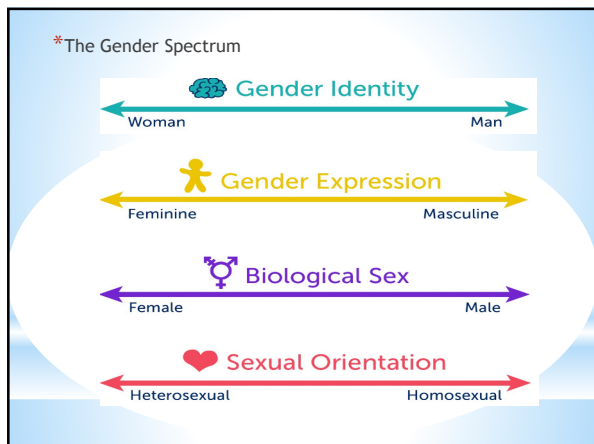
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\*Special Report on Sexuality and Gender  
 \*<http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/number-50-fall-2016>

USCCB resource list:  
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/upload/Gender-Ideology-Select-Teaching-Resources.pdf>

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\* Cultural Landscape: marriage and family

\* CARA data (2015): To support families, need to reach them:  
 Children enrolled in Catholic schools or parish-based religious education:  
 73% of Hispanic/Latino parents have NO children enrolled  
 62% of non-Hispanic parents have NO children enrolled  
 Children enrolled in Catholic elementary or high schools -  
 5 percent of Hispanic or Latino parents  
 12 percent of all other Catholic parents.

Religious Practice: Nearly 50% of Millennials are “Nones” -  
 leaving b/c of “science”  
 impact of divorce on practice  
 Disagreement with teachings (catechesis)

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**Details make a difference:**  
Identity - welcome - personal: Greeters at Mass = use names

Website -  
Identity: tabs for "women" "youth" "men" "singles"

Creativity - activities  
coffee houses, farmer's market, athletic leagues  
cooking with the saints, various formation formats

Practical support - hosting activities:  
Do you offer child care?  
Flexible Meeting times? - alternatives for those at home (kids/retired) and those at work  
Include - Ask for help!  
*servicing increases sense of belonging, integration, friendships*

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\*Women and the Church, Practically Speaking

\*Prayer

\*Gratitude

\*Trust

\*Thank you for all you do!!

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