

Equality for Women in the Church Committee
St. Nicholas Parish
Evanston, IL

PROPOSAL TO SCHEDULE MORE WOMEN TO PREACH

“And how does the world make up for the loss of such experience, intelligence and wisdom of the other half of the human race if women are not expected, not welcomed to its shaping?” (Sister Joan Chittister, NCR Dec., 2013)

Currently in the life of our parish, preaching about the Sunday readings at Mass follows Canon Law 766 and is done primarily by the priest or the male deacon. We believe that women’s spiritual wisdom and leadership needs to be recognized and utilized more consistently. We believe the voices of women preaching at the pulpit are drastically missing. Women’s expertise, individual experiences and charisms bring substance to the Word of God in a way that is unique and vital in today’s world. We believe the absence of women sharing their insights and wisdom at the pulpit is no longer acceptable.

In November of 2001, the United States Conference of Bishops, under the leadership of Archbishop Wilton Gregory, decreed in a complementary norm, that the faithful may be permitted to exercise the ministry of preaching with due regard to various provisions (USCCB, December, 2001). “With specific clarifications to this canon”, the local bishop has the authority to make that pastoral decision in the diocese.

By the authority of our Christian baptism, women, as part of the common priesthood of the faithful, are called to share the Gospel message. In all four Gospels, Christ called forth Mary Magdala to herald the good news of his resurrection. Here and now, in the 21st century, women are ontologically qualified to spread the Good News and build communities of equals.

Both Pope John Paul II (Letter to Women, 1995) and Pope Francis (April, 2019) have called for women to assume greater roles and responsibilities in the Church (although not greater authority). Our faith community’s life will be stronger as this grows. The time is now to actively support the preaching of women at the Eucharist.

Therefore the committee for Equality for Women in the Church strongly recommends that women at St. Nicholas Parish be welcomed to participate in preaching. This specifically means that women are intentionally and regularly scheduled to preach at Mass.

The coordination of this endeavor can be simply orchestrated in a variety of ways. Women’s relationship with the mystery of God in their lives needs to be heard from the pulpit on Sunday at Mass regularly throughout the year. St. Nicholas Parish has a

plethora of women, whose dedication, intelligence, life experiences and holy wisdom can offer unique insights about the Gospel message. This committee is dedicated to moving forward to implement this endeavor.

MISSION STATEMENT for EQUALITY for WOMEN in the CHURCH

As the People of God, we invite all to join us as we explore and promote full inclusivity within our Church. Our focus is on, but not restricted to women's participation in all aspects of ministry and leadership.