

The following report of recommendations was developed by a Task Force on the Promotion of Leadership Roles for Women established by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, S.T.D., referenced the work of this task force, which she chaired, in her remarks at the November 28, 2018 Symposium at Canisius College.

For more information on the LCWR, please <https://lcwr.org>.

## THE CHURCH AND THE BENCHMARKS DOCUMENT

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented at the LCWR Assembly  
Atlanta, GA -- August 17-21, 1996

#### I. OVERVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. A given recommendation may already be in practice in certain areas of the USA and at the same time function as part of a checklist or measure of the advancement of women in other sections of the USA.
- B. LCWR invites interested national organizations to assist in promoting these recommendations.

#### II. CONSIDERATION OF EACH OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

##### A. Promotion of Church Leadership Roles for Women

- 1. **Historical Contribution of Women:** Inclusion of the role of women when teaching the history of the American Church, emphasizing the equality of women; this should be done in all levels of education (primary grades through church-related graduate degrees.)
- 2. **Leadership Positions:** Appointment of qualified women to positions traditionally reserved to clergy and/or laymen.
- 3. **Media Coverage of Women:** Assessment of the media's coverage and of convention programs; take steps to feature and/or include women on convention programs or in media coverage on a more equal basis.
- 4. **Permanent Diaconate:** Encouragement of the USA Church to engage in serious dialogue on the benefits of ordaining women to the permanent diaconate; if it is found beneficial, then petition Rome for the necessary derogations to permit this.

##### B. Protection of Rights

- 1. **Due Process:** Encouragement that local church employers publish the procedures for settling grievances.
- 2. **Advocates:** Training of religious institutes' personnel to serve as advocates.
- 3. **Negotiating Skills:** Preparation of members of religious institutes in negotiating skills and

conflict resolutions as a primary means to protect rights and resolve conflicts.

4. **Personnel Policies:** Development of personnel policies by church employers that are based on competency, applying equally to clergy and laity, women and men.

C. Education and Formation

1. **Availability of Requisite Education:** Allocation of the Church's resources to lay ministers, especially women, equal to that available to those studying for the priesthood.
2. **Appropriate Training of Personnel:** Need for religious institutes to encourage members to undertake serious study in preparation for leadership positions within the Church.  
  
-- this may mean joint funding by a diocese and a religious institute of a degree program for an institute's member.
3. **Women in Seminary Education:** Challenge dioceses to either continue to or to begin to employ competent women as part of the formation of seminarians so they are prepared to work with women in a parish.
4. **Women as Spiritual Directors:** Employment of competent women as spiritual directors by dioceses, religious institutes, and parishes.

D. Just Compensation

Requirement of all church employers to provide just compensation and benefits to their employees.

E. Equitable Representation

1. **Representation on Consultative Bodies:** Requirement that both women and men be equitably represented in all church consultative bodies.
2. **Inclusion of Women within the Quinquennial Reports:** Ask USA bishops to include in their quinquennial reports, perhaps in the section on the laity, a description of the progress each diocese has made in promoting women in the public ministry of the Church.

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