



Voice of the Faithful® 2014 Assembly Workshop: Focus on Female Voices

Connecticut Convention Center - Saturday, April 5, 2014

Pope Francis says he suffers when seeing "that woman's role of service slips into a role of servitude." Yet he insists, still, that women cannot be ordained, and instead of speaking about a "theology of humans" calls for developing a "theology of women."

Can women hope for equal opportunity in ministry from a male hierarchy trapped in a patriarchal mindset? How do women answer the call to ministry when so much in Church tradition and ecclesiology seem to thwart female opportunity?



Join us in Hartford April 5 at the Female Voices workshop to consider these questions and others.

We'll have four **Conversation Starters** to help us explore experiences, hopes, and possibilities within today's Church: Patricia Simpson from the Harvard Divinity School and Boston's Paulist Center; Jennifer Marran from Christ the King parish in Kingston RI; Sarah Tracy, an educator and spiritual director from Rhode Island, and Mary Leahy, a Masters of Divinity candidate at Boston College.

Continue reading to meet our Conversation Starters ...

Patty Simpson ministers in the Boston area. She is the Administrator at the Paulist Center in Boston, the denominational counselor to Catholic students at Harvard Divinity School, and an instructor in ministry at Harvard Divinity School.

Patty grew up in vibrant post-Vatican II parishes and schools that supported the full and active participation of the laity in the life of the Church. After receiving her Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Patty spent eight years as a consultant with Arthur Andersen/Andersen Consulting. She then obtained her Master of Divinity (M.Div.) at Harvard Divinity School with a focus on pastoral and non-profit administration and leadership.

She has been the Administrator at the Paulist Center in Boston for 21 years, a community that models collaborative ministry between lay and ordained members.

Patty has been married for 27 years to her husband, Kevin Flynn. Together they have two young adult children.

Jennifer Marran describes herself as a teacher by trade and an educator at heart. She practices both while serving as Pastoral Associate at Christ the King Parish in Kingston RI, where her duties include, among others, liturgy planning, training of lectors and

Eucharistic Ministers, making hospital visits, and coordinating adult education. She previously was the Director of Religious Formation for Christ the King and worked also as a Catholic school teacher.

Jennifer received a B.S. in elementary education and her Master of Education (M.Ed.) at Rhode Island College, then went on to obtain Certificates for Director of Religious Education and for Applied Pastoral Service. She was named a National Catholic Education Association Catechetical Scholar and has served on various NCEA committees. She also belongs to the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership and the Professional Religious Educators of Providence. Jennifer previously served on the Religious Education Task Force for the Diocese of Providence and as chairperson for the Providence diocese's Religious Education Advisory Board.

Jennifer has been married to her "best friend and husband" Mike for more than 29 years. They have three 20-something sons.

Sarah J. Thomas Tracy has experience as an educator, pastoral counselor, and spiritual director. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Assumption College in Worcester MA with concentrations in both Religious Studies and Social & Rehabilitative Services. She then obtained a Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling from the Boston College Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (now known as the School of Theology and Ministry) and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction from the Diocese of Providence.

Sarah's professional career began with service in Youth Ministry for the Catholic dioceses of El Paso TX and Providence RI. She interrupted that path to work 18 years in Bank Operations and Human Resources at Fleet Bank (now Bank of America), and then returned to ministry and a position teaching Religious Studies at the Prout School in Wakefield RI, where she focused on morality, peace and justice, world religions, and Scripture.

Currently, Sarah is a special lecturer at Providence College, where she teaches online courses for a diocesan Certificate of Religious Education program in the School of Continuing Education. She also provides workshops and presentations on topics such as life's transitions, the lectionary, and Bible studies.

Mary Michael Leahy is an M.Div. candidate at Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry. She also currently leads Liturgy of the Word with Eucharist services weekly at Blessed Sacrament in Walpole MA. In the past at her home parish of Holy Family in Duxbury MA, she was religious education instructor, founder and chair of the Spiritual Book club, director of the Evangelization committee, and a member of the parish pastoral council. She also has been a Eucharistic minister at Newton-Wellesley Hospital.

Mary's focus on ministry follows a career that began with a degree in urban planning from Boston College; a two-year stint in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Seattle WA; vice president of a national home health care agency and a real estate consultant business. She has been married for 14 years to Manley Kiley and has a 13-year-old daughter.

Visit www.votf.org for more information on the VOTF 2014 Assembly
