

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Canadians Going to Rome Call for Catholic Church Reform

A delegation of ten Catholic Canadians, members of the Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE) will be travelling to Rome October 1-6, 2023 to call for the full and equal participation of women in ministry and leadership in the Catholic Church. We will join reform-minded Catholics from around the world as the Vatican Synod on Synodality Assembly begins.

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

Pope Francis initiated the 'Synod on Synodality' to invite Catholics to listen to each other and to discern what the Church is called to be in our time. The three-year process began with surveys and consultation at local and diocesan/regional levels (albeit with varying degrees of support by clergy). These reports have been synthesized by clergy-selected writing teams at national and continental levels. Vatican-selected voting delegates will assemble in Rome for the month of October in 2023 and 2024 to discuss what has arisen.

WHY THIS SYNOD IS HISTORIC

For the first time at a Catholic synod, non-clerical women and men will have voting rights. (Women make up only 15% of delegates, however, and participate at the invitation of an all-male hierarchy). It is also unprecedented that a Synod working document is comprised of *questions* for discussion, rather than *statements* for review/ratification.

WHY CNWE IS GOING TO ROME

CNWE is going to Rome to be a visible reminder (in solidarity with Catholics from across the globe) that it is past time to end the sexism, misogyny and clericalism that has permeated the structures of the church for centuries. While many societies have made strides toward women's equality, the Catholic Church remains a place where women are second-class citizens. Catholics are currently denied the opportunity to have gifted, qualified women preside and preach at mass and to contribute equally to the development of church teaching and important decision-making. It is time that the voices of all those marginalized by Church teaching and practice — women, LGBTQIA2S+ persons, divorced and remarried Catholics, Indigenous peoples and clergy abuse survivors — are heard. For the Catholic Church to credibly uphold belief in the dignity and equality of all persons, it must stop being an international body that condones sexism, a key indicator that contributes to the global impoverishment of women and their families. Bold, concrete structural change toward an inclusive, credible and accountable Church must result from this Synod.

THE TIME IS NOW FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Synod on Synodality offers a historic opportunity for the Roman Catholic Church and delegates, together with Pope Francis must be bold enough to heed the calls for real change. We are church and we are going to Rome with this conviction in mind and heart - voices raised for reform. We invite you to share in our journey.

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