

WALK WITH WOMEN

OCT. 6 2023

WOMEN'S ORDINATION CONFERENCE



PLANNING TOOLKIT



WHO

Founded in 1975, the **Women's Ordination Conference (WOC)** is the oldest and largest organization working to ordain women as priests, deacons, and bishops into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church. A feminist voice for women in the Roman Catholic Church, WOC is a grassroots-driven movement that promotes activism, dialogue, and prayerful witness to call for women's full equality in the church.

WHAT

Join the Women's Ordination Conference on October 6, 2023 for our **"Walk with Women."** From Rome to your hometown, we represent a global, grassroots movement advocating for women's equality.

Together with our global sisters, advocates for women's ordination plan to process through Rome to the synod hall to encourage the church to walk alongside women as equals throughout the synod and beyond. We invite you to join your footsteps and your voices by hosting a Walk with Women in your community.

At the Mass at the opening of the Synod in 2021, Pope Francis said: *"The Holy Spirit always surprises us, to suggest fresh paths and new ways of thinking."* Let's make our Walk with Women a "fresh path" to full equality for all genders in the church.

WHY

Bearing witness creates space for individuals and communities to call attention to injustice. To bear witness is to reclaim our church. It is a public outcry, a form of resistance, embodied prayer, and a way to connect with others while affirming our belief in the full equality of all genders in the Roman Catholic Church.

HOW

- **Organize a walk on October 6.** Gather with WOC supporters and friends in your local area and host your own walk for women's equality!
- **Join the walk in solidarity, wherever you are.** Even if there's no event in your community or you're not able to organize one, you can walk/roll/bike wherever you are and let us know about it - we'll be lifting up all participants on social media and in our messaging! Take a selfie and send it to WOC!

HOW TO START

1. **Ask 1 - 3 people you know** who are supportive of the cause if they can help you plan the event. This is a great way to feel supported and make sure that you don't take on too much responsibility in the planning. If you don't have anyone in mind to ask, contact woc@womensordination.org and we can put you in touch with other WOC members in your area.
2. **Select a time and a location for the walk.** Think about what works best for you and your community. Make sure your location, and the length of the walk, are accessible, or please be clear about any barriers to accessibility. This includes those who have disabilities and those who rely on public transportation.

* WOC TIPS *

You may also want to consider whether there is a location near you with special significance for women in the church or women more broadly. For example, a group in Rochester, NY will be walking from the site of the original WOC office to a statue of Susan B. Anthony; another group is walking the Sojourner Truth trail in the Hudson Valley.

You may need to obtain a permit from state or city officials in order to hold your demonstration in a public place. Research state and city laws or contact local officials about public witnesses. We recommend using sidewalks and not blocking traffic, or walking in a public park or on a trail - all locations that generally do not require a permit for smaller groups.

If you anticipate any interaction with law enforcement or security, it is essential to inform attendees of that possibility before the day of the demonstration so that everyone is comfortable and prepared. This is unlikely, but if there is a risk of arrest or detainment, please contact WOC and we can offer more guidelines to stay safe.

3. **Define your roles:** Divide jobs. Have one person prepare and bring signs/visual materials, have another send reminders to guests, another prepared to talk to the media, another to be responsible for speaking at the event or coordinating several speakers, another to take photos, etc. Designate a person to be the point of contact with WOC staff. If you have a small group, you may each be taking on more than one role.

4. **Tell us about it:** Use **this form** to submit the information about your walk to WOC, and even to request a one-on-one call with WOC staff for extra support. We'll have an interactive map on our website for people to find events near them.

5. **Consider developing a "Run of Show"** or a timeline of the event, asking yourself: "What will we actually do, once we're gathered?" Each march will be different, so consider what makes sense for your community. Remember, If you have a speaker, can everyone engage with the content? Here is a suggested timeline, to get your started.

* SAMPLE OUTLINE *

- **Organizers gather**
 - Set up any materials, signs, tables, or assign reading or speaking parts; begin to welcome attendees
- **Participants gather**
 - Welcome those attending, introduce yourself, check in about the route, offer a program, sign, or symbol you might be using
- **Get started!**
 - Organizers explain the why, how, and what to expect, making the connection to the global movement
 - You might want to start with a prayer, sharing, or a song (examples in this toolkit)
 - Invite people to share a short testimony
 - Practice a few songs
- **Prepare to move!**
 - Maybe you want to chant or sing as you walk? Possible chants:
 - Walk with Women! We are the Church!
 - Knock knock! Who's there? More than half the church!
- **At the stopping place**
 - More sharing? Prayer? Singing? Moment of silence?
 - Thank everyone for coming, take photos!
 - Invite attendees to lunch, tea, or a nearby place for fellowship.

6. Get the word out! Create an invitation or announcement to send via email. Start simple: who, what, when, where, and why! Hang flyers in your community centers. Make announcements and tell your friends. WOC will compile a list of events that we will share in our member emails, on our website, and on our social media channels. We can also invite local members on your behalf.

*** GET SOCIAL ***

Use social media to get the word out. Use Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), Threads, or whatever platform you're present on to invite your friends and neighbors to join your walk. WOC will create an official Facebook event for your local gathering so that participants can RSVP. We've provided graphics for you to use in this toolkit.

Make sure to tag WOC: on Twitter/X @OrdainWomen, on Instagram and Threads @womensordination, and by typing "@Women's Ordination Conference" in a Facebook post. Use the following hashtags: #OrdainWomen #WalkWithWomen #Synod2023

7. Be prepared to share your story. No matter how you design your event, what will most serve this work is sharing why this movement matters to you. Storytelling and authentic testimonies are not just inspirational, but help build community. If you anticipate the media at your event, you may want to rehearse your response or develop some talking points to keep you on message. The WOC office can provide talking points and guidelines, if you need them!

8. Set expectations.

- It is helpful to set some community guidelines for your demonstration if it involves audience participation, such as prioritizing marginalized voices, active listening, and making space for all voices and experiences. Reminder: Speak loudly so everyone, including those that are hearing impaired, can hear you, or provide a written text.
- It can be hard to predict how many people might show up, but remember, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there..." (Matthew 18:20). You are part of a global movement with a long legacy of women who "Go and Tell" the good news of equality. We walk in the footsteps of feminist, womanist, and mujerista theologians, thought-leaders, and prayerful, playful activists who are dreaming and living a new church into being.

9. **If you want, tell local media about your event.** WOC will send a press release to the media about the Rome event and all solidarity walks worldwide, but we encourage you to contact local media to tell them about your event. You can use the template below to send a press release to your local media. Call local radio and TV stations a few days before the event to invite them to come. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper describing the event and the broader context and effects of inequality in the Catholic church. Make sure to inform people who are attending that you've done so to ensure everyone is comfortable.

* DAY-OF REMINDERS *

- **Arrive early.** Make sure you and your group are at the meeting point early, ready to welcome participants and/or meet with the press.
- **Make yourself visible.** Use our [printable signs](#), or feel free to make a larger banner with a message like “Walk with Women” or “Ordain Women.”
- **Remind people of the expectations you created** (see above, in #7).
- **Bring extra supplies:** sunscreen, water, first aid-kits, bug spray, snacks, anything that might help make the experience more pleasant for attendees.
- **Capture your action:** Take photos and/or videos and share them on social media with the hashtag #OrdainWomen. *(Please get consent before taking and sharing photos/videos, especially if children are present.)* Invite people to record a short video explaining why they are “Walking With Women” and why they care about ordination justice in the church.

MAKE IT ~ INTERACTIVE ~

You could even bring a small whiteboard and dry erase marker and invite people to complete a sentence like, “I’m walking for gender equality in the church because...” and pose with their sentence.

SOCIAL MEDIA & POSTERS

* MESSAGING *

Sample tweets/Threads:

If synodality means discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit together, then we must heed the voice of the Spirit calling out for equality for all the church's members. That's why I'm participating in the Walk With Women on October 6th. @OrdainWomen #OrdainWomen #synod

Women are called to be priests—and that message needs to echo through the #synod hall. Join me for the Walk With Women in [your location] on October 6 with @OrdainWomen and ordination justice supporters around the world. #OrdainWomen

The Walk with Women on October 6 represents a global, grassroots movement advocating for women's equality in the Catholic Church. Join me in [your location] to add our footsteps and raise our voices in a global chorus for justice! @OrdainWomen #OrdainWomen

Sample language for Facebook and Instagram posts:

On October 6th, the Women's Ordination Conference is organizing a "Walk with Women," a procession through Rome to the synod hall to encourage the church to walk alongside women as equals throughout the synod and beyond. And there are solidarity walks being planned all over the globe, including here in [your location]. These walks will represent the worldwide, grassroots movement advocating for women's equality and ordination justice in the Catholic church. Join me on Oct 6 at TIME and PLACE as we raise our voices in a global chorus for justice! #OrdainWomen

SIGNS FOR PRINTING

We encourage you to print these signs and carry them with you on your walk.

* GRAPHICS *

Facebook post

Instagram post

Instagram story

Twitter (X) post

SONGS & PRAYERS

SISTER, CARRY ON (CAROLYN MCDADE)

[\(watch here\)](#)

Sister, carry on.
Sister, carry on.
It may be rocky and it may be rough,
but sister, carry on.

Sister, don't lose the dream.
Sister, don't lose the dream.
Don't sell out for no short time gain.
Sister, don't lose the dream.

Sister, don't settle too soon.
Sister, don't settle too soon.
Till everybody's got their rights.
Sister, don't settle too soon.

Sister, we share the way.
Sister, we share the way.
Heart to heart, and hand to hand.
Sister, we share the way.

Stand in solidarity,
Stand in solidarity,
Together bring a brand new day
Stand in solidarity.

Move in solidarity,
Move in solidarity,
Together bring a brand new church
Move in solidarity.

Sister, carry on,
Sister, carry on,
It may be rocky and it may be rough
But, Sister, carry on.

*Note: For more inclusive lyrics, consider changing the word "Sister" to "Siblings" in some or all of the verses.

KEEP ON MOVING FORWARD (PAT HUMPHRIES/EMMA'S REVOLUTION)

[\(watch here\)](#)

Gonna keep on moving forward
Keep on moving forward
Keep on moving forward
Never turning back
Never turning back

Continue with various lines like:
Gonna keep on moving proudly...
Gonna keep on singing loudly...
Gonna keep on loving boldly...
Gonna change our church together...

I WILL STAND (PAT HUMPHRIES/EMMA'S REVOLUTION)

[\(listen here\)](#)

In the warmth of your presence
I am safe at home
I will stand, I will stand
In the deepest conflict
I am not alone
I will stand, I will stand

I will stand in myself
When I'm not feeling strong
I will stand, I will stand
I will tear down the walls
And sing a freedom song
I will stand, I will stand

Chorus: I will stand, I will stand
With this spark in my hand
I will stand in the circle
With the circle in me
I will stand, I will stand

I will gather the courage
I have found in me
I will stand, I will stand
I will honor the vision
Of who I will be
I will stand, I will stand

WHO WILL SPEAK IF WE DON'T (MARTY HAUGEN)

[\(listen here\)](#)

Who will speak if we don't?
Who will speak if we don't?
Who will speak so their voice will be
heard? Oh, who will speak if we don't?

OTHER OPTIONS!

We are Marching/Siyahamba ([lyrics](#))
We Shall Overcome ([lyrics](#))
This Little Light of Mine ([lyrics](#))
Singing for Our Lives ([lyrics](#))
A Place at the Table ([lyrics](#))
Wade in the Water ([lyrics](#))

A PRAYER FOR THE SYNODAL PATH

Source, Sojourner, and Spirit,
to journey with You
is to walk with our gazes fixed upon a horizon of hope.
To journey with one another
is our challenge and our calling.

You call us to move with missionary urgency
to become a more vibrantly living sign
of Your love in the world.
Break us out of worn paths,
free us from the thickets of
we've always done it this way,
and for those who may be frightened
by the new vista revealed,
grant boldness of heart.

May we become a church
where all vocations are welcomed, celebrated, and nurtured,
where Your priests reflect the diversity of Your people,
and where our structures are at the service
of Your kin-dom of radically loving inclusion.

Cultivate in us a holy, healthy restlessness on this synodal path.
Make us unafraid of prophetic decisions
that take us along uncharted territory.
Give us the radical unity that is Your gift and promise.

Grant us generosity of trust
and expansiveness of hope as we say,

Amen. May it be so.

HELPFUL LINKS & CONTACTS

WOC LINKS

[Walk with Women webpage](#)

[WomensOrdination.org](#)

[Submit your walk to WOC \(FORM\)](#)

SYNOD RESOURCES

[Instrumentum Laboris](#)

[WOC's Synod Resources](#)

CONTACT US

General WOC email: woc@womensordination.org

Kate McElwee, Executive Director: kmcelwee@womensordination.org

Katie Lacz, Program Director: klacz@womensordination.org

Twitter/X and Facebook: [@OrdainWomen](#)

Instagram/Threads: [@WomensOrdination](#)

MAKE A SOLIDARITY GIFT

Support our feminist, faith-filled, grassroots activism with a solidarity gift.

To support the Women's Ordination Conference means to embody radical resistance and prophetic persistence on the path toward equality. We minister. We march. We knock on doors. We witness. We write. We shout. We pray. And we simply will not stop until we achieve gender equity in the Roman Catholic Church. WOC is a 501c3 non-profit organization; your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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