

Women's Ordination, Divorce, Celibacy, Medical Ethics Draw Theologian's Comment

By MARTIN TOOMBS

A German-born Catholic priest who has achieved international repute as a theologian says that he expects women to be ordained to the priesthood in the course of time.

Redemptorist Father Bernard Haring, interviewed during a brief stay in Rochester, stressed the need for time in the resolution of this current issue, but he said "there was never a doubt that woman belongs as much as man to the priestly people of God."

He expressed some views also on priestly celibacy, failed marriages and "the death process."

Father Haring, who is lecturing at the Kennedy Center for Bioethics at Georgetown University, is a prolific writer. His stature as a theologian was established in 1963, with the publication of his three-volume work, *The Law of Christ*. His current book is entitled *Prayer: The Integration of Faith and Life*. A book to be published in January deals with medical ethics.

He gave a public talk on values in ministry last Wednesday under the auspices of St. Bernard's Seminary.

The interview taped at the seminary began with mention of this weekend's conference in Detroit on the ordination of women. Father Haring's comments follow.

"Let me first say, I appreciate the warning given by Archbishop Bernardin, because we should not awaken hopes of immediate ordination of women.

"I think ordination of women should come, and will come. I'm not a prophet, but I see the energy of the Church, I see certain developments from which I conclude it will come. But it will not come tomorrow, or as the group is called, NOW.

"In the book of Genesis, it is expressed that God created man and woman in his image and likeness; so women have the same qualities as men. Before God there is no difference between male and female; there was never a doubt that woman

belongs as much as man to the priestly people of God.

"Vatican II has taught that deacons belong to the ministerial priesthood. From here we have the best theological argument, because from the second to the sixth century many parts of the church had women deacons, and they were ordained in the same way as men. So if it has happened in history, it can happen again."

Father Haring pointed out that the function of the bishops, and therefore all priests, is to proclaim the resurrection of Christ; the first person to proclaim His resurrection, to the apostles themselves, was Mary Magdalen, making her "an apostle to the apostles," he said.

Noting the fact that women have never been ordained priests, Father Haring said that he felt the reason was cultural. "In the time of Jesus, women had no role in social, political or cultural life. But now women, I think also as the result of the gospel, have an equal role in the conscience, education, social and political life."

The priest emphasized that it will take time for the issue to be explored completely, and for people to become accustomed to the idea of women as priests; and change will not occur in the immediate future.

Addressing himself to the question of priests marrying, he commented: "I do not want to see our priests on the marriage market, and be the last bus, the last train for super-adult girls." He went on to say that priests who honestly feel they cannot continue with their vow of celibacy should be released from it. While opening the possibility of "holy, married men" becoming priests, he feels that a priest released from the vow of celibacy should not be allowed to continue to perform the sacraments.

Concerning divorce, Father said: "If there is a real probability that the first marriage had not the anthropological, and theological conditions for an indissoluble

marriage, and failed (the couple) should be allowed to remarry, unless the marriage tribunal can competently prove that the first marriage had the necessary qualities."

"What about those who have remarried without the sanction of the Church?"

"If the second marriage is good, and they want to return to sacramental life, I think there must be forgiveness," Father stated. He illustrated the point with this analogy: if a thief stole a million dollars, and squandered all but \$150, which he then returned, he would be forgiven; the same type of forgiveness should be extended to the people involved in marriage that has failed.

In relation to the case concerning Karen Ann Quinlan, Father Haring expressed a different opinion on the use of "extraordinary means." He feels that it is the possibility of recovery that is most important, not the means of treatment.

"Many things that were extraordinary are now ordinary, and I feel that we are obliged to use heart-lung machines or resuscitation if there is reasonable hope of recovery. "It is meaningless," he stated, "to prolong the death process; so what we are doing does not help anyone. It is contradictory how society cares so little at the other end of life, which has all the potentialities, and eagerly disposes of life; it is stupid. And then to compensate on this end to just prolong the death process, it is contradictory."



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Women's Ordination Topic of Conference

The Detroit conference on the ordination of women will be kept moving by a small army of facilitators, more than a fifth of them from this area.

Eleven women from Rochester's religious communities, 12 laywomen and two priests of the diocese expect to go to the weekend conference on the day after Thanksgiving. All but three will be working: Ellen Zazycki of the local chapter of St. Joan's International Alliance has the job of "looking after" the 100 facilitators "to assure their operational mobility," she said.

Conference organizers originally planned for about 600 delegates. Registration closed at 1,300, and 400 registration fees were returned to those who applied too late, Mrs. Zazycki reported.

She said that many "high-powered church people" would be attending, "vicars, heads of orders, and of priests' councils, representatives of dioceses." Rochester priests registered are Father Douglas Hoffman, director of the Office of Pastoral Ministry, and Father Joseph Jankowiak of St. Bernard's Seminary. The Diocesan Sisters Council is sponsoring Sisters Kathleen Kircher, SSJ, and Barbara Moore, RSM.

The ground work for the conference was done last

December by representatives of the following organizations: Leadership Conference of Women Religious, National Coalition of American Nuns, Sisters' Vocation Conference, National Assembly of Women Religious, St. Joan's International Alliance, the American and Canadian branches of the Association of Women Aspiring to the Presbyterian Ministry and the Sisters' Vocation Conference.

The organizing task force included Sister Anne Mary Dooley, SSJ, of the Nazareth Academy theology faculty.

"This conference will convene persons committed to making the talents of women fully available for ministerial service in the Roman Catholic Church," the organizers stated. "It will inform the Church about women preparing for a new expression of full priesthood. The participants will examine the present status of the ordination issue and will develop strategies for effective action."

Sister Kathleen said she was expecting to meet "people from all over the United States, and even other countries."

Her interest was heightened, she said, by Father Bernard Haring's talk here last week: He answered questions with "wonderful openness of spirit," she observed. The theologian "spoke of mission of being called, being sent. That's ordination."

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