

With Pope's Approval

U.S. Church to Encourage Women to Leadership Roles

Vatican City (NC) -- The U.S. bishops will encourage women to take more leadership roles permitted by the church, and the encouragement has the support of Pope John Paul II, said the new president of the U.S. bishops.

The U.S. bishops' decision at their November meeting to draft a pastoral letter on women should result in a document that "will en-

courage the effort to open to women leadership posts in the church," said Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops-U.S. Catholic Conference.

The bishop's comments appeared Nov. 30 in an interview with L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican daily newspaper.

Regarding the role of

women in the church, "considerable progress has already been made, but much remains to be done," he added.

In their efforts to encourage wider roles for women, said the Youngstown bishop, the U.S. bishops "are grateful to the holy father for the support which he gives to their task."

In September the pontiff cautioned U.S. bishops

against encouraging groups supporting the ordination of women to the priesthood.

At the same time, said Bishop Malone, "he also urged us to continue to work with women and for their interests and to do everything to promote their dignity and their legitimate rights."

"We intend to proceed in this spirit," said the 63-year-old Bishop Malone, who Nov. 15 was elected to a

three-year term as head of the U.S. bishops' conference.

Bishop Malone said that the proposed pastoral, expected to be completed within three to four years, "will sustain and explain the position of the church on the problem of ordination."

He also said that "the church can and should do much more than it has done up to now to support and

encourage the legitimate aspirations of women in society."

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