

World & Nation

Pope says synod should study more active role for women

Castel Gandolfo, Italy (NC) — Pope John Paul II said the October bishops' synod on the laity should study how women can play a more active part in the Church's mission, but he ruled out ordination.

The pope also said that while men and women have "equal dignity" in the Church, they have different charisms and services.

He referred to the priesthood as a mission which was not given to women.

The pope made his remarks Aug. 16 after praying the laity at his summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, 15 miles south of Rome.

Speaking to several hundred visitors, the pope said the Gospel is "rich in the presence of women," including those who accompanied Christ and the apostles, who waited at the foot of the cross and who had the privilege of announcing Christ's resurrection.

"These examples are enough to show that, even if women are not called to the typical mission which the Lord entrusted to the apostles as their own, nevertheless they are

given roles of great importance," the pope said.

Since the Second Vatican Council and partly because of Church teaching, "the contribution of women in these years has notably increased in the areas of evangelization, catechesis, liturgy, theology, and, in general, in the mission the Church carries out in the world," the pope said.

"Therefore, this seems like a favorable moment to examine more deeply the ways of ensuring 'an increasingly active share (by women) in the various sectors of the Church's apostolate,'" the pope added, quoting from the council's decree on lay people.

The pope said the life of the Virgin Mary illustrated the way toward "the equal dignity of men and women in diversity of charisms and service." He said the synod should be able to offer an "effective, deeper study" of that issue.

The pope spoke the day after he celebrated Mass on the Feast of the Assumption



BACK-PORCH INTERVIEW — At Detroit's Sacred Heart Seminary, NBC News correspondent Maria Shriver interviews seminarian Todd Lajiness for an August 26 special on U.S. Catholicism. The NBC program will feature Detroit and three other cities on the itinerary of the pope's upcoming U.S. visit.

Archbishop May answers objections raised to synod laity experts

Washington (NC) — The two lay specialists named expert advisers for the upcoming world Synod of Bishops are not "representing and speaking" for U.S. Catholic laity, but are only assisting the U.S. bishops who are delegates, Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis said.

The "periti," Dolores Leckey and Lucien Roy, are not themselves delegates "to a synod made up entirely of bishops," added Archbishop May, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The archbishop made the comments in a letter to Kathleen M. Sullivan, executive director of the National Catholic Coalition, which is campaigning to replace the two advisers with two endorsed by the organiza-

tion. Leckey is executive director of the NCCB's Secretariat on the Laity, and Roy is director of the Office of Ministry Formation for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The text of the archbishop's letter was released in Washington Aug. 13.

Sullivan's group in a July letter to Archbishop May asked that Leckey and Roy "be relieved of the obligation to serve as 'periti' (experts)" at the synod on the laity in October "since both are full-time paid employees of the Church bureaucracy" and "there is serious doubt that they can truly represent the laity in the varied secular roles."

The coalition, which calls itself an organi-

zation of orthodox Catholics, has urged that Phyllis Schlafly, president of Eagle Forum, and Charles Rice, a University of Notre Dame law professor, be named as replacements.

In his letter Archbishop May said Leckey and Roy will serve as staff people to the U.S. bishops' delegation and were chosen for "their background and expertise in the preparatory work for this synod and will be

very helpful to the bishops as they pursue their work at the synod."

He noted that consultations have been held over past two years on diocesan and national levels for lay people to speak to the bishops and added that there was a special consultation for leaders of Catholic organizations.

Archbishop May said more than 200,000 lay Catholics participated.

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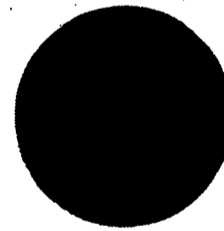
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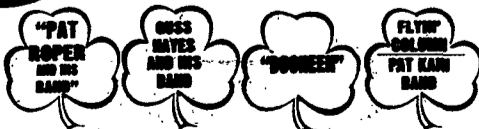


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