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**Open Letter to Cardina G.L Muller, Prefect of CDF/Vatican
From Theologian Dr. Ida Raming, RCWP**

Open Letter to Cardinal G. L.

Müller

**Dr. theol. Ida Raming
(Germany)**

**To the Prefect of the CDF
Card. Gerhard Ludwig Mueller
Palazzo del Sant'Uffizio
00120 Città del Vaticano**

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Rev. Cardinal,

Out of concern for negative developments in our RC Church which are deeply contrary to the Spirit of Jesus, I want to appeal to you as chief of the CDF.

First, please, allow me to introduce myself to you: I am a Roman Catholic theologian with a doctorate in theology, and was promoted as a member of the faculty of the University of Muenster (Westphalia) in 1970. I'm also an active witness of the Vatican Council II (having submitted a petition to the Council in 1963, together with Dr. Iris Mueller, who died in 2011).

In my dissertation, (published in 1973, second edition 2002; English translation: 1976, 2004), I carefully researched the position of women in the tradition of the RC Church, especially the reasons for the exclusion of women from diaconate and priesthood.

My teacher (+ 1988) was a well-known specialist in the history of Canon Law and of Canon Law itself.

Since entering the field of theology, I have attentively observed the development concerning this issue and have published numerous articles and several books on it.

Through my research, I've gotten a deep insight into the long history of discrimination against women in the Catholic tradition. I found not only biblical texts discriminating against women, but also texts of Church Fathers and Church teachers (e.g. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas). They emphasize that women are both genetically and morally inferior to men. Therefore, they claim that women are restricted to a state of subjection (*status subiectionis*). Consequently, women are denied not only the dignity of being created in the image of God (at the very least, this is deeply questioned) but also the possibility of being validly ordained (cf the

argumentation of Thomas Aquinas and other canonists, concerning the state of subjection of women and the ordination of women).

These texts were collected as sources into the Corpus Iuris Canonici and laid the foundation of the so-called impossibility of women's ordination, as CIC/1917 c. 968 § 1 declares: „*Sacram ordinationem valide recipit solus vir baptizatus*“- „*Only a baptised man can validly receive sacred ordination*“). This law was taken over into the CIC/1983 c. 1024 without any change, despite the protest of women's movements and critical scientific research.

The result is:

The exclusion of women from ordination to priesthood is based on a severe, long lasting discrimination against women which can be proven by many sources from church history and church tradition. This history remains closed to honest reappraisal by church-leaders even in our own times, and therefore the discrimination remains in place to the present day.

Of course, today the responsible church-leaders avoid referring to the so-called inferiority of women as reason for their non-ordination, – the present social situation and ideals in democratic states are such that this argument would be dismissed out of hand.

But behind the argumentation of the Church leadership concerning the “non-ordination“ of women, you can still find the ongoing discrimination against women, – it is simply disguised.

[if !supportLists]· [endif]Referring to the exclusion of women from ordination, Church Leaders (including the CDF) declare that Jesus was totally free in choosing only twelve males as apostles.

This argumentation does not take into account that the position of women during Jesus' lifetime was totally inferior (excluded from teaching in public and from witnessing in the court). Thus women were not able to act as apostles, who were sent by Jesus to teach and give publicly witness. By the same token, Jesus could not choose a slave (legally incapacitated) into the group of the Twelve – by way of striving for the liberation of slaves!

It is evident: Church doctrine without taking into account social-cultural and historic developments inevitably leads to false conclusions and false doctrine!

[if !supportLists]· [endif]In order to support the exclusion of women from priestly ministry, Church leaders also refer to the “otherhood“, the “other, or gender-specific, role of women“.

But who defines the so-called “otherhood“, or “other role” of women? It is only the Church leadership – in relation to whom women are in a state of subordination!

Indeed, it is revealing and striking that Church leaders are always stressing that the exclusion of women from ordained priestly ministry does not imply any discrimination or disadvantage to women! That is, of course, an effort by the leading Church-pastors to assuage women, to disguise the injustice against them. However, the truth is that only the ones who are oppressed by the injustice – the women – are able to express what they feel as discrimination against them, not the decision-makers (= Church leaders)!

In my opinion, the doctrine of the Church in "*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*" (John Paul II., 1994) is mistaken when it claims "*that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women*". Indeed, I wish to emphasize *that the church (church leadership) does have "the authority to confer priestly ordination on women"*! They can surely rely on the following texts of the Bible:

1 Cor 12:11: „*All these gifts are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he/she gives them to each one, just as he/she determines.*“

That means: God is freely calling women to priestly ministry, no-one can limit God to calling only men to priesthood!

Gal 3:26-28: „*So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus...*“

These words of scripture are awaiting acknowledgement and realization in the RC Church.

Because of church leaders' persistence in their patriarchal behavior and spirit, the realization of these words of the Bible is prevented – to the detriment of our church. But in spite of this, it is my hope and belief that God's living spirit will introduce the church "*into all truth*" (cf. John: 16,13), even concerning the position of women – in the face of the resistance of church leaders!

In this hope for the *Spirit of Truth* I send you greetings,
Ida Raming