



Ordained Women Deacons of the Church's First Millennium

John Wijngaards

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A recent theological statement from the Roman Catholic Church has increased hopes that while women may not be ordained as priests, their ordination as deacons may soon become reality. This is a new, enlarged edition of a groundbreaking book that gathered historical evidence from ancient liturgies, literature, art and inscriptions on graves to show that the practice of ordaining women as deacons in the first ten centuries of the Church was normative. Women carried out sacramental rites alongside priests and had responsibilities for the care of the Christian community. Recent research has identified over 120 known female deacons - a figure that has tripled since this book's first appearance, under the title *No Women in Holy Orders?* in 2002. This offers a positive, theological and historical contribution to a debate that is fast gaining momentum in the Catholic Church worldwide.



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