

## Manifesto on Equality for Women in the Church

*The People of God - if it is to be truly the people of God - has to include women, not as subordinate helpmates to men but as their full and equal partners. We are here today to ask you for nothing. Our dignity and equality are God given. They are not yours to give.*

### **-Ursula Halligan, a journalist and spokesperson for We Are Church Ireland, in response to the papal nuncio**

As we return from our months of quarantine, we bring with us the lessons we have learned. We have come to appreciate each other in new ways, recognizing that wherever and whenever we gather, God is indeed among us. In this time of fear and confusion we made of our distant gatherings a sacrament. Our conversation became communion. We have listened to the outrage which arose as the pandemic exposed the sins of inequity and exclusion and as the murder of a man laid bare our structural racism. And as we gathered to imagine a new world order built on justice and inclusion, we look upon our own church with vision grown more acute with distance. Dominance and oppression can no longer be tolerated; silence is not an option.

Over the past 18 months, Equality for Women in the Church (EWC) sought to reinvigorate the dialogue around women's participation in the institutional church. We sponsored speakers and panels, advocated for more women's voices to be heard from the altar and for our petitions to recognize the historical struggle for women to gain ecclesiastical parity. And we have watched with great interest and mounting excitement the courageous steps taken by our sisters and brothers worldwide to recognize the inherent dignity and divinity of every woman. As Halligan affirmed, these are not conferred by a synod. They are God given.

So, sisters and brothers and those who identify as neither, as we return we ask your help. Please join with us as we plan for a church which welcomes and celebrates the gifts of all in equal measure. We envision:

- women's wisdom and insights expressed by women from the pulpit and the altar
- women's full participation in all levels of decision-making
- inclusive language that represents our lived experience and that of our mothers and daughters
- complementary celebrations which recognize the shared divinity and dignity of all God's people

We welcome your contribution of ideas and participation as we move forward.

**St. Nicholas Equality for Women in the Church (EWC)**