

Transparent policies and accountability needed if the Vatican is serious about bringing more women to meaningful leadership at the Curia

5 July 2018, Rome, Italy

Recent statements by Pope Francis and top Vatican officials support the need to bring more lay women to top leadership positions at the Roman Curia. However, Voices of Faith is concerned about the apparent difficulties and lack of transparency in regard to how those women are chosen and the process undertaken to appoint them. In an extensively quoted interview with Reuters on June 17th 2018, Pope Francis is reported saying, "I don't have any problem naming a woman as the head of a dicastery." At the same time, he talks about difficulties in finding the right candidates and convincing curial officials to accept women for leadership positions. The Prefect of the Dicastery of Laity, Family and Life, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, stated that the Vatican is "overloaded with clerics" and that "administrative functions within the church can be done by anybody" including laity.

Voices of Faith seeks to support Pope Francis and top Vatican officials with well-proven solutions that are working for business, government and other major institutional organisations. We appeal to Pope Francis to mandate swiftly a set of human resource policies that are shown to jumpstart change, facilitate transparency and ensure accountability in this crucial process of renewal at the heart of the Catholic Church.

"At the core of the 'difficulties' stated by our Holy Father are a lack of due process and support and training for women in these major institutions. While our network is heartened to hear that women are finally able to be considered for important positions within the Curia we know there is much to be done in order to get it right," says Chantal Goetz, Managing Director of the Voices of Faith movement. "We are hopeful about recent first ever appointments of women as consultants of the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith or as under-secretaries in the Dicastery of Laity, Family and Life. However, together with Pope Francis, we are concerned and need understanding on the difficulties with the process, the very slow path of change and the environments that these women are part of which have a male dominated influence."

Voices of Faith works for a prophetic Catholic Church where women's voices count, participate and lead on equal footing with men. They have proposed to Pope Francis and leaders of Curial entities to adopt sustainable human resource policies, rather than continue in placing single handpicked women in a reportedly hostile environment.

Voices of Faith proposes these three steps that are proven to work:

1. Open, merit-based and transparent hiring practices. We call on the Vatican to publicly announce any vacancies, openly list required qualifications for vacant positions and implement transparent selection and hiring policies

2. Workplace gender equality policy. Design and implement policies and procedures that safeguard equal opportunities and remove barriers for women employed at the Vatican. Such policies should include anti-discrimination training for all Vatican employees

3. Monitoring and evaluation. Measure progress towards a more inclusive Vatican Curia through a regular evaluation of key indicators and report results publicly.

We believe that the efforts of Pope Francis and other top Vatican officials will have the necessary credibility and impact only if a top-level official is named and given the necessary authority to lead, monitor and report on progress of this process.

The Pope and his advisors can draw on good practices developed by governmental, business and charitable organizations. We want to cite promising developments within the Catholic Church itself such as the Gender Policy of the Catholic Church in India or the 2013 Trier Declaration of the German Bishops Conference on the "Cooperation between women and men in the service and the life of the Church". Transparent and just workplace policies will bring more women with their diverse life experiences to meaningful positions of leadership, but also increase the overall effectivity, transparency and accountability of the Roman Curia for the benefit of all of us in the Catholic Church.

Voices of Faith works for a prophetic Catholic Church where women's voices count, participate and lead on equal footing with men. The initiative campaigns extensively to promote women's leadership in the Church. Voices of Faith organise the only International Women's Day events ever held inside The Vatican. Ahead of the Synod on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment, Voices of Faith promotes the leadership of young women, including impactful participation of its representatives at the pre-synod meeting of youth in March 2018.

For enquiries or further information please contact:

Chantal Götz, Managing Director of Voices of Faith, at info@voicesoffaith.org

<http://www.voicesoffaith.org>

Footnotes:

[1] https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-says-no-to-women-priests-yes-to-women-in-curial-leadership-78750#.Wyy3_YpFmqU.twitter

[2] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/priests-do-not-have-experience-to-prepare-people-for-marriage-says-vatican-cardinal-1.3552508?mode=amp&localLinksEnabled=false>

[3] http://cbci.in/downloadmat/gender_policy.pdf

[4] https://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/presse_2012/2013-02-21_Declaration-ENG_Study-Day-Women-Men.pdf

Voices of Faith, Bendererstr. 33, 9494 Schaan, Liechtenstein