

**DIGNITY NEW YORK**  
**P.O. Box 1554, FDR Station**  
**New York, NY 10150**  
**GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER CATHOLICS**  
**AND FRIENDS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GAY CATHOLIC GROUP TO HAVE  
ROMAN CATHOLIC WOMAN PRIEST  
AS MASS CELEBRANT FOR FIRST TIME**

**New York, June 4, 2007** – Dignity New York, a 35-year-old group of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) Catholics and their supporters, will have a Roman Catholic woman priest officiate at one of its masses for the first time. Rev. Victoria Rue will preside at the group's annual Gay Pride Mass, which will be held at **Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square South in Manhattan at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 23, 2007.**

Rev. Rue was ordained a Roman Catholic womanpriest in the St. Lawrence River in 2005 by three Roman Catholic womenbishops – an event that was widely reported in the media. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City and her Ph.D. from Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. She is a lecturer in Women's Studies and Comparative Religious Studies at San Jose State University in California. Openly lesbian, Dr. Rue lives with her partner of 16 years.

Since 2002, the Roman Catholic womenpriests movement has ordained dozens of women deacons and priests in rites seen as valid because their womenbishops were duly consecrated – in secret – by canonical male Roman Catholic bishops who stand in full apostolic succession within the Catholic Church. The womenpriests movement plans to hold additional ordinations in New York City and throughout North America in the summer of 2007.

Jeff Stone, a spokesperson for Dignity New York, said, "We have always previously had ordained Roman Catholic men as our priests. This is a bold move for our community, but one to which we believe the Holy Spirit has called us. Dignity has long believed that ordination should be open to women and men equally, without regard to marital status or

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sexual orientation. Now, the ordination of Dr. Rue and other highly qualified womenpriests gives us the opportunity to put that belief into action.”

Stone continued, “It is very clear that there will be no movement toward the ordination of women in the Roman Catholic Church under Pope Benedict XVI. Surveys have shown for many years that most Catholics in the U.S. and elsewhere want to see ordination opened to women as well as men, and to married people as well as celibate men. Historians tell us that there were many women priests and bishops in the early centuries of the Church. Most theologians agree that there is no scriptural or theological obstacle to the ordination of women, and that this is simply a matter of church tradition. After long discernment, we have decided to undertake this act of ‘prophetic obedience’ – a term that Bishop Patricia Fresen has used to refer to the womenpriests movement.”

Dignity New York is expecting between 200 and 400 people at the mass, and hopes that it will help to build bridges to other groups and individuals who are seeking reform in the Catholic Church.

Dignity New York is a chapter of DignityUSA, the nation’s oldest and largest independent organization for GLBT Catholics, their families and friends. DignityUSA has chapters throughout the United States and offices in Washington, D.C.

Further information on Dignity, women’s ordination, and Dr. Victoria Rue is available at the following websites:

[www.dignityny.org](http://www.dignityny.org)

[www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org)

[www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org](http://www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org)

[www.womensordination.org](http://www.womensordination.org)

[www.victoriarue.com](http://www.victoriarue.com)