

**Massachusetts Women-Church Records, 1987-2008, n.d.**

**Creator:** Patricia A. Barry

**Extent:** 6.5 linear ft.

**Processor:** Marisa Borreca, April 2010

**Administration Information**

**Access Restrictions:** Restricted materials, as designated by the donor, removed and added to case file. The materials are restricted until 2019.

**Usage Restrictions:** Copyright was transferred to the Women & Leadership Archives.

**Preferred Citation:** Loyola University Chicago. Women & Leadership Archives. Massachusetts Women-Church Records. Box #, Folder #.

**Provenance:** Collection was donated to Women & Leadership Archives by Patricia Barry in 2007. WLA2008.7.

**Separations:** Approximately 2 linear ft. of duplicate and extraneous materials were removed from the collection and discarded.

**See Also:** Chicago Catholic Women Records, Chicago Women-Church, and Women-Church Convergence Records in the Women & Leadership Archives.

**Administrative History**

In 1988, Marie Sheehan and Dorothy Conceison founded the Massachusetts Women-Church with the goal of eliminating sexism within the Catholic Church. As a member of the Women-Church Convergence, the Massachusetts Women-Church worked to support the ordination of women through annual conferences, awareness campaigns, and respectful witnessings at male ordination ceremonies. The organization consisted of ten to twelve active core group members who met once a month to plan activities and conferences that promoted the eradication of sexism and church hierarchy. They also had a quarterly newspaper with a mailing list of over a thousand people in the New England area. Their annual conferences drew over 200 people on average, and often featured nationally known feminist theologians, such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, Joan Chittister, and Theresa Kane. The core group members also participated in discussion with the Jesuit priests in the Boston area. The Jesuit meetings were a point of pride for the organization, but the Jesuits eventually terminated the meetings in 2000. Additionally, the Massachusetts Women-Church formed a charitable component of their group called the Lost Coin Women's Fund. The fund is still in existence today and provides scholarships to low income women looking to improve their lives through education.

An important event in the history of the Massachusetts Women-Church came in 1999 when the Boston Archbishop, Cardinal Bernard Law issued a hospitality ban against the group. Due to their staunch support of women's ordination, church officials asked to meet with the Massachusetts Women-Church to discuss their controversial stance. When the women declined to meet the official at his office, preferring instead to meet on more neutral territory, they were informed that the Cardinal had already asked local religious institutions to prohibit the group from holding events or meetings on church property. The ban received attention both from local and national newspapers,

and the group continued on with their efforts, despite the lack of support from church officials. In 2007, after almost twenty years of activity, the Massachusetts Women-Church decided to formally discontinue their work.

### **Scope and Content**

The Massachusetts Women-Church Records contain materials relating to the group's support of equality within the Catholic Church. The collection consists of materials that date to the group's founding in 1988 to its dissolution in 2007/2008. The records include extensive administrative records, conference materials, newspaper articles relating to both the group in particular and to women's issues within the Catholic Church, photographs, scrapbooks, video tapes, and the recorded oral history of the organization. The materials are arranged alphabetically within each series.

#### **Series 1: Administrative, 1987-2008, n.d., Boxes 1-4**

Contains material relating to the administration of Massachusetts Women-Church from its beginning in 1987, which includes mission statements, histories, newsletters, general correspondence, and financial documents. Other documents relate to the 1995-2000 meetings with Boston area Jesuits and the 1999 hospitality ban against the group.

#### **Series 2: Events and Conferences, 1988-2006, Boxes 4-6**

Contains material from events organized by the Massachusetts Women-Church and also events attended by group members. Materials include planning notes, correspondence with event speakers, conference pamphlets and agendas, registration lists, event evaluations, and flyers.

#### **Series 3: News Articles, 1982-2006, Box 6**

Contains articles written about the group and their activities, especially their respectful witnessing and annual conferences. Also includes several editorials written by Marie Sheehan, Barbara Mahar, and Dorothy Conceison. Many articles also relate to issues important to the group such as women's ordination, sexism within the church, and church hierarchy.

#### **Series 4: Photos and Scrapbooks, 1990-2006, Boxes 7-11**

Contains photographs of many of the Massachusetts Women-Church organized conferences, as well as events attended by group members. Also contains pictures from respectful witnessing protests. Two of the scrapbooks cover the general history of the group, while one is devoted entirely to the St. Lawrence Women Ordinations, and the other focuses on the Lost Coin Women's Fund.

#### **Series 5: Audio/Visual Materials, 1991-2007, Box 12**

Contains an audio recording of the 1991 Proclaiming our Power conference with Theresa Kane. Also includes a VHS recording of the respectful witnessing of the 2001 Boston ordination ceremony, along with the subsequent TV news stories about the witnessing. Another VHS tape is of the 1993 Women Transforming Church conference with Rosemary Radford Ruether. The two audio CDs contain the oral history of the Massachusetts Women Church, as told by co-founder Marie Sheehan.

**Series 6: Three Dimensional Objects, 2005, Box 13**

Contains two stoles and a bag from the 2005 Women's Ordination Conference attended by several core group members.

**Subjects:**

Boston (Archdiocese)

Roman Catholic Church

Sexism

Women Church Convergence

Women's Ordination

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
<b>Series 1: Administrative Records, 1987-2008</b>			
1	1	Bank Statements and Expenses	1989-2006
	2	Core Group Meeting Minutes	1988-1989
	3	Core Group Meeting Minutes	1990-1991
	4	Core Group Meeting Minutes	1992-1993
	5	Core Group Meeting Minutes	1994-1995
	6	Core Group Meeting Minutes	1996-1997
	7	Core Group Meeting Minutes	1998-1999
	8	Core Group Meeting Minutes	2000-2001
	9	Core Group Meeting Minutes	2002-2003
	10	Core Group Meeting Minutes	2004-2007
2	1	Correspondence	1987-1990
	2	Correspondence	1991-1994
	3	Correspondence	1995-1997
	4	Correspondence	1998-2000
	5	Correspondence	2001-2002
	6	Correspondence	2003-2004
	7	Correspondence	2005-2008
	8	Correspondence	n.d.
	9	Dorothy Conceison Funeral Documents	2008
	10	Herstory of Massachusetts Women Church	1992
	11	Hospitality Ban	1999
	12	Jesuit Meetings	1995-2002
3	1	Jesuit Correspondence	1995-2000
	2	Memberships and Donations	1996-2000
	3	Mission Statements and Timeline	1996-2003, n.d.
	4	Newsletters	1988-2006
	5	Newsletters—Duplicates	1990-2004
	6	Notes	1992, n.d.
	7	Pastoral Letter Documents	1990
	8	Research Documents	1983-2003, n.d.
	9	Spirited Women Documents	1988-1991
	10	Press Materials	1994, n.d.
	11	Treasurer's Report	1989-2003
	12	Sr. Plante Documents	1996-1997
4	1	Taxi Cab Campaign	2001

**Series 2: Events and Conferences, 1988-2006**

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4	2	An Afternoon with Angela Bonavoglia	2006
	3	Beyond Crisis with Mary Hunt	2002
	4	Birthing New Communities with Virginia Hoffman	1991
	5	Catholic Women Informational Meeting	1990
	6	Conversation and Reflection on Beijing Conference	1995
	7	A Day with Mary Magdalene	2003
	8	Discipleship of Equals Conference	1992
	9	Discipleship to a Priestly People with Joan Chittister	2003
	10	An Evening with Fr. Tissa Belasuriya	1997
	11	Fall Liturgy	1990
	12	Jesus as Affirming, Church as Denigrating with Elizabeth Dodsen Gray	1995
	13	Leadership Conference of Women Religious	1998-1999
	14	Made in the Image of God with Elizabeth Shussler Fiorenza	1999
	15	Many Yet One with Jose Hobday	1996
	16	Mary for the Progressive Woman	1996
	17	Proclaiming our Power with Theresa Kane	1990
5	1	Rediscovering a Partnership Society with Rianne Eisler	2004
	2	Respectful Witnessing	1993-2004
	3	Roots and Wings	1998
	4	Spirit of Life: A Celebration	1991
	5	St. Lawrence Ordination of Women Priests	2005
	6	Sr. Jeanette Normandin Courage of Conscience Award	2000
	7	Ways Forward I	1997
	8	Ways Forward II	1998
	9	Ways Forward III	1999
	10	Weaving Massachusetts Women-Church	1989
	11	Women Church Conference	1987
	12	Women Church Convergence	1999-2000
	13	A Women Church Harvest with Diann Neu	2000
	14	Women Church Society	2001
	15	Women Claiming Responsibility with Miriam Therese Winter	1994
	16	Women on the Prophetic Journey	1998
6	1	Women's Ordination Conference	1995
	2	Women's Ordination Worldwide	2001
	3	Women's Ordination Worldwide	2005
	4	Women Transforming Church with Rosemary Radford Ruether	1993
	5	Women Transforming Church Conference Evaluations	1993
	6	Women's Perspectives	2001

**Series 3: News Articles, 1982-2006**

6	7	News Articles	1982-1992
	8	News Articles	1993-1995
	9	News Articles	1996-1999
	10	News Articles	2000-2001
	11	New Articles	2002-2006
	12	News Articles	n.d.

**Series 4: Photos and Scrapbooks, 1990-2006**

7	1	An Afternoon with Angela Bonavoglia	2006
	2	Core Group Gatherings	2004-2006
	3	Discipleship to a Priestly People with Joan Chittister	2003
	4	Evensong Chapel Dedication	2005
	5	God's Gift for a New Church with Dr. Ida Reming	n.d.
	6	Jesus as Affirming, Church as Denigrating with Elizabeth Dodsen Gray	1995
	7	Lost Coin Women's Fund Event with Evelyn Murphy	2005
	8	Many Yet One with Jose Hobday	1996
	9	Massachusetts Women Church Retreat	1993
	10	Marie Sheehan's Birthday Celebration	2001
	11	St. Lawrence Ordination of Women Priests	2005
	12	Proclaiming our Power with Theresa Kane	1990
	13	Rediscovering a Partnership Society with Rianne Eisler	2004
	14	Respectful Witnessing at Holy Cross Cathedral	1999
	15	Respectful Witnessing at Holy Cross Cathedral	2001
	16	Respectful Witnessing at Holy Cross Cathedral	n.d.
	17	Respectful Witnessing in Baltimore	n.d.
	18	Taxi Cab Campaign	2001
	19	Unidentified Conferences	n.d.
	20	Voice of the Faithful Conference	2002
	21	Ways Forward I	1997
	22	Women Church Convergence Meeting	2000
	23	Women's Ordination Worldwide	2005
	24	Women Church Convergence	n.d.
	25	Women Claiming Responsibility with Miriam Therese Winter	1994
	26	Women on the Prophetic Journey	1998
	27	Women Transforming Church with Rosemary Radford Ruether	1993
	28	Women Transforming Church with Rosemary Radford Ruether—Contact Sheet	1993

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8	Scrapbook	2001-2006
9	Scrapbook	1987-2005
10	St. Lawrence Ordination Scrapbook	2005
	Lost Coin Women's Fund Scrapbook	1994-2005
11	Scrap Book	2000-2001

**Series 5: Audio/Visual Materials, 1991-2007**

12	Audio Cassette: Proclaiming our Power with Theresa Kane	1990
	CD: Recorded History of Massachusetts Women-Church	2007
	CD: Recorded History of Massachusetts Women-Church—Duplicate	2007
	VHS: Witnessing at Holy Cross Cathedral	2001
	VHS: Women Transforming Church with Rosemary Radford Ruether	1993

**Series 6: Three Dimensional Objects, 2005**

13	Women's Ordination Worldwide Scarf	2005
	Women's Ordination Worldwide Scarf	2005
	Women's Ordination Worldwide Bag	2005