

Introduction

THROUGHOUT its nearly six years of existence, Women for Faith & Family has attempted to be useful to the Church and to the bishops by providing a conduit for information from “grass-roots” Catholic women who may or may not be Church “activists,” may or may not be highly articulate, but who, nevertheless, take seriously their Catholic faith and, of course, their bishops’ call for their response to matters which are of great consequence and which affect them as women and as Catholics.

The commentary, analysis and recommendations presented here on the second draft of the “pastoral response to women’s concerns” were prepared at the invitation of the bishops’ committee for drafting the pastoral. They are the result of careful study and prayerful deliberation, and represent the efforts of staff members and associates of Women for Faith and Family.

Although some of the following essays which focus on particular aspects of the pastoral bear the names of their authors, much of what has been written here represents as faithful a distillation as possible of the views and opinions and suggestions of many hundreds of Catholic women, throughout the United States and elsewhere, who have written or telephoned Women for Faith & Family about the “women’s pastoral” over the past several years.

We believe, as we have maintained from the beginning, that the faithful bishops of the Church will be greatly encouraged to know of the enormous outpouring of support for the doctrine and practice of the Church, of the great respect for her traditions, and fidelity to her Magisterium that these women convey.

In their name, then, we pledge continued prayerful support to all our faithful bishops, to the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, and to all our dedicated clergy. As we have said many times before, we realize fully that to be a true pastor, responsible in so many ways for the eternal lives of millions of people, is often difficult — sometimes requiring truly heroic effort, self-sacrifice and saintly resolve.

We earnestly hope we have been and may continue to be truly useful to them and to the whole Church. We ask their prayers for us, too — for Catholic women everywhere and in all walks of life — that whatever we do may prove to be what is “that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” To this end, then, we also ask their blessing.

WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY

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