



The Ordination of Women to the Diaconate in the Modern Era

The Patriarchate of Alexandria

Following a decision by the Synod of Alexandria, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, consecrated the Catechist elder Theano, one of the first members of the Missionary staff in Kolwezi, to “Deaconess of the Missions” of the Holy Metropolis of Katanga, in the Republic of Congo, and read the prayer for one entering the “ecclesiastic ministry” for three Nuns and two Catechists, in order for them to assist the missionary efforts of the Holy Metropolis, particularly in baptism and catechesis. February 17, 2016.

<https://basilica.ro/en/patriarch-theodoros-of-alexandria-performs-first-consecration-of-deaconesses/>

Nine current and emeriti professors of Orthodox Liturgics and Liturgical Theology issue a statement of support for the Patriarchate of Alexandria’s decision to restore the female diaconate.

<https://panorthodoxcemes.blogspot.com/2017/10/orthodox-liturgists-issued-statement-of.html>

The Church of Greece

In 1911, Saint (Archbishop) Nektarios of Aegina ordained two women to serve as deaconesses at their monastery. (FitzGerald, *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church*, p.151)

The late Archbishop of Athens, His Beatitude Christodoulos, ordained or appointed a nun as a deaconess in 1986, while he was serving as the Metropolitan of Demetrias (Volos). (FitzGerald, *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church*, p.158-59)

In 2004, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece decided to restore the order of the diaconate for women. Sixty-four bishops made the decision October 8, under the leadership of Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens. At this time, there have not yet been any ordinations following the decision.

<https://orthodoxdeaconess.org/contemporary-orthodox-deaconesses/church-of-greece-restores-diaconate-for-women/>

The Russian Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow appointed his spiritual daughter as abbess of a monastery and made her a deaconess at the same time, in 1840. (FitzGerald, *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church*, p.150)

The Syrian Orthodox Church

The Syrian Orthodox Church, which is closely related historically to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, ordained 22 young women to the diaconate in Belgium, in January 2019.

<https://www.cathobel.be/2019/01/31/ordination-de-diaconesses-a-leglise-syriaque-orthodoxe-de-liege/?fbclid=IwAR1OuBaCTOUgQ2xJiT2ui0vNDzXDVMjiln3Y8yv-VCy7IiuDwasR8eEQe4Y>

The Armenian Apostolic Church

The Armenian Church, which is closely related historically to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, has retained women deacons into modern times, and has begun reviving the tradition in recent years. At the Istanbul conference in 1997, Patriarch Karekin II said they would revive the ministry, and they have taken steps to do so. Most recently, an Armenian deaconess was ordained in Iran in 2018.

<https://armenianweekly.com/2013/07/06/a-nearly-forgotten-history-women-deacons-in-the-armenian-church/>

<https://news.am/eng/news/430380.html>