

ABC NEWS REPORTS WOMEN “PRIESTS”

On the June 19 edition of “World News Tonight,” there was a report by ABC News correspondent Dan Harris that led viewers to think that eight women are about to be ordained as Catholic priests in the U.S.

The lead piece in this story, “From Priesthood to Bishops, Women Gain Ground in Christian Organizations,” covered the election of the first female presiding bishop in the Episcopal Church. Then came the following: “Most evangelical denominations and the Catholic Church steadfastly refuse to ordain women. However, that is changing. In late July, Joan Clark Hauk [sic], a grandmother from Pennsylvania, will be ordained as a Catholic priest, along with seven other women. It will be the first ceremony of its kind in this country, but one the Vatican will not condone.”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

“Some at ABC News are obviously hyperventilating over the election of the first female presiding bishop in the Episcopal Church, and that no doubt led them to package this story with a bogus account about women being ordained as Catholic priests. Joan Clark Houk, and seven other women, will hold an ‘ordination’ ceremony on a boat in Pittsburgh on July 31, but no one save mad feminists will give it any credence. Indeed, this happens every day in the asylum: some actually think they’re the pope.

“ABC News also errs in thinking that this make-believe game has never been played before. In 1981, AP picked up on a story by the *National Catholic Reporter* which said a woman ‘has been ordained and has been performing the duties of a priest for the past year.’ In 1996, *Catholic World Report* ran

a story on a meeting of the Women's Ordination Conference (which supports next month's game) wherein four women dressed as Catholic bishops and then 'solemnly blessed the audience as they made their way to a stage that was filled with dancing women.' And just last month, Victoria Rue, wearing a white robe, appeared before a crowd in San Jose and declared, 'I am a Roman Catholic woman priest.'

"In other words, this madness is old hat. Nonetheless, I am asking David Westin at ABC News for an on-air clarification of this bogus story."