

***Transcript: Joan Chittister's Keynote, American Catholic Council
Sunday Morning, June 12, 2011***

Sister Christine Schenk, the executive director of Future Church, introduced Sister Joan Chittister as follows:

It's my very great pleasure to introduce Sister Joan Chittister.

Prophet, as defined by the Miriam Webster dictionary, is one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight.

Prophet, as defined by a Hebrew Bible biblical scholar, is

Part a,

One rooted in the biblical tradition, uncredentialed and without pedigree who, by the work of the spirit, imagines and describes their contemporary world differently with both judgment and hope.

Part b,

The people who control the power structures don't know what to make of them.

And characteristically try to silence them.

Part c,

What power structure people eventually discover, you cannot silence them.

They keep coming at you in scary and transformative ways.

About 25 years ago as a younger nun, I had occasion for the first time to hear Sister Joan Chittister speak in person.

When she had completed a deeply stirring presentation, I approached her, shook her hand and said Joan, you are a prophet.

What I soon identified as a well-practiced diversionary tactic Joan quickly changed the subject.

But I would not be put off.

No, Joan, I mean it, I said.

You are a prophet.

Where upon she gazed at me with those piercing blue eyes of hers and said simply, "pray for me, okay?"

Of course then I knew for sure that she was a prophet.

Joan, I want you to know that I have been praying for you these past 25 years and so far it's brought nothing but trouble.

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Bishops are upset, committees are upset, cardinals wearing jeweled gloves, three-foot miters and 20-foot red satin trains are upset.

I've even heard, my friends, that we've got trouble right here in the motor city.

Can't these people go away and just stop being so scary and transformative?

Turns out, Joan, this prophet thing of yours is very catchy.

In fact, it seems to be highly contagious.

There have been outbreaks across the Americas, in Europe, in the U.K., in Australia, Africa, Indonesia, all over the world.

Catholic people steeped in the tradition of Jesus uncredentialed and without pedigree are now, by the power of the spirit, imagining and describing our contemporary Church differently with judgment and with hope.

And you, my dear Sister Joan, have given us the language, the heart and the courage in the power of the spirit and in the power of prayer to confront any power structures that be, whether in Church or society, that try to convince us that we are anything less than beloved daughters and sons, made in God's image, and heirs of a new heaven, a new earth, and yes a renewed Roman Catholic Church even now bursting forth in our midst.

Prophets, you cannot silence them.

They keep coming at you in scary and transformative ways.

My dear friends, I give you our sister Joan Chittister.

What now follows is Sister's Presentation

May I have some lights up here?

That's because if anybody is going to quote me, I want you to quote me correctly and I could say absolutely anything without lights.

No lights?

Well, all right, prepare yourselves.

[laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, I give to you in Chris Shank a natural model of the icon that says beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

That is a great woman in this Church and a great voice for the laity.

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Is there no lights?

And I have to tell you she scared me to death.

However, I recovered because I remember a story that they told years ago about a renowned theologian. They say that he found himself in a speaking situation where he had to delicately explain the theological intricacies of the three theological virtues and the more he talked the more difficult and obscure it got so suddenly he said look, let me give you an example.

"If you applaud when I appear on the stage, that's faith.

If you applaud after I'm introduced, that's hope.

But if you applaud when the speech is over, that's charity."

So after I heard her, I decided that I need to remind you that the scripture is very clear, the greatest of these is charity.

I found myself thinking about this particular conference in a more profound way than most of the groups I gather with.

This gathering, I have decided in the last several weeks, is about as strange as the world in which we're having it.

It isn't that it's unusual to have people ask me what I'll be doing next.

What is unusual, however, is the kind of reaction I've been getting ever since I started telling them that the next thing that was on my agenda was this American Catholic council.

Half the crowd who asked me always said oh, that's good.

And the other half said my God, that's terrible.

Then I remembered a story I heard another time and I figured out that whoever told this one had Catholics and this conference in mind.

Did you hear about Billy Bob?

No, I didn't, Archie, that's good.

No, Roy, that's not good, that was bad.

First time he went up that airplane caught fire and he had to jump out.

Oh, whoa, Archie, Roy says, that is bad.

No, Roy, that's good.

You see, he was wearing a parachute.

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Well, Archie, that's good.

No, Roy, Archie says, that was bad.

The parachute didn't open.

Oh, no, Archie, Roy says, that is definitely bad.

Well, no, Roy, actually that was good.

He jumped out right over a farmer's big old soft hay stack.

Gee, Archie, that was really good.

Well, Roy, no, that was bad, too.

See, as he was coming down, he spotted a pitch fork sticking straight up right in the middle of that old hay stack.

Oh, no, Archie.

That was bad.

No, Roy, that was good.

He missed the pitch fork.

Now Archie, I know that's good.

Well, no, Roy, that wasn't good, either.

He also missed the hay stack.

I knew right then and there that we had a problem here because the art of any difficult situation lies in missing the pitch fork but landing in the hay stack.

So then I thought of all of you and I remembered two other insights that gave me more reason to hope.

A philosopher of fifth century Rome taught the world of his time something very important for our times.

He taught that every age that is dying is simply another age coming to life.

Every age that is dying is simply another age coming to life.

New life, in other words, is not death unless we reject it.

New life is growth, not decline, unless we refuse it.

Here is proof.

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New life is evolutionary, not revolutionary, unless we make it so and a Zen master from another culture entirely wrote, in a similar period of history, no seed ever sees the flower.

We're all meant to begin things that will only come to fullness of fruit after us.

With those insights in mind, we have to ask, then, how is it that two groups of people bred from the same tradition, cut from the same social cloth, can possibly see the same agenda, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Vatican II, by bringing all facets of the Church to recommit itself to the fulfillment of that council so differently.

One side ripe with hope, the other thick with despair.

But there is a second story from another culture that is very similar to the first but the soul of the seer is different.

In this tale the Chinese tell of an old peasant who had only one son and one white stallion with which to farm his land.

All the other farmers in the valley pitied him for that poverty but the old man said simply, good event, bad event, who knows?

Then one day the farmer's only stallion bolts from his pitching post and thunders up into the mountains leaving the farmer and his son to do all the sod breaking work by themselves.

Neighbors come again from far and near to commiserate with the farmer about this dire situation.

But the old man says simply, bad event, good event, who knows?

Suddenly the next morning the stallion races back down the mountain again and into the corral followed by a whole herd of wild horses.

The neighbors are astounded by the old man's new wealth and congratulate late them but the old man says simply good event, bad event, who knows?

Soon after, one of the wild stallions throws the young son, falls on the boy, breaks his legs and cripples him for life.

The peasants gather to grieve such a loss but the old man says simply, bad event, good event, who knows?

Then one day in the fall just at the beginning of harvest, the local war lord rides into the valley and conscripts into his army every young man in the valley with one exception, the crippled, limping, apparently useless son of the old farmer he leaves behind.

The other farmers in the valley wail in desperation their own misfortune and the old man says simply good event, bad event, who knows?

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Despair, that story taught me, can be found in every situation however much good may also be there, but in the end how we see a situation depends on what we're looking for.

The fact is that you and I live in a good event, bad event time.

When one age is dying and a new one is coming to life.

We are this in between generation.

We are the seeds that will not see the future.

The only question is, then, whether or not in our time we will see reality as reason to despair or as the very foundation for hope.

Whether we will see the seeds, we, too, are planting here today as simply the beginnings of a new future.

Planted in hard ground, yes.

And slow growing, yes.

But to be tended and believed in so that their harvest time may surely come because you and I were here.

The fact is that the history of God's ways with the people of God has always been a good event, bad event situation.

A continuing affirmation of life, despite the unending threats to it of death.

We are the children of a history steeped in despair turned to hope, of bad events turned to good.

The enslavement of God's people by power hungry pharaohs put a people searching for fullness of life in despair.

But then came Moses with the courage to confront those who were more concerned with cementing their power than they were with meeting the needs of the people.

To defy oppression is of the essence of hope in every age, read your newspapers, including our own if you don't believe me.

The long, long strangling siege led the Bethulians¹ to consider conceding to the alien norms that would destroy the energy of life within them.

But then along came Judith and her hand maid, two women who went into the very camp of the king, not to challenge him with an army, but to outwit him by their own designs.

¹ <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/judith/intro.htm>

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On their account Bethulia was saved by two women who refused to take the plans of men for them for granted.

And who refused to abandon themselves to moral invisibility.

The first time the Hebrew people were marked for extinction it was all over but the execution.

But then came queen Esther, the only Jew in the harem.

The only Jew in the kingdom who was safe and she used her position, despite the danger that would put her in, to beg for their lives and so bartered her own.

Everyone knows, she said, that no one can go to the king unless the king calls them.

But I will go to the king, she says, whether he calls me or not.

And if I perish, I perish.

And on Esther's account, the people were not only saved, but became full participants in the very country and culture that had once condemned them.

When Joseph's brothers sold him off to a caravan of traders to make profit from the loss of him, his life was doomed.

But then Joseph grew, despite the unlikelihood of this bad situation in which he found himself, he grew in stature and wisdom and power to the very top of a foreign system.

And from his new vantage point, rose up to save the lives of those who had endangered his own after years of abandonment, Joseph turned bad into good.

And what had begun in despair became the hope of the people.

The woman with the issue of blood, long smothered under the taboos against menstruating women is denied the ability to touch her own pots, to live in a normal human way for fear her menstrual blood would dilute and pollute the rest of society.

But then came Jesus who, despite the advice of the curia around him --

-- raised this woman up, touched her soul, made her a full member of the human community, a sign of what it feels like to be left out of the human community as well as what it means to the community at large when everyone is taking into it as well.

Indeed, the entire Christian life is a bad event/good event story.

A bad event made good by those who refuse to accept the bad.

Christianity is a history of the need to face up to those that seek to deny a people its personhood.

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It is an array of instances in which the outcast and the invisible are raised up to save the system from itself.

It is a panel of advisors rejected and advice ignored by those who found to their peril what it means to favor power and authority over justice and peace, human rights and equality.

It's that kind of history.

It's that kind of history that is our legacy in this good event/bad event period of Church and state.

It is this legacy that is ours now to claim as obligation, to remember for direction, to look to for legitimacy in the Christian community and to depend on for faith when bad events seem to outweigh good and good events are reduced to words on paper rather than made life in progress.

It is this that is our heritage to redeem from the forces of elitism and secondary trials for unknown vices by unseen accusers under untested truisms on the nature of women and the leading of ministry.

And the place of the laity in all that is in a church that is only 3% clergy, but 97% lay in its insights and experiences, in its educators and ministers, not to mention in the money that supports it.

The question is, how do we know the good from the bad?

How do we know, like those peasants and the old farmer what is really meant to be done now and here by those of us who do love the Church and desire its new blooming so that now, as in the past, the slaveries may end and the prejudices may be ended and the people may be saved and the church may finally become Church and the model of Jesus may become more important than the model of a medieval system now abandoned by humanity everywhere except by us?

The fact is that we have already been given the blueprint for good over bad.

They called it Vatican II.

We have already seen it bring new life, even to old wine skins and at the same time we can now see it silently, surely being eroded away in too many places and too many ways.

If you're any kind of Church watcher at all you know that for Catholics, life has been good, not good now for a long, long time.

The decision to take the Church out of the 16th century, out of the character and quality of Trent into the vision and character of Vatican II was good.

At the council of Trent in the 16th century the Church's response to calls for reform was to lay new laws and new regimentation on the backs of the people rather than bring reform to the policies at the center of the system itself.

The brave decisions of the bishops of the world in our own time, to bring the Church into the 20th century in Vatican II, 400 years after the fact, are more necessary than ever, but were good.

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The response this time, too, is being delayed by a few.

It's being denied by those in the system who fear loss of privilege and power for themselves more than they value spiritual gain for the many.

In the name of reforming the reforms, there is a move abroad now to define who are the "ins," the clerical, the hierarchy the male and who are the "outs" again, the laity, the women and the gays.

There is a move to tinker with new community language and make it old and male again.

There is a move to revive old liturgical rights, to prefer old rituals to the newly sacramental and to desire passive congregations more than we want dynamic communities.

Someone wrote some place the different between liberals and conservatives is that conservatives prefer foolishness frozen in time to foolishness fresh off the vine.

The questions can never be is this a mistake, the question must always be, are we willing to try?

The effect of all that is to dampen the very spirit of the Church, to put out the Pentecost fire, to doom a living Church to become a sacramental way station of smoldering embers.

To make political power more important than spiritual leadership.

To become an exclusivist club where the Jesus who ran with tax collectors and married men and outcast lepers and menstruating women would not merit entry there today.

And all the while people find themselves searching elsewhere for the spiritual life they need.

And yet the fact is that great good did happen in our time.

In our time we learned that the Church is the people of God, not simply a gathering of hierarchy around an even higher hierarchy.

Instead, we learned from a Church alive with Vatican II that the Church is indeed the people of God and we are it.

And we learned it just as did the crowd that walked with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, from the streets to the temple, healing the sick, raising the dead, teaching women as well as men, and contending, contending, contending with those who valued old laws more than they did new life.

We were the Church, they told us, and we thought they meant it.

And that was good.

We became liturgists and women Eucharistic ministers and male -- we became the life blood of the parish rather than the consumers of its services.

We were no longer spiritual children; we were bearers, carriers of the faith.

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But there was a bad event embedded in the great awakening as well.

There was the question of whose Church it really is when the great doors close and answers are given to questions that have not been allowed to be asked out loud, like what do you mean, my gay child is intrinsically disordered?

Or how can you say it is pro-life and really good for the life of the family for my daughter to carry a child she is not well enough to bear?

People who do not simply belong to a Church, but who are the Church begin to shift the focus of that Church.

Begin to see and hear and embrace the people Jesus saw and heard and embraced.

They began to make clear in survey after survey that they want their Church open to lay ministers, open to women preachers and priests, open to lay consultation.

And all of this in a Church that had 500 priestless parishes in the United States in 1965, and had 3200 priestless parishes in 2006.

No doubt about it.

Vatican II gave us the right and the responsibility to be Church but for the Church to be real, that must be recognized both by the hierarchy and the laity itself.

If these bad events are ever to become good ones, we must claim it.

We must make it so.

At the very least we must refuse to let the ideas wither and the questions die, or it will take another 100 years just to legitimize even asking them again.

In the document on *Divine Revelation* we began to see the place of scripture in spiritual formation.

We discovered that law itself is not enough.

It is the model of the life of Jesus that must be the measure of our own.

We came to realize that laws that make the models of scripture impossible are impossible laws.

An understanding of tradition that is limited to historical patterns of practice and custom rather than the scriptural implications of the meaning of faith for our own time has come under the scrutiny of an educated laity.

If scripture, for instance, has nothing to say about ordination at all, let alone the ordination of women, on what basis do we use Jesus as our right to obstruct it?

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And on what basis do we remove bishops from office², who are faithful to the signs of the times and the needs of the members, when they ask themselves for those questions to be discussed¹ when we keep bishops and priests who abuse children and we promote bishops who harbor them?

It's Vatican II that gives us the right and the responsibility in the light of scripture to wonder why.

It must then give someone else the responsibility to open those discussions officially.

Vatican II, with its institution of the vernacular as an official language of consecration returned the liturgy to the people to celebrate as communities.

It wasn't meant to become this liturgy of ours, some kind of Catholic prayer wheel that priests said in dark crypts to collect a stipend.

It was a great breakthrough in the development of real Catholic community.

But lurking in those shadows, too, uniformity, that long heralded counter point of Catholic unity, has become a point of contention.

It has become just one more attempt to maintain the Church of the past rather than develop the Church of the present.

So the liturgy has been made a battleground where bread recipes and chalice styles and the geography of altar ministers and the gender of liturgical language and the translation of pronouns are rising again as the centers of conflict.

Worse, worse they are rising as signs of ruthless control.

And our reference -- any reference whatsoever to the existence of women in the house or the feminine dimension of God as well, the very God who said in our own image let us make them male and female.

Let us make them is meant to be extinguished now from the Pentecostal flame.

And meanwhile, we are also trying to revive the Latin mass where mystique is so easily confused with mystery.

But Vatican II welcomed the laity wholly committed and educated laity into those conversations.

That's the good part of the event.

But when in God's name are the conversations really going to begin?

That's the bad part of the event.

^{2 2} This is a reference to Most Rev. William M. Morris of the Brisbane Diocese in Australia who was removed from office for suggesting that perhaps the ordination of women could be discussed.

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Vatican II and its document on the Church and the world brought the Church out of its insular parochial life where sacred and secular were made out of different molecules for different purposes and with different meaning.

And that was good.

It was a transfiguring moment but then crept in the shadow again.

How much involvement is too much involvement of the Church in the political system and political issues in a pluralistic world?

It's the role of the Church to form the conscience of the Catholic community, not to try to control a pluralistic political process according to Catholic norms.

After all, we've been there before.

We know the harm it can do.

We called it the middle ages.

And the Spanish inquisition.

We managed to mix Church and state then until the ambitions of one became the sins of the other.

It is this Church that burned Joan of arc.

Ask me.

And put Theresa of Avila off an inquisition list and remanded Galileo to house arrest and created an index of forbidden books not necessarily because the volumes were bad but because the Church judged their writer to be a threat to it.

And so they used the index to suppress thinking and stop discussion and smother dissent and stop assembling for over 400 years.

It was a victory not only for pluralism, but for conscience itself to see all those things go.

But to use the sacraments now to control Catholic politicians who are striving to make decisions of conscience that do not legislate one morality over another, that do not make single issues the only issues of moral consequence, that do not make a mockery of the universal commitment to life which Catholic tradition holds dear, but which a single issue conservatism seems to be willing to barter, Vatican II gives us a right to search among the many ways for the right way for many people to do these things.

To do otherwise risks turning a good event, freedom of conscience and human rights, not to mention pluralism, democracy and freedom of speech, into a bad event.

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In the Vatican document on the bishops' pastoral office in the Church, the Church makes a turn in Vatican II from sacred potentate to modern pastor.

The bishop is not defined in these documents as lord or law giver.

Indeed, the bishop's role, the document says, is "listen carefully, to enable the Church, "to be in touch with issues and ideas and, "to create a national identity."

It says nothing whatsoever about stomping out the fire of local questions or the people who are asking them.

As dioceses close their doors and their minds to open discussion, people take their discussions and their respect for the intellectual dimension and persuasive value of spiritual principles elsewhere.

The need now called to change venues, in order to continue a discussion of the undiscussable will in the long run wound the Church as badly as selling relics and chaining bibles ever did.

On the other hand, if bishops themselves defer to Roman control rather than stand for national needs, local bishops themselves will become less and less necessary at all.

To fly in the face of national conferences of bishops and their authorization of the vernacular translations of liturgical documents for their own countries is not only to obviate the local Church but to turn bishops into altar boys as well.

But in canon 212 Vatican II gave Catholics the right to make their needs known: the right to be heard in a world begging to be heard on every level.

And if Christianity itself is not aware of that need, let the Churches watch closely and to their peril as the conservative world, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Iran and Saudi Arabia become models heard round of world as one authoritarian regime after another begins to fall.

In the document on priestly formation, Vatican II gave us a real model of Christian community in which the priest is named brother among brothers.

A spiritual catalyst, a loving equal, the document says, "even to the married and to women, "rather than simply an unthinking member of the local clerical establishment.

There are, they tell us, over six lay people in ministry training for every seminarian.

61% of them are in their 40s and 50s.

28% of them are under 40.

And 65% of them are women.

And yet we have fewer lay administrators of our priestless parishes this year than we had last year.

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What can that possibly be but an attempt to restore clericalism in a clerical-less society?

And despite the fact that Vatican II gave us the right to minister to one another.

Finally, that the role of the laity in the Church was even an issue at Vatican II may be the greatest turning point of the Church's modern history.

Witness this gathering as proof.

For the first time in history, the lay state in the Church began to be described as a vocation, as a special call, not as a leftover from anything or anyone as an important role in the development of the Church itself.

Participation rather than passivity became a factor of lay commitment.

The laity began to see themselves more as seekers in search than as sheep in a sheepfold.

Lay leadership became as much a reality in the local parish as it was at G.E. and Intel and on Wall Street.

Ask Boston and Cleveland and Germany and Ireland how that works when the laity knows who they are but the bishops do not.

From that rationale came the call to the laity to be responsible for Church organization, for Catholic education, for religious formation programs, for Church administration, for the kind of theological reflection required for the *sensus fidelium*, that evaluation of Church law by the faithful that John Cardinal Henry Newman gifted to the modern Church.

The bad event comes when, in the wake of the vocation of the laity, is that the departure from clericalism raises the issue of authority, of course.

"Father says" is no longer enough now to qualify for total respect, let alone the kind of surrender that keeps people in positions and ideas in place whatever the intellectual climate of the time.

And by the way, if we are really committed to the recognition of the gifts of the laity for the sake of the Christian community, does this mean lay women, too?

And if it does mean women, why are they not being generally wholly, totally accepted in the worship or administration of the world Church?

Or at the very least, in the restoration of the diaconate for women?

For which we have centuries of women deacons as models in both west and east.

Here in the question of deacon -- it all comes together to confront and expose the debilitating demon of sexism in the Church itself.

If I were a Roman Catholic bishop, (you don't have to worry about that)

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I would not be disturbed that Catholic women were throwing themselves on the steps of the cathedral wanting to minister in the Church, begging to minister in the Church.

I would be disturbed that they had to go to protestant seminaries for the theological and pastoral preparation to do it.

If there is anything that is going to change the Church in years to come, it will surely be that.

If, of course, we mean what we say about motherhood as the cradle that rocks the Church in the raising of the faith.

Vatican II gives us all the right to give God's gifts to God's work and to God's Church, which is why poll after poll, survey after survey, including your own in this assembly, has been raising the issues of authority and participation, priesthood and gender over and over again for the last 50 years.

And they have cause and foundation to do it.

After all, remember this, the ideas for Benedictine, the Sisters, all of them and more are among the greatest religious orders and congregations of the Church were all begun by lay people.

It was lay women's idea to educate girls.

It was lay women's idea to nurse the sick and it was a lay woman and a lay man who gave us the latest theology of peace in the Church.

Dorothy Day and Peter Moran.

The point is, we are not talking about anything new.

This is not heresy, this is history!

We have always, this Church has always, needed more than financial capital from the laity.

We need the intellectual capital, the spiritual capital and the ministerial and theological capital of the laity as well if we are ever to be a full Church again.

Why?

Because this is the Church in waiting.

This is the new Church: a Church with vision.

This is the Church in embryo again.

This is the Church driven by the vision of Vatican II and waiting for the spirit of God and the Churches to call to life again those who are living with a bad event, all the while alive with the good event that is within them.

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The reality is clear.

When bad events trump good events, when power and clerical privilege trump lay participation, when exclusion trumps Christian community, when an environment of spiritual childhood trumps the coming of spiritual adulthood in the laity, when tradition becomes some kind of secular history rather than the ongoing spirit of the gospel, when the restoration of a feudal system trumps the development of the lay vocation in the development of the Church itself, when the growth of the Church withers under the suppression of thought and the rejection of discussion, when humanism, education, mission and theological thinking are all stalled by the retreat to yesterday, when past laws trump a commitment to being the present presence of Jesus, indeed, the reality is clear, as is the responsibility, yours and mine, to respond to it.

No doubt about it, my friends, it's your name that we're waiting for now.

The one right under Moses and Judith and Esther and Joseph and Jesus.

You are the voice of today's Church.

Speak loudly.

You are the fire of today's Church, burn brightly.

You are the hope of the Church, now and for centuries to come.

Let faith impel you, let love direct you, let hope be the glue that binds you and courage your eternal call to claim.

You are the good of the Church is what has often become a bad event time.

In the Native American tradition at the time of initiation the elders tell the younger, as you go the way of life, you will see a great chasm.

Jump.

When the retreat to yesterday threatens the movement of the Holy Spirit within us all today, this is no time for despair.

This is no time to stop.

This is the time to jump, to move on, to begin again.

Would you have told the abolitionists to stop because the forces raised them were simply too opposed to listen?

Would you have told the suffrage people to stop because all the men of all the male systems opposed them?

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Would you have told Martin Luther King to stop because the opposition had dogs and water cannons and burning crosses and if any of them had stopped, would you, would any of us, be here in our souls as we are now?

This here, this today now and you are the coming of the season of new hope; it is the seed that promises to flower.

It is the new age dying to be born.

It is the bad event that must be turned to good for all our sakes, speak up.

Burn brightly, go on.

For the sake of the gospel, for the sake of the Church, for all our sakes, for the sake of the holy spirit and the presence of God in the power of Pentecost, for God's sake, make a leap! You are my hope.

Thank you!³

³ Sister Joan was interrupted many times by applause and laughter and was given a standing ovation at the end of her presentation.