



New deacons from the Pontifical North American College lie prostrate during their ordination in St. Peter's Basilica Sept. 29, 2022, at the Vatican. In Episode 3 of "The Vatican Briefing," Bishop Shane Mackinlay, a member of the synod's Commission for the Synthesis Report, expresses openness to ordaining women as Catholic deacons. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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In this episode of "The Vatican Briefing," Vatican experts Joshua McElwee and Christopher White interview one of the 13 members of the committee expected to draft the hotly anticipated final document from Pope Francis' ongoing summit on the future of the Catholic Church.

Australian Bishop Shane Mackinlay, elected by his peers to be part of the Synod of Bishops' Commission for the Synthesis Report, expresses openness to ordaining women as Catholic deacons. "I'm glad it's going to be discussed," said the bishop. "And if it were to be that the outcome was for ordination to the diaconate to be open to women, I'd certainly welcome that."



A woman holds a sign in support of women deacons as Pope Francis leads his general audience at the Vatican Nov. 6, 2019. (CNS/Paul Haring)

"The Vatican Briefing" is a new podcast from the National Catholic Reporter. As Pope Francis is presiding over the Oct. 4-29 synod, McElwee and White offer analysis and news updates, and interview some of the assembly's key decision-makers.

In their third episode, McElwee and White discuss the synod's emotional debates [about LGBTQ Catholics](#), how the gathering is handling tensions between members, and outside efforts to influence the assembly's discussions.

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They also interview Mackinlay, who has led the Diocese of Sandhurst since 2019 and was vice president of [Australia's fifth plenary council](#).

Each week during the synod, "The Vatican Briefing" is releasing an episode featuring both the latest updates from the gathering and an exclusive interview with one of the assembly's members. Be sure to subscribe on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), or however you listen to podcasts.

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Relevant links for this week's episode:

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- Catholic News Service coverage of the Australian plenary council's final document on the status of women in the Catholic Church: [Australia council concludes with agreement on equal dignity of men, women](#);

- Joshua McElwee's coverage of the beginning of Australia's fifth plenary council: [Cardinal Pell's release stokes concerns about Australia's plenary council](#);
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This story appears in the [Synod on Synodality](#) and [The Vatican Briefing](#) feature series.