Statement of the Board of Directors
of the
Catholic Theological Society of America
on the USCCB Committee on Doctrine’s
“Response to Observations by Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J ...”
(October 11, 2011)

We, the undersigned members of the Board of Directors of the Catholic
Theological Society of America, wish to express our views on the process that
led to the publication of the October 11, 2011 “Response” of the USCCB
Doctrine Committee.

We are dismayed to find that the same lack of dialogical procedure evident in
the Doctrine Committee’s dealings with Professor Johnson prior to its March
24, 2011 Statement has now continued to the conclusion of this process with
the Doctrine Committee’s October 11, 2011 “Response.” In spite of the fact
that Professor Johnson prepared a lengthy response to the March 24 critique of
her book in which she explained carefully that views ascribed to her by the
Doctrine Committee were not at all her own and affirmed her willingness to
engage personally in constructive dialogue with the Committee to clarify these
matters, no invitation to her to enter into such dialogue with the Committee
was forthcoming before the completion of its October 11 “Response.”

We do not think that this procedure is appropriate to the goal of promoting
understanding between bishops and theologians or to the rightful pastoral
responsibilities of the Doctrine Committee. While recognizing and affirming
those responsibilities, we are concerned about their manner of practice in the
Doctrine Committee’s actions toward Professor Johnson. To preclude dialogue
aimed at mutual understanding at every stage in the process clearly is not a
practice that will foster communication in the Church, and it is precisely in the
Church that one would expect communication to flourish.

Signed,

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