

CWO
Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church

E-news November and December 2011 issue 43

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Welcome to the edited issue 43 of the e-news. Editor Pat Brown. Please visit CWO's website www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk News and previous issues can be seen there.

Please send items for January e-news by 15 January. Also contact me for further information about anything in this e-news where contact details are not given info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk



Slogans!

From CWO's Postbag

"I look at R. C. congregations in which women make up the majority and wonder why all those women continue to financially support these arrogant men. Quietly withdrawing financial support and giving it to charity (members of the church abroad who are struggling to keep body and soul together) might be an answer to the hierarchy's intransigence. Nothing gets their attention like lack of cash. My confessor thought a penny in the collection would pay for the Host which justice required. "Make the Collection Turn Brown". How's that for a slogan?"

Dawn F



A slogan for CWO

The eagle eyed among you will have noticed a strapline after CWO at the top of this e-news. This will now appear by the name CWO by way of explaining what we are about. This is not quite the same as a slogan. Slogan's are useful for t-shirts, banners etc. We are hoping to produce CWO mugs again and it would be good to find a slogan which maybe had some connection with tea/coffee or drinking in some way. If you have any ideas, please email them to me

Anything anyone does anywhere affects everything everywhere.

Things derive their nature by mutual dependence from each other, and are nothing in themselves.

The world's existence depends on everyone.

Everyone plays a part.

What part do you play?

Anon

CWO members who have died - Obituaries below



Jean Palmer died 24 October 2011
aged 63



Astris Klemz died 10 October 2011
aged 72

Jean has been a valued CWO member for many years and most of you will remember seeing her at our meetings. Astrid joined us fairly recently and one can only imagine what she might have brought to our movement.

Our prayers are with Jean's husband Clive, Astrid's husband Bryan, and all Jean and Astrid's family and friends.

It would be good to make a litany of our "CWO saints" of which these two lovely ladies will be part. Please send names of women and men who have died who you would like added to the CWO litany. I'll put it in the e-news each time.

Jean Elizabeth Palmer: Born: 06 January 1948, Died: 24 October 2011.

Jean was born of Irish parents in 1948 in Forest Gate, East London. She went to Catholic primary schools in Ilford and Dagenham until, at the age of eight, she contracted Polio during the outbreak of 1956. As a result Jean became a wheelchair user.

Her life experience was radically changed as a result of becoming disabled. Education was interrupted and she spent the bulk of her remaining school days at a special school in Ilford for pupils with disabilities. The notion of an integrated education was still some years away!

Having had her Catholic education cut short as a child, once an adult she felt acutely the need to explore her faith on her own initiative. Jean and I met and fell in love participating in activities designed to bring disabled and 'able bodied' young people together. In particular on an exchange trip to Berlin in 1968. Coming from an Anglican tradition my need to learn more about the RC tradition only served to stimulate Jean further.

Our two boys, Stephen and Matthew were born in 1975 and 1979 and Jean gave up her work in a local Youth Employment Bureau to help bring them up. I will always be proud and grateful for her skills as a Mother which took no little effort, especially pushing them to playgroup in their buggies and taking them to school (in her wheelchair!).

We were both active members of the Labour Party at the time before the word 'socialism' became a dirty word. Women's rights have, therefore, always been high on both our agendas.

As our boys became more independent and Jean and I began to gain time to pursue our own interests Jean began attending retreats at various centres including the Emmaus Centre in Kent. Her exposure to many religious and lay women's views and ideas ignited her passion for the cause of women generally and that for the ordination of women in the Catholic Church particularly.

Jean's commitment to 'Catholic Women's Ordination' and to 'Women Word Spirit' inspired her to write poetry and become a regular participant in poetry weekends at Cold Ash and Crophorne. Seminars at Winchester University also became a regular haunt. Some of her poems were published in the Christian Women's Yearbook and anthologies published by Geoffrey Duncan of the URC. It is my intention to publish more of her work. Next year would have been our 40th wedding anniversary and our first grandson's first birthday was a month after Jean passed away.

I have lost a lover, partner, companion and friend. Life will not be the same without her passion for causes dear to both our hearts. I will miss her generosity, tolerance, care and love.

"Requiescat in pace et in amore"

Astrid Klemz died 10 October 2011 aged 72

Astrid was born in Easington Colliery and went to school in Sunderland before moving to London in her early 20s. She worked as a mobility officer for the blind in the capital before going on to be an expert witness for people who had become blind through an accident or fault. She would help them overcome their disability as well as sort out any compensation to which they may be entitled.

Astrid Klemz became a popular name across Wearside through the Sunderland Echo columns she wrote which fought for the rights of people with disabilities as well as addressing other issues affecting her beloved North East in the early 2000s.

With wide experience helping people with disability issues – particularly blindness – Mrs Klemz put pen to paper to write two text books for social workers. The avid writer also penned several books, including *Reading In The Shower*, an entertaining selection of anecdotes, and *Blindness and Partial Sight: A Guide for Social Workers and Others Concerned with the Care and Rehabilitation of the Visually Handicapped*.

After retiring, Astrid and Bryan, who married in 1965, moved to Wells in Somerset.

Bryan said: "Astrid was always full of energy, was really interested in people and liked talking to them. She also did a lot of voluntary work and was very active with Cats Protection. She loved animals and she was a genuine outgoing person who was very sociable."

Sunderland Echo editor Rob Lawson added: "I remember Astrid very fondly. She was one of life's real characters. She was also a really good writer and her column was appreciated by Sunderland readers. She had a particular passion for disabled rights and that was often a topic of her columns in the Echo."

Mrs Klemz leaves husband Bryan and a large family of nieces and nephews.

It's living on the margins that gives us that vista that we need in our church today.

Sr Margaret McBride.

Contacting the National Co-ordinating Group

If you wish to contact the National co-ordinating group (NatCog) for CWO that can be done via the website or by emailing natcog@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Father Boniecki banned

Polish priest, former editor-in-chief of Catholic weekly magazine Tygodnik Powszechny, Adam Boniecki, was punished by the Congregation of Marina Fathers, of which Boniecki is a member. He was forced to resign over his public comments. The decision sparked outrage and incited a heated discussion on freedom of speech.

In a month the Council of the Congregation will assemble in order to decide on the future of father Adam Boniecki.

The arguments of the authorities of the Congregation were not made public and remain unknown. Father Boniecki respects the decision and therefore will cease to speak to journalists.

The decision most probably came after recent comments of Boniecki e.g. fro TVN24 station. He defended Nergal, front man of death-metal, satanic group Behemoth. Polish church opposed ardently his participation in talent programme where he acted as a juror. Boniecki also did not oppose Janusz Palikot's idea to remove the cross hanging on the wall in the Sejm.

Boniecki will disappear from the media for a month. Yesterday he phoned father Kazimierz Sowa, director of religia.tv channel, where was running "Rozmownica" ("Locutory") programme, and told him that he would not be running it on Friday. Father Sowa was astonished on hearing that and said that the punishment accepted by the priest is not good for the whole Catholic Church.

The decision sparked outrage. Poland is one of most devoutly Catholic countries in Europe but voices about the need of reform in Church has been heard for a while now. On Facebook some 7,300 people expressed their solidarity with father Adam Boniecki.

Krystyna Janda, actress and director, one of the most prominent figure in Polish cinema and theatre said that she is shocked and considers leaving the Church. "God's staff on the Earth unfortunately leaves a lot to be desired," she said.

Pope Explicitly Condemns Gender Discrimination

Although the Vatican has issued a number of statements condemning discrimination against women in certain contexts (e.g. tourism) the latest statement appears to be one of the first condemning gender discrimination *in general*. Moreover, on this occasion the words come directly from the Pope himself.

The Vatican press bulletin, reporting on the Pope's welcome of the new German Ambassador on 7 November 2011, said

- *Benedict XVI then went on refer to gender discrimination against women, describing it as "a critical problem which, due to materialistic and hedonistic tendencies, seems to be on the increase, above all in the Western world". The Pope highlighted how "a relationship which fails to take account of the fact that man and woman have equal dignity represents a grave affront to humankind."*

The Pope went on to comment specifically on the exploitation of women through prostitution and pornography, and asked Germany to take a lead in initiatives against such abuse. However, his opening comment is clearly a condemnation of gender discrimination as a whole.

Benedict has spoken previously of the "equal dignity of men and women" but this would appear to be the first time he has used the modern language of "gender discrimination". Moreover, he describes it as a "critical problem" which would appear to suggest that acts of gender discriminations are inherently sinful.

One is tempted to quote Jesus' parable about splinters and planks in the eye. If he means what he says (and I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of his statement above) how does he fail to see that there is a problem in the RC Church – which, with its HQ in Rome, is pretty much at the centre of the Western world? If we can help the Catholic Church overcome this small obstacle in her thinking, then the ordination of women cannot be far away!

Gareth M

Today may there be peace within. May you trust that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others. May you use the gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content with yourself just the way you are. Let this knowledge settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us

Anonymous blessing from St Mary's in exile, Brisbane

Meeting at Portcullis House, Westminster 1 November 2011

The meeting organised by 'Women Can Be Priests' in the heart of Westminster yesterday went wonderfully well. A Member of Parliament, Siobhan McDonagh hosted it and she had invited friends of hers from the House of Lords as well as the Commons.

The main speaker, Baroness Helena Kennedy, a human rights and criminal lawyer, had already crossed swords on BBC Radio 4's 'Woman's Hour' with a young member of Catholic Voices who is a sub editor at the Catholic Herald. This young woman was peddling the Vatican line totally uncritically and Helen Kennedy challenged her in every way in a kindly manner. Helena is very much for open dialogue although she had been told that the matter of women's ordination should not be discussed in the public arena. Helena disagreed strongly with this and in the evening spoke very powerfully in favour of women's ordination. There were then scholarly contributions from the Husetop team lead by Hans Wijngaards. They had picked some excellent quotes after Hans' summarising the evidence for women priest and deacons very succinctly. Then Colette spoke about her call to priesthood. Others then contributed including myself, about the dilemmas we now face. There was very supportive applause from a packed audience for all of these and a good discussion ensued, admirably chaired by Miriam Duignan.

We all came away feeling that the topic had been very well aired. The last question was a very important one: we have talked the issue out very well but what strategies should be employed next? I feel that the protest in Rome is a clear indictor of a very good strategy, but we need many more.

Sue W

Websites

www.womenwordspirit.org

Women Word Spirit

www.ccc4vat2.org.uk/ccc

Catholics for a Changing Church

<http://www.gras.org.uk>

Group for rescinding the Act of Synod

<http://womenandthechurch.org/>

Campaign group for women's equality in the Church of England

<http://ncronline3.org/drupal/>

National Catholic Reporter –

<http://lgcm.org.uk/>

Lesbian and Gay Christians

www.womenpriests.org.

Sign up for their regular newsletter

www.spirituschristi.org

A truly inclusive Catholic Church

www.womensordination.org

More news of Rome Petition, Fr Bourgeois and many other issues

Catholic Rebels Challenge Austrian Bishops

VIENNA (Reuters) - Dissident Austrian Catholics announced lay people will start celebrating Mass when a priest is unavailable, a clear call to disobedience just as the country's bishops hold their autumn conference. A manifesto adopted by dozens of activists at the weekend said lay people will preach, consecrate and distribute communion in priestless parishes, said Hans Peter Hurka, head of the group We Are Church. "Church law bans this. The question is, can Church law overrule the Bible? We are of the opinion, based on findings from the Second Vatican Council, that this (ban) is not possible," he said.

The Catholic Church only allows ordained priests to preside at Mass. Hurka said dissidents had long planned the meeting but were happy it came just before a regular four-day session of the Catholic bishops' conference starting Monday. He said he wanted bishops, led by Vienna Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn, to respond to the paper, the latest in a series of challenges by grass-roots Catholic reformers in Austria. "We basically expect this because the demands for reform are not especially new," he said. The bishops received a copy of the manifesto Saturday, he added.

Bishops planned to discuss proposed initiatives and reforms that have been put forward, according to their website, although the main topic of the session was preparing for parish council elections due in March. Schoenborn, a former student and close associate of Pope Benedict, has ruled out sweeping changes demanded by dissident priests led by his former deputy, Rev. Helmut Schueller. Tipped as a possible future pope, the cardinal has said he would not lead his diocese into breaking away from the Vatican by letting clergy flout Church rules after a group of priests issued a "Call to Disobedience" to try to press reform.

The group, which claims to represent about 10 percent of the Austrian clergy, has challenged Church teaching on taboo topics such as priestly celibacy and women's ordination. The dissident priests, who have broad public backing in opinion polls, also say they will break Church rules by giving communion to Protestants and remarried divorced Catholics. Reformist Austrian Catholics have for decades challenged the conservative policies of Benedict and his predecessor John Paul, creating protest movements and advocating changes the Vatican refuses to make. Catholic reform groups in Germany, Ireland and the United States have made similar demands.

A record 87,000 Austrians left the Church in 2010, many in reaction to sexual abuse scandals.

Reuters November 7, 2011

Events @ the kitchen table catering for community conversation		
Thursday 1 st December 7pm	Striking hope in Advent A conversation event led by Rev. Christopher Owens	£7 including supper
Monday 5 th December 12.30pm	Jamie's Ministry of Food Stratford demonstrate @ lunch club	£5 including 3 course lunch
Monday 12 th December 12.30pm	Christmas Lunch Club @ the kitchen table	£7 inc. full Christmas menu
Saturday 17 th December	Christmas Chronicles <i>A make believe theatre</i> production	Time & ticket price to be announced
Thursday 22 nd December 7pm	The Nativity Film & Supper	£8 including supper
<i>The kitchen table cafe will be closed from 3pm on 23rd December opening again 3rd January 2012</i>		
Friday 13 th January 7pm	Music from the 60's from Echo Band with supper	£9 including supper
Thursday 26 th January 7pm	Quiz Night @ the kitchen table with a Scottish flavour!	£7 including supper
<p>If you have any ideas for conversation events, community nights or anything else that we could do @ the kitchen table please come along to our Kitchen Cabinet Thursday afternoons at 2.30pm Everyone welcome!</p>		
For more information about these events & to book please call or email anne@thekitchentable.eu / 0208 586 7979		

Prayer Link

Wednesday between 6.00 and 7.00pm, please pray for CWO, its members and its mission.

Saturdays at noon, join with women and men all over the world to pray for the work of Women's Ordination Worldwide (WOW!)

Please take part in one or both of these prayer networks if and when you can

The CWO Prayer

Moved by a compulsion of the Holy Spirit,

we cannot remain ignorant of this injustice in our midst.

We long for all humanity to be acknowledged as equal, particularly among your community of the church, so we pray grieving for the lost gifts of

so many women.

We ask you, God of all peoples, to bring insight and humility to all those in positions of dominance,

and an understanding that the ascended Lord called us all to act doing Christ's work here and now.

We ask this of you, God our Creator, Jesus our Redeemer, Spirit our Sustainer

WATCH (Women and the Church)

Even Chichester nearly says 'Yes' to women bishops. On Saturday three more Dioceses debated the draft legislation allowing women to be bishops - two said 'Yes', and even the Diocese of Chichester only said 'No' by 9 votes out of 143. To have turned it down by such a small margin indicates the growing difference in thinking among the leadership, the clergy and laypeople across Chichester.

Lichfield Diocese voted in support of women bishops by 94 votes to 31, and turned down a request for further provision for those opposed to women as bishops.

Exeter Diocese also voted in support of the legislation, by 74 votes to 34, but passed a Motion asking for a further debate in General Synod on bringing back the provisions suggested by the Archbishops last July, which were defeated.

21 out of 22 Dioceses have now voted in support of the legislation. Only three have asked for even more provision for those who will not accept women bishops out of 20 where this has been discussed. Another 12 dioceses will be voting before the middle of November

Next year is the 50th anniversary of Vatican II. We hope people will look at papers from the Council and reflect on where we are now. There are papers to help with this on our website. We are organising a meeting at St Andrew's Waterloo on 12 May 2011 to reflect on a new vision of Church.

Also please note our next **Annual Gathering** will be on Saturday 29 September also at St Andrew's

