

**CWO 1993 – 2013 Twenty years of prayer and action  
Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church  
E-news March 2013 issue 57**

Welcome to edited issue 57 of the e-news. Editor Pat Brown. Please visit CWO's website [www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk](http://www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk) News and previous issues can be seen there.

Please send items for April e-news by 15 April. Also contact me for further information about anything in this e-news where contact details are not given [info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk](mailto:info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk)

*Thank God we have a kind Shepherd, Pope Francis. Many Catholic women are called to the priesthood. Please open the door to us.*

This was the prayer on our leaflet which we gave out on our 20th anniversary prayer vigil held on 24 March 2013 outside Westminster Cathedral.

It was bitterly cold but we gave out almost 400 leaflets (attached with this e-news). We had our banner and CWO balloons and prayed together for change in our Church.

Pope Francis washed two women's feet on Maundy Thursday which is a sign of hope for us. He is not afraid of upsetting the canon lawyers!

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article3726461.ece>

From our facebook page

Happy Birthday! Key to the door next year maybe



The impossible can happen!

*Subversive God,  
deconstructing temples of  
power  
in which we would keep you  
trapped and tamed:  
lead us through violent times  
unafraid to speak for peace,  
untempted by those who  
promise easy answers;  
may we follow him alone who  
renews the world in love;  
through Jesus Christ, who sits  
at God's right hand.  
Amen.*

## **CWO Annual Gathering Saturday 5 October 2013**

This will reflect our twenty years of prayer and action  
10.30am – 4.00pm  
at the Welsh  
Congregationalist Church,  
Loveday Street,  
Birmingham B4 6NP

More details will follow –  
please put the date in  
your diaries now.

*Lumen gentium 37 says  
'The laity should disclose  
their needs and desires to  
the pastors with that  
liberty and confidence  
which befits the children  
of God and brothers and  
sisters in Christ. To the  
extent of their knowledge,  
competence or authority  
the laity are entitled and,  
indeed, sometimes duty  
bound, to express their  
opinion on matters which  
concern the good of the  
Church.'*

## **Links**

California bishops add belief requirements to  
teacher contracts

<http://ncronline.org/news/california-bishop-adds-belief-requirements-teacher-contracts>

Joanna Moorhead article in Guardian

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/feb/26/crimes-catholic-church-not-our-names?INTCMP>

Diarmaid MacCulloch Interview

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/video/2013/feb/28/pope-benedict-diarmaid-macculloch-video>

Pope Francis and the ordinariate

<http://anglicancontinuum.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/about-new-pope-and-ordinariate.html>

## **Jack Sutcliffe**

Jack Sutcliffe of Whittlesford, Cambridge died peacefully on Saturday 5 January 2013. He was a CWO member for many years. His name is added to our CWO "Saints"

R.I.P.

## **The Earth is the Lord's: Renewing the Covenant of Creation**

A conference run by Modern Church 15 - 18 July.

<http://www.modernchurch.org.uk/conference/2013.htm>

Booking form

[http://www.modernchurch.org.uk/file/conference/2013/booking\\_form.pdf](http://www.modernchurch.org.uk/file/conference/2013/booking_form.pdf)

## The Catholic Scholars' Declaration

Most people know that I have promoted the ordination of women since my time in India. In 1975 I recommended to the Indian Bishops' Conference that the question of women and holy orders should be re-examined. Two years later, when I had been elected Vicar General of the Mill Hill Missionaries and resided in London, I published: *Did Christ Rule out Women Priests?*, the first rebuttal in this country of Paul VI's papal documents against women in the ministry. My involvement in the cause would finally lead me and my Husetop team to found [www.womenpriests.org](http://www.womenpriests.org), the largest international website on the ordination of women. We receive 1.5 million visitors a year through any of 26 languages!

Last year we started another Husetop initiative: [www.churchauthority.org](http://www.churchauthority.org) which addresses the need of reforming how authority is exercised in the Church. Centrepiece is a Declaration that presents a blueprint of what would need to be done. The question I am frequently asked is: what has this initiative to do with the ordination of women? And: why is the question of women and holy orders not even mentioned in the Declaration itself?

### The thinking behind it all

In 2010 a group of theologians met at an international conference of reform movements called 'Handing On the Torch'. The venue was Utrecht in the Netherlands. Delegates came from various European countries, the USA and Canada. Representing the UK were Simon Bryden Brook, my wife Jackie Clackson and I. Reform issues on the table spanned the usual spectrum of married priests, women's ordination, child abuse, sexual ethics. Our shared concern: how to move forward?

We soon discovered that in all areas of church life, progress is being blocked by authority not functioning properly in the Church. A small clique at the top appoints like-minded bishops all over the world. All opposition is silenced. The Church controls Catholic media. Liberal theologians are dismissed from their posts. Every single issue of church reform suffers the same fate: it is stifled at birth.

I knew this was true from our own experience in the women's campaign. Within six short years the initial discussion on women and orders had been nipped in the bud. Just recall the facts:

1. **1971.** During the Bishops' Synod in Rome, Cardinal Flahiff and the Canadian Bishops Conference ask for a study on women's ministries.
2. **1973.** Paul VI appoints a 'Special Commission on the Function of Women in Society and Church'. Women members reveal their lack of freedom of expression. 'Our views are being systematically suppressed', they said. On [www.womenpriests.org](http://www.womenpriests.org) we have an extensive report about all this by Rie Vendrik, one of the participants.

## The Catholic Scholars' Declaration (continued)

3. 1975. The Pontifical Biblical Commission reports that there are no scriptural objections to ordaining women to the priesthood. [The Vatican suppresses the report, but its contents are leaked and become known.](#)
4. 1975. A Working Group on the Ordination of Women set up by ARCIC (the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Consultation) meets in Assisi. The two RC theologians appointed by the Vatican, Frs. Hervé Legrand and Englishman Eric Doyle, both express support for the ordination of women. [The report is suppressed by the Vatican, but published by ARCIC.](#)
5. 1976. Paul VI through '[Inter Insigniores](#)' rules out the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood.

6.

I realised that restructuring authority in the Church should be the first common concern of all reform movements. That is why, as representative of [Housetop](#) in London, I volunteered to further research this area and collect documentation. We opened a whole new section on [www.womenpriests.org](http://www.womenpriests.org) dedicated to the [abuse of authority](#).

### A new child is born

In 2011 the foetus matured. At our Housetop Annual Reunion the question of authority in the Church was the main topic. We began to feel that just criticising the system and blaming individuals would not be enough. What could we do *positively* to move the Church forward, out of the present mess?

Two ideas began to crystallise in my mind: (1) the Second Vatican Council of which we were celebrating its silver jubilee held most of the answers, and (2) theologians would need to play a crucial role. You should realise that, next to the authority enjoyed by the bishops there is the authority of the charisms in the Church. Karl Rahner has written a wonderful piece about the [Dynamic Element in the Church](#). Theologians have the charism of teaching (1 Corinthians 12,4-11). In the Middle Ages they took part in General Councils and their view was known as the Magisterium. Theologians played a crucial role at Vatican II.

In Spring Jackie and I travelled to the USA where we talked to Anthony Padavano and others. In August we met theologians in Nijmegen, including well-known Peter Nissen. In September we made our way to Tübingen where we got, among others, the support of Hans Küng and Hermann Häring. That put us on a good international basis.

On the 11th of October 2012, the 50th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, we opened the Catholic Scholars' Declaration on Authority in the Church for endorsement. We started with 8 academic sponsors. Now, as of my writing, we have 197 from all over the globe. They give a very powerful *magisterial* assessment, based on professional expertise and decades' of service to the Church.

## The Catholic Scholars' Declaration (continued)

On [www.churchauthority.org](http://www.churchauthority.org) you will find our plea for women's ordination in the section on 'case studies'. As I explained before, we have purposely omitted listing detailed reforms that need to happen. We are seeking the crucial reforms *in the authority system* that will make other specific reforms possible. Like repairing electrical power cables to a house, without determining how exactly the electricity will be used. Like providing a town with proper road, rail and air transport without determining the exact use local industry and commerce will make of this infrastructure.

Please, support the Declaration by co-signing it. While we single out scholars in a special way for the reasons given above, everyone's opinion counts. The 'sense of the faithful' must speak, as much as the teaching of theologians. Prophecy is an important charism exercised by many a reformer in the Church. Let your voice be heard!

John Wijngaards

### Conference - Prof. Phyllis Zagano – female diaconate

A conference is to be held in Dublin on Friday 26 April at All Hallows College, looking at the female diaconate in the Catholic Church. Phyllis Zagano is an internationally acclaimed Catholic scholar and lecturer on contemporary spirituality and women's issues in the church. Her many books include her award winning *Holy Saturday: An Argument for the Restoration of the Female Diaconate in the Catholic Church* and *Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future*. She will be joined by an expert Irish panel.

Venue: Purcell House, All Hallows' College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

date: Friday 26 April 2013

Time: 10.00 am - 4.30pm

Cost: €60

Contact: [womenhopeministry@gmail.com](mailto:womenhopeministry@gmail.com) for further information and booking form. Advance booking is strongly advised due to the level of interest in this conference.

### CWO Saints

Mary MacKillop  
Ruth Norton  
John Hatfield  
Celia Greenwood  
Michael O'Gara  
Sheila Houlihan  
Mary Daly  
Estelle White  
Pat McGarron  
Marcella Althaus-Reid  
Astrid Klemz  
Jean Palmer  
Elizabeth Rendall  
Maureen Brown  
Tissa Balasuriya  
Jack Sutcliffe

*Pray for us*

## **The Lindisfarne Gospels – Ray Simpson**

Celebrations to mark the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 'the book that made Britain' (The Sunday Times) have brought fresh interest in the Lindisfarne Gospels which contain the earliest surviving translation of the Gospels into the English language.

In this book Ray Simpson navigates through various traditions – Irish, Pictish, Saxon, Roman, Coptic and Byzantine, oriental (with Muslim prayer mats) weaving together the story and significance of the Lindisfarne Gospels for UK unity and inter-faith dialogue in our multi-cultural world.

He also uses the portraits of the Four Gospel authors to help us meditate on the Four Archetypes of Warrior, Magus, Lover and King.. His unique insights offer an approach to our multicultural world, and churches will value the new liturgical materials that celebrate the Gospels and the distinctive national Church that they helped to birth.

Kevin Mayhew Publishing  
ISBN 978 184867 5476  
Price 12.99

## **Stabat Mater- from Rosa Mundi**

Time past's in the imperfect tense:  
a labyrinth, not a vista, full of  
alleys and twittens leading the path askew,  
so looking back's the only way  
to chart it. Did you look back much,  
to that limewashed mudbrick house and the girl then,  
learning to spin and sew; lowering her eyes  
when a Roman passed (brass and hot leather,  
sweat);  
knowing nothing beyond the small town  
and the rocky sheep-grazed hills and the hot sky?  
thinking forward to what might happen,  
when everything was possibility,  
before the voice spoke?

Now you are crumpled on the bleakest hill;  
your child hangs in the wind over your head  
and blood of your heart spots on the cold stones.  
The child you loved, knowing the end not good,  
that before the incense and the gold  
you would need myrrh.

What would have happened, else?

A good man or a brute in a small house;  
a life of labour, raising children, goats,  
and fruit and grain; occasional joy seeping  
over the edge of toil; not the wild love  
for something hardly yours, constantly  
pulling you up and on, making you strive,  
whittling away the rebel and the id,  
to the thin core which does not bend or break,  
even where the wood is planted in the stone.  
Do you ever doubt, have to look back,  
have to relive the light which swallowed you;  
the shepherds and the kings, song in the sky,  
dead men walking, disputes with the priests,  
water poured out as wine?

The core lasts;

time forms a perfect O and - if it were not  
for thinking of your husband - you would be  
ready to follow to the star's white heart  
from which He came.

Lynn Roberts

## Websites

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

Catholics inspired by Vatican II.

<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

[www.womensordination.org](http://www.womensordination.org)

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

[www.churchauthority.org](http://www.churchauthority.org)

Sign the Jubilee Declaration

[www.ccc4vat2.org.uk/cc](http://www.ccc4vat2.org.uk/cc)

Catholics for a Changing Church

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

Lesbian and Gay Christians

[www.womenwordspirit.org](http://www.womenwordspirit.org)

[www.womenpriests.org](http://www.womenpriests.org).

Sign up for their regular newsletter

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

National Catholic Reporter

<http://christianfeministnetwork.com/>

Christian Feminist Network - exploring faith and feminism

[www.spirituschristi.org](http://www.spirituschristi.org)

A truly inclusive Catholic Church

<http://www.stcuthbertshouse.co.uk/expliturgy/>

Rachel is a professed hermit of the R C Diocese of Nottingham.

## 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