

CWO
Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church
E-news August 2014 issue 73

Welcome to issue 73 of the e-news. Editor Pat Brown. This version is for non-members - some contact details are missing and some names have been abbreviated. Please visit CWO's website www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk News and previous issues can be seen there. Please send items for September e-news by 20 September. For further information about anything in this e-news where contact details are not given info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk Many thanks to Ruth Wood for proof reading the e-news.

Please try to attend the Annual Gathering (details below) - invite friends to join us for lunch and the afternoon session

CWO Annual Gathering

A Foot in the Door? Women Deacons.

Saturday 4 October
11.00am – 5.00pm.

St Nicholas of Tolentino, Bristol

10.30 arrive
11.00am – 1.00pm AGM (members only)
1.00pm – 2.00pm lunch
2.00pm – 5.00pm Speaker followed by discussion

Speaker - Barbara Paskins

Barbara is a long time worker for change in the Church now at Housetop
<http://www.womenpriests.org/care/paskins.asp>

Discussion will be chaired by Katharine Salmon

Katharine is a theologian, an RS and languages teacher and a seasoned campaigner for CWO

We will conclude with a liturgy which will be informed by the discussion.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Walt Whitman

Elizabeth Johnson: Consider Jesus-waves of renewal in Christology

Although this is not a new book (1995), it seemed an important one to mention in e-news as Elizabeth Johnson recently spoke to the LCWR in the USA and received a standing ovation for her work for women's flourishing in the Catholic Church.** She has come under fire recently as certain Vatican experts have made successive attempts to undermine her theological integrity.

This is probably one of her most readable and accessible book for those who might wish to understand in greater detail the way that the reforms encouraged by Vatican II enabled thinking Catholics to look more closely at the person of Jesus. She revisits some of the theological processes that enabled protestant Christians to identify themselves with the real living person of Jesus, and then links these to doctrinal and theological developments within Catholic Christianity, with specific focus towards the conclusion of feminist liberation theology and salvation. Were she writing the book now, I imagine she would have brought womanist (black feminist) and queer theology into her analysis.

Her ability to make the decisions of Church Councils comprehensible is impressive, and her identification with the Jesus who demands justice is strong throughout the book. This is an ideal introduction for those who would like to get to grips with the theology that formed many of our reform organisations within the church. It is easily available from Amazon. Perhaps we could then pass copies on to others who would like to read it or to a sympathetic parish priest.

Katharine S

**Link to Elizabeth Johnson speaking to LCWR

<http://ncronline.org/news/sisters-stories/johnson-lcwr-sisters-ahead-hierarchy-living-vatican-ii-renewal>

<http://ncronline.org/news/sisters-stories/lcwr-business-usual-despite-cloud-vatican-mandate>



***Conscience and Calling: Ethical Reflections on Catholic Women's Church Vocations* by Sister, Dr. Anne E Patrick SNJM (Bloomsbury, T & T Clark 2013) ISBN: 978-1-441-14452-2.**

This book looks at the meaning and ethical implications of vocation. Anne E Patrick is a Sister of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary, theologian and Emerita Professor of Religion and Liberal Arts. She examines various responses of Catholic women to injustice, and describes a post-Vatican II shift for nuns and lay women from the ethics of obedience to the ethics of responsibility. It is a well written, scholarly, enlightening book. It was timely reading it while the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) were meeting recently, as some of the book traces their recent history, and their current struggles under scrutiny from the Vatican. LCWR represents 80% of women religious in the US.

Patrick describes how women religious have worked and struggled with church authorities but have followed their consciences to emerge with ethical integrity. She relates some of the historical and theological issues encountered and analyses how they came to the decisions they made.

*As a laywoman and CWO member I found this book relevant. Patrick reminds us of the mission to eradicate injustice in the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*. She follows the shift women religious are making from patriarchal, institutional loyalty and obedience to form decisions based on justice, honesty and personal responsibility. Catholics increasingly need to discern ownership of their own individual decision making e.g. about contraception, divorce and remarriage, supporting homosexuality and non marital sex, rather than relying solely on church leaders as the "proper locus of moral authority." This is alongside challenging religiously legitimated sexism and countering discrimination and oppression.*

An analysis Patrick makes of the relationship between women and church and the way they respond is particularly affirming for CWO. She amends Niebuhr's categories of Christ and Culture to present a feminist map of the tension between women and the church. Type 1 describes *Women Against the Church* where women are angry, feel alienated and no longer attend church; Type 2: *Women Content with the Church*, who we encounter as vocal critics of CWO; Type 3: *Women Above the Church*, who find nourishment in feminist communities away from the institution and work on a parallel track. Type 4 : *Women and Church in Paradox* where women are holding fraught, contradictory allegiances to feminism and the church, seeing value in both and holding onto the tension; Type 5: *Women Transform the Church*, where women claim Catholicism and feminism and work prophetically to bring about justice in the church. Type 5 seems to be a fit with the aims of CWO, campaigning to renew the Church from within, and is the stance which Ann E. Patrick sees many in LCWR taking, with energy for reform and a spirit of careful discernment.

Conscience and Calling: Ethical Reflections on Catholic Women's Church Vocations (continued)

Patrick draws on the work of theologian Margaret Farley in her description of vocation as a "framework for love" involving three sorts of callings: fulfilling God's command to love God and neighbour, being invited to focus love, creativity and sexual energy in a particular life-context and devoting time and energy to particular peoples and causes. Whether it is a religious or secular calling love holds the link between justice and compassion. We are all called to work against discrimination and oppression and hierarchies based on gender, race or class and to transform asymmetric relationships.

Patrick traces the historical decline of women's role in the church. She calls for the ordination of women incrementally, starting with church governance at diocesan and international level and the restoration of women deacons. (She observes that if women religious were to become deacons the Vatican would have more power over them as they would be required to be linked to the local bishop, thus losing some of their religious community independence.) Discretionary lay ecclesial ministries need to be supported by Canon Law. She describes the development of WOC and RCWP but not CWO. (She is an American author in the US.) In the future she encourages us to work creatively and discern when to observe rules and when to go beyond them for those in need. She advocates plural strategies for different callings, reminds us there are no barriers in mysticism and that all effort must be sustained by love. This is a worthwhile and enlightening read.

Pippa B

2015 Catholic Family History Society Small Research Award

The Catholic Family History Society is keen to support the research into Catholics within the United Kingdom. The Society has limited funds available and is desirous to assist those interested in undertaking such research which will be of benefit to Catholic family historians. Small Research Awards will be made on an annual basis.

Please feel free to publicise this inside your organisation or forward this to anyone or any organisation that you think might be interested.

Peter Barlow
Catholic Family History Society
<http://www.catholic-history.org.uk/cfhs/>

2014 Llysfasi Spirituality Workshop <http://www.llysfasi-spirituality-workshop.org.uk/>

I'm just back from one of the most stretching and rewarding fortnights of my life. The Llysfasi Spirituality Workshop, which has been given over the last 25 years, was held this year at the very pleasant venue of Park Place Pastoral Centre, Wickham, near Fareham. We were there so long, and patently worked so hard, that Sister Judith, one of the community that runs the Centre, joked that at least a couple of us should join the order.

The aim of this ecumenical Workshop is two-fold: to encourage each participant to make an in-depth retreat following the Ignatian path of imaginative contemplation; and, alongside, to provide a well supervised setting within which to develop contemplative listening. This year's Workshop had four highly experienced facilitators, in the Ignatian tradition, and fifteen participants. My main reason for applying to take part was the desire to build some pastoral skills in a professional context. In this the Workshop far surpassed my expectations primarily because, from the outset, we participants ministered to each other in "listening groups", and, eventually, in one-to-one companioning.

During the first week, the facilitators provided a great wealth of material, both spoken and printed, that took us, rather rapidly, through the phases of St Ignatius' 30 Day Exercises. It did help to have some previous experience of these, I had completed the "Exercises in Lay Life" a while ago, but the presentations were in everyday language, and one could soon pick up any shorthand references. Using music and changing prayer foci, the facilitators emphasised the importance of entering into a contemplative frame both when meditating alone and when listening to what others felt able to share from their meditations. We were encouraged to play with the resources made available in the art room so as to connect with our more intuitive "left brain". Many of these artistic creations were quite remarkable.

Concurrent with our individual work, which I, for one, found brought great healing to aspects of my personal history, we were gradually inducted into the skills of contemplative listening. In the second week, then, there was a change of gear as participants gave each other a three day silent retreat. When one was acting as a "companion", there was quite intensive backup in the form of seminars, role plays, small group supervision and one-to-one supervision with a facilitator. I felt this was giving me a solid and deep grounding in a specialised practice of mindful listening, but am aware there's a lifetime ahead in developing and gaining confidence.

This may all sound overly serious, but the atmosphere throughout was also light hearted with plenty of humour and interesting conversation, as well as profound sympathy, between the variety of participants. Comes highly recommended!

Olive P

Vocations Sunday 2015

In Latin America in various countries (Nicaragua, El Salvador, Argentina), I have been in touch with nuns who are rolling up their sleeves when it comes to sacramental life in animating communities.

It reminds me of a very moving story posted on womenpriest.org of a French nun in Africa who was in charge of a parish larger than the size of a French diocese. She would bring thousands of consecrated hosts from the city on a plane to last for a while. She wrote of her pain not to celebrate the Eucharist and give absolution in the name of the Church. I wonder if we should collect more testimonies like this. The one by Una Kroll was very moving. A book of grievances (cahier des doléances which set the French Revolution) of the pain of women who are unable to be the person God wants them to be for Vocations Sunday 2015?

Severine Deneulin

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me- The writings of Suzanne Hiatt. Edited by Carter Heyward and Janine Lehane

This collection of Sue Hiatt's writings contains many gems and is a mine of interest for all those who have struggled for women's equality in any part of the church. It would probably be helpful for those with limited knowledge of the struggle for women's ordination in the Episcopal Church to read Darlene O'Dell's book on the Philadelphia Eleven first, yet if that is not possible, Carter Heyward's prologue and the first chapter "the radical lady who changed the church" will help considerably.

Sue Hiatt had the campaigning and organisational skills that could bring together an event such as the ordination of the Philadelphia Eleven and, as Carter Heyward says in the prologue: "the fact that there are thousands of women priests throughout the Anglican Communion and dozens of women bishops is Sue Hiatt's legacy". Much of the book is a collection of Sue Hiatt's sermons- an inspiring treasury for any women and men who preach. One of the most moving tributes in the book, written shortly before Hiatt's death from cancer, is by the Right Reverend Barbara C. Harris, titled "In honor of an Unofficial Bishop".

It is clear the debt the Episcopal women owe her. Her campaigning and her ability to never give up are a model for us in CWO- she did not worry about those who did not support her, she just got on with the task in hand. She is also an inspiration for the younger generations who are still fighting against glass ceilings in other churches.

Katharine S

Third WOW Conference 2015

Gender, The Gospel, and Global Justice.

18 – 20 September 2015.

Marriott Hotel

Philadelphia PA



WOW currently includes representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Malta, Poland, and the United States.

Some of our longer serving members will remember being instrumental in setting up a travelling fund for previous WOW Conferences to help people from the developing world attend. We need to do this again so I am asking for anything you can spare for this fund. All contributions will be very welcome. There will be an account set up for this and I will have the details soon.

CWO has sponsored the conference, as all members of WOW will be doing but individuals can sponsor it as well. Please see WOW website for inspiration – this is being added to daily. <http://womensordinationworldwide.org/>

Please also sign up to the monthly WOW e-news

<http://womensordinationworldwide.org/connect/>

Even if (or maybe especially if) you can't go to the conference, you will be able to keep abreast of all that is happening in the women's ordination movement worldwide.



Will Mary Teach the Churchmen to Ordain Women

That Mariological assertions should occur in theology from the earliest times is quite understandable. Such assertions are concerned with particular questions and are often not the result of scientific thinking of the faith but the expression of pious veneration. Hence they often have the character of poetic intuition and enthusiastic exuberance, which means that they must be interpreted by a method appropriate to such literary forms." Michael Schmaus quoted in Mariology in the Encyclopaedia of Theology by Karl Rahner

That comment by German Roman Catholic theologian and professor specializing in dogmatics affirms the fact that so little is known about the historic biological mother of Jesus that she now has an existence not in the real world but in the realm of poetic fancy.

The construct or the several constructs of what or who the Virgin Mary is bears little resemblance to the woman who was mother of Jesus of Nazareth. It isn't likely that she would recognise herself as the biographical westernised construct. The Queen of Heaven role would be especially difficult for her to understand and agree after she had been attributed with reciting the Magnificat with its, "He hath put down the mighty from their thrones; and hath exalted the humble."

Was Mary Allowed to Prevent the Subjugation of Women ?

Unfortunately the Church has a long history of the subjugation of women despite the fact that the biblical Jesus included women among his closest followers and He took advice from them. One of the many supportive actions which made Him so different from other men of His time was His inclusive attitude towards women. Nevertheless it didn't take long for church officials to forget to treat women with due respect. Women lost place and prestige within the Church as its clerics relegated women as did the secular authorities. Weak attempts were made over the centuries to gain social and political power for women with little success. Some sixteen hundred years after the death of Jesus, during the seventeenth century Quakers made big efforts to try to agree equal status to women in their worship. Margaret Fell, a Quaker, spoke out against prohibitions of women preaching with, "God hath put no such difference between Male and Female as man would make", also commenting "Men were trying to limit the power of Almighty God by contending that it existed only in the male sex." After one man stormed out of a meeting which agreed upon women being allowed to speak in Church, a fellow Quaker, George Fox said, that if husbands could rule over their wives "which he did not seek to deny" neither must they rule over widows and young women and other men's wives." See, The Weaker Vessel, by Antonia Fraser.

Will Mary Teach the Churchmen to Ordain Women (continued)

Will Mary Justify the Ordination of Women?

The time is long past for Mary to make an appearance in support of women's ordination. Will she make a supportive appearance once again to agree that through the medium of adolescent girl seers? Was St. Alphonsus, back in the eighteenth century, giving us a good reason for opening up the Catholic priesthood to women when he said: "Whoever then was present on the Mount of Calvary might see two altars, on which two great sacrifices were consummated; the one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary." ?

This suggestion must surely be welcomed by Catholic Women's Ordination and other such lobbyists in the cause of women's rights. How much closer, physically, could anyone get to Jesus than His own mother who supplied the genetic material? Was Alphonsus suggesting that Mary was a priest offering up the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of God on the altar of Calvary? Presumably! Throughout the ages men like Alphonsus have spoken about her offering Jesus as a sacrifice and yet at the same time the Churchmen have insisted that only people of male gender can offer Jesus in the sacrifice of the mass. Their biology is not quite right. Females cannot be priests. Mary may have been assigned a priestly role but no other women have. Her historic example has been in vain.

The former Pope Benedict, during his time as Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Vatican's Propaganda initiative showed signs of learning something about women from secular society. That's fine. Perhaps Mary was steering him in that direction but perhaps not. For example over the centuries, Churchmen learned from secular society to oppose slavery and they are slowly learning something about women-from secular society. Of course, laying claim to be "expert in humanity", as did, Benedict when he was known as Ratzinger, in a Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World is somewhat exaggerated to say the least. The Church administration has never been expert in the humanity of women.

Fortunately the time has passed when Churchmen told slaves it was their duty to obey their masters. Gradually, when Churchmen had discovered something about the immorality of slavery and racism from secular society they began to speak out against it. Surely Jesus had it right back then when He was giving advice on reforming the socio-economic system, but over the centuries the Churchmen chose to ignore Him. When Christianity was well established in the late fourth century even tenants could not take legal action against their landlords, many of them Christians and many of them clerics. Slaves, who in the early Christian Church could become Bishop of Rome, could no longer be ordained without the consent of their masters or mistresses. In 409 this prohibition was extended to tenants as well. The clerics were learning nothing from Mary-but of course she was different. She was incomparable.

Will Mary Teach The Churchmen To Ordain Women (continued)

There was also a time, centuries ago, when black men could not be ordained because they were thought of as being not quite human. Women are still in that bracket, not quite human. They cannot be ordained because they too are still 'were- men' [Saxon, 'not quite men'] and therefore not eligible. To a great extent, within the official Church, men and women are considered equal but as lay people excluded from church power! The Church authorities, during Benedict's time, for example , acting like oppressors in a totalitarian state, treated all, men and women both, equally by prohibiting them from discussing the ordination of women.

The Marian Fatima seer Lucia condemned blasphemies against the Virgin Mary but one should also bear in mind that the Catholic Catechism teaches us that, "It is also blasphemous to make use of God's name to cover up criminal practices, to reduce people to servitude, to torture persons or put them to death." My wife suggests that it is also blasphemous for Churchmen to consider women inferior in their service of God as priests. She asks, did God have an off day when he created woman?

James Patrick Hynes

Links

Francis and the nuns: Interview with Mary Gordon. This has received interest on our Facebook page too

<http://religiondispatches.org/francis-and-the-nuns-an-interview-with-mary-gordon/>

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10152641420778360&id=27311398359&comment_id=10152641604068360&offset=0&total_comments=1

Article about Mary Magdalene

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/who-was-mary-magdalene-prostitute-sinner-apostle-of-the-apostles-1.1873591>

Harrogate School of Theology and Mission – have a look at their autumn programme

<http://www.hstm.org/>

A person of prayer

The person who learns to pray with the heart of God has no patience for injustice anywhere. They see with the prophet's eye. They break down national boundaries. They transcend gender roles. They have no sense of color or caste, of wealthy or poor. They see only humanity in all its glory, all its pain.

The person of prayer is not a person of private agendas. The more we become like God, the greater-hearted we become as well. We have no sense anymore of "we and they" or "them and us" or "me and mine." Now our hearts open to take in the heart of the world.

When, in prayer, we come to discover God's universal love we suddenly realize that God does not take sides, that we have no priority on God alone. We finally understand that the God we seek is the God of the world and so, to seek that God, we must develop hearts as big as the world ourselves.

Then, racism makes no sense and sexism is as much a sin as any other kind of discrimination, and war is blasphemy against humanity. Then we become bigger than our single nation, broader than any one religion, truly catholic—universal—in our cares and beliefs and commitments.

To develop a cosmic heart is a moment of profound transformation. We can never be the same again. We are beyond the boundaries we have created to separate the human race into my race and theirs.

Then prayer becomes truly co-creative.

Otherwise prayer is nothing more than some kind of spiritual spa designed to make me feel good. It is reduced to an exercise the intent of which is to assure me of my own value. It swaddles me in self-righteousness and self-serving. It makes God an icon, a tribal God whose concerns are no bigger than our own. Then God carries a flag, becomes a male potentate, excludes females and passes out personal gifts.

Then we make ourselves God and our God a poor, miserable creature indeed—a national patriot, maybe; a great male warrior, perhaps, but certainly not the God of all creation. Then we are simply worshipping ourselves and calling it prayer.

Joan Chittester

An overview of the Britain and Ireland School of Feminist Theology at Noddfa, July 2104

The Title of this conference was '**Women: Alternate economic and political visions**'. There were some excellent speakers listed and I knew this conference could be very informative, although its format tended to be academic in the form of 4 lectures per day, then a discussion in the late afternoon of each day. This discussion produced a document /declaration which we all agreed to and its content can be found on the Facebook page of BISFT 2014.

Dr. Ina Praetorius (whom some may remember from the Women's Synod at Gmunden in 1996) considered the healing ministry of the Church and asked if we really needed religion for this. We do need something outside ourselves but not the androcentric symbolic order put forward by Aristotle. She called on us to explore the hidden wisdom of ourselves and our traditions by formulating a personal matrix where we could locate our identity. For those who find ourselves still catholic, we could work out a transformed Catholic Christian Matrix. She asked questions like 'What has made you alive?' We have to take on our own authority and act out of abundance. Ina's work can be found at <http://inapraetorius.ch/e/texts-on-the-web.php> and [her publication list.php](http://inapraetorius.ch/e/publication-list.php). I cannot do justice to Ina's work here but would strongly recommend any member of CWO to follow her link.

Another paper by Dr. Agnes Rafferty , entitled 'Women Eucharist and Politics' is particularly relevant to those of us considering ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. She looked at alternative celebrations of the Eucharist. Yet she also referred to the work of Tissa Balasuriya who maintained that the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist has the capacity to bring about transformation and great change. Tissa wrote a book called '**The Eucharist and Human Liberation**' which comes as strongly recommended. He saw the Eucharist as rooted in the issue of justice, of sharing and community. He also stated the Eucharist and Capitalism are incompatible. Tissa supported the ordination of women to give hope to oppressed women living in very difficult circumstances. The Eucharist should be 'the disturber of the comfortable'. It is far more than the last supper. Agnes also quoted a Chilean theologian and Marcella Althaus-Reid, a very memorable feminist theologian from Argentina. Agnes' paper, along with all the others will be published in the Journal of Feminist Theology in May (Sage publications) but I am trying to put together a synopsis of what Agnes said before that.

Others who spoke included Dr. Teresa Forcades OSB who will be the keynote speaker at the WOW Conference next year. She spoke about how drug companies had persuaded women to buy drugs that actually damaged their health. She brought in the work of Lacan and Foucault to show how power had been abused. There is no way I can do justice to Theresa' spontaneity, dynamism and vision from this very factual description of her lecture so I hope that I can do a longer write-up of her talk at a later date. Suffice it to say that she is a very inspirational speaker.

An overview of the Britain and Ireland School of Feminist Theology at Noddfa, July 2104 (continued)

Another very inspirational speaker was Sister Genny Dunnay from the Philippines. She spoke about how the indigenous people in the Philippines had risen up against human rights violations in her country. One group was the Cordillera People's Alliance who fought against the wanton destruction of mother-earth by the mining companies. Also, in the Philippines there had been indigenous women priests called babylans who had resisted Spanish rule.

Many global conglomerates were listed who had tried to exploit the indigenous peoples. Although these people form only 5% of the world's population, they represent 15% of the world's poor. In her country they have been targeted by the Asia Development Bank and the IMF. Sister Genny gave many important facts in calling for a human rights approach to development by working from the Human Development Index rather than the Gross National Product.

We have asked Sister Genny to speak at the WOW Conference next year but we are still waiting to see if she will be given permission by her order. Sister Genny's talk was particularly powerful as it described how groups of ordinary women could resist patriarchal oppression and effect change. Again, this talk was so important that I hope to write it up at a later date, although it will be found in the Journal of Feminist Theology next May.

There were other important talks which I can write up too, but I have taken up enough space in the enews for now. I would encourage CWO members to try to access the Journal of Feminist Theology next May, but I shall also remind people about that too.

Sue W

Annual Gathering Bristol 5 October 2014

Sue Williamson will be bringing some books and articles for people to look at the AGM. Some may be for sale at a reduced rate.

Chester Theological Society 2014-15

7:30pm, Thursday 16th October - Hollybank House, University of Chester Conceiving Jesus: Re-examining Jesus' Conception in Canon, Christology and Creed

Professor Andrew Lincoln - University of Gloucestershire

For many Christians the belief that Jesus was conceived without a human father appears to be demanded by Scripture and creed but causes difficulty in the light of knowledge of ancient parallels about the conception of great figures and of modern biology. The lecture will survey some of the range of issues involved in attempting to negotiate confessional belief and critical enquiry on this topic. Does the New Testament contain other perspectives on Jesus' conception? Why did the virginal conception tradition become dominant and why has it become problematic? What are the implications for the orthodox view of the relation between Jesus' humanity and divinity and for saying the creed if one holds that in all probability Jesus did have a biological human father?

Andrew Lincoln is Professor of New Testament at the University of Gloucestershire. Among his publications are *Ephesians* (Word Biblical Commentary, 1990); *Colossians* (New Interpreter's Bible Vol. XI, 2000); *Truth on Trial: the Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Hendrickson, 2000); *The Gospel according to St. John* (Black NT Commentaries, Continuum, 2005) and *Hebrews: a Guide* (T. & T. Clark International, 2006). Most recently he has co-edited *The Bible and Spirituality: Exploratory Essays in Reading Scripture Spiritually* (Cascade, Wipf & Stock, 2013) and written *Born of a Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition and Theology* (SPCK/Eerdmans, 2013).

Admission at the door: £3.00 (Students: £1.00) Wine and Refreshments

2:00pm, Saturday 7th February 2015 - The Nave, Chester Cathedral

Whatever Happened to the Laity?

Professor Elaine Graham - Canon Theologian at Chester Cathedral ANNUAL CATHEDRAL LECTURE

In the first of her annual lectures as Canon Theologian, Professor Graham will address the role of lay people in the Church. Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council, which emphasised the secular calling of the laity as the embodiment of the Church in the world, are we any closer to really affirming the priesthood of all believers, or does the Church remain largely clericalised in its understanding of ministry? This lecture will survey some of the main thinking over recent years across the denominations regarding the relationship between ordained and lay ministry, and consider what the future prospects may be for the laity in Church and society.

Chester Theological Society 2014-15 (continued)

Elaine Graham, appointed the Samuel Ferguson Professor of Social and Pastoral Theology at the University of Manchester, joined the University of Chester in 2009 where she is the Grosvenor Research Professor of Practical Theology. Her publications include: *Theological Reflection: Methods* (SCM 2005), with Heather Walton and Frances Ward; *Words made Flesh: Writings in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (SCM 2009) and *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age* (SCM 2013).

She is a former president of the International Academy of Practical Theology, a member of the BBC Standing Conference on Religion and Belief, an occasional broadcaster and a contributor to the *Church Times*.

Admission Free

7:30pm, Tuesday 10th March - The Nave, Chester Cathedral

“For the Honour of God and for the Reform of our Realm”: Magna Carta, Church and State, 1215-2015

The Revd Robin Griffiths - Master of Temple Church

King John sealed *Magna Carta* ‘from reverence for God and for the salvation of our soul and those of all our ancestors and heirs, for the honour of God and the exaltation of Holy Church and the reform of our realm’. His advisors included two archbishops, seven bishops and the Master of the Temple. The Charter challenges today’s faith communities to examine the part they might play in the development of a liberal democracy. The landscape has changed beyond recognition, from the universality of the ‘English Church’ in 1215 to the religious diversity and multi-culturalism of the 21st century; but ‘the honour of God and reform of the realm’ are still close to the heart of every religious community.

Robin Griffith-Jones has been ‘the Reverend and Valiant Master of the Temple’ at the Temple Church since 1999. The Temple was King John’s London headquarters and the setting for vital negotiations, 1214-5. He is also Senior Lecturer in Theology at King’s College London. Writings on the New Testament and early Christianity include *The Four Witnesses* (2000), *The Gospel according to Paul* (2004) and *Mary Magdalene* (2008). Fostering the Temple’s natural interest in law and religion resulted in *Islam and English Law: Rights, Responsibilities and the Place of Sharia* (editor & co-author, 2013) and *Magna Carta, Religion and the Rule of Law* (co-editor & co-author, 2014).

Admission at the door: £3.00 (Students: £1.00)

Chester Theological Society 2014-15 (continued)

7:30pm, Friday 1st May – Binks Lecture Theatre, University of Chester **Pope Francis and the Future of Catholic Social Thinking**

Paul Vallely CMG FRSA - Inaugural Lecture as Visiting Professor

Pope Francis has issued some powerful condemnations of the operations of the contemporary global economy. He has called for “a poor Church, for the poor”. But do his trenchant criticisms merely reiterate the critique of “savage capitalism” developed by Catholic Social Teaching throughout the 20th Century? Or is he developing that teaching in new Ways?

Paul Vallely CMG FRSA is a writer, broadcaster and consultant on international development and business ethics. He is Visiting Professor in Public Ethics and Media at the University of Chester and Senior Research Fellow at the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester. He was co-author of the report of Tony Blair’s Commission for Africa (2004-5). He writes regularly in *The Independent on Sunday*, *Guardian* and *New York Times*, is a director of *The Tablet* and a columnist for the *Church Times*. His publications include *The New Politics: Catholic Social Teaching for the 21st century*, (SCM 1999) and *Catholic Social Teaching and the Big Society* (CBCEW 2011). *Pope Francis – Untying the Knots* (Bloomsbury 2013)

Admission at the door: £3.00 (Students: £1.00) Wine and Refreshments

Symposium on Natural Law and Conscience Saturday 20 September 2014 Digby Stuart Chapel, Digby Stuart College, University of Roehampton, SW15 5PH, UK.

Speakers:

Prof Tina Beattie, Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Roehampton, London, UK and Director of the Digby Stuart Research Centre for Religion, Society and Human Flourishing.

Prof Jan Jans, Professor of Ethics at Tilburg School of Humanities, the Netherlands.

Prof Michael Lawler, Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School at Creighton University and Professor Emeritus of Catholic Theology at Creighton University Nebraska USA.

Prof Todd Salzman, Professor of Ethics at Creighton University, Nebraska USA

Dr Luca Badini Confalonieri, School of Education, University of Birmingham, UK.

More information, including online registration, can be found on this event on http://www.natural-law-and-conscience.org/events/coll_roehampton.asp

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
Pat Regini
Mary Ann Schoettly

Pray for us



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

Websites (apologies for smaller print – that’s to fit them in!)

<http://www.womensordination.org/>

News of Fr Bourgeois and many other issues

<http://www.johnwijngaards.org/>

All previous housetop websites can be reached via this address

<http://www.catholicchurchreform.com/>

A global network seeking renewal of the Church

<http://womenandthechurch.org/>

Campaign for women’s equality in Church of England

<http://ncronline.org/>

National Catholic Reporter

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

Catholics inspired by Vatican II.

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

Group for rescinding the Act of Synod

www.we-are-church.org.uk

We Are Church in the UK is a call to recognise that all the Baptised, are part of the Church.

<http://www.ccc4vat2.org.uk>

Catholics for a Changing Church

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

Campaigns against and challenges homophobia and transphobia, especially within the Church and faith based organisations, as well as working to create and praying for an inclusive church.

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

Proclaims the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ so as to sustain and increase Christian belief among homosexual men and women. They offer pastoral support for LGBT Catholics friends and families
Sign up for quarterly newsletter

<http://82.70.116.125/index.html>

Women Word Spirit

<http://christianfeministnetwork.com/>

Christian Feminist Network - exploring faith and feminism

<http://www.spirituschristi.org>

A truly inclusive Catholic Church

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

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