

**CWO**  
**Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church**  
**E-news May 2015 issue 80**

Welcome to the May issue of the e-news. Editor Pat Brown. Please visit <http://www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk/News> and previous issues can be seen there. Please send items for June e-news by 20 June. [info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk](mailto:info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk) for further information about anything in this e-news where contact details are not given.

This has been a great month for marginalised groups; little victories in the news; great result from Ireland.

However, there is still a long way to go. Please support a petition to reinstate Fr Warren Hall who has been sacked for opposing anti-gay discrimination. Sign here. [http://act.faithfulamerica.org/sign/setonhall\\_priest/?t=1&akid=583.426015.uZMP07](http://act.faithfulamerica.org/sign/setonhall_priest/?t=1&akid=583.426015.uZMP07)

Please note that information was incorrect in last month's e-news (page 10).

The Consecration of the Ven Rachel Treweek as Diocesan Bishop of Gloucester will be taking place at CANTERBURY Cathedral and not Gloucester Cathedral.

### **Our Annual Gathering 2015**

Saturday 3 October  
St Andrew's  
Short Street  
Waterloo  
London  
SE1 8LJ



11.00am – 1.00pm	AGM
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Lunch provided by CWO

#### **Sharing the inspiration of the WOW Conference**

2.00pm – 4.30pm	Speaker - Tina Beattie and one other speaker from the Conference – plus CWO members who took part followed by discussion/questions
4.30pm	Closing liturgy

## Third WOW Conference 2015

*Gender, The Gospel, and Global Justice.*

18 – 20 September 2015

Marriott Hotel

Philadelphia PA



### Will you be there?

**Registration** includes all plenary sessions with inspiring [speakers](#), conference workshops, academic seminars with renowned theologians, special events and receptions, and opportunities to take action.

- **\$300 Registration** (up to July 31, 2015)
- **\$350 Late Registration** (After August 1, 2015)

It is easy to register via the website – they deal with converting sterling to dollars

<https://www.signup4.net/public/ap.aspx?EID=WOMA18E&TID=So5TRn5cIhKVluNtnsPU1g%3d%3d>

You can opt to share a room. They will match you up with another delegate. The rooms are large with two double beds in each.

**Speakers list:** Teresa Forcades, Tina Beattie, Christina Rees, Dr. Mary Hunt, Dr. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Barbara Blaine, Kristina Keneally, Ursula King, Sister Genny Dunnay, Sister Christine Fernando, Shannon Dee Williams, Maeve O'Rourke, Mari Steed. Jamie Manson, Theresa Kane RSM, Asra Normani, Kate Kelly, Sr Maureen Fiedler, Patricia Fresen  
Priest panel includes Tony Flannery, Paul Collins and Roy Bourgeois

### Please spread the word via Twitter and Facebook.

If you can't attend you might be able to help someone from the developing world to attend by contributing to the solidarity fund. Any amount is welcome.

You can donate here: -

<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/WomensOrdinationConferenceInc/wow2015.html>

Or you can send me a cheque made out to WOW. My address is on the merchandise form at the end of this enews. If you know anyone who might be worth approaching for a donation please let me know about that too. We need financial backers for this event but **mostly we need people to attend so please publicise widely!**

**Sign up to receive WOW e-news** <http://womensordinationworldwide.org/connect/>

Pat Brown

**James Connolly Memorial Lecture Dublin 9 May - Sr Teresa Forcades talks about the misogynist Catholic Church and her talk at the WOW conference in Philadelphia in September 2015**



Sr Teresa with Gertrude Gill and Colm Holmes

Sr Teresa Forcades had a full house for her talk in Dublin this afternoon.

She spoke for 90 minutes without any notes with great conviction and sincerity. Her appeal for more power to the people and a more equitable sharing of wealth was hugely popular with this audience. I was amazed to hear her explain how the Trinity confirms her political views of moving forward towards a common goal.

Colm Holmes

## **Hilda of Whitby - A spirituality for now** Ray Simpson. [brfonline.org.uk](http://brfonline.org.uk), 7.99

Ray Simpson is a founder of the new monastic movement, The Community of Aidan and Hilda, who lives on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, sharing contemporary Celtic Christianity with all seekers.

Hard as it is for us on the slender written evidence, to reach back 1500 years into a Britain of Celtic and Saxon kingdoms for evidence of a strong woman named Hilda, Simpson sketches a rich portrait nonetheless from a landscape clearly well loved by him. Born in 614 into the deposed Anglo-Saxon royal family of Deira, Hilda led the first part of her life in a constant skirmish of princes and armies, deaths and depositions. She may have been married, more than once - we don't know. She frequently took refuge with her sister Hereswith, married to the ruler of the East Angles, and was on the point, in her midlife, of following her to France to take her vows as a nun at Chelles in Frankia, when the humble great Bishop Aidan called her back to Northumbria to found her first monastery at Hartlepool.

The turning point of Hilda's life had come when she had been baptised, at the age of 15, by the Roman missionary Paulinus, who finally brought Christianity to her uncle Edwin's kingdom of Deira. It meant that she laid aside the bloodshed of the pagan Saxons, and turned instead to the teachings of Christ. Bishop Paulinus brought a Roman Christianity, with an emphasis on power and authority. Years later, however, when the Irish Aidan, the 'Little Flame', arrived with his brethren from Iona, they brought a wholly different Christianity. This humble, woollen and sandals-clad creed walked amongst its people, preaching, teaching and caring. The teaching of Aidan, wrote Bede, *'won the hearts of everyone because he taught what he and his followers lived out... he loved to give away to the poor the gifts he received from the rich.'*

It is as Abbess of Whitby, however, that Hilda's great life work was achieved. Double monasteries flourished more in Britain than anywhere else in Europe, always under an abbess. The largest were effectively small towns, where learning, prayer, production from the land and commerce supported great numbers of people. Here Hilda encouraged the cowherd Caedmon, with no scriptural training, to sing the glories of God's word in songs that have lasted since. And it was to Whitby that King Oswy asked Hilda to call the prelates of Britain to settle the question of Easter, at the great Synod of 664.

Wilfred, Bishop of Northumbria, (who had returned to France to be consecrated by three bishops, and carried on a throne by nine priests, because he thought the Irish traditions of Northumbria insufficiently dignified), carried the day for Rome's interpretation of the date of Easter, and hence of all matters 'Church.' All monks now had, for example, to shave off their prized long black hair with the new Roman tonsure. In the end, the Ionan monks all left, leaving Hilda and the other clerics trained by Aidan managing different traditions with quiet wisdom and authority, with their hearts still true to the natural, intuitive Celtic Christianity, but with less and less influence against the authoritarian Roman model.

## Hilda of Whitby - A spirituality for now Ray Simpson (continued)

Simpson likens many of the present predicaments faced by the Church to those Hilda saw; Vatican 2 called for a plurality of cultures within the church, requiring all Christians to respect and honour one another, as in the Gospel. My brief synopsis here of necessity presents the arguments in shorthand, but there can be no doubt but that many in the Church today, and those who have left it, may look to 'holy mother' Hilda for encouragement and support in their work for a more inclusive, caring and less authoritarian understanding of Christ's teachings than often emanates from Rome.

The multiplicity of Saxon and Celtic names are not necessarily easy for the everyday reader to follow, and I would have welcomed some form of map to help me understand the relevant geography, but as an introduction to a former Christianity that resonates deeply with many of us today, this is a wonderful starting-point for a deeper journey into Celtic Christianity, *a spirituality for now*, as Simpson shows.

Mary R

A paragraph has been deleted here because it is for CWO members.

You can join CWO by emailing [membership@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk](mailto:membership@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk)

Or download a joining form here

<http://www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk/contact.htm>

**"In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength." (Isaiah 30.15 NRSV)**

## **A celebration of ministries- the work of the Li Tim-Oi Foundation and meeting Bishop Libby Lane**

There are not many things that would get me on a very VERY early train to London on a Saturday, but the chance to be part of celebrating the work of the Florence Li Tim-Oi foundation and hear Bishop Libby Lane preach made it all worthwhile. The Li Tim-Oi Foundation is named for the first Anglican woman priest, a very brave woman, Florence Li Tim-Oi. Ordained in 1944 by the Bishop of Hong Kong in difficult circumstances as the Second World War raged, she celebrated communion for communities that would have otherwise been denied the sacraments. After the war, when her ordination was discovered, she had to renounce her orders and it was many years before she would minister as a priest again. Thankfully, after many years waiting, she was allowed to take up priestly orders again.

The fund named in her memory provides training for women in ministry in the two-thirds world. Some women train as priests and ministers, others may train in conflict resolution, social work and community development. Many of these women have suffered hardships to have their ministries recognised. Some may walk miles and miles every week to minister to their congregations, others may go months without receiving their stipends, or be ostracised for not being submissive, or by refusing marriage. The Li Tim-Oi foundation 21<sup>st</sup> birthday gathering celebrated the ministries of the 399 women who have been trained in the last 21 years, and as we met in Southwark Cathedral, the 400<sup>th</sup> woman was just being accepted for training. Dr Elaine Storkey who had recently returned from a trip with Tear Fund spoke of the work these women were doing to care for women suffering domestic violence and those who had been forced into marriage.

Bishop Libby's sermon highlighted the importance of looking at the named women in the Bible and seeing what they say to us. She reminded us that Florence Li Tim-Oi had been given her name because of Florence Nightingale, another woman whose vocation was rebuffed. She reminded us of women like Sarah, who trusted in God's promises even when it involved waiting a long time, Ruth and Naomi who said "yes" to risk, and Esther, who had a clear head and heart. She stressed how important it is to honour the legacy of these women by establishing the kingdom of God where we live. The quote that has really stuck with me is:

"In our weaknesses, we are instruments of God. Through our clay we risk everything when we offer ourselves to Christ".

For me this sums up what we are as the priesthood or all believers, vulnerable yet useful in the eyes of God. Bishop Libby certainly spoke from the experience of being the first woman to crack a pretty big glass ceiling!  
If you want to know more, see the website [www.ittakesonewoman.org](http://www.ittakesonewoman.org) for the Li Tim-Oi foundation and for link to the service.

Katharine S

**Book review - Fifty years' pursuit of renewal in the Church - Ianthe Pratt** published by Catholics for a Changing Church, I Carysfort House, 14 West Halkin St, London SW1X 8JS.

I picked up this slim monograph with its low-cost production values, and found that I couldn't put it down. I hadn't expected to find such solidarity, clear thinking and iconoclasm. It is a joy to follow the pilgrimage of Ianthe Pratt, who has had no qualms about keeping the faith of Vatican 2 alive, and who has practised the intellectual honesty and courage in the face of official repression to do so.

Now in her mid-eighties, Ianthe enjoyed a wide-thinking intellectual upbringing by her poet parents; her mother, for example, had been surrounded by writers such as Rabindranath Tagore. A spell at school was cut short by ill-health, but provided Ianthe with the opportunity to "exercise my contrariness", challenging her teachers' Protestant versions of history through the independent thinking she had learned around her parents' dinner-table, and which she subsequently polished at Oxford. This ingrained intellectualism produced a person keenly critical of the patriarchal, racial and class discrimination of the Catholic Church. In their 34 years of happy marriage, she and Oliver, her husband, worked as equals, living out the inclusive ideals of Christ's teachings, and promoting them in the face of "increasing infallibility creep and the Vatican desire to control everything," as well as the "appalling chicanery" it uses to maintain dominance.

The book is a roll-call of rebels, revolutionaries and results. She recounts the freedoms increasingly brought about by the theologians and priests of the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties who frequented the Pratts' domestic liturgies and garden Eucharists, such as the Dominicans' Laurence Bright, and Herbert McCabe, the editor of *New Blackfriars*, who was suspended for pointing out that 'the Church is quite plainly corrupt.' Following her accounts of, for example, Oliver's role in the shenanigans of *Humanae Vitae*, their leadership in the one and only National Pastoral Congress in Liverpool in 1980, the *Lumen Religious Book Trust* that she still runs, and its subsidiary, *Christian Women's Resource Centre*, it is clear that their family life has been a living crucible for change in the English Catholic Church.

Reaching the founding of CWO in 1993, she neatly encapsulates both our historical background and founding spiritualities, such as Joan Chittister's call for the Church to stop climbing patriarchal pyramids and start forming circles, with hearts of flesh, not stone. Her style is laconic, witty, concise and readable.

As a newcomer to CWO, this has provided me with both essential background understanding, and more importantly, a measure of courage. I am occasionally frustrated by the perceived need for the Catholic feminist cause to counter patriarchal dominance with correspondingly abstract, intellectual and reasoned language. What a delight, then, to find Ianthe pursuing an arrogant cleric even into the sacristy, to demand answers of him, and staggering the then Bishop Vincent Nichols with her accusation, "All you seem to care about is did Christ have a penis or not." This is my sort of Catholic. You go, girl! Respect!

Mary R

## European Network – Church on the Move

### Invitation to the 25th Annual Conference of the European Network Rome 19-20 November 2015

**CASA LA SALLE**, Roma , Via Aurelia, 472 , 00165 Roma, Italy  
Phone: +39.06.666.98.488, Fax: +39.06.660.003.84  
E-Mail: [backoffice@casalasalle.it](mailto:backoffice@casalasalle.it), Web: [www.casalasalle.com](http://www.casalasalle.com)

You are kindly invited to attend the 25th Annual Conference of the European Network Church on the Move that will take place at CasaLaSalle in Rome.

This year the Annual Conference will be shorter than in the other years because it is articulated with the gathering of the delegates of the project Council 50 from the 20th to the 22nd of November that will be the study day of our annual conference. You are kindly invited to attend also this event after the end of the Annual Conference. This is why the attached registration form includes this possibility

You will therefore find attached the draft program of our Annual Conference, the draft program of the Council 50 event with its list of workshops and the registration form.

Furthermore, the project Council 50 will be articulated with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Pact of Catacombs that will take place at the same venue from the 11th to the 17th of November. You are also kindly invited to attend this event. Details will be given later.

More details Simon [brydenbrook@talk21.com](mailto:brydenbrook@talk21.com)



I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way (s)he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

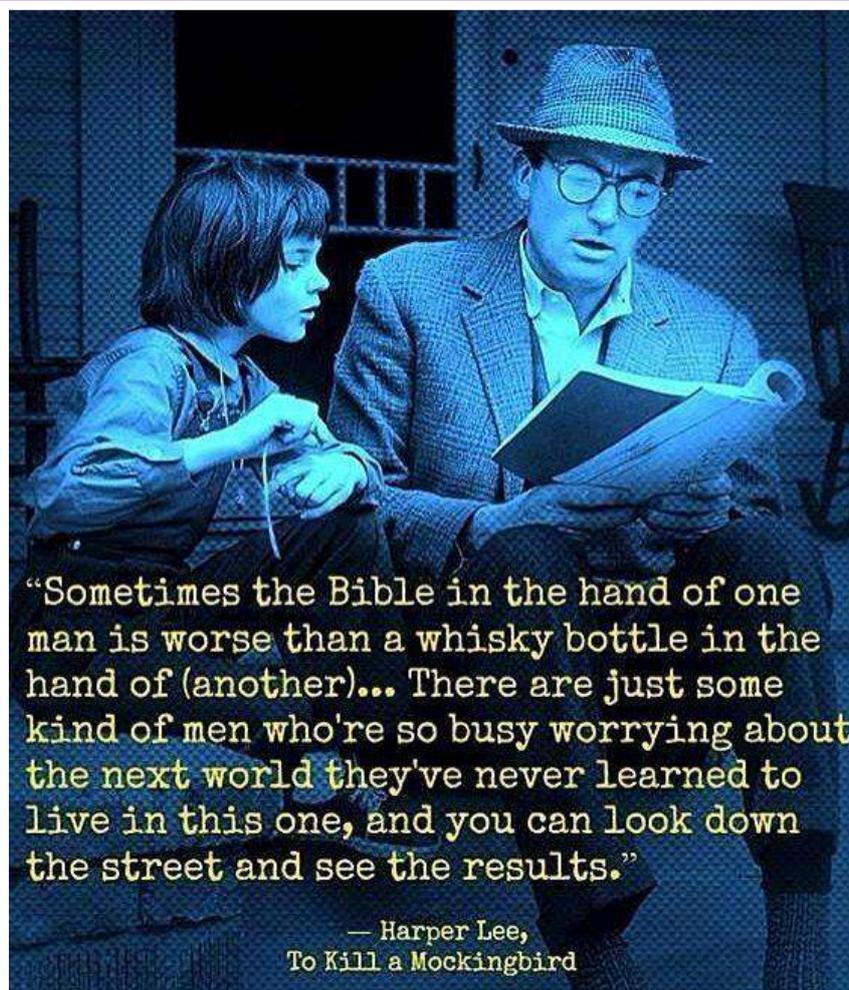
Maya Angelou died 28 May 2014

## Prayer for Earthquake Victims in Nepal

Compassionate Lord, we pray for those  
Who have been devastated by the earthquake in Nepal.  
We remember those who lost their lives:  
Have mercy on their souls, and may they rest in peace.  
We hold in our hearts and in our prayers  
All who are injured and are suffering;  
Families whose homes have been lost,  
Whose communities are broken, livelihoods gone.  
Have mercy on them, and bring them aid and consolation.  
Move us to see you in the “least of these,”  
To offer support, medical care and food,  
To help rebuild houses and lives.  
May we mourn with our global family  
And realize they are all our brothers and sisters,  
Needing us in this dark time,  
Needing us to be the hope and the visible love of God.



Jane Deren



“Sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whisky bottle in the hand of (another)... There are just some kind of men who're so busy worrying about the next world they've never learned to live in this one, and you can look down the street and see the results.”

— Harper Lee,  
To Kill a Mockingbird

## Links

"We have to reform our way of thinking about hierarchy."

<http://ncronline.org/books/2014/06/book-tells-nebraskas-catholic-horror-story>

What's turning women off attending Church

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2015/05/27/why-more-young-women-than-ever-are-skipping-church/?postshare=501432808235189>

The hold the Catholic Church had on the people of Ireland is long gone.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/marriage-referendum/diarmuid-martin-catholic-church-needs-reality-check-1.2223872>

In God's own county history is made

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gavin-harding-uks-first-mayor-with-a-learning-disability-appointed-in-selby-10268437.html>

Federal appeals court has ordered the immediate release of an 85-year-old nun and two fellow Catholic peace activists who vandalized a uranium storage bunker

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-anti-nuclear-nun-ordered-freed-20150515-story.html>

"I remembered that it was really a faith based in love"

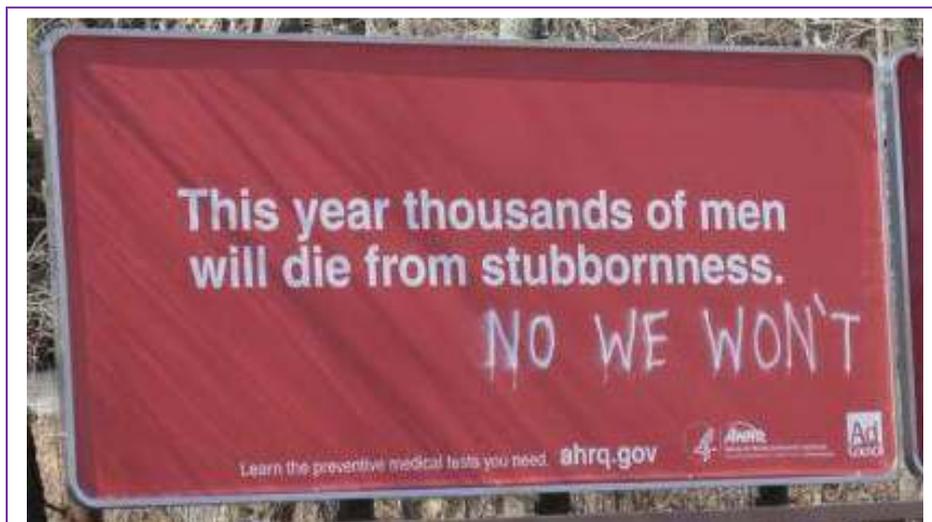
<http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/bisexual-actress-maria-bello-explains-why-she-has-reclaimed-being-catholic050515>

"Women cast as offshoots, even afterthoughts"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/06/opinion/frank-bruni-catholicism-undervalues-women.html?&hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=c-column-top-span-region&region=c-column-top-span-region&WT.nav=c-column-top-span-region&r=1>

Another bastion has fallen to a Catholic Woman!!

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/irish-academic-to-be-first-woman-to-lead-oxford-university-1.2229497>



## **CWO Saints**

Mary MacKillop  
Ruth Norton  
John Hatfield  
Celia Greenwood  
Michael O’Gara  
Sheila Houlihan  
Mary Daly  
Estelle White  
Pat McCarron  
Marcella Althaus-Reid  
Astrid Klemz  
Jean Palmer  
Elizabeth Rendall  
Maureen Brown  
Tissa Balasuriya  
Jack Sutcliffe  
Pat Regini  
Mary Ann Schoettly  
Pam Skelton  
Robert Kaggwa

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

[www.wijngaardsinstitute.org](http://www.wijngaardsinstitute.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](http://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://lgcm.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/Easter2015/>

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