

CWO
Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church
E-news October 2015 issue 84

Welcome to the edited October issue of the e-news. Editor Pat Brown. Some names have been abbreviated and personal email addresses removed. For previous issues of enews, please visit <http://www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk/news.htm> Please send items for November e-news by 21 November. For further information about anything in this e-news where contact details are not given - info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

There's quite a lot in this month's edition so are some pointers.

P 2-3 **Sue and Lala wrote to Cardinal Vincent** and received a reply. Both letters are reproduced here without comment! They are drafting a second letter in response to his and would welcome **your** suggestions. info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

P 4-6 **The Synod on the Family** and Archbishop Durocher's intervention

P 7 – 9 **Pope Francis US visit** and our responses

P 10 – 12 **WOW Conference**

P 21 – **Catholic Women Speak** book launch

Many other interesting items on other pages. There are a lot of links!

On a personal level, the WOW conference was the most amazing experience. We made our presence felt during the Pope's visit and it's always good to get out in the street with a banner! Marianne and Tom Tucker very kindly put up me and Alicja (Baranowska) on the days after the conference when we were in Philadelphia. This typified the warmth of the inspiring people at the conference.

Luca Badini, Miriam Duignan, Katharine Salmon and I shared some of our thoughts about the Conference at our Annual Gathering on 3 October.

Three resolutions were formed during the afternoon

1. Need for more direct action
2. Need for publicity to influence 'mainstream' Catholic thinking
3. We must demand to be heard.

Next year's Annual Gathering will be on 1 October in York. We always go for the closest Saturday to St Thérèse but next year it will be on the day itself.

St Bede's Pastoral Centre, Blossom Street, York YO24 1AQ (five minutes from York Station) More details in due course but **please note the date now!**

Letter from CWO members to Cardinal Vincent Nichols

We, as members of Catholic Women's Ordination, want to wish you well for the forthcoming Synod of Bishops in Rome to discuss the issues of Family and Marriage.

As you may know, there are serious concerns among many RC women about the institutional Church's sexist attitude to women. It seems that the Church still sees the role of mother as the only choice for most women. Yet there are many women who fulfil a maternal role non-biologically. Also, it has been shown that if women are better educated and delay the onset of childbearing, there is a benefit to the whole of a society. Many women today also fulfil several roles within the family, with valuable careers running alongside that of wife and mother.

We in CWO are particularly concerned with the plight of women and girls in Africa who are all too frequently forced into child marriage. We hope the Church will make a strong stand against any form of child marriage. We would also wish the Church to denounce powerfully any form of violence against women and girls, be it spiritual, psychological or physical.

The concerns of CWO reach far beyond the call for women's ordination. We ask very urgently that women's voices (especially those on the margins) be given a chance to be heard through leadership and ministry. The Church cannot apparently currently see its way to ordaining women as priests, although we are teachers, pastors and healers. Christ healed the woman with the issue of blood against all the cultural conventions of the time and the Samaritan woman at the well became a great evangelist. We hope the Church may be brave enough to support those on the margins, especially women, as Jesus did which is clear throughout the gospels.

This weekend in Philadelphia, Women's Ordination Worldwide is hosting a conference on Gender, Gospel and Global Justice. One of its major aims is thus to promote justice for the poor of the world, many of whom are women. We hope and pray that the Synod of Bishops will have, as one of their main concerns when discussing the Family and Marriage, the situation of the poorest in the world.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Williamson
Lala Winkley
Members of Catholic Women's Ordination

Vincent Nichols reply dated 23 September

Thank you for your letter of 21 September with regard to the Extraordinary Synod. Thank you for expressing your concerns particularly for the poor and for women trapped in poverty.

In the last two years, we have made great efforts to counter human trafficking. We have just opened a house, in London, to receive, assist and support women rescued from slavery.

This venture is costly so I am always seeking support. If you, or Catholic Women's Ordination would like to help financially I would be pleased to receive your contribution.

Thank you again for writing to me.

With every good wish

Yours sincerely

Vincent Nichols

Depressing reading!

I just wanted to say how depressed I was at mass this morning to hear the dreadful second reading about the husband having dominance over the wife and how she is bound to obey him! The husband is enjoined to *love* his wife so that's ok then? I looked at my husband and said: 'forget it!'

Why does the church approve such readings when there are any number of more attractive and relevant ones from which to choose? It is so offensive to women! Do they think about our dignity at all? The only woman generally praised by the church of course is Our Lady who sets an impossible example of perfect, saintly virgin motherhood and was of course obedient at all times!

Claire J 23 August

After the AGM, there was a lovely surprise to celebrate my 70th birthday- cake and fizz, plus a most generous gift. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed.

Pat Brown

WOW Response On Women Deacons Discussed at Vatican Synod 6 October 2015

Rome, Italy: Recent statements made by Canadian Archbishop Paul-Andre Durocher of Gatineau, Quebec during the Vatican's Synod on the Family suggests an emergence of a discussion about including women in the ordained permanent diaconate. We applaud Archbishop Durocher for raising the suggestion to the exclusively male-voting body, and furthermore, for highlighting the relationship between the "degradation" of women in Church and society and violence against women around the world.

We call on our Church leaders to state clearly that "domination" over women is never acceptable, and until women are empowered as equals our Church perpetuates an inequality contrary to the Gospel. We pray that women's voices will not only be heard in forthcoming discussions, but given an equal vote.

Women's Ordination Worldwide (WOW) supports the restoration of the sacramentally ordained diaconate for women in its true form. Including women in the diaconate would not be something new. Instead the Church would be returning to its ancient roots when both women and men were deacons. While the women's diaconate continues in some parts of the Eastern Church even until today, we also now know that in the West, it was suppressed only on account of the prejudice against women.

Though restoration of an ordained women's diaconate would not alone be a satisfactory progression to including women in all realms of Church leadership, governance, and sacramental ministry - only ordination to the priesthood and episcopacy could begin to accomplish this - WOW supports restoration of the diaconate. It is long overdue. The so-called changing 'reasons' that have been used to try to justify the exclusion of women from ordained ministry rest squarely on the shoulders of prejudice alone.

The hierarchy deprives people of the pastors God calls for them and of the leadership gifts found in women who would serve the Church; upholding this discrimination, as though it were the will of God, is simply indefensible.

If you do not have women
it is just like getting into a field
and playing with half of the
squad sitting on the bench.

Phumzike Mlambo-Ngcuka,
executive director UN Women



Letter to Archbishop Paul Andre Durocher from WOW leadership circle

On behalf of Women's Ordination Worldwide (WOW), we would like to extend our gratitude for your recent intervention calling for the Synod of Bishops to "show the world the equal dignity of women and men in the Church."

As you stated, the World Health Organization statistics show that 1 in 3 women will experience domestic violence. You suggested this Synod "clearly states that a proper interpretation of Scripture can never justify male domination over women." We agree: until women are empowered as equals, our Church perpetuates an inequality contrary to the Gospel. Our Church fails to uphold the dignity and equality of women.

WOW supports the restoration of the sacramentally ordained diaconate for women in its true form. As you are aware, including women in the diaconate would not be something new. Scholarship has shown that women were ordained to the diaconate in the Church in the West for 1200 years and remain to the present day in the East. Women deacons are named ministers in the Bible, and manuscripts of medieval texts used by bishops include prayers and rituals for ordaining women to the diaconate.

Though the restoration of an ordained women's diaconate would not alone be a satisfactory progression to including women in all realms of Church leadership, governance, and sacramental ministry – only ordination to the priesthood and episcopacy could begin to accomplish this – WOW supports restoration of the diaconate and those who courageously call for this discussion.

Benedictine Abbot Jeremias Schröder commented on your intervention: "I was impressed. That was very courageous. It seemed a convincing suggestion. I can imagine taking it up."

The Vatican's Synod on the Family has made it very obvious that our Church desperately needs to "take up" the issue of institutional exclusion of women at every level of governance and sacramental ministry.

You have given the Synod a great gift by bringing the topic of women to the table. We pray that our Church will soon be open to receiving the gifts of women, many of whom suffer the injustice of a having a calling to ordained ministry which cannot even be tested.

We thank you and pray that your courage will inspire others to revisit the history of their tradition and welcome women as full equals in Christ.

Faithfully,

Pat Brown, Miriam Duignan, Marilyn Hatton, Kate McElwee



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MEN ARE PHOTOSHOPPED
OUT OF VATICAN SYNOD ON THE FAMILY
womensordinationworldwide.org

mematic.net

Young women's votes
needed at Synod
<http://americamagazine.org/content/all-things/where-were-voting-women-synod-0>

Mary Hunt writes about
the synod
<http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/synod-system-stacks-deck-against-women>

Keep the faith
<http://www.cruxnow.com/faith/2015/10/14/ignoring-the-synod-keeping-the-faith/>

Gerard Maloney
bemoans absence of
women at synod on
family!
<http://www.cruxnow.com/faith/2015/10/14/ignoring-the-synod-keeping-the-faith/>

Mary McAleese sums up
the synod
<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/synod-on-family-produced-nothing-new-says-mcaleese-1.2406765>



Response by WOC (Women's ordination Conference) to Pope Francis' statement at Congress

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, as Pope Francis concludes his visit to the nation's capital, the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC) is encouraged by the Pontiff's message of fearless dialogue, commitment to building bridges, and respect for conscience.

"In his message to Congress, Pope Francis honored the United States' long history of working toward liberty and social justice," said Erin Saiz Hanna, Co-Director of WOC. "We pray his dedication to the country's pursuit of happiness and commitment to dialogue extends to Catholic women who are longing for equal treatment in our Church."

A recent study by the Shriver Report found that 88% of Catholics in the United States support the ordination of women as priests. A recent Pew Research study found that on every social issue, U.S. Catholics are more progressive than the average American. Over the weekend 500 delegates from 19 countries gathered in Philadelphia for a Women's Ordination Worldwide conference, calling for equality in the Catholic Church.

In his address, Pope Francis stated "A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty, when it fosters a culture which enables people to "dream" of full rights for all their brothers and sisters."

"WOC believes that like our country, our Church can also be considered truly great when all of its members can enjoy full equality and opportunity to share their gifts. We urge His Holiness to build bridges toward full equality for women in the Catholic Church and society," said Kate McElwee, Co-Director of WOC.

"We are ready to dialogue fearlessly," concluded Hanna.



Washington outside St Matthew's Cathedral

We stood outside the cathedral with banners. Much press interest



Women priests, Roy Bourgeois and others lay down in the road

They were moved but allowed to stand in a prime position so Pope Francis definitely saw them and their banners!



Philadelphia was like a war zone.

A “comedy map” posted on facebook – read the key



Although this was nice
– a tree of prayers
outside the Cathedral
in Philadelphia



Third WOW Conference 2015

Gender, Gospel, and Global Justice

18 – 20 September 2015

Marriott Hotel
Philadelphia PA

All we can say is WOW!

Here are some links for a flavour. There will be more in the fullness of time.

Photos here <https://woc.smugmug.com/>

Click on first two squares

More here

<http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Flashback-Friday--WOW-2015-photos---new-videos-.html?soid=1101596312859&aid=LxLf4P6-Wyc>

Stills and talking heads

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=5m20s&v=9M9LVKtJz-s&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

Sheila Peiffer on the Survivors panel at WOW

<http://www.cruxnow.com/faith/2015/10/14/ignoring-the-synod-keeping-the-faith/>

See also about Mari Steed (one of panel members)

<http://www.irishcentral.com/roots/The-Magdalene-daughter-.html>

Florence Taylor writes in Christian Today about the WOW movement

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/pope.francis.says.its.a.closed.book.but.some.catholic.women.are.getting.ordained.anyway/65057.htm>

Watch part of the Sunday liturgy here

<http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/womens-ordination-conference-ends-song-dance-eucharist>

More information at <http://womensordinationworldwide.org/>

and on their Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/WomensOrdinationWorldwide>

Thank you to all CWO members who gave so generously to help women travel to Philadelphia. Virginia Saldhana from India ([http://www.fides.org/en/news/25954-ASIA Women in Asia amidst violence and poverty find their strength in the Eucharist#.VjPUGbfhBD8](http://www.fides.org/en/news/25954-ASIA-Women-in-Asia-amidst-violence-and-poverty-find-their-strength-in-the-Eucharist#.VjPUGbfhBD8)) and Sister Christine Fernando from Sri Lanka (http://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2000/08/21/priests-nuns-join-farmers-fast-for-their-rights&post_id=16689) are just two of the wonderful women who you helped. There were 8 in total.

We Made Headlines. Lots of them.

NCR: [Catholic activists raise ordination issue as pope's U.S. trip approaches](#)

Reasonably Catholic: [Kate McElwee on Grab Bag episode](#)

NCR: [Women ordination advocates multi-media appeal](#)

NCR: [Women's ordination conference opens in Philadelphia](#)

Irish Times: [Question Time: What can be done to address the shortage of Catholic priests?](#)

America Magazine: [California Bishop Voices Support for the Ordination of Women](#)

Christian Today: [Pope Francis says it's a closed book, but some Catholic women are getting ordained anyway](#)

The Advertiser: [Why won't the Catholic Church ordain female priests?](#)

ABC: [Conference Shines Spotlight on Women Ordained As Priests](#)

Philly.com: [Women priests call for a more inclusive church](#)

NCR: [Mary Hunt: 10 reasons to celebrate 40 years of women's ordination](#)

NPR: [In Defiance Of The Church, Some Catholic Women Seek Priesthood](#)

NCR: [Theresa Kane's message to Pope Francis: eradicate scandal of gender inequality](#)

PA NJ Radio: [Should women be ordained in the Church?](#)

NCR: [Four women honored with Theresa Kane vision and courage awards](#)

New York Magazine: [What Activist Nuns Really Think about the Pope](#)

NCR: [Theologian: Gender insights challenge priesthood theology](#)

Newsworks: [Meeting in Philly, group continues push for ordaining women as Catholic priests](#)

NCR: [Male priests offer support for women's ordination](#)

NCR: [Theologian: Ordination ideas have changed over time](#)

NCR: [Priest sanctioned after appearing at women's ordination gathering](#)

NCR: [Women's ordination: WOW delivers its message to the world](#)

NCR: [Women's ordination conference ends in song, dance, Eucharist](#)

NCR: [As meeting ends, ordination advocates claim renewed purpose](#)

CNS: [Protesters urge pope to approve women's ordination](#)

Refinery 29: [Meet The Women Priests Who Are Defying The Catholic Church](#)

Newsweek: [7 Arrested After Group Seeking Ordination of Female Priests Protests Pope Francis in Washington](#)

LA Times: [Women as Roman Catholic priests? Opinions are divided - and fiery](#)

LA Times: [To Pope Francis: What about women?](#)

NCR: [A church that dreams of rights for women can be great, too](#)

Bustle: [Pope Francis Says Women Are The Future Of The Church, So Where Are They?](#)

CNN: [Not Everyone is a Francis Fan](#)

Democracy Now!: [Female Priests Stage Die-In Outside D.C. Church Urging Pope Francis to Open Priesthood to Women](#)

WUSA: [Protesters issued citations during papal visit to DC](#)

Guardian: [Protesters urge pope to ordain female priests and stop legitimizing sexism](#)

Wochit News: [Protesters Urge Pope to Ordain Female priests \(VIDEO\)](#)

DCist: [Protesters Advocating For Women Priests Removed Ahead Of Papal Visit](#)

Huffington Post: [Protesting Priests Urge Pope To End Thousands Of Years Of Misogyny](#)

NBC: [Renegade Female Priests Hold Peaceful Protest Amid Pope Francis Visit](#)

Mercy Sister Theresa Kane's letter to Pope Francis which she read out at the WOW conference

Pope Francis, although your formal titles are Holy Father and Supreme Pontiff, I take this sacred opportunity to greet you as a brother, a friend, a collaborator in our service to and with God and with others.

I have no doubt your many years in Argentina engaged with the many economically poor people has been a powerful source of strength and grace. Those experiences prepared you to be noted for our deep pastoral spirit, your desire for collegiality and your vision that all of us in the Catholic community are called to be holy -- to be saints!

I am a Catholic woman, a woman religious, a Sister of Mercy, born and raised in the United States, New York City. Through both education and life experiences, I have come to a conviction that anything less than all women in the Catholic community having the possibility of being in all ministries of our church is not only a deficit, not only wrong; it is a scandal to our church and to our world.

For a long time I have believed the Catholic community might serve as a role model and an instrument of reform for governments and religions throughout our world that allow and even legislate that women are less than fully human; that women are objects to be exploited; that it is acceptable and even at times believed natural to violate, to beat and abuse women physically, psychologically and sexually.

For the Catholic church to be agents of God's message to our 21st century, we need to have a vision that the degradation of women worldwide, in all countries of our planet, is the primary, root issue of social and religious violence and not of God.

We as a Catholic community are called to proclaim fully and lovingly to our entire planet community that such scandalous beliefs and actions of gender inequality are forms and expressions of idolatry. When idolatry is present God is not in our midst. We need to bring a loving, caring, creative God into the center of our everyday lives by eradicating all forms of gender inequality. Only then will God as Companion, as Mother, Father, as our Divine Source of grace be present in our world.

I urge you, Pope Francis, to listen to the women of our church and world who cry out in anguish as women throughout the ages have done. Only radical (at its roots) gender equality in church and in society will begin to diminish the violence, hatred and other forms of inhumanity in our world today.

Call for photos for the new archive

Many of you will be aware that CWO's archive collection has been transferred from The Women's Library in the East End (which has now sadly closed) to a new women's archive at the LSE. Myra and I have visited and met with the Archive and Special Collections Manager on a couple of occasions and look forward to a fruitful working relationship with her in the future. The move will probably have the advantage of making our collection easier to visit but the disadvantage of it now being a small fish in a much bigger pool!

I am conscious that no photos have gone into the archive for some time, mainly because of the move and uncertainty surrounding it, and I am keen to remedy this situation. I would therefore be grateful to receive photos that members and supporters think would be relevant to the archive and which they would be happy to submit to it. I particularly want photos that cover the past five years or so but if anyone has significant earlier photos that they are aware we do not have I would love to see them.

All photos will now be stored in digital format and I would aim to select and collate them for the archive over the next few months (though of course this process will be ongoing in future). Please could you provide dates (as far as possible) and contexts?

I think there must be some excellent photos out there languishing on computers and memory sticks, for example from Pope Benedict's visit to the UK, and of course there are those from this year's Vocation's Day gatherings and the recent WOW Conference. I look forward to seeing them!

Please send to: - info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Anna M.

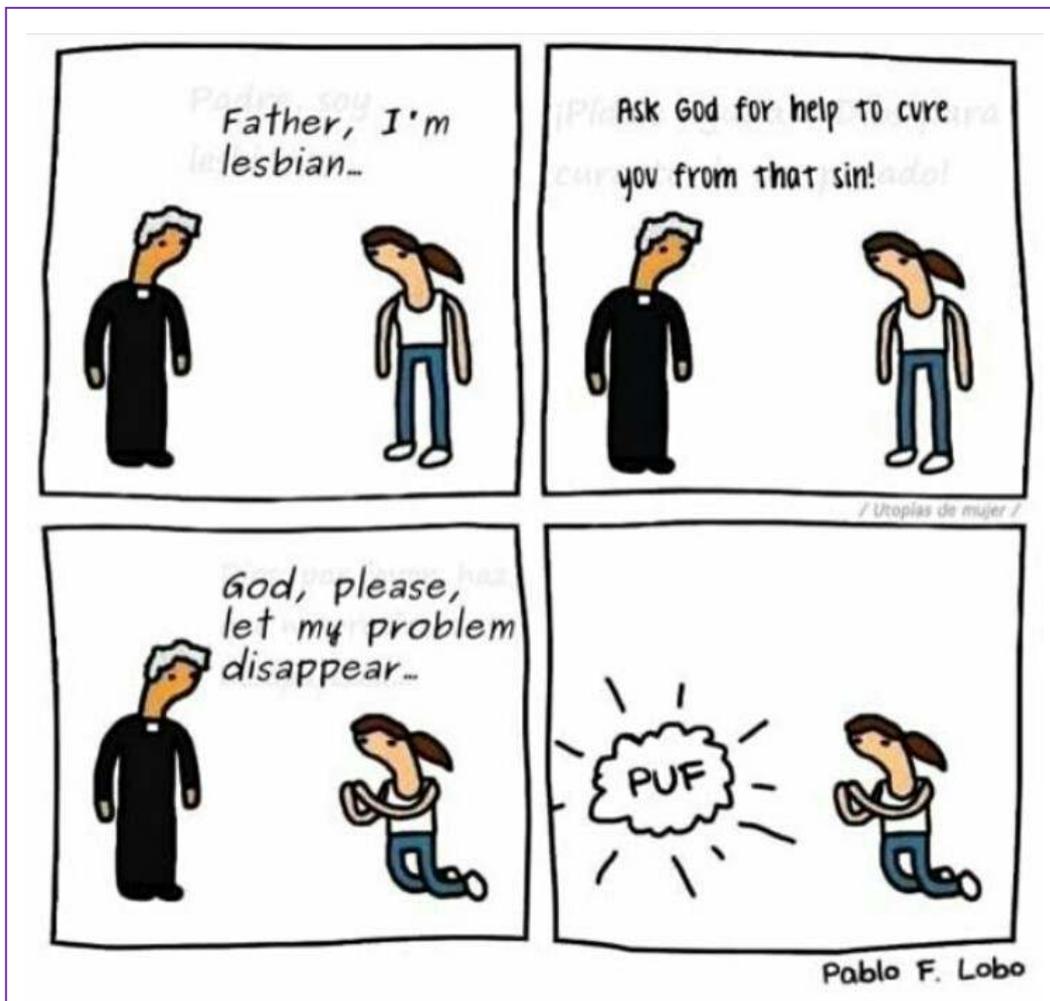




Ameenah Gurib-Fakim , a muslim and first female president of Mauritius
Read more here <http://www.aquila-style.com/focus-points/mightymuslimah/theres-a-new-female-president-in-africa-and-shes-muslim/103413/>

It's now time to recognize that the world was made by men and women and, though for women their contribution was constrained by political social and religious factors that did not exist in the same way for men, that does not alter the value of their contribution or diminish their impact. It is vital for the future of society that we have a proper understanding of the past because once we accept that the history of women has no end point and is still in the process of being written then we can be proud, we can be vigilant and we can be united in ensuring that the next revolution is the age of equality

Dr Amanda Foreman The Ascent of Woman



Noddfa Retreat

CWO held its annual retreat at Noddfa in North Wales at the end of July. As always we had a wonderful welcome, tasty vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, lovely gardens to walk in and the beach, sea and mountains near at hand.

We offered sessions for our weekend retreat which were optional to attend. This year we studied some of the lesser known women in the bible, reflected on the spirituality of ageing, walked around the garden with a meditation based on trees and scripture, heard about a woman peace activist, visited a local church and had some free time.

We also visited Shalom, a house that sleeps 8-10 people in the corner of the Noddfa grounds. This has recently been redecorated, has a large refurbished kitchen/dining area, two sitting rooms, several bedrooms on the ground floor and a bathroom recently adapted with a walk in shower: particularly useful for people with a disability and a small, new car park right by its door. We discussed perhaps using it for a CWO Retreat next year (24-26 June) and made a provisional booking before all the dates went. Shalom has the advantages of a self-contained place for a retreat with breakfast, day time and evening gatherings; main meals in the main house at lunch and supper and ready access to the gardens: the best of both worlds.

We will be discussing it at Nat Cog but will probably have a minimum number policy. (If there are more than 10 people we can have additional rooms in the house.) Please express provisional interest as soon as possible and bookings will be taken on a first come, first served basis.

info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Pippa Bonner

"I am sending you out like lambs among wolves... First say 'Peace' ..." (Luke 10. 1-12)

Rev. Peter Dodson's thought for the month

Dorothy Day: Crying Out for Justice

We must cry out against injustice or by our silence consent to it. If we keep silent, the very stones of the street will cry out. --Dorothy Day [1]

I was delighted to hear Pope Francis mention the American Catholics Thomas Merton (whom I introduced earlier this year) and Dorothy Day in his address to the United States Congress. The Catholic Church and our world in general have sadly and unfairly ignored women. With Sister Joan Chittister, I hope that Pope Francis, "someone so devoted to the cause of the poor also realizes that women are the poorest of the poor everywhere. And do something loud, bold and continuous to call attention to the diminished status, security and economic equality of women in order to change that." [2]

A common criticism of female activists in particular is that they are too "aggressive" (even the nonviolent ones). Studies show that in performance reviews, words like "bossy" and "abrasive" are applied with regularity to women, but not to their male colleagues. Thankfully, the lack of support has not deterred women from speaking up loudly for all marginalized and suffering people. When the Vatican reprimanded nuns in the U.S. for their "radical feminist themes" and focus on social services, the "Nuns on the Bus" didn't slow down but in fact increased their efforts.

We need prophetic voices to speak--and perhaps yell--truth to power. When criticized for "ranting and screaming," Liberian activist Leymah Gbowee responds, "The reason why I rant is because I am a voice for many women that cannot speak out to heads of state, UN officials, and those that influence systems of oppression. And so I rant. And I will not stop ranting until my mission of equality of all girls is achieved."

Dorothy Day (1897-1980) is one of these women who will not be silenced. She writes in her diary, "I too complain ceaselessly in my heart and in my words too. My very life is a protest. Against government, for instance." [3] Read Day's "harsh," necessary words: "We need to change the system. We need to overthrow, not the government, as the authorities are always accusing the Communists 'of conspiring to teach [us] to do,' but this rotten, decadent, putrid industrial capitalist system which breeds such suffering in the whited sepulcher of New York." [4] I know you are wincing, but should you be?

Day was hardly a poster-child for sainthood, although she's now being considered for exactly that--and by the church of New York! Many recall Day saying, "Don't call me a saint; I don't want to be dismissed that easily." In her youth she was a Marxist and agnostic. She had an abortion. She was an anarchist and a zealous pacifist when it was especially unpopular. Perhaps her own pain and mistakes became the source of her deep compassion. Day writes, "I cannot worry much about your sins and miseries when I have so many of my own. I can only love you all, poor fellow travelers, fellow sufferers. . . . My prayer from day to day is that God will so enlarge my heart that I will see you all, and live with you all, in His love." [5]

Dorothy Day: Crying Out for Justice (continued)

Day, who founded the Catholic Worker Movement, focused both on the needs of individual people and also reforming the entire social system. In that, I would find her a more complete role model than even Mother Teresa. She worked to meet short-term goals (such as the hungry person in front of her); and she worked for long-range structural change, too. Day's humility and patience continue to inspire me:

We can do much to change the face of the earth, in that I have hope and faith. But these pains and sufferings are the price we have to pay. Can we change men in a night or a day? Can we give them as much as three months or even a year? A child is forming in the mother's womb for nine long months, and it seems so long. But to make a man in the time of our present disorder with all the world convulsed with hatred and strife and selfishness, that is a lifetime's work and then too often it is not accomplished.

Even the best of human love is filled with self-seeking. To work to increase our love for God and for our fellow man (and the two must go hand in hand), this is a lifetime job. We are never going to be finished.

Love and ever more love is the only solution to every problem that comes up. If we love each other enough, we will bear with each other's faults and burdens. If we love enough, we are going to light that fire in the hearts of others. And it is love that will burn out the sins and hatreds that sadden us. It is love that will make us want to do great things for each other. No sacrifice and no suffering will then seem too much. [6]

When we work for the love of God and others, then it is not work at all. When we suffer for justice for God's little ones, it is not suffering at all.

Richard Rohr 28 October

[1] Dorothy Day, edited by Robert Ellsberg, *Dorothy Day, Selected Writings: By Little and by Little* (Orbis Books: 1992), 273.

[2] Joan Chittister in an interview with Sean Salai, 10 September, 2014, America Magazine, americamagazine.org/content/all-things/faith-and-justice-14-questions-sister-joan-chittister-osb.

[3] Dorothy Day, edited by Robert Ellsberg, *The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day* (Marquette University Press: 2008), 8 August 1974.

[4] Dorothy Day, "On Pilgrimage," *Catholic Worker*, September 1956.

[5] Day, *Dorothy Day, Selected Writings*, 88.

[6] *Ibid.*, 87-88.

Pope Francis Greatest Weakness: - Women!

I have been full of admiration for Pope Francis during his U.S. trip. I thought his addresses to Congress, the United Nations and the U.S. bishops were excellent. But on the way home in the plane, during the press briefing, he addressed the issue of women's ordination.

This is how it was reported by Joshua McElwee of the NCR:

“Pope Francis has again forcefully rejected the possibility of female priests in the Catholic church, saying simply that his predecessor Pope John Paul II decided “that cannot be done.”

In response to a question during a press conference on his flight back to Rome late Sunday/early Monday after an historic ten-day trip to Cuba and the U.S., Francis said that while women may “have the capacity” to be priests John Paul clearly made a negative decision in that regard.

“Women priests — that cannot be done,” the pontiff said bluntly. “Pope St. John Paul II — after long, long discussions, long reflections — said it clearly.”

“Not because women do not have the capacity,” said Francis.

“But, look, in the church, women are more important than men because the church is woman; it is ‘la’ church, not ‘il’ church,” he said, speaking in Italian and referring to the gendered article used before the Italian word for church.

“The Church is the bride of Jesus Christ,” said the pope. “And the Madonna is more important than popes and bishops and priests.”

“I must recognize we are a bit late in an elaboration of the theology of women,” he continued. “We have to move ahead with that theology. Yes, that’s true.”

Francis’ answer on the papal plane is the latest in a series of somewhat controversial and frequently unclear remarks he has made about the role of women in the church.

The pope has previously said that the door to ordination for women was “closed” and has spoken of needing to develop a special theology of women.

He has also said he has stayed away from appointing women to high-level positions in the Vatican bureaucracy for fear of promoting some sort of “functionalism” of women’s roles.

Pope Francis greatest weakness – Women! (continued)

One recent book of 43 essays by Catholic women said the pope's call for a theology of women "reduce[s] women to objects of study, a separate category of reflection." "We resist ... any suggestion that the Church needs a theology of 'Woman' or 'womanhood,'" wrote the authors of *Catholic Women Speak: Bringing Our Gifts to the Table*

"Rather than a deeper theology of women, we say that the Church needs a deeper theology of the human — a theological anthropology that can be developed only by the full inclusion of women in the process of theological reflection informed by the experiential realities of daily life," they said."

What is striking about the way he addresses this topic is the lack of clarity, the blatant contradictions, the general confusion of what he has to say. So much in contrast to the simplicity and clarity he normally shows. He clearly feels bound by the decision of his predecessor. If that is the case, and if he does not feel he can make any move in this area, it would be much better if he did not address the topic at all. Waffling on about how important women are, and how the Madonna is greater than any man, is meaningless and unhelpful.

The lack of equality for women in the Church is an issue that will not, and cannot, go away. It will continue to fester, and drive more and more women out of the Church.

Tony Flannery 28 September blog

"Popey/Schmopey! Wot we need is more wimmin!" – The Virgin Mary (alleged)

Comment on Facebook 27 September

Thanks to Mike Pearson

A letter to Pope Francis from Sister Joan Chittester OSB

Your visit to the United States is important to us all. We have watched you make the papacy a model of pastoral listening. You have become for us a powerful reminder of the Jesus who walked among the crowds listening to them, loving them—healing them.

Your commitment to poverty and mercy, to the lives of the poor and the spiritual suffering of many—however secure they may feel materially—gives us new hope in the integrity and holiness of the Church itself. A church that is more about sin than the suffering of those who bear the burdens of the world is a puny church, indeed. In the face of the Jesus who consorted with the most wounded, the most outcast of society, all the time judging only the judges, your insistence is the lesson of a lifetime for the self-righteous and the professionally religious. It is with this awareness that we raise two issues here:

The first is the dire poverty to which you draw our attention ceaselessly. You refuse to allow us to forget the inhumanity of the barrios everywhere, the homeless on bank steps in our own society, the overworked, the underpaid, the enslaved, the migrant, the vulnerable and those invisible to the mighty of this era. You make the world see what we have forgotten. You call us to do more, to do something, to provide the jobs, the food, the homes, the education, the voice, the visibility that bring dignity, decency and full development.

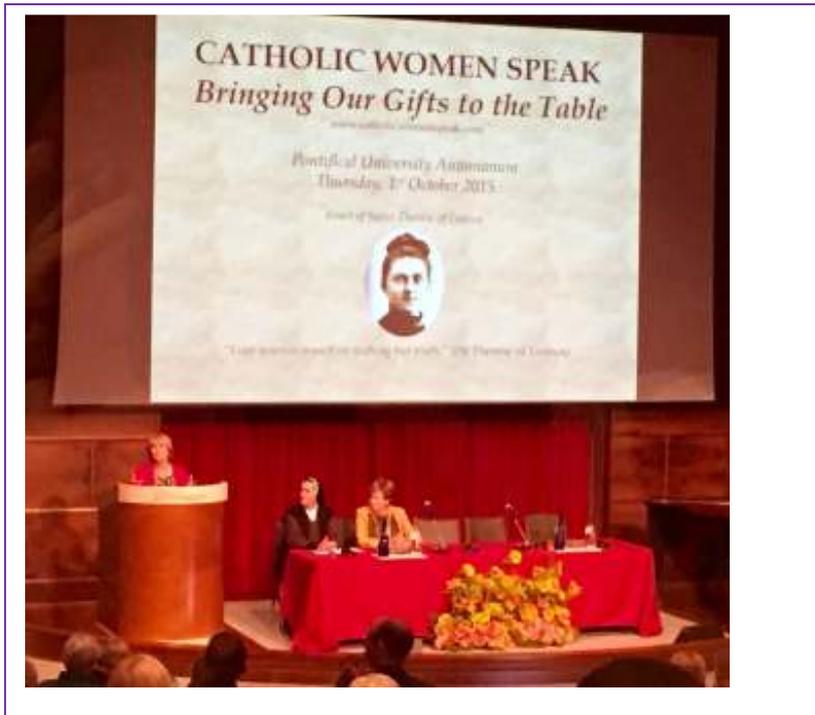
But there is a second issue lurking under the first that you yourself may need to give new and serious attention to as well. The truth is that women are the poorest of the poor. Men have paid jobs; few women in the world do. Men have clear civil, legal and religious rights in marriage; few women in the world do. Men take education for granted; few women in the world can expect the same. Men are allowed positions of power and authority outside the home; few women in the world can hope for the same. Men have the right to ownership and property; most of the women of the world are denied these things by law, by custom, by religious tradition. Women are owned, beaten, raped and enslaved regularly simply because they are female. And worst of all, perhaps, they are ignored—rejected—as full human beings, as genuine disciples, by their churches, including our own. It is impossible, Holy Father, to be serious about doing anything for the poor and at the same time do little or nothing for women.

I implore you to do for the women of the world and the church what Jesus did for Mary who bore him, for the women of Jerusalem who made his ministry possible, for Mary of Bethany and Martha to whom he taught theology, for the Samaritan Woman who was the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, for Mary of Magdala who is called the Apostle to the Apostles, and for the deaconesses and leaders of the house churches of the early church.

Until then, Holy Father, nothing can really change for their hungry children and their inhuman living conditions.

We're glad you are here to speak to these things. We trust you to change them, starting with the Church itself.

Book Launch Rome 1 October Catholic Women Speak: Bringing Our Gifts to the Table



We know Cardinal Vincent Nichols has his copy thanks to Colette Joyce!



Links

Happy 40th Birthday WOC (Women's ordination Conference)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=alw9vJ3lAG8>

Maureen Dowd writes in NY Times about the hazards of having such a "cool" Pope

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/27/opinion/sunday/maureen-dowd-francis-the-perfect-19th-century-pope.html?nytmobile=0&r=0>

Tina Beattie asks what about women in LA Times

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-beattie-pope-francis-women-20150925-story.html>

Jamie Manson writes in NCR

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/grace-margins/church-dreams-rights-women-can-be-great-too#.VgXQmO-2YxE.twitter>

Sister Simone Campbell - We need Frances and Francis!

<http://time.com/4054354/sister-simone-campbell-women-priests/?xid=tcoshare>

Marie Collins, member of Pope's sexual abuse panel, criticises his response to Chile scandal

<http://www.cruxnow.com/church/2015/10/05/member-of-popes-abuse-panels-criticizes-his-response-to-chile-scandal/>

Thoughts from Bishop Peter Doyle

<http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/synod-bishop-expresses-concern-prelates-lack-understanding-family>

Pope Francis apologises for scandals

<http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-publicly-apologizes-unspecified-scandals-caused-church-recently>

Article about new biography of Sr Joan Chittester

<http://www.cruxnow.com/faith/2015/10/27/sister-joan-chittester-the-maverick-nun-shares-her-secret-life/>

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://womensordinationworldwide.org/>

Women’s ordination worldwide CWO is member

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

US organisation supporting women’s ordination

www.wijngaardsinstitute.org

All previous housetop websites can be reached via this address

<http://82.70.116.125/index.html>

Women Word Spirit

<http://womenandthechurch.org/>

Campaign for women’s equality in Church of England

<http://wearechurchireland.ie/>

Concerned Irish Catholics committed to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of Vatican II and the theological spirit developed from it. Affiliated to International Movement We are Church (IMWAC)

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

A global network seeking renewal of the Church

<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

<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://christianfeministnetwork.com/>

Christian Feminist Network - exploring faith and feminism

<http://www.spirituschristi.org>

A truly inclusive Catholic Church