

CWO e-news February 2011 issue 34

Welcome to issue 34 of the e-news. This is the edited version which means that surnames and email addresses are removed. Please contact info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk to enquire about anything in this e-news. Editor Pat Brown. Please visit CWO's website www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk News and previous issues can be seen there.

Please send items for February e-news by 15 March. Also contact me for further information about anything in this e-news.

Congratulations to our members and friends who challenged Christopher Jamison on Valentine's Day when he gave a talk on vocations. They attempted to massacre his arguments! Thanks to Cathy W. and Janet R. for co-coordinating the event.

Gareth M. and Peter C. have also raised some points which I hope will get you reaching for your computer keyboards!

European theologians call for end to priestly celibacy

You may have heard this news. The theologians also welcomed women's ordination, same sex couples and divorced and remarried couples.

Read the article in the Catholic Herald here

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2011/02/07/european-theologians-call-for-end-to-priestly-celibacy/>

And while we're on the subject.....

As a young priest Benedict XVI 'called for the Church to investigate priestly celibacy'

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2011/01/28/as-a-young-priest-benedict-xvi-called-for-the-church-to-investigate-priestly-celibacy/>

Will Women Priests Change the Church?

A new documentary "Pink Smoke Over the Vatican" starts the conversation. Link to article by Mary Hunt

http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/atheologies/4137/will_women_priests_change_the_church/

Valentine's Day Massacre?

When Christopher Jamison arrived to speak about vocations on 14 February at Sacred Heart Church, Harefield Road, Stoke, he was greeted by 10 of our members with a pertinent question, "Where are our women priests?"

It seems that although he thinks there are problems with the Catholic Church Institution, he feels that the ordination of women is not the answer. He supports the official line on this matter though made no attempt to justify this support. Our response was that if there are problems with the institution, it would be good to see some step being taken to address this - instead, new translations are imposed which are not in the language people speak, and not in inclusive language.

He claimed that the age of women being ordained in Church of England was high compared with the male equivalent. (He seemed quite focused on people's ages, with implicit suggestion that asking for women's ordination is an older person's view, and younger women are not interested.) He wanted women to have more influence in the Catholic Church and envisaged these women as being nuns. He has never met a Catholic woman at vocations events who wanted to be ordained. We all know Catholic women, some of them young, who want to be ordained. Such women would be unlikely to attend a vocations event in the present scenario. Some Catholic women have become priests in other churches.

The question was raised of ordaining women as deacons and priests, emphasising that it is not easy to argue for women's ordination within the church, since publicity is often blocked. It is hard for women to have influence if not part of ordained ministry.

He seemed out of touch, referring to MOW. He didn't know about CWO (though he does now!) but it is unlikely that he has looked at womenpriests.org. He said he was happy to discuss women's ordination question informally.



We respect the courage of our members to act on their Christian convictions. Although we may not arrive at a common application of the Gospel to any particular issue, we affirm and honor one another's personal integrity and decisions of conscience in the search for what is just.

Loretto sisters (sent in by Pippa B)

Is whoever drafted the Pope's message for this year's "World Day of Prayer for Vocations" gently paving the way for new attitudes?

CWO member Gareth M believes it is. He writes: -

The message is written in completely non-sexist language. There is talk of "vocations to the ministerial priesthood" with no use of any gender-specific terms except in relation to Jesus, the first disciples and Mary.

It doesn't mean the RC Church is going to change its position tomorrow, but I think CWO should avoid always criticising the official church hierarchy - just occasionally there are things like this which we could welcome.

I feel there is much here we could use in praying for vocations by women and men who are called to the priestly ministry.

The Pope's message follows: -

Vatican City, 10 February 2011 (vis) - "Proposing Vocations in the Local Church" is the theme of the Pope's Message for the forth-eighth World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which is to be celebrated on 15 May, fourth Sunday of Easter.

Extracts of the English-language version of the document are given below: -

"The work of carefully encouraging and supporting vocations finds a radiant source of inspiration in those places in the Gospel where Jesus calls His disciples to follow Him and trains them with love and care. ...

"Before calling them, Jesus spent the night alone in prayer, listening to the will of the Father. ... Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life are first and foremost the fruit of constant contact with the living God and insistent prayer lifted up to the 'Lord of the harvest', whether in parish communities, in Christian families or in groups specifically devoted to prayer for vocations.

"At the beginning of His public life, the Lord called some fishermen on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'. ... It is a challenging and uplifting invitation that Jesus addresses to those to whom He says: 'Follow me!'. He invites them to become His friends, to listen attentively to His word and to live with Him. He teaches them complete commitment to God and to the extension of His kingdom in accordance with the law of the Gospel. ... He invites them to leave behind their own narrow agenda and their notions of self-fulfillment in order to immerse themselves in another will, the will of God, and to be guided by it. He gives them an experience of fraternity, one born of that total openness to God which becomes the hallmark of the community of Jesus".

Engaging with our local bishop

At our recent visitation at St Teresa's Parish, Charlbury, Oxon, we planned to tackle Bishop William Kenney on vocations and our lack of priests, as well as clerical abuse and the desire to leave it without discussion which some of us do not share. I brought up the first topic, and was surprised by how much support I got from the very conservative congregation. Everyone was despondent about clerical abuse, but the apologies from the Bishop did not change their mood. Then, to my delight, an octogenarian (I'm just a septuagenarian) mentioned that his four daughters might have produced one priest among them - in a faith-filled Church!

We could not get any commitment from the bishop to raise our concerns up the line.

I'm telling you all this because I believe the Catholic laity can be united around one issue at present, the lack of priests, and that it brings them into a frame of mind where they challenge the status quo and discover other things about the power of their faith which they had not suspected.

I'm an old pilgrim of course so my ambition would be to get a pilgrimage going from all points in Europe to converge on Rome, carrying a petition which is augmented parish by parish as each walks (or buses) across Europe, asking the Pope to make the ordination of more candidates possible. "We need more good priests" is the message.

Couldn't all of us unite on this one theme?

Stand back from our radicalism for a second, and we discover people who although very conservative indeed, are still desperate for change. We were all won over at some point, and I believe the others will follow us. But given a common slogan and cause, could we not win everyone over by being cunning as the serpent in our insistence on our needs?

Peter C

*The test of tolerance comes when we are in a majority.
The test of courage comes when we are in a minority.*

Ralph W. Sockman

Letters of support over the Ordinariate issue

I wanted to write to thank those who appeared at the recent reception and 'ordination' of three former Anglican bishops. It was an incredibly brave thing to do and I applaud you for having the courage to appear on our behalf, and also to maintain your composure throughout, which must have taken a Herculean effort. I think that the self-congratulatory stuff going on within the church during the service would have made my gorge rise. I notice that three black clad nuns were received at the same time; poor deluded creatures, I wonder what will happen to them.

I'm glad to see that Peter Stanford stood up to the whole affair so honestly, and I was really thrilled to read his piece in the Observer which so adeptly pulled apart this travesty. One can only wonder what the Archbishop of Canterbury thinks ... A take over indeed. There's a frank oddness in the magisterium's thinking about all this, and so much of it makes no sense at all. I wonder what's going on behind the scenes. Thanks again so much, and also well done for keeping your cool. Grace under fire, for sure.

Liz C

The events mentioned in your last e-news are tragic, but it should be remembered that there are many Roman Catholics who have gone the other way, as myself and my colleague Sr. Isabel have done. Romans for many years, we found that the only church trying to put Vatican II into practice is the Anglican Communion.

As priests in the church of God with real posts of responsibility, even though that aspect of our roles is not what matters, we find that quite a few of our colleagues who are now priested both men and women were originally Roman. What seems to be happening is that Rome now becomes the home of misogynists, and the Anglican Communion the home of those who wish to remain faithful to the Gospel of Christ. So sad, but true.

However, lastly, in my experience those who flounce over to Rome, and do so for all the wrong reasons, will eventually find it very hard to sustain. When the last influx of clergy and laity to Rome took place when women Priests were first re-introduced into the Anglican Communion, very many found they had to return to their Anglican roots because Rome proved to be more demanding of discipline than these misogynists were used to. Wait and watch. The kind of behaviour described by Myra etc. will have its come-uppance. Be strong, as St. Francis urged those of us who follow his rule, rejoice when people treat you badly as you would if they treated you well. In the end all will be well.

Revd Sister Ann-Marie S

Well done all of you on your banners and balloons!

So many slings and arrows outside the cathedral with the 'ordination' of the Anglican men! I pray for you and thank you for bearing the brunt of these difficult times. Abuse of Authority indeed!

To celebrate 40 years (of an up and down marriage) we will go to Rome at the end of May. In that splendid city, in that splendid basilica, I will pray and light a candle for you all and for women who struggle against abuse so we may all take part.

God Bless, *E. E. (Lancashire)*

*We believe in one God
The Eternal Power of Life and Goodness
The Maker of Space and Time
Who was and is and is to come.*

*We believe in God our Maker
Whose love fires the sun
Whose word made the world
Whose law is good.*

*We believe in Jesus Christ
Child of God and Mary's child
Born into Palestine
A prophet of Israel.
Born in a stable.
A victim of Empire.
Born to a woman
and made in her image.
Born of the Spirit
The icon of God.
Born as a saviour
of sinners and victims.
Born as a healer of wounds and diseases.
Born as a teacher of wisdom and justice.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit.
The intimacy of God with creation.
The power of God against death
Whose breath lives in all life
Whose peace gathers the church
Whose love sends God's people on
mission.*

*We believe in one God our maker and
helper
A trinity of Beauty and Holiness
A community of joy.
To this holy and awesome God
We give praise.
Now and forever.*

Amen

More messages following the ordinations of the Anglican Bishops

My heart goes out to you all. I cannot believe the church has gone in for this nonsense, which is about the inferiority of women.

Teresa V.

Having spent the weekend in episodic fits of irritation at the psychodrama of the Ordinariate eccentrics, it has been cheering reading of the similar feelings of others. I'm sad but not surprised to hear that many of you were publicly abused during your vigil at Westminster. At least it puts you in some distinguished company over the last two thousand years!

Diarmaid M



Women in Tahrir Square

Events @ the kitchen table

catering for community conversation

7pm Fri 18 February	Singalong a sound of music @ the kitchen table	£8 including supper
Sat 5 March	Kitchen table has a stall @ East Ham Spring Event at Langdon School	
Thurs 10 March	Quiz night @ the kitchen table	£6.50 including supper
Fri 1 April	Lets have some East End fun @ the kitchen table!	£8
7pm Mon 11 April	How do we mobilise <i>our</i> big society @ the kitchen table? A conversation led by Paul Regan	£6.50 including supper
Friday April 29 th	Royal Wedding Party @ the kitchen table	TBA

If you have any ideas for conversation events, community nights or anything else that we could do @ the kitchen table please come along to our

Kitchen Cabinet
Thursday afternoons at 2.30pm
Everyone welcome!

For more information about these events & to book please call or email
anne@thekitchentable.eu / 0208 586 7979

Above All, Trust in the Slow Work of God

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

Yet it is the law of all progress that is made by passing through some stages of instability

And that may take a very long time

And so I think it is with you.

Your ideas mature gradually. Let them grow.

Let them shape themselves without undue haste.

Do not try to force them on as though you could be today what time -- that is to say, grace -- and circumstances acting on your own good will, will make you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new Spirit gradually forming in you will be.

Give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you,

And accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

Above all, trust in the slow work of God, our loving vine-dresser.

Amen.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (sent in by Myra P)

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

www.womenwordspirit.org

Women Word Spirit
(formerly Catholic Women's Network)

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

Group for rescinding the Act of Synod

<http://womenandthechurch.org/>
campaign group for women's equality in the Church of England

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

National Catholic Reporter –
Joan Chittester is a regular contributor

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

Lesbian and Gay Christians

www.womenpriests.org.

You can sign up for their regular newsletter

www.spirituschristi.org

An inclusive Catholic Church where all are welcome

www.womensordination.org

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

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. To keep our faces toward change and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate is strength undefeatable.

Helen Keller