

CWO
Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church
E-news August 2012 issue 51

Welcome to the edited issue 51 of the 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 September e-news by 15 September. Also contact me for further information about anything in this e-news where contact details are not given info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Please join CWO via our website or contact address above for more details.

A meeting is being planned for Leeds to take forward our ideas on Vatican II. This will be on 27 October in Leeds 1.00pm to 5.00pm at Mill Hill Church (2 mins from Leeds station). Speaker Father Kevin Kelly. **All welcome**

A Call to Action

One of the priests writes

"After our letter to the Tablet on June 2nd, 'A call to action', we had a meeting for priests and deacons at which seventy or so came along and we have now arranged for a meeting at Heythrop College, University of London, Kensington Square, London W8 5HN on Wednesday, October 10th. It will probably start at about midday.

The meeting is for everyone, people and priests, to discuss the issues raised in our letter and to try to find a way forward. Our hope is that we shall be a voice through which our bishops will be able to hear our fears and our hopes for the future of our church.

Please come along if you are able and encourage others to do so. Fuller details will be available nearer the date but we wanted you to know of the meeting so that you might get the date in your diary."

Please contact info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk for details nearer the time if you want to attend. This is our chance to support this group but it's important not to use this meeting to advance our own agenda.

Dangerous Women Creed

Dear God, please make us dangerous women.

*May we be women who acknowledge our power to change, and grow,
and be radically alive for God.*

May we be healers of wounds and righters of wrongs.

*May we weep with those who weep and speak for those who cannot
speak for themselves.*

May we cherish children, embrace the elderly, and empower the poor.

May we pray deeply and teach wisely.

May we be strong and gentle leaders.

May we sing songs of joy and talk down fear.

*May we never hesitate to let passion push us, conviction compel us,
and righteous anger energize us.*

May we strike fear into all that is unjust and evil in the world.

May we dismantle abusive systems and silence lies with truth.

May we shine like stars in a darkened generation.

May we overflow with goodness in the name of God and by the power of Jesus.

And in that name and by that power, may we change the world.

Dear God, please make us dangerous women. Amen.

Lynne Hybels

Links

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) will continue dialogue but not compromise mission

<http://ncronline.org/news/women-religious/lcwr-will-continue-dialogue-not-compromise-mission>

and LCWR president Sister Pat Farrell responds to Vatican criticism

<http://www.npr.org/2012/07/17/156858223/an-american-nun-responds-to-vatican-condemnation>

Catholic Church facing 'Eucharistic famine' due to shortage of priests

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/08/03/1224321371424.html>

Teen critic takes on Vatican over 'war on women'

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/teen-critic-takes-vatican-over-war-women>

Please follow this blog.

You may even wish to attend Mass and discover for yourself what the Ordinariate is all about.

http://www.tunbridgeweills-ordinariate.com/blog/?page_id=2

Fr Ed Tomlinson, a Catholic priest of the Ordinariate, serving the village of Pembury in the diocese of Southwark, the TW ordinariate group and chaplain to the local hospital and hospice

A Pure, High Note of Anguish - for the anniversary of 9/11

I want to do something to help right now. But I can't give blood (my hematocrit always runs too low), and I'm too far away to give anybody shelter or a drink of water. I can only give words. My verbal hemoglobin never seems to wane, so words are what I'll offer up in this time that asks of us the best citizenship we've ever mustered. I don't mean to say I have a cure. Answers to the main questions of the day--Where was that fourth plane headed? How did they get knives through security?--I don't know any of that. I have some answers, but only to the questions nobody is asking right now but my 5-year old. Why did all those people die when they didn't do anything wrong? Will it happen to me? Is this the worst thing that's ever happened? Who were those children cheering that they showed for just a minute, and why were they glad? Please, will this ever, ever happen to me?

There are so many answers, and none: It is desperately painful to see people die without having done anything to deserve it, and yet this is how lives end nearly always. We get old or we don't, we get cancer, we starve, we are battered, we get on a plane thinking we're going home but never make it. There are blessings and wonders and horrific bad luck and no guarantees. We like to pretend life is different from that, more like a game we can actually win with the right strategy, but it isn't. And, yes, it's the worst thing that's happened, but only this week. Two years ago, an earthquake in Turkey killed 17,000 people in a day, babies and mothers and businessmen, and not one of them did a thing to cause it. The November before that, a hurricane hit Honduras and Nicaragua and killed even more, buried whole villages and erased family lines and even now, people wake up there empty-handed. Which end of the world shall we talk about? Sixty years ago, Japanese airplanes bombed Navy boys who were sleeping on ships in gentle Pacific waters. Three and a half years later, American planes bombed a plaza in Japan where men and women were going to work, where schoolchildren were playing, and more humans died at once than anyone thought possible. Seventy thousand in a minute. Imagine. Then twice that many more, slowly, from the inside.

There are no worst days, it seems. Ten years ago, early on a January morning, bombs rained down from the sky and caused great buildings in the city of Baghdad to fall down--hotels, hospitals, palaces, buildings with mothers and soldiers inside--and here in the place I want to love best, I had to watch people cheering about it. In Baghdad, survivors shook their fists at the sky and said the word "evil." When many lives are lost all at once, people gather together and say words like "heinous" and "honor" and "revenge," presuming to make this awful moment stand apart somehow from the ways people die a little each day from sickness or hunger. They raise up their compatriots' lives to a sacred place--we do this, all of us who are human--thinking our own citizens to be more worthy of grief and less willingly risked than lives on other soil.

A Pure, High Note of Anguish (continued)

But broken hearts are not mended in this ceremony, because, really, every life that ends is utterly its own event--and also in some way it's the same as all others, a light going out that ached to burn longer. Even if you never had the chance to love the light that's gone, you miss it. You should. You bear this world and everything that's wrong with it by holding life still precious, each time, and starting over.

And those children dancing in the street? That is the hardest question. We would rather discuss trails of evidence and whom to stamp out, even the size and shape of the cage we might put ourselves in to stay safe, than to mention the fact that our nation is not universally beloved; we are also despised. And not just by "The Terrorist," that lone, deranged non-man in a bad photograph whose opinion we can clearly dismiss, but by ordinary people in many lands. Even by little boys--whole towns full of them it looked like--jumping for joy in school shoes and pilled woolen sweaters.

There are a hundred ways to be a good citizen, and one of them is to look finally at the things we don't want to see. In a week of terrifying events, here is one awful, true thing that hasn't much been mentioned: Some people believe our country needed to learn how to hurt in this new way. This is such a large lesson, so hatefully, wrongfully taught, but many people before us have learned honest truths from wrongful deaths. It still may be within our capacity of mercy to say this much is true: We didn't really understand how it felt when citizens were buried alive in Turkey or Nicaragua or Hiroshima. Or that night in Baghdad. And we haven't cared enough for the particular brothers and mothers taken down a limb or a life at a time, for such a span of years that those little, briefly jubilant boys have grown up with twisted hearts. How could we keep raining down bombs and selling weapons, if we had? How can our president still use that word "attack" so casually, like a move in a checker game, now that we have awakened to see that word in our own newspapers, used like this: Attack on America.

Surely, the whole world grieves for us right now. And surely it also hopes we might have learned, from the taste of our own blood, that every war is both won and lost, and that loss is a pure, high note of anguish like a mother singing to any empty bed. The mortal citizens of a planet are praying right now that we will bear in mind, better than ever before, that no kind of bomb ever built will extinguish hatred.

"Will this happen to me?" is the wrong question, I'm sad to say. It always was.

Barbara Kingsolver

Published on Sunday, September 23, 2001 by the Los Angeles Times

Breathe Forth Your Spirit
(A prayer for LCWR)

*Most blessed Breath of God's own
life,
breathed forth from depth
of death's dark night, descend
again
in fiery tongues
of prophesy, equality, unity.*

*Most gentle Breath of God's own
power,
give us gifts of fearless speech
to preach your Jesus-hour
of all inclusive love,
that heals our wounded
hearts of stone.*

*Most fiery Breath of God's own
truth,
blow upon your Church again,*

*Hover over troubled waters,
and recreate this trackless waste
in your own image;
male and female
female and male.*

*(in God's own image we are
made).*

Amen.

Christine Schenk CSJ

Coventry Deanery Justice and Peace
St Osburg's Church Hall
Barras Lane,
Coventry,
CV1 4AQ

Saturday 15th September 10am - 4pm

reading the signs of the times

developing our vision of being a community of
faith in the 21st century

a workshop with Fr Diarmuid O'Murchu MSC

celebrating the year of faith and fiftieth year of
the second vatican council

10am welcome and coffee
bring lunch to share
you would also be welcome for half of
day,

12.30pm lunch - voluntary contribution

from rail station: buses 8,8A,9 or 9A to stop
after large Ikea store, just past Hill St
go along Hill St, across bridge (or subway) to
St Osburg's Church CV1 4AQ

For details eg parking,
contact coventryjustice@gmail.com
07963 800281

all welcome

**The adjournment of the amendment about women bishops, presented to
the General Synod in July, now to be debated in November**

CWO has sent letters of support for women bishops to Archbishop Rowan Williams,
Archbishop John Sentamu and Ross Gillson, Administrative Secretary to the House of
Bishops. We have received replies from both Archbishops. They will be brought to
the AGM on 29 September.

Midlands Group Event

Five members and supporters in the Midlands attended a public afternoon event at Oscott College in Birmingham where the relic of the heart of St John-Marie Vianney was present. It was a pleasant occasion where people visited the chapel and marquees and wandered round on an afternoon which was sunny apart from occasional rain.

We offered prayer cards to those we met, explaining that we wished to pray for discernment in the acceptance of vocations from a wider group, including women and married people. We found no negative reactions, only one elderly lady who felt she was too old to change now. The prayer noted the long perseverance of St John Vianney in his conviction that he should be a priest, and his struggles in the face of difficulties of missed education, rejection of military service and health problems. This seemed a good model for those who cannot have their vocations tested and have waited long years or have been rejected.

Cathy W

CWO Saints

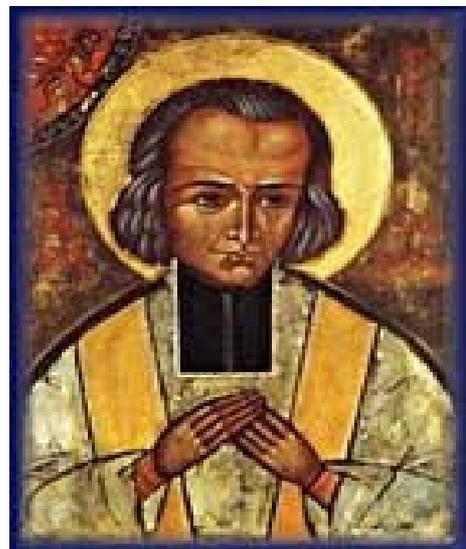
Mary MacKillop	Marcella Althaus-Reid
Ruth Norton	Astrid Klemz
John Hatfield	Jean Palmer
Celia Greenwood	Elizabeth Rendall
Michael O'Gara	Maureen Brown
Sheila Houlihan	
Mary Daly	
Estelle White	
Pat McGarron	<i>Pray for us</i>

Prayer for vocations

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people and set them alight with the fire of your love. You strengthened St John Vianney to persist in your call for him to serve your people. In the face of great obstacles, he overcame a missed education, rejected military service and, with unfailing faith in his calling, became a priest and a saint.

Let all those you call to be a priest also persevere to overcome the difficulties and wait in joyful hope as we learn to welcome the ministry of women and men, married and single, old and young. Inspire us with love for those who are different from us so that in Christ there will be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.

Supported by the prayers of St John Vianney, may we serve each other and become your new creation.



How Survivors of Abuse Relate to God - The Authentic Spirituality of the Annihilated Soul

Grappling with theological issues raised by abuse, this book argues that the Church should be challenged, and ministered to, by survivors. Paying careful attention to her interviews with Christian women survivors, Shooter finds that through painful experiences of transformation they have surprisingly become potential agents of transformation for others. Shooter brings the survivors' narratives into dialogue with the story of Job and with medieval mystic Marguerite Porete's spirituality of 'annihilation'. Culminating in an engagement with contemporary feminist theology concerning power and powerlessness, there emerges a set of principles for authentic community spirituality which crosses boundaries with God, supports appropriate human boundaries and, crucially, listens attentively. Appealing to Church leaders, students, practitioners and practical theologians, this book offers a creative and ethical theological enquiry as well as some spiritual anchor points for survivors.

Susan Shooter
Diocese of Truro

Llysfasi Spirituality Workshop

Noddfa Spirituality Centre
Conwy Old Road, Penmaenmawr, Conwy, LL34 6YF

Monthly weekends from January to April 2013 and a week in May in 2013. The format for this workshop will be that it takes place over *four weekends and a week in May*. Each weekend starts on a Friday, arrival time from 4pm until Sunday after lunch, departure time 2pm. The week starts on Friday 10 May, arrivals from 4pm – and finishes on Sunday 19 May in the morning at 10am.

Dates are as follows

January 11 – 13, February 1 – 3, March 8 – 10, April 19 -21, May 10 – 19

Please note that it is very important for applicants to be able to commit to all of the dates

The total cost is £1,100 per person, which is inclusive of accommodation, resources and team fees. Places for the Workshop are limited to 24. Early bird price of £1,000 for bookings made before 15 September.

A non-returnable deposit of £50 is required with each application. The balance may be paid in full when participants have been accepted, by 15 Sept for the early bird price, or by payment in full by 20 Dec 2012.

In cases of real need, a few bursaries are available. It is suggested that applicants explore potential funding from whatever church, group or employer may be in support of this formation.

Applicants need to apply well in advance of the last payment date, 20 December. A possible address is

The Administrator
Society of retreat conductors
c/o St Mary Woolnoth Vestry
Lombard Street
London
EC3V 9AN

Some thoughts about the York Mystery Plays, 2012

Yesterday I went to the York Mystery Plays for the first time. They have been played at least since 1399. I'll always remember some of what I saw and the thoughts that I had during and afterwards. The cycle of 33 plays were set in front of the ruined St Mary's Abbey. (Those of you who came to the first AGM in York will have walked through the Abbey Gardens.) The cast of 250 were mostly "volunteers" :drawn from the people of York, all ages and different ethnic groups. The professionals were sprinkled among them and only the actors playing God and the Devil had biographies in the programme. The cast wore 1940s dress and the Roman occupation was portrayed as a German/Nazi occupation with some references to the 20th century treatment of the Jews.

"Bold and creative gender-liberated casting across the whole moral spectrum is an important 2012 innovation. Many ordinary individuals peopling the story are played by women as women, including angels, devils, soldiers, Magi, thieves, apostles and politicians. This contrasts with the significant under-representation of female characters in the medieval text, reflecting their largely obscured roles in the Bible. This contemporary artistic decision reflects the range of women's public roles in contemporary society, also referencing post Second World War awareness of women's necessary and important recent involvement in public life." (Prof. Gweno Williams, York St. John University, from the programme notes.

The production lasted over 3 hours, so here are some key points which made it significant for me, a member of CWO, as we campaign for inclusive ministry in the RC Church.

- A majority of the Apostles around Jesus at the Last Supper table were women (not including Mary, Jesus' mother and Mary Magdalene who were also there.) The Apostles also included a woman who is a wheelchair user and a black man.
- The "good" thief and the centurion were both women.
- The angels were all women and Gabriel was a black woman who had a tremendous, gentle, charismatic presence throughout the plays. (At the Annunciation she gave Mary the swaddled baby and wrapped it into her apron which formed a swollen abdomen, so that when she came to giving birth alone, while Joseph was finding accommodation, though she had a painful labour she unwrapped her apron and produced the baby. I thought this was a pragmatic touch that would appeal to medieval sensibilities about men being present at birth!) The angels all wore primary colour Dervish costumes and at the end of the flood featured in the Noah story they formed a rainbow.

Some thoughts about the York Mystery Plays, 2012 (continued)

- There were two chief priests condemning Jesus to death, one a woman. They both had terrifying presence as they walked around the stage followed by paramilitary temple guards.
- In one of the early plays Mrs Noah resisted getting in to the boat. At first she didn't believe that everyone outside of the ark would drown, then she was upset God hadn't told her the message instead of her husband. But then when she agreed to go she wanted to wait to take all her extended family and friends as she could see the consequences of the flood. They made sure a lot of people could survive around the boat.
- After the Massacre of the Innocents the people were divided into groups reminiscent of the death camps and there was gunfire in which some more of the children were killed. In the Harrowing of Hell scene while the people were being released from Hell they adopted some of the persona of those released from the death camps. They then were lovingly accompanied to Heaven by God and the angels, which was in the backdrop of the Abbey. It moved me to tears.
- The suavely dressed Devil in morning dress walked around many of the crowd scenes with a group of women devils dressed in black 1940s suits, hats and gloves. They never said anything but either remained aloof from the action or mingled with the crowd and sowed seeds of dissension, as the audience became aware that wherever they walked fighting broke out.
- There were great trap doors under the stage from which people emerged, which represented variously Hell, the Roman Palace and prison, and became the homes of the families whose children had been massacred at Jesus' birth.
- Two of the Magi were older women and greeted the Family with such warmth as well as their gifts. The shepherds (men and women) gave the baby wooden rattles "and a wooden spoon that could hold 40 peas"
- All the way through my companions and I kept interpreting meanings as the production unfolded and though we knew the stories they were portrayed in such an engaging, compassionate, powerful and thought provoking way. We sat in hot sun for over 3 hours but it was simply wonderful.

Pippa B

So many hills remain to be climbed
Chasms to be bridged, obstacles to be breached
Our own determination can get us so far
The support of the people of Britain and of peoples around the world can get us so much further

Aung san sun ky

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

Never underestimate the power of a small group of people to change the world, in fact, it is the only way it ever has.

Margaret Mead

Websites

www.womenwordspirit.org
Women Word Spirit

<http://www.gras.org.uk>
Group for rescinding the Act of Synod

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

www.womensordination.org
More news of Rome Petition, Fr Bourgeois and many other issues

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

Rachel is a professed hermit of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nottingham. She sent this link to an experimentally inclusive version of the new liturgy. This is an (unauthorised) work in progress and she would welcome any feedback or ideas to improve it.

www.womenpriests.org.
Sign up for their regular newsletter

www.ccc4vat2.org.uk/cc
Catholics for a Changing Church

<http://ncronline3.org/drupal/>
National Catholic Reporter

<http://lgcm.org.uk/>
Lesbian and Gay Christians

www.spirituschristi.org
A truly inclusive Catholic Church

Call for Papers - Liturgy as muse - Religious institutes as protagonists in renewing liturgy, sacred art and music and church material culture (1903-1962)

International conference of the European Forum on the History of Religious Institutes in the 19th and 20th Centuries (RELINS-Europe) Leuven, Belgium, 8-9 November 2012

The intended focus of the 2012 Relins conference is the role – to which still too little attention has been paid – played by religious and religious institutes in the reform and renewal of religious art and the material culture of church architecture and of worship between 1903 and 1962, along three main themes.

1. Religious Institutes and national/international networks
2. Motives, ideas and significance of the religious protagonists
3. Conflicts and public perception

All these questions and themes will be discussed at the 2012 RELINS-Europe conference. (www.relins.eu)

The conference is scheduled to take place in Leuven (Belgium) on 8 and 9 November 2012 and will be hosted by KADOC-KULeuven (www.kadoc.be). Proposals for papers (max. 500 words, including a title), together with a curriculum vitae and a list of publications, should be addressed to Kristien Suenens (kristien.suenens@kadoc.kuleuven.be) before March 1st 2012. Replies will follow no later than May 1st 2012.

From the CWO facebook page

In my church the Priest kind of smiles indulgently and pats us on the head whenever anything mildly "progressive" rears its "ugly" head. We've had loads of homilies about how dreadfully "liberal" US and Canadian women are. However, its vital we stay in the RC's as I think things are and will change on many issues. Blessings sisters.

Emma

The irony - purely a case of men trying to rule over women... Exactly what God warned Eve of in Genesis... How these 'men of God' cannot see this is a testimony to just how blinded they are by their old fallen patriarchal nature. May we bring the new Christlike nature of unity and oneness to this earth; the Kingdom of heaven, where there is '...no longer male and female, we are all one in Christ'. Amen

Rebekah