

CWO e-news February 2010 issue 24

Welcome to issue 24 of the e-news. Editor Pat Brown. Please visit CWO's website www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk Previous issues can be seen there.

Please send items for publication in the next e-news by 10 March 2010. Also for further information about anything in this e-news where contact details are not given - info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

I recently sent out details of a march on Sunday 14 February. The reason I sent it as a single item was that I knew the e-news would go out after the event.

I received five emails and one 'phone call in response to this. The emails ranged from strong protests about CWO supporting this march to understanding but regretting why this information had gone out to members. The 'phone call was from someone who has campaigned tirelessly for our cause and who was very excited about the prospect of CWO being involved in secular political activity.

I believe it is important for us in CWO to know what's going on in the secular world. The Pope's visit brings media interest in us and I think we would be foolish not to try to use this; hence some members have undergone media training. Our current campaign has been outlined in previous issues and more details are below.

I send to members the information I get if I believe it is relevant to our campaign. Campaigning can sometimes mean being alongside secular groups. In this particular case, women's equality was the first item on their list of what they support.

It is a difficult issue and members obviously differ in their response and must act as they see fit. We know that many Catholics don't know that our movement exists. We are a single-issue campaigning group. We campaign for the ordination of women in the RC Church but we also seek to model a more inclusive Church.

I would welcome comments from other members on this.

Jesus was concerned with the healing of human shame and human guilt. He was always taking away people's shame, always taking away their low self-esteem, and reintroducing them to the village, the temple, the priesthood, and their families. He was healing relationships even more than just healing bodies.

And now many would say that we (the Church/Christians) have ended up being the chief purveyors of guilt and shame, instead of healing it and transforming it into life and light. We have decided, for some reason, that it is better to remind people of their unworthiness and brokenness, instead of their potential to be temples of the Holy Spirit. It became taught and learned helplessness in far too many cases.

Richard Rohr

Our campaign to prepare for the Pope's visit in September

As you know, up to the end of March we are targeting politicians. Some of you have written about the equality bill. Please let me know if you get interesting responses.

Now we would like you to write about the "no discussion" ruling on the issue of women's ordination. Below is a sample letter (with many thanks to Jillian Dempsey). You will find ways to make it your own but this has all the relevant points.

We hope to lobby MP's at the House of Commons at the end of March.

Freedom of speech – suppressed by the Pope

Later this year, Pope Benedict XVI will come on a state visit to this country, representing the Vatican and upholding many of the views of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II.

I am a member of Catholic Women's Ordination, an organisation which seeks to encourage renewal of the Roman Catholic Church and the opening of all forms of ministry in the Church to women and men. In 1994, Pope John Paul II issued an Apostolic Letter, stating that 'the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement was to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful'.

This was in contradiction of the 1976 Vatican Pontifical Biblical Commission, which held that there was no scriptural reason to prohibit women's ordination, The 1994 Apostolic Letter is now known as the 'Dubious Dubium' as the authority of the Pope to issue a definitive letter (just below infallible) is questionable.

Discussion on this subject is effectively banned, on threat of excommunication (indeed this has happened) and no power is given to individual conscience. How can the current Pope, who has made no change to the 1994 ruling, come on a state visit to this country when he denies freedom of speech to members of the Catholic Church?

The official doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church says a great deal about male and female being made in the image of God, and I would argue that a ban on even discussing women's ordination is contrary to history and practice in this country

I hope you will feel able to address the Prime Minister on this subject, so that objections to this suppression of free speech can be made to the Pope during his visit.

Many thanks

The campaign will develop as follows

April to June: prayer and reflection, contacting clergy, bishops, papal nuncio, cardinal.

July to the actual visit: action including a presence at **Greenbelt festival 27 – 30 August**. We need people to volunteer for our stall. **Can you give a day to this?**

An additional time for prayer and reflection has been set for the weekend

Friday 6 to Sunday 8 August at Noddfa <http://www.noddfa.org.uk/>

This is open to all members. The cost is £80. There is wheelchair accessibility.

Places are limited so please send £20 to me to reserve a place by **31 May**. (My address is on the merchandise form at the end of this e-news.)

**The Lisieux Trust for Women's Ministry
Invites you to a Training Day
'Making Liturgy'
Saturday, 27 February 2010
St. Andrew's Church, Waterloo, London
10.15am – 5.00pm**

All are welcome.

Donation to cover the hire of the room.

To book or for more information please contact
info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Includes

(Full programme in previous e-news)

What does 'Making Liturgy' mean? An introductory presentation in the form of a dialogue by some of the authors of the book *Making Liturgy*.

Small groups: each small group to be led by one of the authors:

a, Ianthe Pratt on inclusive language in liturgy,

b, Pat Pinsent on creating new liturgies,

c, Myra Poole on what can be expected from experiential liturgies.

Shared Lunch

Developing Liturgy. A short input lecture by Lala Winkley.

Making liturgy, workshops coordinated by Hilary Thompson:

Plenary, coordinated by Dorothea McEwan

Closing liturgy as developed by group

Still time to book!

Some members may want to visit this site to consider signing this petition.
<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/ProtestthePope/>

Just to re-iterate - this is for your information - so we know what's going on out there in the secular world, which is our world too!

Mary Daly

A website has been set up to commemorate the life and work of Dr Mary Daly

<http://marydaly.org/default.aspx>

See also Joan Chittester
<http://ncronline.org/taxonomy/term/165>

Hard work

Some turn up their sleeves,
some turn up their noses,
and some don't turn up at all.

Sam Ewing

Websites

www.womenwordspirit.org
Women, word, Spirit (formerly Catholic Women's Network)

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

www.womenandthechurch.org
Women and the Church

<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

Digby Stuart Lecture

This year, the Digby Stuart lecture will be given by David Bintley, Director of the Birmingham Royal Ballet. These annual lectures are given by well-known Catholics from across the cultural, political and academic spectrum, as a forum for exploring the relationship between the Catholic faith and public life, and for recognising the diverse ways in which Catholics contribute towards British society.

Date and time: 18th May at 6.30 pm (followed by a reception)
Venue: Digby Stuart Chapel, Digby Stuart College, Roehampton University, London SW15 5PH
For further information, please contact Tina Beattie:
t.beattie@roehampton.ac.uk

Stand up for Vatican II

The meeting to launch Stand up for Vatican II was held in London on the 26 January 2010 attended by more than 200 people. The atmosphere was positive and committed to bringing about a renewed effort in the Catholic Church to reignite the feelings that permeated the Church at the time of the Second Vatican Council. At that time people were energised by a feeling that the Church was to be renewed in a way that would enable it to grasp the challenges of the world; would endeavour to use fully all the resources available, clergy and laity; would speak to its people in a language they understood; the leaders would listen, consult and collaborate in seeking to achieve the Sacred Mission of the Church.

Those attending the meeting did so because they are concerned that in recent times our Church has appeared to drift away from the earlier commitment to the teaching of the Council by the Bishops of England and Wales. This commitment is shown most notably in their report into Collaborative Ministry *The Sign We Give* (1995) when in the introduction to this report they said "we are convinced that the manner and style of relationships in the Church are part of the sign it gives and, for this reason, we must develop patterns of collaborative ministry as a key feature of Church life to come". The report goes on to say "The Second Vatican Council gave the Catholic Church a renewed and dynamic understanding of its nature and purpose," where we ask has this renewed dynamic purpose gone?

Stand up for Vatican II is an initiative designed to appeal to our bishops to renew their commitment to all they said in the past about this new and dynamic approach to how we are Church.

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

The CWO Newsletter

Diana Edwards is now editor of CWO Newsletter. She hopes to have the next issue ready in March. Please send articles, book reviews etc to info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Stand up for Vatican II - The meeting

The meeting was opened by our chair Frank Regan, who welcomed all and told us “we are here to renew the spirit of Vatican II and celebrate its fruits”.

Derek Reeve, a retired priest, set the tone and context for our gathering saying “we are not here to criticise or complain but to follow Jesus in the community of the Church.” Derek expressed his appreciation of Pope John who called the Council to represent the changeless mission of Jesus in a new way and the work of all the theologians who prepared the way for the Council. He then asked for a few moments of silence to open our hearts in love.

Robert Nowell, who as assistant editor of The Tablet attended the Council, shared some of his memories and expectations. Collegiality was increasingly sidelined leaving a fundamental problem about how bishops are appointed. As an example of the way appointments have been centralised, he cited the length of time it took to appoint a new bishop in Northampton following the rejection of Rome’s Opus Dei candidate. This centralisation coupled with constant surveillance by the Curia, made possible by modern technology, has curtailed open and legitimate debate and stifles discussion about the future.

Michael Winter a theologian and author of *Whatever happened to Vatican II?* Told us that reform can be doctrinal, moral or institutional and while Vatican II, was successful with liturgical reform it did not reform the institution. It is important to remember that the Church exists for the laity not the other way round; one can envisage a church without clergy, but not a church without laity.

He concluded with some suggested remedies:

- Elected pastoral councils at parish and diocesan levels
- Smaller parish communities, with a married clergy
- In seeking reform we need to be open and willing to express our views and to protest peacefully, citing the petition against the imposition of the new missal already having in excess of 11,000 signatories.

Myra Poole SND de Namur - Educator, Historian, Feminist Theologian and activist for women, spoke of the role of the laity at the Second Vatican Council. Myra described with passion how women in the Church have been ignored and dismissed as irrelevant not least by misogynist bishops and priests. They have struggled to overcome barriers placed in their way and still struggle to gain acceptance. She expressed concern about the lack of education in parishes, so different to the excitement and enthusiasm created during and in the days after the Second Vatican Council.

She told us about a selection of the women who had played their part in making the Council such a success referring to a book entitled *'Guests In Their Own House: The Women of Vatican II'* Carmel McEnroy, 1996. This tells the story of how women at the Council managed to overcome the obstacles and make their own unique contribution. She concluded by reminding us that “there can be no Church unless we have an equal Church.”

Stand up for Vatican II - The meeting (continued)

The meeting was then passed to the audience for comment and discussion, this included:

- The cry of the disillusioned who want to return.
- Acceptance that the Church is not a democracy (although it was at the start) but we do need our bishops to give up "obsequious diplomacy", to take courage and accept their role as successors to the Apostles.
- What about organising a lay pastoral congress?
- Support the many small groups living out in their lives the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

We then had a final reminder of what next? This was to remind people that we need to keep up the pressure, to group together locally in order to ask our local bishop to agree to celebrating a Mass in the Cathedral Church in recognition of the 45th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, organise local groups and meetings.

The evening concluded with a short meditation and prayer led by Valerie Stroud

A more detailed report about the meeting including the text the speakers used will be available in due course. If you have not signed the petition please go to www.standup4vatican2.org.uk click on petition and follow the instructions.

Bernard Wynne (with thanks to Joe Mulrooney for his excellent notes)

Westminster Cathedral Vigil

London CWO continues to pray on the first Wednesday of the month. Their next vigil will be on the Cathedral Piazza on Sunday 25 April 11 to 12.30, Vocations Sunday. This will catch those coming out of 10.30 Mass and those going into 12 Mass. They stand with banners, hand out CWO leaflets and attempt to engage people in discussion - response has been increasingly encouraging.

Think Tank

We are hoping to set up a Think Tank of prominent Catholics in various fields to help us publicise the issue of women's ordination within the Roman Catholic Church. We have compiled a list of possible people and drafted a letter to send to these people, which is now being finalised. To cover the youth angle, some CWOLO members will be attending the Youth Mass at Mount Street.

Jillian Dempsey

Advance Notice of Richard Rohr weekend

Richard Rohr is leading a weekend at St James' Piccadilly on 3-4 Sept "The greatest vocation is not the contemplative, nor is it the active, but the utter art form of putting the two together." Some of the input will come from his Franciscan Tradition, and the event is sponsored by the Society of St Francis.

Price £40

Bookings as follows:

www.oxfordplayhouse.co.uk/ticketsoxford

Phone 01865 305305