

CWO e-news January 2009 issue 12

Welcome to issue 12 of the e-news. Please visit our website

www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Please contact me with items for next e-news by 10 February 2009

Joint editors Pat Brown and Myra Poole

STOP PRESS!! - Myra Poole will be on BBC1 at 10.00am on Sunday 11th Jan - The Big Questions. She will be part of a panel discussing 'Women Bishops in the Anglican Church'. Myra has asked for prayers that she gives a good impression of the work done by CWO and WOW.

The Lisieux Trust for Women's Ministry Education Day

Sat 28th Feb at St Andrews Church

Short Street, Waterloo (street opposite the Young Vic, off The Cut)

10.30 for 11.00am - 4.00pm

Cost £10 00

"Putting Tradition in its place - an encounter with the God of the Letter to the Hebrews"

Led by The Ven. Dr. Joy Tetley

Joy Tetley is an Anglican priest, theologian and teacher. Until recently, she was Archdeacon of Worcester. Now based in Oxford, she is further exploring a ministry of prayer, writing and teaching. As well as parochial and Cathedral ministry, her previous posts have been in the field of theological education, relating to both pre- and post-ordination training.

Joy was made deaconess in 1977, deacon in 1987, and was among the first tranche of women to be ordained priest in the Church of England in 1994. Over recent years, she has been closely involved in the C of E's examination of the issue of women in the episcopate. She has a keen interest in ecumenism, being a member of the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity and having participated in a number of ecumenical dialogues (most recently the Anglican-Orthodox conversations). Her areas of particular focus are biblical studies, spirituality and ministerial theology. She has a special and long-standing passion for the Letter to the Hebrews (the subject of her doctoral thesis) and its vital significance for today.

North West CWO

The North West members of CWO will be meeting for a soiree on Monday 26th January 2009 from 7.00 onwards on the Wirral. Jennifer Stark will give a talk at 8.00pm on her recent experiences in Rome on the occasion of the Bishops' Synod, when she attended the Women's event and presented the Petition on the Ordination of Women to the Vatican.

We hope that as many people as possible can make it to this social event. This will be an opportunity to explore ideas and plan a programme of activities, dates and venues for the year ahead. Please join us if you live within reach of the Wirral.

Prayer Link

Every Wednesday between 6.00 and 7.00pm, please pray for CWO, its members and its mission.

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*

Who are we called to love?

*The prophets had one
foot in Israel and one
foot outside. So you
must have one foot in
your faith community
and one foot in the
world, too.*

*Always we have to
find our love, and
then give our love
away. Sometimes it
isn't easy to give or to
see. We must love
where we are called
to love, and
sometimes that
means loving people
and institutions that
really turn us off.*

Richard Rohr

Letter to Bishop John Hind, Bishop of Chichester

This letter was written following an article in the Sunday Telegraph 14 December 2008. Bishop Hind has told his diocesan synod that, when he appoints a new junior bishop, they will not be permitted to ordain women.

Dear Bishop John

I was thinking of writing to you on behalf of those in this diocese who would welcome the appointment of a bishop who would personally ordain women priests, in accordance with the wishes of the General Synod and other dioceses in the Church of England. I for one would feel that I had someone whom I could trust for spiritual and pastoral oversight. I cannot trust a man, however 'saintly' who regards women as 'something other' in the human species.

However, it has been brought to my notice that you have given very a specific instruction to your appointed team to administer the filling of this vacancy. This instruction is that the new bishop 'should not ordain women as priests'.

Is this true?

If so, I am truly scandalised by this. I refer to the Stumbling Block against which animals for slaughter were forced to stumble in order to expose their throats to the knife. I feel as if I have a knife at my throat; a knife which threatens my very identity as a Christian and a woman.

I am writing to you as one whom the Almighty God(s) has created in 'their' image. In this I refer back to the original Hebrew of Genesis 1. The use of the plural Elohim is ambiguous - the 'plural' God is ONE God. The Christian insight of the 'Three in One' GOD is an amazing re-interpretation of this. So I am in the 'image' of GOD who is beyond yet inclusive of sexuality, male and female. I write to you as more than a female member of the species. I write to you as your equal in the sight of God. We are all his children.

I thank God that I do not have your responsibility for the souls in this diocese. To be a priest and even more, a bishop, is truly an awesome thing. It is to enter into the mission of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God in an intimate way. You bear responsibility for the people in your care in a way which exceeds the responsibility of a doctor, surgeon or special 'responder'.

I am writing this letter to ask you to reconsider your terrible instruction.

By limiting the calling of all women, what are you saying to every female in this diocese?

What are you saying to the rest of the Body of the Church of England whose General Synod has not only authorised the ordination of women priests since 1994, but also acknowledged their consecration as bishops as lawful in the sight of God?

What are you saying to the Church of Rome whose attitude to women you purport to reflect? A maverick in one church is not likely to be acceptable to the governors of another apparently more authoritarian institution.

I cannot answer these questions for you.

I can only say what I know I am hearing.

I hear a timid male power base frightened of the world in which the Incarnate Word speaks to us from mangers and cities and tortures and wars and death – and children - hiding behind the skirts of a false 'mother', denying the authentic church her freedom and her calling to embrace this world in the power of Christ's love.

I wonder what are the reasons for your fear – but that is between your and our Maker.

I speak acknowledging the rule of Jesus Christ.

In His Name so be it

"Unlike the bishops, who shut us out, we women, called to ordination, shut no one out. We hear and respond to the cries of the brokenhearted in our world community - the abused, the abandoned and unloved, the sick and weary."

These are the words of Janice Sevre-Duszynska of Lexington, Kentucky, a leading advocate for women priests and WOC board member, planning her third demonstration on the occasion of the meeting of US bishops, June 2004. On two previous occasions she had been shut out of the church hosting the meetings. The Churches will only flourish and achieve credibility in modern societies, when women are ordained in all denominations.

Remembering our own exclusion, may we never exclude others.

From Prayermail

Prayer to St Therese of Lisieux

Saint Therese, we thank you for your courage in living out your priestly vocation in a community where you were often misunderstood. Intercede for us and for a church that often ignores women's gifts, and sustain by your example those who seek to transform your church so that men and women may minister together at your altar, and proclaim your words of resurrection. Amen.

Women Find a Way: The movement and stories of Roman Catholic Womenpriests

This inspiring book, published via the Roman Catholic Women Priests website, contains much food for thought and prayer. It is a book for those who would like to know more about this fast-growing movement, whether you feel you are in favour of the moves these women have taken, or would simply like to know more. It is a clear reading of the theology and the Gospel passages that have encouraged these women to take this step of faith. The array of ministries is quite incredible, especially considering how young this movement is; the first RCWP ordinations were only in 2002. The book is inspiring because the stories are so varied, and so therefore are the ministries- some host house churches, others minister through hospitals and universities, and there is a very moving account of a Church in the Park that ministers to homeless people. I was privileged to meet some of these women at the last WOW conference in Ottawa, and I'm sure many more will be at the next one in America. For me, the movement has rather a lot in common with the Holy Spirit's work at Pentecost, so my advice would be "watch this space"!

Click these links!

More women needed at the Vatican - Cherie Blair

www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0806270.htm

Ordination of Pat Gaffney

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=WAvNnf1MIM&feature=related>

Visit these websites!

www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk Ours!

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

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

"WHAT SHALL WE SAY?"

A Day Conference on Inclusive Language in the Liturgy
hosted by Inclusive Church and WATCH

Saturday 7th February 2009 11.00am – 4.00pm

At "InSpire" St Peter's Church, Liverpool Grove,
London SE17 2HH
(near Elephant and Castle)

Key Note Speakers

Lucy Winkett – "Inclusive language: what is it and why use it?"

Elizabeth Baxter – "Inclusive Language for a Therapeutic Church"

Steven Shakespeare – "Speak to us of Prayers"

June Boyce - Tillman - "Sing to us of Hymns"

This day conference will consider the theological importance of inclusive language in liturgies both common and rare, with a primary emphasis on its use in our common Sunday worship services. We aim to have some fun too (it is on Saturday!) and to end with a panel discussion of your questions.

Cost of day (for sandwich lunch plus expenses of day) £15 (£5 for unwaged)

Voices Carry: The Fight for Women's Rights in the Catholic Church

Angela Bonavoglia November 19, 2008

It is no accident that in the Catholic Church today, the greatest, most horrific, most horrendous sin a human being can commit is a woman's sin. Men do not present their bodies for abortions; women do. I felt the impact of that judgment as I'd never felt it before when I sat in St. Peter's Cathedral in my hometown diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania, in October listening to the letter written by Bishop Joseph Martino. Intended to intimidate Catholics who were thinking they might vote for Barack Obama for president, regardless of his pro-choice views, the letter was required reading by every priest in the diocese, in place of a homily. While careful not to single out the woman who has an abortion, except to chastise her for her "selfishness," the letter came across as a virulent anti-woman screed.

The reading, which lasted over half an hour, said that abortion is "so heinous, so horribly evil, and so absolutely opposite to the law of Almighty God that [it] must take precedence over every other issue." The letter likened the justification for condemning abortion to the justification for denouncing "Nazi officials who murdered mentally ill people." It argued that abortion was actually a graver moral ill than waging a bloody unprovoked "unjust" war. It likened pro-choice supporters to Cain who murdered his brother Abel—Cain who knew that in time "everyone that findeth me the murderer shall slay me (Genesis 4:13-14)." It declared pro-choice candidates to be "supporters of homicide." Sitting there listening to that vitriol, I shuddered. Where is the line, I wondered, between denouncing abortion, and by extension the women who have abortions, and taking up arms—or torches—against them?

The Catholic Church's commitment to excommunicating anyone who dares to even express support for the ordination of women is yet another manifestation of the church's continued demonization of women. The church maintains that this is God's law, not its own. And it does this despite the archaeological and Biblical evidence of women priests, deacons and bishops; the conclusion of the Vatican's own Pontifical Biblical Commission that there are no Biblical or Scriptural grounds forbidding women's ordination; and the simple fact that Jesus never ordained anybody.

These two issues have not accidentally come together. Indeed, the church hierarchy's increasingly hysterical opposition to abortion (and the whole range of women's reproductive health issues) and to women's ordination grows from a fundamental tenet of all patriarchal religions: that women cannot represent the Divine because women's bodies are the locus for humanity's greatest sins. Empowered women are dangerous. What's new in this new millennium is that an increasing number of Catholics are fighting back. Despite the excoriations of bishops like Martino, the majority of Catholics, 54 percent, voted for Obama for president. So did a whopping 67 percent of Hispanics—the fastest growing group of Catholics in America.

Despite decrees of excommunication—which bar a Catholic from receiving the Eucharist, a Catholic burial, all of the sacraments—scores of women have been ordained priests through the provocative and burgeoning [Roman Catholic Women Priests Movement](#). And they've done so with the support of a growing number of Roman Catholics, including

priests — most recently, the legendary and beloved anti-war activist, Father Roy Bourgeois.

A Maryknoll priest for 36 years, Bourgeois is a giant in the peace movement, a Vietnam vet, a Purple heart recipient, and founder of the School of the Americas Watch. SOA Watch is devoted to ending U.S. training of Latin American military at what is now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, military personnel who in the past have committed grave atrocities.

Following in the footsteps of Father James Callan—who participated in the pioneering public ordination of pastoral minister Mary Ramerman in Rochester, New York, in 2001, before 3,000 ebullient supporters, after which both were excommunicated—Bourgeois co-pressed and gave the homily at the ordination ceremony of his long-time peace activist friend Janice Sevre-Duszynska. Because Sevre-Duszynska is a member of what has become a very high profile international [women's ordination movement](#), Bourgeois' participation did not go unnoticed.

In response to the Vatican's letter demanding that he recant his support for women's ordination or be excommunicated, Bourgeois issued his own excommunication. "Women in our church are telling us that God is calling them to the priesthood," he wrote. "Who are we, as men, to say to women, 'Our call is valid, but yours is not.'"

Equating his support for women's ordination with the whole of the social justice agenda, he went on: "Eight years ago, while in Rome for a conference on peace and justice, I was invited to speak about the SOA on Vatican Radio. During the interview, I stated that I could not address the injustice of the SOA and remain silent about injustice in my church. I ended the interview by saying, 'There will never be justice in the Catholic Church until women can be ordained.' I remain committed to this belief today."

Crediting his faith in the church's sacred concept of conscience, the final barometer of what is right and wrong, Bourgeois refused to recant his "belief and public statements that support the ordination of women in our church." He warned his fellow priests against being the "voice of complicity" and urged them to "break our silence."

Father Roy's excommunication is all but certain. But so it seems is a growing Catholic rejection of the all-male hierarchy's self-serving positions on issues that deeply affect women. The fevered pitch of ecclesiastical rhetoric is living proof of the power of those voices, which are now coming from the pews—and from the altar.

Janice Sevre-Duszynska will celebrate the Eucharist in Columbus, Georgia, on Friday evening, November 21—the date the Vatican's decree of excommunication is scheduled to go into effect.