

CWO e-news November and December 2009 issue 22

Welcome to issue 22 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 January e-news by 10 January 2010. info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk



Mary and Joseph arrive at Bethlehem today

The separation barrier now surrounds the 'Little Town of Bethlehem', making life increasingly difficult for the people of Bethlehem.

God, with your spirit, guide the efforts of humankind to bring peace and justice to the nations of the earth.

Prosper the activities of those who work to preserve human rights.

Promote the endeavours of all who work for reconciliation and justice.

Deliver us from the forces of malice, jealousy and fear.

Direct us into the ways of understanding, cooperation and mutual respect.

Bless all peacemakers; sustain all peacekeepers.

Break down all barriers of ignorance, suspicion and fear.

Build up those things that make for peace, justice and freedom.

Enable us to live with dignity as brothers and sisters united in our diversity and our desire for a world where war itself is but an event only dimly remembered.

From a Unitarian prayer by Peter Teets

Such a lot is going on at the moment.

A press release on 14 November 2009 from the Revision Committee on Women in the Episcopate was reported in some places as bad news eg The Catholic Herald's headline Disaffected Anglicans snubbed by committee. You will find a rather different perspective from Christina Rees in WATCH's press release (see below).

We have had our first "contra legem" ordination in the UK. (see below). Now that this has happened, it is important for members to be aware of the three statements which appeared in the last issue of e-news.

1. Catholic Women's Ordination (CWO) is a prayerful, educational, activist and consciousness-raising campaigning group in Britain, born out of the Church of England vote for women priests in November 1992, and has retained these strong ecumenical links with all its sister churches in its membership.
2. CWO is working for a reformed ordained ministry in a reformed Roman Catholic (RC) Church in the light of the documents and spirit of Vatican II coupled with the ever developing historical, theological and spiritual understanding of women's call to the full ordained ministry in the RC Church.
3. CWO is inclusive. Any member who chooses to follow a different path to ordained ministry may be a member.

Please bear in mind that, although contra legem ordination is not part of CWO's policy, we recognise that it is the intransigence of the Vatican that is forcing some women to take this step.

The Pope is further disrespecting women; he has taken pity on the disaffected misogynists in the Church of England and invited them to come and join the Roman Catholic Church. You will find references to this in parts of this e-news. However, this and his impending visit have raised media interest in us and we must take advantage of that.

At CWO's National Committee meeting on 21 November, we laid out a strategy leading up to the Pope's visit.

This will form three stages

January – March: writing to MPs and MEPs and maybe lobbying parliament in March.
April – June: prayer and reflection, contacting clergy, bishops, papal nuncio, cardinal.

July – the actual visit: action including a presence at greenbelt festival at the end of August

More details of how you can get involved in the next e-news but if you have any ideas, please send them to me info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

**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**

All are welcome.

Donation to cover the hire of the room.

To book or for more information please contact the organiser:
Dorothea McEwan info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Programme

10:15 Welcome / Coffee

10:45 Welcome Liturgy

11:00 First Session. What does 'Making Liturgy' mean? An introductory presentation in the form of a dialogue by some of the authors of the book *Making Liturgy*.

11:45 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.

12:45 Shared Lunch

14:00 Second session. Developing Liturgy. A short input lecture by Lala Winkley.

14:30 Making liturgy, workshops coordinated by Hilary Thompson:
d, Saying /words, prayers, texts, explanations/
e, Sound /music, singing
f, Ambience /movement

15:15 Plenary, coordinated by Dorothea McEwan:
a, each group reports on its workshop / presents its work / explains why they did what they did.
b, General discussion of problems encountered, pitfalls, solutions.

16:00 Tea

16:20 Concluding liturgy, as prepared by the groups.

16:50 End.

Staying at what is worth doing does as much to remake us as it does to remake the world.

Joan Chittester

Women bishops legislation now on right track

WATCH is delighted to hear that the Revision Committee on Women in the Episcopate has decided that legislation for women bishops will no longer include proposals for the mandatory transfer of authority - the vesting of particular functions by law – in bishops who would provide oversight for those unable to receive the Episcopal and/or priestly ministry of women.

WATCH commends the recent work of the Revision Committee, which met yesterday to explore how the previous proposed arrangements could be made to work. WATCH is aware of the huge outcry from members of General Synod and from other Church members to the earlier announcement of the Revision Committee to make changes in law that would have resulted in a two-tier episcopate.

WATCH Chair, Christina Rees said: "This is a real breakthrough. I am delighted that now we can look forward to having women as bishops on the same terms that men are bishops. Women will bring valuable different perspectives and ways of doing things and will also bring a sorely needed wholeness to the Episcopal leadership of our Church. The House of Bishops will cease to be the 'men only' club it has been and will be more representative of the people whom the Church exists to serve. Now the Church will be able to draw on the experience and wisdom of many gifted women. We know from 15 years of having women as priests that they are often able to reach people and approach situations in ways that are creative and empowering for many others."

WATCH is pleased with the outcome on two counts: first, and most importantly, the new proposals express the theological understanding of the Church about the status of baptised Christians and about the relationship between men and women and God. Secondly, the Revision Committee has shown that it has heeded the will of General Synod to draft legislation that would not have arrangements in law that would differentiate between male and female bishops.

WATCH continues to urge to Revision Committee to bring proposals to General Synod in February 2010 which adopt the simplest possible legislation, so that the Church of England can proceed to opening the Episcopate to women in such a way that the nature of the Episcopate is retained and the Church can best communicate its belief that women and men are equal in the eyes of God.

Christina Rees
WATCH Press release

Letter responding to Pope's call to disaffected Anglicans

Myra Poole had a letter published in the Church Times, 31 October 2009.

"The question now for RCs who have a much greater understanding of what Church should and could be is openly to call these present actions of this papacy to account in the light and spirit of Vatican II." Read the whole letter at

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=83938>

Ellacuria, the Jesuit President of the University of Central America in El Salvador and one of the Jesuit Martyrs killed there 20 years ago, writes

"We are people of the Gospel, a gospel that proclaims the reign of God, and that calls us to try to transform this earth into as close a likeness of that reign as possible,"

CWO is called to transform the Church "into as close a likeness of that reign as possible." The Gospel proclaimed love, equality, honouring the marginalised, valuing women and men and each person's gifts.

May we continue to transform ourselves and each other...

Pippa Bonner

The Pope's invitation to disaffected Anglicans

A great article by Diarmaid MacCulloch appeared in the Observer on 25 October. Here is an extract. *"The best law in church history is the law of unintended consequences. In one sense, this is a storm in a teacup, stirred by an elderly cleric in the Vatican with a private agenda and a track record of ill-thought-out policy moves"*

The whole article can be found at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/25/pope-benedict-invitation-anglican-church>

Professor MacCulloch is currently on BBC4 presenting a four-part History of Christianity. He was also a guest on Sunday on Radio 4 in which Myra was also featured briefly. He supported what she had said during his interview. Myra Poole and Pat Brown are meeting him on 15 December.

First "contra legem" Priest in the UK

Morag Liebert, a CWO member, was ordained in Edinburgh on Saturday 24 October 2009.

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

Her press release appeared in the Tablet (31.10.09) as did excellent letters from Katharine Salmon (7.11.09) and Ruth Wood (14.11.09). Unfortunately, links to the article and letters can't be given as only subscribers can access them. Perhaps you can get your hands on a copy if you haven't seen them.

Spanish priests' attack on curia.

A communication has recently been received from Atrio, a Spanish renewal organisation, signed by 300 Catholic priests protesting against the loss of credibility of the institutional Catholic Church. They identify the principal causes of the current crisis as a lack of fidelity to Vatican II Council and fear of making the necessary reforms recommended in the Church by the Council. Vatican II made several severe criticisms of the Roman Curia, which thereafter managed to block any effort to reform it. One consequence of this blockage is the unjust power of the Curia over the Episcopal college, which has resulted in a series of appointments of bishops who do not come from the local churches. Also the Curia does not seek the pastors needed by each church but rather appoints unquestioning pawns who will defend the interest of the central powers of the Church and not those of the People of God. To the signatories a grave error of the Curia in all recent pontificates has been the blocking of reform of the papal entourage.

The lack of reform has two or more consequences. One is holding out the hand of friendship to extreme right wing authoritarian stances -although these are unfaithful to the Gospel and even atheist –at the same time mercilessly attacking the stances of evangelical liberty, Christian fraternity and the equality of all the sons and daughters of God, which approach is so badly neglected today. Another consequence is the inability to listen, which leads to ridiculous situations greater than the case of Galileo. Science today appears to provide data that the Curia prefers to ignore, such as understanding concerning the beginning and end of life.

Much of the two page communication is taken up with reasoning why it is right to criticise the institutional church, including reference to Antony of Padua and St Bernard's criticisms and it speaks of the Church for much of history being a platform for free speech! It cites a 1962 article by our present Pope entitled "Liberty of Spirit and Obedience" asking whether it was a sign that times had improved if the theologians of today do not dare to speak freely, or is it a sign that love (of the Church) has diminished, changed to apathy and they dare not risk the pain to the loved one (the Church).

Our comment might be that perhaps it is an indication of the growing clamp down on freedom of thought that so much of this letter is taken with justifying a critical but loving approach. For many today the expression of loyal dissent is a matter of conscience and is taken for granted among those who feel much pain in the way the institution malfunctions.

Ianthe Pratt

Bishop Willie Walsh calls for the debate on women priests

An Irish Bishop has spoken out in support of our cause. For the full article see <http://www.rte.ie/news/2009/1114/religion.html>

The great discovery: It's a human issue, not a woman's issue
by Joan Chittister on Oct. 27, 2009

Every science student in the country knows that for every action we can expect an equal and opposite reaction. Which translated means that whatever we try to do, someone else will try to stop it. So here's the question: Given the kind of explanatory data that is coming out of "The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation"

<http://awomansnation.com/awn.php> on the social condition and challenges facing women at this moment in history, what can we expect now?

Read the article on <http://ncronline.org/blogs/where-i-stand/great-discovery-its-human-issue-not-womans-issue>

Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister is a best-selling author and international lecturer on topics of justice, peace, human rights, women's issues, and contemporary spirituality in the church and in society.

Women are homemakers and take care of the children.

The whole world is our home.

The children of the whole world are our children.

It is women's job to look after the world and all the children of the world.

Marianne Williamson

Mercy Sister Theresa Kane criticizes church hierarchy

Speaking at the 40th anniversary conference of the National Coalition of American Nuns in St. Louis, Mercy Sr. Theresa Kane offered a stinging rebuke to the Vatican for its treatment of women in general and of women religious in particular.

"Regarding the present interrogation, I think the male hierarchy is truly impotent, incapable of equality, co-responsibility in adult behavior," she said, not mincing any words. "In the church today, we are experiencing a dictatorial mindset and spiritual violence."

Full article <http://ncronline.org/news/mercy-sister-theresa-kane-criticizes-church-hierarchy>

*O God – beyond the farthest star
Yet closer than the next heartbeat*

*–
Intensify my awareness of your immediacy,
So that I may not be stifled by awe at your immensity;
And, as I recognise the 'godness' of other people,
I may remember to be a source
For them also to encounter you through me.*

From prayermail

Stand up for Vatican II

Helping to ensure that the vital work of the Second Vatican Council is not lost

We are a group of concerned Catholics who feel that our Church is at a crucial point in its history. Those of us who lived the moment of Vatican II remember the changes to liturgy and language and the enlivening of the sense of being responsible partners in the mission of the church as a fully recognised lay people. Very many of the people who are currently actively engaged in the life of the Church were inspired to become engaged because of the changes in the Church to which Vatican II gave birth.

We see increasing signs of the Church looking back with longing for the old days of pre Vatican II and we can trace this as starting soon after the Council completed its business. During 1979 theologians like Kung, Boff, Schillebeeckx and the Jesuit general Pedro Arrupe all felt the lash of Vatican disapproval, disapprobation and dismissal.

That was thirty years ago, yet today the drive to return to the past is advancing even more quickly. We could provide many examples, but would only point to the restoration of the Tridentine Mass, the reassertion of clerical power and control, the discontinuation of various forms of lay ministry and the absolute refusal to discuss the question of women's vocation to ministry. The spirit of Vatican II is being strangled and our Church, tainted by scandal and fear of the modern world, is becoming more dysfunctional.

We believe that now is the time to make a stand, to let our hierarchy, priests and laity know that many Catholics throughout the country do not want to return to the past. Already some two hundred people and a number of organisations have indicated their support.

We are planning to establish a working party (organising committee) to develop a national campaign, to launch a national petition, organise meetings and other appropriate activities across the country during 2010, (the 45th anniversary of the closure of Vatican II).

We invite all Catholic Organisations to join us in exploring how we might reinvigorate the legacy of Vatican II and provide a platform to stand and declare our concern for our Church in the world today. We trust that you will join us in this important endeavour and would ask you to place this letter before your executive group as well as individual members to inform them of this development.

Stand up for Vatican II (continued)

We note in the last week the proposed visit of Pope Benedict to the UK in the autumn of next year and trust that by the time of his visit we will have helped to focus the attention of the Church in the UK on the importance of standing up for Vatican II. You may have seen in the Tablet last week that the French Hierarchy are planning to celebrate the opening of the Vatican Council to allow the French to refamiliarise themselves with the Council teachings. Cardinal Vingt-Trois said "... Now we see the Council is a fundamental part of the life of the Church."

We will be holding a public meeting in London on 26 January 2010, to launch the campaign and invite you to join us then, to nominate a member to join the working party and generally to publicise this initiative. More details will be provided in due course.

We need your help. Could you tell us what you think? Would you be willing to attend a meeting, or, at least, indicate your support? Would you be willing to publicise the campaign. We have established an email address where you can contact us standup4vat2@yahoo.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bernard Wynne
Derek Reeve Retired Parish Priest

Websites to visit

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

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

The CWO Newsletter

The newsletter will come out in January.

Please send articles, book reviews etc to

info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Try to perfect an ironic tilt of the head. Any angle between 3 and 5 degrees will work.

Ulysses Brave

Why did God choose to become incarnate in the body of a man?

The “sacred feminine” is in many ways a rediscovery of Jesus’ spirit, a re-emergence of a well-suppressed truth, an eventual political upheaval, a certain reform of our hearing of the Gospel and someday perhaps the very structures of the churches—and all proceeding from a deep knowing in the feminine womb, the exact place from which we received Christ for the first time.

The feminist insight explains a vast majority of Jesus’ teaching and style, a male acting very differently in an almost totally patriarchal Jewish society. Like Mary, the Church also has somehow “treasured these things in her heart” (Luke 2:19), but only in time will they be ready to come forth, like Jesus from her womb.

Jesus would never have broken through as a genuinely new revelation if he had acted non-violently inside of a feminine body. It would not have been revolutionary or a challenge—because we expect and demand that women be patient, nurturing, forgiving, healing, self-effacing, and self-sacrificing. Women are expected to be non-violent in a violent male society. But we are still not prepared for *males or institutions or nations* to act non-violently, even in the church. That is why God had to become incarnate for us in the body of a man. Jesus had a male body but a very feminine soul, which was genuinely new. Unfortunately, we basically rejected most of Jesus’ teachings and style as impractical and unreasonable in the pyramidal “real world” of church and state.

Richard Rohr

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

First Wednesday of the month

CWOLO (London group of CWO) has persevered in a witness outside Westminster Cathedral for 14 years. A logical [progression is a prayerful presence inside the Cathedral. This is held in silence beneath the 8th Station with all its significance, wearing purple scarves/stoles. Please join them if you are in London