

CWO e-news June 2010 issue 28

Welcome to issue 28 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.

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

The campaign around the Pope's visit

There is still time to book for a weekend for prayer and reflection 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.

Please send £20 to me (**cheque payable to CWO**) to reserve a place. The date has been extended but I must hear from you by the end of June. (My address is on the merchandise form at the end of this e-news.)

July to the actual visit: action including a presence at **Greenbelt festival 27 – 30 August**. More information after National Coordinating Group meets on 3 July. Please email the group if you have any ideas or want anything discussed natcog@catholicwomensordination.org.uk

Media is hotting up. Some of us have received some training. Catholic Voices for Reform hope to be heard on various programmes.

Please keep looking at the website as news may be put up there rather than emailed everyone.

CWO Annual Gathering

There are no more details about this except that it will be on 2 October 2010, St Andrew's, Waterloo, London.

A very important part of the AGM will be the ratifying of the new CWO constitution.

Please make sure you have this date in your diary.

*Weh Baba father of the fire
Weh Baba well of living water
The spirit is my home
I live and move in my home
I live and move in the spirit
She is a rock for me - she's my home
She is the air I breathe
She's the spirit
The spirit is my home*

South African hymn
English Lyrics Anders Nyberg

From Watch

News has come from Finland that they have elected Pastor, Master of Theology, Irja Askola (born 1952) as Bishop of the Diocese of Helsinki on the second round of the election with 591 votes. She is the first woman to be elected as bishop in Finland.

Irja Askola graduated as Master of Theology in 1975, and was ordained as priest in 1988. Her home parish is Alppila. She works now as the Special Assistant in Theological Affairs for Bishop Mikko Heikka.

And news from WATCH is that OUTLOOK is about to come out with a centre spread of all the 28 women bishops in the Anglican Communion!

All good news!

How is Jesus' father like a mother?

The Father that Jesus knew looks amazingly like what most cultures would call "Mother." In Luke 15, the story of the prodigal son, Jesus makes his most complete presentation of the character of this Father, whom he called God. The father is in every way the total opposite of the male patriarch and even rejects his older son's appeal from a world of worthiness and merit. He not only allows the younger son to make choices against him, but even empowers him to do so by giving him the money! After his bad mistakes, the father still refuses his right to restore order or impose a penance even though the prodigal son offers to serve as a hired servant. Both his leaving and his returning are treated as necessary but painful acts of adult freedom. In every way he can, the father makes mutuality and vulnerability possible.

Richard Rohr

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.com/ticketsoxford

Phone 01865 305305

Women's Ordination Advocates Hold Press Conference During 'Year for Priest' Celebrations, Vigil Calling on Pope to Ordain Women

ROME, ITALY - Today, at 11:00 o'clock in the office of redazione di ADISTA, Via Acciaioli 7, 00186 Roma, representatives of Catholic organizations from around the world called for the full and equal participation of women in the Roman Catholic Church, including ordination as deacons, priests and bishops. The remarks came during a press conference held by Women's Ordination Conference, Women's Ordination Worldwide, and other pro-ordination groups to protest the Vatican's "Year for Priests" celebration, which begins tomorrow. After the press conference, the groups staged a vigil in St. Peter's Square.

"The absolute hypocrisy of the 'Year for Priests' celebration cuts to the core of what is wrong with the hierarchy today," said Erin Saiz Hanna, executive director of the U.S. based Women's Ordination Conference. "The Vatican is all too happy to turn a blind eye when men in its ranks destroy the lives of children and families, but jumps at the chance to excommunicate women who, in good conscience, are prophetically answering their call to ordination and responding to needs of their communities." (Read Hanna's full statement [here](#).)

On June 19, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI declared a 'Year for Priests' to celebrate and honor the male, clerical, priesthood. From June 9-11, 2010, the year-long celebration culminates with an international gathering of priests hosted by Pope Benedict in Rome to pay tribute to their work.

"At the end of a disappointing 'Year for Priests' and a disastrous year for the Roman Catholic Church we call for a Decade of the People of God," stated Angelika Fromm, representative from International Movement We are Church and the Purple Stole Movement in Germany. "The current global crisis within the church demonstrates that the clerical hierarchy alone can't serve any longer as the foundation of the Catholic Church's institutional structure and authority." Fromm continued, "Our church urgently needs large numbers of male and female pastors to serve our parishes. Charisma should be important, not gender."

Therese Koturbash, a Canadian lawyer and International Coordinator of the womenpriests.org campaign, stated, "Thanks to historical research, we now know conclusively that women did receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, at least in the diaconate. And we know that the Council of Trent stated clearly that the diaconate is part of Holy Orders. However, somewhere along the way, the door to women slammed shut." Koturbash continued, "During this 'Year for Priests,' we have asked that women's historical service in Holy Orders be remembered and that reforms be put in motion to welcome women into priesthood! Women can and should be priests."

Women's Ordination Advocates Hold Press Conference During 'Year for Priest' Celebrations, Vigil Calling on Pope to Ordain Women (continued)

Mary Ann M. Schoettly, ordained through Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP), an international initiative within the Roman Catholic Church that advocates for a new model of priestly ministry, stated, "After years of considerable study and reflection, the women of RCWP are following their well formed consciences and accepting the gift of ordination."

According to the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, in a statement published on May 29, 2008 published in L'Observatorio Romano, the Vatican's official newspaper, all Roman Catholic Womenpriests and the bishops who ordain them are automatically excommunicated, known as *latae sententiae*.

Schoettly continued, "Roman Catholic Womenpriests reject the penalty of excommunication. We are loyal members of the church who stand in the prophetic tradition of holy obedience to the Spirit's call to change an unjust law that discriminates against us."

"The discrimination against women in faith communities and in particular by the Catholic Church underpins the violence against women in everyday life," stated Mary Leslie of Catholic Women's Ordination, UK.

Colette Joyce from New Wine, another UK based group, continued, "It is very difficult for a Catholic woman active in her own parish and community to come forward and say this is her calling because there is nowhere for her to take it. I want to talk to the leaders of my church about women's ordination - not journalists - but every time I try the door is continually being closed."

In 1976, the Biblical Commission of Pope Paul VI determined there was no scriptural reason to prohibit women's ordination. Despite the Commission's finding, the pope issued a statement later that year declaring the Vatican is not authorized to ordain women. In 1994, Pope John Paul II officially closed discussion of the subject. Today, an overwhelming Catholics support the issue, yet people who work for the church can be fired if they even talk about women priests.

"For far too long, only ordained, male, celibate clergy have dictated -or tried to dictate- how Catholics worship, pray and make decisions," concluded Hanna. "Canon 1024, which states that only men can validly receive the sacrament of ordination, is unjust and does not value the gospel message of Jesus. It must be changed."

CWO Newsletter

Many thanks to Diana for the recent CWO Newsletter. Please send items for the next one (October) asap info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

If anyone who has received an electronic copy would like a hard copy please let Pat know info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

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

www.womenandthechurch.org

<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

This brave Muslim woman has come to Oxford...

A Canadian author will become the first Muslim-born woman to lead a mixed-gender British congregation through Friday prayers tomorrow in a highly controversial move that will attempt to spark a debate about the role of female leadership within Islam.

Raheel Raza, a rights activist and Toronto-based author, has been asked to lead prayers and deliver the khutbah at a small prayer session in Oxford.

She has been invited by Dr Taj Hargey, a self-described imam who preaches an ultra-liberal interpretation of Islam which includes, among other things, that men and women should be allowed to pray together and that female imams should lead mixed congregations in prayer.

Three of the four mainstream schools of Sunni Islam allow women to lead exclusively female congregations for prayer, but the overwhelming majority of Muslim jurists are opposed to the notion of their presiding over mixed congregations outside the home.

Raza, 60, is part of a small but growing group of Muslim feminists who have tried to challenge the mindset that has traditionally excluded women from leadership roles within the mosque. They argue that nowhere in the Koran are female imams expressly forbidden. Instead scholars rely on the hadiths (the words and sayings of the Prophet Mohamed) to exclude women – although Muslim feminists and some progressive scholars argue that even these are not clear enough to say with confidence that women are altogether banned.

Ms Raza received death threats after leading a mixed-gender prayer congregation in Toronto five years ago.

"It was a very profound experience," Ms Raza said yesterday in a telephone conversation from her home in Toronto. "It's not about taking the job of an imam. It's about reminding the Muslim community that 50 per cent of its adherents are women who are equal to men. Women are equally observant, practising Muslims who deserve to be heard."

Ms Raza's appearance in Oxford is a repeat of a similar prayer session in 2008 which was led by Amina Wadud, an American-born convert and Muslim feminist. But this is the first time a Muslim-born woman will lead a mixed prayer service in Britain.

Ms Wadud's prayers were attended by a small congregation of less than 40 who were heckled on their way in to prayers by protesters, largely by fully veiled Muslim women. Once inside the prayer hall, meanwhile, they were comprehensively outnumbered by journalists.

But Dr Hargey, a divisive figure within British Islam who runs the Muslim Educational Centre of Oxford, said his congregation had since grown and attracted new followers.

Brave Muslim woman | (continued)

"For Friday prayers we now receive about 100 people, twice that for Eid prayers and important occasions," he said. "I am expecting about 200 people to attend this Friday's prayers."

In recent years there has been a growing demand from Muslim women to be included and represented at their mosques. Earlier this week Faith Matters, a conflict resolution think-tank funded by the Government and private benefactors, released a list of 100 women-friendly mosques. The number of female Muslim scholars, meanwhile, often referred to as imamahs, are also on the rise.

Ms Raza, who is due to fly into Britain this morning, said she was aware that she would be preaching to the converted tomorrow. "But it's about opening one heart, one mind at a time," she added.

From The Independent 10 June 2010

Last in a series of talks by Dr Dorothea McEwan –

Supported by filmmaker Brek Taylor and writer Penelope Middelboe

St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation

78 Bishopsgate (near Liverpool Street Station), London, EC2N 4AG

What is leadership?

An examination of the existing pyramid structure and ways of moving towards an inclusive Church.

Monday September 20th 6.30-8.30pm

There are half a billion women Catholics. Women are excluded from all decision-making as well as from ordination. The discussion of women's ordination has been banned by the Vatican.

"Catholicism and tradition subjugate women to 'second class citizens'. It's extraordinarily important religious leaders understand they must change and there must be equal status in the home, in religious expression and in the political sphere." Mary Robinson, Irish President 1990-97, Former UN Commissioner for Human Rights

Dr Dorothea McEwan is a well-travelled lecturer and academic and editor of *An A-Z of Feminist Theology* (with Lisa Isherwood), *Cymbals and Silences: Echoes from the First European Women's Synod. Women for Change in the 21st Century* (with Fanny Martin and Lucy Tatman) and *Making All Things New* (with Myra Poole).

There is no fee to attend this workshop, though contributions will be welcomed. Refreshments will be served.

To book your place now or for more information please email Brek Taylor at cwolondon@gmail.com

Pope Benedict's visit to England and Scotland from 16-19 September 2010

<http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/2010-Visit/Visit-Information/Itinerary>

Thursday 16 September – Scotland

When Pope Benedict arrives, he will go firstly to Scotland where he will be received by Her Majesty The Queen, members of the Royal Family and people representing British society in the Palace of Holyrood House.

Having met the Queen, the Pope will travel to Glasgow where he will celebrate an open-air Mass in the evening and then he will fly from Glasgow to London. The Holy Father will then be based in London for the remainder of the visit.

Friday 17 September – London

On the second day of the visit, Pope Benedict is going to St Mary's University College, Twickenham, where there will be three aspects to his visit. The first is that he begins the day praying with representatives of religious congregations - particularly those who have a charism for education and a history of education. He will then go and meet about 3,000 young people - schoolchildren, students - to celebrate Catholic education. From there he will then meet with religious leaders and people of religious faith. He will discuss with them religion and belief in our society.

Later in the day, the Pope is scheduled to meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury to speak with him in front of the Anglican diocesan bishops and the Catholic diocesan bishops of England and Wales.

He has then been invited, as part of the State visit, to address British society. Representatives of British society will be invited to Westminster Hall to hear the Pope's address.

He will finish off the day with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Christian leaders at Westminster Abbey to celebrate Evening Prayer.

Saturday 18 September – London

On the third day of the visit, Pope Benedict will celebrate Mass in Westminster Cathedral where he will also, from there, greet the people of Wales.

Later in the day he will visit a home for older people, giving the Pope an opportunity to go to those who cannot meet with him, and then be present at a Vigil of prayer which again will be in the open air in London.

Sunday 19 September - West Midlands

The final day of the visit is focused very much on the beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman, and the Pope will celebrate that beatification in the West Midlands.

He will conclude the day by meeting with the bishops of England, Scotland and Wales in Oscott College before returning to Rome from Birmingham Airport.