

CWO e-news February 2009 issue 13

Welcome to issue 13 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 March 2009

info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

Joint editors Pat Brown and Myra Poole

Help needed

We need people to take over the following jobs because the person doing them (me!) would like to feel she could shed them over the next two years. There is plenty of time to work together so volunteers needn't feel they are being dropped in at the deep end.

1. **Membership secretary** – This involves working closely with the treasurer. You will need to be able to keep a database up to date, and send reminders when subs are due.
2. **Treasurer** – This involves keeping the accounts for Lisieux Trust and CWO.

Both the above jobs take quite a lot of time and would suit someone who knows about data bases and Microsoft Excel.

3. **E-news editor** - This involves chasing people for items for the monthly e-news, assembling it and sending it out to members. You also need to produce a version for the website with personal contact details removed
4. **Website link person** - This involves working with our website person and getting new items into our CWO news section

Pat Brown

**The Seminar for
the
Lisieux Trust
led by
The Ven. Dr. Joy
Tetley**

**Sat 28th Feb
at
St Andrews
Church
Short Street
Waterloo**

This is now full.

If anyone desperately wants to go please contact Myra Poole.

Please don't just
turn up.

European Network Study Day - Sat. May 9th

The theme of the day is 'Eco-feminism' and the main speaker is Dr Anne Primavesi. Place- St Katherine, 2 Butcher Row, Limehouse, E14 8DS. Time 9.00am - 5.30pm - Cost £15, no lunch, £25- includes lunch. There are only seven places available so it will be on a first come, first serve basis.

Please contact Myra Poole if you want to come as soon as possible. :

The Big Questions – Sunday 11th January 2009

I really wish to share with you my unexpected experience on Sunday 11th January, when I was invited to be the RC voice on the 'The Big Questions', BBC1 at 10.00am.

I had never seen this programme but as Christina Rees of WATCH, the Anglican Women and the Church group now working for women bishops in their church, had also been invited, I decided to say yes for the sake of the cause. The programme was live from a school in Leicester - a two hour car ride was necessary to get there and back! I dutifully prepared myself for most eventualities at least I thought I did. It was only as the programme began that I realised the question was not on women bishops but on the gender question in general.

I found the programme very interesting and funny in parts but I came away feeling a total failure. The reason for this was that I only got a chance to say three words and then the compare, Nick Campbell, switched straight to the three Evangelicals sitting opposite. Christina was her usual very able media self but I really wondered if it had been worthwhile going all that way and bothering spending time to prepare. I tried to get a word in but it was impossible. I told the assistant producer, a very nice young woman, who came to thank me at the end and I found myself welling up with tears!

I could not understand my over reaction was it my pride that had been hurt, perhaps a bit, but I realised it went much deeper than that. I had one message very dear to my heart and no speaker had touched on it. No one made the connections between all religious theologies, really ideologies, which are a major cause of holding women's poverty in place. If women cannot publicly image God on an altar etc. because they are second class, dirty etc., according to the beliefs of different generations, then it becomes justified to treat women as playthings.

These religious ideologies have countenanced extreme violence against women and kept them often in abject economic poverty, as well as culturally, psychologically and religiously. On Sunday I again heard the 'man the head of the household' syndrome. No wonder domestic violence is so rife, even with those who profess no faith. Whether we are aware of it or not these ideologies have gone deeply into the psyches of every generation and it continues to be propagated by women as well as men. Is 'sexism' the 'original sin of the world' ?

I am not interested in ordination per se, certainly not in the present RC culture and structures, but I am deeply concerned, with many others, to expose the underlying religious causes that enable these myths to be propagated from generation to generation. The non - ordination of women sums up for me, like nothing else, where so much of the blame lies and the sexist theology and structures that keep it in place. The non-ordination of women, struggle for Bishops etc. is the tip of a very deep and solid iceberg of wrong historical cultural thought on women worldwide

In the West, at least, a general consciousness does appear to be emerging among ordinary people, that the most dangerously misogynist institutions in the world are the churches. Peter Shilton, the footballer speaker on Sunday, summed up the general disbelief of non- church going people on this question. Why all this fuss and knife stabbing when equality is now written into British law?

I know some people think well why bother with any Church, my answer is that this kind of theology has underpinned attitudes in secular society and all the different issues that follow from it today. Moreover, there is no doubt that more people than not are still trapped in a false emotional security to these Institutions and fear criticising them at least publicly. We also live in an age of increased rise in fundamentalism in all religions.

If we really care about the poor of the world then it seems to me we have to care about the fundamental ideas that keep women poor. If we cannot expose these we will not begin to eradicate the many forms of women's poverty. We can go to the developing countries and help the people, we can give money, we can sign petitions ad nauseam, but unless we gradually expose the dangers as well as the good inherent in all religions, in all cultures, we will not get very far.

This, in my opinion, is the great importance of all of us involved in feminist theology and spirituality in our own cultures. I think we in the West have a special obligation because we have the greater freedom, education and resources, to speak and challenge these religious institutions. Organisations like WWS and Catholic Women's Ordination do but I do not think we are making the connections clear enough or often enough, especially in mixed groups. I am also concerned that we have not passed these connections on to our younger people, men as well as women. Many work for wonderful women's organisations but are still unaware of these connections.

This is where feminist theology and secular thought unite. I have always said in my life I gained more understanding of the real Gospel when Ken Livingstone was in charge of the former London authority in the 70's and 80's than from any church. It was this authority that initiated the three isms – racism, classism and sexism. My life was changed, so were the schools and eventually it has permeated British society to a greater or lesser degree. But most of the churches continue to propagate past ideas with alacrity. How can we all lose our fears, work together and bring this dangerous farce to an end? That for me is me is The Big Question of our day.

Myra Poole

And quite right too.....

The Catholic Church has shed light on one of its most secret tribunals with a two-day conference examining the Apostolic Penitentiary. This hears confessions of sins only the Pope can grant absolution. Genocide or murder is not on the list. Aiding an abortion or defiling the Eucharist is, however.

From Metro 16.1.09

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

Pax Christi visit to Palestine 12th – 20th February 2009

I shall be visiting the West Bank, Palestine from 12th – 20th February 2009 as part of a small Pax Christi UK education delegation.

Six of us will be staying in Bethlehem and visiting our partners in the Arab Education Institute and visiting other parts of the West Bank.

The purpose of our visit is to offer solidarity to Christian, Jewish and Muslim peacemakers and projects and to visit schools and education projects to see how we can support them.

The Arab Education Institute works to bring together Muslim and Christian families, young people, university students and women and to build bridges by meeting, praying, working together as well as enjoying each others company. They also join in non-violent actions against the Wall and the occupation.

As usual if you would like to hear more about our visit when we get back please look on the website: www.paxchristi.org.uk where an account will be posted and I will be glad to come and talk to groups and show photographs. There are already previous diaries, a wide variety of prayers, information and resources about peacemakers in Palestine/Israel on the website if you are interested.

Please keep the people of Palestine in your thoughts and prayers and also our small group whilst we are there.

Thank you

Ann Farr

Praise song for the day

Each day we go about our business, walking past each other, catching each others' eyes or not, about to speak or speaking. All about us is noise. All about us is noise and bramble, thorn and din, each one of our ancestors on our tongues. Someone is stitching up a hem, darning a hole in a uniform, patching a tire, repairing the things in need of repair. Someone is trying to make music somewhere with a pair of wooden spoons on an oil drum with cello, boom box, harmonica, voice.

A woman and her son wait for the bus.

A farmer considers the changing sky; A teacher says, "Take out your pencils. Begin."

We encounter each other in words, words spiny or smooth, whispered or declaimed; words to consider, reconsider.

We cross dirt roads and highways that mark the will of someone and then others who said, "I need to see what's on the other side; I know there's something better down the road."

We need to find a place where we are safe; We walk into that which we cannot yet see.

Say it plain, that many have died for this day. Sing the names of the dead who brought us here, who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges, picked the cotton and the lettuce, built brick by brick the glittering edifices they would then keep clean and work inside of.

Praise song for struggle; praise song for the day. Praise song for every hand-lettered sign; The figuring it out at kitchen tables.

Some live by "Love thy neighbor as thy self."

Others by first do no harm, or take no more than you need.

What if the mightiest word is love, love beyond marital, filial, national. Love that casts a widening pool of light. Love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air, anything can be made, any sentence begun.

On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp -- praise song for walking forward in that light.

Elizabeth Alexander spoken at Barack Obama's inauguration

Press Release Roman Catholic Womenpriests, USA
January 28, 2009
RCWP call on Pope to lift Excommunications

For immediate release

Jan. 28, 2009

From Roman Catholic Womenpriests

www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org

Roman Catholic Womenpriests call on Pope Benedict to lift the decree of automatic excommunication issued on May 29, 2008 against all in our movement as a gesture of reconciliation and justice toward women in the church. As is well known, the Congregation for Bishops, instructed by the Pope, removed the excommunication of four traditionalist bishops on Jan. 21, 2009. Therefore, Roman Catholic Womenpriests call on the Pope to lift the decree of excommunication against us. This gesture will be a step away from the institutional church's treatment of women as second-class citizens. We stand firmly in the tradition of Vatican II which declares:

Any kind of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design. Gaudium et Spes, art. 29, 2

No priest paedophiles have been excommunicated.

No bishops who were responsible for their continued placement in parishes after their paedophile history was known have been excommunicated.

Theologians who teach and support Vatican II teachings and who support women's ordination are silenced and/or excommunicated.

Women ordained as priests are excommunicated.

Priests and laity who support women priests are excommunicated.

But,

Priests who reject Vatican II and who deny the holocaust and who openly deny the full equality of women are "rehabilitated" after earlier excommunication?

What's wrong with this picture?

CONTACTS: Bridget Mary Meehan:

<http://www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org/pressrelease10.htm>

And for more about Bishop Williamson click on

<http://www.womenpriests.org/williamson.asp>

There is nothing so ugly and so beautiful as the Catholic Church. If you cannot see the ugliness of the Church, you are closing your eyes; but, if you cannot see the beauty, you don't know the Church.

Visit these websites!

<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

It seems to me that the emerging church is emerging because people are finding the ability to have a grateful foot in both camps— Tradition (the mother church) along with a new consensus, a new support group that parallels, deepens, broadens, grounds and personalizes the traditional message. But you don't throw out the traditional message. The emerging church becomes an accountability system for the Tradition.

There's got to be a new kind of reformation in which we don't react, we don't rebel, we don't hate anything. You can't start a spiritual reformation by hating things. You have to be for something.

And so the emerging church questions are: What are you in love with? What do you believe in? What is the heaven that you have discovered?

Richard Rohr

*Lord, keeper of promises,
I ask Your blessing on all who are journeying to fight injustice.
Guide their steps in the darkness.
Protect them from those who would block their path
May they be restored by the power of the present moment
acknowledging those who share their souls' likeness
May they remember that the greatest vision is given to those on the edge.*

From Prayermail