



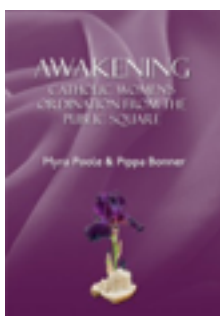
CWO

Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church

E-news

March, 2016 Issue 88

WELCOME to the March issue of E-news!



CWO eNews offers its congratulations and very best wishes to Christina Rees, CBE - read on inside! And Myra and Pippa's thought-provoking new account of CWO, *AWAKENING: Catholic Women's Ordination from the Public Square* is being read far and wide - who can you give copies to? Your family, friends, parish priest and bishop?

A blessed and fruitful Easter to you all,

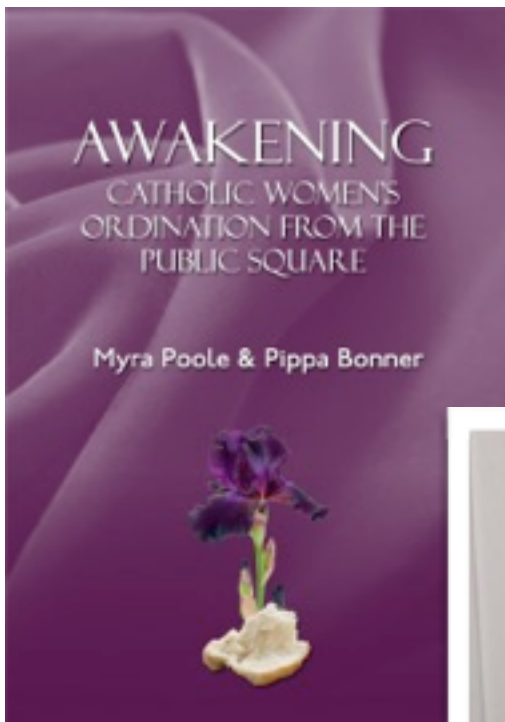
Mary Ring, Editor

For previous issues, please visit <http://www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk/news.htm>

Please send items for March e-news by 21 April, 2016.

For further information about anything in this E-news, where contact details are not given:

news@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk.



AWAKENING!
Buzzing launch in Leeds on 12th March!



Pop over to our **FaceBook** page,



<https://www.facebook.com/Catholic-Womens-Ordination-27311398359/?fref=nf>

for the **pics** and comments **AND...**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcuGDTjjDPM> Myra Poole and Pippa Bonner introduce the book. Pippa speaks about the model used in Chapter 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48IicBs0koE> Katharine Salmon reads from the book and reflects on her own story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhtbOpxAG-A> Myra Poole concludes the book launch presentation

AGM 2016

Saturday, 1st October, 11am - 5pm

St Bede's Pastoral Centre

21 Blossom St,
York
YO24 1AQ
(5 minutes from York Station)



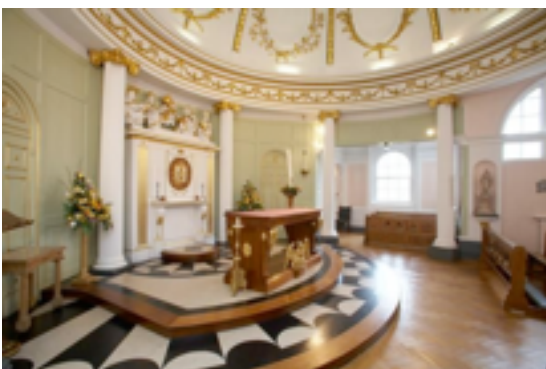
St. Bede's Centre is right next door to the Bar Convent, which is England's oldest living convent. It has just been refurbished, and has an amazing exhibition about the founder of the Congregation of Jesus, Mary Ward.

Mary, a feisty and determined woman, wrote in 1617, "I hope in God that it will be seen that women in time to come will do much."



Born in a time of much religious conflict, Mary's determination that her nuns should be as active and effective as their male Jesuit counterparts, her travels around Europe on foot and in great poverty founding

schools and her work with the poor, sick and imprisoned, make it no wonder that Benedict XVI set her on the path to sainthood.



We will have time to explore the beautiful chapel and exhibition on her life as part of our Annual Gathering, for which we shall be in the competent and knowledgeable hands of St Patricia Harriss, CJ .

Save the date now!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Our heartfelt congratulations to Christina Rees, on her CBE for services to the Church of England, in particular as Chair of WATCH for over 13 years, and her tireless efforts for women's ordination.

Here's her account of our WOW meeting last year:



The Third International Conference of Women's Ordination Worldwide – 18 - 21 September 2015



A week before the Pope was due to visit the city, over 500 people gathered in Philadelphia to address and explore issues affecting Catholic women in the world today. 450 women and 50 men, including religious sisters and priests, from the United States and around the world met in the Marriott Hotel in downtown Philadelphia, discussing topics ranging from an exciting gender

policy in India, new research on Mary as priest, the theology of the body and the hidden history of women's ordination. There was a screening of the film *Radical Grace*, made by a young woman film-maker, tracing several months in the lives of three Catholic women, each called to an extraordinary ministry.

There were contributions from distinguished Catholic feminist theologians Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Ursula King and Tina Beattie, a message from Joan Chittister and a rousing session with Sr Teresa Forcades, known as 'Europe's most radical nun'. With a wealth of talks, panel discussions, academic seminars, vibrant worship and over 20 workshops on offer, it was a packed, stimulating and moving time. There was also an all-male panel, with each of the men telling their stories of the costliness of speaking out in favour of women's ordination.

I was invited by WOW to speak on an interfaith panel, along with a female Jewish rabbi, a Mormon feminist, a Muslim feminist and a former Dominican nun, now a priest since her ordination with Roman Catholic Womenpriests. We shared our very disparate experiences and backgrounds and also found much common ground in the struggle for the equality of women in our different churches and faiths. I also participated in an early morning spirituality workshop exploring how men and women can work together, in spite of unequal gender relations.



It was a huge pleasure to make new friends and to meet up with many UK friends, including Pat Brown, Miriam Duignan, Collette Joyce, Katharine Salmon, Tina Beattie and Ursula King, and to meet Luca Badini, now working with the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research in England.

I learned a lot. I had not known that the host organisation, the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC) had been going for forty years. I had not realised the extent of the growth of Roman Catholic Womenpriests, a group that has taken the decision to ordain women as priests and bishops. I was deeply impressed with how all those present supported and respected one another, despite having chosen different paths.

WOW is an international network of groups from around the world whose mission is to see Catholic women admitted to all ordained ministries in the Church. The organisers intended that the conference will have helped to ensure that 'commitment to ordination equality is recognised as an integral part of freeing ourselves from centuries of discrimination.' WATCH was included among the list of Friends of WOW and will, I know, continue to walk in solidarity and in hope with our Catholic sisters.

<https://womenandthechurch.org/features/christina-rees-a-brief-report-on-gender-gospel-and-global-justice-wow-2015/>



RUTH GLEDHILL reports on 3rd March in Christian Today that the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano has been running articles calling for women to be able to preach at Mass:

Let women not be silent in churches, say Catholic scholars

Sr. Catherine Aubin, of the Pontifical University in Rome, and **Enzo Bianchi**, of the Bose Monastic community, both argue that preaching by women would be welcome in the Church today.

eNews says: why stop at just the preaching, Papa Francesco? But at least it's a step on from 1763...

"A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all."
Samuel Johnson



<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/let.women.not.be.silent.in.churches.say.catholic.scholars/81119.htm>

AN INVITATION

from Cathi Wareing:

CatherineWareing@hotmail.co.uk

Women's Celtic Spirituality weekend

Praying the Keelills Week happens every year in the Isle of Man.

This year is no exception from the 21st May-28th May walks and talks will happen daily across the island.

This year, as part of that week, I was asked to develop a weekend for women to look at Celtic Spirituality. After talking to a number of women a mixture of creative and reflective practice seemed to be in order.

The following programme is designed to enable participants to experience Manx Celtic culture through walking on the land, worshipping and praying in ancient sites and connecting with ancestors. Creative and reflective time will be guided to ensure maximum exposure to many of the thin places found on this beautiful island.

There will be no formal cost for the workshops but donations will be welcome to cover expenses.

Friday 20th May- arrive by boat from Liverpool. Lifts arranged to accommodation.

5pm-6.30pm- Story telling/poetry writing

6.30pm-8.30pm Food and prayer

8pm-9pm Drumming the Sunset

9pm return to accommodation

Women's Celtic Spirituality weekend

Sat 21st May- 10am Connect with the Praying the Keeils programme with a full day 20 mile walk or a half day 5 mile shorter walk

6pm -Food and Prayer in St Marks

7.30-9pm Creative Celtic writing and Illustration.

Sunday 22nd

7.30am Sunrise drumming + breakfast

10am Worship

2pm Connect with Praying the Keeils programme

6pm-8.30pm Food and prayer (local restaurant)

8.30pm -9pm Seaside walk and Ice Cream/pup

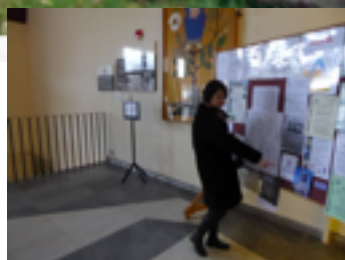
9.30 return to accommodation

Monday 23rd May

Return to Liverpool on the morning sailing

Changes to program subject to group discussion.

Lifts available.



Cathi placing strategic CWO cards on International Women's day...

Why Not?

Scripture, History and Women's Ordination

*Many thanks to Luca Badini and Séverine Deneulin for drawing the Editor's attention to this piece by **Robert J Egan, SJ**, published online in *Commonweal Magazine*, April 2008.*

Concluding our excursion through this piece begun in last month's issue, we highlight here only a few of Egan's points, made in response to the theologian Sarah Butler. For reasons of space, and your Editor's theological pusillanimity, we apologise for cherry-picking Egan's elegant argument. Please click for the whole article: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/why-not-0>

For Jesus and his contemporaries, after all, "priesthood" was something associated with sacrifice and service in the Jewish Temple. On this subject, Jesus said: "Go, and learn the meaning of the words: 'What I desire is mercy, not sacrifice'" (Mt 9:10-13; Hosea 6:6)....

There was no Christian "priesthood" in the early church. It made an entrance into Christian discourse only slowly and metaphorically in the second and third centuries as a way of thinking about elders and overseers. To make the category of "priesthood" the decisive one, then, separates us from the first three centuries of church history, as well as from the testimony of the New Testament.

Butler's argument requires that a clear, strong connection be made between the Twelve and these roles of presbyter and bishop. Did Jesus entrust to the Twelve "an office...of teaching, sanctifying, and governing"? Does ordination to the presbyterate "hand on" this office? The New Testament gives no clear evidence for such claims but suggests a much more varied and complicated situation.

The Twelve were called to travel with Jesus under uncertain conditions. Such travel was perilous and often punishing. In addition, the Twelve were symbolic of ancient patriarchal tribes that were to be made whole and gathered anew. Their function was to give testimony—about what God was promising and doing in Jesus and his ministry—which in those days women were forbidden by law to do. These factors, considered in context, make the all-male constitution of the Twelve more intelligible. But granting that Jesus chose only men to constitute the Twelve, is there any evidence that he intended the Twelve to be a model for later ministries and leadership roles in the new communities?...

We know that those called Apostles constituted a group larger than the Twelve. Paul and Barnabas are obvious examples, as were Andronicus and Junia, the latter a woman, whom Paul describes in Romans as "outstanding among the apostles" (16:7). How do we know from Jesus' way of acting that there was any relationship at all between "the Twelve" specifically and the "elders" (*presbyteroi*) and "overseers" (*episkopoi*) of early Christianity?

It seems likely that the Twelve were themselves not originally thought of as apostles. It is only in Luke/Acts that they become "the twelve apostles." Nor is it clear, as Butler too much takes for granted, that the Twelve had anything to do with ongoing instruction, or spiritual guidance, or governance in the early communities....

Consequently, to many Catholics it seems far-fetched to insist that because no women were chosen to be among the Twelve, no women could later be chosen to be elders or overseers, especially when there is general agreement that women did play significant leadership roles in the early Christian communities, even to a surprising extent. That fairly quickly after the first generation only men were chosen for official leadership positions could, however, be explained easily enough in terms of those very stereotypes, prohibitions, and cultural prejudices from which Jesus himself seems to have been so remarkably free....

There is no evidence in the New Testament that Jesus made any connection between the Twelve and any established offices or continuing roles of leadership in the local communities like elders or overseers. There is, for that matter, no evidence that Jesus himself explicitly intended or foresaw elders or overseers in the new communities. And there is certainly nothing in Jesus' way of acting or his teaching that suggests that he intended any of his followers to become priests. In regard to Sarah Butler's argument, one thing seems clear: If evidence of "Jesus' way of acting" were to be consistently normative, it's hard to see how we could justify having a priesthood at all...



The mere fact that the church has always, or almost always, up to a certain point, said or done something a certain way does not in itself preclude critical reflection, spiritual discernment, even radical change—or even reversal. This is apparently difficult for some Catholics to acknowledge or accept. But it isn't a theory. It is merely a fact of church history. There is nothing esoteric about it. A library card and an open mind are all that are needed to confirm it...

If there were reason to believe the magisterium had never made a serious mistake, this attitude would be more understandable, though still not entirely defensible. Yet the magisterium justified the institution of slavery, tolerated and endorsed a harsh misogyny and the oppression of women by men, defended the use of torture, blessed the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the burning at the stake of heretics, cultivated a disdainful and punitive attitude toward the Jewish people, insisted that sexual intercourse was morally

tolerable only for the sake of procreation, condemned democracy, ridiculed the idea of religious liberty, denied the legitimacy of the idea of human rights, and condemned the separation of church and state. These last six teachings were only reversed at Vatican II, which some church leaders now claim was in perfect continuity with the church history preceding it.

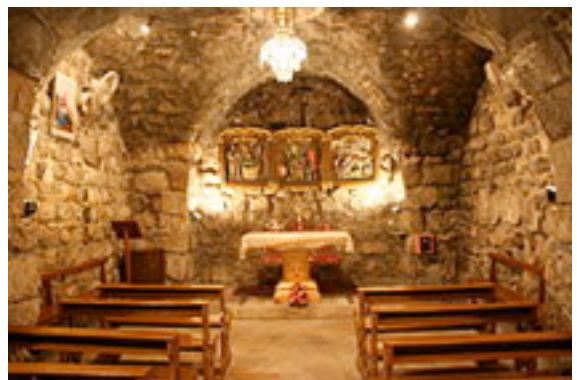
All these teachings were probably "settled doctrine" and considered definitive by the authorities who promulgated them and wrote about them...

Gender roles are different in different cultures and in different historical periods. To what extent they are socially constructed or are rooted in natural sex differences is difficult to determine. Through most of recorded history, in most cultures, women were subordinated to men; today we believe men and women are essentially equal. Throughout most of its history, the church reflected this subordinated view of women; now it does not.

The church cannot remain exempt from the principles of its own social teaching. Catholics cannot bear witness to principles of justice, equality, subsidiarity, and participation, and claim exceptions for themselves. The question is this: Has the tradition of excluding women from the diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopacy really been faithful to the teaching and practice of Jesus? Or has it been part of a mostly unexamined and partially unconscious bias for subjecting women to men's authority and power? Which is the more believable interpretation of our history as a people?

This is a very important question, one that urgently needs and deserves an open, prayerful, learned, patient, and discerning conversation among Catholics today.

And yet it does not happen. And so the crisis deepens.



El Orden Sacerdotal, by Anselm Grün

We continue our series of summarizing in English a little book in Spanish by German Benedictine monk Anselm Grün entitled 'The sacerdotal order' (*El Orden Sacerdotal*, 2002, Madrid, San Pablo, German original 'Die Weihe'). This month, Séverine Deneulin (Bath) summarizes pp. 16-24 on 'The priest in the Bible and ecclesial tradition'.

Old Testament

In Judaism, the most representative functions of the priests were mainly to present offerings, to transmit God's blessing to everybody and to teach and transmit divine knowledge. Only men from the tribe of Levi could access priesthood.

New Testament

Priests do not appear much in the New Testament. They are most present at Jesus' Passion. Jesus became the enemy of priests through his actions. In Acts, priests are set as obstacles to the first Christian community. In the Letter to Hebrews, Jesus is described as the only true priest. In the Letters of Peter, it is the believers who are a 'holy priesthood' because they let themselves be guided by the Spirit of Jesus.

Bishop, Presbyter, Deacon

The primitive church named its ministers according to a terminology from the society of the time: supervisor (episcopos), ancient or leader (presbyteros) and servant (diakonos). These concepts describe functions in the community: supervision, leadership and service. These functions merged with the archetype characteristics of priests in the 3rd century, hence, the tension between the sacral and functional dimensions of the Christian concept of the priest. 'It is in that context that the question of women's representation in the first communities has to be set. In Paul's letters, it is clear that women presided over the Eucharistic meal, and that they participated like men in the leadership of local communities. From a historical perspective, there is no motive to exclude women from the presbyteral office.' (p. 19)

The priest in the ecclesial tradition

In the early Church, Jesus was the only person called a priest; it was the community which was priestly. With time, the image of leaders changed. From guides of a priestly people, bishops and presbyters became those who worked for lay people. Ordination came to mark the entrance into a priestly state (p. 21). It is not clear why priestly concepts came to be applied to community leaders. What we observed is that little by little, ordination was given the role of operating an internal transformation of the candidate to put distance between the ordained and the believers. The image of the priest became centred on the Eucharist, and other archetypical images of a priest became less important.

Protestant reform and Vatican II

Luther protested against the progressive transformation of the priest into a servant of the cult. Vatican II took his critiques on board by emphasising the common priesthood of all believers, the interpretation of the priestly ministry on biblical models and the image of Christ as prophet, priest and shepherd (king).

Next month (April CWO-news), you will find the summary pp. 16-24 on 'The ritual of the presbyteral ordination'.

NEWS, VIEWS, ACTIONS...

EXCLUSIVE: Controversial Swiss theologian pleads with Pope Francis to solve problem of infallibility



09 March 2016 | by Hans Küng

Hans Küng believes that the future wellbeing of the church is wrapped up in question of infallibility

Next week, Hans Küng, the Catholic priest and Swiss theologian, will celebrate his 88th birthday. The fifth volume of his complete works, titled Infallibility, has just become available from the German publishing house Herder & Herder. In connection with the release of Infallibility, Küng has written the following "urgent appeal to Pope Francis to permit an open and impartial discussion on infallibility of pope and bishops." The text of this appeal is being release simultaneously by National Catholic Reporter and The Tablet.

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/5254/0/exclusive-controversial-swiss-theologian-pleads-with-pope-francis-to-solve-problem-of-infallibility>

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/fgm_somalia_ban_rb_loc/?bUpmUdb&v=74187&cl=9687050561



SIGN to add your voice against FGM in Somalia
- see link above.

98% of girls in Somalia are subjected to female genital mutilation, the highest prevalence on the planet. But right now the government is considering a ban and our global support could help push the decision through. Add your voice now:

SIGN NOW

a bit of NON-NEWS...

You'll be glad to hear that your NatCog team wrapped the art of team Skyping last month. Easy-peasy... Thanks to Pat for impressive technical whizzery, and Katharine for rounding up the errant sheep as they trotted about the fields of CWO whimsy.

A MARRIED PRIESTHOOD?

Dr. James Flood of Bristol ACTA and CWO, writes:

A Call to Action seeks to get the Church to face up to the real problems faced by the Laity – the question of married clergy, the role of women in the Church, divorce, contraception etc etc. It is a difficult task as we do not wish to cause splits – rather to carry everyone with us! I think how overdue the Reformation was and what a disaster it was all at the same time!



Bishop Crispian Hollis

On 12th March, our **Clifton Diocesan** group met at St Nicholas of Tolentino to hear a talk by **Bishop Emeritus Crispian Hollis**. He outlined his personal journey and in particular focused on the need for clergy to have the choice of celibacy or marriage.

In answer to questions on the role of women he suggested that this represents the first step in the journey and will lead to change. It was positive but as a retired Bishop his influence is not what it was. However, Bishop Declan supports our activities and no doubt reflects our concerns at the Bishops' Conference.

Recently, the **Portsmouth Diocese** held a meeting in Winchester and Bishop Egan gave his approval. There we heard a feedback from **Bishop Doyle** who attended the Synod

on the Family – which he described as three weeks' hard work. He was optimistic that the Pope's open leadership will wear down the conservative reluctance to change.

eNews says: A perennial knotty one for CWO. Would a married priesthood for men kick the women's question further down the road - or prop open the doors to further change, as Bishop Crispian hopes? What do Members think?



CWO Annual Noddfa Retreat, 24 - 26 June, 2016

Now fully booked!

Waiting-list for possible cancellations: contact pippabonner@gmail.com



SPOTLIGHT...

Write in and tell us what you think...

Websites (apologies for smaller print – that's to fit them in!)

<http://womensordinationworldwide.org/>

Women's ordination worldwide CWO is member

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

US organisation supporting women's ordination

www.wijngaardsinstitute.org

All previous housetop websites can be reached via this address

<http://82.70.116.125/index.html>

Women Word Spirit

<http://womenandthechurch.org/>

Campaign for women's equality in Church of England

<http://wearechurchireland.ie/>

Concerned Irish Catholics committed to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of Vatican II and the theological spirit developed from it. Affiliated to International Movement We are Church (IMWAC)

<http://www.catholicchurchreform.com/>

A global network seeking renewal of the Church

<http://ncronline.org/>

National Catholic Reporter

<http://www.acalltoaction.org.uk/>

Catholics inspired by Vatican II.

<http://www.gras.org.uk/>

Group for rescinding the Act of Synod

<http://www.ccc4vat2.org.uk>

Catholics for a Changing Church

<http://lgcm.org.uk/>

Campaigns against and challenges homophobia and transphobia, especially within the Church and faith based organisations, as well as working to create and praying for an inclusive church.

<http://questgaycatholic.org.uk/>

Proclaims the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ so as to sustain and increase Christian belief among homosexual men and women. They offer pastoral support for LGBT Catholics friends and families Sign up for quarterly newsletter

<http://christianfeministnetwork.com/>

Christian Feminist Network - exploring faith and feminism

<http://www.spirituschristi.org>

A truly inclusive Catholic Church

<http://www.stcuthbertshouse.co.uk/Easter2015/>

Rachel is a professed hermit of the R C Diocese of Nottingham.

CWO Saints

Mary MacKillop
Ruth Norton
John Hatfield
Celia Greenwood
Michael O'Gara
Sheila Houlihan
Mary Daly
Estelle White
Pat McCarron
Marcella Althaus-Reid
Astrid Klemz
Jean Palmer
Elizabeth Rendall
Maureen Brown
Tissa Balasuriya
Jack Sutcliffe
Pat Bepko
Mary Ann Schoettly
Pam Skelton
Robert Kaggwa

Pray for us



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



CWO Merchandise

These items are great way to advertise CWO without costing you very much. I often see people in my rear view mirror admiring the wit of my car sticker!

You can leave the pens lying around in places where it might be difficult to leave a CWO leaflet. The badges attract a lot of attention with the slogan based on the letters of ROME. We now have mugs which as well as being practical are a good way of advertising CWO. You might like to send one to your bishop!

Biro - CWO logo, website and phone no	Purple with silver lettering Black ink		0.80	
CWO rectangular badge	Purple with white lettering Renewed Ordained Ministry for Everyone		Free (except please add postage £2)	
NEW!!! Mug CWO logo website "CWO's my cup of tea"	Purple on white Buy for your office, church tea room, meeting room		4.50 each 3 for £12 10 for £35	
P & P *see below				
Donation (optional)				

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name

Delivery address

Post code

Contact email or telephone number

Send completed form to: info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk for how to pay.

orders up to £10	4.00
orders £10 - 20	6.00
orders over £20	Free