



CWO

E-news
October, 2016 Issue 94

Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church



A WOMAN OF
COURAGE...

MARY
WARD

in this issue

OCTOBER

	PAGE
CWO GENERAL MEETING YORK	1
CONTENTS	2
AT THE GENERAL MEETING	3
SUMMARY OF AGM, AND MARY WARD	4 - 5
A NEW MEMBER'S THOUGHTS	6 - 7
CWO'S POSITION ON THE DIACONATE	7
OTHER NEWS & EVENTS	8 - 9
NEW CWO SAINTS: PETER NELSON	10
DAVID KONSTANT	11
ACTA BIRMINGHAM MEETING	12
CWO SAINTS	13
CWO MERCHANDISE	14
AWAKENING - BUY THE BOOK!	15

MARY RING, EDITOR

[HTTP://WWW.CATHOLIC-WOMENS-ORDINATION.ORG.UK/NEWS.HTM](http://www.catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk/news.htm)

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CWO members

gathered on 1st October at the **Bar Convent** in York for their **General Meeting**, and a wonderful day in the home of the Companions of Jesus. The Bar Convent is England's oldest living inhabited convent, and its Living Heritage Centre tells the life of **Mary Ward**, courageous pioneer and educator.



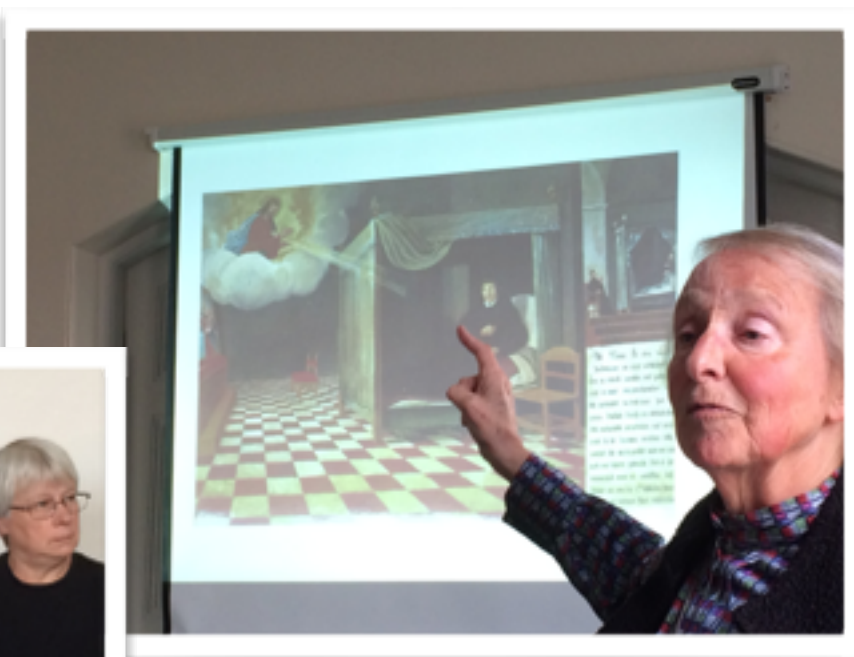
CWO AGM, Feast of St. Thérèse, York, 1st October, 2016

In the morning, we held our CWO AGM, covering a number of topics and developments, with Katharine in the chair, and Pat reporting.

- We are moving from our Constitution to Operational Guidelines instead. These will give us increased flexibility and operational freedom to respond to events and developments.
- Leadership of NatCog (National Co-ordinating Group) is now being steered by four Core Circle role holders: Administrator, Treasurer, Media Co-ordinator, and eNews Editor.
- Media Training is planned for the New Year, to help as many members as possible become comfortable and confident speaking or appearing in public.
- Our Membership is loyal and generous, but ageing. We want to open ourselves as much as possible to the young social-media group - ideas welcome.
- Welcoming the Women Deacons discussions, we are exploring launching a worldwide petition, to take physically to the Vatican - we'll need collegiality on this.
- Watch out for Vocations Sunday, 7th May 2017, and a worldwide WOW initiative.
- Next AGM - Saturday 30th Sept, at Bristol, courtesy of CWO Wales and SouthWest Group.

Sr Patricia Harriss, CJ on MARY WARD, Pioneer and Educator

In the afternoon, we were treated to a superb introduction to the life and times of Mary Ward, founder of the Congregation of Jesus, and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



There is no such difference
between men and women that
women may not do great matters...
and I hope in God it will be
seen that women in time to come
will do much.

© Mary Ward, Saint Omer 1617

wrote **Mary Ward** in 1617. Brought up in Penal times, and strongly influenced by Jesuits, she fought to run her schools and congregations of friends outside Enclosure, which was all but forced upon her.



encouraged, her Congregation was then bitterly suppressed, and she died long before its eventual approval in 1877. She was finally recognised as Foundress in 1909. Through it all, and in prison, she held: *“It is good... above all to be entirely and forever at our Master’s disposal.”*

She carried her fight even to Rome, walking 1,500 miles to Rome with a few companions, crossing the Alps on foot in winter. Her shoes, hat and crucifix are preserved at the Bar Convent. Initially



Pastoralis Romani Pontificis – the Bull of Suppression
...’the pretended Congregation of women or virgins called Jesuitesses was and is...null and void...we totally and completely suppress and extinguish them, subject them to perpetual abolition, and remove them entirely from the Church of God. We destroy and annul them...command all the Christian faithful to consider them...suppressed, extinct, rooted out, destroyed and abolished.’

OUR MEMBERS Alice Scarlett tells us of her own journey to CWO, and to our meeting in York:



I was listening to the radio one day. I often do. This time I heard about a conference that had been held in Philadelphia. The conference was attended by members for Catholic Women for Ordination. I wondered if I had heard correctly. I remember as I listened learning, that, because of simply attending, one particular Priest had been forbidden to celebrate Mass. Apparently he had not said anything controversial. Simply his presence had provoked what seemed to me to be a callous response.

I wanted to learn more. I didn't know the name of the Priest but felt moved to pray for him. After all, such a response cannot be said to be a demonstration of The Father's love for us.

I did a web search, (the joys of living in the 21st. Century). I found out that such an organisation did exist. It had lots of useful information and links available. There was a contact and membership form on line.

I didn't need to think about it. I simply joined which led me to meeting with a lively, joy filled group of women in York recently.

Perhaps I should back track a little. I became a Christian at 15. I had an adult Baptism in the Church of Scotland. I believed that God existed, I knew that I could pray to Him but didn't yet know that this communication could be two way. In the Presbyterian Church women have been allowed to preach from 1949. They have been Deaconesses since 1888. Mary Levison was the first woman to be Ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament 1978 – she also became the first woman to be appointed as Queen's Chaplain in 1991. For me it is difficult to fully appreciate the negative attitudes towards women in the Priesthood. I always took women in Ministry for granted.

I studied in England. I have worshipped in the Anglican Church and Baptist. Some might say fickle me but I honestly believe that I have always sought to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

I was received into full Communion with the Roman Catholic Church just over two and a half years ago. I have much to learn.

Sometimes I have to ask myself "Why Lord". Yes, I believe wholeheartedly in receiving Christ in the Eucharist. Nevertheless Mass is a predominantly male affair. This does baffle me.

I often ponder on Galatians 3: 28. Paul writes: *There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female for all are one in Christ Jesus.*



Debates regarding Scripture continue. There is, I believe, a need to study Scripture, to pray and to ask the Father for understanding. Maybe some of us will embark on studying Latin, Greek and Hebrew?

The Roman Catholic Church is not alone in the refusal to ordain women. There are members of Evangelical Churches who believe with sincerity that a "woman's role is different". How often have you heard "Jesus was a man?"

Jesus always respected women. He appeared first to a woman – when that woman ran to tell the male disciples she was not believed. (John 20; 11 – 19)

All of us have, like our male counterparts, been given gifts and talents. Let us seek to use them in whatever way we feel that the Father is leading us.

MANY THANKS TO ALICE FOR THIS, and a warm welcome to CWO!

* * * * *

The Commission to examine the Diaconate for Women - a CWO view

We believe that there were women deacons for the first thousand years of the Church and many of us wish to have them reinstated.

Were the women deacons equal to the male deacons in terms of a sacramental ordination?

Some say no, but, yes, women did have the same sacramental ordination as men. See www.womendeacons.org and www.wijngaardsinstitute.org for accurate and scholarly information about this, the history, their role, etc.

Why do we have differing views in CWO?

Some of us believe that having women deacons perpetuates hierarchical clericalism: that deacons are the first of three stages of a hierarchy: deacons, priests and bishops. Women deacons would become part of the clergy and would perpetuate the "them and us" dualistic mentality.

My view as a CWO member.

Others, including me, see it as a start to recognising that some women have a calling to sacramental ministry as deacon and/or priest. As in the Church of England, people would get used to seeing that women have the calling, gifts, competence and experience to manage a sacramental role of service: taking Services of Weddings and Funerals, community work, teaching and preaching. Some women feel called by the Spirit to this service, and it needs to be discerned and tested, and who can deny that some women are called?

Other women wish to become priests and wouldn't want this to be put on a back burner as a result of women deacons being "allowed." Some of us want to be able to give "recognised" sacramental help to others, and though all of us do this to some extent, the RC Church needs to welcome women priests as part of collaborative priestly team ministry in a less hierarchical, less discriminatory and secretive Church, where we are called as priests from our local communities. And at a time of a shortage of clerical male priests, and parishes are closing, why are we shutting out this possibility?

Our many thanks to Pippa Bonner for this useful nutshell view on a complicated topic.

OTHER NEWS...

The 4th Annual ACTA Conference - London

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The Evolving Church - Where are we going with Pope Francis?

Speakers:

[Professor Tina Beattie](#), Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Roehampton in London and Director of the Digby Stuart Research Centre for Religion, Society and Human Flourishing.

[Dr Werner Jeanrond](#), Master of St Benet's Hall at the University of Oxford

Our members will be deeply familiar with the pioneering work of Professor Tina Beattie, but some may be less so with that of Dr. Werner Jeanrond. They may care to re-visit their Tablet of 25th February, 2016, to read *The State We're in, and How to Get Out of It*, where Dr Jeanrond outlines how challenging failing structures and thinking in the Church is the most promising form of loyalty:

"Declining numbers of priests looking after declining numbers of parishioners is a picture that reflects just how much the Roman Catholic Church in Europe is not in good shape... In a few years it will be gone.

... Against this background, it seems anachronistic to debate whether or not priests should be allowed to marry or whether or not women should be permitted to join the declining group of territorial priests ordained to serve an outdated model of Church....

A pilgrim church will always seek to meet women and men where they can be found, rather than waiting for them to cross the threshold of incomprehensible and obsolete church structures."

A pdf copy of Dr Jeanrond's paper will be attached to our mailout.



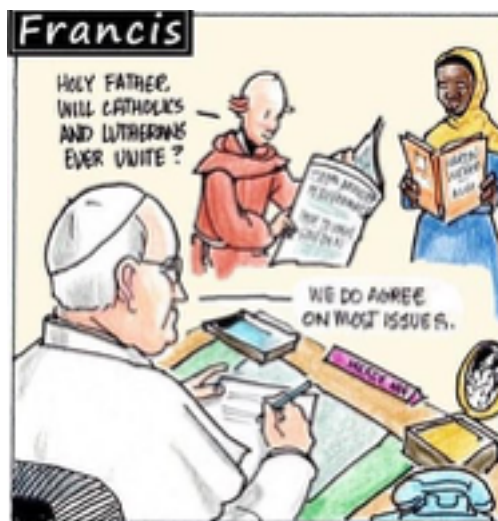
MARY MCFARLAND IS THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF JESUIT COMMONS: HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE MARGINS (JC:HEM). Under her leadership, the organization has developed a model for higher education tailored

to populations around the world unserved and underserved by mainstream higher education. In the process, she has learned not only to construct innovative solutions from scratch but also to raise her voice on behalf of women affected by violence and challenge others to follow her example.....

When asked whether she thought that it made a difference that JC:HEM was headed by a woman, McFarland responded: "It is essential, not because of me personally but because having women in leadership roles encourages other women to keep coming to school." According to McFarland, meeting women leaders also gives men in cultures where men and women normally do not work together the permission to collaborate with a woman and test this new territory. For the same reasons, McFarland believes that it is important for JC:HEM to have a substantial proportion of women on its Board of Directors. "More than just speaking about women in leadership," she concludes, "it matters seeing women who are heads of organizations and see that women leadership can work."

<http://voicesoffaith.org/transforming-lives-margins/>

For members not yet familiar with **Francis, the comic strip**, you can sign up for a weekly treat at the **NCR Online**:



<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/francis-chronicles/francis-comic-strip-274>

PETER NELSON - A NEW CWO SAINT, R.I.P.

We offer our deepest condolences to Pippa Bonner and her family on the death of her stepfather, a great supporter of our cause. Pippa writes:



My stepfather Peter Nelson (1932-2016) died an hour into his birthday: 24th September. He was aiming to live until his birthday! He is known to some CWO members, was a great supporter of our cause and taught on the CWO York Course. He was a priest for many years in Scotland.

After a period living in France in the late 1960s he returned to Scotland and became frustrated at how slowly the reforms of Vatican II were being put into practice. Latterly he taught in a seminary and encouraged all students to do an evening class in cookery so they could look after themselves in post-live-in housekeeper times. He became a great cook!

He left the Seminary in 1971. Sometime later he married my widowed mother and with her brought up my then 4 year old brother. Our father had died and me and my sister had left home by then, but we all became close to Peter. I realise that I "caught" my reforming zeal from him, and when in my 40s I decided to do an MA in Theology to learn more to explore and back up my instinct that women should be able to be priests, he patiently read my assignments and supported me in persisting with the MA and the reform movement.

He taught at Ratcliffe School. His subject was history but the Rosminians entrusted him with some of the Religious Education too at a time when many priests "leaving" were treated with suspicion and hostility by many in the Church. He understood some of the exclusion women feel who believe they have a vocation to priesthood, but he shared CWO's position that women's priesthood would need to be in a reformed, non clerical, non patriarchal and less hierarchical church.

I said I would be asking if his name could be added to the CWO Saints List a little while before he died and he smiled happily... RIP.

AND ANOTHER NEW CWO SAINT, R.I.P.

DAVID KONSTANT BISHOP EMERITUS OF LEEDS

Pat Brown writes:



Bishop David was an inspirational man who championed many justice issues in his lifetime.

He fought for the use of inclusive language and supported Leeds CWO by allowing our meetings to be advertised in the local free Catholic paper that went to all churches. He

wrote to us that women's ordination was something which "can and must be discussed" directly challenging the Dubium which banned discussion on women's ordination.

Back in the 80's when HIV first began to be a danger to the gay community in the UK, there had been comments in the press more or less saying that they got what they deserved. I remember Bishop David saying to a packed Leeds Cathedral that discriminating against gay men was becoming the "new apartheid".

He died on 9 October and will be much missed. I would like to add him to our list of CWO saints.





ACTA – The Role of Women in the Church



*Myra Poole & Pippa Bonner,
co-authors of 'Awakening'*

with Cathy Wattebot and John Armstrong

Newman House, 29 Harrison's Rd, Edgbaston B15 3QS

Sunday, October 23rd, 1.30 (tea/coffee) for 2, till 4.30.

No charge. Everyone welcome – ACTA members and visitors

ACTA website: acalltoaction.org.uk

local contact: cathy.wattebot@gmail.com

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 Regini
Mary Ann Schoettly
Pam Skelton
Robert Kaggwa
Mike Ward
Anne Hepburn
Peter Nelson
David Konstant

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)				

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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

AWAKENING

Catholic Women's Ordination from the Public Square,

by Myra Poole and Pippa Bonner.

£10.00 post free, from info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk

