



CWO

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eNews

Issue 118

A leading voice for women in the R C Church

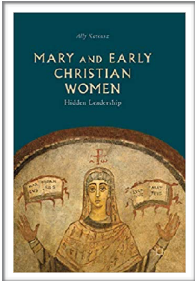
# "PRECIOUS WINDOWS ONTO THE PAST"



## WERE THERE ONLY WOMEN AT THE ANASTASIS ALTAR?

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**Dr Ally Kateusz: UK Book Launch**  
**Mary and Early Christian Women**

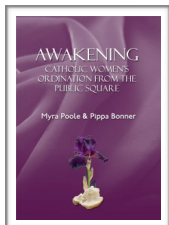
We hear her astonishing research at our Annual Gathering

p 7 We report our CWO AGM. Briefly.



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QUEST Conference Report



CWO  
Saints and Sales

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pp 10 - 11 Open Letter to the Hierarchy, and News



We're really sorry if you missed Dr Ally Kateusz's amazing evidence of **gender-parallel worship** at our UK launch of her new book, **Mary and Early Christian Women**, at our Annual Gathering on 5th Oct. I urge you to buy her book, or download it for free!  
<https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783030111106>, or <http://www.womenpriests.org/women-at-the-altar-in-early-christian-art/>.

And then tell everyone else about it! You'll not be able to stay quiet,

Mary Ring, Editor.

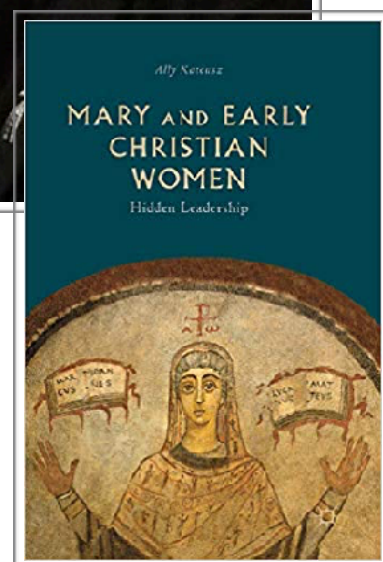
[news@catholic-womens-ordination.co.uk](mailto:news@catholic-womens-ordination.co.uk)

<https://www.facebook.com/CatholicWomensOrdination/>

<http://catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk/>

<https://twitter.com/CWOcampaign>

# WOMEN AT THE ALTAR? THE EVIDENCE!



**A packed room of members and guests of Catholic Women's Ordination heard Dr. Ally Kateusz of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research present her ground-breaking findings on women's ministry in the early Christian Church, at our CWO Annual Gathering in Birmingham on 5th October.**

Following the highly successful reception in Rome this summer of her new book, *Mary and Early Christian Women*, CWO were blessed to host its UK launch. Introduced by CWO member Mirian Duignan, also of the Wijngaards Institute, Dr Kateusz held our rapt attention for an hour's presentation, and an hour of questions. As an art historian, she uses artefacts as "precious windows onto the past."

She explained how she had set out on her



research into early



Christian ministry expecting to find the usual male priestly role-modelling.

To her surprise, she realised that what she was seeing in early Christian art was either gender-parallel worship, or all-women ministry. Because no liturgical documentation survives from the first seven centuries, (we ask, why not?) her art-historian's approach centres upon examining artefacts, which are less susceptible to destruction, and which are supported by other surviving documents.

Thus, **the three oldest artefacts to depict people at the altar of a real church**, from the three most important churches in Christendom - namely, an ivory pyx from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, (above left), a sepulchre from Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (Constantinople) (above right), and an ivory reliquary box from Old St Peter's in Rome - all depict women at the altar.



Two show gender-parallel worship, with women and men mirroring each side of the altar. The third, the ivory pyx from the 500s clearly depicting the Anastasis altar at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, (above left), depicts only women, and no men.

Ally also showed us how the beautiful mosaics in San Vitale, Ravenna, of the Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora carrying the bread and wine respectively, mirrored this liturgical pattern, of men with

the bread, and women with the cup.

She noted that the maniples for wiping the chalice are worn or carried only by the women, not the men. Could there be any higher authority for gender-parallel liturgical ministry, than one carried out by the Emperor and Empress themselves?



Ally also questioned why this magnificent 7th century mosaic of Mary Archbishop (in the centre), leading Peter, Paul and popes and saints in prayer, at the Lateran Baptistery in Rome, is still hidden from public view?

Clearly commissioned to be the focal point of St Venantius Chapel, today you will only see this beautiful mosaic if you lift the red rope barring your access, tiptoe round behind the altar, and crane your neck upwards.



Why?

In the early 1900s the Vatican had decreed that representations of Mary as priest were to be removed.

Consequently, when you go into the chapel today, you immediately see a very different Mary; meek, mild and maternal with her eyes cast down, at the centre of this obscuring altarpiece (right) which was deliberately erected right in front of the mosaic to hide the 7th century Archbishop Mary.

All that is left visible to us is Christ, with a couple of angels, peeping over the altarpiece pediment. Not only has Mary vanished, but so also has the red cross on her archbishop's pallium.

Speaking and taking questions for two hours, Ally received rapturous applause. Questions centred around the Vatican's proclaimed rejection of women's priestly ministry, Pope Francis's stalled Commission into women deacons, and the Vatican's silence over these new findings.

Dr Ally Kateusz's present research is into the invention of the all-male priesthood in the Catholic Church. Watch this space! We are profoundly grateful to Ally for bringing us her astonishing research, and for growing our understanding of women and ministry in the early Church.



# WHAT WE THOUGHT

"It was groundbreaking and I can't wait to share what I learnt there. In fact I already have told of her findings to anyone who will listen!"

"Let's hope the evidence gets before those who need to see it; what, I wonder, will it take to open minds as well as doors?"



"I have known several women priests in the Church of England, some of them well as close friends, and I know that their vocation is every bit as real and irresistible as any man's."

What I simply cannot get my head round is the idea that God would call women in the Church of England, and many other churches, but not in the Catholic Church.



The arrogance of those who say that seems to me breathtaking, as claiming to know the mind of God better than God does....



I think it will take copious amounts of prayer to change the hearts and minds that need to be changed if the inhumanity of it is to end."

"There was a certain sense of justifiable outrage about the treatment of women which came through and you all channelled it and harnessed it well. Ally's talk was very interesting and her research is powerful."

## THANK YOU, EVERYONE!

YOU **ARE** OUR VOICES IN THE WIDER CATHOLIC CHURCH....

# WE ALSO HELD OUR AGM



Thanks to Katharine for chairing,  
and Rhiannon for Minuting.

We said a sad farewell to Lisa on NatCog,  
and a big welcome to Penelope.  
More in our next eNews!



# PARISHIONERS' CALL

**KATHARINE SALMON, MIKE KERRIGAN and  
SR. KATRINA ALTON**

in conversation, 26th Oct, Salisbury.

**Don't miss it!**

Booking essential: [parishionerscall@theclose.org.uk](mailto:parishionerscall@theclose.org.uk)

## Towards Wholeness

Re-envisioning the roles of women and men  
in Catholic Church ministry



PARISHIONERS'  
CALL



**Katharine Salmon**  
Catholic Women's  
Ordination



**Sr Katrina Alton**  
Congregation of the Sisters  
of St Joseph of Peace



**Mike Kerrigan,**  
Movement for Married Clergy

**October 26 2019,**  
12.30pm - 4.30pm  
**Salisbury**

St Osmund's Church Hall, 95 Exeter St, Salisbury SP1 2SF

£3 donation towards expenses including lunch. Pre-booking essential.

Email: [parishionerscall@theclose.org.uk](mailto:parishionerscall@theclose.org.uk)

<https://www.parishionerscall.com>



# QUEST CONFERENCE 2019

FAMILY MATTERS. RAINBOW FAMILIES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



*Mary McAleese chats to Quest members*

Some of you may know of **Quest**, an organisation that since 1970s has provided pastoral support to lesbian, gay and transgender Catholics.

This year's Quest Conference 'Family Matters. Rainbow Families and the Catholic Church' took place at the University of Winchester over the second weekend of August. The conference was open to members and allies, and was centred around two main speakers: Mary McAleese, former President of Ireland, and Sam Hall, a GP from Brighton who transitioned to man in 2013.

The conference was interspersed with prayers, moments of reflection, and time to socialise. It was observed how precious socialising in a safe space was for individuals who had been marginalised in other situations of their lives, including by the Church. It was also quite warming to hear that many members had had very positive experiences of their parish priests and congregations, that did not match the too often found homophobia in the hierarchy... perhaps an experience some of CWO share? In fact there are now a number of Dioceses in the UK organising regular Masses for the LGBT+ community, family, friends and allies (see Quest website for details, <https://questlgbti.uk>).

The experience of Sam Hall and his literally life-saving transition, that had to be managed with his three children and his then husband, was very moving. His transition meant that he was not suicidal anymore and he started living his life more fully, despite a number of unreasonable bureaucratic hurdles that affected his medical practice. As usual, a personal account has a much greater impact on our understanding than an argument made on questions of principle or abstract reasoning.

Mary McAleese talked about her own personal experience of being a relative to gay men. She actually refused to participate in the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in August 2018 because of its exclusion of LGBTI church members and the meetings' history of homophobia, and instead led the Dublin Gay Pride. She recounted how big Irish families have been a site to learn about difference for her, just because of their sheer numbers and the statistical occurrence of difference. She used this example to describe how once we open our eyes to the sameness in difference in our personal encounters, we can more easily argue for the rights of the people who are marginalised in the Church - because we feel, we know (even before we can discuss it intellectually) that we are all, in our humanity, part of the body of Christ.

And this is the question Mary MacAleese left us with- are we expecting too little from the Church and Pope Francis? Are we not making excuses for how slow the process of inclusion of all in the Church is, when we actually know very well what the message of Christ is?

Thank-you to a CWO member for providing this.

## OPEN LETTER TO THE HIERARCHY

October of 2019

Dear Bishop McElroy,

The preparatory document for the coming synod, “Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology,” calls for “structural and personal changes” and “integral conversion.” I write about the ordination status of women in the church. If the bishops proclaim that “women are not fully in the likeness of Jesus,” then is not the critical question: “What is it in Jesus’ likeness that women do not have?”

Callously, silence on this question leaves women unrecognized, uncalled, and voiceless in the church. Tragically, this silence keeps the church from honestly addressing enormous challenges in providing pastoral care and Eucharist. Distressingly, this silence writes off a growing multitude for whom the church is only a dehumanizing institution—the binary opposite of caring, trustworthy, and prophetic.

Is there a better theology than the patriarchal, anthropomorphic, literal thinking that is so confounds us? Can you advocate for a deeper metaphorical, and trinitarian theology? If, for example, it is not in his maleness that Jesus images the Father—if neither the Father nor the Spirit is biologically male—what is integral to the imago Dei?

In practicing pastoral care, two things stand out as we get older. One is our own experience. The other is responding to it. Will honest dialogue be possible in Rome—on the Incarnation, on what makes a human being, on what is essential in a pastoral caregiver? Will valiant women, like those present at the Cross and Resurrection, be disparaged and proven men be valorized? Will misogyny yet again rule the day?

Is there an integral Amazon ecology that does not include integral Amazon women?

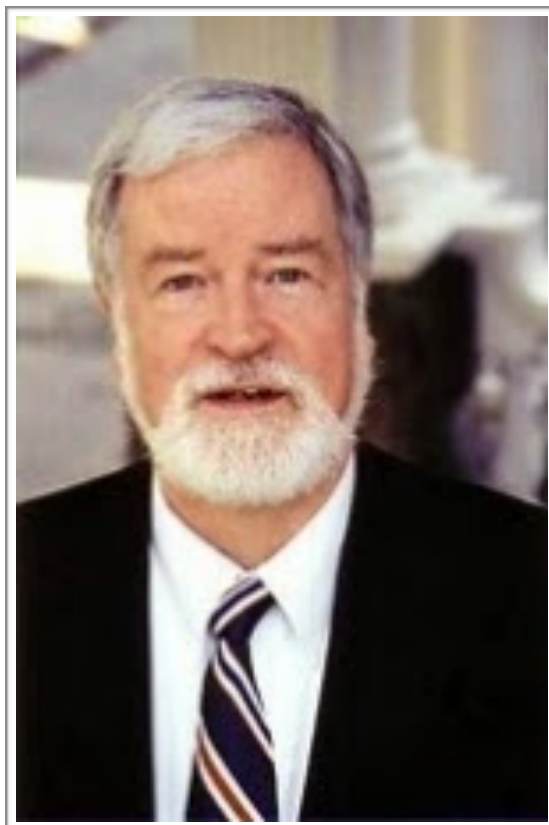
If you promise to uphold the church’s teaching, does this mean—ironically and impossibly—you forfeit the voice that allows you to teach? Is this not the perfect time to speak freely, boldly, and without fear?

Sincerely,

John J. Shea, O.S.A

P.S. Please feel free to share this letter and its companions with synod-supporting men and women who might find them helpful.

John J Shea, O.S.A., Ph.D., M.S.W., was ordained in 1967. He taught in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University and was Professor of the Practice of Pastoral Care and Counseling; Dual Degree Director (MA/MA and MA/MSW) School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College. He has been writing to the hierarchy calling for an explanation of the refusal to see women as “fully in the likeness of Jesus” for many years now.



John J Shea, O.S.A.

# NOTICES

**HST&M Programme 2019/20**

**Live Lectures**  
St Mark's Church, Leeds Road HG2 8AY  
10 am to 12 noon Continental Breakfast from 9.30 am

**23 Nov 2019 Revd Prof Jeremy Duff**  
*Today is the day—for everyone!*  
*Growing Church in Luke and Acts*

**7 Dec 2019 Dr Elaine Storkey**  
*Gender and Justice*  
**at Mowbray Community Church**

**25 Jan 2020 Rt Revd James Jones**  
*The spiritual and moral imperatives in the life of Christ*

**28 Mar 2020 Revd Dr Malcolm Guite**  
*Christ and the Poetic Imagination*

**Bibletrack Seminars**  
(DVD & facilitated discussion)  
Mowbray Community Church, Westmoreland Street HG1 5AT  
10 am to 12 noon Continental Breakfast from 9.30 am

**19 Oct 2019 Dr Jane Williams**  
*Luke & Acts part 1*

**15 Feb 2020 Dr Jane Williams**  
*Luke & Acts part 2*


**25 Apr 2020 Dr Chris Tilling**  
*St Paul's letters part 1*

**9 May 2020 Dr Chris Tilling**  
*St Paul's letters part 2*

Cost including breakfast and mid-morning refreshments  
**Lectures** £8  
(Students £5, Under 18 free)  
**Seminars** £5 (Students £3)

**Season ticket**  
(All lectures and seminars) £25  
(Students £15)

**www.hstm.org.uk**



## Women's Ordination Worldwide - WOW



**WOW**, the international body for all campaigns for women's ordination, meets in Lisbon 18 - 20 Oct, 2019.

**DR LUCA BADINI**, of the Wijngaards Institute, will speak to delegates on: "Women Leaders in the Early Church: Historical Evidence - But Does it Matter?"

**Pat Brown** - who is CWO to many of us - will retire after decades of service to women. Mary Ring takes her place.

Please pray for us: <http://womensordinationcampaign.org>

## 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  
Stanley Baxter  
David Konstant  
Eileen Sikorski  
Fr Kevin Kelly  
Fr Owen Hardwicke  
Jackie Hawkins  
Peter Seddon  
Veronica Seddon  
Sr. Catherine Houlihan

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! says Pat Brown.

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!

		how many	unit cost	total
Biro - CWO logo, website and phone no	Purple with silver lettering Black ink		0.80	
Car sticker CWO logo website and phone number	Purple on cream		1.50	
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)				
<b>PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY</b>				
Name				
Delivery address				
Post code				
Contact email or telephone number				
Send to Pat Brown, 4 West Park Gardens, Leeds, LS8 2HD				

## \*Postage and packing

orders up to £10	3.00
orders £10 - 20	5.00
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](mailto:info@catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk)

address as above for CWO Merchandise

