



CWO

E-news
Nov – Dec, 2016 Issue 95

Challenging Institutional Sexism in the Roman Catholic Church

CONGRATULATIONS! TO THE NEW BISHOP OF ST DAVID'S



AND A BLESSED
CHRISTMASTIDE
TO ALL OUR
READERS!



in this issue

NOV - DEC

	PAGE
WALES' FIRST WOMAN BISHOP	3
CWO MEDIA TRAINING	4
WIJNGAARDS AT THE UN	5 - 6
ACTA BIRMINGHAM	7
ANNUAL CONFERENCE	8 - 9
CWO CONDOLENCES	9
BOOK REVIEW, OUR MERCIFUL GOD	10 - 11
CWO DIARY DATES	11
ON RESERVING PRIESTLY ORDINATION - CWO RESPONSES	12 - 14
CORRECTIONS	14
CWO MERCHANDISE & PRAYER	15 - 16
BUY AWAKENING! THE BOOK	17

WITH RENEWED THANKS TO ALL OUR READERS FOR YOUR RESPONSES, HELP, SUBMISSIONS AND INTEREST.

WISHING YOU ALL THE JOYS AND BLESSINGS OF CHRISTMASTIDE, AND A PEACEFUL AND OPTIMISTIC NEW YEAR,

MARY RING, EDITOR

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[HTTP://WWW.CATHOLIC-WOMENS-ORDINATION.ORG.UK/NEWS.HTM](http://WWW.CATHOLIC-WOMENS-ORDINATION.ORG.UK/NEWS.HTM)



"It's to appease the traditionalists."

GOOD NEWS!

The Church in Wales has elected its first woman Bishop, **Canon Joanna Penberthy**, on November 2nd 2016! The Archbishop of the Church in Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, stressed that Canon Jo was elected as she was the best person to take on the job of Bishop:



“She has considerable gifts – she is an excellent preacher and communicator, can relate to all sections of the community, is a warm, charismatic, caring priest and someone who is full of joy,” he said.

“Joanna knows this diocese – she worked here for 11 years and was a Canon of this cathedral so she is on

familiar territory. She has also worked in the dioceses of Llandaff and St Asaph and has been the Provincial evangelism officer so she knows the province intimately. She has also been serving in the diocese of Bath and Wells so she brings that experience too. The Diocese of St Davids is enormously lucky to have her as its next bishop and I shall be absolutely delighted to consecrate her.”



Adrian and Joanna Penberthy

Canon Jo said, “I am immensely humbled and honoured at the trust that has

been placed in me. I am very much looking

forward to returning to St Davids and serving God’s people as their Bishop. As the first woman to be elected to episcopal orders in the Church in Wales I hope that my ministry will be an expression of our common calling to live Christ.”

<http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/news/2016/11/new-bishop-of-st-davids-elected/>

CWO Wales and the West have sent a message of congratulations to the Bishop elect. Interestingly, given recent developments in the RC Church, Canon Jo was made a Deaconess in 1984; ordained a Deacon in 1987 and then ordained a Priest in 1997 (one of the first). Can we see this as a message of hope for us?

With thanks to Amanda Ryan, CWO Wales and South-West

CWO MEDIA TRAINING DAY

Does this mean YOU?



Following the success of our first course, Christina and Chris Rees are planning another **CWO media training day** specially for us in Central London early next year. Please watch this space!

CWO plans to pay for the course and your travelling expenses. However places will be limited as we will be practising interviewing...so please think about this great opportunity. Introverts are good at this too...! We are taught useful tips.

They have done the course with some of us before the Pope's visit. I found it helped me to focus on what I wanted to get across and think about the listener or viewer hearing or watching, and it gave me confidence. It also may help those who write letters or post online, but primarily this will be a course for CWO members willing to be interviewed.

Chris and Christina Rees, below

Sometimes interviews can be done over the phone. It would be great to train more of our members living around the UK, as local radio often like to hear a local person if possible.

Please contact:

pippabonner@gmail.com or
07961 854840

Pippa Bonner,
CWO Media Coordinator



WIJNGAARDS INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC RESEARCH

CATHOLIC SCHOLARS' STATEMENT ON THE ETHICS OF USING CONTRACEPTIVES

In preparation for the 50th anniversary of the publication of "Humanae Vitae: On the Regulation of Birth," the Wijngaards Institute gathered an interdisciplinary task force of experts to re-assess the ethics of using contraception from within the Catholic tradition. The resulting collaborative research report will be made available online on the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research website in October 2016. The report has been created using the Wikipedia model, and so it will remain open to amendments and expansions from qualified contributors registered to the website.

The Statement presents a summary of the findings. It is available online at <http://www.wijngaardsinstitute.com/statement-ethics-using-contraceptives/>, in Dutch, English, German, Italian and Spanish.

Its conclusions are based on interdisciplinary scholarship which can be verified independently. For that reason, we are submitting the Statement for wider world endorsement, and have launched the Scholars' Statement on the Ethical Use of Contraceptives at a UN-hosted meeting in New York on 20th September 2016, entitled "Keeping the Faith in Development: Gender, Religion & Health."

Our goal is to encourage the Catholic hierarchy to reverse its stance against so called "artificial" contraceptives. To this end, we will make the Statement's findings known to Catholic church officials and opinion leaders (e.g. bishops, priests, religious sisters, management and medical staff of Catholic health care facilities, Catholic social workers, journalists, etc.), as well as ordinary Catholics.

Our findings and theological materials will also be made available to all UN departments

and development agencies who are trying to navigate the relationship between religious belief and women's health as they work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, August 2016

Dr Luca Badini Confalonieri, General Director of the Wijngaards Institute, presenting the Statement at the UN launch.



THE STATEMENT

Summary: The official papal teaching banning the use of “artificial” contraceptives for family planning is based on the belief that the biological “laws of conception” show that each and every act of sexual intercourse has procreation as their natural “finality” and “significance.” From such a belief, the moral requirement is inferred that couples engaging in sexual intercourse must always be open to procreation. However, the vast majority of acts of sexual intercourse do not have the biological “capacity” for procreation, and therefore they cannot have procreation as their “finality” or “significance.” As for the intention of the agents, the Bible identifies a variety of morally worthy non-conceptive motives for engaging in sexual intercourse. This is confirmed by the evolutionary biology of human reproduction, and sociology, among other disciplines.

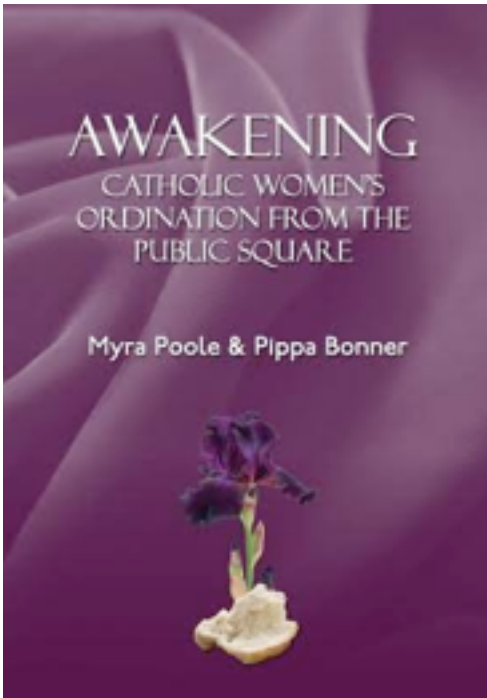
The use of modern contraceptives can facilitate one or more of sexual intercourse’s non-conceptive meanings, as well as have additional morally worthy purposes – e.g. family planning, following the requirements of responsible parenthood (HV §10). Therefore, the decision to use modern contraceptives can be taken for a variety of morally worthy motives, and so it can be responsible and ethical.

To see more, and a list of authors and principal signatories, go to:

<http://www.wijngaardsinstitute.com/statement-on-contraceptives/>



ACTA BIRMINGHAM



'A REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTION TO SOLVING WOMEN'S INEQUALITY AS ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TODAY'.

*Luca Badini Confalonieri, PhD in Theology (Dunelm),
Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research*

A meeting in Birmingham on 23rd October launched "Awakening" in the Midlands as part of the ACTA meeting schedule, with thanks to Myra Poole (who was not well enough to make a difficult journey but helped us get going) and to Pippa Bonner and to Pat Brown for their excellent inputs.

"The Role of Women in the Church" had a strong attendance of around 86 people and there was a good 'buzz'.

The topics of ordination to priesthood and diaconate were covered, and also issues such as the wider negative effects of the church neglecting women's gifts on those called to ministry, on women's poverty and on the life of church communities.

Putting women's ministry in the context of the place of lay people as a whole led to lively group discussions focussed on what we could do together and on renewal of the church and its structures, without sidelining the issue itself. Some evidence from around the world showed how the church's attitude harms women in poverty.

Most striking was the feeling that all this led on to ideas of a renewal starting with ourselves in our parish situations, with such development seen as possible.



ACTA - A Call To Action



The Evolving Church

Where are we going with Pope Francis?

London 26th November 2016

Werner Jeanrond spoke clearly of how Francis is changing the climate - inviting us to move out from churches and chapels with God's disinterested loving gaze.

What does God expect from us? Jesus' creative way to respond, with continuing presence of the Spirit - here is where it is to happen. He mentioned a study of vibrant



parishes in the USA (Bill Simon), and mentioned their characteristics: shared leadership teams, collaborative and delegating, refusal to close down viable communities, welcoming liturgies with good music, hospitality and participation, social outreach and care, and use of new technology.

There was some discussion about Heythrop and a suggestion we might wish to write to appeal to Vincent Nichols given that a plan for collaboration with Roehampton Institute remains on the table.



It is hard to do justice to **Tina Beattie's** lively address and of the Q&A session. A very few of many ideas: the state of the church in our time - it is not destined for extinction,

but open to God's grace - don't wait for tomorrow; pointing out the downplaying of women's roles in scriptures, even though they are so plainly there in vital positions; the insistence on feminine gender for the Church, especially JP2 (although church in Polish is a masculine word) - what exactly are the specifically feminine parts of the church? The deeply problematic "theology of the body" suitable only for those naturally just masculine or feminine with very regular periods. More than a quarter of a million deaths in childbirth annually, the huge majority among poor women - where is the church in that situation?

The smaller scale discussion groups showed the encouragingly varied nature of ACTA people. There was by no means a unanimous point of view, but an exchange of views which is what is often largely lacking in a catholic parish.

With many thanks to Cathy Wattebot, Midlands, for both reports

<http://www.acalltoaction.org.uk/> for the transcript of both talks.

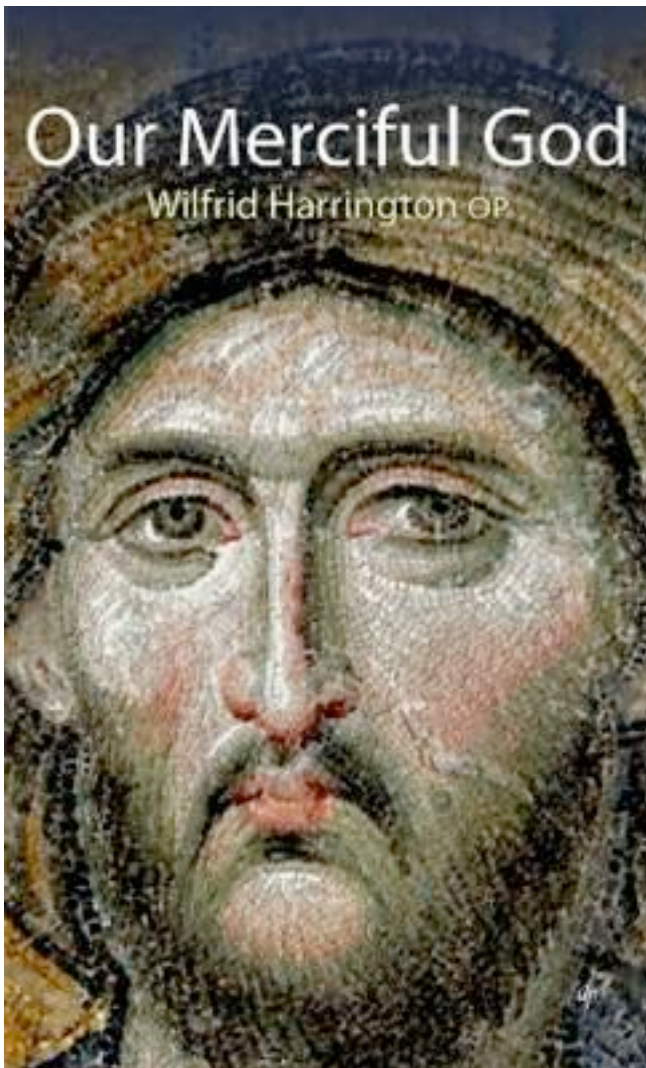
RIP

It is with much sadness that we offer our condolences to one of our longest-serving members, Pat Pinsent, on the death of her husband Henry.

Our thoughts and prayers will be with Pat and her family at this time.

Our Merciful God

by Wilfrid Harrington OP, 2016, Dominican Publications.



When I was shown (yet another) book about mercy at the end of the Year of Mercy, I thought I was “mercied out”.

However, this short book (79 pages) by Wilfrid Harrington, a Dominican Scriptural scholar and teacher, is interesting, distilled from some of his earlier writing, and merciful and encouraging to the reader. I too will try to be brief. There is a particular thought which I think develops into an idea particularly relevant to CWO and it is to do with the image of God.

The first line of his Preface says *“I have become increasingly conscious of the absolute importance of our image of God – how we perceive God. It determines our response to God and how we live out our response.”* For once it seems to me the word “absolute” is used correctly as our image of God is totally key to our lives, and in several paragraphs’ time I will hope to show how Harrington’s development of the image of God seems to me so relevant to CWO.

Along the way he talks about God’s preferential option for the poor and marginalised and that God advocates

“**distributive justice**”: the redistribution of power and goods. We are more familiar with retributive justice: giving people their just deserts: punishment or wages. (p.26.) He then makes the interesting point that God is a God of injustice! This is because God accepts our guilty plea, dismisses the case (forgiveness) and acquits the guilty (which we do not deserve.) God’s word is always forgiveness and our salvation is grace. He does not demand retribution. God has to take the consequences of our free decisions as God created us with free will. We have built up a picture of a God who punishes sinners and the contradiction is that God has a “**preferential option for sinners**” (p.31.)

Harrington takes us through Old and New Testaments, including the example of forgiveness and mercy in the Parable of the Prodigal (or as he prefers, the Lost) Son (Lk.15:11-32)(p.45). We might regard God as “not



fair” in saving and welcoming the wayward son. For those of us who have sympathised with the older son Harrington says he represents the scribe and Pharisee, the Torah observer who has followed the Law. God is offering him no less inheritance. Jesus is telling this parable to depict God’s gracious forgiveness, but also to defend Jesus’ own concern for the outcasts, written off by the Pharisees. We do not have to placate an angry God: we are reconciled to God by God, by Christ’s redemption, by grace, and we are liberated.

Harrington says, “We are unwhole and long for wholeness. We yearn for salvation.” (p.66) Salvation has been presented to us as transcending humanness but Harrington writes “This is tragic because salvation means nothing other than attaining perfect humanness. We are human beings created in the image of God. Our destiny is to be fully human as God understands humanness. This is the goal...What I must learn ...is that my salvation is God’s achievement.” [not mine]... “Salvation is the whole liberation of the wholly human. And it is only when men and women are free to be truly human that the human person becomes the image of God. It is only so that the true being of God can be revealed. Being image of God is not only being a reflection of God but being revelation of God. This is why the human person Jesus is the image of God.”(p.67)

But I want to offer two additional thoughts of my own to the sentence I have underlined. We often say in CWO: **women and men are created equally in the image of God.** It seems to me that if only male priestly ministry is permitted, God is only being partly imaged and only partly revealed. God’s creation and revelation are unable to flourish fully ...And we are being dualistic (or binary) here. **God has either no gender or is all genders.** We can no longer say women and men are the image and revelation of God: no gender or all genders are the image and revelation of God.

Our thanks for this thoughtful review to [Pippa Bonner](#), November 2016

DATES FOR OUR CWO DIARIES 2017

25th March	WOW Day of Prayer for women's ordination
7th May	Westminster Cathedral Piazza 10.15 - 12.15 VOCATIONS SUNDAY Action throughout the world
30th Sept	Annual Gathering and AGM Wales and South-West. Details to follow.

'On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone': Ordinatio Sacerdotalis'

Catholic Women's Ordination Worldwide responds to Pope Francis's remarks about the 1994 apostolic declaration

Pippa Bonner, Myra Poole & Pat Brown



As the Year of Mercy comes to an end, what an unfortunate remark for the Pope to make. In spite of all the good he has done he clearly has a very dangerous, un-theological blind spot.

The 1994 apostolic declaration introduced a new theological category – 'definitive'- without any consultation with Bishops and none of course with the majority of the church, the laity. This directive is now known as the 'Dubious Dubium' and one day will have to be revoked, if the Catholic Church is ever to have real credibility as a Christian, Christ-filled Church.

Moreover the damage of this blind spot carries with it a tremendous responsibility on being a primary cause of the terrible violence and poverty that many women suffer on a daily basis; they are seen as second class and inferior to men.

Erroneous teachings in any church are highly dangerous as they tend to influence young, unformed minds, and are hard to shake off in adult life. This leads to a twisted formation of conscience and reducing people to a lesser understanding of their own personal dignity and a fear of an overarching demanding God rather than the true nature of the Goodness of God.

'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full', (John 10:10). Male, female, lesbian, gay, straight, bisexual, transgender, and questioning are all called by God. All are equal.



... AND PAT BROWN WAS INTERVIEWED ON THE SUBJECT:



By David Gilbert on Nov 2, 2016

[HTTPS://NEWS.VICE.COM/STORY/POPE-FRANCIS-THE-COOL-POPE-SAYS-THERE-WILL-NEVER-BE-WOMEN-PRIESTS](https://news.vice.com/story/pope-francis-the-cool-pope-says-there-will-never-be-women-priests)

Pope Francis has been praised as a progressive pontiff, but on one subject he's decidedly old-school: the ordination of women as priests.

On his way back from a ceremony in Sweden to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation on Tuesday, Francis spoke to a group of journalists on board his plane and was asked if there might be women priests in the next few decades.

"On the ordination of women in the Catholic Church, the last word is clear," he said, referring to a letter published by Pope John Paul II published in 1994 that says female priests could never be ordained because Jesus chose only men to be his apostles.

When an incredulous journalist responded "But really forever? Never?" Pope Francis said, "If we read carefully the declaration made by St. John Paul II, it goes in that direction."

The problem is that not everyone views that letter as gospel. Indeed the Women's Ordination Conference, a group that works to ordain women as priests, calls the document "outdated, fallible and painful" and says Pope Francis should be looking elsewhere for inspiration.

"Instead of citing John Paul II, Pope Francis might have cited the Vatican's own Pontifical Biblical Commission that concluded in 1977 that there is no valid scriptural or theological reason for denying ordination to women, or looked to archeology and historical documents that show women's leadership in the early Church," the group said in a statement.

"He talks all the time about mercy, and he has no mercy on woman called to the priesthood," Pat Brown from Catholic Women's Ordination told VICE News.

While Francis is seen in many ways as the “cool pope,” on the issue of women becoming priests he has stuck very much to the traditional way of thinking. He declared this view publicly first in 2013 and again in 2015. The reason it’s still making news is because campaigners for a more equal Church had seen signs that Francis might be changing his stance on this topic.

“[I’m] not surprised but disappointed,” Brown said. “He has said this type of thing before, but he seemed more categoric yesterday. He had just come from a service where there was a [female] Lutheran priest and he had hugged her. You see these type of images and wonder what he is thinking.”

Pope Francis confused matters regarding female ministers further when he set up a commission earlier this year to investigate the possibility of women becoming deacons in the Church.

Brown calls Francis’ view on women a “blind spot” given the other good work he’s doing to change the way the Church operates. “We have to hope he gets some insight,” she said.

The pope also shows a lack of mercy for women who are called to the priesthood, Brown said. But despite the latest setback, she said campaigners will continue to fight. As the Catholic Women’s Ordination puts it, “Patriarchy will not have the last word.”



eNews is grateful to Morag Liebert for the following corrections to our previous issue:

The first woman to be ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Church of Scotland was Catherine McConnachie, who was ordained in Aberdeen in 1969.

Mary Levison was the first person to make the request to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland that women should be ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in 1963, being eventually ordained in 1978.

The first woman in Scotland to graduate with a B.D. degree was Frances H. Melville (1873-1962), who graduated with a B.D. from St Andrews University in 1910.

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	
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Pam Skelton
Robert Kaggwa
Mike Ward
Anne Hepburn
Peter Nelson
Stanley Baxter
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.

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

