



eNews

CWO

Jan 2018

Issue 106

A leading voice for women in the R C Church

6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2018



Una Kroll  
**BREAD  
NOT  
STONES**

The Autobiography of an Eventful Life



A  
CELEBRATION OF  
UNA KROLL'S  
LIFE AND WORK

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**Two significant events happened this month** here amongst CWO members.

**Firstly**, we remembered our beloved **Una Kroll** at a celebration of her life on the anniversary of her death, the eve of the Feast of the Epiphany - p3. She was the priest, nun, doctor, counsellor, author, campaigner and solitary whose life was so committed to justice. "I've become a Roman Catholic," she said, "in solidarity with Catholic women who are denied any voice in the Church whatsoever and who are treated despicably."

**Secondly**, it is time - and gone time - to speak out amongst ourselves, in our pews and parishes. Do priests, prelates and popes hear us? **Now** is the time to connect everyone who knows that **something is wrong** with the way our beloved Church works.

Read about **Parishioners' Call** on pp 4 - 5, and get in touch. With us, with each other. It is time to **speak out and seek new ways**, as Pope Francis says.

MARY RING, EDITOR

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# REMEMBERING UNA

**Friends and fellow-members of CWO gathered at the Priory Rooms in Birmingham on the Feast of the Epiphany, a year after Una's passing away, to celebrate her life and achievements**



CWO Midlands members Jenny Armstrong, Kate Burke, Janet Ruane, and Cathy Wattebot had prepared a simple and moving celebration of Una's life.

Invited into two circles, we exchanged memories of Una, and reminiscences of her, as we stepped from person to person. Already we felt warm connections with each other, no longer amongst a roomful of strangers.

Next Janet invited us to consider the basket of bread, and the basket of stones, reflecting Una's famous outburst at General Synod in 1978, when it refused women ordination:



**"We asked you for bread, and you gave us a stone!"**



We each took, or not, as we wished, a piece of bread, or a stone, and as we laid it on the memorial table, reflected on our reasons or thoughts.

It was deeply moving, especially when one of our number described how, wherever she turns with her own personal call to ordination, she finds only stones, blocking every way forward.

In the course of the afternoon, guided by Katharine Salmon and Pat Brown who had prepared the framework of our celebration, we read from Una's many books, sharing meaningful passages, and our own memories of her courage, her sufferings, her deep holiness and spirituality. We laughed, loved and listened to a wonderful recording of Una herself being interviewed by the BBC.

We heard her concluding words, after her cry from the gallery at Synod, **"Long live God!"** Thank you to all who prepared and planned this uplifting celebration in her honour, and who enabled us all to go back out into a bleak January evening carrying Una's warmth, fire of love and example in our hearts.

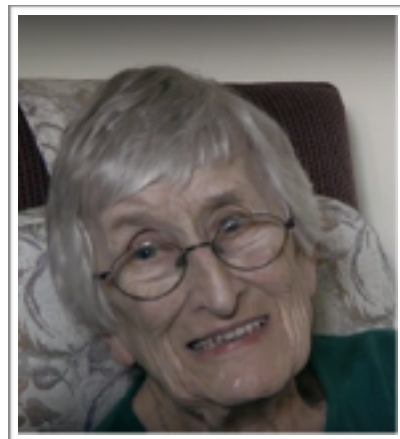
**Mary Ring**

## IN HER OWN WORDS...

"I was thirteen years a priest. I was very happy as a priest. I loved it!"

"While I was at (Mount St) Bernard, in the very early morning, in the church, I remembered the women who'd stood, the Catholic women, who'd come to my ordination, and... had said to me outside, 'Do not forget us, Una.' And I said, 'I will never forget you.'"

"I just long to see a Catholic Church embracing women."



To hear Una's own words, go to <http://catholic-womens-ordination.org.uk/>



# PARISHIONERS' CALL



*Claire and Francis sharing ministry*

A successful and encouraging meeting was held in Salisbury on 20th January, to explore **the shared vocation of all believers**, guided by the words of Pope Francis, 'Find new ways to spread the word of God to every corner of the world.' I felt honoured to be there.

**Two practising ministers, a missionary Catholic priest from Africa, and a retired Anglican Canon** shared their experiences of ministry with us.

The Canon was raised in a Salvation Army family, where both her grandparents were ministers, a norm in the Army. Her grandmother, in particular, had exercised a muscular Christianity in the pubs and streets, offering hope and salvation to hundreds of people. She recalled the throng of mourners at her grandmother's funeral, grieving for the woman who had brought them to their faith.

Thus the effectiveness of both women and men in ministry was a strong part of her own worldview. She taught pastoral counselling and theological spirituality. She accepted training for ordination, when it was suggested to her, as a natural practice of men and women ministering together.

She now works "on the edges of the Church"; people inside and outside the church are not "speaking the same language," as she puts it. She finds that Hospital ministry models this working together of women and men very well. She was very clear that "When I give absolution, or celebrate, it is not MY words, they are God's words - we are celebrating together." We are called to a life of prayer, centred in Christ, and asking, "Lord, what will you have me do?" each day.

We also heard a Catholic priest from a missionary-orientated church in Africa, with much interest. Where countries have had war or troubles, people have had to evangelise each other and today, very many catechists in Africa are women. His mother, he pointed out, was his mother, his teacher and his catechist combined; she taught him everything. Unusually, with her many sons already in school, his mother gave her youngest, their sister, a uniform on her fifth birthday, saying, "Now you go to school like your brothers."





Thus his experience of learning had been from committed women missionary teachers and from shared ministry. Because parishes are huge, they are run by women and may see a priest only once a month to give the 'finishing touches.'

Later, working with women in other parts of Africa, he began to see imbalances between men and women teachers, and how each were perceived and treated.

Thus, it's a question of justice in the Church, he said. Jesus says, Listen! He recommended the Catechism 1267 to us: "Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore... we are members one of another."<sup>24</sup> ... which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes."

After questions and contributions from the circle, and guided by the gentle chairing of CWO member Pamela Perry, we broke into groups to discuss what we had heard, and in particular to address the needs of the Church today.



Why are young people either missing from church altogether, or else deeply conservative? Why do some in the Church seem to fear change so much? Why do the male hierarchy seem oblivious to the terrible wounding damage caused to women all over the world by the Church's teachings?

### 1. DEACONS

Asked to come up with a single solution from each group, we heard four very different contributions. The first agreed that women deacons must be the way towards a fully shared ministry in the Roman Catholic Church, as it has been in the Churches of England and Wales. Women should be encouraged to take up as many ministries in the church as possible.

### 2. MUM AND DAD

The second propounded a simple and striking understanding. We as humans have a very simple concept of 'Mum and Dad' - this is how we perpetuate ourselves. Why is Mum missing from our theology? from our understanding of God?

### 3. WOMEN WHO ALREADY MINISTER

The third group asked, which women amongst us already minister, giving the example of one of us who had regularly conducted Eucharistic Liturgies with fellow-parishioners in New Zealand, with the full authorisation of their bishops. On offering her services in the UK, she was ignored. This group also stressed how important it is to pray for those who attack us. Opposition and conflict arise from fear.

### 4 INCLUSIVITY

This group's reporter, who found herself wondering why she was still a Catholic, highlighted inclusivity-Eucharistic inclusivity - as a gift of women.

Our oldest - and possibly most enthusiastic - participant was 102 years old. An example to us all!

**Mary Ring**

Further gatherings of Parishioners' Call to explore shared ministry are planned. Contact Pamela Perry:

[pamelaperry@theclose.org.uk](mailto:pamelaperry@theclose.org.uk)

# MARY BEARD

## WOMEN & POWER: A MANIFESTO

(PROFILE BOOKS, LONDON) £7.99



Mary Beard's short, readable book, with telling illustrations, stems from two lectures: *The Public Voice of Women* and *Women in Power*. With ironic wit and urgency, she demonstrates that women, as a gender, continue to be silenced in the public sphere and excluded from structures of power often with great savagery. Although she makes no reference to religious power structures, apart from getting it wrong that the next Bishop of London would be a woman, her discussion is immediately applicable to the barriers we face against Roman Catholic women's ordination.

She comes at these barriers from a completely fresh angle compared to the feminist theologians I've encountered. Beard argues that the muteness and disenfranchisement of women are not hard-wired into our brains "but into our culture, our language and millennia of our history." She concentrates on Western culture giving current examples from the UK and US, drawing very direct links between these and the classical world going back almost 3000 years. At first I was unconvinced because, after all, she is a Cambridge Professor of Classics. Yes, she can cite numerous passages in ancient Greek and Roman literature, and in art, where fictional women (actual women then were almost entirely confined to domesticity) who dare to speak and act publically are ridiculed, rendered monstrous and horribly killed. But aren't the similarities with today's vicious misogyny just coincidence?

Her persuasive accumulation of this material, though, is topped, in her second lecture, by the most flagrant of links. There's a

statue in Florence by Benvenuto Cellini, from about 1550, of the ancient Greek myth of Perseus killing the snaky-headed Medusa.

The sworded hero, with a perfect male body, is "trampling on the mangled corpse of Medusa,

and holding her head up again with blood and gunk pouring out of it." This became a much proliferated image in the last US presidential campaign with Perseus given the face of Donald Trump, and Medusa that of Hillary Clinton. Beard has made her case that "more often than we may realise, and



in sometimes quite shocking ways, we are still using ancient Greek idioms to represent the idea of women in, and out of, power," and "our mental, cultural template for a powerful person remains resolutely male."

One can see, then, this template repeatedly applied through Western history. Beard points out that UK parliamentary rules and procedures were devised by classically educated public school and Oxbridge men. So



no wonder that, at the centenary of the first tranche of British women gaining the parliamentary vote on 6 February, women in politics continue to be attacked fiercely on their gender alone. Even less wonder at the utter silencing and complete exclusion of women in the hierarchical operations of the RC Church given its wholesale incorporation of the Greco-Roman edifice from the first century onwards. I recoiled instinctively from Pope Benedict XVI's frequent emphasis on the Hellenistic traditions of the Church. Now I know why.

Ironically, however, in the Church we have more cause for optimism for change than Beard can offer. She struggles to find incremental ways of dismantling the hold on our culture of foundational classical texts. But our foundational texts are entirely different: the Hebrew and Christian Bibles. Even before the enhanced momentum supplied by Vatican II, Christian scholars, and increasingly women scholars, have been digging in, and wrestling with, these scriptures. Of course, they, too, have long been manipulated in the classical manner to gag and marginalise actual women. But from Genesis to the Gospels to even Paul, seeds of subversion keep germinating and pushing through. Will they have reached leaf enough in the findings of the commission on women deacons now sent in secrecy to Pope Francis?

What do women want, Beard asks, and gives much more likely answers than the classically driven Freud. We want to speak freely, and be taken seriously, without limit on subject matter; including but way beyond what's held to be "women's issues." We want to be effective, to make a difference in the world, to share our expertise in whatever field. We want our stake in power, but not power through current male-coded structures of dominance, elitism and prestige.

Beard observes that when women reveal these ambitions they are castigated as "power grabbers." As a woman called to RC ordination, I've met this and been left confused. Now I understand such accusers are not critiquing current clerical power, indeed they uphold it strongly, but the monstrous notion that a woman might inhabit it.

Beard beautifully expresses what we've long known in the women's ordination movement: "if women are not perceived to be fully within the structures of power, surely it is power that we need to redefine rather than women?" And, again, in the Church we are much better placed to find different models of power than in secular culture.

We have the whole dialogic, non-hierarchical and collaborative environment put forward by Catholic Social Teaching. And, especially, we have the long history of women's religious orders, rediscovering their original charisms after Vatican II, practicing authoritative ministries with at least as great pastoral service than that provided by the male hierarchy. How classically scrupulous the latter have been to regulate these women to the margins of sacramental roles.

The sacraments: here feminist theology, by men as well as women, steps in again, and is beyond the scope of this review. Mary Beard's great contribution is to clear so much of the ground. She has explained "just how deeply embedded in Western culture are the mechanisms that silence women, that refuse to take them (sic) seriously, and that sever them from centres of power."

There's a sad, final irony in her book's cover



design by Peter Dyer. It's based on a second century Roman floor mosaic with Medusa's head at the centre. This has been replaced by the author's name and book title. It's the sort of subtle rug-pulling we'll have to bear long after the first RC women are ordained.

WITH MANY THANKS TO CWO MEMBER  
**OLIVE POWELL** JANUARY 2018

# CWO ANNUAL RETREAT NODDFA

15th - 17th June, 2018



Come and experience reflection and relaxation in the beautiful surroundings of the Noddfa Spirituality Centre, Penmaenmawr, N Wales. Arrive Friday from 4pm, until after lunch on Sunday, and enjoy sharing our interests, skills and liturgy as friends in CWO.

Booking is simple! Send your deposit of £20 payable to Noddfa by April 15th to:

**Sue Williamson** at **16 Lloyd Court, Slagrove Place, London SE13 7LP.**  
<https://www.facebook.com/NoddfaCentre>



# LINKS

Broken. A six week study course for Lent  
- The Church of England - Birmingham  
[www.cofebirmingham.com](http://www.cofebirmingham.com)

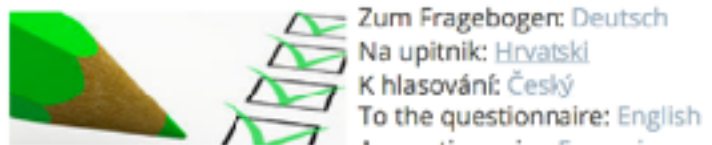


<http://www.cofebirmingham.com/news/2018/01/23/broken-six-week-study-course-lent/>



<https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-chronicles/francis-comic-strip-21>

## PRO POPE FRANCIS - PUBLIC



To support Pope Francis, you may like to take a questionnaire.  
Go to <https://www.pro-pope-francis.com/site/english>, click on **Find More**. Scroll down to the image above, and click on questionnaire 'English', as above. Thank you!

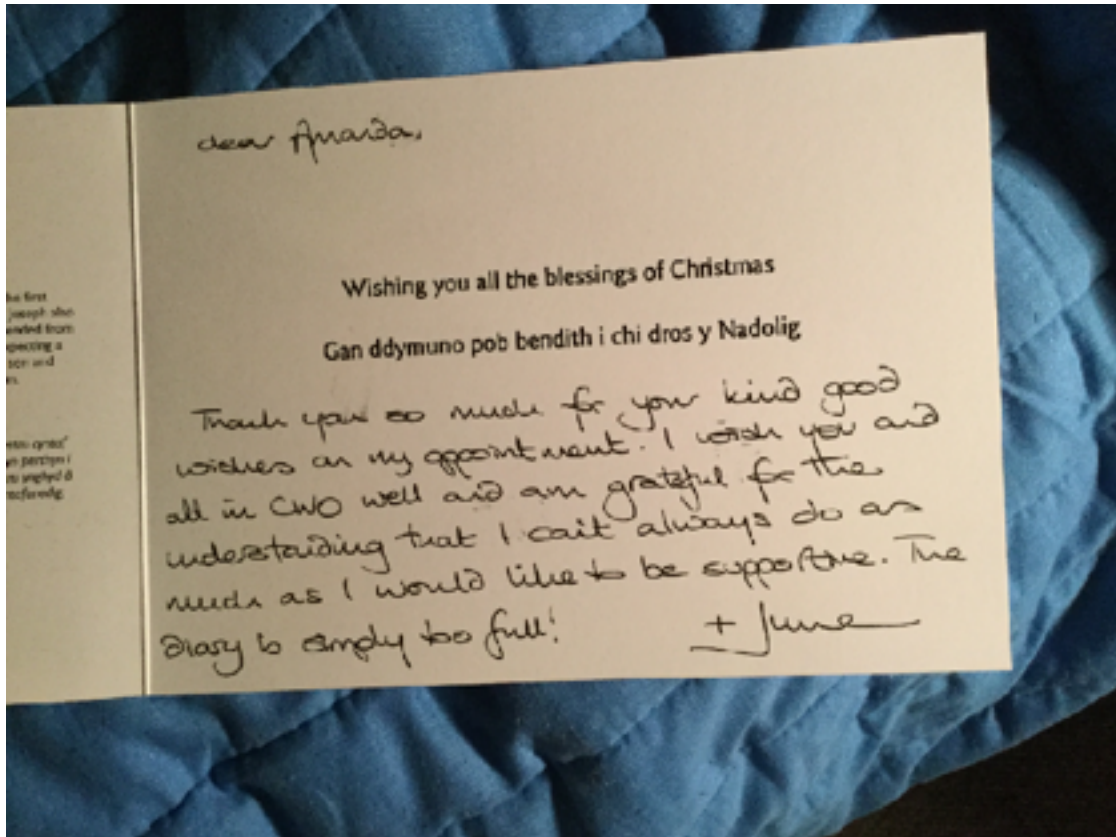


Cardinal Tobin: 'I hope women will continue to speak the truth'  
[www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org)

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/01/08/cardinal-tobin-i-hope-women-will-continue-speak-truth>

# AND FINALLY

**THANKS TO BISHOP JUNE OSBORN of LLANDAFF**, replying to CWO Wales and South-West's congratulations with this kind card:



**Out of the Mouths** - This delightful story from a CWO member, Katharine, says it all:

"I was at my parish this morning where it was the rite of reception for the First Communion candidates.

The reading, for those of you who might not have made it to church (!) was Jesus choosing fishers of men. Although Father is very inclusive and talked to the children about sharing the Gospel with people and everyone being included in Jesus' love, at the end of the homily, a little girl put her hand up. "What about the fishers of women?" she said.

There was a very enthusiastic round of applause from the entire congregation. Father, to his credit, then went on to explain very clearly that Jesus meant men and women and sometimes the Bible's language isn't as inclusive as it should be. My friend and I decided that here is a girl who needs a Joan Chittister book for her first communion, and I felt glad to think that either of my goddaughters would probably have articulated the same thing, even if not publicly. Having read so many comments from the women's marches, this seems, in a different way, just as significant."



## 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

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!

		how many	unit cost	total
Biro - CWO logo, website and phone no	Purple with silver lettering Black ink		0.60	
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)				
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY				
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

