



Newsletter No. 14

June 2 017

Dear WAC Ireland Members & Friends,

Happy Pentecost greetings!

The Strategic Plan for WAC Ireland sees the most important aim is to attract new members. At our AGM we elected a new Core Group for 2017 - 18. Our thanks to Gina Menzies and Bernadette O'Reilly who both stepped down after giving great service on the Core Group. We are very happy to welcome Margaret Lee as a new member on the Core Group. Margaret lives in Tipperary and has been actively involved in church reform for many years. We are hoping to appoint another female member to the Core Group soon to bring us up to our full complement of 3 women and 3 men.

Please do help us finding new members for WAC. At €10 (or €5 if you are unwaged or aged over 65) membership is not expensive! You might ask a friend if they will put their email address on our mailing list and learn more about WAC?

Blessings and best wishes for Pentecost and the summer,

Colm Holmes
Core Group Member

<http://www.wearechurchireland.ie>



The modern church has grown exceptionally good at minimising the role of the Holy Spirit because it is uncomfortable with change. If we downplay the Spirit's presence then it is we who decide what it means to be church, who gets to be part of God's kingdom, and what role we play in it.

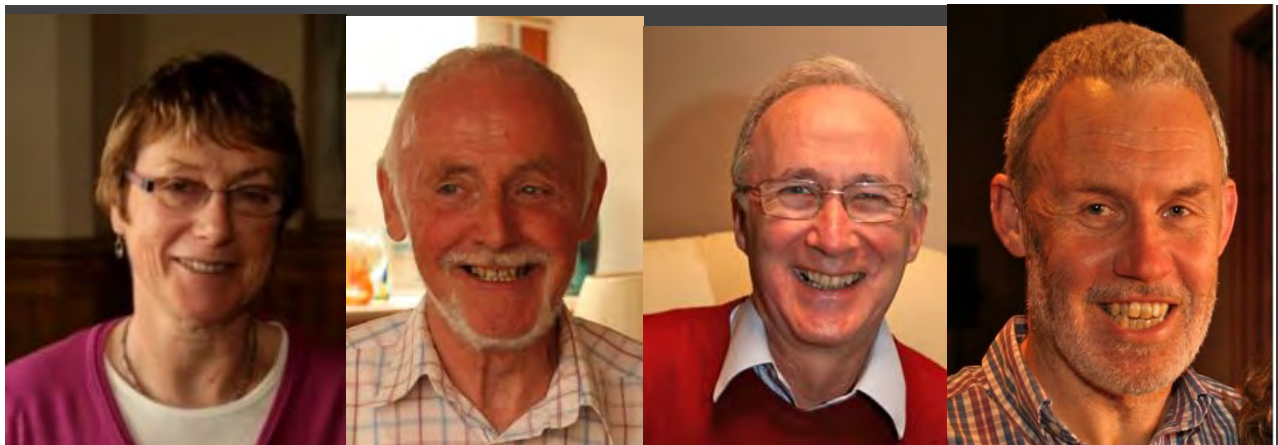
That allows us to ask a question like that asked by the disciples of Jesus: "Lord when will you be arranging the affairs of the church and world in ways that suit us?" That way nobody is upset and that's the way we like it.

- Gordon Linney, The Irish Times, 3 June 2017



PENTECOST: Wear something red - a stole or scarf

Many We Are Church groups will be wearing red on Pentecost Sunday (4 June 2017). This is a symbol showing that the Holy Spirit lives in each and every one of us and not just in the male clerics at the altar. At Pentecost the tongues of fire descended on ALL the disciples, women and men. If you can take a photo or videoclip of your witness in red please send it to Martha Heizer in Austria: Martha.heizer@inode.at or 0043 -650 416850 0 (WhatsApp)



WAC AGM on 27 May 2017

At our AGM the WAC Ireland Core Group for 2017 -18 was elected: P hil Dunne ; Bren da n Butler; Colm Holmes; Finbarr Quigley; Marga ret Lee (n o photo); Vacancy for on e female member. Our Principles of Orga nisation state th at our Co re Group be made up of 3 women an d 3 men. With only 5 elected at the AGM we are short one woman membe r, We hop e to c o-opt a wo man member ont o ou r Core Grou p shortly.

Strategic Plan for WAC Ireland

With Pat Coyle as our facilitator your Core Group devoted a special half day meeting to discussing a Strategic Plan. We all agreed that we want to continue our work in WAC. Here are 10 of the positive measures we drew up:



1. Aim for 200 members in 2 years
2. Continue our quality Press Releases
3. Continue with occasional public prayer functions - perhaps 3 focal events per year
4. Continue the Quarterly Newsletter
5. Make a promotional video for WAC (could cost €1,500 and may need special appeal)
6. Consider a seminar to mark Luther 500 (31 October 2017)
7. Set up a Twitter account [Done: Please follow us at: @we_irl]
8. Look at local outreach, especially local radio
9. See an Fagan Memorial lecture with Angela Hanley in 2017
10. Write to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin setting out what we would like for 2018 visit of Pope Francis

The most important aim was to grow our membership and to get new members on to our Core Group.

Reforming the Catholic Church

Most bafflingly of all, why does someone so able as Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, with immense credibility among so many of the faithful and media, not use his considerable authority and influence to campaign openly in support of the papal revolution towards a more synodal church, in which the voice of laity and theologians would have a structured and institutional presence?



Gerry O'Hanlon SJ

The college of bishops was NOT CONSULTED by Pope John Paul II when he introduced his ban on ordaining women in 1994.

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson
"Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church" (Columba Press 2007)



The presidents of the Bishop's Conferences of the world were called to Rome. There they were presented with a completed document banning the ordination of women and were asked to endorse it in the name of the bishops. The presidents replied that they could not speak in the name of all their members without first consulting them. They also asked for two changes in the document: the omission of the words 'having heard the views of the bishops' and of the word 'irreformable'. Pope John Paul II published *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* banning women from the priesthood on 30 May 1994, the Feast Day of St Joan of Arc.



Irish bishops answer only to Rome – laity, priests and religious kept in the dark

On the 25th of February 2017 letters were posted addressed to each of the 29 bishops of Ireland signed by representatives of 3 organisations:

- We Are Church Ireland
- Association of Catholics In Ireland
- Association of Catholic Priests

The letters asked each bishop to publish their Ad Limina report which they had sent to Pope Francis. The Ad Limina report is a 5 yearly report to the pope about each diocese.

- None of the 4 Archbishops (Armagh, Dublin, Cashel and Tuam) replied
- 19 bishops did not reply
- Only 6 bishops replied:
 - Bishop William Crean of Cloyne
 - Bishop John Fleming of Killala
 - Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry
 - Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe
 - Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare & Leighlin
 - Administrator Mgr Michael Ryan of Ossory

We thank the 6 who replied, indeed some replied in some detail, which was appreciated. But the consensus of the replies was that the Ad Limina reports are considered CONFIDENTIAL and for the pope alone. Yet Pope Francis has been calling for greater transparency and a greater involvement of the people of God in every aspect of our church. Sadly the Irish bishops behave more like managers of a multinational with all reporting going upwards.

An Australian bishop speaking at the Royal Commission made this important point:

"I think we really need to examine seriously that kind of model of Church where it promotes the superiority of the ordained and it facilitates that power imbalance between the ordained and the non-ordained, which in turn facilitates that attitude of clericalism, if you like." – Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen (21 February 2017)

We call on our bishops to have the courage to follow Pope Francis and engage fully with all the people of God.

Brendan Butler
Phil Dunne
Colm Holmes
Gina Menzies
Bernadette O'Reilly
Finbarr Quigley

Core Group of We Are Church Ireland

In Canada Archbishop Albert LeGatt has published his full Ad Limina Report for 2006-2015 on his website. It contains a very good analysis of the diocese. And it shows the structure for Ad Limina reports. Maybe some of our Irish bishops might do likewise? Here is the link to the diocese in Canada: <https://www.archsaintboniface.ca/main.php?p=726>



Vocation Sunday

Praying for vocations? Ordain Women! on Vocation Sunday Prayer Vigils were held in Dublin, Ireland; Des Moines, Iowa; London, England; Rochester, New York; Rome, Italy; Lisieux, France.

Blue sky and brilliant sunshine greeted us in Dublin! We prayed and sang and distributed our cards. Lots of support and a few tut-tut's. Our Prayer vigil at the Pro Cathedral in Dublin on Vocation Sunday (7 May 2017) called for women to be accepted into full ministry in the church of Christ. Our final hymn finished with the words:

"For deep in my heart
I do believe
We have women priests today."

Whether priests are men or women, or both, we cannot have a situation where only priests can exercise power.

Mark Patrick Hederman is a monk of Glenstal Abbey in Limerick



U-turns in the Church

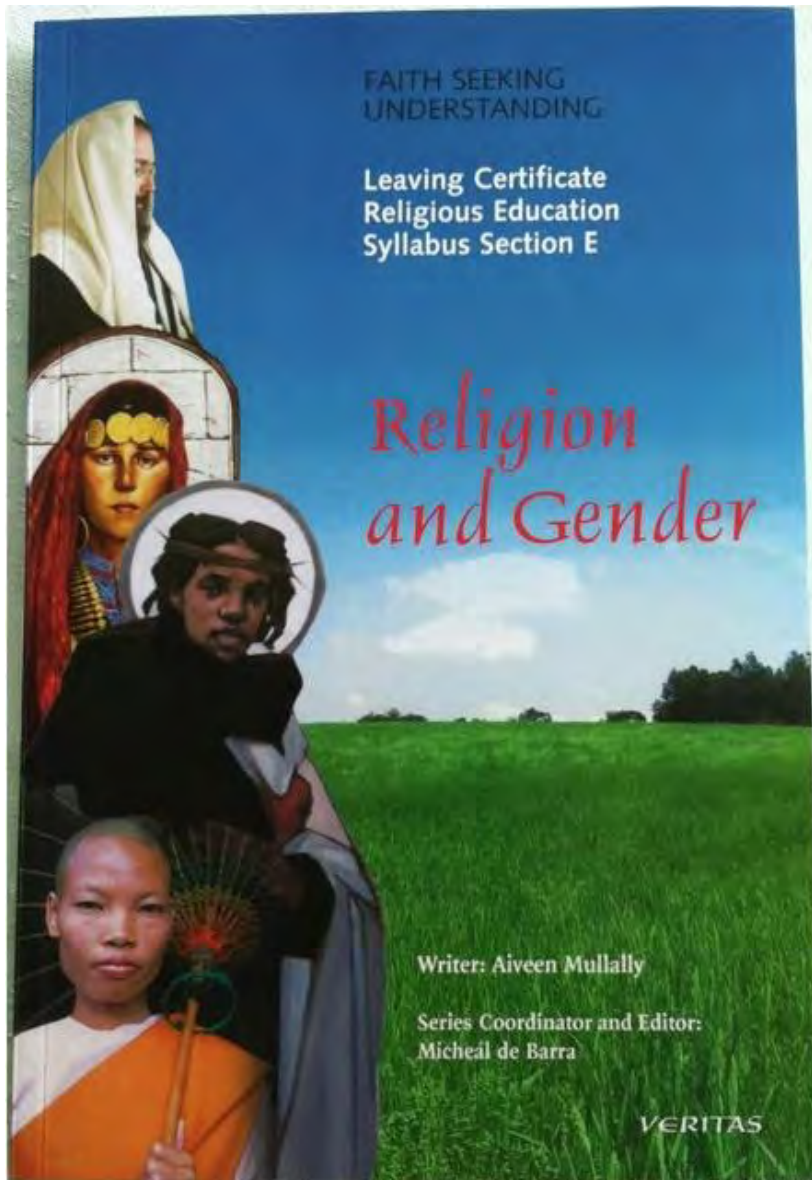
"What was forbidden became lawful (the cases of usury and marriage); what was permissible became unlawful (the case of slavery); and what was required became forbidden (the persecution of heretics)."

Judge John Noonan Jr



**Some Saints Were
"Probably Gay" and
Will Greet You
in Heaven**

- Fr James Martin SJ
5 May 2017



Question: In what way do you think the exclusion of women from priesthood is a 'violence against women with a vocation'?

This question is included in the Leaving Certificate book "Faith Seeking Understanding - Religion and Gender" (Veritas 2006). The work and prayers for the ordination of women to all ministries by BASIC (Brothers And Sisters In Christ) is discussed at length. BASIC merged into We Are Church Ireland in 2012. Interestingly the book is "Printed with Ecclesiastical Approval." This open discussion about the ordination of women has been denied for adults by the institutional church. But for more than a decade this discussion has been alive in our schools!

“I can understand the malaise which women feel when they see only men concelebrate. I can understand that we must look like a men’s squad up at the altar.”



Cardinal Christoph Schönborn
(La Croix International, 13
April 2017)



Welcome New Members!

Do you support our 5 Aims for reform in the Catholic Church?

1. Democratic Structures
2. Equality for Women
3. Primacy of Conscience
4. Married Priests
5. Welcome for all

If you support our aims please become a member. Annual Membership is only €10 (or €5 if you are unwaged or aged over 65). Visit our website for more information: www.wearechurchireland.ie Or email any questions to info@wearechurchireland.ie

