

## ***The Feminist Threat to the Church***

**- Part III -**

***Patricia Phillips***

This article follows on from others published in the January and December 2002 editions of *Christian Order*. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the feminist infiltration currently affecting the Church, but rather an update, giving further snapshots of how radical dissenting feminists – and in particular overt and covert members of the *Catholic Women's Network* (CWN) group – are making headway into official Church structures with the support of our bishops. This article has been largely compiled from information sent to me by concerned Catholics from around the country. It is hoped that it will help others to recognise the feminist menace, and spur them to combat it with protest and prayer. As with any update, readers may find it helpful to refer to the original articles before proceeding with this most recent one.

### **CWN / NBCW**

Needless to say, since the last update on radical feminist activities was written, the situation has significantly worsened. CWN and sister organisation *St Joan's International Alliance* are still listed in the *Catholic Directory* as having ecclesiastical approval from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, despite the fact that CWN still promote pro-abortion and pro-contraception groups, dissenting homosexual groups and pro-women's ordination groups in their journal *Network*. CWN infiltration of the *National Board of Catholic Women* (NBCW), which is a consultative body to the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, is now complete, with the appointment of CWN supporter Dr Mary McHugh as President of the NBCW. Dr McHugh's appointment was the subject of a glowing article in *Briefing*, the Bishops' Conference magazine.<sup>1</sup> The article carefully omitted to mention her involvement with CWN.

CWN's journal<sup>2</sup> carried a complimentary report of the shocking feminist fiasco that took place on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2002 at Bristol Cathedral in the presence of Bishop Declan Lang. The report stated that it was a "*mind-blowing event*", and that "*Bishop Margot Kaessmann, a woman bishop from the Lutheran Church in Hanover, Germany, was present on the altar of the Cathedral for a service, and stood in the pulpit to deliver a long address. On the altar sat our own Bishop Declan Lang, and the Anglican Bishop, Barry Rogerson. The Cathedral was packed for this ecumenical service . . . Three of us here had held a vigil outside the cathedral, in the rain, holding our CWO banners for women priests and this time everyone smiled at us. We went into the service, anxious to hear what Bishop Margot Kaessmann had to say, and we were not disappointed . . .*"<sup>3</sup>

## Portsmouth

In the Portsmouth diocese, the work of “*clergy formation and supervision*” developed by radical feminist Vicky Cosstick continues unabated.<sup>4</sup> Contacts in Portsmouth describe the diocese as a “*spiritual desert – and getting worse each day*”. There is a highly active CWN cabal in the diocese, and there is grave concern at the influence wielded by certain members of this cabal on the Bishops’ Conference. Another complaint is about the culture of secrecy that is alleged to operate in the diocese. While the dissenting bureaucratic elite talk airily about “*inclusiveness*” and “*consultation*”, orthodox Catholics feel they are increasingly excluded, often presented with a *fait accompli* decided at proliferating deanery and diocesan committee meetings, by largely anonymous and un-elected representatives. Despite this they are expected, of course, to cough up and fund the whole thing. A letter was sent out to priests and deacons by Mgr John Nelson, Vicar General, on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2003, which stated:- “*Over the past six months careful consideration has been given to the problem of central expenditure in the diocese . . . As you know, almost everything that is spent centrally in our diocese comes from parishes through the levy . . . What we are faced with is a growing gap between what is received through the levy and what is spent. Some of this is extremely difficult to control, such as the resources required to provide proper protection for children and vulnerable adults and the training and support of clergy. Whilst it may be necessary to ask parishes to increase the amount collected as a levy, it is, I believe, essential that at the same time the matter of costs and expenditure be addressed . . .*” Well, perhaps the first thing that could be addressed is that the Portsmouth diocese, as part of its “*training and support of clergy*” is hosting a series of talks which include speakers such as the notorious ‘liberal’ Bishop Remi de Roo, and dissidents Fr Rafael Esteban and Dr Jack Dominican, throughout 2003 – 2004 under the banner “*Called by Christ: Clergy Formation*”. Catholics in Portsmouth have a right to ask if these talks are a prudent use of diocesan resources, and if it wouldn’t be possible to obtain speakers to help with clergy formation, who fully uphold all aspects of the Church’s teaching on faith and morals, and the disciplines of the Church.

## Catholic Woman / Catholic Omnibus

The NBCW quarterly newspaper *Catholic Woman* – now re-launched as *Catholic OMNIBUS* – is still run by the same known CWN members and supporters, and still has a disproportionate input from listed CWN members and other known dissenters. A recent edition<sup>5</sup> carried two articles by representatives of *Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR)*, in spite of the open dissent of this body from areas of Catholic moral teaching. One of the articles was by Christine Allen, who is the Executive Director of *CIIR*. The following e-newsletter bulletin I received<sup>6</sup> carries disturbing information<sup>6</sup>, warning about the views of Christine Allen and *CIIR*:-

“A Catholic agency is advocating the use of condoms as a ‘pro-life’ weapon in the fight to combat AIDS. The London-based Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), which works in partnership with overseas aid agencies, has produced a statement claiming that condoms

are 'a life-saving option' in 'any holistic and effective approach to HIV.' The statement openly says, 'CIIR, like many others, does not consider this position to be counter to Church teaching.' It continues, 'There is a diversity of views within the Church about the role of condoms in tackling HIV. There are also some precedents for thinking of the use of condoms as being a lesser evil, or having a secondary purpose, than of preventing conception, the primary purpose being the prevention of the transmission of AIDS and to save lives.' CIIR's executive director, Christine Allen, told this week's Catholic Times: 'What we are trying to say is that there is a sense in which the world has moved on so much from when *Humanae Vitae* was written and the AIDS pandemic is so different.' *Humanae Vitae* was the landmark papal encyclical promulgated by Pope Paul VI that reiterated the Church's teaching that the use of artificial contraception is immoral. She continued, 'We are taking a holistic approach that says yes we must have the ideal but it's naive and not very helpful to totally disregard the use of condoms to prevent the transmission of death.' Allen said there was a 'dissonance' between 'the teaching of the magisterium' and 'the pastoral care practiced where people, often religious, are working in home-care centers for AIDS sufferers.'

Obviously, no official Catholic organ should give a platform to groups or individuals that hold and espouse such views. The same issue of *Catholic Woman*, on page 8, carried a swingeing attack on the Creed and the Roman Curia, titled "*For us women - and our salvation too*" by Pauline O'Regan, who wrote: "*I have a parish priest who always uses inclusive language so I have not had to make such ludicrous statements as 'For us men and our salvation' in the Creed, for 20 years. But that is what the official Church now wants me to say*". She accuses the Roman Curia of "*the desire . . . to centralist control over the Church*". One would think that the Bishops of England and Wales would want to dissociate themselves from this kind of dissent and nonsense as quickly as possible, but sadly, a recent issue of the re-launched *Catholic OMNIBUS* shows otherwise <sup>7</sup>. The front page carries the following letter from Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor:- "*Welcome the appearance of Catholic Omnibus as a new vehicle of Christian Good News, driven mostly by laywomen of the Church's family. The pastoral works of many Catholic enterprises can be given expression here in the words of the representatives of different organisations and dioceses. I am grateful to the National Board of Catholic Women – a Consultative Body enjoying the full confidence of the Bishops' Conference for launching this initiative. They retain overall editorship of the new paper, and will continue, as they did in 'Catholic Woman' to ensure our awareness of women's perspectives on the God-given life of the Church, both in its internal communion and in its external mission*". The Cardinal's letter was surrounded by the logos of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and a dozen or so Catholic organisations that have links to the *NBCW*. Unsurprisingly, most of the organisations listed such as *Marriage Care*, the *National Conference of Priests*, the *Conference of Religious*, *CAFOD*, *CIIR*, etc, are well known for being infiltrated by dissenters.

The most recent issue of *Catholic OMNIBUS* contains little to bring comfort to orthodox Catholics<sup>8</sup>. On page three a photograph of a group of women from the Portsmouth diocese is titled “NBCW core group”, but three out of five of them are listed CWN members, namely Roisin Gwyer, Patricia Cox and the ubiquitous Verena Wright – who is the NBCW diocesan representative and on the executive of the NBCW, as well as being assistant editor of *Catholic OMNIBUS* and a long-standing member of the *NBCW Joint Dialogue Group*. On the same page an account is given of the *Joint Dialogue Group (JDG)* report on “*Shifting Boundaries – Authority and Responsibility in the Church Today*”. Firstly, however, I’d like to give a bit of background on the *JDG* before returning to this *OMNIBUS* report.

### **Joint Dialogue Group**

According to Bishop Vincent Malone, Episcopal Liaison to the NBCW, the *JDG* was established in the following way:-<sup>9</sup>

*“In 1991, the results of the NBCW’s consultation were published as a booklet entitled Do Not Be Afraid. It was presented to the Bishops’ Conference, who decided, in response, to establish what came to be known as the national ‘Joint Dialogue Group’. Originally, it was to have six members chosen by the Bishops’ Conference and six chosen by the NBCW. It was quickly agreed, however, that all twelve would be joint appointments, acceptable to both parties. In that form it met a couple of times in Birmingham, in somewhat restricted space, which the women soon pointed out inhibited a free-flowing dialogue. We moved to more spacious facilities in London and agreed that the chairing of the meeting should alternate between a woman and a bishop. The urge to produce rapid results in concrete form gave way to the more demanding hope that we could learn better how to listen to and talk to one another. A further consultation was carried out around the dioceses of England and Wales, and a further report produced, entitled Working Together. We reported our ‘progress’ back to our two sponsoring bodies, and were commissioned to continue to work, but now more as a Working Party (still under the title ‘Joint Dialogue Group’) consisting of three bishops and six women charged with identifying and helping to spread whatever we judged to be ‘good practice’ in our field. The nature of the NBCW before this time was that its members came as representatives of Catholic women’s organisations – such as UCM and CWL – and had no machinery to enable it to consult Catholic women who did not belong to any of these groups. In 1995, following the initiative of the Joint Dialogue Group, the NBCW, with the blessing of the Conference as a whole, changed its constitution in order to admit what have come to be called ‘Diocesan Links’ – appointees of the diocesan bishop from among local Catholic women not necessarily belonging to any church organisation. All 23 of the dioceses in England and Wales now have such a Link. And one of her charges is to try to mirror within her diocese some form of Joint Dialogue Group – between women and priests. Catholic Woman – the quarterly newspaper of the NBCW – reports in each issue on the*

activity in the different dioceses, and once every two years the Joint Dialogue Group organises a national conference to bring together the Links and, as far as possible, a priest from each diocese, to share refinements of the vision, and to hear of local steps being taken to achieve it. Episcopal encouragement continues, not least in the words of Cardinal Hume. His June 1999 paper on 'Unity and Diversity' includes the words: 'One final comment I would make . . . concerns decision-making in the Church. The decision makers are men, bishops and priests. Many of the decisions they take directly affect women, who are not always consulted. Theirs is a legitimate complaint. Women should be more closely involved at different levels in the Church with decision-making. How this could be brought about I do not know, but in this area there is work to be done by us all. Dialogue is needed.' So we have dialogued – locally and nationally – about 'Hearing Women's Voices' (Conference 1998) and about 'What it Means to be a Woman in our Time' (Conference 2000), and at the time of writing are planning our next Conference for January 2003 under the title 'Shifting Boundaries: authority and responsibility in the Church'. The dialoguing is essential, but is there anything more?"

We shall later return to Bishop Vincent Malone and his bizarre ideas about "something more" for women in the Church. If one bears in mind that all of these dialoguing structures are disproportionately filled with CWN members and other known dissenters, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to determine the inevitable outcome of any such "dialogue", indeed the tragic results are becoming more and more evident. Take the account given of the JDG report in the Summer 2003 issue of *Catholic OMNIBUS*. As stated above, this indicates that the NBCW diocesan links met in Leeds to discuss the theme: '*Shifting Boundaries: Authority and Leadership in the Church today*'. There were two inputs, one from a Fr Paul Gadie, and another from Sr Mellitus Lawlor, who is a religious that runs a priestless parish in Stanwell, Middlesex, and who openly lamented the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on the ordination of women at a *People of God Trust* meeting in Cardinal Vaughan House, Westminster in April 2002.<sup>10</sup> At the NBCW meeting, Sr Lawlor gave a talk entitled "*The Lay-Led Parish – A way for the future*". Many would argue – and quite rightly – that the shortage of priests causing the lay-led parish scenario is a contrived situation, forced upon Catholics by clergy and laity with a dissenting agenda, as it has been proven beyond doubt that where orthodoxy thrives, vocations to the priesthood also thrive.<sup>11</sup> After Sr Lawlor's talk, working groups discussed themes and came up with the following twaddle:- "**Canon Law**:- How can it be made accessible? What changes might be desirable? . . . Could such changes ever include the administration of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Anointing of the Sick by those who are not ordained? . . . **The Permanent Diaconate**:- How can we better understand it and how can its usefulness be developed? . . . Concerns were expressed that the permanent diaconate could block lay ministry and to some extent inhibit lay participation, particularly that of women . . . **What are the basics of a parish mission?** There was a plea that we should return to the situation in the early

*Church, with basic communities. This led to a discussion on which elements of parish life need to be developed and which need to be let go . . . **How can pastoral training be developed for clergy and laity?** . . . It was agreed that lay people's skills needed developing and that a range of courses was needed. The deanery is the primary pastoral unit and there should be careful selection of the Dean . . ."*<sup>12</sup> Without doubt the Dean would have to be very carefully selected – to ensure that he fully complies with the dissenting feminist agenda. If not, he wouldn't get a look in!

Although there is apparent concern that the permanent diaconate of men might "*inhibit lay participation*", it doesn't seem to be an issue when the feminists push for *women's* ordination to the diaconate and to the priesthood. Known members of CWN, who are also members of *Catholic Women's Ordination* (CWO), held "reconstructions" of the ordination of women to the diaconate in St. James's Anglican Church, Piccadilly, London on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2003, and in Cotham Anglican Parish Church, Bristol on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2003. An account of these ridiculous travesties, along with photographs, can be seen on-line at John Wijngaards' "*Women Priests*" website<sup>13</sup>

### **Myra Poole: Lisieux Trust**

Sr Myra Poole of CWN / CWO remains active, among other things helping to set up the *Lisieux Trust* which was given the following plug in CWN's journal *Network*:-<sup>14</sup> "*October 1<sup>st</sup> sees the launch of the Lisieux Trust, a charity set up to support women's theological study and training in ministry*". On another page the journal states that Edwina Gateley - a well known dissident - will be speaking at the launch of the *Lisieux Trust* at Cardinal Vaughan House, Westminster Cathedral, with details of the event available from Myra Poole. Don't be fooled by the title, which evokes the memory of the wonderful St. Thérèse – the *Lisieux Trust* is little more than a front to get funds for the CWO, and as such no Catholic should ever donate to it. At the time of writing this, I am aware that the Westminster diocesan authorities have been informed that CWO are behind this event, so it remains to be seen whether they will allow it to go ahead. If it doesn't happen, at least Myra can look back with fond memories on the CWN liturgy, held in celebration of her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and recounted in *Network*.<sup>15</sup> In this "*liturgy*", devised by CWN member Ianthe Pratt, the "*croning*" of Myra took place, along with the "*bestowal of the Buddhist white scarf*", and the now customary circle dance. And the CWN wants us to take them seriously! *Please!*

While we can laugh at the antics of the more ridiculous elements in the CWN, the infiltration of the NBCW and the support of the bishops for the dissenting feminist agenda is certainly no laughing matter. Bishop Vincent Malone has upped the ante by publicly expressing dissenting views identical to those put forward in the account of the NBCW meeting given in *Catholic OMNIBUS*. On Thursday 28 August, the national newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* ran a piece entitled "*Let women hear confession and grant absolution, says bishop*". The piece reported that Bishop Malone has suggested that women might perform some of the sacraments usually reserved to the priest, such as hearing confessions and

anointing of the sick. Most tellingly the report also stated that: "*liberals, including fellow bishops, will welcome his ideas*". Bishop Malone's comments were originally made in a new book "*Healing Priesthood: Women's Voices Worldwide*", which is edited by none other than CWN member Verena Wright (that name again!) and the NBCW's Angela Perkins. Here are a few excerpts from Bishop Malone's contribution to "*Healing Priesthood*":-

*"And in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, could not a lay person be seen by the Church, after prayerful reflection, as the authorised speaker of the forgiveness that comes in reality from God alone? It is not difficult to conceive circumstances in which a female minister could more appropriately than a man be the receiver of the humble confession that opens a soul to hear the glad words of the Lord's forgiveness. Common practice in our society today would expect equal access in many professions to either a man or a woman at the client's choice. It would be an unusual medical group practice which did not have both male and female practitioners, similarly with a firm of solicitors or a team of counsellors. Has the time come to expect a similar availability in even more sacred areas of our lives - without thinking that this is impossible without the ordination of women? . . . So could the Church think of the possibility that a lay man or woman attending a sick person could not only pray with them and pray over them, but could pray the Church's most solemn prayers over them with sacramental anointing? Certainly no individual can simply take that initiative by himself/herself and act against the present discipline of the Church: that would not be a sacramental act . . . But could not the universal Church together reflect on the possibility that a lay person might administer this sacrament, a wonderful focus of their already most welcome ministration of charity to one who needs to be 'raised up'?"*

To cover himself against the charges of dissent and disobedience, Bishop Malone adopts the standard disingenuous Modernist ploy by adding the disclaimer: "*Such thoughts are not intended as an incitement to rebellion; rather they are a quiet reflection on what is meant by healing priesthood*". But of course any Catholic with the most elementary understanding of the Faith knows that such dissenting views, publicly expressed by a bishop, will do *exactly* what he claims is *not* his intention – that is, such views will not serve to *heal* priesthood, but to *destroy* it, by giving credence and ammunition to the rebellious feminists and their dissenting agenda. They say that clerics either dominate women or are dominated by them, and it is difficult to know if this is a case of a dissenting bishop encouraging women to rebel, or if dissenting feminists have browbeaten a weak bishop to acquiesce in the promotion of their agenda – in any event, it shows that Bishop Malone has absolutely no Catholic understanding of the nature of the Priesthood or the Sacraments, otherwise he would never have put such suggestions forward. He should resign without delay, but of course he won't, and if past incidents like this are anything to go by, neither will Rome demand his resignation. And

remember that Bishop Malone is the Episcopal Liaison between the Bishops' Conference and the *NBCW*, and he also has the responsibility of overseeing which groups will be listed in the *Catholic Directory* with ecclesiastical approval! Fat chance of the *CWN* being removed from any future editions!

### **Fight the feminists!**

As things are so dire, drastic action has to be taken by Catholics to help combat this problem. An Achilles' heel of dissenting feminist bureaucratic structures is that they cost a small fortune to run, and there isn't a bottomless pit of money. Where parishes and dioceses are proved to be actively supporting dissent, then we must **stop giving money**. Re-route your covenants/donations to traditional Catholic priestly and lay groups and activities, like *Christian Order*, for instance, the outstanding voice of orthodoxy and tradition in these isles, whose crucial independence allows the printing of articles like this. It cannot survive on subscriptions alone! Tell everyone *why* you are no longer supporting your parish/diocese. Also, the more people that join in the fight to expose this problem, the better. Share information with others. Check out *NBCW / CWN* activities in your parish/diocese and get others to do so. Get on to committees and attend meetings. Where dissent is found, challenge and expose it. Any information regarding incidents of dissent being supported in official Church structures should be sent to Rome and can also be passed to *Christian Order*. Also, last but not by any means least, pray. Pray before Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Pray to Our Blessed Lady, to the English and Welsh Martyrs, and to those who have helped our country in the past, like "*the Apostle of England*" Blessed Dominic Barberi. Bishop Malone's astounding and frightening suggestions show that we are not in for an easy time, but neither should we give an easy time to those who seek to destroy the Church by supplanting it with a counterfeit version, made in their own dissenting image and likeness.

### ***Our Lady of Walsingham – Pray for us.***

---

<sup>1</sup> *Briefing*, November 2002

<sup>2</sup> *Network* – Winter Issue No 73, Dec 2002

<sup>3</sup> See *Christian Order* Dec 2002 for a full account of the Bristol Cathedral feminist fiasco by Christopher Warren

<sup>4</sup> See *Christian Order* Jan 2002 – *A Very Cosstick Solution* by Fr Martin Edwards

<sup>5</sup> *Catholic Woman* - Autumn 2002, Issue no 25

<sup>6</sup> *CF News* bulletin - November 10<sup>th</sup> 2002

<sup>7</sup> *Catholic OMNIBUS* – Spring 2003, Issue no 27

<sup>8</sup> *Catholic OMNIBUS* – Summer 2003, Issue no 28

<sup>9</sup> Bishop Vincent Malone – Women after dialogue – *Priests and People*, Feb 2003

<sup>10</sup> See '*In Cahoots with Heretics*' by Patricia Phillips – *Christian Order* May 2003

<sup>11</sup> See *Christian Order*, February 2002

<sup>12</sup> *Catholic OMNIBUS* – Summer 2003, Issue no 28

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.womenpriests.org/gallery/mast\\_hob.htm](http://www.womenpriests.org/gallery/mast_hob.htm)

<sup>14</sup> *Network* - Spring Issue No 74, March 2003

<sup>15</sup> *Network* – Summer Issue No 75, June 2003