

## The Search for Renewal over Fifty Years

### An abridged version of a talk given to the Croydon Newman Circle

I was born into a counter-cultural family, in that my parents were converts to Catholicism at a time when it was not respectable. My mother came into the Church as a reaction to the promiscuity of the Hampstead literary set – her parents were poets who were friends with people like H.G.Wells, who was always bed-hopping; my father came from High Anglicanism. The faith meant a lot to them but they were fairly liberal where Rome was concerned. Perhaps as a reaction to this I was a traditionalist in my Oxford days; being articulate, I was the student who was brought out to defend the indefensible! I so rigidly applied the rules of fasting that I would go and weigh my sandwiches in the post office! Fortunately, with greater maturity I developed away from this approach to the faith.

I met Oliver, my husband-to-be, at evening classes on the ‘Psychological basis of moral behaviour’ at the Newman Association in Portman Square. He was a recent convert to Catholicism and we cut our teeth together on issues of the philosophy of science, at that time almost the only theme open to lay involvement. This was not the only pioneering work of the Newman in the decade before Vatican II. Inspired by a call made by the well known author Frank Sheed for all to understand the faith better, the Newman Theological Studies Group was started up by Laurence Bright, the influential Dominican, and by Oliver. For many years the TSG offered a good grounding in biblical theology. There were theologians running groups up and down the country: Laurence worked with two London ones, one of which had as refreshment cups of tea, the other glasses of wine. Laurence used to say the wine drinkers outshone the tea drinkers in the quality of their discussion! I find the essays we wrote in those days are still of use today.

The main thing I remember about these groups was the headiness of being introduced to resurrection theology after so much past emphasis on the cross. I realised how bad this had become, when a Newman member said to me, ‘I think Easter is indecent so soon after Good Friday.’ When the Vatican II Council took place, the Newman was one of the leading organisations that welcomed its ideas and strove to put them into action. We found the teachings of Vatican II very inspiring, and were filled with enthusiasm for lay involvement. Also active was a Newman liturgy group set up to collect data on examples of good practice both at home and abroad. Laurence Bright and five other Newman members visited Holland, which at that time was well in advance of other countries in rethinking the field of liturgical reform. At one point they were interviewed in English by Dutch TV; BBC TV wanted to use the interview but, horrors, Laurence was not wearing a dog collar – this would have sent the then Cardinal berserk! Trivia still had much importance in those days: if one swallowed a drop of toothbrushing water one could not go to communion that day!

### The McCabe Affair & *Humanae Vitae*

Our first excursion into campaigning for change was when Fr Herbert McCabe, the Dominican editor of *New Blackfriars*, spoke of the Church as corrupt: he was consequently fired. This was in the context of the resignation from the priesthood of Fr Charles Davis, a leading theologian and editor of *The Clergy Review*. Davis wrote that ‘the official church is racked by fear, insecurity and anxiety, with a consequent intolerance and lack of love ... There is concern for authority at the expense of truth and I am constantly saddened by instances of the damage done to persons by the workings of an impersonal and unfree system.’ Herbert in his editorial wrote that the charges seemed well founded; he went on, ‘The Church is quite plainly corrupt: a cardinal selects Christmas as the occasion for supporting the murder of Vietnamese civilians: the Pope alleges that the Church’s teaching is not in doubt about birth control. The Congregation of Rites has just asserted that a family communion followed by a meal is a practice “alien to the Catholic religion,” while nearer home a bishop has expressed the fear that Catholics who sing carols in Anglican churches are endangering their faith and morals.’

Consequent on Herbert’s dismissal from his editorship (and even for a time suspension from saying Mass), an ‘ad hoc’ committee was set up to campaign for his vindication. Action included gathering about 1,000 people at a ‘pray-in’ at Westminster Cathedral, the organisation of a petition of over 2,000 signatures, and sending the then President of the Newman, who was a personal supporter of Herbert, out to Rome with the petition to intercede with the Master General; this was successful. Further, the English provincial said that if he had known there would be such widespread support for Herbert he would never have given in to the pressure to sack him. Eventually Herbert was restored to saying Mass and editing the *Journal*; in the first issue after this he began his editorial ‘As I was saying when I was so rudely interrupted.’ The whole issue of freedom of speech was developed further by a large scale teach-in, organised by the Newman, which brought together leading thinkers of different shades of opinion.

### *Humanae Vitae*

This campaign was excellent preparation for the greater ordeal to come, with the publication of *Humanae Vitae*, the birth control encyclical, at midsummer the following year, 1968. There had already been a great deal of discussion on birth control and an expectation, held even by Cardinal Heenan, that things would change. The Newman had already contributed to the discussion in 1965 with a report on attitudes to birth control among members of the Association. This showed a large majority who regarded the question as a matter of conscience, thinking that the choice of a birth

control method should be left to the married couple. Most of the respondents did obey the Church's teaching on this point but from obedience rather than conviction. A number of people on the Newman Council were in fact relieved to find how widely their own misgivings were shared, having thought they were the only ones to feel the teaching was wrong.

When the encyclical was published it came like a bombshell, as change had been widely expected. We had already however a core of activists experienced from the McCabe affair at running press conferences and PR work, and able to undertake the rapid gathering of horrified supporters. Having three small children, I did not take as active a part as Oliver did, but we were involved in meetings up and down the country, compiling lists of sympathetic confessors, going on demonstrations etc. It culminated in David Frost's interview with the then cardinal. Frost had been briefed by Oliver and one or two others and he was able to force Heenan into a corner, whereupon the cardinal advised people to follow their own consciences. Without this, many more people would have been alienated from the institutional church. Today there is of course a great variety of opinion on birth control in the Church and we are still immersed in controversy such as whether a married couple, one of whom has AIDS, can use a condom to prevent the spread of infection. It is interesting that even back in 1980 the Gallup Poll RC Opinion conducted by Michael Hornsby Smith, showed that only 14% of Catholics agreed with the Vatican line. That does not tell us anything about what proportion kept to the ruling while disagreeing with it, but it is widely held that today the majority of practising Catholics in the western world do use 'forbidden' methods.

The irony of the papal refusal to endorse the backing for change given by the papal commission on birth control, on the grounds that change in teaching would undermine the faith, was that the encyclical itself could scarcely have done more to undermine the teaching authority of Rome! Apparently the four traditionalist opponents of change on the panel did not oppose it on the grounds of moral theology, as they could not find a sustainable argument for the ban, but on the very question of change undermining the authority of Rome.

### **Catholic Renewal Movement**

After the *Humanae Vitae* campaign, the ad hoc committee developed into the Catholic Renewal Movement. Oliver and I were committee members for a number of years. This organisation has interested itself in a wide range of renewal issues. Eventually it changed its name to Catholics for a Changing Church because people kept mixing it up with the charismatic renewal movement. Today it publishes an informative journal and a series of invaluable pamphlets such as *How must the Church change?* by Fr Ralph Esteban M.Afr; *The Papacy: Myth and Reality* by Eamonn Duffy; *From hierarchy to community* by Adrian Smith; and *Changing climate changing Church* by Edward Echlin.

Back in the early post-conciliar years, although the Council spoke of the Church as the People of God and enhanced the position of the laity, the patriarchal set up of the institutional Church had not changed much by the time of the Lay International Congress in 1971, at which Oliver was one of the delegates. It so happened that a Canadian who understood Latin was in the Press Office when they were having trouble with one of the duplicators. He offered to help and got it going, stuffing one of the spoiled papers in his pocket. This proved very interesting reading – it was from someone in authority addressing the bishops, in Latin, telling them they need not be worried if their delegations didn't toe the official line as any such thing would be edited out at the end! He brought the document to a group who were chatting in one of the rooms and they decided that something must be done. Others were drawn in to help and they all sat up into the small hours translating this document. Someone knew where they could get it produced overnight on an unidentifiable typewriter, and in the morning it was taken around all the conference venues: Latin on the back of the leaflet and the front in the conference languages of English, French, German and Spanish. Within a couple of hours there was uproar, several delegations threatening to go home. One of the bishops was heard exclaiming at the vast resources of this unknown group of whistle blowers! Eventually the bishops climbed down and a lay committee was set up to bring together the recommendations. I wonder why Rome never called another Lay Congress!

During the 1970s, Oliver and I were bringing up a young family and adapting worship to family and group needs. Out of our experiences we wrote books together, with titles such as *Liturgy is what we make it* and *Let Liturgy Live*, which pioneered this subject new at the time. Many of the liturgies developed were tried out by Newman members. On one occasion we were trying out an Advent liturgy in midsummer; the neighbours were rather startled to hear the strains of 'O come O come Emmanuel!' coming from our open windows on a hot midsummer night! One of the most significant home liturgies, from then until now, has been a Christian Passover meal which brings together the Jewish meal up to its fulfilment in the new passover, Christ. We have two versions: one is an agape and the other is Eucharistic for when we have a priest friend with us. We have a seder dish with the symbolic foods, four glasses of wine (people do not have to drink the whole glass), the final one being the Eucharistic cup if it is an Eucharist. We have found that people invited one year to celebrate with us will celebrate in their own homes the following year, bringing in their friends.

We were also drawn into the ecumenical field both at local and national level, bringing our liturgical expertise to its service, for instance preparing liturgies for conferences of the organisation, "One for Christian Renewal".

### **Other Ventures**

Meanwhile we continued with our biblical theology studies started in the 1960s, and in the mid 1970s we set up Lumen Religious Books Trust to promote the cross fertilisation of ideas between the churches, and later its subsidiary, the Christian Women's Resource Centre. Again this venture was prompted by the needs for books felt by the Theology, Family and Liturgy committees of the Newman. We started off by importing the Jerusalem Bible while it was still only available in French. As this service developed I was selling books at conferences and by post, in between teaching at a comprehensive school. We set up a Reference Library concentrating on creative worship, gender issues and the interface between women and religion.

My interest in women's relationship with the Church had been developed by participating in the first conference on this subject, set up by academic women in Oxford in 1973. Being chair of the family committee of the Newman Association at that time, I was asked to undertake a survey on women's views and experiences. This not only went to Newman members but was also taken by them to one hundred parishes. The great majority of respondents held that there was serious discrimination against women in the church and that this was incompatible with justice. A surprise finding was on the issue of ordaining women, a subject which had been very little discussed hitherto. Individual replies were 81% in favour of women priests, while group replies (mainly parishes) were 30% in favour, a remarkable result for those days.

In 1980 a National Pastoral Congress was called by the bishops of England and Wales. I was one of the group leaders on the topic of women and the church and was active in drawing up the topic report. Where the issue of the ordination of women was concerned, we felt that an open call for this would be counterproductive so we used a coded request that the whole issue should be re-examined. One of the Bishops had a 'Damascus Experience.' Before setting out for Liverpool, he had preached in his cathedral on justice; he offered a Lutheran woman pastor, who was an observer, a lift. She proceeded to talk to him all the way from Birmingham to Liverpool about injustice to women. This opened his eyes, as he confessed at a Mass in one of the hosting parishes on the Sunday. The bishops' report, *The Easter People*, actually apologised to women 'that you have often been permitted to play mainly a limited, and often inferior, part in the church.' An apology from the institutional church was almost unheard of in those days! Oliver and I were asked by the CTS to do a discussion pamphlet on the bishops' report, which they entitled *Becoming the Easter People*: without asking us they put a dreadful 'holy nightgown' picture of Jesus on the front – but it was pointed out to us by friends that this might help the sales rather than something more austere. Apparently they sold several thousand copies.

The publisher warned us to treat with extra care the question of communion in both kinds and responsible parenthood. The traditionalists saw keeping the cup away from the laity as a vital part of retaining the separation of the sacred priesthood, which had this privilege. The other matter was of course particularly controversial. The Congress had called for a fundamental re-examination of the Church's teaching on marriage, sexuality and contraception, and asked that the teaching Church should take notice of the insights of married Christians into the meaning of their life-long sexual relationship. The bishops accepted the need to develop positively all aspects of marriage and the family, but had to point out that *Humanae Vitae* 'is the authentic official teaching of the Church.' In the discussion document, we did not think it wise to pinpoint the widespread unease about this, but suggested that this paragraph should be read alongside another one (39) where *The Easter People* dealt with the difference between infallible teaching and official teaching, and said that 'Official teaching is open to development.'

### **Post Congress**

Many people have since dismissed the Pastoral Congress as being ineffectual. At the time it was a heady affair – we went up expecting it to be dominated by yes people but it was full of renewal minded laity with a good proportion of women. The bishops in their report *The Easter People*, while referring to the traditional structures, accepted the vision of the church as a pilgrim people, a sharing and trusting church, one that speaks its mind(!) and where individuals matter. Most of the visions of the Congress on things like collaborative ministry and rethinking of sexuality are currently held by those laity who do actually consider the needs of the Catholic community, and by a good many of the clergy too. The problem is, as always, putting words and ideas into action. The same applies to the excellent document from the bishops in 1995 entitled *The Sign We Give*, focusing on collaborative ministry. Inaction follows because of lack of leadership and paucity of interrelationship skills among the clergy. Every so often there has been an attempt at consulting the laity, which generally has come up with the need for proper in-service training in interpersonal relations and management skills not just for priests but also for bishops, but this has never been taken up. The value of the insights of modern management training are almost ignored, despite the fact that the bishops are not unaware that most of their ad clerums (letters to the priests) get thrown in the wastepaper basket. One bishop said

somewhat bitterly to me 'You seem to think that the clergy do what I ask them to!' Yet somehow the bishops never get round to thinking how they might inspire those who lead parishes better to fill their responsibilities.

### **Lay inspiration for renewal**

Over the years the torch for renewal has been largely carried out not by the institutional church but through the many lay initiatives setting up and working through organisations and movements. In 1983 a small group of women set up a conference at King's College, London, entitled 'Women, Men and Power' with the keynote speaker being the well known American theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether. Some 300 people attended, with another 100 being turned away. I took 12 boxes of books and with a team of helpers in the intervals of talks and workshops sold almost the lot. This was the first chance many had had of finding books on the subject – mainly from America in those days. This conference led in the following year to the setting up of the Catholic Women's Network, of which I was a founder member.

There are many different organisations seeking change: the Movement for Married Clergy, Pax Christi and the Justice and Peace movement, the ecumenical Christian Ecology Movement, Catholic Women's Ordination, St Joan's Alliance, still going after 97 years advocacy of equality and justice, and the Catholic People's Weeks which offer the chance to experience a living and thinking community and share in creative worship. The Movement for Married Clergy in particular gets its teeth into the current crisis of the shortage of clergy: very many Catholics today believe that celibacy should be optional for clergy. On one occasion in a priestless parish, the local deacon introduced a convert Anglican priest who had come to say Mass, and continued, 'and this is his wife Mary,' at which the congregation burst into applause. At a recent synod of bishops the question of obligatory celibacy came up with a request that *virii probati*, senior and reliable married men, could be ordained. The bishops rejected this, emphasising that the shortage problem could be overcome by prayer. I feel strongly that this is a dereliction of their pastoral duty. The Eucharist is central to our worship and large areas of the world are deprived of this spiritual food. I once said to a bishop that a mere disciplinary ruling of celibacy should not outweigh the centrality in our spiritual lives of the Eucharist. The bishop replied that there were other ways of meeting Christ as well as in the Eucharist. This staggered me: in one sense it is true, but at the same time the psychological impact of the Eucharist far outweighs reading the bible or gathering in small groups.

One interesting development, in which the Westminster diocese has somewhat grudgingly co-operated, is the holding of regular Masses organised by the RC caucus of the Lesbian and Gay Christian movement at the Warwick Street church; this provides a haven for families and friends as well as for Lesbian and Gay Christians. Their liturgy is rather traditional but with an outstanding choir singing classical church music, and it draws preachers from among leading clerics in the land.

I took a major part in founding the Association for Inclusive Language, which is now ecumenical. It has an extensive library of sheet liturgy and worship material in conjunction with the Christian Women's Resource Centre reference library. Resource packs and learning modules are available including one on 'The faith community: God talk and creative Liturgy.' Recent editions of the journal have covered death and bereavement and Civil Partnership liturgies. Unfortunately the institutional church seems to be going backwards in the liturgy field with the forthcoming new missal, which seems to be more concerned with faithfulness to a Latin text than with comprehensibility today. Some infelicities have been removed: for instance official love of the word 'bounty' was changed when it was pointed out that to western anglophones this brought up images of a chocolate bar advertised by a coconut tree with scantily clothed females disporting below!

There has been a long walk backwards from the days when ICEL (the International Commission of English in the Liturgy) in its 1980 Report stated that language was a powerful tool of communication and must be used with precision as it affects the way people perceive themselves and others. Since then, traditional secretaries of the organisation have been imposed by Rome, and although the document on the Vocation and the Mission of the Laity (1986) actually used the phrase 'men and women' throughout, by the time we got to the New Catechism the Vatican took such fright at this way of describing the faithful that they took away the original inclusive draft from those asked to draw it up and gave it to a Tasmanian archbishop who had no linguistic experience and was best known for his 'reds under the beds' campaign. However this translation got into trouble by treating men throughout as generic; since he needed to exclude women from ordination, he put the Latin word 'vir' in after references to men, to make sure that 'women' could not be understood. Our bishops were good on fighting for a better translation and one of them flew out to Rome to try and influence the committee but with no avail.

As someone passionate about not using sexist language, to avoid heightened blood pressure when I go to a parish Mass, like many others, I quietly substitute the word 'human' where the Creed has 'and was made man.' A small advance is that the Mass card at Southwark Cathedral has dropped the word 'brethren' in favour of 'Pray, brothers and sisters.' While girl altar servers are increasingly common, there are still many churches which refuse to wash female feet on Maundy Thursday. In one diocese when an 'ad clerum' came round forbidding the participation of women in

this ceremony, the parish priest put out 12 chairs, six of them occupied by men, the rest empty. The congregation was left in no doubt about who should have been there but for the bishop's prohibition. Inclusive language is of course more than words but also symbols, so the exclusion of women from the altar is a message that women are not fully in the likeness of God, despite Genesis 1.27

It is in fact easier for inclusive language about the community to be accepted than it is to appreciate that we can profit from many different images of God: the problem of using 'Father' nearly all the time is that people begin to think in terms of human fathers who are male. Many people if asked whether God the Father is male would answer yes. But the first person of the trinity has no gender. Aquinas himself said we needed many names of God, and that none of them could describe fully the divinity. Among those well authenticated by custom are abba, loving creator, healer, potter, motherly God and shepherd. Julian of Norwich, Anselm, and Bernard of Clairvaux all used mother in reference to Christ. One American bishop, however, does not seem to have heard about the many different images of God used in the Bible and by mystics. He has recently dismissed a woman who has worked very successfully as pastoral assistant in a parish for 34 years because she had written a Ph.D. thesis on the images of the Godhead, and has refused to repudiate it. He has not read the thesis apart from dipping into it here and there, and is totally unfamiliar with the issue. There is a petition going around for her restitution.

One important aspect of the question of what sort of language we should use in worship is the value of the creative approach. This does not supersede the parish liturgy, which has to be formal, but which cannot deal with many aspects of relevance to Christian life in today's troubled world. A number of groups using liturgies created to be relevant to the lives of the participants are working around the country. Out of this has come a book called *Making Liturgy* (Canterbury Press, 2001) edited by Dorothea McEwan, Veronica Seddon, Pat Pinsent and myself. This not only has chapters about how to go about creating such alternative forms of worship, including the use of poetry, prayer, silence, music, dance and symbol, but also gives some 28 sample liturgies which have been used successfully: themes include the liturgical seasons, facing change, journeying, reclaiming Mary Magdalene, balance, justice & anger and peace.

### **Ecumenical work and the ordination of women**

Much valuable work has been done ecumenically, particularly in the quest for women priests. I was present outside Church House when it was announced that the measure for this had been passed by the Anglican church. The reaction was euphoric, and reminded me of Trafalgar Square on VE day, at the end of World War II. I was present at the first Anglican Eucharist celebrated by a woman, which took place in Ripon a few months after the Synod Vote. Each Anglican diocese came in with their banner and right at the end came the RC group holding aloft their banner. At this the whole congregation rose to their feet and applauded us!

Shortly after the vote in the Anglican synod for the ordination of women, Catholic Women's Ordination was set up, with different groups working in their own ways. This organisation provides an interesting newsletter and runs conferences from time to time. The London group has long held prayer vigils outside Westminster Cathedral as well as holding study days and input into the national core set up. In this field the work of Hans Wijngaards and his team is also remarkable. Through the website [Womenpriests.org](http://Womenpriests.org), Housetop has provided well designed and resourced material. Within the first six months there were half a million hits, and academia worldwide has been in touch. Much of the material has been translated into many different languages. This is of course a long term search for change, but we should not underestimate the effect of changing minds and hearts about a particular issue. After all, the change to the use of the vernacular came overnight. The official arguments for continuing the ban on ordaining women are particularly weak – one is that Jesus did not ordain any women – he didn't ordain men either, that came later in early Christian history. Then it is said to be against tradition, but tradition changes: the Church was still teaching that slavery was moral in my grandmother's day! Almost obscene is another argument that women are not in the likeness of Christ, because they are not male. Yet many women show Christlike personal attributes, so the real difference becomes a question of genitalia. Why do we still persist in saying in the creed 'and was made man' where the original Greek means human? Which is more important, that Christ came as a male or as a human being?

### **Christian feminist theology**

This brings me to what I believe to be one of the more hopeful developments in the prophetic aspect of the Church: Christian feminist theology. Spiritual writers such as the Benedictine Joan Chittister and Fr Dermot O'Murchu emphasise its values and underline that it is as important for men as well as women, as it seeks to promote wholeness and inclusion and denies a dualistic outlook of diversity. To Joan Chittister this is a branch of liberation theology which values diversity, promotes an ethics of care and a holistic spirituality and understands power as empowering and enabling, not controlling. Dermot O'Murchu in *Reclaiming Spirituality* has a chapter on what he calls reclaiming the feminist heart, speaking of it as crucial in the struggle against patriarchy, which stands for masculine orientations of possession and control and a hierarchical construct for organising reality. We need to learn that 'both/and' is more basic to reality than the dualism of 'either/or.' To him, feminism is on the cutting edge of life in renaming the

essential nature of living as one of relatedness. Everything is interconnected and interdependent. We need to get away from hierarchical models to the relational mode, which is more egalitarian, participative and communal.

It appears that little leadership in issues of renewal has come from the institutional church, apart from a few hortatory commendations from Rome. Pressure for change is largely a lay matter. Organisations involved in this area may have only a small membership but ideas percolate through. One particularly harmful theological concept, still lingering today is that of the 'perfect Church.' Originally in the medieval era it meant a society that contained all the necessary means of salvation but gradually especially in the nineteenth century it took on the meaning of a church without fault. Vatican II rejected the curial draft resonant with this and replaced it with the idea of God's people on pilgrimage. Remnants of the old view still continue and bolster the secrecy and the sweeping of offences under the carpet, which is a leading factor in the sexual abuse by clergy scandal.

We need to keep the adage 'ecclesia semper reformanda' in our minds, and realise that loyal dissent is essential if we are to correct the inevitable distortions that arise because the institutional Church is run by humans! John Paul II took pioneering steps in apologising for past offences of the Church, but this was very much to the disgruntlement of many curial officials who prefer to pretend the institutional Church is sinless. We also have a responsibility to put pressure on those in power when they are failing in their pastoral role. Bishop Derek Worlock wrote the preface to a CTS pamphlet by Oliver and myself, *The Parish Group Handbook*; he asked us to put in a recommendation that where 'groups, which are the eyes and the ears of the Church' come across a pastoral problem that is not being recognised by the authorities, they must draw attention to this not only in the parish but also to deanery and diocesan authorities.

### **Where we are now**

Looking back over the last 50 years there is far more participation than there was in the past, and a greater belief in following one's conscience. We still, however, have a long way to go in bringing about true renewal, but I take heart from the Newman/Von Hugel concept of the Church having three aspects, of which the institutional is not paramount, although it thinks it is! Equally, or perhaps more important, are the prophetic and the spiritual aspects. But if we give up on the institutional Church we greatly reduce our possibilities of influencing the journey towards transformation. In face of the continuing, and in someways, backward looking trends in the structures, it is important that we follow a prophetic role and persevere in this. One never knows when change might come. We did not expect the Berlin wall to fall. My mantra is 'Sow seeds, but do not worry about the reaping.'

Particularly urgent problems are the shortage of priests and the way many dioceses are dealing with this by closing down vibrant parishes which could carry on under lay leadership with peripatetic priests for celebrating the Mass. Of course many parishes are not at all vibrant and one of our problems is apathy. This also occurs among organisations. The Newman today is largely composed of retired people. I don't want to be ageist, being over 80 myself, but one cannot deny that as we get older most of us have a diminution of energy and a reluctance to take on demanding new challenges. Around the time of Vatican II Catholics were enthusiastic and ready to take on responsibility, which was mainly denied them. Now the institution, out of necessity rather than because it is a good thing in itself, wants more participation by the laity but it is often not forthcoming. The younger lay people tend to be demoralised by teaching on morals that does not resonate with them, and beset with the strains of modern life, juggling family, work, stressful travel and the like.

One bishop, Guazzelli, had a natural understanding of the need to get people involved, much influenced by a laywoman who was his pastoral assistant in the diocese. Between the two of them they vitalised the East End parishes. When the Pope came to Britain, Guazzelli's diocese of East London got together a book of contributions from each parish about what they were doing to bring about renewal. Some parishes did nothing, so Guazzelli said he would put in a blank page for their parish to show their lack of endeavour. They pretty soon put in a page. Maybe if more bishops used this kind of initiative more people would become aware of their responsibilities!

**Ianthe Pratt**