
EQUAL**Catholic Feminist Newsletter for Women
and Men in the Philadelphia Area**

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WRITES**MISSION STATEMENT** - *As women and men rooted in faith, we call for justice, equality, and full partnership in ministry. We are committed to church renewal and to the transformation of a structure which uses gender rather than gifts as its criterion for ministry.*

Wishing You A Blessed Holiday Season

Advent: Amazement and Wonder

By Ellie Harty

Sometimes it's just better to state the obvious in this time before the celebration of the birth of Christ: We all remember and rejoice that, within her 'self' on that great birth day, Mary literally transubstantiated bread and wine into body and blood to create her son - many believe - the Son, the Christ, God With Us on earth.

Yet she, the most celebrated of women, would be prohibited from celebrating Mass, from speaking and reading and praying the words of her son, from reflecting on the life of her son, the Son, the Christ, God With Us on earth.

Yet she, the most consecrated of women, would be prohibited from consecrating bread and wine, from transubstantiating it into the body and blood of Jesus, her son, the Son, the Christ, God With Us on earth.

Yet she, the most sacred of women, would be prohibited from participating in all of the sacredness, Sacraments given to all of us by her son, Jesus, the Son, the Christ, God With Us on earth.

This season is filled with amazement and awe and wonder at what happened, and we rejoice. This season - and the seasons past and to come - is also filled with another kind of amazement and awe and wonder at the objection to Mary - to all women - fully participating in celebrating worship at our own Church by our own Church.

Why is it so simple, so obvious, for us to see? Could it be that its very simplicity and transparency are the sources of its eternal power? And could it happen that this power in the hands of us, the true church, could force the temporal powers finally to see too?

Christmas and then a New Year, it's as simple as that. Let us, with Mary as inspiration, begin.

The Challenge and the Gift of Darkness

This season of the year is not everybody's favorite because it is so dark. I'm one of them. I'm even grateful for the holiday light show and hubbub that keeps darkness, albeit through a hefty dose of artifice and over-exuberance, away. I even work to abolish the darkness that prohibits women from ordination and leadership in the Catholic Church!

Advent, therefore, gives me - and maybe you, too - a special challenge. As if the days shortening and darkening weren't enough, we're shoved into the season with Biblical descriptions of stars falling, the moon failing to shine, and the heavens shaking. We get no graceful, gentle welcome into the season, just drama and mystery, and the barest hint of a promise of the coming light.

And yet, when our usual, reliable ways of seeing in the world no longer function effectively in the new darkness, we are forced to look for fresh sources of light, coming from inside us or from our communities, lamps we have not lit before.

Recently, I asked my small faith group this question: What would you carry with you into the darkness? One said her belief that EVERYTHING is a gift from God's loving heart. Another said, humbly, her uncertainty. Another said she would take nothing so that she could be completely open to whatever was waiting there for her. Someone else said she would take her own inner light and let its shine lead her way.

I remembered then the precious gift our Catholic religion had given us: of viewing all of life sacramentally. If that is true, I realized, then darkness is a sacrament, too, a channel of grace.

One of my favorite of their answers, though, was quite simple. One woman replied, "My Teddy Bear." Whatever gender, whatever cause, we all need those!

Ellie Harty is co-editor of EqualwRites

MARY BYRNE HOFFMAN (1950 – 2019)

A Tribute by Judith A. Heffernan

Mary Byrne Hoffman, who died on August 13, 2019, was one of our own—a beloved SEPAWOC member and supporter. What a joyful day when she walked through that door to join us. Her presence lit up a room with that gorgeous smile from the heart—and those sparkling eyes. Her words, reflections, and comments were precious, valuable, and valued.

Her timing was impeccable; Mary Byrne came to us “just when we needed her most”! Some of the Danube 7 (The first ordained Roman Catholic Women Priests) were visiting the U.S. in 2003, and WOC was honoring their courage, wisdom, and faith in stepping out and being ordained. One of the stops of the visit was Philadelphia and SEPAWOC shared months long planning for that glorious day and evening together. It all came together on May 3, 2003, which will forever be known within SEPAWOC as “The Grand Event”...and it surely was. I learned that Mary Byrne was a vital part of an Intentional Eucharistic Community, and many of those upbeat, enthusiastic, joyful people joined with us at our “Grand Event” and we loved them, too!

We decided we needed to have a Liturgy, a Eucharist, a celebration where all were welcome within a loving community, that long hope of WOC realized—a real, loving discipleship of equals gathered together in the Spirit as one...and what a celebration it was! Mary Byrne was one of three planners, and we learned that she was also a really good Liturgist—very deep, very spiritual, a woman of faith, hope and joy, with a vast knowledge of resources while being so creative herself. ...and in those long meetings of preparation—her wit and humor refreshed us and kept us moving forward.

During this time I learned that Mary Byrne graduated from Union Theological Seminary, a sacred place based on faith, social justice, vision, inclusiveness, respect and integrity, where twenty four faith traditions come together in faith and scholarship to reimagine the work of justice—just her kind of place! She shared with me that before the graduation ceremony of blessing and commissioning, a special “sending forth” was held for the Catholic graduates who had been banned from ordination in their own tradition.

I remember the love Mary Byrne had for her children, her love for super husband, loving partner Les, and I remember laughing all through our dinner on the lake, gathered with the people from Rochester who spoke up, spoke for, spoke with and spoke out for equality in ministry-and who practiced what they preached. When Mary Byrne and Les decided to move out West to be close to their children, we

understood, but I was sad. Then, I realized Mary Byrne was still Mary Byrne -growing, loving, sharing—and through the magic of technology the miles would disappear—we could share her prayers, reflections, photography, poems, insights, hopes and dreams.

When I googled Mary Byrne, I found that she was the President of MBH Productions from 1990 to 2002 and had produced TV documentaries for the National Council of Churches. Mary Byrne earned several awards for documentaries on homelessness, teens in crisis, and racism. This was during the time Mary Byrne also received the Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary, and she adeptly brought the worlds of spirituality and media together and trained teachers and clergy on media integration into religious education. Further, she taught faith and media courses at the University of Dayton and Princeton Theological Seminary.

Mary Byrne later created a media based religion curriculum to help and guide high school students with discernment, transitions, and spiritual formation and then taught it in Catholic High School from 2003-2012. In 2012 Paulist Press published *Catechesis in a Multimedia World: Connecting to Today's Students* by Mary Byrne Hoffman! In August 2019 Dayton Press published her book *Grammy! Grammy! and the Magic Hat*. Coming soon will be *How to do Old-* on how to live with joy.

The other thing you now will find in Google is her dates: Mary Byrne Hoffman (1950-2019), but you will not find the heartbreak for all those who loved her so that goes with those parentheses. Mary Byrne wrote in her reflection *Gutsy Gal: The Spirit of Rising* that we will cartwheel off the precipice of fear ... lovingly release and pass on...and untether an undaunted “Alleluia”—but Mary Byrne, we didn’t want you to go yet. As her friend Pastor Scott wrote, “Hers was a vibrant life, she proclaimed her truth and backed it up with action...Mary Byrne, we have lost an incredible gift, and need to imagine new ways to carry your light.”

Let me close this memory of Mary Byrne by sharing with you from her last email to her faithful followers on June 24, 2019: “Children are experiencing unthinkable neglect at the hands of our government...this is not a political issue—this is a humanitarian crisis...you are as distressed as I am...the question haunts us, ‘What must we do?’” Let us join in prayer everyday ... a prayer for the children, a prayer for all of us, so that we can work toward common hopes rather than divisive fears... May we do no harm, may we walk in loving kindness, may we act with courage... Mary Byrne Hoffman, pray for us.

Judith Heffernan writes the *Scripture Reflections for EqualwRites*.

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The Perils of Predictions By Regina Bannan

On October 26, the day of the vote, I posted a WOC blog predicting what the final document that the Synod on the Amazon would say. One of your co-editors, Ellie Harty, suggested that I write what actually was done “in the room where it happens.” Sorry. That’s my trite cultural reference, not hers. My predictions are in bold. What happened is not in bold. You can access a fuller discussion of each issue by going to the blog at: womensordination.org/blog/2019/10/26/the-day-of-the-vote.

My prediction is that this is the last Synod in which no women vote. And after that, the lay members will vote as well. You read it here first. Well, no women voted, except maybe in their hearts. I assume they were in the room, but I haven’t seen that anywhere. Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego is quoted in a long NCR article by Joshua McElwee (ncronline.org/news/people/catholic-women-deacons-san-diegos-mcelroy-favor-it) saying that he would like to see more discussion about women being made full voting members in future synods. **(McElroy is on my short list for promotion to Archbishop of Philadelphia. Is that another prediction? You read it here first!)**

Women deacons? Maybe not significant change, despite some bishops ready and willing to ordain women deacons and eager to praise women working with their communities. The Synod recommendation was for some way of recognizing women’s ministry as community leaders, which was more or less like my pessimistic expectation. They want to give their deacon deliberations to the commission the Pope agreed to convene when there will be new members. My concern is that the new members may have a more compromised view than some of the old ones, but my prediction is that something will result, just not this year.

Married priests? Nobody seems to be calling for another Synod on the ordination of *viriprobat*, so my guess is that there will be a proposal for a council to implement this for the Amazon. ... How much emphasis is given to compromise and how much to a prophetic response to the need presented will determine what gets proposed. I vote for the prophets. Well, the prophets got top billing in all the news stories and a whiff of real change. The synod calls for the ordination of current married permanent deacons to “sustain the life of the Christian community through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments in the most remote areas of the Amazon region.” I think the compromisers actually won; this is a limited role, but a beginning.

Environment? I expect strong statements critical of deforestation, mining, luxury goods – meat, especially – with condemnation of destructive colonization now and in the past by North Americans, Europeans, and Chinese. The Vatican News summary of the final document left me in awe, frankly. (See: vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2019-10/amazon-synod-final-document.html.) I admit I have not been paying attention to the many presentations on the environment over the three weeks of the synod. There were issues I never anticipated, for example, migration, urban ministry, and trafficking; those I did predict, (See above) were all covered. The definition of “ecological sin” could have come from the Baltimore Catechism: “an action

or an omission against God, against one’s neighbor, the community, the environment” and the whole world is called to stop committing them. That means all of us.

This document goes to Pope Francis and it has been his practice to write his own document incorporating the recommendations voted on by the Synod. So it’s not over yet.

Regina Bannan blogs for The Table at www.womensordination.org

Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW) Update A First Person Report from Rome by Kathleen Gibbons Schuck

Representatives from Austria, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States met in Lisbon, Portugal, for the annual Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW) Steering Committee meeting the weekend of October 18th to 20th. Each member organization (WOC, RCWP, We Are Church, Catholic Women’s Ordination) presented an update on initiatives undertaken in the past year.

Austria appears to be the country furthest ahead on church reform. Martha Heizer shared about a recent workshop of reform organizations in Austria. Four parishes in Austria and two in Germany are implementing an innovative approach. Their pastors are scheduled to retire next year. They are in the process of training men and women leaders nominated by their local parish communities to take over ministerial functions once their pastors retire. Helmut Schuller, who many will remember from the Catholic Tipping Point Tour, is one of the pastors orchestrating this approach. The plan is, once people have been trained, to go to the bishop and request these teams of people be ordained for a period of five years to serve the people of God in that particular parish.

One of the highlights of the weekend was listening to Luca Baldini, theologian with the Wijngaards Institute in London. Luca highlighted historical evidence that women served as leaders at the altar in the 4th through 6th centuries, referencing research by Dr. Ally Kateusz from her book, *Mary and Early Christian Women: Hidden Leadership*. Next time you’re in Italy, check behind the velvet drape at the Lateran in Rome or visit the Catacombs of San Genaro in Naples.

On Tuesday, October 22nd, seven of us witnessed on behalf of Women’s Ordination Worldwide behind Castel Sant’ Angelo in Rome. Wearing green for environmental justice and purple for gender justice in the church, we carried banners and signs that read, “**Empower Women to Save the Earth. Empower Women to Save the Church.**” Media coverage included the Guardian, the New York Times, CRUX, the National Catholic Reporter, Religion News Service, a Korean news outlet, and the Spanish radio. Page followers on WOW’s Facebook page were up 98% this week.

As I write this, I have just read Josh McElwee’s article in the *National Catholic Reporter* on the voting at the Amazon Synod. The closest margin was the voting on priestly ordination of married men with 128 yes and 41 no votes. The second closest margin was the issue of women deacons with 137 yes votes and 30 no votes.

Kathleen Gibbons Schuck is a member of the *SEPAWOC Core Committee*.

It Makes You Want to Stand Up and Scream The Catholic Tipping Point Presentation: Marie Collins

By Regina Bannan

Marie Collins subverts the categories of victim and survivor. We want to be sure you know enough about her to understand why the Catholic Organizations for Renewal invited her on a cross-country Catholic Tipping Point tour. She spoke September 12, 2019, at the SugarLoaf Campus of Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia.

Marie's victim story makes you want to stand up and scream. As a child of twelve, she became ill and in the children's hospital was sexually abused by a priest. The abuse continued until she was seventeen. She couldn't talk about it. For the next twenty years, she felt that she was a worthless person, that her son and husband (an amazing man) would be better off without her. Then a doctor figured out what her problem was and advised her to go to the parish to report the priest in case he was still working with children. The reaction she received: "Don't tell me his name! It must have been your fault." [Audience gasps.] She was shattered and didn't speak about it for another ten years.

Then there was public information about a terrible case of child abuse by clergy, and she came forward again to the hospital and to the church. The hospital went to the police. The Archbishop proclaimed: "There's never been a complaint about him," but there had been multiple complaints, all covered up. There was also swift retribution for giving credence to the victims. A young priest psychologist supported the victims and became interested in "child protection." He was criticized for being disloyal to the church, and his career was destroyed.

That Archbishop eventually became a Cardinal. Marie presented her case and asked him, "Where is the morality in this?" Again his resistance was steadfast: "I have to follow my legal advice." The evidence in her case, photographs the abusing priest had taken, was destroyed. Finally under mounting pressure, the priest admitted his action against her and went to jail, convicted as a "fixated pedophile" who had abused more than seventy children. He was not laicized after the ensuing canon law trial, and Marie was not even informed it was taking place.

The survivor part of Marie's story was developing through all these encounters. She describes her journey as one from naiveté to cynicism. The Cardinal had explained to her the doctrine of "mental reservation," a way to lie without sinning: If there is just cause, an explanation can be left ambiguous so that the wrong meaning would be accepted by the person receiving it. Marie was appalled and began speaking out, so much so that she attracted the attention of those selecting members for the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of

Minors in 2014.

Initially full of hope, Marie expected that the emphasis of the Commission would now be on the safety of children, not protection of the church. But the Curia was determined it not succeed. The Commission had no budget, no way to keep records or receive documents, no staff support. Members were treated with disrespect and lied to, even though they were working for Pope Francis. While the Pope finally accepted their excellent recommendations, the Curia never implemented them.

After three years of speaking out again, Marie resigned. When the Pope came to Dublin, he said to her, "You are right," but nothing changed. Marie generously surmised that perhaps the Pope himself was lied to; he had to trust somebody and he trusted the wrong people.

Marie's story is an insider story: inside the abuse and ultimately inside the Vatican. She proposed many solutions and acknowledged that some positive changes have been made and that most priests are not abusers. She identified the key problem as clericalism and the self-protection that that engendered, and urged lay people to take more responsibility.

As if it had been planned as the perfect transition, audience members proposed two options for future action. For those wanting to act within the institution. Joe Boyle from the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church described a committee he is forming for dialogue with the Archdiocese. For those looking for something else, Johanna Berrigan of Philadelphia's Catholic Worker House of Grace prepared a list of alternative communities and spiritual resources. SNAP (Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests) members distributed "21 things people can do to prevent abuse."

Marie Collins proved herself to be charming, caring, and honest. She ended by recognizing Pennsylvania's key role in sparking the current discussion about the sex abuse scandal.

Making a great idea like the Catholic Tipping Point Tour into reality depends on the local volunteers. Kathy Schuck provided leadership to the whole group working on the tour here in Philadelphia. I am in awe of the businesslike approach she took at every step. It was a prayerful session, too, led by our own Judy Heffernan and Kathy Schuck, and Marianne and Tom Tucker provided the music. Local newswoman, Pat Ciarrocchi, was mistress of ceremonies. Chestnut Hill College was the only Catholic venue on the national tour. We are incredibly grateful to Sister Cathy Nerney for arranging for the wonderful space of the SugarLoaf campus — and the terrific refreshments.

Regina Bannan is President of SEPAWOC.

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“Mary the Great” – A Revision Critically Needing to Happen

By *Eileen McCafferty DiFranco*

Anyone can make a mistake while writing. I know because I write a lot. I also make a lot of mistakes. Occasionally, I'll proof read what I have just written and there is a word sitting there that I didn't even know was in my brain at the time I wrote it. My fingers simply typed it and there it was, an unintentional error, made without my permission.

So it was with ancient scribes who laboriously poured over cramped words and lines of texts not separated by punctuation or paragraphs like modern writing. They got tired and bored. Their minds wandered and their fingers and brains played tricks on them. They might have been lazy and didn't feel like proof reading and correcting. In some cases, they might have deliberately altered the text to say something different in order to make it cohere with the theology or religious beliefs of the time.

Let's check out several examples.

The most egregious alteration in a biblical text occurred more than fifteen hundred years ago in the last chapter of the gospel of Mark. All of the earliest and most reliable copies of Mark end at Mark 16:8, “So they (the women) went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” There are no post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, no reporting to Peter, and no commissioning. The early scribes found this lack so troublesome that they felt obliged to correct it by concocting a host of forgeries that made their way into the Catholic Vulgate and the King James Version of the bible that “corrected” the gospel of Mark.

If the lack of post resurrection stories was not enough, Mark was also missing the story of the virgin birth. In addition, Jesus was described as “son of Mary” and Joseph was conspicuously absent from the story. As a result, the early compilers of the gospels decided that Matthew, which had all of the requisite stories, predated Mark.

Feminist scholars have long pointed out that the name of Junia in Romans 16:7 was changed to “Junias” to render a female apostle male. Many believe that this edit was done deliberately since there is no record of “Junias” being a male name anywhere in antiquity. In fact, Junia, along with a fellow apostle by the name of Andronicus, was regarded by Paul as being prominent among the apostles in Christ. The presence of “Junias” rather than “Junia” in Romans confirmed the later patriarchal insistence that Jesus chose no women apostles. Jerome, along with his faithful companion Paula, who was an expert in Hebrew, translated the entire bible into Latin. Jerome's horror of women and his belief in their innate inferiority (in spite of the brilliant Paula) crept into his translation of the bible. He changed the Greek translation of Genesis 3:16 which reads: “In pain shall you bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” to “You shall be under the power of your husband and he shall rule over you.” Jerome's hatred of women had long term effects on the well-being of women. Seventh century Bede the Venerable and Alcuin added fear into the toxic mix of power: “You shall fear your husband.” In the 12th century, St. Victor of Paris gave permission for husbands to “wound” the wives under their control.

Church historian Bart Ehrman described the modification of God's words at the time of Jesus' baptism in the gospels. Some of the church fathers who wrote well before the canonization of the scriptures into the New Testament wrote that God said, “You are my son; this day I have begotten you” rather than the standard, “You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased” which appears in the gospels.

As a result of proven ongoing scriptural changes over the years, no one should be surprised that the position of Mary Magdalene, Jesus' tower of strength, should have been comprised by some scribe and his school who were uncomfortable with the position Mary Magdalene held as Jesus' “Beloved Disciple” in the very early church. (I don't mean that Mary was Mrs. Jesus or that they were involved in any other relationship except for a professional one. If you recall, Jesus didn't want a wife. He wanted disciples and Mary was one par excellence.)

Elizabeth Schrader, a doctoral student who has examined a prodigious number of ancient papyri in the course of her studies, has postulated in an article in the “Harvard Theological Review” that Martha, the sister of Lazarus, the one who uttered the same words as Peter, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world,” was added to John 11 in order to detract from the elevated position Mary Magdalene held in the early church. In other words, Mary's Christological confession was placed in the mouth of a made-up character in order to detract from her importance.

Schrader learned several things in the course of her studies. First of all, Martha is not mentioned at all in some of the earliest papyri of John's gospel as the sister of Lazarus. Nor is she mentioned by a good many of the early Church Fathers or even in the early versions of the King James Bible. Schrader also noticed that in one of the earliest papyrus that recorded the presence of Martha in John 11, the Greek letter theta, “th,” was added to the name of Maria to make the name Martha. All of the singular pronouns in that particular papyrus were scratched out and replaced by the plural to reflect the presence of two sisters rather than one.

In addition, Schrader writes that the early Christians believed that Mary Magdalene hailed from Bethany rather than from Magdala which some scholars now believe did not exist 2,000 years ago. In fact, the name “Magdala” does not indicate a geographic place but rather a title, “tower.” What appears to be Mary's identifying last name, Schrader wrote, means either Mary, the Tower or, more importantly, Mary, the Great. No wonder the early church editors and scribes felt compelled to add a character to dilute her importance and in doing so, altered the course of history and the theology of the Christian Church.

The name “Mary” is sprinkled all over the stories in the New Testament, and it has been difficult to figure out who is who. From this jumble of Marys, there really is but one Mary the Great. And this is not the mother of Jesus. Mary the Great is Mary Magdalene, the Apostle to the Apostles. Without her, the name of Jesus might have been lost to history.

Eileen McCafferty DiFranco is a Roman Catholic Woman Priest and Member of the Community of Saint Mary Magdalene.

Latest Women Ordained Bestowing Their Gifts on All of Us

By Kathleen Gibbons Schuck

Bishop Andrea Johnson and four Roman Catholic Women Priest bishops from California, Indiana, Oregon, and Canada ordained Jean Marie Marchant as the new bishop of the eastern region on June 15, 2019, in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts. Five additional bishops participated.

Caryl Conroy Johnson, co-pastor of St. Mary Magdalene in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, presented Jean to the community. The emcee explained the laying on of hands as the most sacred moment of the ordination rite, celebrated in silence and wonder. "The gesture is the prayer – there are no words spoken."

What was amazing was after Andrea Johnson, the nine bishops present, and RCWP priests placed their hands on Jean's head, Rev. Ron Hildelang, Jean's husband and ministry partner, invited everyone present to participate in a communal laying on of hands. Ron invited family members, members of the Spirit of Life community, chaplains and women religious, visiting clergy, people Jean had ministered to and everyone present to form circles of love around Jean.

The circles grew organically as people close to Jean placed a hand on her, then others placed a hand on the shoulder of the person closest to them. Three hundred people connected standing in silence. This was profoundly moving, *the gesture clearly the prayer*. The image remains etched in my memory: Every single person physically engaged in ordaining Jean.

New Deacons Ordained: On September 22, newly ordained Bishop Jean Marchant led the ordination of four new deacons at Stony Point Retreat Center in Stony Point, New York. The new deacons include: Karen Murphy of New York, Kathleen Blank Riether of Virginia, Jeanne Fornier of New Hampshire, and Jane Audrey-Neuhauser of Massachusetts.

The Eastern Region of RCWP's next priestly ordination will be 2 pm on May 2, 2020, at the Church of the Redeemer in Morristown, NJ. Congratulations to all of them and to all of us who receive their gifts of leadership and ministry.

Kathleen Gibbons Schuck is a Roman Catholic Woman Priest.



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Editors' Note: We usually do not publish articles that do not relate to Women's Ordination or Catholic Feminism. However, SEPAWOC member, Ann Zech, was so taken with the consensus reached between two usually permanently, and even vehemently, divided groups: one opposing gun ownership and the other owning and advocating for guns, we could not resist. This issue is too compelling for all of us, and any role model for consensus in resolving our own issues with the Church or in the world in general is sorely needed!

COMMOMGROUND OPPOSITION TO GUN VIOLENCE GUN OWNERS AND NON-GUN OWNERS FIND A WAY By Ann Zech

So what happens when a gun owner and an anti-gun activist sit down next to each other? This is a question I posed to myself when I went to my first GunSenseUs meeting six months ago.

Recently we moved from Delaware County to Chester County. For years I was active with Organizations such as Heeding God's Call and Delco United. Both these organizations consider diminishing the number of guns in our society and stopping the amount of gun violence that occurs a vital justice and peace mission. I wanted to continue my activity when I moved to Chester County so decided to show up at a general meeting of GunSenseUS. The meeting was held at Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Chester, Pennsylvania. I was very surprised to learn that I was sitting next to a person who owned a number of guns. But I did not learn this until after I had a shared conversation in which we both agreed on the need for gun safety as a way to diminish the amount of gun violence in our nation. I was fascinated by the concept of people coming to a "consensus" on ways to diminish all the gun violence.

This organization was started two years ago and presently has over 800 registered members. Monthly meetings with speakers and discussion allow everyone to share their common goals while still respecting a person's right to own or not own a gun. Education of the members and the public about gun safety, legislation for proper gun registration and ownership, and protection from violence are the current objectives. "Building Consensus For Gun Sense" is the overriding theme in all we do.

Here's What We Stand For...

- A Background Check for Every Gun Purchase
- Removing Guns from Those Threatening Self/Others
- Pre-purchase Safety Certification

Why We Are Different

We actively welcome those who do and those who don't own guns. We are non-partisan and an all-volunteer organization. We provide ongoing education about ways to reduce gun injury and death. We advocate for change on policy issues where there is consensus between gun owners and non-gun owners. You can find out more at www.gunsenseus.org.

Ann Zech is a member of the SEPAWOC Core Committee.

Book Reviews

Anne Hope: The Struggle for Freedom: the life of the visionary co-founder of Training for Transformation.
By Stephanie Kilroe. Darton, Longman and Todd. 139 pp. \$17.99

Reviewed by Marian Ronan

Feminist scholars have been documenting for some time now that women are consistently left out of historical narratives. One of the books that brought that home to me was Katherine Harmon's *There Were Also Many Women There*, which explains in detail how my ecumenical women's community, the Grail, had been excluded from the history of the liturgical movement. Some of us—my co-author, Mary O'Brien and I, for example, in our 2017 volume on sixteen founders of the International Grail—have been trying to undo this injustice. Now South African writer Stephanie Kilroe has joined the effort with her splendid new life of South African anti-apartheid activist and Grail member Anne Hope: *Anne Hope: The Struggle for Freedom*.

The story begins with Anne's birth in 1930 Johannesburg, South Africa, and traces her lineage back through her distinguished forebears. I personally was astounded to learn that someone who had spent much of her life working and fighting for the poor was descended from so many members of the British peerage and widely respected South African professionals. Anne continued these traditions, raised as she was with flawless manners and morality, and educated at a distinguished boarding school and eventually Oxford University.

Yet the suffering and loss that marked Anne's life also began early with her father's death at the very end of World War II, when she was fifteen. And her horror at the poverty of a black South African township even before her father's death went on to shape her lifelong commitment to justice, as did her early election to the steering committee of Pax Romana, the International Catholic Student Movement. It was, in fact, at a Pax Romana meeting in Montreal in 1952, that Anne met a group of young U.S. Grail women and then, back in Africa, the founder of the U.S. Grail, Lydwine Van Kersbergen who arranged a scholarship for Anne to come to Grailville, the U.S. Grail's farm and national center. Anne's years there changed her life, or at least brought together many of the desires and commitments within her. After four years at Grailville, Anne spent four more years in Uganda at a Grail women's secondary school. Her work there starting women's clubs in Ugandan villages was one of the foundations of her later work with Training for Transformation, an international education program for community organizers

Then, at the age of 32, Anne was named president of the Grail in South Africa where she spent seven years leading significant efforts with the Grail and other groups organizing against the apartheid government's crack-down on the African National Congress and other liberation efforts. Through these groups Anne met Steve Biko; her collaboration with him later forced Anne to flee South Africa not long before his murder by the South African government.

One of the most engaging narratives of Anne Hope's life and emotional/spiritual development is the story of her relationship with Sally Timmel. Soon after leaving the South African Grail presidency, in a scholarship-funded master's program in adult education at Boston University in 1969, Anne met and fell in love with Sally. Their work together developing adult training programs, including DELTA (Development Education and Leader-

ship Teams in Action) and Training for Transformation based in the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, transformed the lives of countless people in diverse African countries and elsewhere. The story of their years of collaboration, and the strains on their relationship as they were sometimes stranded on different continents and their struggle over Anne's nucleus commitment, the Grail, comprises a galvanizing trajectory through the second half of the book.

Some, however, will find the final chapters of *Anne Hope* equally absorbing. Here Kilroe describes, with considerable nuance, Anne's retirement during which, through prayer, psychotherapy, and deep encounters with the earth itself, she came to terms with her own deepest identity. I was especially moved by the details of Anne's death at the age of 85 at Pilgrim Place in California where she and Sally had retired and the burial of her ashes back in South Africa.

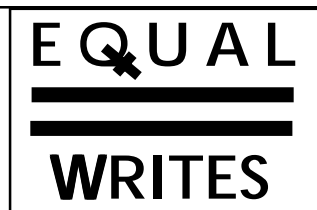
Of perhaps more concern is the genre, so to speak, of Kilroe's work. The initial primary source for her research was Anne's self-published 2013 autobiography, *A Life of Hope: The Story of My Life*. But Kilroe found the autobiography too objective, even stilted in parts. When Sally shared with her Anne's "morning papers," the journals Anne had kept as well as many of Sally's own memories, Kilroe was able to focus on the "transforming struggle of Anne's inner life..." As valuable as the results of such a focus may be, *Anne Hope* is more a spiritual narrative, or even a mediated memoir, than a biography.

We see some of the implications of this focus in Kilroe's discussion of the "trouble" Anne and Sally experienced at the end of a 1979 six-week advanced training course for forty experienced Kenyan trainers they had worked with successfully for years. Suddenly we learn, "the group reacted against colonialism, against white leadership in the church, and against Anne and Sally...accusing them of domination (and) of imposing Western values." These accusations devastated Anne in particular.

Kilroe introduces this conflict with a paragraph comparing it to a child who while becoming an independent young adult experiences hostility toward their otherwise good parents. She quotes one of Anne and Sally's African "colleagues" to justify her use of the comparison, assuring us that she does not mean it to be condescending. I leave it to you to decide whether a white writer comparing Africans to children when they protest white dominance is condescending, but it is also the case that a competent biographer would have interviewed some of the Kenyan trainers involved in the conflict before evaluating it.

These limitations, however, ought not to deter us from reading *Anne Hope* with enthusiasm and gratitude. It is a well-written and absorbing book. Rarely are we gifted with such a poignant and inspiring portrayal of the inner life and accomplishments of a heroic woman—a portrayal that strikes one more blow against the exclusion of women from history.

Marian Ronan is Research Professor of Catholic Studies at New York Theological Seminary in Manhattan and a participant in the International Grail since 1965.



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Scripture Reflections

Isaiah 2:4

By Judith Heffernan, M.Div.

World Day of Peace...January 1st...Isaiah 2:4 ...transform your swords into plowshares.

The World Day of Peace, a call to pray, learn and act for peace was inspired by John XXIII and began in 1968. A prayer from this day concludes, "Keep alive within us the flame of hope"...as heart wrenching a prayer in 2020 as it was in 1968.

The flame of hope: our own dear Mary Byrne wrote to us in 2016, "We shall overcome! We have before, we will again...if we stay true to our call to reach out, welcome, walk with, value, love...and may we walk in kindness, act with courage, reflect the Light...and never forget the power of prayer."

The flame of hope: Joan Chittister recently gave the keynote address at the *Communicators for Women Religious* conference. Joan said that in the face of ecclesiastical, moral and political collapse, we have three choices: 1) avoidance and withdrawing; 2) passive acceptance-to not talk about religion or politics and become part of the great enabling si-

lence; or 3) to be prophetic—to refuse to accept the status quo, because, if we have a heart and soul at all, we are saddened, sickened, shattered by the suffering of so many and we cannot bear the roar of silence any longer.

The flame of hope: Elijah Cummings is now my favorite Patron Saint of moral courage. He asks, "When we are dancing with the Angels, the question will be asked, "...Did you stand on the sidelines and say nothing?!"

The flame of hope: John XXIII wrote in *Pacem in Terris* in 1963 that human beings have the right to choose freely the state of life which they prefer. Outside the Synod in October, 2019, members of WOC and WOW witnessed and prayed: "Empowered women will save the Earth; empowered women will save the Church." Indeed... a renewed Church, a renewed priestly ministry, a discipleship of equals.

"Keep alive within us the flame of hope." May it be so.

Judith Heffernan is a member of the Community of the Christian Spirit and the SEPAWOC Core Committee.

