



Image of the day - Cashel

Reports

Carla Lockhart: I feel called to talk about abortion and to evangelise

DUP MP Carla Lockhart explains why Christians need to speak up in the abortion debate

The Christian DUP MP has spoken about how she believes God has placed her in politics to be a ‘voice for the voiceless’.

Speaking to Liberal Democrat, Tim Farron on Premier’s A Mucky Business podcast, Lockhart explained how Esther 4:14 challenges her to use her position of influence to be vocal about issues like abortion in “such a time as this”.

“I have been very vocal on this [abortion] issue. I will continue to be a voice for the voiceless. I believe that God has me in Parliament to be that voice,” Lockhart said.

She became a member of parliament for Upper Barn during the 2019 elections having previously been a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Earlier this year, the Upper Barn DUP used her maiden speech in Parliament to call on the government to stop the relaxation of abortion laws in Northern Ireland as well as advocating for suicide prevention and increased investment in mental health services.



Westminster made changes to Northern Ireland's abortion laws in 2019 during a period of absence of devolution. It ordered Stormont's Department of Health to set up full abortion services by no later than March 2022.

When asked about her thoughts on the nature and tone around the abortion debate, she said: "For me, it's about the value of life. I believe the most basic human right is the right to life and in pregnancy, both lives matter.

"I think we need to rehumanise the baby in the womb and we need to start to ensure that people recognise that it is a person and therefore it needs to be protected."

For Lockhart, it's not only important that the legislative framework is "life affirming" but also that Christians recognise their role in providing practical support for those facing crisis pregnancies.

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“For us as Christians, we need to step out of our comfort zone, particularly the church, and actually come alongside these people who find themselves in a situation where they feel they can't continue with the pregnancy.”

“It’s about...coming alongside those people who really feel they can't continue with that pregnancy and letting them see that we're there to help and support them. Unfortunately, churches become the last place where people who find themselves in those situations come, and I think that should be a challenge to us all. We need to show some practical Christianity and some real Christian love to those who find themselves in those situations.”

Lockhart became a member of parliament for Upper Barn during the 2019 elections having previously been a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

[[] <https://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Weekday/A-Mucky-Business-with-Tim-Farron/Podcast/Carla-Lockhart-I-feel-called-to-talk-about-abortion-and-to-evangelise>]

Vatican signals Pope won't attend COP26 climate conference

The Vatican said on Friday its delegation to the U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow will be headed by its secretary of state, meaning Pope Francis will not be going.

Scotland's bishops had announced in July that the pope would, health permitting, attend the opening of the conference that runs from Oct 31 until Nov. 12.



The Vatican had never said that he would attend and a Vatican source said that Friday's announcement that the delegation would be headed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin meant the pope would not be going.

Sources have said the Vatican was surprised by the Scottish bishops' announcement on July 12, when the pope was still in hospital recovering from intestinal surgery, though Francis told a Spanish radio network last month that he would like to go.

The 84-year-old pope left hospital on July 14 and after a period of rest he resumed his full activities, including a gruelling trip to Budapest and Slovakia, and has appeared to be in very good condition.

This week he presided at a major event with other religious leaders to bring attention to the environment and the dangers of climate change.

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A Vatican source said there was a possibility that the pope would address the conference by video or that Parolin would read a message on his behalf.

Archbishop of Canterbury in Egypt: Christians and Muslims must work together for peace

The Archbishop of Canterbury has urged Christians and Muslims to work together in the cause of peace, acknowledging that, at times in the past, Christians had failed to live up to the ideals of their faith in encounters with Islam.

Archbishop Welby's call came in a sermon at All Saints' Cathedral, Cairo, during a service of thanksgiving for the new Anglican/Episcopal Province of Alexandria.

"Christians are to be part of a Church that is told to conquer with love and peace," he said. "Never, never with a sword, a bomb, or a plot. Either Christians demonstrate the truth of God or they demonstrate nothing by the quality of their lives.

"And I say to our dear friends from the Islamic community: how often have Christians got this wrong. Our history is one of the tragic sin of force. Let us be people of peace together."

The new Province of Alexandria, Archbishop Welby said, "covers a huge area, from the waves of the Atlantic to the beaches of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It has a history of learning, looks south into Africa and east to the

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Holy Lands, north to Europe. A thousand years ago, this area preserved medicine and learning. Today, Egypt has again found its historic place as a place of meeting, of refuge.”

The Archbishop of Alexandria, Dr Samy Fawzy, was installed earlier this year; the service for the launch of the Province was postponed because of the pandemic. The Province of Alexandria, headed by Egypt, incorporates nine other countries: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Chad, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia.

Archbishop Welby said that the diversity in the new Province reflected that of the Anglican Church as a whole, and went on: “We are to be a Church that is full of difference. In this Province, you are to be united from the villages of Gambella to the apartments and towns of Cairo and Egypt, to the luxurious hotels on the Mediterranean coast. We are to be one, with our differences.”

On his arrival in Egypt, Archbishop Welby visited the ancient monastery of St Macarius, in Wadi Natrun, 60 miles northwest of Cairo. He wrote on Twitter that it was inspiring to begin his visit at a monastery “founded in 360 AD. Very moving to pray in this ancient place. . . Excellent spiritual conversation with the monks here.”

The Archbishop then visited the Harpur Memorial Hospital, in Menouf, which was founded in 1910 by an Irish missionary, Dr Frank Harpur. The Archbishop opened a new wing for the pre-term-infants nursery. In a speech, he referred to the fact that, before the founding of the hospital, Dr Harpur had treated poor Egyptians from a boat on the

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Nile — “a beautiful symbol that reminds us of stories from the Bible such as Noah’s Ark and the story of Moses.”

“The diocese of Egypt runs this excellent hospital,” he wrote on Twitter, “and it’s an example of the role that Anglicans play in healthcare in many countries. Christ’s love in action.”

During his four-day visit to Egypt, Archbishop Welby had meetings with a range of religious leaders, including the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria. He wrote on Twitter that he was “very glad to have this time of conversation and prayer with him today. We give thanks for our beloved brothers and sisters in the Coptic Church and their faithful witness to Jesus Christ.”

Accompanied by Dr Fawzy, Archbishop Welby had talks with the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Shawky Allam, and Ahmed al-Tayeb, Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, the main seat of Sunni Islamic scholarship. “At this time of great crises in our world,” the Archbishop wrote after the meeting, “it’s especially important that we keep building bridges of friendship across different faiths. Grateful for the Grand Imam of al-Azhar’s deep commitment to this vision.”

During a press conference at All Saints’ Cathedral, Archbishop Welby was asked about a developing crisis between Egypt and Ethiopia over the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile (News, 6 August). Egyptians fear that the dam could threaten the flow of Nile water into Egypt on which the country is overwhelmingly reliant. Talks involving Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan have failed to resolve differences on this issue.

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Archbishop Welby said that water resources were not the sole property of individual countries, and he appealed “to the Ethiopian government to show that they will use the dam responsibly, caring for their neighbours downstream. Please show that this dam is not a reason to worry.”

Over 550 submissions from the public about the Synodal Pathway in Ireland

Members of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference gathered in-person last week in Saint Patrick’s College, Maynooth, for their Autumn 2021 General Meeting.

One of the foremost issues discussed by the bishops during their Autumn General Meeting included an the opening of the Universal Synod on 9 and 10 October and an update on the Synodal Pathway in Ireland.

During their 2020 Winter General Meeting, bishops decided to proceed along a Synodal Pathway and, following their Spring General Meeting, announced that a new Synodal Pathway for the Catholic Church in Ireland is to take place with a view to holding a national synodal assembly, or assemblies, within the next five years. Over 550 submissions have been received from the public as part of the initial phase of the Synodal Pathway. Dr Nicola Brady has been appointed as chair of the Synodal Steering Committee and the vice-chairs are Mr Andrew O’Callaghan and Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick.

By a happy coincidence, these first two years of the Synodal Pathway in Ireland will complement the Church’s worldwide



journey towards the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops, entitled: For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission. This weekend (9 and 10 October), Pope Francis will officially open the Universal Synod. The Holy Father has asked that the whole Church prepare for this Synod which is scheduled to take place in October 2023 in Rome.

In this regard, bishops welcomed the publication on 7 September, by the General Secretariat for the Synod in Rome, of the Preparatory Document which indicates the guiding principles of the Synod on Synodality. Bishops agreed that, as the Church in Ireland embarks on its own Synodal Pathway, we can also look forward to letting ourselves be inspired by these guiding principles.

Bishops discussed this Preparatory Document, sharing in the goal of its listening process, namely, “not to produce documents, but to plant dreams, prophecies, and hopes.” For the initial preparatory phase of the Universal Synod, the fundamental questions put before us are:

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- how does this ‘journeying together’ take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel? and,
- what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?

These global questions neatly complement the guiding question facing the Irish Synodal Pathway over the next five years, which is: “What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time?”

The full membership of the Steering Committee and the Synodal Task Group for the Synodal Pathway will be published as part of the official launch in the coming weeks.

For more on the Synodal Pathway see www.catholicbishops.ie/synod and on the Universal Synod see www.synod.va.

News briefs

Installation of Precentor at Belfast Cathedral

The Ven Barry Forde, Archdeacon of Belfast, was installed as Precentor in the Chapter of St Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast, at a Service of Choral Evensong on Sunday October 10.

Clergy pictured at the installation of the Ven Barry Forde as Precentor in Belfast Cathedral, are, from left: The Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Archdeacon of Connor; the Very Rev

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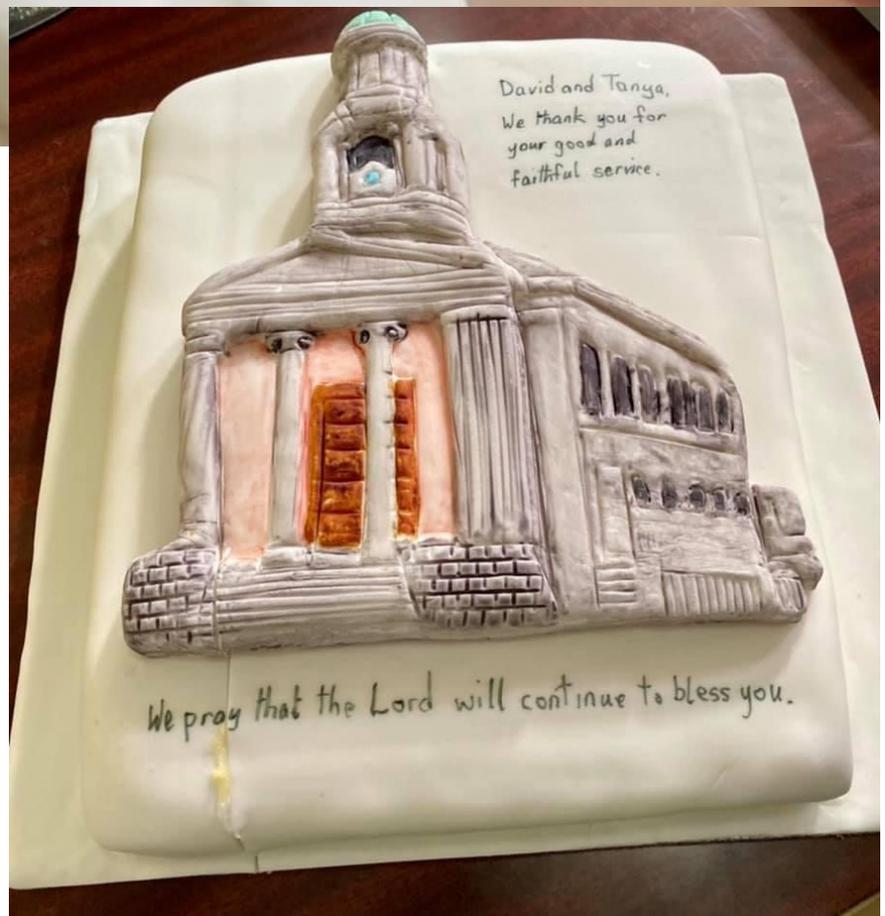
Stephen Forde, Dean of Belfast; the Rev Canon Heather Morris; the Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor; Archdeacon Forde; and the Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada.





Moving parish - a piece of cake?

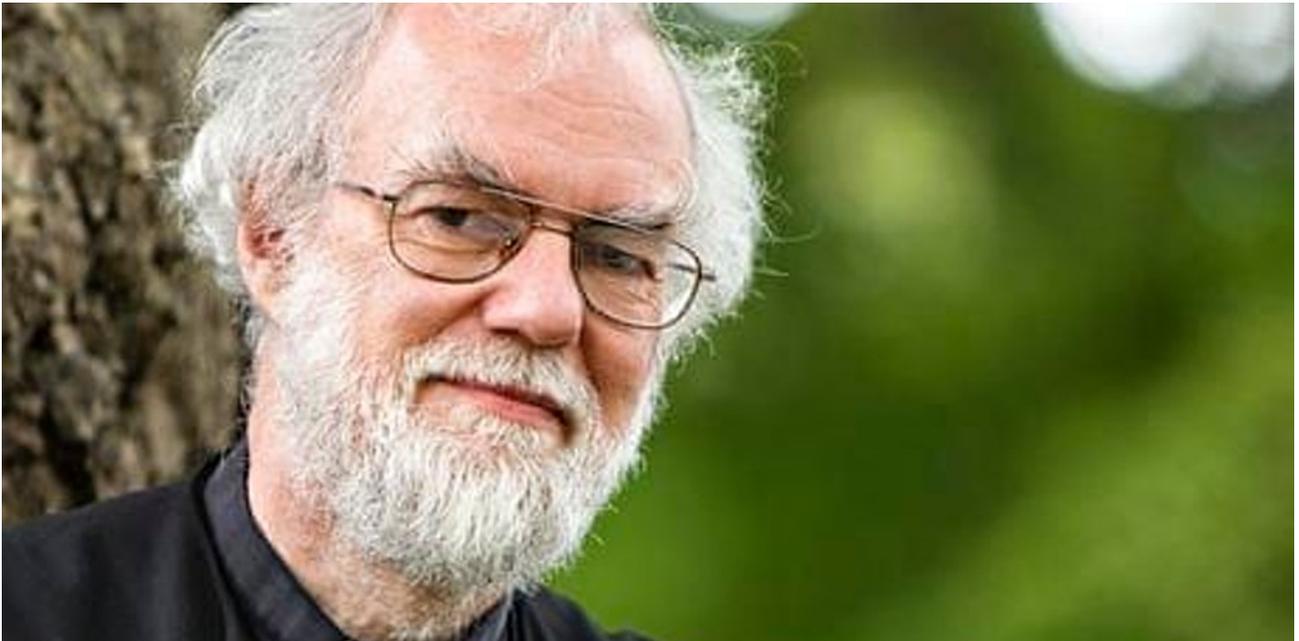
Canon David Gillespie is moving parishes this week in Dublin Diocese. He was presented with a cake from this distinctive church



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Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Solidarity - the 2021 Ken Leech lecture to be given by Bishop Rowan Williams



Solidarity: the ministry of accompanying, transforming and being transformed. An insightful and challenging lecture.

About this event -

“We are delighted to welcome Lord Williams as this year's Ken Leech lecturer.

“Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury and later Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, as a young man was greatly influenced by Ken Leech's passion and insights. Rowan was himself a member of the Jubilee Group, a left wing group founded by Ken to encourage study and action

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in politics and Christian faith. Indeed Rowan was once labelled as a neo-Marxist “subversive” by MI5!

“Ken Leech was a very influential priest and socialist in the Anglo Catholic tradition , who lived for many years in the East End of London and wrote extensively about faith, spirituality and politics. In many ways his teachings and writings subverted established religion, especially the Church of England. He was an early proponent of contextual theology and firmly believed that theology should be for all, and not confined to the academy.

“His Anglo Catholicism stood firmly in, and indeed developed, the tradition of early Anglo Catholic socialists. He firmly supported an open and inclusive church, campaigning for women priests and bishops and full acceptance of LGBT people.

“Ken died in 2015. His Requiem Mass was held at St Chrysostom's Church, Manchester and the church, together with the Society of Catholic Priests and Luther King College, Manchester, established the annual Ken Leech lecture, of which this is the third.

“The lectures aim to keep alive Ken's spirit of challenge to the secular world and to the church, while also acknowledging, as he did, the central role of spirituality in the world.”

Date and time Mon, 15 November 2021 19:30 – 21:30 GMT
19:30 – 21:30 GMT

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[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/solidarity-the-2021-ken-leeche-lecture-given-by-bishop-rowan-williams-tickets-188642955157>]

A Service of Holy Communion in Black History Month

Fr Richard Springer leads the service from St George in the East, London.

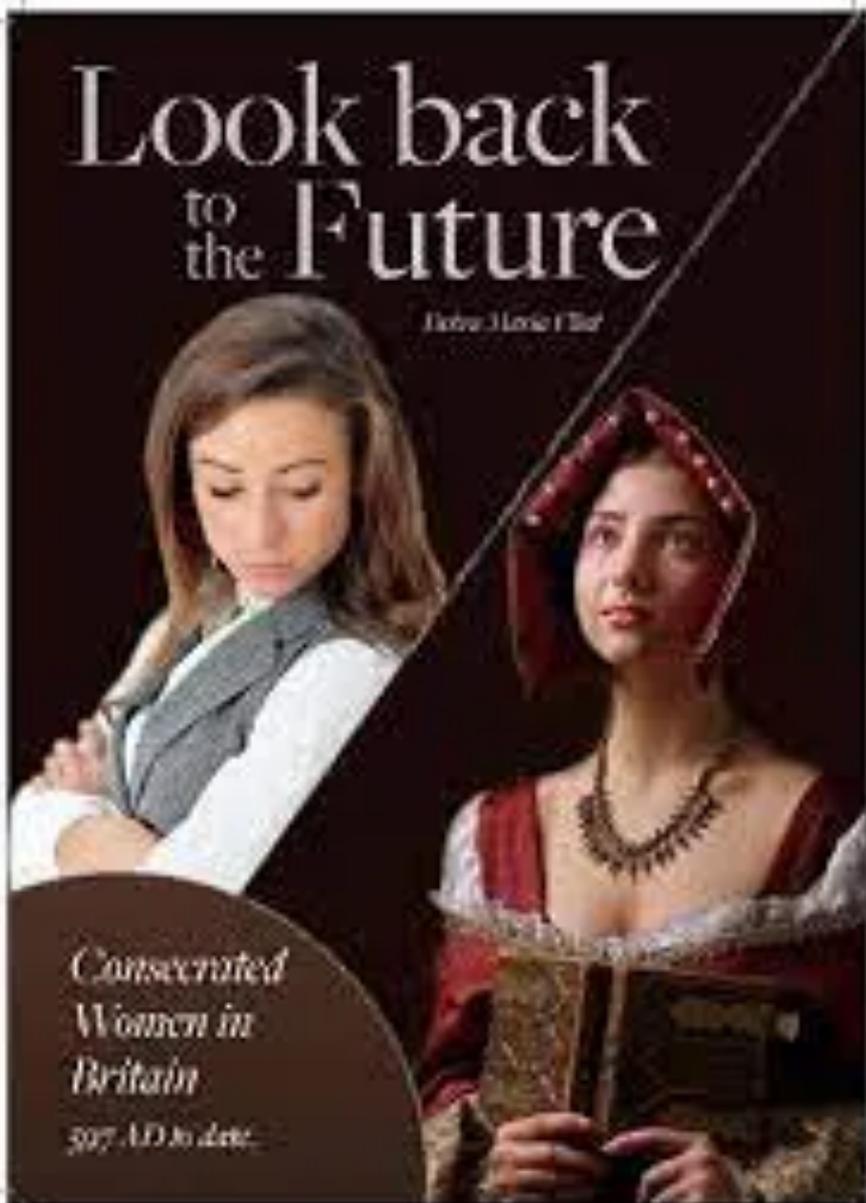
Watch now at cofe.io/BHM21Service.

Book: Exploring history of consecrated women

Look back to the Future: Consecrated Women in Britain 597 AD to date by Debra Maria Flint, published by DWM Press, Roscommon, Ireland. 2021. 166 pages. £8.99. ISBN 9781527288898 .

Easy to read this little volume traces the history of consecrated Catholic women in this country. Flint argues that new and restored forms of consecrated life are not properly promoted in the UK unlike in Europe.

Whilst in Anglo Saxon times consecrated women held great influence even holding office over male religious, the English Reformation completely eradicated such autonomy. It is in describing women of this early period Flint is at her best. Inspired by Walsingham and her husbands' research on its' founder, Richeldis, she spent over twenty five years exploring the history of consecrated women. Interestingly she reaches different conclusions to him as to Richeldis' identity.



Debra Maria Flint converted to Catholicism aged twenty one. After spending several years living in Greece she returned to Britain in 1983. She went on to study theology as a mature student, and met her husband.

After a varied career and following her husband's tragic death in 2014 she sought to follow an

independent vowed way of life. Experiencing difficulties in attaining her goal, she spent several years exploring the limited options open to women today .It was by researching the past that she discovered the opportunities that had previously existed. She seeks especially to promote 'vowesses' - consecrated widows and single women, for the 21st.century in this lively book, highlighting the importance of this form of women's consecration.

She traces the history of female consecrated life at a rapid pace. She denounces Henry VIII in no uncertain terms as

the root cause of the English Reformation and decline in opportunities for women's vocation outside of marriage. At the Reformation female religious orders were either pensioned off and disappeared into obscurity, along with anchorites and vowesses, or fled abroad.

An about turn of history saw female religious life renewed on these shores in the eighteenth century onwards by those fleeing European persecution. However, it did not afford opportunities that existed pre-Reformation for vowed women and anchorites to live independently of community life. These new women religious led an active form of female consecration bringing education to all classes- which was not the case previously- and provided many forms of welfare. Flint attests that it is as the state in modern times took over these roles, religious orders declined in Britain today.

She feels that the role of independent consecrated lay women, who follow their own careers and paths in life, needs to be promoted more by the Bishops' Conferences. She writes: "These women can play a vital part in evangelising and promoting their faith because they live and work in the worldthey are able to help others live a spiritual life in a secular world."

As suggested to Flint by a member of the Scottish Bishop's Conference this book provides a platform for discussion for the synodal process for the forthcoming Synod of the Laity.

More radically she suggests that the role of lay Cardinal should be open to women and that there is nothing historically to prevent this. Certainly there were lay men

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Cardinals who were never ordained, mainly in the sixteenth to early twentieth centuries. In 1917 the revised Code of Canon Law decreed that only priests or bishops could become cardinals.

However, Pope Paul VI wanted to appoint the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain as a lay Cardinal in 1968. Maritain declined. Flint argues that consecrated women could be appointed to such a role and be able to vote at synods as had the Anglo- Saxon Abbesses. In fact she considers those women had a similar role to lay Cardinals.

As well as Amazon on line and established bookstores her book is sold in 54 independent bookshops, including Cathedral and religious bookshops. Prinknash Abbey is the most recent stockist .

At times I felt that the text would greatly benefit from footnotes and hopefully a second edition would include these. This is a challenging and thought provoking book -
Amanda C Dickie

Poem for today

October by Hilaire Belloc

Look, how those steep woods on the mountain's face
Burn, burn against the sunset; now the cold
Invades our very noon: the year's grown old,
Mornings are dark, and evenings come apace.

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The vines below have lost their purple grace,
And in Forreze the white wrack backward rolled,
Hangs to the hills tempestuous, fold on fold,
And moaning gusts make desolate all the place.

Mine host the month, at thy good hostelry,
Tired limbs I'll stretch and steaming beast I'll tether;
Pile on great logs with Gascon hand and free,
And pour the Gascon stuff that laughs at weather;
Swell your tough lungs, north wind, no whit care we,
Singing old songs and drinking wine together.



Speaking to the Soul

Bible verse, thought for the day and prayers - on site daily

