



When he had finished eating, he said to Simon,
“Launch out into the deep water and let down your
nets for a catch”.

Luke 5: 4

Te Hao Nui- LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) October 2023

Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand
Journal and Newsletter for Lay Leaders and Ministers

Welcome to the October issue of LOL!

In this issue we have **Bernadette Patelesio** leading the gospel reflection for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time on the wicked tenants who abused their stewardship of the Master’s vineyard. This is timely as our country goes through the national elections; as we choose rightful stewards of our democracy and our well-being as a country. The freedom to choose our leaders is something we can all be grateful for. There are countries bereft of such privilege. The articles for October shed some light on what leadership and unity means.

In **Felicity Giltrap’s** article, she shares about our beloved Suzanne Aubert who led by compassion. We celebrate her life on the 1st of October. In many ways, Mother Aubert shines as an example of leadership for New Zealand. **Cecily McNeill** in her follow-up article on the role of women in the Church writes of the legacies of two female reformers who fought against the misogyny in the Church—the well-known St. Teresa of Avila and the obscure but equally heroic, Mary Ward.

We also have two articles on the reformation and ecumenism by **Margaret Bearsley** and **Bridget Taumoepeau**. Their articles unveil the painful wounds caused by the Reformation on the personal lives of well-meaning Christians, even to this time. The vision and the call of ecumenical unity transform our competitive tendencies into a desire to come together as one body of Christ. Vatican II can be deemed as a new Reformation, how is the Church dealing with this differently at this time?

Leadership is a fascinating phenomenon that is either romanticised or demonised. Do we know what good leadership looks like? If Jesus, Mother Aubert, Teresa of Avila, and Mary Ward ran for office, would they win? And using a bit of prophetic imagination— if democracy is to be synodal, what would our politics look like?

Maya Bernardo

Formator & Manager, Te Hao Nui- Launch Out Programme

The parable of the wicked tenants (Matthew 21:33-43) 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

By Bernadette Patelesio
Launch Out Candidate



In this parable, Jesus tells an allegorical story. His audience is the Chief Priests and elders in the temple. Earlier in Matthew’s Gospel (21:23-27) they had been questioning his authority.

The vineyard in this story represents the People of God. The landowner (God), sends his servants (the prophets) to collect the vineyard’s produce from the tenants (Israel’s religious leaders at that time). The tenants kill the servants. The Landowner’s son (Jesus) is sent and is also killed by the tenants.

In verse 40 Jesus asks, “Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” – and they (the Chief Priests and Elders) answered with great certainty that the tenants would be killed and replaced!

The wicked tenants had chosen acquiring wealth and power over service and honour. They lacked care for others and murdered those that would take the produce they wanted for themselves or interfere with their plans. Unsurprisingly they lacked any insight as to the consequences of killing the landowner’s beloved Son. I wonder if the tenants even recognised who he was. It had not yet dawned on Jesus’ audience that he was talking about them.

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Next, Jesus says in verse 43, “Therefore I tell you...”, before he delivers the whole point of this story. This is a frequent introduction of Jesus’s when he is about to speak with true authority. This type of speech irritated the religious leaders of that time. “The stone the that builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” Jesus is quoting something he knows they will recognise, from Psalm 118: 22-23. So now he has their attention. There is still a chance some of these priests and elders can hear Jesus’ truth before it is too late. Jesus wants us all to come into God’s Kingdom. Eventually they realise he is talking about them.

Throughout Matthew, Jesus is addressing the people’s expectations of the Messiah. We gain honour by serving and true wealth is gained by giving it away. This Gospel reading is no exception. The tenants do not gain what they seek. Their wealth and power are fleeting, and they will eventually have to meet face to face with the landowner.

This is a fitting reading for us at election time here in New Zealand. Let us pray that those that are elected will place the highest value on the things Jesus taught about. We are the vineyard, and with our vote, we can give our country the best chance of becoming a socially just nation where the respect for life and the dignity of all is paramount. We at least can vote for our own tenants!

At the end of the parable Jesus promised that the kingdom of God will be returned to its people and that those who crushed the cornerstone (Jesus) will be crushed by its pieces as it falls. He does not mince words.

Let us praise God that he sent us his Son, and continues to give us, what seems like chance after chance to get it right, and to recognise his Son’s authority. Jesus is the Cornerstone we should not reject. Verse 42 “...this was the Lord’s doing and isn’t it amazing in our eyes?”

REFERENCES

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ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **Support Life Sunday from the NZCBC** <https://www.catholic.org.nz/resources/sls2023/>
- Looking for a good video on explaining the mass? Check the **Six Key Liturgical Principles by James Mongelluzo, SJ** Click [here](#)
- Quotes and reflections from the Sisters of Compassion. Click [here](#)
- From the website of the Presentation Sisters Aotearoa– a creative slide show of the life **Nano Nagle**
- Susan Apathy shares **Richard Rohr’s meditation on Compassion**. Click [here](#)
- An interesting journal from the **Wellington Theological Consortium**. Our own **Margaret Bearsley and Joe Green** are contributors to their maiden issue. [SomeThink!](#)
- A moving video from the late Michael Himes on [“Finding hope when life doesn’t go as planned”](#)
- As the Synod Assembly opened, **Pope Francis** published **Laudate Deum**, an Apostolic Exhortation building on his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. A timely document on the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi.
- From the Office of the Archbishop on the **Synodal Assembly** this October:
 - ◇ Cardinal Mario Grech, General Secretary of the Synod Assembly starting in Rome on 4 October, has invited all the faithful to participate in **prayer for the Synod from next Sunday 24 September with Prayers for Intercession**. Those responsible for liturgies in every community should go to this National Liturgy Office link for the prayers: www.nlo.org.nz/news-and-events/media-releases/prayers-for-the-synod-in-rome/
 - ◇ A Vatican News article about **Cardinal Grech's letters to the bishops** asking for everyone to join in the prayers is here: www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-09/cardinal-mario-grech-invitation-episcopate-priests-prayer-synod.html
 - ◇ Archbishop Paul of the archdiocese of Wellington, Fr. Dennis Nacorda, Parish Priest of St. Joseph, Levin and Manuel Beazely from the diocese of Auckland are representatives of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Noticing the world around through the eyes of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert

By Felicity Giltrap
Guest Contributor

‘There is a beauty to be found if only we would look around.’ —Anon.

This quote has been floating around in my head for some time now. In fact, it was in a book my mother gave me when I was about 9 years old. I loved that book, with its hand drawn pictures and honest words, and although the book is now gone, this sweet phrase has stayed with me. As we near the official completion of the Pontifical Season of Creation for another year, it dawned on me that creation continues to burst forth, especially here in the Southern Hemisphere. The beauty of the circle of life goes on, but only if we notice, only if we ‘look around.’



This time of year also heralds Celebration Sunday, a day to remember the life and good works of Venerable Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert. This year, this special day was celebrated on Sunday 1st of October. In 2022, some ‘Letters of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert’ were included in the ‘The Unesco Memory of the World, Aotearoa New Zealand Ngā Mahara o te Ao’ . On the card commemorating this, it says, ‘The

life of an intelligent, educated, observant and warm-hearted woman.¹



As I held this card, I thought, yes, Mother Aubert was observant, she noticed people, she noticed suffering, despair. She looked at her surrounds, became one with the Māori world, she cared deeply about creation and life from the earth, she used her experiences, her intelligence, and knowledge to help those she saw in need. She found beauty in the smallest, and most vulnerable people.

Central to the life of Venerable Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert was her faith in the compassionate love of Christ. She saw Christ in the poor, the sick, the elderly, the infirmed, the disabled, and anyone in need. Her warm-hearted smile greeted the poor in spirit. Her actions spoke loudly of her love for Māori, the land, and all its fullness. She ministered to all people, no matter what their race or creed.

While thinking about all these connections, I paused and reflected on my own ministry and the example that Venerable Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert gives me today. Pastoral ministry in 2023 requires us to be observant too, to ‘look around’ and see the need and beauty of those in our communities. But observing our communities can’t be done, if we are rushing about, trying to solve everyone’s problems. How much do we miss, when we think we know what is going on, but haven’t really stopped to fully listen and put ourselves in the other’s shoes? How much can we really observe if we are blinded by our own bias? How much too, do we miss about ourselves? Do we stop and observe our own behaviour before leaping into another situation or project? Do we stop and pause, to reflect and notice how we are coping? Where is our faith in all of this? Some questions to ponder.

By taking a moment to reflect, meditate and enjoy God’s creation, by sitting outside, enjoying the sun, looking for the smallest bud or the greenest new shoot, we are able to connect with ourselves and ‘check- in’. It only takes a moment, but is worth it. For in that moment of beauty, we might see that through nature and creation, Christ is reaching out to us, asking us to receive his consoling, comforting and compassionate love.

¹Memory of the World Aotearoa New Zealand Ngā Mahara o te Ao, 49, The Letters of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert

Photos taken by Felicity as she walked around her garden noticing the beauty of creation in Spring 2023.

In her current role Felicity Giltrap supports the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion, known as the Sisters of Compassion, as Kaiāwhina Administration and Pastoral Support for the Congregational Leadership Team. Prior to this, she worked within the Church Mission Team as Marriage Ministry Consultant for the Archdiocese of Wellington



The legacy of the Reformation— Between a rock and a hard place

By Margaret Bearsley
Launch Out Candidate

I have come to realise that one of the main inhibitions that prevented my developing a devotion to Our Lady until somewhere in my late 50s, was a deeply buried conviction about the futility of everyone and everything; a modernist view that life is haphazard and transitory; that no particular individual matters; and that if Mary hadn't said 'Yes', some other woman would have. Finally, the conviction that giving recognition to Mary was overrated, because it could have been anyone at all that saw the angel and said, 'Yep, sure, I can give that a go.'

Of course, it takes a lifetime of reflection, study, prayer, and spiritual direction to recognise that it is one's own self that one has in mind with these 'out there' thoughts; that *my* actions have no significance.

This might be a generational thing. These days the talk is of the 'me' generation. If for earlier generations, our individual significance seemed less than an atom of dust in a vastly immense universe of stars, planets, and galaxies, the 21st century's children are said to conceive of themselves as the centre of all meaning around which the whole universe spins in adoration. I guess we all have our cross to bear.



An enormous, densely written (in point 8 font!), 890-page tome, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450 – 1650* by Carlos M. N. Eire makes it abundantly clear that individuals make history.

If Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) hadn't been born at all, or perhaps if he had just stuck to the legal profession expected of him by his parents, instead of taking fright in a storm (that admittedly almost killed him) and abruptly quitting his legal studies to become a monk, the Protestant reformation might never have happened. Incidentally, that is my personal line of thought, not a view expressed by Eire¹ in *Reformations*.

We will never know, of course, just as we will never know whether God would have found someone else to ask if Mary had said 'No.'

Such idle speculation aside, one of the main threads throughout *Reformations* is the contingent nature of each person's contribution to the societal changes, deadly wars, and bitter persecutions that flowed from that contribution. The Preface to *Reformations* captures this. Referring to Martin Luther's 1517 public defiance of what he still believed at that time to be his own Catholic Church, Eire states:

Should so much change be ascribed to one person and one event? Like many such turning points in history, the controversy sparked by this monk was long in coming. In fact, the way had been prepared for Martin Luther over several generations, by countless individuals and impersonal forces, and he was as much a product of change as an agent of it. What he did—so to speak—was spark a colossal explosion with a powder keg not of his own making. The volatile elements were there already, everywhere, in plain view.



Luther's outburst in late October 1517 ... should have caused only a few ripples, but instead it set off a chain reaction, much to everyone's surprise, and the end result was a conflagration of epic proportions.²

The book is broken into four parts of roughly 50 years each, with each part prefaced by a brief description of progress on St Peter's Basilica in Rome. The funding for that colossus, through Pope Leo X's ingenious scheme of selling indulgences, catalysed the beginning of what came to be known as the Protestant Reformation.

One of the benefits of investing the time necessary into working through this enormous volume, is the space given to the Catholic reformations that both preceded, and later progressed in tandem with, those of the Protestant reformations. The use of the plural is deliberate throughout the work, as there were many attempts, some successful, some not, at reforming the Catholic Church from within, and from Luther onwards, of reforming the Protestant Churches that flowed from the explosion set in motion by Luther.

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The thing that struck me repeatedly, however, was the extent to which changes that either occurred or were stymied, within the Catholic Church, and those driven by the Protestant reformers, were person-driven, we might say 'incarnational.' I came to understand as I read account after account of the ideas published, and sometimes violent battles fought, by individual men (mostly) but also women, that they required each of those persons' 'yes' to an ideal, sometimes lofty, sometimes avaricious, or hubristic.

In all cases, the dissemination of ideas was achieved via that marvel of the 15th century, the printing press, and the burgeoning literacy that was enabled through the changing social structures enabled by the growing wealth of the merchant and craft guilds from the Middle Ages onwards.

The author takes a fairly non-partisan approach to the history he recounts. Several hundred pages into the work, I felt compelled to undertake a little internet research to see whether he was Catholic, Protestant, or a non-believer. It turns out that Eire is Catholic, but he certainly gives the Protestant elements of the book a very fair hearing—or perhaps we could say, he gives an equally unflattering account of the Protestant protagonists as the Catholic ones.

In the immortal words of Qoheleth, there is nothing new under the sun.³ Today, many (including myself) lament the vitriol of so called 'keyboard warriors' who publish their unrestrained spite in blogs and in comments on others' blogs. Well, it seems things were not so different 400 years ago. Supported with illustrations throughout, we read in Reformations:

The link between the printing press and the sudden expansion of open dissent against the Roman Catholic Church was hard to miss, for it was not just texts by Luther that were cranked out, but also hundreds authored by others, many written not just by learned clerics, but by laymen from different walks of life, with concerns specific to their class or profession. (p. 178)

And the attack on Rome was not limited to words: the evangelicals invented the satirical cartoon. (p. 179)

One broadsheet depicts Luther's Catholic opponents as beasts, and the text associates each of these figures with the attributes of the corresponding species [a howling cat, a randy goat, etc]. (p. 180)

Linking the devil to the pope and all Roman Catholic clergy was a common theme. In another image, On the Origin of Monks and the Antichrist, a devil in a latrine gives birth to monks, and the monks are then thrown into a boiling cauldron, stirred, stewed, and turned into the pope/Antichrist... (pp. 181-183 with illustrations).

There are pages upon pages upon chapters throughout Reformations describing the acerbic vitriol hurled by various Protestant reformers against the Catholic Church initially and then against each other, as sola scriptura led to an inevitable splintering-off of Protestants into differing camps of Scriptural interpretations.

I drew a little comfort from reading that few Catholic polemicists employed satire against Luther and his followers, preferring instead to debate with learned clerics than incite the laity (p 374).

Reformations contains ample, balanced narratives regarding the martyrdoms of Protestants by the Catholic Church and of Catholics by Protestant Churches. It also describes the Inquisition, which recent historians have discovered had been sensationalised by Protestant accounts; *"between 1547 and 1700 the Spanish Inquisition executed 826 people, or only 1.8 percent of the total number processed by its tribunals"* (p. 614).

Towards the end of the book is an excruciatingly detailed account of the tumultuous 200-year period of philosophy that inevitably (read the book any you will see why) led to today's atheism in the First World, and the loss of belief in objective truth.

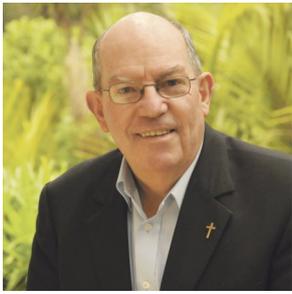
I realise that within my own family is a microcosm of the Reformation period, with five of my siblings having become, initially, fundamentalist anabaptists and since splintering into various Protestant churches; three of my siblings adopting atheism in response to the polemics that abounded at the time of the Protestant conversions; one sibling adopting non-practising tolerance, and I alone remaining a practising Catholic. While none of me or my siblings appears currently to be likely to cause a change in the trajectory of history, I do have a much greater appreciation of the unique and unrepeatable nature and impact of each 'Yes' to God.

Our Lady help of Christians, pray for us.

¹Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2016.

²Reformations, Preface, p.vii.

³Ecclesiastes 1:9 *What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun.*



- **Prayer Day with Fr. James Lyons** on 18 October 2023 at Marcellin Room, Home of Compassion, Island Bay. This will be our prayer day for the year. After this would be the Pastoral Presentations on 25 November. Time flies.
- **Safeguarding** due date for the last assessment is on 25 October 2023.



- The **Pastoral Mentors** will have a gathering on 27 October at the Cenacle House in Waikanae.



Nau mai haere mai !

We have a new Candidate, **Jerry Sparks** from the Holy Trinity Parish (yep, same parish as Margaret’s). He will join us in the Pastoral Presentation on 25 November 2023.

Jerry is a born and bred Wellingtonian and lives in the eastern suburbs with his wife Eleanor and their two young daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth. Jerry is a Communications and Finance Administrator at the New Zealand Catholic Education Office (NZCEO) and enjoys working to support our Catholic School network. Jerry has completed the New Zealand Certificate in Christian Ministry at Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College and is currently working on his New Zealand Diploma in Christian Ministry– Christian Leadership Strand. Jerry is especially interested in supporting the faith formation of young people and welcoming adults who are seeking to learn about or return to the Catholic faith. Jerry is an active member of Holy Trinity Parish in Miramar.

The Hidden Gem of Vatican II

By Bridget Taumoepeau
Pastoral Mentor

The Second Vatican Council (VCI) is no doubt one of the most significant milestones of the Church. Its meaning and its fruits are still unravelling after 70 years. Many scholars highlight the treasures VCI provides for the renewal of the Church. The Synod being one of them. There is, however, a hidden gem that beckons to be recognised because it is one of those treasures. As Pope John XXIII uttered, it has ‘brought the fresh winds’ inside the stale air of the Roman Catholic Church.

That hidden gem for me is ecumenism. As someone who converted to Catholicism as a young adult, the struggle to engage amicably with my Protestant whānau remains one of my biggest crosses. The ecumenism of Vatican II, however, gave me a new and encouraging perspective that assures me of my continued unity with my family of origin, even if they have not realised it yet. VCI tore down the wall that the Roman Catholic Church built against the other Christian churches and replaced it with the bridge of Ecumenical Unity.



The changes have been slow and often unannounced, so that we may not have noticed them or their significance. But, if we cast our minds back to the 1960’s before VCI, the situation was very different. Many older members of my parish have recalled the time when they were forbidden to attend another church, even for the wedding of their friends, and how they defied this and sat in the back of the church, some anxiously praying the Rosary, to allay any condemnation that might result. Presumably there must have been the even more distressing situation of being unable to attend funerals held in a non-Catholic church.

Even before the Council, the Secretariat for Christian Unity had been established in 1960. VCII continued the theme as, for the first time, non-Catholic observers were invited to attend a Council. The Pope described the move as “The invitation to the faithful of the separated Churches to participate with us in this feast of grace and brotherhood.” The Council produced a Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) in 1964. It directly addresses the scandal of division – ‘as if Christ himself were divided’. There are many Scriptural references in the decree - Jesus praying ‘that all may be one’; Paul referring to ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism’ as well as the idea, from Scripture, of the distribution of many gifts and ministries.

As well as outlining the ecumenical principles, there is a chapter on the practice of ecumenism. This includes the call to interior conversion, and invites us to pray for self-denial, humility, gentleness in the service of others, with an attitude of generosity. It is recommended that Catholics join in prayer with other Christian churches and communities.

Over the years there have been many advances, often subtle or unnoticed, but there have also been landmarks of great significance. In 1964, during VCII, Pope Paul VI met with Patriarch Athenagoras of the Orthodox Churches on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. They lifted the Anathemas of 1054 (the Great Schism between the Eastern and Western churches). The first bilateral Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches was established in the US and continues to this day. The International Theological Dialogue was inaugurated in 1979.

While such moves encourage theological discussion, hopefully leading to greater unity between churches, there have been other significant gestures and meetings. For the first time ever, a Patriarch of the Orthodox churches, in this case Bartholomew, attended the installation of a Pope – Francis, in 2013. On the respective feasts of St Peter and St Andrew, these leaders of the East and West traditions greet each other and even attend the festivities.

Pope Francis has laid great emphasis on ecumenism and friendship between different churches. He visited the Lutheran community in Rome; he has a great friendship with the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury and they often appear together. He visited South Sudan with Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Iain Greenshields, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland. This was the first time a papal visit had included leaders of other churches.

He went to Sweden for the 499th commemoration of the Reformation. That in itself is an extraordinary gesture – joining with those who had split from the Catholic Church in causing in the 16th Century, the greatest schism since the East - West separation. In addition, the Pope noted the beneficial impact the Reformation had had on Catholicism. He has also welcomed many different church leaders to his home in Rome, and for many years collaborated with a Protestant leader in Argentina, who later has been a contributor to the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*.

Many gestures and meetings have continued, and now we are about to embark on the Synod on Synodality. On the eve of the opening of the Synod, the ecumenical community of Taizé have led a prayer service in St Peter’s Square. Experts and representatives of other Christian churches will also be present at the Synod as non-voting attendees.

Encouraging as all these signs are, there has not been acceptance by many of this move to unity. This is very personal for me. Coming from a Protestant Northern Irish background, my conversion to Catholicism in the 1960’s was viewed with horror by some members of my family. Unfortunately, there has not been much change in that attitude – at best, disinterest or ignoring the issue; at worst, criticism, and antagonism. On a recent visit to Belfast, I was stunned by the continued evidence of sectarianism.

In New Zealand, this is mercifully less evident, but there is still much work to be done. How many of us take part in inter-church activities or events? Do we value the traditions of other denominations? Do we recognise the importance of understanding each other’s point of view? Do we denigrate or criticise other church communities? Do we recognise that ecumenical outreach will be a great legacy of this pontificate? How much are we each working toward ‘all being one’? Can we join with Pope Francis in making this hidden gem shine in our world?



Holy dissenters: Women who fought against the misogyny in the Church

By Cecily McNeill
Pastoral Mentor



Much of the misogyny practiced towards women in the Catholic Church through the ages expresses attitudes in secular society. Just as women in medieval society were confined indoors, and expected to keep silent, so also were women in the church.

This article will touch briefly on two women who fought against such restrictions and the consequences they faced. Then we will look at the debate between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches over the ordination of women.

The Council of Trent initiated a major change in the Catholic Church including reform of the priesthood. But it saw no room for women in the Church. Religious women were to be cloistered and wives were to be obedient.

Pope Paul IV was elected pope in 1555 but before his election, as Cardinal Caraffa, he instigated the Roman Inquisition where he indulged his hatred of Jews, women, 'sodomites' and heretics. In 1559 Paul inaugurated the *Index*

of *Forbidden Books* which, with the revised *Index* of Trent in 1564, significantly silenced scientific, theological, and cultural life for centuries.

The reform begun officially at the Council of Trent continued with the election of the canon lawyer Pope Gregory (1572-1585). He reinforced the centrality of Roman thought by establishing seminaries in Rome for countries subject to religious persecution such as Ireland, England, and Germany. He also revised the Julian calendar, synchronising with the astronomical year.

Moral severity and pious devotion became the norm for the post-Trent Church with devotions to the Virgin Mary providing a model of sexless holiness for Catholic women.

While reform became the watchword of the Council, with its conformity of belief and uniformity of worship, women's voices were among the few dissenters and their efforts at reform were seen as hysterical and often fraudulent. Female piety was scorned and several women in Spain were burned at the stake.

There grew an understanding that only the ordained clergy could do the church's work. Trent tightened the marriage bonds to give priests greater control over women. Poverty was largely seen as immoral so that poor women were pushed into a cheap labour force.

In the face of such hostility towards women, Teresa of Avila who reformed the Carmelite order in 1554 while Trent was in session became a beacon of hope. She faced enormous obstacles in her quest for a mature spirituality for her sisters and her letters reveal endless negotiations with church officials, local dignitaries and even royalty. She sought to lay a foundation for the new kind of spiritual life that she was advocating. Her prayer was rooted in a profound love of the humanity of Christ.

Meeting her spiritual adviser, John of the Cross, in 1567 was a turning point and they found instant rapport despite her being more than twice his age.

Teresa was named a Doctor of the Church on 27 September 1970 having been canonised in 1622, 40 years after her death. She left five books of spiritual writings including the highly regarded *The Interior Castle* and some 400 letters mostly dating from the last six years of her life.



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Another pioneering woman, Mary Ward, fearlessly took on the institution of the Church and the Jesuits. Like Teresa, Mary travelled extensively in the 17th century founding convents. From the outset, she deemed that whatever the Jesuits were doing, her women could also do. Her 'English ladies' taught, cared for prisoners, attended to the sick and dying, all in profound spiritual freedom.

Her only mission was to educate and catechise young women to be good Christian mothers. But the church had no use for her sort of dedication, and she was seen as positively offensive because of her refusal to keep within the parameters of cloister and silence set up for women.



To complaints about the actions of herself and her sisters, Mary responded that they were only doing what the Jesuits did. As with many other women founders of the time, Mary simply refused to accept the cultural restrictions on a woman's life and work. Many miscommunications between Propaganda Fide and Mary's Institute followed but eventually the houses were closed and in 1631, a bedridden Mary was arrested without trial and put in prison – the dungeon of the local convent of Poor Clares who were surprised to find the 'monstrous heretic' was in fact a small, cheerful, and humble woman. Mary must have despaired at finally seeing the document of suppression – because 'the sisters had carried out works by no means suiting the weakness of their sex, womanly modesty, above all, virginal purity – works which men, who are most experienced in the knowledge of Sacred Scripture and the conduct of affairs, undertake with difficulty and not without great caution'.

When Mary died in 1645, she was laid to rest in a small Anglican church with a limestone slab concealing her grave because the graves of Catholics were being vandalised.

<https://www.maryward.org/mary-ward-world/mary-ward-world-23/>

Today more than 4,000 women of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary claim Mary Ward as their founder. But it was not until the start of the 20th century that members of the Institute – 'English Ladies' in Europe and Loretto Sisters in North America – were allowed to name Mary as their founder.

Scouting ahead now to the 19th century when a new word, 'feminism,' was coined to describe a movement that would bring change in women's consciousness of unprecedented proportions.

The Enlightenment of the 18th century brought ideas of tolerance, reason, progress, natural rights, freedom and educational rights and personal fulfilment. Protestant social ideas of religious individualism and the priesthood of the laity also came to the fore. The dogma of papal infallibility insulated the Catholics against such ideas for another 100 years.

The movement for the abolition of slavery in the United States and Europe galvanised the feminist movement and its first international leaders began to emerge including the sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke who founded the Quaker movement. They took their mandate from the Galatians text (3:28) 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' The Sermon on the Mount (Mt chapters 5 – 7) was a favourite text of Sarah's which she said showed no discrimination. The sisters were privileged through their access to the Christian scriptures that was denied most other women through a lack of education or a deliberate barring of women from studying the scriptures.

A flourishing of religious orders of women characterised the 19th and early 20th centuries but they were stymied to some degree by the 1917 overhaul of canon law, the first in 600 years. New regulations now forbade nuns to care for babies, nurse women in childbirth or teach in co-educational schools. Regulations forbidding 'particular friendships' made human contact difficult especially when trying to collaborate with men. Mercifully the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) ended these restrictions.

This has been a somewhat breathless rush through the ages concluding with the realisation that much of the world and the church in the world has been against women. The significance of the global context cannot be downplayed. In many ways the church was simply reflecting the restrictions on women placed by secular society. The Second Vatican Council brought a reversal of attitudes in so many ways that it is important not to rush a summary of its impact on women in the Church.

Note: this article has been inspired by the third of the three-volume work of Mary T Malone, *Women in Christianity* 2003.