

# The Seed Keepers

A Publication of the Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE)

Réseau Catholique pour l'égalité des femmes

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As far as New Year's Resolutions go, I'll tell a few people that I do try to achieve them. You'll be glad to know that I'm promising this year not to lose anything that is sent to me for *The Seed Keepers*. Nonetheless, I must ask you to keep me in check as I, like most mortals, tend to forget my new year's good intentions come March, April, May. Thanks in advance for any assistance!

In this edition of *TSK* there is, as usual, thought-provoking content. One short gem, by Jane Kryzanowski, written from her 'prayer corner', takes us into the literature of Richard Wagamese and also of Ruth Blaser.

In another article, we remember Mary Joy, a long-standing member of Ottawa CNWE who died in early November.

One other article was solicited, motivated as I was by Stephen Covey's reasoning: "Strength lies in differences, not in similarities." 'Clericalism and a New Model of Priesthood' is written by CNWE member, Bishop Emerita Marie Bouclin, who writes to her colleagues in RCWP (Roman Catholic Women Priests). It was purposely solicited because yours truly gathered that in CNWE some of us hold a very sore point, viz., that clericalism is perceived to be present in RCWP. Marie's article, first published in RCWP's *The Review*, is addressed to her fellow priests. We publish it here in the hope that by putting an issue squarely on the table - and offering what we believe is a full and constructive view - we can begin or, if you will, continue to openly discuss points over which we have differences.

Also included is a reprint of the latest letter we all received from the CNWE's Transition Team. The team is clear: "The goal is to present a workable/doable model of Energy Circles for the consideration of the membership at the 2020 AGM."

#### **Table of Contents**

2. **Bouclin:** Clericalism and a New Model of Priesthood'

6. Kryzanoski: From My Prayer Corner

7. **Lafond:** Celebrating Mary Joy

8. Have you heard?

9. Transition Team's Latest Message

10. Time to Renew Membership!

We welcome your feedback and any submissions you have for our next edition(s).

Vírginia Lafond Editor

virginialafond@gmail.com



### Clericalism and a New Model of Priesthood by Marie Bouclin, RCWP, priest, bishop emerita\*



In his Letter to the People of God1, Pope Francis denounces clericalism as the cause of the sexual abuse scandal that is, according to Canon Lawyer Thomas Doyle, O.P.<sup>2</sup>, the worst crisis in the church since the Reformation. I've come to connect clericalism and sexual abuse ever since I heard women's experiences of abuse of clerical power, particularly stories of sexual abuse, harassment and unjustified dismissals of women by priests and bishops. In fact, it was those abuses as well as a need for a new model of priestly service, that put me on the path to priesthood. I could see an urgent need to find ways of healing the rape of the soul that is clergy sexual abuse. It became very important for me to understand clericalism so that we, in the women priest movement, can be ever watchful lest we fall into its trap.

Pope Francis describes clericalism as "an assumption of moral superiority" and "a peculiar way of understanding the Church's authority" which manifests itself in "sexual abuse and the abuse of power and conscience". 3 The remedy he prescribes is prayer and fasting. Nowhere is there mention of a systemic problem within the structure of the Church nor is there any real call for change. In fact the constant teaching of the Magisterium is so resistant to change that it has made several decisions that have been harmful to the people of God. Consider that in 1968 with Humanae Vitae, all forms of artificial contraception were banned, even for the poorest families who could not support another child. Paul VI dismissed the advice of his pontifical commission which called for a more modern approach to family planning. Then there was the official banning (though not all bishops agreed) of condoms even

though the AIDS epidemic took more than 35 million lives, mostly in poor countries. And then of course, there is the prohibition on so much as discussing the ordained ministries of women and excluding women from all decision-making positions — even though women are "naturally" morally superior if we are to believe John Paul II.4

However, a group of women researchers, mandated by Cardinal Cupich of Chicago proposes a much more detailed definition:5 Clericalism is an attitude of entitlement and superiority. It claims the right to making decisions affecting the lives of Catholics based on the "sacred power" conferred by priestly ordination. In the present scheme of things (according to the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church), the priest is endowed with the power to act in persona Christi, that is to say that he speaks and acts in the person of Christ himself. Clericalism is a form of idolatry most manifest when the priest and many faithful believe that clergy actually speaks and acts "as God".

This attitude of entitlement and superiority has led to very skewed teachings, particularly with regard to women and sexuality. For instance, old celibate men who, again according to Thomas Doyle, have "never had a healthy and honest love relationship in their lives", claim to have the wisdom to tell young couples how to live their conjugal love, including how many children they will have. Even until now, they have taught that sexual intercourse has always to be open to new life.

Then there are the "cheaters" (their numbers, according to Doyle, quoting Dr. Richard Sipe, would be about 90%) who claim they have made a promise of celibacy, i.e., not to

marry, but not a vow of chastity. These same men are telling vowed women religious how to live their vow of chastity and how to love Jesus better.

Some chaplains of religious communities believe they are entitled to impose all kinds of mortifications, particularly on young nuns, which would include frequent fasting, corporal penances, deprivations of all kinds, such as sleep, leisure time, family ties, etc. without however, observing them themselves. And this is besides the sexual abuse documented in a recent film by Marie-Pierre
Raimbaut.

[T]

There are "princes of the church" who live in luxury but reserve the right to excommunicate women for having had an abortion or tried to have fewer pregnancies because they live in grinding poverty and cannot provide the necessities of life for another child. Some parish priests have refused the sacraments to women who left a violent and abusive husband (even if their lives were in danger), saying this is the cross women have to bear.

So, if as a renewed model of

priesthood, we are to strive to be more faithful to the Gospel, we must recognize that some teachings of the Magisterium, such as article 1563 of the Catechism. simply need to be set aside. For instance, the notion that something special happens, often called "ontological change", when one is ordained a priest. The ordained man (always a man in the current scheme of things) becomes another Christ (alter Christus). This is not the same as being incorporated into the Body of Christ through Baptism. The underlying theological argument of the alter Christus theory promulgated to priests and laity alike is this: Christ is the second person of the Trinity, "of the same substance as the Father", to quote the Nicean Creed, and the priest is "configured to Christ". So, he basically becomes God. And he not only acts and speaks for God (as all real prophets do, for instance), but as God. There is a huge difference. This is the crux of the problem of clericalism. The priest can claim to know what God wants, can expect to be treated with special reverence, can impose his will as that of God. That endows him with an enormous power which can easily lead to abuse, be it sexual, physical, psychological or spiritual.

The alter Christus theory is also at the root of the current two-tiered membership in the Church. It prompts Vatican reporter Robert Mickens to describe clergy as having... a privileged and separate caste mentality that makes clerics believe that they are specially chosen, set apart from the rest of people to rule, teach and admonish. I

Consequently, one must belong to this caste to have any decision-making power.

Clericalism is maintained in place by the oath of obedience made by priests and bishops to the Pope. This oath rests on the belief that the teachings of the Magisterium are infallible and also that access to the Divine is always mediated through the clergy. Never mind that experience has taught us otherwise. Some decisions

alluded to earlier have been harmful to the People of God, the Magisterium has lost credibility because it has not paid attention to the sensus fidelium nor the advances of science or even biblical exegesis, or even that God has spoken to humanity through the voices of prophets and mystics who have not all been priests. The alter Christus theory has further ramifications. If only clergy are qualified to rule, teach and admonish, they come to believe they are not only morally, but intellectually and spiritually superior. They are entitled to make

[T]his is enshrined in Canon Law which for centuries now has taken precedence over the teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

all decisions regarding not only parish and community administration and welfare but also about who is worthy, in their opinion, to receive the Sacraments. And all this is enshrined in Canon Law which for centuries now has taken precedence over the teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

Our task then, as priests, is to avoid falling into the trap of clericalism and to exercise a "new model of priestly ministry". Here it can be helpful to listen to some of the complaints people have expressed to us about women priests, and questions we can ask ourselves:

Do we <u>listen</u> to the members of our communities? Do we give people a voice via "shared homilies", for instance, or do we insist on imposing our "superior theological/intellectual knowledge" on people who are often well-informed in the faith and want to raise legitimate theological questions? **Our also resp** 

Do we insist on titles and insignia as recognition of our "superior status" in the church?

Do we make decisions collegially within our small faith communities, especially with regard to liturgy, or do we accept suggestions gratefully?

Do we resist the temptation to impose our "moral or intellectual superiority" by referring too frequently to our own

experiences or to a body of esoteric knowledge that has no bearing on the situation at hand?

#### What more can we do?8

We may find interesting the suggestions made by Marie-Andrée Roy to the members of L'autre Parole, a collective of Christian Feminists based in Quebec. Their aim is to raise awareness and prevent further sexual abuses by clergy, but can also serve our purposes in renewing our vision of church. No single action is going to stem this tide of destruction washing over a Church that cannot be "fixed", but collective actions may help us in our mission to renew it (or build a new one).

- 1. We can begin by being radically inclusive, at all levels of our ecclesial communities. We need both women and men in all ministries, as well as people who fit into an imprecise human gender. The first criterion for leadership is that people be reliable witnesses to the Gospel.
- 2. The current theology of the priesthood, which claims that the priest is another Christ (alter Christus) must be deconstructed and a new theology of ministry must be built on the example of Jesus and those who are dedicated to service to the community.
  - 3. We must set aside an understanding of Church as made up of two hierarchical castes, clergy and lay, where clergy hold the key to salvation and the laity is a flock which simply follows. We need equality.
    - 4. Dispense with titles, be it Reverend Father (or Mother or Sister or Brother) not to mention Excellence, Eminence, Monsignor (= My lord), Your Holiness. We have parents who are our fathers and mothers. All members of our church community are our sisters and brothers with whom we maintain brotherly and sisterly relationships.
- Our ordination also calls us to ... respect... the dignity of all human beings we encounter and treating them exactly as we imagine Christ would.
  - 5. Abolish all hierarchies, including those of material means, social standing and education. Every person has value and everyone has a voice.
  - 6. There is no need to dispense with the vow of celibacy per se, but we do not impose it. Celibacy is not a condition to be admitted to ministry. Chastity, on the other hand, which is the holy and healthy exercise of human sexuality, is a precious Christian virtue required of everyone.
  - 7. Insist, however, that Church leaders refrain from pontificating and trying to regulate the

sexuality of persons, especially as they relate to contraception, abortion, homosexuality, premarital sex, etc. Rather, speak out on the important issues of respect for the dignity of all persons, openness to the poor and most needy, and loving others as ourselves.

- 8. Develop a new understanding of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience (vowed Religious, for example), so that obedience of all Catholics does not become blindly servile and self-destructive.
- 9. Demand that the current atmosphere of secrecy, silence and submission be replaced by

the acquisition and continuously developed processes of discernment, self-esteem and self-confidence – in other words, learn to love ourselves to love others better

One of our priests has called her ordination the "grace of all graces". God has indeed graced us with a call to be channels of grace for God's people by our attentiveness to spiritual and also material needs. Our ordination also calls us to very high ethical standards of behaviour. That means respecting the dignity of all human beings we encounter and treating them exactly as we imagine Christ would. Then we would indeed be another Christ.

- 1 Pope Francis, Letter to the People of God, August 20, 2018
- 2 Thomas Doyle, O.P., Lecture to Futurechurch, March, 2019
- 3 Letter to People of God, op.cit. #4
- 4 See John Paul II, Mulieris Dignitatem, 1988 especially #27 and #31
- 5 From correspondence with Bishop Andrea Johnson, RCWP
- 6 L'autre scandale dans l'Église, l'abus sexuel de religieuses, Société Radio Canada, 24 avril 2019
- 7 Robert Mickens, *How serious is Pope Francis about eradicating clericalism*?,La Croix International, Sept 21, 2018
- 8 Marie-Andrée Roy, Unpublished notes, Colloque de L'autre Parole 2019

Note: This article was first published in RCWP'S *THE REVIEW*, Dec. 15, 2019. It is published here with the permission of the author and Felix Kryzanowski, Editor of *The Review*.

### Look again at the iconic logo of The Seed Keepers



Think about this: as we have said before, "Here you have
The Seed Keepers — power in your hands."

Please be generous and consider those who would benefit from knowing about us, about what we think about, how we act, what the CNWE mission and vision are."

Do find that 'forward' arrow, and press send. (Or, find a stamp and envelope to forward your copy.)

Thanks!

### From My Prayer Corner Бу +Jane Kryzanowski, Bishop, RCWP\*



There are two little books that have found a place on my prayer table over the past few months. One is *Embers* by Richard Wagamese (2016, Douglas & McIntyre, Madeira Park, B.C.). The other is *Remnants* by Ruth Blaser (2018, Cranberry Tree Press, Windsor, ON). While each has a unique style of reflective writing, they both draw on powerful images which provide a springboard for a deep dive into my centering prayer practice and allow me to be held in holy oneness with Creator.

Wagamese may be best known for his awardwinning novel, Indian Horse, which was made into a must-see movie. In this work, Wagamese draws on his Ojibway heritage and experiences of Wabaseemoong First Nation in northwestern Ontario to share compelling reflections on the spiritual journey that touch embers laying still in the soul. I find a special resonance in the dialogue passages he creates such as the following.

ME: Why do I use a drum?

OLD WOMAN: To touch the earth.

ME: Then why do I sing?

OLD WOMAN: To allow the earth to

touch you.

ME: What am I singing for?

OLD WOMAN: So that someday you might sing the one note that joins your heartbeat and the earth's heartbeat to the

heartbeat of everything.

ME: You're saying that drumming and singing, anything that leads me inward and then outward, are just like praying and meditating.

OLD WOMAN: You are getting wiser, my boy.

Blaser writes from her love of the land, especially a tract of old growth prairie grassland that is part of the Qu'Appelle Valley Watershed in Saskatchewan. Her name is on the Land Title to this quarter section as were her parents' and grandparents' before that. She is keenly aware that what she has inherited is a sacred trust and that she is indebted to those whose land this was long before her settler ancestors arrived and made their dwelling there. A holy reverence born of her deep connection and profound respect for this sacred space fills the pages. I cannot help but feel connected with Creator when I read words such as these from her poem 'Raised':

> Raised as I was by infinite curvaceous hills wild prairie grasses and the long long line where Earth and Sky meet how could I not nearly always be captivated by the clear plain

My more than six decades have been held in the thrum of one ever changing yet unturned place

Where big dreams thumping grief wild kindness great love have staked and raised her tent next to mine.

<sup>\* +</sup>Jane Kryzanowski, RCWP Bishop for Canada, is a member of Western Canada CNWE.

### Celebrating Mary Joy (1941 - 2019)



Mary and I came to know each other through the Catholic Network for Women's Equality. We met in the late eighties at one of its conferences here in Ottawa. In 2001 we travelled Ireland together for the two weeks around the First Women's Ordination Worldwide Conference in Dublin. Mary was a fabulous, very enthusiastic companion right from the beginning of our planning meetings. I learned that she, like me, had never been to Ireland though both her parents were born there. She was obviously serious about visiting heritage sites and getting to know Irish folks. She accepted my suggestion to stay in B&Bs so we could actually have conversations with some Irish people. Because of her desires, we got to Glendalough, the Abbey Theatre, and more — and we met some more Irish when we took a day's tour from Dublin to Waterford (where my parents had visited). We loved it all. Highlights that day included the Waterford Crystal Factory tour and the boat ride on the River Barrow with its fantastic meal. A detail here: On the boat ride, Mary enjoyed her whiskey-laced pork chops with buttered cabbage as well as her Irish alcohol drink of choice, Bud Light. I think I saw her eyes roll as I stuck with Guinness.

You might also be interested in what happened in the Dublin Tourism Centre where we were purchasing our tickets before we set out. When I overheard Mary say in full voice, "Oh yes, we are Canadians and we are both here to attend the Women's Ordination Worldwide Conference." I, having been sternly coached by an Irish colleague to keep a very low profile about our reason for being in Ireland, was saying in my mind to Mary, a polite "keep quiet, Mary!" However, I soon learned I was out of order as the upshot came fast. The agent she was dealing with appeared most sympathetic and went to the back to bring out her supervisor. Both congratulated us, and one said approvingly, "It's about time for women's ordination!" They then went on to tell us about an archbishop who had denounced women's ordination and married priesthood many times. After his death, as they explained, his 'wife', on behalf of herself and his children, came forward to demand financial support from the church. There were then other women with similar experiences who followed that queue. We learned all this because Mary spoke up.

Among my sweetest memories of our voyage together through Ireland are the visits to pubs with Mary. What I soon found out was that she knew the words to <u>all</u> the Irish songs and she would sing those songs with that beautiful voice of hers – indeed, as I've always described it, with the voice of an angel.

Mary played an active part in the Catholic Network for Women's Equality – opening the Joy home for out of town folks here for CNWE conferences, CNWE meetings, and for Eucharistic celebrations including our most recent one in September.

I give profound thanks for your presence in my life, Mary. I know we loved each other. To me, each of our hugs was as if it would be our last. Please continue to be close to us. Do pray for us all. And, Mary, thanks!!!

# Díd you hear?

#### ~ Pope John Paul refused to shake hand of Ireland's female president

By James O'Shea, Irish Central, January 11, 2019

https://www.irishcentral.com/news/pope-john-paul-refused-to-shake-hand-of-ireland-s-female-president-she-reveals?

#### utm\_source=zergnet.com&utm\_medium=referral&utm\_campaign=zergnet\_4673711

Former Irish president Mary McAleese (president from 1997 to 2011, who has a doctorate in canon law) revealed how Pope John Paul refused to shake her hand when they met and shook her husband's hand, instead, asking him "would you not prefer to be the president of Ireland instead of your wife?" McAleese recalled she quickly interjected: "You would never have done that to a male president. I'm the elected president of Ireland whether you like it or not" ( . . . ).

Disgraced Cardinal Bernard Law also tried to intimidate her stating, "I'm sorry for Catholic Ireland to have you as president," she recalled when they met. Law brought her to a room where a female right-wing lawyer and theologian Mary Ann Glendon was waiting and tried to brief her on why only men should have positions of power in the Catholic Church.

She said: "His remarks were utterly inappropriate and unwelcome. "Cardinal Law lambasted me and a considerable number of the official delegation after ushering us into a room where a well-known American conservative Catholic, Mary Ann Glendon, was waiting to lecture me on my views on women priests."

McAleese told the Independent newspaper that the cardinal's language and attitude were nasty and he demanded that she sit down and listen to the orthodox view on women's ordination from Glendon. She added: "We were initially gobsmacked by this arrogant man. "I then told the cardinal that I was the President of Ireland and not just of Catholic Ireland." McAleese then revealed how a heated argument broke out between the two. She said: "I felt he had insulted Ireland and the Irish people."

### ~ Former president Mary McAleese calls on Catholic Church to allow women to become deacons

http://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2019/11/04/news/former-president-mary-mcaleese-calls-on-catholic-church-to-allow-women-to-become-deacons-1755296/

by John Monaghan, Irish News, 4 November, 2019

Ordination as a deacon in the Catholic Church is currently reserved exclusively for men. The former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, has urged the Catholic Church to allow women to become deacons.

Ms McAleese, who is the incoming chancellor of Trinity College Dublin, was speaking at an event at the university on Saturday. Following a recent synod in Rome, bishops are to consult with a papal commission on the potential ordination of women as deacons.

Deacons cannot celebrate Mass but can assist a priest in a number of duties including performing baptisms, witnessing marriages, and leading funeral and burial services outside of Mass. The role of permanent deacon is currently reserved exclusively for men who have no intention of becoming priests.

Ms McAleese said: "It won't solve the problems in the church but it would be a breakthrough. It would be a breach of the bunker in some ways, because the bunker ultimately is the bunker of really embedded misogyny. "It goes very, very deep. It goes so deep that good men don't even see it themselves," she said.

Joining the former president at the conference was US theologian and Benedictine nun Sr Joan Chittister. The pair were billed as "the women the Vatican couldn't silence". Sr Chittister said women "make very good window dressing" in the Catholic Church, but added "in terms of being able to contribute as a baptised person to the development of the church, we are not there".

"Some day you have to wake up and say what you see, and what I see is that the Catholic Church, for women, is a totally owned subsidiary of pious males. We really are not full members of the church. We are the outside edge."

### Just in case you missed it: Transition Team's Latest Message

December 12, 2019

Dear CNWE members,

At the halfway point in the 2019-2020 year of CNWE's ongoing efforts to fulfill the mandate given at the 2019 AGM, we, the Transition Team (TT), offer this update.

The Transition Team (TT) has met several times and are moving along on the mandate received at the CNWE 2019 AGM (See below). The focus of the TT is on reviewing the governance and sustainability of CNWE. Alternative ways of communicating, collaborating and supporting the passions, commitments and energy of the CNWE members are being considered. The model of Energy Circles that was brought forward at the AGM, is being worked on. The goal is to present a workable/doable model of Energy Circles for the consideration of the membership at the 2020 AGM.

The most recent efforts of the TT include reviewing the surveys submitted by individuals and local groups as part of the Appreciative Inquiry process. Within this material is a rich trove of wisdom, ideas, insights, workable projects and actions that have energized, sustained and inspired CNWE. Also, there are moving forward ideas and aspirations for the ongoing growth and thriving of CNWE. We have begun the process of sorting all this material into categories that express the main values and commitments of CNWE. So far the categories are: Member Connection, Support and Solidarity; Learning; Spirituality: Prayer and Spirituality; Social Justice Action; Governance (Decision-Making, Communication, Coordination, Accountability, Transparency); Reaching Out: New Members; Networking: Local, National, International.

The next step is to take the raw material, again, and review it through a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) process as we continue on our review of Governance and Sustainability of CNWE. Keep tuned in for more updates as we prepare for the 2020 AGM.

Wishing you an Advent of Peace and a Christmas of Joy.

Sylvia Verde for the Transition Team (Alexina Murphy, Catherine Walther, Jeanie McKibbon, Mary Ellen Chown, Mary-Ellen Morgenstern and Sylvia)

For review, the Motions that passed unanimously at the 2019 AGM:

- 1. We propose that the 'Choosing Our Destiny' process be continued for one year:
  - That a special transition circle of at least 3 members be chosen to facilitate this process
  - That the process will include consulting all CNWE members including the NWG
  - That a report containing all recommendations be presented to the membership at least 30 days before the AGM of 2020
  - That alternative voting methods be chosen to include all members in lieu of face-to- face conference
- 2. To fulfill the legal requirements of our constitution and corporation the NWG will continue with its responsibilities until the decisions are made at the 2020 AGM



# CATHOLIC Network For Women's Equality Réseau Catholique Pour L'égalité Des Femmes Membership Form 2020

Using one of the payment methods below, please send this completed and signed membership form to: CNWE, Box 19594, 55 Bloor St. West, Toronto, ON, M4W 3T9, Canada

form to: CNWE, Box 19594	, 33 BIOOI 31. West, Toro	illo, Olv, Ivi4vv 519, Callaua
Name		
Address		
City	Province	Postal Code
Phone (home)	)(work/cell)	
Email address		
Please check one: New membership Renewal of membership		
Please check one:		
\$50.00 annual CNW	/E membership _	\$25.00 students and those unable to pay
		the full annual membership fee
\$80.00 annual CNWE couple membership\$60.00 annual international member		\$60.00 annual international membership
optional additional donation to CNWE of \$ PAYMENT METHOD (choose one):  A) I have enclosed a cheque made out to "CNWE"  B) I have paid with (auto)e-transfer (Name:Janet Speth, Email - jspeth@csj-to.ca)		
To facilitate networking, CNWE sends out the membership list once a year, only to members.		
(We do not otherwise release membership information). If you would prefer not to have your		
name on the membership list, please check below:		
Do <b>NOT</b> include my name and contact information on the membership list.		
Waiver Form – April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 (as per the Corporation Act)  I,, consent to waiving an audit of the books  Print Name		
of the Catholic Network for Women's Equality for the period <b>April 1, 2020</b> to <b>March 31, 2021</b> .		
Date: Signature:		



### **CNWE'S VISION**

Justice and equality for all persons manifested in word and action in the

Catholic church and throughout the world.

#### **CNWE'S MISSION**

As a Canadian organization, we connect, support and represent people who seek justice for all the baptized within the Catholic church, for women throughout the world and for all of creation.

## CNWE'S CORE VALUES

**Inclusivity** 

Creativity

Celebration

Compassion

Solidarity

Collaboration

**Dialogue** 

# The Seed Keepers

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The Seed Keepers' Publication Team:

Virginia Lafond

**Jocelyn Rait** 

. . .

National Work Group (NWG)

**Janet Speth, Toronto ON** 

Sylvia Verde, Toronto ON

April Weavell,

County of Grande Prairie AB

#### For information about CNWE:

Go to: www.cnwe.ca

Visit us and 'like' us on Facebook: Catholic Network for Women's Equality - Canada

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v=JeFIJpA7axo

Yahoo e-list: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/

**cnwe**