



SIBYLS LOGO - ROBYN GOLDEN - HANNA 28 MAY 2018



# Sibyls Newsletter 114

## Christmas 2025

### CONTENTS

Editorial	3
Introduction to Sibyls	4
Services and events	5
Residential weekend	6
Poem for TDOR by <i>Rosie Martin</i>	7-8
Trans Faith	9-11
Trans Law and Politics	11-13
Trans Health	13-14
Trans Life	14-17
Trans World	17-18
Trans Books and Media	18-19
Jesus The Wisdom of God by <i>Mary Ward</i>	19-26

## Editorial

Dear Sibyls

Well, it's Christmas and not a time for gloom or negativity. We celebrate once more the Light that no darkness could overcome and God's act of ultimate solidarity with God's suffering world, God becoming one of us, sharing our frailty, pain and vulnerability in a world often quick to reject and condemn us. We need no reminding how difficult this year has been for trans people and yet amidst the gloom there have been some signs of hope. The government welcomed the supreme court ruling as bringing "clarity" and has found it's brought anything but. No surprise that they have been sitting on the draft EHRC guidance on the ruling for months. Recent employment tribunal decisions have emphasised that providers *may* exclude trans people but not that they *must*. And the Levy Review of the adult gender clinics commissioned following the disastrous Cass Report, on first sight offers some positive messages to trans people who it acknowledges face completely unacceptable waiting times for treatment.

And we have a woman as Archbishop of Canterbury! And in Wales archbishop Cherry Vann is not only a woman but a gay woman. That is a huge step forward even if the Catholic church continues to lag far behind with its refusal to accept women even as deacons. Maybe the tide is turning just a little in our favour....

Thank you for putting up with my pontificating for another year – I am grateful for the privilege given to me and to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter – and indeed to anyone who has read it. My membership of Sibyls has meant a great deal to me over the years and perhaps especially in this past tough year. Adversity has brought trans people together and has also shown us that we have many friends and allies. So let's joyfully celebrate Christmas and enter the new year with renewed hope – let our light so shine that all may see us and praise God. May God grant us all that peace that the world cannot give but God alone.

*Pauline xx*

## Editor

**Pauline Fleck**

mobile: 07581 553357

email: [pauline.fleck@btinternet.com](mailto:pauline.fleck@btinternet.com)

# Introduction to the Sibyls

We are a Christian spirituality group for gender-variant people.

## Sibyls website

The main source of information about the Sibyls is our website: [www.sibyls.co.uk](http://www.sibyls.co.uk). This includes:

- How to join the Sibyls confidential mailing list.
- Planned events, supportive churches and inclusive faith groups.
- Resources, such as books and signposted web links.
- Recent Sibyls newsletters.
- Our listening service, if you need to talk to someone about being a trans Christian.
- How to contact us.

## Sibyls Facebook groups

There are two Facebook groups which enable Sibyls and other trans Christians to communicate and exchange views and news. They are:

- Sibyls Members 'Group – send a request via Facebook to join this confidential group.
- TranschristianUK – an open group, do join up if you are not already a member.

## Meetings for personal conversation and sharing

Some of you might appreciate the opportunity for more personal conversation on Zoom, rather than the regular large sessions. We can help arrange meet-ups for e.g. just three Sibyls – this would enable easier direct conversation and sharing (with some ground rules). If you would like this to happen, please email [pauline.fleck@btinternet.com](mailto:pauline.fleck@btinternet.com) and we will see what is possible.

*More detailed information about our online activity is available by post if you do not have access to the internet. Please contact Pauline as above.*

# Services and events in 2026

## General

### Online

Sibyls Zoom services and fellowship meetings take place online, usually around the 25th day of the month, beginning at 7.00 pm.. We aim to send out invitations about a week in advance.

### London group

Sibyls based in or near London are welcome to take part in our quarterly communion service, at 6.00pm, at St Anne's Church, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF, followed by a meal in a nearby restaurant. Provisional dates for 2026 are: Wed 11Mar, Thu 11 June, Fri 11 Sep, Tue 8 Sep.

For more information contact Susan Gilchrist at:

[susan@crestcons.net](mailto:susan@crestcons.net)

### Events in North Wales / West Cheshire

Jenny-Anne Bishop OBE is the Chair of the UNIQUE Transgender Network.

See <https://www.uniquetg.org.uk/> (there's a lot of interesting information, not just for those lucky enough to live in North Wales):

Jenny-Anne hosts an online service every Sunday at 4.00pm for LGBTQ+ people. Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88502951623>

### Residential Weekend

Arrangements for our weekend are still unclear. If Purley Chase is unavailable (as currently seems likely) we shall need to find a new venue and the dates will depend on availability.

## Residential weekend 2025

It was, for most of us, a step into the unknown. Having our booking cancelled by Purley Chase (“staffing difficulties”) was a great disappointment. Rachel and her team in Warwickshire always went the extra mile to make us feel positively spoiled while we were there and we had exclusive use of the premises. We were pleased that Hayes Christian Conference Centre were able to accommodate us at short notice but the place was huge and we’d be sharing with other groups – gulp. These groups, as it turned out, included probably rather conservatively minded evangelical sort of people. A couple of our members found this very uncomfortable and overheard “remarks” so decided to stay away for the night. A wise decision as it happened because at 2.30 a.m. we were awoken by the fire alarm and I found myself hastily pulling on some clothes and exiting down the fire escape stairs into the cold and wet. We were guided to the sports hall and eventually allowed back to our rooms. There was no fire – and not much sleep.

This was not the ideal start. It got better. The food was abundant, good quality, and served by friendly staff. Mingling with others in the dining room for some of us was enjoyable. We had conversations with people who were politely curious, if sometimes misinformed about trans lives. Hopefully they went away with a better impression of us. I remember walking through a crowded area and attracting (as I thought) smiling – maybe even admiring – attention. Then someone approached me to say that my skirt was tucked into my knickers at the back....

The weekend was mostly about fun and relaxation and respite. But on the first morning Nicky, both priest and lawyer, led us through a discussion of how we had been affected by the supreme court and EHRC disasters. This prompted some sombre reflections but also a good deal of resilience and positivity. These qualities were also very apparent when our guest of honour, Ruby Almeida, talked to us about her work for the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics and other Catholic LGBTQ+ groups. She showed us a picture of her meeting Pope Francis. It was great to enjoy Ruby’s company at the weekend.

A traditional highlight of Sibyls’ weekends is the Saturday night disco. Hayes was happy to accommodate this but in the chapel rather than our much cosier meeting room. The chapel was large, cavernous and somewhat cheerless but once we’d connected Lorraine’s 70s CDs to the sound system it wasn’t bad at all. Especially when “Dancing Queen” came on....the chapel was quite a long way from the bar but some of us found our way and enjoyed a drink and chat before a mercifully undisturbed night’s sleep – had the alarm gone off again I think we’d have had real grounds for taking it personally!

With the experience of the disco in mind, we chose to have our Sunday Eucharist in our much cosier meeting room. Nicky led us in a beautiful service with music provided by Amy’s violin and with chorister Helen leading the singing.

Would we go back to Hayes? I think most of us who were there would say probably not. They did their best for us but though there were positives for some of us with the mingling with other groups they were probably outweighed by the lack of exclusivity. We have to live the rest of our lives amongst cis people who often misunderstand us and who are sometimes downright hostile to us and the Sibyls weekend is an opportunity to completely relax, let our guard down, re-charge and feel safe just for a while in our own tribe. If Purley Chase again cannot accommodate us we’ll be looking at options other than Hayes.

*Pauline*

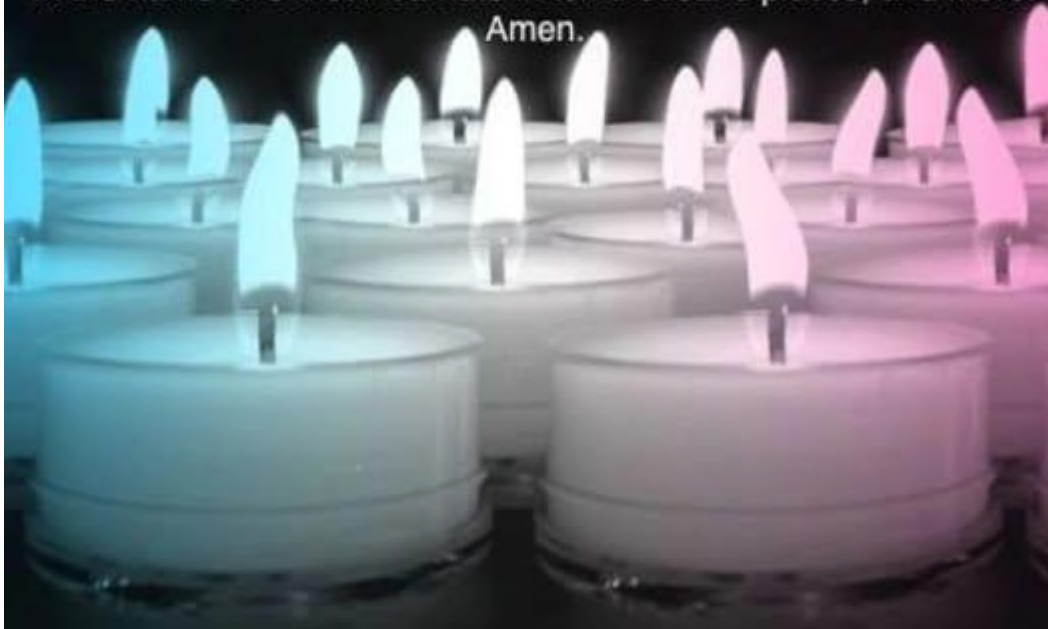
**Poem for TDoR by *Rosie Martin***

People Like Them and People Like Me  
They told us we don't belong here,  
    that truth was a wound to conceal.  
That our bodies were broken, our hearts were mistaken,  
    our love was something unreal.  
But still, we walk with quiet grace—  
    alive, though we were never meant to be.  
The world forgets how hard it is  
    for people like them and people like me.  
They said our names with laughter,  
    they turned our faces away.  
But our names are songs of courage,  
    our voices demand to stay.  
Each letter carved from longing,  
    each word a small decree—  
a declaration that we exist,  
    people like them and people like me.  
Some were taken by cruel hands,  
    some by their own despair.  
The weight of hatred—heavy, vast—  
    was more than a soul could bear.  
The world grew quiet after each loss,  
    but silence is not peace, you see—  
it's absence, carved in memory  
    of people like them and people like me.  
We've buried our dead with trembling hands,  
    and whispered their names to the sky.  
Wondering how many candles must burn  
    before the world asks—*why?*  
Why must truth invite such pain?  
    Why must freedom come with a plea?  
How many lives must end before  
    it's safe for them and safe for me?  
Yet even in sorrow, there's fire.  
    It burns in our tender pride—  
in trans joy, trans love, trans living,  
    in the power we hold inside.  
We rise like dawn through darkness,  
    we speak, we fight, we see—  
we build a world with room for all,  
    for people like them and people like me.  
Today, the candles flicker.  
    Each flame is a fragile song.  
It hums of the ones we've lost before,  
    and the ones still moving along.  
Our grief becomes a promise,  
    our love a legacy—  
to make this world a kinder place  
    for people like them and people like me.



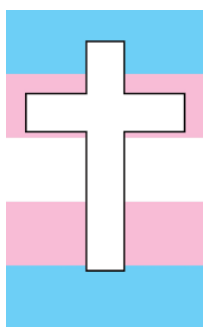
**For people like them.  
And people like me.**

God of all genders and none,  
Source of our glorious difference and true harmony,  
Bearer of all pain and Spirit of transformation.  
we give you thanks that you have created us in your own image,  
in the many-splendoured forms of our wonderful diversity.  
Hear us as we remember transgender and gender diverse people.  
Transform the violence, pain and struggle,  
bring new life out of death, hopelessness and despair,  
and empower us with your grace, strength and joy.  
in the name of Christ incarnate in ten thousand places, and more.  
Amen.





## Trans faith



Please pray for Sibyl rev. *Diana Johnson*:

Prayers please. I am being licensed to a further group of parishes today, 5th Oct. No surprises there, as everyone is doing more these days. What may just be a first is that it is one trans incumbent following straight on from another, in that my predecessor as priest in charge of the parishes was also a transwoman. I am wondering, rather idly, if that is a world first in the Anglican community?!

Anyway, prayers for the continued openness of the diocese of Newcastle and parishes of Slaley, Healey and Riding Mill will be appreciated.

Article by *Pauline* for Leeds Church Institute magazine:

<https://lcileeds.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/City-Theology-Autumn-2025-for-web.pdf>

Inclusive Church open letter to House of Bishops about LLF process:

<https://www.inclusive-church.org/llf-open-letter>

Report on inclusivity of churches in Europe for LGBTQ+ people:

<https://inclusive-churches.eu/>

“RICE 2025 provides a vital snapshot of inclusion in Europe’s churches. It shows progress, highlights resistance, and offers evidence that faith and equality can coexist.

As society increasingly calls for the full recognition of LGBTI rights, this research invites churches to rediscover their calling: to stand for justice, celebrate diversity, and reflect God’s love without exception.”

### **Trans Theology Conference Luther King House 14-16 November**

I once again attended the Trans Theology conference organised by Chrissie Chevasutt and Holly Taylor-Zuntz. The theme of the conference, suitably enough in view of the venue, was “I Have a Dream”. I am not going to report in detail on the conference but shall pick out a few highlights.

As always at these events, it was a delight to meet old friends and to make some new ones. Lovely Martin who served our splendid meals greeted me like an old friend. I was surprised he remembered me – surely he must see lots of crazy elderly pink-haired trans women? The first session was led by rev. Sarah Jones, a Cardiff vicar and the first person to have transitioned and then to be ordained in the Church of England. She spoke with wit as well as passion about her own experience as a pioneering trans woman priest and about how we might weather the storm breaking around trans people and engage with those who might despise and fear us. She did not seek to minimise the dangers and

difficulties facing us but her own high spirits and optimism lifted our spirits setting the tone for the rest of the conference.

It was also a treat to be addressed by rev. Tina Beardsley, a long-standing Sibyl who has made such a huge contribution over very many years with her ministry, her speaking and writing and her just being.....herself. She was accompanied by her wonderful husband, Rob and in her presentation, brilliantly illustrated, she drew comparisons between Hebrew prophets like Micah and Jeremiah and modern-day counterparts like Marsha P Johnson and Silvia Rivera, at the forefront of gay and trans liberation in 1960s America. It felt quite challenging to think that we might again be living in times when such heroic, Christ-like resistance from the margins might be necessary. Do we have it in us to live in such radical solidarity with the oppressed and marginalised? After Tina's presentation we were invited to suggest what representations on trans inclusion might be made to archbishop-designate Sarah Mullally and the Council of Bishops. For some, the legal recognition of non-binary identities and same-sex marriage loomed large. Inspired by Tina's address, I wondered if Sarah Mullally could assume a prophetic as well as priestly role and, with great jeopardy to her position at the heart of the establishment, speak out in support of a marginalised and stigmatised group. A big ask. We badly need allies in positions of power and influence – as rev. Sarah had said earlier, the trans narrative has been dominated by those opposed to trans rights (and in some cases committed to our complete erasure from public life) and the voice of trans people themselves has been drowned out.

We heard powerful testimonies from a number of people about the joy and pain of being trans, especially in the context of also living a religious vocation. Rev. Tom read us a very moving poem about “just wanting to be Tom”. Nicolette Burbach treated us to a deep dive into the distinction between “drive” and “desire”. It was a little too dense for me to take in in real time and I was left just with the picture she evoked of trans people as “bricks”. This picture was elaborated by the trans performance poet Jay Hulme who sparkingly led us into a copiously illustrated demonstration of how trans people are like Cathedrals – messy, mashed-up, bits from different times stuck together often with the joints showing, yet somehow, in their entirety, sublimely beautiful.

The judging panel had a very difficult task in deciding the winner in a performance contest where we were treated to a range of moving poems, songs and a guitar-accompanied impro by Francis which was awarded first prize.

In addition to this fabulous content I was further enriched by the informal conversations I was privileged to have at meal times and coffee breaks where people were brave enough to show vulnerability and open up about their lives and those of people loved by them – including a mother who spoke very movingly about the challenges faced by her trans daughter. I'm pretty sure she would have derived some hope from the experience of the conference – I know I did and am truly grateful to Chrissie, Holly, the wonderful staff at Luther King House and all who made this such a joyous event. I shall long treasure the memory of seeing the video of Marsha P singing “Climb Every Mountain” and then joining with the other attendees in belting it out ourselves...we had a dream indeed.

*Pauline*

New Ways Ministry criticizes US bishops for stance on trans healthcare:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2025/11/13/new-ways-ministry-criticizes-u-s-bishops-on-anti-trans-health-policies/>

## Trans law and politics



Council of Europe human rights commissioner warns against exclusion of trans people from single-sex spaces:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/oct/14/trans-people-risk-exclusion-many-uk-public-spaces-rights-expert-says>

Good Law challenge to EHRC interim guidance:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19qEvbln0e2dmUXauUzdtIB8CeliMzxyZ/view>

EHRC withdraws interim guidance:

<https://goodlawproject.org/ehrc-withdraws-interim-guidance-encouraging-trans-exclusion/>

**“I’ve spent six months talking to trans people who are afraid to go out because of the climate of fear the EHRC’s interim guidance created,” Maugham said. “Some are suicidal – and I am aware of people who have sought to take their own lives. The EHRC has finally taken it down – and my question to them is: if the High Court finds the guidance unlawful, will you apologise to those whose lives you have so profoundly harmed?”**

**According to Good Law Project trans rights lead, Jess O’Thomson, the guidance hasn’t only had a “devastating impact on trans people’s lives”, but may also have encouraged organisations to act unlawfully.**

**“Now the guidance has been withdrawn,” O’Thomson said, “so should the exclusionary policies that organisations rashly implemented in its aftermath. If not, they could find themselves in hot water.”**

**Good Law Project’s challenge to the interim guidance will begin at the High Court on 12 November 2025.**

Freddy McConnell on rare legal victory in High Court for trans people (a trans man wanting to bear his own baby had been denied a GRC):

[freddy-mcconnell-a-judge-showing-compassion-to-trans-people](#)

**Equality commission's guidance after sex ruling is fundamentally unworkable**

**The EHRC has ignored warnings about the contradiction between possibly being sued for challenging someone's gender versus being sued for failing to, says Rachel Taylor MP**

**Guardian Mon 3 Nov 2025 17.39 GMT**

**Contrary to what Kishwer Falkner is suggesting (Letters, 28 October), MPs' problem with the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) guidance was not that it failed to address every conceivable scenario, but that it set out fundamentally unworkable instructions to businesses that go far beyond what the supreme court actually ruled, and which places them at risk of costly litigation.**

**Take the question of using a gendered bathroom – hardly a niche issue, given it is something most of us do on a daily basis. The EHRC's guidance places the onus on businesses to police whether people are using a bathroom that corresponds with their sex assigned at birth.**

**However, there is no practical way for businesses to know whether someone is transgender – based solely on their appearance – and challenging people risks humiliation for trans people and others whose appearance doesn't neatly fit with society's expectations. I have already heard appalling stories of women being aggressively challenged while waiting in a queue for the bathroom. Policing this puts businesses at serious reputational and legal risk, but under Lady Falkner's leadership the EHRC has chosen to ignore warnings about the contradiction between possibly being sued for challenging someone's gender versus being sued for failing to.**

**This makes even less sense when you consider that the supreme court said businesses could choose to exclude trans people from single-sex spaces when it is a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim", not that they *must* exclude them.**

**Having questioned Lady Falkner as a witness on the Commons women and equalities committee, I have been concerned by her refusal to even acknowledge the difficult situation the supreme court judgment has placed transgender people in – many of whom have been using the toilet of their assumed gender and going about their lives without issue for decades until now.**

**Under her leadership, the EHRC has adopted an ideological interpretation of the judgment which is not shared by many legal experts. That position risks marginalising transgender people, like the veteran I met recently who has been excluded from the women's motorbike club she has enjoyed for years. It also leaves businesses and their staff caught in the crossfire of the increasingly bitter gender wars, while doing absolutely nothing to advance women's rights or protect vulnerable women from abuse.**

**I hope when Lady Falkner's successor starts in post next month that she will take a far more balanced and consensual approach to tackling some of the very real and difficult issues that upholding all of our**

**rights**

**entails.**

**Rachel**

**Taylor**

**MP**

***Labour, North Warwickshire and Bedworth; member of the women and equalities select committee***

Debate in Scottish Parliament on unacceptable waiting times at gender clinics:

[unacceptable-waiting-times-for-accessing-gender-identity-clinics](#)

Key take-aways from Beth Upton/Peggie Tribunal ruling:

<https://archive.ph/bBdwS#selection-1613.26-1617.53>

“A key aspect of the case was whether the Supreme Court's ruling on biological sex, handed down in April, automatically makes it unlawful for a trans person to be allowed to facilities for their acquired gender. The tribunal ruled that it did not.

The decision means that a blanket ban on trans people using single-sex spaces is likely to be unlawful in the majority of incidents.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/dec/11/trans-doctor-changing-room-case-does-it-amount-to-a-bathroom-ban>

A friendly, balanced piece on trans rights by Simon Jenkins in The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/dec/12/trans-rights-private-toxic-debate-courts-inclusion>

“Let organisations make up their own minds on inclusion”.

...and an excellent piece by the Good Law trans lead:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/dec/09/transgender-rights-wi-girlguiding-supreme-court>

All is not lost!

## Trans health



Levy Report of adult gender clinics:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/operational-and-delivery-review-of-nhs-adult-gender-dysphoria-clinics-in-england/>

Gender clinic waiting times in Glasgow 224 years:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/10/06/gender-clinic-wait-times-scotland-glasgow/>

Peer-reviewed critiques of Cass Report:

[peer-reviewed-critiques-of-cass-review](#)

Open letter from GIDS' staff about shocking mismanagement of GIDS closure:

<https://medium.com/@GidsStaffGroup/an-open-letter-to-nhs-england-from-concerned-gids-staff-4e075dd574d2>

*There is no blueprint for how to live in a body that is not easily definable as male or female*

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/nov/12/intersex-campaigners-fighting-to-limit-surgery-on-children>

Study on HRT in trans women:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/11/12/hrt-trans-women-study-feminising-hormones/>

Plans for puberty blockers clinical trial announced:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2k4jq0wkj4o>

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/nov/22/two-uk-clinical-trials-to-assess-impact-of-puberty-blockers-in-young-people>

Campaigners trying to stop the trial:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyv6l5nypgo>

Mental health bodies, including Royal College of Psychiatrists, alarmed about effect on trans people of exclusion from singles sex spaces:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/dec/08/single-sex-spaces-trans-nonbinary-mental-health-charities>

## Trans life



Katie's story: .I've been writing my own newsletter, that I take around the shop's once a month, it used to be every week- now it's once a month. It gives me a real connection to the town, I get 500 printed a month. Here's my story  
<https://transactual.org.uk/blog/2024/09/02/katies-pride-the-handmade-newsletter-that-changed-my-life/>

Consultation on trans access to Hampstead Heath Ladies' pond:  
<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/10/01/hampstead-heath-consultation-single-sex-spaces-row/>

Trans pupils in Scottish schools avoiding food and drink so they don't have to go to the loo:  
<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/10/02/trans-scotland-schools-guidance-eis/>

Julia Serano: Lies, Damned Lies and Transgender Statistics:  
<https://juliarserano.medium.com/lies-damned-lies-and-transgender-statistics-a6cd6c6b8e26>

Girl Guides ban trans girls:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/dec/02/trans-girls-banned-girlguiding-supreme-court>

...and Women's Institute follows suit:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3e05130wyno>

## **INSIDE**

Inside, I was Male.  
Inside, I was Female.  
Inside, I was Sapiosexual.  
Inside, I was Sappho.  
Inside, I was a diversity of things.  
Who could make sense of such complexity?  
Certainly not me, I am simply confused.  
My shame tore me apart on the inside.  
I hated what I was.

But later in life  
My Lord intervened!  
Under His gentle guidance  
He revealed to me the way of integration.  
Following it, I was able to find peace.  
Inside, I am one.

## **LOSING MYSELF**

I lost myself in learning.  
I lost myself in reading.  
I lost myself in an endless  
Pursuit of knowledge

All to escape the insistent craving.  
To become like a woman  
A sexy lady  
Desired by other ladies

Better this form of escape  
Than to seek oblivion  
In drink, drugs or suicide  
Or by pretending to be the man I was not

Through my systematic and constant learning  
I could live and not make being Trans  
The be-all and end-all  
Of my life

## **ORIGINS**

What were the origins of these cravings  
To be a woman  
To dress and live as one?  
How did they begin?  
What strange genesis set me on this road?

I cannot grasp  
I cannot fathom  
I cannot find an answer



Was it genetics?  
Or hormones?  
Was it through some childhood trauma?  
Or negative family dynamics  
I just do not know

It's all a mystery  
A tantalising puzzle  
One, I simply cannot solve

Why didn't God my Father prevent it?  
Why didn't Jesus my Saviour end it?  
Why didn't the Holy Spirit blow it away?  
Where was God in my suffering?

Again, I do not know.  
No answer has emerged.  
It defies all explanation.

But now at last  
In my sixtieth year  
I have received

Some glimmer of understanding  
Of why God allowed it  
And for that I am grateful

*Sapio T*

## **Trans Joy**

I'm walking alone. It's growing dark. A man approaches me. My heart beats a little faster. He passes by. I look behind me. I see another man. I try to stay calm. I can't help walking a little faster and try not to look round. It feels like he's keeping pace with me. I have to stop and let him pass me. He does. Phew. Ahead there's a group of kids, boys. I have to pass them. Will they say anything? "Are you a man or a woman? Freak! Weirdo!" – the words ring loud in my head. I tell myself they're only kids and words can't hurt. But what if it's not just words? Could I defend myself? Can I still run fast enough to escape? My heart beats fast. But they say nothing. I calm down but wish, now it is completely dark, that I was somewhere safe. I arrive at a restaurant. The waiter asks, what can I get you ma'am? I smile. It's ok.

*Pauline F*

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/oct/11/my-cultural-awakening-kate-bush-helped-me-come-out-as-a-trans-woman>

"Something shifted in me that day. Bush's ode to womanhood felt like an invocation of all the things I knew I could be: euphoric, audacious and free. I started to view my femininity not as a flaw, but as an affirmation of life; a way of indulging in the intense pleasure of the world, nature and my body."

How David Bowie helped me find my identity as a trans man:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/nov/05/a-moment-that-changed-me-i-thought-i-was-a-lesbian-david-bowie-made-me-realise-the-truth>

When the David Bowie Is exhibition finished its world tour with a stint in Brooklyn, New York, five years later, I went back. I had reached a breaking point. I couldn't go on pretending to be something I was not. Standing in front of the same video in 2018, I knew for certain that the problem wasn't my clothes, it was my body. I wasn't a masculine woman; I was a feminine man who'd been wearing drag all his life. I wanted to transform myself into the man in the sharp suit, dancing in the spotlight, and now I realised that I could.

Trans exile: many trans people thinking of escaping transphobic UK:

<https://goodlawproject.org/over-a-quarter-of-trans-people-likely-to-leave-the-uk/>

Moving story from trans refugee:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/11/21/lgbtq-refugee-labour-asylum-system-changes/>

A short TED talk on history of fight for trans rights:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/samy\\_nour\\_younes\\_a\\_short\\_history\\_of\\_trans\\_people\\_s\\_long\\_fight\\_for\\_equality](https://www.ted.com/talks/samy_nour_younes_a_short_history_of_trans_people_s_long_fight_for_equality)

## Trans world



Trans America:

Musk cancels Netflix subscription over trans character:

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/oct/02/elon-musk-netflix-trans-character-dead-end-paranormal-park>

Almost of trans Americans have relocated to another state:

**A recent study** shows that 48% of surveyed trans adults in the US have either already relocated and/or are considering relocating to a different state in response to legal and sociopolitical hostility towards trans people. 45% of respondents expressed a desire to move out of the country.

*Judith Butler* on dangers of right-wing transphobia:

[https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2025/10/judith-butler-warns-that-society-must-resist-right-wing-transphobia-or-else/?fbclid=IwY2xjawNQRoFleHRuA2FlbQlXMAbicmlkETAxBDg3OXh3Y2JYN2o1Y2d1AR4TpqrLWRT-9SHo8RcpU4EOxW0vkYpQ37fHV8GxMak8RXoibCSZ8r739VWk7A\\_aem\\_32srYnOAa0gw6f\\_SEw55Gw](https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2025/10/judith-butler-warns-that-society-must-resist-right-wing-transphobia-or-else/?fbclid=IwY2xjawNQRoFleHRuA2FlbQlXMAbicmlkETAxBDg3OXh3Y2JYN2o1Y2d1AR4TpqrLWRT-9SHo8RcpU4EOxW0vkYpQ37fHV8GxMak8RXoibCSZ8r739VWk7A_aem_32srYnOAa0gw6f_SEw55Gw)

“Womanhood won’t be erased just because we open the category and invite some more people in.”

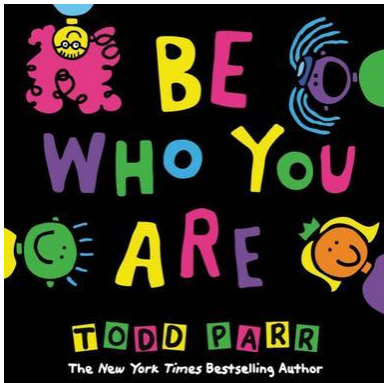
Mamdani pledges to protect trans people in New York:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/11/05/zohran-mamdani-trans-election-win/>

Trans Ireland – ominous signs of gender-critical movement gaining momentum:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/dec/23/ireland-gender-recognition-act-decade>

## Trans books and media



BBC newsreader rebuked for “pregnant people” stance:

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2025/nov/06/bbc-upholds-complaint-against-martine-croxall-over-pregnant-people-change>

Victoria Coren Mitchell’s take-down of Graham Linehan over his comment about appearance of a trans woman on Only Connect:



**Graham Linehan** ✓ @Glinner · 18h

Hey, @VictoriaCoren should 'Emily' be allowed in women's sports and spaces? What about female-only shelters and rape crisis centres? A yes or no will suffice! [pic.x.com/jk50TLel4f](https://pic.x.com/jk50TLel4f)

Replying to @Glinner



In my experience, Graham, *\*nothing\** will suffice to stop you pestering me. You seem to really want a rise out of me, and I'm not someone who's comfortable with anger. Only Connect is just a harmless quiz show. I try to ignore your relentless messages like I would with any other troll. But on this occasion, out of respect for the friendly relationship we used to have and the brilliant writer you used to be, I will ask you one more time to please, please, please, leave us alone. If you are still in there somewhere: stop it. You **MUST** be better than this.

## Jesus the Wisdom of God

Mary Ward

[mary@gkc.org.uk](mailto:mary@gkc.org.uk)

(1) God

God is infinite, while we are finite creatures. So there is an infinite distance between our understanding and the true nature of God.

It is impossible for us to bridge the gap: to seek God and find God by our efforts. "Man's search for God" is therefore a futile endeavour. As Aquinas put it: "No created intellect can see the essence of God." (ST I, q 12, obj 1)

But...

God is infinite, so God can bridge the infinite distance and communicate with us. God's self-revelation gives us true knowledge of God: to the extent that our finite minds are able to comprehend. And our minds were created by God for the purpose of being in relationship with God.

The revelation tells us that God is Love and God is a Trinity:

one God in three Persons. At the heart of the Godhead, at the bedrock of reality, we find, not the "immutable, impassible, Alone" of the philosopher, but a community of love that overflows into the creation of the world.

C. S. Lewis writes:

"Men are reluctant to pass over from the notion of an abstract and negative deity to the living God... The Pantheist's God does nothing, demands nothing. He is there if you wish for Him, like a book on a shelf. He will not pursue you.... An 'impersonal God'--well and good. A subjective God of beauty, truth and goodness, inside our own heads--better still. A formless life-force surging through us, a vast power which we can tap--best of all. But God Himself, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, perhaps approaching at an infinite speed, ... that is quite another matter.

"There comes a moment when people who have been dabbling in religion ('Man's search for God!') suddenly draw back. Supposing we really found Him? We never meant it to come to that! Worse still, supposing He had found us?"  
--C. S. Lewis Miracles

God is still infinite and we are still finite, so even God's self-revelation does not enable us to comprehend the entirety of God.

St Gregory of Nyssa says "The Holy Spirit, in delivering to us the Divine mysteries, conveys its instruction on those matters which transcend language by means of what is within our capacity" (Contra Eunomium)

Therefore: all speech about God proceeds not literally but by way of analogy, God is more unlike than like any of our analogies.

If we take any of these analogies and images literally, it becomes an idol. As C. S. Lewis says:

"My idea of God is not a divine idea. It has to be shattered time after time. He shatters it Himself. He is the great iconoclast. Could we not almost say that this shattering is one of the marks of His presence?... And most are offended by the iconoclasm; and blessed are those who are not." (C. S. Lewis, "A Grief Observed")

Let us, then, proceed by way of analogy, taking the revelation of God in all its forms as the primary source, and not treating any analogy or image as final and complete. God being more unlike than like any of our analogies.

Jamie Moran writes "For, the full paradox is that you cannot confine God in any way, including making God stay beyond everything. God does not! God overflows his limitlessness to touch, enter, affect, the limited. He does not stand on his dignity. The transcendent becomes immanent"

(2) Lady Wisdom

In Proverbs, Wisdom is described as giving life (Proverbs 3:16) and a "tree of life" (3:18).

She is pre-existent: "Yahweh possessed me at the beginning of His way before His works. From everlasting I have been established, from the beginning before there was ever an earth" (8:22-23)

(This passage is often translated "The Lord created me...", but this interpretation implies that God initially did not have any wisdom, and so he created wisdom and then used wisdom to create everything else. This seems unlikely to me!)

She dwells with God and is the one He delights in (8:27-30).

Wisdom is involved in the creation of everything (8:30).

Wisdom calls out in the street inviting all to come to her and find life and understanding (1:20-23, 8:32-34, 9:3-6).

She is the cosmic giver of the transforming feast who sends her servant-girls out to proclaim from the highest places, so that all may hear, that there is space at the table (9:3-5).

Wisdom offers knowledge, understanding, insight, life and peace (1:23, 2:6, 3:13,16-18, 8:5-10,33,35, 9:5-6), as she speaks, calls, challenges, warns, invites, serves and nourishes.

Wisdom invites everyone to feast at her banquet that she has prepared (Prov 9:1-5), offering bread and wine in abundance.

To know her is better than gold (Prov 8:10,19, 16:16, cf 1 Peter 1:7).

Wisdom is the one who sends prophets and apostles, some of whom are killed and persecuted (Luke 11:49).

Where have we seen a figure like this before?

In John 1, "the Word" was in the beginning, with God, and was the one through whom all things were created, who gives life. This "Word" became incarnate and lived among us (1:14).

The people came to Jesus to find wisdom and were astonished at his teaching, because he taught with authority (Lk 4:32)

Jesus is the one who offers life (Jn 10:10)

Jesus offers a feast (Mt 22:2-10) and sends out his servants to gather the guests to the feast.

Jesus provides bread in abundance (Mt 14:20 etc) and wine in abundance (Jn 2:6) along with wise words of teaching.

Jesus has the words of eternal life (Jn 6:68)

Jesus is close to the Father's heart (Jn 1:18), the Beloved that He is pleased with (Mk 1:11, 9:7, Lk 3:22)

Jesus is the one who sends prophets and apostles, some of whom are killed and persecuted (Mt 23:34)

When he was criticised for being a friend of tax-collectors and sinners, Jesus directly identifies himself with Wisdom: "Wisdom is vindicated by all her deeds/children" (Lk 7:34-35 and Mt 11:19)

Some have claimed that Lady Wisdom is simply a personification of an attribute of God. But there seems to me to be far too much detail in the figure of Wisdom to be a mere personification.

Although any divine figure can be treated as a "personification"--if you try hard enough! For example:

- \* God is a personification of a motivating power of a value system
- \* God is a personification of an archetype
- \* God is a personification of discipline and excellent spiritual reasoning
- \* God is a personification of Reality
- \* God is a personification of Love, Power and Wisdom
- \* God is a personification of the energies and forces which permeate universe

... and so on ...

### (3) The Wisdom of Solomon

How was the divine figure of Wisdom understood at the time of Jesus?

The book "The Wisdom of Solomon", or "The Book of Wisdom" is generally dated between 30 BC and 40 AD. It is part of the canon of the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, and part of the Apocrypha for the Protestant Church. Origen in the 2nd century AD refers to uncertainty about its canonicity.

Athanasius includes it among the books which "were appointed by the Fathers to be read".

Regardless of its canonical status, the book has much to tell us about how Lady Wisdom was understood at the time of Jesus.

In Wis 7:25, Wisdom is described as "a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty" and in 7:26 as "a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God and an image of his goodness".



In Col 1:15-20 Jesus is the "image" of God, the "firstborn of all creation", the one through whom "all things ... were created", who "is before all things, and in him all things hold together".

Wisdom is described as the radiant light of God (Wis 6:12, 7:25, 26), she is "more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars", "Compared with the light she is found to be superior" (Wis 7:29, cf Jn 1:4-5), while Jesus is "the true light, which enlightens everyone" (Jn 1:9)

In Prov 2:10 "Wisdom will come into your heart". In Wis 7:27 "she can do all things... she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets". Jesus says "I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (Jn 15:15)

In Prov 3:19, and Wis 7:22 Wisdom "founded the earth", and is "fashioner of all things", while in Col 1:16 "in him (Jesus) all things were created" and Jn 1:3 "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being"

In Prov 8:30-31, Wisdom was beside God like a master builder (or a beloved child), "daily his delight". At Jesus baptism the voice from heaven declared "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased".

In Heb 1:3 Jesus is "the reflection of God's glory", while Wisdom is "radiant and unfading" (Wis 6:12) and "a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty" (Wis 7:25) and "a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness." (Wis 7:26).

Jesus says "My sheep hear my voice" (Jn 10:27) and "the sheep follow him because they know his voice" while Wisdom is "easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her" (Wis 6:12)

Jesus embodies "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3) and "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9), while Wisdom offers knowledge to all who come to her (Prov 8:10-12) "she is an initiate in the knowledge of God" (Wis 8:4), "she knows the things of old, and infers the things to come" (Wis 8:8)

In Mark 6:2 when Jesus returns to his home town the people ask "What is this wisdom that has been given to him?" which could even be translated "Who is this Wisdom..."

In the transfiguration (Mk 9:1-8) Jesus is called "Son" and "beloved" and becomes dazzling white, just as Wisdom is described as radiant (Wis 6:12) The voice from the cloud commands the disciples to "listen to him" (9:7) just as Lady Wisdom repeatedly calls all to listen to her and thus gain life (Prov 1:20-23, 8:1-21, 9:4-6).

In Luke 11:49 Jesus says "Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute...';"

In Matthew 23:34 Jesus says "Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify..."

Jesus calls his disciples "no longer servants but friends" (Jn 15:12-15). Wisdom brings people into friendship with God (Wis 7:12-14, 27-28).

In Ephesians, Jesus is "the Beloved" (Eph 1:6 cf Col 2:10) and the one who fills "all in all". Wisdom "pervades and penetrates all things" (Wis 7:24). The "plan of the mystery" is that "the wisdom of God" might be made known to all through Jesus (Eph 3:9-12). The image of Jesus as the one who descended and ascended (Eph 4:10) reflects Wisdom who "reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well" (Wis 8:1).

#### (4) Jesus and Lady Wisdom

How do we reconcile all these passages together?

The simplest solution is that Jesus is the incarnation of divine Wisdom!

If fact, Paul explicitly says that Christ is "the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24)

John in his prologue calls Jesus "the Word" (Greek: Logos) rather than Wisdom (Greek: Sophia), but Logos and Sophia are closely connected in Greek philosophy, which John is using here.

#### Jesus | Lady Wisdom

Existed from the beginning | Existed from the beginning  
With God from the beginning | Possessed by God at the beginning  
Creator of all things | Fashioner of all things  
Calls us friends | Makes us friends with God  
Sustains all things | Orders all things well  
Sent the prophets | Sent the prophets  
Fills all in all | Pervades and penetrates all things  
The image of God | A spotless mirror and image of God  
Close to the Father's heart | The one He delights in  
Light of the world | Radiant light of God

#### (5) The Risen Jesus

Finally, in Revelation 1:13 John has a vision of the risen Jesus: "in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest."

The word here, often translated "chest", as in this version, is the plural Greek word *mastoia* meaning "breasts" (as in mastitis and mastectomy). Later in Revelation the seven angels have "golden

sashes across their chests" (15:6) and the Greek word is stethe , which is the usual word for "chest" (as in "stethoscope")

The only other appearances of mastois in the NT are clearly to women's breasts and are in the context of breastfeeding. These are Lk 11:27 "Blessed [are] ... the breasts that nursed you" and Lk 23:29 which refers to "the breasts that never nursed".

In 1 Peter the author uses the image of Jesus breastfeeding us:

1 Peter 2:2-4 "Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight"

But Jesus was a man!

How can Jesus, a man, also be the incarnation of divine Wisdom, a woman?

Well, anyone who is transgender, or who knows what it means to be transgender, will understand that a person's gender identity can differ from their physical sexual characteristics and assigned sex at birth.

In other words: Jesus was transgender.

#### (6) Wisdom in the Church Fathers

In 1 Clement (70 AD or 96 AD), Wisdom is described as "all-virtuous Wisdom" According to this text, it is by heeding Woman Wisdom that one is able to abide in the holy name of God. Jesus is described as the Creator's "beloved child" (59:2,3) and "your child" in a prayer to God (59:4).

Justin Martyr clearly identifies Wisdom with Jesus:

But this Offspring, who was truly begotten of the Father, was with the Father and the Father talked with Him before all creation, as the scripture through Solomon clearly showed us, saying that this Son, who is called Wisdom by Solomon, was begotten both as a beginning before all His works, and as His Offspring.

(Dialogue with Trypho 62; see also 126, 155-160 AD)

The claim that Jesus is Woman Wisdom incarnate is pivotal to Justin's debate with Trypho.

#### (7) Wisdom in Christian History

Brother Lawrence writes:

"My most typical approach is this simple attentiveness and general loving awareness of God, from which I derive greater sweetness

and satisfaction than an infant receives from his mother's breast. Therefore, if I may dare use the expression, I would gladly call this state the "breasts of God," because of the indescribable sweetness I taste and experience there" (Brother Lawrence, "Letter 2 to a spiritual director")

St John of the Cross says of Jesus:

"There He gave me His breasts,  
There He taught me the science full of sweetness.  
And there I gave to Him  
Myself without reserve;  
There I promised to be His bride."

(The Spiritual Canticle of St. John of the Cross, 27)

Among a number of references to the Motherhood of God, Julian of Norwich writes:

"The human mother suckles her child with her own milk, and with the utmost tender kindness our beloved Mother, Jesus, feeds us with himself through the blessed sacrament, which is my life's precious food." (Chapter 60)

"The human mother puts her child tenderly to her breast, and our tender Mother, Jesus, leads us intimately into his blessed breast, through the sweet open wound in his side, and there gives us a glimpse of the Godhead and the joy of heaven, with the inner certainty of eternal bliss." (Chapter 60)

--