**Letters to The Tablet, January-March 2021**

**07 January 2021**

**Voices of women**

The new Archbishop-elect of Dublin, Bishop Dermot O’Farrell, states that a key aim of his tenure will be to listen to the “neglected” voices of women (Tablet online, 29 December). That already happens here in some areas; the Christmas Carols and Lessons Service from St Chad’s Cathedral in Birmingham featured women reading all the lessons. However, in 2021, we, as Catholic women, do not just need to be listened to – we need to have a say in what goes on in our Church.

Younger members than those of my generation, both men and women, have been used to seeing women at all levels involved in every aspect of life. We know that Pope Francis is doing his utmost to change things, but he has a difficult task with so much opposition, particularly from conservatives and other vested interests. We have many distinguished theologians among Catholic women; why are they not among the decision makers? The answer that they are not clerics is a poor one.

Life after Covid will be different. People have become used to Masses online and it will be quite a task to get them back into the pews again. Why should people, particularly younger people, listen in the future to moral directives from the Church decided by mainly elderly single men with little understanding of the lives the laity live?

**Gail Brown**
Kidderminster, Worcestershire

**11 February 2021**

**Muslim example**
The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has elected Zara Mohammed, a training consultant from Glasgow, as its secretary general, the first woman to hold this position. Rarely have I felt so ashamed of our Catholic Church.

Few things better illustrate how backward, misogynist, and out of touch our leadership are. They live in societies in which women can hold any top job, and if asked they would say they uphold that. Yet in their church lives they do the opposite.

If the MCB can respond so intelligently to the mores of the society it is living in, why can’t our church leadership show the same common sense?

**Michael Knowles**
Congleton, Cheshire

**25 March 2021**

St John’s Gospel 19:25 tells us that at the foot of the Cross of Jesus were four women, Mary his mother, his mother’ sister, Mary wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. This number of four women to one man can be seen in most congregations today. Is it hidden fear of the same ratio occurring at the altar that prevents bishops ordaining women?

**Elizabeth Price**
Linton, Kent