



FOCUS E-News

July 2 - 8, 2017 Edition

In the Spirit of Pentecost, we work for change. Please support these efforts!

[Celebrate St. Mary of Magdala!](#)
[Start a conversation on women deacons!](#)
[Discerning a call as a female deacon? Join us at our 2nd retreat!](#)
[Take recourse if your parish is being sold!](#)
[Urge leaders to support Cardinal Arborelius' suggestion for a College of Women Advisors](#)

Honor the Marys of Magdala in your life!

From the Executive Director

This has been a memorable few weeks in church politics; a time filled with controversy, but also with the possibility for furthering necessary reforms in our church.

Cardinal George Pell, Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy was charged with sex crimes in his native Australia and has been relieved of his duties to face those charges there.

Cardinal Gerhard Mueller steps down from his role as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and will be replaced by Archbishop Luis Ladaria, a moderate conservative who has a gift for



listening, creating new possibilities for reform in a number of arenas - but especially in terms of restoring women deacons.

The newly appointed cardinal from Sweden, [Cardinal Anders Arborelius](#) along with [Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Germany](#) are [calling](#) for real and measurable gains for women in church governance.

Reform within the institution moves at a snail's pace, but it is coming as we anticipate new doors for women in ministry and governance, as well as reforms that will open doors to other excluded populations of Catholics.

Catholics like you have been active in working for reform and we need to continue to engage our leaders in dialogue and advocate for change. Now is the time to act. Here are a few suggestions:

[DeaconChat: Start a Conversation on Women Deacons](#)

[Write a letter to our U.S. cardinals asking them to support Cardinal Anders Arborelius' idea of a College of Women advisors to Pope Francis](#)

[Open the discussion on married priests](#)

FutureChurch's collaborative initiative -- Catholic Women Preach Initiative -- is highlighted in NCR

Cynthia Bowns has felt the calling to be a deacon since her husband went through the diaconate formation program a few years ago. Despite the Catholic Church's rule that women cannot be ordained, Bowns started preaching to members of her parish at Mass and whenever she is requested. "There's a great need for [preaching] from a woman's perspective, especially married women," she said.



Bowns said her preaching has been well-received among her fellow parishioners, and several of them even call her a deacon because of it.

Her time at the pulpit hasn't gone unnoticed. A couple of years ago, Deborah Rose-Milavec, executive director of FutureChurch, an organization that advocates for women's ordination and ending clerical celibacy, asked Bowns if she would be interested in participating in a new initiative dedicated to women preaching.

[Read more](#)

New Swedish Cardinal suggests College of Women

One of the five prelates Pope Francis just made a new cardinal of the Catholic Church has suggested the pope consider creating a special advisory body of women akin to the College of Cardinals to offer more opportunity for women's leadership in the church. Stockholm Cardinal Anders Arborelius, whom Francis made



Sweden's first cardinal in a consistory Wednesday, June 28, said he thinks "it's very important to find a broader way of involving women at various levels in the church."

"The role of women is very, very important in society, in economics, but in the church sometimes we are a bit behind," Arborelius said in a June 28 NCR interview. The new cardinal mentioned that Pope John Paul II had often sought counsel from Mother Teresa and Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare movement.

"Maybe it could be made more official," he suggested, adding: "We have a College of Cardinals, but we could have a college of women who could give advice to the pope."

[Read more](#)

Cardinal Reinhard Marx calls for a greater percentage of women at the top

One of Pope Francis' top advisors has called on the Western Church to admit a greater percentage of women to its upper echelons.

Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich, who is a member of the pope's Council of Cardinals (C9), made the appeal on June 22 at a mentoring program for women in his archdiocese.

"We would be mad not to use women's talents. In fact, it would be downright foolish," he told participants at the gathering, which was sponsored



by Hildegardis Association. The Catholic group was founded in 1907 to prepare women for academic positions in the Church.

"We need a new image of what the Church is supposed to be – namely a world Church led by men and women from all cultures working together", said the cardinal, who is also chairman of the Vatican's Council for the Economy.

[Read more](#)

Cardinal Timothy Dolan seeks to relegate seventeen churches to profane use

Cardinal Dolan is seeking to relegate seventeen churches in the archdiocese to profane use, but you won't find news of it in his latest blog, nor is it easy to find news of it on the diocesan website. While the cardinal wishes to talk about summer fun, Catholics in his diocese are suffering over this latest round of disposing of churches. [Read decrees](#)

For Catholics who want to pursue recourse against actions like these [please download FutureChurch's Save Our Parish Resources](#). We will put you immediately in touch with canon lawyer Sr. Kate Kuentler. ***Remember that you must act within 10 days of a notice.***

[Learn more](#)



Robert Mickens on what Cardinal Pell's ouster means for financial reform and more

Pope Francis granted Pell an extended “leave” from his Vatican post this past Wednesday so the cardinal could return to his native Australia and face “multiple charges in respect of historic sexual abuse.”



This will likely require a long and drawn-out courtroom battle that will last at least a year or more. And that’s far too long for a major Vatican office to be left without its head.

Or without the head’s right-hand man.

In Pell’s case that was Libero Milone, an Italian financier born in Holland and educated in England and the United States. The sixty-seven-year-old Milone was hired as the Vatican’s first-ever Auditor General. But he abruptly resigned without any explanation just a week before Pell took his leave. It is still a mystery why the auditor stepped down.

[Read more](#)
[Time report](#)

Cardinal Gerhard Mueller's prefecture at the CDF ends: what it means for the church

[Pope Francis](#) earlier this year ordered Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, the top doctrinal watchdog in the [Roman Catholic Church](#), to fire three priests from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which is the keeper of the church’s orthodoxy and presides over investigations into sexual abuse.



Cardinal Müller, an ideological conservative often at odds with the pontiff, was vexed by the order, and, in a recent interview, said he had made a case, in vain, for the priests to stay in Rome.

On Saturday, it was Cardinal Mueller’s turn to leave. The Vatican announced that

Francis had declined to renew the German cardinal's mandate and had replaced him with his deputy, Archbishop Luis Ladaria, 73, a Spanish Jesuit theologian.

[Read more](#)

[Joshua's McElwee's report](#)

[Michael Sean Winters' analysis](#)

Who is Archbishop Luis Ladaria, the new Prefect at the CDF? And what of the recent accusations over the handling of 2012 abuse cases?



[Observers say](#) that the appointment of Luis Ladaria as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is the second most important selection in Pope Francis' pontificate, after that of Pietro Parolin as Secretary of State.

He has chosen a discreet and hardworking professor, who is open to dialogue and has now become one of Pope Francis' points of reference at the Vatican.

Archbishop Ladaria, who was named to head the commission on women deacons, will undertake all of the former prefect's roles.

Regarding the recently raised accusations over Ladaria's role in mishandling sexual abuse claims, The Tablet's [Christopher Lamb](#) reports that Archbishop Ladaria was the second signatory on a letter granting a request to remove Gianni Trotta from the clerical state

The new prefect of the Vatican's doctrine department is coming under scrutiny over his handling of a sexually abusive former Italian priest who was laicised but then went on to commit more crimes against children.

Italian media have reported that Archbishop Luis Ladaria, appointed to his new job on Saturday, was the second signatory on a letter granting a request to remove Gianni Trotta from the clerical state.

The 2012 letter, written in Latin and obtained by Italian newspaper La Repubblica and an online version of L'Espresso magazine, tells the local bishop not to publicise details of the case so as to avoid "generating a scandal amongst the faithful." It does point out, however, that information can be publicised "if there is a danger of minors being abused".

Authored by then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal William Levada, it is a pro-forma response issued when a laicisation request is accepted.

But the case of Trotta will raise questions about whether the best way to deal with abusive clergy is through laicising them, a process which means the Church no longer has formal responsibility for them. Furthermore, the canonical requirement for silence in such cases runs against the need for open, transparent processes in reporting.

[Read more](#)

Better than expected? What happened at the Bishop's Orlando convocation

[Orlando speaker Kerry Weber](#) from America Magazine reported that many of the weekend's discussions centered around shining light on people and perspectives too often excluded or forgotten in the church.



[Dennis Sadowski of Catholic News Agency reported](#) that participants at the July 1 - 4 convocation in Orlando heard that rising diversity offers the opportunity for mutual accompaniment and understanding.

[Hosffman Ospino, associate professor of theology and religious education at Boston College cautioned that the church faces challenges from increased isolation](#), rising secularization and increasing numbers of people unaffiliated with any faith community, and the continuing differences

entrenched in the "so-called culture wars." He called for respectful dialogue among people with differences of opinion across the spectrum of issues that concern the church, from abortion to care for the poor. "Our society continues to witness an erosion of communal life. If communal life is not important, advocating for others is not a priority. Caring about the most vulnerable is somebody else's problem," Ospino said, explaining that the church can bridge such gaps.

He said the convocation-goers and those they engage when they return to their home parishes and dioceses can set the tone for future historians to see that they have laid the foundation for a stronger church that embraced diversity and inclusion.

Women can be welcomed into church leadership roles that do not depend upon ordination, said Helen Alvare, professor of law at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University. She said women must be accepted seriously as contributors rather than being chosen for their roles to check off a box on a list.

[Read more](#)

Cardinal Jochaim Meisner, one of "dubia" cardinals dies

Holding strict views against women in the priesthood and the abolition of celibacy, Meisner once referred to himself as 'a resistance fighter for God'



The former archbishop of Cologne, Joachim Meisner, has died at the age of 83. He was widely regarded as Germany's leading conservative Catholic.

[Read more](#)

Cardinal Tobin's Real Life Approach to Faith

Faith, says Joseph Cardinal Tobin, is not

what you do on Sunday mornings. It's how you are. It's how you see. It's how you act.

"A joke I use sometimes to illustrate this is the one about the priest who's reading his breviary on a plane," he says. "At one point the flight attendant comes out of the cockpit rather ashen-faced and says, 'The pilot informs us we can't get the landing gear to descend. Make sure you're strapped in and assume the crash position.' The priest snaps his breviary shut and says, 'Oh my God, I'd better pray.'"



He's got an easy sense of humor, but Cardinal Tobin takes his role as a leader of the faithful seriously. He's one of the U.S. Catholic Church's most prominent voices against deportations and immigration bans.

[Read more](#)

You won't want to miss these FutureChurch events!

Please support this work! We need you!



SAVE THE DATE! FutureChurch Fall Event

October 27, 2017
Cleveland, Ohio

Sr. Sandra Schneiders
*John's Gospel: Blueprint for the
Future of Parish Life*

[Learn more](#)



Follow in the footsteps of our foremothers --- in Greece!

From **October 5 - 14, 2017** join FutureChurch as we explore the archaeological sites of early Christian women. This pilgrimage will focus on the influence of women on the spirituality and history of Christianity. Sr. Christine Schenk will serve as educational director and Russ Petrus, FutureChurch program director will serve as



Learn what you can do to save your parish community

FutureChurch supports parishioners who want to preserve their parish community from being merged or closed. In doing so we have, together, changed Vatican policy. This FutureChurch initiative is designed to provide Catholics with tools to defend their parish homes has contributed to a highly significant change in Vatican policy.

[Learn more](#)

spiritual director.

[Read more](#)



New! Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life 2017 - 2018 SERIES

September 13, 2017
Association of US Catholic Priests Priestless Parishes

October 23, 2017
Professor Ed Hahnenberg
Emerging Models for Ministry

October 27, 2017
Sr. Sandra Schneiders
John's Gospel: Blueprint for the Future of Parish Life

November 8, 2017
Fr. Robert D. Duch
The Lobinger Model for Parish Leadership and Ministry

January 17, 2018
Jamie Manson
Religious Life for the Next Generation

February 7, 2018
Chris Lowney
Everyone Leads: How to Revitalize the Catholic Church

[Learn more](#)

Check out events offered by our friends

**2017 CALL TO ACTION
EAST COAST CONFERENCE
CTA Chapters from Maine to Florida**

Justice and Mercy Under the Trump Administration

"...to do justice, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8)

**EAST COAST CONFERENCE
CTA Chapters from Maine to Florida**

Friday and Saturday, October 20 – 21, 2017

Double Tree by Hilton, Baltimore BWI Airport, 890 Elkridge Landing Rd., Linthicum, MD 21090

Keynote Speakers

Sr. Simone Campbell: "Justice and Mercy Under a Trump Administration"

**Dr. Greer Gordon: "Racism in the Church and Society"
Sr. Patty Chappell: "Pax Christi: Being a People of Peace"**

Focus Presentations

**LGBT and the Welcoming Church
Caring for the Earth, Our Common Home**

**Immigration, Sanctuary, and Human Rights for All
Transgender and Intersex Identities and the Family
Jews and Muslims...Our Sisters and Brothers**

Registration Materials Coming Soon

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