FOCUS E-News
December 10 - 16, 2017 Edition

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From the Executive Director's Desk

As the stories of abuse of women by powerful men are proliferating, I feel a profound sense of awe and gratitude as women risk further belittlement and battering and choose to speak up.
Truly this global reckoning comes at a price for those who dare to tell their stories. In a news article that is not really news, UCANews reports that not everyone in Hong Kong wants to hear women's stories of abuse. Tragically, that has been the norm for millennia and the reason so many women have not come forward.

Jamie Manson, citing world renowned feminist bell hooks, cuts cleanly and deeply to get at the root of the problem being addressed by the #MeToo and the #ChurchToo campaigns.

Rightly, she recognizes that the abuse by males cannot be located in individual behaviors, but finds its historical foundation in a well constructed and institutionalized privilege termed patriarchy.

She writes that given the unrelenting fallout from the sexual misconduct and assault by men, feminist author and activist bell hooks was asked about the roots of this male aggression and violence. She told New Yorker editor David Remnick that, though she had read a lot of commentaries since the first revelations about Weinstein, hardly any commentator had used the word "patriarchy" to explain the root cause of all of this bad behavior.

"We want to act like this is individual male psychopathology," hooks said, rather than admit that this
behavior has been normalized for men by a patriarchal system.

Lately it feels like every day another a man vanishes from the limelight, as if taken by a plague. But in these cases, the pestilence was of their own making. And, as hooks points out, patriarchy created the conditions under which it could breed.

Patriarchy is any system in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it. In a patriarchal structure, powerful men dominate women, children, nature and other men. Frequently, one of the key ways that men predominate over women is by fixating on and controlling female sexuality.

In Hollywood and in the media, elite, ruling classes of wealthy men act as kingmakers. They have the power to decide what faces will become famous, which voices will become influential, and whose unknown name will become a household name. The patriarchal system gives these men license to abuse their power through the sexual coercion and domination of women and, in some cases, minors.

The entertainment industry's patriarchal system enabled obscene levels of sexual misconduct, gross abuses of power, and conspiracies of silence. If it feels like we've seen this movie before, we have. Remember "Spotlight"? The patriarchal structure that led to this moment in Hollywood is
remarkably similar to the system at the root of the prolonged sex abuse crisis in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church may not have invented patriarchy, but it has certainly sanctified it. The patriarchal system that allowed famous actors, producers and newsmen to move about like gods is not much different from the patriarchy that has for centuries told priests that they are divine, exceptional men, set apart to rule over a lowly and lost laity.

If Hollywood had a pope, it was surely Harvey Weinstein, with his omnipotent authority to make actors' visages immortal or condemn them into irrelevance, and with his access to resources that could enforce secrecy and make unseemly rumors disappear. Rose and Lauer, we are finding out, functioned almost like bishops, dominating their own little fiefdoms, with unchecked power and scant accountability.

True to the patriarchal system, in both the church and entertainment industry scandals, the majority of victims were women and minors. In the church's crisis, of course, the bulk of victims were children, but there are also untold cases of priests' committing acts of sexual assault and impropriety with adult women.

Whether the crimes take place in Hollywood or the newsroom or the church, abusers who thrive within a patriarchal environment
seem to fit a very similar psychological profile.

You can read more of Manson's analysis here.

Ola Segura pens an article about the origins of the #ChurchToo campaign that addresses abuse in religion, a much needed focus in the #MeToo troposphere.

Christine Schenk, CSJ picks up another thread and ultimately urges younger women to stay in the church and fight the ravages of patriarchy.

Women Church Convergence, a coalition of a number of reform groups, also released a statement on the topic that deserves deep consideration.

Powerful men who believed their power protected them in their exploits are being rejected and ejected from their seats of influence. That is the beginning of some very good news for our daughters and sons and for all of us who have worked for justice in the church and in the world.

Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Christine Schenk, CSJ, writes a love letter to her younger sisters

Writing for her column, Simply Spirit and for A Church for Our Daughters, Sr. Christine Schenk asks younger women to stay in the church and fight for the change they want to see.
Dearest younger sisters,

It is Advent. The season of hope and of the prophet Isaiah who foretells justice and healing for all God’s people.

As I write, #MeToo women of all ages are shining a brilliant light on the sexually abusive behavior of way too many men. Powerful men who ruled entertainment, politics, and the media are being called to account for treating women as sexual objects. Harvey Weinstein, Roger Ailes, Matt Lauer, Peter Levine, Al Franken, and scores of other men have been fired or resigned in disgrace.

Read more

**Voice of the Faithful conducts study on financial transparency of dioceses**

Peter Feurerhard reports that a new study reveals the extent of transparency in dioceses.

Voice of the Faithful, a church watchdog group, conducted the study which surveyed dioceses and archdioceses across the country, rating them from most transparent to most opaque. The study was based on how much financial information is accessible on diocesan websites.

Sacramento scored the highest, 59 on a 60-point scale. Camden, joined by the Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama; and the Dioceses of Brownsville, Texas, and Biloxi, Mississippi, scored a 10, the lowest possible grade. The study took place last summer 2017.
Those dioceses and archdioceses that scored highest behind Sacramento are the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; the Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio; the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa; the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Maryland, and the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas.

Read more

**Jamie Manson names the source of so much suffering: patriarchy**

In mid-November, at what many thought was the height of revelations about sexual misconduct by powerful men in the media (we were post-Harvey Weinstein and Louis C.K., but pre-Charlie Rose and Matt Lauer), the New Yorker Radio Hour presented a series of interviews on the fallout from the unrelenting flood of sordid tales of sexual misconduct and assault by men.

Read more

**At Last, The "Vice-Wuerl" Gets The Call – Pope Taps DC’s Knestout For Richmond**

Rocco Palmo reports that after months of rumblings over his future, Bishop Barry Knestout can finally breathe easy – expected from very early in the year, the Pope’s choice of the 55 year-old vicar-general of Washington as the 13th bishop of Richmond indeed came to pass at Roman Noon yesterday.

In the post overseeing the massive 33,000 square mile bulk...
of Virginia stretching from the Atlantic's Eastern Shore to the Kentucky border – all of it home to some 250,000 Catholics – the top deputy to Cardinal Donald Wuerl (duo seen above) succeeds Bishop Francis DiLorenzo, whose death from kidney failure in August remains a shock to his many friends.

Having reached the retirement age of 75 last April, the process for DiLorenzo's replacement was already well in the works at the time the vacancy occurred. On speaking to him a week before his passing – and not expecting to lose him in the least – this scribe admitted to DiLorenzo of wondering what was taking the appointment "so long," to which he characteristically shot back, "Me too."

Even then, it bears noting that Knestout – from his days as secretary to Cardinals James Hickey and Theodore McCarrick, familiar figures in church circles for nearly two decades – was the only potential pick whose name came up in the conversation.

Founded in 1820 to initially encompass Virginia and the future West Virginia, the Richmond church is one of the oldest in the US.

The first son of a cleric to be named a bishop in the global church since the permanent diaconate was restored in 1968, Knestout's arrival brings a quieter, conciliatory hand to a diocese led over the last four decades by larger-than-life
personalities at opposite ends of the ecclesiological spectrum. Read more

**John Shea, OSA, perseveres; wants dialogue on women's ordination to the priesthood**

John Shea, OSA, recently sent a letter to Pope Francis, to each cardinal in the College of Cardinals and to the president of the USCCB, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo.

The text to Pope Francis is below.

Advent, 2017

Dear Pope Francis,

I hope you are well. And I hope your staff lets this letter reach you. I pray for you. Your overall concern for injustice, for the poor, for the environment, and for reform in the church is more than wonderful.

Enclosed again are two letters about the ordination of women: the first is sent to each member of the Council of Cardinals with whom you are soon meeting; the second is a letter for background that I mailed to all the ordinaries of the United States at the beginning of Lent in 2014.

At first, when you talked about the need for honest dialogue on the issues that we face as a church, it was heartening. You kept insisting: “dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.” In fact, you said: “dialogue fearlessly.”
There is not nor has there been, however, any dialogue—fearless, gender inclusive, or otherwise—on the ordination of women, arguably and for many reasons the most important issue in the church.

In your care for God’s people, can the collaboration between bishops and theologians at Vatican II serve as a model? As Supreme Bridge Builder can you initiate up-to-date synodal dialogue on this issue—dialogue so urgently needed yet so strangely feared?

Will our church ever be whole if women are “not fully in the likeness of Jesus”? Failing to affirm the body-and-soul wholeness of women—leaving their integrity ignored, disparaged, and denied—is a crushing injustice stifling the Spirit and giving a lie to the Good News.

This advent is it wrong to hope that archaic structures will change? Is it wrong to hope that ministry will be disentangled from patriarchal conceit? Is it wrong to hope that an intelligent view of gender will prevail? Will women, like Mary, finally embody the wholeness of Jesus?

Pope Francis, how much longer until Vatican misogyny takes a huge leap forward—centuries overdue—into the real world?

Sincerely,
John J. Shea, O.S.A.

Copy: Each Member of the Council of Cardinals
Mumbai's Virginia Saldanha thinks the church should be purified

After my visit to the region of the North East of India which is a mineral rich region (not the extreme North East that is beyond Bangladesh), I realised how the government in collusion with the Corporations is using lumpen elements to destabilize communities living on the land so that they will vacate it and allow the Corporations a free hand to mine the land. This has resulted in extensive impoverishment of tribes peoples. Our missionaries are working closely in this region and have also suffered through all the violence that has been unleashed on these communities. To me they are the real priests of Christianity.

I felt challenged to look at this situation from the lens of "Christian mission". I am compelled to ask: What really should be our mission in this region? Should it be to baptise and expand our numbers? No the CBCI and many religious communities decided that it was not the primary reason for missionaries working there but instead to live with the people and to help them live a better life with access to education, medical care and other aspects of "development" that could be brought to the communities. However the people did convert and Christian communities were built up.

For me mission is to live with the people, incarnate ourselves into
their lifestyle, without conversion (even if people ask for it) because that is always misconstrued. To help people live life to its fullest in the context of their own culture and lifestyle, as these are what has helped them down the ages to preserve their land and keep their communities thriving. With conversion, communities are divided and conflict is easily generated along religious lines. Our goal should be to preserve these communities and nature that they have helped protect over the centuries. Similar to the indigenous peoples issues in the US. I feel that we, by Christianizing the tribal people, have indirectly drawn attention to these communities, by disturbing their lifestyle and culture and exposing them to the greedy corporations. This to me is the real challenge of Christian mission in my country and really in countries around the world. You can understand what I am saying by reading Evangeli Gaudium in conjunction with Laudato Si.

The corruption in Christian teaching and practise from what Jesus meant it to be has led to Christianity being responsible for so many conflicts by piggy backing with the colonialists around the world. Rather, it should be a peace maker as Jesus intended.

In this context women deacons and women's ordination which are structures in a patriarchal and corrupted Church do not make sense to me. I feel our
real goal is to purify Christianity and bring it back to the original intent of Jesus in the gospels. The context of my country and what is happening around the world throws us this challenge every day. Today we see what the president who claims to be pro-life, has done in the Middle East by stirring up conflict in the Palestinian region!!! While his own country is literally burning!! Are we really reading the signs of the times and responding?

To me this is a tremendous challenge and one we need to work on. Our basic question should be: how do we minister to communities building them up to live in peace and harmony with each other and the environment. We need to teach gospel values not be baptizing people. (the politics of sacraments is a whole other issue) All those who do this are the real priests, like my sister friend in Patna and all those who work silently to build communities of broken and hurting people. This is why I am so passionate about the LGBT people who are hurting because of the attitudes in the Church towards their reality.

The Argentine bishops and Pope Francis's Chapter Eight

Massimo Faggioli writes that changes in canon law don’t come quickly, as the ongoing reception of Amoris Laetitia since its promulgation in April 2016 is currently reminding us. But the news this week that Pope Francis has officially recognized
the interpretation of Chapter VIII of the exhortation put forth by Argentine bishops indicates that change does nevertheless occur. That interpretation, on “accompanying, discerning, and integrating weakness” in regard to the issuing of sacraments, was expressed in a September 2016 pastoral letter that was also addressed to Francis. It includes guidelines noting that there is no such thing as “unrestricted access to the sacraments,” but that in some situations a process of discernment “opens the possibility” to receipt of communion for divorced and remarried Catholics. In accepting that interpretation, Francis wrote (in Spanish) to the delegate of the pastoral region of Buenos Aires that “it fully explains the meaning of Chapter VIII of Amoris Laetitia.

Read more

The making of the immaculate conception into a solemnity

Anthony Ruff, OSB charts the uneven history of Mary’s immaculate conception. He writes that the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is an interesting case of how doctrine develops and comes to be clarified very gradually over the course of church history.

By the early modern era, belief in Mary’s Immaculate Conception – that she had been conceived by human parents without acquiring any touch of original sin – had acquired a long and troubled pedigree.
As early as the twelfth century, the arguments about its validity were becoming passionate and even violent. Nor had the controversy subsided by the seventeenth century. The clashes over the Immaculate Conception remained so heated, in fact, that Popes Paul V and Gregory XV issued decrees in 1617 and again in 1622 that banned any public statements denying the truth of the doctrine. Although these decrees implicitly upheld the Immaculata, papal support was uneven through the century, especially during Ferdinand III’s reign. In 1642, for instance, Pope Urban VIII issued the bull *Universa per orbem*, which catalogued the universally required Catholic feasts and conspicuously omitted the Immaculate Conception; two years later he dealt a further blow to official acceptance of the doctrine with a decree forbidding any writer from using the adjective “immaculate” to modify “conception.” The controversy surrounding this doctrine persisted well beyond the seventeenth century; not until 1854 did it become dogma of the Catholic Church and receive an official liturgy.

**What happens when the last priest dies?**

The Tablet's Werner G. Jeanrond suggests that the debate about the shape and governance of the Church has never lacked drama and goes back to the days of the first followers of Jesus.
Jeanrond writes that today we are at a moment when the anxious defence of her (real or imagined) glorious past clashes particularly sharply with prophecies of doom if she does not modernise at once. But change of some sort, almost certainly momentous, has now become inevitable. [Read more (subscription link)]

**UISG and LCWR discuss forthcoming document on relationship between religious and bishops**

Global Sister's Report staff recently held a discussion with Loreto Sr. Pat Murray, executive secretary of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG); Incarnate Word Sr. Teresa Maya, president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR); and Holy Cross Sr. Joan-Marie Steadman, executive director of LCWR. They asked, "How much input have you had on the update of *Mutuae Relationes* [which outlines the relationships between bishops and religious], and do you have any idea when this might come out? Are you working with the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life [CICLSAL], and where in the process might we be?"

Sr. Steadman replied that they had received a letter of invitation from CICLSAL, and our members were given the opportunity to participate in reflecting on questions that
would help shape the document. Our members sent in their reflections in the summer of 2016. Those were put together and then sent on to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life. We were directly asked to participate, and we're grateful for the opportunity.

Sr. Maya added, "We had a gathering with the bishops' committee on religious life [Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations], which Cardinal Joseph Tobin chairs. All three conferences of religious are represented as well as vicars and secular institutes. We had a short conversation about the document at the November meeting."

She noted that it was a great conversation with Cardinal Tobin. Mostly what we talked about is when this document is finally released, we need to be proactive in terms of having conversations and study sessions so we can really embrace what's in it and take the opportunity for bridging some conversations with our bishops. We're also talking about reception and distribution of it when it's finally published.

Sr. Murray reported that they helped the congregation for religious to disseminate the letter. Not only did it go to the conferences of religious worldwide, but it was also sent to individual superiors general through the UISG mailing list. We also as a board participated
in at least two sessions of the congregation for religious on discussions in relation to the future document.

They were very honest in terms of saying while it's greatly appreciated to have a theological vision that underpins the relationship, it was equally important to deal with the critical areas that need to be addressed in terms of the practical relationships on the ground. When the responses were sent from all over the world, members of UISG helped in the collation. You had to refine the themes and the general areas of concern.

After a recent meeting of the congregation for religious, we asked when we might expect a draft of this document. My sense was that that draft would hopefully be quite soon. They didn't have a date, and they didn't know. They said it's moving along.

**Commission appointed to strengthen oversight on clergy sex abuse cases may lapse**

Joshua McElwee reports that a member of Pope Francis' commission on clergy sexual abuse has suggested that the pontiff may let the group lapse into an inactive state when the terms of office of its current membership expire Dec. 17.

Jesuit Fr. Hans Zollner, a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, **made seemed to**
suggest that on Twitter Dec. 13 in response to a Tweet by Marie Collins, an Irish abuse survivor who resigned from the commission in March.

Collins was commenting on news that suspended commission member Peter Saunders would be resigning from the group ahead of the Dec. 17 expiration of his term.

In a Tweet, she said Saunders' move had "strange timing" due to the approaching end of his term.

Responding to Collins in his own Tweet, Zollner said a "new term" of the commission "will start in 2018."

Read more

Suspended member, Peter Saunders will resign

Christopher Lamb on Saunders' resignation

Barbara Reid, OP, brings feminist series to life

Dawn Araujo-Hawkins of Global Sisters Report writes that Dominican Barbara Reid has released more volumes in her groundbreaking commentary series offering feminist interpretation for every book of the Bible.

Reid, who is vice president and academic dean at Catholic Theological Union, said that there are now 13 volumes out, with two of them winning Catholic Press Association awards.
Reid noted that people are starting to know about the series now, and there’s an interest and an excitement building about it. There are many more institutions since we last talked that have standing orders for the commentary and many individuals who know about it and who are interested and reading it and using it.

Read more

The terror of de-gendering God

Sara Maitland of The Tablet reminds readers that she has a very positive view of Pope Francis but, "that does not make him perfect in my eyes."

She continues that this should come as no surprise – both because of my egotism and because this is what it is to be human.

Read more (subscription link)

How #ChurchToo empowers victims in religious spaces

Olga Segura writes that on Nov. 20, Hannah Paasch and Emily Joy created #ChurchToo, a Twitter movement that invited the victims of sexual harassment and abuse in religious spaces to share their stories and experiences. “Given the reckoning that Hollywood and Washington are undergoing with the abuse allegations coming to light, it seemed right to shine that same light on the [Christian] church,” Ms. Paasch tells me.
Ms. Paasch and Ms. Joy were both raised as evangelical Christians. “Both of our fathers were, at varying times, pastors and missionaries, so we spent time in a variety of different kinds of conservative Protestant churches growing up,” Ms. Joy says.

The two first met at Moody Bible Institute in Illinois. In an article on Dec. 4 for the Huffington Post, Ms. Paasch shared that a few months into their friendship, Ms. Joy admitted to her that at the age of 16 she had been abused by a church youth leader. “When the truth came to light, it was Emily who had been censured by her peers in the youth group, punished by her parents and generally ostracized from the cult of good reputation at her local megachurch,” Ms. Paasch wrote.

Ms. Paasch also described her own experience with sexual assault, which did not occur in a religious space. But her response to the attack was shaped by the purity culture of her evangelical upbringing. “When I staggered home, still half-mute from the effects of the date rape drug I’d ingested, I was prepared to sweep the whole thing under the rug, blinded by guilt and shame,” she wrote.

The women created #ChurchToo as a platform where survivors can come forward and begin to heal and realize they are not alone in their experiences of assault in religious contexts. It also creates accountability for
Australian bishops reject call to end mandatory celibacy and to break secrecy of confession in light of clergy sex abuse

CNN reports that senior leaders in Australia's Catholic church have rejected calls by a wide-reaching investigation into child abuse to end mandatory celibacy for priests and break the secrecy of confession.

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which concluded Thursday after five years of work, delivered a total of 189 new recommendations to address what it described as a "serious failure" by Australia's institutions to protect its most vulnerable citizens.

The landmark report estimates tens of thousands of children have been abused in Australian institutions, in what the commission described as a "national tragedy."

"We now know that countless thousands of children have been sexually abused in many institutions in Australia. In many institutions, multiple abusers have sexually abused children," the report said.

"We must accept that institutional child sexual abuse has been occurring for generations."

Vatican needs to fight financial crime with renewed
Cindy Wooden reports that the Vatican earned praise from Council of Europe experts for its updated legislation against money laundering and for its vigilance in flagging suspected cases, but the committee said the effectiveness of the Vatican efforts could not be proven until Vatican courts actually prosecuted someone for a crime.

Moneyval -- the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism -- released a progress report on the Vatican's efforts Dec. 8. The experts said the Vatican Financial Information Authority "seemed to be working efficiently," but although the Vatican court had frozen the assets of several accounts at the Vatican bank, "the Holy See had still not brought a money-laundering case to court. While considerable amounts of money continued to be frozen, no criminal case had yet produced a confiscation order," a Moneyval press statement said.

Moneyval said the Financial Information Authority's 2016 report indicated that the main offenses suspected in Vatican bank accounts it flagged for investigation involved suspected "fraud, serious tax evasion, misappropriation and corruption."

In a statement Dec. 8, the Vatican said it is "committed to
taking the necessary actions in the relevant areas to further strengthen its efforts to combat and prevent financial crimes."
The Vatican also highlighted the report's appreciation of "the creation of a specialized Economic Financial Crimes Investigation Unit within the Corps of the Gendarmerie and the appointment of a specialized assistant promoter of justice."

The Moneyval report said the Vatican had hired two full-time officers for the new unit, both of whom are on leave from "the Italian police forces and both fully trained in modern financial investigation techniques," but Moneyval also recommended all of the Vatican gendarmes receive training in fighting financial crimes and suggested that the Vatican City court "needs further professional reinforcement in this regard."

Gerry O'Shea asks "Is the Pope Catholic?"

Gerry O'Shea, writing for Call To Action's Metro N.Y. chapter, asks how anyone could doubt on the pope's religious affiliation.

He observes that a small but powerful minority of Catholic theologians and church leaders are doing just that, and they raise real doubts about his commitment to what they consider core Catholic beliefs.

A minority of these dissidents believe that the church has already veered into schism while others assert that Francis'
statements on some important moral issues have caused serious confusion and bewilderment among the faithful.

How does one explain this extraordinary situation?

In 2014 and 2015 the Synod of Bishops met at Francis' invitation to consider how best the church could minister to the modern family in all its permutations, including divorced people in new relationships and members in same sex partnerships. Two approaches were evident in this all-male assembly. One group argued that only an exclusive marriage union of man and woman is morally permissible. Divorce is completely out except where the divorced partner has received a church annulment.

They argue that it has always been church teaching that someone in a second marital relationship - while the first spouse is still alive - is committing adultery which rules that person out from receiving communion.

The second group, following more liberal thinking, doesn't dispute the church history of teaching against allowing the remarriage of divorced church members, but they stress that a pastoral approach to people in new marital relationships should not exclude them from participating in the most revered Catholic sacrament, the Eucharist.

These theologians point to the
example of Christ who scorned many of the pharisaic laws of his time in favor of a perspective characterized by mercy and forgiveness. Pope Francis supports this approach. Cardinal Muller who was Francis' doctrinal leader in the Vatican made no bones about his opposition to his boss: "No power in heaven or on earth, neither an angel or the pope, has the power to change church doctrine." This confrontational statement implied that the pope was acting beyond his authority when he opened the door to divorced church members receiving communion in his statement, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) published following the bishops' synod deliberations.

Four other cardinals, including the American Cardinal Burke, wrote a formal letter, called a "dubia" or doubt document, in the fall of 2016 disputing parts of *Amoris Laetitia*. They argued that it is an article of faith that church doctrine can never change, and they were clear that the ban on adulterers - their language - receiving communion could never be lifted.

Read more

**Bishops of England and Wales neuter motu proprio**

Ruth Gledhill of The Tablet reports that last month, a spokesman for the Catholic bishops of England and Wales said after their meeting at Hinsley Hall in Leeds that the current 2011 translation of the Roman Missal will be retained for use, in spite of Pope Francis’
motu proprio, *Magnum Principium*, restoring responsibility for liturgical translations to local churches. He said the bishops were "grateful" for the guidance that they had received from the Congregation for Divine Worship that the motu proprio "concerns future liturgical translations and cannot be applied retroactively".

Father Christopher Thomas, general secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has since explained that the guidance was in a letter sent by the CDW to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on 26 September. "This was unsolicited by this Conference," writes Father Thomas in a letter to an enquirer, seen by The Tablet.

"This letter specifically says that the application of the Pope's instruction is not retroactive. As our Conference already has recognitio for the Roman Missal 3rd Typical Edition, we cannot 'go back' on this in the specific case."

He continues: "The motu proprio can be applied to all future liturgical texts and we will continue working with ICEL as our corporate English translating partner.

He continues: "The motu proprio can be applied to all future liturgical texts and we will continue working with ICEL as our corporate English translating partner. In this regard, we will work to apply the triple fideliter of translation"
outlined in the Pope's letter – namely the Latin language 'in primis', English syntax in its translation and the English language in its receiving context. The Congregation has promised further support to Bishops' Conferences regarding the implementation of the motu proprio, which we await."

This week's Tablet carries a story by Sarah Mac Donald reporting the welcome given by the Irish bishops to the motu proprio. Bishop John McAreavey of Dromore, who represents their conference on the board of ICEL, seemed to back the interpretation of the bishops of England and Wales.

La Croix is reporting that the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference want ICEL to review the 1998 draft Roman Missal translation early next year. A source told The Tablet that the only formal decision the New Zealand bishops have made so far is to continue to work with ICEL – possibly suggesting they want a period of wait and see to discover what the other conferences might be thinking.

What our postbag indicates is considerable surprise that anyone would interpret the motu proprio or canon law in a manner that effectively neuters a motu proprio understood to have been intended by Pope Francis to restore control over liturgical translations to bishops' conferences.

Read more
More women are sharing their stories of being called to the diaconate. Share your story at our 100 Women Deacons campaign!

You won't want to miss these FutureChurch events!

Please support this work!

Be inspired! Catholic Women Preach!

Please support this effort!

Add your name to our 100 women deacons list!

Start a conversation with DeaconChat

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
Honor the Mary of Magdala in your life by having her name added to our list on Catholic Women Preach!

Learn what you can do to save your parish community

New! International priests statistics!

U.S. Priest statistics

Get the latest scholarship on the role of early Christian women by Christine Schenk, CSJ. Receive a copy of Crispina and Her Sisters when you donate $125 or more to FutureChurch!

Crispina and Her Sisters will open your eyes to the role women played in the shaping and expanding Christianity

As co-founder of FutureChurch, Christine Schenk, CSJ spent decades researching and writing about women in early Christianity. Like many feminists who have recovered the history and importance of women's authority, ministry and leadership in early Christianity, Schenk's book, Crispina and Her Sisters unearths new evidence that women held prominent roles in shaping and spreading Christianity. The book has already received accolades from prominent scholars such as Gary
Macy, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, and Joan Chittister, OSB.

The book will be released on December 15. FutureChurch will be offering a free copy of Chris's book for a donation of $125 or more. Learn about women in early Christianity and support FutureChurch at the same time.