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From the Executive Director's Desk

According to Cardinal Walter Kasper, Pope Francis wants episcopal conferences to decide whether to incorporate married men into the ranks of priesthood.
On the occasion of his 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, Christa Pongratz-Lippitt reports that Cardinal Walter Kasper has told German media he believes Pope Francis favors ordaining married men of proven virtue (known by the Latin term, *viri probati*), but is also sure the pope wants to leave the decision up to individual bishops’ conferences.

“The (vocation) situation differs so widely in different parts of the world that a uniform worldwide solution is not possible,” the cardinal said on April 6th in a long interview with the German Church’s Internet portal katholisch.de.

“Each bishops’ conference must first decide whether it is in favor (of ordaining married men) and describe how it intends to go about this. And then it must bring its proposals before the pope,” said the cardinal, a world-class theologian known to be close to Francis.

“I have the impression that if their application is well-founded, it will be met positively. The ball is therefore back in the bishops conferences’ court,” he said. The cardinal said that as far as Germany and many parts of the Western world are concerned it is “imperative and most urgent” to discuss the possibility of ordaining *viri probati* because the shortage of priests has become drastic.

“We simply cannot carry on with the situation as it is at present.
Priests today are often managers with four or five parishes to look after. They have no time for pastoral work,” the 84-year-old cardinal said.

“One cannot just go on clustering more and more parishes together into ever larger entities. And importing priests from India or Africa is not really a solution,” said the cardinal.

FutureChurch began its work more than 27 years ago educating Catholics about the repercussions of a declining priesthood of male celibates and the need to open ordination to all who are called.

Please do your part by asking your bishop to begin dialogue on this important issue.

Download our resources and find what you need to initiate this discussion in the wider church today.

Thank you!

Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Seeing is believing: Why Catholics need women deacons

Nicole Sotelo writes that as a child, I had a fairly good idea of what God looked like. When I prayed, I imagined God in the form of Msgr. McMahon, the pastor of my parish. Certainly the way people treated him seemed like he must be a step away from divinity.
As a result, I conjured an image for God as an older male, balding, wearing a white alb, and maybe even speaking an Irish brogue. Read more

**Sr. Pierrette steps in to celebrate marriages**

Cindy and David had their religious wedding on Saturday, July 22, celebrated by... a woman.

The exceptional ceremony took place in a Catholic church at Lorrainville, 650 km west of Montreal in Canada.

In the rural diocese of Rouyn-Norand in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, the lack of priests is such that the bishop called on the assistance of Sr Pierrette Thiffault of the Sisters of Providence.

**Why Sr Pierrette?**

“You need to ask my bishop,” she smiles, explaining that in this zone several priests are responsible for up to seven or eight different parishes each. “I was happy and proud to be able to provide this service for my diocese,” she says.

Although rare, such an event is in fact authorized by canon law. “Where there is a lack of priests and deacons, the diocesan bishop can delegate lay persons to assist at marriages, with the previous favorable vote of the conference of bishops and after he has obtained the permission of the Holy See,” says Canon 1112.
Massimo Faggiolli gleans the highlights from the Australian Royal Commission report and considers the implications for the Catholic Church.

First, he notes that the report goes straight to the heart of the clergy sex abuse crisis - clericalism. Clericalism is a system of privilege that is supported theologically with bogus notions of ontological change.

Secondly, while he considers the connection between mandatory celibacy and clergy sex abuse to be facile, and even false, he credits the commission for bringing the important question to the fore.

Finally, he notes that the Catholic Church can no longer expect to operate with impunity. When the Church fails to govern itself with integrity, it can expect states to get involved.

Faggioli writes that the sexual-abuse scandal is arguably the most serious crisis for the Catholic Church in the West since the Protestant Reformation, with still near-daily reminders of its scope, the fumbling nature of the institutional response, and the pain done to the victims and their families.

Wednesday brought news of the death of former Boston Cardinal
Bernard Law, likely to be remembered by many in the United States (and elsewhere) for his role in keeping secret the abusive behavior of priests in the archdiocese over the course of decades. This comes the same week the Vatican has let lapse the term of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors; the appointments of its members expired on December 17, and as of now it’s not fully clear whether Pope Francis will extend or renew them. And these developments follow last week’s release of the final report of Australia’s Royal Commission investigation into institutional responses to childhood sexual abuse—which could have particularly large ramifications for the Church as it continues to find a way to fully address this historic scandal.

Amounting to seventeen volumes and containing four hundred final recommendations, the Royal Commission report is the product of four years of investigation into four thousand institutions and interviews with some fifteen thousand survivors of abuse. The investigation covered schools, sports and recreation organizations, and other settings in addition to religious institutions, including the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Salvation Army, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and two Yeshivas of the Jewish Chabad-Lubavitch movement.

Read more

Pope Francis calls out the Curia, again!
Gerard O'Connell reports that Pope Francis urged those in the Curia to serve while chastising those who seek to exercise their privilege.

O'Connell writes that Francis called out those who lose contact with the real world of faith and life and join in the "unbalanced and degenerate logic of conspiracies or of the small circles that in reality represent—notwithstanding all their justifications and good intentions—a cancer that leads to self-referentiality, that infiltrates itself into the ecclesiastical organisms as such, and in particular into the persons that work there." When this happens, he said, the joy of the Gospel "is lost."

He described the second group as "the betrayers of trust and the profiteers of the motherhood of the church." These are "persons who have been carefully chosen to give greater vigor to the [ecclesial] body and to the reform but, not understanding the high levels of their responsibilities, allow themselves to be corrupted by ambition or vain glory, and when they are delicately removed [from those positions] they erroneously declare themselves to be martyrs of the system, of ‘the pope who is not informed,’ of ‘the old guard,’ instead of reciting the mea culpa[‘through my fault’]."

He noted, moreover, that "alongside" these two groups there are others "still working"
in the Roman Curia “to whom all the time is given to take up the right path, in the hope that they will find in the patience of the church an opportunity for converting themselves and not for taking profit.”

“A Curia closed in on itself would betray the purpose of its existence and would fall into self-referentiality, condemning itself to self-destruction.” The pope emphasized, however, that all these people are but a small minority in the Roman Curia where “the overwhelming majority of faithful persons who work there [do so] with praiseworthy commitment, fidelity, competence, dedication and much holiness.”

Cardinal Mueller is self-deluded according to Michael Kelly, SJ

Cardinal Gerhard Müller’s criticism of Pope Francis’ termination of his tenure as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) is simply astonishing. His complaint is that he had no warning and the termination was a summary dismissal.

I don’t know where the cardinal has been in recent months. But it doesn’t seem to have been in Rome. Or if he was in Rome, he must have kept his winter muffs covering his ears and fogged goggles to (not) see with. Even from a great distance – I
live in Bangkok – it’s been obvious to me that if he didn’t change his tune, he wasn’t long for his job.

In recent months, the cardinal’s had three of his clerical employees sent packing from the CDF for their reported resistance to the current pope’s agenda. Again, and as the world knows, the two lay people who resigned from the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors left explicitly because of their frustration with the obstacles and blockages that CDF staff placed before action and reform. Cardinal Müller denied there was any problem. For him then to invoke nothing short of his entitlement to remain as the reason he’s most upset puts him, at least for me, in a parallel universe.

Entitlement is just the most loathsome feature of clericalism. It’s what the retarded seminary system inculcates; it’s what operates at too many levels of Church governance; and it’s a million miles from the sort of sacrificial service Jesus exhorted the Apostles to in John’s Gospel on the night before he died when he washed their feet and insisted, despite Peter’s protests, they should do this to others.
Cardinal Müller’s complaint against the pope is also about the process of his removal. It is the complete absence of any sense of irony in this line of complaint that leaves me dumbfounded.

The cardinal headed an office in the Vatican whose modus operandi has been for about 500 years to ignore due process, deny natural rights and force those they’ve targeted to turn up to cross examinations where the accused is not given prior warning of the charges, who has made them or what evidence the charges are based on.

Müller is on very thin ground pursuing this line of attack to say he’s suffering from lack of due process.

Read more

**The Church that could and should lead**

Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry argues that for anyone who follows the intersection of social change and innovation, the church’s lack of involvement is a grim spectacle.

None of the most innovative endeavors in any field where the Catholic Church competes—for we do compete, whether we are aware or not—come from us, whether that is in education (Khan Academy, Udacity, alt:school, One Laptop Per Child, Minerva Project, Harlem Children’s Zone), health care (Mayo Clinic, Sherpaa, Practice
Fusion, Breakthrough), media (YouVersion, Wikipedia, social networking), development (International Justice Mission, the microfinance revolution, social venture firms like Acumen) or scientific research (Human Dx, M.I.T., Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab); the list goes on and on. There certainly are many worthy and innovative endeavors in the church, like L’Arche, the Cristo Rey educational program or Homeboy Industries, but any honest evaluation would have to reckon with the fact that, overall, the picture is dismal. Can anyone argue with a straight face that the Catholic Church is the undisputed leader of innovation in, well, any field?

There is an obvious reason to be alarmed, which is that the church is called to serve its neighbors, and an innovative mentality would allow us to be more effective at it. But there is a less obvious, much more profound reason, which is that this reveals a deep spiritual sickness in the church. Read more

Jesuit editors call on Francis to restore trust

The editors of America Magazine write that on Dec. 21, Pope Francis spent the morning addressing members of the Roman Curia. He focused on the need to reform the Curia, as well as the Curia’s relationship to the world outside the Vatican. That relationship must be characterized, he said, by a spirit of service. Later that
afternoon at St. Peter’s Basilica, he offered the final prayers at the funeral of Cardinal Bernard Law, the former archbishop of Boston who had been appointed as the archpriest at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome after being forced to resign as the sexual abuse crisis unfolded in Boston. As the cardinal was laid to rest, the church waits for Pope Francis to officially renew the mandate of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, which had been allowed to expire on Dec. 17. The official renewal is expected soon, with the membership of the commission to be announced in the new year.

It is typical protocol for the pope to offer the final commendation at the funeral of a cardinal in Rome, and long waits for official Vatican actions and announcements are nothing new. But the juxtaposition of these events is jarring to the world outside Rome. As attention is again focused on Cardinal Law, a symbol of the church’s abject failure during the sex abuse crisis in the United States, many survivors of abuse and other Catholics are wondering when the church will publicly hold bishops accountable for misdeeds and inaction in responding to sex abuse. Read more

**Drawing lessons from the Cardinal Law debacle**

National Catholic Reporter editors draw on the experience and work of Voice of the Faithful as they draw lessons from the
Cardinal Law debacle.

They write that for those trying to understand the legacy of Cardinal Bernard Law, Donna B. Doucette, executive director of Voice of the Faithful, may offer the most useful insight.

Doucette's organization grew out of the revelations of clergy sexually abusing children and its cover up that forced Law out of Boston in 2002, ripped the lid off a simmering cauldron of scandal, and made the sexual exploitation of children by clergy an issue of global concern. She says Catholics should learn three basic lessons from Law's legacy: "absolute power corrupts absolutely," "secrets destroy" and, for those interested in reforming church structures, "trust but verify."

**Read more**

**Against criticism, Rev. Bryan Massingale stands in solidarity with transgender Catholics**

Bryan Massingale writes that in February he participated in a panel on transgender Catholics at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress called “Transgender in the Church: One Bread, One Body.” Almost 800 people attended this session, which testifies to the intense interest that this issue raises in both our society and the church.

The main presenters were a young man and young woman, Mateo and Anna. Their powerful stories of their struggles over
realizing the deep disjunction between their birth bodies and their inner sense of being a man or a woman were heartbreaking and inspiring. Both also movingly related how their “transition” into their transgender bodies was a faith journey as well. I was struck by their heartfelt conviction that accepting their true gender identities led them to a deeper and more authentic relationship with God. Hearing their stories of pain and triumph was one of the most privileged moments I have had in 33 years of being a priest.

My brief contribution to the discussion centered on answering the question, “Why am I here?” That question was posed by relatives and friends who wondered about why I would “put my reputation on the line” by being associated with such a stigmatized group. As one put it, “Don’t you get into enough trouble talking about race? Why take this on, too?”

Space does not allow me to give my full response. But one reason why I chose to be present is because I have a lot to learn. To be blunt, I was at the panel precisely because of my ignorance and discomfort.

Transgender issues were never addressed in either my moral theology courses in the seminary or in my graduate studies in Christian ethics. I—and most priests—have not been trained to specifically minister to transgender members of our parishes or to the concerns of their families.
What the Church should do when Black children fear for their lives

Rev. Bryan Massingale writes that in mid-September he spoke at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota where he met with about 25 middle-school students of the local black Catholic parish school.

"After talking about my ministry, I opened the floor to their questions and invited them to talk about their hopes and dreams. Immediately, a black girl no more than 12 years old raised her hand. With matter-of-fact directness she shared, 'I’m afraid I’m going to die. I’m scared I’m going to be killed.' None of the other children expressed any surprise at this statement. That haunts me."

Massingale notes that when he speaks about racial justice, he is often asked, "How can we talk about race in my parish, in my classroom, and not make white people uncomfortable?"

He has come to realize that unless the majority becomes unsettled by the pleas of a young girl and the anguish of a young man, we will continue to limp from Ferguson to Baltimore to St. Paul to the next “eruption” and wonder why.

Cardinal Law's role in perpetuating clergy sex abuse

Tom Doyle writes that public
awareness of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy actually dates from 1984. It was triggered by the public exposure of widespread sexual violation of children by a single priest in the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, and its systemic cover-up by the church's leadership that lasted well over a decade.

Cardinal Bernard Law, who went from in 1974 being bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to in 1984 being named archbishop of Boston, became the most powerful and influential Catholic bishop in the United States. This all came to a screeching halt in 2002. In one day Law became the face of hierarchical treachery and dishonesty when The Boston Globe revealed the systemic cover-up of widespread sexual abuse by Boston priests, most of it his doing. He remained the face of the hierarchy's disgraceful attitude towards the violation of minors and the vulnerable. Even in death he remains the focal point of the anger and rage of countless victims of sexual abuse by clergy—certainly Boston victims, but also others worldwide.

Women, the future of the Church?

Writing for L'Osservatore Romano, Anne Marie Pelletier explores the barriers women face in experiencing their full humanity in the Catholic Church.

She writes that if in fact we need to talk about the "place" of
women in the Church, questioning the ecclesial institution on practices that very often continue to marginalize them, to treat them with condescension, if not with contempt, we must also perceive that the underlying problem is precisely that of relationship between men and women.

The question of "women in the Church" is therefore closely linked to that of the future of this relationship, marked by the mark of goodness, as all the love songs of the world sing, but also a cause of pain, of suffering, as attested by the experience of human societies, even when we have entered the Christian novelty ... And the future of the Church is certainly connected to the future of this relationship: will the Church enter its truth accepting to take into account that it is constituted in equal measure by men and women, that duel that makes humanity in the image and likeness of God? Will this report be a test of its future, facing difficulties that crystallize - not exclusively, but singly - precisely in the way of managing the word between men and women?

Pelletier begins with an exegesis of Genesis 2:23.

*This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh (Gen 2:23).*

"The first dimensions of language are here words of celebration of a woman on the part of a man."
Yet the woman remains a third-person object to the first-person male subject. He admires the woman because she is like him. He speaks about the woman but fails to encounter her and listen to her. She does not speak. This situation continues “very often” in the church. Women are marginalized and treated with condescension or even contempt.

Recently many (good) words are spoken of women in the church but practices have not changed. Women remain “in the third-person” as objects.

Positive words about the feminine or Marian character of the church, or a reconciling complementary, remains “speculative and abstract”

“Thus, these new discourses of celebration of the feminine have turned to themselves. They have brought women back to the world of male representations that support, in one way or another, the structures of authority and government.”

“On the other hand, we should not be surprised, because such discourses do not include listening to the woman, who alone frees the space of her word. They do not really run the risk of an encounter with the other, just as this other can be said, with the unexpected of his experience, with his difference that we must let him formulate and not absorb into new discourses of male domination. What is at stake is that women in the Church take
Baptism includes dignity and parrhesia and authority.

Male church leaders cannot continue to simply talk about women even if in positive terms. They must encounter women and listen to women and accept women as women describe themselves and their experiences.

Read more (Original article is in Italian)

Rhonda Miska -- no heavenly peace

Candidate with the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Rhonda Miska writes that God arrives in ways that are small, poor, hidden, and unexpected and comes into a world torn by violence, battered by the death-dealing forces of empire, struggling against powers and principalities that seek to extinguish the light. God is here among people who are overlooked and marginalized. God is decidedly present among those for whom—in the here and now—there is no room at the inn.

“I think Christmas really happens that way,” commented her friend Brian.

Brian’s response helped Miska to hear the Christmas story in a new way and pulled her out of the academic rabbit hole into which she had plunged.

"After all, no matter how little or
how much exploring of the historical and literary context of scripture we do, it is ultimately our task to reflect on how the gospel is brought to life today in our context.

The plot of the Christmas story has been sanitized for children’s books and prettied up through our annual holiday festivities, and then further obscured and secularized by much later cultural additions of red-nosed reindeer, Santa Claus, snowmen, and the like. Though we harmoniously sing in a major key about the 'silent night, holy night' of that “little town of Bethlehem,” Mary and Joseph took risks, faced exclusion, endured the hardship of Roman occupation, and lived with threats of violence."

Theirs was not a comfortable, secure life, and though we sing “sleep in heavenly peace,” Jesus of Nazareth was not born into a peaceful time and place. A manger is not a comfortable, cozy crib, though it might appear to be in the crèche at the front of the sanctuary at Midnight Mass. A gift of myrrh—used for embalming—prefigures the brutal death Jesus will die on the cross.

The reality of Mary and Joseph’s marginalization and the precarious situation into which Jesus is born are clearly there in the gospel texts. As Pope Francis has pointed out, the Holy Family knew what it meant to be refugees and to flee violence. Studying the historical context of the infancy narratives
does stretch those of us in comfortable middle-class environments of privilege to think of those who live daily with a vulnerability and precariousness that mirror those of the Holy Family. In recognizing Mary and Joseph’s marginalization, as Brian did, we are pointed to those who are marginalized here and now to ask how Christ is coming into the world, where we might see a manifestation of Emmanuel—God with us.

“Christmas happens that way.” Brian’s words become a refrain that I have remembered every Advent. The question moved from past to present tense and continues to guide my Advent journey each year.

Priest wants victims of sex abuse to have justice

Father Shay Cullen of Manila writes that the shocking and almost unbelievable disclosures in recent years throughout the developed world, and most recently in Australia at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, leave people shocked.

The inquiry is looking into the response, or the lack of it, by churches of all denominations, sports clubs, institutions of education, and the military to child sexual abuse in their organizations. The disclosures on the frequency of the sexual assaults and the lack of
response to help the victims and bring the perpetrators to justice are hard for ordinary people, especially Catholics, to accept and understand.

Who will listen to their cries?

The most glaring wrongdoing in past years has been within the institutional Catholic Church. It has been the wrong practice of some bishops to conceal and cover up the crimes of clergy, teachers, and church workers. As many as 1,888 victims have declared they were abused by clergy. Hundreds more have not been able to come forward and report the abuse done to them.

Although the Catholic Church has dramatically changed its practice and is acting to prevent and report to the authorities sexual abuse of children, recent history has left its painful legacy. The lives of the victims have been greatly affected and many continue to suffer. Hundreds have committed suicide as a result of the abuse.

The Guardian, reporting on the work of the Commission, said: "Gail Furness SC said in her opening address that a survey revealed 4,444 allegations of incidents of abuse between January 1980 and February 2015 were made to Catholic Church authorities. Ms Furness said 60 percent of all abuse survivors attending private royal commission sessions reported sexual abuse at faith-based institutions. Of those, almost two-thirds reported abuse in Catholic institutions. The Royal
Commission's report found of the 1,880 alleged perpetrators from within the Catholic Church, 572 were priests."

Ms Furness described the victims' accounts as "depressingly similar." "Children were ignored or worse, punished," she said.

**Anti-gay discrimination defeat for Church according to Marx**

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt writes that Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich has distanced himself from the apocalyptic scenarios some Catholics have voiced over Germany’s new same-sex marriage law, saying the Church should be more concerned over its historic complicity in demonizing gay people.

Marx, who is head of the German bishops’ conference and one of Pope Francis’ chief advisors and allies, stated clearly that he firmly upholds the Church’s view on marriage. But in a lengthy interview published on July 14th, he said the Church must also express its regret that it did nothing historically to oppose the prosecution of homosexuals.

He told the Augsburger Allgemeine that Church must continue to state its teaching that marriage is a lifelong bond between a man and a woman. But at the same, he said it’s also imperative “to recall that the Church has not exactly been a trailblazer as far as the rights of homosexuals are concerned”.

Read more
Book review: The Rise and Fall of Cardinal George Pell

David Armstrong reviews Louise Mulligan's book *Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of George Pell.*

Armstrong writes that *Cardinal* is the saddest book I have ever read. It is also the most shameful. It is a chronicle of a horrifying scandal inside the Catholic Church in Australia: child sexual abuse by clergy, on a mammoth scale. It is a record of the young lives ruined, in many cases destroyed, when men children believed to be close to God shattered their trust.

And it is a twisting, tortured tale of a man who, fairly or unfairly, has been sucked into the quicksand of the Church’s disgrace and can never quite reach firm land.

That man is Cardinal George Pell, former Archbishop of Melbourne and Cardinal-Archbishop of Sydney, now effectively the Vatican’s finance minister. He is the best-known Catholic in Australia and the most senior cleric the Australian Church has produced.

This book, written by lawyer and journalist Louise Milligan, contains story after shocking story. It also makes allegations that, if proven to be true, would be explosive.

But it remains overwhelmingly sad.
Take the raw statistics. The Australian Government set up a royal commission – a top-level official inquiry with the power to force witnesses to testify and produce evidence. It found that between 1950 and 2010 a total of 4,444 people made complaints of child sexual abuse to 93 Catholic Church authorities concerning 1,880 perpetrators. The average age of victims was 10.5 years for girls and 11.6 years for boys.

Some 7 per cent of Australian priests working during those years had complaints made against them to the Church. In Melbourne Archdiocese, the number was 8.1 percent. Among the teaching order known as the Irish Christian Brothers, it was 20 percent.

Child sexual abuse is not an evil unique to Australia but elsewhere the accepted figure is 2 percent.

Figures can mask the human suffering. This vignette of a meeting with a survivor – one who must remain unnamed but is called The Kid – gives an insight. She writes: “He has PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) eyes, although he does his level best to hide them with humor.

“I’ve seen them before and I’ll see them again and again before this thing ends... PTSD eyes somehow have the look of a dog that’s been left alone outside for weeks in a yard that has been concreted over. PTSD eyes are quick to tears.”
The Kid is a survivor who has managed to build a decent life – a good job, university education, a lovely girlfriend. Yet in the case of so many other victims the pain, the shame, and the betrayal put them on a pitiable pathway of anger, violence, crime, drugs and alcohol abuse and sometimes suicide.

A cause of deep sadness and even deeper shame is the Church’s response. Throughout most of the 60-year period the royal commission analyzed, the Church did nothing to help. It denied, it covered up, it shuffled priests from parish to parish to push the problem away. And even though Church authorities had knowledge of serious crimes, they failed to alert the police.

Good people did become involved and individual priests, bishops, and nuns helped victims. But there was no formal action until well into the 1990s when Cardinal (then Archbishop) Pell started a program called the Melbourne Response. It was followed quickly by a national assistance scheme known as Towards Healing.

Read more

**Hardliners in Knights of Malta struggle for power**

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt reports that a leading official of the Knights of Malta has confirmed claims that hardliners opposed to Pope Francis over Church teaching, as well as the pope’s views on the world economy, were behind last December’s power struggle within the 12th-
century equestrian order.

Albrecht von Boeselager – who was first ousted, but is now reinstated as Grand Chancellor of the Order of Malta – said he was reluctant to speak of a proxy war.

He added, however, that there was certainly a connection between what had happened in the order and the conflict between hardliners and the pope.

In an interview published March 4 in the German daily Die Welt Boeselager said it was quite obvious that there were hardliners in the Church who feared that Francis was watering down church teaching on marriage and the family. They also rejected his stance on economic matters and the distribution of wealth.

Read more

When abortion becomes an instrument to reduce female populations

Prakash Khadka believes abortion is wrong. But he is especially concerned when it is used to increase the population of male children over female children.

He writes that often women are forced to terminate pregnancies with girls. Sex-selective abortion is sometimes the result of families pressurizing the woman to have a boy. It is a sad irony that what was originally framed as a woman’s right to choose has become the right of the patriarchal society to choose
between a girl or boy.

Deep-rooted shame and stigma is a further issue faced by women who access terminations even leading to divorce. How long until we realize that women are not birthing machines? Read more

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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.