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February 18 - March 4, 2018 Edition

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Fr. Joseph Healey, MM

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From the Executive Director's Desk

On February 17, a cold, grey day, the Sisters of Charity, as well as family and friends celebrated the life of Louise Akers.

I admit my experience of losing my dear friend has pulled at something so deep in me, that I have struggled to find words. Those frail, fraught groupings of letters that help us to express both the mundane and the profound, have largely escaped me as I reflect on her impact on me and so many others.

But there are images I want to share.

The first is a photo that stopped me in my tracks. It hung on a series of boards filled from top to bottom, side to side, with moments from Louise’s life.

In this particular photo, Louise is hugging a frail looking woman. Louise’s face is contorted. She is weeping.

Louise did not shed tears easily.

As I stood there taking it in, Louise’s nephew, David explained that Louise was hugging her older sister and his mother, Sherry. The moment captured is Sherry, who had been ill for a very long time,
whispering into Louise’s ear that she wanted Louise to wait to die so that she [Sherry] could go first. David explained that his mother reasoned the birth order should also be the order for dying.

Sherry’s request to her younger sister was fulfilled. She died a few months before Louise died.

Louise and Sherry’s only other sibling, the youngest – Robert - had died unexpectedly over a year before that. So within a very short time, a whole family of siblings -- a beloved mother, a prophetic educator/activist, and an animal lover -- were gone.

David wept. I wept.

The second is the tender, heartbreaking image of Sr. Joan Groff, one of Louise’s closest friends, in a wheelchair -- frail herself -- carrying Louise’s ashes on her lap up the aisle to the altar. Joan is soft-spoken, mighty figure who shared Louise’s devotion to justice and equality, Louise’s politics, and Louise’s hearty love of life and laughter. As I wept and watched, I thought, "these two mighty giants have scaled mountains of injustice and apathy for love."

The third image that I offer is what we deemed "the button board", Louise’s prophetic work for justice -- from Beijing to Boston to where ever she made her home -- captured in pins, icons, sayings, and photos. Some of them made me laugh. “Women make laws, not coffee.” I can just see Louise saying that.

Another was an Eleanor
Roosevelt quote, "You must do the thing you think you cannot do." Louise and Eleanor, two women cut of the same cloth, are probably singing that phrase together as they drink a beer. "Jesus was a liberal", made me chuckle and "Priestly people come in both sexes" is both an observation and a stance she took that cost her dearly.

And two more were printed in honor of Louise that featured her bright spirited smile. One read "Team Akers." The other asks "WWLD?" What Would Louise Do? That is the question many will continue to ask as we discern how to carry on her legacy.

The final image I want to share, is the bittersweet expressions that came over the faces of those gathered as Sr. Marge Kloos sang so beautifully, "Let the Women Be There" by Marsie Silvestro. It may have been Louise's favorite song.

Marge practically proclaimed the words.

If ever I should cry from the pain of injustice
Let the tears I cry run down like a river
and set us free.

Let the women be there
Let the women be there
Let the women be there by my side.

And when I am walking,
Spirit's breath last journey,
Let the wisdom I carry be the vision
I'm passing on.

Let the women be there
Let the women be there
Let the women be there by my side.
Ten days after we celebrated Louise's life, I joined Sisters of Charity Jean Miller, Andrea Koverman, and Tracy Kemme and a bunch of other dreamers, sisters, priests, laypeople and a bishop in Washington D.C. to raise awareness about the need to pass clean DACA legislation by engaging in non-violent civil disobedience. Along with our signs and rosaries, I wore my WWLD? pin.

As the Capitol police arrested me and cuffed me, I thought, this is what Louise would do.

Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Voices of Faith Organizers
Waiting for Response from Pope

Sarah MacDonald reports that organisers of the Voices of Faith conference in Rome, which Cardinal Kevin Farrell attempted to bar former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese from addressing, have said they are still waiting to hear back from Pope Francis as to whether he will take up their invitation to be their guest of honour.

This year’s conference, themed ‘Why Women Matter’, was to have been held in the Vatican’s Casina Pio IV in the Vatican on International Women’s Day (8th March).

But the venue was changed following Cardinal Farrell’s opposition to Dr McAleese as well as Ugandan LGBT rights advocate Ssenfuka Joanita Warry.

Executive director of Voices of
Faith, Chantal Götz, told The Tablet that so far, she has not had any response from Pope Francis “nor from any cardinal” that the organisation invited. “We hope Pope Francis and other cardinals and bishops will join us. As Pope Francis has expressed so beautifully in his letter in preparation for the October 2018 synod, ‘The Catholic Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls.’”

In a statement, Ms Götz responded to Cardinal Farrell’s opposition to the three speakers, describing it as “disappointing to realise on International Women’s Day of all days, these women who have accomplished so much in their communities, could be turned away from respectfully sharing their stories and experiences as Catholics.” Read more

**Cardinal Farrell defends his ban of speakers at VOF event**

At a book launch event, Robert Mickens asked Cardinal Kevin Farrell why he banned Mary McAleese and others from the Voices of Faith event to be held on March 8. Cardinal Farrell's reply was not surprising, but as Mickens points out, also not true.

Anything that’s said in the Vatican is presumed to be sponsored by the pope and the pope is in agreement with everything that is said,” the cardinal maintained.

According to Mickens, that is not
Archbishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, for instance, has invited to Vatican-sponsored meetings a number of academics, politicians and other personalities who are not exactly on the same page as the pope. And he’s been criticized by some, but not blocked for doing so. Sanchez is the chancellor of two pontifical academies dealing with science and the social sciences. His base of operations is the sumptuous 16th century mini-palace in the Vatican Gardens, known as the Casina Pio IV, which also generates revenue as a conference center. And, in another bit of irony, it is the place where Voices of Faith have held their last two Women’s Day events, to which the archbishop only reluctantly conceded after the intervention of a higher-ranking Vatican official. Read more

**Women Church World becomes a #MeToo platform**

The March edition of “Women Church World,” the monthly women’s magazine of the Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano* reports on the underpaid labor and unappreciated intellect of religious sisters. The magazine is increasingly becoming the imprint of the Catholic Church’s #MeToo movement.

“Some of them serve in the homes of bishops or cardinals, others work in the kitchens of church institutions or teach. Some of them, serving the men of the church, get up in the morning to make breakfast, and go to sleep after dinner is served, the house cleaned and..."
the laundry washed and ironed,” reads one of the lead articles.

A nun identified only as Sister Marie describes how sisters serve clergy but “are rarely invited to sit at the tables they serve.”

“Until now, no one has had the courage to denounce these things,” the magazine’s editor, Lucetta Scaraffia, told The Associated Press. “We try to give a voice to those who don’t have the courage to say these words” publicly.

“Inside the church, women are exploited,” she said in a recent interview. Read more

Prosecutors withdraw one charge against Pell

James Roberts reports that three days before Cardinal George Pell is to appear in Melbourne Magistrates’ Court for a committal hearing on multiple sexual abuse charges, prosecutors have withdrawn one historical charge.

The Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy, who has been on leave for eight months following the charges, is due to return to court on Monday for the month-long hearing.

Complainants will be the first to give evidence and the hearing will determine whether there is enough evidence to commit Cardinal Pell to stand trial.

One of Cardinal Pell’s defence barristers, Ruth Shann, said the defence focus would be on the timing of allegations, saying they were aware of material that would show that the timing and location of what some people were alleging was "in essence, impossible". Magistrate Belinda Wallington has
told lawyers that the cross-examination of witnesses and complainants would not "delve into detail that is likely to cause distress", adding that there was no intention "to trawl through abuse at the hands of other clergy".

Last month Ms Wallington denied a request from Cardinal Pell’s lawyers for medical records of a complainant from Justice Health, which provides medical services in prisons in the state of Victoria. “My view is that despite the limits of confidentiality for the purposes of prison security, the records are confidential for all other purposes,” Ms Wallington said. "My view is that they are protected communications."

The court will be closed when witnesses’ and complainants’ evidence is given, which is standard practice in the state of Victoria for hearings involving sexual offence charges.

Cardinal Pell strenuously denies the allegations against him.

German Bishops open doors for Communion with Protestants

La Croix reports that Germany has taken steps toward approving Holy Communion for the Protestant spouses of Catholics on a case-by-case basis, two years after Pope Francis suggested the idea was open for debate.

The German bishops' conference made the decision during their four-day Spring Assembly in Ingolstadt, adding that most of the bishops were in favor of an “orientation guide” to accommodate non-Catholic spouses yearning for the
Eucharist — which in Germany would include Lutherans, Reformed and members of united churches. Munich’s Cardinal Reinhard Marx revealed the decision on Feb. 22. Read more

**Cardinal Sarah sows division, again**

Rita Ferrone argues that in an arena where the most important thing he could do is to encourage charity and an irenic spirit toward various forms of Eucharistic piety, Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, has once again demonstrated that what he really does best is sow division.

He did it concerning washing women’s feet on Holy Thursday (delaying more than a year in fulfilling Pope Francis’s request). He did it by urging that altars be turned around so that Mass would be celebrated with the priest’s back to the people (for which he was reprimanded). He did it by minimizing and misinterpreting the pope’s initiative on liturgical translation (prompting a public correction from the pope). Now, he is sowing division concerning how communion is received. Read more

**Member of Commission says trust has been broken**

Christopher Lamb reports that according to one of the new members of Pope Francis’ child protection body, Sister Jane Bertelsen, the Church has to change a “deep-seated culture” that resists transparency and accountability when dealing with clerical sexual abuse.
Named last week to the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, Sr. Bertelsen told The Tablet that this culture has been around for centuries and that the Pope had made attempts to change it. "We have to restore credibility. Trust has been broken. And we have got to keep trying to restore that credibility, with truth-seeking, compassionate listening and in whatever way we can," she said.

But she emphasised that this could not be left to the Catholic hierarchy. She said restoring the Church’s credibility over handling the abuse scandal requires collective involvement from the laity.

The British religious sister has long experience of working in child protection and helped draw up guidelines in England and Wales following Lord Nolan’s 2001 report into the church’s handling of abuse. These are widely considered to be one of the most robust set of church safeguarding rules in the Catholic world.

**Beatifying Humanae Vitae?**

Christopher Lamb reports that Pope Paul, who was beatified in 2014, was recently confirmed by the Vatican congregation in charge of making saints.

This means that the former pope’s canonisation is going to take place 50 years after the publication of his encyclical Humanae Vitae, which reaffirmed the Church’s ban on artificial contraception. But the move to make Pope Montini a saint is happening as a subtle re-evaluation of that famous
encyclical takes place in Rome. Since last October and continuing until March, the Pontifical Gregorian University has held a series of lectures marking Humanae Vitae’s anniversary entitled “The Path of the Family”. A lecture earlier this year, focused on a “re-reading” of the encyclical through Pope Francis’ family life document, Amoris Laetitia. Fr Maurizio Chiodi, a moral theologian recently appointed to the Pontifical Academy for Life, suggests that in some cases natural methods of birth control are “impossible or impracticable”.

Meanwhile Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, tasked by Francis to broaden out the pro-life agenda, has recently told Avvenire, the official newspaper of the Italian Bishops’ Conference, that more research is needed on “responsibility in procreation”.

The approach here is to acknowledge the prophetic elements in Paul VI’s encyclical but to reframe the discussion away from just talking about artificial methods of contraception. To borrow the title from David Lodge’s famous novel about Catholic life in the 1960s and 70s, it is no longer only a question of How Far Can You Go? Read more

**Pittsburgh diocese responds to priest shortage by ramping up call for male deacons**

La Croix reports that the Pittsburgh Diocese in the US state of Pennsylvania is urging interested applicants to join its deacons training program in order to respond to a shortage of priests.
They should be in good physical and emotional health and able to financially support themselves and their family. Married applicants must have the full support of their wives,” according to the Pittsburgh Diocese website.

Bishop David Allen Zubik of Pittsburgh who made the announcement Feb. 27 said that the diocese will begin taking pastoral nominations for college-educated men 30 to 59 who seek to be admitted to the Deacon Formation Program.

The formation program takes five years but the bishop wants to call a class into the formation program every other year in order to prepare men to eventually serve in ordained ministry as permanent deacons. The program's first two classes drew 31 participants, who still in training.

To begin the process, a prospective applicant’s pastor must submit a nomination on his behalf. Applications without a nomination will not be considered, the diocese said.

Read more

Violence against women? The Church backs away

La Croix reports that the Catholic Church has chosen not to support a European treaty that first emerged seven years ago and which could pave the way for the legalization of same-sex marriage while helping combat violence against women.

Forty countries have signed the 81-article treaty but a number of Eastern Bloc nations including Bulgaria, Hungary and the Czech
Republic, have refrained from doing so.

Two weeks after Bulgaria rejected the deal, Slovakia, which signed the treaty in 2011, said through its Prime Minister Robert Fico on Feb. 22 that it would not ratify the agreement, Reuters reported. “We cannot pass measures that would clash with beliefs and feelings of people in some states,” said Fico, a Social Democrat. He was seen as caving to pressure from religious groups and a junior coalition partner.

At the heart of the dispute is the treaty’s definition of “gender” as “social roles, behaviors, activities and characteristics that a particular society considers appropriate for women and men.”

Hispanics are leaving the Church

J.D. Long-Garcia writes that Hispanics are leaving the church.

But there is a cure.

Listening. That is the word Genaro Romo, a parishioner at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in West Valley, Utah, used to describe V Encuentro, a four-year national initiative by the U.S. bishops that seeks to better serve the growing Latino community.

“Our people are leaving the church,” Mr. Romo said, expressing a common concern at the regional Encuentro meeting in Phoenix on Feb. 23-25. The regional gatherings are
happening throughout the country this spring and summer. Two by two, Encuentro participants have been going to the peripheries of the church to reach out to those who do not feel welcomed. They include family members and friends who have fallen away from the church.

“We didn’t go to judge anyone, but to listen,” Mr. Romo said. “It’s working, thanks be to God. Just by [our] listening, people are already coming back.” Read more

The Demise of the Irish Church

James Keane wonders if the Irish Catholic Church will survive.

He writes that more than 90 percent of Irish Catholics reported attending Mass at least weekly in the early 1970s; recent surveys put that percentage at between 30 and 35 percent in recent years. In the Archdiocese of Dublin, it is less than 20 percent, and some urban parishes report weekly attendance as less than 2 percent of the Catholic population.

As many as one in ten Irish now identify as “nones,” claiming no religious affiliation.

The numbers augur an uncertain future for the Catholic Church in Ireland, long a place where Catholicism seemed sure of deep roots and high adherence to practice and tradition. Will Ireland follow the same trajectory as Quebec, an overwhelmingly Catholic culture that almost completely rejected the church in two generations to
become one of the most secular societies on earth? Or will it resemble the Catholic Church in the United States, where a community diminished by sex abuse scandals and a decades-long vocations crisis still bleeds numbers but seems vital enough to survive? Or will there be some unanticipated future for the famous “land of saints and scholars”? Read more

**Bringing in cardinals that can assure the Francis legacy**

John Allen writes that judging by past performance, it would seem Pope Francis enjoys creating new cardinals. So far, he’s held one consistory, the event in which that happens, during each full year of his papacy, which would mean that if things hold to form, there could be one before the end of 2018 as well.

On Tuesday, Cardinal Paolo Romeo, the former archbishop of Palermo, Sicily, turned 80, meaning he’s no longer an “elector,” meaning a cardinal eligible to vote for the next pope. He’s one of six cardinals who will age out between now and June, with the others being:

- **March 6:** Cardinal Francesco Coccopalmerio, Italy
- **March 17:** Cardinal Keith O’Brien of Scotland, United Kingdom (In March 2015, O’Brien lost his right to participate in a conclave, in consistories, and in meetings reserved only to the College of Cardinals.)
- **March 29:** Cardinal Manuel Monteiro de Castro, Portugal
- **April 1:** Cardinal Pierre Nguyên Văn Nhơn, Vietnam
- **June 8:** Cardinal Angelo
Those birthdays mean that should Francis choose to hold a consistory sometime over the summer, and, if he elects to retain the limit of 120 cardinal electors established by Blessed Pope Paul VI, he could name six new Princes of the Church.

If he’s going to hold a consistory in 2018, there would be no calendrical motive for waiting, since a cardinal doesn’t cross the age threshold again until Mexican Cardinal Alberto Suárez Inda in January. In theory, that would allow Francis to stage a small consistory around June 29, one of the traditional dates for the event, which is the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

Francis could, however, elect to wait until later in the year, perhaps taking advantage of the Synod of Bishops on youth and discernment in October, when at least some cardinals will already be in Rome and he could save them an extra trip.

Should Francis instead choose to skip 2018 entirely, and wait until October 2019, by that stage he could hold a fairly robust consistory of fifteen red hats, since by that stage nine more cardinals will have aged out:

- Cardinal Orlando Beltran Quevedo, Philippines
- Cardinal Edwin O’Brien, United States
- Cardinal Stanislaw DZiwisz, Poland
- Cardinal John Tong Hon, China
- Cardinal Sean Baptist Brady, Ireland
- Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasiyna,
Democratic Republic of Congo
- Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, Poland
- Cardinal Edoardo Manichelli, Italy
- Cardinal Telephore Placidus Toppo, India

No matter when it happens, the distribution of red hats always alters the balance of power within the College of Cardinals. At the moment, 49 cardinal electors (41 percent) have been named by Pope Francis, 52 (43 percent) appointed by Benedict XVI, and 19 (16 percent) appointed by John Paul II.

Slowly but surely, in other words, Francis is coming closer to having a majority in the College of Cardinals that are his picks. [Read more]

**James Keenan and company take the Amoris Laetitia show on the road for bishops**

Following up on an October meeting organized by Cardinal Blaise Cupich and Jesuit James Keenan, a group of theologians took the Amoris Laetitia show on the road in order to get bishops educated and talking about the implications of the document.

C. Vanessa White and Natalia Imperatori Lee joined on the journey. Keenan cited 7 takeaways from those meetings.

1. The bishops, theologians and pastoral leaders met easily, respectfully, positively and collegially with one another. The tone, style and content were in each setting candid, hope-filled and honest.
2. The success occurred because there were great expectations
from both bishops and theologians for a meaningful dialogue on the much-neglected exhortation. As both Natalia Imperatori-Lee and C. Vanessa White said at each of the four locations, they had always hoped that one day their work would be at the service of the church’s leadership.

3. The center is expanding. Hurley used an image of how the San Diego synod successfully found its rhythm because the "pegs of the tent were extended rather than retracted." At each location we invited roughly six additional local theologians so as to offer parity between bishops and theologians. By week’s end, then, 62 bishops and roughly 45 theologians had enjoyed such an experience.

4. Theologians and bishops work best when they are talking not about themselves, but about the church they both serve. At no point did any bishop lament his challenges not being appreciated, nor did any theologian recount narratives of being overlooked. In fact, our best discussions followed the panel of Robinette, Imperatori-Lee, White and Ward, when we heard from them the contemporary challenges of the young, Hispanic, black, poor and working class populations.

5. The language and imagination of Francis were present. Terms like discernment, accompaniment, gradualism, growth, freedom and conscience became the language of the conference.

6. Both bishops and theologians said we need to host such discussions like these with some regularity. The U.S. Catholic silence on Amoris Laetitia stems from its silence on many matters. The silence
is allowing many to drift away without realizing what it is that the church led by the Gospel offers. We have lost the art of Catholic encounter, conversation and dialogue. But Amoris Laetitia provides an occasion for us to discuss that and, more than anything, to read its pages.

7. Humor helps. Read more

**Sr. Nancy Bramlage delivers homily at Louise Akers' funeral**

Sr. Nancy Bramlage, SC, a longtime friend and colleague of Sr. Louise Akers, delivered the homily at her funeral mass. Below is the text.

We gather together here in this chapel to commemorate and celebrate a wonderful woman and friend and teacher and leader in the cause for justice, our Sister Louise Akers.

And may I first express our sympathy to Louise’s family members whom she loved so much: her nieces (Pam, Mandy, and Cindy) and nephews (David and Phil) and her brother-in-law, Allen) who so recently also lost Louise’s sister, Sherri, your wife, and mother, and also your uncle, Robert. These are all huge losses for you. May you be blessed with wonderful memories of Robert, Sherry and Louise.

You probably all recognized Louise’s hand in choosing the Scripture readings for her funeral. The first reading from Isaiah described so well her ministry and her passion. The cry of Isaiah to the people of Israel spoke so clearly of God’s call to Louise and to us! This is what God wants of us – to hear the cry of the poor, and to do
something about it. And Louise used her gifts of teaching and writing to spread the call of Jesus for justice for the oppressed. She invited and urged us to join her in that work.

She wore many different hats in this ministry.

She was the ultimate teacher in the classroom, in high school and in college courses.

And she was an activist. How many of us here who probably would never have joined a picket line, got out there in front of the grocery stores in Dayton in the 60’s, to urge people not to buy grapes or lettuce- in solidarity with the Farm Workers and Caesar Chavez?

Louise co-led the Archdiocesan Social Action Office, helping to teach the folks in the parishes about the Social Teachings of the Church.

Later she organized and directed the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center for all the congregations of Sisters in Cincinnati and many of us joined in committee work on one or more of the priorities of the center - which we are happy to say is still very much alive and well, doing the work of justice in our city.

And later Louise, as a staff member for LCWR in DC, worked with congregational leaders all over the country to raise the clarion call for justice. And this included justice in our Church!

Who among us does not remember her educating us about the need to shift the
paradigms that had dominated our thinking for much too long, particularly the paradigm of patriarchy in our Church? And we began to recognize the signs of that patriarchy that were everywhere.

Louise made sure we continued to uncover the prejudices and the deep seated biases in our society, our blindness to the white privilege we have been brought up with and the need to change that in order to subvert the dominant paradigms of racism and sexism. Whether she spoke to large audiences at Call to Action or Future Church, or wrote in her blog, she crafted her words carefully to feed our minds or to touch our hearts. She sent out blogs every month on her website that she so aptly called Paradigmshifting! Her most recent one she wrote in Nov. Her entries were always on very current events.

As we know Louise never met a crisis in our world or our Church which was not a “teachable moment”!

With all of these serious world issues that were always on her plate, you might have the impression that she never had any time for fun! But not if you really knew Louise. As many of the Sisters commented on Charitynet as they remembered Louise, she had a lively sense of humor, laughed a lot, and knew how to party!

The Gospel Louise chose and you just heard read was Mark’s story of the storm at sea, when the apostles were so afraid they were going to die and had to wake Jesus up to calm the storm. I can’t help but believe she chose this story because
she met her own storm at sea when she publicly stood up strongly for the issue of women’s right to be ordained in our Church.

And she met a wall of resistance that didn’t stop her from speaking and writing about this injustice. I think she was not afraid to do this because she knew that Jesus was in the boat with her! And he was also in the boat with her as she journeyed through her dying process, not afraid but looking forward to be reunited with Jesus, and with her family members who have gone before her, and many of her friends who went before her.

In the letter of Paul to the Philippians, St Paul says “I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my heart for all of you because of your partnership in the Gospel.” Paul’s words spoke to her of the gratitude she had in her heart for all of you, every one of you – her family, all her friends, her Sisters of Charity who were both sisters and friends.

And we all thank you, Louise, for all you did to strengthen our living out of the Gospel of Jesus – the Good News that taught us to see every one as sister and brother, and most especially the ones who were shunned, the ones who were marginalized, the ones whom Jesus loved most.

Thank you, Louise, for leading the way.

Farewell, sister dear, but not forever.

Friends Jeanne Gallo and
Good Morning. I am Jeanne Gallo and this is Sunny Robinson. Louise was a beloved friend. We spent time with Louise here in Cincinnati and at Lake Loreli, which she loved and at our home in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

We are privileged to have been with her during her last days and we thank all who made it possible – her community, her family and friends, her caregivers.

We speak these intercessions in place of many who could be standing here with you. But, as we say them, let us remember that they are Louise’s prayers for us, for our nation, for our world. They are her words and we now join her in saying them. In praying the response, God, hear our prayer, we all of us, are praying with Louise...

Intercessions

Response: God, hear our prayer.

For the Church—the institution and thre people of God--, that we may more fully live the words of Jesus, let us pray...

For the family and friends of Louise, that we continue to remember her loving kindness and humor, let us pray...

For our legislators and all US citizens, that compassion, civility and openness will replace the turmoil that presently exists in our land, let us pray...

For peace everywhere,
especially in Afghanistan, Congo, Syria, and other trouble spots in our world, let us pray...

For those who are unemployed, homeless and lack health care, let us pray...

For all of us here and for all those whose lives Louise touched, let us pray...

Sister Louise Akers, PRESENTE!

**Irish Bishop Steps Down**

Catholic News Service reports that an Irish bishop resigned on 1 March after increased criticism over how he dealt with revelations of an abusive priest. Bishop John McAreavey of Dromore was criticised in a program on BBC Northern Ireland on 28 February, after it emerged that he concelebrated an anniversary Mass with a priest he knew had stepped down after being sent for treatment following complaints of abuse.

In a statement from his lawyer released to journalists on 1 March, Bishop McAreavey, 69, said: "Following media reports which have disturbed and upset many people in the diocese and further afield, I have decided to resign with immediate effect."

Twelve people accused the late Father Malachy Finnegan of sexual abuse. The priest, who taught at St. Colman's College in Newry, Northern Ireland, from 1967 to 1976, is also accused of physical and emotional abuse against students.

While Father Finnegan was disciplined under his predecessor, Bishop McAreavey had been criticized in recent weeks for not making the
Father Finnegan died in 2002, and Bishop McAreavey previously apologized for conducting his funeral Mass.

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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 was released mid-December. FutureChurch is 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.