



## FOCUS E-News

July 16 - 22, 2017 Edition

***Honor the Mary of Magdala in your life!***

Did you miss an issue of our weekly FOCUS E-News? Catch up!

**[Download your St. Mary of Magdala resource for 2017!](#)**  
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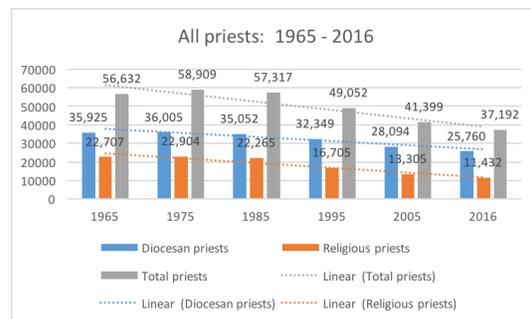
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**[SAVE THE DATE!](#)**  
**[October 27, 2017](#)**

**[Sr. Sandra Schneiders discusses the Gospel of John as a model for parish/community life today!](#)**

### From the Executive Director

FutureChurch has been providing educational and advocacy resources addressing the priest shortage since our beginning over 26 years ago. While the trends have not changed (see charts on this page), it is important to note that as the priest shortage continues unabated and parishes are being merged and closed as never before, the number of Lay Ecclesial Ministers, Lay Professionals and Permanent



Deacons is skyrocketing. While those numbers climb, the number of parishes led by someone other than an ordained priest (Canon 517.2) is falling - another indication that our bishops are tragically slow to meet the current needs of the church with current, abundant human resources.

Our upcoming series, [Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life](#), will explore the exciting innovations that are being piloted in the U.S. and around the world. The Spirit of God lives on and the People of God are responding.

### *Corruption in high places*

I admit that I sighed when I read the [news that two former high level administrators](#) from the Vatican owned hospital Bambino Gesu are on trial after being charged with embezzlement of monies that were funneled away from the care of sick children to one of the church princes, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone for a \$500,000 facelift for his apartment. Still, while two are on trial, the cardinal does not face any charges. I look forward to the day when these actions are grounds for bringing in the moving trucks and sending these princes packing.

### *Much to respect, even to celebrate*

In a church that often moves too slowly when it comes to justice, hopeful signs abound in the growing chorus of hierarchical

voices who are finally speaking up more definitively for LGBT rights -- voices that might still be silent except for the undeniable, [horrific violence against LGBT people](#) for which the Church must accept its share of culpability, and the decades of grassroots activism of Catholics in the U.S. and around the world.

Using their institutional authority to address the exclusion of LGBT Catholics, both [Cardinal Christoph Schönborn](#) and [Cardinal Richard Marx](#), along with [Cardinal Joseph Tobin](#), [Bishop John Stowe](#), [Bishop Robert McElroy](#), [Fr. James Martin, SJ](#), and others are beginning to overturn the historical practices of shunning and condemning LGBT Catholics.

Other signs of progress include the fact that we are on the cusp of a decision about women deacons -- a discussion that would not have occurred without [the long, diligent grassroots activism of Catholics](#) and the [courageous request of International Union of Superior Generals president Sr. Carmen Sammut](#).

A newly appointed [cardinal from Sweden](#) has suggested that a [college of women advisors be appointed](#) to advise Pope Francis, an idea that has been suggested prior to his appointment by [innovative women](#) advocating for the expansion of women's leadership in Rome and beyond.

And, advocacy that was

foundational to FutureChurch's beginnings more than 26 years ago is beginning to re-emerge with new strength. [Opening the door to married priests](#) is being discussed as never before.

We are a people of hope -- a people whose broken hearts propel our labors. Finally, we are responsible for the future of the church. Please continue to do your part and **take action today!**

[Open the discussion on married priests](#)

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

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

Thank you for all you do!  
Deborah Rose-Milavec  
Executive Director

### **Cardinals on Opposite Sides of the Hudson Reflect Two Paths of Catholicism**

The New York Times ran a front page story highlighting the differences and similarities between Cardinal Joseph Tobin and Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Their differences are apparent on many fronts, but especially in their approach to parish mergers and closures.

Canon lawyer Sr. Kate Kuenstler who assists many Catholic parishioners who want to keep



their vibrant parishes open said, "With Dolan, there was an abandonment of the people and no pastoral sensitivity," she said. "But Tobin, when alerted to issues harmful to the people, immediately looked for an alternative way to respond to their needs."

[Read more](#)

### **Pope Francis: no withering flower**

Robert Mickens confronts the hypocrisy of the uber papalists as they spill their ink undermining Pope Francis.

He writes, "Those who think Pope Francis is withering under criticism to his reforms should think again."

[Read more](#)



### **The human cost of closing parishes**

"I'm lost. I'm lost now," Georgiana Meyer said. "That was my church. I grew up there, got my sacraments there. I got married there. I buried my parents and my grandparents there."

Tony Moscato is not happy with the closing of his church in the Momauguin section, which will close as the parish merges with Our Lady of Pompeii and St. Vincent de Paul.

The new parish will be called St. Pio of Pietrelcina.

"They took the wind out of my sails the way they went about it," Moscato said.



Moscato said he was a member of that parish his whole life, received the sacraments there and buried his parents and son from St. Clare's.

"I don't know if I care to go to another church," said Moscato, who had been in the choir at St. Clare's since 1970 when he was in high school. "My dad was an usher there for 50 years."

[Read more](#)

### **Attitudes shifting on women clergy**

The Toledo Blade reports that women in religious leadership have come a long way in a relatively short time.

As a percentage of Protestant senior pastors, their numbers have tripled within the last 25 years, according to a 2016 Barna study. (Barna Group is a research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture.) That's even as ordained female ministers remain significantly outnumbered by men: They account for just 9 percent of Protestant senior pastors.

And while some leadership positions remain out of reach for women of some faiths — Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Judaism, and, in some contexts, Islam, to name a few — two local scholars in Catholic and Islamic traditions suggest more shifts could be afoot.

[Read more](#)



## Number two head appointed to CDF

Joshua McElwee reports that Pope Francis has appointed a relatively young Italian priest and theologian as the second-in-command of the Vatican's doctrinal congregation. And like the office's new leader, Jesuit Archbishop Luis Ladaria, the new deputy has a connection with the Jesuit-run Pontifical Gregorian University.

The Vatican announced July 18 that Francis has chosen Msgr. Giacomo Morandi as the new secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and has also elevated him to the level of archbishop.

Morandi, a priest of the northern Italian diocese of Modena-Nonantola, had been serving as an undersecretary of the congregation since 2015. Aged 51, Morandi earned his doctorate in missiology at the Gregorian in 2008.

[Read more](#)



## Demonizing gay people, not same sex marriage, a defeat for the Church says Cardinal Marx

According to La Croix, 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.

[Read more](#)

## **Black Catholic Congress: Catholic Church needs to be a stronger force in confronting the systemic racism at the root of mass incarceration and economic inequality.**

The 12th [National Black Catholic Congress](#) attracted more than 2,200 participants July 6-9. They gathered from dioceses across the nation to learn from each other and draw inspiration from speakers such as [Cardinal Peter Turkson](#) [2], the head of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, attorney Bryan Stevenson, founder of the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) [3] in Montgomery, Alabama, and Bishop Edward Braxton of Belleville, Illinois, author of the [pastoral letter and study guide](#) [4] "The Racial Divide in the United States: A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015."

Amid workshops on prayer, Bible study and prison ministries were sessions on racism as a destructive force and lessons learned in the St. Louis Archdiocese from the unrest in Ferguson after the fatal police

## **Catholics to meet at Basilica following National Black Catholic Congress**

Jessica Trygstad | July 12, 2017

Twenty-six people from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis were among more than 2,000 who attended the 12th National Black Catholic Congress July 6-9 in Orlando. Clergy, lay and religious speakers addressed a variety of topics and concerns facing black communities and families, while urging participants to take an active, enthusiastic role in living out the Gospel. *Full story*



From left, Claudette Paris, Lynelle Graham Cedric Waterman, Father Erich Rutten, pastor of St. Peter Claver, Mary Syllia Noble, Maya Ignabode, Cynthia Bailey Manns, Andromeda Guines, David Wentzstaff, Carol Burton, Carl Paris, Hazel Waterman and Ben Osemwem (crouching). Courtesy Father Erich Rutten

shooting of Michael Brown in 2014.

[Read more](#)

### **Cardinal Schonborn: Church doing best to strengthen families of all types**

Sarah Mac Donald reports that, according to Cardinal Schonborn, the Catholic Church is doing whatever it can to strengthen the family, including families often considered nontraditional, said Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna, the theologian who reviewed Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on the family.



"Favoring the family does not mean disfavoring other forms of life -- even those living in a same-sex partnership need their families," the cardinal said during a visit to Ireland, which next year hosts the World Meeting of Families.

[Read more](#)

**You won't want to miss these FutureChurch events!**

**Please support this work!**



**Be inspired! Catholic Women Preach!**

**Register for our 2nd retreat for women discerning their call to the permanent diaconate!**



**Learn what you can do to save your parish community**



**EMERGINGMODELS**  
OF PARISH AND COMMUNITY LIFE

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

## Check out events offered by our friends

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

**Justice and Mercy Under the Trump Administration**

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

**Friday and Saturday, October 20 – 21, 2017**

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

### Keynote Speakers

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

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

### Focus Presentations

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

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

**Registration Materials Coming Soon**

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