

FOCUS E-News

March 12 - 18, 2017

The Pope opens the door a little further for married priests



On March 8, a German newspaper published an interview with Pope Francis in which he commented again on the possibility of opening priestly ordination to "[viri probati](#)" or "proven men." While stating that optional celibacy is not a possibility, Pope Francis indicated that ordaining married men in remote places where there are too few priests may be a possibility.

In November 2016, [Pope Francis visited with seven families](#) where the fathers had served as parish priests. His visit created speculation that the next synod would focus on married priests. In December 2016, theologian [Leonardo Boff](#) predicted that the Pope would open ordination to married men in a few regions. Two Brazilian bishops, Jaime Vieira Rocha and Erwin Kräutler have been requesting "viri probati" priests for large areas of the Amazon where it has been reported that there are only 27 priests serving 700,000 Catholics. [Cardinal Claudio Humes](#), former prefect of the Congregation for Clergy and one of Pope Francis' closest colleagues, is reported to be pressing Pope Francis on the issue.

In the March 8th [Die Zeit](#) interview, Francis said, "The problem is the lack of vocations, a problem the church must solve. We must think about whether 'viri probati' are one possibility, but that also means discussing what tasks they could take on in remote communities. In many communities at the moment, committed women are preserving Sunday as a day of worship by holding services of the Word. But a church without the Eucharist has no strength."

Francis also went into great detail about the genesis of the commission to study women deacons saying that when they meet again in March he wants to learn first hand where things stand.

Francis rightly acknowledged the vast contributions of many lay women faithfully serving their communities. And as the possibility of ordination to the priesthood is expanded to include "viri probati", it would be a tragedy if women's ministries and contributions were somehow diminished. [As the women of Killaloe diocese in Ireland made clear](#) when facing the restoration of the male diaconate, "what was needed in the Catholic church was not another layer of male-only clergy but arrangements which could accommodate all." We hope and pray that opening priestly ordination to "viri probati" will be accompanied with an equal effort to fully respect, honor and include women in every form of ministry, leadership and governance.

Marie Collins versus Cardinal Mueller

Dear Cardinal Müller,
I read with interest the answers you gave to the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* March 5 in reply to items in my statement following my resignation from the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. There are some things you say in this interview to which I feel I need to respond.

[Read more](#)



An overview of Patriarch Theodoros' first ordination of women deaconesses

The Orthodox world is buzzing with the recent news report on the ordination of deaconesses in the Patriarchate of Alexandria . . .The ordination of these five deaconesses in Alexandria marks a turning point in the discussion about the order of deaconess within the Orthodox Church. To date, the restoration of the female diaconate has been limited to discussion, deliberation, and study – not to mention heated debate. With this ordination, we now have a historical episode of ordination and appointment to ministry, a pattern for what the female diaconate could become.

[Read more](#)



Voices of Faith welcomes Sr. Simone Campbell into the heart of the Vatican

In 2012, along with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Sr. Simone Campbell and her organization, NETWORK, was censured and investigated by the Vatican. NETWORK, in particular, was



criticized for focusing too much on poverty and economic injustice, while keeping “silent” on abortion and same-sex marriage.

After years of strong pushback from U.S. Catholics and a lot of pain, the investigation finally ended. And it felt like justice was getting her day when Sr. Simone spoke as one of the panelists in the heart of the Vatican this year during the Voices of Faith event on March 8.

In her interview with America Magazine, Sr. Simone admitted that she wept just before the event.

Referring to the investigation, she confided: “I have to tell you that I was talking to one of the religious women before our panel [at the conference], and I just started to cry because there’s a way in which I stayed focused on mission and didn’t let the hurt sink it. But being here is a treasure, it’s a huge treasure to me and to women in the United States.”

At the conference, she perceived not only great joy at the courageous work that is being done by women of faith of all ages across the world, she also detected “some sadness, because there is a feeling that the church is getting left behind. Everyone else is waking up to women’s leadership, but our beloved church, slow as it is, is not benefitting from the opportunity.”

Radio Vatican interview with Sr. Simone
Religious News Service interview

The Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr. Arturo Sosa speaks plainly on the need to make room for women in the Church

Father Arturo Sosa, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, joined women and men from around the globe



for Voices of Faith, an annual event held in Vatican City to mark International Women's Day on March 8. He told those gathered that "if we are honest, we acknowledge that the fullness of women's participation in the church has not yet arrived."

[Read more](#)
[Radio Vatican report](#)

Don't miss these opportunities and events!

Support our work

Join FutureChurch in Greece and follow in the footsteps of our foremothers in faith

From October 5 - 14, 2017 join FutureChurch as we explore the archaeological sites of early Christian women. Learn about the ancient Greek goddesses Athena, Artemis and Gaia to women of the New Testament and finally present day nuns in Greek monasteries. This pilgrimage will focus on the influence of women on the spirituality and history of Christianity. Sr. Christine Schenk will serve as educational director and Russ Petrus, FutureChurch program director will serve as spiritual director. Register by April 30 and receive a discount.

[Read more](#)

FutureChurch offers second retreat for Catholic women discerning a call to the diaconate

FutureChurch will host a second retreat for women who are discerning a call to the diaconate September 8-10 in San Francisco, CA. This second retreat will

The site of Phoebe's church in Cenchraea



also include a special workshop on one component of diaconal ministry: the Ministry of the Word – particularly Liturgical Preaching. Sign up today!

[Learn more](#)

Catholic Women Preach

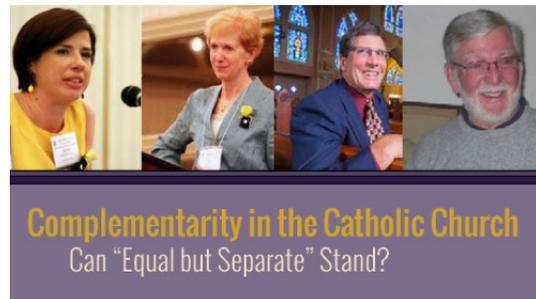
Each week throughout the year, Catholic Women Preach offers the wisdom and challenge presented by the Gospel through the experience of women. In this season of Lent, Holy Week and the Easter, be inspired by the Catholic women who preach each Sunday and some holy days. Mary Catherine Hilkert, O.P. preaches for the Third Sunday of Lent.



[Learn more](#)

Complementarity Series

Join us on April 5, 2017 for part three of our teleconference series on Complementarity. Todd Salzman and Michael Lawler of Creighton University will discuss complementarity in papal thought in the last few decades and how Pope Francis has engaged the concept. You can also listen to the podcasts of Natalia Imperatori-Lee and Susan Ross on the topic.



[Sign up for Part Three](#)

Support our work



FutureChurch | 17305 Madison Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107 | 216.228.0869
info@futurechurch.org

Visit our website