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Sr. Sandra Schneiders
The Gospel of John: A Blueprint for Parish Life
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Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life
Ed Hahnenberg
Emerging Models of Ministry October 18, 2017

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

From the Executive Director

Catholics long to see an end to clericalism, the privileged, entitled status of a elite group within the Catholic church that served as the foundation to the clergy sex abuse crisis and cover up and other ills within the church. Catholics have also been working for decades toward a Vatican II approach to collaboration between lay and ordained in parish life, ministry, and governance.
Just a few days ago, Parramatta’s Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguye commented that the "separate and elitist priesthood is drawing its last breath. And an article written by Rev. Donald Cozzens in 2015 offers a nuanced analysis of the culture of clericalism worth considering.

Catholics like you are working to end the clericalism that is so deadly to the life of our church. FutureChurch offers a number of ways that you can advocate for change.

Download DeaconChat and begin a conversation about women deacons in your parish and with your bishop.

Learn more about the priest shortage with our International Priest statistics. Just as the bishops in Brazil are doing, ask your bishop to open ordination to married men.

Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Newly named bishop of Innsbruck advocates for women deacons

Pray Tell reports that Hermann Glettler, recently appointed bishop in Innsbruck, said that he is “definitely for” the admission of women to the diaconate, Austrian media report. Now that the pope has appointed a commission on women deacons, Glettler would be very happy if it “came into the home stretch relatively soon and were decided positively.”
Asked about ordination of females priests, Glettler said this is “not so utopian.” But first steps are needed such as female deacons.

Asked if he is open to giving Communion to the divorced and remarried, the bishop-to-be responded, “Very.” To give Communion to those whose marriage failed and live in a new relationship has “very, very much sense based on the Gospel.” But it is also sensible to accompany those who come to the conclusion that they will not receive Communion. It is a matter of “accompanying, distinguishing, and then leaving open whether someone says, I will deliberately go to Communion or I will deliberation forego this, based on specific inner motives.”

Pope Francis and women: Reality is more important than ideas (?)

Gudrun Sailor, of Radio Vatican has written a book inclusive of all the writings about women from Pope Francis during his pontificate. She makes six points in her article for Voices of Faith.

She writes that Francis is a “reality-based” pope. He brought with him to Rome his forty-four years of experience as a priest and twenty-one as a bishop in an emerging nation in which the church is alive, but not without its contradictions. He drew on that experience when, a few months after his election as Pope, he said to a group of
Roman Catholic women who were by no means inclined to revolution: "I suffer—to tell you the truth—when I see in the Church or in Church organizations that the role of service, which we all have and should have—when a woman’s role of service slides into servidumbre [servitude]."¹

Read more

Elitist priesthood drawing its last breath according to Australian bishop

Parramatta's Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen has told a seminary reunion in Sydney that the model of an exalted, separate and elitist priesthood was "drawing its last breaths". The former Vietnamese refugee, now leader of Australia's fifth most populous diocese, said the Church needed to reclaim "the essential quality of the priesthood as Jesus the Humble Servant".

"We bear the brunt of public anger and distrust in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis," Bishop Long told the gathering at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, in western Sydney, in a speech entitled "The Priesthood in Australia: Reflections on its future in the light of the Royal Commission (into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse)".

"It is one of the hardest times to be a priest. Yet paradoxically, it is also one of the most exciting times that we, as ministers and messengers of the Gospel, are privileged to live and to make it
known to others. It is precisely in this Kairos that we are given the unique opportunity to accompany our people in a spiritual exodus that I believe will lead to a new dawn for the church. Read more

**Boston College hosts conference with U.S. bishops and theologians to consider how to implement 'Amoris Laetitia'**

Joshua McElwee writes that bishops and theologians will gather at Boston College to consider the best strategies for implementing *Amoris Laetitia*.

Jesuit Fr. James Keenan, a theologian at Boston College who is helping organize the event along with Cardinal Blaise Cupich. Keenan told NCR the hope for the conference is to "fortify and further the ongoing reception of *Amoris* in the U.S."

In five panel discussions over two days Oct. 5-6, two cardinals, 12 bishops, and 24 other invited participants are set to discuss what organizers are calling the "new momentum" *Amoris Laetitia* gives local bishops to renew their pastoral practices toward families.

Cupich will attend the Boston-area event as will Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who was called to Rome from Dallas by Francis in 2016 to lead the Vatican's new Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. Farrell will speak Oct. 5 as part of a panel on how the apostolic exhortation addresses
those in Western cultures who have become disaffected by authority structures.

Keenan said the event will have a particular focus on hearing from those who have been involved with helping the European church better understand and implement *Amoris Laetitia*.

Speakers include German Bishop Franz-Josef Overbeck, who participated in the 2014 and 2015 Synods of Bishops that led to the exhortation; Malta Archbishop Charles Scicluna, who co-wrote a January 2017 document for Malta's priests on how to implement the exhortation in their country; and Jesuit Fr. Antonio Spadaro, a papal confidant and editor of the Italian magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

Other bishops set to speak at the event include Atlanta Archbishop Wilton Gregory and San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy. Those in attendance are to include Santa Fe Archbishop John Wester; Indianapolis Archbishop Charles Thompson; San Bernardino, California, Bishop Gerald Barnes; Cheyenne, Wyoming, Bishop Steven Biegler; and Burlington, Vermont, Bishop Christopher Coyne.

In addition, Keenan said that while Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley and Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput are unable to attend, both are sending representatives to take part.
Among the expected 24 lay participants at the event are some of the most prominent theologians in the U.S., including: Cathleen Kaveny, Richard Gaillardetz, and Hosffman Ospino of Boston College; Julie Hanlon Rubio of St. Louis University; Franciscan Sr. Katarina Schuth of the University of St. Thomas, and Meghan Clark of St. John's University. Read more

**Kick-starting a new Catholic conversation**

Mary Hunt, Marianne Duddy-Burke and Jamie Manson urge a new conversation about LGBTQI Catholics in the Church that is not mired in clericalism and Church-speak.

They write that we need wisdom from many Catholic perspectives, not limiting "Catholic" to institutional church teaching on matters on which the vast majority of Catholics have left the hierarchy behind. It is time to grow up and use "I" statements instead of making pronouncements or pretending to be above the fray.

Therefore, we declare a moratorium on ecclesial-speak and begin anew with human-to-human, Catholic-to-Catholic conversation about sexuality, not just homosexuality, in the frame of global justice. The crying needs of the world — ecocide, violence against women, war, racism and poverty — do not permit us the luxury of endless
In book length interview, Pope Francis says more women will be in decision making roles

While Austen Invereigh suggests that French sociologist Dominique Wolton could have "dug deeper" in his interviews with Pope Francis, he also appreciates some of the new insights.

Wolton asked Francis if he has “won the battle” against the Vatican maladies he famously identified in his Christmas address to the Curia in December 2014. Francis, who was then (end of 2016) preparing his new Christmas address to the Curia summarizing his reforms, answers: “Yes, it hasn’t gone badly, not just in the organic reform of the organigram, but also the reform of attitudes” - suggesting that, for the pope, the second is at least as important as the first.

At the end of the book Francis touches on the Curia again in relation to amplifying the voice and presence of women in the Church’s governance.

“With the reform of the Curia, there will be many women who will have decision-making powers, not just in an advisory role. Because you don’t need to be a priest to head an education department. In the Curia, there is already a second-in-command (vice-directrice) in the Vatican’s press office.”
After discussing the influence of women in the pope’s life, Wolton presses him again, asking if in the Curia he will give women more of a role.

“Yes yes, I think so,” Francis answers. “Because there’s not so much misogyny as all that. That’s not the problem. It’s elsewhere.”

Pope Francis’ plan for the theology of the body

Paul Moses writes that about a dozen years back, he attended a diocesan workshop given by Christopher West on Pope John Paul II’s “theology of the body.” During the question-and-answer period Moses remarked that he had talked about moral theology all day without once using the word “conscience.” Moses noted that when he took a diocesan institute’s course on moral theology in the very same building, the instructor spoke often about the role of conscience in Catholic moral teachings.

On September 19, Pope Francis announced a decision that Moses hopes will help address situations like this: he will revamp the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. The pope is re-affirming the Theology of the Body, but beginning a process of responding to some of the questions that have been raised about it. Moses sees it as an effort to better connect John Paul’s ethereal talks to the
realities of everyday life, in which we all wrestle with conscience and circumstance.

Moses believes that in rearranging the John Paul II Institute, Francis seems to be responding to critics of the Theology of the Body, keeping what he sees as valuable while looking to fill in the gaps some theologians have written about. Read more

Always Our Children: 20 years later

Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata, founders of Fortunate Families, write about the history and the continued influence of the U.S. Bishops' document, "Always Our Children."

On October 1, 1997, the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Marriage and Family issued Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children AND Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers (AOC). This document was long overdue given the pastoral damage caused by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s (CDF) 1986 letter, On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons. The harmful language in the 1980s document — e.g. newly characterizing a homosexual orientation as an “objective disorder” — still arouses rage in many people. Read more

Catholic Women Speak decry extremism

The following statement was issued by the Catholic Women
Rebecca Bratten Weiss is a member of Catholic Women Speak (CWS) – an international network of nearly 900 Catholic women committed to defending women’s right to speak and be heard inside as well as outside the Church. That is the only single cause we campaign on, for our members represent the diversity that exists among Catholics on other issues.

In early August this year, Rebecca was told that her contract with the Franciscan University of Steubenville would not be renewed, even though she was scheduled to teach three courses in the autumn semester, and to direct two theses. She was shown screenshots of conversations she had participated in on social media, including some taken from the closed CWS Facebook group, as evidence for why she was no longer employable by a Catholic institution. In September the website Lifesite News (not linked here for reasons of taste and discretion) posted an attack on Rebecca, using similar screenshots to those her employers had used. Read more

The Church needs to wake up

Sr. Terry Richard, OP is fed up with the all too common response to women who are advocating for more leadership. She writes that describing women who desire leadership as “power hungry” is an unfair
characterization. We do not say the same about bishops or priests who lead our dioceses and parishes. Leadership enables us to make an impact.” Sr. Terry Rickard, OP is the President of RENEW International, a ministry of New Evangelization that has reached over 25 million people in 160 dioceses with its innovative formation processes for small Christian communities. Read more

Catholics around the world celebrate the vocation and witness of St. Theresa of Lisieux

Kate McElwee, Executive Director of Women’s Ordination Conference writes that the “Little Flowers” of the Grassroots were in full bloom witnessing around the world for women’s ordination in honor of the feast day of St. Therese of Lisieux (October 1), who herself was called to the priesthood.

A 19th century French Carmelite nun and Doctor of the Church, St. Therese wrote in her journals and confided in her sister Celine of her deep desire to be a priest. She wrote: “I feel in me the vocation of priest.” For the first time, a five yard-long purple “Ordain Women” banner was placed on the Sant’Angelo bridge, just in front of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. The banner stayed in place for nearly two hours before being removed by authorities. Read more
Cardinal Burke is back at the Apostolic Signatura

Christopher Lamb reports that Pope Francis has named Cardinal Raymond Burke as a member of the Apostolic Signatura, the Church’s supreme court which the cardinal used to lead.

The appointment came as a surprise given the cardinal has been a prominent critic of Francis who is threatening to issue the Pope with a “fraternal correction” over the papal family life document, “Amoris Laetitia”. The Pope’s decision to give the cardinal a seat on the board of the Church’s top justice body will be read as a peace offering, and comes after the Holy See’s most senior diplomat, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, called for more dialogue in the Church.

It also has the effect of drawing Cardinal Burke closer into the Francis administration and therefore upping the stakes should the cardinal issue a correction. A correction by Burke would be divisive, yet the Pope's move today signals the papacy wants reconciliation. Read more

Why Pope Francis is reviving local liturgical practice

Liturgical studies specialist Joanne M. Pierce writes that since Pope Francis has changed Catholic Canon law, he has been met with some intense reactions. At stake here is the language used for the Mass and the
question of who has the responsibility for translating the Catholic liturgy into regional languages.

Until the end of the 10th century, local bishops indeed made their own decisions about liturgical practices in their areas.

Read more

Cardinal Farrell goes on record about lay ministry to married couples; communion for those who support abortion

In a recent address, Cardinal Farrell said that ministering by couples to couples is better done by "people who have walked in their shoes," the cardinal said. He admitted he did not "have a clue" how to answer some of the questions on couples' difficulties, which his own nieces and nephews had put to him.

"I have no experience of that and the majority of priests don't have that experience," Farrell said, noting that many of the married couples who attended the 2014 and 2015 Synod of Bishops on the family insisted that more lay couples be involved in marriage ministry.

The prelate also staunchly defended Francis, rejecting any suggestion that he is guilty of spreading heresy in his writing and addresses.

Asked about some who have called for politicians who support abortion to be refused communion, Farrell told CNS
afterward that although he believed their stance was wrong, the church is "for those who have sinned" and that redemption is for all.
Read more

**The rise of Catholic cyber bullying**

Patricia Miller writes that there was a time in the Catholic Church when supporters of doctrinal orthodoxy could count on the Vatican to do their policing for them. But the advent of a pope who sees his role as less about policing orthodoxy and more about creating dialogue, coupled with the decentralizing forces of the internet and a free-floating populist–conservative anger, has given rise to the same sort of vicious cyber-bullying that has characterized attacks on feminists and others who challenge the right.

Jesuit priest James Martin had the temerity to write about the need for the Catholic Church to build bridges and open dialogue with the LGBT community. His book *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity* was written with the permission of his superiors based on a talk he gave to the Catholic LGBT group New Ways Ministry,* also with the blessing of his superiors.

Read more

**More Catholic bishops speak up for James Martin SJ**
Robert Shine reports that in the ongoing aftermath of right-wing attacks on Fr. James Martin, SJ, because of his new book on LGBT issues in the church, three more Catholic bishops have made statements in support of the Jesuit.

Read more

**It all seems new...and it is!**

James McEvoy, priest of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, and professor in the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at Australian Catholic University writes that many people have told him, “I love your new boss.” after Pope Francis’ election to 

Often the remark was made by someone who did not share his Catholic faith; often, too, by someone under thirty.

McEvoy remarks that to this day, there’s a freshness and vibrancy in Francis’ leadership of the church.

Read more

**Children of priests speak out**

The Globe reports that Mary “Mimi” Bull was happily married and the mother of three children when she found out that her biological father was a Catholic priest she had known growing up in Norwood in the 1940s. She had always believed that she was adopted and that the priest who often visited was just a family friend.

But it wasn’t until last month, at age 80, that Bull finally spoke to someone with a life story like...
her own. He is an Irish activist who learned as an adult that his godfather, a local priest, was really his biological dad. Bull talked on the phone for an hour with Vincent Doyle, the first time she had ever spoken with another priest’s child.

“It was huge,” Bull told the Globe.

Read more

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AUGUST 27, 2017
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
How, like Jesus, can we - even at great risk to ourselves - stand up to today’s kings and Pharisees ready to oppress others? And how, like Jesus, can we let love and life-giving service be the hallmarks of our own exercise of authority?

CATHARINE MOONEY
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Add your name to our 100 women deacons list!

Write a letter to our U.S. cardinals asking them to support Cardinal Anders Arborelius’ idea of a College
Start a conversation with DeaconChat 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!

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