FOCUS E-News
October 9 - 15, 2017 Edition

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October 18, 2017
Ed Hahnenberg
Emerging Models of Ministry for Today's Church
2nd in the series Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life

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

More women are sharing their story of being called to the diaconate. Share your story at our 100 Women Deacons campaign!

From the Executive Director

After days of cringing over vicious comments hurled by the elite, "holier-than-thou" band of
Catholics, this week we witnessed another circle of Catholics inspiring us and offering hope.

From October 5 - 6, Boston College hosted a conference focusing on the implementation of *Amoris Laetitia*. It was organized by James Keenan, SJ, and Cardinal Blaise Cupich.

Prior to the Boston conference, Argentina, Austria, France, Germany, Italy and South Africa had gathered bishops, cardinals, and theologians to find creative ways to implement *Amoris Laetitia*. Keenan wanted the U.S. Bishops to get on board and with the help of Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Robert McElroy, they gathered.

On the first day, Latina feminist theologian Natalia Imperatori-Lee peeled back layers of privilege and domination that undercut the full potential of the laity.

She said that in Francis' call for better respect of decisions laypeople make in their lives, Latinos see the pope "pointing to the infantilization of laypeople and families that is so commonly a feature of colonization."

"The infantilization of the laity has its historical roots in a view of laypeople as objects of clerical control: pay, pray and obey, or as Pius X notes in [the 1906 encyclical] *Vehementer Nos*, 'the right of the laity is to allow itself to be led,' " she said.

Imperatori-Lee said Francis,
however, sees the family as "the protagonist of its own destiny." "Couples become the subjects of their history, even as pastors and confessors retain a role of accompaniment and listening," she said.

She also mentioned Francis' call in Amoris Laetitia for pastors to respect decisions laypeople make in conscience after a process of discernment. "We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them," the pope wrote in the document.

"The replacement of conscience is an act of domination, again colonization," she said, paraphrasing Peruvian theologian Gregorio Pérez. "It is an abuse of power. The formation of conscience, on the other hand, is life-giving ministry."

Along with Imperatori-Lee's insights, Keenan noted five key insights that summarized the conference discussions.

1. [Theologian] Lisa Sowle Cahill remarked: "It's so good that the speakers basically chose to describe the contemporary situation in terms of families, instead of marriages." Her insight was that the politics of marriage often sidetrack us from the more complicated issues of family where questions of profound economic pressures and inequities, discrimination, physical and mental health, and other issues are so profoundly challenging.
2. The second moment arose when [Cardinal Kevin] Farrell replied to a question by a bishop who asked what Roman document should take priority over others. Farrell stated emphatically: "*Amoris Laetitia!* This is the document that talks about the entry level of the pastoral ministry of the entire church."

3. Third, a much repeated claim was "we have discovered that there are eight other chapters to *Amoris Laetitia.*" While not ignoring Chapter 8 ("Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness") at all, Cupich added: "I would caution us that there are other dimensions of family life that the pope treats in *Amoris Laetitia..."

4. In talking about the eighth chapter, [Malta Archbishop Charles] Scicluna gave us the fourth phrase when he spoke of "the principle of affective collegiality and communion with the Holy Father."

5. In discussing his synod in San Diego, McElroy commented at the end of his striking presentation: "I was a learner there." That’s the fifth catch phase. I do not think that anyone left the seminar with anything but having experientially glimpsed from one another the church that Francis is inviting us to be.

Keenan summed up the experience, "Using Francis' terms like 'the church as field hospital,' 'the irreplaceable conscience,' 'accompaniment,'
and 'authentic discernment,' we became for 36 hours a bit more forgetful of ourselves and more mindful of the papal exhortation on our families. It was a refreshing moment."

Moments like this remind us that the work we have been carrying out together over the past 27 years at FutureChurch is alive with the possibility for real and meaningful change. We have seen it happen over and over again. God's Spirit alive in her people as we honor the sacredness of every Catholic's call in our Church.

Please support this ongoing work and help continue to dialogue and advocate for change with resources like DeaconChat.

If you are called or discerning a call to the diaconate, share your story at our 100 Women Deacons Campaign. You can also get the latest developments on the commission at Commission Watch.

Learn more about the priest shortage by viewing our International Priest statistics. Following the model of bishops in Brazil, ask your bishop to open U.S. discussions on the ordination to married men.

In gratitude for all you do,

Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Petra Dankova reflects on her love for the Church and the struggle to be accepted
Catholic women are preaching and their words and witness are transformative.

In an enormously powerful testament of her love for the Church and her struggles to be whole within it, Petra Dankova offers a profound witness to God's life-giving love and grace. In a Church that too often rejects and demeans its own members, especially LGBT members like herself, Dankova finds a way to be authentic, whole, and prophetic.

Listen

What are the chances Amoris Laetitia can be integrated?

Thomas Reese, SJ, is a realist who asks if Amoris Laetitia has a chance of being integrated into Catholic practice.

He writes that parishes need to be more welcoming to families, especially families in difficulties. Rather than greeting them with a list of rules to be followed, the document encourages "listening" as the first response.

"Accompanying" was another key word in Amoris Laetitia, "which connotes accepting where people are and then traveling with them in their journey toward God.

But who is going to do this accompanying?

The lack of a positive reception of Amoris Laetitia by many priests and even bishops was seen as a major problem for the
Young priests, who were trained by conservative moral theologians during the papacies of John Paul and Benedict, are often suspicious of the document. They were trained to enforce rules that excluded people rather than welcomed them. Many are confused; some are outright antagonistic.

Read more

**Will the church move forward on women deacons**

Pat Perriello suggests that if the church does not move forward with women deacons, it risks its own future.

He writes that in a recent NCR editorial, there is a call to swing the doors open for women. There is a need to start somewhere. Either women are going to be brought into their rightful role in the church or the church will remain fixed in the Middle Ages. There is a fear of strong women among much of the hierarchy. Quinn's book notes that the Chicago Catholic women's movement met with bishops during the early days of their ministry in the '70s, but "men became increasingly terrified and embarrassed by the reactions to their outrageous oppression of women." The history of an all-male and celibate priesthood continues to haunt the future of the church.

If the church continues to say no to even the smallest effort to update itself, it diminishes its influence in the world and
impoverishes the riches it can offer to its own congregants. It is indeed time to swing the church doors open for women. They are exactly what is needed in our church today.

First ever synod in Pope's home diocese seeks to learn from alienated Catholics

Austen Ivereigh writes that the Archbishop of Buenos Aires has announced a three-year diocesan synod, with a special emphasis on mission and hearing from all the baptized.

Because it is the pope’s home diocese, the first synod in its 400-year history is likely to be closely observed by bishops elsewhere contemplating doing something similar.

In a lengthy pastoral letter, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Mario Poli, says he was moved to consider a diocesan synod following the pope’s groundbreaking speech in October 2015 on the fiftieth anniversary of the institution of the synod of bishops in Rome.

In it, the pope invited the Church to introduce means of collective discernment at all levels that would enable dialogue and consultation with the whole people of God, arguing that “it is precisely this path of synodality that God expects of the Church of the third millennium.”

Poli says he was struck in particular by the pope’s mention of the diocesan synod as the
“first level in the exercise of synodality” in which clergy, Religious and lay people alike are called to collaborate with the bishop for the good of the ecclesial community on the ancient church principle captured in the Latin phrase *quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet* - “what affects all should be discussed by all.”

Read more

**German bishops abandon missal translation**

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt reports that the German bishops appear to have abandoned a controversial new German translation of the Missal that was based on *Liturgiam authenticam*, the Congregation for Divine Worship’s 2001 document that insisted on greater fidelity to the Latin original in liturgy translations.

The conference president Cardinal Reinhard Marx has called *Liturgiam authenticam*, a “dead end”. The Missal translation that used *Liturgiam authenticam* has not yet been approved and after a recent initiative by Pope Francis it is unlikely ever to see the light of day.

The bishops did not mention the new Missal translation in the final report of their autumn plenary, but Cardinal Marx was questioned about it at the press conference afterwards. He said the German bishops were “hugely relieved” and very thankful that, in his recent motu proprio Magnum principium,
Pope Francis had given local bishops’ conferences greater responsibility concerning liturgy translations.

**Association of U.S. Catholic Priests want U.S. Bishops to return to 1998 revision of Roman Missal**

The **AUSCP Working Group on the Roman Missal** wasted no time in sending a message to the USCCB as a follow up to the Pope's recent action giving the power over liturgical translations back to the bishops. AUSCP Leadership Team Members Kevin Clinton and Louis Arceneaux spearheaded the writing of a letter sent on October 4th to Archbishop Wilton Gregory, Chair, and all members of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship, consultants & staff members.

The letter said, in part:

"From our point of view we offer these suggestions as steps into the future:

1. Place an immediate hold on the translating of liturgical books that are in the "pipeline".
2. Conduct an in depth and objective inquiry among those who are the practitioners (i.e. deacons, priests & bishops) using the current translations in their pastoral work.
3. In 1998 the English speaking bishops of the world spent many years finalizing and approving a translation for English speaking people. What
about the possibility of returning to that 1998 translation and, as prudently necessary, revising it given our liturgical experience since 2011? We believe that this would be welcomed by many priests and affirm the hard work that was done for the 1998 revision."

The letter concluded with the offer to assist the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship with this issue. Learn more

**Australian bishops in Rome to talk about multiple crises**

Christopher Lamb reports that a leading Australian bishop says the Church in his country is facing the biggest crisis in its history after taking part in talks with the Vatican over how to address the problem.

The Archbishop of Brisbane, Mark Coleridge, who is Vice President of the Australian Bishops’ Conference, told The Tablet that he and fellow bishops were in Rome to discuss the fallout of the clerical sexual abuse crisis, and how the Church will adopt a new approach. This, he says, will look at how to include women in positions of “governance”.

High on the agenda at the Vatican summit was Australia’s Royal Commission inquiry into how institutions handled child sexual abuse. This has seen the Catholic Church facing unrelenting criticism for its response to the scandal. The
problem has been magnified after the Australian police’s decision to charge Cardinal George Pell, the Vatican treasurer and former Archbishop of Sydney, with historic sexual offences.

Francis declares that canon law must serve Vatican II vision

Cindy Wooden reports that leading canonists, as well as professors and students from all the canon law faculties in Rome, were meeting Oct. 4-7 to mark the 100th anniversary of the first systematic Code of Canon Law, which was promulgated by Pope Benedict XV in 1917.

The Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law is an instrument that must serve the church's pastoral mission of bringing God's mercy to all and leading them to salvation, Pope Francis said.

Just as the first full codification of Catholic Church law was carried out 100 years ago "entirely dominated by pastoral concern," so today its amendments and application must provide for a well-ordered care of the Christian people."

Critics engender a culture of dissent

According to Paul Moses, Francis' critics are engendering a much needed culture of dissent, a way of interacting with the institution that was often punished under the prior two
He writes that the heat that a group of conservative academics generated by publicly accusing Pope Francis of heresy this summer in a letter they released September 23 is warming up the Catholic environment for dissent. And in the end, the pope’s patience with critics like these could do a lot to reform the culture of the church. It is one more way Francis is sculpting the church that the Second Vatican Council envisioned.

I doubt it’s what his tradition-minded antagonists intended as they launched a publicity campaign against the pope over passages in his document *Amoris laetitia (The Joy of Love)* that urge a more merciful approach to divorced Catholics.

Nonetheless, they’ve taken up Vatican II’s call for the laity to speak up from areas of their competence—“permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church,” as *Lumen Gentium* (37) puts it.

**What I learned from organizing the conference on Amoris Laetitia**

James Keenan, SJ describes his hopes for the U.S. conference on *Amoris Laetitia* that he organized and what he took away.

[Read more](#)
Conference weighs how 'Amoris Laetitia' rejects 'infantilization of laity'

Bishops deliberate on whether one rule applies to all divorced and remarried Catholics

Conference on Amoris Laetitia was dialogical

Legionaries on the line again

Catholic News Service reports that the Legionaries of Christ pledged its ongoing commitment to renewal and reform as it released information about a former rector who has publicly acknowledged being the father of two children.

Legionaries Father Oscar Turrion - who served as rector of the order's seminary in Rome - informed his superiors of "his intention to leave priestly ministry" in light of the recent revelations, the order said in an online communique on 6 October.

Read more

San Diego bishop celebrates Mass with LGBT Catholics

Michael O'Loughlin reports that members of the Catholic L.G.B.T. community and their families gathered in a San Diego church on Saturday to celebrate Mass and observe the 20th anniversary of a letter from bishops meant to address the pastoral needs of Catholic parents with gay and lesbian children.

"'Always Our Children' was
written at a time when good and faithful churchgoing Catholics were witnessing society quickly change before their eyes and the church seemed—in their eyes—to stand still,” Bishop John Dolan, an auxiliary bishop in the Diocese of San Diego, preached at St. John the Evangelist Church, located in San Diego’s historically gay-friendly Hillcrest neighborhood.

Kyle Escobar-Humphries, who attended the Mass with his husband, told The San Diego Union-Tribune, “It’s important because my kids have two gay dads and I would like for them to understand that this church is open for everybody.

“I want them to understand how to treat each other equally,” he continued.

Bishop Robert McElroy, who leads the diocese, also attended the Mass. He told the Union-Tribune that the Mass was a response to Pope Francis’ call for the church to serve everybody.

Read more

Not just George Pell on trial

Referring to the trial of Cardinal George Pell where it is reported there will be up to 50 witnesses, Michael Kelly SJ writes that whatever the outcome of the legal process, charges against clerics, whether proven or dismissed, stick in the popular imagination. Once the finger is pointed at a cleric on sexual matters, the game is up and his life in the chosen profession
is finished. What’s more, for Pell, his life in the Vatican is over as these court proceedings will extend well beyond his current contract there.

When Cardinal Pell is charged, under the rules that now apply to Catholic clerics in Australia, he will not be allowed to operate as priest – celebrating a public Mass, bless weddings, etc. What is tragic in the Greek sense of what is happening to Pell is that here is a person who for thirty years has created his profile. He also linked his considerable ambitions to being the re-maker of Catholicism in Australia and, through his international alliances, in the global Church.

He was the self-appointed leader of a movement to restore the Catholic Church to “orthodoxy” and right practice in Australia and joined forces with similar personalities internationally. The movement now lacks credible leadership, ideas and plausibility and its campaigns over the decades have left the Catholic Church in Australia divided and demoralized.

Call it hubris. Call it silly and ridiculous. Call it over-reaching. Call it what you like. But the ambition is now in ruins because the Catholic Church in Australia is in tatters: its credibility is zero; its leadership continues to fail to “get it” as is clear from their divided efforts to guide the current same-sex marriage debate. One (Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane) absurdly
linked the unacceptability of same-sex marriage (for him) to the unacceptability of incest. Simply put, with utterances like these, no one is listening to them.

The bishops proposing the "No" vote on gay marriage just don’t seem to realize that their collective negligence in covering up the worst sex scandal in Australian history disqualifies them from being heard out on anything to do with marriage and sex for many generations to come.

As one of the best bishops in Australia said to me many months ago, it will be at least three generations before the Catholic Church in Australia recovers the trust and credibility it needs to provide its service and do its job.

Read more

**German bishop prohibits blessing; another promotes it**

Robert Shine reports that a German bishop has barred the blessing of a same-gender couple’s relationship just as marriage equality in the nation became effective October 1, and his decision was received poorly by a religious organization for LGBT people, while a powerful German Catholic lay organization reiterated its call for marriage equality.

Bishop Felix Genn of Münster forbad a church blessing for the mayor of the city of Emmericher, Peter Hinze, and his partner, which had been planned for
September 30. Fr. Stefan Sühling was to celebrate a “blessing for loved ones” during a Liturgy of the Word, reported Katholisch.de.

Relatedly, a bishop who called for same-gender relationships to be blessed back in 2015 was recently elected as vice chair of the German Bishops Conference. Bishop Franz-Josef Bode (pictured) of Osnabruck had said previously that “with prayer and a private form of blessing, you will be able to accompany [such couples] on their way.” Read more

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Be inspired! Catholic Women Preach!
Add your name to our 100 women deacons list!

Start a conversation with DeaconChat

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

Honor the Mary of Magdala in your life by having her name added to our list on Catholic Women Preach!

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