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Follow in the Footsteps of Our Foremothers in Faith in Greece!
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Bishop Randolph Roque Calvo of Reno expresses openness to women deacons

Most Rev. Randolph Calvo, bishop of Reno, and Dominican Sisters Mary Peter Traviss and Gloria Marie Jones, made their presentations to a group of 80 religious and laywomen — and a few men — for a lively panel, followed by thoughtful questions.

Bishop Calvo's talk centered on "Women Deacons: What the Past Can Mean for Today." His experience on the topic spans more than 20 years, he told the gathering.

While serving as president of the Canon Law Society of America in November 1995, he sent a copy of an ad-hoc committee’s "Canonical implications of ordaining women to the permanent diaconate" to then-Cardinal Josef Ratzinger.

His presentation drew upon the work of historians and scriptural scholars, who point to the presence of women deacons and deaconesses in the early church.
Beyond looking at history, Bishop Calvo encouraged looking at the possibilities.

"What we’re doing here today," he said, in raising the question of women deacons, is asking, "Where is the Holy Spirit calling us on this particular question at this particular time?"

AUSCP practices tough love when it comes to statements on homosexuality and the priesthood from Rome

Disturbed by the statements on homosexuality in the The Gift of Priestly Vocation document issued by the Congregation for the Clergy, dated December 8, 2016, the Association of US Catholic Priests voiced its concerns to the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors, the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life & Vocations, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, and the National Association of Hispanic Priests of the USA. The statement was also included in a mailing to all U.S. bishops. They write, "The terms 'homosexual tendencies' and 'deep-seated homosexual tendencies' are ambiguous and disrespectful of the personhood of those who identify with a homosexual orientation."

Two new Francis bishops appointed in the U.S.

For the first time since 2002, what’s now a 1.3 million-member fold in San Diego has a new auxiliary bishop. But if anyone’s expecting a clone of the last one, well, have we got news for you.
Six weeks since Bishop Robert McElroy electrified progressive activists (and infuriated conservatives) with a fiery address at a national summit on social justice, at Roman Noon this Wednesday, the Pope bolstered the SoCal prelate’s arsenal with the appointment of Fr. John Dolan, 54 – the "pastor to the priests" as McElroy’s vicar for clergy, likewise serving at the helm of two city parishes – as the first of two requested deputies for the border diocese.

Read more

Irish church is running out of priests

According to a 2007 study, about half of all priests in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland were aged between 55 and 74. Ten years later they are overwhelmingly over 65, with many ministering into their eighties.

There are approximately 100 young men studying for the priesthood in Ireland, down from 600 just a few decades ago. The crisis is indeed mounting.

There is more bad news for the Church this week with vocations in one diocese at zero, and more confirmation of a quickly aging population of priests among those currently working in the parishes.

Read more

Are you called or are you discerning a call to be a deacon in the Catholic Church? Join our 100 Women Deacons Campaign and share your story!

As Pope Francis' Commission for the
Study of the Diaconate of Women undergo their work, FutureChurch has launched the “100 Women Deacons” Campaign asking Catholic women who have considered a call to the diaconate to share that discernment with the wider church. View the stories of women who have considered a call to the diaconate and share your own story below.

Read more

Stay up to date on Pope Francis' commission at Commission Watch

Why we need an entrepreneurial church

Chris Lowney knows the institutional church is in trouble. And he sees parallels in the corporate world when organizations cannot adapt to a changing environment. Lowney offers a lens for viewing current challenges with ideas for creating the culture the Catholic Church needs in order to move into the future.

He observes, "...this can happen in any organization... but you see it a lot in corporate cultures right before they hit a wall. People tell themselves a story that it can turn around, it’s going to turn around, we’re doing all the right things, and then that story lasts until it’s literally no longer sustainable or believable.

Take an example like Sears, where something has been sliding for years and then one morning we wake up and boom, we’re in a deep crisis because we’ve been telling each other or telling the public a story that is sort of plausible but doesn’t quite incorporate all the difficult but undeniable facts. In the church, you can sustain this kind of pattern even longer. In the corporate world you get a report card every quarter and have to talk about it, whereas the church can drip, drip through bad trends for decades and
Who gets the ear of Pope Francis?

Pope Francis is known for his listening skills. But he is a selective listener. Robert Mickens makes that case that while Pope Francis may want to hear what young people have to say in the lead up to the 2018 synod, he made a mistake in not picking up the phone to listen to Marie Collins, the most credible member of his Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Mickens asks why, "a pope who has become famous for calling people out of the blue, for desiring dialogue and encounter even with those who disagree with him, not pick up the phone and ask Marie Collins to tell him more about her frustrations with the PCPM?"

Nuns and Nones Engage

Both Nuns and Nones are on the margins or fringes of our traditions. Both Nuns and Nones have a track record of challenging institutions in order to promote inclusion and justice. Both Nuns and Nones are seeking community that is open to questions and the continuous search for meaning.

Catholic millennials set the record straight about their faith

Shanna Johnson is a millennial who wants to set the record straight and bust the myth that millennial Catholics
Johnson argues that millennials are more equipped and motivated than previous generations to spread the Gospel. She writes, "Rather than rejecting their religion, I see young Catholics taking pride in their faith. Millennial-led media platforms like Buzzfeed feature articles and video clips on Catholicism. It appears, in articles such as one titled “21 frustrations that were too real for anyone raised Catholic,” that being Catholic is a unique experience of which we should be proud. It is something over which we bond.

In short, being Catholic is cool.

What is even cooler is that millennials are focused on social justice."

Pope Francis will appoint seven new Irish bishops

When Pope Francis fills seven current vacancies in the next few months, he will have appointed 16 of the 26 Irish diocesan bishops.

Feminist theologian from India discusses new forms of religious life

Kochurani Abraham is one of the foremost change agents in the Catholic Church in India. She is a woman with a keen intellect, abundant creativity, and courageous conviction. In this interview she examines new forms of religious life in an age where the old is passing away. She focuses on some of the basic building blocks for the future church.

First, I would want the church...
declericalized. The church needs leadership, but the current hierarchical structure based on "priestly" ordination contradicts the spirit of the Gospel and model of Christian leadership. It is time for a serious rethinking on what it means to be the church today.

I want the church to be more democratic. Its worship and other matters should be led by people, who are imbued by the Spirit with sufficient preparation. Their gender — male, female or transgender — should not a hindrance. I also want the church freed of caste, class and gender politics to share power in mutuality so that it can truly be ushering in the reign of God.

Who Will Speak Out to Solve the Vocations Crisis?

According to Robert Mickens, "the church has a serious shortage of ordained presbyters in almost every part of the world, except in some countries in Africa and Asia. And this 'vocations crisis' is not something new. The first signs of it started appearing even before Vatican Council II got underway."

Unwilling to take a serious look to the future, "Paul VI stifled any serious discernment on how to effectively respond to the problem when he forbade the Council Fathers from questioning mandatory priestly celibacy or deliberating over the possible ordination of the so-called viri probati — married men of proven virtue."

Mickens contends that "the Council never had a serious discussion on the much larger and important issue of ministries in the church or how we discern, recognize, distinguish and verify the different charisms Christ bestows on the Holy People of God", and as a result have "tried to
circumscribe all these gifts within these Holy Orders."

He suggests that this rather narrow view "may have limited and/or resisted the working of the Holy Spirit."

Read more (LaCroix subscription)

Francis's words about women

Rita Ferrone asks us to look more closely at Pope Francis's words about women. She acknowledges that he has used demeaning phrases, but also suggests that Pope Francis is searching for language to express his intuition that what the Catholic Church currently embraces in terms of women's roles and ministry is not enough. She asserts that he is not satisfied with Pope John Paul II's popularized notion of the "feminine genius" and that he seeks a more satisfying "theology of women" to express what he knows to be incomplete.

Read more

Fr. John Shea, OSA continues to call for dialogue on women's ordination

With deep respect and love the for the Church, Fr. John Shea has issued a new letter to Pope Francis and his advisors asking them to be bold in their dialogue concerning women's ordination.

Letter to Cardinal Maradiaga

Anthony Padovano writes a letter to his daughter for April at A Church for Our Daughters

My Dearest Daughter,
Your personal journey in life, with all the passion and grace you bring to it, matters immensely, not only to you but to me and to many others. I will not encourage you to give your heart to the Church if it is one you cannot trust or will harm you or not listen to you.

Read more

Second convocation for U.S. Bishops seeks to mend the divide

Can U.S. bishops and other faithful Catholics find a way to mend a sharply divided Catholic population and spread the Joy of the Gospel?

A historic convocation, the second such gathering called by the U.S. bishops, will find more than 3,000 Catholic leaders – bishops, clergy, religious and laypeople – meeting July 1-4 in Orlando, Florida, to focus on how the pope’s 2013 apostolic exhortation, "Evangelii Gaudium", applies in the United States.

Read more

Voices of Faith Panelist, Flavia Agnes, reminds us of the power of women's actions at Easter

Flavia Agnes knows what it means to advocate for women. Once a victim of domestic violence, she is a force to be reckoned with when women are mistreated. In her recent article she states:

...change is difficult to come by and there has been a great deal of resistance to incorporate the change within church rituals.

Last year, a few parishes in Mumbai included women and this year more were to follow. But the public statement by two Eastern churches, the Syro-
Malabar Church and the Syro-Malankara Church of Kerala, that they will be following the tradition of exclusion of women has come as a dampener.

But interestingly women have taken on the challenge, and have organised their own feet-washing ceremonies at various public places. A group in Kottayam, Kerala, Women’s Lives Matter, celebrated the feet washing ceremony with the inmates of the Swanthanam Centre for battered Women and children on April 11, 2017, two days prior to the day marked for the celebrations. Another group of women in Thrissur included transgender people in the feet-washing ceremony.
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

Voices Speaking Event

Join FutureChurch’s Deborah Rose-Milavec as she talks about "Current Trends in Fostering the Role of Women in the Catholic Church"

Women are leaving the Catholic Church in record numbers. But they are also advancing in brand new ways. Learn about the bumpy road toward equality in the Catholic Church and why it is important to carry out that work.

April 29, 2017
2:00 - 4:00 pm
First United Church of Christ
5808 Glenview Ave.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45224

Learn more

Visit the FutureChurch booth at the New Ways Ministry conference,"Justice and Mercy Shall Kiss Conference: LGBT Catholics in the Age of Pope Francis"

If you are heading to the New Ways Conference in Chicago from April 28 - 30, 2017, make sure you stop by the FutureChurch vendor table and pick up our latest resources.

Learn 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 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 Easter, be inspired by the Catholic women who preach each Sunday and some holy days.

Learn more

Celebrate the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene!

**Go and Tell My Sisters and Brothers: A Celebration of Women Preachers**

Join thousands of Catholics across the U.S. and worldwide as we celebrate the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene.

This year, FutureChurch will lift up women preachers from Scripture and history – from Mary of Nazareth and Mary of Magdala to Catherine of Siena and Thea Bowman. Together we will honor and learn from their witnesses and ask them to pray with us as we work to lift up women’s voices in Church and society today.

Learn more