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

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

**FutureChurch Teleconference**
Join FutureChurch for our September 13 teleconference with Fr. Ray Cole of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests talking about their national plan for priest-less parishes

**New! Priest Status by Country!**
CLICK HERE to get priest stats by country!
Get priest stats by U.S. diocese
Open the discussion with your bishop on married priests

**Join us for our Fall Event**
October 27, 2017
Sr. Sandra Schneiders discusses the Gospel of John as a model for parish/community life today

**From the Executive Director**
After starting and stopping this sentence a few times, I will just cut to the chase.

This is Russ Petrus' final week as program director for FutureChurch and we are going to miss him. It is rare to come across a colleague who is so
authentic, talented, creative, kind, and humorous -- but that is Russ. Russ will continue to carry on the work of Catholic Women Preach as a consultant so we will still be working together on a very important project.

I have every confidence that our next program director will be just as extraordinary, but, today, I will register the sweet sadness that is born out of letting go of a colleague who shared FutureChurch's passion for justice and reform in the Church and was fully committed to ushering in change in a positive, respectful way.

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we say good bye, Russ. We wish you only joy and happiness as you venture into a new career.

Deborah Rose-Milavec, Executive Director, and the FutureChurch Board & Staff

**FutureChurch seeks Program Director**

FutureChurch is an exciting place to work! The possibilities for creativity are endless as we carry out the important work of reform in the Catholic Church.

If you are interested or know someone who would make an excellent candidate, please share this notice with your networks!

**Program Director Job Description**

**Catholic Women Preach flows from the courage and**
creativity of our foremothers in faith who preached despite the odds

Catholic Women Preach is a first-of-its-kind resource designed to end the silencing of women, overcome the suppression of women’s authority, and strengthen the preaching mission of the Catholic Church.

Throughout Christianity, preaching was officially restricted to males and male clerics. Although prophecy was open to women, preaching was not. The institution sought to control and suppress the speech of women early on in Christianity as the Gospel of Mary, 1 Cor 14:34-35, and 1 Tim 2:11 - 15 illustrate. This phenomenon grew more pronounced as the masculinization of Church leadership was increasingly solidified from the third century on.

Recognizing the power and authority preachers had in interpreting Scripture, the tradition, teachings, theology, doctrine, laws, and practices for Catholics, males in authority exerted control over who could preach, an indispensable tool in the patriarchal arsenal for delegitimizing women’s authority and sacralizing male domination.

When women did engage in some form of preaching, their moral character was attacked, they were accused of sexual license and heresy, and they were sanctioned. The opponents
of women preachers selectively appealed to Scripture, tradition, and patriarchal social norms ("natural order") to enforce their codes. In this way, Catholic sensibilities, imagination, and experience have been profoundly shaped by those who were officially sanctioned to preach God’s Word and, often, they functioned as the first line of defense in the religious legitimation of unjust social structures which oppressed women.

Still, what is equally clear is that although the validity of women’s preaching, teaching, prophesy, and leadership was contested in every century, women found creative ways to preach. Women persistently and tenaciously shaped, enriched, and spread the influence of Christianity when they perceived there was a need. And they developed their own reserve of strategies in the face of those who would silence them.

Women who preached:

a. Used Scripture to support women’s authority to preach and prophesy, especially John 20:17-18 with Christ’s command to Mary of Magdala to “go and tell”; Acts 2:17-18 and Joel 2:28-32 with their promise that the Spirit would be poured out on women; 1 Corinthians 11:5 where women were prophesying; and Titus 2:3 with the injunction for women to teach. Appeals to Deborah (Judges 4-6), Esther, Anna (Luke 2:36-38), Prisca (Acts 18:26), Phoebe (Romans 16:1),
Tryphaena (Romans 16:12), and Philip’s four daughters in Acts 21:9 were proofs of women’s authority to preach.

b. Argued that the Spirit was given to all the baptized, and that according to Galatians 3:28, there was no longer male and female. Christ could call on any woman to proclaim the Word of God just as he had done with Mary of Magdala.

c. Contended that Mary of Nazareth overcame Eve’s sin and therefore women of faith stood in her priestly heritage.

d. Maintained that women and men are all were made in God’s image.

e. Asserted that biblical injunctions against women speaking could not be universally applied.

f. Challenged the legitimacy of the “naturalness” of gender categories and roles.

g. Defended their reputations against slander by those who questioned their authority.

h. Developed new language to “disguise” what they were doing such as teaching, singing, prophesying, etc.

i. Appealed to tradition to counter the ways women with authority were safely categorized as exceptions to the norm.

Today we recall the lives of Christian women who preached
and prophesied including Mary of Magdala, Catherine of Alexandria, Catherine of Siena, Rose of Viterbo, Sojourner Truth, Catherine Booth, and many others.

These women sustained and nurtured their communities and understood their authority to be based on: baptism, prophetic inspiration, and the call of the Spirit.

Catholic Women Preach flows from the creativity, commitment, and courage of our foremothers in faith who preached the Word of God to the People of God. Just as women in every age disrupted patriarchal systems and resisted patriarchal pressure to submit to male authority and silence their voice, Catholic Women Preach creates the platform for Catholic women to preach today within an institutional Church that still does not fully recognize their authority to preach. Thus, Catholic Women Preach, breaks down barriers by:

1. Providing a platform for diverse Catholic women to preach.
2. Providing Catholics with the opportunity to engage with the wisdom, challenges and Good News seen and experienced through the lives and faith of Catholic women.
3. Providing Catholics the chance to learn about our foremothers in faith -- those who helped spread and shape Christianity and our understanding of the Gospel message through the ages. Many of the women who
ministered, witnessed, and led are excluded or misrepresented in our Lectionary. CWP creates the space to reclaim our heritage and retell our stories of faithful women.

4. Creates a place of encounter where Catholics who have not heard women preach can grow accustomed to their presence in the preaching ministry.

5. Creates an inspirational setting where Catholics, young and old, can find a message that resonates with their deepest understandings of the God, Christ, and the Gospel while challenging them to grow in faith.

Go to Catholic Women Preach

NCR: Keep survivors on Commission for the Protection of Minors

In a statement that we at FutureChurch fully endorse, a National Catholic Reporter Editorial is blunt. "Retain abuse survivors or risk irrelevancy!" Read more

The power of the CDF is being curtailed under Francis

In Joshua McElwee's analysis of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's power to purge its enemies, he concurs with other analysts that the CDF is not the powerful watchdog it used to be.

McElwee writes that the congregation's theological investigations used to follow a fairly predictable pattern. Someone might notify a staff member of the doctrinal office
about a theologian whose writing they found problematic. The office would consider the matter and then determine whether to investigate.

If the theologian under review were a member of a religious order, all contact from the congregation would go through their religious superior. The theologian would be told the issue was a matter of pontifical secret and that any discussion of it in public or with the press would result in further unspecified penalties.

In April 2016, a group of prominent global theologians, priests and bishops publicly called for the doctrinal office to adopt a new process for theological investigations that would be marked by openness instead of secrecy.

Benedict, who had led the doctrinal congregation from 1981 to 2005 as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, was known as firm advocate of theological investigations. Under his leadership, the congregation took a decidedly proactive stance in defining church teaching and in criticizing or warning theologians.

That has changed significantly under Pope Francis.

Read more

Will Pope Francis drop "consubstantial"?

Pope Francis may be getting Catholics ready for a re-do. Radio Vatican reported that
Pope Francis gave an important address on liturgical reform speaking to participants of the 68th Italian National Liturgical Week.

The liturgical reform, he said, did not "flourish suddenly," but was the result of a long preparation. It was brought to maturity by the Second Vatican Council with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, "whose lines of general reform respond to real needs and to the concrete hope of a renewal; it desired a living liturgy for a Church completely vivified by the mysteries celebrated."

Read more
Pope says liturgical reform can't be turned back

The future of SNAP

Tom Roberts reports that with the resignation of its two founders, SNAP is staking out a new future.

New president Barbara Dorris, herself a survivor who was repeatedly molested and raped as a child by a parish priest, said she welcomes the opportunity to explore suggestions advanced by Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea in one installment of a series published in NCR last June.

O'Dea, an author and psychologist who has worked with sexual abuse survivors for more than 30 years, wrote, "Is it time, however, to ask if SNAP can grow beyond its work of
confrontation? Twenty-seven years is a long time to be battling such a formidable institution as the Catholic Church. To do so has required a herculean degree of dedication, as well as a high level of agreement about what needs to be done."

Such a concentrated focus on advocacy, she wrote, left little time for healing. "SNAP has never taken an organized approach to that part of the process," wrote O'Dea. "For example, SNAP is ideally situated to develop a sister organization, one headed by researchers, academics, clinicians and victims, completely dedicated to addressing the healing needs of survivors and separate from advocacy activities."

Read more

**Paul Lakeland thinks "Everyone Leads" by Chris Lowney is on target**

Expert on the role of the laity in the church, Professor Paul Lakeland reviewed Chris Lowney's new book, *Everyone Leads* and finds Lowney affirms that change in the U.S. church depends on laity taking up leadership reign.

Lakeland writes that Chris Lowney’s new book, this time applying his leadership skills to the current condition of American Catholicism, comes at a time when a lot of the energy for ecclesial reform seems to be taking a breather. On the more progressive wing, the grizzled
veterans of Vatican II and Vietnam are just that, veterans, and their energies, like their lifespans, are not endless. 
Read more

**Chris Lowney will be presenting one of FutureChurch's teleconferences on February 7, 2018. Sign up!**

Are personal parishes on the rise as one model for the future of Catholicism?

Charles C. Camosey shares his interview with Dr. Tricia Bruce in Crux exploring the future of personal parishes in the melange of innovations occurring in the Catholic Church.

At a time when the U.S. Catholic Church is more racially and ethnically diverse than ever, personal parishes offer a way to provide specialized ministry to specific communities of Catholics. There are personal parishes for Vietnamese Catholics, for Hispanic Catholics, for Black Catholics, and more.

These parishes are different than traditional “territorial” parishes because their parish decree specifies service to a specific community, per Canon Law no. 518. Rather than serving everyone in a designated geographic area, personal parishes devote their ministry to a particular purpose. They specialize.
Read more

**A majority of Australian Catholics stand with LBGT**
Most Catholics, Christians, and people of other religions in Australia back same-sex marriage and are likely to vote for it in a postal survey later this year, according to a recent poll. Some 66 percent would be inclined to vote “yes” to same sex marriage, with support among the non-religious at 79 percent, compared with 58 percent of people following a religion, the poll revealed. Same sex marriage campaigners will use the findings to encourage Australia’s 5 million Catholics to ignore directives from church leaders who want them to vote “no”.

The polling was commissioned by the Equality Campaign and conducted last week by Jim Reed of Newgate Research. One thousand people were surveyed online.

Last week reports said the Catholic Church was threatening to sack any of its employees who entered a same-sex marriage, if it were legalized.

Read more

**The Catholic Church in Ireland will order priests who have fathered children to act in a responsible manner**

Ireland’s Catholic bishops approved the guidelines titled "Principles of Responsibility Regarding Priests who Father Children While in Ministry" in May, but the document has not yet been published.
According to the said guidelines, any Catholic priest who fathers a child should prioritize the latter's well-being, The Irish Times detailed.

In addition, the guidelines say the priest should face and not abandon his legal, moral, and financial responsibilities to the child. When making decisions concerning the matter, the mother should "be fully involved" and should not be "isolated or excluded" because she is the main caregiver. Read more

In case you missed it: Women now pastoral directors in ten German dioceses

The German Bishops Conference has welcomed the fact that its target of 40% of women in posts as directors of pastoral work has been achieved.

Fifteen years ago, Daniela Engelhard became the first woman to take overall responsibility for pastoral work in the Diocese of Osnabrück in north-west Germany. Today there are ten women holding similar positions in different German dioceses.

The German Bishops Conference (DBK) welcomed the fact that its target of 40% of women in posts as directors of pastoral work has been achieved, it said in a statement published on July 31.

At the moment the 27 German dioceses now have a woman as the head of their pastoral work departments. The women are
**Archbishop Charles Chaput's new book "relentlessly pessimistic"

Michael Sean Winters is not a fan of Archbishop Charles Chaput's new book, *Strangers in a Strange Land: Living the Catholic Faith in a Post-Christian World*. He writes that it is strange indeed. Strange in its almost relentlessly pessimistic view of America today. Strange in its sweeping claims. And, perhaps strangest of all, the book leaves the reader wondering why a bishop would feel compelled to pen such a thing, reliant as it is on virtually every right-wing thread of cultural and political analysis.

**Rev. Hans Zollner visits Australian Catholics**

Hans Zollner, head of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, went to Australia to talk to bishops, priests, and laity there.

He was asked how he felt about the resignation of Marie Collins. He said, "I was very sad. I was really shocked. We were founding members of the commission set up by the Pope in 2014, and since then we had gone through many discussions, many frustrations and made some progress. I tried to ask her calmly what we could do so that we can still complete the (three-year) term (of
When asked about criticisms that the Commission is moving too slowly he said, "From my point of view, compared to the normal pace of change in the Church, we have made progress in a relatively short time, but compared to some expectations it is not enough. People expect things to change faster, and many can’t stand it anymore when they hear over and over again that there are still bishops who don’t act swiftly and consistently, or where there are still horrible cases of abuse that come to light.

Yet, as I see in my encounters in many countries around the globe, much more than one can see if one looks only from one’s own country’s perspective has changed for the better compared to five years ago when we had the symposium at the Gregorian University where almost all bishops conferences were represented, for the first time. You can talk about this subject publicly now in places like Malaysia, Malawi, Mexico or Slovakia and Poland."

Read more

**MSW comments on Pope Francis and the movement away from Pope Benedict's liturgical reforms**

It is always disappointing when Michael Sean Winters ratchets up his sarcasm using such wooden terms as "Left" and "Right" in his typically nuanced
analyses, but this piece on Pope Francis' turn back to Vatican II norms for liturgy is worth considering.

MSW writes that Pope Francis gave an important address last week to the participants in a National Liturgical Week event in Rome. It is not just what the pope said that is important, but the topic itself...

Pope Francis cited Sacrosanctum Concilium as his reason for what is likely to be a movement away from Pope Benedict's "reform of the reform."

"There is still work to be done today in this direction, in particular in rediscovering the reasons for the decisions made regarding liturgical reform, overcoming unfounded and superficial readings, partial acceptance and practices that distort it. It is not a question of rethinking the reform by reviewing decisions, but rather of knowing better the underlying reasons, also through historical documentation, and of internalizing the inspiring principles and observing the discipline that regulates it. After this teaching, after this long path we can affirm with certainty and magisterial authority that the liturgical reform is irreversible."

Read more
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

Learn what you can do to save your parish community

New! International priests statistics!

U.S. Priest statistics

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

Check out events offered by our friends
Register for CTA East Coast Conference in Baltimore, MD

October 20 - 21, 2017

For more information contact:
Ryan Sattler, CTA MD Chair
ryansattler@comcast.net
443.274.1180

Go online: http://conference.calltoactionmd.org