In honor of the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala, donate $50 to help us continue our important work to #ReclaimMagdalene.

As our way of saying thanks, through the month of July receive the online video link and transcript to Sr. Sandra Schneiders' presentation on The Gospel of John and its perspective on women's leadership and ministry as a model for the Church today.

Honoring FutureChurch Founding Member and Longtime Volunteer Helen Brinich

FutureChurch recently received word that our founding member and longtime volunteer, Helen Brinich passed away on July 20 in Cleveland. She was a nonagenarian who loved to walk. During her 80th decade, she faithfully walked a mile or more from her Lakewood home to volunteer in the FutureChurch office every Wednesday.

Co-founder Chris Schenk recalls, "In 2006, Helen enthusiastically joined our very first pilgrimage to Rome sites of women leaders in the early church. Her energy and endurance during the sometimes-lengthy hikes put most of us younger pilgrims to Helen was a quiet woman, for whom the adage "still waters run deep,"
Helen Brinich: Presente!

**Honor St. Mary of Magdala and continue the work of recovering her rightful place in Early Christianity**

In rehearsing for the NBC made-for-television production of "Jesus Christ Superstar Live" this past Easter, Sara Bareilles, who grew up Catholic, said she has a love and reverence for the story of Mary of Magdala. Although the story line in the production relies on a faulty understanding of Mary Magdalene, Bareilles tries to lift her up in that context noting, "I find Mary pure and truthful. She was dismissed by the church. I plan to honor her in [that] light."

Although the production is innovative, unfortunately, Bareilles' character replicates the well worn patriarchal path to recognition for women - her sexually intimate relationship to a male figure -- in this case, Jesus.

While intimate relationships are holy and healthy, history has tried to cram every women into the mold of the silent, strong support figure who stands behind her man, a stereotype that has helped keep a male-dominated power structure afloat.

But historical criticism and feminist scholars are dismantling those confining and distorting stereotypes and replacing them with more accurate portrayals of Mary of Magdala and, by extension, women's ministry, leadership, and witness throughout the history of Christianity.

Over twenty years ago FutureChurch's co-founder, Chris Schenk, CSJ, has a dream of correcting the record and raising up Mary of Magdala to her rightful role.

Today we know that Mary Magdalene is one of the most significant women of the New Testament. In the 19th – 20th centuries, as biblical scholarship tools and techniques developed, scholars reexamined Mary Magdalene undoing some of the damaging confusions of the past. In 1969 the Vatican confirmed that she was a disciple who came up with Jesus from Galilee, stayed with him at the cross when most of his followers had left (Mt 27:55-56, Mk 15:40-41, Lk 23:49, Jn 19:25), went to his tomb early on Easter Sunday, searched and encountered the risen Christ – her teacher,
her “Rabbouni.” (Mt 28:1-20, Jn 20:1-16) He spoke; commissioned her to proclaim his Resurrection and she did. (Jn 20:17-18) On June 10, 2016, Pope Francis elevated her memorial to a feast day.

While we have made progress regarding our understanding of Mary of Magdala's role in history, we still have much work to do. As the newest production of "Jesus Christ Superstar Live" shows, Mary of Magdala is still getting the short shrift when it comes to her authority and witness in the Early Church. As the production travels in 2019, it will be important to take every opportunity to share accurate information about Mary Magdalene. You can find our Letter to the Editor here.

FutureChurch's newest effort to correct the record and raise up the real Mary of Magdala can be found at ReclaimMagdalene.org. There you can find new and old resources. Please take time today to visit the site and learn what you can do to help correct the image of Mary Magdalene.

Don't forget to take this opportunity to receive Sr. Sandra Schneiders' presentation on the Gospel of John and the role of women in that community by donating $50 to FutureChurch. This offer will last through the end of July.

May the true memory of St. Mary of Magdala live on and serve as a foundation for recognizing the authority of all women who love, serve and lead in the Church today.

Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Chris Schenk, CSJ, on the Mary of Magdala season

According to Christine Schenk, CSJ, Mary of Magdala's profound connection to Jesus shows us the power of love.

In her latest Simply Spirit column, she writes:
Mid-July always reminds me that it is Mary of Magdala season. Over 20 years ago, I helped launch what would become an annual event hosted by FutureChurch designed to honor this preeminent "Apostle to the Apostles."

Inspired by the global women's marches, this year's theme is "Celebrating Feminism and Faith in Union." A special prayer service includes optional readings from feminist theologians such as Elizabeth Johnson, Miriam Therese Winter, Diana Hayes and Emily Maynard. Since Mary's feast lands on a Sunday, July 22, special resources offer ideas for honoring this great woman witness at Mass.

It has been gratifying to watch the Mary of Magdala celebrations explode in popularity. An amazing 250 to 400 events are held around the world every year. FutureChurch leaders, Deborah Rose Milavec and Russ Petrus are reaping the rewards of their faithful perseverance.

Why has celebrating St. Mary of Magdala become such a hot ticket? I suspect ordinary Catholics are attracted to the idea of helping correct an egregious wrong. Plus, there is something intriguing about the hiddenness of the women in Jesus' discipleship. After all, most of us are pretty much "hidden disciples" ourselves. We don't think of our Christian witness as anything special, even though it is what gives our lives meaning and drives our decision-making.

Could we be among those Pope Francis is talking about when he quotes St. Teresa Benedict of the Cross (Edith Stein) in Gaudete et Exsultate?

The greatest figures of prophecy and sanctity step forth out of the darkest night. But for the most part, the formative stream of the mystical life remains invisible. Certainly, the most decisive turning points in world history are substantially co-determined by souls whom no history book ever mentions. And we will only find out about those souls to whom we owe the decisive turning points in our personal lives on the day when all that is hidden is revealed. For the most part — at least until recently — Mary of Magdala's witness was all but invisible in Christian history. Even though her testimony is the lynchpin upon which the proclamation of the resurrection depends, for centuries she was falsely remembered — at least in the West — as a forgiven prostitute.

Her prophetic witness emerges from what is surely the darkest moment in the lives of the earliest believers. She went to tell her brothers — despairing male disciples who probably figured Jesus' promise of a new reign of God was nothing but a pipe dream — and they did not believe her. Before belief could take hold, they needed their own experiences of the risen Christ.

Mary's deep love for the one who had healed her, led her to the garden on that fateful morning. First, she discovers that the tomb was empty. And then she saw him. She saw the one who had not abandoned her in her time of trial. The one that she and her sister disciples could not abandon...
during his time of horrendous suffering and death. And the rest, as they say, is history. Or is it herstory?

Some biblical scholars suspect that the empty tomb and resurrection narratives came down to us predominantly through female oral history. The popular memory of the women's experience at the tomb was so strong, it could not be extinguished even though early male writers minimized it out of concern for propriety. In Greco-Roman culture women were not permitted to be legal witnesses or to speak publicly.

This may be why Mary of Magdala and her companions are not mentioned by Paul, whose letters precede the Gospel accounts by several decades. But by the time the Gospels were written down, it was impossible to tell the story of the resurrection without including the women witnesses. The oral tradition about the empty tomb and Mary of Magdala's encounter with Jesus was too deeply entrenched in Christian memory to leave out.

Mary of Magdala's profound connection to Jesus in the garden recently came to mind as I watched the Disney film, "A Wrinkle in Time." I had loved Madeleine L'Engle's book and enjoyed the movie almost as much, even though the production was uneven at best.

I resonate with the story's focus on love as the binding force in the universe and its capacity to traverse the space-time continuum. Perhaps a bit like our Catholic communion of saints. Perhaps a bit like Jesus' ability to be present to Mary of Magdala, then to the other disciples, and now — to us!

L'Engle's tale contains other lovely Christian themes: Each person's inner light brings something uniquely important to creation; we can access divine power by loving and seeking the good and by acknowledging our faults contributes to victory over evil — for evil most certainly exists in L'Engle's narrative world as it does in our own.

In the story, teenager Meg Murry becomes a Jesus-figure, saving her younger brother, Charles Wallace, who has been possessed by "It," the dark enemy of all that is good. She saves her brother by loving him despite the evil invective and pain he spews. Her love persists in the face of grievous suffering. In the end, her love overcomes all dark powers and her brother is returned to her, whole and healthy.

This is a powerful story. It increases my faith that the significant evils we face in our day can be overcome by our union with divine love. In the process, we must also acknowledge our faults — individually and corporately — because then their power over us is weakened.

I suspect there may be many "hidden mystics creating a decisive turning point in human history," in our world.

Perhaps, like Mary of Magdala and Jesus, we will create a new "wrinkle in time," when dark powers are overcome and all that is hidden is revealed.
The Future Church: How Young Catholics are Transforming the Faith

September 20, 2018

Join FutureChurch for our Fall Event with keynote speaker Kaya Oakes and Trivison Award winner Sr. Norma Pimentel

Learn more or purchase your ticket

Join Kaya Oakes and a panel of young Catholics as we explore the future of the Catholic Church.

Our 2018 Trivison Award recipient is Sr. Norma Pimentel. Sr. Norma was one of FutureChurch’s Women Witnesses of Mercy. She is said to be one of the Pope's favorite women religious because of her work.

For the first time, FutureChurch will present a young Catholic leader with the Christine Schenk Young Catholic Leadership Award. This year’s recipient is Shannen Dee Williams. Shannen is known for her remarkable research on the work of African American Religious women to dismantle racism.

Australian bishops under a microscope
John Warhurst writes that the Catholic bishops are by institutional design the centrepiece of the Australian Catholic community. This means a lot is happening in the name of ordinary Catholics whether they like it or not because the perception of the wider community is that the bishops represent all Catholics.

The future of the Australian church may have been put in the hands of the Plenary Council 2020, but any outcome of this process is half a decade away. Till then it is business as usual.

Prime among the bishops now in the news is the recently convicted Archbishop Wilson of Adelaide, who is being called by the Prime Minister, the South Australian Premier and the new Archbishop of Melbourne to resign his position. Read more

**TAKE ACTION! URGE U.S. BISHOPS TO REFORM SEMINARY PROGRAMS**

Recently the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP) sent a letter to Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.SS.R. and the USCCB asking for a major overhaul of their programs for priestly formation. FutureChurch supports the AUSCP campaign and asks Catholics to contact Cardinal Tobin and the Committee to express their concerns.

**Dublin archbishop says youth are alienated from Church**

Catholics should “learn new ways in which they can win new hearts” as young people increasingly feel alienated from the teachings of the church, according to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin.

The Republic of Ireland capital is set to welcome Pope Francis in August as he will attend the World Meeting of Families there but concerns are growing as attendance rates at church services continue to dwindle.
Archbishop Martin sounded a wake-up call, saying Catholicism is becoming “foreign” to young people, especially in Ireland, The Irish Times reports.

The main body of the membership of Irish Catholicism and its leadership belong to an age and cultural group that is in many ways foreign to the culture of young people,” he said.

“The Irish church needs to waken itself to the urgency of this situation,” he said, adding it “needs a radical overhaul in its outreach” and must “re-learn the ability to speak the language of faith authentically in a world where that language may be alien.”

**Irish conference to address emerging parish models**

The Irish Catholic writes that organizers of a key conference on breathing life into Irish parishes hope the visit of Pope Francis can give new energy to a more lay-led vision of Church reform.

The two-day conference on the Future of the parish in Ireland is being hosted by the Irish Institute for Pastoral Studies based at MIC St Patrick’s Campus, Thurles and will be addressed by highly experienced speakers from around the globe. Pope Francis, who will visit Ireland just days before this conference is held, has said that the parish is not an out-dated institution.

However, according to organizers of the event, in Ireland it is quite clear that the dynamic of the parish is changing dramatically with the declining number of priests left to serve throughout every diocese. Read more

**Thomas O'Loughlin on the German approach to Communion**

Thomas O'Loughlin comments on the merits, or lack thereof, of the German bishops' approach to Communion with people who are not Catholic.

He writes that humans do not simply eat together, we share meals. Indeed, it is this meal-sharing that is distinctively human. We may act in packs as hunter-gatherers, but we eat as meal-sharers with a common culture. Moreover, there is an inherent structure to this sharing, which we might call “the grammar of meals”. In the simplest or most elaborate meal, there are basic codes that are common human property – and when they are transgressed we instinctively
recognise that something is wrong. A simple example is that we place common food midway between the sharers; we divide up the food so that all get a share; we have conventions when guests are present, such as “family hold back”.

All this has implications for liturgy because the Eucharist has, to say the least, the form of a meal, and so the grammar of meals applies. Can I allow you to be present at our meal and then refuse to share the food with you? Can you be at the table and not be offered food to eat and a cup to drink? If you are at the table and refuse my offer, I will be offended and wonder why you are there at all.

Likewise, if you are there and express a willingness to eat, then can I be a host of the divine banquet and yet respond with what would be brutish behaviour on any other occasion? Because we confess that we can be elbow to elbow with the Lord around his eucharistic table, it surely follows that we have to accept that the grammar of meals applies there.

Each day we pray, in the present tense, that the Father’s “will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven”. Moreover, we see any expression of this will being an anticipation of the End. Constituted as a community of memory, the Church is unremittingly future-focused. What we pray for now is that which we shall enjoy in its fullness in heaven. Moreover, we instantiate this in the Eucharist when we refer to it as “the promise [or taster] of future glory”. We normally think of this relationship in terms of the present leading to the future, but in liturgy – as the sacramental presence of the future now – the future also determines the present.

So, will non-Catholic Christians have a full share in the heavenly banquet?

If you answer “No”, then that solves the problem: they should be excluded now. If you reply “Yes” (see, for example, Matthew 8:11 and Luke 13:29 for two expressions of this theme in the kerygma), then it is that heavenly table which we should be aiming to imitate at the gathering next Sunday. Read more

Listen to FutureChurch’s podcast with Thomas O’Loughlin

Rescinding honorary titles for Cardinal McCarrick

The Tablet reports that earlier this month, Fordham University announced that its Board of Trustees had voted to rescind an honorary doctorate awarded to Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, following revelations that the former Archbishop of Washington had molested an altar boy nearly 50 years ago as a priest at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York.

On Thursday, The New York Times reported on
Another allegation against McCarrick, this one involving alleged sexual abuse of a minor. The person making the charge is identified only by his first name in the Times account, yet the story also indicates he’s filed a police report in Loudon County, Va.

With the growing spotlight on Cardinal McCarrick, Fordham isn’t the only institution to have awarded an honorary degree to the 88-year-old retired cardinal who has now been suspended from public ministry by the Vatican.

The Catholic University of America, the University of Notre Dame, Georgetown University, Sienna College, St. Peter’s University, the College of New Rochelle, and the University of Portland are just a number of the institutions that bestowed honorary degrees upon a man who, during his 50 years of ministry, was widely known as a social justice giant within American Catholicism.

Another bishop resigns: no reason disclosed yet

Joshua McElwee reports that Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Tegucigalpa, Honduras Auxiliary Bishop Juan Pineda Fasquelle, who had reportedly been accused of financial and sexual misconduct.

Pineda, age 57, had served Catholics in the Honduran capital under the leadership of Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, who is known as an influential papal advisor and serves on the nine-member Council of Cardinals.

The Vatican announced the move in a short note July 20 that did not give any reason for the resignation. The traditional retirement age for bishops is 75.

Francis had sent an Argentinian bishop last year to look into the administration of the Tegucigalpa archdiocese. While the bishop's report on the matter was not made public, the Italian magazine L'Espresso reported last December that it contained accusations of misuse of funds.

The Catholic Trifecta of Disgrace

Feminist scholar Mary Hunt believes that a third wave of disgraceful exploitation is about to be revealed. She writes that...
adult women who have been sexually involved with priests represent the third element of this complicated problem.

Until and unless their stories are told and the implications parsed, I doubt that the abuse of young people and of employees will be solved.

Here's why: The abuse of minors and the utilization of underlings are variants on the systematic abuse of women rooted in an ideology of female subordination to male power. To have that top-down schema recapitulated with young and vulnerable men is totally consistent with the patriarchal logic on which it is based.

As long as that ideology remains in place, there is little hope for much-needed changes in priestly behavior and ecclesial structures. There is little hope for the whole church. Read more

**Thomas Rees, SJ, on Humanae Vitae**

Thomas Reese argues that Humanae Vitae is not about sex, but about power.

When the encyclical was published on July 25, 1968, the response from Catholic moral theologians was overwhelmingly negative. Although they liked many things in the encyclical, the universal prohibition against artificial contraception was not something they could support. They noted that almost all other Christian denominations approved of contraception and that the papally appointed commission to study the issue had recommended a more open position.

The opposition of theologians was not just behind closed doors. It was very public in scholarly articles, op-eds, news conferences and signed petitions. Both Catholic and secular media covered the dispute extensively. Disagreements in the Catholic Church over sex made good copy.

Nor were theologians the only ones to disagree. Some cardinals and bishops distanced themselves from the pope, pointing out that the document was not infallible teaching and that each person had to follow their conscience. The German bishops issued the "Declaration of Königstein" that left to individual conscience of lay people whether to use contraception or not.

And much of the laity worldwide did follow their own consciences. Polls have shown that the overwhelming majority of Catholics do not accept the hierarchy's teaching that all use of artificial
contraceptives is immoral. In 2016, the Pew Research Center found only 8 percent of American Catholics agree that using contraceptives is morally wrong. Catholic couples felt that they understood the situation better than celibate males.

It is uncertain how many Catholics left the church over this teaching, but it is clear that even more stayed, continued to go to Communion, and simply ignored it. This was a remarkable change for Catholics who had deferred to the clergy on moral and doctrinal teaching. It gave rise to the concept of "cafeteria Catholics," Catholics who picked and chose which teachings they would accept. Some in the hierarchy blamed dissenting theologians for leading the people astray. While it is true that the public debate eased the consciences of some Catholics, the vast majority of Catholic couples were making up their minds on their own. In fact, studies found that increasing numbers of Catholics were already using contraceptives in the 1950s.

Rather than shoring up the authority of the hierarchy with the laity, "Humanae Vitae" undermined it. In the laity's mind, if the church could be so wrong on this issue, why should they trust the church in other areas?

Cardinal Parolin on the demise of the "state church"

Catholic News Agency reports that according to Cardinal Pietro Parolin, World War I and its aftermath changed the map of Europe, but also dismantled the notion of the "state church" in a way that forced the Catholic Church to discover again the authentic meaning of mission.

After the war, Pope Benedict XV "was prompt in indicating how the missionary world must change paths, abandoning the colonial ideology in which it had been lulled and promoting autonomy, independence and ecclesial self-governance in all the areas outside Europe," said the Vatican secretary of state.

Speaking at a conference July 12 anticipating the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, Cardinal Parolin looked at the wide-ranging impact of the war and its aftermath on the political map of Europe, and how that affected the fates of peoples in the Middle East and in the countries of what would become the Soviet Union.

But he also spoke about Pope Benedict's 1919 apostolic letter "Maximum Illud" on the church's missionary activity. In conjunction with document's centenary, Pope Francis has asked all Catholics to celebrate a special "missionary month" in October 2019.

Announcing the special commemoration, Pope Francis had said, "In 1919, in the wake of a tragic global conflict that he himself called a 'useless slaughter,' the pope recognized the need for a more
evangelical approach to missionary work in the world, so that it would be purified of any colonial overtones and kept far away from the nationalistic and expansionistic aims that had proved so disastrous."

---

**Sr. Linda Romey, OSB**

**Developing Strategies for Ensuring the Future of Religious Life**

Erie Benedictine Linda Romey has been focused on the evolution of religious life for a number of years. In this telecast, she will be presenting the open source movement as a model for facilitating the growth of new offshoots of traditional religious life and the important role of networking in the growth process.

Linda will also discuss how the ways we think and speak about religious life influence the perceptions of the wider church and culture. She will close with a few thoughts on the importance of think tanks, public relations and media campaigns to change negative perceptions.

---

**New! LISTENING TO WOMEN**

**Join the Conversation!**

Pentecost is a time when we open our hearts and minds to the movement of God's Spirit.

Today, women in the Church are looking for opportunities to express the fullness of God’s presence in them as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. Through Listening to Women, we a) create safe spaces where women can talk about the celebrations and challenges they experience as women in the Catholic Church; then b) share those reflections with our Bishops to help create opportunities for greater understanding and inclusion in Church life.

[Learn more](http://listeningtowomen.org)
CATHOLIC WOMEN DEACONS RETREAT

Join us for our third retreat as Catholic women come together to discern and explore the call to the permanent diaconate!

September 7 - 9, 2018
Cleveland, Ohio

Learn more or Sign up

Sign the Open Letter to Pope Francis Urging More Effective Collaboration with Women

Catholic Women Speak and Voices of Faith invite Catholic women to sign an open letter to Pope Francis urging him to collaborate more effectively with women and to use language that expresses the pressing need for full equality for women.

Sign the letter

Donate $125 or more and receive a copy of Kaya Oakes book, The Nones Are Alright: A New Generation of Believers, Seekers, and Those in Between

Start a conversation about women deacons with DeaconChat!

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

Catholic Women Preach expands!

We are excited to tell you about two new features we've just added to help you get the most out of Catholic Women Preach.
THE CWP PODCAST
Many of our regular viewers have been asking for and suggesting ways to listen to audio-only versions of the reflections on Catholic Women Preach. They want to benefit from the fine preaching, insights, and wisdom these women have to offer whether they're at home or on the go.

And so we're glad to announce that recent and all upcoming preaching will now be offered as a podcast. Best of all, when you subscribe you'll have the audio version waiting for you as soon as it is added.

Listen and subscribe on the most popular platforms:

Apple Podcasts Overcast Pocket Casts RadioPublic CastBox

SEARCH CWP
As our archive of preaching grows, many of those who work in religious education, adult formation, RCIA, high schools, campus ministry and other ministries have asked for a way they can search for preaching that touches on a particular theme or topic.

You may have already noticed the new search bar at the top of the page (or in the menu if you're using a mobile device). All you need to do is type in your search term and press enter to get the most relevant search results. You can search for a particular preacher, a particular feast day, a topic or issue, or a scripture (using the standard abbreviations).

THANK YOU
We really hope that these two enhancements help you get even more out of the faithfilled reflections of all the women who preach for us. And we thank you for your feedback, continued viewership, and support! In our efforts to continually enhance this ministry, we invite you to consider taking our survey and contributing financially.

Of course, be sure to connect with us on Facebook and Twitter and share the gift of Catholic women preaching with your friends and networks!
Over 150,000 views! **PLEASE SUPPORT CATHOLIC WOMEN PREACH!**

Please take the Catholic Women Preach survey and help us to make this exciting initiative even better!

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