



FOCUS E-News

July 23 - 29, 2017 Edition

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[October 27, 2017](#)

[Sr. Sandra Schneiders discusses the Gospel of John as a model for parish/community life today!](#)

From the Executive Director

Everyday I meet Catholics who inspire me and deepen my faith. I work alongside some of them, they sit on FutureChurch's board and committees, they volunteer in our office and at our events, and they participate in acts of loving resistance to injustice within the church.

As you read the articles this week, you will find inspiration in the work of Hispanic Catholics in Colorado fighting to keep their parish open, or Catholics who gathered this week to honor the



memory of St. Mary of Magdala and her modern day counterparts, or the trio of prelates who pushed for a change of direction at the spring general assembly of the USCCB.

We are a people of hope -- a people whose broken hearts are the foundation for our labors. We believe in our God's vision given to us through Jesus Christ and we are responsible for the future of the church. Please continue to do your part and **take action today!**

[Open the discussion on married priests](#)

[DeaconChat: Start a Conversation on Women Deacons](#)

[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](#)

Thank you for all you do!
Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Francis cardinals dominate at USCCB assembly

According to Michael Sean Winters, something beautiful happened at the USCCB conference in Indianapolis. Francis appointees began to turn the conference around -- returning it to a gathering where mature, robust discussions about complex issues such as immigration, health care and religious liberty could take place.



Leading the discussion were two of the three Americans made cardinals at last November's consistory, Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark - who last month welcomed an LGBT Catholic group to his Cathedral of the Sacred Heart - and Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago. "I was very pleased with the robust and mature discussion of complex issues like immigration, health care and religious liberty," Cardinal Cupich told The Tablet in a phone interview at the conclusion of the public sessions. "There is a growing consensus on these issues as people are willing to grapple with their complexity."

By the end of the assembly, 53 bishops voted against making the religious liberty committee permanent (132 yes:53 no) and President Cardinal Daniel DiNardo scrapped the plans to disband the working group on immigration.

[Read more \(subscription link\)](#)

Catholics celebrate the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala

Mary of Magdala is perhaps the most maligned and misunderstood figure in early Christianity. Since the fourth century, she has been portrayed as a prostitute and public sinner who, after encountering Jesus, repented and spent the rest of her life in private prayer and penitence. Paintings, some little more than pious pornography, reinforce the mistaken belief that sexuality, especially female sexuality, is shameful, sinful,



and worthy of repentance. Yet the actual biblical account of Mary of Magdala paints a far different portrait than that of the bare-breasted reformed harlot of Renaissance art.

In fact, Mary of Magdala was one of Jesus' most influential apostles—and she was not a prostitute.

Across the U.S. and around the world Catholics are celebrating the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala.

In Cleveland, on July 20, more than sixty women and men joined FutureChurch for the annual celebration of St. Mary of Magdala. Presider Lisa Frey recalled, "the dangerous memory" of women leaders in Christian history and asked all present to take up their unique call to "Go and tell" the Good News.

In Cincinnati, Sr. Barbara Fiand preached to the gathered, "We are not to hold on to what we have always done, calling it holy by that fact, but to cling to the new life that is ever the fruit of the resurrection – HIS and ours in his name."

For Catholic Women Preach, Sr. Mary Boys lamented the degradation of Mary but also had words of hope. She preached, "Jesus may have chosen the apostle Mary of Magdala to play a vital role in his community, but later generations found this too radical, too counter-cultural. So, Mary of Magdala, Apostle to the

Apostles, had to be put in her place, lest women be seen as equals in making known the Gospel. Refashioning Mary as a repentant prostitute kept women from stepping out of their place.

So, sorrow tinges our remembrance. The Magdalene's mistaken identity calls us to lament all that the church has lost over the ages by its repression of women's leadership—a repression that continues to constrict the church and betray the ministry of Jesus.

And yet, we live in hope. Just as today we can't imagine a Boston or New York Marathon—or any marathon--without women, so, too, may the day come that we can't imagine the church's apostles without picturing women alongside men.

May we let the apostle Mary Magdalene step into her rightful place in our church and world! Let us celebrate her as wounded healer, evangelist, and witness to the Risen One.

May the Apostle of Apostles continue to bear witness that Christ is alive!"

To learn about other celebrations taking place in the U.S. and around the world, go to <https://www.futurechurch.org/mary-of-magdala-celebrations-2017>.

Huffington Post article: [Mary Magdalene: Single Best Argument for Women Priests](#)

Mickens on Mueller: No

whining please

In his Letter from Rome, Robert Mickens writes that Gerhard Ludwig Muller is not going away quietly. He has not stopped complaining in the public forum since June 30 when Pope Francis personally informed the 69-year-old cardinal that he would not be retained as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).



Recall how he immediately [leaked the news](#) of his dismissal to friends in the media even before the Holy See Press Office officially announced it the next day.

It was the reaction of a stunned and angry man.

One can sympathize. Not a single cardinal who has headed this 475-year-old office — formerly called the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition (and later the Holy Office) — has ever been let go so unceremoniously.

The pope did not publicly thank or acknowledge Muller for his five years of service; just let him go six years before the canonical retirement age. The cardinal claims he had no clue whatsoever that Francis was going to cashier him, even though almost everyone else saw it coming.

No clue, indeed.

And, apparently, poor Cardinal Muller still hasn't got one.

[Read more](#)

***La Civiltà Cattolica* calling out radically ultraconservative media**

Paul Moses writes that Church Militant, the ultraconservative website with the stated aim of “educating individuals about the Catholic faith,” is getting considerable attention after Fr. Antonio Spadaro, SJ, and Argentine Presbyterian Pastor Marcelo Figueroa assailed its “shocking rhetoric” last week in *La Civiltà*

Cattolica. They [described](#) Church Militant as “a successful U.S.-based digital platform that is openly in favor of a political ultraconservatism and uses Christian symbols to impose itself,” adding: “This abuse is called ‘authentic Christianity.’ ” Carrying the clout that accompanies the Jesuit-run, Rome-based publication’s close association with the Holy See, the authors cite Church Militant as a prime example of the apocalyptic fear-mongering they decry.

[Read more](#)

[Michael Sean Winters on B. Chaput](#)

Habit is not Fidelity

There is more tough talk in Rome coming from Francis allies.

Crux reports that in the Vatican newspaper *L' Osservatore Romano*, Italian Father Giulio Cirignano, a native of Florence and a longtime Scripture scholar at the Theological Faculty of



Central Italy wrote, "The main obstacle that stands in the way of the conversion that Pope Francis wants to bring to the Church is constituted, in some measure, by the attitude of a good part of the clergy, at levels high and low ... an attitude, at times, of closure if not hostility," Cirignano wrote.

"Most of the faithful have understood, despite everything, the favorable moment, the Kairos, which the Lord is giving to his community," Cirignano said. "For the most part, they're celebrating."

"Despite that, the portion [of the community] closest to little-illuminated pastors is maintained behind an old horizon, the horizon of habitual practices, of language out of fashion, of repetitive thinking without vitality," he said.

Cirignano offered several factors to explain what he sees as "closure" and "hostility" from the clergy towards Pope Francis.

[Read more](#)

[Meet that man who could define what a Francis bishop means](#)

Restructuring the Roman Rota

Elise Harris reports that Fr. Pierangelo Pietracatella and Fr. Hans-Peter Fischer are the newest members of the Roman Rota, and mark the latest in a string of appointments Pope Francis has made this summer as part of his ongoing effort to restructure the Roman Curia.

[Read more](#)



Giving Voice creates a space for younger women religious

Carolyn MacKenzie reports that women religious under 50 who have started their formation stage in a Catholic congregation met in early July for the meeting of Giving Voice, a network aimed at building a community among women religious and giving them a voice as well as advocating for a larger participation within society.

[Read more](#)



Is it possible to be Catholic and Feminist?

Colleen Hennessey questions whether one can be Catholic and a feminist at the same time. What do you think?

She writes that in my own experience, as Catholic and a feminist, I am alienated from and angered by the Church's past and continued treatment of women. My research on Catholicism and feminism among Irish women showed that I am not alone.

While 98.2% of women surveyed were baptised Catholics, I found that less than half had baptised their own children or intended to baptise future children. Only 27% affirmatively identified as Catholic now while the remaining half didn't identify as Catholic or replied they were unsure if they identified as Catholic.

The majority of the women in my study believed it was impossible to be a Catholic and a feminist



and all rather stunningly, reported that news about the Church made them angry on a regular basis (daily and weekly). Their advice to young women about Catholicism centered on using personal conscience and warnings that participating in the rituals of the Catholic Church will damage their self-esteem.

[Read more](#)

Hispanic Catholics defend their Colorado parish

Across the entire Archdiocese of Northern Colorado, Our Lady of Visitation Catholic Church (OLV) is the only church established solely by Hispanic Catholics from the Southwest. It has a unique history that cannot be replicated. This quaint church, on a quiet street, is the home of devout Catholics who migrated to Denver from Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado as early as the 1920's.

OLV has been completely financially self-sufficient for over 70 years. From the hard work of parishioners, this church has accumulated savings of over \$200,000. OLV has 397 registered parishioners with weekly attendance consistently over 100 people.

In March 2017, the Archdiocese of Denver ended Masses, citing a shortage of priests, various administrative burdens on the pastor and proximity to other parishes.

But the parishioners do not agree with the decision of the Archbishop and are working to



keep their parish open because, "So many people love this humble, little church - abundant blessings abound!"

www.goathillcatholic.org

[Parishioners of church strive to keep it open](#)

Pastoral work and theology cannot be separated

[Cecilia González-Andrieu](#) argues that theology and pastoral work cannot be separated. She writes that one way to understand how the pastoral and theological are intertwined is to think about Martin Luther King Jr.



In King's case, we can see how seamlessly he moves from the life-and-death concerns of his community, to mining the Christian tradition for a way to judge racism and segregation (in his "Letter From Birmingham Jail" he quotes both Aquinas and Augustine), to then formulating a theology that can address the suffering of his community in light of the Gospel.

As we can see here, what King understands is that the formation of his community's living faith, his pastoral work, requires a previous step, and that is the work he does as a theologian. King reflects on how the interplay of the present and the past in the Christian tradition provide new perspectives.

[Read more](#)

New Ways Ministry's service on gay-friendly parishes

Peter Feuerherd reports that when New Ways Ministry began

its ["gay-friendly parishes" list](#) 20 years ago, for at least some Catholic ears it might have sounded like a contradiction in terms. Now it is the most popular section of the group's [website](#) and contains more than 200 listed parishes, most in the United States, and continues to expand.

[Read more](#)



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[Be inspired! Catholic Women Preach!](#)



[Learn what you can do to save your parish community](#)



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2017 CALL TO ACTION

EAST COAST CONFERENCE

CTA Chapters from Maine to Florida

Justice and Mercy Under the Trump Administration

"...to do justice, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8)

Friday and Saturday, October 20 – 21, 2017

**Double Tree by Hilton, Baltimore BWI Airport
890 Elkridge Landing Rd., Linthicum, MD 21090**

Keynote Speakers

Sr. Simone Campbell: "Justice and Mercy Under a Trump Administration"

Dr. Greer Gordon: "Racism in the Church and Society"

Sr. Patty Chappell: "Pax Christi: Being a People of Peace"

Focus Presentations

**LGBT and the Welcoming Church
Caring for the Earth, Our Common Home**

**Immigration, Sanctuary, and Human Rights for All
Transgender and Intersex Identities and the Family
Jews and Muslims...Our Sisters and Brothers**

Registration Materials Coming Soon

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