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Download your 2017 Feast of St. Mary of Magdala Resource—Celebrating Women Preachers: Go and Tell My Sisters and Brothers!

Start a discussion with DeaconChat

Go to Greece with Sr. Chris Schenk!

Celebrate the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala!

Go and Tell My Sisters and Brothers: Celebrating Women Preachers

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

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 the Church and society today.
FutureChurch, the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, and Voice of the Faith launch new project to foster dialogue on women deacons - DeaconChat

The goal of DeaconChat is to bring ordained and lay Catholics together to learn, converse and discern together.

FutureChurch, the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests and Voice of the Faith are asking you to engage a local member of the clergy (your parish priest, deacon, or your local bishop) in a conversation about women deacons.

Learn more and download the resources

FutureChurch heads to the meeting of Association of U.S. Catholic Priests and finds signs of hope in those who are confronting racism in the world and in the Church

At the 2017 AUSCP meeting held in Atlanta from June 19 - 22, FutureChurch, Voice of the Faithful, and AUSCP formally launched DeaconChat, a joint initiative encouraging laity and clergy to dialogue about women deacons. The packet contains historical, theological, and pastoral reasons for restoring women deacons along with tools for starting a conversation with bishops and priests.

The theme of this year's AUSCP conference was "Peacemaking in Our Fractured Society" and focused on healing the racial divide in the world and within the Church. This year's AUSCP John XXIII award winner, Fr. Brian Massingale, opened the conference.
with a survey of the tragic violence being perpetrated against African Americans today along with a comprehensive analysis of the historical root causes. He also carefully outlined the complicity of the Catholic Church in perpetuating racism historically and today.

During the Q & A, some priests expressed fear that challenging racism in their largely white parishes would result in angering them. They wanted to seek ways to educate and challenge their parishioners while avoiding ruffling feathers. But Fr. Massingale responded with several poignant questions. He asked, "Why do certain people matter more than our black brothers and sisters who are suffering?" and "Who are your people?" Participants were reminded of the old adage that the Gospel is meant to "comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable."

Fr. Clarence Williams, Fr. Kenneth Taylor, and other priests from the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus continued the process of transformation by leading a poignant liturgy of lament where participants reflected on the many ways we still perpetuate racism in our lives, our culture, and in the Church.

We learned of the African American men and women who had been turned away from the Catholic Church including Fr. Augustus Tolton (1854-1897), a former slave, who was turned away from the seminary in the United States because he was black. He went to Rome to obtain the education and formation he needed to become a priest and was ordained there in 1886. He came back to the United States and founded the first black Catholic church in Chicago. The Chicago archdiocese formally opened his sainthood cause in 2010.

In the evenings, participants gained greater historical perspective watching
the documentary "I am Not Your Negro" based on James Baldwin's writings, and "Hidden Figures," the story of some of the African American women at NASA.

On the last day of the conference, participants made a pilgrimage to Ebenezer Baptist Church where we walked in the footsteps of Martin Luther King Jr. and the many leaders of the Civil Rights movement. We ended with Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, the first Black Catholic Church in Atlanta. The Gospel music and liturgical dance stirred our hearts.

Report by Deborah Rose-Milavec

**Correction: Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco dies**

Retired Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco, who led the Northern California archdiocese for 18 years, died on June 22 after a long illness. He was 88.

The archbishop had moved to the Jewish Home of San Francisco from St. Mary's Medical Center on June 16, but he "experienced difficulties with his breathing early this morning," San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone said in an announcement. "He was transported to the nearest hospital but could not be revived."

"He stated several times since his move that he had achieved his goal of leaving the hospital for a new home where he could enjoy the fresh air, trees and the sounds of birds in the early morning," Archbishop Cordileone said, adding that the prelate's "initial days at Jewish Home had gone extremely well."

"Our hearts are breaking at losing such a great priest and friend," Archbishop Cordileone said. "Join me in praying for the repose of his soul."
Pope honors priests who were censured for serving the poor

Nicole Winfield writes that Pope Francis made a pilgrimage to northern Italy on Tuesday to honor two 20th-century parish priests whose commitment to the poor and powerless brought them censure from the Vatican.

Francis flew by helicopter to Bozzolo, near Cremona, to pray at the tomb of Don Primo Mazzolari. Mazzolari, who died in 1959, was an anti-fascist partisan during World War II who, like Francis, preached about a "church for the poor."

Afterward, Francis flew to Barbiana, near Florence, to pray at the tomb of Don Lorenzo Milani, a wealthy convert to Catholicism who founded a parish school to educate the poor and workers. He died in 1967.

Both priests were considered rebels in their lifetimes and were censured by Vatican authorities for their writings. By honoring them with his brief visit, Francis sent the church a message of the type of priest he wants today: simple, guided by Gospel values, devoted to the poor, and uninterested in careerism.

At his first stop, Francis stood in silent prayer before the simple tomb of Mazzolari, who is considered now to be "Italy's parish priest."

When Pope Francis gets tough

Christopher Lamb writes that the Pope can be a very tough when it comes to unity and integrity in the clergy.

It was evident last week when the pope
delivered a stinging rebuke to priests from the Diocese of Ahiara in Nigeria. The priests had refused to accept the 2012 appointment of a bishop from a different clan.

When he met with the Ahiara clergy he ordered each one of them to apologize in writing, pledge their "total obedience" to the papacy and accept whomever he appoints to lead the diocese.

The next day, Francis made another tough move. The Vatican announced that the pope had accepted the resignation of Archbishop Alfredo Zecca of Tucumán, Argentina, for health reasons.

Zecca has reportedly upset the pope for a failure to defend one of his priests, Fr. Juan Viroche, an outspoken voice against local drug traffickers.

In October, Viroche was found hanged, but Zecca resisted calls to put up a plaque in Viroche's parish commemorating the priest. Instead he accepted the official version of events that Viroche committed suicide. Many locals suspect the suicide was staged.

Learn more

**Astrid Lobo Gajiwala opens up about the pain of exclusion in the Catholic Church**

I recently attended a service held for of an old neighbor who passed away and was shocked to learn that she was Catholic. Laid out in the boarding school of her youth, it was a poignant goodbye with the religious sisters and her Muslim husband and children around her in prayer. I do not know if her birth family was present. I did not see a priest, so I am guessing she did not receive a Christian burial.

What I do know is that my heart burned within me as I recalled my insensitivity
to her frequent lighthearted comment that she was “half-Catholic” because of her Catholic schooling. I never followed up on this hint she offered. I can empathize with her reticence to share her truth. Married to a Hindu, I often found myself in a similar predicament with regard to my children, who went regularly to Mass and Sunday school but were not baptized. Our secrets may have been different, but our fear of public censure was the same.

Read more

**Fortunate Families Respond to Bishop Paprocki’s latest decree further excluding LGBT Catholics**

After learning that Bishop Paprocki issued another decree finding new ways to exclude LGBTQI Catholics including excluding them from Catholic funerals, Fortunate Families responded.

**We regret that Bishop Paprocki** of the Springfield Diocese found the need to verbally assault the Catholic LGBT+ community in his [Decree regarding same sex marriage and related pastoral issues](#). As parents we understand that all of our children were wonderfully made in the image of God. We understand that all of our children lead whole and holy lives when they live authentically. Our response to Bishop Paprocki can be found [here](#).

We hope that you will join us in writing to the bishop and condemning this kind of message.

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Here is the contact information for those who want to write or call the bishop.

Bishop Thomas John Paprocki  
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois  
Catholic Pastoral Center  
1615 West Washington St.
What will future houses of worship look like?

Over the past few decades the concept of a “church” — in fact, of all kinds of religious buildings — has been shifting, some might even say radically transforming, because of big changes in people’s attitudes about religion.

Do we even need a building to be religious, to be spiritual, to practice our belief? Is there a future for religious architecture at all? We put that question to a group of architecture students at the Catholic

The students revealed a willingness to greatly broaden the definition of what happens inside a house of worship, and why it was important to them.

Students found new opportunities to define a sacred place in such activities as performing music or making art; in moving their bodies through space in the medium of dance; in digitally connecting with people and events around the globe; in sharing with and caring for other human beings through the concept of “giving and receiving”; in creating a safe place for women who are victims of domestic violence; in landscape and nature serving as a setting for contemplation, reflection and celebration; in providing support to those seeking to strengthen their bodies and spirits through nutrition and exercise.

Conventional ideas about houses of
Who will the Pope pick as new bishop of Milan

Pope Francis is preparing to change the leadership of several important dioceses around the world. The moves, which he’s expected to begin rolling out in the coming days, are likely to give a huge boost to his unrelenting and long-term project to change the mentality and direction of the global Catholic Church.

It will give him a golden opportunity to replace men who have been less than exuberant about his attitude adjustment program and efforts at reform.

Megan Clark sees parallels between Mary of Magdala and Wonder Woman

I am a theologian who knows well the experience of being the only woman at the table. “Wonder Woman” beautifully captures the intensity and frustration of this experience, as well as the feeling of greater responsibility for those not allowed in the room.

In the Gospels, one of Jesus’ most radical choices is his use of women as witnesses. From Mary Magdalene to the Samaritan Woman at the Well, Jesus trusts women to tell his story. In fact, if it were not for female witnesses, preserving an account of the crucifixion and resurrection would have been quite difficult as it was the women who did not flee.

Unfortunately, women’s space in the Gospel narratives has not been celebrated for much of Christian history. The most blatant distortion is the maligning of Mary Magdalene as a...
repentant prostitute, a claim with no grounding in Scripture. Her strength and witness in otherwise male cultural and religious spaces were less threatening if she could be reduced to a female stereotype.

Over the last 75 years, there have been many attempts to weaken or diminish Wonder Woman.

**Tom Fox receives well deserved honor**

Thomas C. Fox, retired publisher and editor of National Catholic Reporter, received the Bishop John England Award June 22 from the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada.

**The God Squad: The Next Generation of Catholic Priests**

Time Magazine writes that no generation may ever be able to repeat the post-World War II priest boom, when droves of men were ordained at the average age of 28 and fewer laypeople could serve in leadership roles. But the share of men under age 29 who enter Catholic seminary has risen 15% in the past 15 years, according to CARA, and the average ordination age has fallen from 37 to 34.

The new priests represent a cultural change in the church. For the first time, the next generation of Latino Catholics in the U.S. is larger than that of white Catholics. Only seven in 10 of the newest priests in the U.S. are white, compared with more than 9 in 10 U.S. priests overall, according to CARA. In Chicago, where 44% of Catholics but only 14% of priests are Latino, church leadership is recruiting young priests with brochures that read, Sé un líder.
The future of the priesthood looks more hopeful

Pat Perriello writes that her concern about the future of the priesthood in the United States has centered around everything she has heard and experienced involving those priests ordained in the last few decades. Now Time magazine presents a thoughtful article on the latest attitudes among seminarians today, and it is encouraging.

I should say that if I were writing my vision of the future of the Catholic priesthood, it would certainly include priests being able to marry if they choose to, and a priesthood that includes women in significant numbers. It would also include a clergy even less driven by doctrine than the young seminarians appear to be. Yet, the article does suggest that the youngest crop of seminarians is moving in a positive direction.

The article describes the post-Vatican-II clergy as "reserved men, removed and dogmatic, who present themselves at the lectern to guide their congregations." I would add that my sense has been that this generation of priests sees themselves and their function as sacred and cultic. This has created distance between them and the people. Of course, not all priests fit this stereotype, but it does seem to have some resonance.

The Francis effect seems to be changing that. No one would accuse the latest crop of seminarians and newly ordained as being wildly liberal, but change is evident, especially in the
In the early 1960s, after leaving his studies at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh to enter the minor seminary at St. Mary's, Kentucky, Bernard Survil looked ahead to a conventional and calm life as a priest in his home diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

"My bishop was very happy to have me go and get out of the diocese because I was speaking out against the war in Vietnam," Survil recalled on a recent afternoon when he visited my home in Washington, D.C., after a peace rally at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Four years ago Pope Francis declared “if a person is gay and seeks out the Lord and is willing, who am I to judge that person?”

The implications of Francis’ statement are profound and are playing out internationally at a pace that - by the glacial standards of the church – might be called breakneck.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, 65, was profiled this week in The New York Times for welcoming a group of openly gay people to mass.

But in New York, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, 67, appears to be resisting any reconsideration in tone or doctrine over gays. This week he signaled he would take a different approach by publicly...

Learn more

**In a move to engage the world more effectively, Francis brings in new leaders to Academy for Life**

Some pro-life Catholics are upset over the appointment of the Rev. Nigel Biggar, an Anglican clergyman and moral theologian, to the Pontifical Academy of Life. He is Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Christchurch College, Oxford, and director of the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics, and Public Life. He was recommended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who was asked to send a representative. He is also a sign that Pope Francis wants the Academy to better engage with the world.

Learn more

**John O'Malley recalls the man who fought papal infallibility**

In the Treaty of Tolentino, 1797, Pope Pius VI, thoroughly humiliated, had to pay a huge indemnity, agree to French occupation of the most important cities in the Papal States, like Bologna and Ferrara, and cede to Napoleon possession of hundreds of precious manuscripts and works of art. He died two years later in France as Napoleon’s prisoner.

After Napoleon’s defeat, the situation allowed a religious revival to take place, but a deep feeling of insecurity gripped many Catholics. In 1819, Joseph de Maistre published his book *Du Pape (On the Pope)*, in which he argued that an infallible papacy was the only salvation from the chaos that
threatened. The book set off a controversy about the role of the papacy in church and society that raged in the popular press for the next 50 years, until the opening of the First Vatican Council (1869-1870).

Don't miss these opportunities and events!

FUTURECHURCH FALL EVENT

SAVE THE DATE!
October 27, 2017

Sr. Sandra Schneiders presents:

John's Gospel: Blueprint for the Future of Parish Life

Join FutureChurch in Greece and follow in the footsteps of our foremothers in faith

Listen to Sr. Chris and Russ Share a Preview of the Pilgrimage

From October 5 - 14, 2017 join FutureChurch as we explore the archaeological sites of early Christian women. Learn about the ancient Greek goddesses Athena, Artemis and Gaia to women of the New Testament and
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.

Read more

FutureChurch resources

Want to learn about modern women witnesses of mercy? Or the history of early Christian women leaders? Want to know more about the priest shortage and what you can do to open the doors to married priests, women deacons, and lay leadership? Want to purchase our cards featuring St. Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles? Visit our store to view all our exciting resources.

Visit the FutureChurch store

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 Deacons

Are you called or are you discerning a call to the permanent diaconate?
Share your story.

As Pope Francis’ commission on
women deacons continue their work, women around the world are already discerning their own call to be a deacon. Share your story today and help make Catholic Women Deacons a reality!

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 and faith of women. Be inspired by the Catholic women who preach each Sunday and some holy days.

Learn more

Join us as we launch our new initiative - Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life

2017 - 2018 SERIES
September 13, 2017
Association of US Catholic Priests

Priestless Parishes

October 23, 2017
Professor Ed Hahnenberg
Emerging Models for Ministry

October 27, 2017
Sr. Sandra Schneiders
John’s Gospel: Blueprint for the Future of Parish Life

November 8, 2017
Fr. Robert D. Duch
The Lobinger Model for Parish Leadership and Ministry

January 17, 2018
Jamie Manson
Religious Life for the Next Generation

February 7, 2018
Chris Lowney
Everyone Leads: How to Revitalize the Catholic Church

Save the dates!
Learn what you can do to save your parish community

FutureChurch supports parishioners who want to preserve their parish community from being merged or closed. In doing so we have, together, changed Vatican policy. This FutureChurch initiative is designed to provide Catholics with tools to defend their parish homes has contributed to a highly significant change in Vatican policy. Since 2007, our Save Our Parish Community project has guided successful parishioner appeals across the U.S., and in Cleveland, Ohio.

Learn more

Make your voice heard to open the door for married priests

On a trip home from Tel Aviv, Pope Francis stated, "Celibacy is not a dogma of faith, it is a rule of life that I appreciate a great deal and I believe it is a gift for the Church. The door is always open given that it is not a dogma of faith." Bishop Erwin Krautler and Pope Francis discussed the priest shortage and future of the priesthood in Brazil urging the Bishop and all local bishops to be "courageous" and to make concrete suggestions on the possibilities available to assist in this crisis, including expanding the priesthood to include married men. Catholics in the United States call on our bishops to follow Pope Francis' call to be courageous in seeking solutions to our growing priest shortage and to present these solutions to Rome.

As you know well, over the past forty years, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States and worldwide has experienced a steadily worsening priest shortage. At first, the process was so gradual that it was hardly noticed. But now, the rapidity of the decline is having a devastating impact on parish and sacramental life. According to a 2008 Center for Applied
Research in the Apostolate study, half of the 19,302 active diocesan priests plan to retire by 2019. Following Pope Francis' model we urge the U.S. Bishops to undertake a fresh examination of our early church tradition of a married and celibate priesthood, a diaconate served by women and men, and invite priests who have married back to ministry. Please encourage local bishops to open this important dialogue at a diocesan level particularly in the areas most affected by the priest shortage.

We also ask U.S. Bishops to open a discussion of these issues at their general assemblies with a view to presenting concrete suggestions for opening ordination to Pope Francis. We call on you, our bishops and brothers in Christ, to encourage discussion of the genuine reform so necessary to the future of the Church. We urge you to take action now.

Learn more