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Catholics Call on Bishop Paprocki to Rescind His Harmful Decree

FutureChurch released a statement urging Bishop Thomas Paprocki to rescind his harmful decree and calling on all Catholics to do the same.

FutureChurch strongly urges Bishop Thomas Paprocki to rescind his harmful decree barring lesbian and gay couples in civil marriages from communion and Catholic funerals and calls on him to follow Pope Francis’s lead in becoming more loving, accepting, and welcoming members of the Body of Christ.

“Bishop Paprocki’s decree stands in direct opposition to Pope Francis’s pastoral spirit, deeds, and words,” said Deborah Rose-Milavec, Executive

Director of FutureChurch. “His harsh tactics defy the Gospel and deny the God’s own people the love, care, and acceptance that we are called to offer one another.”

“Rather than build up the Body of Christ, I’m afraid this decree will only serve to further alienate LGBTQI Catholics, their families, and those who love them, leaving deep and lasting wounds,” said Russ Petrus, Program Director for FutureChurch. “This decree is not representative of the kind of inclusive and pastoral Church that Pope Francis, many bishops, and so many lay Catholics across the world are working together to build.”

FutureChurch supports LGBTQI Catholics and the Catholic parents, family, and friends of LGBTQI Catholics and ask those who disagree with the bishop’s decree to respond honestly and respectfully by contacting him. Bishop Paprocki’s contact information is below.

Bishop Thomas Paprocki
Catholic Pastoral Center
1615 West Washington Street
Springfield, Illinois 62702-4757
Phone: (217) 698-8500
Email: tjpaprocki@dio.org

Read more

Over a dozen organizations sign an open letter to Bishop Paprocki

Louise Akers, SC, to receive 2017 Trivison Award

Louise Akers, S.C., has a wide, gracious smile for most everyone she meets, but she is no pushover. In fact, she is a modern day prophet who stands firm in her convictions when it comes to justice and equality for women in the Catholic Church and in the world.

In 2009, Sr. Chris Schenk, then
Executive Director of FutureChurch, heard Sr. Louise speak about her experience of being dismissed after refusing to back down regarding her stand on women's ordination at a Call To Action conference. Chris was so inspired by Louise's faith and sheer determination in the face of attempts by the Archbishop of Cincinnati to silence her, that Chris was inspired to develop one of FutureChurch's most important resources - A Million Voices. The resource was designed to help Catholics know their rights and responsibilities and to navigate difficult conversations in a Church that has too often silenced those who faithfully dissent.

As a testament to her long life of faithful service to the Gospel, FutureChurch will name her the Trivison Award recipient for 2017.

The award honors the spirit and life of FutureChurch co-founder Fr. Louis J. Trivison and is given to a Roman Catholic who exhibits outstanding leadership in advancing the FutureChurch mission or vision in one or more of the areas of teaching, administration, research, publication, advocacy, and pastoral service.

Sign up to receive information about our Fall Event

Read about her 2009 appearance at CTA

Learn more about A Million Voices

**BBC reports that Cardinal George Pell is charged with sex offenses**

Australia's most senior Catholic figure, Cardinal George Pell, has been charged with sex offences. The charges relate to alleged "historical" incidents, police in the Australian state of Victoria said on Thursday.
Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Shane Patton said the allegations were made by more than one person. Cardinal Pell has consistently denied any wrongdoing.

[Read more NY Times article]

New cardinal promotes high level advisory body of women to advise Pope Francis

Voices of Faith – an initiative that advances the role of women in the Catholic Church and supports them in their infinite potential to create meaningful change for the common good, contributing fully to the life of the Catholic Church and to wider society - - may see one of the ideas they have promoted with a number of cardinals and bishops come to fruition.

Joshua McElwee reports that one of the five prelates Pope Francis just made a new cardinal of the Catholic Church has suggested the pope consider creating a special advisory body of women akin to the College of Cardinals to offer more opportunity for women's leadership in the church.

Stockholm Cardinal Anders Arborelius, whom Francis made Sweden's first cardinal in a consistory Wednesday, June 28, said he thinks "it's very important to find a broader way of involving women at various levels in the church."

"The role of women is very, very important in society, in economics, but in the church sometimes we are a bit behind," Arborelius said in a June 28 NCR interview.

[Read more]

US priests' association wants to focus on formation

"All means all — no exceptions, no
small print. God loves all of us, whatever our differences," Fr. Bryan Massingale said as he recalled the anniversary of the Orlando massacre of LGBT people in the Pulse nightclub a year ago.

Amid sustained applause from 170 members of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, the Fordham University theology professor challenged the sixth annual assembly gathered in Atlanta, June 19-22, to retrieve a crucial insight of Martin Luther King Jr. — the need to "redeem the soul."

According to Massingale, "We are in a struggle for the soul of America." To heal a fractured society is not just a quest to overturn racial or other discriminatory laws. There is a far deeper reality to redeem — the soul. The soul is a set of meanings and values that informs a way of life.

"We are also in a struggle for the soul of U.S. Catholicism," said the recipient of the association's St. John XXIII Award. "We talk more about religious liberty than about Jesus Christ. We talk more about the Fortnight for Freedom than the reign of God. We need less talk about the catechism and the code of canon law and talk more about the joyful witness of passionate charity found in Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical, Deus Caritas Est," continued Massingale, again amid persistent applause.

Read more

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

FutureChurch, the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, and Voice of the Faithful 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

Sweden's first cardinal will help Francis accomplish his vision

This week, Pope Francis will create Sweden’s first Prince of the Church, in fact the first cardinal in all of Scandinavia - not just since the Reformation, but ever. The consistory ceremony in which it will happen takes place in Rome this Wednesday, June 28, the vigil of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

By all accounts, Francis was charmed and impressed by Bishop Anders Aborelius of Stockholm during his brief, Oct. 31-Nov. 1 visit in 2016.

According to those who know Arborelius, he’s easy to like. “The Bishop of Stockholm is a very good man, very competent and open, he gets on with everybody,” said Bishop Czeslaw Kozon of nearby Denmark, a fellow member of the Scandinavian Bishops Conference, in a June 15 interview with Crux.

“He'll be a very good representative for the church here,” Kozon said.

Beyond personality, however, the pope
may have three big-picture aims in mind by trying to raise the profile not just of Arborelius, but the Catholic Church generally in this part of the world.

Read more

Cardinal Joe Tobin featured in New Yorker for his "No"

“What keeps despots, dictators awake at night, what topples evil empires is the little person who goes into the square in the middle of the town in the dark of night and scrawls on the wall, ‘No!’ ” the Catholic prelate told the congregation. “And I want to say to you, we are the ‘No!’ that God scrawls on the wall.” This was at an interfaith gathering in Newark, New Jersey, in early May, to oppose the Trump Administration’s immigration and deportation policies. The speaker was Cardinal Joseph Tobin, and the meeting was in defense, as another participant, Bishop Dwayne Royster, said, of “undocumented folk,” “black folk,” “poor folk,” and “folk needing health care in this country.”

Read more

USCCB makes religious freedom committee permanent and dissolves committee on immigration

Thomas Reese, SJ observes that, except for a few bishops, the USCCB continues to move away from the social justice emphasis of Francis while ossifying their emphasis on the culture wars.

Read more

Open letter to the authors of the dubia urges them to cease and desist

Author Stephen Walford of England writes an open letter to the four authors of the dubia to Pope Francis on Amoris Laetitia.
Her writes, "I would like to begin by addressing your concerns expressed in the dubia. It seems that in relation to the first dubia, you have trouble accepting the two authentic interventions of Pope Francis in which he has already affirmed that in certain cases, sacramental discipline has been changed: firstly, in answer to Francis Rocca’s question on the flight from Lesvos to Rome on April 16, 2016, and secondly, on September 5, 2016, when he praised the Argentine Bishops’ draft guidelines stating there is: “no other interpretation” of Amoris Laetitia Ch. 8. In relation to your other four dubia, I am confused as to why you have felt the need to ask them."

Read the full letter

Cardinal Elect from Laos believes Francis wants cardinals who understand the small and persecuted church

Cardinal-elect Louis-Marie Ling Mangkhanekhoun, apostolic vicar of Pakse and apostolic administrator of Vientiane, Laos, has been caught in a whirlwind since the "surprise" announcement by Pope Francis on May 21 to make the Laotian bishop a new cardinal.

When asked why he thought he had been chosen he replied, "When we went for an ad limina visit [on Jan. 26], nobody would have thought about this. However, during the visit, the pope told us that the strength of the church resides in the local church, especially the church that is small, the church that is weak, and the church that is persecuted. This is the backbone of the universal church. I was a little puzzled."

He continued, "The next day we celebrated Mass with the Holy Father, and again he reiterated the same theme in his homily. It made me wonder. I came to a conclusion from
what he said that the strength of the church came from patience, perseverance and the willingness to accept the reality of faith. This made me think that our poverty, suffering and persecution are the three columns that strengthen the church."

**Rocco Palmo suggests mergers in Camden handled with care**

The decision to merge six parishes into three in Camden came after an 18-person committee was formed in the fall of 2015 to determine what changes were needed. After reviewing the data and the concerns of the parishes, the representatives determined that the most effective option was to reduce the number of parishes through mergers, which would save on personnel, housing, and other assorted management costs, the diocese said.

Rocco Palmo, a Catholic journalist in Philadelphia who writes for the news website *Whispers in the Loggia*, said Saturday that the Diocese of Camden has been “extraordinarily delicate” in its handling of the mergers.

“They know the people in Camden City, between the violence, the poverty, the struggle of immigrant communities, they need the presence of the church more than anybody. The presence is going to remain, but it’s going to be consolidated,” he said. “It’s simply the way of the world here.”

Camden, which has declined in population, used to be a mostly white, blue-collar industrial city, but that hasn’t been the case for 50 years, said Palmo, noting a significant influx in recent years of Latinos from Puerto Rico and Mexico.

“The population base simply isn’t there for” the six parishes, he said. The Camden Diocese, which
comprises the six southernmost counties of New Jersey and ministers to 450,000 Catholics in the region, will have 62 parishes after the mergers.

Read more

Changes coming for Commission on the Protection of Minors

A member of Pope Francis’s commission on clergy sexual abuse has suggested the composition of the advisory body may change at some point this fall, as the original three-year terms granted to individuals in the group expire.

Jesuit Fr. Hans Zollner, who was appointed by Francis with seven others in March 2014 as the initial members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, said the group is hosting its last planned plenary session in September.

"People know that the mandate of this commission comes to a close," said Zollner, speaking Thursday at the Pontifical Gregorian University. "The mandate is of three years and at the end of this year the mandate finishes."

Read more

Pontifical Council for Culture wants women's permanent advisory council to be a model that is replicated

The female advisory board for the Pontifical Council for Culture wishes to change that, sending an "electric shock" that will open discussion on women’s roles in the Church.

“The Church is a male-dominated world, but the [wider] world in which it exists is both male and female,” Consuelo Corradi, vice rector for research and international relations at the LUMSA University of Rome, told Crux.
“The global church needs to enter a continued dialogue with women,” Corradi said.

Read more

Will the Pope Pull It Off?

As the process of review and renewal of the structures of the Roman Curia continues, Church leaders, educators, local reformers, and observers – along with bishops, priests, religious men and women and lay faithful all around the world – are trying to understand what Pope Francis is asking of them, specifically.

Will Pope Francis Pull It Off? is the title of a book by Fr. Rocco D’Ambrosio, a priest of the Diocese of Bari and Ordinary Professor of Political Philosophy in the School of Sociology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

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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 continues 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
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
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.

Learn more