The Priest Shortage Originated in the Mid-Sixteenth Century

According to Dr. Thomas O' Loughlin, Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Nottingham, the priest shortage is even more acute than is typically reported because the Church tends to take an anemic view of what it means to be a Eucharistic people.

O' Loughlin contends that there has been a serious crisis of "under-ordination" since the mid-sixteenth century when as an effect of the Reformation debates the full-time, professionalized, seminary-educated cleric became the norm. Since that time, he asserts that the Church has never attempted to establish an optimal ratio for priests to people. He proposes a new vision of parish life with a ratio of 1 priest per 100 Catholics.

Read article

Cologne priests criticize parish clustering, mandatory celibacy, and call for women's ordination

In an open letter published on January 10, 2017, 11 priests from the Archdiocese of Cologne criticized the practice of clustering parishes,
mandatory celibacy, and called for the Church to admit women to the priesthood. "It makes no sense to pray to the Holy Spirit for vocations, if, at the same time, women are excluded from the priesthood. We urgently need to forge ahead with courageous initiatives regarding admission to the priesthood," the priests wrote. One of the writers, Mgr. Wolfgang Bretschneider remarked, "There was a time when one could not even discuss women's ordination openly," but he believes a lot has changed under Pope Francis (Tablet, 21Jan17).

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German Bishops offer "broad interpretation of Amoris Laetitia"

On February 1, the German bishops published their guidelines for Amoris Laetitia which allows Catholics who are divorced and remarried to receive the sacraments. Their guidelines are predicated on the importance of respecting individual decisions of conscience. They have been criticized by the likes of Cardinal Gerhard Mueller, Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who stressed that it was not "correct" for bishops to interpret Amoris Laetitia. But Archbishop Heiner Koch, who is responsible for family life in the bishops' conference, defends their broad interpretation saying they are firmly convinced "this is the Pope's intention" (Tablet, 11Feb17).

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First woman appointed to head of Vatican Museum

Barbara Jatta, an Italian art historian, has been appointed to head the Vatican Museums. She is the first woman to be appointed to such a
position and the appointment makes her the most prominent female administrator in the Vatican thus far.

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