

## FOCUS E-News

November 26 - December 3, 2017 Edition

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### **From the Executive Director's Desk**

Several decades ago, I served as Executive Director of a domestic violence prevention agency and shelter offering women services intended to support them as they worked to end the abuse they suffered in their relationships.



Women came into the shelter with one, two, three, or more children in tow. Women came into the shelter with bruises, both physical and emotional. Women came into the shelter crippled by a deep sense of shame. They had internalized messages from their abuser, family, friends, pastors, and society and they blamed themselves for their abuse and neglect.

When they entered the doorway of the shelter, they became part of our lives and we became a part of theirs, if only for a short while. We sought to support them, shield them, defend them, offer them choices that would empower them, but most of all, we sought to honor them by letting them know in practical ways how deeply they were cherished, respected, and admired. In turn, their courage inspired us and taught us what it means to live and love with purpose in the midst of a war zone.

Today, many women are braving the patronizing, demeaning, and destructive taunts of others as they declare their resistance to abuses they have experienced at the hands of too many men in power.

The #MeToo campaign, a movement that began more than 10 years ago by activist Tarana Burke, took off in ways no one could predict and has generated a cultural reckoning that will help ensure that women are treated as co-equals who claim their equal rights and equal dignity.

The #MeToo campaign has given rise to another campaign, #ChurchToo, that focuses on the abuse women have faced in religious contexts. This campaign has helped uncover the specter of violence against women rooted in our religious texts, traditions, teachings, and practices.

Feminist theologians, activists, and practitioners have been

rooting out the distorting features in our religious histories for decades. Yet, we can ask with renewed vigor, "What is the Catholic Church's contribution to the spectrum of violence against women?"

Phyllis Tribble, Delores Williams, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, and many other feminist, womanist, and mujerista theologians have, for decades, connected the dots between religious norms and the oppression of women.

[Daniel Maguire writes](#) that "The subordination of women to men is a primal violence from which other forms of anti-woman violence are spawned."

Beyond naming the age old problem, many are calling for bold changes.

Maguire believes that while religion has caused and abetted misogyny, it also contains the cure.

[Rev. Jason Wells](#) suggests that men can make a huge, positive difference by:

1. Listening to victims.
2. Believing victims.
3. Speaking up and reporting violence.
4. Speaking out by challenging other men.
5. Giving up visions of masculinity that are not rooted in the Gospel.
6. Committing to a new way of life.

Wells suggests that men begin the transformation process by committing to concrete actions

using **#Iwill** to declare their intent.

Others praise the quick actions of organizations in stopping sexist practices.

[When women from the online blog and community "Sick Pilgrim" reported the predatory actions of the co-founder of the community,](#) Rebecca Bratten Weiss praised the board's action saying they offered "a preferential option for the victim."

We can change both the Church and the world by resisting the sinful status quo and make "a preferential option for the victim" a reality when violence occurs.

Deborah Rose-Milavec

### **New Zealand bishops commit to exploring new missal translation**

A statement released from the New Zealand conference of Catholic bishops on October 26 voiced support and thanks for Pope Francis's guidance on liturgical translations, offered in his motu proprio, *Magnum principium*, which they describe as a "bold directive."

They also expressed the desire to "explore prudently and patiently the possibility of an alternative translation of the Roman Missal and the review of other liturgical texts" along with the other English speaking conferences.



The full statement (see below) is signed by the president, Bishop Patrick Dunn, and secretary, Bishop Charles Drennan, of the conference, as well as Cardinal Archbishop John Dew, who serves as an adviser to the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome, and others.

"During our recent meeting in Wellington, we discussed Magnum Principium (the great principle), Pope Francis' September 2017 edict concerning the translations of liturgical texts. The Holy Father has shifted the responsibility of liturgical translations from a Vatican department back to national Conferences of Bishops.

Thus he has reaffirmed the teaching of the Second Vatican Council which states that it is local groupings of bishops who oversee then approve translations into the language of the land, before seeking final acceptance of this work by the Holy See.

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC) gratefully welcomes this directive from Pope Francis. We appreciate the bold step he has taken to ensure translations of liturgical texts are of the highest standard.

Pope Francis has stated that three principles should guide the work of liturgical translation: fidelity to the original text; fidelity to the particular language into which it is being translated; and, a commitment to the

intelligibility of the text.

Therefore respect for a language's own syntax, structure, and turns of phrase are to be upheld.

Like many priests and parishioners, we share in the frustration concerning some aspects of the current translation of the Roman Missal and we reiterate our desire for beauty, comprehensibility and participation in and through the sacred liturgy.

We will be working in collaboration with English speaking Bishops' Conferences around the world, as we seek to explore prudently and patiently the possibility of an alternative translation of the Roman Missal and the review of other liturgical texts."

✠ Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland and NZCBC President

✠ Charles Drennan, Bishop of Palmerston North and NZCBC Secretary

✠ John Dew, Cardinal Archbishop of Wellington

✠ Steve Lowe, Bishop of Hamilton

Rev Michael Dooley, Vicar General, Diocese of Dunedin

Rev Rick Loughnan, Diocesan Administrator, Diocese of Christchurch

The New Zealand Conference of Catholic Bishops was an [early supporter](#) of Pope Francis's

initiative in undertaking a review of *Liturgiam authenticam*.

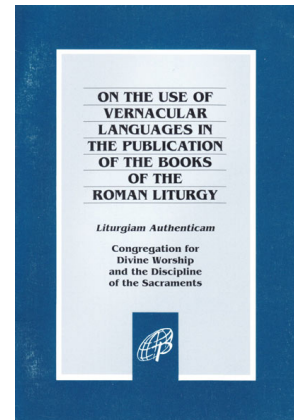
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## A Nail in the Coffin of *Liturgiam authenticam*?

Rita Ferrone writes that the Italian journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, well known for publishing views and perspectives which reflect those of the Holy Father, has dedicated the lead story of its current issue to the subject of liturgical translations.

The article incisively presents *Liturgiam authenticam* as a detour from the foundational principles of the Second Vatican Council, and praises Pope Francis's recent *motu proprio*, *Magnum Principium*, for putting the Church back on course. It also situates, correctly, *Comme le Prevoit* as one of the "great instructions" flowing from the Council.

The article is entitled «MAGNUM PRINCIPIUM» E L'INCULTURAZIONE LITURGICA NEL SOLCO DEL CONCILIO, "Magnum Principium and Liturgical Inculturation on the Path of the Council." [Fr. Cesare Giraudo SJ](#), distinguished professor emeritus of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, is the author of the article. Among his other accomplishments, Fr. Giraudo was one of the scholars closely involved in the landmark ecumenical decision, under Pope Saint John Paul II, to approve the validity of the ancient



Anaphora of Addai and Mari, practiced by the Assyrian Church of the East.

The full article (in Italian) is available to subscribers only, but below is the abstract in English translation, followed by some extracts (rendered in English by Matthew Sherry) that were taken from the full article and published today in [Sandro Magister's blog](#).

Anyone reading that blog should take care to note that Mr. Magister's hostile evaluation of the Pope's intentions (a "comprehensive plan to make the Church evolve from monolithic to federated") is not borne out by the facts. The article speaks of "subsidiarity"—which is something totally different, and a far more applicable concept for understanding what the Pope has done.

Magister does, however, correctly assess the close connection between this publication and Pope Francis's own views and program, in general. Therefore, the article merits our attention as an indication of the direction the Holy See is moving. Is this article another nail in the coffin of *Liturgiam authenticam*? Time will tell, but it certainly seems so.

#### ABSTRACT

It is indeed a "great principle" that the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* proclaimed in Article 36, which conceded to the



individual liturgical assemblies the right to speak with God in their own language. This problem had already been confronted and successfully resolved in the middle of the ninth century by Saints Cyril and Methodius, who listed liturgical language among the goods of which nobody can be deprived.

In Italy, the first who dared to put in the hands of the Christian people a translation of all the prayers of the Mass, including the canon, was Lodovico Antonio Muratori in his book *The Regulated Devotion of Christians*, published in 1747. Yet it is necessary to recognize that there is still a great gap between putting the text of the Mass in the hands of the people in the vernacular, and actually adopting these vernacular languages for the celebration of Mass. By filling that gap, the Second Vatican Council in the liturgical constitution responded positively to a long-felt desire. Let us say immediately that at the level of reception, from the early years, there has intervened a frivolity of conduct that has not seldom blunted the goodness of the conciliar purpose.

Now with the *Motu proprio Magnum Principium*, Pope Francis, concerned to redefine the relationship between the Apostolic See and the Bishops' Conferences on a matter that is particularly delicate and arouses strong feelings, has returned to the conferences "the right and the responsibility" (*ius et munus*) for the translation of liturgical

books. In order to do this, he was obliged to realign Canon 838 of the Code of Canon Law, and related documents, with the Council's norms.

Moreover, who is better able to judge their conformity with the original texts than the Episcopal Conferences, each of which oversees the panel of experts who drafted the translations? Furthermore, every translation by its very nature is already an interpretation. Pure, aseptic translation does not exist. Those who claim that this is a possibility will sooner or later end up encountering formulations that do not translate but betray the original.

Following the promulgation of the Motu Proprio Magnum Principium, which was accompanied by a note and an explanatory comment, a letter to the Pontiff written by Cardinal Robert Sarah concerning Magnum Principium appeared in a number of press organs. In it, he ended up presenting the new practice as a reaffirmation of the old state of affairs. In the face of this erroneous interpretation, the Pontiff was forced to act in the same way, i.e., publicly. Now that the changes have been clarified, liturgical inculturation will certainly benefit from this measure regarding translation, intended to infuse new blood into the Church's patrimony of prayer.

[Read more](#)

**Women speak about about abuse in churches at**

## #ChurchToo

Time Magazine reports that the explosive #MeToo social media campaign to raise awareness of sexual harassment and violence has spread to the religious community in the form of #ChurchToo.



Launched by Twitter users Hannah Paasch and Emily Joy, #ChurchToo prompted users to share stories of sexual abuse in church settings.

[Read more](#)

## Barbara Blaine's legacy lives on

Amy Morris-Young senses that the spirit of Barbara Blaine lives on in the #metoo campaigns afloat today.



She writes that on Sept. 24, when Barbara Blaine, founder and former president of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (or SNAP) died, "it felt to me like an era of the safe telling of this story might be ending as well. Like many other Catholic families, ours has been influenced by past clergy abuse, and felt its reverberations through subsequent generations. With Barbara Blaine gone, I worried that survivors might hold their stories tight, and keep those damaging secrets hidden, once again.

I am only guessing here, but it seems Barbara has continued her mission, from heaven."

[Read more](#)

## Lay Catholics in India celebrate progress regarding clergy sex abuse but keep the pressure on



Jose Kavi reports that the Catholic dioceses and religious congregations in India are in the process of implementing a set of guidelines that the bishops' conference required when it released its sexual harassment policy for the workplace two months ago.

A 60-day checkpoint for setting up diocesan and congregation committees as the first stop for sexual harassment complaints passed on Nov. 14 without much progress, but response has also been slow to similar directives in a 2013 national law.

The "CBCI Guidelines to Deal with Sexual Harassment at Workplace" were released Sept. 14 by the [Catholic Bishops' Conference of India](#) amid demands from church groups for a policy to rein in increasing sexual abuse cases involving priests.

Though the [28-page document](#), which took two years to prepare, steers clear of mentioning priests, those demanding action against clergy abuse still find it a welcome step by the Indian church.

Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, a laywoman theologian and a founder and member of the [Indian Christian Women's Movement](#), said publication of the much-awaited guidelines is a

"cause of celebration" as the document fills "a critical lacuna in the church."

Gajiwala was among more than 100 theologians, women religious, priests, and feminists who wrote to the bishops [on March 22](#), a month after a Catholic priest was arrested for allegedly raping and impregnating a minor girl, his parishioner, in Kerala, southern India.

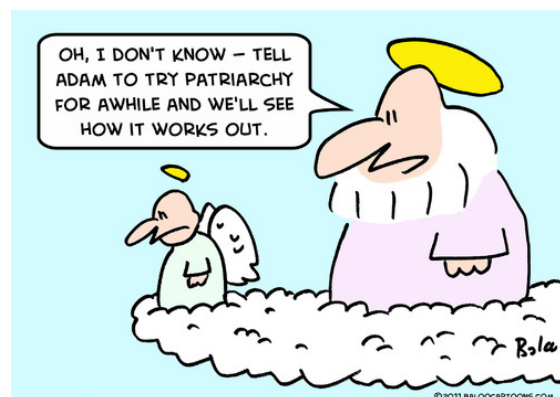
The new document sends "a strong message that the bishops mean business when it comes to zero tolerance of violence against women that they advocate in their Gender Policy," Gajiwala told NCR. She was referring to the "[Gender Policy of the Catholic Church](#)," which the Indian bishops' conference published in 2010.

[Read more](#)

### **The Church of Sweden urges end to patriarchal language when referring to God**

The Guardian reports that the Church of [Sweden](#) is urging its clergy to use gender-neutral language when referring to the supreme deity, refraining from using terms such as "Lord" and "he" in favour of the less specific "God."

The move is one of several taken by the national Evangelical Lutheran church in updating a 31-year-old handbook setting about how services should be conducted in terms of language, liturgy, hymns, and other aspects.



The decision was taken on Thursday at the end of an eight-day meeting of the church's 251-member decision-making body, and takes effect on 20 May on the Christian holiday of Pentecost.

A former state church, headquartered in Uppsala, some 37 miles north of the capital, the church has 6.1 million baptised members in a country of 10 million. It is headed by a woman, Archbishop Antje Jackelén. Jackelén told Sweden's TT news agency that a more inclusive language had been discussed as early as the 1986 conference. "Theologically, for instance, we know that God is beyond our gender determinations, God is not human," Jackelén said. The change was met with criticism, however. Christer Pahlmblad, an associate theology professor at Sweden's Lund University, told the Kristeligt Dagblad newspaper in Denmark that the move was "undermining the doctrine of the Trinity and the community with the other Christian churches".

[Read more](#)

### **Jesuit theologian calls for Catholic bishops to use 1998 missal translation**

Sarah MacDonald writes that in a new book urging Catholics "seize the moment," authors Fr. Gerald O'Collins, SJ, and John Wilkins, former editor of The Tablet, argue that the imposition of the 2010 translation under Pope Benedict was the outcome of a "scandalous takeover" by



conservative elements in the Vatican, and O'Collins urges bishops' conferences to seize this moment to roll back on that turn of events.

In [\*Lost in Translation: the English Language and the Catholic Mass\*](#), Wilkins outlines the maneuverings that dismantled the International Commission on English in the Liturgy and how Cardinal Medina Estévez, the prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, swept aside the international commission's 16 years of work, even though its translation of the missal had been approved by all 11 of the English-speaking conferences of bishops participating.

[Read more](#)

**Fr Adam Boniecki, a historic figure at the intellectual Polish Catholic weekly, "Tygodnik Powszechny," to reduce his media involvement because of views regarded as too liberal**

Samuel Lieven reports that the former editor-in-chief of the magazine *Tygodnik Powszechny* in Krakow, Fr. Adam Boniecki, MIC, a theologian who was close to Pope John Paul II, has been silenced again.

The religious order of Fr Adam Boniecki MIC, a key thinker from the liberal wing of Polish Catholicism, announced this weekend that he is prohibited from speaking to the media.

This amounts to the re-introduction of a sanction



previously imposed on the former editor in chief of the Krakow journal Tygodnik Powszechny.

The ban on Fr Boniecki, who used to be close to Pope John Paul II, was only lifted in July. As "senior editor in chief" of the paper, the 83-year old retains the right to continue writing in the journal, where he regularly criticizes the conservative Polish government.

According to a statement by Fr Boniecki's order, the Marians of the Immaculate Conception, the prohibition was imposed as a result of certain comments with respect to Church teaching on the moral judgment of suicide.

The Marians also referred to a message posted on a Facebook page belonging to the LGBT community. They said the post "illustrated without any possible doubt Fr Adam Boniecki's support for so-called sexual minority groups, whose activities are in total contradiction with the moral teaching of the Church".

The latter criticism was immediately rejected by the editors of Tygodnik Powszechny. "Fr. Adam has neither posted any message nor made any gesture of support and he has been a victim of manipulation," the paper said in a statement. "People have taken advantage of his benevolence and of the fact that he is opposed to discrimination against homosexuals."

Regarding the suicide issue, the



order reproached Fr Boniecki for his sermon at the funeral of a man who set himself alight last month in Warsaw in protest against government policy. Citing §2283 of the Catholic Catechism, Fr Boniecki raised the possibility of salvation for people committing suicide.

"A section of the hierarchy does not like Fr Boniecki," Henryk Wozniakowski, director of Znak, who was in France for the Social Week, told La Croix. Znak is an independent publisher close to liberal Catholic circles and the line defended by Tygodnik Powszechny.

"Poland today is caught up in a battle of culture. On one side, we have the anti-religious modernists and, on the other, the tenants of a combative Catholicism focused on the defense of life and traditional values," Wozniakowski said. "According to this fringe group, any gesture of mercy towards homosexuals such as the one by Boniecki is suspect."

[Read more](#)

### **A moral giant has died**

Shannen Dee Williams writes that in 1965, Sister Ebo—then a 40-year-old nurse and the director of medical records at St. Mary's (Colored) Infirmary in St. Louis, Mo.—cemented her place in U.S. history when she traveled with an ecumenical delegation from St. Louis to Selma, Ala., to demonstrate in support of black voting rights. As the only black nun in the interracial group and the first of



two black sisters who marched in Selma, Sister Ebo's presence drew a surprising amount of attention.

[Read more](#)

### **Clergy Sex Abuse commission in England says ordained have too much power**

Rose Gamble writes that the Catholic church is "particularly subject to the temptation to cover up abuse" in order to protect its reputation, the national inquiry into child sex abuse has been told.



On the opening day of a three week hearing on the English Benedictine Congregation as part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), lawyers representing abuse victims said mandatory reporting of sexual misconduct must be introduced in the church to prevent abuses occurring. "The reputational pressures, the cultural and theological factors which led to abuse being covered up in Catholic institutions have not gone away. They remain as powerful as ever," Richard Scorer of the law firm Slater & Gordon, who is representing 27 core participants, told the inquiry on 27 November.

"Because we have no mandatory reporting law, that temptation to cover up in our view remains undiminished today," he added. David Enright, a solicitor at Howe and Co representing more than 12 former schoolboys from a Catholic Comboni missionary school, highlighted the "power

and depth of influence” held by those in leadership positions in the Catholic church. Removing the privileges of priestly confession would be beneficial in tackling abuse, he said.

“Matters revealed in confession, including child abuse, cannot be used in governance,” Enright said. “One can’t think of a more serious obstacle embedded in the law of the Catholic church to achieving child protection.

“The Catholic church is so opaque, so disparate, so full of separate bodies who are not subject to any authority that it is difficult to see how reform can be made to provide good governance and introduce acceptable standards of child protection,” he said.

William Chapman from the firm Switalskis likewise highlighted the culture of the Catholic Church and the Benedictine religious order as allowing for an abuse of power.

He described the Benedictine church as “a Harry Potter world of beguiling charm that invites a high degree of trust and indeed receives a high degree of trust. Therein lies the danger.”

Bishops and those in leadership positions, he said, are given too much power.

[Read more](#)

## **God our Mother**

Isabelle de Gaulmyn argues that we need to move beyond "Our Father" because language reflects and influences our worldview. While she does not

argue for a narrow overturning "Father" for "Mother", she knows that the Church, which proclaims itself to be very much in the world, cannot extricate itself from debates around gender equality that is at the heart of modern society.

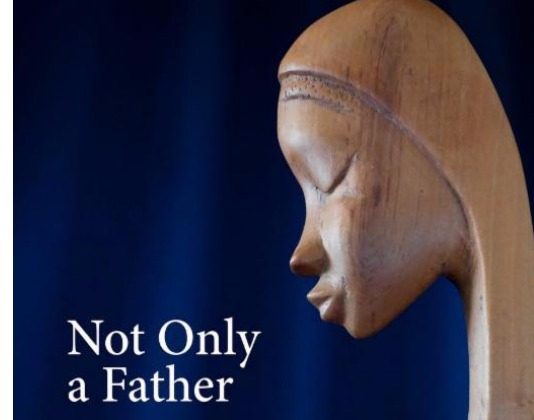
The Church cannot ignore its responsibility when it comes to violence against women, and this is not because women in the Church are less at risk of violence. They are neither more nor less at risk.

Feminist theology should be commended for helping us reveal the sometimes stark patriarchal vision that biblical texts convey, marked as they are by their particular social and historical contexts. You only have to read certain passages of Paul, or the Fathers of the Church, which are difficult to accept nowadays.

Beyond the texts themselves, the whole institution is in need of thorough self-examination. Can we hope for serious interrogation of the status and role of women in the Church, leading to real changes in the day-to-day relationships between men and women?

Any such debate would have to avoid being simplified and caricatured by critics of feminism. It would also have to allow serious discussion of the social, philosophical and religious meanings of the differences between the sexes.

This must be done with the help,



dare I say, of gender studies, without being immediately demonized by certain voices within Catholicism. Such a discussion would also have to move beyond the age-old question of female preachers, which in itself doesn't solve anything.

[Read more](#)

## **More Catholics leave for Pentecostal churches in Nigeria**

Across Nigeria, Catholic churches are increasingly competing for membership with other Christian denominations, particularly large charismatic Pentecostal churches. And a growing number of students in Nigeria choose to straddle Catholicism and Pentecostalism: They attend Mass while at home with their parents but are involved with Pentecostal movements on campus.

Catholics in the global North frequently point to Africa and other developing regions as "the future of the church." It is true that there are great growth and vitality here. But if the future of Nigeria is Catholic, it is also increasingly Pentecostal.

Today, Africa is home to some 158 million Catholics. The continent is expected to be home to [one-sixth of the world's Catholics](#) (about 230 million people) by 2025. Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, with a population evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. It also boasts the continent's largest Christian population, with



as many as 80 million Christians, 20 million of whom are Catholic. The southeastern region, home mainly to Christians from the large Igbo ethnic group, has a significant Catholic population.

[Read more](#)

## **SNAP settles lawsuit and apologizes**

Mary Rezak reports that advocacy group Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) has issued an apology to a St. Louis priest for "any false or inaccurate statements" regarding allegations of abuse, after criminal charges against him were dropped and subsequent lawsuits were settled or dismissed.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis published the apology from the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) on Monday.

"The SNAP defendants never want to see anyone falsely accused of a crime. Admittedly, false reports of clergy sexual abuse do occur. The SNAP defendants have no personal knowledge as to the complaints against Fr. Joseph Jiang and acknowledge that all matters and claims against Fr. Jiang have either been dismissed or adjudicated in favor of Fr. Jiang," the group stated. [Read more](#)



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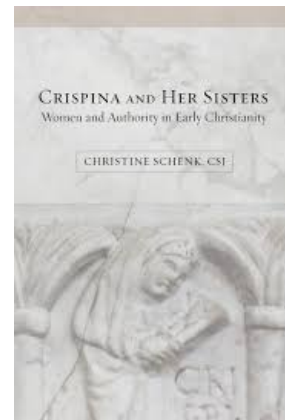
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As co-founder of FutureChurch, Christine Schenk, CSJ spent decades researching and writing about women in early Christianity. Like many feminists who have recovered the history and importance of women's authority, ministry and leadership in early Christianity, Schenk's book, *Crispina and Her Sisters* unearths new evidence that women held prominent roles in shaping and spreading Christianity. The book has already received accolades from prominent scholars such as Gary Macy, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, and Joan Chittister, OSB.



The book will be released on December 15. **FutureChurch will**



be offering a free copy of Chris's book for a donation of \$125 or more. Learn about women in early Christianity and support FutureChurch at the same time.

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