



FOCUS E-News

October 16 - 22, 2017 Edition

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Did you miss an issue of our weekly FOCUS E-News? Catch up!



FutureChurch welcomes Karen Murphy as new program director

FutureChurch welcomes Karen Murphy in her new role as Program Director for FutureChurch.

Karen brings both passion and enthusiasm for the work of reform and justice, as well as, a rich educational background, diverse professional work experiences, and a variety of ministries to underserved populations.

Karen has a BA in Theology and Philosophy from the University of Scranton, a Jesuit school, and an MA in Theological Research, Christian Spirituality from Andover Newton Theological School, the nation's oldest graduate theological school, where she was also awarded the Gerald R. Cragg commencement award for outstanding achievement in Church History. Her Master's thesis focused on the Eucharistic theology of St. Catherine of Siena.

Throughout her career, Karen has served as an Assistant Vice President with CCS Fundraising where she helped raise funds for churches, dioceses, schools, associations, and relief organizations. Her development work included working for organizations like the Girls Scouts of NYC and the Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation.

Karen joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and worked at a regional mental health center supporting women and men with debilitating mental illness. Later she worked with children and adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities.

Most recently, Karen has served as Director of Operations for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a century-old peacebuilding organization, rooted in interfaith dialogue and nonviolent philosophy and direct action.

Karen also designs and facilitates retreats and programs steeped in the wisdom of women who have formed the Christian tradition. Karen's spiritual practices include Centering Prayer, which she learned at a young age from her mother, and Ignatian spirituality, a gift from her undergraduate days which has informed her interior life ever since. She is a practitioner of Nonviolent Communication -- a spiritual practice of empathy. She has been involved in all levels of campus and parish life, including: choir member, lector, cantor, trainer, lecturer, retreat facilitator, and RCIA director.

According to Karen, "When the opportunity to join FutureChurch became available, I knew it was the job I had been waiting for, the job for which all my life experiences, my studies, and my ministry had prepared me."

Welcome Karen!

FutureChurch pilgrims travel to Greece to follow in the

footsteps of our foremothers in faith

Seventeen women and men joined FutureChurch's educational director, Sr. Chris Schenk, and FutureChurch's spiritual director, Jocelyn Collen, for a ten day journey to Greece to visit the sites of early Christian leaders with an emphasis on women leaders. Together they visited the site of Lydia's baptism in Philippi, stood near the ancient ruins of Phoebe's church in Cenchreae where as a deacon, she was charged with carrying a letter from Paul to the community in Rome, and visited the sites where ancient women worshiped goddesses of fertility and wisdom.



You can read some of the reflections from both leaders and pilgrims below.

FutureChurch will lead another pilgrimage to Rome in the fall of 2018. We will finalize the dates when the Synod on the Evangelization of Youth dates are announced. Sr. Chris Schenk will serve as educational director again. In Rome she will share her expertise on women's authority based on her research of burial artifacts.

Her book, ["Crispina and Her Sisters: Women and Authority in Early Christianity"](#) explores visual imagery found on burial artifacts of prominent early Christian women. It carefully situates the tomb art within the cultural context of customary Roman commemorations of the

dead. Recent scholarship about Roman portrait sarcophagi and the interpretation of early Christian art is also given significant attention. An in-depth review of women's history in the first four centuries of Christianity provides important context.

A fascinating picture emerges of women's authority in the early church, a picture either not available or sadly distorted in the written history. It is often said "a picture is worth a thousand words." The portrait tombs of fourth-century Christian women suggest that they viewed themselves and/or their loved ones viewed them as persons of authority with religious influence.

To get on the mailing list to learn more about this pilgrimage as details emerge, write debrose@futurechurch.org.

FutureChurch board chair Jocelyn Collen reflects on her experience as a pilgrim in Greece

FutureChurch board chair, Jocelyn Collen served as the spiritual director for FutureChurch's pilgrimage to Greece. She shared some thoughts about her experience below.



Lydia. Prisca. Phoebe. Our Foremothers in faith! I now add Afaea, Gaia and Athena as Foremothers. Our pilgrimage to Greece was not only a time to retreat from the demands of a hectic life in ministry, but it was

also a chance to be with so many other women from around the country who have served and serve in ministry. I was privileged to be a part of a dynamic, radical, loving, prayerful group of fellow pilgrims.

I have read about Lydia, Prisca and Phoebe in the Scriptures. They became more like friends on our journey. I was grateful to experience, with my own eyes, the places where these women served and broke bread. I was also so surprised and grateful for the opportunity to meet other ancient female prophets such as Gaia, the goddess of the earth, Afaea, the goddess of fertility, and Athena, the goddess of wisdom. Visiting temples and holy sites for these female figures was also quite inspiring and powerful. Knowing that the places we were able to visit were holy sites for literally thousands of years honoring women, allowed me the opportunity to feel more connected, more alive, and more affirmed in my vocation.

Our leaders, Alik Pelteki, and Sr. Chris Schenk, CSJ, were a match made in heaven. Alik knew literally every historical fact that we needed, and Chris knew the Biblical facts, history, and context. They worked in tandem flawlessly, and one would have thought that they had been a team for decades. Instead, this was their first pilgrimage together.

As I recall our time together as a group, I recall our time of

prayer. Each day our setting for our prayer services became more spectacular than the day before. From hotel spaces to mountains to outside ancient city walls to the island of Aegina at the temple for Afaea, we were cared for by God in a loving, spectacular way as we prayed prayers of Thanksgiving for our time in the spectacular country of Greece, and asked God to guide the Greek people, help us to learn from our Foremothers, and bless our church, our families, and our communities as we strive to build a church of the future in which all are welcomed equally to share in the banquet.

Efcharistó

pilgrims, guides, and of course, Hellas!

What was Paul doing crashing a woman's prayer service?

[In her National Catholic Reporter column, Sr. Chris Schenk](#), who served as educational director for FutureChurch's pilgrimage to Greece from October 5 - 14, 2017 shared some profound insights. Her column is below.



For the past several days, I have been boning up on St. Paul's ministry in Greece as I prepare to lead a [FutureChurch pilgrimage](#) to early Christian sites where women had founding leadership roles.

Most Christians are completely unaware that women helped establish many of the earliest churches in Greece, Turkey and Rome. This is because church

tradition always credits their founding to Paul.

Early Christ-followers circulated and preserved Paul's undisputed letters (circa 51-62 A.D.) and later, Luke's Acts of the Apostles (circa 80-90 A.D.), both of which chronicle Paul's missionary journeys in considerable — if sometimes differing — detail.

So it is understandable that later Christ followers thought Paul did it all. But he did not. In fact, Paul himself credits Prisca as his "coworker in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16: 3-5) and describes Euodia and Syntyche of Philippi as coworkers who "struggled beside me in the work of the gospel" (Philippians 4:3).

Paradoxically, no one would know about these early women leaders except for the patient piecing together of disparate facts by meticulous biblical scholars working with the very texts that chronicle (and sometimes lionize) Paul and other male leaders in the early church.

Acts identifies Lydia of Philippi as beginning the first house church in that city (Acts 16:6-40), and Paul's letter to the Philippians suggests that a disagreement between two women — Euodia and Syntyche — is threatening the unity of the church there (Philippians 4:2-3). According to well-known New Testament scholar, Sacred Heart Sr. Carolyn Osiek, Euodia and Syntyche were very likely among the *episkopoi* and *diakonoï* to whom Paul addresses his letter.

(A reference, by the way, that Paul uses in no other greeting.) In Thessaloniki and Berea, the Greek "leading women" supported Paul's mission even as the male synagogue members ran him out of town (see Acts 17:1-15).

Christianity seems to have held a special attraction for Gentile women. Women of status — whether from business (Lydia was a wealthy purple dye trader) or of societal prominence (Greek "leading women") — were especially drawn to the message of Jesus.

But why?

Recent research into ancient engravings at Philippi may shed light on this interesting question. In [*Ritual, Women and Philippi*](#) (Cascade Books, 2013), Jason T. Lamoreaux analyzed 140 etchings on the acropolis at Philippi. Ninety were dedicated to the Greek goddess Artemis (Roman goddess Diana). Lamoreaux suggests that since few other goddesses were in evidence at Philippi, the Artemis cult was a primary focus of women's religious lives in that city. He hypothesized that female worship of Artemis would therefore influence how women received Paul's letter to the Philippian church.

Known in Hellenist culture as the goddess of the hunt, Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, and the twin of Apollo. She remained a virgin, and women invoked her protection in labor, childbirth and female rites of

passage such as puberty, marriage and pregnancy.

In the 90 archaeological reliefs created by female devotees at Philippi, Artemis was depicted 51 times as a huntress with a bow and arrow. In the androcentric imagination of ancient Greek medicine, the womb was viewed as a wandering animal. Artemis's arrow signified anchoring it and making it fertile. (Freud would have a hey-day with this.

Seriously.) Seven times in the Philippi reliefs, the goddess is depicted with a sword slaying a deer, indicating the darker side of Artemis — namely her power to bring death.

Astronomically high maternal-infant death rates meant that ancient women had an intimate relationship with the prospect of death. Religious ritual helped them deal with that. The acropolis reliefs contain images of gifts offered to Artemis in thanksgiving for a safe and successful childbirth: sandals, a mirror, a comb, a wool basket and spinning distaff.

If an infant or a woman died during childbirth, it was thought to be punishment from Artemis. Reliefs depicting her killing a stag may be commemorations of the death of a mother or her newborn. Artemis was feared until a woman survived childbirth.

Lamoureaux suggests that Philippian women heard the Christian message differently than men because Paul paints death as a positive and not as a punishment: "It is my eager

expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain" (Philippians 1:19-22). One wonders what Lydia, a "God worshipper," and her female companions were about when Paul finds them at the "place of prayer" by the river. God-fearers were non-Jewish people who were interested in Judaism and hung around the local synagogue. But there was no synagogue at Philippi, or Paul, Timothy and Silas would have gone there for Sabbath worship as was their wont. Some scholars believe the Lukan author of Acts portrays Lydia as a "God worshipper" to clean up the disciples' religious gaffe.

After all, what was Paul doing crashing a woman's worship service?

What we do know is that Lydia "opened her heart" to the Gospel, was baptized herself, had her whole household baptized, and then invited Paul and his companions to stay at her home. Several weeks later before leaving town, Paul "encouraged the brothers and sisters" who are now meeting at her house (Acts 16:40). Lydia started a church of Jesus-followers who believe death is not a negative.

Now that's a hopeful — if challenging — concept for all of us.

[Read the full article in NCR](#)

New program director Karen Murphy reflects on her pilgrimage to Greece from Oct 5 - 14 with FutureChurch

"I want to be baptized again!"

"Oh let all who thirst, let them come to the water!" As we sang the opening lines to this favorite John Foley song, the flowing waters of the river of Lydia's baptism our only accompaniment, I found myself wondering what it must have been like for Lydia to experience the zeal of thirst for baptism.

What was going through her mind, her heart? Was she afraid? Excited? With whom did she celebrate? Did she understand her baptism as a holy consecration, as a gift, a challenge, an invitation? What changed in her after she had been baptized? What changed in others? How long did she feel the power of her baptism?

I felt excited just thinking about the Holy Spirit moving in her. And I wanted to feel that power, that hopefulness, that joy and trust.

I wanted to be baptized again!

And it dawned on me that this is our call, our invitation: to live our lives with the full zeal and power of our baptism as though it had only happened a moment ago and was still fresh and alive in us. We do this by remembering who we are - God's beloveds. We do this by remembering we are not alone -



the Holy Spirit whispers
unceasingly into our hearts.

And we do this by remembering
our mothers of faith - the Lydias
and Phoebes and Mary
Magdalenes. We walk where
they walked, pray where they
prayed, preach where they
preached. We let them be alive
in our midst, and in keeping
them alive, we are drawn back
into the fullness of our own
baptism knowing that we are
accompanied by those who have
gone before us.

May all who thirst come to the
water! Over and over and over,
let us be nourished by the
waters of baptism, and by the
faith and communion of our
mothers whose courage and
conviction remind us of the
power and presence of the Holy
Spirit. And then from that place,
let us journey forth as the newly
baptized do, filled with zeal for
God and love for one another

Bishop Calvo reiterates his support for women deacons at October 16th Reno meeting

FutureChurch board member
Barbara Guerin invited Bishop
Randolf Calvo to speak to area
Catholics on Monday evening
about the possibility of women
deacons.

A canon lawyer, Bishop Calvo
believes that women can be
ordained as deacons based on
the needs of the Church today.
And he believes that the role of
women deacons need not be
limited to what it was historically.



While serving as president of the Canon Law Society of America in November 1995, he sent a copy of an ad hoc committee's report on "canonical implications of ordaining women to the permanent diaconate" to then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Those conclusions did not prevail.

Bishop Calvo expressed a generous willingness to share his perspective with other Catholics. Those who want to have him speak at their parish should contact his office.

Most Reverend Bishop Randolph R. Calvo, DD, JCD
Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Ms. Donna Kennedy
775.326.9428
DonnaK@catholicreno.org

Barbara Guerin will offer a full report of the meeting for our upcoming newsletter. Stay tuned for the Good News!

Three women set tone for *Amoris Laetitia* be heard

Matthew Sitman writes that a conference hosted by Cardinal Blase Cupich and James Keenan, SJ, at Boston College earlier this month focusing on *Amoris Laetitia* sought to forge "a new momentum for moral formation and pastoral practice."

Bringing together two cardinals, twelve bishops, and over twenty other participants—some priests, but many lay theologians—the gathering clearly was an attempt to shift the way *Amoris laetitia* is being understood and engaged



with in the United States.

Most Catholics certainly haven't read the exhortation; their knowledge of it is second hand, often filtered through fevered speculations about the pope's "plot" to change the church or news reports about "filial corrections" from self-styled guardians of orthodoxy.

But *Amoris Laetitia* begins, not with abstract theological ideals, but attentiveness to the concrete hopes and sorrows, joys and messiness, of actual family life. It starts with examples and complexity, not pat formulations. It's important to underscore the word *family*. Often we reduce debates about such matters to arguments about the nature of marriage itself, but family is more expansive than that. It also means nursing sick parents and grandparents, helping struggling siblings, and mentoring nieces and nephews. In *Amoris* Francis exhorts us to acknowledge and work to overcome the pressures we all face in caring for those close to us—not least because of the "throwaway" economy the pope lamented in *Laudato si'* and elsewhere, which incentivizes mobility, fosters individualism, and undermines stability and lasting commitments.

That's why it was encouraging that the Boston College conference did not start with a series of prelates pronouncing from on high, but with a panel that included three lay women presenting on *Amoris's* reception so far—Natalia Imperatori-Lee,

C. Vanessa White, and Cathleen Kaveny. They very much offered reports from “on the ground,” from each woman’s specific context: a Latina theologian who also is a mother of young children, an African-American professor, and a woman working at the intersection of law and theology. It set the tone for the conference: that the experiences of lay people, especially women, were going to be taken seriously, and that the conference aimed for good-faith deliberation, a conversation without a preordained end.

Imperatori-Lee’s and White’s talks especially were helpful in emphasizing the way *Amoris* connects with Catholics outside of the white, middle-class enclaves that have historically dominated the U.S. church. Both talks drew attention to the challenges facing Latino and African-American Catholics and their families, which exist in specific pastoral contexts. With the former, the perils of migration, poverty, lack of documentation, domestic abuse, and other issues impinge on family life.

Lee also made the connection between a passive understanding of the laity and colonization, drawing on Francis’s comment in *Amoris* that pastors “have been called to form consciences, not to replace them.” For Lee, the attempt to replace rather than form consciences is an “act of domination.”

[Read more](#)

Pope Francis announces regional synod of bishops

Cardinal Claudio Hummes, who is very close to Pope Francis and president of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference's commission for Amazonia has championed the call for a regional synod -- a call that Pope Francis just announced.



Pope Francis has announced a special assembly of the Synod of Bishops, scheduled for October 2019, to involve prelates from Latin America's Pan-Amazon region, meaning Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Perú, Venezuela and Surinam.

The main purpose of the Amazon gathering, Francis said, will be to identify new paths for the evangelization in the region. Particular attention, he added, will be paid to the indigenous people, "often forgotten and without the prospect of a serene future," and to the crisis of the Amazonian rain forest, considered one of the world's "lungs" because of the amount of oxygen produced by its abundant vegetation.

[Read more](#)

Young Catholics will be auditors at 2018 Synod

Ines San Martin reports that young Catholics won't just be a topic at the 2018 Synod, but protagonists.

"Through every phase of this Synod, the Church wants again



to state her desire to encounter, accompany and care for every young person, without exception," a preparatory document released by the Vatican on Friday says.

"The Church cannot, nor does she wish to, abandon them to the isolation and exclusion to which the world exposes them." The lives of young people, struggling against losing themselves in violence or death, and hoping that disappointment doesn't alienate them, are issues that should be of great concern for all those who have been "baptized in the faith," the text says.

If the document is any indication, young people will be more than mere study subjects for the bishops.

[Read more](#)

The Church must listen

[Cindy Wooden writes that](#) Pope Francis said he is prepared to risk listening, because it is the best way to know and respond to people's real concerns.

"I know this can make me vulnerable, but it is a risk I want to take," the pope wrote in the introduction to a new book collecting transcripts of question-and-answer sessions he has held all over the world. The collection in Italian, "Adesso Fate le Vostre Domande" ("Now, Ask Your Questions"), was edited by Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro and scheduled for release Oct. 19. The pope's introduction was published Oct.



17 in the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*.

"I want a church that knows how to enter into people's conversations, that knows how to dialogue," Pope Francis wrote.

[Read more](#)

Catholic doctrine evolves in light of the death penalty

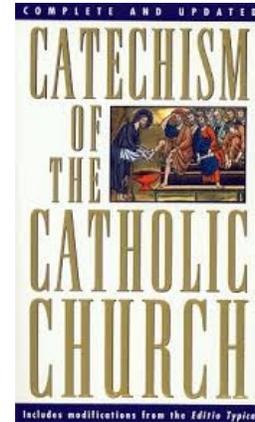
Robert Mickens shows how the Catechism's teachings are being challenged by Pope Francis when it comes to the death penalty.

According to Pope Francis, "It must be clearly stated that the death penalty is an inhumane measure that, regardless of how it is carried out, abases human dignity. It is *per se* contrary to the Gospel because it entails the willful suppression of a human life that never ceases to be sacred in the eyes of its Creator and of which – ultimately – only God is the true judge and guarantor."

The 80-year-old pope added that the Catechism needed to give a "more adequate and coherent treatment" of capital punishment to reflect this.

Currently, the CCC says that "the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty", though stressing that "the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity are very rare, if not practically nonexistent".

Pope Francis has gone a step further. Capital punishment, he



said, is never an absolute necessity. Nothing can justify it.

[Read more](#)

The Perils of Popewatching

Massimo Faggioli wonders how the new age of Pope watching shapes our view of the Vatican.



He writes that there's something about that coverage, in the repackaging and presentation of papal activities, that reminds him of the phenomenon of food porn, defined by Wikipedia as follows: "a glamorized spectacular visual presentation of cooking or eating in advertisements, infomercials, blogs, cooking shows or other visual media, foods boasting a high fat and calorie content, exotic dishes that arouse a desire to eat or the glorification of food."

[Read more](#)

More women are sharing their story of being called to the diaconate. Share your story at our 100 Women Deacons campaign!

**You won't want to miss these
FutureChurch events!**

Please support this work!



[Join us for our Fall Event](#)



[Join our teleconference](#)

October 27, 2017
Sr. Sandra Schneiders
The Gospel of John: A
Blueprint for Parish Life
Come to the event
or buy a live stream/virtual
ticket!

October 18, 2017
Ed Hahnenberg
Emerging Models of Ministry
for Today's Church
2nd in the series
Emerging Models of Parish
and Community Life



OCTOBER 15, 2017

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

I cannot tell you that I am fully reconciled with today's readings, or the Church as it is today. I can only invite you to wrestle with it. And to stick with it.

PETRA DANKOVA



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Add your name to our 100 women deacons list!

Start a conversation with DeaconChat



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

Honor the Mary of Magdala in your life by having her name added to our list on Catholic Women Preach!



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