FOCUS E-News
October 30 - November 5, 2017 Edition

Please support this work!

You still have time to purchase a virtual ticket from our Fall Event Sr. Sandra Schneiders and Sr. Louise Akers  Prophetic words from prophetic women!

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

Join our teleconference
November 8, 2017
Fr. Robert Duch
The Lobinger Model
Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life

From the Executive Director

On Friday evening, FutureChurch was honored to have two premier Catholic women leaders speak at our 2017 Fall Event.

Keynote speaker, Sr. Sandra Schneiders, IHM, reflected on the Gospel of John as a community where radical equality was the community practice.

Trivison Award recipient, Sr.
Louise Akers, SC reflected on her decades of work for justice, as well as her encounter with her bishop over her support for women's ordination to the priesthood -- a position that ultimately led to her being barred from teaching in the diocese.

Each speaker developed their remarks from a different starting place, but ultimately came to the same conclusion. Gospel justice requires us to recognize that God's own vision is one of radical equality and inclusion. You can still purchase a virtual ticket to hear their remarks.

After hearing from women like Schneiders and Akers, it is even more difficult to learn that the U.S. Bishops' Conference is not exercising the leadership we need in the face of today's problems and threats to humankind and to the earth. Michael Sean Winters lets loose his criticism of the USCCB's feeble agenda for its upcoming meeting on November 13 and 14, 2017 in Baltimore.

With the existential challenges we face today, Winters asks, "Will the bishops rise to the occasion?"

That is a question many Catholics have been asking for far too long.

As faithful Catholics, we need to continue to urge them to take action for the sake of the Gospel. Please write or call the president...
of the USCCB, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo and express your hopes for leadership from the bishops.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo,  
President  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington DC 20017  
Phone: 202-541-3000

or go to their contact page at:  
http://www.usccb.org/about/contact-us.cfm

MSW on the history of the USCCB

Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa will reinstate order of Women Deacons

The Tablet's Rose Gamble reports that the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa is to reinstate the ancient order of women deacons, in order to better serve the pastoral needs of the Patriarchate, which serves the entire continent of Africa.

The Patriarchate of Alexandria is currently meeting for its two-day synod, where participants led by Pope Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, are discussing "The very essential African issue: Ecclesiastical Marriage in African Affinity."

A group of nine prominent Greek Orthodox liturgists – who describe themselves as active and emeriti professors of liturgics and liturgical theology at...
various theological schools and seminaries in Greece and the US – has since issued a statement in support of the move. Read more

Professor Ed Hahnenberg offers insights about innovations in ministry in the Catholic Church in FutureChurch’s Emerging Models series

Professor Hahnenberg argues that the fifty years since Vatican II have been one of the most important periods of ministerial transformation in the history of the Church.

In his discussion he made the following points:

And I say that, very much aware that we human beings are always in danger of overstating the significance of our own time. It is a temptation that is only dwarfed by the temptation among academics like myself to overstate the importance of our own particular area of research.

Still, I think when we think about what has been going on in the Catholic Church over the last fifty years, it’s hard to escape the conclusion that we are living in one of the most significant periods of ministerial transformation in the history of the Church, that the emergence of lay ministry stands out as one of the top three or four ministerial shifts of the past 2,000 years—historical on par with the changes to the Church brought about by the rise of communal forms of monasticism.
in the 5th century, the birth of Mendicant Orders in the 13th century, and the explosion of women's religious communities in the 19th century.

And I use that parallel to religious orders—I'm intentional there. And it's an insight that came to me a few years ago as I was reflecting on the work of the Jesuit historian, John O'Malley, who has written a lot on early history of Vatican II Catholicism. He has written a lot, very helpful stuff, on Vatican II. He has also written about the history of religious life—He's a Jesuit himself. And in some of that writing, O'Malley has argued that when you look at the history of religious life and you look back on that story, he says there are at least two different ways to tell that story—two perspectives, or two different lenses that shape the way you see the past.

On the one hand, if you look at the history of religious life through the lens of the evangelical councils, the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, that structure, a particular way of life, if that's your lens, what comes through is the continuity across time and across different religious communities.

But if you look at that same history, not through the lens of the vows, but through the lens of ministry—in other words, the active service that these religious communities provided—what comes through is the diversity, the novelty, the originality.
Irish Bishop Paul Tighe takes up #2 post at Pontifical Council for Culture

John Allen reports that on Saturday, Pope Francis elevated Bishop Paul Tighe’s standing, naming him the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture. He is now the number two official in the department led by Italian Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, as opposed to the ad-hoc role of “Adjunct Secretary” he’s held since December 2015.

Prior to that, Tighe had served as Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications since 2007. In that role, he quickly became a precious resource for journalists everywhere, especially in the English-speaking world. For one thing, Tighe was remarkably accessible, always happy to take a phone call no matter how swamped he was in a particular moment. For another, he’s unflinchingly honest. He’ll tell you what he knows and what he doesn’t, he doesn’t sugarcoat situations, and there’s never any sense that he’s just trying to make himself or “the system” look better.

For another, Tighe is just a deeply real person. He’s genuinely humble, never taking himself too seriously, and he looked on journalists he dealt
with not just as members of the press but as friends, taking a sincere interest in their lives as well as their careers.

When it became clear in late 2015 that the Council for Social Communications was going the way of all flesh, dissolved as part of a broader reorganization of Vatican communications, Tighe was shifted to Culture. At the time, some Vatican-watchers suspected his adjunct secretary gig might be little more than what the Italians call a parcheggio, meaning a place to park him while figuring out his long-term future.

Instead, Tighe and Ravasi developed a rapport, and now Francis has cemented the Irish prelate’s status as a key part of the Church’s outreach to the worlds of culture.

Read more

Orthodox Liturgists support restoration of deaconesses

In a formal statement Orthodox liturgists write:

We the undersigned, active and emerita professors of liturgics and liturgical theology at various theological schools and seminaries in Greece and the United States of America, wish to express respectfully our support of His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros and the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in their effort to restore in a timely fashion the order of deaconess within the borders of the Patriarchate.
The historical, theological, canonical, and liturgical validity of the order of deaconess has been attested to time and again in recent years by Orthodox scholars and theologians. Although the order of deaconess gradually fell into decline by the end of the fifteenth century, it survived among the Oriental Orthodox Churches and in some monastic communities. The Russian Orthodox Church before the 1917 Revolution and again in more recent times has considered restoring it. Likewise St. Nektarios and other contemporary Greek bishops have ordained deaconesses. In fact, the Church of Greece established a School of Deaconesses, which in the end developed into a school for social workers.

The reinstitution of the female diaconate does not constitute an innovation, as some would have us believe, but the revitalization of a once functional, vibrant, and effectual ministry in order to provide the opportunity for qualified women to offer in our era their unique and specific gifts in the service of God’s people as publicly commissioned and authorized educators, evangelists, preachers, counselors, social workers, et.al.

Robert Mickens writes, "It is time to call off the dogs."

Pope Francis is facing a raucous and, at times, vicious opposition from certain groups of Catholics. The increasing hostility they are showing
towards the Bishop of Rome is probably without parallel in the modern history of the Roman Church.

Now there is actually good news, as well as bad news to all of this. The good news is that, as best one can tell, those who are rowing against the current helmsman of the Barque of Peter are part of a very tiny, if noisy, minority.

The bad news is that they are mostly found among the Church’s ordained workforce — men who serve as priests and bishops.

6 new settlements include payouts of $1.8 million to victims of clergy sex abuse

Eyewitness news reported that six more payouts were made to victims of clergy sex abuse in the Archdioceses of New York and Brooklyn totaling 1.8 million dollars. These are not court cases but settlements that come from a fund set up by the Archdiocese to settle with victims of clergy sex abuse. Attach a gag order and the archdiocese is able to sweep these cases away while continuing a path of non-transparency-- suppressing the facts that surround the crimes and the way the monies for settlements are raised.

In fact, what is not the in the eyewitness report is the fact that the archdiocese is selling multi-million dollar church properties, closing viable parishes, and driving Catholics
away with a crass strategy that lays the sins of clerics who abused children and covered up abuse on the shoulders of the faithful.

In terms of the human cost to victims, one advocate summed it up.

"What we have seen today is a shameful example of what the Archdiocese of New York considers business as usual," said Joelle Casteix, a victim's advocate. "When we look at Monsignor Casper Wolf and Father Herbert D'Argenio, we see two men that the Archdiocese of New York knew were child sex abusers, and they did nothing to warn children. They did nothing to tell parents and they did nothing to reach out to the survivors for years."

These were not court cases. These are settlements from a massive compensation fund that was set up last year by the Archdiocese of New York.

Read more NY Times article

DignityUSA launches petition asking Bishop Morino withdraw his guidance to priests on excluding LBGTQI Catholic from funerals

All Catholic families deserve to know that their loved ones will be treated as a loved, respected member of the Church at the time of their death. Telling people in same-sex relationships that they may not be given the full funeral rites of our Church makes us second-class members...
of the Church. This will increase the pain and grief that our families will experience while dealing with the loss of someone they love.

We want ALL Catholics-including the LGBTQI Community-who seek Catholic funerals to know their requests will be honored, and that all families will be treated with compassion. Sign the petition to tell Bishop Morlino the "guidance" that discriminates against lesbian and gay people must be withdrawn. Go to petition

The Catholic Church should answer for its response to racism

Eric Martin recently issued a challenge.

He writes that The Catholic Church must have a long and honest communal examination after none of its clergy showed up in Charlottesville on August 12. Muslims and Jews, despite their vulnerable status, arrived ready for whatever the day brought. Members of the United Church of Christ, Pentecostals, Methodists, Presbyterians, black and white Baptists, Evangelicals, Quakers, Episcopalians, and Lutherans came, among others. But when the interfaith procession of clergy left the church after our six a.m. sunrise service to march to Emancipation Park and block neo-Nazis from gathering, there were no Roman collars to be seen.

I have heard people express regret for not being present, but
the problem is not a lack of individual commitment; it is systemic. How long has the Catholic Church failed to show up for racial justice?

How many of us heard nothing in the pews on August 13 of the brutal beating of 20-year old Deandre Harris, who broke his wrist and needed eight staples in his head, and the murder of Heather Heyer at the hands of white supremacists? While the silence many of us encountered that morning sent a loud message, it merely echoed that U.S. Catholicism has never sufficiently grappled with white supremacy. This gross negligence did not simply happen but is the product of habit.

**Cardinal Wuerl supports Pope Francis on decentralization**

In an interview with Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Joshua McElwee reports the cardinal said that, "In decentralizing authority from the Vatican to bishops' conferences for the translation of texts for the Catholic Church's liturgies from Latin into local languages, Pope Francis is simply putting in place a reform called for by the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council."

"The council clearly said this was the responsibility of the bishops, these translations — in communion, obviously, with Peter."

"Now, we have Pope Francis saying, 'Isn't this what the council said?'" Wuerl said.
"Shouldn't we be doing that?"
Wuerl was responding in the interview to a question about Francis' Sept. 9 motu proprio Magnum Principium ("The Great Principle"), in which the pontiff moved most responsibility for Catholic liturgical translations from the Vatican to local bishops' conferences. Read more

Thou Shalt Not Petition

Massimo Faggioli doesn't think Catholics should face off using petitions.

In the face of Francis critics, Faggioli did not sign onto a recent pro-Francis petition. He writes that the most obvious temptation in this situation is not just to take sides – all of us do, consciously or not – but to form a party. That is one of the reasons why I declined to sign the "Pro-Francis petition", among whose signatories there are theologians I greatly admire, such as Thomas Halik and Paul Zuhlener. The petition is a reaction to the "Filial Correction" against Pope Francis' "heresies".

Faggioli believes we need to remember principles Yves Congar put forth when dealing with dissent.

In the face of social uprisings and student revolts in France, Congar said the Church had to understand how to deal with revolt and dissent. And he put forth five criteria for doing so.

“There are certain things that the expression of protest can
never do in the Church,” he wrote.
1.) It can never destroy or wound the bond of charity; 2.) It can never call into question the hierarchical structure of the Church’s pastoral life; 3.) It can never deny or question the articles of doctrine in a hasty, superficial or irresponsible way; 4.) It can never fix parameters for the “limits of fraternity”, excluding those who think differently; and 5.) It cannot admit expressions of protest within the celebration of the liturgy.

Faggioli suggests that for at least the past two centuries the Catholic Church has grappled with the loss of unity and control on the totality of the world and social imaginary. Charles Taylor has described this as a shift from “a community mentalité” to “a partisan stance”.

Taylor was talking about 19th-century Catholicism when the Church built a front against secular and liberal modernity. Back then, to be Catholic was a partisan stance in and of itself, because Catholicism assumed the unity of its members as a given. But now this partisan stance has invaded the internal life of the Church, evidenced by the great temptation to formally and publicly define oneself as one particular kind of Catholic as opposed to another.

Just as discussions about Eucharistic communion have become – paradoxically – a debate over exclusion, the term
“Catholic” has been turned upside down in a similar way. It has become synonymous with intra-ecclesial partisanship. The Catholic Church has been shaped not only by the French nouvelle théologie that led to Vatican II but also by 19th-century non-rationalistic, romantic theology. In this peculiarly kind of romantic relationship that is the Church, there are many ways other than signing a petition that we can express love and affection to one another – and to Pope Francis.

Read more

Black Catholics want a stronger response to police violence

In the world of African-American Catholic life, San Antonio was the place to be July 5-9. The annual Archbishop Lyke Conference, named for the late former Atlanta archbishop James P. Lyke, was to explore and celebrate liturgy and worship in the black American tradition. The expectation was that there would be joyous song, praise, and dance at the meeting, held at the Oblate School of Theology.

And then reality hit. As word spread about the killing by police of Alton Sterling on July 5 and Philando Castile on July 6, young black men in Louisiana and Minnesota, respectively, joyous praise no longer was appropriate.

"We can't just be happy," said one young participant.
The youth at the conference led the way in redirecting the meeting agenda, according to Jesuit Fr. Joseph A. Brown, professor of Africana studies* at Southern Illinois University, the conference keynoter.

"We shifted to real-world issues," Brown told NCR, noting that the conference atmosphere abruptly changed. At its conclusion, a photo of participants included young people holding signs proclaiming "Black Catholics Support Black Lives Matter" and "Where Are Our Bishops?"

Read more

**Only 65,000 young Catholics worldwide complete the Vatican survey**

Gauthier Valliant reports that since the Vatican posted an online international poll for people 16-29 years of age, fewer than expected completed it. The survey was part of preparations for the Synod of Bishops’ ordinary assembly, which is focusing on “Young people, faith and vocational discernment” and is to take place in Rome in October 2018.

The direct consultation was unprecedented for the Vatican. It was meant to take place in parallel with the contributions from bishops’ conferences from each country around the world. The survey was posted online on 14 June 2017 and was designed to be open to all young people irrespective of religion or geographic origin.
But a month after the survey closed, the Synod’s secretary-general, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, has revealed some interesting statistics.

While a total of 148,247 people visited the survey site, less than half of this number — a little more than 65,000 — actually answered all the questions. However, some 3,000 respondents left their email addresses and said they wished to be kept informed of the survey’s outcome.

Read more

A requiem and more

Sr. Joan Sauro writes that the closing of her church was announced in April by way of the church bulletin.

"Our church was slated to close in October. Three men in the pews groaned when they read the bulletin. 'I had no idea,' one said. A pall came over the congregation. After the final blessing, the pastor said he was sorry. He did not become a priest to close churches."

'The next day I planted geraniums behind the home I shared with another sister. Bunches of pink and white and blood red."

"As I sat in the pew and watched the Eucharist being removed and the sanctuary light put out, I wept."

Her beautiful expression of the heartfelt grief her Catholic sisters and brothers were
feeling at the closing of the community pointed to another reality.

"In the days that follow, we will go our separate ways to other churches. Some will leave off church altogether."

Young women tell their stories of being called

In a recent article, Jamie Manson follows the stories of three young women, Sarah Holst, Elaina Jo Polovich, and Lisa Cathleen who are called to ordained ministry in the Catholic Church. The three are recipients of the Lucile Murray Durkin Scholarship for Women Discerning Priestly Ordination.

As part of the article, Manson contrasts the cost of their education to those of their Jesuit colleagues.

Manson writes that anger is not an unfamiliar emotion for Elaina Jo Polovich or Lisa Cathelyn as they witness the stark contrasts between their struggles to earn a Master of Divinity degree and the privileges enjoyed by their male, Jesuit classmates who have their tuition, housing and food fully covered by the Society of Jesus. A three-year M.Div. program at Jesuit School of Theology costs over $50,000. That doesn't include the $3,000 for medical insurance and inflated rates for rent and food in Berkeley. Though the Jesuits technically take a vow of poverty, Catholic women who have no hope of ordination often
Mueller moves closer to Francis on Amoris Laetitia

Christopher Lamb reports that the Church’s former doctrinal chief has come out in support of Pope Francis’ family life document which opens the way for divorced and remarried Catholics to receive communion. Cardinal Gerhard Müller, who was dismissed by Francis in July, has written a preface to a new book on ‘Amoris Laetitia’ which argues there can be “mitigating factors” for those living in second unions following their first marriages breaking down. He also argues there are “conditions” which open the way for those in second marriages to receive the sacraments.

The German cardinal’s intervention is the latest salvo in the heated debate inside the Church over Francis’ family life teaching and contained in the introduction to a book titled “A friendly response to the critics of Amoris Laetitia.”

The book is written by Rocco Buttiglione, a theologian and confidant of John Paul II who came to prominence when his nomination as a European Commissioner was blocked due to his views on homosexuality.

Data from 1967 Survey of Women Religious now available

Dan Stockman reports that in
The survey was mailed to 157,917 sisters in 398 orders, and 89 percent of recipients responded to the questionnaire, which asked the sisters for their individual opinion on topics such as theology, social changes and the Vietnam War and led to detailed analysis of religious life at the time.

Though Neal published her findings from the survey and follow-up work for decades afterward, the data itself — originally encoded on computer punch cards then stored on computer tapes — had been inaccessible to other researchers. But on Oct. 6, the University of Notre Dame announced that Neal's data is now available for researchers around the world to analyze, thanks to a university project.

"It's almost impossible to overstate how significant this dataset is and how having access now will really illuminate not just the history of Catholic sisters, but also a tumultuous time in the United States," said Kathleen Sprows Cummings, director of the University of Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for American Catholicism and associate professor of history.
Archbishop Tomasi releases new book on international relations

Joshua McElwee reports that the Vatican's longest-serving ambassador to the United Nations Office in Geneva has published a new book that collects 13 years of statements made by the official diplomatic arm of the Catholic Church, evincing some of the major developments in the church's social teaching since the onset of the new millennium.

In The Vatican in the Family of Nations, released in August, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi brings together hundreds of the diplomatic positions he took on behalf of the Holy See as its permanent observer in Geneva from 2003-16.

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!
Be inspired! Catholic Women Preach!

**DEACONCHAT**
A CONVERSATION ABOUT WOMEN DEACONS

- 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!

Learn what you can do to save your parish community

New! International priests statistics!

New! Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life 2017 - 2018 SERIES
Retreat for LBGTQ Christians at Jesuit Retreat House in Cleveland, Ohio

Come to meet and journey with other LBGTQ men and women, supportive and knowledgeable religious and parents of gay children at the 18th annual retreat for LGBTQ Christians, their family and friends. The theme this year is “We are Companions on the Journey”. Rev. Keith Stuart will be our keynote speaker. Keith Stuart is the Senior Pastor at Dover UCCC in Westlake. The retreat runs from 6pm Friday through 9pm Saturday, November 10 and 11, 2017 at the Jesuit Retreat House which is located at 5929 State Road, Cleveland, Oh 44134. The cost of $95 includes a single room and four meals.

You may register on line at www.jrh-cleveland.org. Contact Sister. Marian Durkin at (330) 659-5112 or smd@srsfcharity.org with additional questions and scholarship information.

Jesuit Retreat House of Cleveland | A Place of Peace
www.jrh-cleveland.org

The Art of Janet McKenzie in Boston

Embrace Hope - The Art of Janet McKenzie, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 138 Tremont St. Boston, through the month of November and ending Dec. 3. 28 laminated print
reproductions of my work - print, book signing. .
stauboston.org