NEW! Take and share the survey!
Voices of Faith survey for young Catholic women!

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Open the discussion with your bishop on married priests

Join us for our Fall Event
October 27, 2017
Sr. Sandra Schneiders discusses the Gospel of John as a model for parish/community life today

From the Executive Director

There was a time when I thought ordaining women as deacons was, more or less, a strategy -- a first step -- to opening doors to greater roles for women in ministry and governance. But over the past three years, I have been converted to a much deeper and richer appreciation of what it means to be called to the diaconate. And that new understanding has come from listening to women themselves.

This past weekend, sixteen
women gathered to support each other as they discerned their call to the diaconate. It was FutureChurch's second retreat for women considering a call to the permanent diaconate.

The retreat was led by Lisa Frey, a pastoral associate with a doctorate in homiletics. Other leaders included Cindi "Sam" Bowns, a Chicago Catholic who is certain of her call to the diaconate; Elaina Jo Polovich, a pastoral minister who preached; Rosemary Ellis Robinson, a pastoral minister; and Patti May, a spiritual director; and FutureChurch staff.

Throughout the weekend, participants listened deeply to one another. They tenderly held each other's pain -- the pain that accompanies the offering of gifts not received. They also acknowledged their fierce hunger for a Church that values all gifts and ministries, especially those of women as well as celebrated the faith, commitment, experience, and wisdom women bring to the life and ministry of the Church.

As Pope Francis' commission continues its work, women are acknowledging their own calls to ordained ministry and sharing powerful stories of faith and transformation. While the church is often slow to move, there is nothing that can stop our God from breaking through. Women will become full and equal partners in this great venture that is God's.

If you are called or discerning a
call to the diaconate, please join the 100 Women Deacons Campaign and share your story!

Start a conversation with DeaconChat.

Thank you for all you do in the service of the Gospel and the future of the Church!

Deborah Rose-Milavec
Executive Director

Msgr. Ray Cole and the future of the church

On Wednesday, September 13, Msgr. Ray Cole of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests will discuss their National Plan for Priest-less Parishes.

Believing that the future of Catholic parishes is threatened, the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests is joining an appeal to Pope Francis to keep parishes open.

The Leadership Team of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests has issued a statement endorsing the appeal from the organization, FutureChurch. It calls for “a reset of the pastoral strategy that relies on parish closings and mergings.”

The AUSCP is the largest association of Catholic priests in the United States. The endorsement of the FutureChurch statement was published in the October 4, 2015 Bulletin, a newsletter serving about one thousand AUSCP members.
The priests say that “the closing of any parish not requested by the members themselves” is seen “as invariably wounding the Body of Christ. It leaves casualties among the People of God rather than healing.” They say the current pastoral strategy “withdraws the church from various ‘peripheries,’ and that “Such steps betray Pope Francis’ call for the church to function as a field hospital for the marginalized.”

This past June, the association agreed on a National Plan for Priest-less Parishes. In a working draft it calls a "Proposal for Pastoral Care In & Thru Priestless Parishes," the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests exhorts the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and "dioceses nationwide" to quickly address the issue.

Core to the plan is "new and more specific exploration" of lay ecclesial ministers to oversee non-sacramental aspects of parish life and administration. They note that:

- 30 percent of U.S. Catholics have left the church
- Church marriages have declined 60 percent since 1980
- "Apart from Hispanic members," Catholic total membership is declining

In developing the plan, AUSCP stated, "We have relied on the USCCB's 2005 document Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, as well as
the 2015 Tenth Anniversary Reflection on that document. Co-Workers welcomed Lay Ecclesial Ministry and addressed the wide field of ministries that involve laity."

In February 2017, the AUSCP submitted their draft plan for public comment.

Registration for our next teleconferences can be found here.

Pope Francis authorizes bishops to decide on liturgical language

Joshua McElwee reports that in a motu proprio issued Sept. 9, Pope Francis says he is making a change to the church's Code of Canon Law so that the Second Vatican Council's call to make the liturgy more understandable to people is "more clearly reaffirmed and put into practice."

The motu proprio, given the title Magnum Principum, modifies two clauses of Canon 838. The rewritten clauses say simply that the Vatican is to "recognize" adaptations of Latin liturgical texts approved by national bishops' conferences. Read more at NCR Fr. Tom Reese Pray Tell Blog with Bishop Coyne John Thavis Fr. Michael Ryan Fr. John Baldovin

Yes, God is also Mother

Jessie Bazan writes that our mysterious God is big beyond
measure. The language we use to talk about God should reflect God’s great depth.

This weekend, Pope Francis gave local bishops conferences greater say over the language used during Mass in an apostolic letter issued *motu proprio* (on his own initiative) titled “*Magnum Principium*.” The work of translating liturgical texts will shift from Rome to local conferences. I hope the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will consider putting forth a Mass text with language that better reflects God’s deep mystery.

I feel frustrated when I hear God referred to as “He” over and over in Roman Catholic liturgies. As a woman who believes I am made in the image of God, I struggle to connect with lines like “... for the praise and glory of *his* name, for our good and the good of all *his* holy Church.” During Mass this weekend, I counted more than 20 uses of masculine language for God. This does not include the times “men” is used to describe humanity. I did not hear any feminine language.

**Read more**

**Benincasa lay Catholic community a model for today and for the future**

*Cynthia-Marie Marmo O’Brien* writes that from the outside there is little evidence that the brownstone on New York’s Upper West Side is an unusual community. That is until you notice the crest on the door: a black and white design featuring a rose, a grain of wheat, and the name Benincasa. Step inside and you’ll find a committed lay community and a retreat center for young people to
Karen Gargamelli, the community’s founder, had a vision for such a place many years before it came to fruition in Benincasa, named after St. Catherine of Siena, who was born with the name Caterina Benincasa. “It was the thing that was always on my mind,” she says. “The thing that I always talked about, this desire and this longing and this vision.”

For eight years Gargamelli practiced housing law with Jay Kim at Common Law, a legal practice the two founded together. Although she pursued her legal career based on a desire to work for justice, Gargamelli found it difficult to follow the gospel. “I had been formed by a Catholic education and driven by a spirituality that was linked to the gospels. I was seeking a profession based on a desire to serve,” she says. “Yet because I entered a secular world and secular profession, I was asked to follow the gospel inside huge bureaucracies. There was no support.”

Living alone in a studio apartment, Gargamelli looked for that spiritual support at her local parish, as “loneliness is real and pervasive,” she remarks. But she didn’t find it. “I have a sense that before my time parishes were places where people felt supported. I don’t know that the parish is really a home base anymore,” Gargamelli says. She didn’t feel fulfilled at her parish because she feels that parishes today “don’t have adult education in place for developing theological understanding. . . There’s still more focus on sacraments and less on individual development.”

Read more at U.S. Catholic
Rockville Centre Catholics urge bishop to ordain married men

In a time of fewer priests, a petition composed by James Stubenrauch and other Catholics asked Rockville Centre Bishop John Barres, the local ordinary, for the church to "move without delay" in allowing ordination of married men to the priesthood and asked Barres to "make every effort to advance this important proposal."

The petition was mailed to Barres in June, after Stubenrauch spoke in favor of his proposal at a discussion group on social and religious issues held Tuesday mornings at Dominican Village.

"Some of us are waiting for Vatican III," said Stubenrauch, who said that the church needs to be democratized beyond a "pay, pray and obey" model to involve more laity. Others in the group argued that the church's resistance to change is a reason why many of their children and grandchildren no longer attend Mass.

Barres responded to the petition this month with a letter addressed to "Residents of Dominican Village." He wrote, "It is a blessing to observe people with fervent faith in our Diocese who are concerned about the needs of the Church. I certainly will bring your concerns to my own prayers and reflection." He asked the group to pray for issues affecting the church on
Long Island, including gang violence, care for immigrants, religious liberty and evangelization. He did not mention priestly celibacy. The response was a disappointment, said the petition signers.

"He overlooked it [celibacy] and put his own issues first," said Kuta.

Noted Stubenrauch, "He completely ducks the issue we brought up."

Read more at NCR

Natalia Imperatori-Lee moderates discussion on bridge building with James Martin, SJ, and Patrick Hornbeck, Ph.D.

Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Ph.D. moderated a discussion with James Martin, SJ, editor-at-large for America magazine, and Patrick Hornbeck, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Department of Theology at Fordham, as they explored the challenges of bridge-building between the LGBT community and the Catholic Church, even when the church continues to describe homosexuals in its catechism as “intrinsically disordered.”

Read more

NCR Editorial urges Church to ordain women

The National Catholic Reporter's editorial staff are championing women's ordination. Citing Professor Tina Beattie and Fr. Ray Donovan, they are urging
They write that an NCR reader in a California diocese recently wrote the newspaper with the information that his community was foregoing daily Masses because the parish's full-time pastor had been incapacitated with an unexpected chronic illness and the retired priest who helps out has limited capacity. According to the letter writer, the pastor's illness makes even weekend Masses an endurance test and not a celebration.

Given the growing numbers of aging clergy in the church, Catholics will be witnessing this situation with increasing frequency.

The letter writer also adds that his parish has members who are validly ordained priests but are prevented from leading the community because they have married. The church hierarchy "would rather have no Eucharist than one celebrated by a married or widowed priest," the letter writer says. "And they do it with a straight face as if they are right."

We would add that very likely in that same congregation are a large number of equally qualified and capable women who could be called into ministry but are not — only because they are women.

Read more

**James Martin, SJ, confronts Catholics who hurl insults**
James Martin, SJ, has been the target of homophobic Catholics. He has faced a bombardment of insults and slurs. When targeted by Austin Ruse, president of the Center for Family and Human Rights, or C-Fam, and a columnist for Crisis magazine.

Martin did not reply directly to Ruse, but instead posted on Facebook a screenshot of the tweet, and wrote, "Insults and slurs like 'pansy' are what LGBT people face every day, even from Catholics. But hatred and contempt, like this public example posted today on Twitter, only strengthen my desire to advocate for LGBT people, especially within our church. "Many Catholics ask me if there is still real homophobia in the church, and so it's important to have public examples like this one. ... It's important for Catholics who may doubt the need to advocate for LGBT people in the church to see this kind of public contempt." Words like "pansy" and other insults, Martin continued, "make LGBT people feel 'less than.' What I'm trying to do, with help from many of my brothers and sisters and siblings, is make them feel like beloved children of God."

Read more

Curia reforms almost complete?

Pope Francis’ international Council of Cardinals is nearly done with its work of advising the pope on a major reform of the Vatican bureaucracy, the
Bishop Marcello Semeraro of Albano, secretary of Pope Francis' Council of Cardinals, told Vatican Radio Sept. 11 that "as far as the reform process of the Roman Curia is concerned, it is even more than three-quarters of the way there — it is almost complete."

"It is nearly complete at the level of proposals made to the pope," he said. [Read more]

**September 11 - 13: College of Cardinals on decentralization of authority and reducing clericalism**

Joshua McElwee reports that among themes the spokesman said were discussed in the latest meeting of the College of Cardinals was: decentralization; the role of Vatican embassies around the world; "the curia as an instrument of evangelization and service to the pope and the local churches;" and "the selection and competence of personnel" for the Vatican's bureaucracy.

On the last point, the spokesman said the cardinals spoke about having "less clerical, more international" staff at the Vatican. [Read more at NCR]

**Voices of Faith Survey for Young Catholic Women**

*Holy entrepreneurs: Catholic...Young...Women...Now!*

Voices of Faith is celebrating its 5th anniversary and we want to hear from young women (ages 18 - 35). Please complete our...
survey and share your voice!

Here is the link:
https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/GTX9JPX

1. Please **complete the survey** by **September 22, 2017**!

2. Please **share this link** with your friends who might join us in our fight.

Thank you for taking the time to create a better future for women in the Catholic Church!

You won't want to miss these FutureChurch events!

**Please support this work!**

Be inspired! Catholic Women Preach!

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

Learn what you can do to save your parish community

New! International priests statistics!

U.S. Priest statistics

Check out events offered by our friends

Register for CTA East Coast Conference in Baltimore, MD

October 20 - 21, 2017

For more information contact:
Ryan Sattler, CTA MD Chair
ryansattler@comcast.net
443.274.1180

Go online:
http://conference.calltoactionmd.org

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