FOCUS E-News
September 4 - 10, 2017 Edition

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

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

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

Sign up for FutureChurch’s Teleconference
September 13 at 8:00pm ET
Fr. Ray Cole of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests
National plan for priest-less parishes

New! Priest Status by Country!
CLICK HERE to get priest stats by country! By U.S. diocese!
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
If you want to learn how Pope Francis came into power, you will gain some critical insights from Catherine Pepinster, the former editor of The Tablet, who details how embassy officials left the room to allow Cardinal Cormac
Murphy-O’Connor, who died last week, time to persuade the cardinals of the importance of voting for Bergoglio.

In the days before the 2013 vote, Murphy-O’Connor co-hosted a reception at the British embassy in Rome to lobby support for Cardinal Bergoglio, the then progressive archbishop of Buenos Aires. He invited cardinals from the Commonwealth but deliberately left off the invitation list two powerful but conservative clerics - Cardinal Ouellet from Canada, who had been a frontrunner, and Cardinal Pell from Australia. Read more

Some contend that Pope Francis' election has created a "wait and see" mentality among Catholics who have worked for Vatican II reforms. We, at FutureChurch don't agree. We know that Catholics are at the heart of change and that they continue to do their part to foster the Vatican II spirit within the Church. Here are some ways we can work together!

Start a conversation with DeaconChat. Open the discussion with your bishop on married priests

Thank you for all you do in the service of the Gospel and the future of the Church!
Deborah Rose-Milavec Executive Director

Voices of Faith Survey for Young Catholic Women

Holy entrepreneurs:
Voices of Faith is celebrating its 5th anniversary and our focus is on young women!

Dear Young Catholic Women:

To prepare the next Voices of Faith event and to make sure young women are heard, we would like to get your response to some fundamental questions about the Church. *This survey is for Catholic women between the ages of 18 - 35.*

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

For others:

Please **share this survey request with young women** (daughters, granddaughters daughters of friends, friends, colleagues, etc....) who would be willing to share their voices with us. *We want to make sure all young women are heard, especially those who have already left the church or who are thinking about leaving the Church*; those who would like to stay involved but feel they cannot given the present constraints on women’s participation in leadership, governance, and ministry.
Thank you for taking the time to create a better future for women in the Catholic Church!

Survey link

Join our teleconference on Wednesday, September 13, at 8PM ET with AUSCP Fr. Ray Cole as he discusses the need to empower lay leaders in parishes at risk of closing

Members of the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests will discuss their efforts to promote a national plan to address the increasing number of priest-less parishes.

Their letter to bishops begins:
We write regarding our concern that, as we move from the present into the future, the church in the United States assures pastoral presence to the people of God. Our pastoral experience together with the well-known and worsening shortage of priests convinces us that our dioceses and all of us need a plan which we can adapt to our local situations and develop to meet the emerging needs. To that end we have prepared the attached proposal regarding Lay Pastoral Ministers in Priest-less Parishes.

Sign up!

The Popemaker: Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor

According to a new book by former Tablet editor, Catherine Pepister, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor is a "Popemaker" who succeeded in persuading cardinals of the need
for a liberal pope in the person of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio.

Prior to the conclave, he invited cardinals from the Commonwealth but deliberately left off the invitation list two powerful but conservative clerics - Cardinal Ouellet from Canada, who had been a frontrunner, and Cardinal Pell from Australia.

Ms Pepinster, whose book The Keys and The Kingdom: Britain and the Papacy from John Paul II to Francis is published next month, said: “Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor was a popular, genial man but beneath his jovial exterior was someone of great canniness who knew exactly how the Vatican worked.”

“And that canniness meant he ensured his friend was elected Pope Francis - a pope who has made a huge impact on the Catholic Church and the world. There have been kingmakers in history; Cormac Murphy-O’Connor turned out to be a popemaker.”

Read more

Was Cardinal Mueller sacked because of his public stand on women deacons?

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt reports that a noted German Protestant theologian who attended the Catholic Church’s 2015 Synod on the Family has claimed that Cardinal Gerhard Müller was dismissed as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) because of his public criticism of Pope Francis,
especially on the issue of women deacons.

“I don’t think it was a case of differences of opinion, but the fact that Müller often made these differences public,” said Thomas Schirrmacher, a specialist in Christian moral philosophy and chairman of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

Read more at La Croix Robert Mickens on C. Mueller

Australian Catholics identify and institutionalize necessary reforms

Massimo Faggioli writes that Australian Catholics are weaving together a strategy that not only identifies the deep-seated abuse of power that led to clergy sex abuse and coverup, but they are building a way to institutionalize reform.

Faggioli writes that Francis Sullivan, a lay Catholic who is CEO of the Truth, Justice and Healing Commission, gave him his assessment of the impact of the Royal Commission hearings. “The hearings have laid bare the cultural factors that enabled the scandal to be so badly managed,” Sullivan told him. “They can be summarized as issues of power, privilege, and participation. Who controlled decision-making, who was involved in decision-making, and who benefited from the decisions taken.

The lack of transparency and the entitlement attitudes that
underpin clericalism were given a lot of ventilation. This has opened public debate about the role of women, celibacy, seminary training, supervision of clerics, and the ethical use of church finances.” The church, he added, has lost control of this public debate. “Its voice has been muted and compromised,” he said. “Any semblance of a defensive tone is jumped on by critics and the majority of the leaders have been missing in action.”

Jesuit priest Frank Brennan calls for legalizing marriage for LBGT couples

Contrary to the opinions of other Catholic leaders, Jesuit priest Frank Brennan said the increasing number of same-sex couples with children was an argument in favor of marriage equality.

"We've got to factor that into the common good argument about what's necessary," Father Brennan told the Sky News channel on Sept. 1. Earlier in the week he said he would vote “yes” in a postal plebiscite due to take place in Australia to measure public opinion on the same sex marriage debate. A positive result in favor could result in a vote for legalization in parliament.

Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland want to temporarily halt ordinations
Sarah MacDonald reports that the Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland has called on the Irish bishops to halt the introduction of permanent deacons in their dioceses until the Vatican’s commission on women deacons has concluded its report and Pope Francis has made a decision based on its findings.

In their statement, association leaders said they believed that proceeding with the introduction of male deacons at this time would add “another male clerical layer to ministry” which was “insensitive, disrespectful of women and counter-productive at this present critical time.”

The call by the Association of Catholic Priests follows a public statement by one of association’s leadership team, parish priest Fr. Roy Donovan, who warned Aug. 9 that introducing permanent deacons without women is “extending patriarchy.”

Read more

Catholics live the call declaring "racism is a sin."

Michael Powell writes that Saint Columba is a Catholic church in Oakland, CA that could end up leading the local religious community’s resistance to the increasing climate of hate. The pastor, Fr. Aidan McAleenan, preaches prophetically declaring, "racism is a sin."

Saint Columba is not simply another radical church in the
black community, preaching to its own constituents. Only 3 percent of American Catholics, two million people, are African Americans, so Saint Columba connects a unique population with the world’s largest religious institution. The Catholic church in the United States has long done this, connecting with the various non-white immigrant groups who reach America’s shores. As black Catholic leader Rev. Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. said, “The Catholic church in America has never been a white European church.”

Fr. Aidan McAleenan has shaped the church under his leadership into a place he hopes would better serve Oakland’s large African American population. West African symbols adorn the church along with depictions of a black Virgin Mary and Jesus. Read more in the Bay City Beacon

Bishop Nelson Perez asks for forgiveness for clergy sex abuse; promises to listen to Catholics hurt by parish closings; urges Catholics to care for immigrants

Newly installed Bishop Nelson Perez is the son of immigrants and the first Latino bishop of Cleveland. His installation took place on September 5, 2017.

A man with a quick and easy smile, he offered several comments that were especially welcome. He asked for special prayers for the stress being suffered by those seeking new lives in
America and the strain being caused by political pressure for more restrictive immigration policies.

Perez also asked for forgiveness on behalf of all the bishops and the church for the “horrendous” child-abuse scandals of the past. “I want to once again ask for forgiveness,” he said.

As for his plans for the diocese, Perez said, he has none. He explained that “this is not about me;” rather, it is about you - the faithful that number some 677,000 across Northeast Ohio.

“I want to be clear,” he said. “I have been sent here to be a part of you — not the other way around.” Read more

**In case you missed it: Rita Ferrone asks how history will judge Pope Francis**

Rita Ferrone writes that in recent column by Ross Douthat in the *New York Times* (“Pope Francis’ Next Act” July 15, 2017) tags the issue of communion for the divorced and remarried as the “great controversy” of the past two years of the Francis pontificate. He says it has reached “a stalemate,” with Francis on the one side, and “bishops the world over” on the other. Now that Cardinal George Pell has gone to Australia to face sex abuse charges, and Cardinal Gerhard Mueller’s term as Prefect of the CDF has not been renewed, and Cardinal Meisner has died, and Cardinal Angelo Scola has retired from
the Archdiocese of Milan, Douthat worries that “resistance to Francis in the highest reaches of the hierarchy” is eroding. What will be the “next act” of the “drama” of this “liberal pope”?

I hope the readers of the *New York Times* take Douthat’s analysis with a grain of salt.

First of all, I think that history will look on Pope Francis’s post-synodal exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) as a very modest gesture toward a more humane pastoral approach to marriage, not a great standoff between Pope Francis and his bishops. The kind of flexibility and accompaniment recommended by the Pope is not outside the scope of church teaching.

Read more

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

**Please support this work!**
Be inspired! 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!

New! Emerging Models of Parish and Community Life 2017 - 2018 SERIES

Check out events offered by our friends
Register for CTA East Coast Conference in Baltimore, MD

October 20 - 21, 2017

For more information contact:
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Go online:
http://conference.calltoactionmd.org