From the Executive Director's Desk

As I have aged, my capacity for gratitude has deepened which is an undeserved blessing in itself.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to work alongside so many incredibly committed and gifted women and men who are carving out bigger spaces within the institution for all God's people.

I am particularly grateful for my many teachers, mentors, and friends who have inspired me with their courage, integrity, creativity, curiosity, and commitment.

Of those who have stretched my vision and shaped my heart, there is no one I have come to cherish more than Sr. Louise Akers, SC. In a relatively short span of time, she has taught me to persevere in the face of
adversity, seek justice boldly, and speak truth to power when called.

I am also grateful for the many women and men who have made FutureChurch the outstanding organization it is today.

Although I never met him, co-founder Fr. Louis Trivison’s vision, energy, wisdom, and fearlessness are imprinted deeply in the work we carry out.

I am profoundly indebted to co-founder Sr. Chris Schnenk whose unshakable support for me and the ongoing work of FutureChurch has been foundational to our success. Her abiding love and advocacy for the Church, and especially women in the Church, both ancient and modern, has opened new doors for women in the Church today. Recovering the stories of apostleship, ministry, witness, and leadership of Mary of Magdala and many other named and unnamed foremothers in our tradition has helped modern-day Catholics take new steps toward greater gender balance within the institution. She continues to break ground with her new book, Crispina and Her Sisters.

I cherish the members of FutureChurch’s board who have worked tirelessly and with great skill and wisdom to steer the organization in good times, in the face of attacks and hostility, and through momentous changes. Their commitment to the health and vibrancy of FutureChurch has been unwavering and inspirational.

I am grateful for my colleagues whose energy, creativity, and commitment to this work is
supremely evident day by day, and to all our volunteers and co-workers near and far, who have worked across international borders for common goals.

And finally, I am grateful for all faithful Catholics who have carried out the ministry of reform by building a grassroots movement for change. This Thanksgiving, I am grateful for each and every one of you. You have shared your gifts, voiced your hopes and dreams, and pioneered new paths in the Church in order to make the Gospel a greater reality in a world ever in need of God’s grace and vision today.

Blessings to each and everyone of you from FutureChurch.

Deborah Rose-Milavec

Adequate seminary formation is key to preventing clergy sex abuse according to Jesuit Hans Zollner

Sarah MacDonald, writing for The Tablet, reports that a member of the Vatican’s Commission for the Protection of Minors has said seminaries must pay the “greatest attention” to the protection of minors and vulnerable persons in their formation programs and mustn’t confine the matter to a one-off safeguarding lecture or workshop so that a box could be ticked.

In his address on ‘Formation in Safeguarding in Seminary and Religious Training’ at a symposium at the national seminary in Maynooth, Professor Hans Zollner of the Centre for Child Protection at Rome’s Gregorian University, said specific courses on the
protection of minors must be included in seminaries’ programme of initial as well as ongoing formation. The issue should not be something seminaries fear nor should it be confined to the area of sexuality, “it has to be part of our understanding of pastoral work,” he said.

Speaking to the Tablet, the Jesuit criticised the Church’s lack of a theology of safeguarding for children and the lack of a theology of childhood.

He questioned how the Church could talk to victims of abuse about salvation when the typical approach currently emphasises that individuals are saved from their sins. “How do you tell that to a survivor of abuse who has been sinned against” he asked.

Read more

Congregation for Clergy presses to close seminaries that serve too few students but will leave it up to bishops' conferences to decide

Archbishop Jorge Carlos Patrón Wong, the official responsible for seminaries at the Congregation for the Clergy, has told France’s bishops that the Vatican believes seminaries with tiny numbers of students should be closed or merged.

The Mexican bishop made his remarks on Saturday at the fall plenary assembly of the French Bishops’ conference, currently underway at the Marian Shrine of Lourdes.

He came from Rome expressly to present the key points of the new Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis or "The Gift
of Priestly Vocation", the Vatican’s guidelines for training future priests.

There is one point that especially stands out among Rome’s new recommendations, especially in a country where priestly vocations are increasingly rare. Bishops are requested to consider “the need to set a minimum number of students” for a seminary to function as “a veritable training community”.

Later though, in a follow up letter meant to clarify Rome’s position, the archbishop said the Vatican will leave to it the discretion of national episcopal conferences to decide the minimum number of seminarians required for houses of priestly formation to remain viable.

Read initial report
Read second report

The Pope sets up new department for papal diplomats

Christopher Lamb reports that while the Holy See might be one of the world’s smallest sovereign states it has a diplomatic network second only to the United States in terms of its global reach.

Now, Pope Francis has established a special department inside the Vatican’s Secretariat of State devoted to overseeing the work of papal diplomats including their selection, career advancement and working conditions. Titled the “Section for the Diplomatic Staff of the Holy See” it will be led by Polish Archbishop Jan Romeo Pawlowski and will act as the equivalent of a human resources department for the
roughly 300 priest diplomats who work in the service.

The move is part of Francis’ wider reform of the Roman Curia and a sign of his appreciation of Vatican diplomacy and the work of his ambassadors. At the same time he and the C9 – his advisory body of cardinals - have been looking at the role of papal nuncios, and how to better support and define the role. The creation of the new section also comes three months after the Vatican recalled a diplomat from Washington for suspected child-porn violations.

Read more

Supporters of Pope Francis should speak up

Rita Ferrone writes that those who support Pope Francis’s leadership have tended to keep a fairly low profile by comparison. But that may be changing.

Indeed, an outstanding demonstration of public support has arisen in Central Europe in recent weeks. Two highly respected academics, Tomáš Halík in Prague and Paul Michael Zulehner in Vienna, both Roman Catholic priests, wrote an open letter of support for Pope Francis and invited others to sign. As the “filial correction” letter, announced with great fanfare in September, has fizzled, going from 62 signatories to a mere 250, backing for the “Pro Pope Francis” letter has taken off like a rocket. As of this writing, more than fifty thousand people have added their names, either as signatories or supporters.
But it’s not just the number of signatories; it’s who they are as well. Many of them are university professors from German-speaking Europe and the Czech Republic, but eminent leaders from around the world, in public life and the church as well as the academy, also included their names. The philosopher Charles Taylor, South African bishop Kevin Dowling, former Hungarian President László Sólyom, spiritual writer David Steindl-Rast, former German Bundestag President Wolfgang Thierse, and Erwin Kräutler, the “legendary bishop of the Xingu” in the Amazon, have all signed on, along with many others. Read more

No retroactive application of *Magnum Principium* says bishops from Wales and England

Ruth Gledhill reports that the Bishops of England and Wales have announced that the current translation of the Roman Missal will be retained for use, in spite of Pope Francis’ motu proprio restoring responsibility for liturgical translations to local churches.

*Magnum Principium* amends canon 838 of the Code of Canon Law, giving to bishops the responsibility for liturgical translations that the Second Vatican Council intended. But the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales said after their meeting in Leeds last week that they were "grateful" for guidance that they have received from the Congregation for Divine Worship that the motu proprio "concerns future liturgical translations and cannot be applied retroactively".
The bishops’ statement appears to put paid to hopes that the highly-praised 1998 translation of the Roman Missal that had been approved by 11 conferences of English-speaking bishops might be authorised for use in England and Wales. This translation was ultimately rejected by Rome for being insufficiently true to the Latin original.

Archbishop of Southwark Peter Smith, vice-president of the bishops' conference, said last week that the aim of Pope Francis from the start of his papacy has been to devolve power back to the bishops’ conferences from Rome. *Magnum Principium* was part of this process, but, Archbishop Smith explained, a lot of people had "taken it amiss" to mean that the bishops could go ahead and authorise their own translation as of now. This was not the case, he said.

Read more

**Failing to reach enough youth, the Vatican extends the deadline for completing the Youth survey**

Gauthier Vaillant reports that the Vatican's online survey aims to reach a maximum number of young people in preparation for the Synod of Bishop's assembly next year on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment.

The Vatican is giving 16- to 29-year-olds one more month to fill out its on-line survey in preparation for the Synod of Bishop's next gathering on “Young people, faith and vocational discernment”. The
bishops will hold their meeting from October 3-28, 2018 in Rome.
The online survey which began in June was originally set to close on November 30. But Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, the Synod secretary general, announced on Tuesday that the questionnaire will continue to be accessible until December 31st.
The responses, which will be analyzed and synthesized, will provide a basis for the drafting of the Instrumentum Laboris or “working document”, the roadmap that which the Synod Fathers will work from.

Click [here](#) to access the survey.

This online survey is unprecedented both in its form and as a method of preparing for a Synod gathering. It is also the first time that the Vatican has organized its own direct consultation with the faithful in parallel with the discourses normally carried out in the dioceses.

The latter is used to prepare national summaries which also serve in the drafting of the Instrumentum Laboris. The French Bishops Conference submitted their synthesis to Rome in October. It was made public at the beginning of November during the autumn assembly of the bishops at Lourdes.

The survey was clearly an unprecedented initiative. The question is whether it was a success. At the end of October, Cardinal Baldisseri said the questionnaire had received 65,000 responses.

This is, in fact, a low response
rate considering that the Vatican aimed to address young people from the whole world regardless of their religion. 
Read more

**Australia's Royal Commission will offer final report soon**

Mark Brolly reports that Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is to have a final public sitting in Sydney next month, on the eve of delivering its final report to Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove on 15 December, to thank the community for its support.

The CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan, told a national meeting of Catholic secondary school principals in Adelaide that the final report – the delivery of which will mark the formal end of the Commission's work more than five years after then Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced its creation in November 2012 – was expected to comprise up to 17 volumes, at least three of which were expected to deal with the Catholic Church.

However, it is not clear when the report will be made public as that normally occurs only after tabling in Parliament, but none of Australia's federal or state legislatures is due to sit between 15 December and Christmas, the start of Australia's summer holidays. So the report may not be made public until early 2018.

Read more

**Hopeful new appointments**

Rocco Palmo reports that In a
appointments following last week’s November Meeting, at Roman Noon the Pope named Fr Joseph Mark Spalding, 52 (above) – until now vicar-general of Louisville and pastor of two city parishes – as 12th bishop of Nashville...

...and Fr William Shawn McKnight, 49 (right) – pastor of Wichita’s flourishing Church of the Magdalen, already a familiar figure on the national stage from his five years as director of the USCCB’s Clergy arm – to Missouri’s capital as the fourth bishop of Jefferson City. With his appointment, the Sant’Anselmo-trained liturgist becomes the US' youngest head of a Latin-church diocese.

While the relative youth of both (not to mention their shared use of their middle names) will stand out on the wider scene – and, to be sure, their active service will stretch into the 2040s – the striking piece internally is the outsize experience and reputation each brings to the bench. Indeed, having known them both for what feels like ages, these choices respectively possess a degree of ecclesial firepower beyond their years, and from a national vantage, to see them come up together is the most significant thing of all.

Read more

Cardinal Parolin: Pope Francis is the bearer of Vatican II

Rocco Palmo reports that the week just past [USCCB assembly] always makes for a "full immersion" experience... and to be sure, that the lounge of the USCCB hotel was dead by 10 on Wednesday night goes to show how knocked out everyone
Building upon his historic message to open the 100th Plenary, as the bench’s elections unfolded on Tuesday morning, the Cardinal-Secretary of State Pietro Parolin delivered an even more extensive – and, quite possibly, even more significant – word, appearing at the Catholic University of America in Washington to propose Pope Francis as the ultimate figure of continuity with Vatican II, citing how he’s "taken up anew" the Council’s teaching and rebooted model of church.

Especially given two of the examples cited by Papa Bergoglio's top deputy – episcopal collegiality and what Francis has termed the "poor Church for the poor" (with global Catholicism's first-ever Day of the Poor accordingly being marked this weekend) – the hourlong talk is as salient to the moment as the interest in it has been sparse.

While publication of Parolin's text has been prohibited – Lord only knows why – gratefully a fullvid of his Italian address is around, with a captioned translation in English....

And here it is: Parolin address

Robert Mickens addresses the future of Francis at Detroit's Elephants in the Living Room gathering

Robert Mickens addressed questions about Pope Francis' legacy and future in a recent talk to a group called Elephants in the Living Room in Detroit.

Mickens asked, "Who are the
men currently seen as candidates to succeed Francis? And are any of them likely to carry forward his creative vision for Church reform?"

Mickens suggests that much will depend on when this pope exits the stage and what the Church and the world look like at that moment. For example, how many cardinals will actually be voting at the next Conclave? If Francis keeps the number of electors fixed at no more than 120, as Paul VI established after Vatican II, conventional wisdom might suggest that there’s a greater the chance that the cardinals will have to find a compromise candidate.

Because as it stands right now Pope Francis has named only 49 of the 120 men who are currently under the age of eighty and eligible to vote (and be candidates) in a Conclave. That is not even one-half the number of electors. Benedict XVI appointed 52 of the current crop and John Paul II named the other 19 who can still vote for the next pope.

Read more

Catholics petition for the removal of Madison Bishop Robert Morlino

A social media petition campaign asking Pope Francis to remove Bishop Robert Morlino as leader of the Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin, has generated more than 7,300 signatures as of Nov. 9.

The campaign is a response to an advisory sent to priests by Fr. James Bartylla, diocesan vicar general, that discouraged Catholic funerals for those in same-sex marriages and
relationships. The advisory was made public Oct. 22.
Read more

More women are sharing their stories 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!

Please support this effort!

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!

U.S. Priest statistics

Get the latest scholarship on the role of early Christian women by Christine Schenk, CSJ. Receive a copy of Crispina and Her Sisters when you donate $125 or more to FutureChurch!

Crispina and Her Sisters will open your eyes to the role women played in the shaping and expanding Christianity

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.

**Opportunities from our friends**

**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 her work - print, book signing. . [stpaulboston.org](http://stpaulboston.org)