

FOCUS

On FUTURECHURCH

OPTIONAL CELIBACY: SO ALL CAN BE AT THE TABLE JESUITS CALL FOR MARRIED PRIESTS

A moving editorial in the Jesuit weekly *America* recently called for the “recruitment and training of married men” as priests, ordaining permanent deacons to the priesthood, and welcoming back married priests. Saying that, “Silence and fervent prayer for vocations are no longer adequate responses to the priest shortage in the United States,” the May fourth issue asked U.S. bishops to take greater leadership in openly discussing remedies to the priest shortage as the church prepares to observe the Year of the Priest.

In the midst of worldwide calls to change celibacy rules, FutureChurch is pleased to announce an important new initiative: **Optional Celibacy: So All Can Be At the Table**. This effort builds on our earlier work at the 2005 International Synod on the Eucharist where the priest shortage dominated the agenda and four of twelve bishop small groups asked for further study of married priests.

It is also one outcome of a survey conducted over the past year to help us determine next steps in our work to change church rules to include both married and celibate priests. Initial survey feedback indicated strong support for international, national and local networking for petitioning church leaders to discuss mandatory celibacy and women’s roles in the church. Other favored strategies included education about the priest shortage and the history of mandatory celibacy. Surprisingly there was significant support for encouraging priests themselves to speak up about the need to change celibacy rules. (Final survey results will be available in August.)

In light of the unprecedented success of our Synod on the Word postcards last fall, FutureChurch is launching an international electronic and paper postcard campaign asking Cardinal Hummes at the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome to open discussion of optional celibacy at the highest levels of the Church. Cardinal Hummes himself spoke in favor of discussing celibacy rules before he left Brazil. Also, it is likely that his office is already familiar with parishes closing because of the priest shortage since and the burgeoning number of appeals from devastated parishioners land on his desk.

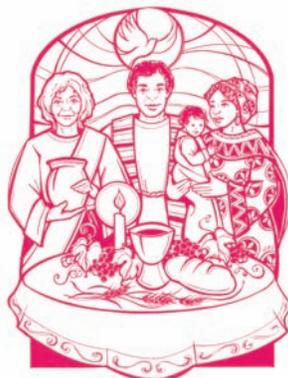
We will also approach national bishops conferences, priest organizations and international reform groups for support in requesting discussion of changing celibacy rules to include both a married and celibate priesthood in the Latin rite of the Roman Catholic Church.

The new project is most timely since calls for changing celibacy rules are rapidly expanding, especially in the face of widespread parish closings. Consider the following:

- In March, 2009 New York’s Cardinal Egan said he believed optional celibacy would be coming up for discussion by the church’s hierarchy: “I think it is a perfectly legitimate discussion” (Catholic News Service)
- In Brazil and Austria, groups representing 18,300 priests are lobbying for changes in celibacy rules.
- A recent Irish poll found that two thirds of Irish Catholics believe priests should be allowed to marry, and thousands of British Catholics presented a statement asking for married priests and discussion of women priests to the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.
- A recent Pew study found that four times as many U.S. Catholics leave the Church as join it, more than any other denomination.

In just the past three years, over 400 parishes across the United States have closed, according to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. Sadly, this scenario is being repeated in Canada, the United Kingdom and Europe as the irreversibility of the priest shortage hits home. Likewise thousands of Catholics in the developing world have minimal access to Mass and the sacraments because of too few celibate priests.

FutureChurch has worked for nearly twenty years to raise awareness about the need to change celibacy rules. While we are saddened to see so many Catholics suffer from the failure of church leaders to address the priest shortage, we do not lose heart and we redouble our efforts on behalf of the People of God.



What you can do:

- **Send a paper postcard to Claudio Cardinal Hummes** and order paper postcards (for Cardinal Hummes and our own bishop) for your friends to send.
- **Or visit www.futurechurch.org to send an electronic postcard** and cc: your local bishop and officials at the U.S. Bishops’ conference. Email your friends to send a postcard too.
- **Sponsor a special *Optional Celibacy: So All Can Be at the Table* educational program and prayer service** on the priest shortage and best practices for preserving vibrant parishes (available June 30, 2009 at www.futurechurch.org).
- **Educate yourself and your faith community** by purchasing the **Future of Priestly Ministry** and **Save our Parish Community** resource packets available at www.futurechurch.org

'09 Magdala Events to Celebrate Women Coworkers of Paul

Go and Tell: Celebrating the Women Who Were Co-Workers with Paul is the title of our special 2009 Mary of Magdala prayer service, created by Joan Brausch of Midland, Michigan. The service weaves together the stories of women of faith—Mary of Magdala, Women in the Ministry of Paul, Women Who Preach the Gospel in Word and Action, Women Who Serve, Women Who Lead in the Community, Mothers Who Pass on their Faith and our own stories. We have chosen to educate about the women leaders of St. Paul, specifically Prisca, Phoebe, Lydia, and Eunice as a fitting conclusion to the Church's Year of St. Paul.



Every year, FutureChurch includes prayer, education and action components to the celebrations in honor of St. Mary of Magdala's feast day on July 22nd. Celebration coordinators are asked to distribute postcards for participants to send to Cardinal Llovera, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, asking him and the synod council to follow through on Synod Proposition 16, a reexamination of the Lectionary "in light of these historic times" and include more stories of biblical women leaders.

COMPLETE MARY OF MAGDALA ORGANIZING KIT and Women and the Word: Follow Up to Synod 2008 resources available at:

www.futurechurch.org

Go to the website to tell us about your celebration plans AND to immediately download new Mary of Magdala and Women and the Word resources.

Women Leaders in the Ministry of St. Paul - An evening at my New York City Parish



On a spring evening in the middle of May, about 50 parishioners gathered for an exploration of "the Women Leaders in the Ministry of St. Paul" sponsored by our Faith Formation Committee. We used FutureChurch's simple prayer service and had an insightful presentation by Dr. Deirdre Good.

Dr. Good, who is a New Testament Professor at the General Theological Seminary in New York City, dug into the rarely heard Romans 16:1-16 passage. In this last chapter of what was probably his last letter, Paul introduces us to a number of remarkable women who so few Catholics today know about. First named is Phoebe, a deacon and leader of the community in Cenchreae and Paul's benefactor. She is

most likely carrying Paul's letter and therefore will explain its meaning to the community in Rome. Paul then greets the leaders in Rome among them: Junia, "prominent among the apostles" and Prisca with her husband Aquila—"co-workers" who "risked their necks for my life." Many in our group were delighted to learn this—but some concerns were raised – Could a woman be an apostle? Was a woman actually a deacon? (The answers are, "Yes," and "Yes.") We saw first hand that, as Dr. Good said, "These texts are hot; they are far from dead."

Dr. Good then led us through the mystery of Ephesians 5:22, "Wives should be subordinate to their husbands..." (*New American Bible*) We learned that the early Greek manuscripts have an ellipsis where the text now has the word "subordinate." Deirdre defined an ellipsis as, "an omission for the reader to fill in based on common usage." For example in the Beatitudes, the phrase "Blessed are the poor..." does not have the word 'are' in the Greek text. Readers automatically insert it based on common usage. Over the years scribes inserted the word "subordinate" even though there was an ellipsis in the original. They probably took "subordinate" from the prior sentence, which uses it in a completely different way. Husbands and wives are to "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Eph 5:21) So today we really don't know how to interpret Ephesians 5:22 and yet it is part of our Lectionary.

It was a wonderful way to get to know these early women leaders – indeed it is "... an honor we have, in that there are such women among us.... the women of those days were more spirited than lions." (John Chrysostom in *Biblical Affirmations of Women*, L. Swidler, p. 295). May their spirits be with, and inspire all of us.

Written by Rita Houlihan, Vice Chair of the FutureChurch Board



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Focus on FutureChurch is a quarterly publication of FutureChurch, a national organization of parish-centered Catholics working for full participation of all Catholics in the life of the Church. The newsletter features information and commentary related to the mission of FutureChurch and reports on Church reform issues not prominently covered elsewhere. No advertisements are accepted, though letters to the editor are always welcome.

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SOME APPEALS SUCCESSFUL, VATICAN MEDIATION SOUGHT

CLEVELAND

After Bishop Richard Lennon announced on March 14 that he would close 52 parishes in the Cleveland diocese, FutureChurch assisted parishioner groups from at least fifteen parishes who downloaded appeal and prayer resources from the FutureChurch website. They then received daily updates and extensive canonical information individualized for Cleveland so they could decide whether to appeal or not. At least 14 parishes did write formal appeals to the diocesan chancellor, most with the active support of the pastor or pastoral administrator.

Two large landmark churches, St. Colman and St. Ignatius of Antioch, which were slated to close despite recommendations from a 17-month reconfiguration process that they stay open, succeeded in their appeals. After thousands of letters from parishioners pledging financial support and vigorous intervention from members of Cleveland City Council and other political leaders, the Bishop agreed to a reprieve for both parishes.

Bishop Lennon said he granted the reprieves because he had come to a better understanding of the social and community services provided by the parishes, the importance of the demographic areas served and future financial viability, provided parishioners step forward.

At this writing an estimated six to nine other parishes whose appeals were denied are appealing to the Vatican. Many came together to create an independent Cleveland coalition of parishes to support one another and are presently planning future activities.

In a number of cases, Lennon's decisions to close a given parish went against the recommendations of his own staff, parishioners and the Diocesan Priests' Council. Easily half of the parishes slated to close were in poor urban areas of Cleveland, Akron and Lorain. Most have active congregations with important ministries in struggling urban areas.

SMITHTOWN, NEW YORK

After a four year struggle Diane Stobodzan, a parishioner of the Byzantine Church of the Resurrection, is jubilant because her efforts to bring her parish back from the brink of destruction have finally borne fruit: "I may have been an army of one but I was persistent and never bad mouthed anyone....It has been a long difficult and

painful fight but the outcome is wonderful!!! The Church is perfectly named as we are going to do it again."

According to Resurrection parishioners, trouble began in October 2005 after former pastor Rev. Daniel Bitsko, who had run the parish for 38 years, was forced out with only three days notice by the Eparchy of Passaic. The next pastor closed the nursery school and, with little warning, cancelled the church's annual bazaar, which was a major fundraiser. In succeeding years several buildings on parish property were also demolished. Parishioners believe financial gain motivated actions by the Eparchy since the parish sits on a 5 acre property worth about \$2.5 million. Weekly attendance plummeted but Stobodzian did not give up. She organized a committee who wrote letters to church authorities, political leaders and newspapers. She took many photographs and obtained legal and financial documents under the freedom of information act. Her group circulated petitions, staged non-violent protests and sought mediation in Rome. All of the hard work paid off. On

May 14, the new bishop installed Fr. John Custer as permanent pastor at the Church of the Resurrection.

**It has been a long difficult
and painful fight but the
outcome is wonderful!**

31 PARISHIONER GROUPS ASK VATICAN MEDIATION

On April 7, Peter Borre of the National Council of Parishes hand delivered a request on behalf of 31 parishioner groups in eight U.S. dioceses, asking the Vatican Secretariat of State to "instruct its departments and courts to suspend reviews of appeals against parish closings, and to instruct American bishops to enter promptly into mediation with these parishioner groups." The parishioner groups were from the dioceses of Boston, Allentown, Pa., Buffalo, Cleveland, New Orleans, Scranton, Springfield, Mass., and New York. In an interview with the *National Catholic Reporter*, Borre said the 18 page document seeks clarity in the financial responsibilities of both parishes and dioceses and a renewed recognition of the "principle of subsidiarity in diocesan governance." Borre has made four trips to Rome in the last five months to confer with a church lawyer and with sympathetic officials. All of them, he said, held little hope for a favorable legal outcome and advised him to seek relief "through policy." At this writing Borre is enroute to Rome for further meetings with officials in the Curia.

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WHEN THE MOON IS DARK WE CAN SEE THE STARS

By Pamela Prime, *The Printed Voice*, 2008, 288 pages
Reviewed By Fran De Chant

Hidden behind a somewhat awkward title lies a narrative that is worth a read and study as sensitive as the way in which this author chronicles her life. I found deep satisfaction in Pamela Prime's account of her evolution from privileged suburban Catholic wife into a powerfully aware spiritual director of others as they seek true spiritual paths.

The awakening woman shedding shackles of family, cultural and religious deprivation to achieve stature is the subject of a fair amount of current writing. Rare enough is the story, honestly told, of a materially pampered woman who finds wings strong enough to beat her way out of the "gilded cage." This is Pamela Prime's story. She will lead the reader through passages of intense spiritual experience, which she describes graphically. But the bed-rock on which *When the Moon is Dark We Can See the Stars* rests is an unusually compelling account of heartbreaking survival and growth.

Prime's parents were materially advantaged and socially prominent. Like many parents, they loved their children deeply and proceeded to raise them in deeply flawed ways. Her mother's desire for constant social approval, and her father's lack of emotional support for his daughter, left the young Pamela with a poorly developed sense of self. Not surprisingly, Prime carried these deficits into a typical upscale marriage, a marriage which produced

"The possibility that God and the church might be on different tracks at times was a huge ahah!"

four living children and one who didn't. A beautiful baby girl died in infancy of a sudden unknown disease.

Increasing restlessness with her stereotypical life in California led Prime to seek enrichment in graduate studies. Fortunately, she chose the right place to begin. She applied for graduate admission to the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley and was accepted. Anxious at first, Prime found she excelled in course work that gave a solid academic foundation to her lifelong intuitive spiritual gravitation. With encouragement from school faculty, she began spiritually directing students. A project Prime had begun earlier, La Casa, grew from a women's sharing group into a full fledged center for spiritual therapy. Prime describes a liturgy at La Casa this way: "Women and men sat in a circle, and we prayed from our hearts, blessing the home-baked bread and one another as we remembered the love of Jesus."

Pamela Prime's life journey took her through two more heart

wrenching losses. Women and men can relate to the loneliness and pain she suffered in the dissolution of her longtime marriage. Her means of finding solace in this loss and the tragic death of another child will not be everyone's. But her insights as she grows and heals were helpful to me and would be to others.

Within her faith evolution, Prime was confronted with an interior crisis regarding the Catholic Church. Throughout childhood and earlier years of marriage, her privileged position guarded her against experiencing firsthand the oppressed position of women in the church. Aware of such discrimination for the first time, along with failures of the church to put into practice its own doctrines of social justice, brought Prime to the realization that the church she had once passively accepted in its entirety, stands in need of change and reform. "The possibility that God and the church might be on different tracks at times was a huge ahah! I knew I would have God's love and Presence, even though I might not be welcomed in church as a Catholic in good standing," she writes. **Pamela Prime has selected FutureChurch as one of three organizations that will receive proceeds from her book.**

As a woman who has also shared some of Pamela Prime's life experiences, I found resonance in her story. I see in this narrative of spiritual growth against odds, inspiration for those younger than me, men and women. Courage and honesty have something to say to everyone.

Fran DeChant is a longtime FutureChurch volunteer and wisdom figure.



SAVE THE TREES

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NEW! Women Leaders in Early Christianity CD and Presenter's Guide

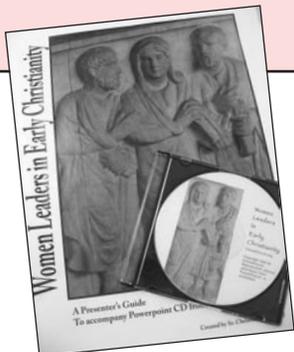
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WOMEN AND THE WORD: SYNOD FOLLOW UP

FutureChurch is energetically following up on the unprecedented success of our advocacy at last October's Synod on the Word. For the first time in history Catholic bishops discussed the need to restore deleted women's stories to the Lectionary. One surprising outcome was Synod Proposition 16 recommending "that an examination of the Roman Lectionary be opened to see if the actual selection and ordering of the readings are truly adequate to the mission of the Church in this historic moment."

To encourage implementation of Proposition 16, FutureChurch launched a new postcard initiative to Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera, the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, and other Synod Council members charged with implementing synod propositions. The postcard contains the following requests:

- Open an examination of the Lectionary to "see if the actual selection and ordering of the readings are truly adequate to the mission of the Church in this historic moment," as recommended by Synod Proposal 16.
- Restore women leaders such as Phoebe (Romans 16), Lois and Eunice (2 Tim 1:4-5) and Mary of Magdala (John 20: 11-18) to Lectionary texts from which they have been deleted.
- Include stories about other women leaders such as Shiprah and Puah, the midwives who saved a nation of Hebrew boy-children, perhaps even Moses.
- Convene a gender-balanced group of biblical scholars and liturgists to decide which women's stories would be most fruitful for prayer, preaching and catechesis if added to the Lectionary.

FutureChurch Executive Director Sr. Chris Schenk also sent follow-up letters and background materials to Cardinal Llovera and to fifteen members of the Synod of Bishops charged with writing the post synod exhortation and following up on the proposals.

To date she received positive replies from two committee members, Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Chair of the International Commission for the preparation of an English-language Lectionary (ICPEL), and Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture.

Archbishop Coleridge wrote that while his committee was instructed to "revise the translation and some of the decisions about the filleting of texts but not the selection of readings," he believed the Congregation for Worship would be "reluctant" to revise the Roman Lectionary when the production of the Roman Missal was pressing. However, he said, "if the Holy See were to embark upon a revision of the readings at some stage, suggestions such as yours could prove invaluable."

Archbishop Ravasi wrote of his personal interest in the topic stemming from an exegetical commentary he wrote on the Song of Songs in which the figure of the woman is the protagonist. The final synod exhortation is not expected until the fall.



FOLLOW UP TODAY: Send your paper or electronic postcard to Cardinal Llovera,

and cc: Synod Council members. Visit www.futurechurch.org for more info on the synod project, to send an electronic postcard, order paper postcards and forward an email to your friends.

IMAGES OF EARLY WOMEN LEADERS NOW AVAILABLE ON CD



Samaritan Woman
catacomb fresco

Twenty-first century women and men frequently believe women did not exercise leadership during Christianity's formative centuries. FutureChurch aims to change that with an extensively researched new PowerPoint presentation that allows woman and men to visually retrieve the history of early women leaders too long distorted or rendered invisible in Christian memory.

Two years in the making, the resource includes one-of-a-kind photos of newly available sarcophagi friezes of women leaders in the Pio Christian Museum. These accompany better-known reproductions of catacomb frescos, paintings and mosaics dating to the 9th century. Original art and information about selected New Testament women leaders who are often under-represented, or worse, misrepresented in preaching and

Lectionary texts are also included.

A sixteen-page presenter's guide contains thumbnail photos of all 43 slides along with a carefully researched summary of what archaeologists, specialists in early Christian images and catacomb experts tell us about these artifacts.

Thank you for helping us spread the "good news" about women's witness and leadership in Christian origins. The new resource is ideal for adult education programs, secondary school and college students, small faith communities and personal enrichment. CD contains images in PowerPoint and Pdf formats. FutureChurch is grateful to several special benefactors who made the project possible.

Visit www.futurechurch.org to order at Magdala's Market.



Magi and Mary of Nazareth



Woman Leader
Between Two Apostles

Pastoral Leadership Project Receives New Lilly Grant. The Lilly Foundation has given a \$1 million grant to the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership Project to research parish leadership. Issues to be addressed include lay ecclesial ministry, ministry in linked parishes and multicultural and generational diversity. The project is an initiative of the Washington-based National Association for Lay Ministry with the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development; the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators; the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association; and the National Federation of Priests' Councils. (*Catholic News Service* 4/16/09)

Newly Appointed Bishop Calls for Married Priests. Bishop Karl Golser, who has just been appointed a bishop to the bilingual diocese of Bozen-Brixen on the Austrian Italian Border has publicly called for ordaining married men and increased decision making for women and bishops conferences in the church. Golser said: In the future we will have a pastoral structure which is no longer as clerical and as concentrated on priests as it used to be. The question of ordaining proven married men-whose marriages have proved stable...will come up more and more often." (*The Tablet* 4/11/09)

Half of Polish Priests Support Married Priesthood. Research conducted by professor Jozef Baniak at Poznan University in Poland found that 54 percent of Polish priests support an end to mandatory celibacy. Nearly one-third are in relationships with women with 12 percent admitting they are living with a woman. Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, a senior Polish bishop, said he distrusted the survey. (*The Tablet* 2/14/09)

Rome Delaying Romero Beatification. At a recent lecture tour in Westminster, England, Fr. Dean Brackley, SJ said that leaders in the Vatican and in El Salvador are blocking the cause of Archbishop Oscar Romero who was assassinated in 1980 for his defense of the poor. Brackley, who is professor of theology and ethics at the University of Central America, said officials were nervous about publicity highlighting the archbishop's identification with the poor and the political motives behind his murder. However, said Brackley, the new archbishop of San Salvador, Jose Luis Escobar Alas, favored Romero's cause and that the delay was more on Rome's end. (*The Tablet* 2/21/09)

Pius X Society Defies Benedict XVI. Even though Pope Benedict lifted the excommunications for four Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) bishops in January, it is doubtful that any real reconciliation will ever be possible. In late March the SSPX ordained several subdeacons in Econe, Switzerland going against the express wishes of the Pope. In a March 10 letter the Pope said: "As long as the Society does not have a canonical status in the Church, its ministers do not exercise legitimate ministries in the Church." In late April, Cardinal Kasper said he did not think the group would accept the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (*The Tablet* 3/28/09, 5/2/09)

European Theologians Petition For Vatican II. A group of European theologians have called for the full implementation of Vatican II and for rehabilitation of other "lost sheep" in the wake of Rome's decision to rescind the excommunication of four Bishops from the Society of St. Pius X who denied the teachings of the Council. The theologians have launched an internet petition. To read and sign it, visit http://www.petition-vaticanum2.org/pageID_7327623.html

Lawsuit Against Vatican Can Proceed. In early March, a Federal appeals court rule ruled that a sexual abuse lawsuit against the Holy See may be able to proceed. An Oregon man alleges abuse by Fr. Andrew Ronan, a now deceased Irish priest. The plaintiff argues that the Holy See was negligent because after admitting to molesting a minor in the Irish Archdiocese of Armagh in the 1950s, Ronan was transferred to Chicago where court documents say he abused another child. He was then sent to Portland, Oregon where the plaintiff says Ronan abused him in 1965. Normally sovereign states cannot be sued in US courts. The appeals court said an exception could be made if the accuser can prove that Fr. Ronan was an employee of the Vatican acting "within the scope of his employment." (*The Tablet* 3/14/09)



Vatican Investigates US Organization of Leaders of Women Religious. On March 10, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) received a letter dated February 20 from Cardinal William Levada, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, announcing the group would be the subject of a doctrinal investigation. LCWR represents about 95% of the 68,000 women religious in the United States. The letter noted that in 2001 LCWR was invited "to report on the initiatives taken or planned by the conference" to promote the reception of three areas of Vatican doctrinal concern: the 1994 apostolic letter on the non-ordination of women *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, the 2000 declaration *Dominus Iesus* from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and "the problem of homosexuality." Levada said that "the tenor and the doctrinal content" of various addresses given at LCWR's annual assemblies showed that "problems continue to be present." The investigation will be conducted by Leonard P. Blair, bishop of Toledo, Ohio, a member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine. This investigation is a separate issue from the Apostolic Visitation being conducted by the Vatican's Congregation on Religious life. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

Legionaries of Christ in "Civil War". A former Legion priest, Fr. James Farfagli, a pastor in Corpus Christi, Texas, recently said that "civil war is starting to emerge" in the Legionaries of Christ in the wake of revelations that the order's now deceased founder, Fr. Marcial Maciel Degollado, was a pedophile and fathered a daughter. According to Farfagli, many American members of the Legion are outraged by the deceit of Legion leadership who hid the scandal for decades. The Vatican recently announced an investigation, to the relief of many members. Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver is one of the visitators. Baltimore Archbishop Edwin O' Brien banned the Legion from his diocese because of its cultlike propensities. The order has 800 priests and 70,000 lay people. (*The Tablet* 5/9/09)

JUSTICE IS “WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CATHOLIC”

On April 29th over 100 Clevelanders gathered for FutureChurch’s second annual “Open Mic.” Night. The question posed to the group was, “Where is the justice in the Catholic Church?” A panel of younger Catholics started the discussion by sharing their experiences, concerns, and hopes. Devon Lynch-Huggins, a theology teacher and campus minister at an inner city Catholic high school, focused on a “new role” for Catholic education—educating the public and being committed to spreading the Gospels to all people. She shared examples, especially a student Spring break trip to New Orleans.



Devon Lynch



Rachel Napolitano



Megan Gergen



Dante Perete

For Megan Gergen, currently a Jesuit Volunteer at a domestic violence center, working for justice is “what it means to be Catholic.” Megan believes faith and justice intrinsically linked. She said, “I have had the opportunity to learn about Catholic Social Teachings and the belief we hold of basic human dignity, that each person is made in the image of God; that a healthy community can be achieved only if the poor and marginalized are given special attention; learning these things has helped me grow

tremendously in my faith.” Rachel Napolitano shared personal experiences where she witnessed justice in the Church from her year of volunteer service and her involvement in the Catholic Worker community. Dante Parete found the recent parish closings in Cleveland unjust in that a disproportionate number of closings are in the inner city serving the poor.

Lively conversation continued after the panel of young people spoke. Since Cleveland had received word a month prior of the closing of 50 of its parishes, many comments were along the lines of Dante’s. The other concerns raised were the lack of justice towards women, gays, the sex abuse crisis, the appointing of bishops and AIDS in Africa.

Participants walked away hopeful even though many examples of injustice were identified. The witness of younger Catholics, the many Catholic ministries serving as Jesus did, the concrete suggestions for change, and the solidarity and commitment of the people present all gave powerful testimony that the Church—even though imperfect—is an agent of justice.

New! Women Leaders in the Ministry of Paul

These special resources educate and celebrate the women who founded house churches, evangelized, and endured great hardships to spread the good news as “apostles to the Gentiles” alongside their brother, Paul. **Free download at www.futurechurch.org** or paper copy for \$3.00. Order at the FutureChurch website or call 216-228-0869, X5.

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Donations and Memberships can be processed via the Internet.
Go to www.futurechurch.org - Click on Join then make your donation or become a member.

A LOOK AHEAD

Saturday, July 18-19. Belleville and Southern Illinois.

Sr. Chris Schenk to speak to Fellowship of Southern Illinois Laity on working for justice for women in the Catholic Church. Contact Mick Gibbar mmgibbar@charter.net for further info.

Wednesday July 22. Thirteenth Annual International Celebration of St. Mary of Magdala. Visit www.futurechurch.org for free resources and to find a celebration near you.

Wednesday, July 22. FutureChurch, Cleveland, OH. Remembering the Women Co-Workers of Paul. 13th Annual Celebration of St. Mary of Magdala. Dr. Sheila E. McGinn, professor of biblical studies and early Christianity at John Carroll University. 7:00-9:00 p.m. Light of Hearts Villa, 283 Union Street, Bedford OH 44146. For further info 216-228-0869.

Save the Date! November 6, Milwaukee, WI.

Women and the Word: Bridging the Gap. Pre-conference day designed to "bridge the gap" between the reality of women's biblical leadership and the experience of most church goers today. With **Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA**, Professor of Old Testament Studies at Chicago's Catholic Theological Union and the author of *Preaching the New Lectionary: Cycles A, B, and C* and *People of the Covenant*. **Sr. Chris Schenk** and **Ms. Barbara Guerin**, Chair of the Women Ministry Committee at her parish in Irvine, CA, will explore practical ways of overcoming obstacles to gender balanced proclamation of the Word.

Save the Date! November 6-8, Milwaukee, WI.

Call To Action Conference. *Everyone at the Table.* Keynotes by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Dianne Bergant and Roy Bourgeois. Register at www.cta-usa.org.

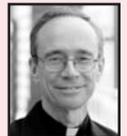
SAVE THE DATE!

FutureChurch's 19th Annual Benefit and Silent Auction

Thursday, October 8, 2008 • 6:00 - 9:30 p.m.
Executive Caterers at Landerhaven
in Cleveland, OH

GUEST SPEAKER: Thomas J. Reese S.J.

Thomas J. Reese, S.J., Ph.D. was former editor-in-chief of America magazine from 1998-2005. He is currently Senior Fellow coordinating the Religion and Public Policy Program and International Visiting Fellowship Program at the Georgetown Woodstock Theological Center in Washington D.C.



Fr. Reese writes his own blog for the Newsweek-Washington Post "On Faith" web site and is also a regular contributor to the "Georgetown-On Faith" blog featuring Georgetown University scholars.

Get the event flyer and order your tickets online by going to www.futurechurch.org, click on Coming Events and Order Tickets or call Patty at 216-228-0269, ext. 5.

Can't Join Us? Why not purchase a VIRTUAL TICKET online? You will receive a copy of Reese's book: *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*, an audio CD of his presentation to FutureChurch and recognition in the event program.

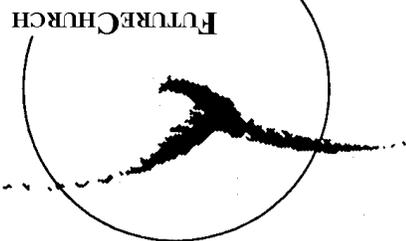
Quotable Quote:
"If this parish weren't involved in bringing good news to the poor, I would not spend a lick of energy trying to keep it open ... but because it is bringing good news to the poor, then I have a responsibility to guard and defend this mission against anyone who threatens it."
(Rev. Bob Begn, pastor of St. Colman Parish who led a canonical appeal to save his parish and succeeded. As quoted on CNN.com)



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