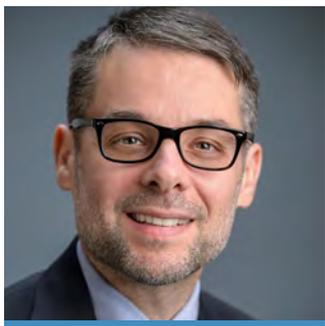




# FutureChurch 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Fall Event

## Politics & The Pulpit:

### The Intersection of Faith and Public Life



Massimo Faggioli  
Keynote  
Presenter



Sr. Helen Prejean  
Louis. J. Trivison  
Award



Chloe Becker  
Christine Schenk  
Award



# The Sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph

wish to recognize and thank

## FutureChurch

for helping us to “be Church” for the past 31 years.

We are grateful for and support your mission to seek changes that ensure all Catholics have the opportunity to fully participate in Church life and leadership.



This year, we thank you for honoring

## Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ

with the Louis J. Trivison Award,  
in recognition of her crucial work and  
ministry against the death penalty.



To learn more about Sister Helen and all our justice work,  
visit us at [CSJoseph.org/Social-Justice](https://CSJoseph.org/Social-Justice)

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## From the Co-Directors

### Deborah Rose & Russ Petrus

Hello! And welcome to our 31st Annual Fall Event!

First and foremost, thank you for all you have done to support FutureChurch over the years. Without you, FutureChurch and the work we do for Vatican II reform would not exist.

We extend a special thank you to our keynote presenter, Massimo Faggioli, Ph.D.; and our honorees, Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ and Chloe Becker. We are honored that you have accepted our invitations to be a part of these evenings. Thank you for the work you do for the good of the Church and all God's people.

Like many Catholics in the United States, we were stunned as we watched the terror unfolding at the Capitol in Washington D.C. on January 6, 2021. The nation was built on the backs of those who, too often, did not benefit from its vast social, political and economic resources, but now the truth was undeniable, glaring, and ugly.

Under the former administration, white supremacy, misogyny, homophobia, xenophobia, and anti-science attitudes had repeatedly received enthusiastic presidential endorsement. With hundreds of thousands of people dead from Covid 19, black Americans being murdered by police before our eyes, vulnerable immigrant children and families being put in cages, more people on death row being murdered by the state, and so much more, Americans were paying a heavy, horrific price.

Too often, the Catholic Church was no refuge during these moments. In many cases, instead of being a place where the Gospel was preached and Catholics were challenged to live by the message, ordained leaders promoted partisan politics and single issue positions that were positioned to downplay the ugly



*FutureChurch  
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continue to confront  
the challenges of  
our day.*

fusion of injustices that the most vulnerable Americans face. Many U.S. Catholics wanted their bishops to speak up against these injustices - loudly and clearly - but we were left without meaningful leadership.

The idea for our Fall Event program surfaced in the midst of this chaos and what we witnessed as disregard for human dignity and life. We wanted a forum to wrestle with the intersection of faith and politics. We found some of the United States' most prominent Catholics to address these issues knowing their wisdom and insights will be helpful for all of us.

Also, FutureChurch programs will continue to address our collective failure to end misogyny, homophobia, racism, and other injustices within the Church. Our initiatives will continue to confront the challenges of our day. In it all, we take seriously the notion captured at the 1971 Synod of Bishops:

*While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and the life style found within the Church herself.*

As we commemorate 31 years of work together, please know we are more deeply committed than ever to creating the change needed to build a more just, inclusive, and transparent Catholic Church where the gifts, talents, and faith of all its members are honored and utilized.

In gratitude & hope,

Deborah Rose

Russ Petrus

# Agenda

**Thursday**

October 14, 2021

**Meet the Speaker Gathering**

**Welcome & Opening Prayer**

**Offered by**

Russ Petrus

Todd Ray

**Keynote Presentation**

**Introduction of Keynote Speaker**

**Keynote Presentation**

Andrea Koverman, SC

Massimo Faggioli, Ph.D.

**Thank You & Closing Prayer**

**Offered by**

Deborah Rose

Mûmbi Kîgûtha, CPPS

**Thursday**

October 21, 2021

**Meet the Speaker Gathering**

**Welcome & Opening Prayer**

**Offered by**

Russ Petrus

Jocelyn Collen

**2021 Christine Schenk Award for Young Catholic Leaders**

**Introduction**

**Acceptance of Award**

Deborah Rose

Chloe Becker

**2021 Fr. Louis J. Trivison Award**

**Introduction**

**Acceptance of Award**

Sean Gargamelli-McCreight

Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

**Thank You & Closing Prayer**

**Offered by**

Deborah Rose

Joseph Miller



## Keynote Presenter

### Massimo Faggioli, Ph.D.

A leading authority on the history and administrative inner workings of the Catholic Church, **Massimo Faggioli, PhD** has specific expertise in the papacy, Vatican II, the Roman Curia, liturgical reform, new Catholic movements and on Catholicism and global politics. He is Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University in Philadelphia, PA.

Professor Faggioli is one of the foremost scholars on the intersection of American Catholicism and the state of democracy in the United States. He examines and charts both the impact and potential threats to democratic ideals as our increasingly “unique” brand of American Catholicism - embraced by a majority of U.S. Bishops and funded by wealthy conservative donors - is wedded to a democracy increasingly invested in free-wheeling capitalism that eschews social safety networks.

A much published author and commentator, his latest book is *Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States*.



## 2021 Louis J. Trivison Award Recipient

### **Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ**

FutureChurch is honored to present **Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ**, with the 2021 Louis J. Trivison in recognition her prophetic work and ministry against the death penalty which has led to significant change in Church teaching.

Over the decades, Sister Helen has made personal approaches to two popes: John Paul II and Pope Francis, urging them to establish the Catholic Church's position as unequivocally opposed to capital punishment under any circumstances.

After Sister Helen's urging, under John Paul II, the Catechism was revised to strengthen the church's opposition to executions, although it allowed for a very few exceptions. Not long after meeting with Sister Helen in August of 2018, Pope Francis announced new language of the Catholic Catechism which declares that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, with no exceptions.

Author of the best-selling book, *Dead Man Walking: The Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty*, Sr. Helen's latest book is *River of Fire: On Becoming an Activist*.

*Named for FutureChurch co-founder, Fr. Louis Trivison, this award is given to a Roman Catholic who exhibits outstanding leadership in advancing FutureChurch's Vatican II mission or vision in one or more areas of teaching, administration, research, publication, advocacy, and pastoral care.*



## 2021 Christine Schenk Award for Youth Leaders Recipient

**Chloe Becker**

*Named for FutureChurch  
co-founder  
Sister Christine Schenk,  
CSJ, this award is given to a  
young Roman Catholic whose  
research, writing, advocacy, or  
ministry exhibits outstanding  
leadership in promoting justice  
in the church and whose efforts  
will inspire and foster a new  
generation of reformers and  
activists.*

FutureChurch is proud to present Chloe Becker with the 2021 Christine Schenk Award for Young Catholic Leaders in recognition of her commitment to creating art that lifts up the lives of underrepresented saints and Catholics of color and calls on all Catholics to engage in the work of racial justice.

Becker is a recent graduate of Magnificat High School in Rocky River, Ohio and a member of the Harvard University Class of 2025. Chloe has created all of the art for FutureChurch's Women Witnesses for Racial Justice series.

Images and artist statements of her Catholic Art for Justice - including the Women Witnesses for Racial Justice series for FutureChurch - can be found on [her website, https://www.chloemariebecker.com](https://www.chloemariebecker.com).



## Bread Not Stones

### **FutureChurch and its COR partners call on U.S. Bishops to be more pastoral and less political**

As Catholics, we know that it is wrong to weaponize the Sacraments. This is especially true of the Eucharist - the central, unifying ritual that draws us into communion with God and one another. So it was a reprehensible betrayal of the power of the Sacraments this past spring when the U.S. Bishops voted to proceed with drafting a document that may pressure prelates among their ranks to deny some Catholic politicians - including President Biden - communion. This November, the bishops are slated to vote on this document at their fall assembly in Baltimore, MD.

*continued on next page...*

FutureChurch is proud to stand with its partners in COR – Catholic Organizations for Renewal – and resist this abuse of power and attack on the long-held Catholic belief in the primacy of conscience.

In the lead up to the bishops' spring assembly, FutureChurch co-director Deborah Rose joined with other COR members at a news conference calling on Catholic bishops to stop acting like culture warriors and political operatives and start behaving like shepherds and healers. Rose, who previously served as the executive director of a domestic violence prevention agency and shelter, focused her remarks on the opposition of Catholic bishops to supporting the Violence Against Women Act and the National Suicide Hotline, all because both now contain provisions to protect LGBTQ+ people.

Read Deborah Rose's entire contribution and view the recording at <https://www.futurechurchnews.org/article/bread-not-stones>.

COR also embarked on social media campaign aimed at informing fellow Catholics about the bishops' plan and calling out the bishops, encouraging the use of the hashtags #BreadNotStones and #WhoWouldJesusDeny.

After a heated debate and a call from Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Christophe Pierre to hold off on taking a vote, the bishops voted to move forward with a teaching document on the Eucharist. Bishop Kevin Rhoades, chairman of the doctrine committee that is drafting the document, has denied any intent to set national standards or norms for the reception of Eucharist. Those who watched the debate live or read a transcript know he's guilty of spin, especially since several bishops explicitly referred to President Biden and Speaker Pelosi.

While it is uncertain what will happen at the bishops' assembly this November, one thing is clear: the U.S. bishops are out of touch with American Catholics and have even ignored the entreaties of Pope Francis who recently revealed that he has not denied anyone communion. FutureChurch and our partners in COR will be present to make sure that the voices of Catholics are heard.

On Monday, November 15th – the first day of the bishops' fall assembly – COR will host a peaceful witness outside their meeting space in Baltimore. The witness will include signs, chants, testimonies, prayer, song, and ritual. All are welcome to attend.

Visit [www.catholic-organizations-for-renewal.org/bread-not-stones](http://www.catholic-organizations-for-renewal.org/bread-not-stones) to learn more about the witness and to sign up to be a part of it! COR will organize busses with limited seats for travel from New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC.



*“The Gospels tell us that Jesus saved his most vociferous condemnations for those who sacrificed human lives to ideology. He called them blind guides, fools, vipers, and serpents. In this day and age, we call our bishops to follow the example of Jesus – to give victims of violence and those who are contemplating suicide bread instead of stones. It is the work of the Gospel.”*

 VIEW

# Can the Catholic Church Free Itself from Clericalism?

## An Online Conversation about a Key Justice Issue in the Church

FutureChurch joined with its partners in COR - Catholic Organizations for Renewal - to host a panel discussion on clericalism in the Catholic Church on September 22, 2021. Linda Pinto, co-chair of CORPUS, facilitated a discussion between author, James Carroll; theologian, Richard Gaillardetz; and Roman Catholic Womanpriest, Andrea Johnson. FutureChurch co-director, Russ Petrus, moderated questions. The event was inspired by Carroll's June 2019 piece "[Abolish the Priesthood](#)" published in [The Atlantic](#).



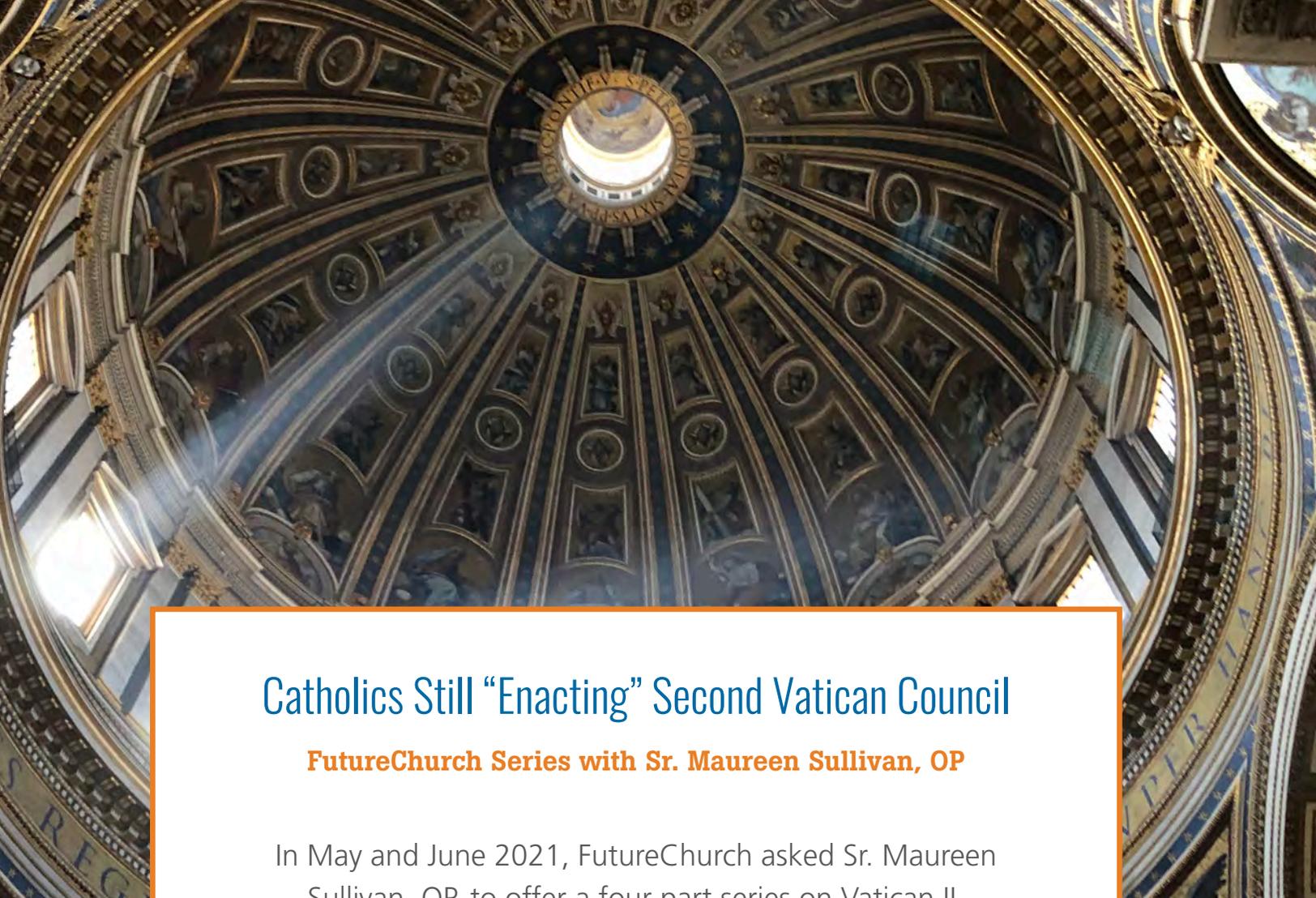
James P. Carroll is the author of twelve novels, most recently *The Cloister*, and eight works of non-fiction, most recently *The Truth at the Heart of the Lie: How the Catholic Church Lost its Soul*. Other books include the National Book Award winning *An American Requiem*; the New York Times bestselling *Constantine's Sword*, now an acclaimed documentary; *House of War*, which won the first PEN-John Kenneth Galbraith Award; and *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, which was named a 2011 Best Book by Publishers Weekly. He lectures widely, both in the United States and abroad, and contributes occasional essays to the New Yorker. He lives in Boston with his wife, the writer Alexandra Marshall.

Dr. Richard R. Gaillardetz is the Joseph Professor of Catholic Systematic Theology at Boston College and the current chair of the BC Theology department. Dr. Gaillardetz previously taught at the University of Toledo from 2001 to 2011 as the

Thomas and Margaret Murray and James J. Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo and at the University of St. Thomas Graduate School of Theology in Houston from 1991 to 2001. He received a B.A. in Humanities from the University of Texas, an M.A. in Biblical Theology from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, and both an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame in Systematic Theology. He has published numerous articles and has authored or edited fourteen books, including, most recently, *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II*.

Andrea M. Johnson, a former program officer in international education exchange with the Senior Fulbright Scholars' Program at the Council For International Exchange of Scholars, has worked for many years, and in several dioceses, as a religious educator at the adult and secondary levels. In the 1980's, she served for two years as a parish life director in a priestless parish of the military diocese. Always active in her parish communities, she served from 2004-2006 on the pastoral council of her current parish, as president during the second year of her term. An active member of the Women's Ordination Conference since 1984, she served that organization as executive director from 1996-2000. Andrea's educational background includes a BA in French from Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, and a MA in diplomacy and international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. She holds a M.Div. from Global Ministries University. Her particular interest is ministry with marginalized and underserved Catholics. As bishop of the eastern region of RCWP-USA, from 2009-2019, she ordained many priests and deacons for the small faith communities served by Roman Catholic Womenpriests in the eastern region. Retired since June 15, 2019, she is available to assist the current regional bishop.

View the event on COR's website at [www.catholic-organizations-for-renewal.org/clericalism](http://www.catholic-organizations-for-renewal.org/clericalism).



## Catholics Still “Enacting” Second Vatican Council

**FutureChurch Series with Sr. Maureen Sullivan, OP**

In May and June 2021, FutureChurch asked Sr. Maureen Sullivan, OP, to offer a four part series on Vatican II. FutureChurch is rooted in the vision of Vatican II and this particular effort was sparked by Sullivan’s inspirational presentation about the women of Vatican II for a previous “Women Erased” series. Sullivan explained that the Second Vatican Council produced a charter for the Church to move from the rigid, hierarchical model espoused by Pius IX at Vatican I (1869-70) to the collegial, “communio” model that emerged under John XXIII at Vatican II (1962-65). In the four brief sessions that took place from 1962-65, over 2,500 bishops--who often disagreed on the most critical issues--produced sixteen documents that reshaped the very essence of the Catholic faith.

*continued on next page...*



## ENACTING VATICAN II

with Sr. Maureen Sullivan, Ph.D.

A FutureChurch series May 26 - June 16 @ 7PM ET

VIEW

In giving an overview of the council, Sullivan recounted the ways John XXIII supported progressive theologians who had been working so hard in the decades leading up to the council – those who in many cases had been disciplined harshly by the Vatican for their modern ideas. John XXIII acknowledged the legitimacy of their approach to theology and invited many of them to serve as *periti*, theological experts, at the council. Their work paid off and Vatican II became a turning point – a moment of grace in the life of the church.

Instead of continuing a hostile and suspicious attitude toward the world, Vatican II acknowledged the inherent goodness in the world, as the creation of God. Instead of regarding itself as spotless and all holy, the Church acknowledged its errors, failings and sins and expressed the need to continually reform itself. Instead of viewing the Church primarily as a pyramid (with the pope at the top, followed by bishops, clergy, religious and finally, the laity), the Church reclaimed the New Testament vision of Church – a communion vision - with no one better than any other simply by virtue of one's vocation. The Council spoke of one universal vocation: the call to holiness by virtue of our baptism. And it embraced the New Testament's understanding of the diversity of gifts, of charisms, in the Body of Christ. Instead of focusing our attention on the "next world," Vatican II drew our attention to the need to transform "this world." Instead of viewing other churches with hostility and other religions as false and harmful, the Council called us to respect our sisters and brothers. And perhaps, in one of its

greatest achievements, the council acknowledged that salvation is a gift that can be offered to all of humanity...not just Roman Catholics.

Despite these remarkable theological developments and invitations to grow, almost 60 years later with so much yet to be implemented, Sullivan asked, "Have we lost the momentum?"

Sullivan encouraged participants to trust in the presence of the Spirit even though we have yet to implement the charter written at Vatican II that restored the church as the people of God.

In Pope Francis she sees a man who has tried to follow the charter that was intended to make the Church more humble, more at the service of the world, more decentralized. And, almost as to assure us, at the last conclave the Holy Spirit gave us a pope who is a champion of the kind of church Vatican II envisioned saying recently, "Tradition is not the worship of ashes...it is the preservation of the fire." Sullivan contends that those theologians working in the decades before Vatican II, who were paving the way for the council's extraordinary developments, would have loved this quote.

As Sullivan sees it, the Council is not over. It isn't a then, it is a now! One of her favorite quotes from the council documents is: "The future of humanity is in the hands of those who are strong enough to give future generations reasons for living and for hoping."

Sullivan ends with, "We are the people of God. We have a voice. Do we dare not tell this story to a new generation?"

Look for more sessions on Vatican II with Sr. Maureen Sullivan in the next few months. We'll go deeper into the documents and talk about strategies for making Vatican II a greater reality today. Go to <https://www.futurechurch.org/enacting-vatican-ii> to learn more.

# Catholics Talk Up

## Talk Up Tuesdays Foster Conversation on Breaking Catholic News



*Marie Collins presents at FutureChurch's "TalkUp Tuesday" on June 15.*

FutureChurch's newest series, "TalkUp Tuesdays" creates a space for Catholics to speak candidly about the important issues of the day. Inspired by Pope Francis who has called Catholics to speak with "parrhesia", FutureChurch hosts daytime conversations regarding current events meeting with experts in the know, sharing opinions about those matters with one another in the Spirit of faith, frankness, and courage.

On June 15, 2021, former member of the Vatican Commission for the Protection of Minors, Marie Collins spoke about the [new penal code](#) and its potential for combatting clergy sex abuse and the cover up. Many heralded the release as the most extensive revision to Catholic Church law in four decades because it insists that bishops take action against clerics who abuse minors and vulnerable adults. Collins, however, was not impressed.

Collins has consistently called for zero tolerance policies and in 2018 spoke directly to Pope Francis about her concerns. The new penal code, like provisions before, make depriving a priest of his office for clergy sex abuse optional. She also noted that calling clergy sex abuse against a vulnerable adult "adultery" is "highly derogatory." [As Joshua McElwee of the National Catholic Reporter reported](#), Collins was clear. "Victims, children, who have been sexually assaulted or abused or raped do not see

how that comes within the sin of breaking the Sixth Commandment."

At the June 22<sup>nd</sup> session, Sr. Christine Schenk, CSJ reflected on how the new penal code would impact the ordination of women to the Diaconate. Pope Francis promulgated the new changes in "Book VI: Penal Sanctions in the Church," to into effect Dec. 8 — the feast of the Immaculate Conception. As a result of the work, of the 89 canons that make up this Book VI, 63 have been modified (71%), 9 others have been moved (10%), while only 17 remain unchanged (19%).

Notable changes impact clergy sex abuse, financial crimes, and the ordination of women. The changes regarding the ordination of women punish a person who attempts to confer a sacred order on a woman and excommunicates a woman who attempt to receive the sacred order.

Given recent debate about the possibility of ordaining women to the diaconate, and the calls from some German bishops to move forward on the ordination of women — first to the diaconate and later to the priesthood — the new text of the canon could be a signal from Rome that any attempt to forge ahead with these plans will be treated as a breach of ecclesial communion, and punished accordingly.

Schenk went on to note Phyllis Zagano's response to the new penal code. [In the National Catholic Reporter, Zagano states](#) it is "nothing new" and that the new penal code refers to ordination to the priesthood and not the diaconate.

Schenk finished by saying the important thing to remember is that the now codified restriction against ordaining women, at least as deacons, is a "merely ecclesiastical law." That is, it can be changed. Francis modified canon law to allow all laity — male and female — to be installed as lectors and acolytes. That represented a development of doctrine. And the current discipline is that all persons who are ordained deacons must first have served in these two installed lay ministries. Thus, we know "merely ecclesiastical laws" can be modified. So does Francis.

*continued on next page...*

On June 29, 2021, Christian Weisner of Germany spoke about the resignation of Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Pope Francis's decision to keep him on, and what it means for the German Synod and reform in the German Catholic Church.

On June 13, 2021, National Catholic Reporter's Christopher White spoke about the U.S. Bishops efforts to exclude President Joe Biden and other Catholic politicians from the Eucharist for their support of Roe V. Wade. White noted that the previous month's vote by the U.S. bishops to go ahead on the controversial document on Communion against the wishes of Pope Francis indicated that after eight years of the Francis papacy, [the U.S. bishops' conference is still controlled by a majority of bishops who are out of sync with Rome](#).

White went on to talk about future opportunities for Pope Francis to re-brand the U.S. episcopacy by filling it with those more closely aligned with his agenda. Three dioceses in the U.S. are vacant, another nine bishops have already passed the age of 75, and there are several other dioceses that will soon open. Three other bishops, including one metropolitan archbishop, will also reach retirement age in the coming months.

With all the opportunities being presented to Pope Francis, White noted how important it is for him to remake the U.S. episcopacy quickly if he wants to ensure that his pastoral agenda succeeds here.

On July 27, 2021, Christopher Lamb of *The Tablet* spoke about Pope Francis's efforts to restrict the Old Rite as well as responses from conservative Catholics. Lamb noted that while Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 Summorum Pontificum allowed for celebrations of the Old Rite when it was requested, Pope Francis's sweeping new restrictions were put in place because it had caused harm and great division. [According to Lamb](#), "Francis' intervention aims to make the Tridentine liturgy very much the exception, and to clamp down on younger, traditionalist priests wanting to say the Old Rite."

And on April 3, 2021 Steven Milles, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Public Theology and the Director of the Bernadin Center at Catholic Theological Union discussed ethical standards in Catholic journalism and the most recent controversy regarding the The Pillar's investigation into the now former general secretary of the USCCB, Msgr. Jeffrey Burrill. It released data identifying Msgr. Jeffrey Burrill's phone which seemed to indicate that he had frequently used Grindr, a popular dating app in the gay community, and that he had left geolocation tracks to and from gay clubs. As a result of their "investigation", the USCCB issued a statement that Msgr. Burrill had resigned from his role as general secretary of the USCCB.

Millies described the Pillar article as, "damaging, homophobic innuendo that is part of a broader strategy of the well-monied Catholic conservative forces to assert their anti-Francis agenda. This tabloid-like journalism strikes a new, foreboding low in these tactics."

He also noted that the Society for Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics encourages journalists to "avoid using undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information" and admonishes that "Pursuit of the news is not a license for ... undue intrusiveness."

The TalkUp Tuesday gatherings are meant to bring Catholics together to dig into important current events.

Those conversations will continue to be scheduled as new events arise.

To learn more go to  
<https://www.futurechurch.org/talkup-tuesdays>.

VISIT



## 2021 Mary of Magdala Celebration

### **Global Celebration of Catholic Women & Virtual Art Tour**

FutureChurch has promoted global celebrations of Saint Mary of Magdala each year since 1997 and we are always humbled and inspired to learn about all of the various places and contexts where celebrations are being held. Celebrating online again this year, it was a true blessing to gather virtually with more than 500 Catholics from around the world, both those who are new to celebrating the Feast Day and those who steadfastly celebrate with us year after year.

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**Mary of Magdala**  
At the Foot of the Cross: Virtual Art Tour



with  
**Dr. Christine Axen, Ph.D.**

Recorded July 20, 2021



FutureChurch  
www.futurechurch.org



**Mary of Magdala and Many Others:**  
A Celebration of Catholic Women



with  
**Kayla August, Preacher**  
&  
**Lucy Rieger, Leader**

Recorded July 22, 2021



FutureChurch  
www.futurechurch.org



WOMEN REACH

RITA L. HOULIHAN



This year, there were two opportunities to celebrate the Feast of Saint Mary of Magdala with FutureChurch.

First up, and back by popular demand, was [our second virtual art tour](#) with medievalist, **Dr. Christine Axen, Ph.D.** In 2020, Dr. Axen drew on her knowledge of the layers of medieval spiritual life and symbolism to expand our understanding of the complex imagery used to depict the Mary Magdalene of both scripture and legend.

This year, Dr. Axen focused on depictions of Mary at the foot of the Cross. To begin her presentation, Dr. Axen displayed several contemporary examples of the Stations of the Cross, hanging in churches today, that do not depict Mary Magdalene as a witness to the crucifixion. She then took us on a detailed journey through art history as she traced various depictions and treatments of Mary Magdalene – and other women – at the Cross.

On the July 22nd Feast Day itself, FutureChurch hosted a virtual liturgy entitled “[Mary Magdalene and Many Others: A Global Celebration of Catholic Women](#)” inspired by Luke 8. A contemporary woman from each of the inhabited continents was selected and highlighted to symbolize to good work that women around the world are doing to advance the work of the Gospel and the ministry of the Church.

Each women’s story was read by a FutureChurch member or supporter living on that continent. It was a privilege to welcome our guest preacher, **Kayla August**, who has just begun her doctoral studies at Boston College after several years of ministry at Notre Dame University. A superbly talented preacher and rising star in the Catholic Church, August focused her preaching on being healed of our demons – whatever they may be – just as Mary Magdalene was healed and seeing ourselves as the “Woman of Wisdom” from the first reading (Wisdom 7: 21-30).

The liturgy was beautifully and skillfully led by FutureChurch member, **Lucy Rieger**, of New Jersey.

At [Catholic Women Preach](#), **Rita Houlihan**, a long-time FutureChurch supporter and board member, championed the need to reclaim the presence and true story of Mary Magdalene: “Never stop seeking. We must preserve and pass on Mary Magdalene’s pivotal role in bringing the story of the Resurrection to us. If our bishops, cardinals, priests and pope cannot see her, can they see me, can they see you? Without her witness, where would we be?”

[Click on any of the links to the left to view the recordings.](#)

**We are all invited to the table**

to be compassion,  
to be forgiveness,  
to be love,  
to be kindness  
to one another  
and to those  
on the margins...

**CRYSTAL CATALAN**

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 8, 2021



## Catholic Women Preach

### **Raising Voices, Renewing the Church**

Catholic Women Preach has always maintained a strong commitment to lifting up a diversity of voices. However, the need to go further and center the voices of women of color became clear as violence and injustice continued to bear down on people of color. And so, beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing through and including Easter Sunday, Catholic Women Preach viewers and listeners heard only from women of color.

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Preaching for the First Sunday of Lent, Dr. Tia Noelle Pratt, Ph.D., a sociologist of religion specializing in systemic racism in the Catholic Church, urged us to remember the pain, sacrifice and suffering as the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and racial injustice in the United States raged on:



*It feels like we've had more suffering than one year can hold. It has truly been a Lenten year. Yet, Lent brings with it the promise of Easter rebirth and renewal. We truly have gotten this far by faith...As we reflect on this first Sunday of Lent*

*and in the days and weeks to come, we must not forget the sacrifice and suffering we have borne and witnessed in the last year. Doing so would dishonor all of that pain and all of that loss. Instead, we must prayerfully embrace it because that will allow us to see the rebirth and renewal that comes with the light of Easter.*

On the Third Sunday of Lent, Olga Marina Segura, opinion and culture editor at the National Catholic Reporter and the author of *Birth of A Movement: Black Lives Matter and the Catholic Church*, reminded us that the Cross is a call to conversion:



*We believe in the power of the crucifixion, and this belief must help us to understand more deeply the systemic violence enacted upon Black, indigenous, people of color, and all marginalized groups. As Catholics, this means we are called to*

*fight for a better, more liberated world. We are called to go to the margins and center the experiences of society's most vulnerable communities.*

Palm Sunday brought a message of tenderness and mercy from Dr. Nichole Flores, Ph.D., assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia, who focused her reflection on the woman who anoints Jesus:



*As we approach this Holy Week, may we find comfort in the words of mercy poured out even in the midst of trial. May we pour our mercy to those around us, especially as we all continue to walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death of this*

*pandemic. And may we pour out mercy to those most in need, doing all that we can to defend the lives and dignity of the children of God crying out for God's mercy.*

Preaching for Easter, Sr. Anita Baird, DHM, past president of the National Black Sisters' Conference, filled desperate hearts with joy and hope:



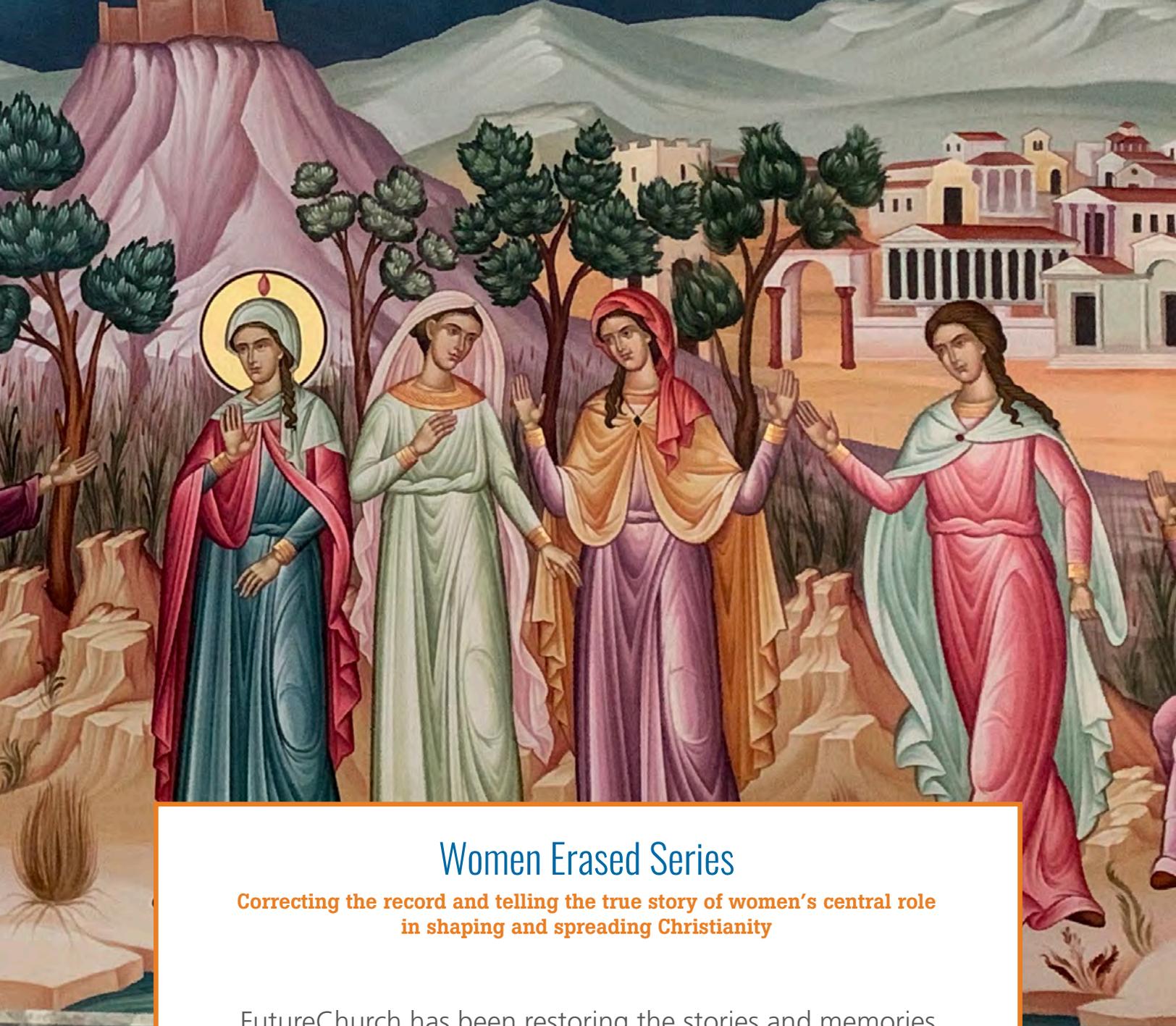
*The Easter story is our story! It is a story of light overcoming darkness. It is a story of truth overcoming lies. It is a story of love overcoming hate. It is a story of hope overcoming despair. It is a story of victory!...Go forth and tell somebody,*

*tell everybody, that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. He has conquered death and the victory is ours in Jesus' name. That's good news, church! That is the heart of our faith! Death, o death, where is your sting? Death, o death, where is your victory?*

To date, a total of 275 remarkable women have offered more than 300 challenging and inspiring reflections, making Catholic Women Preach an indispensable ministry that both reveals and helps to satisfy the deep need for the voices and insights of women in our Church. For weekly preaching that inspires, visit [www.catholicwomenpreach.org](http://www.catholicwomenpreach.org).

A playlist of all the preaching of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday can be found on the CWP YouTube page.





## Women Erased Series

**Correcting the record and telling the true story of women's central role in shaping and spreading Christianity**

FutureChurch has been restoring the stories and memories of our foremothers in faith since our beginning. Last year, we continued and expanded upon that tradition, offering a new "[Women Erased](#)" series of online gatherings to explore the incomplete histories that have been handed down through the centuries, to correct the record, and to tell the true story of women's central role in shaping and spreading Christianity from its beginnings to today.

*continued on next page...*

Overwhelmingly popular, these “Women Erased” presentations have consistently drawn hundreds of Catholics from around the world – many participants even report staying up late or waking up early to be a part of them live! To date, 15 insightful presentations from leading scholars, activists, and faith leaders have attracted nearly 3500 participants over the past 18 months!

[Our most recent presentation](#) on September 9th featured FutureChurch board member, **Dr. Nontando Hadebe** and other contributors to a new book [A Time Like No Other: COVID-19](#) in Women’s Voices, which was compiled by the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and addresses the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and violence against women raging in their communities.

Dr. Hadebe, co-editor, introducing the book saying, “What we have done with this book is to make sure that when the history of COVID-19 is written and discussed, women’s voices will be at the center... there will be a book and people will know what the women were saying at this time.” Among others, Hadebe was joined by songwriter, Rev. Bulelwa Wooly who prayed for us in song with “I’ll Still Speak” and 18-year-old slam-poet, Tari Nyamayaro, who captivated us with “Auditioning for My Funeral.”

In August, we welcomed **Elizabeth Schrader**, a Ph.D. candidate in Early Christianity at Duke University, whose research interests include the New Testament Gospels, the Nag Hammadi corpus, Mary Magdalene, textual criticism, and feminist theology. Schrader focused [her presentation on her theory that Mary Magdalene’s role was, in fact, literally erased](#) by biblical scribes to minimize her importance. Specifically, she presented multiple manuscripts of the raising of Lazarus told in the Gospel of John. In today’s Bibles, Lazarus has two sisters, Mary and

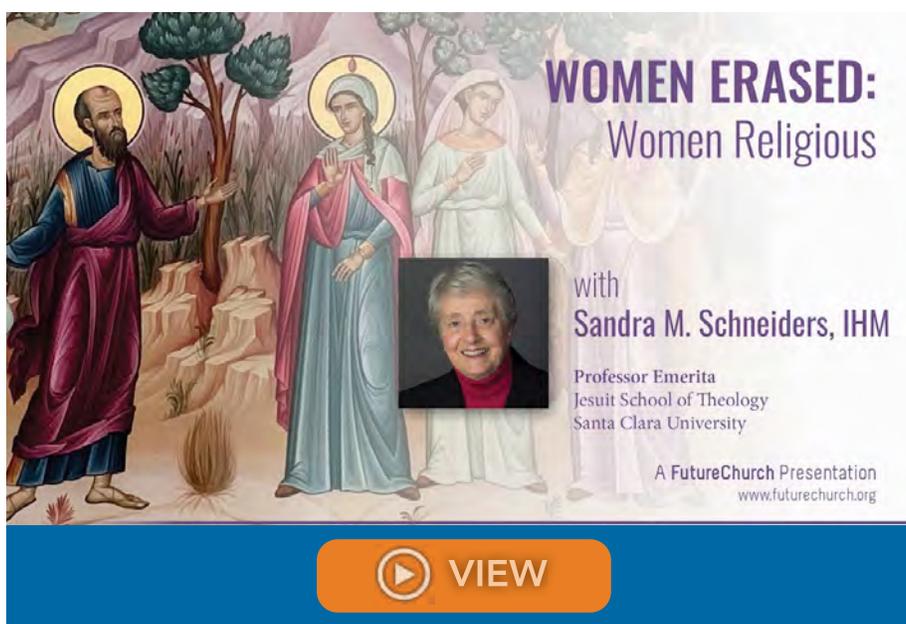
Martha. But after analyzing hundreds of hand-copied early Greek and Latin manuscripts of the Gospel, Schrader found the name Martha had been altered. The scribes scratched out one Greek letter and replaced it with another, thereby changing the original name “Maria (or Mary)” to read “Martha.” They then split one woman into two. Schrader argues that the Mary of the original text is Mary Magdalene, not Martha or Martha’s sister, Mary. The two sisters belong to another story, in the Gospel of Luke, that is not repeated in John’s Gospel.

In July, we [were treated to a special preview](#) of **Rev. Wilda C. Gafney’s** massive and revolutionary undertaking, *A Women’s Lectionary for the Whole Church*. A Hebrew biblical scholar and

Episcopal priest, Rev. Gafney has set out to develop and translate a lectionary which is thematically consistent with existing lectionaries but centers the stories of biblical women and girls — both those explicitly named and those “obscured” within the text itself. When complete, the Women’s

Lectionary work will contain four volumes: Year A, Year B, Year C, and Year W (a single year, composite lectionary for those denominations or congregations that are not bound by a three-year cycle). Years A and W were released in August, just days after Gafney’s presentation for FutureChurch.

In May, **Dr. Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Ph.D.**, Professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College in the Bronx, NY, [explored how dominant narratives about Catholicism in the United States often render the stories of its significant and growing Latinx membership, especially that of Latina women invisible or irrelevant](#). Few U.S. Catholics, she pointed out, understand that Latinx/Hispanic Catholics encompass both the oldest Catholic inhabitants of this land and its newest arrivals. Through the literary and artistic works of Latina women like Rosario



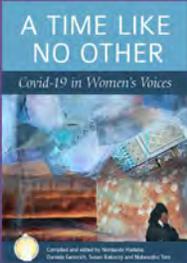
Ferré and Yolanda López, as well as the popular faith practices such as the devotion to Guadalupe, Imperatori-Lee illustrated how the *sensus fidelium* subverts institutional notions of holiness and offers a more complicated, but truthful and wholistic understanding of the intuitions and holiness of the laity, in general, and women in particular.

In April, celebrated theologian and New Testament scholar, **Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM**, [reflected on women religious in particular](#). Noting both her fascination and discomfort with the concept of ‘erasure’ at the beginning of her presentation, Schneiders asked, “Are we, women religious, in a process of being erased — that is, disappeared? If the answer is yes, by what or by whom are we being erased, and with what foreseeable consequences for women, the church, and the world? And if not, is there any probative evidence on which to base such a judgment, or are we simply whistling cheerfully past the cemetery? Or, more literally, are we (i.e., women currently in religious life), just hoping that we, personally, will be safely in the next

life before the charismatic, or at least institutional, ship called religious life goes down?” Schneiders then continued to deftly and insightfully explore the history and current manifestations of religious life, transformations she sees taking place, the questions congregations are asking to hypothesize that rather than being ‘erased’ religious life is in an ongoing process of ‘becoming.’ She concludes, “on the basis of Scripture, theology, psychology, history, and experience — that is, from the standpoint of spirituality — I would put my chips on not only the survival and transformation of women’s religious life itself but on the God who calls and the few remarkably generous women who respond, today and tomorrow, as so many have in the past.”

On a brief hiatus for the Fall, “Women Erased” will return in December. Visit <https://www.futurechurch.org/women-erased-series> to learn more about the series, to view videos of past presentations, and to view the upcoming schedule.

Women Erased Series  
**A Time Like No Other: COVID-19 in Women’s Voices**



with  
Dr. Nontando Hadebe, Co-Editor  
Daniela Gennrich, Co-Editor  
Susan Rakoczy, Co-Editor  
Rev. Bulelwa Woolly, Contributor  
Tari Nyamayaro, Contributor  
Rev Seipati L. Ngcobo, Contributor  
Virginia Mafaralalam, Contributor  
Dr. Annemarie Paulin-Campbell, Contributor

Recorded on September 9, 2021

FutureChurch  
www.futurechurch.org



Women Erased Series  
**Mary Magdalene and the Gospel of John**



with  
Elizabeth Schrader, MA, STM,  
Doctoral Candidate at Duke University

Recorded on August 26, 2021

FutureChurch  
www.futurechurch.org



Women Erased Series:  
**Grappling with Patriarchal Constructs of Women in the Lectionary and Bible**



with  
Rev. Wil Gafney, Ph.D.

recorded on July 29, 2021

FutureChurch  
www.futurechurch.org



**WOMEN ERASED:**  
The Latinx Future of the Church

with  
Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Ph.D.

A FutureChurch Presentation  
www.futurechurch.org





## Women Witnesses for Racial Justice

### Resisting Racism in Church & Society

In a world where, daily, we see our black sisters and brothers dying in our streets because of the manifold injustices they face, Fr. Bryan Massingale, one of the Catholic leaders who inspired FutureChurch's work for racial justice argues convincingly that "the only reason for racism's persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it."

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FutureChurch's new initiative, **Women Witnesses for Racial Justice**, is aimed at bringing Catholics together in community, to learn, pray, and take action for racial and reparative justice in the Church and in the world. Inspired by the [prophetic work of black Catholic historian Dr. Shannen Dee Williams](#), the initiative focuses on racial justice through the lens of Black Catholic Women -- many of them previously unknown to most -- who have powerfully shaped Catholic tradition in ways that challenged racist structures and broke down racist barriers.

The initiative features educational resources, prayer resources, newly commissioned [art by Chloe Becker](#), a speaker series, and liturgies of the word. All the elements work together to build communities of Catholics who are inspired to action.

The series has provided many powerful opportunities for soul searching, but also for inspiration as reform-minded white Catholics learn that our black Catholic sisters and brothers were already leading and teaching us what it means to be resilient and to resist injustice as people of faith.

For instance, on [Good Friday, we heard and reflected on the stories of courageous Black Catholic Women](#) who relied on their faith and dedicated themselves to living and sharing it, despite bearing the unjust crosses of racism, slavery, poverty, segregation, sexism, and exclusion. As white Catholics we acknowledged -- before God and before one another -- that we, as individuals and as a community of believers -- have failed to live the Gospel values of freedom, equality, solidarity, and inclusion.

In our [Liturgy of the Word celebrating Mother's Day](#), we honored the life, witness, and legacy of Anna "Madre" Bates, the founder of Our Lady of Victory parish in Detroit. We thanked God for the gift of motherhood -- and the many forms it takes and asked for God's mercy, compassion, and forgiveness -- aware of the fact that our Church, called to be "home" -- called to be "mother" -- has failed Black Catholics. We also mourned with black mothers who have had their beloved children taken from them: taken and sold into slavery; taken and executed by the criminal justice system...never to return home.

Our [Martin Luther King Jr. day celebration](#) prayerfully recalled the powerful witness of Sr. Thea Bowman. Like King, she was clear about sinfulness and evil of racism telling the U.S. Catholic bishops that "to be



*Sister Thea Bowman. Art by Chloe Becker, 2020.*

Black and Catholic, still though, often feels like being a second or third class citizen of the Holy City." And like King, she saw dignity in every human being. Asked what it means to be black and Catholic, Sr. Thea proclaimed, "It means that I come to my Church fully functioning. . . .I bring myself; my black self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become. I bring my whole history, my traditions, my experience, my culture, my African-American song and dance and gesture and movement and teaching and preaching and healing and responsibility - as gifts to the Church."

All Catholics, but especially white Catholics are called to lead the fight for racial and reparative justice in our church and in our world. FutureChurch is committed to doing our part. Through our **Women Witnesses for Racial Justice** initiative we will continue to offer new prayer experiences, new art, and new educational resources so that, together, we may build God's kin-dom.

To learn more go to [www.futurechurch.org/celebrating-women-witnesses-for-racial-justice-prayers-and-presentations](http://www.futurechurch.org/celebrating-women-witnesses-for-racial-justice-prayers-and-presentations).

# Women Witnesses for Racial Justice

## Artist Statements from Chloe Becker, 2021 Christine Schenk Award Recipient



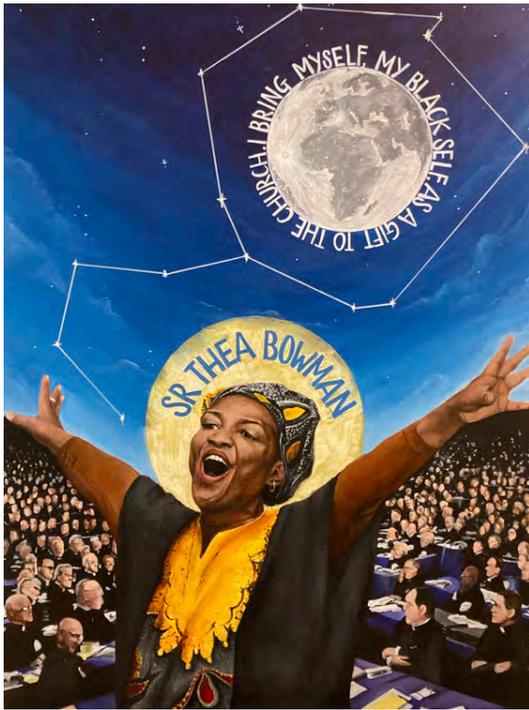
### Sr. Antona Ebo

This portrait represents the active and public contributions that Sr. Antona Ebo made to racial justice movements throughout history. I painted from her iconic picture of speaking to the press at the march from Selma, as that was a monumental moment for her beginnings in publicly acting against racism and for nationwide representation for Black nuns.<sup>1</sup> The background shows the march in the front (you might be able to spot Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.), and transitions to depict the protests in Ferguson for the police officer's murder of Michael Brown, which Sr. Antona Ebo also spoke at, decades later.<sup>2</sup> I wanted the crowd to convey that the racism of the Civil Rights Era is the same racism that America has now---it is the same evil, just in slightly different form.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, the dove in the sky is a reference to Sr. Antona Ebo's public love of the Holy Spirit, and how we rely on the Spirit in our work for justice.



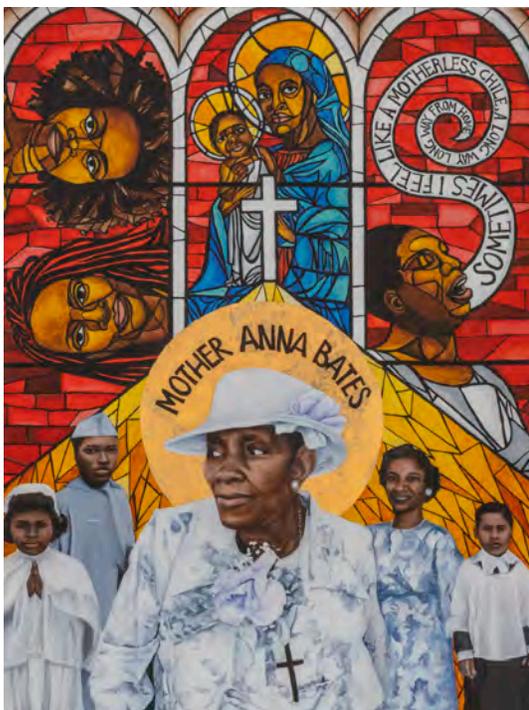
### Mother Mary Lange

Mother Mary Lange is sitting with a young student from St. Frances Academy, the school she started for Black girls.<sup>4</sup> The positioning and colors of the two reference the iconic Black Madonna of Czestochowa as a means to emphasize Mother Lange as a powerful mother figure in the Church and her community. I wanted to center Mother Lange's portrait around her focus on women in her racial justice work (as her school was initially created only for girls, and also formed the Oblate Sisters of Providence).<sup>5</sup> So, I connected the Say Her Name campaign of today with what I believe would've been the Say Her Name campaign of the early nineteenth century---the countless Black women who were lynched and/or raped by white Americans during this time period.<sup>6</sup> The names near the bottom of the painting are of those from the 1800s, and transition halfway to names of Black women who were killed by police in the twenty first century. Finally, the hands held at the top of the painting are layered with meaning. They represent the unity and support that Mother Lange provided for her Black community still dealing with the aftermath and continual existence of slavery after the Civil War. They represent the women of the names on the painting holding hands together in God's Kingdom. They can even represent people holding hands while praying. All interpretations apply.



### Sr. Thea Bowman

First and foremost, it was important for me to feel Sr. Thea's energy through this portrait. I wanted to show her as she spent most of her time on earth: lively, joyful, singing, teaching, and preaching her truth as a Black Catholic woman. She is lighting up the cool night sky with her warmth, and preaching to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as she did famously in 1989.<sup>7</sup> I chose to add in a crowd larger than just the bishops to show how Sr. Thea spoke publicly around the U.S., teaching Catholics about the beauty and legitimacy of Black Catholic religious expression, and even more so, the urgent need to dismantle racism in the Catholic Church and United States.<sup>8</sup> The constellation and moon display in a divine way what she is preaching: "I bring myself, my Black self, as a gift to the Church." -Sr. Thea Bowman.<sup>9</sup>



### Mother Anna Bates

Mother Anna's portrait is centered on her grass-roots work to form a Black Catholic church in Detroit, Our Lady of Victory, amidst resistance and racism from the Church. The positioning of Mother Anna and her parishioners emulates the architecture of Our Lady of Victory, as after Catholic authority refused to grant her request for a church, Mother Anna created a "church" with the people in her popular summer programs.<sup>10</sup> The stained glass behind Mother Anna further emulates the church's architecture, and displays in the three panels the ways in which Black women like Mother Anna are excluded from the Church. The left panel shows discrimination and lack of representation of Black women and girls with natural hairstyles;<sup>11</sup> the middle displays a Black Madonna (for the white-washing of Mary and the Church's lack of emphasis of the racism-caused high rates of infant mortality for Black mothers as a life issue);<sup>12</sup> the right panel conveys the exclusion of Black song and spirituals from "typical/traditional" Masses or prayer services.<sup>13</sup> The stained glass chosen for its unbelievable lack of representation of Black figures conveys a future Church where all Black women are centered and valued.<sup>14</sup>

View art and statements for the entire Women Witnesses for Racial Justice Series at Chloe Becker's website.

VISIT

An expanding collection of free FutureChurch resources are available for download on our website.

VISIT

## Footnotes

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## Holy Family Campaign

### Ending Subordination in the Catholic Lectionary

In June last year, Nancy Small, the former national director of Pax Christi USA wrote to FutureChurch about a new problem she was encountering. She had moved to a new parish and for the first time in her life, she was hearing readings that stung her ears, hurt her Catholic sensibilities, and sparked the kind of constructive anger that she had been employing most of her life as a leader for Pax Christi, and later, [a Hospice chaplain](#). She was hearing texts that explicitly supported the subordination of women and she knew she had to act.

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It is tragic, even scandalous, that in the 21st century, the Catholic Church, which incorporates the transformative wisdom of the Second Vatican Council along with a challenging and robust catalogue of Catholic Social Teaching, continues to subject Catholics to lectionary texts that explicitly encourage the subordination of women and enslaved peoples. Yet, these exhortations are part of our Sunday and weekday readings -- teachings that Catholics hear and assimilate.

Tragically, these teachings often affirm some of the most destructive impulses humans possess. For example, survivors of domestic violence know that abusers see biblical texts that subordinate women as one of the rationales supporting their dangerous, controlling, and abusive behavior. White supremacists and those who consciously or unconsciously employ white privilege to dominate people of color are emboldened by biblical texts that encourage enslaved peoples to obey their masters.

Yet, most Catholics cringe upon hearing these texts "proclaimed" at Mass. They know what they are hearing contradicts the values of the Gospel by explicitly promoting domination of one person over another, one group over another, or one gender over another.

On the **Feast of the Holy Family**, Catholics hear Colossians 3: 12-21 which exhorts women to be subordinate to their husbands, "as is proper in the Lord." This is the second reading proclaimed for the Feast of the Holy Family during the Christmas season every year. Because this reading falls on a Sunday and a feast day, greater numbers of Catholics hear it and assimilate it as sacred teaching on family life.

There are optional readings but they are not always chosen. Colossians 3:12-17 excises the subordinating text and can be substituted for the longer reading. Also, in Year B, Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 is an optional choice, while in Year C, 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24 is an option. Yet, because the longer reading, Colossians 3:12-21 is listed first, it is too often chosen as the reading for that feast day.

Similarly, Ephesians 5:21-32 exhorts "wives to be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord." This admonition is heard on the **Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary time in Year B**. There is an optional shorter reading. Ephesians 5: 25-32 excludes the subordinating text, but because it is optional, the longer text is too often used.

**Ritual celebrations, such as weddings** offer Ephesians 5:21-32, Ephesians 5:21-33, or 1 Peter 3:1-9 as options for readings. All three texts admonish women to be subordinate to their husbands. There are approved shorter readings that excise admonitions to be subordinate -- Ephesians 5:2a, 23-33 or 5:2a, 25-32.

Ephesians 3:21-33, used on the **30th Tuesday in Ordinary Time in Year II** exhorts wives to be subordinate is. Ephesians 6:1-9 which exhorts slaves to obey their masters is heard on the **30th Wednesday in Ordinary Time Year II**.

Titus 2:1-8, 11-14 which exhorts older women to train younger women to be "under the control of their husbands" is heard on the **32nd Tuesday in Ordinary Time** on even years.

And while these troubling texts are heard on weekdays, and therefore to a more limited group of the faithful, it is clear that their presence in our lectionary is deeply problematic and even sinful given today's understanding of the Gospel mandate for gender justice and racial justice.

The Sunday lectionary is the only canon heard, read, preached, or studied by most church-going Catholics. The Sunday lectionary is also the cornerstone for many Bible studies, catechetical programs, and spiritual guides.

When selections from the lectionary are proclaimed during the liturgy, they are concluded with the phrase "The Word of the Lord" or "The Gospel of the Lord" to which the assembly verbalizes its assent. The members of a worshipping assembly enter into a liturgical process that evokes remembrance, and by listening to and affirming the lectionary readings the Word becomes "real and present" in their minds and hearts. The liturgical process is designed to lead the assembly to internalize what is heard as a matter of faith.

The goal of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy was to cover as much of the Bible as possible. Thus many more books and passages of the Bible were made available to Catholics through the scripture readings at Sunday and daily Mass. The widely-held assumption has been that the lectionary faithfully presents the essence of the Bible, with the omission of only a few troubling or gory passages.

*continued on next page...*

But, a lectionary, by its very nature, excludes some ancient traditions as it includes others, recasts its selections into designated collections, and assigns each collection to a particular context in the church calendar. Thus, devising any lectionary produces a “canon within the canon” with the selections being under the control of ordained males.

*Therefore, many scriptures left out of the lectionary including scriptures about women. Women’s books, women’s experiences and women’s accomplishments have been largely overlooked in the assigned scripture readings that are being proclaimed in our churches on Sundays and weekdays.*

When women and female images are “erased” or distorted, it has real consequences for the entire Body of Christ, but especially for women. The witness of women that is provided in an already androcentric Bible, is further narrowed in the lectionary canon. When females and female images are marginalized in the lectionary, women are interpreted as marginal. Furthermore, when androcentric, misogynistic, racist, and patriarchal texts are emphasized (as we note in the above section), Catholics internalize those messages and assume they are part of the divinely designed social order. This has disturbing, even dangerous consequences for marginalized groups and women.

Underlying these texts that explicitly promote the subordination of women or their erasure from the lectionary is patriarchal framework that reflects and re-inscribes misogyny. Dr. Regina Boisclair shows how lectionary readings chosen from the Hebrew Scriptures are light on lessons that highlight positive, empowering female imagery for God, and heavy on lessons that frame women such as Eve and Sarah as dangerous, weak, submissive, or disposable. When these scriptures are paired with a Gospel reading, another aspect of the unconscious androcentric interpretative framework is introduced into the lectionary by the compilers suggesting that women are “derivative of men, dangerous to men, and except as mothers of sons, they are disposable by men...”

In her book length study, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets*, womanist Biblical scholar Dr. Renita J. Weems traces the patriarchal foundations of the prophets in the Hebrew Bible to show how women bodies, as metaphor, reveal sacralized misogyny and even

violence against women. The correlation repeatedly drawn between divine judgment and husbands battering their wives is “haunting and telling” according to Weems.

While much more can be written about “texts of terror” in the Bible, it is clear that androcentrism and misogyny serve as the foundation for the subordinating texts that Catholics hear at Mass.

Catholics still hear Ephesians 6:1-9 which exhorts slaves to obey their masters. While this is read every other year on a Wednesday in Ordinary time, the proclamation of this text in any Catholic Church at any time runs counter to the prophetic voice of the Black Catholics, and especially the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus (BCCC), who, in 1968, called the Catholic Church out for its role in racism after the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. They wrote, “the Catholic Church the United States, primarily a white racist institution, has addressed itself primarily to white society and is definitely a part of that society.” Further they noted that the Church was “not cognizant of changing attitudes in the black community and is not making the necessary, realistic adjustments.”

Later in 1968, the National Black Sisters’ Conference (NBSC) pledged “unceasingly for the liberation of black people.” The sisters proclaimed “expressions of individual and institutional racism found in our society within our Church are declared by us to be categorically evil and inimical the freedom of all men everywhere, and particularly destructive of people in America.”

The ongoing proclamation of Ephesians 6:1-9 is an important example of how the sin of racism still plays out in the church running counter to the message of the Gospel.

Nancy Small is an example of how Catholics can make a difference. And as a result of her efforts, FutureChurch created The Holy Family Campaign, an educational and advocacy effort to end the inclusion of biblical texts that subordinate others.

Learn more about this effort at

<https://www.futurechurch.org/holy-family-campaign-downloads>

VISIT



## Pope Francis, Meet Your Priest

### **FutureChurch and Women's Ordination Conference Collaboration**

As Pope Francis travelled to Slovakia in September, FutureChurch and Women's Ordination Conference [publicly called on him](#) to recognize the courage and sacrifice of Ludmila Javorova who, 51 years ago was clandestinely ordained a priest by a Roman Catholic bishop as part of the underground church in Czechoslovakia during the country's authoritarian Communist rule.

*more coverage on next page...*

Entrusted by her bishop, Javorová courageously served the church at a time it seemed all but certain that Catholicism would be erased from Czechoslovakia, risking her own life and safety. She offered sacraments to a community threatened by religious persecution, and along with so many other brave Catholics, answered the call of God to keep the faith alive. Today, she is 89 years old.

In 1970, Bishop Felix Maria Davidek of the underground Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia ordained Javorova and at least seven other women and married men, at a time when the persecuted Catholic community was in dire need of ministers. Davidek also ordained several bishops who continued the practice in the underground church.

Instead of lauding her courageous act of faith and evangelization, the Vatican forbade her to exercise her priesthood in 1996, claiming her ordination was invalid simply because she is a woman.

In addition to the public statement, [FutureChurch and Women's Ordination Conference sponsored an online event with Sr. Miriam Therese Winter](#), the author of an award winning 2001 book, *Out of the Depths* which recounts Javorova's powerful witness and courageous leadership.

With more than 420 Catholics from around the world gathered, WOC executive director Kate McElwee stated our purpose. "We know the danger of women's witnesses, leadership and ministry being erased. And we will not let that happen [with Javorova]. Her living witness, a woman priest of our time, forever changed the women's ordination movement."

[Sr. Christine Schenk captured the heart of Winter's presentation](#) and its meaning for today in her Simply Spirit column for the National Catholic Reporter:

*Francis' words at the Sept. 14 Slovakia Mass seem particularly apropos to these two leaders [Davidek and Javorova] of the Czech underground church: "Witnesses generate other witnesses, because they are givers of life," the pope said. "That is how the faith is spread: not with worldly power but with the wisdom of the cross; not with structures but with witness."*

Fr. Felix Davidek spent more than 14 years in a Czech prison where he and his brother priests surreptitiously celebrated Mass using bread and fermented raisin juice (raisins were brought in by family). But he was anguished when he saw the

many imprisoned women and women religious who had no access to the sacraments in a time of spiritual need.

After his release, Davidek sought out Javorova - a trusted family friend with prodigious organizational skills - and the two created the clandestine Koinotes community, which functioned as a kind of university to recruit and educate male seminarians who would be ordained to serve underground Catholics.

With the knowledge of Pope Paul VI, Czech scientist Jan Blaha was consecrated as a bishop for the beleaguered underground church. Blaha then secretly consecrated Davidek to serve as bishop of Koinotes and its offshoots.

Javorova worked tirelessly - and at no small risk to herself - in every aspect of Koinotes' functioning. Appointed by Davidek as vicar general, she attended every ordination.

As Winter explained to the Sept. 14 gathering:

*And the rules were, they could write nothing down. Even the names — she had to memorize them. At the end, she had witnessed to over 545 ordinations ... and the rules were if you were ordained, you could not tell anyone, not even your wife, your mother, your father, no one.*

Koinotes quickly grew to include scores of hidden communities throughout Czechoslovakia. Along with Davidek and Blaha, Javorova knew the identities of all the priest and lay leaders of the burgeoning underground church.

Winter believes that Javorova's witness reveals something about the birthing pains so plainly evident in the church today:

*[Koinotes] was like an organism that connected everything to everything. And it was alive. I am dying to yesterday. I am entering today. And then tomorrow. That's how a new tradition gets born. What happens in our spiritual life is also true with our everyday life. The fact that life can change. I leave certain things behind, and I start something new that is needed. So while we stick to tradition at the same time, there has to be a new tradition being formed as well in the church.*

Javorova, who is now 89 years old, once told Winter, "The work of the Holy Spirit means you are left with something you have to do. And you will know that you have to do it."

---



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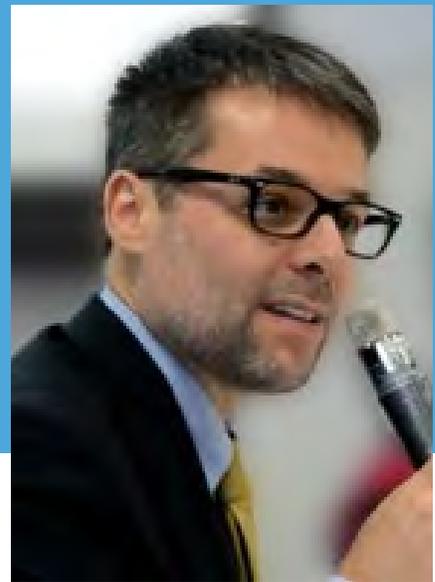
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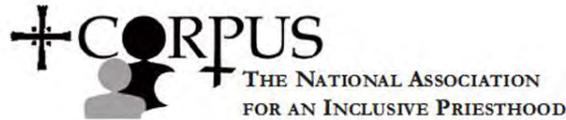
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