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Supporters see him as part of a new evangelization, others see him as alienating Catholics on the margins

Chaput sends resignation notice to Vatican

By PETER FEUERHERD
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PHILADELPHIA · After eight years, Archbishop Charles Chaput's tenure as Philadelphia archbishop will soon end. He has already presented his resignation notice to Pope Francis, consistent with church law as he marks his 75th birthday on Sept. 26. Francis will either accept it or ask him to continue until a successor is named.

Approximately 11,000 Catholics in the Philadelphia Archdiocese are expected to be baptized this year. That is in contrast to nearly 38,000 baptisms in 1961. Wracked by sex abuse and financial scandals, a once powerful church here has undergone painful consolidation and retrenchment. In comparison to past eras, far fewer Philadelphia Catholics are being baptized, married and buried in the church.

Philadelphia is feeling the effects of outside forces that have changed the landscape of the Catholic Church in the Northeast and Upper Midwest. In addition to the effects of scandal, the church has experienced a massive

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—CNS/Paul Haring

Pope Francis, right, raises the Eucharist as he celebrates the closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in 2015. With him at the altar is Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput.

This issue was mailed on Sept 27.

On US tour, Marie Collins exposes clerical culture behind abuse cover-up

By TOM ROBERTS
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WASHINGTON · The Catholic Church has reached a crossroads. Its leaders can either change, become open and accountable, or maintain the status quo: an institution lacking transparency, wrapped in secrecy and beholden to a clerical culture that is at the heart of the institution's problems.

That bleak assessment was made by Marie Collins, the Irish clerical sexual abuse survivor who was an original member of a papal commission dealing with the sex abuse crisis, and who said she is "hanging on by my fingernails."

The scandal, she said in remarks Sept. 8 opening a five-city U.S. tour, is both systemic and global, and clericalism remains at its core.

"The church is at a crossroads. It can either continue to behave as it has for centuries, protecting itself, or open up and become the church we all want it to be, the church that it should be."

—NCR photo/Tom Roberts

Marie Collins

Collins, in a separate interview with NCR following the news conference, expanded on her understanding of clericalism and how it played into her decision to resign, after serving for three years, from the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

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Synod organizers defend focus on disputed issues, Amazon's needs

By JOSHUA J. MCELWEE
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VATICAN CITY · The fundamental basis for the discussions at next month's Vatican meeting of bishops from the Amazon region will be the unique needs of the millions of people who live in or near the world's largest rainforest, say organizers and consultants for the three-week gathering.

Although controversial pastoral issues such as married priests and ministry for women will be discussed, as well as controversial political issues such as exploitative mining practices and illegal deforestation, the central focus will remain on the needs of those whose lives are now threatened by unprecedented levels of ecological destruction, say the organizers.

In a series of NCR interviews, those

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Cover of the Oct. 4-17, 2019, print edition of National Catholic Reporter

by NCR Staff

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July 7, 2020

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The Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada has honored National Catholic Reporter with 17 citations of excellence in its 2020 awards contest, including dual first place prizes for best newspaper website and best national newspaper overall.

The results of the contest were announced July 2. In their comments for the best newspaper category, which NCR has now won for 18 of the past 20 years, the judges called the paper "a top tier publication" and said it is "written and edited with clarity and authority."



Cover of the Oct. 4-17, 2019, print edition of National Catholic Reporter

NCR's individual winners spanned the contest's reporting, commentary and audio/visual categories.

Heidi Schlumpf, NCR's executive editor, earned three awards for her earlier work as the publication's national correspondent. She won the first place prize in

analysis/background newswriting for a four-part investigative series exploring the connections between Catholic media conglomerate EWTN, conservative donors and the Republican Party.

The judges praised Schlumpf's interviewing and research skills, and said they would now consider NCR an "authority" on EWTN.

Schlumpf also garnered the third place prize for reporting on social justice issues for a report on Marquette University's Center for Peacemaking, and an honorable mention in the personality profile category for a piece about Orbis Books publisher Robert Ellsberg.

Soli Salgado, a staff writer for Global Sisters Report, earned second place in the reporting on young adults category, for three stories focusing on the unique experiences of Catholic sisters who interact with young people who identify as "nones" — or having no religious affiliation.

"The articles provide an in-depth look at an interesting group," said the judges. "The true feelings of the subjects are palpable."

Peter Feuerherd, NCR's national news editor, earned third place in the national newswriting category for his report on last year's retirement of former Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput. The judges said Feuerherd presented "thought-provoking quotes and equally thought-provoking facts."

Saji Thomas, a freelance writer for Global Sisters Report, earned an honorable mention in the international newswriting category for a report on five Catholic sisters in India who supported another sister who alleged that she had been abused by a bishop.

Among other winners were columnists Michael Sean Winters and Jamie Manson, who won first and second place in the category of "best blog by a layperson" for their respective columns, Distinctly Catholic and Grace on the Margins.

The judges called Winters' work "well researched, uniquely insightful, and a joy to read," and said Manson challenged readers to "think through pressing social issues from the level of lived experience."

Advertisement

Theology en la Plaza, a shared NCR column featuring Arturo J. Bañuelas, M.T. Dávila, Carmen Nanko-Fernández and Miguel H. Díaz earned an honorable mention in the blog category.

NCR freelance writer Menachem Wecker earned an honorable mention in the culture, arts and leisure column category.

Jesse Remedios, a staff writer for NCR and EarthBeat, earned an honorable mention in the best podcast category for his three-part "Trials of Nonviolence" series, which explored the motives of seven Catholic peace activists who broke into a nuclear submarine base in Georgia.

Joshua J. McElwee, NCR's Vatican correspondent and international news editor, earned honorable mentions in two categories for his coverage of Pope Francis' significant appointments in 2019 and of the pontiff's trips abroad to Panama, Romania, Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius.

NCR also earned first and third place in the best editorial category, for editorials focused on how conservative Catholic groups express influence in church-run organizations across the country and on the process for evaluating bishops' responses to clergy sexual abuse.

The Catholic Press Association judges called the first-place editorial "a standard-setting editorial for the industry."

A version of this story appeared in the **July 24-Aug 6, 2020** print issue under the headline: NCR named best Catholic newspaper, website.