

Women Should Be 'Full Participants'

The challenge to find new ways for women to be “full participants in the various areas of social and ecclesial life...can no longer be postponed,” said Pope Francis, speaking on Feb. 7 with members of the Pontifical Council for Culture. The pope said a “more widespread and incisive female presence” in the church “is desirable, so that we can see many women involved in pastoral responsibilities, in the accompaniment of persons, families and groups, as well as in theological reflection.” He added that the “irreplaceable role of women in the family” cannot be forgotten. Women must not be left alone to carry the burden of deciding between the family and an effective presence in public life, Pope Francis said. “Rather,” he said, “all institutions, including the ecclesial community, are called to ensure freedom of choice for women, so that they have the possibility to take on social and ecclesial responsibilities in a way that is in harmony with family life.”

Assisted Suicide Gains

Assisted suicide is legal in only four states currently, but several other jurisdictions are considering legislation on the practice. A California bill resembles the Oregon law approved by voters there in 1994, but it has some significant differences. The California proposal does not include a conscience clause that allows doctors to refuse to participate in assisted suicide. The Oregon law also mandates referral for psychological counseling if either of two doctors examining the dying patient suspects the patient is mentally ill or suffers from impaired judgment. That stipulation is not included in the California proposal. In New York, where a bill patterned after Oregon’s assisted-suicide law has also been introduced, the Disability

NEWS BRIEFS

More than two dozen **undocumented students** at Catholic colleges sent a letter on Feb. 5 to 79 members of Congress who graduated from Catholic schools, urging them not to cut off funding for the president’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. + Church leaders criticized the **arrests of Christians** who had gathered on Feb. 5 at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in New Delhi to protest police inaction on recent attacks and desecrations at five Delhi churches. + House Speaker John Boehner, Republican of Ohio, announced on Feb. 5 that Pope Francis will **address a joint meeting of Congress** on Sept. 24, making him the “first leader of the Holy See” to do so. + Two bishops have joined some Philippine lawmakers in demanding the **resignation of President Benigno Aquino III**, after 44 troops were killed in a botched operation against Muslim rebels on Jan. 25. + There is nothing more scandalous than a nation made up of **Christians engaged in conflict**, Pope Francis said on Feb. 4, discussing the worsening conflict in Ukraine. + Meeting on Jan. 27 in Lebanon, Catholic and Orthodox patriarchs called for an end to **financing terrorists** and suggested that borders be closed when necessary to prevent the movement of terrorists.



Struggling in Ukraine

Rights Legal Center filed a suit on Feb. 4 to give New Yorkers the right to end their lives. Assisted suicide bills were also recently introduced in Maryland, Wyoming and Pennsylvania.

Romero Beatification

Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador will be beatified in San Salvador “certainly within the year and not later, but possibly within a few months,” said Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the postulator, or chief promoter of the archbishop’s sainthood cause. Speaking to reporters on Feb. 4, the day after Pope Francis formally recognized that the slain Salvadoran archbishop was killed “in hatred of the faith”—and not for purely political reasons—Archbishop Paglia said the two de-

acades it took to obtain the decree were the result of “misunderstandings and preconceptions.” During Archbishop Romero’s time as archbishop of San Salvador—from 1977 to 1980—“kilos of letters against him arrived in Rome. The accusations were simple: He’s political; he’s a follower of liberation theology.” To the accusations that he supported liberation theology, according to Archbishop Paglia, Archbishop Romero responded: “Yes, certainly. But there are two theologies of liberation: one sees liberation only as material liberation; the other is that of Paul VI. I’m with Paul VI” in seeking the material and spiritual liberation of all people, including from the sins of injustice and oppression.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

