

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

JAN. 4-11, 2016 \$4.99



## Refugee Rights

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PEOPLE FORCED INTO FLIGHT?

DAVID HOLLENBACH

# OF MANY THINGS

Another dour, colorless twilight is wending its way through midtown Manhattan, making me only more susceptible to the mid-winter nihilism for which my Celtic forebears are so famous. “Why should I be happy,” wrote Eugene O’Neill, “or éen be merry/in weather only fitted for Cook or Peary.” Yet I know that there is a lot to be merry about. I’m grateful for the hundreds, indeed thousands of people whose talents and generosity have made this a banner year for America Media. I am especially mindful of three of them as we enter 2016:

John P. Schlegel, S.J., died on Nov. 15 after a yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer. Father Schlegel served as the 23rd president of Creighton University from 2000 to 2011. In his “retirement,” he served as president and publisher of America Media from 2011 to 2013. This was a critical time in our history: We were discerning how to evolve from a traditional weekly magazine to a truly multiplatform, 21st-century media ministry. John Schlegel’s Midwestern commonsense and uncommon wisdom, along with his abundant Christian charity, were our guideposts on an uncertain path. I am especially grateful for his mentorship and friendship, both of which never failed me.

Richard Curry, S.J., also left us in 2015. Father Curry, who died on Dec. 20, was the founder and artistic director of the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped, which trained persons with disabilities to become actors and was for many years headquartered here at America House. Rick, who was born with one arm, was himself an actor and earned a Ph.D. in theater. A frequent contributor to these pages, Father Curry spent his last years ministering to disabled veterans. As James Martin, S.J., recounted in this column in 2002 (10/14), Father Curry found the inspiration for his work “after

answering an audition call one day. Rick greeted the person taking applications for the auditions, who took one look [at his one arm] and laughed. ‘Is this a joke?’ she said. On such ugly insults are beautiful things built.” The thousands of people Rick touched in his seven decades already miss him dearly.

Lastly, America Media bade a bittersweet farewell on Dec. 18 to Francis W. Turnbull, S.J., who is retiring and moving to the Murray-Weigel community at Fordham University. Brother Frank labored at **America** for 23 years in all, interrupted only twice, by stints as a retreat director in Africa and in the business office at St. Peter’s University in Jersey City. For years Brother Frank arrived at 7:30 a.m.—the first person in our office, turning on the lights, answering voicemails and emails, generally getting the place in shape for the day’s proceedings. I have valued his wise counsel, born of his many years of service to four editors in chief, which included several years as managing editor. Indeed, Frank started working at **America** when I was in high school. More than his professionalism and dedication, however, I will miss his constant presence, his warm and friendly disposition and his wry sense of humor, which he always deployed at just the right moment, usually when I was taking myself too seriously. Thank you, Frank. Best wishes and Godspeed.

I hate to say it, but maybe Eugene O’Neill had it wrong. Things may be cold, colorless, even forbidding. But the noble lights of great men and women can illumine the dark paths of mid-winter and warm the hearts of those of us fortunate enough to move in their shadows. For that gift and for all the gifts of this past year, of course, we owe our thanks to the one whose light still “shines in the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it.”

*Lumen Christi. Deo Gratias!*

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

**America** | **MEDIA**  
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106 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019-3803  
Ph: (212) 581-4640; Fax: (212) 399-3596  
Subscriptions: (800) 627-9533  
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**MODERATOR, CATHOLIC BOOK CLUB**  
Kevin Spinale, S.J.

**EDITOR, THE JESUIT POST** Michael Rossmann, S.J.

**EDITORIAL E-MAIL**  
america@americamedia.org

**PUBLISHER AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**  
Edward G. Spallone **DEPUTY PUBLISHER** Rosa M. Del Saz **VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT** Daniel Pawlus **ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER** Chris Keller **DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR** Kerry Goleski **BUSINESS OPERATIONS STAFF** Khairah Walker, Glenda Castro, Katy Zhou, Frankarlos Cruz **ADVERTISING CONTACT** ads@americamedia.org; 212-515-0102 **SUBSCRIPTION CONTACT/ADDITIONAL COPIES** 1-800-627-9533 **REPRINTS:** reprints@americamedia.org

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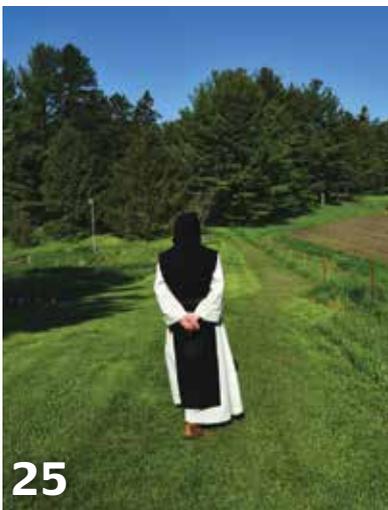
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## ON THE WEB

Judith Valente explores solutions to **gang-related violence in Chicago**, and James Martin, S.J., discusses the ongoing **Jubilee Year of Mercy**. Full digital highlights on page 24 and at [americamagazine.org/webfeatures](http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures).



### Saudi Suffragettes?

In Saudi Arabia religious custom and cultural norms restrict women's lives and rights in significant ways. They cannot engage in activities that many women elsewhere take for granted, like driving a car, traveling without male chaperones or interacting with men not related to them. They cannot participate in certain sports (like swimming) or read uncensored magazines. But thanks to a decree by the late King Abdullah, there is one thing they now can do, though in a limited fashion. They can vote.

In the country of 20 million, there are 1.5 million registered voters; now 130,000 of them are women. In the municipal elections held on Dec. 12, there were 6,900 candidates vying for 2,112 seats in the desert kingdom's 284 local councils. Of the 979 women who ran for office, about 20 were elected. This is the third time in the country's history that an election of this kind has been held and the first in which women participated. While the number of women elected is small, it is nevertheless a step in the right direction for the country's future.

Three factors precipitated this new opening for women: the widespread use of social media, a growing youth population and the increasing number of women in the workforce. All of these have contributed to lifting slightly the veil of social and political isolation Saudi women have had to endure. Still, there is a long way to go before Saudi women can claim the rights that men have in running the affairs of their country.

### Church and Covenant

For Catholics who came of age after the Second Vatican Council it can be difficult to appreciate the epochal shift in Catholic-Jewish relations represented by the council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" ("Nostra Aetate"). A statement released by the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews on Dec. 10 not only recalls and clarifies these significant changes in the church's teaching but also highlights how far the delicate relationship between Christianity and Judaism has come in the 50 years since the council.

The new document, "The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable," invites readers to study and reflect on the profound but ultimately mysterious interdependence of God's covenant with Israel and the Church of Christ. Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Interreligious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee, told **America** that he found two aspects of the statement to be exceptional.

First, it formally declares that "the Catholic Church neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed toward Jews." Second, the document echoes previous statements in denouncing anti-Semitism in "even the slightest perceptible forms," but it is the first to call for the church and the Jewish people to combat together such discrimination and other injustices in concrete ways.

On Jan. 17, Italy's annual day for Christian-Jewish dialogue, Pope Francis will demonstrate his and the church's deep affection for the Jewish people by visiting the Great Synagogue in Rome. The Vatican statement calls on all Christians to follow the pope's lead in walking with our Jewish brothers and sisters, reminding readers that texts "cannot replace personal encounters and face-to-face dialogues."

### The Cost of Care

A paper released by the Health Care Pricing Project in December found enormous variability in health care spending for privately insured individuals, both within regions and across the country. Common procedures vary in cost by more than 600 percent among hospitals, even in the same region. Worse, it found that the places where Medicare manages to contain costs are not the same as those where private insurance manages to contain costs. This means that hopes to use Medicare cost containment as a template for reform elsewhere may not bear fruit. The takeaway from all this: Not only do we not know how to contain costs in our health care system; we also do not know where to start looking in order to learn.

A detailed look at the U.S. health care system can be discouraging. Along with the problem of insurance coverage and access to health care, the United States also spends more than any other developed country on health care—more than 17 percent of our gross domestic product, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services—outstripping other countries by far. A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2013 found that U.S. health care spending per capita was 42 percent higher than Norway's, the next highest spender.

Clearly, more research is needed to understand what drives such extreme variations in pricing, which are a sign of basic failures in the health care market. This does not mean the solution is price controls imposed from above. But we cannot continue to accept a situation in which we mandate insurance, then watch helplessly as prices explode out of control for reasons no one understands well enough to avoid.

# Defending the Middle Class

**T**he middle class is now a minority in the United States, according to a study released in December by the Pew Research Center, which warns of “a demographic shift that could signal a tipping point.” We hope not to reach another tipping point, at which policymakers would accept the steady loss of middle-class families as inevitable. This would be another sign that we have given up on the idea of a common good, following the near-extinction of labor unions, the pursuit of productivity at the expense of a just wage and the indifference of the federal government to widening economic inequality.

Using data from the Census Bureau, the Pew researchers estimate that the share of adults living in middle-income households fell to just under 50 percent last year from 61 percent in 1970. Upper-income households, or those making more than twice the median (for a family of three, the median is \$63,000), rose to 21 percent of the total from 14 percent. Lower-income households, or those making less than two-thirds of the median, also increased, to 29 percent from 25 percent.

Catholic social teaching encourages us to look at concepts like the common good and solidarity as we make public policy decisions, and the trend identified by the Pew Center is worrisome by these standards. A shrinking middle class suggests fewer opportunities for upward mobility. It means a less dynamic economy, with lower consumer spending and fewer people taking the risk of starting small businesses. (Upper-income households are more likely to park their funds in safe investments.) And the eroding of a common ground for most American households could worsen the polarization of our politics, making it more difficult to enact policies that benefit the greatest number of families.

Upper-income households, accounting for an ever-larger share of the nation’s total earnings, may not even grasp that the rest of the country is withering. From 2001 to 2013, the median wealth of households in the middle class fell by 28 percent.

Not surprisingly, polls show ever-greater pessimism about the future and disenchantment with the political process, especially among voters without college degrees—the voters who feel the loss of civic solidarity most keenly and fear ending up on the wrong side of a growing economic divide. Middle-class families are justified in feeling abandoned by both political parties.

We need an acknowledgment of objective reality, as op-

posed to partisan loyalties. There are ways to support the middle class and promote economic security for all citizens that merit the support of lawmakers across the ideological spectrum. Chief among them is the enactment of policies that ease the economic burdens of starting and raising a family. Paid parental leave and child-care assistance, as well as increases in the child tax credit and earned income tax credit, could help some families attain the economic security needed to climb into the middle class—and could help other families at risk of sliding out of the middle class.

We also need to increase educational opportunities. According to the Pew study, 69 percent of all adults with no more than a high school education were considered middle-class in 1971, with only 17 percent in lower-income households. By last year, only 53 percent were in the middle-income group, with 36 percent in lower-income households. A study from Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce last year estimated that the number of jobs held by workers with a high school diploma or less declined by 6.3 million during the recession, and “there has been virtually no recovery of these jobs” since. We must recognize that post-secondary education is becoming essential for almost any job that can support raising a family, and we must control costs and provide tuition assistance so that this option is universally available.

Housing costs are also putting a squeeze on the middle class. The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies reported last month that, partly due to the foreclosure crisis, 37 percent of all households now rent rather than own, the highest level since the 1960s. Apartments are not being built fast enough to keep up with this new demand, and just over a quarter of these households pay more than half their income for rent. Unless we want a repeat of the foreclosure crisis, we should not treat owning a home as a prerequisite for membership in the middle class. That means reforming exclusionary zoning and other laws that hinder the creation of rental housing within a reasonable distance of secure jobs.

The Gospels give priority to caring for our most vulnerable fellow human beings (Matthew 25), but the erosion of the middle class and the attendant cleaving of American society endanger any consensus on how to promote the common good. The “tipping point” identified by the Pew study should be a call to action, not an admission of defeat.



## REPLY ALL

### Unrestricted Mercy

In “Proclaim the Jubilee” (12/7), Marc Tumeinski says the Jubilee Year of Mercy should be a time to experience the sacramental expressions of mercy in the Mass and reconciliation. The coming year may be a graced opportunity to experience all three forms of the sacrament of reconciliation, including the third form of general absolution. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm that met the renewal of the sacrament of penance and the various ways of celebrating it have, over the years, been dampened by restrictions. I think it would be a wise and pastorally attractive invitation for the faithful if church leadership would enable and encourage parish celebrations of general absolution during the jubilee. As Pope Francis reminds us, “the church is to be the facilitator of mercy, not its arbitrator.”

(REV.) DENNIS J. LYNCH  
*Stevens Point, Wis.*

### What About Workers?

Re “An Election Out of Focus,” by John Carr (11/30): Where is the focus on poverty, work and workers in the campaign? At a time of identity politics in progressive circles, could Democrats focus on the crucial identity of people as workers and what happens when that is lost? I ask: How do we continue to “assimilate” refugees given the employment conditions of our country?

MARGARET McINTYRE  
*Online Comment*

### Down to Earth

Re “On Being and Becoming,” by William J. O’Malley, S.J. (11/16): If Father O’Malley had written the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it would look far more like a raucous poem than a schematic for belief; and I and many other Catholics, I am certain, would have let it inform our Catholic imaginations and our praxis. And if, to

Father O’Malley’s terrain of mystery and paradox, we could bring the critical poetics of Philip Metres’s “this-ness” and “here-ness” (“Homing In,” 11/16) we would have in hand the aesthetic correspondent to Father O’Malley’s earthy and sacramental theology.

Together, the two would make manifest the genius of Pope Francis’ eschewing abstract schemata for the immediate and fleshy reality of the steamy barrio, the distraught and heart-scalded marriage, the soul-draining struggle for one’s daily bread—and for the prophetic voice of Mr. Metres’s daughter, echoing “Laudato Si’”: “I’m praying for the dead worms.”

For these two articles, I can only say, “Thank you, **America**, thank you, thank you.”

JOHN SAVANT  
*San Rafael, Calif.*

### Reconcilable Differences

Heather Moreland McHale writes in “Graham Green’s Pope” (11/16) that Francis’ words in a 2013 homily, “politics, according to the social doctrine of the church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good,” and Benedict’s (in an article written in the 1990s), “wherever politics tries to be redemptive, it is promising too much,” indicate some disagreement or divergence between the two pontiffs.

That calls for explanation. The two statements aren’t at all clearly related in the way they address the idea of the political. They concern quite different subjects: for Francis, the Christian citizen weighing action in a complex world; for Benedict, “politics” itself as a sort of abstract agency in the world. There’s no obvious reason to think they couldn’t or shouldn’t be shown to be consistent statements. One place to look to try to reconcile them, if that’s the problem, might be “Deus Caritas Est,” where there is a good deal said both about the forms of charity and—in much of Part II of the encyclical—

about politics and the state.

PAUL BOWMAN  
*Online Comment*

### Making Men for Others

Re “Seize the Moment!” (Editorial, 11/16): I truly believe that Jesuits and the communities they serve have mirrored the approach of Pope Francis for a long time now. As for moving forward with his papacy’s momentum, how about doing so in the schools, especially the all-boys high schools sponsored by the Jesuits? We should put our best minds together to develop a formative curriculum to address issues that arise among these young men that are sometimes acted out later, often in college. I am particularly thinking of the harrassment and abuse of women on college campuses. We could do much if we worked together to see that the “men for others” we form do not contribute to this problem but rather assist in its solution.

BARRY FITZPATRICK  
*Online Comment*

### Contraception Cooperation?

In “The Federal Mystique” (11/9), Helen M. Alvaré makes the all too frequently repeated claim that religious institutions are required “to communicate to their insurance providers that they must attach free contraceptives and early abortifacients to their health insurance plans,” thus implicating the institution in cooperating in an evil act. This simply is not the case.

On July 10 the religious exemption procedure was revised so that the institution merely needs to notify the Department of Health and Human Services in writing of their religious objections. H.H.S., in turn, notifies the insurance company, which will then be required to provide the coverage. So, yes, the employee will receive the coverage, but that is totally out of the employer’s hands, just as an employer is not morally responsible if an employee uses his/her wages to procure an abortion. With this revised procedure, the

institution is not in any way instructing the insurer to provide the objectionable services and it is thereby removed from any material cooperation.

JOSEPH KEENAN  
*Netcong, N.J.*

### Taking Note

In "Strategic Opportunities" (11/2), Dennis Holtschneider, C.M., prescribes improved preaching as one method for strengthening the church. He states that in his seminary, men are required to preach without notes from the first day. Please do not encourage that practice. Almost all the great orators of the world either wrote their speeches out entirely or used notes. Too many priests hope the Holy Spirit will provide guidance once they are at the lectern, resulting in bored or confused parishioners. Notes accomplish two things: They keep the speaker on track. The story of the loaves and fishes does not morph into a presentation on gluten free diets. (I have heard of that happening.) And they tell the priest or deacon when it's time to stop.

MARY DAHL  
*Prescott Valley, Ariz.*

### From Tolerance to Inclusion

The racial disparities at Jesuit institutions of higher learning described in "Breathing Space," by Alex Mikulich (10/26), are regrettably similar to those in our high schools—not just for students of color but for our L.G.B.T.Q. youth as well. What can we do? What is being done? Jesuit institutions have for many years been places of social justice, looking outward to serve and support the poor and marginalized. Today Jesuit institutions need to move from being communities of tolerance to communities of inclusion.

In 2014 I completed my dissertation research at Fordham University on the experience of black, Latino and L.G.B.T.Q. students in Jesuit high schools. I chose these three populations because while some Jesuit schools are much further along the journey from

tolerance to inclusion, there is still an achievement gap between white and black or Latino students. Similarly, the L.G.B.T.Q. community remains marginalized in many Jesuit high schools. In my findings I recommend adult formation and education for school leaders, faculty and parents in the areas of diversity and inclusion and a renewed commitment to educating students justly. Why? Because the achievement gap in Jesuit high schools reflects our public school system. Surely institutions built on Jesuit mission and identity should be at the forefront of challenging oppressive structures in our society.

JANE BLEASDALE  
*Maplewood, N.J.*

### Alone Together at Mass

Re "Church-Shopping," by Kaya Oakes (10/19): The advice Kaya Oakes re-

ceived to focus on the Eucharist reminded me of something J. R. R. Tolkien wrote in a letter to his son. He encouraged him to seek out celebrants who preach uninspiring sermons, so he can concentrate on what's really important!

And yet, there's an inescapable tension underlying all this, between the need for some solitude and quiet, each seeking salvation alone in fear and trembling, and the clearly communal nature of the Eucharist. Jesus calls us to love one another as he loved us, to recognize that we are branches of the vine, members of one body. All we have is a community of faith, composed of human beings and bound to disappoint and exasperate us. What could Jesus have been thinking?

JULIAN IRIAS  
*Online Comment*

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## Jesuit Journeys

Spiritual Journeys for Lovers of All Things Ignatian



### Loyola & Beyond: An Ignatian Journey to Spain

With Fr. David Robinson, SJ & Mr. Carlos Obando  
Hosted by Loyola Institute for Spirituality, Orange, California  
12-Days: May 18 – 29, 2016

### A Journey into the Heart & Soul of Ireland

With Fr. Sam Bellino SJ & Fr. John Mossi, SJ  
Hosted by California & Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus  
12-Days: Sept 18 – 29, 2016



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WORLD DAY OF PEACE

## Francis: End the Death Penalty And Act for Global Justice

**P**ope Francis called for abolishing the death penalty worldwide, lifting the burden of debt on poor nations, global aid policies that respect life and revamped laws that welcome and integrate migrants.

He urged individuals, communities and nations to not let indifference, information overload or pessimism discourage them from concrete efforts “to improve the world around us, beginning with our families, neighbors and places of employment.” Building peace, he said, is not accomplished by words alone but through the grace of God, a conversion of heart, an attitude of compassion and the courage to act against despair.

The pope’s multifaceted plea came in his message for World Peace Day, Jan. 1. The message, titled “Overcome Indifference and Win Peace,” was delivered to world leaders by Vatican ambassadors and was released at the Vatican on Dec. 15; it contains a three-fold appeal to the world’s leaders.

Pope Francis asked that countries: “refrain from drawing other peoples into conflicts of wars,” which not only destroy a nation’s infrastructure and cultural heritage, but also their “moral and spiritual integrity”; forgive or make less burdensome international debt of poorer nations; and “adopt policies of cooperation which, instead of bowing before the dictatorship of certain ideologies, will respect the values of the local populations” and not harm the “fundamental and inalienable right to life of the unborn.”

Also part of building peace in the world, he said, is addressing the urgent problem of improving the living conditions of prisoners, especially those still awaiting trial. Since rehabilitation should be the aim of penal sanctions, effective alternatives to incarceration should be considered as well as the abolition of the death penalty.

The pope called on national governments to review their current laws on immigration and find ways they could “reflect a readiness to welcome migrants and to facilitate their integration.”

All nations’ leaders should also take concrete measures to alleviate the problem of a lack of housing, land and employment, the pope wrote, as well as to stop discrimination against women

in the workplace, which includes unfair wages and precarious or dangerous working conditions. He said he hoped those who are ill could be guaranteed access to medical treatment, necessary medications and home care.

The pope’s message focused on the dangers of cynicism and indifference against God, neighbor and creation.

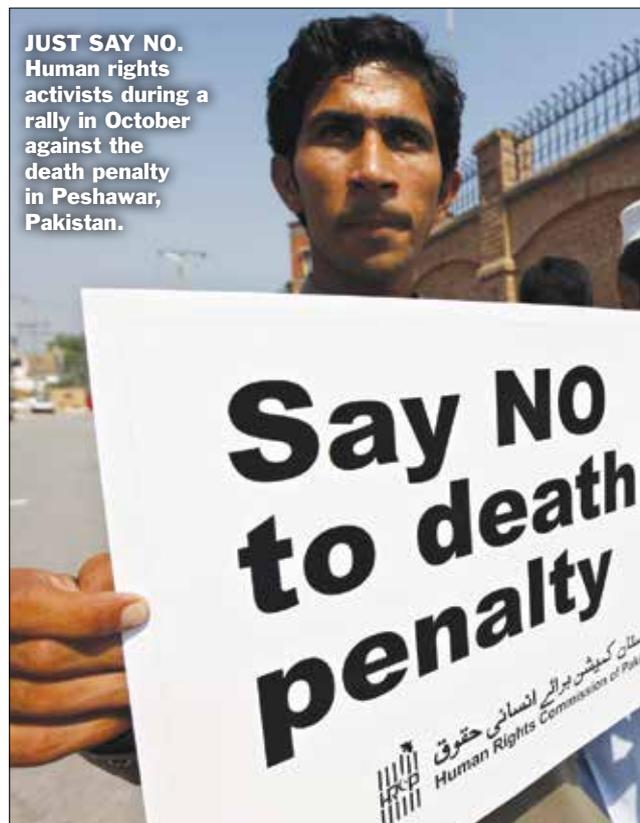
“Disregard and the denial of God,” he said, “have produced untold cruelty and violence.” And the exploitation of natural resources and mistreatment of animals have an effect “on the way we treat other people.”

“With the present Jubilee of Mercy, I want to invite the church to pray and work so that every Christian will have a humble and compassionate heart” and that all people will learn “to forgive and to give,” he said in his message.

God is never indifferent to the world, he said. He not only sees, hears

and knows, he “comes down and delivers” real healing and eternal teachings.

The pope welcomed one effort that offers a glimmer of hope for a more peaceful world, expressing his satisfaction with a resolution adopted on Dec. 18 by the U.N. Security Council to resolve the Syrian conflict. For the first time, diplomats from the United States, Russia and other world powers agreed to a political roadmap toward the end of the civil war in Syria, though many obstacles remain. “I am moved to turn my thoughts to beloved Syria and express my great appreciation for the agreement just reached by the international community,” Pope Francis said, following the Angelus prayer in St. Peter’s Square on Dec. 20. “I encourage everyone to continue energetically down the path to an end of violence and a negotiated solution for peace,” he added.



**JUST SAY NO.** Human rights activists during a rally in October against the death penalty in Peshawar, Pakistan.



MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL

## Settlement Brings Court Oversight

**T**he Ramsey County Attorney's Office in Minnesota announced a landmark civil settlement with the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis related to a civil case that alleged grave breakdowns in the archdiocese's child protection policies. According to County Attorney John Choi, the primary objective of the settlement is to transform the organizational culture of the archdiocese "into one that is vigilant about ensuring that no child will ever again become the victim of clergy sex abuse."

"Today's historic agreement increases oversight and transparency to

systemically change how the archdiocese protects children and responds to suspected incidents of child sexual abuse," said Choi. "It is my expectation that the facts of this case will never be repeated and the protection of children will forever be of paramount importance within this archdiocese." The "case" referred to by Choi involved Curtis Wehmeyer, a former priest who is now serving a prison term for molesting two boys in 2010.

Civil charges will be stayed for three years while the church puts in place enhanced policies and practices to protect children. The archdiocese would have to submit progress reports to the court every six months, and the civil case would be dropped after three years if the court is satisfied with its progress. An accompanying criminal investigation will continue, the county attorney's office reported.

Archbishop Bernard Hebda, the archdiocese's apostolic administrator, described the agreement in a letter to parishioners as "an opportunity for us to do all we can to make sure children are as safe as possible now and into the future."

Archbishop Hebda wrote, "From the time I first arrived here in June.... I have worked to learn as much as I can about the events surrounding" Wehmeyer and "his abuse of children under his care."

According to the archbishop, since his appointment he had been in dialogue with Choi and his staff. "We immediately realized we all had the same goal: to make sure children are safe in our churches, schools and communities....we worked together to find the best ways to make that a reality."

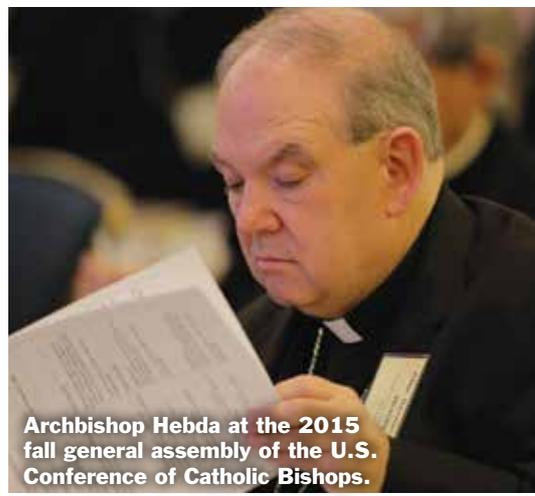
Days after the civil and criminal complaints were filed by Choi's office in June, Pope Francis accepted the resignations of the former arch-

bishop of Minneapolis-St. Paul, John Nienstedt, along with that of Auxiliary Bishop Lee Piche, and appointed Archbishop Hebda as the interim leader. The archdiocese filed for bankruptcy in January, and the proposed settlement will require federal bankruptcy court approval.

According to Archbishop Hebda, "much of what is in the new document are things we are already doing, while others are practices and procedures that are already working in some dioceses around the country. We are agreeing to implement the plan under a set deadline and to be held accountable for that commitment."

Choi's office reports that the settlement "incorporates many of the October 2014 Child Protection protocols agreed upon by the archdiocese...as well as the 2014 recommendations of the [archdiocesan] Safe Environment Task Force."

Two independent audits will be completed in 2017 and 2018. Among other new procedures, when allegations of misconduct, including sexual abuse of a child, arise in the future, they will now be addressed by the Ministerial Review Board, rather than allowing one or two members of the clergy to determine how to respond.



Archbishop Hebda at the 2015 fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

## Mother Teresa Miracle

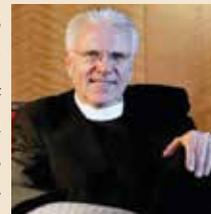
Pope Francis has approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, thus paving the way for her canonization on Dec. 17. The postulator for her sainthood cause, the Rev. Brian Kolodiejchuk of the Missionaries of Charity, said the second miracle that was approved involved the healing of a now 42-year-old mechanical engineer in Santos, Brazil. Doctors diagnosed the man with a viral brain infection that resulted in multiple brain abscesses. Treatments given were ineffective and the man went into a coma, the postulator wrote. The then-newly married man's wife had spent months praying to Blessed Teresa, and her prayers were joined by those of her relatives and friends when her dying husband was taken to the operating room on Dec. 9, 2008. When the surgeon entered the operating room, he reported that he found the patient awake, free of pain and asking, "What am I doing here?" Doctors reported the man showed no more symptoms and a Vatican medical commission voted unanimously in September 2015 that the healing was inexplicable.

## Healing Takes Time

Catholics involved in the reconciliation process over the Indian residential school system in Canada say continued understanding requires action. "It isn't by making laws you are going to overcome racism," said Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, president of 50 Catholic Entities, the legal body formed to respond to the litigation that led to the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. "Look at what's continuing to happen in the United States with black Americans," the archbishop, who leads the Archdiocese of Grouard-

## NEWS BRIEFS

**Richard J. Curry, S.J.**, professor of Catholic studies and theater at Georgetown University and founder of Dog Tag Bakery and the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped, passed away on Dec. 19 at the age of 72. + The Christmas spirit this year in Bethlehem—and **the 2015 Christmas tourism season**—has been dampened by the region's renewed violence, which, since October, has included the deaths of almost 100 Palestinians and 22 Israelis. + The Diocese of Salt Lake City said in a statement on Dec. 16 that the change in **the appearance of a consecrated host** was caused by red bread mold, not blood, as some had believed. + After three scrubbed launches, a CubeSat satellite built by students at St. Thomas More Cathedral School in the Diocese of Arlington was finally **launched into space** on Dec. 6, headed to the International Space Station, where it will be released into orbit in late January. + Pope Francis on Dec. 18 visited the **Caritas Center, a new homeless shelter** in Rome's Termini train station, where he opened a holy door for the Jubilee of Mercy, the first such celebration conducted at a facility for homeless people.



**Richard J. Curry, S.J.**

McLennan in Alberta, Canada, said. "You still have white cops killing black kids. A lot has to happen at the grass roots and for people to come to a conversion in their own hearts about the issues. That takes time." The archbishop said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission members, who released their final report to the public on Dec. 15, also knew there was more work to do. The report built on an executive summary in June that referred to what happened to aboriginal Canadians in residential schools as "cultural genocide."

## Outbreak of Fraternity

Catholic leaders in the Central African Republic said Christian-Muslim ties were positively affected by Pope Francis during his visit on Nov. 29-30, 2015. "No guns or grenades sounded during the visit—and while some unfortunate incidents oc-

curred afterward, there was no resort to open violence," said Msgr. Cyriaque Gbate Doumalo, secretary general of the nation's bishops' conference. "The pope came with a simple message that Christians and Muslims can fraternally live together in peace and harmony, despite what's happened here. I think this has touched the Muslim community and given us a real chance." He said the bishops' conference president, Archbishop Dieudonne Nzapalainga of Bangui, had been well received on Dec. 9 when he and three priests walked through the mostly Muslim neighborhood known as PK5 to "check the situation" and encourage Christian-Muslim ties. "Access to PK5 has long been blocked, but since the Holy Father's departure, people have been coming and going freely again," Monsignor Doumalo said on Dec. 11.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

## No Laughing Matter

If I were to review the year 2015 in South Africa, I would call it the “year of the giggle.” At numerous times this year when the country faced both internal and external challenges, that was the response of South Africa’s president, Jacob Zuma.

What is wrong, one may ask, with a head of state with a sense of humor? For many countries that might seem refreshing. But in South Africa’s case this year the president’s public laughter has occurred in contexts that gave little cause for genuine amusement.

Zuma’s state of the nation address in February had been a debacle—with angry opposition parties ejected from Parliament or storming out in protest over the use of public funds for his private residence. Watching it, I wondered if the president’s giggling was a nervous tic or an expression of contempt.

If the former, it suggested that he was all too aware of the millions of dollars in misappropriations that had gone into renovating his home. If the latter, it was an expression of contempt for his parliamentary opposition, government oversight and the people of South Africa. I suspect it was a mixture of both. But now even a hitherto docile public, fed on the myth that the African National Congress liberated South Africa single-handedly, is fast losing patience.

We have seen a decline in key public utilities; both electricity and water have been mismanaged to the point of collapse. While the roots of the elec-

tricity crisis lie in the pre-1994 failure to plan ahead, to take account of the extension of the grid to every corner of the country and to build new power stations accordingly, 21 years have been wasted instead of being used to build infrastructure and maintain what already existed.

In the rush to make the national power supplier “representative” of the

### President Zuma may still giggle in public; South Africans are not amused.

people as a whole—a valid point, it must be noted—many skilled white professionals were given early retirement packages, albeit generous ones. But their skills were lost, with little view to who might replace them in the medium term. The result is a small core of dedicated professionals stretched beyond their limits trying to maintain an already inadequate set-up. The upshot of this has been a year of rolling blackouts damaging to industry and frustrating to citizens.

Ditto for the situation in the water sector. Poor maintenance has led in the last few months to a looming water crisis. Water scientists warn that many of the reservoirs, water purification plants and supply systems have not been well maintained. Some warn that this could have serious public health consequences. In addition, South Africa is in the midst of one of the worst droughts in living memory. Farming is in crisis. Many fear that ba-

sic foodstuffs will run short; at the very least, prices of these staples are about to skyrocket.

Just a few days into December, the country was dealt another blow. Zuma fired the minister of finance, Nhlanhla Nene, because he refused to bow to political pressure and sanction the revision of a deal to buy new aircraft for South African Airways—a state-owned enterprise. The airline’s board chairperson, Dudu Myeni (who is also chair of the Jacob Zuma Foundation), was unhappy and appears to have used her personal relationship with the president to force Nene’s removal.

Nene had also hesitated to back a multimillion-dollar nuclear power plant deal in which the president was personally invested. Zuma was not happy. Zuma giggled. Nene was gone; the country’s currency plummeted; and an inexperienced mayor of a small backwater town was given the finance portfolio.

Add to this half-baked policy decisions on matters like visas for holiday-makers, a trigger-happy police force and the growing sense that corruption in government, public administration and business is rife. President Zuma may still giggle in public; South Africans are not amused.

In 2016 South Africa will host municipal elections. In many cities pre-election polls suggest tight contests for previously safe A.N.C. seats. The right and far left predict massive gains for their parties. Will this happen? It is possible that by playing up “struggle” mythology and promising increased welfare grants, the A.N.C. will still emerge victorious despite its poor delivery of basic services.

But one thing is certain. President Zuma will have little to laugh about in 2016. Ditto, I suspect, for the rest of us.

**ANTHONY EGAN**

*ANTHONY EGAN, S.J., a member of the Jesuit Institute South Africa, is one of America’s Johannesburg, South Africa, correspondents.*



# First Things First

**R**anging around a used furniture shop last week, I discovered a painting of two Roman Catholic cardinals enjoying conversation over a glass of wine. When I picked it up to look more closely, the shop owner recommended that I read the consigner's notes taped to the back. They began: "In times past, when cardinals and bishops enjoyed respect..."

A great deal more followed about the painter and the chain of title, but my mind lingered on that casual and cutting dismissal of the hierarchy. It is not as if I hadn't heard such a judgment before. Yet this time it struck me how important it is for the church as a whole that this level of disregard come to an end. Of course, the hierarchy is not the sum of the church. Yet no matter any particular Catholic's opinion of one bishop's or all the bishops' strengths and weaknesses, it is clear that the credibility of the church's most visible teachers matters. Pope Francis' relentless and inspired exhortations and efforts, addressed directly to bishops, are a sign that he takes this view. In fact, I think this will be one of the great Francis legacies, if he is able to complete the revolution he forwarded so forcefully in 2015: the empowering, the turning, the freeing up of more and more bishops toward becoming known and beloved pastors on the model of Jesus Christ.

Many Catholics and even non-Catholics have positive, pastoral experience of bishops. In my own case, I have only to think for a few minutes to remember the excellent career ad-

vice, frank spiritual diagnoses and consolation respecting family problems I have received from bishops over the years.

But I'm atypical. I get the chance to collaborate with the hierarchy and other religious leaders, week in and week out. More regular and informal contact between bishops and their flock could lead to greater mutual respect and understanding. It could grow the visible beauty of the faith in the world according to the pattern of its first growth: as a response to the seemingly impossible combination of goodness, authority and self-emptying love on the part of Jesus and then, later on, on the part of those whose lives he had transformed.

How to get closer to this situation?

Enter Francis and his continuing, tireless promotion in 2015 of the duty of bishops to instigate open-handed, personal encounters with the struggling, the disaffected, the bitter and the vulnerable. For a while, I wondered aloud whether—despite the barrels of ink and miles of camera footage expended on the Synod of Bishops on the family and on the pope's U.S. visit—Francis' ambitious 2015 agenda had left almost no "mark" on the church in the United States. I've concluded, however, that I was thinking too narrowly—professor that I am—and that his influence should not at all be measured by how many people are examining his written theology.

Instead, people are influenced by pictures and headlines about Pope Francis—bishop of Rome, first among equals—washing the feet of a Muslim

prisoner, kissing a disfigured man, stepping out of his tiny car or laughing with his head thrown back on the cover of one or another People-style U.S. magazine. And every American with a pulse and an Internet connection knows that Francis is "reforming the Curia," "cleaning up the Vatican bank" and launching councils, commissions, synods and a Year of Mercy, always with an eye to encouraging bishops in their role as pastors—not administrators, not power centers.

Francis is setting standards for the contemporary bishop.

Francis is, of course, modeling mercy and justice for Catholics generally. But it is unmistakable that he is setting standards for the contemporary bishop as well. How do we "bring this home" to each diocese? The apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel" and Francis' words at the closing of the meetings of the Synod of Bishops on the family and the opening of the Year of Mercy are obviously important parts of the blueprint. But so are his weekly and now yearly agendas "on foot": who Francis visits, hugs and gives "alms" to.

At a diocesan level, how would this work? It's not clear, but it could involve a deliberate choice to free up the bishop for more informal contact with his people, more teaching and pastoral care and *then* figuring out what kind of lay and religious expertise to bring on board to pick up the administrative work—putting first things first, in other words. Maybe it would require more bishops per square mile. All the elements of an answer await experimentation, but the need to experiment is clear.

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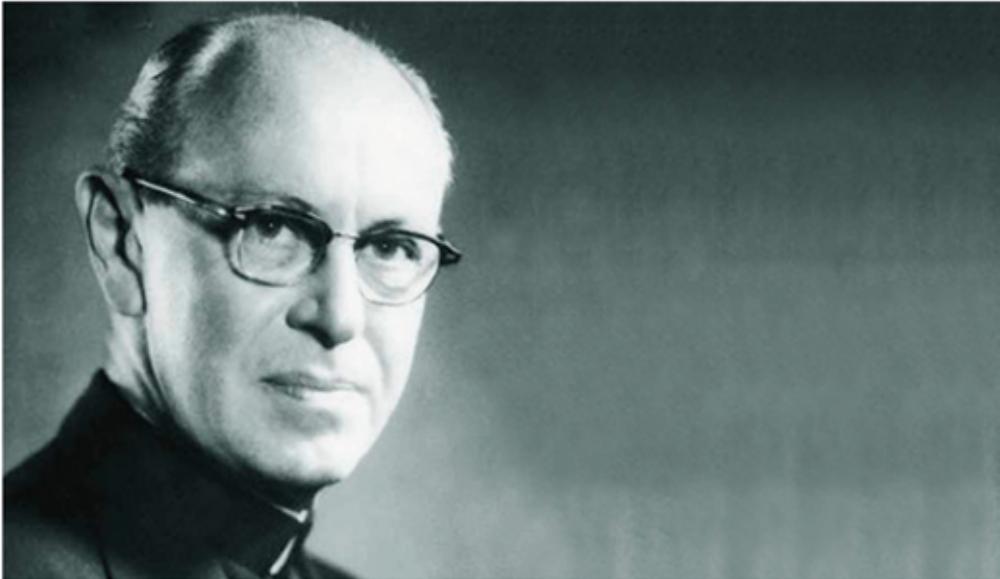
HELEN ALVARÉ is a professor of law at George Mason University, where she teaches law and religion and family law. She is also a consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

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# The Rights of Refugees

Who is responsible for people forced into flight?

BY DAVID HOLLENBACH

**M**igration has been occurring throughout human history, since early humans left eastern Africa for Arabia and the rest of the world about 60,000 years ago. People have always been seeking to improve their lives or to escape war, oppression, famine and other threats to their well-being by moving. In recent decades, however, migration has been dramatically increasing. In 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million, up from 154 million in 1990 and from 76 million in 1960.

Many modern migrants are fleeing war and conflict in places like Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Central African Republic and elsewhere. In 2015 the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reported that the number of people displaced by war, intrastate strife and human rights violations had reached 59.5 million in 2014, 8.3 million more than a year earlier. This was the highest number of displaced persons ever recorded. The number of deaths from conflict and disasters also remains distressingly high. In the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, from 2005 to 2015 over five million persons died due to conflict, chiefly from disease and malnutrition brought about by the fighting. Sadly the protection of people from severe threats to their humanity remains a distant goal.

## Well-Founded Fears

A refugee is a specific kind of migrant. The 1951 United Nations' Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who, "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality." Refugees have little or no choice about their movement. Because of the persecution they face, their most basic human rights are on the line. The phrase "forced migrants" has recently been coined to take into account the fact that religious, ethnic or social persecution is not the only coercive pressure that drives people from their homes. They can be forced from home yet still remain in their own country as "internally displaced

persons." And people escaping extreme poverty may have a moral claim for admission to another country as urgent as a refugee's claim for asylum.

What can we say about our responsibilities in the face of this suffering? As the number of refugees seeking asylum from grave threats has risen, secular political philosophers, like Joseph Carens of the University of Toronto, and refugee scholars, like Philip Marfleet of the University of East London in the United Kingdom, have argued that the time has come to consider making borders fully open to migration and to granting asylum to all people who are fleeing from persecution, conflict or disaster. In a similar spirit, several years ago Martha Nussbaum, a University of Chicago philosopher, argued that the cosmopolitan community of all human beings has primacy over narrower communities defined in terms of nationality, ethnicity or religion. Indeed she called nationality a "morally irrelevant" characteristic of personhood.

This support for open borders can be given Christian religious backing. Christopher Hale, executive director of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and a Catholic cultural commentator for Time magazine, affirms that "in Jesus Christ, there are no borders." This stance has biblical roots. In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, just after Jesus' birth he was driven from home with Mary and Joseph by King Herod's effort to destroy him as a threat to his regime. Anachronistically, we could say that since Jesus was fleeing persecution across a border, he met the contemporary international convention's definition of a refugee. Also in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches that on the Day of Judgment one's salvation or damnation will be determined by whether one has welcomed the hungry, the thirsty and, most relevant here, the stranger (Mt 25:40). Thus Christians should recognize their special duties to suffering people who are not members of their own communities, including migrants and refugees.

Jesus' inclusive teachings echo affirmations from the Book of Genesis that all people have been created in the image of God and are thus brothers and sisters in a single human family, no matter what their nationality or ethnicity. Every person is created with a worth that reaches across national borders. The universality of human dignity led Pope John XXIII to insist that "the fact that one is a citizen of a particular state does not detract in any way from his membership

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DAVID HOLLENBACH, S.J., is the director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College. This article was adapted from his presentation upon receiving the Civitas Dei medal at Villanova University on Nov. 18, 2015.



**FENCED IN.** A young refugee girl holds up a drawing in a makeshift camp on the Macedonian-Greek border, November 2015.

in the human family as a whole, nor from his citizenship in the world community.”

The question, of course, is whether this philosophical and Christian universalism means that state borders have no moral relevance. In fact, the issue is more complex. An appreciation of the common humanity of all people must not only support the unity of the human family but must also respect the differences among peoples, cultures and nations. An exclusive stress on what we have in common will have difficulty explaining why being forced from home, either as a refugee or within one’s own country, has such negative moral significance.

We need, therefore, a more differentiated approach to how responsibilities reach across borders than the stress on the unity of the human family, taken alone, can provide. In her recent writings Professor Nussbaum now draws on Grotius and Kant to argue that people exercise their freedom and express their dignity when they join together to shape the institutions of their own nation state. Protecting the independence of accountable states is thus a way of protecting human dignity.

## Weighing Obligations

In a similar way, though Christianity requires universal re-

spect for all persons, it also requires respect for their distinctive identities. St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas both affirm a Christian duty to love all humans as our neighbors. At the same time, they recognize that there is an order of priorities among our loves (an *ordo amoris*). Those with whom we have special relationships, like our family or our fellow citizens, deserve distinctive forms of treatment as an expression of our love for them. Christian love therefore requires both universal respect for all and distinctive concern for those with whom we have special relationships. Christian ethics affirms that one has special duties to one’s co-citizens, just as one does to one’s siblings and friends. At the same time, Christian ethics forbids actions and policies that in effect treat those of other countries who are in grave need as nonpersons.

The mass movement of people in our world today calls us to reflect carefully on the relative weights of the obligations and rights that arise from our common humanity and from our distinctive identities. Let me suggest several priorities among these duties and rights. We should begin by reaffirming the United Nations’ 1951 Refugee Convention’s affirmation that refugees fleeing persecution should have a high-priority claim to be granted asylum in another country.

Refugees are people who have virtually no alternative ex-

cept flight from home. In almost all cases their choice is either migration or loss of basic human rights, in many cases even the right to life. Thus in all cases where a country has the resources to admit refugees without severely jeopardizing the life and well-being of its own citizens, it ought to do so, granting asylum to the refugees at its borders.

In addition, we should insist with the Refugee Convention that refugees have a right not to be subject to forcible return (*refoulement*) to regions where they face serious threats to their lives and freedoms. The priority of non-refoulement of refugees is grounded both in Christian respect for the dignity of every person and in the wisdom formed by political experience.

It is clear that wealthy countries like those of Europe and North America have the resources needed to grant asylum to refugees from countries like Syria and South Sudan today. Chancellor Angela Merkel took the right path when she decided to relax Germany's borders to all those fleeing the chaos of Syria.

When Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom announced that his country would grant asylum to

20,000 people over the next five years, however, he was appropriately reminded that Lebanon had admitted that many Syrians over the previous two weekends. Indeed, developing

countries today host 86 percent of the world's refugees, the highest percentage in more than two decades, and the very poorest countries among them are providing asylum to 25 percent of the global total. Thus the rich nations of the North have a duty to admit a considerably larger number of asylum seekers than they do now and an even greater duty to assist these less-developed countries that are already hosting most of the world's refugees. Sadly, the funds

being provided for this burden-sharing by the North fall far short of what is needed.

## Christian ethics forbids actions and policies that in effect treat those of other countries who are in grave need as nonpersons.

### For Rich Countries, Special Responsibilities

It is also clear that in wealthy nations like those of the United States, Europe and Australia, much of the negative attitude toward migrants and refugees is grounded in a mixture of racially driven xenophobia and a mistaken fear that refugees may be terrorists. Dislike of the needy stranger, especially when motivated by racial or religious stereotypes, is clearly



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contrary to core principles of Christianity and to the secular norms of a human rights ethic as well. The asylum needed by refugees should be a top priority as we determine how to combine loyalty to our own community and to those from other societies. Balancing these loyalties requires that we work to overcome exclusionary, xenophobic attitudes.

A further priority arises from the special duty a rich country that has contributed to the economic deprivation of a poor country can have toward migrants from that country, especially if they are fleeing the dangers of war. For example, European powers that benefited from colonizing regions of Africa or Asia without contributing to their development have significant duties to be open to refugees and other migrants from these regions. Thus France and the United Kingdom have duties to migrants from their former colonies that they probably do not have to migrants in general. Economic benefit through forms of exploitation other than formal colonization can create similar duties. For example, the political and economic history of the United States in nations like Guatemala and Haiti creates special duties to admit people from those countries, especially refugees fleeing political persecution.

A country with a history of military involvement in the life of another country may also have special obligations. The United States recognized its special duty to receive refugees from Vietnam following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975.

And though U.S. military engagement in Iraq was not the sole cause of the displacement of many Iraqis, the U.S. intervention was the occasion of the huge forced migration of Iraqis that followed.

As the Harvard political scientist Stephen Walt commented in the aftermath of the terror attacks in Paris on Nov. 13, if the United States and its allies had not invaded Iraq in 2003, there would almost certainly be no Islamic State today. Thus the United States and its allies in Iraq have especially strong duties to admit refugees seeking asylum from Iraq and Syria, as well as others fleeing the economic deprivation caused by war in the region. They also have serious responsibilities to help rebuild the political and economic life whose destruction has been the source of the huge movement of Iraqi and Syrian people.

There are no doubt additional grounds for a country to grant priority to the admission of migrants from a particular background when not all can be received. These suggestions indicate the direction we should be moving today. Indeed, the most fundamental criterion for determining our priorities should be our duty to support the basic human dignity of those whose lives and basic human rights are severely threatened. As Pope Francis has repeatedly stressed, duties to refugees are duties to our brothers and sisters in the human family and, we Christians believe, duties to Christ. We are urgently challenged to live up to these duties. ■

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# Too Much Authenticity

Probably the most common insult Americans use against politicians is “phony.” It can apply to anyone who voices opinions different from your own (“deep down, they know I’m right”), but the word is usually hurled against candidates who seem too rehearsed, too conscious of the effects of their words. Political leaders are accused of lacking “authenticity” when they pause and take a breath before reacting to news about a scandal or a tragedy. It seems that the best way to deflect charges of phoniness is to go off half-cocked (“I’d like to kill someone over this!”), even when the bursts of what looks like spontaneity are planned.

We saw a lot of so-called authenticity last year in presidential politics, mostly in the candidacy of the Republican Donald Trump, who dominated news coverage with increasingly divisive rhetoric. Mr. Trump has prospered as a person with no filters on what he says, characterizing immigrants from Mexico as “rapists,” advocating that the the United States “take out” the families of terrorists and suggesting that protesters at his campaign events deserved to be “roughed up.” In an MSNBC poll in December, 43 percent of all voters and 71 percent of Republicans described him as someone who “tells it like it is,” as opposed to someone who “is insulting and offensive.” When Mr. Trump said he would stop all Muslims from immigrating to or visiting the U.S., former Republican vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin praised the “bold, non-politician candidate” for espousing “common sense.”

Mr. Trump’s tough-guy rhetoric

often veers into ostracism of fellow Americans and the kind of brutal judgments more commonly found on Internet dating sites than in political discourse. “If you’re an illegal immigrant, you’re a loser,” said Jennifer Mercieca of Texas A&M University to *The New York Times* in an analysis of Mr. Trump’s speeches. “If you’re an illegal immigrant, you’re a loser. If you’re captured in war, like John McCain, you’re a loser. If you have a disability, you’re a loser.... It’s not a kind or generous rhetoric.”

“Trumpism” has been building for a long time, with bigotry being passed off as a kind of straight talk. In 2010, the proposal to build an Islamic cultural center a few blocks from Ground Zero caused many politicians to broadcast their disregard for sensitivity and religious liberty. When President Obama defended the proposal, Senator John Cornyn of Texas condemned the “lack of connection” to “mainstream America” and said voters were “being lectured to, not listened to”—as if the model of a public servant is to reinforce gut reactions based on inflammatory headlines.

After months of authentic hucksterism—with Mr. Trump setting the tone and several other candidates following his lead in campaigning against political correctness—it would be a relief if civility and discretion made a return to the campaign, even if some are bored with politics “as usual.”

Politics as usual defused the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, when President John F. Kennedy carefully measured ev-

ery public utterance so as not to panic Americans or further antagonize Soviet leaders. (It’s scary to think of a President Trump calling Nikita Khrushchev a “loser” and daring him to lob some missiles our way.) Kennedy’s predecessor, Dwight Eisenhower, was arguably one of our phoniest presidents, making bland, inoffensive statements and keeping his temper under wraps, but he kept the country calm in the early days of the Cold War. And though he had personal reservations about the Supreme Court abolishing racial segregation in public schools, he chose to enforce the law rather than exploit feelings of prejudice for his own gain. President George W. Bush was often accused of using simplistic language as president, but he was careful not

to promote Islamophobia or fear of immigrants in his statements immediately after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Americans have legitimate concerns about terrorism and other forms of violence across the globe (not to mention economic conditions at home). But it is disheartening to hear candidates encourage panic and impulsive thought—to say, as presidential hopeful Senator Ted Cruz did at a campaign stop last year, that “the whole world’s on fire.”

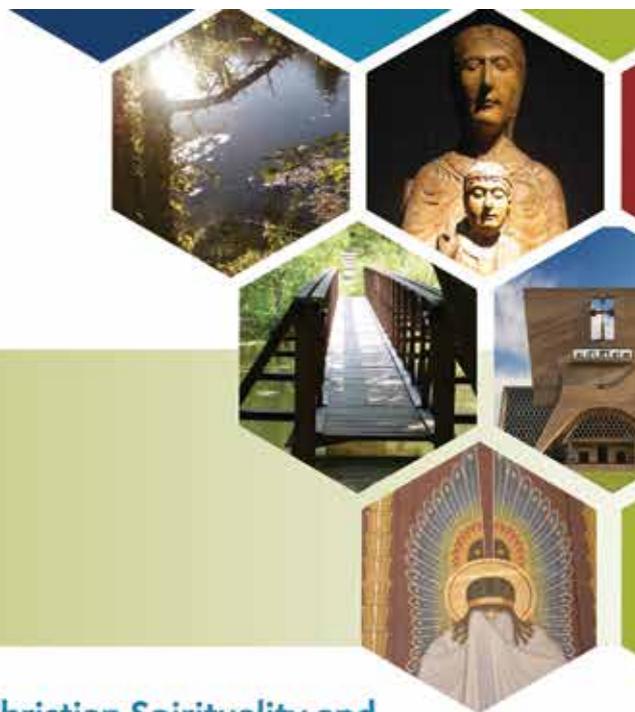
The final 10 months of what has become a four-year presidential campaign coincides with the Year of Mercy, declared by Pope Francis as a “revolution of tenderness.” We can’t expect a year of tenderness in American politics, but we can hope for a little more temperance.

**ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN**

**ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN** is an associate editor of *America*. Twitter: @RobertDSullivan

# SUMMER 2016

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All workshops are located at the Collegeville Institute, Collegeville, Minnesota, on the campus of Saint John's University and Abbey, a Benedictine institution dedicated to the values of work, community, and prayer. All expenses, including travel, are covered by the Collegeville Institute.

### Apart, and Yet a Part

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*Independent, unstructured work in community*

**Tuesday, June 14 – Monday, June 20**

### Poetry, Prose, and Prayer

A Week with Michael Dennis Browne

*For poets and prose writers exploring religious themes in their work*

**Wednesday, June 22 – Tuesday, June 28**

### A Broader Public

Writing for the Online Audience, with the Editors of Religion Dispatches

*Entering the public conversation*

**Wednesday, July 6 – Tuesday, July 12**

*For application information, and to learn more about our Resident Scholars program and short-term residencies, visit our website: [collegevilleinstitute.org](http://collegevilleinstitute.org). Please visit our website for additional fall 2016 off-site writing workshop offerings.*

### Christian Spirituality and the Writing Life

with Lauren Winner

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**Monday, July 18 – Wednesday, July 27**

### Awakening Theological Imagination

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*Helping pastors, chaplains, religious educators, and others cultivate personal attentiveness and invigorate theological conversation in their congregations and other ministry settings*

**Tuesday, August 2 – Monday, August 8**

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*For active pastors, chaplains, pastoral associates, and all who long to write prose that matters*

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**JOSEPH A. O'HARE, S.J.,**  
*Post-Graduate  
 Writing Fellowship*



**OVERVIEW**

The mission of the Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., Post-Graduate Writing Fellowship is to support the next generation of writers for the Catholic media and other forms of professional journalism. The fellowship offers three recent graduates of Jesuit colleges or universities in the U.S. or Canada the opportunity to develop their literary skills and professional relationships while living and working in the capital of global communications, New York City. O'Hare Fellows spend one full year working at the offices of America, where they will generate content for America's multiple platforms: print, web, digital, social media and events.

O'Hare fellows receive housing at Fordham University's Lincoln Center Campus, health care coverage, and a monthly stipend for living expenses during the 12-months of the program.

**ELIGIBILITY**

- Applicants must be graduating seniors from a member institution of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities or Campion College at the University of Regina, Canada.
- Applicants must have a cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 or equivalent.
- Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States or Canada.
- Applicants should be familiar with the Roman Catholic tradition and have some appreciation for the role of the Catholic media in the United States and Canada.
- Applicants must be willing to make a 12-month commitment to the program.

**APPLICATION DETAILS**

Applications for the 2016 O'Hare Fellowships will be accepted between December 1, 2015 and January 30, 2016. There is no application fee. Applications should be submitted through our webpage at [www.oharefellows.org](http://www.oharefellows.org). All questions and inquiries should be directed to [fellowships@americamedia.org](mailto:fellowships@americamedia.org).

All applications should include the following:

- A letter of introduction and a resume
- Four writing samples. Samples can include newspaper and magazine clips, academic papers, blog posts and unpublished pieces. Samples should not exceed 1,500 words each.
- An unofficial academic transcript issued by the applicant's undergraduate institution.
- Two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a faculty member or a professional journalist who is familiar with the applicant's literary talents.
- A description of three story ideas for America:
  - 1) a self-reported feature or essay;
  - 2) an article on an important debate from the world of politics, policy or ideas;
  - 3) a multimedia story. The description of each of these ideas should not be longer than one paragraph.

**TIMELINE**

**Jan. 30, 2016:** Application deadline.

**Feb. 2016:** Review of applications and notification of first round decisions.

**March 2016:** Online interviews with finalists; fellows announced.

**Aug. 2016:** Fellowship commences.



*The Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., Post Graduate Writing Fellowship is made possible through the generosity of William J. Loschert, Fordham University's College of Business Administration, Class of 1961, and a member of America Media's board of directors.*

# A Vibrant Vocation

The passionate possibilities of Christian single life

BY KARL A. SCHULTZ



**CURTAIN CALL.** The “Catholic Dating Game” during a Catholic Thrive conference in New York.

**T**he church is increasingly recognizing the vocational dimension of single life, but that does not mean that today’s single Catholics have it easy. A friend who underwent a painful divorce told me that it ruined his life, and for many people intimate break-ups can be even more troubling than the struggle to find a spouse in the first place. Yet whether widowed, divorced or unmarried, single Catholics can find it difficult to find support in the church.

With the exception of young-adult ministry, which also includes married persons, sparse attention and resources are devoted to single persons in the church. The single vocation is rarely mentioned in official documents, homilies and magisterial teachings. There are encyclicals, pastoral letters and synods focusing on family life, but not on the single vocation, despite the fact that the number of singles is growing. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, in 2014 there were 124.6 million single Americans, which for the first time accounted for just over half the U.S. population (50.2 percent).

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**KARL A. SCHULTZ**, the director of *Genesis Personal Development Center* in Daytona Beach, Fla., has been involved in singles ministry for over 20 years. His website is [karlaschultz.com](http://karlaschultz.com).

Attention to this vocation as witnessed in the Bible, tradition and the living church (the magisterium and the sense of the faithful) can offer therapeutic and redemptive responses to the ways our secular culture at times glorifies, exploits, corrupts or caricatures single life. And the church has made some progress—within the last half century there has been increasing awareness and recognition of the vocational dimensions of single life. Events like the National Catholic Singles Conference and the teachings of St. John Paul II’s theology of the body have been helpful. Singles are not necessarily adrift in the church, but they certainly do not suffer from excessive attention.

## A Complex Situation

In a pastoral setting, single life presents particular challenges. Going to Mass by oneself can be a lonely experience. Solo participation in church activities is sometimes awkward. Priests are not usually trained to deal with issues faced by single persons. (Deacons are often better equipped, as many have more recently been in the dating world, but they often are busy with other responsibilities.) Priests know the moral dos and don’ts, but less so the subtle temptations and practical problems faced by singles. Too often simple, moral-

istic answers are imposed on complex situations better suited to nuanced responses. Middle-aged singles often fall through the cracks. There are established support networks for the old and the young, but what about those caught in between, whose social needs and challenges are even more acute? The church has work to do in the area of supporting single life, just as with respect to families and consecrated life. We as church should emphasize that those called to the single life, whether temporarily or permanently, can approach their mission with a passion, recognizing it as no less meaningful and vibrant than other vocations.

In the Bible, to be alone is to be near the world of death. Whether within the parish or outside of it, loneliness can be a major challenge for singles. Socially, most married couples gravitate toward other married couples. And as individuals grow older, it can be harder to break out of ingrained social habits. Some singles grow less receptive to the fellowship or spontaneous social interaction that might present possibilities for friendship, companionship and/or romance. Trust issues from past relationships can also influence behavior. Some restrict themselves to a static circle of friends and a lifestyle that inhibits spiritual, emotional and social maturation. Others become reclusive or overly dependent on digital devices or pets for companionship. We need to cultivate more opportunities, resources and constructive alternatives that foster growth, healing and solidarity, which often have their roots in dialogue, particularly as defined and lived by Pope Paul VI (see the 1964 encyclical "Ecclesiam Suam," which set the tone for the conclusion and implementation of the Second Vatican Council).

On the other hand, some Catholic singles are more than willing to stretch themselves and their social circles, to take risks and to grow. Many make efforts to meet new friends or volunteer, not only with dating in mind, but simply to create a rich life. Many people have made good friends or met their mates at singles groups like the Catholic Alumni Club, while others have encountered cliques, shyness and social ineptitude. These diverse experiences are not unique to Catholic circles. The truism of managing or tempering expectations for a particular event is a good approach for any singles situation. Many people simply try to engage in pleasant conversations and meet new people, and if possible have fun, and then let God take it from there.

Some choose to participate in online dating as another potential venue in which to find a person with similar interests and values, and there are several dating sites aimed at Catholics. Still, looking for a suitable partner can feel like seeking a needle in a haystack. While some people make fruit-

ful connections online, others find the climate and behavior little different from secular dating websites, in which messages go ignored, or worse, are met with a rude (or overly pious) response.

Despite these challenges, single life in the church offers many possibilities. There are many opportunities to serve, worship, learn and interact with others. By definition, single persons often have freedoms and options unavailable to married persons and religious. But boundaries are necessary because friends and family sometimes incorrectly assume that single persons have more flexibility, time or resources. They may also fail to factor in the dearth of support and collaboration that singles often experience. Ultimately, single life is circumstantial and personal. Each person's history and experience is unique. For some the single life is a transitional stage, lived deliberately and perhaps reluctantly, before following a call to marriage or religious life. For others, it is a chosen state.

One of the possibilities that is rarely considered is that of dedicated service, whereby single persons put themselves at the disposal of family, church and God, and in effect live a consecrated life, sometimes formally so. This decision requires ongoing effort and discernment, and not everyone is capable of it or called to it (Mt 19:11–12).

It is important to remember that singles are not second-tier Christians. Their witness is not inferior to that of other vocations. In some ways it can be more painful, because it is often involuntary. Simon of Cyrene can be an inspiration for singles who wish to be married someday, as he was pressed into service against his wishes. The Gospels do not reveal his emotions and perspective. Singles bring them to life in their response to the heavy burden of involuntary celibacy that they bear and share with many.

No matter how much we pray and have fellowship with others, this is a lonely undertaking. Others can suffer with, but not for us. In a profound address to married couples on May 4, 1970, Pope Paul VI pointed to a reality that is equally applicable to single life: "They are not freed from the need of persevering effort, sometimes in cruel circumstances that can only be endured by the realization that they are participating in Christ's passion." The Lord appreciates this company, for he was single and felt alone and abandoned himself.

## **Singles in Scripture**

The spirituality of single life and its distinction as a vocation is rarely mentioned in the Bible. St. Paul offers recommendations in his First Letter to the Corinthians that are influenced by his perception of the imminent second coming: "Now to

## **Ultimately, single life is circumstantial and personal.**

the unmarried and to widows, I say: it is a good thing for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire" (1 Cor 7:8–9). The passage can be hard to parse, but it can also be helpful. For some people, it seems to echo the traditional Latin expression *age quod agis* (do what you are doing). Live your life as it is given to you, and make the best of it. For others, his advice on getting married rather than being consumed by passion is relevant, especially since our horizon for eternity is different than his.

While the single vocation as an entity in itself is insufficiently developed in Scripture, there are numerous colorful characters who face challenges to which single persons can particularly relate. From "a sudden blow" Ezekiel lost his beloved wife—"the delight of [his] eyes"—one of the most moving expressions in not only the Bible but in all of literature (Ez 24:16). How many husbands or wives before and since can resonate with that expression! Thus he was unexpectedly thrust into prophetic single life, bereft of the love of his life and his primary means of support.

How difficult it must have been for Ezekiel to relay God's message to the Israelites in the bizarre and eccentric ways characteristic of his ministry when inside he was shattered by the loss of his love. Likewise, singles have to move on with their life and carry out their responsibilities despite profound loss, sadness, personal eccentricities and difficult emotions and circumstances.

Jeremiah is perhaps the purest example of a single believer in the Old Testament. The celibacy chosen for him by God must have intensified the loneliness and alienation he felt when he proclaimed his message of impending terrors to a disbelieving people (Jer 16:2). His feelings of being ostracized are something many singles can relate to.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist, who preached in the desert, must have felt lonely, particularly given the opposition of the religious and secular leaders to his message of repentance and hopeful anticipation. And although St. Paul embraced his life as a single person, he tells us movingly in his later letters of his feelings of abandonment and despondency. Holiness never immunizes us from the painful aspects of life; rather, it helps us face and transform them. Jesus' close friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus may also have been single. They must have felt some of the opposition accorded Jesus by the religious authorities, and undoubtedly

helped him bear it. It is reasonable to assume he sought comfort and fellowship from them in addition to teaching them the Gospel message.

These persons and others epitomize the prophetic dimension of single life. By persevering in a unique way in the struggle to be faithful to the Gospel, single persons become dynamic reflections and incarnations of God's word and love. God speaks through human attitudes and actions: we become the Bible for those who might otherwise not read it

## Uniquely Passionate

While the single vocation is unique, the experience of single people in the church should not be differentiated too finely from married persons, priests or religious; most challenges and trials have universal human dimensions. Loneliness is part of the human condition. Spouses can be separated by out-of-town work, military deployment or caregiving for elderly parents or disabled children. Spouses experience various degrees of apathy or abandonment in the form of immature or deplorable behavior by their partner. Priests can be given undesirable assignments far from home and loved ones. Cloistered nuns have to continually accept with vibrancy the consequences of letting go of the possibilities of societal interaction.

Persons are or become single by way of a multitude of paths that escape static generalizations. Our discussion of

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this diverse vocation must always be moderated by a recognition of the enormous variables, subjectivity and ambiguity that mark all vocations.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament cite marriage as the primary analogy for our relationship with God. The intense, passionate and volatile longing of the sexes for each other mirrors the fundamental human relationship with God. It is important for single and married people alike to have recourse to biblical passages that proclaim God's profound and benevolent designs for sexuality and marriage. Despite the difficulties of romantic relationships, we must never lose sight of the mutuality, complementarity and fruitfulness that remains constitutive of such relations, even when obscured by sin. Like people in other vocations, singles must always celebrate the gift of sexuality, even though at times it can constitute a painful cross.

Thus single life necessitates a consciously passionate dimension, if it is to redirect sexual energies in healthy or, better, redemptive fashion (Col 1:24). Singles need to exercise formational self-direction and self-discipline in a creative, responsible and at times courageous way. We should view cultivation of a social support network, a fitness regimen for proper care of the body and mind, hobbies, travel, leisure and ongoing education and cultural enrichment as integral rather than peripheral dimensions of single life. Further, persons of all vocations need to interact with each other in a

mutually enriching manner. We are all members of the body of Christ who are called to collaborate in facilitating each others' potential fulfillment and wellness, as outlined by Paul VI in his encyclical "On the Development of Peoples" (1967).

Passionate attitudes will help everyone, but particularly singles, persevere in participating in Christ's passion in a joyful manner. Like Abraham when called to sacrifice Isaac and, in effect, his future, we do not have to understand or welcome the daunting missions God imposes and entrusts. As St. John Paul II explained in his apostolic letter "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering," God listens for and awaits our questions and the expression of our difficult emotions. Even Jesus lamented on the cross. God can handle our intensity and raise us up, as God did with Jesus. In him, ultimately, are our hopes.

Armed with a sense of humility, humor and passion, singles may willingly choose the single vocation or endeavor to make the best of their de facto circumstances as single people, thereby exercising their prophetic ministry as vibrant witnesses of God's kindness and fidelity. Whether voluntary or involuntary, celibacy, even when practiced imperfectly, is a gift to God. Singles can be lifegiving through their hearts (i.e., disposition, orientation), words and actions and thereby give glory and honor to God by accepting and cooperating with his mysterious will and salvific plan. ▲

DIGITAL HIGHLIGHTS

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EVENTS

On Jan. 12 Rabbi Daniel Polish will deliver The John Courtney Murray, S.J., Lecture to mark the 50th anniversary of "Nostra Aetate."

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RADIO

On "America This Week" James Martin, S.J., discusses how we can live out the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which Pope Francis inaugurated in Rome on Dec. 8.

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BLOG

In a three-part series, Judith Valente reports on gang-related violence and police-community relations in Chicago.

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WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT:

"The value of my liberal arts background is something I draw from everyday, as it colors the way I engage in the world. You don't need a Ph.D. for that."  
—REBECCA KRIER, "HUMANITIES AND THE SOUL"

FROM OUR BLOGS

A Great Day for U.S. Education? Look Again.  
Raymond A. Schroth, S.J.

Rabbi Rosen Proposes That Pope Francis Makes New Peace Initiative for Holy Land  
Gerard O'Connell

Big Donors Getting Miffed by Presidential Politics  
Robert David Sullivan

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WHAT YOU'RE READING

God's Isn't Fixing This? No, We're Not Listening, James Martin, S.J.

'The Study Quran' and the Battle Against Ignorance  
Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

How Does a Catholic Read the Bible?  
James Martin, S.J.

Pope Francis' Visit to Juarez Will Include Cross-Border Mass, Kevin Clarke



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# Life on Another Level

Can the ancient tradition of monasticism be part of the new evangelization?

BY MARK PLAISS

**W**e were about a half mile from the monastery, hoeing weeds out of the pumpkin patch. The late-June sun of Iowa beat down upon Hal and me, and sweat streamed down our faces. Our shirts and shoes were caked with dirt. We were thirsty. I glanced at my watch: we were halfway through the assigned afternoon work period.

I heard Brother's truck before I saw it. I straightened up my aching back, leaned on my hoe and watched his 1966 Ford pickup lumber over the grassy field. Brother eased the truck adjacent to the pumpkin patch and, sticking his tanned bald head out of the window, said, "Pump house, boys."

Neither Hal nor I hesitated; we dropped our hoes in the bed of the truck and then slid into the cab, I in the middle. As the 49-year-old truck rumbled through the grass, I removed the leather work gloves from my hands. Even though I had used them while working, a blister had erupted be-

tween the thumb and index finger of my left hand. Cold water, though, awaited us at the pump house, and that prospect washed away any concern about the blister. Actually, the pump house was a little tool shed about a stone's throw from the monastery, but right up against the back of the tool shed was a faucet where we could gulp down some cold water. There is nothing like cold water on a hot day while working the fields at the monastery!

After all three of us drank our fill, Brother said, "Well, let's go over to the shade there and pray." We walked over to the nearby shade and sat down beneath a large, old maple tree. Brother, clad in a torn shirt and bib overalls, removed his hat and wiped his brow with the back of his left hand. He placed his hands on his knees, bowed his head and started into a Hail Mary, three of them in fact. His voice was soft, but firm. Hal and I chimed in. Brother's blue eyes were closed. Following the three prayers, Brother prayed for the intercession of three saints, and Hal and I asked for the saints to pray for us, too. Then Brother began to tell Hal and me stories of his time in the Korean War.

Brother does not fit the romantic mold of monasticism.

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**MARK PLAISS** teaches in the religious studies department at Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein, Ill. He has been a monastic associate at New Melleray Abbey, near Dubuque, Iowa, since 1997.

He does not walk around with his hood up, arms folded beneath his black scapular, averting his eyes from yours. True, he walks with his head bowed, but that is because of a malady in his neck and spine. But he is one of the first monks to enter the choir before vigils blasts off at 3:30 a.m. He shuffles to the north choir in the dark, usually selecting a stall toward the eastern end, hacks the phlegm out of his lungs and blows his nose, the sound reverberating off the stone walls of the abbey church. And so Brother's day begins, a day—during the warm months—spent mostly scratching and clawing away at the Iowa soil trying to bring forth vegetables for the 30 or so monks with whom he lives at the Trappist monastery.

## Lessons From the Monastery

My high school students in Mundelein, Ill., know that there are monks and monasticism, but few, if any, have either met a monk or set foot on the grounds of a monastery. Their knowledge is limited to what they have learned in a church history class (in the unit on the Middle Ages) or a class on Christian lifestyles or through films in the vein of “Monty Python and the Holy Grail.” I show the students YouTube clips from monasteries like St. Meinrad Archabbey or New Melleray Abbey that show how monastic life is lived today (rather than in the Middle Ages). When they are told what the typical day of a Benedictine or Cistercian monk might entail, they are skeptical. When told of the monk's commitment to lifelong celibacy, they are incredulous. When asked if such a life is in anyway intriguing or appealing to them, most remain silent; some snicker. But they respect the life.

The students see the monks as “hardcore,” not just believing the Gospel but living it. True, the students quickly add that the Gospel can be fully lived in the “regular” world, but they concede that monks take the Gospel to “another level.” Hence “hardcore.” When I tell my students about Brother at the monastery in Iowa they listen. They nod their heads in affirmation. “That's real,” says one.

*Respect, real.* Those are key words, for they are words that invoke authenticity and credibility. Such terms in regard to the church today are rare. Too often I hear terms like as “hypocritical” and “out of touch” in association with the church. So I propose that an authentic and credible response of the church to our present world is monasticism. I believe this for three reasons:

1) *Monasticism smacks of being outside of the church establishment.* At first blush, that claim seems ludicrous. What could be more of the church establishment than monasticism, filled as it is with its ancient rule, customs and modes of dress? Yet, look at monasticism from the point of view of my students. They see a small group of women or men gathered together trying to live the Gospel in a simple form. They see women or men who embrace personal poverty for the betterment of the kingdom and to emulate Jesus. They see an actual community of persons with a kindred spirit.

Contrast that with the way most of my students encounter church. Church for them is a weekly one-hour gathering of disparate individuals who just happen to come together at the same Mass to fulfill their Sunday obligation. This obligation is connected with the same old songs and a windy homily that rarely, if ever, has anything to do with their lives at all. Whether or not this picture my students paint of the

church is accurate is beside the point. The point is that even though monasticism is not a vocation to which any of my students now aspire, they see something in the monastic lifestyle that they do not see in the parishes they attend. They might not have a desire to live the life of a monk, but they sense authenticity. And that makes the monks—and, by association, Christianity—credible.

The monk is “outside” the boundaries of the church simply by adhering to and living out the foundational truths of the faith: resurrection, a living God, new creation. It is not that the parish does not believe or preach these things. It is just that few of my students can hear or see them—for whatever reason—coming from their parish. But they sense it in the monks.

Furthermore, my students see monks as “radical.” There is nuance among the students in this adjective. Most wonder if the monks are helping anybody by “just praying and working among themselves.” These students frequently ask, “How are they helping others by doing what they do?” Thus, in the mind of these students, the monks are radical in the sense of turning away from the world. But a sizable minority of my students believe the monks are radical in the sense of “wanting to live like Jesus did in the purest way.” Either way, the students view the monks as living Christianity in a different way from most Christians. But neither group desires—to sign up at this stage in their lives, anyway—to sign up.

2) *Monasticism is prophetic, and it is prophetic primarily because of its simplicity.* There is no agenda, just living



**ORA ET LABORA.** Brother Joseph Kronebusch, O.C.S.O., at work

and working with one another, listening to and praying with Scripture, devoting themselves to the breaking of the bread, being hospitable to the stranger and being patient with the eccentric.

Why is that prophetic? Because, with the demise of Christendom, the church can no longer depend upon society at large to bolster its mission. The church will need to present Jesus the Christ in a manner that is not only credible and authentic but easily visible. Monasticism is—and always has been—a visibly different way of being Christian. Do not tell me, *show me*, my students are saying.

3) *Ecumenism*. Shortly before leaving for his trip to South America last July, Pope Francis addressed a crowd of approximately 30,000 in St. Peter's Square. Francis encouraged Christians to pray together. "All of you," said the pope, "have received the same baptism; all of us are following the path of Jesus."

Monasteries are well-known places not only of inter-Christian prayer but also of interreligious prayer. From the Gethsemani Encounter at the Abbey of Gethsemani, where Christian and Buddhist monks come together, to Benedictine Oblates and Cistercian associates of various Christian denominations coming together to pray, monasticism is at the forefront of the ecumenical effort. One issue that drives my students to distraction is the division among Christian communities. They perceive such divisions as insignificant to the bigger picture of Christ. This is not the place to address the merits of such an opinion. But more and more students at the school either are not Catholic or come from homes in which their Catholicism is not practiced. The point: People in the same place but with different outlooks need to find a way to live peacefully, and monasticism can be seen as a bridge that brings Christians together.

The time may once again come, as it did so many centuries ago, when monasticism hands off the baton of faith to a new civilization that is once more receptive to the notion of God and his Christ. But for now, let there be silence and psalms. This is the voice of the new evangelization.

### Closing Prayer

Vigils has ended. I remain in my stall to pray. The monks depart from the church, some sooner than others. After about 20 minutes, I too stand and leave the church to return to my room on the third floor.

As I step from the church into the cloister where the north and western ranges meet, I see a monk in the western range. He is standing in the nearly dark cloister with his hand touching one of the stations of the cross that line the outer wall of the cloister. Though the light is minimal, I can see that it is the monk who drives the nearly 50-year old pickup truck. He is whispering something, but I am unable to decipher what he is saying. ▲



## Nature is Full *of* Divinity

– Henry David Thoreau

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# Francis in 2016

Pope Francis can be described in the words of the Anglo-Irish poet Arthur O'Shaughnessy (slightly adapted here) as both “a mover and shaker” and “a dreamer of dreams.” He wants to move and shake so the dreams become reality. We have seen this since his election as pope on March 13, 2013, and we are sure to see more this year.

The Jubilee Year of Mercy is a priority event in Francis' dreams. In a world marked by conflict, violence, brutality, vendetta, poverty and exclusion, he is advocating the rediscovery of mercy as the path to a more humane world. He wants the church to blaze the trail.

But he knows the church has often adopted a judgmental mentality and obscured the central place of mercy, so he is insisting on putting mercy before justice—not just in words but in creative ways too, including through the practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. He is promoting a “revolution of tenderness.”

Francis highlighted the significance of mercy for the life and mission of the church in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. He goes into greater depth in an interview that will appear in book form as *The Name of God Is Mercy* on Jan. 12. Five days later, he will visit the synagogue in Rome.

Ever since Boniface VIII opened the first holy year in 1300, the 28 subsequent ones have been Rome-centric, but Francis has broken with this tra-

dition in two important ways: first, by opening the jubilee in the cathedral of Bangui, in the Central African Republic, which is crushed by poverty and conflict; and, second, by decreeing that this jubilee be decentralized and that a holy door be opened in every diocese and sanctuary worldwide, as well as in situations of exclusion, like hospitals, prisons and refugee camps. An estimated 10,000 holy doors are being opened in some 3,000 dioceses worldwide.

Francis has explicitly linked the Jubilee Year of Mercy to the meetings of the Synod of Bishops on the family, and it is expected that he will publish his apostolic exhortation on the family in the first part of the year. It will be his most important magisterial text of 2016. It remains to be seen in what ways he will open the doors of mercy to Catholics who feel excluded from the life of the church for one reason or another.

His two main foreign journeys this year—to Mexico (Feb. 12-18) and to Krakow, Poland, for the World Youth Day (July 26-31)—are directly linked to the theme of mercy. The logo for his visit to four cities in Mexico is Misionero de Misericordia y Paz (Missionary of Mercy and Peace), while the one for World Youth Day is centered on the words of Jesus: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy” (Mt 5:7). He is likely to visit Auschwitz while in Krakow.

On March 16, 2013, Francis told the media that he dreams of a church

that is poor and for the poor, and throughout his pontificate he has given attention to the peripheries. He is sure to continue on this path when he creates new cardinals in June.

This first Latin American pope dreams of a church where synodality is exercised and decentralization is a reality. He proposed this in his pro-

The apostolic exhortation on the family will be his most important magisterial text of 2016.

grammatic document, “The Joy of the Gospel,” and expanded on it in his keynote speech on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Synod of Bishops.

Furthermore, Francis and his council of nine cardinal advisors will devote one session of their next meeting (Feb. 8-9) to this topic, because of its relevance for the reform of the

Roman Curia.

It is worth mentioning, too, that the International Theological Commission is currently studying the question of synodality and the church. These reflections could pave the way for a transformation in the governance of the church and could have important implications in the ecumenical field.

As I mentioned in an earlier column, Francis hopes for a breakthrough in relations with the Russian Orthodox Church through a meeting with the Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill I. He also hopes for a breakthrough in relations with China. These could happen before he closes the Jubilee Year of Mercy on Nov. 20.

**GERARD O'CONNELL**

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GERARD O'CONNELL is *America's* Rome correspondent. *America's* Vatican coverage is sponsored in part by the Jesuit communities of the United States. Twitter: @gerryome.

# Freed Speech

A priest overcomes his stammer

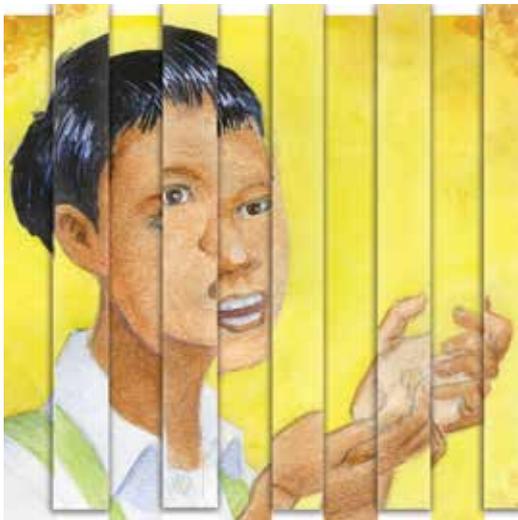
BY CARIDADE DRAGO

In my youth, I stuttered terribly. I hated both the children who laughed at my disability and the elders who pitied me. I disliked the teacher who tried to correct me. Answering a question in the class horrified me, and even private conversations filled me with dread. Unable to express my feelings and thoughts clearly, I hated myself, too. Increasingly, I grew anxious, angry with all and horribly fearful of talking to others. I preferred to listen and keep my thoughts to myself.

The moments of bitterness and shame are seared in my memory. I went to the shop to buy milk. On the way, I kept on repeating, “milk carton, milk carton, milk carton.” But at the counter, I mumbled, “M-m-m-me.” I was not referring to my miserable self. The customers looked at me and giggled. I tried again, “M-mi.” I pointed at the milk carton. I paid for it and ran home, eyes brimming with tears.

The school instructor asked the class, “Who was the Greek invader of India?” After repeating the question, he waited for a long time. Though I knew the answer, I avoided his eyes. A minute passed and no one answered. I started to reply, “Ah-ah-l-e-le-xa-xa...” Self-conscious and ashamed, I stopped. My neighbor shouted, “Alexander the Great.”

“That is correct,” said the instructor. The class teacher pitied me. I hated him for that and was angry and restless



for the rest of the day.

After my studies, I worked for five years. My parents started arranging for my marriage. As soon as I got wind of it, I rushed to my only friend, the parish priest. Nervously, I fumbled, “I want to be a priest.” Having known me for many years, he took me immediately to the Jesuits. Four of them interviewed me, separately. They met in private, and then the rector conveyed the conclusion, “Priests preach and teach.”

I pleaded, tearfully, “I wa-wa-want to-to be pr-pr-prie-st.” My pitiful insistence was futile. Crestfallen, I returned home. Hoping against hope, I joined the novitiate anyway. My sincerity and often-repeated pleading moved my novice master. He told me, “Demosthenes, the Greek orator, stammered too.” That same evening, I went to the football field, I put five marbles in my mouth and shouted for an hour, a folk cure for stuttering. The result? I suffered with a sore throat for many days.

I was older than most of the novices and yet felt humiliated in the classes on voice training and public speaking. Their criticism of my frightful performance discouraged me, doubling my fears and diffidence.

The novice director sent me to Dr. Hafiz, who declared, “Physically, there is nothing wrong with you.” I looked for a second opinion. In the summer, I went to the Nair Hospital in Mumbai. Dr. Ozha, a speech therapist, suggested that I relax my facial muscles and breathe deeply. I could speak fluently, but only in his benevolent presence.

By the end of theological studies, my speech had improved considerably. I received a letter of approval for ordination. Singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving, I danced in my room, but not for long. Many fears and doubts rose up to jeer at me, “You stammer. How can you be a priest?”

## Facing My Fear

Unable to resolve the doubts, I ran to my spiritual guide. He, too, said, “Your trouble is not physical.” The implications of that statement hit me like a ton of bricks. I had refused to see or accept the truth for nearly 40 years. My world consisted only of the painful past or negative imaginings about the future. When faced with any human interaction, I instantly recalled the boys of my childhood laughing at my stammer. Every interaction with others carved into my heart the fear and terrible pain of rejection.

Stung by the remark of my spiritual

CARIDADE DRAGO, S.J., *assistant to the director of novices for the western region of Jesuits in India, was a spiritual director for 25 years.*

guide, I decided to get out of this hell. I learned to sit erect and still and to be in the presence of God, who is the ocean of compassion. I watched every feeling that arose in my heart and every thought that passed through my mind. I owned them as mine and placed them before God. My spiritual guide advised, "Be compassionate to all that comes up, just as the heavenly Father is. He makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good and gives rain

to both the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45).

At the beginning, the river of painful experiences began to rise and inundate me. I had to make a concerted effort to stand in the strong currents of feelings and thoughts like a tree. The river was nothing but my fears, anger and brokenness seeking attention and healing. In the presence of God and with his help, I learned to see those who had hurt me through the eyes of Jesus, the

compassion of God made visible. I perceived my own self and others sailing in the same boat. Regular practice of remaining in the compassionate presence made me compassionate to my own self and others. It doubled my self-confidence and reduced my fears.

Often during teaching or preaching, unaware, I would stutter a few words and begin to feel discouraged and hopeless. To get over this old habit, I place myself in the compassionate presence of the Crucified One. Those for whom he came shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" After vividly imagining the scene, I compare my plight with his. Out of a thousand words, I might have stuttered a few! And no one laughed at me, at least not openly. At this moment, instead of condemning myself and others, I gaze at my suffering self compassionately and smile at my foolishness. At once my fears subside and speech flows.

### Cleansing My Heart

What about my accumulated anger and sadness? I found a cure in meditating on the last days of Jesus—the journey to Jerusalem, the agony, the betrayal, the insults, the suffering and the death. Jesus lived the compassion he taught. In great humility, he washed the feet of Peter, who would reject him, and even of Judas, who would betray him. Hanging on the cruel cross and in horrible agony, he had prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Inspired and enabled by Jesus, I forgive others. It was not easy at first. I had to make deliberate efforts to forgive those who had repeatedly mocked me. I wash their feet with compassionate love until all the bitterness and pain are removed from my heart.

Do I stammer today? Yes, sometimes I do. But, when I feel the stutter coming, I attend to the presence of God and his unconditional love. Immediately, my fears vanish and peace fills my heart. I face others calmly and talk without fear. 

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# Homecoming

From Tupperware to Taylor Swift

BY ZOE SILSBY

**M**y faith journey began in a Tupperware container. I can't say why, exactly, I was baptized in such an unusual vessel—perhaps the church was doing a lot of baptisms that day. But while my baptismal font may have been unconventional, my faith wouldn't be the same without it.

I have been in Catholic school since my first day of prekindergarten at the Boston College Children's Center. Ever since my 2-year-old self joined Ms. Karen's class, I have gone through a steady stream of religion classes and holy day of obligation Masses. It would be a lie to say that it has been an easy journey, free of the ups and downs of life. I have questioned the validity of church teachings and struggled with its social declarations. Somewhere in the midst of this struggle I lost my faith.

A year ago I hardly identified as Catholic; I joked that my religious high school had converted me away from Catholicism. At the time, the idea of coming back to the religion that raised me seemed far-fetched and unrealistic. Now, I see my digression from my faith as a vacation from Catholicism—and the best lesson I have ever learned.

I always thought of faith as being based solely on a strict following of every rule in the Catholic Church. It was an impersonal and cold idea that didn't fit with my "beliefs." Because of this misunderstanding of faith, I was

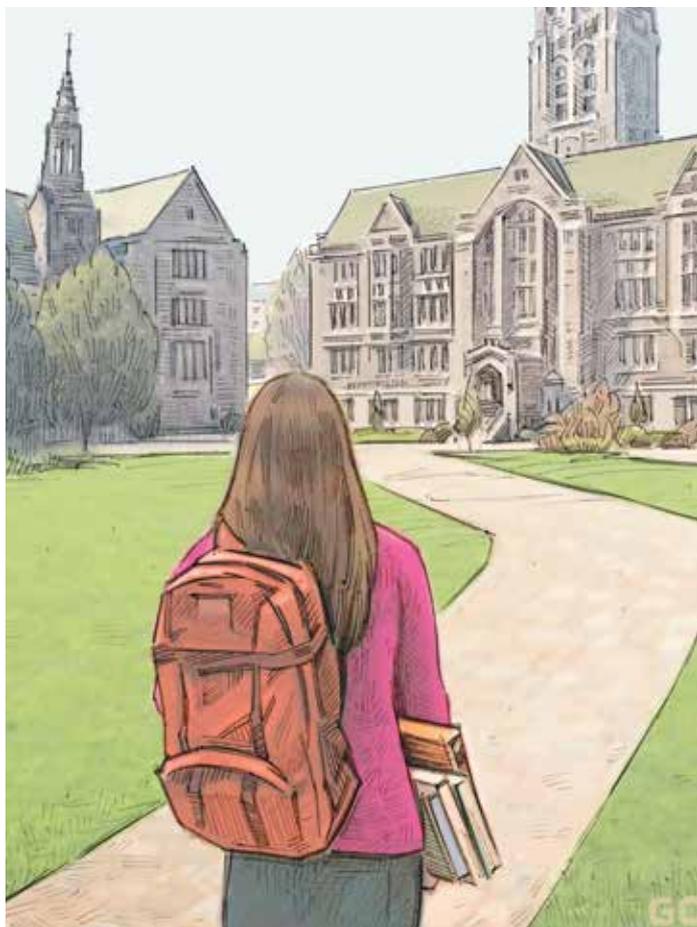
happy to vote myself off this island of religion. Ironically, separating myself from Catholicism left me on my own little island, without the community I had relied upon since I came out of that Tupperware container.

## Letting My Faith Go

It seems that every romantic comedy refers to this concept: "If you love someone, let them go; and if they return, they were always yours." I guess God let me go, or perhaps more accurately, let me choose, because as school got harder and college got closer, I came sprinting back to the community that raised me.

I had an enlightening vacation but it's good to be home. Coming home I made some changes. I dropped my preconceived notions about church teachings and learned the truth. I went to Mass and treated it as time for reflection rather than the only thing preventing me from sleeping in. The biggest change I made was making my faith my own, rather than something that hinged completely on what I learned in religion class and from other naïve teenagers.

My grandmother always said I was lucky to be raised Catholic. I always thought she meant lucky that I could get a good education, lucky to live in



the United States and lucky to have semi-normal parents. In embracing my faith I realized what she really meant. I am beyond lucky to have something to believe in, to know that there is more than me "out there." I am lucky to be confident enough in my faith that I can find it in everything and everyone.

I truly can find my faith anywhere, and it often comes in the form of music. I was up late on Oct. 26, 2014, one of those nights when the homework never seems to end. I was up so late that it turned into Oct. 27, and my

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**ZOE SILSBY**, a graduate of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School in Washington, D.C., is a freshman at Boston College.



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pre-purchased copy of Taylor Swift's new album, "1989," began to download automatically. So I was up even later, listening to every song and ranking my favorites by rapid-fire texts between my friend and me.

I was just about to call it quits and listen to the rest in the morning when unexpected lyrics floated through my headphones: "You can hear it in the silence, you can feel it on the way home, you can see it with the lights out." Expecting to hear a plethora of songs about broken hearts and girl-power, I was shocked to hear a song that resonated so much with how I felt about my personal faith. While the song clearly fell into the category of dramatic romance, it struck me nonetheless.

Living out my faith in my mundane day-to-day life sometimes just means believing I can make it through the day. I hear my faith in the moments of silence and reflection with which my teachers often start class. Every Sunday at 11 p.m. I have to leave my volunteer

work as an emergency medical technician and drive 30 minutes home. In a subtle way my faith keeps me awake despite the knowledge that school starts in less than nine hours. I can see my faith with the lights out as I fall asleep, believing that tomorrow will be a better day or thankful that today was so good.

I have had a special form of faith ever since my makeshift baptism as an infant. Finding my faith and its role in my life has been a challenge, but well worth it. My faith is what wakes me up in the mornings. It is in the little things in life, the days when the Starbucks barista accidentally gives me a grande instead of a tall. It is the days when I wake up to an email announcing a snow day. It is the days when I have an epiphany moment in calculus class. I cannot think of my faith in terms of next week, let alone the rest of my life. Yet knowing that my faith will be there, and will get me through the tough days and lift me up for the good, is enough. 



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**THEATER** | ROB WEINERT-KENDT

## A VIEW FROM THE EDGE

*You can't turn away from Ivo van Hove's vision.*

**T**he Belgian-born, Dutch-based theater director Ivo van Hove has become something of a New York fixture in the last few decades, in large part for his stark, cobweb-clearing, Off-Broadway stagings of classics by Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, Henrik Ibsen, and Molière. For many critics and audiences, van Hove's work is an irresistible mix of European *Regietheater*—the practice by which continental directors radically rethink classics with scant regard for original authors' intentions—and careful, even reverent reinterpretation. Van Hove's genius would seem to lie in

changing familiar plays utterly without changing a word.

That is certainly the trick he pulls off with his mesmeric, needle-sharp staging of Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge*, which marks the director's Broadway debut (at the Lyceum Theater through Feb. 21). The play's 1950s Brooklyn waterfront setting is here only suggested by the accents, well rendered by a mostly British cast (the production is an import from London's Young Vic). The players are otherwise dressed in casual contemporary clothes, sans shoes or props, on a clean, black-and-white set with a single en-

trance and low benches on three sides.

Thus stripped to its essence, this painful family tragedy—in which longshoreman Eddie Carbone (Mark Strong) exerts tight, inappropriately obsessive control over teenaged Catherine (Phoebe Fox), the orphaned niece of his wife, Beatrice (Nicola Walker)—throbs with undeniable intensity and inevitability. Maybe too much, in fact. Held up to such an unblinking light, Miller's play looks neither as tight nor as clean-lined as van Hove's staging. And while the three leads, in particular Strong and Walker, etch memorable portraits—he with a chilling long stare, she with a wide-eyed, barely concealed terror—it is hard not to recall fondly Gregory Mosher's more straightforward staging on Broadway in 2010, which starred Liev Schreiber, Jessica Hecht and Scarlett Johansson. Miller, with his explanatory excesses and naked



Mark Strong and Company in  
*"A View From the Bridge"*

PHOTO: JAN VERSWELD



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stabs at tragic significance, may always feel more at home in that kind of slow-cooked naturalism, rather than skewered on van Hove's bright-lit rotisserie.

Still, there is no question it is a transfixing, almost pugilistic spectacle, and it will be fascinating to see what the director does with his next Broadway production later this month, a staging of Miller's better-known play "The Crucible."

Meanwhile, back at his de facto Gotham home base, Off-Broadway's New York Theatre Workshop, van Hove recently ventured into uncharted territory, for him and for his central collaborator: a new musical with songs by David Bowie and a script by Bowie and the Irish playwright Enda Walsh. The result, *Lazarus* (through Jan. 20), is no less transfixing a spectacle than "A View From the Bridge," but for all the wrong reasons. Attempting to shoehorn some old and some new Bowie songs into a bleak, disjointed narrative about a rich alien gone to seed in a Manhattan penthouse—the script is billed as a sort of sequel to the 1976 film "The Man Who Fell to Earth," in which Bowie himself played the earthbound alien—*Lazarus* is the kind of deep-dish disaster that happens when really interesting artists have a very bad idea and commit their utmost to its realization. They drive this wobbly vehicle all the way off the cliff, in short, and while there can be an awful beauty in a flaming car crash, it is still a car crash.

So we get the deep-voiced, mildly disheveled Michael C. Hall in the Bowie-alien role, writhing about the stage, nursing a gin bottle and mustering a fair imitation of Bowie's odd, swirling baritone. We watch a depressive waif (Cristin Milioti), ostensibly his housekeeper, spiral into an identity crisis, during which she sings the revolutionary Bowie hit "Changes" while, yes, changing into a blue wig and a tiny dress. We follow a psychopath (Michael Esper) as he slices his way through New York nightlife for mysterious and

apparently otherworldly ends. Worst of all, we are offered a teen ghost (Sophia Anne Caruso), on hand to haunt Hall's alien with cute non sequiturs and a Broadway-kid voice.



Phoebe Fox and Nicola Walker in "A View From the Bridge"

The live band, encased behind glass, sounds mostly terrific, particularly on a few new Bowie songs. But the show's music would register more strongly if it had, you know, any theatrical reason for being. Instead, the songs here are mostly excuses for van Hove and his designer, Jan Versweyveld, to keep things visually popping. Tal Yarden's all-encompassing video design is a particular standout, especially in a mind-blowing, double-vision scene in which a projected, prerecorded Hall trashes the set, while the real Hall sits and watches on the same undisturbed set.

It is impossible to be bored, it seems, at a van Hove show, whether he is exposing the seams of Arthur Miller or creating what are essentially theatrical music videos for Bowie songs. "Strange fascination fascinating me," goes one famous lyric of Bowie's "Changes"; and if that tautology neatly sums up the self-enclosed world of "Lazarus," it also suggests the unique niche this Belgian innovator has carved out on American shores.

**ROB WEINERT-KENDT**, an arts journalist and editor in chief of *American Theatre* magazine, has written for *The New York Times* and *Time Out New York*. He writes a blog called *The Wicked Stage*.

## FALSE PROPHETS OF FEAR

As we have seen in the increasingly divisive, xenophobic and inflammatory language of this political primary season, fear is the fuel of demagoguery.

As we have witnessed in the unsettling statistics published last December in *The New York Times*, fear is the catalyst for increased gun sales.

And as the Gospels remind us and our everyday experience of the world sadly confirms, fear is the enemy of Christian discipleship.

Like so many people around the world, I became increasingly despondent during the final weeks and months of 2015. Following the attacks in Paris and the shootings in the United States, I could hardly believe the degree to which fear had preoccupied the hearts and minds of millions. It reminded me of the wisdom of Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk and author, who wrote in his book *New Seeds of Contemplation* that “at the root of all war is fear: not so much the fear men [and women] have of one another as the fear they have of everything.”

As women and men of faith, we should pay close attention to the ways in which we respond to fear. It is natural, of course, that we become afraid on occasion. There are good reasons and instinctive responses that we have developed over time to aid us in protecting others and ourselves from very real and present dangers. Fear of the unknown might have saved our ancestors from eating poisonous plants or from becoming prey to carnivorous animals in the wild. But fear can also creep up into other circumstances in our life for which the “fight or flight” mechanism of our primordial selves is

not warranted.

It appears that some aspiring politicians, at home and abroad, have seized an opportunity to capitalize on the collective fear of our age: fear of terrorism, fear of economic insecurity, fear of strangers, fear of whatever is unknown, different or unfamiliar. The Dec. 12 issue of *The Economist* featured an article titled “Playing With Fear,” in which Donald J. Trump and Marine Le Pen, presidential aspirants in the United States and France, respectively, were singled out as emblematic fearmongers of our day. Their apparent populist messages feign to reflect the sentiment of the people writ large but in fact play on the economic and cultural insecurities of those who feel most threatened by change or the unknown.

Instead of offering constructive proposals to address the persistence of gun violence, racism and xenophobia, all of which undoubtedly contribute to an environment rife with discord and teetering on violence, Mr. Trump and Ms. Le Pen merely pour gasoline on the real and imagined fears of their voter base. They do this to position themselves as the would-be saviors of their exclusive and, at least by inference from their rhetoric, homogeneous society devoid of racial, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Of course that sort of society is what they are ultimately suggesting would make America or France “great again” (as if their prejudicial wonderlands, imagined with faux nostalgia, ever existed).

It is no accident that one of the most common phrases to come from Jesus in the Gospels is “Do not be afraid!” Jesus, as truly human, understood the experience of fear. Weeping in the garden on the night he was betrayed, he showed solidarity with those who face physical harm and emotional stress. But Jesus, as truly divine, also

understood that following the Father’s will means working to overcome the inhibitive fear that too often prevents us from doing what is right and speaking the truth when necessary. Hence Jesus’ first words to his followers—then and now—are always “Do not be afraid,” because when we surrender to fear, we are unable to live the Gospel.

The entirety of the Jesus’ life and ministry was a revelation of God’s love and what

it means to live a fully human life (Jn 1:18). What we see unfold in the Gospel narratives is the Christ who exhorts his followers to welcome the stranger, to care for the weak, to embrace the one who is “other,” a “stranger” or simply “different.” We see an example of human living that acknowledges fear but then casts it aside with the recollection that love overcomes fear and that death does not have the last word; that it is better to give up your life for another than to kill; and that the God we worship is the Prince of Peace. To give in to fear is to give up one’s faith in a God who calls us to love even when loving is difficult and scary.

When we  
surrender  
to fear,  
we are  
unable to  
live the  
Gospel.



# HEALING THE SOUL OF AMERICA

## BEYOND CIVIL RIGHTS

### The Moynihan Report and Its Legacy

By Daniel Geary

The University of Pennsylvania Press.  
288p \$45

Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927–2003) makes Horatio Alger seem like a Rockefeller heir. After growing up in New York City's then notorious Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Irish poverty and shining shoes in Times Square, he went on to serve in the administrations of two Democratic and two Republican presidents, served as ambassador to India and then to the United Nations, represented New York in the Senate (from 1977 until his death), wrote 18 books, nine of them as a senator; and in the lapses between his presidential duties (in the Department of Labor for Kennedy and then Johnson, in Urban Affairs for Nixon), he headed Harvard University's Joint Center for Urban Studies.

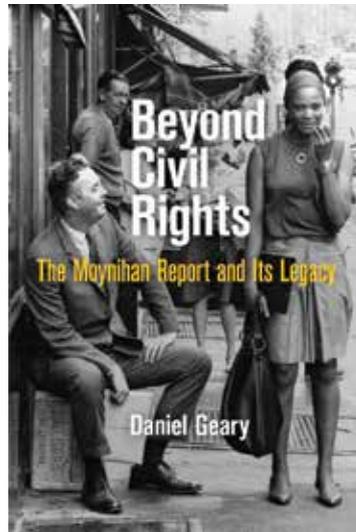
But his fame—and dis fame—rests on “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action” published in March 1965 by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Policy Planning and Research. Quickly shortened to “The Moynihan Report,” the 78-page report, of which 30 pages are footnotes, was marked “for official use only.” Moynihan's 1970 memo to President Nixon on race relations, with the almost immediately infamous phrase “benign neglect,” was interpreted, like the report itself, in ways directly contrary to Moynihan's intent.

His intent in the Department of Labor report was to persuasively shake Americans from any complacency that two centuries of chattel slavery could be remedied solely by the passage of civil rights equal opportunity laws, and his “benign neglect” advised

focusing not on the riots occurring in major American ghettos but on helping blacks as the disproportionate number of all the American poor. How could an intelligent and well-meaning scholar-politician generate these aim-distorting misunderstandings? Part of the translation problem was that he seldom let his Harvard intellect slow his Irish tongue. Another was that his social science data-driven approach impelled him to acknowledge all the relevant data, making his publications a Rorschach test for antagonists to select what best suited their punditry.

Last and certainly not least, his emphasis on traditional family stability as the core of social stability was being abandoned by his liberal colleagues almost as he wrote. His aims, the nascent culture war distortions and, above all, his subject matter—that social stability based not on fear or resignation but on human dignity required substantive justice, not merely the formal justice of civil rights—remain hugely pertinent today.

As I write, the September 2015 issue of *The Atlantic* features an article by the National Book Award winner Ta-Nehisi Coates on the Moynihan Report's 50th anniversary and its renaissance that is even longer than Moynihan's original. As Daniel Geary makes clear in his book *Beyond Civil Rights*, every magazine (including *America*), newspaper, public intellectual and social science scholarly journal gave the Moynihan Report a prominent and an ongoing attention that



has never entirely faded. As the report dealt with America's original sin, slavery, and its ongoing impact on our conflicting and intertwined notions of freedom and equality and the role of government, Moynihan attempted to write in a pragmatic mode about the soul of America and its healing.

Daniel Geary, who teaches U.S. history at Trinity College Dublin and has written on C. Wright Mills, writes neither to bury nor resurrect the Moynihan Report. Geary tells us that his book diverges from prevailing accounts of the Moynihan Report controversy, which focus

on establishing Moynihan's intended meaning, by concentrating on why and how the report became a powerful symbol for a surprising range of groups, including liberal intellectuals, Southern segregationists, civil rights leaders, black power advocates, feminists, neoconservatives and Reaganite conservatives.

His thesis is that the report's ambiguities and inconsistencies gave it its enduring salience. Was family instability primarily a cause or a consequence of racial inequality? Were the “social pathologies” of African-Americans race-specific, rooted in the history of slavery and racial discrimination, or were they class-specific, based on the over-concentration of African-Americans among the urban poor? Was the patriarchal family structure naturally superior, or did racial minorities simply have to conform to mainstream nuclear family norms for mainstream acceptance?

At the time, 23 percent of urban nonwhite marriages were dissolved through divorce or absent fathers versus only 8 percent of urban white mar-

riages, with 24 percent of black babies born out of wedlock versus 3 percent of whites. Double the black statistics and make the white stats match the 1964 black stats, and you have today's data. "Less than half of all Negro children," Moynihan reported, "reach the age of 18 having lived their lives with both of their parents." A review in *The New York Times* last October (10/22/15) reports that black boys are more likely than girls to underperform in school and engage in drug and violent behavior. Without mentioning Moynihan, they summarized the current data as suggesting that "impoverished households are more likely to be led by single mothers, and boys suffer from a lack of male role models."

In his highly detailed investigation on the impact of the Moynihan Report, Geary searched all the pertinent archival collections and cites every article dealing with Moynihan ever written in the leading social scientific, black American and prominent liberal, progressive and conservative magazines and Moynihan archives, many of them in previously unused sources, and interviewed key surviving participants. He seems never to have thrown a file card away.

The style of his middle research chapters is heavy going, repetitious but not turgid. Geary writes that an analysis of the contradictions and flaws in the arguments on all sides reveals the debate's complexity and results in a history without heroes or villains and with lessons for the present. His conclusion sides with Moynihan's critics but is mostly a critique of the prevailing liberalism which, despite its shifting, still inadequately grasps that our society overwhelmingly favors the wealthy and powerful at the expense of most Americans, especially the poor and working class. For Geary, the family-centered focus of the Moynihan report was insufficiently radical.

But Geary the writer omits a key dimension of Moynihan the public in-

tellectual. Moynihan wanted not simply to criticize Americans but to prod voters. His key thesis was that for the majority of blacks, civil rights legislation was only a dimly lit corridor to the light of full dignity. They needed jobs and wages—a family wage—and the only way to achieve this was to persuade more comfortable Americans to move beyond their entrenched individualism towards a greater solidarity which Moynihan hoped to arouse by focusing on the family and what all families need to bring up their children in authentic hope.

Geary explicitly notes the influence of Moynihan's Catholicism on his thinking. He attended Catholic schools as a boy, had strong ties to Catholic social welfare organizations and served on the board of the National Catholic Social Action Conference, delivering the keynote ad-

dress at its 1964 meeting. He writes that Catholic social teaching provided Moynihan with a moral vocabulary to attack economic inequality. But in his conclusion, Geary simply pronounces the need for a more radically egalitarian society and provides nary a hint about any pragmatically oriented moral vocabulary. **America's** more demanding readers will look beyond the present era's "culture wars" to their own critically evolving tradition for the relationship between national and international solidarity and how they affect families. They might well conclude that not only was the Moynihan Report "insufficiently radical" but also "insufficiently Catholic" and that the two terms, properly understood, belong closer together.

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**JAMES R. KELLY** is emeritus professor of sociology at Fordham University.

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

## FOR BETTER OR WORSE

### **KEEPING THE VOW** **The Untold Story of Married** **Catholic Priests**

By D. Paul Sullins  
Oxford University Press. 336p \$29.95

Will celibacy be mandatory for future Roman Catholic priests? Or will optional celibacy become the rule, as it is in all the other 20 rites in communion with Rome? Contested questions about celibacy and priesthood are not about to disappear.

Yet it is little known that 80 or so married ordained Latin Rite priests *already* serve in a fourth of American dioceses—mostly in the Southwest. These married priests have come to the Catholic Church from the Episcopal Church, whose petitions for priesthood as Roman Catholics were made possible in 1980. In June of that year Pope John Paul II finally "opened the

door to Rome" by approving the norms for what became known as the pastoral provisions for priests seeking acceptance into the Catholic Church.

What are these married priests like, and how did they come to join the Catholic Church? D. Paul Sullins, a sociologist, who is himself a former Episcopal priest, has provided a careful research study of these priests, their wives and their process of becoming Catholic. Then he gives his own thoughtful reflections on the relation of celibacy, marriage and the secular priesthood. As a good sociologist, Sullins gathers his information from interviews, surveys, other pertinent research studies and relevant church documents. Readers are provided with 47 tables, figures and graphs, many notes and an extensive appendix with more documentation. Responses of these married priests and their wives

are compared with those of different cohorts of celibate priests and to surveys of “active laity”—i.e., those Catholics who go to church regularly. Personal interviews provide more insights, along with quoted comments that enliven the narrative.

Sullins confirms the general impression that younger diocesan priests have become more traditional than earlier priests of the 1970s. Today’s priests are more accepting of the status quo, including the celibacy rule. (Of course the 27,000 priests who resigned to marry since the ’70s have voted with their feet.) Yet the converted married priests and their wives are more traditional on contested faith and moral issues than current celibate priests, who in turn are more traditionally orthodox than the “active” laity.

The married priests were in their late 40s and established with families by the time they were became as Roman Catholics priests. They report themselves to be joyfully fulfilled in their priestly life, more than current celibate priests. Although working longer hours, these married priests spend more time in prayer and devotions but have to schedule their workloads to fulfill family obligations.

The priests’ wives also reported themselves to be happy, but less than their husbands. Wives had lost their defined social roles had made sacrifices in disrupting their families and faced financial hardship. Granted, the role of the pastor’s wife in Protestant denominations is known to be difficult, but in Roman Catholic parishes it is non-existent. Loneliness was often the result. Yet all of these wives fully endorsed and supported their husbands in their decisions. They saw their own religious vocations as sup-

porting the vocation of their husbands. They followed their lead and willingly made the necessary sacrifices. Sullins describes the stresses and subordination of a priest’s wife to her husband’s vocation as similar to that of the wives of corporate business leaders. These marital models were not much influenced by feminism.

In fact, the issue of ordaining women and gays as priests and bishops had been the last straw in pushing these married priests and their wives out of the Episcopal Church. Their traditional theological and moral beliefs had led them to judge that theologically educated men were “intellectual and conscience converts,” who after lengthy struggles felt pushed and pulled to follow Newman’s example and “swim the Tiber.” And a heroic swim it appears to have been.

They had to give up assured career achievements, settled social status and financial security for an uncertain future. After petitioning American bishops to sponsor them, they endured arduous interviews, theological tests,

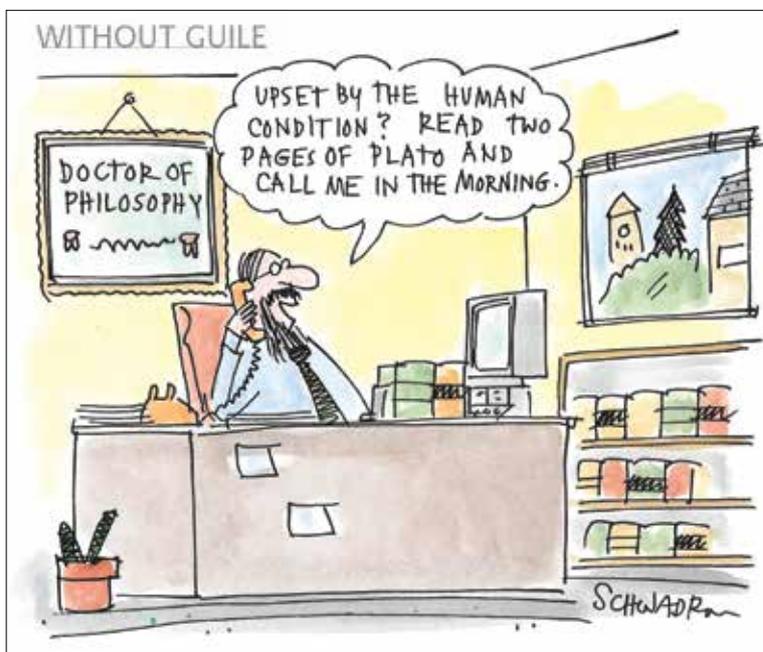
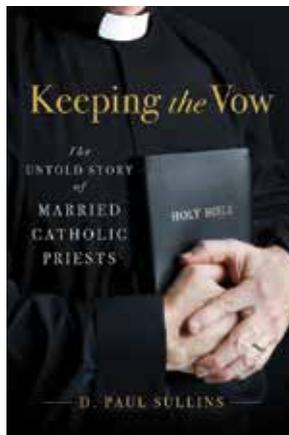
psychological examinations of the individual priest’s fitness and of the stability of their marriages. Mounds of bureaucratic paperwork (often inefficiently handled) accompanied complicated negotiations on arrangements for work deployment, family housing and financial arrangements. In an appendix Sullins provides a financial analysis

that shows that, contrary to assumptions, married priests are not much more expensive to support than celibate priests in established rectories. But celibates are more available for reassignment by bishops than those with family concerns.

In the end bishops, marred priests, wives and families were happy with the general outcomes.

The laity and celibate priests in the parishes welcomed the married priests. Occasionally the more traditional views of the new Catholics created tension. Ironically, while the married priests and their wives vigorously asserted that their priestly ministries were equal to, if not more dedicated than that of celibate priests, they did not all endorse a change in the celibacy rules.

In his concluding reflections, Sullins seems to agree with these contradictions. Married priests can serve as effectively as celibate priests and be happier as individuals. But celibacy is better for the church as a whole as a symbol of transcendence. It gives a valuable witness to a secular culture. He sees that a married priesthood has other good values and can work well; but celibates are



more available for assignments by their bishops and give a higher form of witness. A celibate priest in a parish can also give witness to marital fidelity and inclusively relate to all as family.

I too agree with the goods of both married and celibate priests. Yet in privileged, comfortable, all-male parish settings with celibacy enforced as a rule, there is a danger that celibates can become a priestly caste who cannot easily relate intimately to parishioners as a family. I see the challenge for the future church to create a priesthood that can include the complementary goods of marriage and celibacy.

For full disclosure, I report my own conversion to Roman Catholicism, which makes me very sympathetic to the decisions of these married priests. I too have found joy in the fullness of Roman Catholicism and its authoritative, rich tradition. As a “conscience” and “intellectual” convert, I too was inspired

by the great Cardinal Newman. I was most inspired by his thoughts on conscience and the evolution of doctrine through experiences of change.

Christianity’s God is revealed as “One Who Makes All Things New.” The Second Vatican Council’s proclamation of an ever reforming church leads me to a Gospel feminism that believes in the possibility of ordaining women. Here I have to disagree with Sullins and his good company of admirable married priests. I am grateful to them for their ministry and their faithful commitment to the Roman Catholic Church. More subversively, I hope that their good example as married priests will have more influence in the future church than their conservative ideals.

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**SIDNEY CALLAHAN**, a psychologist, is author of *Called to Happiness: Where Faith and Psychology Meet*.

KEVIN M. DOYLE

## ROME’S RESISTANCE

### CHURCH OF SPIES

#### The Pope’s Secret War Against Hitler

By Mark Riebling  
Basic Books. 384p \$29.99

America’s deftly damning review in 1999 of *Hitler’s Pope*—John Cornwell’s 430-page indictment of Pius XII—failed to credit Cornwell on one score. Without breaking prosecutorial stride, Cornwell managed a subchapter on Pius’s collaboration with the German resistance. “His Holiness was the Führer’s man, well, except when His Holiness was trying to overthrow the Führer.”

Unfortunately, this core contradiction neither derailed Cornwell’s best-seller nor created immediate demand for a book doing justice to a great untold story of intrigue. Fortunately,

however, that book has finally arrived in Mark Riebling’s *Church of Spies: The Pope’s Secret War Against Hitler*.

Riebling recounts the early enlistment of Pius as a co-conspirator with high-ranking German officers who repeatedly attempted Hitler’s removal. Fearing the Allied subjugation of a Hitlerless Germany, the officers used Pius to seek assurances of respect for a country restored by “decent Germans.” Pius’s role broadened, though.

The Vatican, along with German Jesuits, plus Alfred Delp, S.J., Dominicans and Benedictines, became both integral to preparations for a stable post-coup Germany and linked to

every major resistance effort.

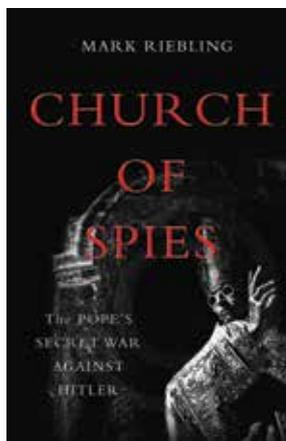
Central to all this was Josef Mueller, a Bavarian lawyer trusted by Rome. Mueller became a courier, coordinator and conniver, thanks to the resister Wilhelm Canaris, who headed German military intelligence. With sly audacity worthy of “Homeland’s” Saul Berenson, Canaris stationed Mueller as a Vatican-centered operative who “posed” as the disgruntled German he actually was. Spymaster Canaris ran brilliant interference for his double agent until Mueller’s arrest in 1943 and the S.S.’s recovery of blueprints to Hitler’s bunker from Mueller’s law office.

Despite scrupulous primary sourcing and endorsements from the heavyweights Michael Burleigh and Sir Martin Gilbert, some might discount this book as a thriller. Riebling’s account crackles with suspense even after the failed Valkyrie bombing in July 1944. More, Riebling serves up surprises, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s meeting in the Vatican crypt with Robert Leiber, S.J., Pius’s closest aide and advisor.

Notwithstanding his sin of good storytelling, however, Riebling effectively razes the caricature of a wartime pontiff prudent-unto-paralyzed in the face of the 20th century’s worst crimes. Whatever Pius’s limitations and blind spots, the scope, depth and duration of his subversive endeavors now defy dispute.

If World War II, the modern papacy or the “Pius War” interests you at all, get this book. But do not take it as some long-awaited winning brief for Pius’s canonization.

Pius’s canonical cause momentarily tempts anyone with a sense of historiographic justice. And it flat-out enthralls those grievance-fueled Catholics who yearn



for the church to thumb her nose at the secular media and academia, some of which have muddied Pius for half a century. "Take that, New York Times!" "How do you like them apples, Professor Goldhagen?"

But, again, for two reasons, *Church of Spies* should not be read as the case for St. Pius XII.

First, Riebling actually sells Pius short in one regard. Riebling casts Pius's "silence" about Nazi crimes as the price for ongoing collaboration with the resistance. Here Riebling exaggerates both Pius's "silence" and, by implication, his ability to rally the faithful against Germany.

In 1941, a brave James Dillon stood in neutral Ireland's Irish Parliamentarian Dail and begged

his country to join the battle against Hitler's "bestly tyranny." Dillon repeatedly staked his moral assessment on the judgments of "Our Holy Father the Pope." As shown in the work of indefatigable Pius champions like William Doyno and Ronald Rychlak (ideologically unlikely friends of mine), similar papal judgments found expression throughout the war, albeit with varying directness.

As to the efficacy of more pointed declarations, read Owen Chadwick's *Britain and the Vatican During World War Two* or general works like Lawrence Soley's *Radio Warfare*. Appreciate then how a flaming papal protest would likely have been embargoed, suppressed, spun and discredited as either counterfeit or a vindica-

tion of Goebbel's nationally broadcast warning in 1937 that the church spread bogus atrocity tales. (Even the Irish government jammed Vatican Radio's anti-Axis broadcasts.)

Second and more important, the reader can draw from Riebling things much richer than arguments for Venerable Pius XII's further elevation. This book inspires and cautions.

Riebling's German protagonists—lay and religious, civilian and soldier, planner and doer—assumed the dove's innocence and the serpent's cunning. Each displayed staggering courage and tenacity in a world slick with blood and betrayal. Some, like Delp and Bonhoeffer, sacrificed their lives. All were prepared to. Mueller sought assurances his daughter would be cared for when he was gone.

Take heart from these heroic examples. And take heed from the example of the nonheroic millions of the period.

For a time, Mueller successfully feigned Hitlerian loyalty despite a fierce anti-Nazi history early on. He managed this because so many Catholics—high and low—eventually succumbed to Nazi intimidation, bribery and seduction, but also because so many lost faith in the power of truth. Unable to identify a morally sound, politically tenable alternative, they accepted a vilely racist movement as a protector against chaos and Communism.

American Catholics have neither Hitler nor Stalin to contend with. Still, let's admit that concerning, inter alia, economic justice, immigration and the unborn, our Republican and Democratic parties mercilessly shred the "seamless garment" from opposite ends. Pray with martyrs Delp and Bonhoeffer that we demonstrate more faith, more patience and more discernment than did our German brothers and sisters in Christ.

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KEVIN M. DOYLE, a New York lawyer, was formerly New York State's public defender, during which no one suffered the death penalty.

## CLASSIFIED

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### Translator

Luis Baudry-Simón, translator (from English into Spanish): newsletters, articles, essays, websites, pastoral letters, ministry resources, motivational conferences, spirituality material, etc. Contact: [luisbaudry-simon@gmail.com](mailto:luisbaudry-simon@gmail.com) (815) 694-0713.

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# Life for the World

BAPTISM OF JESUS (C), JAN. 10, 2016

Readings: Is 42:1–7; Ps 104:1–30; Acts 10:34–38; Lk 3:15–16, 21–22

*“I truly understand that God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34)*

The title “servant of God” (Hebrew, *ebed*) in Isaiah, which appears in a number of “Servant Songs,” is a complex one. When *ebed* was translated from Hebrew to Greek in the Septuagint, it was translated in roughly equal numbers as *pais* (“child”) and as *doulos* (“slave” or “servant”). In the case of Is 42:1, where the Hebrew reads “Here is my servant” (*ebed*), the Septuagint has “Jacob is my child” (*pais*) and adds “Israel is my elect one.” The servant who “will bring forth justice to the nations” and who has been given “as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations,” is identified clearly with the nation of Israel.

When the early Christians, who were themselves Jews, reflected on the “Servant Songs” in the light of Jesus’ life, they saw their Messiah as the servant, not Israel—as in Mt 12:18, where the translation of Is 42:1 designates Jesus, not the nation, as “my child” (*pais*). But how could one man, even the Son of God, be “a light to the nations”? How would life, God’s salvation, be brought to the world by this singular servant?

The first thing Jesus did in his public ministry was to align himself with John the Baptist’s call to repentance and reconciliation among God’s people. Jesus entered into solidarity with Israel, responding to John’s call for

the baptism of all Israel to prepare for God’s coming kingdom.

Jesus saw the baptism for the forgiveness of sins as the means by which his own ministry would begin, both at personal and community levels. For Jesus, the baptism was the mysterious start of his mission, an act in unity with fallen humanity but also the point at which the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit descended on him, and a voice from heaven spoke, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” Jesus’ own mission was now to start.

At the ecclesial level, Jesus was baptized “when all the people were baptized,” not only as a sign of solidarity with Israel but also to prepare them for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which John had told the people the coming Messiah would bring to them. The people were ready, wondering whether John himself might be the Messiah.

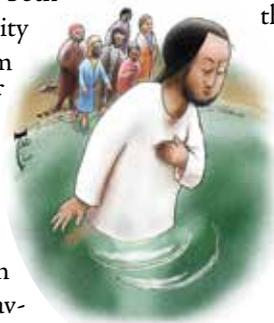
John’s baptism was, therefore, the necessary sign that another baptism of water and spirit was coming with the Messiah. A new people of God was being constituted. Jesus, the servant of God, was not after all alone as a light to the nations. A new Israel would walk with him, baptized with water and the Holy Spirit.

In the Acts of the Apostles, though, Peter is brought to an even newer realization that not only is baptism the means by which the new Israel would walk into God’s kingdom with the Messiah, but that baptism was the

means by which every nation would come to constitute with Israel this new people of God.

Peter’s insight came when he met Cornelius, a Roman soldier, and a group of other Gentiles in Cornelius’s home. Peter had been brought to them through a series of revelatory events by which he came to realize that baptism was not just for Jews but for everyone in every nation. Peter’s shocking admission—“I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him”—is also the realization that the light to the nations includes the nations in baptism.

Peter, in the joy of this realization, offered baptism to



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Meditate on Christ’s own baptism. How does Jesus’ baptism indicate solidarity with Israel and the world? Do you understand your own baptism as personal and ecclesial? How can you bring the light of your baptism to others?

ART: TAD DUNNE

the gathered Gentiles then and there, when the Holy Spirit descended on them. This fulfilled John’s promise, too, that the Messiah would come with water and the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ ministry, which began with his own baptism, would now be brought to all by means of baptism. It was not, Titus says, due to any righteousness on our own part that salvation came to us, “but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Ti 3:5). When the light of the nations appeared, it was always clear that salvation needed to be brought to all. This was the work of one man, who handed on the task to many to bring it to completion, to offer life for the world.

JOHN W. MARTENS is a professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. Twitter: @BibleJunkies.



# The Wedding Reception

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), JAN. 17, 2016

Readings: Is 62:1–5; Ps 96:1–10; 1 Cor 12:4–11; Jn 2:1–11

*“But you have kept the good wine until now” (Jn 2:10)*

No one, except for the rare perverse person, marries anticipating the relationship will be filled with torment, hoping that the marriage will crumble in ruin. Marriages begin with profound love for one’s spouse, the hope of harmony and faith in each other. Marriage is the source of great and profound love, as well as deep loss and numbing pain in some instances.

This is one of the reasons a variety of biblical texts describe the relationship between God and the people of God as a spousal relationship. Nothing quite describes the depth of God’s love for his people as well as the analogy of a spouse’s love for the beloved. And nothing quite describes the waywardness of God’s people, mired in selfishness and crushing sins, like the image of a marriage falling apart because of unfaithfulness.

But what sort of joy emerges when a faltering relationship is restored to its former delight? In Third Isaiah, when the prophet “sings exaltedly of Zion emerging out of the ashes of destruction,” to borrow a phrase from Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., the analogy used is that of marriage between God and Jerusalem. Isaiah promises that “the nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.” Jerusalem will no longer be called “Forsaken” or “Desolate,” but “My Delight Is in Her”!

The prophet says directly, “as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”

Joy and delight are the key features of the relationship between God and Jerusalem, an eros driving the divine love that can be designated only by the marital imagery. The power of this imagery to define the relationship between God and his people is why Jesus begins his ministry in the Gospel of John at the wedding in Cana, the only Gospel in which this scene occurs.

Jesus’ ministry, therefore, begins with a party, overflowing with wine. Well, it was overflowing, which is why Jesus’ mother intercedes and encourages him to rectify the situation “when the wine gave out.” Jesus seems to challenge Mary when he responds: “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” Mary’s response, “Do whatever he tells you,” shows that while this was not Jesus’ ultimate “hour,” it was time to reveal his divine nature and mission.

Jesus does, indeed, tell the servants to fill six stone water jars, each of which could contain 20 or 30 gallons, and then draw out the water from them. What they drew out, however, was not water but wine, which was certified by the chief steward.

In fact, the steward called the bridegroom after tasting it, shocked, it seems, by the surplus of superior wine: “Everyone serves the good wine first,

and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” It was baffling. Why did the good wine appear at the end of the wedding reception?

Keeping the party going, and expanding the party in fact, is the point of the wine. We are told that the water was “for the Jewish rites of purification” and that it was held in stone jars. Stone does not impart impurity, so these were indeed used for holding water in purity in Jewish antiquity. That this water was turned into abundant wine indicates

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Think about marital imagery as an analogy for the relationship between God and God’s people in the Bible. How have you experienced God’s love? Is it sometimes a troubled relationship for you? Have you experienced your relationship with God as a wedding reception overflowing with wine?

that if the wedding reception was big, it was about to get bigger. It was the end of one wedding reception and the beginning of another. More guests were on their way.

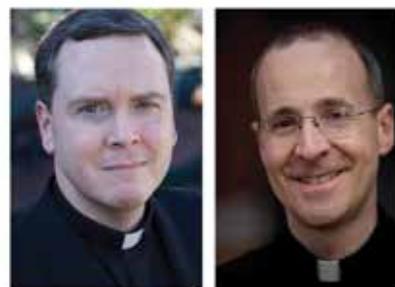
The Gospel of John calls this event, and all of Jesus’ miracles, “signs,” and this was the first of Jesus’ signs, which revealed his glory and caused his disciples to believe in him. The wedding at Cana also is a sign that as God rejoiced over his bride Jerusalem, so Jesus the bridegroom invites his bride, the church, into nuptial relationship. This is a marriage that will last forever, an eternal joy, like a wedding reception where the good wine never runs out.

**JOHN W. MARTENS**



## Where is the church going?

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