America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

FEB. 4, 2013 $3.50

THINKING WITH THE CHURCH

DONALD W. WUERL • RONALD D. WITHERUP
JOHN W. O'MALLEY • AVERY DULLES

The Catholic Worldview of John Ford

THEOLOGICAL ED.

OF MANY THINGS

"My theme is memory," writes the protagonist of *Brideshead Revisited*, "that winged host that soared above me one grey morning in wartime." It is a curious coincidence that the most famous "Catholic" novel of the 20th century, "the sacred and profane memoirs of Captain Charles Ryder," agnostic-cum-believer, should invoke such an image. In the traditional understanding, the memory of the church is the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the descending dove, the one, Jesus tells us, "that the Father will send in my name." This same Holy Spirit, the Lord says, "will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."

This revelation of the Holy Spirit as the church's memory helps us to account for the church's unique relationship with time. Recall the words of the Nicene Creed: The Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things were made, is "born of the Father before all ages." In other words, God in Christ is the Lord of time, the creator of time. The faith, then, is not simply a record of things past. In the Eucharist, for example, we are not re-enacting some event from long ago, akin to the way in which some people might re-enact a Civil War battle. We're not simply remembering our history; we are making history—or rather, we are participating in history in the making. In the Eucharist, the triune God transforms the past into the present, while at the same time affording us a glimpse of the future.

All of this is simply to say that to "think with the church" is to inhabit her memory, to live in the spirit so as "to enter into the mind of the church," in the words of the late Avery Dulles, S.J., "and by this means to interpret the Christian faith in fullest conformity with the intentions of the Lord himself." Our theme for this issue, therefore, is memory, the living memory of the church of Jesus Christ. That last part is important, for the memory of the church, expressed in her teachings, is not an archive of propositions, it is an ongoing encounter with the One who is "both the mediator and the sum total of revelation," in the words of the fathers at Vatican II. When church teaching is separated from its Christocentric origins, then it usually takes the form of merely functional law, rather than personal, loving revelation. Yet as Ronald D. Witherup, S.S., reminds us in this issue, God desires more than our obedience: "He wants us to be fed, strengthened and inspired by God's own holy word."

Also in this issue, Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl examines the relationship between the church's magisterium and the work of theologians. The magisterium is the guardian and authentic interpreter of the church's memory, as expressed in Scripture and tradition. At the same time, His Eminence invites theologians to embrace "a vibrant vision of their role as responsible collaborators in the teaching of the church." The historian John W. O'Malley, S.J., sets forth some principles for interpreting the Second Vatican Council, surely a memorable event in the church's history. Lastly, **America** inaugurates in this issue a new feature we're calling Vantage Point. From time to time, we will re-print some article from our past that might help you make sense of the present. This week's entry is an article from 1997 by Avery Dulles, S.J., in which he examines how the Ignatian charism helped form some of the 20th century's greatest theological minds.

If you don't mind my saying so, it all makes for really interesting reading. It's also a chance, perhaps, to inhabit anew the church's beautiful, life-giving memory; an opportunity, in the words of Charles Ryder, to find "that low door in the wall, which others, I knew, had found before me, which opened on an enclosed and enchanted garden, which was somewhere, not overlooked by any window, in the heart of that grey city."

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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Published by Jesuits of the United States

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106 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019-3803

Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596

E-mail: america@americamagazine.org; letters@americamagazine.org
Web site: www.americamagazine.org.
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www.americamagazine.org VOL. 208 NO. 3, WHOLE NO. 4998 FEBRUARY 4, 2013

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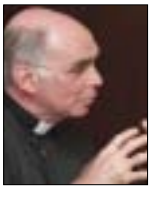
ON THE WEB

The Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, right, talks about the legacy of **John Courtney Murray, S.J.,** on our podcast. Plus, a forum on the future of **Catholic education** and clips from the films of **John Ford**. All at americamagazine.org.



Good Food Gone Bad

The Institute of Mechanical Engineers wants you to listen to your mother. More specifically, a report issued by the group urges consumers to follow the traditional—yet increasingly urgent—plea heard at dinner tables everywhere: Stop wasting your food.

"Global Food: Waste Not, Want Not," reports that up to half of the four billion tons of food produced each year worldwide is wasted. In many developing nations, inefficiencies in farming techniques, transportation and refrigeration cause food to go bad before it ever reaches a market. In countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, it is not the infrastructure that is a problem so much as the attitudes of consumers. More often than not, both consumers and purchasers reject imperfect-looking but perfectly edible produce, and consumers allow food to rot in refrigerators at home.

Americans often view food as a low-cost commodity, in some cases with good reason. The report states, for example, that between 2008 and 2010 the price of cereal remained relatively static. When inflation is considered, the cost per pound actually decreased. But the report argues that, given the current and projected economy, food prices are likely to rise and "waste control programmes will be much more beneficial in economic and political terms."

Improved infrastructure and technology can go a long way to help developing nations waste less. But citizens of developed nations must overhaul the way they plan meals and purchase food. Huge amounts of land, fertilizers and water are used to produce the food we eat. When we allow good food to go bad, we are not just wasting the energy the food could have provided to consumers, but the energy used to produce it as well.

The Coming Population Bust

In 1968 Dr. Paul Ehrlich cast a Malthusian gloom over the American psyche with his book *The Population Bomb*. The bestseller issued a series of dire warnings about looming famine, scarcity and instability driven by unrestrained human population growth. These days, however, an emerging actual population threat might inspire a different title to an Ehrlich follow-up: "Population Bust."

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the world's seven-billionth human entered this vale of tears sometime in March 2012, double the population in 1968. But for the first time in human history the number of years required to add that next billion did not decrease; it lengthened, from 12 years to 13. Population growth is slowing so quickly, in fact, that within the lifetime of some of the earth's current human inhabitants, the total world population will begin shrinking. Societies worldwide are coming closer to the "replacement rate" of 2.1 live births per woman. Western Europe confronts a population reduction of 110 million, from 460 million to 350 million, by the end of the century. Population losses will be even more severe in other nations: Russia, China, Japan.

The U.S. population for years has been held up only by higher birthrates among immigrant families; but that demographic factor, perhaps owing to the Great Recession, has collapsed, and in 2011, the United States recorded its lowest birthrate ever. For decades the developed world has agonized over the threat of overpopulation. The emerging numbers suggest, however, that a self-propelling cycle of underpopulation will prove a far more existential threat to the future of humanity.

End the War

"How will this conflict end?" Speaking about the ongoing "war on terror" at the Oxford Union in November 2012, Jeh Johnson, then general counsel for the U.S. Department of Defense, raised this critical question. Mr. Johnson warned, "In its 12th year, we must not accept the current conflict, and all that it entails, as the 'new normal.'" Rather, "there will come a tipping point" when the "armed conflict" should be considered concluded.

Two particular issues, civil liberties and financial burden, should push Americans to favor quickly ending this global war and returning to a more customary legal framework for its counterterrorism effort.

In the days following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Congress granted extraordinary wartime powers to the president. More than 11 years later, the commander-in-chief continues to treat the entire world as a battlefield through an increasing number of drone strikes, carried out in secret, in countries like Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. At home, key provisions of the Patriot Act as well as warrantless surveillance continue to be renewed.

Meanwhile, this global war has drained about $2 trillion from the federal budget in the past decade. As President Obama follows through on his public commitment to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan "at a steady pace" so that Afghan forces can assume full responsibility for that country's security in 2014, the American people should push Mr. Obama to go even further and put an end to the entire "war" on terror.

Raising the Bar

The American public school system has taken some hits in recent years: the disparity between white suburban schools and inner-city institutions; the rise of charter schools and the public demand for vouchers; labor disputes that prompted Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York to compare the teachers' union to the National Rifle Association; the battle over teacher evaluations and the role of standardized tests, which lead teachers to "teach to the test" rather than teach the material. Finally, there is the frustration of faculty members in second-tier or non-elite colleges facing a class of local public school graduates, some of whom after 12 years cannot distinguish between *there*, *their* and *they're*. And some are among the reported 33 percent of high school graduates who will never read a book.

The American Federation of Teachers, which together with the National Educational Association organizes and speaks for the vast majority of public school teachers, is determined to confront the accusation of mediocrity. Modeled on the training of doctors, lawyers, architects and engineers, a proposed A.F.T. program will require every teacher to pass a "bar examination" before joining the profession. The main instigation was not so much the problems listed above as the results of an international study by the Program for International Student Assessment, which ranks schools in places like Singapore, Shanghai and Finland at the top and the United States far down the list.

This proposal, which deserves broad and deep support as it works its way through 50 state departments of education, could significantly improve public education in the United States. A task force assembled by Randi Weingarten, president of the A.F.T., has spent a year preparing a plan for certification that sets a high standard from the start. College students, including those who major in education, must graduate with at least a B average. As the challenge mounts, word will spread that to be a teacher, you really have to be above average.

With every state setting its own norms, the current U.S. system, said Ms. Weingarten, is a "patchwork lacking consistency" that must be replaced by a systematic, consistent approach that sets high standards and provides monitoring along the way. Ms. Weingarten admits that some teacher training schools do not measure up. But if the A.F.T can set norms for what the teacher needs to know on the first day of teaching, it will force colleges to reset their curriculum and also examine whether they have a reputation for grade inflation.

The A.F.T. wants the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to develop a bar exam to be administered in several parts, consistent with the goals set by the Common Core State Standards, which supply the intellectual backbone for the reform, as well as to test the new teacher's skills in conducting a class. The national survey of new teachers, conducted by the task force of 14 experienced teachers, also highlighted some needs. First-year teachers constitute nearly 10 percent of the workforce; nearly half of these will leave within five years. Among all new teachers, 21 percent say they may leave because of lack of support, low pay and not enough respect for the profession. While satisfied with the academic content in their training, a significant number felt unprepared for that first day in the classroom.

Because it requires the cooperation of 50 states, the reform will take several years, and the public will have to be patient as well as attentive. Here are some suggestions—most of them implicit in the task force report—that should strengthen it. Since learning is a community experience, teachers should know how to create a sense of belonging and cooperation in the class. Just as teacher evaluations should include standardized test scores, student surveys and class visitations, the bar exam should not predominantly be a multiple-choice test but should require class observation and extensive written essays. No one who cannot write well enough to teach basic writing should be a teacher. The exam should be based at least partly on a reading list of classic books that every teacher should have read, including both world literature and "how to" books on teaching.

Just as the basic core areas in the great majority of states include literature, mathematics, science and social sciences, the undergraduate education of teachers should emphasize the liberal arts, especially literature and American history because of the schools' special obligation to produce a literate and informed citizenry. No one should teach at any level without a bachelor's degree nor receive tenure without a master's. The bar exam should include a final hour-long oral exam, independent of the year in "clinical practice," in which the examiners can assess the character and motivation, as well as intellectual stamina, of the man or woman to whom society entrusts its children. It follows that having met these standards, teachers' salaries should rise substantially. The community owes this to teachers and to itself.

MALI

French Forces Step In As Noncombatants Seek Safety

A Catholic bishop in war-torn Mali, whose diocese lies in the path of Islamist insurgents, said "people are hiding in their homes, unable to venture out."

"Although our churches are still intact, people are becoming afraid to enter them," said Bishop Augustin Traore of Segou, Mali. "Our entire Catholic culture will clearly be in danger if this conflict drags on."

As French combat troops prepared to engage Islamist rebels at Diabaly, 90 miles north of Segou, Bishop Traore said, "Until the havoc caused by the French bombing ends and the hostilities cease, no one will be in a position to know what has happened." He warned that the country's churches could face destruction if conflict continues. African forces were expected to join French troops in an attempt to drive insurgents back from central parts of the landlocked country after French jets began bombing rebel-held towns on Jan. 11.

Helen Blakesley, regional information officer for Catholic Relief Services, said more than 200,000 Malians have fled southward since the conflict was accelerated by a March 2012 military coup, while a similar number have escaped to Niger, Burkina Faso, Morocco and Algeria. Blakesley said a tradesman from the rebel-held town of Tombouctou, or Timbuktu, a world heritage site, was renting rooms with 40 members of his extended family in Mali's capital, Bamako, assisted by C.R.S. The man told her more family members were arriving weekly.

Blakely added that the tradesman, Ibrahima Diallo, had been robbed by

GUN CONTROL

National Religious Leaders Mobilize for Action

An ecumenical campaign to halt gun violence issued a call for background checks and the outlawing of "military-style assault weapons," one day before President Obama began a renewed national effort to reduce gun violence. On Jan. 16, the president urged Congress to renew the assault weapons ban, to ban high-capacity ammunition magazines and to require background checks for all gun sales, adding that he would initiate a series of executive orders aimed at curtailing gun trafficking and gun violence.

"We can't put this off any longer," the president said. "Just last Thursday, as TV networks were covering one of [Vice President Joseph Biden's] meetings on this topic, news broke of another school shooting, this one in California. In the month since 20 precious children and six brave adults were violently taken from us at Sandy Hook Elementary, more than 900 of our fellow Americans have reportedly died at the end of a gun—900 in the past month. And every day we wait, that number will keep growing."

It was a tone of urgency that echoed the concerns of a message to the president and Congress in January from Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence. "In light of the tragedy in Newtown—and in Aurora, Tucson, Fort Hood, Virginia Tech, Columbine, Oak Creek and so many more—we know that no more time can be wasted," the group wrote. "Gun violence is taking an unacceptable toll on our society, in mass killings and in the constant day-to-day of senseless death. While we continue to pray for the families and friends of those who died, we must also support our prayers with action.

"We should do everything possible to keep guns out of the hands of people who may harm themselves or others. We should not allow firepower to kill large numbers of people in seconds anywhere in our civil society. And we should ensure that law enforcement

BIENVENUE? French special forces on the road to Segou on Jan. 17.

armed rebels during the five-day truck drive to the capital, which he made with his blind sister and five small children. Blakesley said two women, Fanta Poudiougou and Mariam Dembele, had described fleeing their hometown of Gao, 200 miles southeast of Tombouctou, without their husbands to escape the threatened rape of their young daughters.

She added that both women were "praying negotiations will work," fearing military intervention could place civilians in the crossfire.

Ethnic Tuareg rebels seeking to establish a separate state overran most of northern Mali during 2012, operating alongside the Islamist group Ansar Eddine, which is thought to be linked to Al Qaeda. The two rebel contingents have since had a falling out, and now Islamist militants are leading the attacks on Mali government forces.

Sean Gallagher, the C.R.S. country representative in Mali, said the U.S. bishops' international development agency was providing help to people fleeing from rebel-occupied parts of Mopti Diocese. He added that many northern inhabitants had fled to Segou but were now moving south to Bamako as the insurgent threat to Mopti and Segou increased.

"Conditions aren't so bad in the rural towns, where the autumn harvests were good and there's food available," Gallagher said on Jan. 16. "Since most of the displaced are women and children, it's much harder in urban areas like Bamako, where the priority is to ensure they have enough to eat and can maintain their dignity."

The Catholic Church has six dioceses in Mali, where Catholics make up less than 2 percent of Mali's predominantly Muslim population. Bishop Traore said relations between Christians and Mali's Muslim majority remained good at a "local level" and had not been damaged by the Islamist insurgency, adding that people of all faiths were "vigorously committed" to maintaining the country's secular character.

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has the tools it needs to stop the virtually unrestrained trafficking of guns."

The letter was signed by 47 national religious leaders representing over 80 million Americans from a number of different faith traditions, including United Methodists, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Sikh Council on Religion and Education, the Islamic Society of North America, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and dozens more. Prominent Catholic signatories included Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., Chairman of the bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; the Rev. Larry Snyder, chief executive officer of Catholic Charities USA; John Edmunds, S.T., president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men; and Carol Keehan, D.C., president and C.E.O. of the Catholic Health Association.

Commenting on Faiths United's letter to Congress at a press conference on Jan. 15, Sister Keehan said, "As Catholics, we believe there is a moral imperative to build and maintain safe communities. Part of that means making substantive efforts to address and prevent gun violence, including commonsense measures like banning assault weapons and requiring universal background checks."

Jim Winkler, chair of Faiths United, quickly endorsed the president's proposals. He said the plan "will do much to keep these weapons of mass destruction out of the wrong hands and prevent future tragedies like we saw in Newtown, Conn." "We believe Congress has a moral imperative to enact the life-saving measures" included in the White House proposals, said a statement by the group.

EXECUTIVE ACTION: President Barack Obama signs executive orders on Jan. 16.

Peace Promoters

The United States should provide tireless leadership to ensure a two-state solution in the Middle East, said two leaders of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a letter to President Obama on Jan. 9. "We affirm your support of the two-state solution, promise our support for strong U.S. leadership for peace, and urge you even to consider appointing a high profile envoy in hopes that as in the past this might advance peace and justice in the region," wrote Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, president of the U.S.C.C.B., and Bishop Richard Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace. The bishops acknowledged that actions by both Israelis and Palestinians, including rocket attacks from Gaza and Israeli occupation and settlement policies, have undermined peace in the region, threatening the two-state solution of "a secure and recognized Israel living in peace alongside a viable and independent Palestinian state." The bishops also noted the conflict's heavy toll on the ancient Christian community in the Holy Land.

E.U. Decision Lamented

While applauding the recognition by the European Court of Human Rights of the right of a British airline employee to wear a cross on her uniform, the Vatican lamented the court's denial of the full right of conscientious objection in other cases involving claims of religious discrimination in the United Kingdom. The court on Jan. 15 dismissed cases brought by a British relationships counselor fired after he objected to offering therapy to same-sex couples, a registrar who objected to presiding over same-sex civil partnership ceremonies and a nurse forced from her job for wearing a cross in breach of uniform policy. Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, the Vatican secretary for relations with states, said on Jan. 16 that the cases demonstrate how "questions relating to freedom of conscience and religion are complex," in particular in European society, marked by religious diversity and "the corresponding hardening of secularism." But "regarding morally controversial subjects, such as abortion or homosexuality, freedom of consciences must be respected," the archbishop said.

In Syria, Nature Is Also a Casualty

Among the disasters that mark a devastating winter of war in Syria can now be added the progressive destruction of the environment, including small, previously protected wooded areas in Syrian Mesopotamia. Syrian Orthodox Archbishop Eustathius Matta Roham, titular of the Metropolitan See of Jazira and Euphrates, saw for himself the ruinous effects of the war in a recent visit to the National Park. "The poor Bedouin from the suburbs of Hassaké," the Archbishop wrote, "have cut off the old trees there." The "looting" for fuel took place, he said, "under the eyes of the guardians of the park," who did not have the heart to intervene because of the obvious need to survive the cold weather. The deforestation and environmental damage, the archbishop said, are a side effect of a Syrian catastrophe that already includes "deaths, destruction, inflation, poverty, immigration, kidnapping."

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS


Francis D. Kelly

Msgr. Francis D. Kelly, a priest of the Diocese of Worcester, Mass., was installed on Jan. 20 as a **canon of St. Peter's Basilica** at the Vatican, becoming the first U.S.-born canon in almost 50 years. ✦ Anti-abortion groups from 20 different countries launched a petition in January to ask the European Parliament to recognize that **life begins at conception.** ✦ Egypt's **President Mohamed Morsi** assured a delegation of visiting U.S. senators in Cairo on Jan. 16 of his respect for monotheistic religions after reports surfaced of anti-Semitic statements about Jews and Zionists he made in 2010. ✦ The number of **suicide deaths in the U.S. military** surged to a record 349 in 2012—more than the 295 Americans who died fighting in Afghanistan that year. ✦ **The 112th Congress,** adjourned in January, was the least productive in history, with just 219 bills passed, compared to an average of 420, and the least popular, with an approval rating of 10 percent (lower than "Communism"). ✦ After two eviction-related suicides in Spain, members of the locksmiths union in Pamplona took just 15 minutes to decide that they would no longer assist **Spanish banks** in the execution of evictions.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR.

State of the Unions

In the mid-20th-century United States, about a third of all workers belonged to a union. Today, however, only about 12 percent of American workers are union members. Mass public opinion has taken an anti-union turn. In one recent survey, when asked whether "labor unions" were "necessary to protect the working person," a third of all Americans, including 39 percent of Independents and 57 percent of Republicans, said no.

But what do you suppose most average working people would say to a nearly 14 percent increase in wages, a 28 percent greater chance of receiving employer-paid health benefits, and a 54 percent greater chance of an employer-paid pension? According to careful empirical research by the Economic Policy Institute, those are the wage premiums and other benefits associated with being a union member.

About 6.1 million Americans lost their jobs between 2009 and 2011. By 2012, about 30 percent of them had taken jobs that paid four-fifths or less than they had been making; 27 percent remained jobless; and 17 percent had given up searching for work.

As the Harvard economist Richard Freeman and others have documented, the ongoing collapse of the American labor movement has figured in the steady rise of economic inequality, whether measured by income or wealth. It has also figured in the stagnation of real median income, uneven growth in productivity gains and the persistence of extreme rates of poverty in many urban communities with majority-minority populations.

An "America without unions," defined as an America in which fewer than one worker in 20 belongs to a union, would be a disaster for unionized and nonunionized workers alike, for the desperate-for-a-job unemployed and for the all-American ideal of a middle-class democracy anchored by sustainably middle-class families.

The church teaches and preaches an unambiguously pro-labor doctrine.

An America without unions would also be a constitutional and public law travesty. Given the ongoing spike in anti-labor legislation in many states, by 2032 and the 100th anniversary of the Norris-LaGuardia Act, which gave federal protection to collective bargaining rights, workers' rights might actually be less well protected by law than they were just after the New Deal.

And an America without unions would violate core Catholic teachings.

Some otherwise estimable Catholic thinkers have claimed or implied that in the Catholic tradition "human capital" is freighted with no more moral significance than nonhuman factors of production and financial capital. But they are far wrong. The church teaches and preaches an unambiguously pro-labor doctrine. That doctrine is explicated not only in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, but also in numerous papal encyclicals, in other Vatican edicts and, here in the United States, in the statements by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Here, for example, is the preamble to the U.S.C.C.B.'s latest statement on "labor-employment":

> Through the combination of social and economic change, trade union organizations experience greater difficulty in carrying out their task of representing the interests of workers, partly because Governments, for reasons of economic utility, often limit the freedom or the negotiating capacity of labor unions.... The repeated calls issued within the Church's social doctrine...for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honored today even more than in the past....

Hearing those words cited as evidence that the church stands firmly with labor, a prominent Catholic thinker asserted (privately) that the statement reflected "only the views of certain bishops."

Well, it does reflect the views of at least one bishop—the one that sits on the throne of St. Peter in Rome. It is a direct quotation from Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical "Charity in Truth" (2009). The pope has made numerous additional pro-labor pronouncements since then.

Starting with the 161 Catholics in Congress, I hope that we will heed the call to honor workers' rights and the "associations that can defend" these rights.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR. *is the author of* Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future *(Univ. of California Press, 2007).*

Bishops and theologians in the service of the new evangelization

CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING

The Noble Enterprise

BY DONALD W. WUERL

In the Mass, at which I was privileged to be a concelebrant, recently celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI at the close of the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which had as its theme, "the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian faith," the Holy Father reflected on the healing of the blind man Bartimaeus. Pope Benedict said that this "is the last miraculous healing that Jesus performs before his passion, and it is no accident that it should be that of a blind person, someone whose eyes have lost the light.... It represents man who needs God's light, the light of faith, if he is to know reality truly and to walk the path of life." The Holy Father observed that Bartimaeus represents "those who live in regions that were evangelized long ago, where the light of faith has grown dim and people have drifted away from God, no longer considering Him relevant for their lives." The "new evangelization" that is needed especially in those regions, the pope remarked, "applies to the whole of the Church's life." The synod thus offers us the opportunity to reflect upon the role of the church, "the whole of the Church's life," including that of bishops and theologians, in the great work of the new evangelization that seeks to heal the deepest blindness of all, groping in the dark "where the light of faith has grown dim."

THEOLOGICAL ENCOUNTER: **Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl speaks with Sara Butler, M.S.B.T., and Luisa Ciupa, S.A.M.I., both experts at the Synod of Bishops.**

CARDINAL DONALD W. WUERL *is archbishop of Washington, D.C.*

It is in that light that the synod spoke of the theological task of the new evangelization and how theologians share in the church's primary mission of passing on the faith. As the synod's Proposition 30 states: "Theologians are called to carry out this service [dialogue between faith and the other disciplines and the secular world] as a part of the salvific mission of the Church. It is necessary that they think and feel with the Church (*sentire cum Ecclesia*)."

Ecclesial Task of the Theologian

The particular role of the theologian presupposes but goes beyond a catechetical presentation of the faith, "beyond" not by contradiction—authentic theology does not presume to generate new teachings—but "beyond" in depth, in intensity and in precision. It is the privilege of theologians to delve more profoundly and systematically into the meaning of the faith, according to the ancient adage, *fides quaerens intellectum* ("faith seeking understanding"). As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, the faith of the church is enriched through "the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts" and in particular "theological research [which] deepens knowledge of revealed truth" (No. 94).

The synod offered its support to what Pope Benedict referred to as the correct hermeneutic of theological development. Proper theological investigation must come out of a continuity and connectedness with the living apostolic tradition of the church. As the synod's Proposition 12 states, "The Synod Fathers recognize the teaching of Vatican II as a vital instrument for transmitting the faith in the context of the New Evangelization. At the same time, they consider that the documents of the Council should be properly read and interpreted. Therefore, they wish to manifest their adherence to the thought of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, who has indicated the hermeneutical principle of reform within continuity, so as to be able to discover in those texts the authentic spirit of the Council."

Theology, then, is neither simply catechesis nor a radically independent academic discipline. It is always tethered to the faith taught by the church, much as a natural scientist's work is tethered to the facts of physical laws. Theology enjoys a legitimate autonomy, but an autonomy bounded by the standards of the field and the boundaries of what constitutes spurious or fruitless investigation. There is a broad field for theological exploration and critique, for instance, from the "underlying assumptions and explicit formulations of doctrine...to questions about their meaning or their doctrinal and pastoral implications, to comparison with other doctrines, to the study of their historical and ecclesial context, to translation into diverse cultural categories, and to correlation with knowledge from other branches of human and scientific inquiry" (*The Teaching Ministry of the Diocesan Bishop*). These investigations, however, are not made in isolation from the received faith of the church, but are made presuming that faith, and in light of that faith.

It is essential for the health and progress of theology, then, that it take place within the context of a clearly cohesive community of faith, that its creativity be channeled and maximized by boundaries delineated by the received revelation. Identifying these boundaries of the authentic faith constitutes the bishop's contribution to the flourishing of the theological sciences. Theirs is the duty to see that the noble enterprise of theology is integrated into the overall mission of the church to transmit the good news.

It follows that theological opinion can never be placed on an equal footing with the authoritative teaching of those to whom Christ has entrusted the care of his flock. Nevertheless, the bishop and the theologian have a special relationship that can and should be reciprocally enriching. "The Church cannot exist without the teaching office of the bishop," *The Teaching Ministry of the Diocesan Bishop* states, "nor thrive without the sound scholarship of the theologian. Bishops and theologians are in a collaborative relationship. Bishops benefit from the work of theologians, while theologians gain a deeper understanding of revelation under the guidance of the magisterium. The ministry of bishops and the service rendered by theologians entail a mutual respect and support." This same idea is found in the text of the International Theological Commission, "Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria," where we read that "the magisterium needs theology…[and] also theological competence and a capacity for critical evaluation…. On the other hand, the magisterium is an indispensable help to theology…" (No. 39).

The Challenge of Theologians

An article in this publication ("The Road Ahead," by Richard Gaillardetz, 9/24/12) laments that a recent intervention by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith does not respect the "critical exploratory function of theology" in "challenging faulty arguments, raising difficult questions and proposing alternative frameworks for the church's prayerful discernment." Much of the work of theologians, the article states, "can be supportive of the magisterium," but then concludes that "the work of theology cannot be limited to this." If authoritative teaching does not withstand the challenges of theologians, the article concludes, then "perhaps honest theological exploration will yield insights for a development or even a substantive change in the teaching."

Therein lies the difficulty. The magisterium, the church's teaching office, does not assert that in its proclamation of the faith it has exhausted every development, nuance or application of the faith in the circumstances of our day. But the church does define that the authoritative teachers of the faith will not lead us into error and away from Christ. No

one else can rightfully make that claim. We turn to the teaching of the church not for speculation, but for sure guidance on the way to eternal life with Christ. To suggest that a "substantive change in the teaching" of the church is a legitimate fruit of theological work underscores the different ecclesial view held by some theologians today. Such an approach to theology inevitably bestows on theological work the aura, at times even the explicit declaration, of a "parallel magisterium," one that has the competence not simply to deepen our understanding of the faith, but to graft onto it teachings extraneous to the deposit of faith that Jesus entrusted to the church as its steward.

The true challenge of theologians is not their presumptive authority to challenge established teachings of the magisterium, but rather their vocation also to challenge themselves in exploring more deeply, more intensively, more prayerfully the truths of the faith handed onto us by Christ through the church. It is the challenge to accept as a starting point for their investigations the teachings of the church and the authority of those entrusted with passing on the faith and guarding it from erroneous intrusions. It is the challenge to resist the temptation to bend to the currents of every age, to accommodate Catholic teaching to the penchants of the times rather than penetrating the times with the wisdom of Catholic teaching. It is the challenge to realize that faith is ultimately a gift of grace, the bracing call to follow Jesus that comes directly from him, not the work of rendering Catholic teaching more comfortable and agreeable to our way of life.

Catholic theologians, whether or not their works are used as "textbooks" in Catholic institutions of learning, are collaborators in the teaching mission of the church, and cannot exempt themselves through appeals to a false and counter-productive freedom from accountability. To do so would in fact denigrate the noble vocation of theology. The great Catholic theologians of the past and present are remarkable not only for their profound insights and provocative theological speculation, but also for their humble recognition of their own fallibility and their acceptance, even desire, for the church's appraisal of their work. This humility was grounded in their recognition of the important role they played in the church's life and in the church's teaching of the faith, whether or not their works were used in any official teaching capacity. As theologians themselves rightly remind us, theirs is not simply a catechetical vocation; it is precisely their vocation to deepen our understanding of the church's faith that renders their work especially needful of robust accountability.

Theology and the New Evangelization

Theologians who embrace this vibrant vision of their role as responsible collaborators in the teaching of the church are

well poised to contribute to the new evangelization urged by the Holy Father and the recent Synod of Bishops. There are numerous people, particularly in the Western world, who have already heard of Jesus. Our call as Christians is to stir up again and rekindle in the midst of their daily life and concrete situation a new awareness and familiarity with Jesus, to re-propose his Gospel in all its depth, its intensity and its transformative power. Theologians, in their efforts to penetrate more deeply our understanding of the deposit of faith, to draw new conclusions of that faith, to render more precise our understanding of the church's teaching, to apply the truths of faith and morals to our time and our culture, and to find better approaches to proclaim the faith effectively to the people of today, play a crucial role in advancing the banner of the new evangelization.

This dynamic vision of theology within "the whole of the Church's life" draws its vitality from the grace of faith. For theologians to be agents of the new evangelization, they must first perceive themselves as such, as important cooperators in the work of the church, as credible and convicted believers. Their personal faith is not an impediment to objective and fruitful theological work, but rather its prerequisite. In *The Nature and Mission of Theology,* Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger observed that as "there is no theology without faith, there can be no theology without conversion…the opportunity for creative theology increases the more that faith becomes real, personal experience; the more that conversion acquires interior certainty." It is faith that allows theologians to stand on the pillar of revealed truth, to sense the need for theological accountability, to perceive the magisterium as intrinsic to their work. Natural scientists are grateful for the existence of physical laws since their work is only sound, only fruitful, when it respects the foundational truths of those concrete boundaries. In a similar way, the church's teaching office, when grasped in the context of faith, is a great assistance to the scholarly research of theologians since its judgments are determinative of good theology.

Bartimaeus, the Holy Father reflected in his homily at the close of the synod, represents "man who needs God's light, the light of faith, if he is to know reality truly and to walk the path of life." There is no more urgent task in the church today than shedding that light anew upon those thirsting for the truth, for the beauty, for the goodness of the Gospel. Bishops and theologians both contribute, powerfully and distinctly, to that momentous project. On their fruitful collaboration depends not only the renewal of vibrant Catholic theology, but to a large extent the renewal of the church herself and her readiness to meet the great commission of our day, the commission to re-propose the Gospel to a weary world with clarity, with joy and with conviction. On their fruitful collaboration depends, in great measure, the fruitful harvest of the new evangelization. A

All Hands on Desks

A call for a Catholic mobilization to finance our schools

BY THOMAS J. HEALEY, JOHN ERIKSEN AND B. J. CASSIN

The nation's Catholic schools have disappeared with such regularity over the years that the recent announcement by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia that it was shuttering 48 schools, affecting 24,000 students, had more the feel of postscript than headline. Nearly one in five Catholic schools has folded over the past decade, and each report of mass closings evokes a familiar scene: the public shakes its head and educators scramble for new models to stanch the blood-letting. In some cases, these models—public charter schools, for example, and independent faith-based schools like the Cristo Rey and NativityMiguel networks—have been quite successful. But new structures are only part of the solution to America's vanishing Catholic schools. The system that manages Catholic education has become so outdated and sclerotic that only by tackling a range of fundamental issues can parochial schools hope to thrive again.

Data Points

No issues play a more pivotal role in the prescription for change than data-driven accountability and transparency. In an age where information and disclosure are joining forces to rewrite the rules by which companies and organizations operate, the Catholic Church appears to be opaque and secretive. That is unfortunate, since it has an excellent story to tell about its elementary and high schools. Not only do they educate vast numbers of underserved children in inner-city neighborhoods—thereby relieving the public sector of that burden—but they have set and met high standards, proved by the number of minority students who excel academically and then go on to pursue higher education.

Yet very few dioceses collect or publish data that reflect those achievements. It should not be that way. If Catholic schools hope to improve, they must earn the trust of the public, including philanthropists, advocates and the church community itself. This means being completely open about their performance, warts and all. Catholic school systems should publish academic performance and other data, broken down by grade level within each school and on a school-by-school level within each diocese. The data should be compared to that of other dioceses whenever possible, as well as to charter and public schools to provide the fullest possible picture.

Unless Catholic schools find ways to reduce operating expenses—of which the largest component is personnel—they will remain on the edge of a financial abyss.

One diocese that opted for that approach is Paterson, N.J. The public can access performance data on each of the diocese's 38 schools through its Web site (www.patersondiocese.org). These so-called "balanced score cards" report financial information (total cost to educate a student, tuition charge per-student); enrollment and demographics; faculty information (student-to-teacher ratio, percentage of teachers with advanced degrees, percentage of returning teachers from the previous year); academic performance (by school and by grade level for reading, language, math and science); and academic growth (percentage of students showing at least one year of academic improvement).

Public schools are no strangers to this level of transparency. For the church to embrace it might seem a bit awkward at first, but in the long run the exercise would lead to a healthy reliance on even more data in managing the schools and give the public a better understanding of the unique challenges religious institutions face.

Technology Upgrades

Another area where Catholic schools can reap substantial long-term rewards is technology. But once again, a paradigm change is required within an educational system that has

THOMAS J. HEALEY, *a retired partner of Goldman Sachs, is currently a senior fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He served as assistant secretary of the treasury under President Reagan.* **JOHN ERIKSEN** *is the former superintendent of schools in the Diocese of Paterson, N.J.* **B. J. CASSIN** *is a venture capitalist whose private foundation has supported the replication of the Cristo Rey and NativityMiguel school models.*

GETTING CREATIVE: A blessing of the bikes serves as a school fundraiser in Fairhaven, Mass.

CNS PHOTO/KENNETH J. SOUZA, THE ANCHOR

done the bare minimum to stay abreast of the information explosion. While the jury is still out on the effectiveness of computers versus traditional instruction, few would disagree that technology can streamline the educational process both in the classroom and in the way that children, educators and parents communicate within and between their respective communities.

There is an even more urgent reason, though, for Catholic schools to take technology to heart: cost management. Unless Catholic schools find ways to reduce operating expenses—of which the largest component is personnel—they will remain on the edge of a financial abyss. Technology can be a critical cost-saving tool. Administrators at Carpe Diem, a tuition-free charter school system in Arizona, for example, have made the educational experience more relevant, efficient and cost-effective by combining half-days of teacher-led instruction with half-days of online instruction. There are savings because fewer teachers staff the classrooms.

Technology is also leaving its mark on classrooms through new applications for tablet devices that essentially replace textbooks. These commercial programs draw on the wealth of open source educational materials available on the Internet. Applications like these have the potential to save schools money, even after the purchase of tablet devices, by eliminating the considerable annual cost of hardcover textbooks.

Rethinking Teacher Performance

First-rate teacher quality has been the hallmark of Catholic education. But to maintain it, the onus is on Catholic educators to apply a new mind-set to how they recruit, train, evaluate, compensate and reward teachers, which means giving serious consideration to merit-based pay and bonuses for exemplary teachers.

In public and Catholic schools alike, too many mediocre principals are enabling mediocre teachers. As Joel Klein, former chancellor of New York City's school system, put it in an article in The Atlantic, "Rather than create a system that attracts and rewards excellent teachers—and imposes consequences for ineffective or lazy ones—we treat all teachers as if they were identical widgets and their perfor-

mance didn't matter." Teacher performance does matter. A new study by researchers at Harvard University and Columbia University, which tracked 2.5 million students for over 20 years, found that the variations between really good and really bad teachers can have a lifelong impact on a child. Students fortunate enough to have had top teachers are less likely to become pregnant as teenagers and more likely to enroll in college and to earn higher income as adults.

While there are many effective ways to train and evaluate the performance of teachers, we underscore the need for Catholic school leaders to reset the way they think about teacher competence. Competence needs to be measured by the most fundamental criterion of all—how well a teacher performs in the classroom. Any winnowing of instructors this model precipitates should be welcomed. And administrators should treat any reduction in the number of teachers as an opportunity to reward those who remain with the increased compensation they deserve.

Giving Tax Credit Where Due

The Catholic school funding-model did not work 20 years ago and today finds itself on life support. How can a school system that serves so many low-income students survive when it depends on tuition and private contributions? When dwindling income fails to keep pace with escalating expenses, sustainability becomes impossible.

The biggest obstacle to sustainability is the exclusion of parochial schools from public financing. If the national ambition is to create the best possible educational system with the public's money, then it should be agnostic about who delivers it. Catholic schools not only serve the church; they serve society in general by educating growing numbers of disadvantaged youngsters—often with better academic results and at less cost per pupil than public schools. Many students at Catholic elementary and high schools, particularly in the inner cities, are not Catholic. On what rational grounds can society continue to deny Catholic schools—which, according to the National Catholic Educational Association, save American taxpayers $20 billion annually—direct public support? The United States is the only major industrial country that does not financially support private and faith-based schools.

Vouchers have been touted in the past but have received tepid or inconsistent support. (The issue was revived—again—during the presidential campaign because of Mitt Romney's interest in vouchers.) Another way around this thorny issue is a tax credit program at the state level that allows indirect funding of religious schools. Under this approach, states allow individuals and businesses to reduce their tax liability by contributing to organizations that disperse these funds to families (often through scholarships), enabling them to pay for their children's religious or private school education. Because these intermediary organizations are nongovernmental, the proceeds avoid church and state entanglements. Tax credit programs save the public money. A nonpartisan report prepared by the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability found that taxpayers saved $1.49 in state education funding for every dollar lost in corporate income tax revenues because of tax credits for scholarship contributions.

Currently, nine states (Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Georgia and Indiana) permit tax credits for education; 13 other states have legislation pending. In 2008 more than $54 million in scholarship money was awarded to children in Arizona through a tax credit program. In Pennsylvania the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Act generates about $80 million annually for low- and middle-income students.

A coordinated, state-by-state effort is needed to strengthen existing tax credit programs and to start such programs in other regions. Supporters of Catholic education might consider joining forces with such organizations as the Center for Education Reform, the Alliance for School Choice and the American Federation for Children. Catholics should be encouraged to write their legislators in support of tax credit and voucher initiatives.

The advocacy movement was given a huge lift by a U.S. Supreme Court decision in April 2011 upholding the use of tax credits to fund religious education in Arizona. That decision could be a springboard for Catholics to become active players in the overhaul of funding for religious education in America.

A Governance Model That Works

The fact that highly effective Catholic hospitals and universities have a progressive form of governance should be a resounding wake-up call for Catholic school leaders. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to governance, the best models are typically built on attributes easily transferable to education: clarity of mission, accountability, a focus on core functions and the ability to put outcomes over egos.

ON THE WEB
From the archives, a forum on Catholic education.
americamagazine.org/catholiced

Institutions work best when managed by people who are highly skilled and knowledgeable in their fields. Catholic hospitals and universities tend to work extremely well because they entrust operational responsibilities to independent boards whose members are selected on merit and who are rigorously focused on results. For them, governance is a collaborative enterprise.

Catholic schools should be heeding this example. When our schools are run efficiently, they can educate more children. Governance should be refocused around people with the proven ability to perform, be they laypeople, clergy or religious. Some Catholic schools have already seized the initiative. Even the relatively small Catholic Academy of Sussex County, N.J., for example, has centralized business functions (including marketing, financial management and fundraising) across five schools serving 2,000 students and reaped outstanding financial and operational results in the process. The linchpins of the system are laypeople with extensive business experience and a board of trustees that runs the four elementary schools and single high school like a profit-loss business.

Better governance and the other broad areas for change discussed here are not novel ideas, but bold action by Catholic education on all these proposals would be. Data-driven accountability and transparency, technology enhancements, elevated teacher quality standards, tax credit legislation and improved governance represent pivotal challenges that need to be actively confronted. More important, Catholic schools need to be developing solutions that expand or improve on these—solutions that in the hands of imaginative and forward-looking leaders could provide the footing for a transformation of Catholic education in this country. A

By the Book

How should Catholics approach Bible study?

BY RONALD D. WITHERUP

Here is some good news regarding the Good News: Since the Second Vatican Council, Catholics have made enormous progress in our appreciation of the Bible. Catholic scholars are equals with their Protestant, Jewish and Orthodox counterparts, participating in scholarly discussions together. Moreover, Catholics are more familiar with Sacred Scripture than ever before. This is due in part to the reforms of the liturgy, including Mass in the vernacular, more biblically oriented homilies by priests and exposure to more readings from the Bible because of the revised lectionary. Another factor is that more Catholics have been exposed to or participated in Bible study programs, whether as adults or through catechetical efforts.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/SKYLINES

There is a downside to this development, however. Although Catholics have developed Bible study programs over the last 50 years, there has been no consistent, universal effort to promote biblical knowledge among Catholics, nor have the vast majority of Catholics ever participated in formal Bible study. In addition, those Catholics who have searched high and low for interesting programs of good quality have sometimes been enticed into Protestant Bible study groups where the approach has been more fundamentalist in orientation and sometimes even hostile to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Some programs that make a strong claim to be Catholic actually are a slightly dressed up version of fundamentalism, leading inattentive Catholics down a road that distorts a Catholic approach to the Bible. Many are left to wonder: What, exactly, is the Catholic approach to the Bible?

RONALD D. WITHERUP, S.S., *is superior general of the Society of Saint Sulpice and author, most recently, of* Gold Tested in Fire: A New Pentecost for the Catholic Priesthood *(Liturgical Press, 2012).*

Some Essential Characteristics

Since the Second Vatican Council, Catholic teaching has stressed that there is no one method for Catholic biblical study. Instead, Catholics remain open to a wide variety of approaches, ancient and modern. Pope Benedict XVI himself has praised the achievements of the historical-critical method of Bible study that largely dominated the last century, but he has also called for a reapplication of spiritual or theological interpretation that goes beyond the level of mere historical questions, such as those practiced in the patristic or medieval periods.

Fortunately, resources from these earlier periods are increasingly available in English. But caution is called for when using such resources, as sometimes pre-critical interpretation was very fanciful and went far beyond the text. Catholic interpretation always begins with the literal sense of the text, that is, the most literal meaning of the words, and then proceeds from there. Spiritual or theological meanings can never go against the literal meaning of the text.

Although no one method can be said to be the Catholic method, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Nos. 112-14) outlines three essential characteristics of Catholic exegesis.

1) Catholics must pay attention "to the content and unity

of the whole of Scripture." This means especially how we view the unity of the Old and New Testaments. The New is hidden in the Old, and the Old is fulfilled and made fully understood in the New, all as part of God's mysterious plan of salvation.

2) Catholics should interpret the Bible within "the living Tradition of the whole Church." This is an acknowledgement of the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the process of interpretation throughout church history, and the ultimate authority the magisterium retains to interpret Scripture definitively in cases of doubt.

3) Catholics must pay attention to the "analogy of faith," that is, "the coherence of truths" contained in God's revelation. This means that though we may not comprehend every detail of God's plan of salvation, there is an internal coherence to it embedded in the Scriptures.

The Church's Expectations

There can be big differences in the styles and quality of bible study programs on the market, but there are some basic guidelines for Catholic programs that conform to the church's expectations. In general terms, a good Catholic Bible study program will do at least the following:

- Be in conformity with Catholic doctrine concerning the Bible, its origin and its interpretation, as well as major Catholic documents on scripture, especially "Dei Verbum," the "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" (1965), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and "Verbum Domini," the postsynodal apostolic exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI (2010).
- Be open to multiple methods of biblical studies and a judicious application of them. This includes the historical critical methods and the history of interpretation (from the patristic and medieval period up to contemporary studies) and sociological studies or interpretations from the developing world.
- Quote biblical passages or explain them in their context in the Bible.
- Make no claim to be the only Catholic approach to the Bible or advocate for a single understanding or theory of biblical inspiration, which the church has never definitively settled (though the Pontifical Biblical Commission is currently studying this question at the pope's request).
- Make no definitive judgments about matters that the church leaves open. This includes the date and authorship of biblical books and translations or interpretations of specific passages of the Bible. It should acknowledge the rare instances when the church has declared a given interpretation as the correct one, or has proscribed specific interpretations, such as the passage on the brothers and sisters of Jesus (Mk 3:32), where the church teaches that they are not blood siblings of Jesus.
- Avoid fundamentalist interpretations or improper literal or fanciful interpretations.
- Recognize the complex and dynamic relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. This includes valuing the Old Testament as God's holy word, appreciating the essential Jewish background of the New Testament and avoiding anti-Jewish interpretations of the Bible.

ON THE WEB

Rev. J. Bryan Hehir talks about the legacy of John Courtney Murray, S.J.
americamagazine.org/podcast

The Need for Good Leadership

Naturally, the quality of a Catholic Bible study program will depend significantly on the quality of both the program and its leaders. Unfortunately, whether because of lack of time or interest or simply because of lack of expertise, many priests today do not involve themselves in Bible study. Sometimes generous lay people step forward and offer to lead such groups. But if these individuals lack training, or if their main approach is only "what-the-Bible-means-to-me," their groups can quickly get off track.

The key to good Catholic Bible study that will avoid any fundamentalist tendency is good leadership. Ideally, if one is promoting parish-based Bible study, the parish should help leaders to acquire some training, either by attending workshops and catechetical congresses, or by working through a prescribed training manual or regimen. Some programs offer both training and leadership materials that provide extra background to biblical books that may not be obvious either to leaders or participants. A good study Bible is also essential, and there are several good Catholic editions that can be used for background. Despite what some people claim, the meaning of the Bible is not self-evident. Even fundamentalist editions of the Bible (like the Scofield Reference Bible) have explanatory notes, though ardent fundamentalists would deny that these in any way affect their understanding of the biblical text.

Before choosing a program, the effective leader should examine the materials to see if the criteria outlined above are met. Ideally, diocesan religious education offices or the like should be able to offer sound advice on such matters; but in my experience, such resources are sorely lacking. There is also nothing on the national level that offers such advice, neither on the level of the U.S. bishops' conference or the Catholic Biblical Association. So responsibility, unfortunately, devolves to the diocesan or local level.

Relating Study and Prayer

Another misconception for some Catholics is that praying with the Bible somehow bears no relation to studying it.

At times, people seeking true spiritual nourishment from the bible are frustrated because it involves too much history, too many details and too much open-ended process. They look for quick, easy and definitive interpretations. Furthermore, they want something that truly gives them spiritual guidance. This is a healthy desire. It is also the primary reason the scriptures exist! God wants us to be fed, strengthened, inspired by God's own holy word. As the Second Letter to Timothy says: "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (3:16-17). The Scriptures exist for our spiritual and moral well-being.

At times people seeking this nourishment invoke the image of the church fathers, the patristic period of interpretation, as the ideal. They prayed Scripture, whereas we read and study it. This is a false dichotomy. It forgets that the reason the fathers of the church could become so enthralled with Scripture and readily use scriptural imagery is that, for them, study and prayer were intimately intertwined. They pored over the sacred Scriptures day and night. They reveled in studying the language of the Bible, exploring its literal sense in order to arrive at the infinite depths of the spiritual sense. Then they meditated upon it, commented on it, preached upon it and proclaimed it to others.

This was not a process of prayer alone. It was a deep enterprise of closely reading the Scriptures, remaining open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to arrive at the spiritual messages they contain. From a Catholic perspective, good Bible study leads to the ability to pray the Scriptures with ease. And good prayer with the Bible leads one to seek more insight, to want to go further, to comprehend the good news the scriptures contain.

The Rebirth of *Lectio Divina*

The dual relationship between study and prayer of the Bible leads to another area that has seen a rebirth in recent years, especially with the encouragement of Pope Benedict XVI. *Lectio divina* (literally, "holy reading") is the ancient practice, developed even further by the monastic tradition of the Middle Ages, of prayerful reflection or meditation upon the Scriptures. The process can be very simple, like just sitting and slowly reading and reflecting on a biblical passage, or quite complex, involving various stages of spiritual insight leading to contemplation. The point is not which method is used but that a prayerful reading of Scripture is done. This is especially important for lectors and homilists at the Mass. Such meditative reading should be done before ever proclaiming or preaching on the Scriptures. Fortunately, there are many resources being published today to help people rediscover this ancient practice, which had drifted into the shadows in the wake of modern scientific study of the Bible.

Still, *lectio divina* is not the only way to pray with the Bible. How one chooses to study and pray with the Bible depends upon what one is looking for. For example, do you want personal or group study? Are you looking for programs with lots of audiovisual aids or text-oriented programs? Are you called to *lectio divina* or a more academic approach? Do you have knowledgeable leaders who already have some background in biblical studies and can move ahead quickly, or are you just starting out and do not have a leader with experience?

TAKE AND READ

While I cannot recommend any one Bible study program, I can indicate a few resources with good track records.

• **Electronic New Testament Educational Resources** (http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/), maintained by Felix Just, S.J., is chock full of information that can supplement good Catholic Bible study. Despite its name, it also has resources on the Old Testament, liturgy and spirituality.

• **Little Rock Scripture Study,** directed by Catherine Upchurch, started in the Diocese of Little Rock. (Full disclosure: the author has contributed directly to some of these programs.) This program was designed for small groups and is based on the New American Bible, revised edition, which is the basis for the Lectionary. It includes videos, short commentaries, study guides, leadership training and a stand-alone study bible. It explores books of the Bible and biblical themes, and is available in Spanish.

• **Threshold Bible Study,** authored by Stephen Binz, is organized thematically, which gives it a distinctive character. It does not attempt to introduce the Bible in the customary fashion of many Bible study programs. Yet the themes are each rooted in biblical foundations. Designed for either individual or group study, each book contains thirty chapters that explore the theme, accompanied by discussion and reflection questions and a prayer. Biblical quotations, which generally introduce each chapter, come from the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition of the Bible. It also offers practical suggestions for group facilitation and fosters a traditional form of *lectio divina*, noting how Pope Benedict XVI has emphasized the importance of this ancient practice of meditation.

• **The Word** column and **The Good Word** blog in **America** and at www.americamagazine.org.

Despite the abundance of modern study options, St. Augustine's ancient advice still is the best: *Tolle, lege!* Pick up the bible and read it! The three-year-long observance of the golden anniversary of Vatican II offers Catholics a unique opportunity to engage in Bible study in a serious way. Consider one of the following as a first step:

- Buy a study Bible and use it to help you better understand one or more of the Sunday Mass readings.
- Read the Bible five or 10 minutes a day for yourself.
- Read and discuss short passages from the Bible with your family.
- Read the Sunday Mass readings in advance so you can better understand them.
- Consider joining or starting a parish Bible study with interested parishioners.
- Take time to attend a lecture on the Bible or a catechetical congress.

The word of God has renewed the church before, and it was instrumental in shaping the documents of the council. With a little effort on our part, it can continue in our own day to shape our lives, for in the word of Scripture, we encounter the Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ. A

Misdirections

Ten sure-fire ways to mix up the teaching of Vatican II

BY JOHN W. O'MALLEY

It is not easy to interpret any great event, so it is not surprising that today there is disagreement about how to interpret the Second Vatican Council. Here, I want to turn the issue around to indicate how *not* to interpret it. (Of course, astute readers will see that this is just a sneaky way of making positive points.) Some of these principles are, in fact, of direct concern only to historians or theologians. The issues that underlie them, however, should be of concern to all Catholics who cherish the heritage of the council. These 10 negative principles are simply a backhanded way of reminding ourselves of what is at stake in the controversies over the council's interpretation.

1. *Insist Vatican II was only a pastoral council.* This principle is wrong on two counts. First, it ignores the fact that the council taught many things—the doctrine of episcopal collegiality, for instance, which is no small matter. It was thus a doctrinal as well as a pastoral council, even though it taught in a style different from previous councils. Second, the term can be used to suggest an ephemeral quality because pastoral methods change according to circumstance. Wittingly or unwittingly, therefore, "pastoral" consigns the council to second-rate status.

2. *Insist it was an occurrence in the life of the church, not an event.* This distinction has currency in certain circles. Its import is best illustrated by an example: A teacher is given a year's sabbatical, which she spends in France. The experi-

JOHN W. O'MALLEY, S.J., *university professor in the theology department at Georgetown University, is author of* The First Jesuits *and* What Happened at Vatican II *(Harvard Univ. Press).*

COMPOSITE PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/DMITRY VERESHCHAGIN

ence broadens her perspective. She returns home enriched, but she again takes up her previous routines. Her sabbatical was an occurrence. But suppose she, instead, is offered a position as dean at an institution other than her own. She pulls up stakes, moves, gives up teaching and in her new job learns new skills and makes new friends. That is an event, a significant turn in the road.

3. *Banish the expression "spirit of the council."* Sure, the expression is easily manipulated, but we need to recall that the distinction between spirit and letter is venerable in the Christian tradition. We should therefore be loath to toss it in the dust bin. More important, *spirit*, rightly understood, indicates themes and orientations that imbue the council with its identity because they are found not in one document but in all or almost all of them. Thus, the "spirit of the council," while based solidly on the "letter" of the council's documents, transcends any specific one of them. It enables us to see the bigger message of the council and the direction in which it pointed the church, which was in many regards different from the direction before the council.

4. *Study the documents individually, without considering them part of an integral corpus.* I cannot name anyone who insists on this principle, but it has been the standard approach to the documents ever since the council ended. Of course, to understand the corpus one must first understand the component parts. Hence, study of individual documents is indispensable and the first step in understanding the corpus. Too often, however, even commentators have stopped at that point and not gone on to investigate just how a specific text contributed to the dynamics of the council as a whole, that is, to its "spirit." Without too much effort it is easy (and imperative) to see the relationship in themes and mind-set, for instance, between the document on religious liberty and the document on the church in the modern world.

5. *Study the final 16 documents in the order of hierarchical authority, not in the chronological order in which they were approved in the council.* The documents, of course, have varying degrees of authority (constitutions before decrees, decrees before declarations). But this principle, when treated as exclusive, ignores the intertextual nature of the council's documents—that is, their interdependence—one building upon the other in the order in which they made their journey through the council. The document on the bishops, for instance, could not be introduced into the council until the document on the church was fundamentally in place, especially because of the crucial importance of the doctrine of collegiality being debated in the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church." The documents, therefore, paraphrased, borrowed from and adapted from one another as the council moved along. Thus they form a coherent and integral whole and need to be studied that way. They are not a grab bag of discrete units. To toy with one of the documents, therefore, is to toy with all of them. (Unfortunately, the latest edition of the widely used translation of the council's documents, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P., prints them in hierarchical, not chronological, order.)

6. *Pay no attention to the documents' literary form.* A feature that most obviously distinguishes Vatican II from all previous councils is the new style in which it formulates its enactments. Unlike previous councils, Vatican II did not operate as a legislative and judicial body in the traditional sense of those terms. It laid down certain principles but did not, like previous councils, produce a body of ordinances prescribing or proscribing modes of behavior, with penalties attached for nonobservance. It tried no ecclesiastical criminals and issued no verdicts of guilty or not guilty. It most characteristically employed a vocabulary new for councils, a vocabulary filled with words implying collegiality, reciprocity, tolerance, friendship and the search for common ground. Instead of ignoring this distinctive feature, explanation and analysis of the documents' literary form seem to be indispensable for understanding the council.

7. *Stick to the final 16 documents and pay no attention to the historical context, the history of*

the texts or the controversies concerning them during the council. This principle allows the documents to be treated as if they float somewhere outside time and place and can be interpreted accordingly. Only by examining the travail that the decree on religious liberty, for instance, experienced during the council, to the point that it seemed it could not be approved, can we understand its path-breaking character and its significance for the church's role in the world today. Moreover, there are official documents beyond the 16 that are crucial for understanding the direction the council took—such as Pope John XXIII's address opening the council, "Mother Church Rejoices," and the "Message to the World"—that the council itself published just as it was getting under way. These two documents opened the council, for instance, to the possibility of producing "The Church in the Modern World."

ON THE WEB
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8. *Outlaw the use of any "unofficial" sources, such as the diaries or correspondence of participants.* No doubt, the official sources—the final texts and the multivolume *Acta Synodalia,* published by the Vatican Press—are and must remain the first and most authoritative point of reference for interpreting the council. But the diaries and letters of participants provide information lacking in the official sources and sometimes better explain the often sudden turns the council took. Making use of such documents is not an innovation in scholarship. The editors of the magnificent 13-volume collection of documents concerning the Council of Trent, the *Concilium Tridentinum,* did not hesitate to include diaries and correspondence, which have proved indispensable for understanding that council and are used by all its interpreters.

9. *Interpret the documents as expressions of continuity with the Catholic tradition.* As an emphasis in interpreting the documents of the council, this is correct and needs to be insisted upon. The problem arises when this principle is applied in a way that excludes all discontinuity, that is, all change. It is an absurdity to believe that nothing changed, nothing happened. On Dec. 22, 2005, Pope Benedict XVI provided a correction to such exclusivity when he said in his address to the Roman Curia that what was required for Vatican II was a "hermeneutic of reform," which he defined as a "combination of continuity and discontinuity at different levels…."

10. *Make your assessment of the council into a self-fulfilling prophecy.* This principle is not so much about misinterpreting the council as it is about employing assessments to determine how the council will now be implemented and received. The principle is dangerous in anyone's hands but especially dangerous in the hands of those who have the authority to make their assessment operative. In this regard "the party slogan" in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* hits the nail on the head: "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past." A

Ignatius Among Us

Great 20th-century theologians share a common spiritual heritage.

BY AVERY DULLES

Where would contemporary theology be except for the works of the Jesuits Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) of France, Karl Rahner (1904-84) of Germany, Bernard Lonergan (1904-84) of Canada and John Courtney Murray (1904-67) of the United States?

The Swiss-born Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-88) may be appropriately added to this group because for several decades he too was a Jesuit.…

These great giants of the mind unquestionably belong to the advance guard of the Second Vatican Council and, except for Teilhard, who had died in 1955, were among the leading interpreters of the council's work. And if one asks what these men had in common, the obvious reply is that all of them were deeply formed by the *Spiritual Exercises* and the teaching of St. Ignatius of Loyola, whom they took as their spiritual guide. Teilhard de Chardin, Rahner, de Lubac and Balthasar, upon whose achievements I shall focus my remarks, give clear manifestations of this intellectual genealogy....

CARDINAL AVERY DULLES, S.J., *was the McGinley Professor of Religion and Society at Fordham University in New York City from 1988 until his death in 2008. He was the author of 27 books and 800 articles and reviews. This essay is a shortened version of the Ninth Annual Spring McGinley Lecture, delivered at Fordham on April 10, 1997. It was later published in* ***America*** *on April 26, 1997, and in* Church and Society *(2008).*

Ignatius, though he was a great spiritual leader, scarcely comes up for mention in histories of Catholic theology. He aspired to no theological originality. For the training of Jesuit students he recommended the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. Instead of calling for innovation, he directed that Jesuit professors should adhere to the safest and most approved opinions, avoiding books and authors that were suspect.

What inspires the creativity of modern systematic theologians is not primarily the theological views of Ignatius but rather his mysticism. Modern authors speak frequently of this as a Christ-centered mysticism, a sacramental mysticism and an ecclesial mysticism. They mention Ignatius' mysticism of service, of reverential love, of the Cross and of discernment. Whereas other mystics may find communion with God by withdrawing from activity in the world, the contrary is true of Ignatius. He seeks union with God primarily by dwelling within the mysteries through which God makes himself present in our world—especially the mysteries of the incarnate life of the eternal Son. It is a mysticism of action, whereby we unite ourselves with the mission of Christ in the church.

I should like to comment on four themes from the *Spiritual Exercises* that have particularly inspired 20th-century theologians.... I shall illustrate each of these themes—the cosmic, the theistic, the ecclesial and the Christological—from the writings of one of the theologians already mentioned.

Finding God in All Things

[… In] the Exercises, Ignatius reflects on how God dwells in all creatures and especially in human beings, who are created "in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty" (No. 235). Indeed, says Ignatius, God works and labors not only in human persons, but also in the elements, the plants and the animals (No. 236; cf. No. 39).…

St. Ignatius' close disciple, the Majorcan [Jesuit] Jerome Nadal (1507-80), contended that Ignatius was endowed with a special grace "to see and contemplate in all things, actions, and conversations the presence of God and the love of spiritual things, to remain a contemplative even in the midst of action." Nadal believed that to be a contemplative in action and to find God in all things were graces or charisms especially proper to the Society of Jesus.

Among modern Jesuit authors, none has extolled the sense of the divine omnipresence more eloquently than Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his classic work, *The Divine Milieu*, first published in English translation in 1960. This work was written, according to the author, with the intention of instructing the reader "how to see God everywhere, to see Him in all that is most hidden, most solid and most ultimate in the world." The divine milieu, Teilhard declares, "discloses itself to us as a modification of the deep being of things"—a modification that does not alter the perceptible phenomena, but renders them translucent and diaphanous, so that they become

epiphanies of the divine.

In successive chapters Teilhard explains how to find God in the positive experiences of successful activity and in the negative experiences of failure and diminishment. The Cross, he maintains, enables sickness and death to be paths to victory. His is a mystical spirituality that involves detachment from all creatures for the sake of union with the divine. As he wrote in a private letter of Oct. 22, 1925: "After all, only one thing matters, surely, 'to see' God wherever one looks."…

For Teilhard the realization of God's universal presence was not simply an ascetical principle for his own interior life. It was the inspiration of his lifelong quest to build a bridge between Christian faith and contemporary science. Having meditated deeply on the Kingdom of Christ, as set forth in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Teilhard was filled with ardent longing to set all things on fire with the love of Christ (see Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*). Aflame with this missionary zeal, he saw the worlds of science beckoning to him as the new territory to be evangelized. In 1926, referring to a recent lecture by a Harvard professor on the dawn of thought in the evolution of species, he wrote in a letter: "However farfetched the notion might appear at first, I realized in the end that, *hic et nunc*, Christ was not irrelevant to the problems that interest Professor Parker: it only needed a few intermediate steps to allow a transition from his positivist psychology to a certain spiritual outlook. This realization cheered me up. Ah, there lie the Indies that draw me more strongly than those of St. Francis Xavier."

Just as the early Jesuit missionaries sought to adopt all that was sound in the cultures of India and China, so Teilhard sought to utilize the new findings of science as points of access to faith in Christian revelation. In his enthusiasm he identified Christ as the Omega Point toward which all the energies of religion and science were converging. This hypothesis certainly went far beyond anything that St. Ignatius would have imagined, but it may be in part an outgrowth of the Ignatian vision of Christ in glory as the "eternal Lord of all things" (*Sp. Ex.* No. 98); it recalls the universalistic horizons of the meditations on the Kingdom of Christ, the Incarnation and the Two Standards.…

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Immediacy to God

A second theme from the *Spiritual Exercises* is that of the immediacy of the soul to God. In the "Annotations for the Director" in the introduction to the Exercises, St. Ignatius admonishes the director to refrain from urging the retreatant to choose the more perfect way of life. "It is more suitable and much better," he says, "that the Creator and Lord in person communicate himself to the devout soul in quest of the divine will, and that He inflame it with love of Himself." The director should therefore "permit the Creator to deal directly with the creature, and the creature directly with its Creator and Lord" (No. 15).…

Among modern theologians who have built on this Ignatian theme, none is more explicit than Karl Rahner.…

On the ground that every individual is in immediate contact with God through grace, Rahner develops an original theory of the relationship between the charismatic and the institutional elements in the church. The charisms, or gifts of the Holy Spirit, he holds, are in principle prior to the institution. The charismatic element, in fact, is "the true pith and essence of the church," the point where the lordship of Christ is most directly and potently exercised. The external structures of the church, in his system, are seen as subordinate to the self-actualization of the transcendental subject, achieved by grace. Office holders in the church are obliged not to stifle the Holy Spirit but to recognize and foster

the free movements of the Spirit in the church.

Holding that the articulation of dogma always falls short of the reality to which it refers, Rahner pleads for a high level of tolerance for doctrinal diversity in the church. He favors a pluriform church with structures that are adaptable to local and transitory needs. The institutional forms, for him, are radically subordinate to the nonthematic experience of grace. The student of the *Spiritual Exercises* is reminded in this connection of the way in which Ignatius instructs the director to adapt the meditations to the age, education and talents of those making the Exercises. Retreatants are encouraged to adopt whatever posture best enables them to pray. For Ignatius, external forms and practices were always secondary to spiritual fruits.…

In an early essay on "Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World," Rahner celebrates the distinctively Jesuit affirmation of the world and its values, the disposition to accept the achievements of culture, to esteem humanism and to adapt to the demands of varying situations. Once we have found the God of the life beyond, he concludes, we are able to immerse ourselves in the work required of us in our world today. Since God is active at all times and places, he argues, there is no need to flee to the desert or return to the past to find him. Like Teilhard, therefore, Rahner interprets Ignatius as having laid the foundations of a lay theology that discovers God's presence in worldly realities.

Rahner, again like Teilhard, accepts the Ignatian theology of the Cross. He insists that God is to be found not only in the positive but also in the negative experiences of life, including failure, renunciation, sickness, poverty and death. Just as the passion and death were central to Christ's redeeming work, so privation and self-denial can be paths to the ultimate renunciation that each of us will have to undergo in death. God is greater than either our successes or our failures. He, the *Deus semper maior,* is our only lasting hope.

Ecclesial Obedience

St. Ignatius of Loyola, while recognizing the immediacy of the individual soul to God, strongly emphasizes the mediation of the church. He repeatedly speaks of the church as the Mother of Believers and the Bride of Christ (*Sp. Ex.* 353). "In Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and in his Spouse the Church," he asserts, "only one Spirit holds sway" (No. 365). Ignatius in the Exercises speaks of serving Christ in the church militant and on two occasions refers to it as the "hierarchical church" (Nos. 170, 353), a term apparently original with Ignatius. On one occasion he adds that the hierarchical church is "Roman" (No. 353, some manuscripts). He takes it for granted that no one could be called by the Holy Spirit to do anything forbidden by the hierarchical church (No. 170). This ecclesial mysticism is recaptured in the theology of the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac, as well as in that of his friend and disciple Hans Urs von Balthasar.

The perfection of human beings cannot be measured by abstract ethical rules but only by their response to the call that Christ addresses to them.

De Lubac, like Rahner, was strongly influenced by [the Belgian Jesuit Joseph] Maréchal's view that the human spirit is constituted by a dynamic drive to transcend all finite objects in quest of that which is greater than everything conceivable (see *The Discovery of God*). The dynamism of the human spirit toward the vision of God, he believed, surpasses all the affirmations and denials of both positive and negative theology. A ceaseless inquietude of the soul towards God drives the whole process forward. Primordial knowledge comes to itself in reflexive concepts, but these concepts are never final; they are always subject to criticism and correction (see Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*).

Conscious though he is of this inner drive, de Lubac does not fall into religious individualism. Picking up the Ignatian designations of the church as Bride of Christ and as Mother of all Christ's faithful, he affirms that a "mystical identity" exists between Christ and the church. He repudiates every tendency to introduce an opposition between the mystical and the visible, between spirit and authority or between charism and hierarchy. Although the church has an invisible dimension, it is essentially visible and hierarchical. "Without the hierarchy which is her point of organization, her organizer and her guide," he declares, there could be no talk of the church at all (*The Splendor of the Church*).

In a celebrated passage of *The Splendor of the Church*, de Lubac paints a glowing portrait of the loyal Christian, one who seeks to be what Origen termed a "true ecclesiastic." Like St. Ignatius, such a person will always be concerned to think with and in the church, cultivating the sense of Catholic solidarity and accepting the teaching of the magisterium as a binding norm. The ecclesiastical person, according to de Lubac, will not only be

obedient but will love obedience as a way of dying to self in order to be filled with the truth that God pours into our minds.…

The Call of the King

A final theme in the *Spiritual Exercises* that has inspired modern disciples of St. Ignatius is the call of Christ in the meditation on the Kingdom. All persons with good judgment, Ignatius maintains, will offer themselves entirely to labor with Christ in order to share in his victory (No. 96). But those who wish to distinguish themselves in service will wish to imitate Christ in bearing all wrongs, and suffering abuse and poverty, in order to give greater proof of their love (No. 97-98). The drama of the following of Christ through his sufferings to ultimate victory is central to the entire theological project of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Balthasar's theology of revelation is centered about the self-manifestation of the divine majesty, a theme he himself connects with the Ignatian motto, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. The glory of God, he holds, overwhelms and captivates all who perceive it. The culminating manifestation of God's glory is Jesus, the crucified and risen one. Jesus glorifies God by the faithful execution of his mission, which is the prolongation in time of his own origin from the Father.

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The perfection of human beings cannot be measured by abstract ethical rules but only by their response to the call that Christ addresses to them. That call is always to share in the lot and mission of the Lord. The church incorporates its members into Christ, first of all through baptism into his death. Christians achieve the freedom of children of God by renouncing their self-will, putting on the mind of Christ. In Balthasar's ecclesiology, therefore, obedience is central and constitutive. To be church is to be, like Mary, the "handmaid of the Lord." The church's task, like hers, is to hear the word and do it.…

Balthasar's large volume *The Christian State of Life* is an extended commentary on the call of Christ described in the Ignatian meditation on the Kingdom. The vocation to the consecrated life, in the view of Balthasar, is a fundamental feature of the church. Since Jesus called the Twelve to poverty, chastity and obedience during his public ministry, the state of the evangelical counsels existed even before the priestly state. By renouncing every desire of their own, Christians are best able to share in the absolute freedom that is in God. The prayer of St. Ignatius, "Take, Lord, and Receive," magnificently expresses the sacrifice of personal freedom for the sake of living by the divine will alone.

The following of the crucified Lord takes on concrete form in the hierarchical church, which retains its Christological form thanks to the authority of office holders over other members of the church. If this opposition between hierarchy and faithful were dissolved, he writes, "all that would remain would only be a formless mush of ethical instructions." Like de Lubac, therefore, Balthasar holds that office and charism belong together. From one point of view, office may be seen as a special charism for coordinating other charisms and bringing them into the unity of the church as a whole.…

• • •

...In a longer presentation many other themes and authors could be studied. One might wish to survey the missionary theology of Pierre Charles and Jean Daniélou, the ecumenism of Augustin Bea, the theology of conver-

sion of Bernard Lonergan and the views of John Courtney Murray on religious freedom. In all these authors it would be possible to trace Ignatian motifs based on the *Spiritual Exercises*....

Ignatian principles, as I have tried to indicate, can lead to a variety of theological systems. In the *Spiritual Exercises* themselves there seems to be an inbuilt tension between immediacy and mediation, between personal freedom and obedience, between universalism and ecclesiocentrism, between horizontal openness to the world and reverence for the sacred and the divine. Some theologians, such as Teilhard de Chardin and Rahner, put greater emphasis on immediacy to God, personal freedom and universalism; others, like de Lubac and Balthasar, especially in their later work, insist more on ecclesial mediation, sacramentality and obedience. The "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits" seem to point in one direction, the "Rules for Thinking with the Church" in the other. But because both emphases are valid and are held together in the Exercises, they must be harmoniously reconciled in theology.

The Ignatian charism, as I understand it, consists in the ability to combine the two tendencies without detriment to either. A purely mechanical obedience without regard for the movements of the Spirit and a purely individualistic reliance on the Spirit without regard for ecclesiastical authority would be equally foreign to the heritage we have been exploring. For Ignatius it was axiomatic that Christians are called to achieve authentic freedom by surrendering their limited freedom into the hands of God. The theologian who is most prayerfully open to the impulses of the Spirit is best able to enter into the mind of the church and by this means to interpret the Christian faith in fullest conformity with the intentions of the Lord himself. A

FILM | PATRICK J. McNAMARA

THE SEARCHER

John Ford's faith in community

"A fella ain't got a soul of his own, just a little piece of a big soul, the one big soul that belongs to everybody."

—Henry Fonda as Tom Joad
"The Grapes of Wrath" (1940)

His movies are filled with compelling images and characters: a prostitute and an outlaw who ride off into the sunset; a self-absorbed commander who gets all of his men killed; an obsessive, tortured loner who sets out on an epic quest; a hero who isn't all he appears to be.

He was a director whom Orson Welles labeled "Hollywood's Old Master." Clint Eastwood and Martin Scorsese agree that no serious film student can afford to ignore him. From "Who's That Knocking at My Door" to "The Departed," Scorsese has alluded to him on screen. The director Walter Hill called him a "Catholic poet." The man, of course, is John Ford.

Do any of the scenes described above seem Catholic? Some religion and film scholars think so. Professor Anthony B. Smith at the University of Dayton, who has closely studied Ford's films, suggests that while most of them do not deal with overtly Catholic subjects, there is a Catholic approach. In his study of Catholic filmmakers, Richard A. Blake, S.J., who has reviewed many films for **America**, argues that the "core of Catholic belief" imprinted what he calls an "afterimage" on Ford's films, giving them "a characteristically Catholic view of the world." Ford's emphasis on the community rather than the individual gives his films a distinctly Catholic feel.

Ford once told Peter Bogdanovich that while he was Catholic, he wasn't "very Catholic," meaning he wasn't a regular churchgoer. The Ford scholar Tag Gallagher, however, contends that his work was very Catholic in that he did not see life as "senseless wandering, but [a] pilgrimage leading to some sort of decreed epiphany, and in its course the characters find redemption." Ford was no nihilist. The English director Lindsay Anderson called him a "poet of faith in an age of unbelief."

How did this poet come to be? He was born John Martin Feeney in 1894, the 10th child of Irish immigrants in Portland, Me. He loved books, a fact he tried to hide in a macho, working-class world. He also had an eye for pictures and a penchant for storytelling, entertaining friends and family with stories and drawings. But he preferred to be known as Bull Feeney for his prowess on the football field.

His brother Frank had become a successful film actor as Francis Ford. After graduating from high school, Jack went West to begin an apprenticeship behind the camera. By 1917, he was directing Westerns as Jack Ford. Audiences liked his blend of action and humor, and critics liked his eye for detail.

A Poet in a Fedora

It was in sound that John Ford made his mark, while his brother was relegated to character roles. A fedora pulled over sunglasses (worn, Maureen O'Hara suggested, to hide kind eyes), chewing on a pipe and a handkerchief, a necktie worn in lieu of a belt and a keychain carrying an array of charms and religious emblems, he directed classic after classic. His work was his life. Everything else, family included, was secondary.

His actors, known as the "John Ford Stock Company," became his real family: John Wayne, Ward Bond, Victor McLaglen and others. If Ford's home life was limited, he had a genius for creating community onscreen. After seeing the same actors in different movies, one gets the feeling of revisiting old friends. In Ford, plot is less important than people. One does not watch so much as look: at the landscape, sky, faces. While he has been likened to the Western artist Frederic Remington, Ford also merits comparison with Charles Dickens; like Dickens, Ford creates a world full of interesting characters.

ON THE WEB
Clips from the films of John Ford.
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In 1939 Ford revived the mainstream western with "Stagecoach." The story of strangers thrown together in the middle of an Indian war, the film put society's "outsiders" (an alcoholic doctor, a prostitute and an outlaw) at its center. The sinners practice Christian virtues, in contrast to the "respectable" members of society. Anthony Smith writes: "The real journey in Stagecoach is…less geographical than moral, one from intolerance and prejudice toward acceptance and forgiveness. It is a film about the triumph of the generosity of spirit over selfishness and isolation, and creatively maps a Catholic moral landscape onto the mythic American West."

In 1940 and 1941 Ford won con-

ACTION: John Ford filming "My Darling Clementine," Monument Valley, Ariz.

PHOTO: © BETTMANN/CORBIS

secutive Best Director Oscars for "The Grapes of Wrath" and "How Green Was My Valley," the only director so honored. His story of displaced Oklahoma farmers has been called "one of the most powerful political-sociological documents in the history of the cinema." At its end Tom Joad (Henry Fonda) talks of "one big soul," a phrase reminiscent of the Catholic belief in Christ's mystical body. The second film, a tale of Welsh miners, celebrates an idyllic community destroyed by industrialism and ends with an invocation of the dead, a veritable communion of saints.

War interrupted Ford's career. As an officer in the Naval Reserve, he served with a field photographic unit, making photo surveys and filming combat. His documentary "The Battle of Midway" won an Oscar, but his D-Day footage is lost. His military service was his greatest pride. Back home he filmed consecutive classic westerns: "My Darling Clementine" (1946), "Fort Apache" (1948) and "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" (1949).

Community and Ritual

In 1947 Ford directed his most overtly religious film, "The Fugitive," based on Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*. It was among his least successful, critically and commercially. The story of a priest on the run from an anticlerical regime, it is a bit heavy-handed in its treatment of religious imagery. Ford's values, it seems, emerged more effectively when less blatantly presented. "Fort Apache," for example, celebrates community, the military family, with a highly ritualized dance scene at its center. Community rituals, particularly dances, are at the center of other movies, especially "My Darling Clementine" (1946) and "Wagonmaster" (1950).

The commander at Fort Apache, (Henry Fonda) is a loner whose recklessness leads to a massacre. At the conclusion, the new commander (John Wayne) eulogizes the troops in what almost amounts to a litany of the saints: "They aren't forgotten because they haven't died. They're out there living—Collingwood and the rest. And they'll keep on living as long as the regiment lives.... The faces may change...the names...but they're there; the regiment, the regular army, now and 50 years from now."

In 1956 Ford presented his masterpiece. "The Searchers" is the story of the quest for a captured girl. It received positive if minimal critical acclaim at the time, but greater praise from later directors like Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and Scorsese. John Wayne's character, Ethan Edwards, is the archetype of the rugged individual, a central figure in American literature. He "goes it alone." But for Ford he is a tragic figure, and his story is the tragedy of a loner. In "The Searchers," the community is the norm, and the loner is the anomaly, even a figure as tough as Ethan.

By the 1960's, age was catching up. On the set of "Cheyenne Autumn" (1964), his last Western, Ford said the fun was gone. The 1966 release of "Seven Women" marked the end of a half-century career. Critics said the times had passed Ford by. Plagued by ill health, he planned a comeback, but mainly stayed in bed reading books and smoking cigars. In 1973, at the age of 79, he died of stomach cancer.

Ford's work has its flaws. He sometimes overdoes the sentimental, especially in later films like "Two Rode Together" (1961) and "Donovan's Reef" (1963). Some critics, notably Richard Schickel, consider him incapable of portraying mature male-female relationships. Yet his movies are still watched today. The director William Friedkin says, "When we have colonized the moon, people will still be watching and loving John Ford's films."

If film is not mere entertainment, and directors are more than technicians, then Ford's films qualify as art. If being Catholic means more than observance of rules, but a way of viewing the world and humanity, then Ford qualifies as a Catholic. If Catholic art stresses communion, God's activity in the world and life's deeper meanings, then John Ford qualifies as a Catholic artist of the highest kind.

PATRICK J. McNAMARA *is an adjunct professor of church history at St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y. He writes a weekly column on American Catholic history for the Web site Patheos.*

BOOKS | JON M. SWEENEY

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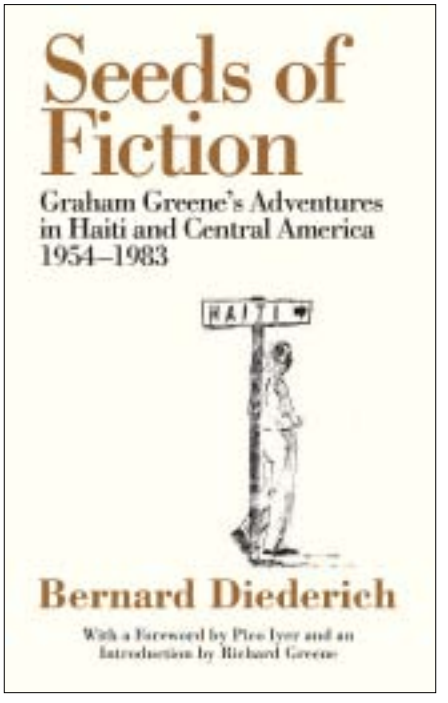
Peter Owen Publishers. 300p $29.95



As a biography, *Seeds of Fiction* appeals to the reader who tires of salacious details about a subject's personal life. Bernard Diederich writes with a discrete respect for his subject and tells us they were close friends. "I knew enough not to intrude. I was in awe of Graham...," he begins, and then much later, "I knew little of Graham's personal life." This is all as if to say: It was none of my business. Diederich is not very interested in asking invasive questions of his friend, and in this book—which is also a memoir—he isn't interested in adding to the speculations about Greene's affairs, drinking, suicidal tendencies and the like. Instead, Diederich wants to tell us about Greene the traveler/adventurer, Greene the novelist/researcher, Greene the political liberal, Greene the friend.

How refreshing this is, in part because Graham Greene has had more malevolent biographers than anyone is due. Michael Shelden's 1994 sensational bestseller, for instance, famously accused Greene of duplicity, evil "and a heart full of darkness," and that was only in the first two and a half pages. Norman Sherry, the biographer whom Greene officially sanctioned, wrote three informative, terrific volumes, retracing Greene's steps all over the globe, and yet exhibits on several occasions an only slightly veiled animosity toward his subject.

Bernard Diederich may deserve his own biographers. Born in 1926 in New Zealand, he left high school at the age of 16 to seek adventure sailing the world, ending up in the Pacific aboard a U.S. Merchant Marine vessel before the end of World War II. He visited Haiti for the first time in 1949,

founded a newspaper a year later called the Haiti Sun and also found work as a correspondent for The New York Times and Time. When he talks about himself, you can feel the explorer side of Diederich's personality: "*En route* to the South Pacific I had sailed into Port-au-Prince, quit the sea to search for my stolen camera, fallen in love with Haiti and, after a short stint working at an American-owned casino, started an English-language weekly newspaper."

Five years ago, in 2007, Richard Greene, no relation of Graham, wrote in an editorial note in *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters* that Diederich's "memoir of Greene is eagerly anticipated." That's this book.

In 1963, because of his courageous reporting in Haiti, Diederich was thrown into prison by President Duvalier, known as Papa Doc, and then exiled from the country. His print offices in Haiti destroyed, Diederich set up shop in the adjoining Dominican Republic. There Greene met him that summer. Two years later, in 1965, Greene and Diederich were back together in the Dominican Republic, and the journey they took that spring along the D.R.–Haitian border forms the backbone of *Seeds of Fiction*.

Diederich was a newsman, and Greene famously despised the press. He believed that most journalists were lazy; that's why he was drawn to Diederich, who loved getting stories firsthand. They also shared a desire to risk their lives for a cause. For the newsman, this was his work and passion; for Greene, the obsession for taking personal risks seems to have been a part of his spiritual makeup.

Greene was a self-professed "hunted man," a theme reinforced in a short profile of his life and novels filmed and broadcast by the BBC in 1968. In that interview, he refers to a "mercy which is the opposite of pessimism," as a way of saying that his work is about both of these things—one divine, the other very human. Tangling with real-life characters like Papa Doc was Greene's way, perhaps, of attempting both.

At one point during that rare 1968 recorded interview, Greene said the following, which he later echoed in print in his 1971 memoir, *A Sort of Life*:

> There's a passage in [Robert] Browning that I've always felt could have acted as an epigraph to all my books: 'Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things/ The honest thief, the tender murderer..../ We watch while these in equilibrium keep/ The giddy line midway.…

Greene wrote often of "tender murderers" in his fictions—most memorably, the character of the husband, Arthur Rowe in *The Ministry of Fear*, who gently poisons his sick wife with tainted milk. Did he do it for selfish reasons or to help her? A typical Greeneish ambiguity. *The Comedians*—first published in 1966—is less ambiguous. It is a novel Greene wrote to overthrow a dictator, and Papa Doc is never tender. It is *The Comedians* that Diederich's memoir/biography aims most of all to illuminate. Greene was inspired—perhaps even tempted—into writing the novel by Dierderich and his wife, who knew Greene's appreciation of danger, easy identification with the religiously persecuted and loathing of official duplicity. The man who had written *The Power and the Glory* and *The Quiet American* also had a novel in him that could turn the tide in Haiti, and Diederich knew it.

There are plenty of marvelous details in *Seeds of Fiction* along the way, tidbits to which Norman Sherry probably did not have access. (The exhaustive bibliography of Sherry's three-volumes does not list Diederich among the 79 people interviewed.) During Greene's visit to Haiti in the summer of 1963, for example, as he researched what became his bombshell article shining a light on the atrocities of the Duvalier regime, "Nightmare Republic" (published by London's Sunday Telegraph, Sept. 29, 1963),

Sunday's Theme

In the stories I return to, people love each other
indirectly. Offering coins, their moonlit
faces. Not receiving too much credit.
Like the man at work today who answered
"How are you?" with "Blessed." I thought,
that's not an answer to the question.
Afterward, I spent the day remembering:
I'm alive and breathing, drinking tea
with cinnamon. All day that was beautiful.
Later afternoon, the crew team spuming
wings of mist beyond me on the Mississippi,
each man's stroke and strain of back
a promise to his boat-fellows, a steady line
to shore. Someone else can speak about
the heart of love. I'll keep its faithful
offerings. Blooming sky this evening,
and footsteps at the door.

EMILY K. BRIGHT

EMILY K. BRIGHT *has an M.F.A. in poetry from the University of Minnesota. Her chapbook* Glances Back *was published by Pudding House Press.*

Diederich tells us that the novelist carried everywhere a "green clothcovered book of Victorian detective stories." This was only a cover for voluminous blank notebook pages that Greene filled "in a tiny, nearly microscopic script, making it impossible for anyone other than him to read."

By the end, Diederich returns to those questions that everyone seems to want to explore in Greene's life, particularly the matter of his friend's mistresses. Diederich spent time in the company of Catherine Watson and later Yvonne Cloeta. In the concluding chapter of *Seeds of Fiction*, entitled "We'll Meet Again," Diederich recounts several conversations between him and Greene about Yvonne. Eventually, Diederich offers, "Graham rarely discussed such private matters, and I felt rather uncomfortable. He said Yvonne was no bother, no hindrance; in fact she was a great help to him. As a married man and a Catholic I wondered about Yvonne's husband." He seems to have kept this wondering to himself.

But a moment later, Diederich reflects to us, not to Greene, "Obviously the sin of adultery didn't bother Graham." And Greene, sensing his friend's unease, offers an answer, interpolated with brackets that show Diederich's understanding: "We [he, Yvonne, and Jacques] have an understanding, an agreement."

This is a book 50 years in the making; Diederich and Greene first met in 1954. Anyone interested in the life and work of Greene will find it full of new insights. It left me wanting to know more about the relationship between the two men, sending me back to my shelves for Greene's letters and to Sherry. And, as someone who believes in the power of the written word, even in the 21st century, one message of *Seeds of Fiction* is to remind us that books can be powerful weapons, as *The Comedians* certainly was.

JON M. SWEENEY *is the author of* The Pope Who Quit: A True Medieval Tale of Mystery, Death, and Salvation *(Image, 2012).*

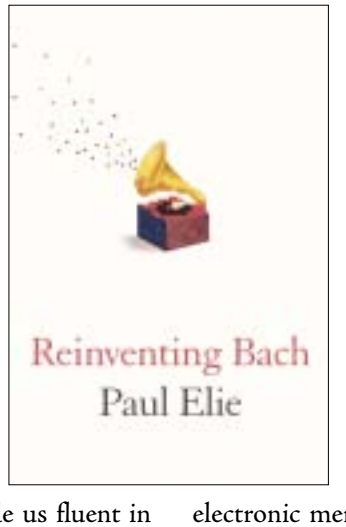
T. FRANK KENNEDY

HARMONIC CONVERGENCE

REINVENTING BACH

By Paul Elie
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 512p $30

Reinventing Bach is a curious and wonderful book, delightful and challenging at the same time. Among musicologists and classical music lovers, Johann Sebastian Bach's place in the canon of western music is secure, but what Paul Elie demonstrates is that Bach has a place much bigger than that. His music continues to engage on so many levels. Bach now can be experienced on a global level, interacting with musics of many cultures, which are constantly being drawn into partnership with the legacy of the one whom many of us consider the greatest composer of the Baroque age, if not the whole of the Western tradition itself.



Elie tells us how and why this happened in a prose that is cognate with the musical forms and procedures that Bach used in his own creative and very personal vein. At the end of *Reinventing Bach* Elie says, "…our experience of the [Bach] recordings, as the recorded life of Bach reveals, has made us fluent in the practices that traditions of the spirit prize: scrutiny of the past, communication across the ages, a reluctance to judge by appearances, and the recognition that the dead continue to speak and the sounds they make, amplified right, are a kind of music."

This is the meaning of this curiously inventive book, a book that performs a literary counterpoint among the various stories that the author tells to enlighten our hearts and minds with the depth and spirituality of the music of Bach—but not only that. The author imitates in his craft that spirit of invention that he carefully shows characterized the music of the great master. It takes some time before the reader understands why in any deep way the personalities he chooses and their stories are allowed to invade this life of Bach, but eventually the literary invention becomes clear. It is a vehicle to engage the invention of Bach himself. The book itself is not about only the music of J. S. Bach and the effect of his music through the centuries since his death. The book is also a narrative of the technology of recording and how various well-known musicians contributed in astounding ways to the historical narrative around that technology that we usually take for granted.

Musicians have been arguing ever since the first wax cylinders appeared in the 19th century about the importance of recorded music and whether this technology is ultimately useful, pedagogically or otherwise, or whether it is simply ruining the experience of live music. For once, someone has pushed this question to the center of our discussion and demonstrated that indeed Bach's greatness has depended on, and grown spectacularly by recording history's electronic memory, fully engaged now for more than 100 years, beginning

with Albert Schweitzer's first Bach recordings in the 19th century. This is the "new way," as Elie calls it, "that will have profound effects on the nature of the art and its place in our society."

Who are the personalities who create the counterpoint that relates the greatness of Bach with the history of recording technology? Several figures appear as musical ositinatos. They repeat their appearances in the text just as an ostinato repeats in a musical context as a compositional procedure. These are Albert Schweitzer, the organist/theologian and medical doctor missionary who wrote the first important life of Bach and was the first musician to record music of Bach; Pablo Casals, the Catalan cellist who as an artist embraced the cause for peace in the world; Leopold Stokowski, the famous conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra whose influence on the development of sound technology began in earnest with his collaboration with Walt Disney on "Fantasia"; and Glenn Gould, the eccentric and brilliant pianist who more than any other, perhaps, created the space where new recording procedures managed not only to develop, but to spin a rhetoric that seems akin to a new and separate aesthetics.

This surprisingly has led to a reconciliation of these new listening experiences with the age-old experience of live music. There are other characters who enter the narrative to a lesser degree. These are more like recurring themes in the narrative: Wanda Landowska, Rosalynd Tureck, Yo Yo Ma, Judy Collins, the Beatles, Lorraine Hunt, Steve Jobs and Keith Jarrett, as well as a number of directors of early music ensembles. What is astonishing is that Elie author manages to fairly chronicle the American music scene for most of the 20th century up to the present day and relate it to Bach. Certain Bach pieces also become touchstones: the "Two- and Three- Part Inventions," the "Toccata and Fugue in D minor," the cello suites, the "Well-Tempered Clavier" and above all, the "Goldberg Variations," which are par excellence the example of Bach's respect for, and absolute mastery of invention as a musical form.

Elie catalogs an amazing number of performances in modern times of the "Goldberg Variations," not only on piano or harpsichord, but an infinite array of instruments. (I am surprised he missed a performance in Tokyo, September 2007, of the Goldbergs on an accordian by the Finnish concert accordianist Mika Väyrynen!) These works and others are woven into the narrative, but Elie often gives interpretation and commentary that is usually spot on. After finishing the book, I could not wait to hear again "Cantata 82," *Ich habe genug*, so moving was the author's testimony. The kaleidoscopic perspective of this book is thrilling and very satisfying.

T. FRANK KENNEDY, S.J., *is professor of music at Boston College.*

DREW CHRISTIANSEN

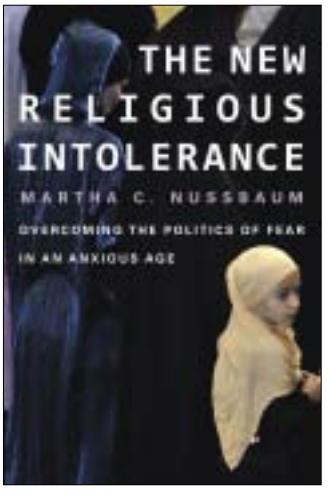
UNVEILED

THE NEW RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Overcoming the Politics of Fear in an Anxious Age

By Martha Nussbaum
Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 304p $26.95

Stumbling on one's own limits, especially when they reveal prejudice, can be uncomfortable. One virtue of Martha Nussbaum's *The New Religious Intolerance* is that it challenged my aversion to some traditionalist Muslim women's wearing of the burqa and chador in Western societies. My dismay was all the deeper because I am a moralist who should, as Nussbaum argues, live an examined life. Her unrelenting argument against Western arguments for prohibition of the burqa unveiled my own apparent bias.



I am also a minor expert on the Middle East, admittedly focused on minority Christian relations in the Muslim world. But I have little experience of the remoter regions of the Arab world where women commonly wear the burqa, a veil that covers the face, or the chador, the all-enveloping body-tent that hides not just the face but also a woman's limbs from view.

I have often participated in dialogues with Muslims and have been critical of Islamophobia among my acquaintances. When the Park51 mosque dispute erupted in New York City a few years ago over the opening of a mosque a few blocks from Ground Zero, I sided with Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, a moderate Sufi cleric, and the sponsors of construction against their critics. (Nussbaum also examines the Park51 controversy in detail.) I have even chatted with young Muslim women of my acquaintance over their choice to wear the hijab, the simple head scarf that covers the hair and neck but leaves the face unveiled, in the interest of modesty and as a sign of religious commitment.

But when it came to opening up to the burqa and finding fault with anyone who would ban it, I balked.

Like the former British foreign secretary Jack Straw, I find it a matter of mutual respect and civility to be able to meet people face to face, if not eye to eye. In his own riding (constituency), though he opposed a ban on the burqa, Straw would receive burqa-wearing women only if they met him face to face in the company of another woman. His, I think, is a practical resolution to a clash of cultures. Acceptance in society requires face to face encounter. It is by revealing ourselves that we come to trust one another. Acceptance in a host society, if not integration, requires satisfying that kind of fundamental expectation for facial recognition into it. The burqa, by contrast, heightens the otherness of the newcomer. It makes the woman a wraith in our midst, depriving her of recognizable humanity.

Speaking to the BBC in 2006, Mr. Straw explained, "Communities are bound together partly by informal chance relations between strangers, people being able to acknowledge each other in the street or being able to pass the time of day." This justification of a policy of limited unveiling on the basis of what Nussbaum calls "transparency and reciprocity" would be axiomatic in sociology or anthropology, but not in Nussbaum's Kantian liberalism. Other schools of philosophy, like phenomenology or symbolic interactionism, would make it a starting point for further reflection on crosscultural encounters.

Traditional Catholic moral theology, for its part, might find Mr. Straw's stratagem an acceptable accommodation of conflicting values. It would be an unexceptional bit of casuistry. In some intellectual traditions, in other words, Mr. Straw's common-sense observation would be a presumptive resolution and, I would hope, an invitation to further inquiry rather than a red herring targeted for rebuttal.

For Professor Nussbaum, one of America's premier philosophers, however, Mr. Straw's position is just so much pettifoggery. "The problem with such security and transparency arguments," she writes, "is they are applied inconsistently." France's ban on religious dress and particularly the burqa comes in for relentless criticism from Nussbaum for its loop-hole ridden law on grounds of inconsistency. Exceptions are made for mostly secular professionals like surgeons and dentists, and entertainers like folkloric dancers and actors and, worst of all, carnival masquerades. There are so many exemptions, she argues, that one has to say it is biased against Muslims.

Drawing on her own dressing habits, she describes how she bundles up against the cold Chicago winter and protects herself from the burning summer sun, and no one would ask her to shed clothing in either situation. But the seasonal occasions for her heavy or protective dress is clear; it does not continue throughout the day as conditions ease or when she moves indoors. While she claims no one demands she unfurl her scarf in a bank, I would think she would do so, even just to adjust to the indoor temperature, if not to transact business face to face.

Myself, I am old-fashioned enough to doff my hat when I come indoors; and unlike both film-land state troopers and criminals posing as officers of the law, I remove my sunglasses when I am talking to someone. Of course, my habits and instincts are no more probative than Professor Nussbaum's. But I would hope a philosopher would give more philosophical consideration to Mr. Straw's observation about the role of facial recognition in social life.

There is a great deal that is thought-provoking in *The New Religious Intolerance*, but its flat rendering of philosophical anthropology, despite its commendable insistence on self-examination and moral imagination, is not adequate for exploring intercultural conflicts like that over the burqa. For that we need a philosophical anthropology informed by what Clifford Geertz called "thick description."

Even a little history of Muslim dress, for example, would have indicated how the burqa originated with control over women held in rulers' harems. The garment has had a checkered history, and wearing it has only occasionally been regarded as a religious obligation. The face veil has been used in classical Greece, Byzantium, Persia and India largely for cultural and status reasons, not religious ones.

ON THE WEB
This month's Catholic Book Club selection.
americamagazine.org/cbc

Remarkably, in one of the earliest disputes on the issue, the Prophet's niece, Aisha bint Tahla, rebuffed her husband's request to wear the veil. She refused, saying: "Since the Almighty has put on me the stamp of beauty, it is my wish that the public should view the beauty and thereby recognize his grace unto them. On no account, therefore, will I veil myself."

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J., *former editor in chief of* ***America****, is a fellow of the Jesuit Institute and a visiting scholar in the department of theology at Boston College.*

FRANCIS X. HEZEL

LIFE BEGINS AT 80

GREEN LEAVES FOR LATER YEARS

By Emilie Griffin
IVP Books. 183p $15

What is a person—in this case, the author—to do when she has reached the age of 75 but is informed by her doctor that she may live another 15 years or longer? She may have completed the biblical life span, but faces the prospect of additional years to be lived out in pain and with the vivid awareness of declining powers and growing challenges. In this modern age of improved medication and lengthening life expectancy, she has plenty of company. Erik Erikson, who had famously defined the seven ages of life, realized well before his death that he had outlived his own categories. Erikson, the author tells us, took up the challenge by writing and speaking about these later years as "new and adventurous territory."

Emilie Griffin, a prolific author of books on Christian spirituality, has followed Erikson's lead in this latest volume. Griffin, who has been suffering from painful rheumatoid arthritis for years, acknowledges the need to recalibrate our understanding of aging. Even so, she admits that she's not so much plumbing the problems of old age, even less seeking an answer to the mystery of decline and death, as asking "how Christian faith informs life's journey, especially in the later years." Her own experience, together with that of all the others she draws on in this short volume, witnesses to the possibility that what is so boldly proclaimed in Jeremiah 17 might be true: "The righteous person is like a tree planted by living water, whose leaves stay green." Yes, leaves can remain green, even in advanced years, the author declares.

There's plenty of evidence to the contrary, Griffin knows. Old age brings infirmity, the loss of those powers on which we have relied for years, as well as an overall decline in health. But the steady advance of pain in the joints and everywhere else is only the half of it; even worse at times is the loss of friends to the ravages of death. This, of course, raises the fearful question the aged are forced to confront at every funeral they attend, "Can I be far behind?"

Loss and diminishment, then, would seem to be the hallmarks of old age. The best we can hope for is to surrender graciously what we have once enjoyed.

Or is it? There must be something to be gained as old age robs us of our eyesight, our bodily strength and the self-esteem and those other parts of our psyche that depend on this. The conventional answers, as advanced in Cicero's tract on old age ("De Senectute") and other ancient texts, are detachment, freedom from meretricious desires and wisdom. To this traditional argument the author adds the results of a British psychology professor's recent research, cited in The New York Times, indicating that "we can expect to be happier in our early 80s than we were in our 20s."

In the end, though, the author is not arguing that the blessings of old age more than offset the drawbacks, even if some of her sources suggest as much. The titles of her chapters—"Pushing Past the Pain," "Grief, Loss and Anger," and "Resetting Goals and Picking Up the Pieces"—point to a less euphoric outlook. Age is a precursor of death, and the latter has never had much to recommend it. She's just offering us wisdom on how to survive and flourish in a period that smells of decline.

Throughout the book she summons a host of witnesses that point the way. The famed artists Renoir and Matisse, both of whom suffered from the same debilitating rheumatoid arthritis as the author, continued their pursuit of beauty despite the affliction that deformed their hands. Peter Drucker, the founder of modern management theory, retained his child-like fascination with life to the very end of his own. Nelson Mandela, Billy Graham and his wife Ruth, and two cardinals of the church, John Henry Newman and Avery Dulles, did much more than battle old age to a draw. Distilling the experience of the many decades they had lived, they made significant contributions to the world in their later years.

Griffin's book, then, does not offer a grand argument on aging and holiness. The volume, like life itself, is a pastiche

of experiences, some good and some bad, but all sustained by faith and good humor. Each chapter is more an exhortatory homily than an essay, each packed with real life examples, each followed by questions to stimulate reflection and a prayer.

At bottom, the defining feature of old age is a gradual surrender of our human powers that prepares us and summons us to the final surrender of life itself. Spiritual growth can occur during this time of diminishment and loss, of course, but only on condition that we have the resources to make the best of a difficult time. The author's counsel here may help us detect some of the hidden graces of old age, but for the most part it merely offers us guidance on how to keep those leaves fresh and green. We are not called to roll back the ravages of age, but to keep walking, as Abraham and Sarah did, until the very end of our life's journey.

FRANCIS X. HEZEL, S.J., *recently a guest editor at* ***America****, has returned to his apostolate in Micronesia.*

Correction: Because of an editing error, in the review (1/21) of the book *Law's Virtues,* the name of a legal philosopher cited by the book's author was given incorrectly. The name is Joseph Raz, not Joseph Ratzinger.

LETTERS

Worthwhile Investment

Re "Culture Shift," by Archbishop Robert J. Carlson (1/7): I am happy to note Archbishop Carlson's support for promoting a culture of vocations through Catholic schools, especially among the growing Hispanic population in our country. For the past two decades, through the Nativity/Miguel network and Cristo Rey schools, religious congregations of men and women, along with laypeople, diocesan priests and concerned bishops, have been making the "concerted effort to increase Hispanic involvement in our Catholic schools" that the archbishop calls for.

Today, though challenged by new alternatives like the ever-expanding charter school movement and by the financial viability of the Nativity/Miguel network, church leaders and Catholic communities need to advocate vigorously and find the financial means to sustain and grow these initiatives to make Catholic education available to the Hispanic community as well as other Catholic youth.

A study in *Soul Searching,* by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, found that the U.S. Catholic Church "appears in its institutional infrastructure to invest fewer resources into youth ministry and education than do many other Christian traditions and denominations in the United States." Without strong action behind the words of encouragement, Catholic schools will continue to disappear in this country, as they have been doing for the past half century.

ROBERT SCHIELER, F.S.C.
Washington, D.C.

To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears below articles on **America**'s Web site, www.americamagazine.org. This allows us to consider your letter for publication in both print and online versions of the magazine. Letters may also be sent to **America**'s editorial office (address on page 2) or by e-mail to: letters@americamagazine.org. They should be brief and include the writer's name, postal address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Ciszek for Everyone

I was delighted to read, "Chained, but Free," by John Levko, S.J. (1/7), and I fully understand the Jesuit embrace of Father Ciszek as one of their own.

But I claim him, too. The lucid, profound and courageous wisdom of *He Leadeth Me* belongs to all of us. I have reread it many times and continue to be challenged by its call of total surrender to God. I have recommended it to deacon formation classes as well as ordained deacons and wives in our diocese, and it continues to be read by Catholic cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

I have no hesitancy in doing this. I was introduced to the book by a shoe salesman as I purchased a pair of shoes to wear at my daughter's wedding.

(DCN.) CHUCK SPECHT
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Respect the Law

"One Step Forward?" by Robert McCreanor (12/24), applauds

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Positions

THE CENTER OF CONCERN in Washington, D.C. (www.coc.org) is seeking a full-time DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, who will be responsible for all aspects of development and donor outreach. These include the Center's direct mail appeals, major donor relations and new donor acquisition, foundation grants and Center memberships. He/she will work closely with the Center President, Center C.O.O., program staff and Board of Directors. More information is available at https://www.coc.org/coc/job-opening-director-development-center-concern. Cover letter and résumé should be submitted to resumes@coc.org by Jan. 31, 2013.

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE. Montana Indian Reservation parish makes request for religious woman to minister in following capacities: director of religious education; provide weekly day-time presence at parish/parish center; provide pre-baptismal instruction/preparation for approximately 80 families. Be a part of (though living at Lodgepole nine miles from) an active community of three Sparkill Dominican Sisters, four Jesuit Volunteers teaching in our mission grade school and two Jesuit priests staffing three separate parishes on the 20- by 40-square mile Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. Comfortable trailer, car and insurance provided. Salary negotiable. Contact: josephrr@mtintouch.net, or call (406) 673-3300. Joseph R. Retzel, S.J., Pastor; St. Paul's Mission, Hays, MT 59527-0040.

Retreat

Bethany Retreat House, East Chicago, Ind., offers private and individually directed silent retreats, including dreamwork and Ignatian 30-day retreats, year-round in a prayerful home setting. Contact Joyce Diltz, P.H.J.C.: (219) 398-5047; bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net; bethanyretreathouse.org.

Wills

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America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 13 combined issues: Jan. 7-14, 21-28, April 8-15, June 3-10, 17-24, July 1-8, 15-22, July 29-Aug. 5, Aug. 12-19, Aug. 26-Sept. 2, Sept. 9-16, Dec. 9-16, 23-30) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodical postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Business Manager: Lisa Pope. Circulation: (800) 627-9533. Subscriptions: United States, $56 per year; add U.S. $30 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. $56 per year for international priority airmail. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, P.O. Box 293059, Kettering, OH 45429.

President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Even if we sympathize with the situation of undocumented aliens who entered the United States as children, respect for the Constitution must trump even this presumably well-intentioned policy.

Congress, not the presidential administration, is the legislative branch of our federal government. Whether or not we agree with the legislation passed by Congress and signed by a president, it is the law of the land. If the president is allowed to decide which laws are worthy of enforcement and, as in this case, create an administrative status inconsistent with current law, the rule of law and freedom itself are in danger.

Clearly, a representative republic is a messy and inefficient form of government, but it does protect us from despotism.

Perhaps Congress will eventually pass a bill mimicking the deferred action program. Perhaps not. In the long run preserving the rule of law is more important than the common good. This is another case in which the end does not justify the means.

THOMAS A. HILL
Highland, Ill.

Christmas Love

Re "Carrying On" (12/24): Kerry Weber's fond memories of the 1978 "Christmas on Sesame Street" television special reminded me of that wonderful program. At the end, without understanding how it happens, Big Bird is visited by Santa Claus. This is a great analogy for the mysterious generosity of Christ's appearance among us.

In 2012, PBS's "Call the Midwife" Christmas special also revealed the tremendous love at the heart of Christmas. Set amid the docks of 1950s London, "Midwife" follows four young student midwives in training at a convent of Anglican nuns. An elderly victim of the workhouse finds consolation when a young nurse takes her to the graves of her five long-dead children. A frightened teenager gives birth in secret and leaves her newborn on the convent steps. The girl nearly dies, but is saved, and her baby is taken in by her family. There is a harried Boy Scout leader struggling to corral her lively charges into a presentable Christmas pageant.

You will laugh, you will cry, and you will be profoundly moved. It is a keeper.

NANCY PERICH DALY
Houston, Tex.

Same as Before

Re "New Translation Receives Wide Acceptance" (Signs of the Times, 12/24): I have been using the new translation of the missal for six months. After a while the new words seemed awfully familiar.

I located my first missal—a Saint Andrew Daily Missal published in 1949 with an imprimatur. I had used this missal during my years at Archbishop Williams High School, for two years in the Maryknoll seminary and at Boston College. The Confiteor, Gloria, Nicene Creed, Suscipiat Dominus, Santus, Sign of Peace and Ecce Agnus Dei are essentially the same in both.

In the early 1960s there was a new English version. We were told our missals were obsolete. Now we have the "new translation," which is actually the same as we used before. So why is it called a new translation?

THOMAS J. NORTON
Teaticket, Mass.

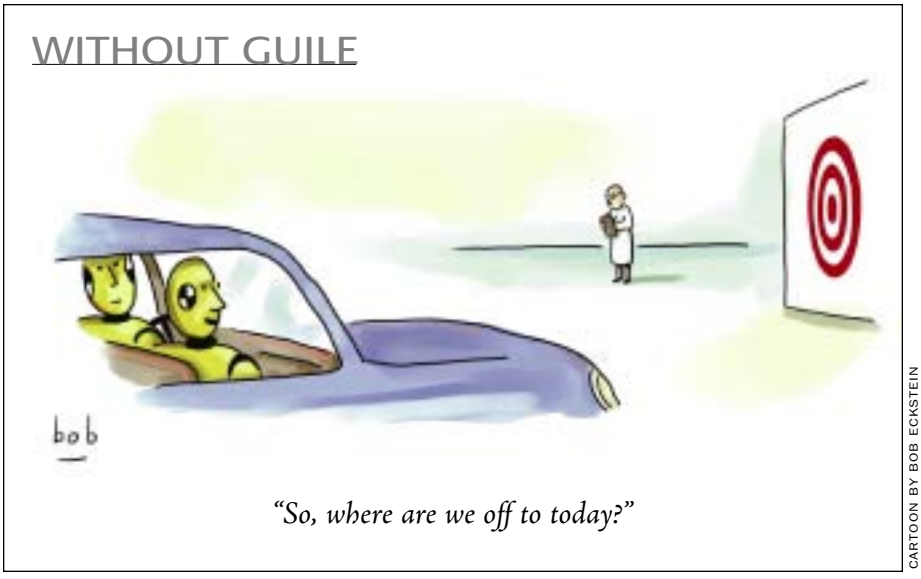
Hope in the Resurrection

The column on evil by Matt Malone, S.J., (Of Many Things, 12/17) hits the correct balance. Evil is a mystery, and its residue is historical from Bethlehem to Newtown. We are not helpless. There are measures we can take to guard our children, like better gun control, better preparation in our schools, maybe even an armed guard in each school.

But we must accept the fact that this mystery of evil will go on until the end of time. Jesus did not come to earth to explain suffering, nor to make us understand it nor to take it away. He came to endure it with us to the bitter end and to assure us that we are not alone and that evil does not and cannot have the last word.

We all share the tears of Newtown, but hopefully we share the final hope. Evil does not have the last word; only the resurrection of life does and a hope built on that firm foundation.

PETER J. RIGA
Houston, Tex.



"So, where are we off to today?"

CARTOON BY BOB ECKSTEIN

The Transformers

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), FEB. 10, 2013

Readings: Is 6:1–8; Ps 138:1–8; 1 Cor 15:1–11; Lk 5:1–11

"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (Lk 5:8)

If God were completely "other," we could not relate to God because God would be different from us in every way. But Genesis assures us that we are made in the image and likeness of God. So even in the matter of holiness there can be some similarity, but God's holiness is so far beyond ours that the encounter of a human being with the living God is powerful and transformative. When the prophet Isaiah envisions God's throne, he hears and sees the seraphs singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." Isaiah's initial response to God's holiness is to cry, "Woe is me; I am doomed!" God's holiness, in the form of a burning coal, is placed upon Isaiah's lips; and he is not only purified, but prepared for his call, as his "wickedness is removed" and his "sin purged."

The confrontation with God's holiness has transformed Isaiah; he is now the man who responds to God's call not with shame or fear, but by saying, "Here I am. Send me!"

That same transformative power was operative in Jesus. The Gospel of Luke presents Jesus' call of the first disciples, Simon Peter, James and John, differently than Mark or Matthew. In the other synoptic Gospels, there is a simple call and response. In Luke, the call and response are placed in the context of the manifestation of Jesus' power. Luke subtly answers a question that the other two synoptic Gospels raise in our minds: Why did the disciples respond to Jesus' call so quickly?

Jesus comes among the fisherman not in some "holy" or otherworldly setting, but in their day-to-day work lives—at the shore while they are cleaning their nets. After Simon, James and John had a night of unfruitful fishing, Jesus instructs Simon to "put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon counters by telling Jesus that their hard work has not been rewarded all night, "but at your command I will lower the nets." This act of faith is rewarded with overflowing nets and boats sinking under the weight of the catch. Simon knows that it is Jesus who has brought them this catch and recognizes in him the awful power of God. As with the prophet Isaiah, the presence of the divine overwhelms Simon and illuminates his weakness and sinfulness. His cry, so similar to Isaiah, is "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."

Yet the presence of God in our lives not only illuminates our weakness, but strengthens and emboldens us as it transforms us. Jesus simply instructs Simon not to be afraid. Simon and the others clearly hear the call, for they "left everything and followed him." It is that same powerful presence of Jesus Christ which was revealed to Paul and transformed him from persecutor to evangelist. Indeed, in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul speaks of the reality of Jesus Christ and encapsulates it in what is perhaps the earliest Christian creed: "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve."

This proto-creed is not intended to be a dry summation of realities long gone and fondly remembered, but a sign of God's power and reality still active. For the same God who came to Isaiah, Simon Peter and Paul is still calling us in the church and beyond to encounter the living God, to be purified by his cleansing power, to cast off fear and to respond to the call to be transformed by God's grace. And it is still the case that God's call comes to us and meets us where we are in the world, whether called like Isaiah to encounter God in his glory or like Peter to meet God as he performed his daily tasks. The message in every case is clear: Do not be afraid to encounter God's holiness—it will burn off our fear and reveal the holiness for which God has created us.

God's "otherness" is not intended to drive us away from him but to draw us near to him. It is when we respond to God's call that we can call out to God confidently with the Psalmist: "When I called, you answered me; you built up strength within me."

JOHN W. MARTENS

ART: TAD DUNNE

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Can I accept God coming near to me?
- Do I hear the voice of God calling me?
- Do I have faith that God is empowering me?

JOHN W. MARTENS *is an associate professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.*

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