America
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Pope Francis

THE GROUNDBREAKING FIRST YEAR

KATARINA SCHUTH

JOSEPH G. KELLY

Seamus Heaney

WEAVER OF WORDS

MICHAEL DOYLE

OF MANY THINGS

Political phrases like "anti-choice," "tax-and-spend," "liberal" and "conservative" are short currency in political-speak, buzzwords that convey much more than their dictionary definitions and therefore demand our immediate attention. While the modern masters of political spin may have perfected the use of buzzwords, they didn't invent them. Buzzwords have been with us from the start of political communication. Eighteenth-century American politics also had its buzzwords. One of them was "faction," generally a clique or subgroup within a larger political unit, but in the context of the raging philosophical battles of America's founding, "faction" stood for a subversive force, an organized group beyond formal public scrutiny that threatened to dominate and possibly destroy the young republic. In Federalist Paper No. 10, for example, the word "faction" appears no fewer than 18 times.

Throughout their debates about the artful arrangement of political power, almost every one of the founding fathers expressed some concern about the influence of factions. Thomas Jefferson, for example, feared that a powerful faction was bent on restoring the monarchy in all but name in the form of a powerful federal government. Alexander Hamilton, meanwhile, argued that only a strong central government could counter the power of factions and unite the American states. John Adams's sympathies, if not his affection, were with Hamilton: "I dread a division of our republic into parties and that is what I see is happening," Adams said. The greatest critic of political factions was George Washington, who famously denounced the institutionalization of factions in the form of political parties: "However [parties] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government."

Those are powerful words, almost as powerful as John D. Dingell's words last month. The longest serving member of Congress in U.S. history announced his retirement after nearly 60 years of continuous service to the people of Michigan. Mr. Dingell is 87 years old; he has been a part of the congressional family since the late 1930s, when he went to work on Capitol Hill as a page. Old age, however, is not the reason the congressman is heading home to Dearborn.

Mr. Dingell believes that the founder's fears have been realized; partisan factions have paralyzed the political process. Congressman Dingell spares no one in his assessment. Democrats as well as Republicans have injected the factious toxin into the body politic, rendering the present Congress, in Mr. Dingell's judgment, not only ineffective but "obnoxious." In a guest column in this issue, William T. Cavanaugh adds corporations to the mix, those "persons," according to the Supreme Court, who by virtue of their wealth hold a near monopoly on public speech.

To counter all this, Mr. Dingell says, we need to recover some powerful buzzwords for the political lexicon: "Compromise is an honorable word, as are cooperation, conciliation and coordination," he said. "Let us recognize that our founding fathers intended that those words would be the way the business of our country would be conducted. Rights were given in the Constitution to be used well, to govern wisely and to work together." In other words, the founders expected that while there would be disagreement and debate, we would still be able to govern ourselves. That requires, however, some smart reforms and a lot of goodwill. "The Congress must live up to its name," Mr. Dingell said. "It must be a great coming together of our people."

Paging Mr. Adams.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

America

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Cover: Pope Francis greets the crowd as he arrives for the general audience in St. Peter's Square on Feb. 19. CNS photo/Paul Haring

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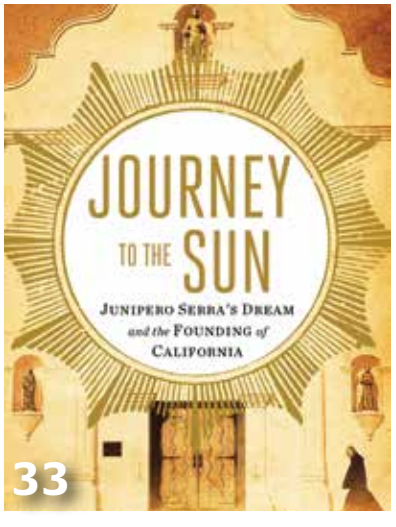

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ON THE WEB

A collection of **America**'s coverage of Pope Francis' first year. Plus, Rhona Tarrant talks about the changing face of **Catholicism in Ireland** and Matthew McGarry reports on the work of Catholic Relief Services in the **Middle East**. All at americamagazine.org.

A Divided Venezuela

Events on the ground are proceeding quickly in Venezuela, where poor economic conditions and dissatisfaction with the government of President Nicolás Maduro have led to violent street protests. As of this writing, 13 people have been killed, and one of the principal opposition leaders, Leopoldo López, remains in jail. Meanwhile, Mr. Maduro's rival for the presidency in 2013, Henrique Capriles, is calling for the Catholic Church to serve as a mediator.

The bishops of Venezuela have "called for the social and political leaders to engage in deep, sincere dialogue" to address the urgent problems in the country, like high rates of violent crime and the lack of basic consumer goods. On Feb. 24 the bishops' justice and peace commission joined other organizations in calling for "urgent action to help guarantee human rights, justice and peace in Venezuela."

In the past, church leadership alienated some in the Venezuelan community by its strong, while accurate, criticism of President Hugo Chávez. The fact that Mr. Capriles sees the church as an impartial negotiator is a positive sign that the reputation of the church has improved among the political elite. The United States should also refrain from taking sides, even as tensions rise over the expulsion of American diplomats in Caracas. Some in Washington may be tempted to take advantage of the crisis, but they should tread delicately. The United States may wish for a better negotiating partner than Mr. Maduro, but the president's party still retains strong support among the poor. Mr. Chávez may be dead, but Chavismo lives on.

The Latest Strike

On Dec. 12, 2013, a wedding party of 50 or 60 guests in Yemen, after feasting on roasted lamb with the bride's parents, piled into the 11-vehicle caravan for the drive up a mountain road to deliver the bride to the groom's house. Suddenly a buzzing in the sky grew louder, and four Hellfire missiles launched from drones slammed into the convoy. The attack killed 12 people, including the groom's son from a previous marriage, and seriously wounded 15, including the bride.

The U.S. government has conducted two investigations into the incident. Though the results have not been made public, U.S. officials claim that only militants were killed. A recent report by Human Rights Watch, titled "A Wedding That Became a Funeral," released on Feb., 20, tells a different story.

Human Rights Watch interviewed more than 25 people, including family members, eyewitnesses and government officials from Yemen and the United States. From the evidence available, the report says, the attack violated a policy endorsed by President Obama on May 23, 2013: There must be "near-certainty" that a legitimate target is present, that he poses a "continuing and imminent threat" to the American people, that arresting him is not feasible and that no civilians will be killed. According to the report, the victims were most likely all shepherds, farmers and migrants, not terrorists; the "bad guy" was not there, and even if he had been, that would not have justified the devastating attack. Since 2009 the United States has conduccted at least 86 target killings in Yemen, taking at least 500 lives.

After this latest attack, the 60-year-old groom raised his hands to the sky, saying: "Why did the United States do this to us?" Why, indeed?

Troubling Transcripts

Central bankers are supposed to be gloomy proctors, not high-wire acrobats, so it seems a little unfair to criticize the want of urgency exhibited by some of the nation's Federal Reserve presidents in 2008. Transcripts released on Feb. 21 of Federal Open Market Committee meetings conducted as the economic crisis accelerated reveal wayward prognosticators far too sanguine about the resilience of the U.S. economy, apparently oblivious to the acute damage recession and credit panic were already doing (though the current chairperson, Janet L. Yellen, shows up frequently right on the money).

More than five years later it is not clear that Congress and state and federal regulators have properly addressed the tangled complex of interests and incompetence that created and propelled the crisis. The Federal Reserve has indirectly pumped billions into the economy as "qualitative easing," and markets are up past their pre-crisis highs. But restoration of the economy continues to move at a glacial pace that has left those at the bottom scrambling for decent-paying work. Meanwhile, the surviving too-big-to-fail banks have only gotten too-bigger; subprime mortgage lending has returned, renovated as "non-prime"; and commercial banking tentacles now reach deep into the real economy, opening exciting new opportunities for conflict-of-interest case studies.

The lesson to be drawn from the transcripts is not how woefully out of touch Federal Reserve bankers were in 2008. It is that a meeting room of central bankers should be the last place for high-risk innovations that are as likely to turn out wrong as right. A solid regulatory and enforcement regime makes a better bulwark against economic chaos than best guesses around a Federal Reserve meeting table. It is necessary to make these reforms before this latest fiasco slides away into the realm of the forgotten.

EDITORIAL

Disorder in the Court

There are few experiences more devastating than being accused of a crime of which one is not guilty. It is even worse when the accusation could lead to the death penalty. A society likes to think of its judicial system as fair and just, yet evidence has been mounting in recent years that innocent men and women are tried, sent to prison and even executed for crimes they did not commit. Various databases spell out the evidence. A database maintained by the Justice Institute, a small nonprofit organization, currently lists 4,401 cases in 109 countries where 584 people have been sentenced to death and 789 have been sentenced to life in prison for crimes they did not commit.

One of the oldest cases is that of John Gordon, wrongly convicted of murder and executed in Rhode Island in 1845 after the judge instructed the jury to give more credibility to Yankee depositions than to those of the newly arrived and suspect Irish. The most recent case is that of Tony Yarbough. Condemned for stabbing and strangling his mother, half-sister and her friend in Brooklyn in June 1992, his murder conviction was vacated on DNA evidence after he had spent 22 years in prison. On Aug. 7 he told The Daily News: "If there had been a death penalty in New York, I would be dead by now." The common reaction of the general public to convictions is to presume they are just; but these cases are "life issues" that demand an institutional, moral and legislative response.

The Death Penalty Information Center, another national nonprofit organization, documented 143 defendants sentenced to death and later exonerated since 1973. Of those released, 14 had been in prison for over 20 years. A record 87 people were exonerated in 2013 from past convictions in various types of criminal cases, according to the National Registry of Exonerations. In the case of Nicole Harris, who in 2005 was sentenced in Chicago to 30 years for killing her son, the police had coerced a false confession. Most appalling, in some cases the person had already been executed before innocence was established. Among the best known cases is that of Cameron Todd Willingham, accused in Texas in 1991 of burning down his own house to kill his three young children. After his conviction, a nationally known fire investigator examined the scene and found no evidence of arson.

Until recently these studies have been the work of university researchers, civil rights activists and journalists, exemplified by The Innocence Project at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law of Yeshiva University in New York, which published *Actual Innocence* in 2000. The book describes how false convictions happen and celebrates the introduction of DNA analysis as an instrument for justice. More recently, a report of the U.S. Department of Justice and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, titled "National Summit on Wrongful Convictions: Building a Systematic Approach to Prevent Wrongful Convictions" (August 2013), includes 30 action recommendations. This is a milestone in engaging police and prosecutors in correcting the procedural shortcomings exposed by DNA profiling.

A catalogue of factors that produce bad outcomes, familiar to viewers of television police procedurals, includes the following: eyewitnesses are the least reliable source of information; tortured suspects will lie to their torturers and implicate others to get reduced sentences for themselves; suspects, sleepless and depressed, will confess to almost anything; people of color from crime-filled neighborhoods already have two strikes against them; lab tests are rigged; defense lawyers with overwhelming caseloads cannot fight for their clients. Ambitious prosecutors and politicians trumpet "law and order" as a campaign theme, as if a murder trial were a spectacle in ancient Rome.

Most of the report's recommendations concern day-to-day practices: record all interviews involving major crimes; review cases to avoid investigative bias; do not accept jailhouse informers without corroborating evidence; create risk-assessment tools to help identify wrongful arrests; identify the five most frequent errors that lead to wrongful convictions. But the emphasis is on the most problematic investigative tool, eyewitness identification. The current practice of the lineup ought to be replaced by double-blind/sequential protocols, says the report. The investigator, for example, should not conduct the witness's viewing of suspects in a lineup, and a "blind" administrator, who does not know the suspect, should be the one who presents photos to a witness for identification.

Bureaucracies resist change, and some law enforcement officials may drag their feet at taping all interrogations or limiting rough treatment. The hope, of course, is that the new level of care applied to this stage of an investigation will set the tone for every step. This may lead to fewer convictions, but it will at least help restore confidence in a system badly in need of it.

REPLY ALL

Football Is Immoral

"Fairness in Football" (Current Comment, 2/10) evoked a huge reaction in me. I have often questioned why Americans not only love football, but idolize it. It is our country's favorite sport and religion.

I have asked myself if viewing a football game is an acceptable way for the American public to experience—vicariously, of course—angry, even violent, feelings hidden deep within. Football involves violent, brutal attacks of the players upon one another. Medical experts are suddenly expressing great alarm about concussions, but they haven't even begun to talk about internal injuries, which often appear years later in the lives of husbands and fathers.

For all of these reasons, football is immoral.

I feel embarrassed and defensive in saying all these things, but have you ever held a conviction that, in essence, contradicts the beliefs and feelings of the multitude? It isn't comfortable, I assure you. But it is a matter of principle for me to say the things that must be said, despite the threat of public lynching.

MARY ANN FOY, R.S.C.J.
Redwood City, Calif.

Boxing Senators

Re "Fairness in Football": Over 50 years ago, Sports Illustrated asked Richard McCormick, S.J., to write about prize fighting ("Is Professional Boxing Immoral?" 11/05/1962). The key issue was brain damage due to the battering and bashing of the head. It is worth reading. Father McCormick, my moral theology professor from 1966 to 1967, was brilliant and influential.

Boston University's research into traumatic brain injuries of football players is simply repeating what we have known for years, but with graphic details.

With all the head-butting that Senators Harry Reid and John McCain have done over the years in Congress, they now want to fund research in safety for boxers. Ironic. We already know there isn't any safety in boxing, so they should use our tax money for other causes.

MAURICE VANDERPOT
Enfield, N.H.

Spreading Democracy

Much as I hate to agree with "A War of Ambition," by Andrew J. Bacevich (2/10), I had hoped that the Bush doctrine would spread democracy throughout the Islamic world. I thought that U.S. bombs and missiles could do the trick in Iraq and then other places. The Arab Spring produced just the opposite, however. We are in more danger today than on Sept. 11 because we instigated the jihad that, if not dead, had at least been quiescent.

The one thing Professor Bacevich did not mention is the violence on Christians throughout the Islamic world. Thousands have been murdered, exiled and imprisoned in Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, Nigeria and so on. See *The Global War on Christians*, by John L. Allen Jr. I am uncertain where all this will lead, but it is a disaster.

PETER J. RIGA
Houston, Tex.

WHAT YOU'RE READING at americamagazine.org
1 **Our Secular Future,** by R. R. Reno (2/24)
2 **Take Up Your Cross,** by James Martin, S.J. (3/3)
3 **Suspicious Minds,** by Michael P. Murphy (2/24)
4 **A View From Abroad,** by Massimo Faggioli (2/24)
5 **Acts of Young Apostles: The Controversy at Eastside Catholic,** by John D. Whitney, S.J. (In All Things, 2/21)

Before 9/11

Professor Bacevich makes it sound as if the Iraq War came together "overnight" in the wake of 9/11. Actually, the war was well scripted at least five years in advance by the neo-conservative Project for the New American Century, which called for the reckless use of American power. Regrettably, there were significant contributions made by Catholics to the drafting and promulgating of the project. One can only wonder how Jesus and St. Francis of Assisi somehow went missing from their Catholic education.

ROBERT E. ULANOWICZ
Gainesville, Fla.

Failure of Democracy

Thank you for "A War of Ambition." The Iraq War shows us how right Plato was to put democracy near the bottom of the pyramid when ranking governments. Our system is obviously very broken when one man, George W. Bush, can have a ridiculous idea and can convince the Congress and the public that he is right.

"Shock and awe" has turned into horror for us all. I wonder that any of us can sleep at night because of it.

STEVEN R. BETTLACH
St. Louis, Mo.

Not Worthy of Applause

Thanks for "What We Wrought," by Cathy Breen (2/10), and "A War of Ambition." Right after the 9/11 attacks a Guatemalan Indian woman named Rigoberta Menchú, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, wrote to President George W. Bush expressing the general sympathy and solidarity of the Latin American people. In her letter she cautioned Mr. Bush not to react vindictively since such a course would only make matters worse.

Very soon thereafter I watched Mr. Bush's address to a joint session of Congress that was attended by special guests including high ranking prelates of the Catholic Church. The president's words were openly vindictive and

the audience repeatedly endorsed his words with standing applause. Enough said. The rest is history.

(MSGR.) DAVID A. RATERMANN
St. Louis, Mo.

Cancel My Subscription

The Feb. 10 issue of **America** disappoints deeply. How could you stoop to print "A War of Ambition"? The diatribe by Professor Bacevich is destructive propaganda at its worst. "Of Many Things," by Matt Malone, S.J., and "What We Wrought" follow close behind.

I thought Jesuit thinking strode higher paths. Your intellectual sloppiness embarrasses this Catholic. Cancel my subscription and refund any balance of my $38 that your policies may provide.

CHARLES A. BYRNE
Newport, R.I.

The writer is a retired lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force.

Tears and Blood

I finished reading the Feb. 10 issue of **America** with tears on my cheeks and blood on my hands. What distressing articles on Iraq and Honduras! These stories are sad enough, without the added knowledge that our beloved country is deeply implicated in all of this. I would like to declare myself "not guilty," but that does not seem possible. Many of us, even millions around the world, protested loudly and publicly when President George W. Bush decided to invade Iraq. But to no avail.

And yet, in many ways, as long as we are citizens of this country and enjoy the many privileges we have as American citizens, we are a part of the oppression. Like Lady Macbeth, I can't get the blood off my hands.

LUCY FUCHS
Brandon, Fla.

Experience and Tradition

Thank you to the Rev. J. Michael Byron for his insightful article, "A Faith That Works" (2/3). I couldn't agree more with his premise and his emphasis on the importance—though often not realized by the individual—of an underlying theological method.

The method I have found most useful is the one espoused by the wise Richard Rohr, O.F.M. He makes it clear and succinct in the first chapter of his recent book, *Yes, And…: Daily Meditations*: "Scripture as validated by experience and experience as validated by tradition are good scales for one's spiritual worldview." I highly recommend reading that chapter (and the whole book).

DOUGLAS RUSH
Cambridge, Ohio

BLOG TALK

*The following is an excerpt from "Jesuitical Confusion," by Mark Tooley, published in The American Spectator (2/13). The article is in response to "What We Wrought," by Cathy Breen (**Am.** 2/10).*

For many there will never be any statute of limitations on American culpability for Iraq's travails. This anti-American narrative omits almost all history prior to the Persian Gulf War, which the **America** piece briefly cites without explaining what precipitated it, which of course would distract from the article's polemical goal. What prompted such focused American attention on Iraq across two decades is never detailed.

The answer of course is that Iraq's murderous Baathist regime, under Saddam Hussein for over 25 years, not only terrorized its own nation but made itself a regional and international menace. Besides hundreds of thousands of murdered Iraqis, and countless more brutalized, raped, imprisoned and tortured, Saddam's Iraq supported international terror and invaded two of its neighbors….

Praying and working for wise policies that mitigate the worst evils while seeking an approximate peace when possible are worthy goals. Demonizing America and portraying nearly everyone else as innocent victims is a spiritual and historical falsehood.

MARK TOOLEY
The American Spectator

"We, the jury, feel the defendant's conviction by the media should be overturned."

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

SOUTH SUDAN

Cease-Fire Collapses as Conflict Turns Key City Into 'Ghost Town'

A cease-fire that seemed to offer a chance for a peaceful resolution to months-long conflict in the world's newest nation, South Sudan, has unraveled. Intermittent fighting has continued since the cease-fire agreement was signed on Jan. 23. But now in Malakal, a key city in an oil-producing region in the country's northeast, government forces loyal to President Salva Kiir are in more or less open combat with rebel groups loosely arrayed behind former Vice President Riek Machar.

Sudan's Catholic bishops complained in early February that they could have a stronger role in ending the violence but have been left out of the peace process, as have representatives from South Sudan's civil society. Now negotiations in Ethiopia to unravel the conflict are at a standstill, and Malakal, a city of 150,000, has been reduced to a "ghost town," according to Llanos Ortiz, deputy emergency manager for Médecins Sans Frontières (M.S.F.-"Doctors Without Borders"). Ortiz has recently returned to Barcelona but receives daily updates from her team in South Sudan. She told **America** that the news from Malakal is not good.

ON THE MOVE. Rebel in Upper Nile State on Feb. 13, 2014.

An M.S.F. emergency coordinator reports that the city is deserted, "with houses burned throughout and countless dead bodies strewn in the streets." Ortiz said most of the residents of the city have "been obliged to flee." Many are seeking safety on the opposite side of the Nile River in camps that have also proved vulnerable to attacks from armed groups.

Ortiz said that M.S.F. medical compounds have not been spared, neither in Malakal nor in other South Sudanese cities where violence has reignited. On Feb. 22, an M.S.F. team came upon "scenes of horror," discovering at least 14 bodies throughout the Malakal Teaching Hospital compound, scattered among 50 to 75 patients remaining in the facility who were too weak or elderly to flee for safety. Ortiz could not say which side attacked the facility. "There have been [repeated] attacks and counterattacks from both sides," she explained. Many buildings in the hospital were damaged, the pediatrics ward was razed, and equipment was looted.

New York-based Human Rights Watch accused both sides of serious abuses that may amount to war crimes. "A clear pattern of reprisal killings based on ethnicity, massive destruction, and widespread looting has emerged in this conflict," Human Rights Watch said in a report released on Feb. 27.

Survivors reported that armed groups entered the hospital on Feb. 19 and shot dead people who had no money or mobile phones to hand over. Later that afternoon, armed men returned and killed patients in their beds and others who had fled to the operating theater for safety. They also reportedly raped women and young girls.

According to Ortiz, those who have fled the city remain in an extremely precarious condition in a number of camps for displaced people that have sprung up in the area. Access to food, sanitation and water is an immediate concern. Ortiz said she is especially concerned about the near term in the area, as the South Sudanese rainy season is about to begin. Typically the area becomes more or less inaccessible because of the rains, and it may be difficult to reach people cut off in the camps. Their vulnerability to disease, hunger and violence will only increase in the coming weeks, she warned.

The international anti-poverty agency Oxfam pulled its staff out of Malakal because of the dangerous conditions. Ortiz said that M.S.F. has no intention of leaving. "No way; absolutely not," she said. Right now, she said, the group has the capacity to assist Malakal residents who have fled the city, and M.S.F. has re-established a camp hospital to treat the wounded who continue to trickle in seeking help. But, she said, the volatile situation really "requires a very comprehensive response by the international community." The U.N. reports that after three months of conflict more than 860,000 people have been driven from their homes in South Sudan.

KEVIN CLARKE

PHOTO: REUTERS/GORAN TOMASEVIC

DIVORCED / REMARRIED

A Pastoral Path To Communion?

The Catholic Church needs to find a way to offer healing, strength and salvation to Catholics whose marriages have failed, who are committed to making a new union work and who long to do so within the church and with the grace of Communion, Cardinal Walter Kasper told the world's cardinals. Pope Francis had asked Cardinal Walter Kasper, a well-known theologian and author of a book on mercy as a fundamental trait of God, to introduce a discussion on Feb. 20-21 by the College of Cardinals on family life. While insisting—for the good of individuals and of the church—on the need to affirm Jesus' teaching that sacramental marriage is indissoluble, Cardinal Kasper allowed for the possibility that in very specific cases the church could tolerate a second union.

Because they are human and prone to sin, husbands and wives continually must follow a path of conversion, renewal and maturation, asking forgiveness and renewing their commitment to one another, Cardinal Kasper said. But the church also must be realistic and acknowledge "the complex and thorny problem" posed by Catholics whose marriages have failed but who find support, family stability and happiness in a new relationship, he continued.

"One cannot propose a solution different from or contrary to the words of Jesus," the cardinal said. "The indissolubility of a sacramental marriage," he said, "is part of the binding tradition of the faith of the church and cannot be abandoned or dissolved by appealing to a superficial understanding of mercy at a discount price." At the same time, Cardinal Kasper added, "There is no human situation absolutely without hope or solution."

Cardinal Kasper said it would be up to members of the special assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the family in October and the world Synod of Bishops in 2015 to discuss concrete proposals for helping divorced and civilly remarried Catholics participate more fully in the life of the church. A possible avenue for finding those proposals, he said, would be to develop "pastoral and spiritual procedures" for helping couples convinced in conscience that their first union was never a valid marriage. The decision cannot be left only to the couple, he said, because marriage has a public character, but that does not mean that a juridical solution—an annulment granted by a marriage tribunal—is the only way to handle the case.

As a diocesan bishop in Germany in 1993, Cardinal Kasper and two other bishops issued pastoral instructions to help priests minister to such couples. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by the then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, made the bishops drop the plan. A similar proposal made last year by the Archdiocese of Freiburg, Germany, was criticized by Cardinal Gerhard Müller, current prefect of the doctrinal congregation.

Citing an article by then-Father Joseph Ratzinger in 1972, Cardinal Kasper said the church also might consider some form of "canonical penitential practice"—a "path beyond strictness and leniency"—that would adapt the gradual process for the reintegration of sinners into full communion with the church that was used in the first centuries of Christianity.

To avoid the greater evil of offering no help to the divorced and remarried, cutting them and most likely their children off from the sacraments, he said, the church could "tolerate that which is impossible to accept"—a second union. "A pastoral approach of tolerance, clemency and indulgence," he said, would affirm that "the sacraments are not a prize for those who behave well or for an elite, excluding those who are most in need."

THE FRIENDLY CARDINAL. German Cardinal Walter Kasper in St. Peters Square last year.

Pope Francis Describes Bishops at Their Best

In a speech to the Congregation for Bishops, Pope Francis said bishops should act not like ambitious corporate executives but as humble evangelists and men of prayer, willing to sacrifice everything for their flocks. "We don't need a manager, the C.E.O. of a business, nor someone who shares our pettiness or low aspirations," the pope said on Feb. 27. "We need someone who knows how to rise to the height from which God sees us, in order to guide us to him." He stressed the importance of self-sacrifice in a bishop's ministry, which he described as a kind of martyrdom. "The courage to die, the generosity to offer one's own life and exhaust oneself for the flock are inscribed in the episcopate's DNA," he said. "The episcopate is not for itself but for the church, for the flock, for others, above all for those whom the world considers only worth throwing away."

Challenging High Rate Of U.S. Incarceration

"The church in the United States has a moral and ethical imperative to protect human dignity and must address the problem of mass incarceration in our nation," the leaders of Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. said in a statement issued on Feb. 7 in Newark, N.J. The coalition includes the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The statement continues, "We recognize that the legacy of the dehumanization of people of color has borne lasting effects in current-day society" and cites slavery and Jim Crow laws as examples of "subjugation" until civil rights laws passed nearly 50 years ago tried to right it. "We see the vestiges of these systems of human control in America's current system of mass incarceration." Christian Churches Together added, "These systems are not only affecting African-Americans. They are now impacting all people of color, the poor, the marginalized, and the immigrant in the United States."

NEWS BRIEFS


Wissam Akiki

Father Wissam Akiki became the **first married man** to be ordained a priest for the U.S. Maronite Catholic Church on Feb. 27 at St. Raymond's Maronite Cathedral in St. Louis, Mo. ✦ **Thousands lined up** at the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp near Damascus on Feb. 24 in hope of receiving one of the 450 family food parcels handed out by U.N. relief workers. ✦ A survey released Feb. 26, conducted by the Public Religion and Research Institute in Washington, found a **dramatic change** among U.S. Catholics on same-sex marriage; almost 60 percent now favor it. ✦ In a letter to Congress released on Feb. 26, Catholic bishops and evangelical leaders pleaded for "common-sense fixes" to **U.S. immigration policies**, noting that the current system "does not reflect our commitment to the values of human dignity, family unity and respect for the rule of law that define us as Americans." ✦ **Bishop Raymond Boland**, retired bishop of Kansas City and former bishop of Birmingham, passed away on Feb. 27 in his native Ireland. ✦ The first-ever **National Catholic Sisters Week**, honoring Catholic sisters who have served faithfully as an integral part of American history, kicked off on the weekend of March 7-9 at St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minn.

Boko Haram Rampage In Nigerian School

Nigeria is in a state of shock after the killing of 59 students at a government-run college by Boko Haram Islamic militants in the northeastern state of Yobe during the night of Feb. 25. Two days later another attack on a village claimed 12 more lives. During the school attack, the militants spared the girls but set fire to the dormitory where the boys were sleeping. Those trying to escape were killed in cold blood. Residents claim security forces withdrew from two local checkpoints shortly before the attack began. Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos said on Feb. 27 that he and many other Nigerians are wondering how Boko Haram militants can carry out such brutal attacks with impunity. "My suspicion and my fury is that perhaps we have insiders among the security forces who are sympathetic to the cause of Boko Haram." The archbishop said Nigerians "are absolutely despondent" over the continuing attacks. Boko Haram militants are opposed to Western education, which they see as "diabolic," he explained.

From CNS and other sources.

DANIEL P. HORAN

Thirsting for Lent

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—this Lenten trinity of practices has long been the foundation of our penitential season as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter. Many people will adopt new methods of prayer, engage in the spiritual practice of fasting and offer time and resources in the form of almsgiving. Each of these helps us to focus our attention on what we might otherwise overlook and challenges us to, as one option for the distribution of ashes puts it, "repent and believe in the Gospel" in increasingly attentive ways.

Even with Lent now underway, some people might still be looking for a way to connect better to their faith beyond the usual tradition of "giving something up." I suggest that this year we might benefit from focusing our attention on something totally different, something often taken for granted: water.

With the short phrase "I thirst" (Jn 19:28) counted among the traditional seven last words of Jesus from the cross and proclaimed in the Passion account on Good Friday, it seems that we already have a reason to reconsider water as part of our Lenten practice of repenting and believing in the Gospel.

Too often this phrase has become "overly spiritualized." It is perhaps too easy, too quick and neat to read this line symbolically as a reference to the waters of eternal life. There is a temptation here for us to ignore the real and powerful human suffering that comes with someone dying of dehydration and experiencing real, life-ending thirst. To over-spiritualize the Gospel and overlook the real suffering of human beings is a problem because the waters of eternal life may mean little for those who die waiting for the waters of basic earthly life.

In his book *Seven Last Words*, Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., the former master general of the Dominican Order, makes the keen observation that "because our bodies are 98 percent water," we might better view "dehydration [as] the seeping away of our very being, our substance. We feel that we ourselves are evaporating." To die from lack of water is perhaps one of the most dehumanizing ways for a life to end. And yet, millions of people face this threat every day.

> When we take clean water for granted, humanity and creation suffer.

Often people in the United States are shielded from the harsh truth that most of the world's population does not have access to clean drinking water. This same insulated population, especially those in city and suburban locations, regularly uses clean water to flush toilets, wash cars, clean sidewalks and water lawns. That said, the recent droughts in California, as well as the Elk River chemical spill in West Virginia that left more than 300,000 residents without drinkable water, have made more people in this country aware of how precarious life can be without the guarantee of clean water.

Beyond our borders the situation is much worse. While we regularly accept the commodification of water in the form of plastic bottles purchased at grocery stores or the use of filtration systems to enhance the taste of our already potable supply, the business of water has become a justice issue for those who cannot afford to satiate the whetted appetites businesspeople have for profit. It raises the question: Is clean water a basic human right or a product for sale?

Christiana Peppard, an assistant professor of theology, science and ethics at Fordham University, treats this question in her new book, *Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis*. Treated as an overlooked subject for Christian ethics and social justice, water, Peppard notes, is really a right-to-life issue, because "fresh water is interwoven with the most pressing realities that populations and regions will face in the twenty-first century, from agriculture to climate change to political stability, and more." When we take clean water for granted, both humanity and the rest of creation suffer.

Jesus' cry "I thirst" continues to echo in the lives of those hanging on the crosses of poverty and oppression. This Lent perhaps we can commit ourselves to rethinking the role of water in our lives, paying special attention to how we use and abuse it. In turn, we might reconsider our practices and discover ways we can become better sisters and brothers to one another and the planet.

DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M., *is the author of several books, including* The Last Words of Jesus: A Meditation on Love and Suffering *(2013).*

THE EMERGING ECCLESIOLOGY OF POPE FRANCIS

Open to All

BY KATARINA SCHUTH

Almost everyone has an opinion about Pope Francis. For some time I have been inquiring of my students, co-workers and others in widely varying circumstances what they think of him and why he has so captured the imagination of believers and nonbelievers alike.

The responses are telling: Francis emphasizes God's mercy and does not scold or reprimand; he does not just talk, but acts like Jesus especially by showing his love for the poor; his life is simple—no trappings of the office, no special privileges; he excludes no one and shows no favoritism; he uses the vocabulary of ordinary people and communicates as if he is one of us; he consults widely so as to understand the plight of people in all kinds of situations; he is credible, consistently speaking and acting out of his beliefs; he exudes warmth and happiness as he engages with so many people; he does not convey the sense of someone who prefers isolation.

PRISON BREAK. Pope Francis blesses prisoners from Pisa and Pianosa jails during a private meeting, Feb. 19.

Francis made these impressions in the first moments of his pontificate. He radiated the stance of a humble man who would bring a fresh approach to his role. This partial list of observations conveys more than his tone and manner; in simple words the reflections

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capture the essence of this pope's ecclesiology and reveal his emerging vision of the church. In precise and clear words, he has candidly addressed fundamental questions: Who can be saved? Who has a place in the church? What is the mission of the church? What should the church do? What is the best way to govern? How should responsibilities be distributed?

Along with his words, Pope Francis' very way of being conveys his understanding of the nature of the church and how it should function. While in some ways he has signaled a new era, he also has communicated his commitment to the enduring message of the Gospel and his fidelity to the tradition. In his writings and homilies, interviews and impromptu comments, he has managed to hold these varied strains together in a message that has captivated the world. He has been able to frame his beliefs about what the church should be like in the future.

Pope Francis' very way of being conveys his understanding of the nature of the church and how it should function.

A Place in the Church

In his most comprehensive document so far, the apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel," Pope Francis addresses diverse topics of vital concern to the church. Beginning with some basic elements of ecclesiology, he assures people that all can be saved and all have a place in the church: "Everyone can share in some way in the life of the church; everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason" (No. 47). He continues: "Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems." Many who have felt alienated and excluded appreciate the opening doors.

In his acceptance of those who have been deemed somehow unworthy in the judgment of others, Pope Francis demonstrates his openhearted approach. In May, for example, he proclaimed in a homily:

> The Lord has redeemed all of us, all of us, with the blood of Christ: all of us, not just Catholics. Everyone! "Father, the atheists?" Even the atheists. Everyone! And this blood makes us children of God of the first class! We are created children in the likeness of God, and the blood of Christ has redeemed us all!

While his inclusion of atheists puzzled, if not irritated, some people, his remarks warmed the hearts of multitudes of Catholics and those of other faiths or no faith at all.

Even as he offers a welcome to all, Pope Francis raises challenging issues related to the very topics that have disaffected some, like the meaning of family, homosexuality and the role of women in the church. Though never straying from the tradition, he has a way of framing discussion of these topics to demonstrate his benevolent and respectful attitude. He treads carefully and thoughtfully in raising concerns, never assuming that he knows all the answers but signaling the need for greater understanding of the *sensus fidelium*. He told members of the International Theological Commission on Dec. 6 that the church has a "duty to pay attention to what the Spirit tells the church through authentic manifestations of the 'sense of the faithful.'" But even as he voiced this attitude, he made clear that this sense "must not be confused with the sociological reality of majority opinion."

The pope is using new methods to gain deeper insights into the problems of groups and individuals who feel they have been on the periphery of the church's concern. For example, in anticipation of next October's meeting of the Synod of Bishops on the pastoral challenges of the family, the Vatican sent to all of the bishops' conferences a survey designed to discover what Catholics think about a wide range of family-related topics. Aware of the complexity of these issues in modern culture, the pope recognizes that new approaches to pastoral care need attention as they relate to single-parent families, divorce, contraception, same-sex unions and the frequent practice of premarital cohabitation, among other issues.

The Mission of the Church

Since the early days of his pontificate, the message of Pope Francis about the role of the church in the world was evident. Quotations that reflect his stance abound, especially his concern for the poor in whom he sees the face of Christ. On numerous occasions his aspirations were expressed in terms of care for all, in whatever form their need is made known to us. In May, he visited the Dona di Maria soup kitchen and women's shelter, a facility located inside the Vatican. He told the women who live there: "You are a gift to this house and to the church. You tell us that loving God and your neighbor isn't something abstract, but profoundly concrete. That means seeing in every person the face of the Lord to be served and to serve him concretely." What Francis has done, and what he believes the church should do, is attain greater dignity for those who have no voice.

In "The Joy of the Gospel," Pope Francis asserts that the church has the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel in ways that pertain to the whole people of God; the homily is one of the primary vehicles for this instruction. As is true of so much of the pope's ecclesiology, he focuses on those who will

hear the Word preached, not on the one preaching—*ad extra* rather than *ad intra*. He insists that the preacher "needs to keep his ear to the people and to discover what it is that the faithful need to hear. A preacher has to contemplate the word, but he also has to contemplate his people.... He needs to be able to link the message of a biblical text to a human situation, to an experience which cries out for the light of God's word" (No. 154). The pope stresses the use of the language, signs, symbols and questions of the people.

In Chapter 4 of the same apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis underscores the plight of the poor in the section titled "The inclusion of the poor in society." From a compelling scriptural and doctrinal foundation, he moves to a pragmatic discussion of the reality of imbalances created by present economic structures. While some have criticized his economic analysis as inadequate, his role is not to serve as an economist, but to call attention to the consequences of human behaviors that have created escalating and insurmountable inequity between rich and poor. Foreseeing a potential critique, Pope Francis explains, "If anyone feels offended by my words, I would respond that I speak them with affection and with the best of intentions, quite apart from any personal interest or political ideology" (No. 208). Underscoring his attitude of humility, he confirms that he is interested only in helping those who are negatively affected by the present situation, so they can live a more humane and fruitful life.

Governance in the Church

Early in his papacy, Pope Francis communicated his intent to review and change the governance structures of the church, now widely regarded as dysfunctional and inflated. Toward that end the pope appointed eight cardinals whose official task is to advise him on governance of the universal church and help him revise "Pastor Bonus," the apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia drawn up by Pope John Paul II in 1988. Considerable change is likely to emerge from a review of the present forms of governance, including more decentralized church authority, altered relationships with bishops' conferences, more prudent management of church finances and even the shape of the papacy. As part of the reform, Francis already has appointed to key positions archbishops and cardinals who have strong experience in pastoral leadership.

Responsibilities for the life and ministry of the church will be shared in new ways, too, involving all the faithful more completely in efforts of evangelization, a major theme of "The Joy of the Gospel." Pope Francis has addressed the role of women in particular. Although he rules out the possibility of women's ordination, he calls for a greater part for women in decision-making in the church. He recognizes that "many women share pastoral responsibilities with priests, helping to guide people, families and groups and offering new contributions to theological reflection. But we need to create still

broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church" (No. 103).

In dealing with entrenched rules and procedures, Pope Francis acknowledges that the process of change will involve dealing with conflict. Some will ignore it, and others will embrace it in a way that causes confusion and dissatisfaction. But, he states, "there is also a third way, and it is the best way to deal with conflict. It is the willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process" (No. 227). Reminiscent of the method proposed by the Catholic Common Ground Initiative, this pope is willing to embrace a course that confronts problems that inhibit the full flourishing of the church.

ON THE WEB
Highlights from
Pope Francis' first year.
americamagazine.org/pope-francis

His Way of Proceeding

Considering the multitude of positive responses to Pope Francis, it is clear that his distinctive way of proceeding has unquestionably captured the imagination of Catholics and others all over the world. First among his most beloved characteristics is his bond of friendship with Christ. "When you are with him, you get to know Christ personally," observed Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Above all, Pope Francis radiates God's love and helps people recognize how much they are loved by God. The outpouring of his affection is universal. He is slow to judge and quick to forgive; he consults widely and tries to understand groups and individuals in their daily struggles. Not often mentioned, but also discernible, is his utter brilliance. His command of the tradition is especially evident in "The Joy of the Gospel," in which he quotes numerous sources, ranging from the church fathers to the documents of the Second Vatican Council and from Pope John XXIII to Pope Benedict XVI. The depth of his awareness of the worldwide nature of the church is reflected in references from all continents and peoples.

Something new is emerging in the ecclesiology of Pope Francis, but at the same time his fidelity to tradition remains firm. The now-famous interview conducted by Antonio Spadaro, S.J., for publication in Jesuit journals worldwide (**Am.,** 9/30/13) reveals the foundation of the pope's outlook on his life and his office. His approach to issues that come before him is genuine; his responses are authentic, not calculated to please or punish but rather to reflect the Gospel. His acknowledgement of his need for redemption endears him to all. When Father Spadaro asked, "Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?" Francis said: "I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner." He is like us, and yet Pope Francis stands apart as a singularly blessed and powerful witness of Jesus Christ. His own joy in the Gospel offers to all a future filled with hope.

‘Heal the Wounds’

Best practices for the church as field hospital

BY JOSEPH G. KELLY

‘I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.” What a stunning image Pope Francis has given us in this statement, which appeared in the interview he gave to Jesuit journals last September (**Am.** 9/30/13). Of course, there are other traditional images of the church, but the image of a field hospital is certainly a stellar one for those of us who live and work in the church at the present time. Wounded people abound, and the battle seems endless.

In order to make this image a reality, however, all of us who are members of the church will need a major change in attitude. As Pope Francis insists, “The first reform must be the attitude.” We must adjust our focus and begin to put into practice the habits that are essential for working in a field hospital. All who have accepted an official role of ministry—bishops, priests and deacons, religious sisters and brothers and lay leaders—must lead the way. But every member of the Christian community will need to step forward and take up the task. Otherwise the staff of the field hospital will be much too small for a task that is much too great.

Of primary importance is our need to keep in touch with the Chief Physician. The Chief Physician is in charge and we work for him. Without a deep relationship with our Triune God, we cannot hope to accomplish any healing. Like Mary of Bethany, we must spend time “at his feet.” Here we learn that nothing is possible without God’s grace and strength. Francis reminds us that “God is found in the gentle breeze perceived by Elijah” and “a contemplative attitude is necessary.” In the quiet of our prayer, we are able to discern the right path. Francis assures us, “Profound peace, spiritual consolation, love of God and love of all things in God—this is the sign that you are on this right path.” And Augustine said our souls are restless until they rest in God. Without the practice of deep and quiet prayer, the burnout in a field hospital will be severe.

We also know that we cannot be effective ministers to the wounded until we come to recognize our own wounds. We are often numb to our own suffering. We learn to sweep our pain under the carpet and pretend that it does not exist. If we really wish to help to heal others’ wounds, we must accept the fact that we too are deeply wounded. We must face the pain and suffering in our own lives if we wish to be compassionate to others. After all, compassion means “to suffer with.” The Rev. Henri Nouwen reminds us that we are all “wounded healers,” working side by side in the human condition.

When we work in a field hospital, we cannot be afraid of the dark. Human nature does not like messiness! We like things to be clean and orderly. We would rather deal with people who “have their act together.” We tend to shy away from people who are hurting. But wounds are rarely clean; they are bloody and raw. Darkness abounds. But Pope Francis tells us, “The ministers of the Gospel must be people who can warm the hearts of the people, who walk through the dark night with them, who know how to dialogue and to descend themselves into their people’s night, into the darkness, but without getting lost.” The work is not for the faint-hearted.

Next, we must face the reality that the church is a field hospital. Field hospitals are usually tents set up near the battlefield. Risks are all around. They have none of the fancy resources and equipment found in hospitals in urban centers. Long, unscheduled hours and noise are everywhere. In this situation, the staff must rely on one another. They quickly develop a sense of equality, cooperation and teamwork. Sometimes procedures necessary for saving the patient take precedence over regulations. As positions change in a particular battle, field hospitals have to be ready to move at a moment’s notice. Creative solutions and maximum flexibility are the name of the game. So too with the church.

This requires a major change in attitude. We must be agile and flexible, ready to move as the battle situation demands. We must deal with the limited resources at hand. We need open communication and a sense of trust that all the members of the team can do their jobs well. We must resist the temptation to build permanent structures. We must recognize that we do not have all the answers. We still seek God. Here Francis refers to St. Augustine: “Seek God to find him, and find God to keep searching for God forever.” But the pope also assures us that “God is to be encountered in the world of today.” Thus bishops, for example, “must be able to accompany the flock that has a flair for finding new paths.”

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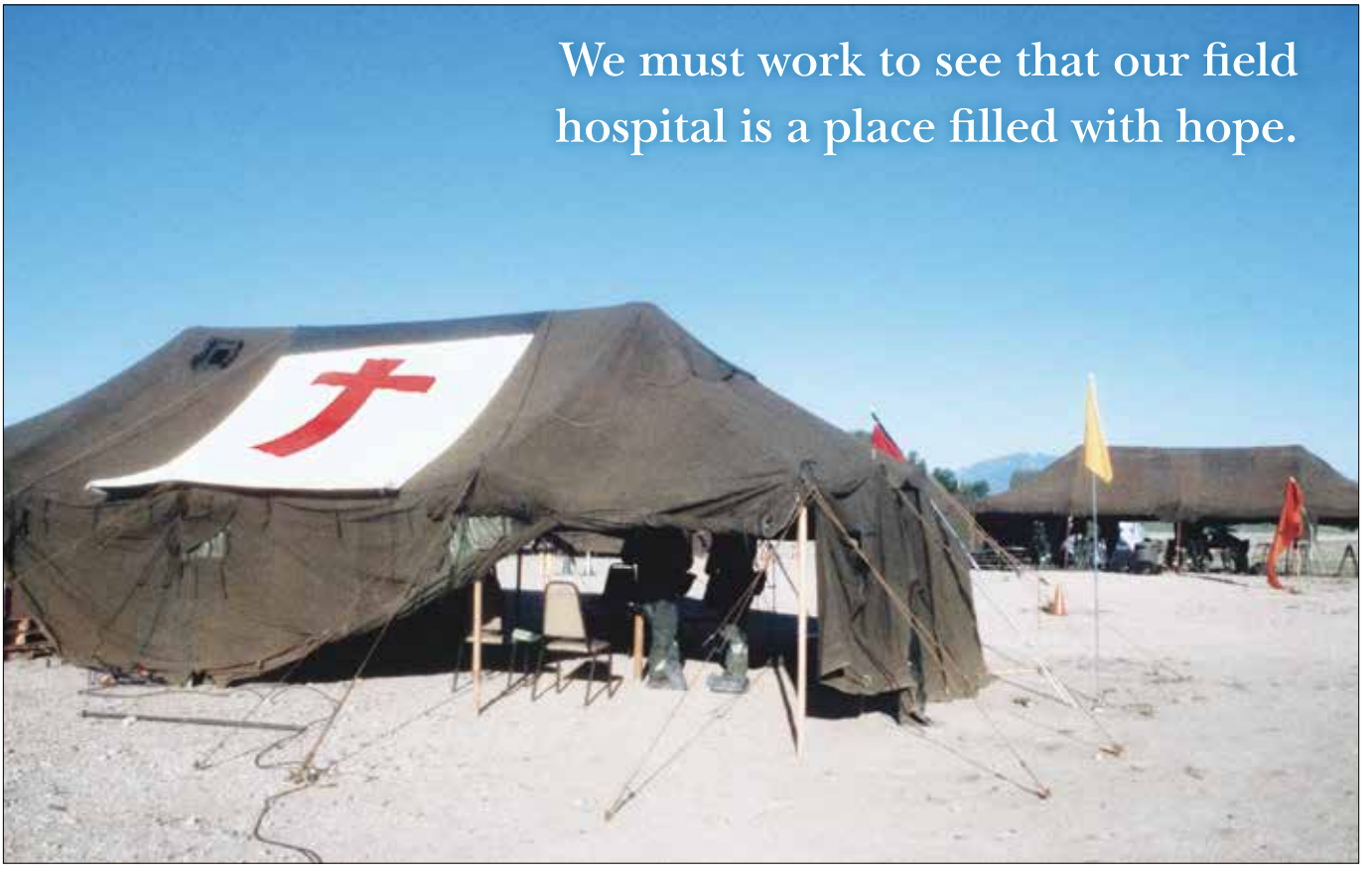

COMPOSITE IMAGE: DEPT. OF DEFENSE/USAF/AMERICA

We must also work to see that our field hospital is a place filled with hope. But we must be very clear about the meaning of hope. Christian hope is not a kind of shallow, Pollyannish approach to life. We need to offer the wounded a deep hope based on our own knowledge of the past and our firm faith in the future. We sing the old hymn, "O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come." We share a deep conviction in the providential care of God, and we affirm the insight of Blessed Juliana of Norwich that in God's mysterious way, "All shall be well and all shall be well." But this practice of the virtue of hope is a challenge for the Christian community. It is easy to lose hope in the midst of such pain. Yet we cling to the advice of Seraphim of Sarov: "Have peace in your hearts and thousands around you will be saved."

Quite often in our field hospital, we have no choice but to imitate the friends of Job, as they appear in the prologue of that amazing book in the Hebrew Scriptures: "Then they sat down upon the ground with him, seven days and seven nights, but none of them spoke a word to him, for they saw how great was his suffering" (Job 2:13). Why are we so afraid of silence? Why do we insist in filling the silence with often meaningless chatter? In so many cases, the only thing that can be done to alleviate suffering is to *be* with a person, to hold a hand or wipe a brow. In our strong—and often fruitless—desire to do something, we forget that healing often comes in the gentle and compassionate silence of human companionship. Dag Hammarskjöld reminds us, "Friendship needs no words, it is solitude delivered from the anguish of loneliness."

Finally, as we work in our field hospital, we must be convinced that the ultimate source of healing is the Eucharist. When we gather around the table of the Lord, we bring with us all of our pain and suffering. But in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup, our lives are transformed. Each time we come to this table, we enter into the sufferings of Christ and come to know more deeply the salvation that can only come from our good and gracious God. This is the "balm of Gilead that makes the wounded whole." New strength is gained from the support of the community and, fed with the bread of life, we can, with Elijah, "walk 40 days and 40 nights to the mountain of God" (1 Kgs 19:8). When all else fails and every possible human effort has been made to alleviate suffering, we come face to face with the mystery of redemptive suffering. By finally imitating Christ in embracing the heavy cross of the human condition, we experience resurrection with its new peace and freedom. Only then can we sing with the ancients: *O crux, ave, spes unica*—"Hail, O cross, our only hope!"

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Encountering Jesus

Where do we meet him each day?

BY PETER J. VAGHI

"The most important thing that can happen to a person," Pope Francis explained during a homily on the First Sunday of Advent before confirming a group of parish children, "is to encounter Jesus, who loves us, who has saved us, who gave his life for us." In our increasingly digital age, it can be easy to forget the living presence of the risen Lord in our concrete human lives. Where then, and how, do we encounter Jesus each day, an encounter bound to change our lives and make us happy and joyful?

Inspired by the rich magisterium of Pope Benedict XVI and the continued focus and approach of Pope Francis, I propose three places to meet the living Jesus. First, Jesus is alive in his word, the inspired Gospel stories and the living tradition of our church. Second, we meet Jesus in the sacraments, especially in regular participation in both the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation. And third, we meet Jesus in our loving service to those in need, those who live on the periphery of society.

This threefold way of describing where we encounter Jesus draws inspiration specifically from Benedict XVI. In "God Is Love," he writes: "The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her threefold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (*kerygma-martyria*), celebrating the sacraments (*leitourgia*), and exercising the ministry of charity (*diakonia*). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable." In these three ways we meet and encounter Jesus in our time. To meet Jesus and be transformed by that encounter is the hope and joy of every person who is searching for God.

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In His Word

In his first encyclical, "The Light of Faith," Pope Francis writes, "The word which God speaks to us in Jesus is not

CNS PHOTO/GREGORY A. SHEMITZ

simply one word among many, but his eternal Word." But how do we come to meet and know and be affected by Jesus in our meditative and prayerful appropriation of his holy word? The story of the call of Simon the fisherman can shed light on this (Lk 5:1–11). Here Simon Peter encounters Jesus in his word and in the process becomes an evangelist, which each of us is called to be in our own unique way.

Luke tells us the crowd was "pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God." Jesus got into Peter's boat and asked him to pull out a short way. After he finished teaching the crowds, Jesus said to Peter: "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for the catch."

Peter responded, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." Peter must have been exhausted from a full night of catching nothing. He could have given in to his weariness, telling Jesus he had already tried; it was no use; it was better to go home. We might respond in this way when Jesus asks us to make certain decisions in life. We can reject his word and follow our own instincts. But not Peter.

Peter decided to obey the word of Jesus: to take a chance and put out into the deep and lower the nets, to run a small risk, to ignore his overwhelming fatigue and the possible threat of ridicule among his co-workers and friends. Jesus was forming Peter to be not only an apostle, an evangelizer, but the leader of the apostles. Jesus was helping Peter to see that obeying the word of God can lead to surprising success. They caught such a great number of fish that their nets were at the breaking point. More important, the dramatic experience changed Peter. He repented of his sins and followed Jesus.

So it must be with us. We must take risks for Jesus even and precisely when we seemingly grow tired of leading the Christian life and following the challenging moral laws of Christ and his church. We must live in such a way that our lives would not make sense if God did not exist. To be a follower of Jesus demands no less and no more than what Jesus demanded of Peter.

As men and women of the new evangelization, we can see in this Lucan passage the life-changing power of God's holy word. Jesus is routinely in the boats of our lives, and his word encourages us to go out into the deep. The fish await us, those open to the new evangelization, precisely because we listened and acted upon the word. In these situations, we will encounter Jesus Christ joyfully and ever anew and, like Peter, become changed people and leave everything to follow Jesus.

In Sacraments

We also encounter Jesus in the sacraments of the church, the sacraments of faith. In "The Light of Faith," Pope Francis describes the sacraments as a "special means" for passing down the fullness of "our encounter with the true God, a light which touches us at the core of our being and engages our minds, wills and emotions, opening us to relationships lived in communion."

There is no better story than the healing of the paralytic (Mk 2:1–12) to give us a scriptural basis for the sacrament of reconciliation—an encounter, in our day, with the healing Jesus. Each of us can picture ourselves paralyzed in different ways from the mystery and debilitating effects of sin at different times in our lives. Each of us needs healing in our lives as did the paralyzed man in the Gospel story.

The sacrament of reconciliation is a centuries-old citadel of healing and forgiveness.

Mark describes a remarkable scene: a dramatic disruption of Jesus' sermon in his house. Imagine we are all packed in the living room of his house when suddenly debris begins to shower down on us, a human-sized hole opens in the terraced roof and, lo and behold, a stretcher with a person strapped to it begins to descend slowly. An ingenious, persistent and bold quartet are determined to bring this paralyzed person to Jesus for physical healing.

What happens initially is certainly not what they had in mind. Without asking the paralytic any questions about his condition or the state of his soul, Jesus immediately says: "Child, your sins are forgiven." What was planned by these four men as a pilgrimage for a physical healing turns suddenly into the healing of his sins. It was not until later in the story, after some of the scribes challenge his authority to forgive sins, that Jesus finally turns to the paralytic and says, "Rise, pick up your mat, and go home."

Jesus first forgives the paralytic's sins and only later heals the physical paralysis. In a way, Mark challenges us to see sin itself as a kind of spiritual paralysis. Such paralysis, not unlike a physical paralysis, cannot be healed without the help of someone else. A skilled doctor, with the aid of attendants who bring the person to him, heals the person. In this case, friends bring the paralyzed man to a healing father who is able to diagnose and heal the underlying spiritual malady, the malady of sin.

This healing ministry of Jesus continues in our day. We call it the sacrament of reconciliation, a centuries-old citadel of healing and forgiveness. When we pull back the velvet curtain or open the door to the reconciliation room, think of Jesus healing the paralytic at Capernaum. Each one of us, from time to time, lies paralyzed on a mat in need of healing.

We need a change of heart, *metanoia*—a movement toward God.

The sacrament of reconciliation is a personal encounter with Jesus, the same Jesus who spent a great part of his life on earth healing others and forgiving sins. Sins cannot be faxed, sent by email or delivered by Federal Express. Rather, the person has an individual encounter with Jesus in the person of the priest, which includes a confession of sin, an act of contrition and the intention to amend one's life and do prescribed penance. Could there be a more personal encounter with the crucified, forgiving and healing Jesus?

ON THE WEB

James Martin, S.J., talks about his new book *Jesus: A Pilgrimage.*
americamagazine.org/podcast

Forgiveness is a divine prerogative and priority. It is so freeing and full of love, the love of a new start. As the paralyzed man was healed, each of us is healed and forgiven as Jesus continues his healing ministry in our day, each and every time we seek his forgiveness in the sacramental encounter of reconciliation.

In Works of Charity

Finally, we encounter Jesus in our works of charity. In "The Light of Faith," Francis writes, "The hands of faith are raised up to heaven, even as they go about building in charity a city based on relationships in which the love of God is laid as a foundation." In our works of charity, founded on the love of God, we encounter God. Francis also says that in Christ "our lives become radically open to a love that precedes us, a love that transforms us, from within, acting in us and through us." As we imitate the love of Christ, we encounter him within us and in the persons we help. This dynamic is especially clear in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37).

We are familiar with the story. As a man traveled from Jerusalem to Jericho, he fell victim to robbers and was left stripped and beaten along the road. A priest and a Levite passed the man, perhaps more out of fear than indifference. If they touched a corpse, according to the law, they would have to undergo elaborate cleansing ceremonies before taking part in temple services. The Samaritan, however, was moved with compassion, and he went to great lengths to assist the man. Jesus then asked, "Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" The scholar of the law responded, "The one who treated him with mercy." And Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

There are two neighbors in this Lucan passage: the person who acted with mercy and the person in need of mercy and compassion. In the deepest sense, yet in a very subtle way, the neighbor is the Lord Jesus in both persons. In every act of charity, we encounter Jesus in ourselves *and* in another person. The Samaritan was the least likely to be defined as neighbor in the parable, but he was identified as such. Like the Samaritan, each one of us—as a follower of Jesus—is called to be a neighbor to others, cultivating a sensitivity of heart that reaches out and bears witness in countless practical ways.

Jesus is also "the image of the invisible God" crying out from the man who lies stripped and half dead on the roadside. Jesus is the member of our family in trouble, or the person next door who has no one to turn to. In that person, we see the face of Christ and encounter him. In the Last Judgment scene in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (25:40). Jesus identifies himself with those who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, immigrants, in prison, sick, homeless—all those, to use the words of Pope Francis, on the "periphery" of society.

The road from Jericho to Jerusalem represents a world of neighbors, a world of people in need whose true face, once uncovered, is the face of Christ himself. It is humanity inviting us to meet Jesus and be changed by him. As we actively and concretely try to "go and do likewise," we will also unexpectedly encounter a neighbor, a good friend named Jesus, who lives both within us and in the person who receives our charity and love. And these encounters with Jesus—in his word, in the sacraments and in works of charity—are transformative and everlasting. A

Tolling for Thee

Ireland adapts the Angelus for the 21st century

BY RHONA TARRANT

Every evening at 6 p.m., programming on Ireland's national radio and television broadcaster stops. News and weather are put on hold while a bell tolls, ringing in the pattern 3-3-3-9. This daily observance of the Angelus, the Catholic prayer honoring the Annunciation, is among the longest-running segments on the state channel. The observance is rooted in the country's strong Catholic past and has carried through to a new generation that is often wary of its religious heritage. It lasts no longer than one minute and 15 seconds, but in this simple tolling of the bells one can trace the changing profile of Irish Catholicism.

Although the Angelus broadcast in Ireland began in 1950, its origins can be tracked to the introduction of what became Raidió Éireann (Radio Ireland) in 1926. After 1922, the newly sovereign government of the Irish Free State was committed to carving out a distinct national identity. The state-owned radio broadcaster became a vehicle for this vision, with a schedule filled with Irish language and music, Gaelic football and hurling, Catholic prayers and very little else.

In 1950, the Most Rev. John Charles McQuaid, then Archbishop of Dublin, proposed that Raidió Éireann begin broadcasting the Angelus twice daily to mark the Year of the Annunciation. It was so hugely popular that the broadcaster decided to continue to feature the ringing of the bells beyond the close of the holy year. With the introduction of state television in 1962, Raidió Éireann became Raidió Telefís Éireann, popularly known as RTÉ, and the Angelus was promoted to the small screen as well, where it remains to this day.

ON THE WEB
Rhona Tarrant talks about Catholicism in Ireland.
americamagazine.org/podcast

Crisis of Faith

Fast forward to 2011. Paddy Power, an Irish gambling company, was offering 5-to-1 odds that RTÉ would remove the Angelus by the end of the year. The audacious prediction proved disappointing for those who wagered against the bells, but the fact that the issue was talked about in such terms betrayed a huge change in the culture of Irish Catholicism.

There were two main causes for the shift; the first was the economic boom of the 1990s that led to an increase in wealth and immigration and fostered a more diverse, secular society. The second and perhaps more significant factor was the litany of scandals involving sexual, physical and mental abuse within the church, exposed over the space of two decades. Pictures of handcuffed priests and disgraced bishops shattered the image of one of the country's most trusted institutions. In the midst of news coverage that reported in detail the horrors of clerical abuse, pausing for the Angelus seemed to some a cruel irony.

The turning point came in 2009. After years of investigation, the Murphy and Ryan reports, which detailed decades of child abuse and cover-ups by church officials, were published. It was also the year when the painful effects of the 2008 financial crisis sank in, leaving thousands out of work or without a home. It seemed as if all institutions—banking, government, church—were crumbling.

In the years leading up to this watershed moment, RTÉ had been forced to re-examine how it approached religious programming. Traditions like the Angelus and televised Mass were scheduled alongside church investigations, government apologies and critical media reports by journalists, who no longer deferred to the clergy. The audience too had a new level of caution and questioning. Thus in 2007, RTÉ appointed Roger Childs, a British man with a background at the BBC, as the new head of religious programming. His job was to reconcile the old broadcasting traditions with the new cultural and media landscape. So he began with the oldest.

In his opinion, the problem was not the Angelus itself but rather its outdated presentation. On television the bells were accompanied by short clips of Irish people pausing to reflect, interspersed with religious iconography. As he explains, "They were amateur actors having moments of epiphany. Yes, they were culturally diverse, but when they heard the bell they would just stare into space. I heard one person refer to it as the 'dawn of the dead moment.' Another said it looked like they were reacting to a bad smell."

But it wasn't just the bad acting. In a country that was

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growing in cultural and religious diversity, many felt the need to include images beyond exclusively Catholic iconography. Although the latest census indicates that 84.2 percent of the population identify as Roman Catholic, it also shows that Muslim and Hindu populations are on the rise. Because of RTÉ's legal obligation to reflect religious and cultural diversity, the decision was made to shed the Angelus' traditional Catholic image and develop a more modern and diverse incarnation of the broadcast.

Relic or Renewal?

The idea was simple: allow the Angelus to become a moment of reflection rather than a pronounced Catholic prayer. The production company came back with new representations of Irish life: a street artist sketching praying hands on Dublin's College Green; a mother polishing a memorial stone to her drowned son; an older couple feeding swans on the River Shannon; a fisherman at sea on his trawler; and a Zambian immigrant gazing out of her window toward the Phoenix Park in Dublin.

Although the tolling of the bell remained, it was now accompanied by the sounds of 21st-century Ireland. "We have tried to show people from all walks of life finding time to pause and reflect, and it is not clear if they are thinking or praying," says Mr. Childs, "The idea is that it is open to everyone." And while it represented the transition from old to new, the redefinition raised a new point of contention for dissenting voices: Should people of all faiths, or no faith at all, participate in a traditionally Catholic call to prayer?

Ireland remains the only country in Europe that continues to broadcast the Angelus daily. In Italy it is broadcast only on Sundays. It is not broadcast at all in Britain, Spain or Portugal. Poland, a deeply Catholic country, does not feature the Angelus on any of its three state-owned television stations. Thus, for many Irish, this "redefinition" did not go far enough; the bells, in their opinion, were still embarrassing, outdated and had no place on state television.

The debate played out over several weeks after the rebranding. The level of interest was so great that Mr. Childs found himself on the front page of several national newspapers. The arguments were as fervent as they were diverse. Some suggested that RTÉ pull all religious programming; others wanted images of the Blessed Mother and the Annunciation to be brought back. But despite some criticism, most commentators praised the state broadcaster for bringing the Angelus into the 21st century.

Should people of all faiths, or no faith at all, participate in a traditionally Catholic call to prayer?

Most surprising were the sources of this support. One 94-year-old nun wrote to thank Mr. Childs for bringing creativity back to the Angelus. The head of Clonskeagh Mosque wrote to say that he liked living in a country where the news and weather have to wait, because it shows that Ireland is a country that values prayer and religion. RTÉ consulted everyone from the chief rabbi to Methodist preachers to the Church of Ireland Broadcasting Committee. There were no

complaints from these quarters either.

The greatest dissenting voices have come from atheists, humanists and agnostics, many of whom see the updated Angelus as an unpleasant hangover from Ireland's deeply religious past. To this, Mr. Childs points out two things: First, the Angelus is a pre-Reformation practice and not necessarily a distinctly Catholic tradition. Second, it is a mistake to assume that the alternative, secularism, is the same as neutrality: "The fact is that 93 percent of people in Ireland still identify themselves with one faith. Religion, in one form or another, still holds an important place in the Irish psyche."

The redefinition of the Angelus in many ways represented the dawn of a new era in Irish faith, one that leaves more space for questioning and uncertainty. "People are now more likely to say that they're not religious, but spiritual," says Mr. Childs. "But that's not to say they're throwing out the baby Jesus with the bathwater." Most people can separate the good work of their local parish priest from the scandal-tarnished parts of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and the peace of the Angelus bells from the pain caused by some Catholic institutions.

A few years ago, an unfounded rumor that the Angelus was to be scrapped reached a small parish in County Clare. The next week, residents sent RTÉ a petition with 263 signatures protesting the cancelation. And while the numbers were small, the latest audience research suggests that this parish is not alone; more than two thirds of Irish people think the Angelus should continue in its current form, chimes and all.

Today, the 6 p.m. bells are likely to interrupt discussions about financial difficulties, unemployment and the mass emigration that has stripped the country of one quarter of its young workforce. As Roger Childs puts it, "For the person of faith it is a moment of grace; for the person of no faith it is a moment of peace. There are 1,440 minutes in the day, and this is just one."

The Anointing

Sacred and secular meet on the battlefield

BY BRIAN DOYLE

I'll tell you an anointing story. A priest told it to me. He had been in a war. *The* war, he called it. We didn't think there would ever be another war after *that* war, he said. Too bad we were wrong about that. That would have been a great thing to be right about.

I was a sergeant then, he said. I wasn't a priest yet. I had thought about being a priest before the war but like a lot of guys I ran screaming away from the idea because I thought it was crazy and it was maybe my mom's idea not mine and maybe it meant I wasn't a real man or something like that. Becoming a priest is scary. No one admits that. Being a priest is scary enough, but you are committed to it after you are ordained, and *becoming* a priest was scarier, at least to me.

I joined the Army and went to the war, he said. I was 20. They made me a sergeant just to fill out a duty roster. I hadn't done anything to be promoted. My unit ended up in New Guinea. We were with the Australians. Essentially our battle was backing up slowly over a huge mountain range. Fighting backwards. The Japanese pushed us back all day and night. Eventually they were going to push us back into the sea and take over New Guinea and then take over Australia and make it the biggest air base in the history of the world. Well, in the end, we pushed *them* back into the sea, and that was the beginning of the end of the Empire of the Rising Sun. That was the first time they lost a land battle, you know. No one talks about that anymore, but if they didn't lose that battle, who knows?

But I was telling you an anointing story, he said. Well, back then it wasn't called anointing. It was extreme unction, and you did it only in times of dire sickness and imminent death. I knew that much from Catholic school and paying attention to our priests. We had *five* priests in our parish. Those were the good old days when there would be a pastor and then a flock of young guys training to be pastors. I'd seen them anointing old people and once a girl who had been hit by a truck in our neighborhood, and I paid attention. It was such a gentle sacrament, no fuss and special clothes, and it seemed to me that sometimes it worked just because the sick person believed so intensely that it *would* work, you know?

But it wasn't primarily about healing, he said. It was primarily about *spiritual* healing. Getting right with the Lord before you went home. Remission of sins first and then maybe whatever other healing aspects might happen by intercession. And it was such an *honest* sacrament, you know? The priest would anoint the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and hands of the sick person, all the doors and windows through which your soul goes out to work in the world, or if things were really dire he would just anoint the head. That happened with the girl who was hit by the truck. He just anointed her head. That was the first time I saw a priest cry. She didn't live another hour. She lived two doors down from me on our street and for some reason all the kids on our street were around when the priest anointed her. I remember my brother was outside looking through the window. This was in Chicago.

So I was in the battle in New Guinea, he said, and we were getting hammered, and one night a kid even younger than me got blown up, and me and another guy were the only guys within reach to get to him and be with him as he died. You could tell he was going to die pretty quick. We didn't even call for a medic. He knew too, I think. His eyes were open but he couldn't speak. I saw he had a

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ART: SUSAN OGILVIE

medal around his neck, the Madonna, and I figured he was Catholic. Some Protestant guys I knew had medals but never the Madonna. The other guy with me that night was not a religious guy. He was from the state of Washington, I think. Anyway the kid who was dying was staring at me, and for some reason I felt like I should anoint him. I still don't know why. It was something to do. It was the right thing to do, but it wasn't religious, you know what I mean? It was a holy thing. Holy things are bigger than religions, even Catholicism. Religions borrow holy things. That's why a priest sinning is such a terrible thing.

We didn't have any oil, of course, he said, and we didn't have any water, although it was wet as the bottom of the ocean in that jungle. My *God* it was wet. I thought about using a little mud but that didn't feel right so to be honest with you I used the man's own blood to anoint him before death. I did. He was bleeding from everywhere. I wiped my hand to get it as clean as I could and I took some of his blood and made a cross on his forehead and he looked at me and he knew what I was doing. I start to cry every time I think about that and that was a real long time ago. He knew I was anointing him for death and he closed his eyes for a minute and the other guy with us thought the kid had died but then he opened his eyes and I finished anointing him. I did his eyes and ears and nose and mouth but only one hand because the other was gone. I don't think he even knew it was gone. His legs were a mess also. I don't think he knew how bad he was hurt because he was hurt so bad. But he knew I anointed him. He knew that. He died a couple of minutes later. That was the first time I was ever close to a man when he died and you could actually see the life go out of him. He was alive, and then he just wasn't, and you could tell the instant the soul left his body.

I tell the story of that kid in the jungle sometimes when I talk to new priests in my order, he said, and they ask me if that's the reason I became a priest and I say no, me becoming a priest was a very long road, and really I started on that road long after the war, but now all these years later I wonder if they were right and I was wrong. That kid needed someone to anoint him and there I was, you know? Someone needed to be there. You need someone to be there at the very end. Some people have someone they would like to be the last person to touch them and say be forgiven, be clean, be peaceful, go with the Lord. But most people don't, you know. Most people are alone. We never admit that. I think that's why we have religions in the end, because we are so alone, and religions bring us together at the moments we all know are holy but hardly ever admit that. Sacraments are ways we insist on what's holy. People think sacraments are stiff and boring and formal and just rituals, but I don't think so. I try to remember they are ways to insist on holiness, you know what I mean?

Nowadays we don't call it extreme unction anymore, he said, now we say anointing of the sick, and there were some men among my priestly brethren who complained and moaned and bickered about this, but I could never see that it mattered what you call it. Guys tend to complain about any change at all, of course. There's still a guy I could name who is annoyed that we face the congregation when we celebrate Mass, and that was 50 years ago we made *that* change. Anyway whenever I start getting annoyed at guys complaining about things I think about that kid in the jungle and he reminds me that priests are just servants. Our job is to be there when it counts. Any priest who thinks he is cool or powerful or holier than anyone else is an idiot. I try to remember that. I try to remember that one time I was there when it counted. Anybody could have done what I did that night, but for some reason it was me. Maybe that was the spark that set me on the road to being a priest. I don't know. It sure was a holy moment, though. I didn't even know the kid, in this life—he had been with us for about three days, and no one even really knew his name. I'd like to meet that kid, somehow, after I die, and talk about that moment.

POETRY | MICHAEL DOYLE

DIGGING DEEP

Remembering Seamus Heaney, weaver of words

…big soft buffetings come at the car sideways
And catch the heart off guard and blow it open.
—Seamus Heaney, "Postscript"

When Seamus Heaney died in a Dublin hospital last summer, his death plunged Ireland into a depth of grief unequaled on that island. The news was a sad west wind that did "catch the heart off guard," the heart of a country. No other poet touched the people of Ireland, myself included, more deeply, more purely, more truthfully than Seamus Heaney.

I was in Ireland, sitting a few feet from the spot where I was born, when I learned the news. I was in the right place: near to the simple ways of life on small farms that he honored and elevated with his clear words. It was a great comfort to be there as the people of Ireland honored him. Michael D. Higgins, who is a poet and the president of Ireland, wept as he declared that Heaney's contribution "to the republic of letters, conscience and humanity was immense." Prime Minister Enda Kenny proclaimed: "For us Seamus Heaney was the keeper of language, our codes and our essence as a people. Today, it would take Seamus Heaney himself to describe the depth of his loss to us."

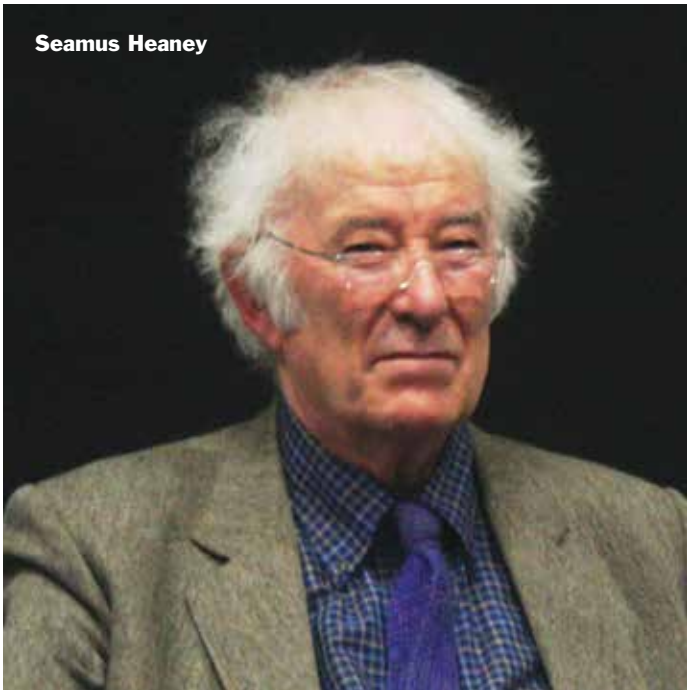
After Heaney died, aching words of sorrow flooded the country. The newspapers, in a novena of acknowledgement, went on for nine days with long articles. Overwhelmed, I felt that I should not dare to write a word. But one day in talking with my grandniece, Emma, about children and traffic dangers, I said, "Seamus Heaney's four-year-old brother was killed by a car, when he ran out on a little road in Bellaghy. Seamus wrote a poem about it." Immediately, Emma remembered the poem, called "Mid-Term Break." I quoted a line:

He lay in the four foot box as in his cot
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

And Emma finished: *A four-foot box, a foot for every year.*

Emma is 9. I thought to myself, if she can add her bit to a worldwide eulogy, I can add my own.

Heaney was born on a farm called Mossbawn, the oldest of seven sons and two daughters of Patrick Heaney and Margaret Kathleen McCann. When he was 13, the family moved to a farm in Bellaghy, County Derry. His father was a farmer and a jobber who bought and sold cattle. At 12, Seamus won a scholarship to St. Columb's College, a boarding school in the City of Derry. In 1953, he was in his second year when his brother Christopher was killed. He came home for the wake and funeral. Many years later he wrote, "Mid-Term Break," in which he recalls seeing his brother's lifeless body for the first time.


Seamus Heaney

His first book of poetry, *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), contains, besides "Mid-Term Break," "Digging," which is known to millions of readers. He writes as he hears the sound of his father's spade digging below his window, recalling the hard work of hardworking men digging "for the good turf." Then the poet writes:

But I've no spade to follow men like them.
Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/ SEAN O'CONNOR

While Waiting

for the night, we decide
we must go now
while we can.

New York is sinking,
we go to Pompei,
itself a reminder
that nothing is permanent.

Vesuvius erupted yesterday,
volcanic ash blanching
the air above Naples.

At the airport, we rent a car,
and suddenly we can smell
the sea, feel distended light.

We seek God in the vortex
of ocean and sand, find
grandmother's hills.

Twisted olive branches
twine with chestnuts
in the valley, arcing

to the sky. The disc of sun
falls from heaven
into the city of ghosts.

Like us, the horizon moves
but never really disappears.
We finish where the sky begins.

DONNA PUCCIANI

DONNA PUCCIANI *is baesed in Chicago. Her fifth collection of poems,* Hanging Like Hope on the Equinox, *was released by Virtual Artists Collective in 2013.*

And dig he did, and made a living from it. He produced 12 volumes of poetry and other literary works as well. He was a weaver of words, choosing them with care and reverence, and transforming them into gems by the brilliance of the way he arranged them. In 1995, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for "works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth which exalted everyday miracles and the living past."

All "the fuss," as he called it, did not change this down-to-earth genius. On receiving the Nobel Prize, he said, "It's like being a little foothill at the bottom of a mountain range, you just hope you live up to it." He was a professor of poetry at Harvard University for 21 years—but wrote no poems there! "No moss on the stones here," he said. Besides Harvard and Oxford, he taught at Berkeley and Bellaghy Teacher Colleges in Belfast and Dublin. He was the perfect teacher, telling students what influenced him: the sound of words in litanies and recitations, even the sound of the beautiful words in the litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the family rosary: Tower of Ivory, House of Gold, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven, Morning Star.

"The poet," he said, "is on the side of undeceiving the world. Poetry tries to help you to be a truer, purer, wholer being." And he told them, "The main thing is to write for the joy of it."

His poem "Requiem for the Croppies" touches on the tragic losses suffered by the Irish people in the 1798 insurrection for independence. Here are a few lines:

The pockets of our great coats
full of barley—
Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes at cannon.
They buried us without shroud or coffin,
And in August—the barley
grew up out of our grave

This poem inspired the peace monument that parishioners at Sacred Heart Parish in Camden, N.J., one of America's poorest cities, erected in 2009, at a busy intersection near our church. I was honored that they'd chosen it to mark the golden jubilee of my ordination. (I serve as pastor there.) The monument is eight feet high, a huge open seed with the kernel, *PEACE,* in large letters within it. The base is the earth with barley growing up, and hands reaching up out of it to broken weapons.

"I am moved to know that 'Requiem for the Croppies' figures in the peace monument," Seamus Heaney wrote to us.

Heaney's last words were written in a text to Marie, his wife, moments before he died: *Noli timere* (Don't be afraid). It is good advice for those of us still on this side of the grave. This past fall, I made the journey to St. Mary's Church and its graveyard, where he lies under the fresh green sod of Bellaghy. His grave is in a corner, under an ash and a sycamore tree. An old wall on two sides has ivy on the unmortared stones, holding their own. It is near the tombstone of Christopher and his parents. I poured blessed water from the Sacred Heart church in Camden on his grave, which will be a destination of inspiration for centuries. It is a place to recall his words:

History says, don't hope
On this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.

REV. MICHAEL DOYLE, *a native of Longford, Ireland, is pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Camden, N.J.*

ON THE WEB
The Catholic Book Club discusses a history of the North American martyrs. americamagazine.org/cbc

GOOD CORP, BAD CORP

Democracy is defined as rule by the people. But especially since the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2010 in the case of Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, it seems to mean rule by the people with money.

That disastrous decision ruled that corporations and unions enjoy the same free speech rights that individual human persons have, and can therefore spend freely on direct political advocacy. While many took issue with the concept of corporations as people, Catholics acknowledge that the concept of corporate personhood, as in members of the church joined in the body of Christ, is a dominant theme throughout the Bible. Christ is able to undo Adam's sin because Christ, like Adam, incorporates the whole human race (Rom 5:12–21). In a modern situation, where individualism takes hold and associations of civil society wither away, it is important that groups speak with united voices.

But not all corporate bodies are the same, and whom they speak for varies greatly. The Citizens United ruling is based on the idea that more speech is better and that spending money is necessary for disseminating speech. Unfortunately, that ruling upholds the freedom of all to speak while deliberately ignoring the real disparities of power among different speakers.

There is such a thing as too much speech. For speech to be effective, it has to be heard. It is not enough to have the right to stand on a street corner and speak if your opponent can drown out your voice with sophisticated means of communication. If money allows certain voices to dominate the "marketplace of ideas," then there is no free market; it is instead a monopoly. Too much speech from one point of view can and does drown out and negate free speech from those who lack the money to spread their views.

In theory, all kinds of individuals and groups—wealthy individuals, poor individuals, business corporations, unions—have the same rights to free speech. In reality, the voices of the wealthy drown out the voices of the poor, and the voices of business corporations dwarf those of labor unions.

There is such a thing as too much speech.

In addition to having access to more money, business corporations are also fundamentally different types of corporate persons than unions and other associations. A union is a group of workers united by common interest; a business corporation is a group of stockholders, managers and workers whose interests may be diametrically opposed to each other. Speech from a business corporation often uses the resources generated in part by the workers to oppose the workers' interests, because the managers and stockholders—and not the workers—decide what political speech to support.

From a Christian point of view, the fact that the voice of the wealthy is the voice that is most clearly and forcefully heard is an upside-down state of affairs. For it is precisely the voice of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable that ought to be heard most clearly.

As the Gospel makes plain, Christians must aim not only to be charitable to the poor and vulnerable but to associate with them, to live with them and listen to them, just as God hears their cries. To defend the cause of the poor, one must know their concerns; and for their concerns to be known, their voices must be heard. And precisely because we are part of one another, a true corporate person with common goods, the interests of the poor are not just those of one special interest group contending against others; rather, all of us are bound up together with the fate of the poor and most vulnerable.

The Supreme Court is about to rule on another case, McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission, which will likely allow the wealthiest among us to use their money to amplify their voices even more. The Catholic bishops of the United States have emphasized that the poor are not simply a nagging burden; they deserve participation in political life. The current equation of political speech with money virtually ensures that this principle will be violated and that the interests of those with access to money will prevail in the "marketplace of ideas."

It is time for people of faith to engage with this crucial issue and use our corporate body, coming together as a community, to speak against this silencing of the poor, and against the monopoly of speech enjoyed by the very wealthiest in our society. Only then will democracy be something more than an empty promise.

WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH *is a professor of Catholic studies at DePaul University in Chicago, Ill.*

GOD GOES WEST

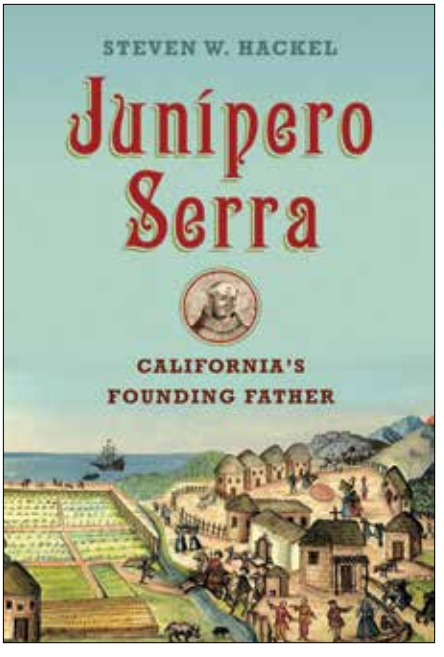
JUNÍPERO SERRA
California's Founding Father
By Steven W. Hackel
Hill and Wang. 352p $27

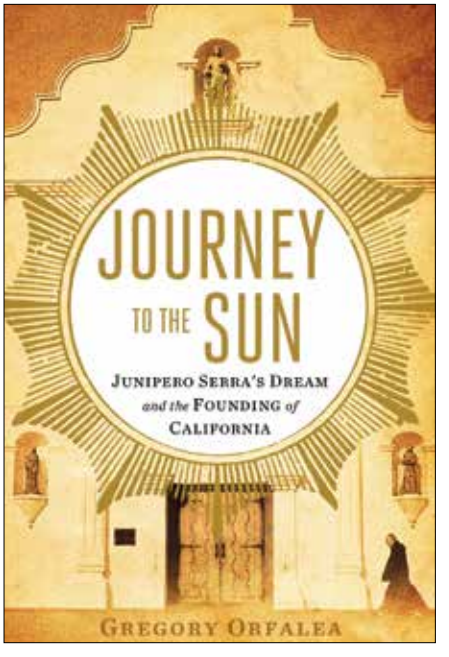
JOURNEY TO THE SUN
Junípero Serra's Dream and the Founding of California
By Gregory Orfalea
Scribner. 480p $30

Junípero Serra's instrumental role in establishing the California missions is well known, but the contours of his own life have at times been overshadowed by debates over Spanish colonialism and the mission system. As an emblem of the religious and colonial system he established along the California coast, Serra has been praised by those who celebrate the success of the missions and criticized by those who fault them for their abuses. In these two new biographies, Steven W. Hackel and Gregory Orfalea seek to recover Serra's own personal story, tracing his life as he journeyed across an ocean and up and down the coast of a continent.

Both authors reveal an appreciation for Serra's life and legacy, but they employ different narrative styles and differ in their characterization of their shared subject. Hackel, a historian who has written about Indian-Spanish relations in the colonial missions, provides the crisper biography. Though still lively and engaging, his is the more academic study, exhibiting his broad command not just of Serra's own writings, but of the social, political and religious context of his times. Orfalea, in contrast, employs a more literary approach to his tale. His account can be imaginative or impressionistic at times, but he wants readers to experience the sights, sounds and spectacle of Serra's travels and ministry.

By all accounts, Serra lived a remarkable life. He was born in 1713 on the island of Mallorca, a Spanish outpost in the Mediterranean where the Catholic Church provided order and institutional stability amid political turbulence and economic hardship. Christened Miguel Joseph, he assumed the name Junípero upon entering the Franciscan order at the age of 17. He would spend the next two decades at the seminary and university, first as a student and then as a professor. The path of Serra's early life gave little indication of the turn it would take in 1749, when at age 36, having never before left his home island, Serra embarked for the New World. He embraced missionary work as a second career.





Upon his arrival in Mexico, Serra received only a short period of training before being sent to work in the Sierra Gorda, a region north of Mexico City where the missions had stagnated. His renewed outreach to the Indians and his administrative prowess brought him to the attention of his Franciscan superiors and government officials alike. When Spain looked to extend the missions into Alta California as a means of establishing more secure control over the region, Serra's proven skill made him the clear candidate to lead the campaign.

As daunting as the prospect of establishing the California missions may have been, Serra found the opportunity spiritually invigorating. Unlike other regions, where the missions served those who had already been converted, California offered the chance to reach those who had never before been evangelized. Hackel, in particular, calls attention to Serra's desire to spread the faith among the "poor" Indians who suffered from lack of a padre. At times prone to romanticize missionary labor, Serra expressed a belief that the Indians would be converted "at the mere sight" of the Franciscans. Even as the missions helped promote Spanish imperial aims, he continued to measure their success in the number of souls saved. For Serra, in Hackel's telling, "spiritual conquest" remained the true goal.

Serra's voluminous correspondence

from his California days is a blessing for the biographer. The way Hackel and Orfalea approach these sources highlights their interpretive differences. Orfalea mentions that he examined every document of Serra's he could find, and even discovered in the course of his research a couple of letters that had lain forgotten in remote archives. While he mines these materials well to trace Serra's comings and goings, he also seems determined to find the traces of Serra's private life and personal thoughts hidden within Serra's official reports. After describing the subject of those documents, he is quick to interrogate them for Serra's emotional state or to describe what Serra might have been feeling at that moment. In describing a letter sent by Serra to the viceroy to report an Indian uprising, for instance, Orfalea speaks of how Serra "seemed to sense violence was inevitable" and how it was almost "as if Serra were asking for forgiveness not only for the Indian, but *from* him."

For Hackel, however, it is those very same administrative writings that reveal the true Serra. He argues that one of the things that set Serra apart from his fellow missionaries was his "mastery of the art of composing dry, lengthy, logical, and persuasive memoranda." As head of the California missions, Serra was responsible for securing resources and protection for them in negotiation with both church and colonial officials. When the political restructuring of the Bourbon reforms threatened the autonomy of the missions, Serra penned numerous appeals and fought vigorously to protect their established privileges. He was particularly concerned about efforts to secularize the missions by removing them from the control of religious orders and turning them over to diocesan priests.

Although both accounts largely avoid the contested legacy of the mission system, they recognize the tensions that arose between the Spanish and their Indian subjects. As Hackel notes, Serra could be blind at times to the resentment caused by the strict moral discipline imposed upon Indian converts, the regimented life within the missions and the use of corporal punishment against transgressors. Yet he also provides context to offer a more sympathetic explanation for Serra's policies. Since "paternalist rigor" and physical mortification were part of Serra's own spiritual formation, he demanded the same of others. If Hackel finds any fault with Serra, it is the friar's reluctance to delegate responsibilities to others even as his declining health made it more difficult for him to oversee the missions. His "desire for absolute control" was something he would relinquish only upon his death in 1784.

Orfalea, though no uncritical apologist, is much more generous toward Serra. He highlights the friar's various acts of mercy toward the Indians and argues that the real hardship of life within the missions came from the unintended consequences of European disease. His final chapter on the ques-

tion of sainthood also seeks to make a case for Serra's sanctity, as exhibited by his "practice of love beyond justice." More than Hackel, Orfalea is invested in placing Serra's spiritual legacy in positive light. He meditates on Serra's virtues and witness, seeking lessons of inspiration to enrich lives today.

Published just months apart, these two biographies draw attention to a pioneering missionary whose life and labors were shaped by the religious character and social order of California and the American West. And while both draw upon the same sources and cover the same ground, they remain markedly different books. Orfalea's strength lies in his vivid prose and rich descriptions. His narrative style seeks to engage the readers' imagination and convey the concerns that weighed on Serra's mind, even if that requires taking "some liberties in reconstructing Serra's thoughts." Hackel, though more dispassionate, is better at interrogating Serra's spiritual impulses and political involvements. While remaining accessible to the general reader, his work sets the new scholarly standard.

THOMAS RZEZNIK *is an associate professor of history at Seton Hall University in New Jersey and author of* Church and Estate: Religion and Wealth in Industrial-Era Philadelphia *(Penn State Press, 2013).*

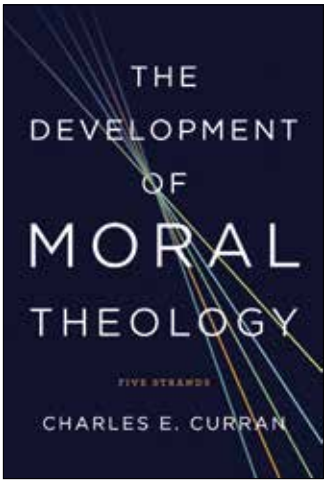
EDWARD VACEK

HIGHER AUTHORITIES

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL THEOLOGY
Five Strands

By Charles E. Curran
Georgetown University Press. 288p
$29.95

Religious freedom? We were against it before we were for it. The papacy at one time unreservedly condemned religious freedom as "madness," but now U.S. bishops condemn any restrictions on it. Earning interest on a loan? The Vatican condemned this practice, then it allowed the idea, and subsequently it created its own bank. With the scandals surrounding the Vatican Bank and the too-big-to-fail-and-too-big-to-prosecute American banks, perhaps the Vatican might consider some form of return to the biblical prohibition of usury. Catholic moral teaching evolves.



Charles Curran regularly refers to changes like these in his most recent book. Currently the Elizabeth Scurlock University Professor of Human Values at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Tex., Curran is author of over 37 books and editor of many more. This book is his witness to the developments in moral theology over the past six decades. Even when he delves deeply into the distant past, he does so in order to show how tradition has made moral theology distinctively Catholic. Although Curran suffered ostracism during this period, his writing is even-handed and for the most part reportorial.

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, most moral theology textbooks limited themselves to enumerating all the ways that humans could fail. The good news of Christianity was left to spiritual theology, which was considered less important and more suitable for nuns and monks. Moral manuals catalogued sins according to the Ten Commandments and graded them according to whether they deserved purgatory or hell.

Curran tries to rescue Catholic moral theology from being a slightly warmed-over version of moral philosophy. He wants to recover St. Thomas Aquinas's claim that grace perfects nature. Nevertheless, he admits that Thomas's own grounding of ethics in philosophy led the many subsequent Thomisms to slight the theological dimension of Christian ethics. When Pope Leo XIII in 1879 imposed Thomism on the church, the result was a "scientific" neoscholasticism that continued to neglect the religious riches of the Catholic tradition. Pre-Vatican II moral manuals focused deontologically on the rules that one must obey. Not Aquinas's reasonableness, but Ockham's submission of the will was central.

Curran is at pains to show that there are many contrasting theories and practices that go by the name natural law. One enduring version refers to what nature has established in all animals. As a consequence, masturbation is worse, sexually, than rape because it frustrates procreation, whereas the latter does not. Paul VI's encyclical on birth control is an offspring of this type of natural law. Another enduring version of natural law insists that the natural is the reasonable, and thus rape is far worse. A very different and especially effective kind of natural law thinking, avers Curran, undergirds the social teaching of the church. For example, providing food for the hungry and health care to the sick are supported by the natural law.

Curran underscores the impact that a growing awareness of history has had on moral theology. For the classical tradition, moral norms, once established by the church, apply to all people in all situations and can never be changed. Historical consciousness challenges that assumption. This divergence

prompted Cardinal Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI's preoccupation with relativism. Similarly, a growing awareness of psychology and sociology shifted the stress from particular acts to, on the one hand, subjectivity and, on the other, inculturation. In response to these changes, several revisionist moral theologies arose after Vatican II, some to question official teaching and some to offer fresh defense of it.

Curran describes in detail how, for the practice of moral theology, few changes have been as significant as the shift in the role of the papacy. In the first millennium, popes functioned mainly as local and regional leaders. They did not "rule" the church nor define doctrines. But in the second millennium, the papacy assumed ever more power. Whereas earlier the local bishop and theologians took up pressing moral problems, increasingly Rome set up the expectation that it could and should decide all moral questions. The church became papalized. Being a Catholic came to mean obeying the pope.

Once teaching authority became centralized in the Vatican, the criterion of truth became the authority of the pope who proposed it, not its evidence or fruitfulness. In reaction or self-defense, many theologians argued that papal teachings on ethics were not infallible. Ironically, many who currently disagree with certain statements by Pope Francis and resist Vatican II use the same terminology to explain why they can dissent. The wheel of history keeps rolling.

Curran lauds the approach taken in Vatican II, trying to inspire rather than condemn. The council, like the present book, affirmed not only earlier tradition but also the insights of the contemporary world. The council stressed the importance of the person as both individual and social, themes that are central to Curran's own relational-responsibility ethics.

Since Vatican II, Curran has been a vigorous participant, comprehensive observer and courageous leader in Catholic moral theology. With this book, he shows how this theology continues to develop the riches of the past and respond to the signs of the times.

EDWARD VACEK, S.J., *is Stephen Duffy Chair of Catholic Studies at Loyola University New Orleans.*

NICHOLAS CLIFFORD

NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

THE MEMOIRS OF JIN LUXIAN
Volume 1: Learning and Relearning 1916-1982

Translated by William Hanbury-Tenison, with an Introduction by Anthony E. Clark
Hong Kong University Press. 314p $28

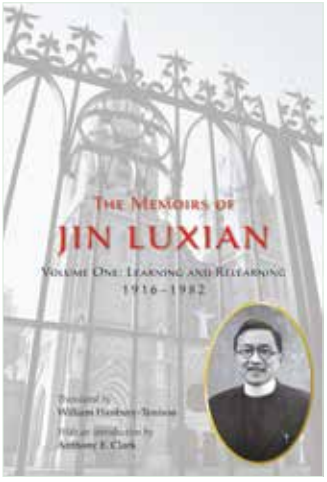
Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian has been one of the most important and controversial figures in modern Chinese Catholicism. Born into a Catholic family in Shanghai in 1916, he was educated by the French Jesuits in that city and became a Jesuit himself, living through a tumultuous time in China's history, a witness to war and revolution, to the triumph of Mao's Communists in 1949 and the vicious campaigns mounted against China's Christians (to say nothing of other perceived enemies of Maoism) in the years that followed.

Jailed in 1955, he emerged only in 1982 as Maoist Communism was giving way to a powerful state capitalism disingenuously waving the revolution's red flag. By that time, Chinese Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, had been divided into two groups. One was underground, in the Catholic case maintaining a traditional loyalty to Rome. The other came to terms with the regime in the Catholic Patriotic Association. After Jim's release in 1982, he became not only one of the leaders of this latter movement, but as the C.P.A.'s bishop of Shanghai, proved himself very successful in rebuilding Shanghai Catholicism, reopening churches, schools and seminaries, and attracting (or re-attracting) parishioners. To some (including many of his fellow Jesuits) he was a traitor; to others, a man of extraordinary accomplishments under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

This volume, splendidly translated by William Hanbury-Tenison, takes the story only up to Jin's return to Shanghai from jail in 1982. His accounts of his youth and education under the French Jesuits in Shanghai are very interesting, as are those of his studies abroad after the Second World War in Rome and in France. Sometimes gently and sometimes not, he chides the French clerical establishment in Shanghai for seeking to hold onto power and ignoring the efforts of men like Benedict XV and his nuncio in China, Celso Constantini, to encourage the indigenization of the church (Benedict's "Maximum Illud" of 1919 is one of the key documents here).

I do not think he's exaggerating. When the first Chinese bishops since the 17th century were named by Rome in the mid-1920s, a dispatch from the French minister that I found in the archives of the Quai d'Orsay warned that they would become heretics "*par la pente naturelle de leur ésprit*" (from their natural inclinations), and would use their positions for their own benefit. That seems to have been a common French view, both lay and clerical. And if Jin's account is to be trusted, even after the coming of the Maoist regime in 1949, and the installation of Bishop Gong Pinmei in 1950, the French Jesuits

sought to maintain control, presumably as what the Chinese call *houtai laoban*, or backstage manipulators.



Not that it did much good. By the early 1950s most foreign missionaries, Protestant and Catholic, either fled China, were expelled or were jailed. As long as he could, Gong led an effort to prevent the regime from taking over the city's Catholicism, an episode described in *Church Militant*, the masterful account of the period by Paul Mariani, S.J. By September 1955, however, a series of sweeping arrests brought independent Shanghai Catholicism pretty much to an end. Gong and Jin themselves were among the many arrested and jailed, and much of the latter half of the book is given over to Jin's prison years, with endless interrogations and forced confessions of supposed activities against the regime. He kept his faith alive, however, and though the book ends with his release in 1982, a few years later, at the urging of his former captors, he formally joined the C.P.A. "In another twenty years," they told him, "you will go to heaven, and Catholicism will simply die out in China. You will bear responsibility for that…. You should take responsibility for the Church." He did so, becoming bishop of Shanghai under C.P.A. auspices and going about the task of rebuilding Catholicism there, with remarkable success until his death in 2013.

Whatever Jin's ecclesiastical opponents may have said of him earlier, his relations with Rome were patched up when the Vatican ultimately recognized him as bishop coadjutor. Nevertheless, he remains a figure of controversy because of his dealings with Beijing; and while C.P.A. members in Shanghai may have something that looks a bit like religious freedom, the so-called "underground" church, which has never renounced allegiance to Rome, continues to be watched, harassed and persecuted.

For much of this, Jin's record remains extraordinarily valuable. But not definitive. Memoirs are not, properly speaking, history. Rather, they are part of the raw material of history, waiting for historians to come along and incorporate them into their broader research, seeking to arrive at clearer and more accurate depictions of the past than have earlier existed. By their very nature, memoirs must be personal and indeed parochial, setting forth the views of single individuals. More than that—and this is a quality they share with all historical writing—they can be deceptive, even though this may not be the intent

of the writer, and even though every event they record did actually happen.

Jin's book, he tells us, was written entirely from memory, since he had lost all his papers at the time of his arrest and knew the dangers of keeping correspondence or a journal. Add to these uncertainties the fact that it was published in China, hardly a leading center of press freedom. His translator told me in an email that he worked from a privately printed copy of the memoirs that had not undergone censorship by the authorities of the People's Republic of China, though Jin may well have censored it himself, well knowing what he could and could not say. Parts of the book sound like echoes of Beijing's standard phrases and judgments. When, for example, Jin refers to the "Gong Pinmei counter-revolutionary clique," or sees Bishop Gong as a front for the French Jesuits, is he reflecting his own beliefs, or does he trust us to discover a meaning beyond the words themselves? He is quite ready to denounce the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), though that is almost orthodoxy in today's People's Republic of China, but he says nothing of Mao's catastrophic famine of the late 1950s, which carried away from 30 million to 45 million victims in three years.

It is impossible to know the answers to these questions. Read his work and decide for yourself. But read Mariani's *Church Militant* as well, which is based on a wide range of official and unofficial sources, both Chinese and Western. Bear in mind also that the Chinese state's wish to control certain ecclesiastical affairs is by no means a recent Communist invention. In 845, under the Tang dynasty, a widespread persecution of Buddhism and other religions (including Nestorian Christianity) broke out, at least in part, because they were seen as foreign and perhaps even a danger to the established order. Thereafter the state, when it could, kept a wary eye on such matters. Nor, for that matter, is the church's acquiescence—forced or otherwise—to the cultural and political norms of the day anything new. The road to Canossa has not always been a one-way street. Think, for example, of the Gallican articles of 1682 or, much more recently, the Emperor Franz Josef's veto of Cardinal Mariano Rampolla as the elected successor of Pope Leo XIII in 1903 or Francisco Franco's power to name his own bishops in Spain.

I am not a church historian, and will leave the similarities and differences here to others. Bishop Jin Luxian has great admirers, both within the church and beyond it. Did he make the right choice in accepting state supervision of his eminently successful rebuilding of Shanghai Catholicism? It is very tempting to say that he did. Now that he has died, however, it is unlikely that we will ever see the second volume of these memoirs, or know the circumstances behind their publication even if they appear. Nor is the story over yet. Shortly after Jin's death in April 2013, his successor as bishop, Ma Daqin, resigned his position in the C.P.A., and was thereupon ousted by the regime. His status and whereabouts are something of a mystery today.

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Away With Despair

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (A), MARCH 23, 2014

Readings: Ex 17:3–7; Ps 95:1–9; Rom 5:1–8; Jn 4:5–42

"Why did you ever make us leave Egypt?" (Ex 17:3)

When my oldest son was a little boy, he was shopping with my mother and father and saw something on a display shelf that he wanted. He said so. "I want that, I want that." My mother explained that you cannot have everything you want, but that we buy what we need. He thought about that for a while and then said, "I need that, I need that." God knows we need things—material things, friends, spiritual insight and love—and God knows that our true needs do not grow out of selfishness or misplaced craving.

We need, though, to discern genuinely between our wants and our needs. For a perfect way to stunt spiritual growth, in Lent or at any time, is to yearn for all the things we want and complain about all the things we do not have. What makes this spiritual discernment particularly difficult is that sometimes we do lack those things that we need, materially, emotionally or spiritually. We must not only discern between want and need; we must maintain trust and hope that God knows our needs and continues to care for us, and will supply our needs.

The Israelites, after being released from slavery, wandered in the desert and soon began to grumble about their situation. The source of their grumbling was a genuine need for water, essential for life, but their need started to erode trust and hope in God's care for them. Despair was at the heart of their "quarrelling" and "testing," which resulted in the question, "Is the Lord among us or not?" This is not a question regarding the existence of God, but whether God's care and compassion extend to the people in need. Trust in God and hope in God begin to wear away. This spiritual erosion can lead any of us to despair, or to ungratefulness and forgetfulness about God's care in the past, even the recent past, leading us to ask, "What have you done for me lately?"

Sometimes events can overwhelm us. During the years when I worked in crisis intervention, I saw that people in crisis, when their lives were falling apart (and often things truly were falling apart), were not able at certain points to perceive God's action in their lives or the many blessings and gifts they still had. It is important in this spiritual wandering to simply walk alongside people, because how God was working and why God was working in certain ways often become clear only with time and distance. Only with a glance behind us do we see the ways in which what we have been given was precisely what we needed and at the right time, how sufferings have shaped and molded us and how God has watched out for us when we thought we were abandoned.

The Samaritan woman, for instance, could not have been expecting some new spiritual awakening when she went to perform the simple task of drawing water. Yet her daily chore of drawing water, as necessary for her life as for the Israelites in the desert, led to her encounter with Jesus, who offers her "living water." Jesus says that anyone who drinks this water "will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." Initially, she misunderstands and just wants this water "so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Ultimately she grasps that what Jesus offers fulfills more than material desires; it is exactly what she and everyone needs.

The water Jesus offers, made visible in the sacrament of baptism, leads to eternal life. In grasping this truth, the Samaritan woman recognizes Jesus for who he is, the Messiah, and grasps the truth about God's knowledge of our ultimate need.

The Samaritan woman might have been considered on many counts unworthy of Jesus' visitation, but God has come to her, a woman (which astonishes his own disciples), a Samaritan and someone who had been married five times. But her life had prepared her for this meeting, to become the voice of Jesus among her people. When we are prepared for the "living water" to become what we want, despair is banished and we have all that we need.

JOHN W. MARTENS

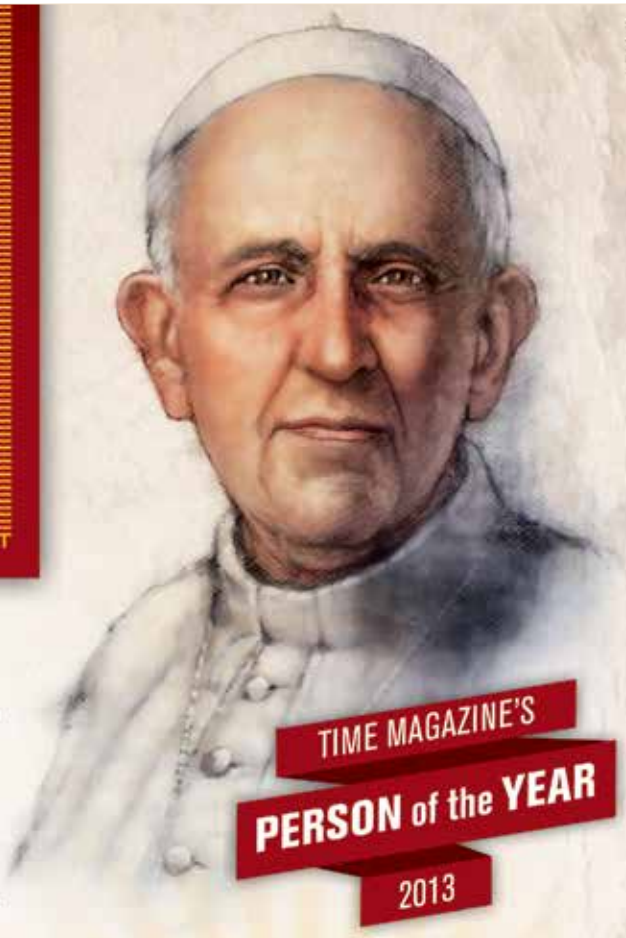
PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Imagine yourself with the Samaritan woman at the well. As you listen to Jesus, what do you need to learn from him?

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

Celebrate the First Year of Pope Francis

Discover the Leadership Values of the First Jesuit Pope



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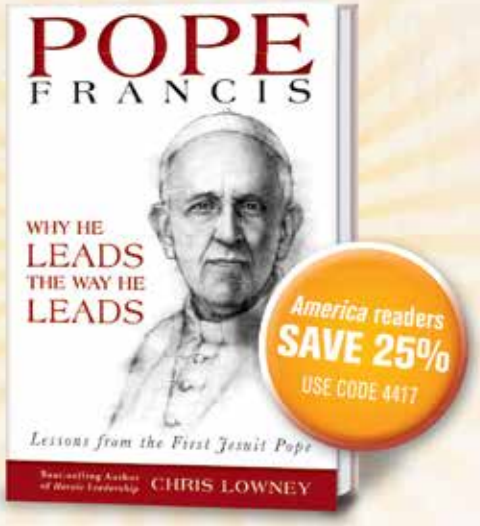

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