America

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Pacem in Terris

FIFTY YEARS LATER

DREW CHRISTIANSEN

Responses to 'Repeal the Second Amendment'

OF MANY THINGS

Fifty-five years ago this spring "a masterpiece was unveiled in our editorial office." Thurston N. Davis, S.J., editor in chief at the time, was so taken with the new acquisition that he dedicated his entire Of Many Things column in the issue of April 26, 1958, to a description of it: "It is 12 feet long and of trapezoid shape. Under the satin sheen of the finish, the oaken grain has been matched in a lovely design; the angle-joints are so silky smooth to the touch that they seem no more than penciled lines. Every ounce of its 400 beautifully designed and executed pounds bespeaks the craftsman whose loving care and pride in his work has produced this masterpiece of the cabinetmaker's art."

The craftsman was Clarence Mahlmeister, a Jesuit brother; the object of Father Davis's admiration was the new editorial boardroom table, the place where "we shall sit," he wrote, "hammering out editorials and comments and the entire policy of this review." Indeed, the table is magnificent. It is also extremely heavy. In 1965, when Father Davis moved **America**'s offices from Manhattan's Upper West Side to Midtown, the table moved too. The movers had to use a crane to guide the table into the editorial board room through the large, second-story window. According to Father Davis, a crowd gathered on the sidewalk in front of America House just to watch the workmen maneuver the Buick-sized office piece.

Perhaps people are busier in New York these days; when the table was moved again last month, after almost five decades in the same location, not a single passerby took note. Once again, though, a crane guided the table out through the same window it had traversed 48 years earlier; several workmen then lowered it into the alley below and carried it around to the front entrance, into the lobby, then up the stairs and into my office. The table had to be moved because—a sign of the times—its former location will be converted into a multimedia studio for **America**'s Web and digital platforms.

Preparing to move the table was also not easy. Various permissions, lawyers, faxes and not a little frustration were involved. Still, we did not for a moment think about getting rid of it. Here **America**'s editors have debated the great matters of the day: the death of one president, the disgrace of another; wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan; the Second Vatican Council and its aftermath; the vicissitudes and legacies of six papacies; the end of the cold war, the beginning of the digital revolution. That editorial tradition continues. Following the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School last December, we discussed gun control and decided to call for repeal of the Second Amendment while gathered at this table. As you will see from the volume and passion of the correspondence we have received about that editorial (see State of the Question, p. 36), decisions made at the editorial table can elicit powerful reactions.

We know now that just before the Jesuits moved their editorial table to Midtown, the Soviets were moving nuclear missiles to the beaches of Cuba. After President Kennedy revealed the presence of the missiles, the world came perilously close to self-annihilation. Pope John's response to the Cuban missile crisis was the encyclical "Pacem in Terris." In this issue, another of my predecessors, Drew Christiansen, S.J., writes about Pope John's prophetic vision on the occasion of the encyclical's 50th anniversary.

As we acknowledged in the issue of March 25, 2013, concerning **America**'s coverage of the Vietnam War, we don't always make the right decisions at the editorial table. Only God is perfect. Still, our hope and prayer is the same as that of Father Davis: "that our work, in content and style, will reflect—week in and week out—the hatred of sloppy craftsmanship that shines out of every shimmering grain of our new boardroom table."

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Talk About Steubenville

Parents will no doubt be challenged as they try to explain the ethical and moral issues involved in the Steubenville rape trial, now that two young men have been convicted. The crimes these young men committed will be embarrassing to discuss, but it is imperative that parents do so, particularly with the boys and young men in their families. Many will no doubt find it impossible to imagine that their child could be capable of such acts, which is perhaps precisely what the parents of the young men now facing jail time in Ohio once thought.

Assuming they bring up the painful topic of rape at all, many parents coach their girls on strategies to protect themselves from assault. A dialogue perhaps even more urgent would be directed at boys about the sort of behavior expected of them in protecting the human dignity of the people they will encounter later in life. It may seem obvious that violating someone who has become nearly unconscious because of drugs or alcohol is odious and wrong. But that was not obvious to a party full of young people who either directly participated in the assault, stood by while it happened or chose to write about the attack and post pictures of the helpless victim on social media.

We may model exemplary behavior that we hope to see in our children as they mature, but it does not hurt to make expectations and standards of human decency absolutely clear in as frank and realistic a manner possible. The memory of a parents' clear directives may be enough to restore young people in a moral fog of alcohol and peer pressure to their better selves, that is, people more likely to use smartphones to call for help or the police than to capture video as a young woman is violated in front of them.

Catholic Opportunity

This season Gonzaga University enjoyed its usual success in men's basketball. The team went undefeated in conference play and qualified for the N.C.A.A. tournament for the 15th consecutive season—gigantic feats for this modest-sized Jesuit school in Spokane, Wash. But this year was different. Instead of arriving as the scrappy underdog trying to upset the perennial powerhouses, Gonzaga entered the tournament as the top-ranked team in the nation.

Gonzaga's impressive rise to the top, though rudely thwarted by Wichita State in the Round of 32, coincided with other big news from the world of college basketball. Last month nine Catholic schools—Creighton, DePaul, Georgetown, Marquette, Providence, Seton Hall, St. John's, Villanova and Xavier—along with one non-Catholic university, Butler, confirmed they will form a new Big East Conference in July. Others, like Dayton and Saint Louis, may join later to make a 12-team league. A multi-year television deal with Fox Sports will reportedly bring $3 million annually to each school.

The formation of the new league presents a unique opportunity. In 2008 the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities formed the Jesuit Basketball Spotlight, a creative initiative to draw attention to the mission of Jesuit education whenever two Jesuit schools played each other on the hardwood. In similar fashion, the mostly Catholic league should take advantage of this reorganization to remind its coaches, student-athletes and fans—by press releases, game programs, in-game announcements, halftime features and television and radio advertisements—about the mission of Catholic higher education in the United States: its intellectual heritage, Christian vision and commitment to service. This would serve as a reminder that these schools, while excelling in basketball, offer even more important and lasting lessons.

Iraq, the Lost War

Last month marked the 10th anniversary of the start of the Iraq War. The George W. Bush administration, with the support of members of Congress of both parties, some of whom soon regretted their decisions, bombed and invaded an Iraq at peace with its neighbors. Saddam Hussein quickly fell and was hanged; but civil disorder led to civil war, and Iraq may never again be a united country. Our costs: $2.2 trillion (including veterans' health care), 32,221 U.S. troops wounded, 4,475 killed. An estimated 320,000 U.S. veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars may have brain injuries, and a record number are committing suicide. Iraqi civilian death counts have ranged from 134,000 to one million. Ironically, one reason for the war was to "spread democracy" in the Middle East.

Church leadership in Rome at the time did its best to prevent the disaster, and two cardinals who were considered *papabili* in the latest conclave carried the message. Cardinal Fernando Filoni, papal ambassador to Iraq when our bombs fell on Baghdad, remained to suffer with the Iraqi people. Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, a leading diplomat, called the war a "crime against peace" and a violation of international law. And Pope John Paul II sent his personal envoy, Cardinal Pio Laghi, to the White House—only to be ignored. The cost of ignoring him is on our conscience. Meanwhile Pope Francis, in choosing his name, "thought of wars" and of St. Francis of Assisi, "the man of peace." The pope has called on all of us to be peacemakers. This time, will we listen?

Welcome, Stranger

According to the Gospels, when witnesses to the resurrection encountered the risen Christ, he was not always immediately recognized. This was the Evangelists' way of answering that basic question posed in the early church: Where is Jesus? If he still lives, how can we find him? Luke's response is in the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus approaches them "in another form," explains the Scriptures and finally reveals his identity during a meal when "they recognized him in the breaking of the bread." Luke's point is clear: We discover Jesus in the stranger on the road.

Who is today's stranger? We find him or her in those of whom Pope Francis spoke at his inaugural Mass—those we are called to "protect." Pope Francis spoke especially of "the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison." In our world today, this undoubtedly includes undocumented immigrants.

The Catholic Church in the United States is historically an immigrant church. Many universities in the United States trace their origins to the 19th century, when religious orders arrived in a population center, built a chapel, enlarged it to a church, added a school, enlarged that to a high school and expanded that into a college and a university. This helped to move Catholic immigrants into mainstream American life.

Obviously, much has changed since then. In the 19th century the goal of "social justice" movements was to fight the inequality produced by the industrial revolution. Today the pursuit of justice calls us to work for immigration reform. Of the 65,000 undocumented students who graduate from high school annually, roughly 5 to 10 percent go on to college, and only a few receive scholarships. The great majority go to community colleges, and many drop out.

A large number of today's undocumented young adults were brought to the United States as children by parents who either overstayed a legal visit or entered the country without authorization. Facing difficult circumstances, many either do not go to college or, once there, fail out. Unchecked, these problems can create a generation of talented men and women who will never develop their full potential and contribute to the society they once sought to join. They fear deportation, are barred from professions—as teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers—they once dreamed of and are blocked from participating in many of the activities of their peers. They cannot receive most federal aid or work-study stipends. In short, their lives are stunted by psychological and social isolation.

Various universities have programs to assist them. Notre Dame's renowned Alliance for Catholic Education, in order to "welcome the strangers among us," helps prepare some of its teachers to specialize in teaching students who speak a language other than English at home. In 2010 the Ford Foundation gave Fairfield University, in Connecticut, a substantial grant to study the situation of undocumented students at the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities. Joined by Loyola University Chicago and Santa Clara University, they researched and interviewed immigrant students, administrators and faculty at six schools, plus officers involved in admissions, student affairs and financial aid at all 28 schools. They found that 76 percent of all staff members surveyed agreed that enrolling and supporting undocumented students fits the mission of their institution, but 40 percent were not aware of any outreach programs to support them.

What can be done? Santa Clara is the only Jesuit institution with a scholarship fund exclusively for undocumented immigrants. That will change. Twenty-five presidents of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities have signed a statement promising support for documented and undocumented students alike. These schools will emphasize in their mission statements that they exist to serve all students, regardless of immigration status. They will explore establishing a "common fund" to finance scholarships for all, create a list of outside scholarships for which immigrants are eligible and find ways to help pay for books, lab fees and transportation.

Finally, according to a position paper prepared by Fairfield University, the schools recognize that the current situation "can lock families of particular ethnic backgrounds into enclaves or ghettoes, instilling an atmosphere of fear, misunderstanding and disinformation." These universities will respect the privacy of undocumented students and help the students fulfill both their family obligations and fully participate in university life.

Christians' desire to help the stranger goes back to the risen Christ, "the stranger" who revealed himself on the road to the downcast disciples. What might have happened if the disciples had not invited this stranger to remain with them?

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OBAMA IN ISRAEL

Warm Reception, Great Speech, But Will Anything Change?


CHARM OFFENSIVE: U.S. President Barack Obama in Jerusalem on March 20, 2013.

President Barack Obama was warmly received on his first state trip to Israel. Sidestepping the Israeli Knesset, the president made an appeal for renewing the peace process directly to the Israeli people, declaring, "Peace is necessary" and "Peace is the only path to true security." He urged the end of settlements on the West Bank, a return to negotiations with the Palestinians and the eventual acceptance of a two-state solution, to which both sides in the decades-old conflict claim to be committed.

President Obama said: "Negotiations will be necessary, but there is little secret about where they must lead—two states for two peoples. There will be differences about how to get there; there are going to be hard choices along the way."

While the president's visit was for the most part positively received, enthusiasm for the charm offensive in Israel was not universal. "All the great people in the world come to visit us," said Latin Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah. "They arrive and depart, and our reality does not change. We [Palestinian Christians] are in the same situation."

Speaking before a group of young people on March 21 at the Jerusalem Convention Center, President Obama said that Palestinians must recognize that Israel will be a Jewish state and that Israelis have the right to insist upon security. But, he added, "Israelis must recognize that continued settlement activity is counterproductive to the cause of peace and that an independent Palestine must be viable—that real borders will have to be drawn." He

ENVIRONMENT

A Pope Comfortable in Green Implores 'Protection' of Creation

Catholic greens had reason to sound exclamations of joy during the inaugural papal Mass on March 19. Starting with the announcement of the new pope's name, Francis, there was speculation about whether Pope Francis would show the same sensitivity for nature as the saint who according to legend preached to the birds, loved the wild places and tamed the wolf of Gubbio.

In his homily honoring St. Joseph, the patron of the universal church, for his care of the holy family, the new pope meditated on Joseph's role as protector, using the Latin word *custos* ("guardian" or "warden"). It is the term, incidentally, that Franciscans apply to their religious superiors. Four times in the homily he cited protection for creation as one of the virtues expected of today's church.

"Let us," he urged, "protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, protect creation." That means, he explained in his simple way, "protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as St. Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live."

Pope Francis continued to describe in detail a Christian ethic of care: "It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!"

He made a special plea to world leaders to join him in this ethic. "Please, I would like to ask all those

described the need for a Palestinian state as an issue of "fairness."

"The Palestinian people's right to self-determination and justice must also be recognized," he added. "Put yourself in their shoes—look at the world through their eyes. It is not fair that a Palestinian child cannot grow up in a state of their own, living their entire lives with the presence of a foreign army that controls the movements, not just of those young people but their parents, their grandparents, every single day. It's not just when settler violence against Palestinians goes unpunished. It is not right to prevent Palestinians from farming their lands or restricting a student's ability to move around the West Bank; or displace Palestinian families from their homes."

He said, "Neither occupation nor expulsion is the answer. Just as Israelis built a state in their homeland, Palestinians have a right to be a free people in their own land." He told the students that their hopes "must light the way forward.

"Look to a future in which Jews, Muslims and Christians can all live in peace and greater prosperity in this Holy Land. Believe in that," the president said. "Most of all look to the future that you want for your own children—a future in which a Jewish, democratic, vibrant state is protected and accepted, for this time and for all time."

According to Patriarch Emeritus Sabbah, "regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, no external pressure can really change things. Only Israel can decide to proceed on the path of peace or to maintain the status quo. No one can change this situation from the outside. Everything is in the hands of Israel." As Holy Week approached, Patriarch Sabbah noted on March 21 the difficulties Palestinians Christians and Muslims face in gaining access to the holy places in Jerusalem. Patriarch Sabbah said, "Here to pray you do not go directly to God. One must first pass by the military to ask for permission."

with positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of good will: Let us be protectors of God's creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment."

While he warned against "'Herods who plot death, wreak havoc and mar" humanity's "countenance," his message was a positive one, calling for goodness and tenderness in the treatment of the others and the world. Addressing the hard-heartedness many presume to be necessary for survival in this world, he declared, "We must not be afraid of goodness, nor even of tenderness!"

In concluding his homily, the pope spoke of the role of the bishop of Rome as a protector. "To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the bishop of Rome is called to carry out, yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly. Let us protect with love all that God has given us!"

On this day of the formal inauguration of his Petrine ministry, Pope Francis left no doubt that he believes, like his predecessors, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, that protection of creation is at the heart of the church's work in the modern world.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.

CARE FOR CREATION: Pope Francis celebrates his inaugural Mass in St. Peter's Square on March 19.

All Have Responsibility

For the good of all people, the care of the poor and the future of the earth, religions must cooperate in reminding modern men and women that God exists and has a plan for their lives and their behavior, Pope Francis said. "The Catholic Church knows the importance of promoting friendship and respect among men and women of different religious traditions," he said on March 20 during a meeting with Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Jain delegations that had come to the Vatican for his inauguration. The Catholic Church, he said, "is equally aware of the responsibility that all have for this world, for creation—which we must love and protect—and we can do much good for those who are poor, weak and suffering, to favor justice, to promote reconciliation, to build peace.... But more than anything," he said, "we must keep alive in the world the thirst for the Absolute. We must never allow a one-dimensional vision of the human person to prevail—a vision that reduces the person to what he produces and consumes. This is one of the most dangerous, insidious things of our age."

Zimbabwe Bishops Urge Peace

General elections in Zimbabwe, expected in the second half of the year, will be as important in determining the country's destiny as the 1980 vote that led to independence from Britain, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference said in a mid-March pastoral letter. The bishops urged Zimbabweans to "close the door to political intolerance, violence, impunity, lack of transparency and accountability, intimidation, corruption and open another [door] to a true democratic dispensation." They said, "Free and fair elections should be possible with a new constitution and the necessary reforms in place." The 2013 election "offers Zimbabwe a second chance," the bishops said, citing the violence that erupted after the disputed 2008 election. The bishops called for tolerance and reminded Zimbabweans of the importance of credible electoral processes. They urged people to maintain a "peaceful atmosphere" throughout the election period.

Still Threat to Freedom

New proposed regulations governing the contraception mandate under the Affordable Care Act continue to violate basic principles of religious freedom, said the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. In comments filed on March 20 with the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S.C.C.B. raised a series of concerns, among them being that the new proposals keep in place "an unjust and unlawful mandate" regarding the provision of contraceptive and other reproductive services and that the rules provide no exemption, or accommodation, for "most stakeholders in the health insurance process, such as individual employees and for-profit employers," who are morally opposed to such coverage. Other objections include: an "unreasonable and unlawfully narrow" exemption for some nonprofit religious organizations, primarily houses of worship, and a limited accommodation for religious employers that continues to require those employers falling outside of the government's definition to "fund or facilitate objectionable coverage."

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Breezy visit

Pope Francis "had nothing to do with the dictatorship," preferring **"a silent diplomacy"** during Argentina's so-called Dirty War, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel of Argentina reported after a private meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican on March 21. ✦ In a **show of solidarity** with Irish Americans, Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland toured New York's hard-hit Breezy Point neighborhood on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, to review Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts. ✦ For the second year in a row, the Cuban government, responding to a request from the Holy See, allowed Cubans the day off to **observe Good Friday**. ✦ The Anglican prelate Justin Welby, 57, was enthroned as **Archbishop of Canterbury** on March 21, following induction ceremonies that for the first time included a woman, Archdeacon of Canterbury Sheila Anne Watson. ✦ Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel apologized** on March 22 to Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for a commando attack in May 2010 on a Gaza-bound humanitarian flotilla that resulted in the killing of eight Turkish citizens and one U.S. citizen.

MARGOT PATTERSON

The Costs of War

This March 19th marked the 10-year anniversary of the Iraq War, a debacle so enormous one would have thought its consequences larger here at home. Waged under false pretenses, the war against Iraq destabilized the region and dramatically eroded the United States' influence and standing in the world, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia, where it was seen as part of a campaign of aggression against Muslim countries.

The war devastated Iraq, exacting a heavy toll in death and destruction and creating three million refugees. A new study released by Brown University's Costs of War Project reports the war killed 176,000 to 189,000 people, of whom 134,000 were Iraqi civilians, and has so far cost the United States $1.7 trillion. Add in future medical and disability payments to veterans, and the study estimates the war will cost the United States close to $2.2 trillion. Add in interest payments on the war debt through 2053, and the price tag rises to $4.4 trillion.

These costs have at least temporarily dampened the appetite for military adventurism in this country, though not entirely. Some of the same people who agitated for war against Iraq continue to have a forum and now promote war against Iran. The perverse hostility to Chuck Hagel from his own party during his confirmation hearing to become secretary of defense stemmed partly from his criticisms of the Iraq War, partly from his challenge to the prevailing orthodoxy regarding support for Israel and the need to impose draconian sanctions on Iran in Israel's defense. The economic war now being waged against Iran calls to mind the ruinous sanctions imposed on Iraq between the first and second Persian Gulf War. The eagerness of some members of Congress to involve the United States in the tar baby that is Syria is even more astounding. Iraq remains such a mess that one would think Congress would be wary of diving into yet another Mideast conflict, especially one likely to be ugly for a very long time.

The war against Iraq eroded the United States' standing in the world.

In mid-March the Pentagon announced plans to expand missile defense along the Pacific Coast. This is to show the North Koreans that we are not to be messed with, to show the South Koreans and Japanese that we will protect them and to show the Chinese that they should rein in their erratic ally. The New York Times article reporting the expansion of the U.S. ballistic missile defense observes that U.S. intelligence officials acknowledge that North Korea is not close to being able to execute a nuclear strike and is unlikely even to try. It also notes their missiles are only 50 percent accurate. The estimated cost of this agonistic display is $1 billion. Given the size of the deficit, this is peanuts, of course. Still, as the saying goes, "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking real money."

One positive effect of the sequestration created by the impasse over the looming deficit is that the Defense Department is being cut back and this year faces deeper cuts than domestic programs. With military bases and defense projects scattered across the United States to keep everyone united about their necessity, the Defense Department has been an impregnable bastion of vast prodigal spending. Waste on a small scale arouses the ire of ordinary people and Congress alike. Waste on a monumental scale goes by the name "keeping America strong." Since the United States spends more on defense than the expenditures of the next top-spending 17 countries combined, we can safely assume that the United States is, hands down, the muscle man of the world. Grotesquely so, in fact.

The opportunity if not to starve some of the sacred cows in the U.S. budget then at least to reduce them is the silver lining to sequestration. But pro-Israeli lobbyists and other special interest groups are clamoring to be exempted from the across-the-board budget cuts.

The United States doles out more than $3 billion in aid to Israel every year for the privilege of funding an occupation that everyone else in the world regards as immoral, illegal and provocative and then seeing Israel snub the U.S. request to cease building Jewish settlements on the West Bank. This is a "special relationship" one would think we could do without. At the very least, one might think it would lead us to wonder why we should expect China to be able to control its errant client state when we cannot control ours.

MARGOT PATTERSON *is a writer who lives in Kansas City.*

A Day the World Rejoiced

His Holiness, Pope Francis

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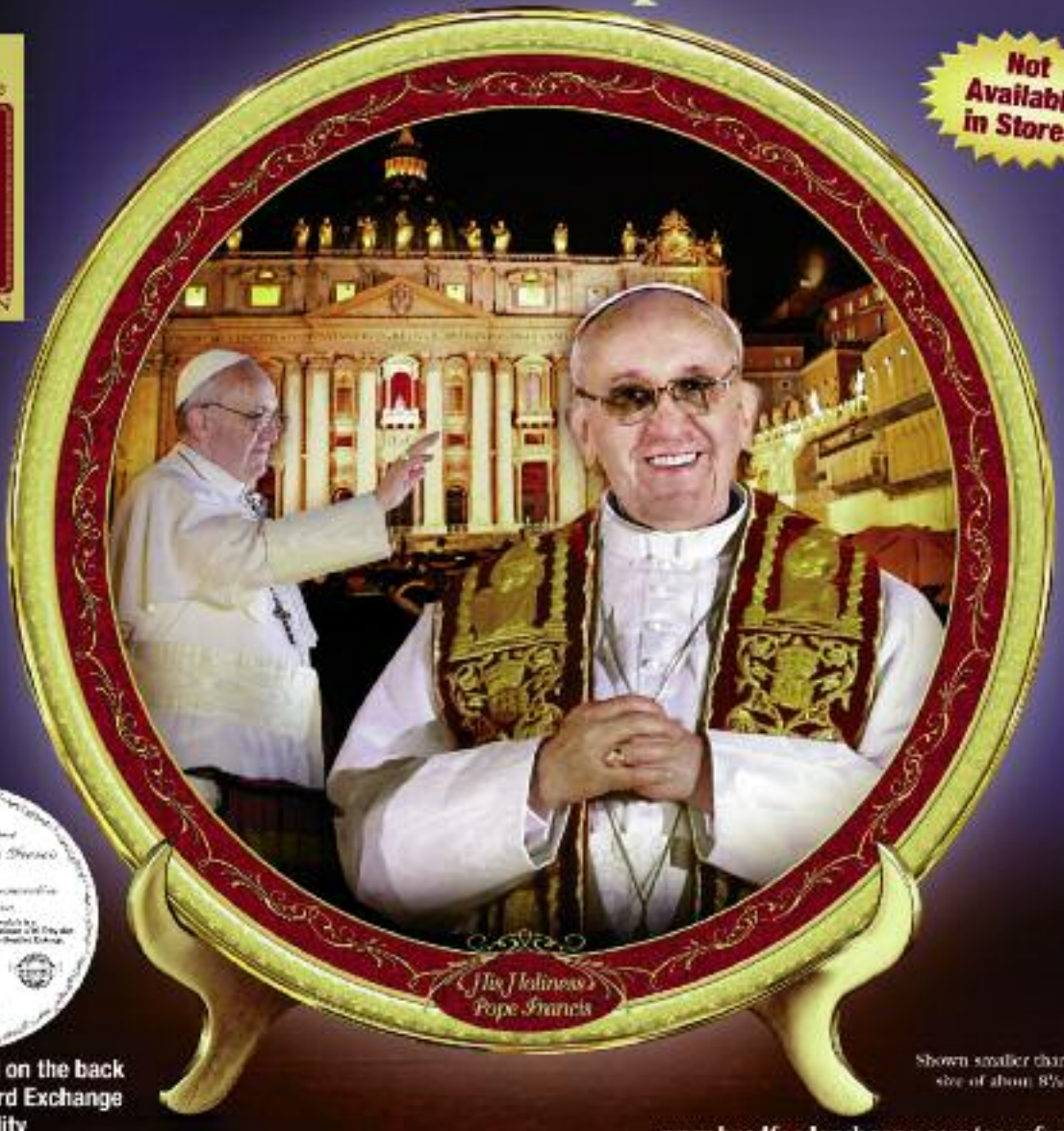

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When the papal conclave concluded on March 13, 2013, millions of the faithful around the world celebrated the appointment of Pope Francis, history's first Jesuit Pope and the first from the Americas to be chosen. The former Archbishop of Buenos Aires chose the papal name *Francis* in honor of Francis of Assisi, beloved patron saint of animals. The 266th Pontiff was ordained as a priest in 1969 and has devoted his ministry to humility, teaching and social justice. His values and teachings give new hope and inspiration to believers the world over.

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PEACEMAKING?: The G8 Summit at Camp David, Md., on May 19, 2012

A Vision of Peace

How the prophetic 'Pacem in Terris' helped change the world.

BY DREW CHRISTIANSEN

"Pacem in Terris" was born in the mind of Blessed John XXIII in the fall of 1962 during the Cuban missile crisis, when he served as a back channel between President John F. Kennedy and the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, urging dialogue to end the most dangerous confrontation of the cold war. For the pope, the missile crisis was a prophetic moment. He offered a message of peace to superpowers locked in a world-threatening contest. Until his intervention, that contest had been defined by ultra-realist war-fighting strategies. His was the classic word of a prophet: an appeal by a man of God to men of power. Challenging the realist suppositions of cold-war strategists, he rejected the generally held notion of mutually assured destruction—that a balance of arms ensured peace among nations—arguing instead that "the solid peace of nations consists…in mutual trust alone." Like the prophets before him, Pope John also had a vision to share with the human family. "Pacem in Terris" projected a world where peace would be achieved by governments dedicated to the fulfillment of human rights and where global institutions would be established to address global needs.

Fifty years on, John's vision has begun to be realized. Human rights have become a major fac-

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tor in international law and diplomacy. Transnational agencies have proliferated to deal with global problems and emergencies. Global governance has begun, albeit imperfectly, to become a reality. Universal jurisdiction for crimes against humanity has become a reality and longtime practitioners of nuclear brinksmanship, like Henry Kissinger and George Schultz, now call for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

As the church commemorates the 50th anniversary of "Pacem in Terris," Pope John's prophetic vision has affected world affairs by promoting human rights and strengthening global governance. Though a great deal remains to be done, the world has changed considerably in directions Pope John would have approved.

Setting an Agenda for Human Rights

For the most part, "Pacem in Terris" dealt relatively little with either the issues of nuclear weapons that helped precipitate the encyclical or with other topics associated to that date with Catholic teaching on war and peace. Rather, it proposed a structure of peace built on "the recognition, respect, safeguarding and promotion" of human rights. In so doing, it set the agenda for church participation in world affairs for the years ahead. The Second Vatican Council, taking its cue from "Pacem in Terris," declared the Gospel as the surest safeguard of "the personal dignity and liberty of man" and announced the promotion of human rights as one of two principal services the Catholic Church renders the world.

In the years that followed, national conferences of bishops, dioceses and religious orders opened human rights offices to address offenses in Latin America, Asia and Africa. These groups worked through the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace with politically influential national bishops' conferences in the West and with secular human rights agencies to defend people against repressive regimes. Later Blessed John Paul II was a guide for Poland's Solidarity labor movement and subsequently a leading actor in the events of 1989 that led to the end of Communism in Eastern Europe, making a special contribution to the nonviolent unfolding of those events. His visits and speeches also rendered support to rights advocates around the world.

The secular world was likewise undergoing an awakening to human rights during this time. Amnesty International began making appeals for "prisoners of conscience" in 1961. The adoption of the Helsinki Accords in 1968, especially its civil rights provisions, gave rise to new civil-society groups like the Helsinki Group and Human Rights Watch. In addition, treaties advancing protection against torture, discrimination, genocide and disappearances were adopted, along with others on behalf of children, women, migrant workers, persons with disabilities and indigenous and tribal peoples. Finally, the apparatus for increased international monitoring and enforcement of rights violations began to be erected at the time of the United Nation's 60th anniversary summit in 2005, with some strengthening of the U.N. capacity in peacemaking and the adoption of the principle of the responsibility to protect, as it is commonly called. Much more must still be done to improve these institutions further, but the outlines of the kind of world Pope John imagined, where public authority upholds the rights of all, has begun to be discernible in our contemporary world.

Challenging the suppositions of cold war strategists of the day, Pope John XXIII rejected the generally held notion of mutually assured destruction.

Shaping a World Community

Traditional Vatican geopolitics, like that of the rest of the post-Westphalian world, focused on the relations among states. Part IV of "Pacem in Terris" still dealt with binational and multinational realities of a traditional sort. But the underlying political theology of the encyclical revived an older, "cosmopolitan" Catholic political theology, identified from late antiquity through the Middle Ages with Christendom, now secularized and shorn of the pretentions to universal papal sovereignty, in the form of a rights-based political universalism.

John saw all political order as directed to upholding the rights of persons. In this context, the pope introduced a level of political action the encyclical calls "the world community" and which diplomats, journalists and church leaders refer to as "the international community."

From Pope John XXIII forward, Catholic social teaching has identified the growth of new social groups as a natural dynamic of "socialization" that contributes to the effective unity of the human family. This is a characteristically Catholic insight, rooted in the essential social character of human nature and the communitarian nature of human fulfillment. The Second Vatican Council named the promotion of unity—and, therefore, peace—along with the promotion of human rights, as one of the key ways in which the church serves the world. For the sake of the future welfare of the one human family, Pope John also proposed a novel concept: the universal common good.

The Universal Common Good

From antiquity the common good had been a capstone concept in Catholic social and political theology, referring to the

shared good of a whole society or political entity. In earlier times, it had applied to Italian city-states and medieval kingdoms; in modern times to nation-states. Appreciating the greater interdependence of our times and the global problems, like nuclear disarmament, that exceeded the ability of even multilateral treaties to address, "Pacem in Terris" argued that the universal common good should govern such transnational realities. In turn, recognition of the claims of the universal common good entailed the duty to develop institutions of global scope to address global problems.

While some have objected that Pope John's utopia, as it was called by one Italian journalist, envisioned a single global superstate, his one specific illustration was the United Nations system, a loose network of formal bodies like the General Assembly and the Security Council, the International Court of Justice and autonomous authorities like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, joined with an array of specialized offices that deal with problems like refugees, development, population and special U.N. rapporteurs advising the secretary general or other international bodies on various emerging problems, like religious intolerance. Pope Benedict XVI explained more fully in "Caritas in Veritate" (2009) how a more integrated and effective system of global governance ought to be rooted in subsidiarity, so that the *subsidium*, or service, of the larger unit supplies for the inadequacies of smaller social units.

Perhaps the most significant recent developments in the implementation of the universal common good since Pope John's time are the International Criminal Court (2002) and the emerging concept of the Responsibility to Protect. The court is a panel of last resort in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. It acts when local jurisdictions have failed to act or are unable to do so. The Responsibility to Protect, an improved, juridical version of humanitarian intervention, is a principle of international law that, like "Pacem in Terris," advances the idea that all political authority is ordered to upholding the rights of citizens and requires the international community to intervene, with the permission of the Security Council, to prevent human rights violations, enforce their correction and/or provide remedies to affected populations. Before the formulation of the responsiblity to protect, Pope John Paul II appealed during crises in the former Yugoslavia, central Africa and East Timor for what was then known as humanitarian intervention by the international community. In his address to the U.N. General Assembly in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI gave strong endorsement to R2P, though in subsequent clashes in Libya and Syria, out of concern for the situation of local Christian minorities, the Holy See has proved reluctant to invoke the principle.

The need for regulation of global financial institutions after the collapse of many leading investment houses and

the egregious offenses of others provides an example of another set of problems of the sort the universal common good was intended to address. In 2009, as part of his treatment of global governance in "Caritas in Veritate," Pope Benedict XVI cited reform of global finance as a top priority. "Financiers," he wrote, "must rediscover the genuinely ethical foundation of their activity, so as not to abuse the sophisticated instruments which can serve to betray the interests of savers."

In 2011, on the eve of a meeting of the G20, the policymaking group of finance ministers and central bank governors from 20 major economies, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace published a groundbreaking study on financial regulation, "Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary System in the Context of a Global Public Authority." It cites "Pacem in Terris" as its inspiration for proposing "an authority over globalization." The need for "adequate, effective mechanisms equal to its mission," the council wrote of a world authority to govern the financial system, is greatly increased "in a globalized world…which also displays the existence of monetary and financial markets of a predominantly speculative sort that are harmful for the real economy, especially of weaker countries."

ON THE WEB
Howard Hubbard and Matthew Clark recall their episcopal ministry.
americamagazine.org/vatican2

Work for Peace

Finally, in the intervening half-century since the publication of "Pacem in Terris," the participation of Catholics, other believers and secular activists in the multifaceted work for peace also has given the church a degree of broad engagement in peacemaking that John desired but could only have vaguely imagined. Leading Catholic groups in this field include Pax Christi International, the Caritas Internationalis network, the Community of Sant'Egidio and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network.

The multiplication of private, voluntary initiatives that often lead the way in meeting humanitarian needs when governments fail to respond is a characteristic of the world situation today. Global politics is characterized by the interlacing of nongovernmental, governmental and intergovernmental initiatives. Recent efforts by the Holy See to integrate Catholic peace and justice activities directly into hierarchical church structures may, in fact, run counter to the trend of civil society initiatives in the broader world. For some, like Catholic Relief Services, however, which is sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and has regularly sought theological guidance, it should not present real problems. But for others accustomed to more autonomy and the support only of friendly bishops, it may require more adjustment.

What needs to be weighed is the potential loss, through Curial centralization, of initiative on the part of the faithful and of speed in the Catholic response to changing events. More explicit attention to evangelization in such Catholic undertakings as envisaged in recent legislation may also diminish the margin of freedom of the faithful for collaboration for the common good with believers of other faiths as well as with men and women of good will. The integration of Catholic organizations directly into the Vatican bureaucracy may also risk reducing the effectiveness of their peacemaking initiatives, as happens when any voluntary group is assimilated by a larger organization.

The experience of 50 years demonstrates that Pope John's vision of peace was not "an impossible dream." The integration of human rights into international law and diplomacy, the evolution of structures of global governance with practices like the Responsibility to Protect, and the multiplication of civil-society peacemaking initiatives give substance to Blessed Pope John's design for a more peaceful world. Nonetheless, the vision of peace in "Pacem in Terris" remains a utopia whose depth of potential and breadth of aspiration are still to be realized. As we think ahead to the centennial of "Pacem in Terris," 50 years hence, perhaps we can learn from the optimism of Pope John and imagine not only the challenges to peace the world will face five decades from now, but the forces and social inventions that might further the cause of peace. A

Lethal Responsibility

Reframing gun control as a public safety issue

BY GEORGE B. WILSON

The question of guns in society is often framed as an issue about "protecting good guys from bad guys." The bad guys include not only criminals but also people with a tendency to deal with emotional problems by acting violently against their fellow citizens. Once you name the issue that way, all responses to the issue will be geared to forestalling criminal behavior.

In the conversation occurring across the country, this way of structuring the question appears to be winning. All the options under consideration seem to be aimed at preventing tragedies like the shooting in Newtown, Conn. It is a laudable objective, to be sure, but to adopt it as the only one, or even the primary one, would be a serious mistake.

THE RISING TOLL: Tahitah Myles collapses while viewing the body of her son's father, a victim of gun violence, in Chicago on Feb. 4, 2013.

PHOTO: REUTERS/JOHN GRESS

Why focus on situations that, however ghastly, occur quite rarely, when the number of gun injuries and fatalities occurring in the home—whether through sudden bursts of anger, domestic conflicts or children just playing around with their parents' firearms—far outnumber those resulting from mass murders?

If we really want to diminish the number of deaths by firearms, we need to be clear that gun deaths are often not a matter of bad guys versus good guys; they are more frequently a matter of careful gun owners as contrasted with careless ones. Both have the right to possess guns. Most gun owners are responsible in exercising that right. But many are not, with fatal consequences—and they are neither criminals nor people with mental problems.

ON THE WEB

Read reactions to America's editorial on the Second Amendment.
americamagazine.org/guns

Instead of focusing on criminal behavior (which many believe will have little effect, simply because criminals can always beat the system), we need to institute policies that define responsible gun behavior and attach serious consequences for those "good guys" who are not criminals but who behave without any sense that their behavior diminishes the well-being of the rest of society. The dominant issue is not one of criminality but of public safety. The overarching goal is to diminish the number of deaths due to irresponsible behavior.

How might that be accomplished? I propose a three-pronged strategy.

1) A single registry of all gun owners. The aim of this registry is not to constrain lawful citizens unfairly but rather to supply public officials with the information they need if they are to fulfill their responsibility for safeguarding the citizenry.

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For this discussion, the trajectory of our country's response to automobiles is an illustrative one. Ninety years ago anyone could buy a car and drive it. No license was required. A driver was simply expected to use the car in a responsible way. The invention was so new that people did not yet know, experientially, how hazardous it could be. But the occurrence of serious accidents soon showed the wisdom of requiring some form of driver identification. Then gradually we learned that even with clearer expectations people did not take the trouble to learn how to drive responsibly. That led to the requirement of drivers' education programs. We became aware of physical impediments, like impaired vision, and developed strategies for recognizing them. Today a vision test is mandatory. We also instituted quality controls in the manufacturing of the vehicle itself.

Our law should say to the gun owner, "When you bought that hazardous object, you became responsible to your fellow citizens for its proper custody and use."

For any of these improvements to occur, evidence-based data were needed. The same thing is true with data on gun ownership. In the absence of a national database, no policy decisions can be evaluated.

Over a reasonable period of time, all gun owners should be required to register their firearms with a government agency. After that period anyone possessing an unregistered gun would be subject to penalty. Obviously not all guns would be registered in that first period, but we should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Over time the expectation would be taken for granted—like other forms of certification—as part of responsible citizenship.

2) *Mandatory training before a permit is issued.* Experience has proven that many owners simply do not appreciate what it takes to use a firearm safely. A loaded firearm is an inherently hazardous object. Its potential toxicity respects no difference in psychological status; it simply is dangerous. (An interesting byproduct of mandatory training would be the emergence of a new industry: officially certified training programs, which would also generate new jobs.)

Since experience shows that as we age our competences diminish, there would be provision for periodic recertification (just as your eyes are tested each time you renew your driver's license).

3) *Penalties for abdication of responsibility.* This is the necessary linchpin. A citizen might be able to show evidence of recent completion of training and have the required license, but accidents still happen. People—many people, according to statistics—die from guns in the hands of the "good guys" who happen to act irresponsibly and carelessly.

A father leaves for work; his 6-year-old son gets into the closet, plays with the gun and kills his sister. A licensed owner gives his gun to a friend who has a fight with his wife; the fight escalates; he grabs the gun and she dies. An owner needs money and sells his gun without leaving any record; it passes through many hands until it lands in the hands of a criminal.

Our traditional response to such deaths is, "How sad! What a tragedy." Instead, our law should say to the original owner, "When you bought that hazardous object, you became an agent of society, responsible to your fellow citizens for its proper custody and use. You were trained to fulfill that responsibility. You have failed to live up to it and society exacts a penalty for that abdication. As long as you remain the licensed owner you retain responsibility for what happens. 'Accidents' are no excuse."

What might we expect from the implementation of such a strategy? Responsible gun owners should applaud it. It adds extra protection for them and their families, while affirming the contribution they make to society by taking their responsibility seriously.

As implementation begins, we should anticipate a slow learning curve: "Are they really serious?" But as new cases result in convictions, the public at large will begin to be more aware that ownership brings with it serious consequences. (It is assumed that a dramatic educational effort would accompany the implementation.) Each potential new buyer would be compelled to weigh the slight risk of a criminal break-in against the far greater risk of becoming responsible for an "accidental" tragedy. Some present owners might even find it more attractive to eliminate that personal risk by participating in a gun buy-back program.

Careful or careless? It is not simply a personal choice; it is a social responsibility—even for the good guys. A

An Aperture for Grace

A meditation on Botticelli's 'Annunciation'

BY JEROME A. MILLER

Spring is a time for surprises. So it is the appropriate season for celebrating the Annunciation—and for pausing before Sandro Botticelli's depiction of it. None of our expectations prepare us for this scene (p.19).

Focus first on the setting, a carefully arranged order inspired by classical architecture. Our attention is seized by the peremptory lines of the flooring, a virtual avenue of parallelograms. In fact, a rigorous geometry governs all the details of the room. Its rectilinear space does not tremble or fluctuate. All is symmetrical, properly proportioned, unerring in its balances. Such order gives us a sense of meaning and structural integrity. The "mean" that Aristotle identified with the good life is just this kind of poised and steadfast balance. Beauty, classically conceived, provides an image of such equilibrium; it conveys calm repose and imperturbable self-assurance. Our lives, it implies, should fit and hang together.

But in the painting rectilinear architecture creates a portal to what transcends it—an anomalous opening that cannot be closed. Though a rectilinear structure itself, this portal exposes the interior space of the room to what is not structured—to the unpredictable and unprecedented, the fortuitous and uncertain, what can surprise, rupture, overwhelm. But for Botticelli, this is no defect. It makes the opening an aperture for grace and gives the terrible beauty of angels access to the life within. The ingress of mystery obeys no geometry. It happens like lightening. Perhaps our inner space is plumbed only when it is vulnerable to astonishment.

The Drama

The air under the angel's wings still trembles with movement. This testifies to the terrible urgency of his mission. We often expect grace to be genial and its bearer amiable. But there is something fierce and perilous about this angel—something peremptory about his gesture of command. However, it is clear the angel has stopped and will not advance further. He deliberately leaves inviolate the space the woman occupies so she can decide what her response to him will be. His fingers curve toward the woman in deference and courtesy. His gesture of command has the character of a salutation.

How can the angel command and salute the woman at the same time? Precisely by hailing her. To hail a person is simultaneously to summon and praise her. Hailing celebrates even as it enjoins. Here the angel is Gabriel; the addressee Mary. But hailing happens time and again in Jewish scripture. The daunting emissary of a power too terrible to see calls by name an individual who would otherwise be unremembered. Jewish tradition suggests that the divine Thou summons every human person to some singular vocation. One's name, uttered by the angel, becomes awesome and holy. One previously indistinguishable is called upon to bear the divine into the world.

But because Botticelli's angel honors Mary's freedom to choose how to respond to his hail, the painting suggests that her decision is going to have a pivotal impact on the drama that's unfolding. Whether an addressee can, in fact, have such an impact is, however, a contentious theological issue that tore the Christian church apart not long after Botticelli completed this work. If a transcendent providence governs history, does it not control the future? If we are free, don't we control it?

Botticelli leads us beyond the simplifying answers usually given these questions. The angel takes Mary completely by surprise because he comes from a divine Thou she cannot imagine or conceive and summons her into a future she cannot possibly fathom. This God does not control the future—does not make history rectilinear by subjecting it to a divine geometry. He comes to Mary not just from the unprecedented future but *as* this future. The divine Thou is the absolute astonishment, sprung on us to shatter all our expectations. The power of the Most High breaks open the present to divine possibilities that unsettle all human ordering.

These unfathomable possibilities are precisely what give breath to Mary's freedom. It is the unprecedented future sprung upon her by the power of the Most High that gives her the power to affect it. The divine Thou governs time by springing the undecided future on us. Gabriel's hailing of Mary breaks her life open to the awful throe of the holy. History is happening in the space between his hand and hers.

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The Child

Gabriel's lips and eyes are open. Mary's lips are closed, her eyes downcast. Botticelli shows her living her response instead of uttering it. As she does so, her spirit becomes the body of receptivity.

Her hands are bent at a severe right angle that appears painful. Prior to the angel's sudden appearance, she read Scripture from a lectern that required her to rise to her full height. Now, in response to Gabriel's hail, she turns her hands to him in a way that accentuates their grievous bend of reverence. It is the sole rectilinear element that remains in her posture. But it makes her hands rhyme perfectly with the concave curve of reverence that shapes her whole body as it comes under the sway of a power that is unpredictable. We are seeing the first movement in a dance of genuflection. The same inflection that bends the hands and knee inclines the head and eyes to bow. The rectilinear is subordinated to the supple bow of modesty, the compliant turn and fluid bend of deference. Her turning opens her to receive the Word the angel speaks. Her fingers, mirroring her body's gesture, curl to complete the curve of Gabriel's hand. The drama is at its most intense and most serene in this exacting rapport of hands that do not touch. In the open space between them, grace and freedom join.

"THE ANNUNCIATION" BY FILIPEPI SANDRO BOTTICELLI PHOTO: ALFREDO DAGLI ORTI / THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE, NY

This kind of gracefulness is beautiful: Here, too, as in the geometry of the "mean," everything comes together in an integrating whole. There is, nevertheless, a profound difference between rectilinear order and the kind of grace that Botticelli's Mary incarnates. For the Greeks, symmetry and balance—self-assured poise and equilibrium—were of preeminent importance. In Botticelli's painting, Mary's poise is exquisite but not self-reliant. Her perfect balance is not due to her rectilinear character. It is due to a grace that comes from being hailed. To receive it, she has to be wholly receptive.

Such receptivity involves the willingness to allow one's being as a whole to be moved, overwhelmed, overcome. This willingness gathers the whole person together into a single vulnerability. Jewish tradition locates this vulnerability in the center of one's being—the heart. If one's heart is open, no place in one's self is safe. Vulnerability makes one liable to profound suffering.

For the Greeks, vulnerability of this sort signified

weakness, passivity, lack of self-mastery. But, here, vulnerability is not sheer passivity. It is the consummate ability of the heart, its capacity to assent to what affects it. This assent allows passion to be engendered in us. Passion is not the eros of the Greeks, the desire to possess. It is our longing to give ourselves to what awakens it in us. Passion is self-donation, extravagant self-expenditure. It is the child of grace and freedom. Botticelli's "Annunciation" depicts the conception of this child. The curvature of Mary's body gives shape to passion as so conceived. It is what it signifies: her decision to entrust herself wholly to the throe of the Mystery hailing her.

Because it unifies the whole person, such passion creates a harmonious accord that we experience as beautiful. Mary's single-heartedness brings her entirely into rapport with the movement of grace affecting her. But because this beauty arises from impassioned vulnerability, there is something in it for which the Greek sense of symmetry and self-assured poise does not prepare us. There is a poignancy to it that is heart-breaking.

When we look again at Mary's raised hands, we sense that she is already beginning to suffer passion's gravity. Gabriel's fierceness suggests that divine possibilities are harrowing. His lily is more sword than flower. Her body wavers, as if undergoing a premonition of the unbearable. Her hands are raised, as if in self defense. She doubts, perhaps, her capacity to conceive a passion so terrible. But her hands are open, her palms exposed. Even as it wavers under the weight of grace, her impassioned body curves in fidelity to it.

Poignancy can prove excruciating. Why, then, are we drawn to this painting? Precisely because it moves us by piercing us. We know, in our hearts, that it is our vocation to open them. The painting itself is a portal to the future. We cannot know what is coming. But we can answer when hailed. A

FILM | ROBERT E. LAUDER

IN SEARCH OF BEAUTY

The poetry of Terrence Malick's 'To the Wonder'

If during a visit to a movie theater, you have been exposed to eight or 10 trailers depicting crashing automobiles, huge explosions and an almost deafening soundtrack—a phenomenon perhaps suggesting that films are getting dumber and dumber, despite better and better technology—then you may welcome Terrence Malick's **To the Wonder** as a kind of cinematic parousia. Malick's film, almost as visually beautiful as his "The Tree of Life," from which he borrows some footage, is a demanding but ultimately richly rewarding film.

The narrative centers on four characters: Neil (Ben Affleck), Marina (Olga Kurylenko), Father Quintana (Javier Bardem) and Jane (Rachel McAdams), each at different stages of alienation in a world from which God seems absent. The film opens with a blurry image from a cell phone camera, a foreshadowing of its characters' difficulty in communicating with one another and with God and perhaps also acting as an invitation or even a warning from Malick that we should pay avid attention to the images he will put before us and trust our reactions to them.

At the beginning of "To the Wonder," Neil and Marina are lovers in France and their love reaches its peak, at least for Marina, when they visit Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy, site of the Benedictine abbey. Malick makes a point of pausing his camera on the baptismal font. Marina wonders about the love that surrounds them, the love that loves them, that seems to come from nowhere. She describes climbing the steps to the island's highest peak as climbing "to the wonder."

When Neil takes Marina back with him to Oklahoma, their relationship becomes strained. Malick shows us

PHOTO COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES.

Ben Affleck and Javier Bardem in "To the Wonder"

several scenes of them engaging in passionate sexual encounters; but when their relationship demands a deeper commitment, Neil behaves like one of T. S. Eliot's "hollow men," lacking substance beneath the surface. He has an affair with Jane, a childhood sweetheart and now a divorcée struggling to find herself. Marina seeks advice from Father Quintana, who believes in Christ's presence in his life but is going through a dry spell, perhaps even a dark night of the soul.

In "To the Wonder" there are numerous shots of windows, but for much of the film the characters' vision seems stunted. There are numerous shots of open doors, yet the characters remain confused about the direction their lives should take.

There are moments in Malick's film that may call to mind the work of other important directors. In depicting the absence of God, Malick steps into the territory of Ingmar Bergman and Woody Allen. In depicting the ultimate success of Marina and Father Quintana in experiencing God's presence, Malick's work resembles to some extent that of Carl Dreyer and Robert Bresson, whom the author and director Paul Schrader described in his book *Transcendental Style* as having developed a style that successfully presented the transcendent. At times in "To the Wonder" Marina seems like one of the director Michelangelo Antonioni's lost souls; but unlike Antonioni, Malick never embraces nihilism. The "nothingness" that interests Malick is the supraconceptual experience of God that mystics report.

But whatever resemblances Malick's work has to that of other directors, his wedding of message and method is unique. No one else is making films like Malick's, and I suspect in the history of movies no one ever has. "To the Wonder" is visually gorgeous and aurally marvelous, with a soundtrack that includes music by Wagner, Haydn, Berlioz and Tchaikovsky.

While watching "To the Wonder," we might feel that we are being bombarded by beautiful images. Rather, we are being seduced by them to turn toward the Beauty that is the source of nature's beauty. The description of Malick as a "naturalist" is accurate if the term means that he is in awe of nature's beauty and presents it magnificently in his movies. It is inadequate if it suggests rejection of the supernatural or that which transcends nature.

"To the Wonder" shares the preoccupations displayed in "The Tree of Life," and both display Malick's brilliant use of stunning images and beautiful music. At the risk of oversimplifying the similarity and the dissimilarity of the two films, I suggest that with "The Tree of Life" Malick presented a Teilhardian evolutionary vision, starting with the big bang more than 13 billion years ago, leading down to the interpersonal relationships in a Catholic family. The evolutionary movement culminated with a surreal depiction of the resurrection of Jesus and of love relationships beyond the grave. In "To the Wonder" Malick starts with the experience of human beings trying to love and then ascends to God.

ON THE WEB
Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., on race and the Renaissance.
americamagazine.org/art

Malick's preoccupation with the divine is most obvious in the characters of Father Quintana and Marina. Like the other three actors, Rachel Adams turns in a fine performance, but her character, Jane, does not have enough screen time or undergo enough development for us to guess if she will work out her problems. Neil, who announces at one point "I have no faith," seems permanently adrift. Father Quintana's parishioners sense his problem. An old woman says to him, "Father, I'm going to pray for you, so you receive the gift of joy." In Quintana's church, a man cleaning a window, significantly a stained glass window, urges the priest to go out into the world and feel the power of God. Father Quintana does just that.

One of the most striking scenes in the film is of Father Quintana exercising his ministry in a prison, distributing Communion to prisoners through a small opening in the cell wall. They are physically imprisoned, and he had been spiritually imprisoned. There is a wonderful montage of Father Quintana serving others as a priest, each shot accompanied by a voiceover of Father Quintana reciting a line from the prayer of St. Patrick:

> *Christ with me, Christ before me,*
> *Christ beneath me, Christ above me,*
> *Christ at my right, Christ at my left.*

Early in the film, Marina wonders about the love that loves us and surrounds us. At the end, she again refers to the love that loves us, this time saying only, "Thank you." At that point I wanted to say, "Thank you" to Malick.

Have no doubt that this is a demanding film. I cannot imagine it being a big commercial success. Supposedly Ben Affleck said, after viewing the film, that "To the Wonder" made "The Tree of Life" look like "Transformers." In the lobby of one New York multiplex theater in which "The Tree of Life" was playing there was a sign that read, "If you go to see 'The Tree of Life,' don't ask for your money back." I can imagine that theater putting up a similar sign for "To the Wonder." In my opinion, however, it is money well spent.

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MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY

Print the Legend?

It is the dream of not a few artists to influence the public's perception of current events. Doing so with integrity, however, is exceedingly difficult; a masterpiece like Picasso's "Guernica" is a rare thing indeed. And sometimes art can shape our views in troubling ways.

Consider the case of "Zero Dark Thirty," the Oscar-nominated film from director Kathryn Bigelow about the hunt for Osama bin Laden. The film began as a script about the Battle of Tora Bora. After bin Laden's death, the filmmakers changed course and, thanks to unusual access to officials in the Central Intelligence Agency, produced a disturbing film that ends with the military raid on the bin Laden compound in Afghanistan.

Shortly before the film's official release, Senator John McCain raised concerns that the film implied that torture led the C.I.A. to bin Laden. Along with Senators Dianne Feinstein and Carl Levin, McCain called the film "grossly inaccurate and misleading." Bigelow countered the growing criticisms in a front-page profile in Time magazine. "I think that it's a deeply moral movie that questions the use of force," she said. "It questions what was done in the name of finding bin Laden."

I saw "Zero Dark Thirty" after finishing *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*, a first-rate history of the French war in Vietnam by Fredrik Logevall. It is a distressing read, especially for someone who did not live through the American war in Vietnam. (Yes, history repeats itself, but did it have to happen so quickly?) The book takes an intriguing turn when a novelist walks onto the scene and into the middle of current events. Logevall calls him "the quiet Englishman."

That man, of course, is Graham Greene, who traveled to Vietnam in 1951 to write an article for Life magazine. Greene was much sought after as a journalist, and he often used his reporting sojourns as grist for his novels. This was especially true of his trip to Vietnam. Though his article for Life was rejected by his editors as insufficiently anti-Communist (it was later published in Paris Match), Greene found the seeds of a story that would later become the novel *The Quiet American* (1955). More than any of his other novels, the book drew from his firsthand experiences.

> Sometimes art can shape our views in troubling ways.

The titular character is Alden Pyle, a C.I.A. operative in Vietnam who seeks to establish a "third force" to fight both the French and the Communist forces. Pyle is portrayed as both naïve and dangerous, and his debates about foreign intervention in Vietnamese affairs play out in his conversations with a jaded British journalist, Thomas Fowler. At the center of the novel is a bombing in a Saigon square by a third force movement, which uses explosives supplied by Pyle. The episode is based on a bombing in 1952; a "third force claimed responsibility, though some suspected U.S. involvement.

The novel received positive reviews in England, but met with negative criticism in the United States, where reviewers took exception to Greene's portrayal of Pyle. Newsweek faulted Greene for presenting a caricature of the "American abroad," and A. J. Liebling, in the New Yorker, suspected that Greene was jealous of the United States for its growing role in world affairs. "There is a difference between calling your overly-successful offshoot a silly ass and accusing him of murder," he wrote.

A few years later, however, the Unites States, or at least Hollywood, would have its revenge. In Joseph L. Mankiewicz's adaptation of *The Quiet American*, the story is changed "to make Pyle the completely good American and Fowler a communist dupe," Logevall writes. Greene was irate, but Washington was pleased; the film was screened for government and security officials. The American Friends of Vietnam declared that the film "gives appropriate weight to the constructive role played by the United States in assisting the Vietnamese in their quest for independence."

Not for the first or last time, a piece of art was used to advance a controversial narrative. In the case of "The Quiet American," at least, skeptics had Greene's novel to refer to, not to mention his reporting from Vietnam. (A remake in 2002 was more faithful to Greene's vision.) "Zero Dark Thirty" presents a thornier problem. Until certain material is declassified, and an intrepid reporter seeks to tell the full story, the details of the search for bin Laden will be shrouded in uncertainty. For now at least, Hollywood has the last word.

MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY *is the digital editor of* ***America****.*

BOOKINGS | JOHN M. SWEENEY

WAUGH'S HEAD REVISITED

A writer who deserves to be remembered

Evelyn Waugh (1903-66) published 14 novels between 1928 and 1961. Another went unpublished and is counted among his juvenilia, and yet another was released only in a limited edition of several hundred copies. Of the 14, several were widely acclaimed best-sellers in their day, including *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), *Scoop* (1938) and *A Handful of Dust* (1934). He also wrote three volumes of biography (on Rossetti, Campion and Knox, all lesser figures today), eight mostly forgettable books of travel writing even by Waugh's estimation, one volume of memoir (*A Little Learning*), short stories, diaries and letters and various essays and journalism, much of it written originally for the London *Spectator*.

Seventy-five years ago Waugh was one of the world's most popular writers of fiction. A convert to Catholicism like his friend Graham Greene, Waugh had less aversion to the label "Catholic writer." For Waugh, joining the church was the result of an investigation into truth; it also came immediately after his first marriage ended. For Greene, it was always more of a matter of coming to terms with evil and sin, his own and others, and originated in his desire to marry a Catholic woman as a young man. Waugh couldn't sound less like Greene, for instance, when he writes to a friend in Sept. 1964: "Do you believe in the Incarnation & Redemption in the full historical sense in which you believe in the battle of El Alamein? That's important. Faith is not a mood."

Waugh's longtime publishers on both sides of the Atlantic—including Little, Brown and Company here in the United States in December 2012—have spent the last two years rereleasing much of his oeuvre in hopes that interest in his writing will revive. Will it? I wonder. Does anyone read Evelyn Waugh anymore?

The historical books are not great history, and the travel books do not work well as travelogues. No matter, as these are not part of the reintroduction plan of Waugh's U.S. publishers. Only the novels are still read today.

"Nobody ever wrote a more unaffectedly elegant English," the critic Clive James once wrote. Waugh's characterizations of the English between the Wars are impeccable and often hilarious. The novels often reveal England in the 1920s and 1930s to have been an orgy of nihilistic pleasure-seeking, counterpoised against an aristocratic approach to life that sought eternal values. Think *Downton Abbey*. Given the enormous popularity of Julian Fellowes's television series, I could imagine *Brideshead Revisited* being redeveloped for the screen along the lines of "Downton" or the 11-episode series in 1981-82 that was produced by Granada Television, starring Jeremy Irons and named by Time magazine in 2007 as one of the best 100 television shows of all time. Anything but the 2008 film adaptation of *Brideshead* directed by Julian Jarrod, which was roundly disappointing to those who appreciate the novel.

Waugh's best work, *Brideshead* is the story of the Marchmain family, both Catholic and aristocratic, as narrated by young Oxford student, Charles Ryder, a stranger to both ways of life. Waugh used his thorough knowledge of English position and privilege (which he knew firsthand) and his talent for wit and humor as secular tools for imagining how God's grace can break through into human lives in the most unusual ways. There are many discussions of God and Catholicism throughout the novel, and Charles Ryder converts to both by the end.

Waugh's earlier novel, *Vile Bodies* (1930), written just prior to his conversion to Catholicism, took on similar themes. The novel combines lighthearted romantic comedy with the disintegration of all harmony by novel's end, in the form of a looming and cataclysmic war in Europe. The title itself, *Vile Bodies*, is likely a reference to Phil

ON THE WEB

The Catholic Book Club discusses *The Pope's Last Crusade.*
americamagazine.org/cbc

PHOTO: COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/CARL VAN VECHTEN

3:21 in the King James Bible.

Like many great novelists, Waugh used his own life as material. *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955) and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961)—later collected together as *The Sword of Honour* trilogy—follow the life of Guy Crouchback, the scion of another aristocratic Catholic family in England before, during and after World War II. As usual, Waugh combines a somber tale with wicked comedy as, for instance, we watch Guy's frustration and perhaps virtue, being a devout Catholic, in accepting loneliness rather than remarry without an annulment of his first marriage, which ended in divorce. Another late novel, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), offers a humorous, slightly veiled fictional account of Waugh's own nervous breakdown.

Little Brown has reissued all of this fiction in fresh hardcover and paperback editions—15 volumes in all, when you add *The Complete Short Stories*, as they have. Each of the paperbacks includes a Reading Group Guide at the back; I don't usually appreciate these as much as others must do. Here's a sample question from the guide for *A Handful of Dust*: "Whom do you think Tony loves more: Brenda or Hetton? Can loving a place be as rewarding as loving a person?" Also somewhat strange to me is the plumped-up design of these hardcovers and paperbacks, given the realities of the market for physical books today. We live in an era when the hardcover novel is rapidly dying, one of the casualties of the popularity of e-books. Especially quick to go are the sort of hardcovers that Little Brown has created in these redesigns: over-spacious in typesetting, using paper that was originally intended to "bulk up" a book, making for a thicker spine and thus more noticeable on the bookseller's shelf. I doubt whether these will ever make it onto many of those shelves.

Take for instance the new edition of *The Complete [Short] Stories*. When I hold it up to my 2000 edition of the same fiction published in Alfred A. Knopf's Everyman's Library imprint, the new edition fails by comparison. Aside from the fact that the Everyman is a sturdily bound hardcover with a ribbon marker and the new one is a trade paperback, the Everyman also includes a thorough Introduction, chronology, textual notes, many additional stories from Waugh's juvenilia and best of all, black and white illustrations from throughout Waugh's life and career as an amateur artist. The surest reason for Little Brown's republishing extravaganza seems to be that the Waugh estate has finally agreed to terms for the creation of e-book editions of all of the fiction. So, there they are.

Evelyn Waugh deserves to be remembered. By most accounts, he is one of the best, if not the best writer of English prose of the 20th century. He does aristocracy, privilege, sadness,

THE OLD WOMAN IN ICU

The old woman in ICU wants to rail against the Church.
Patriarchy, she says, hierarchy, and I agree.
She looks just like my mother.

But you're dying, I say.
Why are we talking about this?
Why does any of this matter?

And the sun slants through the dusty window.
My Roman collar chafes.
On the monitor, the peaks and valleys
of her failing heart.

May I give you communion? I ask her.
And she says, would that mean I'd have to come back
to the Church?
No, I say. No. It will be our little secret.

CHRIS ANDERSON

CHRIS ANDERSON *is a professor of English at Oregon State University and a Catholic deacon. His latest book of poetry is* The Next Thing Always Belongs, *Airlie Press.*

beauty, romance and wonder better than just about anyone. And he's better on love and sex than most. There is a reality to Waugh on the everydayness of love that his near-contemporary, D. H. Lawrence, cannot reach with all of his spiritualizing. For these reasons alone, Waugh's writing is still relevant, and not merely as period pieces.

We also forget how he mentored a young Thomas Merton in the late 1940s as the sage editor for the British editions of two of the young Trappist's books, including *The Seven Storey Mountain*, which was retitled *Elected Silence* in England. Waugh was prescient when he wrote in a letter to a friend just weeks before *Seven Storey* was published in the United States: "It seems to me likely that American monasticism may help save the world."

Unless you have an interest in the life of Waugh and his role in the Catholic renaissance of 20th century letters, stick to the novels. His other books are mostly irrelevant today.

This is apparently not so in England, however. There, Penguin Classics did the same sort of reissuing last year—in their case, only in lovely hardcover editions—but included some of Waugh's travel books, as well as his Catholic histories, like *Edmund Campion: Jesuit and Martyr*.

The legacy of Waugh in England seems to be broader than it is here, where his prose and storytelling are all we remember. There Waugh remains (with Chesterton and Greene) an intellectual voice of a historic, religious minority, where he will be known more than ever as a distinctively Catholic writer, fiction or nonfiction.

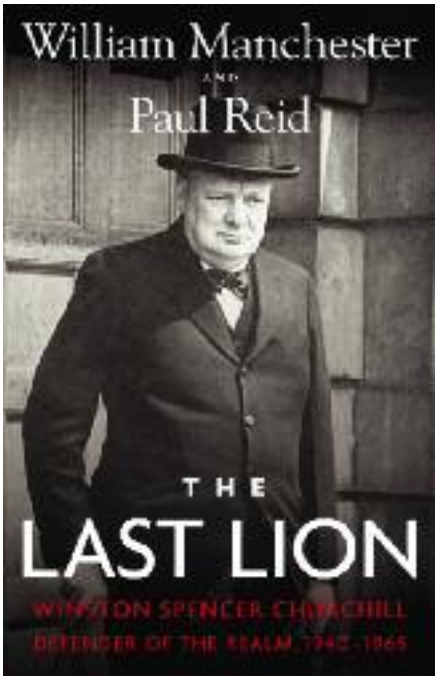
JON M. SWEENEY *is editor in chief at Paraclete Press and the author of* The Pope Who Quit: A True Medieval Tale of Mystery, Death, and Salvation, *which was recently optioned by HBO, Inc.*

BOOKS | THOMAS MURPHY

LONESOME LEADER

TTHE LAST LION
Winston Spencer Churchill, Defender of the Realm, 1940-1965

By William Manchester and Paul Reid
Little, Brown and Company. 1232p $40



In London's Mayfair district, a monument honors the World War II alliance between Britain and the United States, symbolized by the friendship between Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Statues of the two statesmen, smiling broadly, are seated at opposite ends of a park bench. While the gap between them likely was arranged in anticipation of the many tourists who now are photographed as they sit between the two statues, the space actually captures something true about both Churchill's personality and his patriotism. He was a loner who saw his beloved Britain as occupying a unique role in world civilization.

These attitudes were bound to produce a dramatic life. William Manchester, a professional writer with a dramatist's sense of narrative and pacing, was well suited to capture Churchill's theatrics. His collaborator, the journalist Paul Reid, wrote the vast majority of this final volume of Manchester's Churchill trilogy after an ailing Manchester delegated the task to him. Neither author was trained as a historian. This fact gives the biography both weaknesses and strengths.

This long book lacks proper emphasis and proportion. The intended focus is the last 25 years of Churchill's life. There are 1,051 pages of text, of which the first 951 are devoted just to the last five years of World War II. That leaves a little over 100 pages for Churchill's postwar experiences. The years 1945-55, when Churchill served as leader of the oppo-

sition in Parliament and then made a remarkable comeback as prime minister, receive particularly inadequate attention.

In the preface, Reid declares his continuity with Manchester's style, which is chronological and comprehensive rather than thematic and specialized. At times Churchill himself vanishes from the narrative for long passages while the setting of a battle is portrayed and its story told. Exception should be made for the story of the Battle of Britain, not only because that is the only part of this book for which Manchester managed to write himself but also because it was the central event of Churchill's life. Overall there is no need for this much detail. The general narrative of World War II is well related elsewhere. The authors' intent to show the conflict through Churchill's eyes is often obscured; his experiences are present and compellingly told but buried in an avalanche of context.

Reid's continuity of method, however, is honorable in these circumstances. He undertook the task as a tribute to a dear friend and was ethical in avoiding any major renovation of the project. Manchester's approach does have the advantage of showing how much of a wartime leader's life is based on the simple reaction to diverse events as they come up and press him in a bewildering array. It is the forte of a journalist like Reid to reconstruct such pressures.

Particularly in the case of Churchill, the chronological and comprehensive approaches to his life are hazardous because of the man's versatility. Several recent biographers of Churchill have chosen instead to pursue a single theme within his life. Parliamentary politician, friend of Roosevelt, writer/historian, half-American, prophet and imperialist—these are but a few subjects of recent creative books about him. The present volume's subtitle, "Defender of the Realm," provides the seed of a possible theme for a condensed version of Manchester and Reid's work.

Churchill first undertook the defense of the British realm for motives both patriotic and imperial. The central drama of his latter life, discernible in this book even though not so explicitly stated, is that he did not hold power until an era when these two virtues were no longer compatible. World War II and its aftermath created a situation in which the service of patriotism required that the British Empire be brought to an end if the British nation was to be saved. While Churchill clearly disliked this situation and continued to champion the empire rhetorically, his actual deeds show that he understood it had to be discarded to defend the realm. In the internal struggle between his romanticism and his pragmatism, the latter won. This victory is worthy of the dramatics of Manchester and the journalism of Reid.

Churchill's ejection from power immediately after the war spared him the task of beginning the actual dismantling of the empire and allowed him to think creatively about the realm's post-imperial role. Churchill wanted Britain to pursue a strong alliance with the United States, offered vocal support for a strong European Union, even while advocating that Britain itself remain somewhat aloof from that Union, and sought an enduring relationship between Britain and the Commonwealth remnant of the empire. The first two of these have had important long range effects—Churchill had influence as late as the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq and the British decision not to join the common European currency. This enduring influence is what makes Reid's too-rapid summary of the later years a missed opportunity.

Moreover, certain themes of Churchill's old age are not as familiar to Americans as they deserve to be. We celebrate his opposition to the aggression of Nazi Germany in the 1930s and the Soviet Union in the 1940s, but what of the dovish quality of his second premiership? Alarmed by the emergence of the nuclear arms race, Churchill hoped to become a broker between the United States and the U.S.S.R. Also, his enmity with the Labour Party did not mean that Churchill was hostile to the concept of social welfare. In fact, Churchill prided himself on his role as an architect of the Liberal version of welfare earlier in the 20th century and resisted Labour mainly for its means and excesses rather than its ends.

A final theme discernible in this work is that genius is lonely. In all his stands, Churchill went through intense periods of holding them alone. That is another reason that the isolated placement of his statue on that Mayfair bench is so appropriate.

THOMAS MURPHY, S.J., *is associate professor of history at Seattle University.*

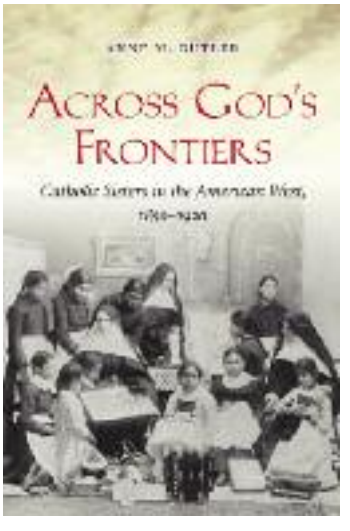
LAURA CHMIELEWSKI

HOW THE WEST WAS WON OVER

ACROSS GOD'S FRONTIERS
Catholic Sisters in the American West, 1850-1920

By Anne M. Butler
The University of North Carolina Press.
416p $45

Anne Butler's *Across God's Frontiers: Catholic Sisters in the American West, 1850-1920* explores a topic as vast as the geography in its title. For American historians, the knowledge that Catholic nuns were virtually everywhere on the North American continent is not a revelation. The breadth and scope of their endeavors, however, is now assembled and explored in a wonderfully readable volume.



Across God's Frontiers demonstrates convincingly the holistic experiences of American nuns whose lives and work were determined by time and place. As the author describes it, women religious were bound in conventional obedience to the local male-dominated Catholic hierarchy. Yet the needs of the societies they encountered and their own initiatives had the ironic consequence of inverting commonly held gender expectations. As Butler describes it, they "defied economic constraints, defining a womanhood (often intensely maternal but without childbirth); constructing multifaceted, labor-centered lives over many decades; and constructing their own employment history in the West." To the best of my knowledge, no other population of westward-moving women could make the same claim on such a grand scale.

Yet within these broad strokes, Butler's keen attention to detail and skills as a storyteller humanize her subjects. The nuns of the American West lived in a world of alien landscapes and peoples, hunger and deprivation, demanding bishops and apathetic potential parishioners. Yet they buoyed one

another's spirits with humor, played practical jokes and pined for the world of fashion that their vows forced them to leave behind. The author's subjects emerge as women first, who chose religious life in the course of their lives *as women*. They were not, as some scholarship and popular culture suggest, a third category (and a much caricatured one at that), of humanity. As Butler puts it, they were not "stereotypes of the sequestered ascetic."

Westward movement and settlement demanded a good deal of independent thought and action. In the name of self-preservation or preservation of the mission, sisters routinely defied or ignored dictates of mother houses, rules and male clerics. This was often done in reponse to unanticipated challenges rather than as deliberate disobedience. This was the case when sisters sought to alter their congregation's rule to make it compatible with local circumstances, some of which affected life and limb. When local bishops balked, the sisters often did what they felt they had to do to protect their work and themselves.

Across God's Frontiers contains a rich supporting cast of characters: Native Americans, bishops and priests, settlers and philanthropists. Yet none of these are simple foils for the heroic acts of women religious. Far from starry-eyed about the achievements and sacrifices of her subjects, Butler understands that the zeal of missionary nuns and their care for the corporal and temporal concerns of native children did not always lead to cultural sympathy. Indeed, many sisters (Katherine Drexel, for example), agreed with secular cultural pundits that the era of sovereign Indian cultural identities was at its end. Nor did they view this as any sort of loss. And not all nuns accepted a life of hardships without complaint or questioning of God's will. Anger, annoyance and disgust with their situation (or in some cases, their spiritual charges) are common elements in their communications and reflections.

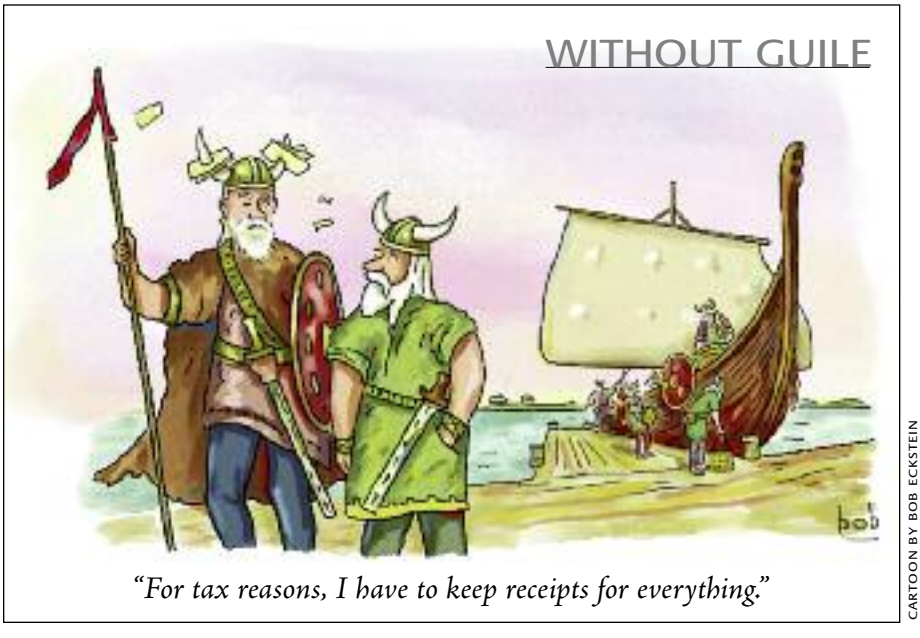
Butler is at her best when exploring the range of possible experiences of Catholic sisters in the West. Yet this benefit is also a liability to the book overall. The sheer volume of expository anecdotes leaves some of the most tantalizing human stories without endings or further discussion. Butler makes even a hard-nosed historian care about the fate of her subjects, yet the experience of evidence without an end can lead to frustration with an otherwise fine book.

Another important limitation of this otherwise stellar book is Butler's overbroad use of the term "the West." Its definition is relative to time and place (we who grew up in southern New Jersey in the 1970s, for instance, considered Pennsylvania's Amish Country "the West") and, at various times, the defined "West" constitutes two thirds of the nation. But these problems of definition are only vaguely presented in this book. This is problematic, as the trans-Mississippi geography of the period Butler covers contains vastly different landscapes, flora, fauna, patterns of settlement, economies and people. In some cases, sisters came from motherhouses already established in "the West," leading to confusion over what made the nuns of these orders so different from the religious expansion from east of the Mississippi. What, then, constituted their "authentic" western experience?

Yet this book's strengths and the sheer pleasure of reading its insightful prose far outweigh these criticisms. In the wake of her western odyssey, a Sister of Charity wrote to her motherhouse in Kansas: "I felt like saying in an extremely loud voice to be heard at all points of the compass, 'Oh all you sisters safely sheltered in your convents, *stay there*, if you can!'" For generations, Catholic nuns refused to remain safely at home. Many paid for this choice with their well-being, if not their lives.

By rejecting a hagiographical approach, Ann Butler restores to these women their basic struggles, triumphs and sacrifices. This candor renders their achievements all the more heroic. Anyone interested in the history of American religion, Catholicism, women, education, race relations or cultural development should read this book.

LAURA CHMIELEWSKI *is associate professor of American history at Purchase College, State University of New York.*



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STATE OF THE QUESTION

"Repeal the Second Amendment," **America**'s editorial published on the Web on Feb. 16, just a few days after Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation, evoked a comment by Theresa Johnson at episcopalcafe.com the next day. She asked God to "bless these Roman Catholics for taking such a bold stand." She also, described the odds of actually repealing the amendment: "probably as safe a bet as election of a Jesuit pope." Within a month, to the shock of many, the first Jesuit pope was elected. Is repeal next? Is it an idea whose time has come? Here is a sampling of reader responses to **America**'s editorial.

Lost Subscriber

Your editorial really disappointed me. It is the type of typical knee-jerk, unthinking reaction to events that one expects from the ignorant people who never look beyond the latest news story.

Repealing the Second Amendment will not stop gun violence; it will just provide another profit base for organized crime. The real solution to gun violence is to re-establish a moral base.

My father, who grew up during the depression, regularly took his rifle to school; he left it in the cloak room. On his way home he would go hunting, to put food on the table. No one thought anything about it because in the 1930s morality and right and wrong were still taught in school, and shooting someone was unthinkable. But when we threw God out, we threw morality out with him, and now we are suffering the consequences.

Please cancel my subscription. Thank you.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT
Orono, Me.

Editor's Note: To cancel your subscription, call 1-800-627-9533.

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Thank you for your well-thought-out, reasonable suggestion to repeal the Second Amendment. I would wholeheartedly back such a change to our Constitution. Good work. I will subscribe to **America** as a way of supporting this and your many other efforts to make ours a community stumbling forward as best it can toward the reign of God. Thanks.

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Editor's Note: Thank you for subscribing.

Join the Marines

I commend the editors. I am a Jesuit-educated (Fordham University) senior citizen, U.S. Marine Corps veteran, avid and active hunter/sportsman, gun owner and former member of the National Rifle Association. In today's culture I see no logical or relevant connection between the maintenance of a well-regulated militia and the right of the people to keep and bear arms.

I believe responsible, stable people should have the right to keep guns for legitimate uses like hunting and target shooting, and I strongly support adequate background checks and the removal of all loopholes. Also I don't approve of any civilian, except law enforcement personnel, being allowed to possess an assault-type weapon. There is no reason for a civilian to have one, and they are inappropriate for hunting. My advice for anyone demanding that privilege is to contact your local Marine recruiter; if they determine you're fit, they might be able to use you in Afghanistan.

WILLIAM B. DONNELLY
Morrisville, N.Y.

Confront 'Traitors'

Having just read your editorial, I am reminded why I continue to buy weapons and ammunition. People, traitors, such as yourselves, will need to be confronted one day. Not by my choice, but by yours.

When you call for repealing the backbone of our U.S. Constitution,

BLOG TALK

The editors at **America** aim high in their quest to combat gun violence. Any chance? If not, still worth saying? A prophetic moment?

DAVID GIBSON
Religion News Service

America hates the Second Amendment. No, not that America. **America** the heterodox Jesuit rag. It is good to see the Jesuits at **America** suddenly in favor of a "culture of life." Considering their editorials in support of the most pro-abortion president in our nation's history, I will take their "conversion" with a boulder of salt.

DONALD R. McCLAREY
The American Catholic

The editors observe, "The human cost is intolerable." I concur. Repeal of the Second Amendment must become part of the national conversation on guns. I congratulate the editors of **America** for their courage in talking about the elephant in the room.

MICHAEL MEYER
Daily Kos

Yes, I know it would be easy to scoff, "Oh, isn't it ironic that a Catholic writer wants secular dogma to yield to critical inquiry?" The larger point is that the editorial questions the premise of treating the Constitution in the same way that Christians look to Scripture. This article stands out as one of the few voices willing to undermine that basic mistake. I've said this many times before: the Jesuits have guts.

ALAN MONTECILLO
God Is Sometimes Great

you are also inviting the repealing of your rights to free speech, assembly, press, religion and so forth.

If and when the Second Amendment is repealed, there will be those who will not follow a law that is unconstitutional, I being one of them. I will never register my firearms nor allow them to be confiscated.

Law-abiding citizens with the God-given right to protect themselves and others from those that are evil and/or demented will not tolerate such an act.

MIKE REDDEN
Lawrenceville, Ga.

Editor's Note: Two hours after sending the e-mail letter above, Mr. Redden wrote again: "By the way, do not construe this e-mail as a threat. I am not one of the gun 'nuts' you so fear. My confrontation with people like you will be waged through the courts every step of the way…."

End the Paralysis

I was delighted to see someone, especially **America**, take a bold and direct stand with regard to the gun control problem. Why should the country be paralyzed by a constitutional provision that does not meet our current needs? It is evident that gun violence throughout the world is proportionate to gun ownership and that we have let extremists on gun ownership use the Constitution to prevent common sense controls. I hope others will follow **America**'s lead and urge taking the logical means to end the paralysis that has been foisted on us.

ROBERT F. WEISS, S.J.
St. Louis, Mo.

Regulate, Not Eliminate

It's paranoia to think that the government will start coming after us if we don't have weapons, and it is only slightly less ludicrous to think we'll have an uptick in home invasions. By the text of **America**'s editorial, the government would only have the power to pass laws to regulate weapons, not eliminate them.

WILLIAM BURROWS.
Online comment

Pre-Existing Right

Should the Second Amendment be repealed, the right to bear arms does not go away. After all, the Second Amendment doesn't give us the right to bear arms. Rather, it recognizes a right that pre-exists our government and all governments. The right to bear arms is a "natural right."

TOMAS NALLY
Online comment

More Education

If the United States currently possesses enough civilian-owned guns to give one to every man, woman and child, then perhaps we should take the more prudent approach of education about guns. There would be no harm in allowing local police departments or the N.R.A. to come to schools and teach and demonstrate gun safety.

JOSEPH GREGRICH
Online comment

STATUS UPDATE

Bob Hudak. I've listened to what often is the prophetic voice of the Jesuits for more than 40 years—and I've rarely been disappointed. Thank you for your prophetic essay. It makes the teachings of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount more relevant and challenging than ever.

Kim Engel. Where's the dislike button?

David Ozab. I don't think we need to repeal it, but maybe we need to ask ourselves what the words "well regulated" mean.

Monica Quigley Doyle. I gave up posting and sharing articles on Facebook for Lent. I just broke my Lenten sacrifice and shared this. (Which means $$$ in the rice bowl for Catholic Relief Services.) I'll be shocked if I get any "Likes"—although my Facebook pals are too polite to argue with me. I was astounded at how forceful the editors' argument is.

Neil DeMoney. I don't buy in at all! Like the mainstream media, this article misses the mark. The guns are not leading to violence; if repealed, the modus operandi for carrying out the violence will change. The church should be concerned with changing hearts, behaviors and attitudes.

Rachel Jennings. This proposal is bold and necessary. Thank you. I do believe that tyranny is a very real threat. The fact is, however, that owning guns will not protect us from police brutality or from government surveillance or domestic drones, nor will guns protect us from violent spouses or neighbors or complete strangers. Guns will not serve that function. As Christians, in these circumstances, we must choose nonviolence. Give up the guns!

Tim Farber. Why do we think it is O.K. for law enforcement officers and the military and those who require firearms for morally reasonable purposes to possess firearms, and it is not O.K. for me or you? Both you and I are moral agents who have proven to use our moral freedom in life-affirming ways. I say let's make sure the police and the military are the first to be disarmed.

Dan Smith. When it comes to self-defense, how about we try to introduce nonlethal weapons, like Tasers, bean bag ammunition, etc.? Why do we feel we have to totally annihilate our assailant as a means of defense? That's God's right to take a person's life, isn't it? Shouldn't we do everything we can to limit the possibility of a lethal outcome? We need more choices and more dimensions, and we need to figure out what we are really afraid of here: the loss of a controversial right, or our God-like pretensions to power over our neighbors?

Fish for Breakfast

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (C), APRIL 14, 2013

Readings: Acts 5:27–41; Ps 30: 2–13; Rv 5:11–14; Jn 21:1–19

"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you" (Jn 21:17)

It took the apostles some time to come to terms with the reality of Jesus raised from the dead; but once they accepted it, they had to face the challenges of day-to-day life in the context of their newly aroused faith. It was this tension between the mundane reality of ordinary life and the glorious reality of a Lord who now reigns with God that had to be resolved in the lives of the apostles. This tension was especially manifested in the apostles' personal encounters with the risen Lord, who challenged them to transform themselves in imitation of him.

The Gospel of John presents a scene at the Sea of Tiberias, where a number of Jesus' disciples had gathered. Jesus had already appeared to them twice, but Peter's mind that day is on fishing. Whether that is on his mind because he needs to earn some money, to relax and pray for a while or just to catch some food to eat, Peter's announcement is matter of fact: "I am going fishing." Just as matter of fact is the response of the disciples, who say, "We will go with you."

One can imagine the disciples on the boat and what they might be discussing together; or perhaps they are silent, trying to process the events of Easter and what their next tasks might be. The revelation of Easter puts them between two worlds. Their discipleship with Jesus has not come to an end, but how will they begin again?

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

They fish all night without a catch and Jesus appears to them a third time at dawn. While they do not recognize him initially, they cast their net to the right side of the boat when he instructs them to do so. Only when they struggle to pull in their miraculous catch of fish do they recognize Jesus. What Jesus does next is ordinary; he feeds them breakfast, cooking some of the fish over a charcoal fire and giving them bread. He cares for them in the most ordinary of ways, helping with their work and giving them food to eat.

But after breakfast Jesus gives to Peter an extraordinary task; as Jesus has fed his disciples, so Peter is now to feed his sheep. Jesus challenges Peter three times whether he loves him, and three times Peter answers yes, though he is "distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'" Jesus has challenged Peter three times to profess his love in light of Peter's threefold denial, but also to impress upon Peter his new vocation.

As simply as Peter said, "I am going fishing," Jesus now instructs him, "Feed my sheep." The Greek in this conversation is interesting, as Jesus asks Peter twice whether he loves him, using the verb *agapao*, love that pours itself out for others, and Peter responds with *phileo*, the word for deep love between friends. On the third occasion, however, it is not Peter who alters the verb, but Jesus. Jesus aligns himself with Peter, using *phileo*, not *agapao*, and Peter again responds with *phileo*, asserting that he loves Jesus deeply as a friend.

It is a subtle recognition by Jesus that the spiritual transformations necessary to follow him lie latent in our own gifts and abilities. Peter was called by Jesus to serve in a new way in order to feed his sheep, and his responses to Jesus indicated that he did not yet understand the full implication of this call even as he accepted it. Yet Jesus knew that these gifts lay dormant in Peter and he would be able to feed his sheep and follow him to death.

These gifts are made manifest soon after the ascension in Peter's behavior in Jerusalem, when he is told to stop preaching in Jesus' name and he responds, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." Not only will Peter pour himself out for the name of Jesus, but he will do so filled with joy. Just as Jesus knew, Peter's love for Jesus had grown so that now it fed not just his own needs but the needs of all of the disciples.

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- What gifts am I called to let grow?
- How do I let the extraordinary suffuse my ordinary daily life?
- How do I love on behalf of others?

ART: TAD DUNNE

The Great Multitude

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (C), APRIL 21, 2013

Readings: Acts 13:14–52; Ps 100: 1–5; Rv 7:9–17; Jn 10:27–30

"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rv 7:14)

It is easy to forget how few Christians there were when the church began. Acts 1:15 says there were 120 people gathered together after Pentecost. Acts also narrates the mass conversions of many people, sometimes in the thousands, but Robert M. Grant said that "one must always remember that figures in antiquity...were part of rhetorical exercises." These numbers are intended to indicate that the Holy Spirit was at work among the people, both in Jerusalem and increasingly in the Gentile world; they are not literal demographic data. Rodney Stark, a sociologist with expertise in religious conversion, has calculated that in the year 40 there might have been only 1,000 Christians and by the year 100 only 7,530.

While none of these numbers is exact, this inauspicious beginning renders the task of the church in these first decades even more remarkable. The church, formed after Easter in the certainty that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, was emboldened with a missionary impulse to be "a light to the Gentiles, that you may be an instrument of salvation to the ends of the earth." There are two things to keep in mind here. One was their wondrous realization that the message of salvation was for all peoples; the other was the shocking fact that it was the apostles and disciples of Jesus who would bring the Gospel message to the whole world. Sometimes the early church faced opposition and persecution in preaching Jesus Christ, while at other times they faced indifference and ignorance.

Still, there were times when their message met willing hearers. Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish." It was this message of eternal life that drew people to the church, but it was also the manner in which the early Christians lived out their lives, no matter the situations they faced, that caused people to listen to them and to heed the call of Jesus. All who answered the call and belonged to the church, whether Jew or Gentile, no matter their station in life, were called to belong to one flock.

How does today's reading from the Book of Revelation fit in the context of a practical survey of early Christian growth? While a difficult text to interpret, in one sense Revelation is always crystal clear: The hope of the church rests with the Lamb who was slain. This counter-cultural and counter-intuitive victory was won by the sacrifice of the Lamb when it seemed the enemies of sin and death had triumphed. In John's visions, though, the Lamb is now seen enthroned and worshiped.

What is even more remarkable is that these visions reveal "a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue." But in the first century, no great multitude of people had yet been converted; there were not yet saints "from every nation, race, people, and tongue." John's vision represents not only the hope of eternal life, but a sign of hope for the early church in their missionary task, which is a sign of hope for the whole world.

Before John had seen any practical evidence of the numerical success of the church, and even in the midst of persecution—he speaks of those "who have survived the time of great distress"—he envisions a spiritual reality of the joy of life "before God's throne" for a great multitude. This multitude, sheltered by God, "will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

It is this hope, carried by the first disciples, which made John's prophetic vision a reality. Multitudes would respond to the shepherd's voice, knowing that with him there would be comfort, every tear wiped away, safe in the presence of God for eternity.

JOHN W. MARTENS

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- How do I carry out the missionary task of the church?
- How do I manifest hope in difficult situations?
- When do I listen for the voice of the shepherd?

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