

# America

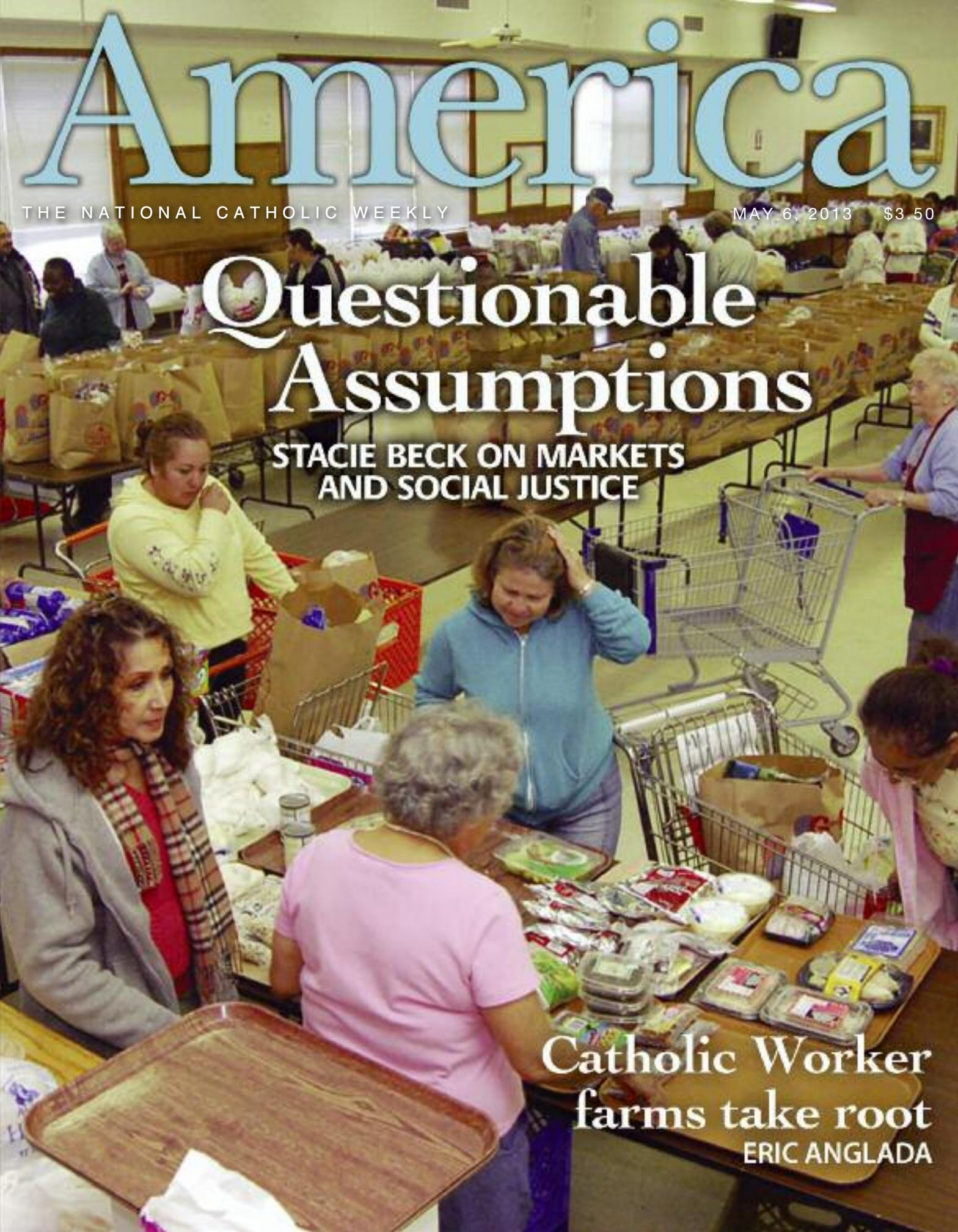
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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## Questionable Assumptions

STACIE BECK ON MARKETS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Catholic Worker farms take root  
ERIC ANGLADA



# OF MANY THINGS

**W**e're lucky at **America**. Our readers are smart, generous and kind. Your feedback is certainly welcome and almost always helpful. It's also mainly positive; in fact, the good far outweighs the bad. Still, nary a week passes when we don't receive a complaint about something we've published.

Don't get me wrong. We don't mind criticism; it's often justified. One type of response, however, is neither helpful nor justified. From time to time someone will contact us to say something like this: "How could you publish so-and-so? Don't you know that he/she is (take your pick here) a liberal/conservative and/or a restorationist/heretic?" The complainant, in other words, objects not to the author's opinions per se, but to the author's mere presence in these pages. That response is not only disappointing, it's baffling. Call me naïve, but I cannot grasp why some Christians feel so threatened by opinions that differ from their own, especially when those opinions involve matters of prudential judgment rather than dogma. Our faith is in Christ who is truth; doesn't Christian faith therefore require an open-minded intellectual disposition?

Before I go any further, let me save someone some postage: No, **America** would not publish a manuscript by Hitler. Nor would we publish a manuscript that is manifestly unorthodox, heretical, uncivil, patently false or just plain unintelligible. The fact is, though, that we very rarely receive such manuscripts. Our authors may disagree, sometimes vigorously, but they represent positions within the broad spectrum of mainstream Catholic opinion.

The present issue is a case in point. It includes two authors, Stacie Beck and Eric Anglada, who describe very different approaches to economics and Catholic social teaching. If we had published an editorial about the subject, it would probably have involved yet a third perspective. But that's what **America** does; in fact, it's what we've

always done. To wit, here is part of a column written in 1975 by Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., then editor in chief:

As a journal of opinion, this review seeks, in each issue, not only to inform, but also to interpret. The interpretations—the opinions—of the editors can be found in the editorials, including those shorter "current comments." The views in these unsigned statements reflect not so much a collective statement but rather the result of a collective process...that has emerged from the weekly editorial meeting. Along with these unsigned editorials, individual editors also write signed pieces: articles, columns, reviews. These represent the views of the individual....

The articles we choose to publish, on the other hand, may not represent the viewpoint of the editors either collectively or individually.... Finally, since the most sensitive opinions in each issue are expressed in the book reviews, it should be clear that the reviews do not represent the opinions of the editors.

Times have changed, of course. In addition to traditional letters to the editor, which were also plentiful in 1975, we now receive feedback by e-mail, blog posts, tweets and Facebook comments. (The new name for the Letters section, Reply All, reflects this.) But nearly 40 years on, Father O'Hare's ground rules still hold: "A Catholic journal of opinion should be reasonably catholic in the opinions it is willing to consider," he wrote. "Which is not to say that catholic means indiscriminate. It does mean, however, that we will publish views contrary to our own, as long as we think they deserve the attention of thoughtful Catholics." In other words, if we've done our job right, then you should find something in every issue that challenges you. As always, we'd love to know what you think about it.

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

# America

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*Cover:* Low-income clients move through the grocery line at St. Margaret Mary Alacocque Church food pantry in the Los Angeles suburb of Lomita. The food tables in the parish hall are staffed by church volunteers who prepare all week for the event, which provides groceries for some 250 families. CNS photo/Bill Stephens

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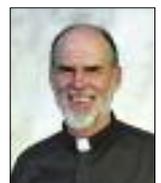
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### The Torture Report

More than four years after President Obama promised to close the military prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, the escalating desperation of its remaining 166 inmates, especially the 85 cleared for release or transfer, has shot back into public consciousness. A hunger strike that began on Feb. 6 has grown to include more than half (84 as of April 22) of the remaining prisoners. Sixteen prisoners are being force-fed twice each day, and six are hospitalized.

On April 14, Samir Naji al Hasan Moqbel described the first time a feeding tube was shoved up his nose, down his throat and into his stomach. “I wanted to vomit, but couldn’t,” he said. “There was agony in my chest, throat and stomach. I had never experienced such pain before.” Mr. Moqbel, held at Guantánamo since 2002, has never faced charges in a military or civilian court.

For those unaware of the ongoing hunger strike, a new 577-page report on detainee treatment in the past decade should shock the conscience. The landmark report, released on April 16 by the Constitution Project, relies on more than two years of research, analysis and deliberation. Asa Hutchinson, a Republican who served in the Bush administration from 2001 to 2005, and James R. Jones, a Democrat, co-chaired the 11-member task force.

The majority of members called the use of indefinite detention at Guantánamo “abhorrent and intolerable,” and the task force unanimously agreed that the force-feeding of prisoners is “a form of abuse” that violates medical ethical standards and “must end.” But the most damning conclusion of the report relates to the horror of torture. It is “indisputable,” the report stated, that in the past decade the United States “engaged in the practice of torture” and that “the nation’s most senior officials,” including President George W. Bush, “bear ultimate responsibility for allowing and contributing to” its spread.

The United States is legally obliged under the Convention Against Torture (1984) to investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible for complicity or participation in torture. This convention by definition protects the human rights of the nation’s enemies. The commitment to the rule of law and human dignity, even for criminals, is what distinguishes civilized people from terrorists.

In December the Senate Intelligence Committee completed and adopted a 6,000-page report on the Central Intelligence Agency’s detention and interrogation program following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The report should be made available to the public, and where crimes have been committed, the Justice Department should pursue

prosecutions, regardless of party, even if it leads to the Oval Office. Under the convention, the United States must also provide “fair and adequate compensation” to those who were tortured. Even self-proclaimed mass murderers like Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who was waterboarded 183 times while in C.I.A. custody, are not exempt from protection.

President Obama should move quickly to end the hunger strike at Guantánamo by addressing the prisoners’ legitimate grievance about languishing for more than a decade without charges. Those still held should be prosecuted in Article III courts, transferred or safely released. Mr. Moqbel, in his op-ed, wrote, “I just hope that because of the pain we are suffering, the eyes of the world will once again look at Guantánamo before it is too late.”

### Forgetting Sandy Hook

The president has spoken; the public has spoken; Gabrielle Giffords has spoken. But apparently the only voice worth hearing, again, belonged to the National Rifle Association. Baby steps toward rational gun control were halted by the national gun lobby in a nausea-inducing déjà vu of past legislative performances. Once again the public was twirled in the gun control waltz—an act of unspeakable gun violence, this one arguably the worst ever, followed by a period of public soul searching, political posturing and the delivery of new gun control proposals; then the inevitable patient, methodical rolodexing of N.R.A. lobbyists, the prelude to another legislative coup de grâce.

At least this latest failure to establish common sense gun control measures like universal background checks should dispel any concerns about latent racism in Washington. Some wondered what it might say about the United States should its national legislators finally be moved to action on gun control only because of a massacre of Caucasian school children after ignoring for years the daily roll call of mayhem in U.S. cities. But never fear. It turns out that in Congress’s broken politics gun rights are valued more than all of America’s children, whatever their race or ethnicity.

This latest embarrassment proves that any meaningful social policy reforms will continue to be held hostage by a small cabal of Senate obstructionists until procedures are reformed to end the fake filibuster. Despite lofty rhetoric about constitutional principles, the only freedom the N.R.A. is really determined to protect is contained in the second clause of the Second Amendment (let’s forget about that troublesome “well-regulated militia” business). Perhaps come November, a fed-up American public will send a signal with their ballots: Enough is enough.

# The Marathon

So we confront this grim spectacle again, this time at the Boston Marathon—not only on one of the most enjoyable days of the year in Boston, Patriots’ Day, but in the absolute heart of the town, Copley Square, on one of Boston’s most pleasant streets. Seeing the carnage in a familiar location on such a beautiful New England day was more than the mind and heart could comprehend. Seeing Boston so damaged was like seeing a loved one terribly injured.

We are properly reminded that such acts of terror are rare. We are urged to focus on the heroic selflessness of the police, the marathon volunteers, firefighters and emergency medical teams and the passersby, the helpers who hurled themselves into the tense struggle to save lives and serve the wounded in the crucial seconds and minutes that elapsed after the bombs went off. We are asked to confront this modern evil with resolution, to live our lives without fear, to remember that for all the headlines they generate, acts of terror are infinitesimally rare and the people capable of such cruelty blessedly few.

All true and all worth hearing and remembering. And yet, the sorrow likewise cannot be denied. What to do with this pain? How to process these unholy sights, little different from the sights in Syria and Afghanistan, Jerusalem and Gaza, Pakistan, Yemen and all the other places on earth where unspeakable violence is visited upon the innocent.

In a moment from last May preserved on Facebook, Martin Richards holds up a sign in his second grade classroom. “No more hurting people,” it reads. “Peace.”

Just another sweet sentiment from a sweet little boy in a classroom somewhere in America. An endearing message and an image that would have gone unnoticed except that now this message and this image are changed utterly; Martin was the unnamed 8-year-old mentioned in early reports as one of three fatalities in the hours immediately after the bombs went off near the marathon’s finish line. His picture has been handed from one to another across the Internet, a digital prayer card that provokes the same sharp gasp of anguish wherever it has been seen. Martin was taken away in a split second of barbarity. His mother and sister grievously wounded; his family shattered. Who will tell his surviving family members to face resolutely the world after losing so much, so suddenly? Who can tell them how to stand up to their sorrow?

“That little boy will never come home again,” a neighbor in mourning told a Boston reporter. “It’s still unreal.”

This is, of course, not the first time such pointless suffering has been inflicted, and it will surely, sadly, not be the last. Our hearts have been cracked open and pried apart again by tragedy. But this fractured heart makes space for love to grow, to pour forth and to flow into the world.

This is the love that tears down fences instead of fleeing the horror. This is the love that stanches the blood flowing from severed limbs, picks up the fallen, comforts the injured. This is the love that spends frantic moments that seem like an eternity seeking after loved ones, forgetting old resentments upon the news that they are safe and secure. This is the love that aches over the murder of Martin Richards and the other innocent bystanders.

“In the midst of the darkness of this tragedy,” said Cardinal Sean O’Malley, O.F.M.Cap., of Boston, “we turn to the light of Christ.”

At the end of this Easter season, Boston has been returned to Good Friday, a day that teaches us that we have a God who understands suffering. Everyone on the first Good Friday in Jerusalem knew suffering. Jesus’ disciples, who had expected a joyful victory, confronted instead a miserable failure. Family and friends had followed him into the city in great happiness; they were rewarded with uncontainable grief. Like the people in Boston, who had prepared for joy, they must have struggled to accept all the day’s misery. Here was the person they loved, for whom they had great hopes, cut down. It did not make sense.

A victim of senseless violence as surely as those on Boylston Street, Jesus is with us in our suffering, not only because he loves us, but because he has suffered too.

But suffering is never the last word. There is always the possibility of new life. But how will that victory be achieved? The end of our race, where we know peace and mercy overtake the darkness, may be too distant to see now, as it was impossible for the disciples on Good Friday to see; but the God who has suffered is ready to help us, always holding out the promise of something new, something that will help us move beyond the blood and the tears.

That was true in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, and it is true in Boston—and anywhere else the darkness may fall—today.



Vigil for Martin Richards

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## TERRORISM

### In Boston Aftermath, No Way To 'Zero Out' Threat of Terror

**A**s police closed in on 19-year-old Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, one of the two men alleged to have been the perpetrators of the Boston Marathon bombing, Maryann Cusimano Love, associate professor of international relations at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., was regretfully noting that there was little chance that the United States could absolutely protect itself from such acts of terror. "This is the cost of an open society," Cusimano Love told *America* on the evening of April 19, taking a break from following the real-time coverage of the hunt for the younger Tsarnaev. His older brother Tamerlan had died during a shootout with police in the early hours of the same day.

"There is no way to zero out the threat of terrorism," she said. "What you do is the same thing you do to protect your home. You have a layered approach to security. You lock your doors; you have strong windows, good relations with your neighbors; you leave the lights on. One thing alone won't work," she said. "But what you end up with is a pretty good package...that's going to get to a 90 percent solution." But in a free, open society like the United States, she said, "There is nothing that is going to get you to 100 percent." Cusimano Love points out that even comparably closed societies, like China and Russia, remain vulnerable to acts of terror.

Cusimano Love said the comprehensive response to the attack indicated that antiterrorism efforts in the United States have improved since the shock and lack of coordination experienced after the attacks on Sept. 11. This time, she said, federal, state and local agencies launched a well-coordinated, united response. "The public is your best line of defense," she added. After the bombing, the public provided the raw data of the investigation in photos and videos of the marathon that anti-terrorism forces culled to track down the Tsarnaev brothers.

Could the response and preventive efforts have been better? "Well, we are not at the heightened state of awareness of Israeli society," Cusimano Love said. But she believes that over all the

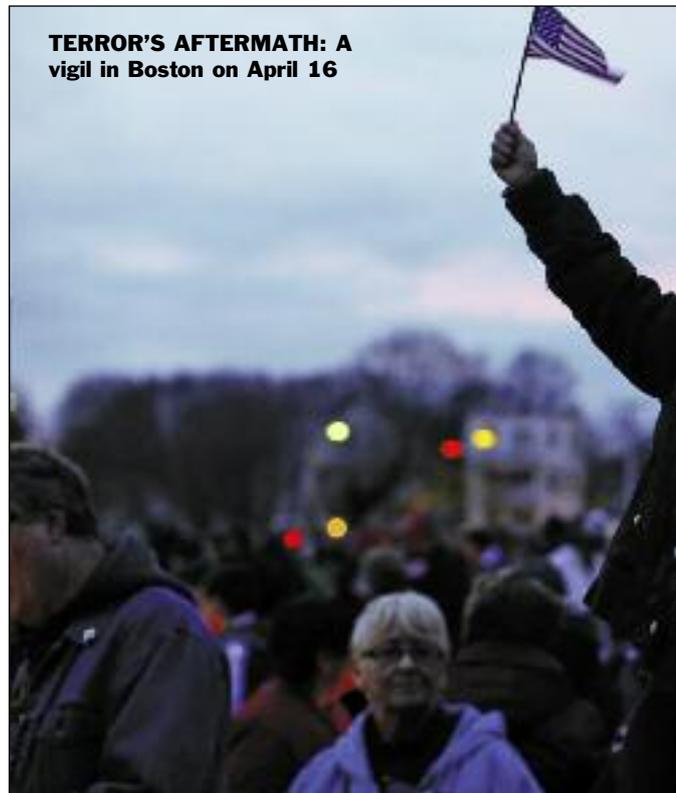
nation has been effective at thwarting terror strikes since 9/11. "The threat of Al Qaeda core groups has been greatly diminished through the killing of their core leaders and the disruption of their network," she said. But "lone wolf" attacks, as the marathon bombing appears to be, are much more difficult to defend against.

The brothers, U.S. residents for years, hailed from Chechnya, where they maintained family and cultural ties. All the same, Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a visiting research fellow at the International Center for Counter-Terrorism—The Hague, said in an e-mail that it remains too early to say if the Boston attack was directly connected to the ongoing conflict in Chechnya. "The attackers could have a different radicalization trajectory and a different purpose," he said. "I think we will know more soon, but it's always perilous to have an overly static

conception of what motivated an attack when there are still so many possibilities."

Al Qaeda has been the focus of much of America's anti-terrorism effort in recent years, but Gartenstein-Ross would not say that campaign has meant other threats have been improperly discounted. "The potential for attacks from homegrown as opposed to international terrorists has been widely discussed, and the F.B.I.'s sting operations have largely focused on homegrown extremists," he said. "This case may ultimately point to aspects of transnational terrorism that security experts have overlooked, and less prominent violent non-state actors may be one of them. But, again, we can't say that with any degree of certainty. While the time Tamerlan Tsarnaev spent in the Caucasus is known, it's not clear that he liaised with extremist groups while there."

**TERROR'S AFTERMATH: A vigil in Boston on April 16**





It is possible, in fact, that the brothers are not connected to any particular terror network but became radicalized independently. Tamerlan “favorited” YouTube videos that depict radical Islamist messages, but “we shouldn’t consider radicalization that occurs over the Internet to be ‘self-radicalization,’” Gartenstein-Ross said. “Thinking of it that way will cause us to fundamentally misunderstand why the Internet can serve as such a powerful medium. Relationships formed over social media are real relationships; and an individual who radicalizes through social media without meeting any of his influencers is in no way radicalizing alone,” he said. “In fact, some social science studies suggest that online bonds may form more quickly.”

“The materials are out there,” said Cusimano Love. “Even back when the first U.S. attacks took place in

Afghanistan, every second fleeing Al Qaeda militant had an AK-47 and a laptop. You don’t need to go to the remote areas of the world to learn the tools of the trade anymore.”

KEVIN CLARKE

## AFRICA

# U.N. Offers New Hope for Peace in Congo

**F**or nearly two decades the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially those in its eastern North Kivu Province, have known nothing but conflict and dislocation. “Imagine that since 15 years the people are constantly displaced,” said Bishop Nicolas Djomo Lola, president of the Congo’s bishops’ conference and bishop of the Diocese of Tshumbe. “They are exhausted. That is why,” he said, “the church is asking for peace...asking the international community to push for that, so that we can have finally a lasting peace.”

Bishop Djomo was in New York on April 18 to meet with representatives from the United Nations Security Council to thank them personally for the assistance that the United Nations has so far provided to the D.R. Congo, but also to implore them to make a final effort to bring the central African nation’s various conflicts to a peaceful conclusion. To that end, he was supporting the recent approval of a more aggressive U.N. brigade to North Kivu. The Security Council approved the creation of a so-called intervention brigade, a new combat force

to conduct “targeted offensive operations” against armed groups in eastern Congo in March. It will be the first time a U.N. force has received an offensive mandate.

Soldiers from Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa should be in the field by July as part of the new brigade. The effectiveness of the current U.N. peacekeeping force has long been criticized as the country’s long conflict dragged on. According to Bishop Djomo, the success of this latest U.N. mission to establish peace in Congo is crucial. “We have more than 30 armed groups in the country,” Bishop Djomo said. “We need to put an end to the violence in that region.” The war in Congo, he added, has claimed five million lives. “The church is trying to prevent it from taking a million more.”

Bishop Djomo reports that the church in Congo carries many burdens. It runs 40 percent of the nation’s schools and provides 45 percent of its health care services in addition to running humanitarian and economic development efforts through Caritas Internationalis, the international church’s relief and development agency. The church also contributes to the struggling nation’s peacemaking efforts and civil and human rights capacity



**FLIGHT:** Villagers escape another round of violence near Goma, Congo, last July.

building “in order to prepare a new generation of leaders in the Congo.”

Key to achieving that peace, he said, is addressing the “root causes” of the conflict, an international hunger for the large nation’s vast mineral wealth. “The armed groups, with the complicity of some Congolese, but especially with [multinational] companies, are exploiting the minerals illegally. They sell these minerals, get money and commit atrocities against the population, [including] even the rape against the women. It’s a cycle, and we have to put an end to that cycle thanks to the U.N. brigade.”

Bishop Djomo declined to identify the companies involved in the conflict minerals trade. “It’s not politically correct to say which companies are working with the armed groups,” he said with a small laugh. “They are from all over the world—the United States, from Europe, from Asia—so we are calling for an international association to protect the minerals for the Congo and for the region.”

Bishop Djomo says D.R. Congo could best use U.S. assistance for professionalizing its armed forces, frequently the target itself of accusations of sexual violence and human rights violations, so that the central government can assert control throughout the nation.

KEVIN CLARKE

## Church in Blast Crisis

Emergency personnel were combing through blocks of wreckage in West, Texas on April 18, a day after a chemical fertilizer factory caught fire and exploded with the force of a small earthquake, injuring scores and killing at least 14 others. Dozens of homes were destroyed. In a town with a strong Czech and German immigrant history, the 120-year-old Church of the Assumption Catholic Parish is one

## NEWS BRIEFS

The **Rwandan genocide survivor** and peace advocate Immaculée Ilibagiza became an American citizen on April 17 in New York City. • In a message sent from his Twitter account, @Pontifex, on April 18, Pope Francis asked 2.3 million followers to “join me in praying for the victims of the **explosion in Texas** and their families.” • In an statement on April 18, the Secular Coalition for America said Boston’s nontheist community was “**disappointed and saddened**” to be excluded from the city’s “Healing Our City” interfaith service held in the aftermath of the marathon bombing. • Vatican spokesperson Federico Lombardi, S.J., was named **communicator of the year** on April 18 by Germany’s Allianz Group. • In an unprecedented visit to the Pentagon on April 18, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with U.S. military leaders to **discuss the Korean crisis** and U.N. peacekeeping missions. • Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, on April 18 expressed “deep disappointment in the Senate’s **failure to support reasonable regulations** to reduce gun violence in our nation,” in a letter to the Senate’s majority leader Harry Reid and minority leader Mitch McConnell.



**Citizen Immaculée**

of the largest church communities, with about 1,300 families, and church property was being used by emergency services as a command center. Father Ed Karasek, the pastor of 24 years, posted brief notes on the parish Web site, reporting, “We have lost several folks dear to us and many, many more have lost a portion of or all of their possessions.” He said that in the close-knit town, everyone was coming together: “Everybody is related to each other, and they are all supporting each other.”

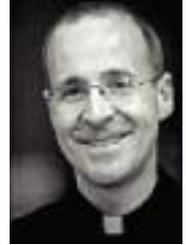
## Bishops Mediate Venezuela Election

In a statement released on April 17, the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela, where tension remains high after violent post-election clashes

caused at least eight deaths, urged “political and social leaders not to use offensive, derogatory and inflammatory language” and to “avoid clashes on the streets.” The bishops said, “As Christians we are supposed to be on the side of the weak; we must forgive and fight for union to prevail over division, love over hate, peace over violence.” The bishops offered to help resolve a dispute over the outcome of Venezuela’s presidential election on April 14. Vice President under the late Hugo Chávez, President Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner and sworn in on April 19. His challenger, Henrique Capriles, has demanded a recount, which the National Electoral Council has agreed to conduct.

From CNS and other sources.





# Papal Embrace

‘I make sure,’ said my friend, ‘that I am never alone with my nephews and nieces.’ That comment came from a priest. We were talking about the most sensitive topic imaginable: the fallout from the clerical sexual abuse scandals and the way that has affected our priesthood. It is something that many priests often discuss among themselves.

Before talking about sexual abuse, let me begin with a few comments to forestall any misunderstandings. First, sexual abuse of minors is a crime, and anyone found guilty of those crimes belongs in jail or a secure psychiatric facility. Second, anyone credibly accused of abuse—clergy or layperson—should be removed from his or her ministry (or job). Third, anyone in authority (bishops included) who willfully shielded abusers should be held accountable.

My friend said something I had never heard before. Even when he is among his family he takes care never to be alone with his nephews or nieces. He always ensures that there is another adult nearby so there will be no perception of anything untoward having happened. My friend is one of the healthiest people I know, is not attracted to children or adolescents and is someone I would trust wholeheartedly with anyone’s children.

By necessity, the sexual abuse crisis altered the ministry of many people, especially those who work in schools. Many changes you might expect—

new windows in classroom doors allow visual access to meetings of teachers with students and bans on teachers’ driving students home, the end of weekend retreats unless parents are present. But some things you might not expect. One high school chaplain said that because the door has to be ajar when he meets with a minor, students are now far less likely to seek counsel about issues they brought to him before—family problems, trouble in school, difficulties with friends. Why? They are afraid of being overheard by others, so now they clam up. My friend now feels less able to help them.

Overall my reaction has been: This is what is needed for the church to regain credibility.

But I was surprised by what my friend said about his nephews and nieces. As it happened, we were walking with another priest at the time. To my surprise, he agreed. ‘That’s what I do, too,’ he said. ‘I’m never alone with my nephews.’

I was, again, surprised. My own nephews are two of the great joys of my life; and I’m alone with them from time to time, say, when their parents are out of the house during a weekend visit. I thank God for them.

But I understood my friends’ caution. For when I’m with any other children I am hypervigilant—not because of any attraction but because of the fear of false accusations. When children not related to me hug me after Mass, I gently push them away—even when their parents are standing next

to them. Until recently I thought that this state of affairs, while sad, was inevitable. I take delight in children as marvelous creations of God—especially infants. Still, I figured: Better safe than sorry.

Among priests and religious the truism is that since anything at all can be misinterpreted, and since it’s nearly impossible to defend yourself against an accusation, it’s best to have zero contact, zero physical contact especially, with any child or adolescent, even to the point of not touching an infant on the head. Zero affection should be shown.

So imagine my surprise when I saw Pope Francis one Sunday shortly after his election joyfully embracing and kissing children on their

heads as they came out of a Roman church after Mass. Of course it was in full view of their parents (and about 50 cameras), but I would not have done this. Something changed for me when I saw this. I thought: How natural! The pope was expressing his love for those children—as Jesus did.

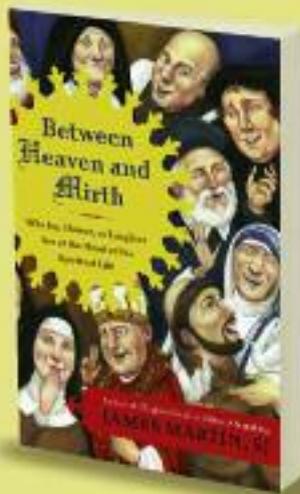
Much has been written about how Pope Francis has already changed the church. But his hugging of children helped me to see that in addition to zero tolerance, we need a little love. My post-Mass responses may have been too draconian, too cold, too fearful. So the next time little kids hug me after Mass, I’ll think of Pope Francis, and I may be less afraid to show them that the priest, and the church, wants to hug them back.

In addition  
to zero  
tolerance,  
we need  
a little  
love.

JAMES MARTIN, S.J., is editor at large of *America* and author of the new e-book *Together on Retreat: Meeting Jesus in Prayer*.

# From *New York Times* bestselling author James Martin, SJ. . .

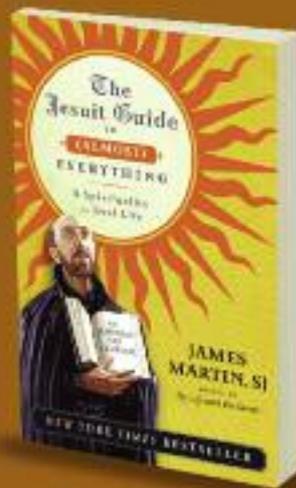
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PHOTO: GNS/IED FOSTER JR.

## The history and new growth of Catholic Worker farms

# Taking Root

BY ERIC ANGLADA

**T**his brings me great joy,” said Chris Montesano, a long-time California farmer, with tears in his eyes. He beamed as he looked upon a room full of Catholic Worker farmers who had traveled from across the country for a recent gathering in Dubuque, Iowa. “We are at a historic moment in our movement’s history,” Montesano declared to the 60 eager listeners. After floundering for decades, Catholic Worker farms are now reclaiming their role at the center of the “Green Revolution” originally proposed by co-founder Peter Maurin.

Eighty years earlier, in 1933, Maurin—short, stocky, ragged and overly didactic with his thick French accent—had been the unlikely answer to Dorothy Day’s prayer for a vocation. Since her conversion to Catholicism in 1927, Day had longed for a synthesis that would reconcile her political radicalism and her newfound religious orthodoxy. For Maurin, Day was the eloquent, practical and thoroughly American companion to translate his idea for a Green Revolution into action. Maurin soon began sharing with the journalist his pithy, free verse writings, which he called “Easy Essays.” Many of these were summaries of books that greatly influenced his ideas, like the 1930 Southern Agrarian tract, *I’ll Take My Stand*.

The Green Revolution that Maurin proposed was a far cry from the movement of the same name spread by Norman Borlaug in the 1960s. Where the latter emphasized industrialism and synthetic fer-

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ERIC ANGLADA lives on the New Hope Catholic Worker Farm near Dubuque, Iowa, with his wife and three other families.

tilizers, Maurin's movement harked back to the medieval Irish (hence "green") monks who had saved civilization during the Dark Ages through their combination of "cult, culture and cultivation" (Maurin's catchy idiom for worship, study and agriculture). Maurin's nonviolent revolution centered primarily on creating farming communes where people could integrate the practices of growing organic food, praying together and offering hospitality to wayfarers and the poor in "Christ rooms." Not wanting to abandon the urban poor, Maurin also advocated the establishment of city houses of hospitality for the homeless (the most well-known aspect of the Catholic Worker).

Initially, though, the Green Revolution would be fomented by starting a newspaper for disseminating Maurin's theory. On May Day 1933, Maurin and Day commenced their movement by passing out 3,000 copies of *The Catholic Worker*. Three years later, joined by a growing number of volunteers, they announced their search for land and financial support with the audacious headline: "To Christ—To The Land!"

On a bright spring day in 1936, a carload of Catholic Workers set out from their house of hospitality amid the paved streets of New York City in search of fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of a new social order. Seventy miles from the city, just outside Easton, Pa., they found a solid prospect: a 28-acre parcel of land overlooking the Delaware River. It was the feast of St. Isidore, patron of farmers, and thanks to a generous donation from a subscriber to *The Catholic Worker*, these communarians now had their first farm, which they would name Maryfarm. In a fit of excitement, the driver, Big Dan Orr, threw himself into the grass and shouted ecstatically, "Back to the land!"

With good soil, abundant fruits and a sizable asparagus patch, Maryfarm was brimming with promise that spring. The green revolutionaries canned vegetables and fruits, some of which were sent to the breadlines back in the city. They acquired chickens, pigs and a milking cow. They held retreats. They provided a space to rest for the down-and-out. And as they wrote about the developments on the land in the pages of their paper, others found enough encouragement to start their own projects. The pages of *The Catholic Worker* were filled with news of homesteading projects, successful economic cooperatives and the virtues of rural life.

Over the years, however, life on the handful of farms ebbed and flowed. Often bereft of money, skills, tools and sobriety, the groups were destined to struggle. Reflecting on the prob-

lems of the farms in her 1963 book *Loaves and Fishes*, Day wrote, "We have tried to be all things to all people." In this part farm and part retreat center, home for the mentally ill and place of recovery for alcoholics, lay monastery and crash pad for the counterculture, their energies were spread too thin. The overwhelming needs of the guests took precedence over the work of farming. They had unwittingly invented a recipe for their own failure. "Our job is to sow," sighed Day, "future generations will reap the harvest."

## Harvest Time

Today the Catholic Worker is reaping that harvest. As the movement celebrates its 80th birthday, it is 180 communities strong, including nearly two dozen farms. Catholic Workers who attempt to make their way to the land have been inspired and aided not only by budding ecological awareness within the broader society, but also by the proliferation of organic farms offering practical apprenticeships. With renewed excitement, Catholic Workers are rediscovering the truth in Maurin's quip, "Eat what you raise, and raise what you eat."

Owing largely to Maurin's insistence that each community in the movement be a dynamic organism, today's farms represent a diverse spectrum. Peter Maurin Farm, located about 65 miles north of New York, for example, grows staple vegetables for the city houses and offers hospitality to four single men on the land. Strangers and Guests in southwest Iowa resembles an idiosyncratic family farm—selling handmade rugs, growing a large subsistence garden and committing periodic "acts of conscience" against war and the military. Bitterroot Farm in Montana devotes its energies to creating a retreat space for exhausted Catholic Workers. The Mustard Seed Farm, outside of Ames, Iowa, and home of the Catholic Worker Farmer newspaper, splits the fruits of its harvest three ways: among the poor, those who are active in growing the produce and subscribers to their Community Supported Agriculture program.

The New Hope Catholic Worker Farm in eastern Iowa, where I have lived for the past five years, is home to four families who practice ecological sustainability. We spend much of our day engaged in manual labor in order to maintain ourselves. We work in our gardens to grow an array of organic fruits and vegetables, and we tend to the animals that provide us with meat, eggs, milk and wool. We heat our homes with wood from our forest, compost nearly all of our waste and use alternative energies. In

### From "Regard for the Soil"

It is in fact impossible  
for any culture  
to be sound and healthy  
without a proper regard  
for the soil,  
no matter  
how many urban dwellers  
think that their food  
comes from groceries  
and delicatessens  
or their milk from tin cans.

From "Catholic Radicalism: Phrased Essays for the Green Revolution," by Peter Maurin. New York: Catholic Worker Books, 1949.

addition, we are a small educational center, offering a variety of workshops.

Many urban houses of hospitality focused on the works of mercy are now also embodying aspects of Maurin's land program. Gardens, once considered superfluous in light of the abundance of donated food, are now budding in the yards of most houses, offering an important step to reclaiming healthy food for the poor. Several communities feature backyard chickens. The Cherith Brook community in Kansas City, Mo., to cite one impressive example, not only provides meals for the hungry, offers free showers and engages in ongoing nonviolent resistance to the nearby nuclear weapons manufacturer; it has also transformed the lawn into raised beds for vegetables that they fertilize with composted elephant manure from the local zoo.

A common thread runs through these experiments: Each Catholic Worker community seeks to "create a society where it is easier to be good," as Maurin liked to say. Each group imperfectly attempts to bring forth the peaceable kingdom, where all relationships—to creation, one another, the poor and the divine—can flourish.

## Moving Forward

"If only the farms increased as the Houses of Hospitality are doing," Dorothy Day lamented amid the frenzied buildup for war in 1939, "there would be the beginnings of that social order which is the foundation of peace at home." Both Day and Maurin longed to see the day when their movement would be more rooted in the land. It is encouraging that today's Catholic Workers, through change in lifestyle and active protest, are confronting many of the ecological crises of our times: permanent war over distant resources, a fickle climate, technological overload, ongoing topsoil loss, rising food costs and genetically-modified organisms. It is clear that a significant "greening" of the Catholic Worker is underway; but to address the predicament our world faces, we desperately need more people growing food, simplifying their lifestyles, providing hospitality

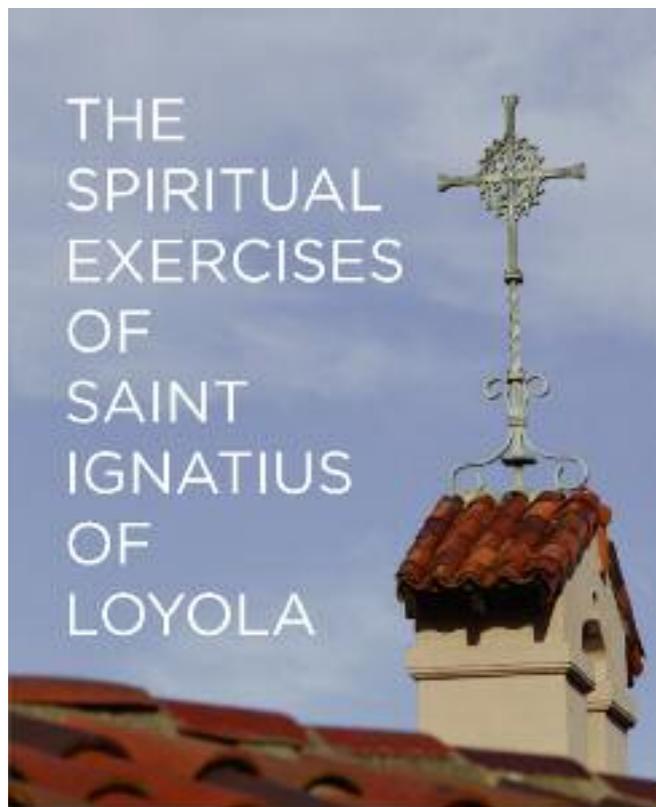
to the marginalized, deepening their spiritual lives and navigating the ways we can live in community with one another. Like the

### ON THE WEB

From the archives, the editors on Peter Maurin.  
[americamagazine.org/pages](http://americamagazine.org/pages)

Irish monks of the seventh century, whose way of life helped save the remnants of civilization, perhaps today's Catholic Worker communities can play a role in the difficult and necessary transformation of our own culture in this time of crisis.

During the recent gathering of Catholic Worker farmers, Chris Montesano noted that the first 80 years of the Catholic Worker movement saw the growth of houses of hospitality. He predicts that the next 80 will witness the spread of Catholic Worker farms. Let us hope he is right. **A**



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# Just Economics

## Questioning the assumptions of social justice advocates

BY STACIE BECK

**W**hen Catholics discuss the topic of social justice, the focus is usually on economic justice. Here is one example. *We Believe: Grade 4*, a religion textbook published by Sadlier, a Catholic publishing house, teaches that social justice demands access to health care and housing and that among our human rights are employment and a fair wage. But how do these ideas mesh with our understanding of how a modern economy produces, prices and allocates these goods and services? To answer this question it is necessary to explore the factual and logical inconsistencies of what seems to be the social justice agenda.

The goals of social justice assume a society prosperous enough to support them. But throughout history the vast majority of humanity has lived out its existence barely above subsistence level. Prosperity has been rare and transitory. Now we live in an unprecedented era of widespread prosperity. The estimated poverty rate worldwide has dropped 80 percent over the last 30 years, and the absolute number of poor people has declined by hundreds of millions. Every region of the world has experienced a decline in poverty rates, including Africa. The rate there has declined over the past 10 years, according to a working paper for the National Bureau of Economic Research by Maxim Pinkovskiy and Xavier Sala-i-Martin. This prompts two sets of questions: 1) How did this prosperity come about, and how can it be preserved? 2) What destroys prosperity, and how can that be avoided?

The students in my course on macroeconomic principles often point to ownership of natural resources as a reason that nations are prosperous, but it is easy to think of places that are resource-poor yet prosperous. Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan are often cited. The prosperity of such nations suggests they possess innovation, technology, education and better health—yet those are as much consequences as causes of prosperity. The answer seems to lie in the way society is organized, especially how its structure creates incentives that channel the efforts of its members. People

seek to gain income and wealth. Do we gain them through our own productive activity or at the expense of someone else? Economists refer to the latter as “rent-seeking.” This happens when a company, organization or individual seeks economic gain from others without creating any good, service or other benefit in return. One example is lobbying for government subsidies that redistribute income, goods or services from one group to another. A less obvious example is lobbying for competition-restricting regulations that allow the privileged to obtain higher profits (for example, limits on the number of taxi medallions issued in New York City). Theft, fraud and embezzlement are examples of illegal forms of rent-seeking.

To become prosperous, a society must ensure that production, rather than rent-seeking, is the most promising way for individuals to earn income and wealth. So national security abroad and law and order at home are necessary. It is also necessary to keep rent-seekers from exploiting the tax and judicial systems. Adam Smith, the 18th-century philosopher, observed, “Little else is requisite to carry a state to the highest degree of opulence from the lowest barbarism but peace, easy taxes, and a tolerable administration of justice: all the rest being brought about by the natural course of things.”

In this environment, the “natural course of things” means that people will produce what they can produce most efficiently and then trade this for other goods they need. Thus a system of free enterprise, also known as the free-market system, comes about. This system of specialization and trade is what is truly responsible for the breathtaking prosperity that exists today in industrialized countries and that is lifting millions out of poverty as it spreads to more countries. To give a man a fish feeds him for a day, but a market can galvanize him to learn to fish so well that he can feed himself and many others. This is how society becomes prosperous. It is important to understand that the free enterprise system is the only system that economists know of that can do this. There is no alternative.

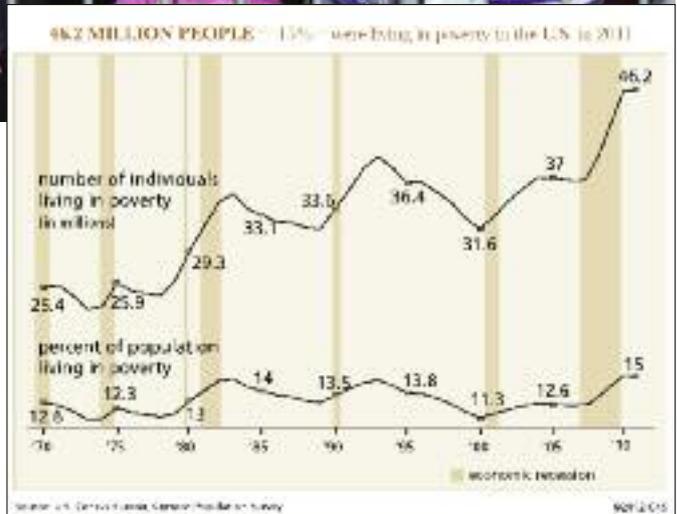
Why then, does the free-market system have so many enemies, including many advocates for social justice? Maybe it is because, although the absolute condition of the poor improves, their position vis-à-vis the wealthy sometimes worsens. While the evidence of this effect is inconclusive,

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**REDISTRIBUTING WEALTH? Families wait in line for the Los Angeles Mission's Christmas meal service in Los Angeles, Calif.**



there is some evidence that when market systems spread to new nations and/or there is rapid innovation and technological change, incomes become less equal, at least initially.

Prosperity generates savings and investment in capital and technology that creates jobs and higher wages for others. It makes possible a level of health care and housing not previously available. Social justice seems to demand that the benefits of a prosperous society be more widespread to those who are less productive (in an economic sense). How and why this should happen is important from both a practical and a moral perspective. "Spreading the wealth" is potentially costly, so it is worth considering whether the cost justifies the benefits, both moral and practical. Here the advocates of social justice fall seriously short.

### **A 'Right' to Others' Efforts?**

Few people would argue against the idea that it is best to encourage and assist people to become more productive whenever possible. In addition to more prosperity, this creates a sense of satisfaction and self-worth and is almost surely most consistent with God's plan. Therefore, we should teach that it is immoral to collect unemployment compensation or food stamps or disability payments, regardless of what the law allows, if we are capable of earning our own way. Yet the *We Believe: Grade 4* textbook has no hint of this principle. Lest readers think these topics are inappropriate for fourth graders, be reminded that this same textbook describes jobs and fair wages as human rights. What effect does this one-sided treatment have on our children's sense of entitlement and their view of self-reliance as a moral duty?

Should we not push our elected officials to change social programs that discourage people from working? This does not seem to be part of the social justice agenda.

As for jobs, we should consider in what way this is a question of human rights. Who should provide these jobs? Entrepreneurs identify business opportunities and then, using their ingenuity and risking their own money and time, establish companies that employ people. This generates tax revenue to pay for government employees. The rest of us depend to a large extent on the creativity of this small group of people. Do we really have a right to the benefits? Maybe we should teach our children to be grateful for these entrepreneurs. Maybe we should call attention to ethical business people as being as important a part of society as the firefighters and rescue workers who are paid with our tax money. Should we not lobby our elected officials to eliminate anticompetitive regulations that keep people from getting jobs and starting companies? This does not appear to be part of the social justice agenda.

PHOTO: REUTERS/JONATHAN ALCOORN

What is a fair wage? In a free and competitive market, firms pay wages that reflect workers' productivity. If they pay more, they go out of business. If they pay less, workers are free to go elsewhere. Only by colluding and taking advantage of a labor pool trapped in a location can firms force wages below this level, a situation less and less common in today's highly mobile society. If a fair wage means a higher wage, then the problem is different. Worker productivity depends on the level and quality of education/training and capital investment. Here Catholics are right to push for better options in education, especially for the disadvantaged, since the United States gets the worst value per dollar spent on K-12 education among industrialized nations. But capital investment requires a tax and transfer system more favorable to savers, who are the suppliers of investment funds. Right now the United States has one of the most progressive (redistributionist) tax systems in the industrialized world and one of the least progressive transfer systems, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This encourages consumption and borrowing rather than saving and investment. The result is that wages and living standards stagnate or fall. Should we not push for policies that discourage consumer borrowing and encourage saving?

**ON THE WEB**  
 Michael Kennedy, S.J., talks about the Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative.  
[americamagazine.org/podcast](http://americamagazine.org/podcast)

## A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Redistribution

Ironically, the redistribution of income and wealth through the tax system discourages the productive activity that created prosperity in the first place. A tax and transfer system is institutionalized rent-seeking and has a cost in lost production. Is redistribution "worth it" in terms of lost prosperity? Are those living in poverty better off with an unequal slice of a bigger economic pie or an equal slice of a smaller economic pie? As a practical matter, that is the choice. Second, is compulsory redistribution justified morally if the prosperity generated by the free enterprise system raises the absolute condition of the poor to an acceptable level?

The evidence generated by the economics profession on the first question is embarrassingly scanty. Yet there are a few indications about the effects of redistributionist efforts. Mr. Sala-i-Martin and Mr. Pinkovskiy find that reductions in poverty rates are closely correlated with economic growth but not correlated with reductions in income inequality. Theoretical models show that the United States is better off with a less redistributionist tax and transfer system, including for those who are less fortunate. Empirical evidence reveals that extremely redistributive systems result in everyone being worse off. In these situations there is no access to decent health care or

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housing. The evidence on the mixed approach taken by some European countries in the 1980s and 1990s shows that the poorest 20 percent have a living standard comparable to the poorest 20 percent in the (formerly less) redistributionist United States, whereas the top 80 percent in Europe have a lower living standard than the top 80 percent in the United States. Based on this limited evidence, the cost of redistribution in terms of lost prosperity appears to be pretty steep.

This cost might be worthwhile if it results in a population that is more compassionate, more moral and endowed with a greater sense of justice. What is the evidence for this in societies that have more redistributionist tax and transfer systems? Does public charity and service to the poor through the tax and transfer system supplement private charity and service or take their place? What incentives exist in tax and transfer systems to help the poor live a moral and productive life? Have the Catholic advocates of social justice collected any evidence or devoted any thought to these questions?

It is almost certainly true that some minimal level of compulsory redistribution will be needed to take care of those who cannot be productive in an economic sense. But this is not the issue addressed here. The issue is whether, as Catholics, we should advocate for tax and subsidy programs that go beyond a minimal safety net. Is it right to compel productive people to be charitable? Or is it our duty to persuade them to be so of their own accord? Is it social justice to advocate for more redistribution as a public policy? Or is it social justice to bring productive people together with those in need within church communities to inspire the generosity, help and compassion Christ asked for?

Many well-meaning people who advocate policies based on social justice seem not to have considered these questions. There is a failure to appreciate that in many cases, the economic incentives of these policies lead to the problems they are designed to solve and reinforce the behaviors that caused the problems in first place.

There is only one economic system that is capable of eliminating widespread poverty: the free-market system, which depends on an enterprising and self-reliant population. Making that system more competitive and more accessible is true social justice in action. Encouraging and enabling nonproductive members to become productive, whenever possible, is social justice.

Advocating for redistribution through the tax and transfer system erodes prosperity and undermines the attitudes that created it. Can this be social justice? The central problem is to figure out how to get the market system to work for as many as possible without destroying it. If the Catholic Church is to help the condition of the poor, then its contribution should be to think through much more carefully what social justice entails in a modern market economy. **A**



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## PANELS OF PERFECTION

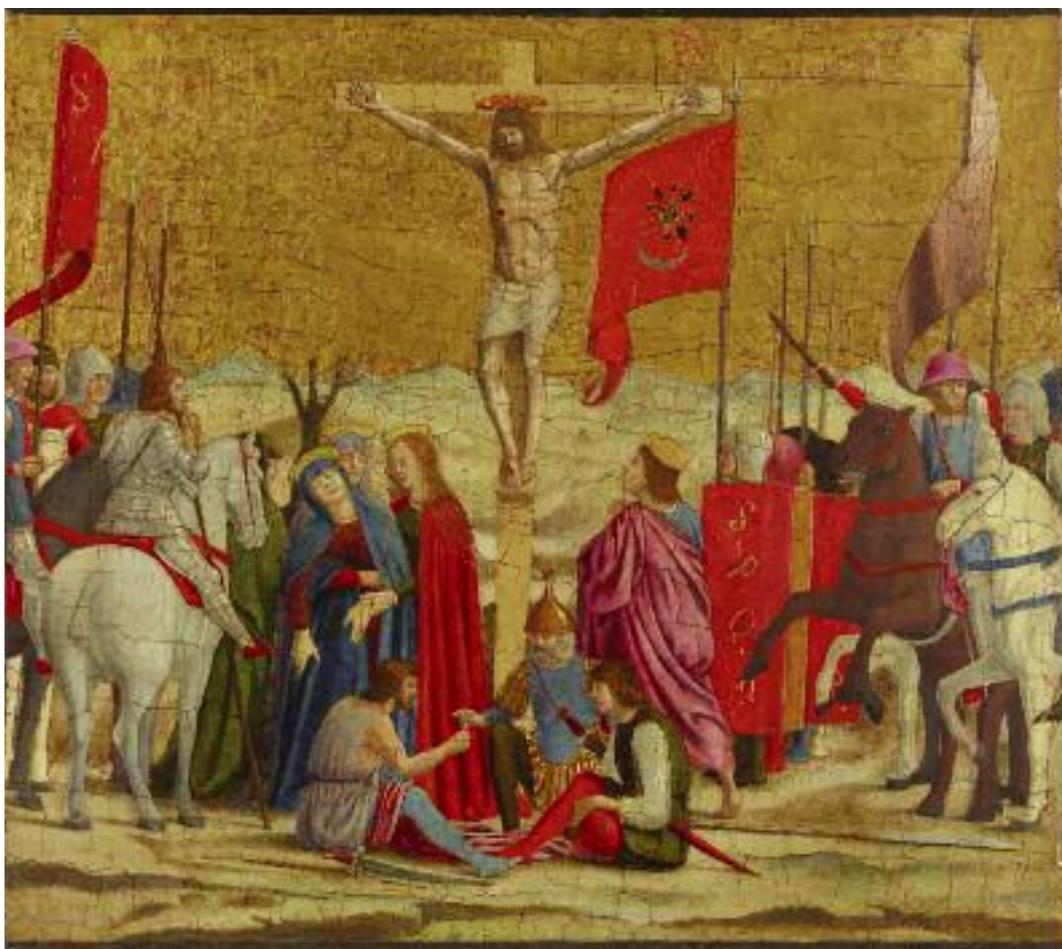
*Rediscovering the incomparable Piero della Francesca*

No other Western artist is quite like Piero della Francesca, the Quattrocento Italian painter who disappeared from public awareness for centuries after his death in 1492 and was then dramatically rediscovered in the late 19th century. It's not that he is the greatest of painters—although Aldous Huxley famously called his “Resurrection” “the best picture in the world,” and any museum holding one of his rare works will certainly rank it among its treasures.

It is not that Piero is *sui generis*. Vermeer's young women by their windows share some of his luminous calm. Zurbarán's stately saints suggest the dignity of his sculptural figures in their lucid landscapes or elegant architectural settings. The critics Roger Fry and Bernard Berenson thought Cézanne's radical way with color and form echoed Piero. But no one else captures so ravishingly the assured serenity and timeless interiority of his figures, grounded firmly on this earth as they are but

seeming always to see beyond it. The grave dignity and still solemnity of his work are incomparable.

The style reflects the man. Born about 1412 in the Tuscan town of Borgo San Sepolcro (now Sansepolcro), he remained steadfastly rooted there even while traveling extensively throughout Italy. A prosperous commercial center of about 5,000 citizens at the time, Borgo traced its founding to two 11th-century pilgrims with relics from the tomb of Christ and imagined itself as the New Jerusalem. Piero was the son of a successful tradesman and a woman from a noble family. His earliest surviving painting, “The Baptism of Christ,” was done in Borgo some time after 1437. (The consistency of his style has confounded attempts at accurate chronology.) In 1439 he is recorded as working with Domenico Veneziano in Florence, where he must have been influenced by artists like Masaccio, Donatello and Ucello, as well as the mathematician and architect Leon Battista Alberti. In the 1450s he was commissioned to paint “The Legend of the True Cross” for the Basilica of San Francesco in Arezzo, a series of frescoes generally considered his masterwork. Later, major patrons included Federico da Montefeltro, the Duke of Urbino, and Pope Pius II in Rome. In his



**The Crucifixion, 1454–69**

P. 20 AND 21: PAINTINGS BY PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. PHOTOS BY THE FRICK COLLECTION, NEW YORK.

last years, he retired to Borgo, devoting himself to writing treatises on mathematics and perspective and receiving visits from younger artists.

In the United States there are exactly six panels by the artist and one fresco. Five of the panels once belonged to an altarpiece commissioned in 1454 for Borgo's Church of Sant'Agostino (now Santa Chiara), while the sixth was done for another church in the town. Almost miraculously, all six panels have been brought together at The Frick Collection in New York (through May 19), giving visitors a sense of what the grand original work must have been like. (The fresco, of Hercules, could not travel from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.)

In a persuasive reimagining of the once enormous altarpiece, Nathaniel Silver, who organized the exhibition, draws on the scholarship of Machtelt Israëls and suggests that the predella (the horizontal band of paintings below the main tier) included the three small paintings of Saints Apollonia, Monica and (perhaps) Leonard with a small crucifixion in the middle. The saints' panels, each about 15 inches high and 11 inches wide, show them in three-quarter length, facing forward, against a gold ground. The naming of Apollonia is the most secure, as she holds with a pair of tongs one of the teeth she lost in her martyrdom. Monica, Augustine's mother, is presented severely in an Augustinian habit, while the figure thought to be Leonard (once identified as Dominic) is similarly dressed and has a visible tonsure. Small as they are, the figures have a rounded physicality that would have been enhanced by light reflecting from their golden backgrounds.

About as high as the saints' panels and a third again as wide (it was once wider still), "The Crucifixion" is a deceptively complex composition, rich in color contrasts and pictorial detail. Christ on his cross rises

solemnly before a golden sky and a rocky landscape, surrounded by at least 20 figures. The Virgin faints among the three Marys to the viewer's



**St. John the Evangelist 1454–69**

left, while St. John to the right looks longingly up toward his savior. Three soldiers at the foot of the cross play dice for Jesus' robe, while others on foot and horseback look on from either side. Banners unfurl, spears ascend, and gradually the viewer becomes aware of an intricate pattern of vertical, horizontal and diagonal relationships that give the scene a silent, sacred dynamic.

Above the predella, in the main tier of the altarpiece, two saints on each side flank a large, central panel (now lost)—St. Augustine and St. Michael the Archangel to the viewer's left and St. John the Evangelist and St. Nicholas of Tolentine to the right.

While the other saints look out toward the viewer, the venerable John is lost in his reading of a handsome (unidentified) book. Beneath a halo his sunburnt face is framed by snow-white hair and a pointed white beard. A voluminous, vermilion cloak enfolds his almost life-size figure. Under it he wears a blue-green tunic with a border of pearls, rubies and aquamarines. Barefoot and abstracted though he is, his presence is as imposing as any king's.

If the "St. John" is monumental, the "St. Augustine" is even more marvelous. Younger than John but with a resolute set to his eyes above a salt-and-pepper beard, this is fully the father of the church who served as bishop of Hippo for 34 years and enriched Christianity with some of its most profound theology. He wears a jeweled miter and a richly woven cope, carrying in his right hand a handsomely bound book and in his right a crystal crosier. In the pearl-encrusted center of his miter is a full-length figure of the risen Christ, his blood flowing into a chalice below him. His cope is painted as cloth of gold embroidered with navy-colored leaf patterns and its border bears an extraordinary series of twelve scenes from the life of Jesus, from the annunciation to the crucifixion (two further scenes are tantalizingly covered by the folds of the cope). A prominent clasp, this time with a half-length image of the risen Christ, holds the cope together above Augustine's chest.

The now lost original central panel, probably a virgin and child enthroned (although the catalogue proposes that it may also have been a coronation of the Virgin), has a fine understudy at the Frick, the "Virgin and Child Enthroned With Four Angels" (1460-70). Although only about three and a half feet high, it too has monumental grandeur. Mary's throne is raised on a pedestal, and the Christ Child on her left knee reaches for the rose in her right hand (a symbol of his passion).



Rosettes on the upper step of her throne echo the symbolic theme, and among the four angels standing about the throne, the furthest right, dressed in an elegant rose-colored tunic, glances out to us and points to the child. The whole scene is set in a classical courtyard in which the Corinthian columns' relationship to each other is a marvel of perspective with incredibly subtle effects of depth. It is "the most hieratic of all Piero's pictures," writes Walter Kaiser, quoting also the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert: "Once more geometry has absorbed passion."

Masterful as each of its pieces are, this gem of an exhibition can scarcely convey the full mastery of its artist. But there is much to discover. We learn at the Frick that it was not only the traditionally ascribed Florentine and Netherlandish influences that

shaped Piero's art. Equally significant, it appears, were the polychrome devotional statues cherished by the Borghese, the landscape around them and their fervent sense of living on land newly made holy. Living in and from his native town, its most famous citizen came to a contemplative sense of an art interiorly ordered, confident that calm was constructive, cherishing the majesty that could shine from someone standing still. Even with just seven pieces in the Frick's Oval Room, and four of them quite small, you can truly commune with this incomparable artist and share his feeling of time fulfilled, of eternity swelling in the now, of the divine dwelling with us and promising forever.

#### ON THE WEB

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# Post-Christian Rock

Sometimes it's hard to hear above all the grousing going on in religious circles these days regarding the growing irrelevance of faith among young adults. If you're not familiar with the phenomenon it's probably because a) you don't work for a religious institution and/or b) you don't yet place Talmudic importance on research data released by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Whatever the case, you might also be one of the 2.2 million Americans (and counting) who bought Mumford & Sons' "Babel"; this year's Grammy winner for Best Album and one of the most God-haunted collections of songs you're likely to find by a major musical act.

The United Kingdom folk rockers' sophomore release spent weeks atop the charts, posting the best single-week sales for 2012—nearly doubling tween heartthrob Justin Bieber's number. Not bad for an album with an Old Testament name whose title track features lines like "Cause I'll know my weakness, know my voice, And I'll believe in grace and choice."

On the surface, Mumford & Sons' "Babel"—and its 2009 predecessor, "Sigh No More"—sound like the earnest, old-timey folk rave-ups found on the soundtrack from the Coen brothers' 2001 film "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" (Most of the band members were barely teenagers when the soundtrack dominated the U.K. charts and cite its influence.) But to reduce them to being retro revivalists doesn't

do justice to the lead singer/songwriter Marcus Mumford's ability to coax something new out of familiar forms. "But I'll still believe though there's cracks you'll see,/ When I'm on my knees I'll still believe," Mumford sings in "Holland Road." "And when I've hit the ground, neither lost nor found,/ If you'll believe in me I'll still believe."

Faith, or the profound struggle with it, is at the core of everything the band has recorded thus far. I must confess, however, that when I first heard Babel I found myself thinking less about the music and more about a 10-year-old cartoon.

In an episode titled "Reborn to Be Wild," from Mike Judge's long-running, animated series "King of the Hill," a heavily tattooed and pierced young pastor runs a Christian rock Messiah Fest, claiming that the old folks "just don't get it; this is how we testify! Praise Him!" Hank Hill, the mild-mannered, slightly dense family man from suburban Texas, responds incredulously: "Can't you see you're not making Christianity better, you're just making rock 'n' roll worse?"

Hank is right. Jesus doesn't need us to make him cool. For years, Christian rock—a hybrid genre that emerged in the 60s and 70s—has married rock's sounds and forms to Christian praise and worship themes, with dismal results.

Mumford & Sons are by no means the second coming of Christian rock (Thank you, Lord!). Instead, their music represents the first commercial

fruits of a generation of young adults raised in nondenominational Christian churches. Marcus Mumford's parents founded the evangelical Vineyard Churches in the United Kingdom, and he met his band mate Winston Marshall in a worship band at summer camp.

Mumford and his crew have grown up and are now wrestling with what belief means for their own lives. And they are not alone. Artists like Sufjan Stevens, Kings of Leon and David Bazan (from Pedro the Lion), to name a few, all take faith seriously. They take doubt seriously as well.

This isn't their parents' Christianity by a long shot. Statistically we know that many Millennials are disillusioned with the cozy marriage of religion and Republican Party values. They are less myopically focused on culture wars over abortion and sexuality and more focused on war, poverty, justice and the environment.

Treading a path blazed by Bono and U2, Mumford & Sons are at the leading commercial edge of a growing number of crypto-Christian artists who claim no particular affiliation and actually seem uncomfortable with institutionalized Christianity. And yet, somehow, their imaginations, instincts and language are deeply informed by Scripture and the person of Jesus. While we continue to wring our hands over statistical trends, it will be important to remember that the movement of the Spirit is not easily captured in a pie chart.

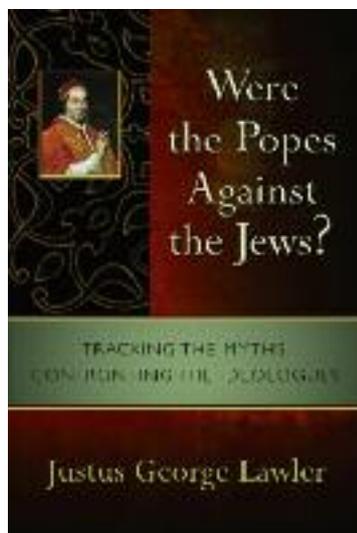
Jesus  
doesn't  
need us  
to make  
him cool.

**BILL MCGARVEY**, author of *The Freshman Survival Guide*, owner of *CathNewsUSA.com* and former editor in chief of *Busted Halo* (2004-10), is a musician and writer.

# TORTURED HISTORY

An inveterate skepticism induces gullibility. This is what the publishers of John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope* counted on when they coupled the title with a dust jacket photograph of Eugenio Pacelli, easily recognizable from his pictures as Pope Pius XII, striding toward a waiting automobile between files of German soldiers in full salute. The title, of course, implied that they were Nazi soldiers. The scandal lay in the fact that the Pacelli pictured there was not a pope and the saluting troops were not Nazis. The photograph was taken before Hitler came to power, at a time when Pacelli was the papal nuncio to President Hindenburg's pre-Nazi Germany.

In *Were the Popes Against the Jews? Tracking the Myths, Confronting the Ideologues* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 405p, \$35), George Justus Lawler examines a mass of historical distortions about several bishops and popes that have appeared in the toxic wake of Rolf Hochhuth's notorious 1963 play, "The Deputy." Lawler, author of many books and editor of several journals, intimately familiar with the ways of the publishing world, examines several of Hochhuth's heirs, focusing mostly but not exclusively on David Kertzer's *The Popes against the Jews* (2001). Kertzer argues that several modern Popes—culminating with Pius XI and Pius XII—were anti-Semites who paved "the road to the Holocaust." Lawler, initially beguiled by Kertzer's argument, became suspicious, re-examined Kertzer's support-



ing evidence and discovered "a flood of errors," "rhetorical subterfuge," "slanted paraphrase," "a potpourri of mistranslations...juggled chronology, and...

out-and-out falsehoods." Before he had ever seen the Vatican archives, Kertzer had already made up his mind about the popes, as he made clear in a New York Times op-ed column: "The explanation of what made the Holocaust possible is to be found in no small part in the files of the Inquisition...."

Lawler repeatedly demonstrates that Kertzer's accusatory examples—ranging from Vatican support for the myth of Jewish ritual murder or of anti-Semitism based on a form letter sent in receipt for a book expressing anti-Semitism—are demonstrably false or illogical.

Contrary to what gullible cynics might expect, Lawler's book is no whitewash of the church hierarchy. Kertzer, however, creates a fiction of "aggressive papal support of the hatred that led to the Holocaust" and insists that "a whole-cloth conspiracy against Jews [was] perpetrated by the elders of the Vatican."

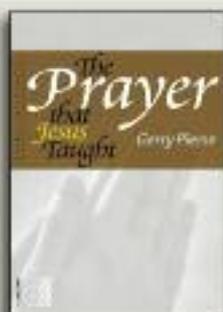
Lawler candidly acknowledges the anti-Semitism expressed by members of the clergy or in Catholic publications (including the Jesuit periodical *Civiltà Cattolica*). He emphasizes that the Second Vatican Council condemned any persecution or use of force in the name of Christianity and that, as one of its documents states, there is no justification for "having recourse to means that are incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel." Had

Kertzer been less bound to his predetermined view, he might have seen in the statements of those same popes a dynamic moving not toward the Holocaust but instead toward the rearticulation of the principles of the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes.

As Lawler outlines it, papal positions form a trajectory in support of "social justice" and what Pope Leo in the encyclical "Rerum Novarum" referred to as the rights of workers and Pope Pius XII in his 1941 Christmas address as "the rights of man." Vatican II and subsequent papal statements have further expanded on those "basic gospel principles," he says, although they are threatened by bishops, and others, who "are fostering prejudice" against homosexuals seeking their rights and women seeking equality in the church. A "dialectical relationship," as expressed in Newman's statement, "I shall drink—to the Pope, if you please—still to Conscience first, and to the Pope afterwards," balancing "authority and private judgment" helps to "rein in warped zealotry."

President Roosevelt was more reticent than Pius XII when it came to aiding or talking about Europe's Jews in extremis. In *FDR and the Jews* (Belknap Press, 464p, \$29.95), Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman, history professors at American University, challenge the view that F.D.R. was remiss in helping them and plot stages in his development from aloofness to engagement. As they point out, F.D.R. was a consummate politician from the first and "carefully walked a line between retaining Jewish support and exploiting upstate [New York] anti-Semitism." Unlike Kertzer's misleading contexts, Breitman and Lichtman supply contexts showing the domestic factions faced by F.D.R. Some had a fear of Nazism that was less than their old

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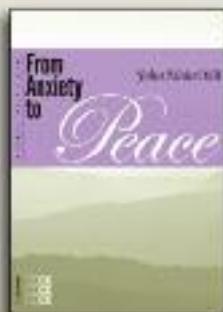


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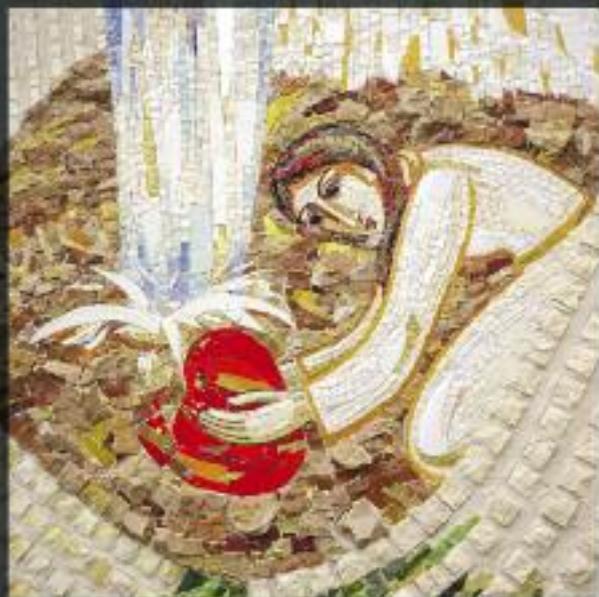
—ROWAN WILLIAMS, Archbishop of Canterbury

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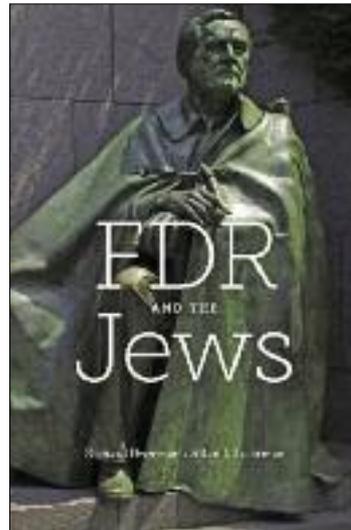
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fear of Communism and saw Hitler as a way to destroy it; others wanted an America isolated from Europe's war; and still others were anti-Semites, with no interest in hearing about Jewish problems. Attempts to allow Jewish refugees into the United States were met with opposition. Like others, including some members of the church hierarchy, F.D.R. held traditional stereotypes and at first lacked sympathy for requests from Jews for help or statements denouncing the Nazis. In the period before the Nazis halted the emigration of Jews, the United States barred the entry of many of them (while the pope had provided money for fares and encouraged countries on three continents to accept Jewish refugees—a matter outside the scope of and unmentioned in the discussion of F.D.R., despite its telling contrast).

News about the Jews was confusing even in mid-1942, when there were reports—though without verification—of wholesale slaughter in exter-

mination camps. In late summer, the prominent U.S. rabbi Stephen Wise received a telegram from the World Jewish Congress warning that “the Nazis were considering a plan to exterminate 3.5 million Jews with prussic acid...” The State Department continued to believe that Jews were being sent to work camps. Meetings of U.S. Jews called for more “study.” F.D.R. remained cautious about statements singling out Jews as the sole victims and non-committal to Rabbi Wise. In the face of increasing pressure from other Jewish quarters, F.D.R. continued to maintain in late 1943 “his own cautious approach to Jewish issues,” which “very gradually shifted away from the position that only a military victory

could save the victims of the Nazi terror” to become more sympathetic to the Zionist project.



Even in his final stage (“late to the task”), F.D.R. “remained cautious about harboring refugees in the United States” (in contrast with Pius XII, who arranged protection for the 80 percent of the remaining Roman Jews, after over 1,000 of them had suddenly been rounded up). F.D.R.’s use of the War Refugee Board

and his own second-term initiatives assisted in saving up to 300,000 Jews, still far fewer than the 860,000 Jews cited by the Israeli historian, Pinchas Lapide (“Three Popes and the Jews,” 1967), who were saved by the efforts of Pope Pius XI: “more than all other Churches, religious institutions and international rescue organizations put together.”

Franklin Roosevelt learned much about the horrors of the death camps from a Polish eyewitness. The welcome reissue of Jan Karski’s account of his years in the Polish underground, **Story of a Secret State: My Report to the World**, (Georgetown University Press, 464p, \$26.95, fills out the brief mention of his U.S. president on July 28, 1943—a meeting that may have been instrumental in convincing F.D.R. that the atrocities in the camps were even worse than the wildest rumors about them. Karski himself had suffered first at the hands of the Russians, then the Germans; he was indefatigable, even after having been captured by the Nazis and beaten nearly to death. He simply escaped and rejoined the movement.

In the climax of his exploits, at the behest of the Jewish Bund, he entered



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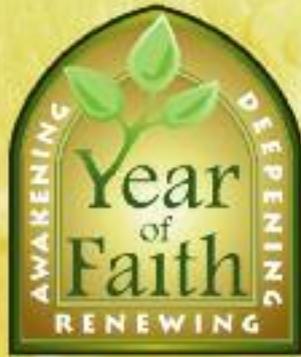
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a Nazi death camp to become an eye-witness who could take his message to the West. "I was to go on a day when executions were scheduled," he says, in his matter-of-fact way, entering Belzec wearing an Estonian uniform and with the assistance of one of the Estonian "attendants" bribed by the Bund to serve as a conduit to the prisoners. Overcome after hours of being left alone to watch, the Estonian returned to tell Karski that his open-mouthed daze might give him away. The experience left him vomiting for the next day and night. The farewell celebration included Mass: "quiet and beautiful.... We all took Holy Communion."

Finally reaching the United States, Karski was received by President Roosevelt, who was eager to hear all about Poland and wanted him to "verify the stories told about the German practices against the Jews." Breitman and Lichtman give more attention to Wise as the bearer of second and third hand reports than to Karski's eye-witness testimony.

Even less remembered than Karski are the heroic members of the clergy during the war. In **The Catholic Bishops of Europe and the Nazi Persecutions of Catholics and Jews** (Edwin Mellen Press, 309p, \$49.95), Vincent Lapomarda, S.J., professor of history and a Holocaust specialist at the College of the Holy Cross in

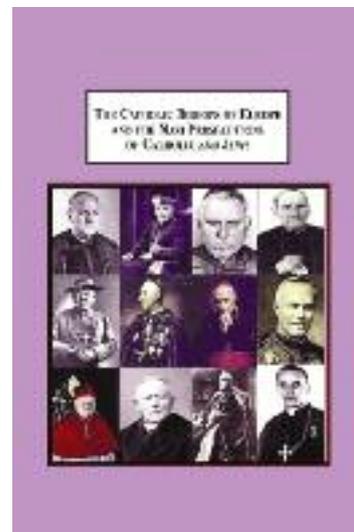
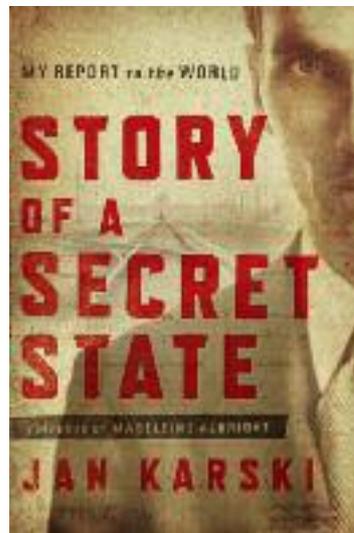
Worcester, Mass., focuses on the church hierarchy, while including many other among the clergy and laity who risked or gave their lives in resisting the Nazis and aiding Jews. Lapomarda chronicles scores of bishops and priests, country by country, in a valuable but undetailed study. Particulars are often difficult to come by, since the clergy members who helped Jews sought no publicity and left few traces. He is forthright about those who were less

than resistant to the Nazis but concentrates on the many who were heroes. Adding to the book's value as a resource is a bibliographical essay with country-by-country chapters. Extremely condensed, occasional details are reminders that some bishops also endured the horrors of concentration camps and some were martyred.

Lapomarda's dry recitation serves the historical record, while Kertzer's slick presentation promotes historical mystification. The most important of these four books is Lawler's, but it is seriously marred by a multitude of intermittent faults that dilute its clarity and at moments its coherence.

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**JEROME DONNELLY**, since his retirement from the University of Central Florida, has taught occasionally in the university's international studies program. His new critical reading of Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych* will appear in the spring issue of the journal *LOGOS*.



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## REPLY ALL

### Remember the Gospel

The analysis and the documentation by Raymond A. Schroth, S.J. (“America at War” and “War of Words,” 3/25) was an outstanding piece of journalism, offering insights into **America’s** editorial history. I remember the editorials very well and found it a bit chilling to read them again.

The big question in my mind is: “Where was the Gospel in all of the analysis of Vietnam?” I know there were themes of justice and responsibility, but American exceptionalism seems to have trumped efforts to bring a Christian point of view to the issues. It’s good that **America** has learned from the experience—thanks to Father Schroth.

LEO GAFNEY  
Lakeville, Conn.

### Why Apologize?

I am confused by two points made at the end of “Vietnam Postscript” (Editorial, 3/25).

The editors wrote, “**America** was unable to appreciate well enough and early enough what was truly at stake.” No doubt, true. But why does **America** give this lofty impression that they should have been the publication with the wisdom and vision to have all the policy answers on this complex, disturbing time in American history?

The editors also wrote, “**America** asks for forgiveness for what we have done and for what we have failed to do.” The editors “acted in good faith and good conscience,” just as most of us in the United States did back then, regardless of our differences. So where does “forgiveness” come in? I’m confused.

KURT CHISMARCK  
Nevada City, Calif.

### STATUS UPDATE

Re “Pope Francis, the CDF and the LCWR,” by James Martin, S.J. (In All Things blog, 4/15):

Thank you! As a Catholic, a woman and a Catholic school teacher who spent many years with the good sisters and a person who knows some of the victims of clerical sexual abuse, the last 15 years or so have been sad and painful. The weeks since the election of Pope Francis, and his many actions in that time, brought me not only joy and delight, but also hope that the church I was promised as a teen in the 1960s would finally begin to emerge. This morning’s news really shook that hope. Your calm and level-headed assessment

*Editor’s Note: America does not believe that we should “have been the publication with the wisdom and vision to have all the policy answers” regarding Vietnam. The point is simply that many of our peers in the media grasped the heart of the matter sooner than we did, and we regret that fact.*

*As for our request for forgiveness: The military industrial complex that promoted and prolonged the war was a prime example of a “structure of sin.” Thus, America’s support for this structure constituted participation in social sin, and for this we request forgiveness (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1869).*

### Unseen Heroes

My deepest thanks to Brian Doyle for sharing his fond memories of the sisters of the Order of Preachers in his touching article, “A Place at the Table” (3/25). While some of us were educating students academically, these valiant women were welcoming students to the convent for those “gentle and delicious gifts” of peanut butter and jelly

of the situation helps me not to despair that “the honeymoon is over.”

Teresa Hooten Kozempel

Holding tight, but not confident.

Andrew Raymond

The pope, coming from a religious order, is far more likely than not to be sympathetic to the view of religious. Logically, he is almost certainly going to be fair in the process. It does not mean, however, that both sides of this argument will be satisfied with the outcome. However, trusting in God, I am confident with hope and with prayer, the good side will prevail, whatever that result may be. It is, after all, the Easter season. Kevin Conery

sandwiches. Mr. Doyle is wise for recognizing the incredible lessons he received, not so much in the classroom as at that wooden table in the convent.

Those unseen sisters were true heroes in leaving their compassionate and caring marks on the lives of hundreds and thousands of children. As an O.P. sister, I’m glad they are remembered and revered.

PEGGY DEVLIN, O.P.  
Marlton, N.J.

### Meaning of ‘Church’

Re “A Listening Church” (Current Comment, 3/18): May I suggest a moratorium on the indiscriminate use of the term *church*, as in, “The church’s teaching is clear: the church has no authority whatsoever to ordain women as priests.” Note the *whatsoever* to con the reader into thinking that the statement needs no proof. As Vatican control has become tighter and more ubiquitous in recent years, there is an understandable tendency, I think, to equate pope/Vatican/hierarchy/Curia with “the church.” The secular media might be given a pass on this one, but **America** should know better.

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# Heaven-Sent

ASCENSION (C), MAY 12, 2013

Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Ps 47:2–9; Eph 1:17–23 or Heb 9:24–28, 10:19–23; Lk 24:46–53

*“Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky?” (Acts 1:11)*

Paul says of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:45, “Thus it is written, ‘the first man, Adam, became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.’” Luke Timothy Johnson draws on this verse when he describes the ascension of Jesus, saying that “the ‘withdrawal’ of Jesus is not so much an absence as it is a presence in a new and more powerful mode: when Jesus is not among them as another specific body, he is accessible to all as life-giving spirit.”

While it is true that Jesus is now with us “as live-giving spirit,” even after his ascension, he remains a particular person, both God and man. While he is present in a new and more powerful mode, Jesus is absent in a profound way, which is why we yearn for his return. At the ascension Jesus does not cease to be the one who came to earth, who was raised up and who will come again in glory to judge both the living and the dead. This is the same risen Lord who appeared after his ascension to Paul. Paul asked in response to his experience, “Who are you Lord?” “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5).

At the same time, we must acknowledge the constant presence of Jesus in the church and his accessibility to all of us. It is through the Eucharist that we know Jesus intimately now and as a foretaste of heaven; it is in the church, the body of Christ, of which he is the head, that he

is truly present in our midst.

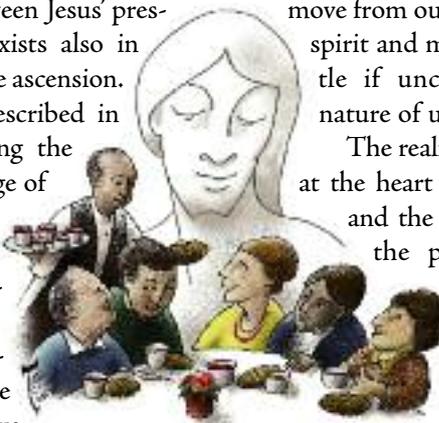
The tension between Jesus’ presence and absence exists also in our conception of the ascension. The ascension is described in Luke and Acts using the cosmological language of a three-tiered universe, in which Jesus floats up into heaven—an image long ago exploded by scientific views of the cosmos. But if we speak of the imagery of the ascension as a metaphor, this should not divert us from the reality of the event: Jesus in his particularity is in heaven with God.

In asserting Jesus’ identity and real existence, we support the hopeful anthropology of Christianity against gnostic devaluations of personal identity and the goodness of the body. As the risen Jesus exists even now as Lord, we too will one day be raised up as physical beings with personal identity. We will not be subsumed in a divine nothingness; we will not lose our individuality. Yet a radical transformation will occur between who we are now and who we will be in heaven.

There might be some people who withdraw from the notion of heaven as a “place,” but Christianity does not reduce the afterlife to psychological projection or childish wish fulfillment. Christianity speaks of the existence of these places and those who inhabit them as real. Such notions are not sim-

ply metaphors, but they call on us to move from our concrete notions of spirit and matter to a more subtle if unclear notion of the nature of ultimate reality.

The reality of the ascension is at the heart of the Christian life and the Christian hope. It is the point at which the church begins to take shape as eucharistic community—that is,



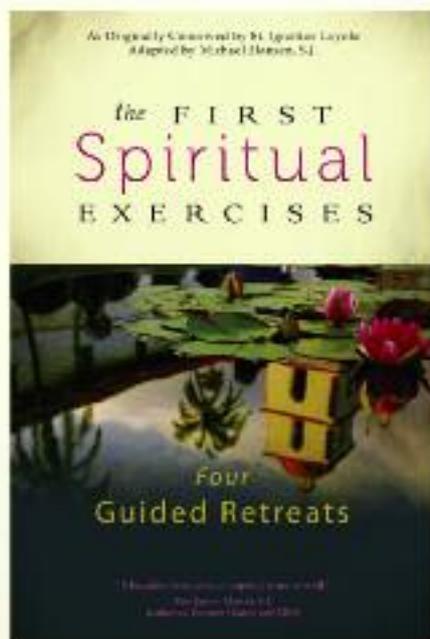
## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- How do I experience the absence of Christ?
- How do I experience the presence of Christ?
- What aspect of Jesus’ ascension most intrigues me?

centered on *koinonia*, fellowship or communion, and the Eucharist. It is a sign of the hopeful and joyful anthropology of the church, which promises not a melting away of our individuality, but the continuation of our identity as radically transformed beings in God’s presence. And it is the event that makes us aware of Jesus’ presence and his absence. It is, finally, the promise of Jesus’ return in his particularity as the risen Lord: the one who became incarnate on our behalf, who died on the cross for us, who was raised from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father and who will return to be present with us. **JOHN W. MARTENS**

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

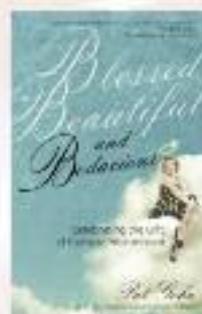
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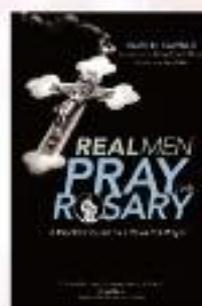
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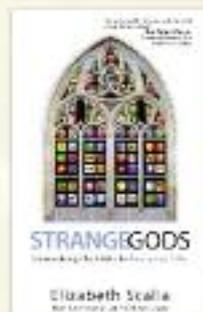
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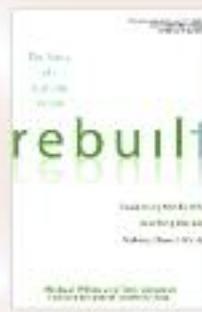
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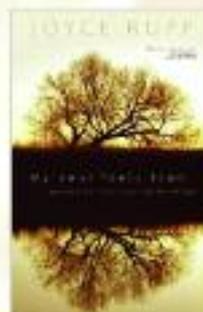
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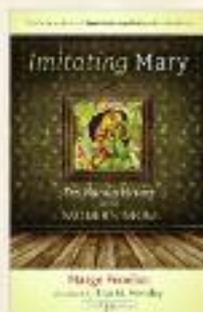
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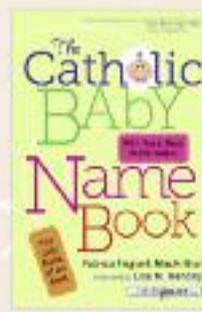
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