

JESUIT EDUCATION

# America

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## The Cardinals' Appeal

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PERIPHERY

JIM McDERMOTT

A mere half mile from the spot where Our Lord was born, nine children are born each day at Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem. Though it offers a full range of health care services, the hospital specializes in prenatal care and delivery. At the invitation of Pope John Paul II, the medical facility has been supported and administered since 1990 by the Knights of Malta and houses a maternity ward with 63 beds and the latest in Western medical technology. Thanks to the generosity of its benefactors, it's hard to discern any difference between Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem and Children's Hospital in Boston. Since its opening, the dedicated team at Holy Family has delivered more than 55,000 babies, without regard for their parents' ability to pay or for their religious or national affiliations. The church's commitment to a consistent ethic of human life is clearly and daily evident in their work.

I visited the hospital this month during *America's* eight-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Bethlehem, as you likely know, is located in the Palestinian Territory, on one side of a gargantuan wall that separates the Israelis from Palestinians and, in a very real way, the first world from the third world. Life in Bethlehem is dramatically different from life in downtown Jerusalem, just a 15-minute car ride away. Unemployment rates are stuck in the upper 20s, and daily wages for Palestinians are less than half of those of their Israeli counterparts. These two economic realities have converged to produce a myriad of social problems for Bethlehem's residents, including a lack of access to good, affordable health care. So Holy Family Hospital, which has the only available medical care for high risk pregnancies in the area, is saving lives daily.

It makes sense that this Christian work should shine in the midst of such poverty and struggle. After all, Jesus was

born in this place during a disturbingly similar period of occupation and destitution. It also made good sense for us to visit the hospital. For the previous six days, led by *America's* editor at large, James Martin, S.J., we had toured the major sites associated with Jesus of Nazareth, from the shores of Galilee to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the site of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. But when the risen Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene and his disciples, he did not simply announce his triumph: he also commissioned them to make disciples and to serve the least among us. In that sense, the visit to Holy Family Hospital gave our pilgrims a glimpse of one of the ways that Christians are meeting the Lord's mandate in our own time.

It is almost impossible to put into words what one feels during such a pilgrimage. "Awe-inspiring" is one word. "Humbling" is another. But after some initial reflection, I've settled on "hopeful." I am hopeful, not because I think we have solved our problems or because there appears to be less injustice in the world. Far from it, I fear. I am hopeful because this pilgrimage allowed me to meet Jesus once again, this time in the land of his birth and ministry, the land that biblical scholars like to call the fifth Gospel. I encountered anew the one we call in Mass our "blessed hope." Whatever happens, he has already won the ultimate battle between good and evil.

That gives me the hope I need to redouble my efforts on behalf of the kingdom of God. It's the same hope the good men and women of Holy Family Hospital show in their work, the same hope that allows us to believe in faith that we will one day sing with joy and with new meaning the words of one of our favorite hymns: In that little town of Bethlehem, "God imparts to human hearts/ The blessings of His heaven./ No ear may hear His coming,/ But in this world of sin,/ Where meek souls will receive him still,/ The dear Christ enters in."

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

106 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019-3803  
Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596  
Subscriptions: 1-800-627-9533  
www.americamagazine.org  
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Kevin Spinale, S.J.

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

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

**PUBLISHER AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER** Edward  
Spallone. **DEPUTY PUBLISHER** Rosa Del Saz. **VICE**  
**PRESIDENT/ADVANCEMENT** Daniel Pawlus. **DEVEL-**  
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**STAFF** Chris Keller; Glenda Castro. **ADVERTISING**  
**CONTACT** ads@americamagazine.org; 212-515-0102.  
**SUBSCRIPTION CONTACT/ADDITIONAL COPIES**  
subscriptions@americamagazine.org;  
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*Cover:* Pope Francis places a biretta on new  
Cardinal John Dew of Wellington, New Zealand,  
during the consistory on Feb. 14. CNS photo/  
Paul Haring

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## ON THE WEB

Kevin Spinale, S.J., leads a discussion of "**Killing Jesus**," by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard, and **Brother Joe Hoover, S.J.**, right, reads his favorite recent poetry on "America This Week." Full digital highlights on page 39 and at [americamagazine.org/webfeatures](http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures).



### A Humanitarian Disaster

Conflict in Iraq, Syria and Yemen and violence and poverty in African states are propelling an unprecedented flight to Europe. The most desperate are attempting to escape by sea from the chaos of Libya, where they are prey to Islamic State assassins and criminal human trafficking gangs. After the deaths of hundreds in two horrific incidents in April, it is clear that Europe's maritime capacity, too focused on treating the crisis like a border control problem and not the humanitarian disaster it has become, must be rapidly and dramatically scaled up.

The crisis offers the European Union the opportunity to review and rationalize its asylum policies with the aim of establishing a reasonable and comprehensive plan for immigrant and refugee resettlement continentwide. The fiscal and social burden for new operations should be fairly distributed among all member states.

Pope Francis wisely warned in Strasbourg last November that any coherent E.U. response must include provisions to protect migrants not only on the high seas but in communities of resettlement, where they may be targets of labor exploitation or the source of resentment.

Unfortunately, no matter how Europe responds, tragedies on the Mediterranean will continue as long as the complex of conflict persists in Syria and Iraq. Finding a diplomatic solution to the violence that is tearing ancient communities apart should diminish the dangerous exodus across the sea. That is partly why a successful conclusion to negotiations with Iran over its nuclear development program remains a geopolitical imperative. An Iran that can be better integrated into the international community could play a pivotal role in bringing to an end these brutal conflicts across the Middle East.

### Vatican vs. Violence

With the aim of encouraging respect for "true spiritual values," the Vatican is planning a diplomatic offensive against religious violence grounded in frank and open dialogue with Muslim leaders and teachers. In an interview in April with the newspaper *The Australian*, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Holy See's secretary for relations with states, discussed the importance of religious engagement in negotiating global peace and noted "the situation of the Christians in the Middle East is most precarious and distressing."

The larger issue of religious extremism, which is not confined to Islam, also needs to be addressed. This virulent strain infects all religions, including Christianity

and Judaism. Recently, graves at a Christian cemetery in northern Israel were desecrated, and Jewish extremists, who have carried out similar acts in the past, are suspected. Israeli government officials rightly condemned the vandalism. Religious extremism strives to achieve ideological dominance over the other. If violence can obtain that objective, it will be used. By employing its vast diplomatic network, the Vatican hopes to raise awareness and combat religious intolerance. It is a critical issue of our time, which tears at the fabric of civil society as well as of religion, and it must be addressed.

As *America's* editorial "A U.N. for Religion?" (3/9) stated, the Vatican is uniquely situated to provide a forum for conflict resolution and possible reconciliation. The great unknown is whether it can succeed in this endeavor. In order for society and religion to thrive, it must succeed.

### Lessons From Ebola

It is clear now that the world was not ready for the Ebola outbreak that began in December 2013. After ravaging parts of West Africa for more than a year and a half, the highly infectious disease has left 10,000 dead in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and has infected an additional 25,000. As the outbreak began to spread, many considered the World Health Organization the group best suited to respond. But in a recent statement its directors acknowledged that they, too, were caught unprepared, adding that the world remains vulnerable should another major outbreak occur.

W.H.O. leaders expressed a desire to create new measures that could help prevent such catastrophic situations. They promised to devote more resources to studying diseases with outbreak potential and acknowledged the need to create a reserve group of staff members for crises, provide greater oversight of member countries and use new organizational systems in the field.

The leaders highlighted the importance of building trust. Much of the chaos caused by Ebola was due to a lack of trust between affected communities and health workers. Strong relationships between communities and health workers can be key to rapid and more orderly responses to emergency situations. The W.H.O. might consider asking aid organizations already on the ground for guidance in their efforts to build relationships in potential outbreak areas. Organizations like Catholic Relief Services often have a deep understanding of both the big picture and the challenges that individuals face. They could provide the context needed to prepare for and, we hope, prevent future outbreaks.

# The Student Debt Crisis

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Higher Education Act. Part of Johnson's Great Society agenda, the legislation was created as a way to lessen the economic divide between poor and rich American families by providing better financial support and resources for lower-income students seeking higher education. Fifty years later, however, with rising tuition costs and a rapid increase in student loan burdens discouraging working- and middle-class college aspirations, that divide threatens to become unbridgeable.

The current federal student loan debt is over \$800 billion. As of 2012, the average loan balance for borrowers of all age groups is \$24,301. The skyrocketing cost of tuition, which has risen far in excess of the rate of inflation, is a major contributor to the uptick in borrowing.

Research shows that upon graduation, many borrowers—who make up 60 percent of the graduating class nationwide—are struggling to make timely payments. Recent graduates, who often lack the lucrative job offers and competitive salaries obtained by their predecessors, have very few options if they cannot make their payments. Once the deferment period ends—usually six months after graduation—borrowers must begin making payments immediately. Many recent graduates can make only minimum payments while interest accrues; most outstanding student loans have interest rates of nearly 7 percent or higher. Unless a borrower meets specific requirements, like economic hardship or a high credit score rating, there is little to no consumer protection available. Unlike mortgage and car payments, student loans cannot be refinanced.

Millennials have been hit the hardest. Burdened by student debt, millennials are putting off large purchases, like houses and cars. An article in *The Atlantic* last October states that home ownership among millennials has reached a 19-year low. A recent study by the Pew Research Center also finds that Generation X-ers (now in their 30s and 40s) who have outstanding loans are likewise affected by the lingering weight of student debt. Those who took out college loans have less wealth than their parents had at the same age, which makes it more difficult for them to save for retirement, investments or their children.

What is being done to address the problem? In 2013, Congress passed the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act, which allows students who took out loans in the 2013-14 school year to pay an interest rate of 3.86 percent on their loans. Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts, proposed the Bank on Students Emergency

Loan Refinancing Act. Under this proposal, students would be given the opportunity to refinance their debt at current government-subsidized rates (less than 4 percent). Senator Warren added that these lowered rates “would be paid for via higher taxes on top earners.” Congress initially rejected Warren's plan in 2014; the senator hopes to push it through this year.

Loan relief is a good first step, but better financial information should also be provided for students so they understand the implications of the agreements they are making as college freshmen. Universities and colleges with huge endowments could also consider following the Stanford University model; the university now offers free tuition for families making less than \$125,000. While not all schools can afford to be so generous, it is incumbent on administrators everywhere to look for creative and prudent ways to contain the cost of a degree.

Catholic colleges also have a special responsibility to offer affordable education for low-income students. Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity Washington, explained in an interview with *America* that although her school's endowment is only \$14 million, Trinity is able to provide its students with \$10 million worth of tuition discounts. She says that particular attention is given to so-called Dreamers, undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children.

Many students opt out of attending college because they cannot afford tuition costs and fees; others do not see a four-year degree as a significant reason to overburden themselves with student loans. But the competitive global economy of the future will demand some level of post-secondary education, and study after study has documented the importance of a four-year degree to long-term wealth creation. Young people in the United States should not be hamstrung from the start of their working lives because they are trapped by unreasonable debt.

The decision to pursue higher education should pay dividends for all members of U.S. society, not merely the banks or the government. As Pope Francis urged on Palm Sunday in his message for World Youth Day, we must encourage our youth “to be revolutionaries” and “to go against the tide.” What better way than through education, preferably one they can afford?



## REPLY ALL

### F.D.R.'s Legacy

In “The Taxman Cometh” (4/13), Joseph Dunn writes that President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “massive experiment with redistribution failed to work as planned.” On the contrary, F.D.R.’s experiment exceeded expectations. Beginning in 1933, nearly three million 18-year-old men went to work in the Civilian Conservation Corps.

In the 60 years prior to F.D.R.’s presidency, 16 economic downturns occurred with unemployment ranging from 12 percent to 25 percent. After F.D.R.’s last term, unemployment has never once reached 12 percent. Median income increased over 60 percent during the “housing, highways and high tax” economy. Median income has otherwise typically declined in the “low tax economy.” The percentage increase in median income with Clinton’s tax increase was nearly double that of Reagan’s tax cut.

Mr. Dunn writes, “The limitations of an economy based on housing, highways and high taxes were becoming apparent by the late 1950s.” The second President Bush perhaps made apparent the limitations of an economy based on tax cuts: the recent Great Recession was the ninth worst economic contraction since 1856.

CHUCK KOTLARZ  
*Online Comment*

### Charity Instinct

Re “Metaphysics and Money,” by Gary Anderson (4/13): Quibbling about motivations for charitable response is far beneath a search for true holiness. We give help, support and friendship to the poor and unfortunate precisely because they are poor and unfortunate and we wish to share and help them to be restored and uplifted. Watch any child instinctively share with someone he or she sees as deprived. No righteous thinking, no judging, no weighing, no bargaining with God, just

compassion and an unselfish desire to make things better. Our better natures are altruistic, until someone tries to explain human love and its response in other, self-interest terms. May God bless the generous and make them happy in their sharing.

MIKE EVANS  
*Online Comment*

### My Changed Heart

Re “Lord, Have Mercy,” by Jeanne Bishop (4/6): I read Ms. Bishop’s book, *Change of Heart: Justice, Mercy, and Making Peace With My Sister’s Killer*, in one sitting. In 1980 I lost my sister Patricia to her husband, who took his own life. I felt pity for him, especially because he hurt so many people in the last act of his life. After reading her book, I see that I can do more. I can pray for him and ask God to show mercy to him. With God there is no time, so my prayer now can be seen by God from all eternity and it can still help. Again, Ms. Bishop, thank you for your amazing book and witness.

PAUL FERRIS  
*Online Comment*

### Talk the Talk

Re “A Space for Women” (Editorial, 3/30): **America** did well in focusing on the Voices of Faith gathering at the Vatican on International Women’s Day. On that Sunday, a woman, Kerry Robinson, the executive director of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, was invited by the archbishop of New Delhi to preach at the liturgy in a small parish inside the Vatican—probably a first, at least in this millennium.

The editor’s proposals are helpful. However, on the first, attention to language, things have been moving backward in recent years. After enabling inclusive language in the liturgy for more than three decades, the new Roman Missal took it away and substituted impossibly sexist language. In addition, the Lectionary omits texts on

the roles of women in the first-century church, which is extremely offensive, since we come to church to hear God’s word, but hear only parts of it.

If Catholics consistently hear at church that only the existence and discipleship of men is of significance, it will affect how they see themselves and persons of the opposite gender. Furthermore, it is also important in journalism. **America** was exemplary for decades in using only inclusive language but recently has become rather negligent in adhering to it. Maybe we should all be quiet for a while and listen to what God may be calling us to be and to do.

ELISABETH TETLOW  
*Online Comment*

### Choosing Ignorance

Re the responses to “No White Man Is Innocent,” by Nathan Schneider (3/23): It seems there is a horrifying misunderstanding of what racism is. It is not simply white-hooded men. Accepting a black president, having black friends, hiring black men and women, living next door to a productive African-American family—these do not disprove the existence of racism.

This is why no white person is innocent. Understand “racism” first; then see the systemic, out-of-sight out-of-mind racism that is prevalent in America but is oftentimes beyond a white person’s knowledge. It is my ignorance of this truth that leaves me guilty, not by choice but simply by birth. If I choose to remain ignorant of this truth, that is where the problem lies.

BEA STOUT POLLARD  
*Online Comment*

### Death, Naturally

In “On Dying Well” (3/16), Jessica Keating writes: “Suffering unto death can be penetrated and transfigured by the mystery of love. This transfiguration occurs in hidden intimacies. Choosing to die early forecloses such possibilities.” As a hospice chaplain, I’m often struck by how these trans-

figurations unfold slowly over time. As loved ones face the reality of death, relationships slowly open up in ways that invite greater love, healing and reconciliation, sometimes after years of distance.

Early on, family members may be filled with fear and trembling at the prospect of losing their loved one. Over time, they dig deep to find an inner strength and resiliency that sustains them through the struggle. Those who are dying may dig in their heels and hold on tightly to life, not ready to let go. Little by little, they begin to loosen their hold as they slowly open to the mystery of dying. They are often moved by their awareness of God's love permeating it all and sometimes speak of the nearness of God. The process is profound, as is the grace that flows through it. This is but a glimpse of the dignity to be found in the natural dying process.

NANCY SMALL  
Worcester, Mass.

### Family Breakdown

In "A Cry of Hope" (3/9), a review of Robert Ferguson's *Inferno*, Frank Hermann, S.J., speaks of a "punitive impulse" seizing our society as one cause of the high prison population in the United States. Does he really think that most Americans enjoy punishing people? Or are they concerned for their safety?

Curiously, no mention is made of the family's breakdown—talk about a glaring omission. In *The New York Times* Ross Douhat writes: "In a substantially poorer American past with a much thinner safety net, lower-income Americans found a way to cultivate monogamy, fidelity, sobriety and thrift to an extent that they have not in our richer, higher-spending present" ("For Poorer and Richer," 3/15). In *Coming Apart*, Charles Murray has a message for affluent whites: "preach what you practice" (family, stability, work, education, thrift).

Is it true that "society's punitive impulse confines people in cages with

nothing to do and without any future"? Do we not spend an enormous amount on recreation, health care and education for prisoners? None of this obviates the fact that all lives are worth living. But to attack a problem effectively, we need to tackle the real cause: family breakdown.

ROBERT C. PALITO  
Woodhaven, N.Y.

### Revisiting 'Coal Canyon'

I have seen only two responses to Stella Jeng Guillory's poem, "They Build a Hogan in Coal Canyon, Arizona" (3/2), and neither assessment has been complimentary (Reply All, 3/30). Allow me to ask readers to give it another look. Like Scripture, art sometimes requires a type of anagogic vision, a lifting of the veil, in a sense.

### f STATUS UPDATE

*On April 16, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious issued a joint statement announcing an amicable end to the Vatican's investigation of this group, which represents the majority of women's religious orders in the United States. Readers responded to the news.*

Historians say that President Johnson should have "declared victory" and pulled out of a war that never should have started. Somebody here followed that lesson of history.

ROBERT P. LYNCH

Thankfully this "witch hunt" is over! To me, this was some men in the church trying to dominate and shut down the voices and works that women religious have always con-

Ms. Guillory has seemingly presented a grotesque meal, but to me it undoubtedly signifies the Eucharist. The Passover lamb (kosher killed) must be completely consumed (Ex 12:9). The wilderness of Coal Canyon (a very remote place) draws us to make the Passover connection even further. In our gut reaction to the poem, we can feel like those at the end of St. John's discourse on the bread of life: "These teachings are hard; who can accept them?" (Jn 6:60). But a little bit of time and faith and wrangling, and all of a sudden you realize what some may call "disgusting" is perhaps the most important thing the world ever received. I think there is a lot in this little poem, maybe even the Infinite.

KEN NOVAK  
Online Comment

tributed. God bless these dedicated women and the pope who sought this reconciliation!

PAT GRAY MAHON

Have they agreed to fall into line with Catholic doctrine and moral teaching now? I'm not sure that those calling this a "witch hunt" were paying much attention to the complaints against the L.C.W.R. by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This was a matter of orthodoxy and religious obedience to the magisterium of the church, and there were serious issues being reported.

Since the C.D.F. has ruled there is no issue remaining, let us hope and pray that they persevere in the faith of the church, rather than act against her.

ADAM DOLAN



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SAN FRANCISCO

## What Does Mercy Demand? Two Views of Church Leadership

National attention was drawn to the Archdiocese of San Francisco in mid-April after a group of about 100 area Catholics placed a full-page advertisement in *The San Francisco Chronicle* criticizing the leadership of Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone and asking Pope Francis to remove him.

Among those watching events unfold in the city by the bay is Vivian Dudro, a book editor with Ignatius Press and a 20-year resident of San Francisco. "As someone who has...raised kids here, nothing surprises me," she said. Even so, she criticized the *Chronicle* ad, noting "in every single paragraph there were misstatements."

Dudro acknowledges that a major issue of contention in the archdiocese is the archbishop's proposed changes to the archdiocesan teachers' contracts, which include a list of moral teachings faculty staff must "affirm and believe." But, she surmises: "Let's be honest, the reason why this is such an issue is San Francisco is the mecca for the homosexual-rights movement. And the church here has had issues with trying to proclaim its message in a city with a lot of people who reject that message."

Tom Brady Sr., an insurance executive who was among those who added their signature to the *Chronicle* ad (and also the father of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady), points out that the signees have all offered decades of service to the church.

He sees comments like Dudro's as an attempt to minimize their reasonable concerns. "The Catholic Church means a ton to me," he explained. "I've been involved in it my whole life. And what I see going on here is virtually every constituency being disenfranchised. Whether it's girls and women or gays and lesbians or high schools or the parishes.... The teachers are all shook up. The parents are all shook up. The priests are depressed."

Asked about whether he and his fellow signees had considered smaller or less public steps, Brady said: "We've written letters to the papal nuncio. We get no response. And the archbishop continues to disrupt and stir up Catholics. If you keep getting ignored, what are you going to do?"

A statement released by the archdiocese called the allegations in the advertisement "a misrepresentation of Catholic teaching, a misrepresentation of the nature of the teacher contract,

and a misrepresentation of the spirit of the Archbishop." According to the statement, "The greatest misrepresentation of all is that the signers presume to speak for 'the Catholic Community of San Francisco.' They do not."

In response to the advertisement, a new group, "San Francisco Catholics" will be holding a family picnic in support of Archbishop Cordileone on May 16.

"As the Archbishop is saying, he's not creating a division," she said. "A division already exists. There are people both inside the church and outside the church that do not agree with the church's moral teaching. So what's the church supposed to do?"

In some ways, the conflict between these two points of view might be summarized in the ways a church of mercy is differently imagined. Brady says the role of an archbishop is like "in the prayer of St. Francis, it's to be a chan-



**RALLYING THE FAITHFUL.** Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco speaks to a crowd gathered for the fourth annual rosary rally last October.

nel for your peace. To be a nurturer, to foster the spiritual health of all the flock that you have been entrusted with. The pope says that we're supposed to get down and smell like the sheep."

Dudro sees it differently. "I love the pope's metaphor of the field hospital. But I have a metaphor of my own: we're the salvaging operation in a junkyard. Our purpose is the reclamation of human beings."

**JIM McDERMOTT, S.J.**

CUBA

## The Francis Bump

The president of the Latin American bishops' conference called Pope Francis' planned visit to Cuba an opportunity for the church to play a larger role in a country experiencing reforms and re-embracing institutionalized religion.



“Whether we want to accept it or not, Cuba is undergoing a transformation. In this transformation, the institution with the highest expectations from Cuba society to provide a response is the Catholic Church,” said Archbishop Carlos Aguiar Retes of Tlalnepanla, Mexico, president of the Latin American bishops’ conference, known by its Spanish acronym CELAM.

“The church continues being an entity with a presence across the island, with small groups, but it’s there,” said the archbishop, whose archdiocese covers the northern suburbs of Mexico City.

Federico Lombardi, S.J., the Vatican spokesman, has confirmed that Pope Francis will travel to Cuba in September, visiting the island prior to his three-city tour of the United States on Sept. 22–27. This will be the second time in less than four years that a pontiff will travel to the Caribbean country.

Pope Benedict XVI visited in 2012.

The visit comes as Cuba and the United States work to re-establish diplomatic relations and build stronger economic ties. Pope Francis played a role in the reconciliation. He urged both sides to start talking, and the Vatican hosted secret talks between U.S. and Cuban officials.

The coming trip will be another opportunity “to promote this opening between the United States and Cuban governments,” Archbishop Aguiar said, adding that the church has long been concerned about the state and fate of Cuba.

Cuba is considered one of the least Catholic countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, with just 27 percent of the population professing the faith, according to a survey by Univision and Fusion. The small number of professed Catholics is a consequence of a policy of secularism imposed by the Communist leadership after the 1959 revolution. The Cuban church is small, but it has been regaining ground since St. John Paul II visited in 1998 and restrictions on religion were loosened.

“Cuban society, regrettably, lost its religiosity. It was beaten back into an individual religiosity” expressed in forms like Santeria, Archbishop Aguiar said. “If the Cuban Catholic Church is supported, is accompanied at this time, when there is this transformation of the Cuban society, the Catholic Church could regain its significant presence.”

Pope Francis has also announced plans to visit three South American countries—Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay—in July.

The trips reinforce the vision outlined in a document edited by the pope when he was archbishop of Buenos

Aires, Argentina, at the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007. The document appealed to Catholics on the continent to make missions a priority and came partly in response to the precipitous decline in the Catholic population of many countries.

“What Aparecida proposed was to go out for [people], that we don’t stay satisfied attending to those that have come [to church], rather that we be willing to go for those who are distant or those that have fallen away or those that are indifferent, but continue being Catholic,” Archbishop Aguiar said. “It’s a gigantic challenge because our mentality, particularly clerical, isn’t made for this.”

By visiting three of the poorer countries on the continent, the pope is continuing his policy of putting peripheral places at the center of church life, said Archbishop Aguiar. “These are three countries that don’t count much in the Latin American outlook,” he said. “They’re small with many problems, historically difficult constitutions, particularly Bolivia and Paraguay. When the pope says, ‘Go to the periphery,’ he also means going to peripheral countries.”



## Audit Released on Abuse Compliance

The U.S. bishops on April 17 released an annual audit tracking the church's response to the abuse of children by members of the clergy. During the 2014 audit year (July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014), 37 allegations of abuse were current and 620 were made by adults who had been abused in the past. Of the current allegations, all were reported to civil authorities, who found six substantiated, 11 unsubstantiated and 12 unable to be proven. Eight other cases were still being investigated. "While substantive progress has been made, it should not be concluded that the sexual abuse of minors is a problem of the past," Francesco C. Cesareo, Ph.D., Chair of the National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People, wrote in a letter introducing the report. "The fact that there were six substantiated cases of abuse of current minors in this year's audit is indicative of the fact that there are still instances where dioceses fall short." Cesareo warned that institutional complacency was "something that bishops need to guard against."

## Envoy for Christians

Beheadings, enslavement, kidnappings and rape plague minority religious communities across the Middle East, and it is time for President Obama to fill a job created to address their plight, a group of prominent evangelicals, scholars and other religious leaders told the White House. In the seven months since Congress created a "special envoy for religious minorities in the Middle East and South Central Asia," the extreme violence against these groups has only escalated, the religious leaders, gathered by the Washington-based International Religious Freedom Roundtable, wrote

## NEWS BRIEFS

**Stefanie Tiefenbacher**, 87, of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, was robbed and murdered in her bedroom in the small town of Ixopo, near Durban, South Africa. • An appearance by Sister Jeannine Gramick, censured for positions on homosexuality and same-sex marriage, at a Catholic church in Charlotte, N.C., **has been canceled** • After an Italian prosecutor revealed on April 24 that the Vatican had been an intended **target of terrorists** in 2010, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin said that the "pope is calm," and that security officials felt "proper" fear but "not an exaggerated preoccupation with the issue." • It was announced on April 21 that Pope Francis had accepted the **resignation of Bishop Robert Finn** of the diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., the first Catholic prelate to be convicted for not reporting a priest who posed a danger to children. • "Rescue is the first priority," said the Rev. Pius Perumana, director of Caritas Nepal, as **humanitarian agencies responded** to an earthquake, 7.8 on the Richter scale, that struck Kathmandu, Nepal's capital city, on April 25.



to Obama on April 20. Nominate someone, they implored. "The Islamic State's murderous reach has extended beyond Iraq and Syria," the letter reads, asking Obama to "swiftly" find a candidate for the envoy job. "Doing so would signal to beleaguered communities in the Middle East, and beyond, that America stands with them."

## J.R.S. 'Disappointed' By E.U. Response

The Jesuit Refugee Service expressed disappointment on April 24 with the measures announced by the European Union to respond to the accelerating migrant crisis in the Mediterranean, describing the outcome after meetings in Brussels as "a lost opportunity." James Stapleton, the international commu-

nications coordinator for J.R.S., told Vatican Radio that J.R.S. was hoping for something "much stronger" to emerge from E.U. emergency discussions—a resettlement plan with a greater focus on saving peoples' lives as well as tackling the migrant crisis at its roots. Instead, he said, E.U. representatives agreed "on a raft of measures" aimed at "hiding the problem." Noting that British Prime Minister David Cameron had pledged ships, helicopters and other resources but at the same time said his government was not prepared to accept any more asylum seekers in Britain, Stapleton said, "What's happening is a shirking of responsibilities" rather than "a sharing of responsibilities" for dealing with the migrant crisis.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

## Xenophobia in South Africa

In a chilling reprise of the events of 2008, South Africa in April endured a resurgence of anti-immigrant violence. Sparked by a demand from the Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini that foreign-born Africans “pack up and go home,” the attacks on individuals and businesses quickly spread from Durban to other major cities. Events such as the killing of a Mozambican immigrant in Alexandra Township in Johannesburg made world headlines.

The dominant rationale of the xenophobes is that immigrant workers—mainly from the rest of Africa, but also some shop-owners from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and China—are “stealing” jobs from South Africans. A closer examination reveals a slightly more complex picture.

South Africa is a country with a skills shortage—from skilled labor such as artisans, builders and carpenters, to the professions (notably engineering, medicine and education). Twenty-one years into democracy, this cannot be seen as simply the practice of white job reservation that has barred blacks from entry into the higher skilled labor market. The demands of the economy had started to undermine that practice as far back as the 1980s, and training quotas in technical and tertiary education after 1994 had started to redress the imbalance. State programs of redress, economic empowerment and affirmative action have further assisted this process.

In 20 years a new middle class, sometimes called the Black Diamonds,

has emerged. Even after massive state expenditure, secondary education has been hampered not by apartheid but by faults in how education reform has been implemented. Despite large injections of cash, the majority of mainly black schools have not produced the desired results: a skilled workforce. Short-sighted education policies and schools that seem to be held hostage by powerful teachers’ unions (strongly

The default position seems to be an expectation that government will provide.

tied to the ruling party) have weakened education.

Post-school technical training is available, but there are very few people in apprenticeships, particularly young black men, who represent the majority of the unemployed and are the major perpetrators of xenophobic violence. Partly this is because of inadequate grounding in school.

The other aspect seems to be lack of interest or a sense that learning a trade or skill is beneath one’s dignity. Everyone aspires to be a success in South Africa, dreaming of a house in the suburbs, a smart car and fashionable clothes. There is a strong sense of entitlement, but without the sense that upward mobility is the result of personal initiative and hard work.

Above all, perhaps, the problem comes down to money: trades and skilled labor are simply not as well paid as professions. Combine this with low productivity compared with many oth-

er countries and a strong tradition of labor militancy and the results are quite devastating. Because South African labor is unreliable, there is less demand to increase skilled jobs or increase wages. Where workers are needed, employers will look for the most skilled and reliable ones; and they are not to be found here. Skilled workers from other parts of Africa are therefore in demand.

Similarly, there is a very low level of what one might call an enterprise culture. While immigrants, following the historical pattern everywhere, start up small businesses regularly—and work very hard to maintain and grow them—local South Africans, with some notable exceptions, do not. The default position seems rather to be an expectation that government will provide—if not well-paying sinecures, then welfare.

Which it does, if not within underperforming state bureaucracies then through welfare—which currently supports 16 million people. But this does not end resentment against working foreigners, particularly those who start businesses that succeed. Nothing fails like success.

A psychologist might infer that the relative success of these immigrants presses a nerve in the psyche—a sense of failure—and, combined with a mentality of entitlement, generates the violent, xenophobic responses we have seen.

Current attempts to stop xenophobia by appeals to morality will not change this. What is needed, apart from radical upgrading of education, is an initiative to challenge entitlement and generate a new attitude on work that emphasizes productivity, effort and enterprise—in short, a revival of that classic understanding of the dignity of work that is central to Catholic social thought.

**ANTHONY EGAN**

**ANTHONY EGAN, S.J.**, is *America’s* Johannesburg correspondent.



# New Monasticisms

Outside a drugstore in the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Bernice McCann found a woman sitting among a cluster of bags. The woman's hands had deep gashes cut by the cold New York City winter. McCann applied ointment to them, massaged them gently and bandaged the wounds. She is a grandmother, and the woman was old enough to be one too. All along they talked. McCann told the woman how beautiful she was, which is what she tells all the street people she meets on these Monday-night rounds in and around Port Authority. They smile and embrace her and tell her their news. A handful of younger friends watch and follow her, giving out their sandwiches and snacks—more timidly, mostly learning from the master, mostly transfixed by her affection.

A couple of hours before heading to Port Authority, the group, which calls itself the HAB Community, gathers a few blocks away, at the office of an organization for homeless and at-risk youth. HAB's convener is Adam Bucko, a 39-year-old Polish emigre with dreadlocks as long as he is tall tied neatly behind his head. These Monday-night meetings are a kind of testing ground for the ideas described in his recent book with Rory McEntee, *The New Monasticism: An Interspiritual Manifesto for Contemplative Living*.

After tea and a few yoga poses, he leads meditation and prayer on the floor in a small chapel. The candle-lit altar there includes a dark-skinned Madonna-and-child icon, Arabic

script from the Quran and Tibetan prayer flags. There is a hand-copied quotation from Martin Luther King Jr. that reads, "If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity." The passage continues: "Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust."

Bucko and McCann grew up Catholic. Visit New York's Catholic Worker houses with McCann, and she can introduce you to the old-timers. The beginnings of The New Monasticism were in meetings at St. Benedict's Monastery, a Trappist community in Colorado, under the guidance of Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O. Yet Bucko has also been received into the Episcopal Church; he counts among his spiritual compatriots a Sufi master and eco-feminist nuns. Many of the L.G.B.T. youth he works with were driven to the streets by religion-inspired bigotry. He seeks a catholicism more universal than what the Catholic Church normally practices.

At a time when religious orders are seeing few or no new postulants, when monasteries and convents are becoming nursing homes, Bucko is setting aside new space for contemplation and works of mercy in the middle of Midtown Manhattan. Experiments like this fulfill Thomas Merton's prophecy that the monasteries of the future will be not big, medieval abbeys but small communities scattered wherever the world is in need. As they appear, they chart out different routes between the legacies behind them and the world before them.

Thirty blocks uptown, Karen Gargamelli has been chipping away cracked paint in a run-down, six-story townhouse with her boyfriend, her mother, Catholic Workers, a team of Dominican Volunteers and some Jesuit scholastics. By day, Gargamelli, 33, is a lawyer who helps low-income people facing foreclosure and eviction. Now she has found a home of her own.

Despite not sensing the call to vowed religious life, she confesses a calling to be a foundress. This might seem grandiose were she not both temperamentally humble and resolutely practical. For years she has been writing proposals, forming boards and meeting with diocesan officials. At last she found a priest with a building he needed to rent, a former convent

## Setting aside space for contemplation in the middle of Midtown Manhattan

with a solemn chapel and rooms that are tiny even for New York. Starting this summer, Dominican Volunteers will fill some of them; others will house lay community members and homeless guests. They will call themselves Benincasa Community, after the surname of St. Catherine of Siena, a Dominican tertiary who lived not in a convent but in her family's home.

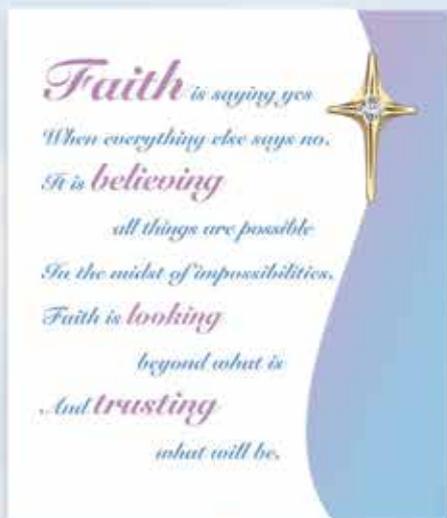
On the first day of cleaning, Gargamelli and her crew received a visit from Genevieve Whitmore, a member of the Sisters of Charity who lived in the building a decade earlier. Sister Whitmore remembers praying, as she moved out, that new life would come to the place. The interval had left the house partly in ruin. "But you know," she said, "ten years is not a lot in God's time."

NATHAN SCHNEIDER is the author of *Thank You, Anarchy and God in Proof*. Website: [TheRowBoat.com](http://TheRowBoat.com); Twitter: @nathanairplane.

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# The Cardinals' Appeal

Perspectives from the periphery

BY JIM McDERMOTT

In February Pope Francis installed 20 new cardinals. In keeping with the pope's interest in moving the church "to the peripheries," these new cardinals hail from all over the world, many from places we rarely hear mentioned in the U.S. press. Most are pastors who have worked with populations on the margins—migrants, religious or cultural minorities, displaced people, indigenous groups, the economically disadvantaged or people in danger.

But they share other experiences that have gone less reported as well, experiences that may have made them attractive to Pope Francis. Ten have been president or vice president of their bishops' conferences, another president of a conference of religious orders; and almost all served in these roles at the same time that Pope Francis, then Cardinal Bergoglio, was head of the Argentine bishops' conference.

They are men who can be expected to bring new, perhaps surprising perspectives to the meeting of the Synod of Bishops on the family next October in Rome. Cardinal Edoardo Menichelli, 75, hails from the Archdiocese of Ancona-Osimo, a central Italian land of rolling hills, vineyards and sandy beaches on the Adriatic Sea. He told *America* that he hopes, following the synod, the church will appreciate that "every person is a gift from God, no matter their sexual inclinations. Heterosexuals, gays, everybody has a lot to offer. We have to rediscover this in the Gospel and in our everyday mission."

Likewise, Cardinal Alberto Suárez Inda, 75 (Morelia, Mexico), who has spent decades in southwest Mexico work-



**Clockwise from top: Manuel Macario do Nascimento Clemente, John Dew, Peter Nguyen Van Nhon, Jose Lacunza Maestrojuán, Soane Mafi, Berhaneyesus Souraphiel, Daniel Sturla Berhouet, and Francesco Montenegro**

ing for peace and reconciliation amid the violence of drug cartels, government forces and private militias, calls for "a meeting that is not self-enclosed, but where the pastors really carry with them the *sensus fidelium*, the sense that the Holy Spirit gives the church to respond to the serious pastoral problems—while being faithful to the doctrine, sensitive to the needs that real families live with."

As much as Pope Francis' choices have been interpreted as emphasizing the "globalness" of the church, the selections clearly also mean to be apostolic, to accomplish immediate good. They draw world attention to crises like the violence in Mexico, the plight of migrants in Europe, the threat that climate change poses to the peoples of the Pacific, the horror of human

trafficking in Africa and Asia.

So it is in Vietnam, where the church has long struggled to build trust with the Vietnamese government; in Myanmar, where Cardinal Charles Bo has been very involved in efforts to protect Muslim minorities from persecution; and in Mexico, which the Vatican pointed out in January is the most dangerous place in the world to be a priest. Being made cardinal will help these men gain a hearing (and perhaps even protect them).

In the month prior to their installation, *America* reached out to the new cardinals for their thoughts on the church

JIM McDERMOTT, S.J., a screenwriter, is *America's* Los Angeles correspondent. Twitter: @PopCulturPriest.

**NEW VOICES.** Pope Francis leads a consistory at which he created 20 new cardinals in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Feb. 14.



today. Seventeen found the time in the hectic weeks before their installation to respond. The full text of their responses can be found on America Media's website ([americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org)); but some selections follow below. They offer a glimpse of the minds and hearts of these new church leaders.

### **On Being Named Cardinal**

*Cardinal Menichelli:* "I was writing the homily for the next Mass and I heard noise from the outside, like children screaming.... The noise came from the nuns that work at my house. They had received the news Pope Francis made me a cardinal and they came to tell me, shouting: 'The Pope named you a cardinal!'"

"Really? I was very surprised. Then I told them: 'Okay! Now you better go and cook lunch!'"

*Cardinal Francesco Montenegro, 68 (Agrigento, Sicily):* "I understood this is a kind of award for the land of Agrigento and the people of Lampedusa Island, where the migrants reach Europe from Africa. Pope Francis chose Lampedusa

as his first trip outside Rome. He came here and he said that in this land poverty and providence can walk together.... I'm happy for these people of Agrigento and Lampedusa, as it recognizes their efforts."

*Cardinal Luigi De Magistris, 88 (retired head of the Apostolic Penitentiary):* "I'm honored to be named cardinal. My whole life was about serving the church, and I tried to do my best, like many others who aren't now cardinals but loved the church like me or more. And I received so much love and so many spiritual and moral gifts. I can't thank God enough."

### **Hopes for the Church Today**

*Cardinal John Dew, 66 (Wellington, New Zealand):* "That it be seen to be involved in the lives of those who are struggling for one reason or another; that the church be seen to be offering hope and support."

*Cardinal Peter Nguyen Van Nhon, 76 (Hanoi, Vietnam):* "I hope the church reflects the face of God who is meek,

ONS PHOTO: PAUL HARING

goodness, full of mercy through our mission of love and service.”

**Cardinal Arlindo Gomes Furtado**, 65 (Santiago de Capo Verde, Cape Verde): “I hope that the church fights against all forms of violence and destruction of human dignity, as Pope John Paul II called for during his visit to Cape Verde 25 years ago.”

**Cardinal Montenegro**: “I want the church to learn from people who have nothing, to walk with those who are miserable. I was born in a poor family; I had very difficult times. But I learned a lot. Without this, the church is going nowhere.”

**Cardinal Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel, C.M.**, 66 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia): “My hope for the church is that it continues to become credible not only to its flock and those it serves, but also to the whole world which is expecting so much from the Catholic Church.”

**Cardinal Soane Patita Painsi Mafi**, 53 (Tonga): “That the church becomes a humble church, but filled with the fire of the Spirit.... A church whose members are moved with passion to share and spread the good news of their faith-filled experiences in their daily lives, so that others would realize their own.”

### A Key Message From the Church

**Cardinal Nhon**: “Good News of peace, full of joy and hope.”

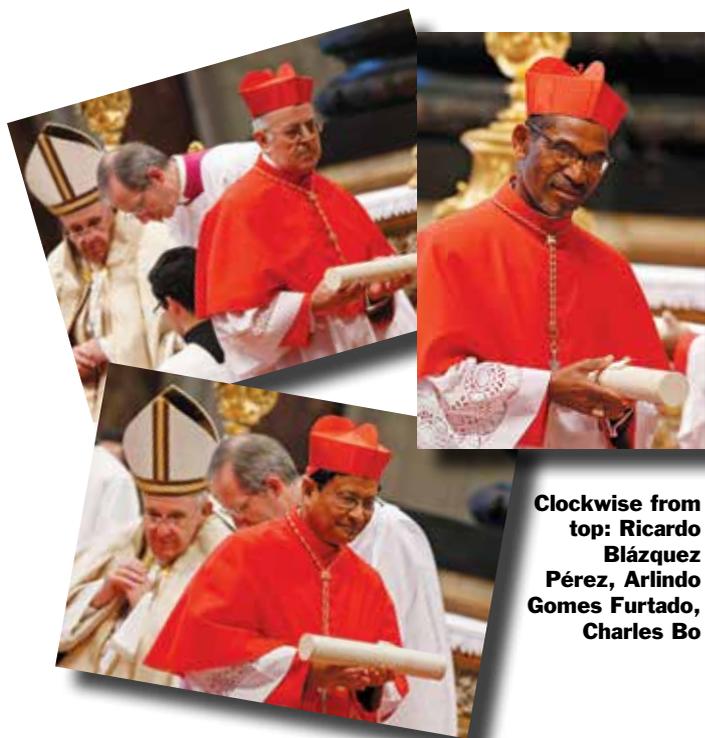
**Cardinal José Luis Lacunza Maestrojuán, O.A.R.**, 70 (David, Panama): “We know that the world hopes and asks for the presence and the word of the church on many cultural, economic, social, political and environmental issues. And we cannot fail, but...our fundamental word and our key witness is to make present the good news: God loves us.”

**Cardinal Dew**: “I have no doubt that the church should be offering a message of hope to those who struggle with life.”

**Cardinal Dominique François Mamberti**, 62 (head of the Apostolic Signatura): “The church in her pastors, of course, but most especially in the millions and millions of everyday Catholics—parents, workers, professionals, students, the young and the old—must show forth in the world that holiness and fidelity to the Gospel is possible.”

**Cardinal Ricardo Blázquez Pérez**, 72 (Valladolid, Spain): “The Gospel must be spread by the presence and the signs offered by Christians. So the embrace of the leper in the story of St. Francis of Assisi finds a version in our days in the embrace of Pope Francis with a man who had a skin disease that disfigured his face. This hug is a parable of what the church should offer today.”

**Cardinal José de Jesús Pimiento Rodríguez**, 96 (retired Archbishop of Manizales, Colombia): “To insist that the



**Clockwise from top: Ricardo Blázquez Pérez, Arlindo Gomes Furtado, Charles Bo**

## The newly named cardinals can be expected to bring new, perhaps surprising perspectives to the Synod of Bishops in October.

Gospel is not an ideology or a philosophy, but a way of life.”

### What Have They Learned?

**Cardinal Daniel Fernando Sturla Berhoet, S.D.B.**, 55 (Montevideo, Uruguay): “That the most important things are simple. That the church is called to be transparent and close.”

**Cardinal Lacunza**: “About God, to look to him as Father. It is the great lesson of simple and humble people: confide in him, cling to him.

“About the church: that in her we have room for everyone and we all have something to contribute. Also here the simple and humble teach us to bring everything we are and have.”

**Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, S.D.B.**, 66 (Yangon, Myanmar): “God is never tired of forgiving us and accepting us.”

**Cardinal Menichelli**: “We are all brothers; we have one Father. Races and colors are visible to our eyes, but to be human is something invisible, and this is what we have to find in one another, like a family.”

**Cardinal Montenegro:** “That a Christian person can’t stay on a side of the road watching others walking; the Christian person has to walk with others. We have to fight.”

### Images of Encouragement

**Cardinal Mafi:** “In the early days of my life, during my school years, I was always moved whenever I recalled the fact that Jesus had ‘dared’ to call his followers ‘his friends.’ This image of a ‘friend’ seemed to have remained with me and defined my own spirituality in many ways.”

**Cardinal Manuel José Macário do Nascimento Clemente,** 66 (Lisbon, Portugal): “Jesus, on a boat, facing a windstorm, peaceful and able to continue through that challenge.”

**Cardinal Suárez:** “The image of God that the first books of the Bible give us, especially Exodus and Deuteronomy: a God who cares and is concerned for his people, who hears the cry of his people. He is a father who educates and takes the hand of the little one through the walk across the desert, protecting them so that their feet do not swell nor their clothes wear away.”

**Cardinal Júlio Duarte Langa,** 87 (retired Bishop of Xai-Xai, Mozambique): “I think that all Scripture, and particularly the Son, shows us the Father and good shepherd who cares for his flock and asks mercy especially for the lost sheep. He supports and encourages me in my vocation, as does the young Carmelite Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who

discovered the immensity of God’s love.”

### Hopes for the Synod

**Cardinal Blázquez:** “I want the church to be like an alarm clock that allows humanity to discover or rediscover the fundamental meaning of marriage and the family.”

**Cardinal Sturla:** “My hope is that the fathers of the synod listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and that this be their only goal.”

**Cardinal Clemente:** “That the expected focus on challenging situations, which will increase for sure, will not overshadow the beauty and truth of the Christian proposal.”

**Cardinal Bo:** “We do not hope that the synod would change the doctrines nor the fundamental principles of the church. But I do hope that there will be more pastoral and intensive care for families, a deeper sympathetic pastoral approach toward families, especially those in irregular unions.”

**Cardinal Furtado:** “At the end of the many debates that certainly will be, it is my hope that Mother Church heads to her sons and daughters living with some sort of failure in life as spouses and as family, with optimism, with practical incentives and welcoming gestures to enable these members to feel included in the life and activity of the church—in fact to feel the church is a big family and a welcoming home. I believe that this is in fact the greatest pastoral challenge we must face.”



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# In My Backyard

The first warm days of spring had me leaping out of bed at 7 a.m., woken not by birds but by the sound of a Caterpillar machine clawing down a building across the street. The structure was built about 30 years ago, an upgrade for a locally owned supermarket in my small city. After a super-supermarket went up a block away, the building became a health club for a few years, then an empty fortress. It is to be replaced by a couple of low-rise apartment buildings.

No doubt most of my neighbors are happy that the mean-looking box and its sullen parking lot are finally being replaced. But the improvement to the neighborhood is sure to accelerate already-rising rents, as well as boost prices for houses within walking distance of a gentrifying downtown. Civic improvement always has its victims.

In Malden, Mass., where I grew up and now live again, there are also plans to tear down the city hall, a 40-year-old building hated for its flat, Brutalist style. Forty years! Even the most humble church is designed with a far longer lifespan in mind. Indeed, the only real survivors in this downtown area, which has been constantly “redeveloped” in my lifetime, are the 19th-century brown sandstone public library and three churches (Catholic, Baptist and Congregationalist). Sacred Hearts Church—where Mass was first celebrated in 1892, in the basement because the ground floor wasn’t finished yet—still rises above its Main Street neighbors, topped by

a small cross that contrasts with the unadorned roofs around it.

Sacred Hearts has seen a lot of changes in its neighborhood, some natural and some the result of urban planning fads that held sway in Boston or Washington, D.C. When the current city hall was built, tagged with the more grandiose “Government Center,” the car was king, and a new bypass road allowed residents to speed past downtown on the way to the malls. Rental housing was associated with big cities and urban decay, so single-family houses were wedged into the rocky outlying neighborhoods while the center of town grew emptier of residents—even as it filled up with parking lots and garages.

Now the center is changing. New apartments are going up, with ever-higher rents justified by nearby public transportation (now back in vogue). The independently owned clothing and furniture stores have not come back, but now there are restaurants and specialty groceries, mostly owned by Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants. Changes to federal immigration law made during the 1960s have, decades later, revitalized the downtown. The state’s 1993 educational reform law may also deserve credit, by somewhat alleviating the huge differences in spending among public school districts. School enrollment here is up after a long decline; immigrants and other families may not be as willing to spend any cost for a house in a “respectable” suburb in order to avoid sending their kids to city schools.

Many of these public policy changes are to the good. Few of us would want to go back to the consensus view that urban areas are in irreversible decline, necessitating the government to do all it can to help decent people avoid “bad neighborhoods.” The tone of American politics is not elevated when candidates can profit by appealing to suburban fears of city residents (a strategy that is often a not-even-veiled appeal to racism).

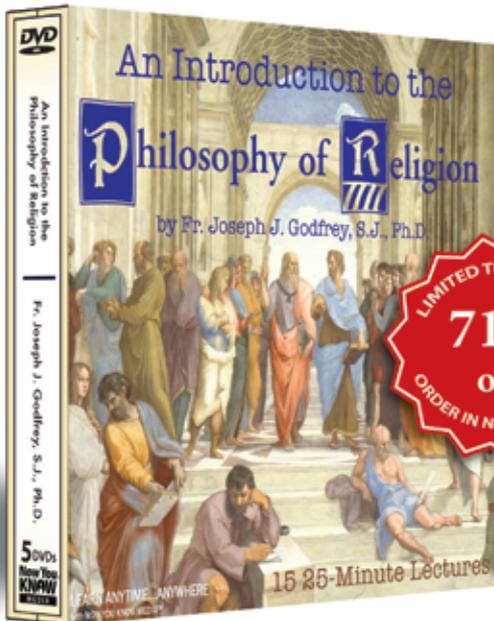
Still, what’s good for the city at large isn’t always a benefit to the individuals who were there during the toughest times. Case in point: Jewelers’ Row in Philadelphia, one of the last places in big-city America where, as the Philadelphia Inquirer’s Inga Saffron writes, “stuff gets made.”

Saffron writes that this two-block district, which has been around since 1852, is at risk of extinction, its land coveted by condo developers looking to take advantage of Philly’s downtown revival. The artisans of Jewelers’ Row remind me of the businesses that were in my neighborhood long before gentrification seemed possible, including a stationery store, a portrait photographer and a typewriter repair shop.

The teardown outside my bedroom window has me excited for the future of my neighborhood. But I’ll say a prayer for any parishioners of Sacred Hearts who may find themselves priced out of the homes they kept in good shape when nobody else wanted them. **ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN**

This downtown area has been constantly ‘redeveloped’ in my lifetime.

**ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN** is a freelance writer and editor living in the Boston area. Twitter: @RobertDSullivan.



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# Company Men

On preserving the unique identity of Jesuit universities

BY WILLIAM J. BYRON

**T**he Jesuits in American higher education have lost the principle of assignment. In its place, the principle of attraction has been at work since the 1970s. Previously, the superior of a Jesuit province would, after appropriate consultation, assign one of his men to a given college or university faculty or administration in that province, and the receiving institution would welcome the man to its ranks. This was the principle of assignment.

Operative now is a two-way principle of attraction. The credentialed and qualified Jesuit follows his attraction to a given vacancy at a particular college or university; or the institution, for its part, works to attract a Jesuit to consider working there. The provincial then assigns the man to mem-

bership in the Jesuit community associated with the institution to which he has been attracted and is now missioned.

The provincial can no longer assign a man to teach a specific subject or hold a staff position at a specific Jesuit college or university. In the old days, the educational institution and the sponsoring religious community were one corporation. The president of the college or university was also the rector of the Jesuit community. And the governing board of the institution was composed primarily, if not exclusively, of Jesuits. In the 1940s and 1950s separate incorporation began to occur, and the community at a given institution was led by a religious superior who was appointed by the provincial and distinct from the president. Boards gradually opened up to having laypeople as members and as chairpersons; and the board, not the provincial, appointed the president. The Jesuits no longer “owned” the university; the board, no longer exclusively Jesuit, set policy, oversaw hiring decisions and

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**WILLIAM J. BYRON, S.J.**, a former president of the University of Scranton, The Catholic University of America and Loyola University New Orleans, has been a Maryland Province Jesuit since 1950.



Georgetown University

for all practical purposes “owned” the institution.

“We gave it all away,” some Jesuits still lament. Others say, “We have finally arrived in the mainstream of U.S. higher education.”

As this transition has taken place, another change—a cultural shift, really—has occurred. It is typically described as a decline in vocations; some call it a vocation crisis. There are fewer Jesuits in the ranks these days, and the prospects for growth are not positive.

On the 28 Jesuit college and university campuses, meanwhile, offices of “mission and identity” have opened up to protect and preserve the Jesuit identity of the institutions. Campus ministry is prospering. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are touching the lives of lay faculty members, administrators and students in new and creative ways. Courses in Jesuit history and Ignatian spirituality enjoy a prominent place in the curriculum. Off-campus service opportunities abound for students. And many would say that the institutions are now more Jesuit than they have ever been.

In the year after Pope Francis’ election, the Society of Jesus saw a significant increase in men inquiring about the possibility of joining the order. Yet even if there were to be a dramatic rise in the number of young men choosing to join the Society of Jesus in the United States, the institutions still have to be concerned about the preservation of their Jesuit mission and identity. Not all the new recruits will

want to pursue ministries in the academic world, although I hope that Jesuit provincials and formation directors will encourage movement in that direction.

In cases where a young layman of generosity and talent might be attracted by the example of Jesuits at work on Jesuit campuses, it seems reasonable to ask why he would want to become a Jesuit if the Jesuit order could not assign him to work in a Jesuit institution. Just as West Point and Annapolis might lose their appeal if, upon graduation, those who enroll there have no guarantee of assignment to an active Army or Navy unit, a potential candidate for admission to the Society of Jesus who wants to work in Jesuit higher education might have second thoughts if the Society were unable to assign him to work in a Jesuit school.

There may, however, be a way around this dilemma. Perhaps we can create on every Jesuit college and university campus a group of Jesuits—say four or five in number, with the rector of the local Jesuit community as their leader. These Jesuits could work as retreat directors, chaplains, moderators, non-tenure track teachers, coaches or counselors and could work together as a band of brothers whose presence and professional services help to set the institution clearly apart from other schools. This could be a place to which Jesuits could easily be assigned and from which Jesuits might eventually cross over to join the institution’s own tenure-track faculty or professional staff. It is not so wild a dream when you quietly consider it.

Those in key positions throughout the institution, most of them not Jesuits—faculty, staff, administration and trustees—would have to want to see it happen. Budgetary provisions would have to be made so that the institution could pay these Jesuits for their services. Rectors of Jesuit communities would have to become effective team leaders. That, in fact, might be the best word to describe it: a team. The rector would become a broker between those with power to hire within the institution and Jesuits already on or to be recruited for the team and who are available for service. Space would have to be provided in university-owned student unions or campus centers, or “on corridor,” as we used to say referring to service as dormitory counselors. The team would have to be visible and easily identifiable as Jesuit. Again, not so wild a dream presuming that the Jesuits and their lay colleagues want to make it happen.

If this happens, the question of Jesuit identity would pretty much take care of itself, and the admissions offices of these schools would have something additional, if not unique, to pitch when they compete in the tightening race for new students.

This could prove to be a picture of the future of American Jesuit colleges and universities. It could also be a partial response to the challenge the order faces as it deals with diminishing Jesuit manpower in the United States. ▲



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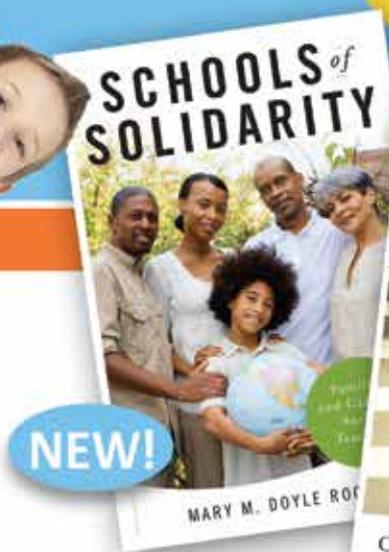
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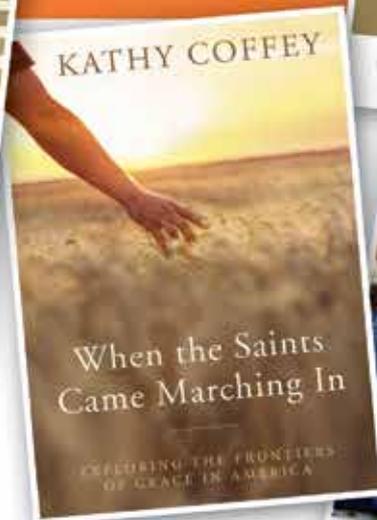
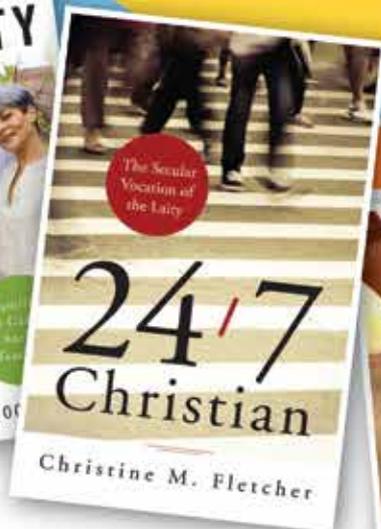
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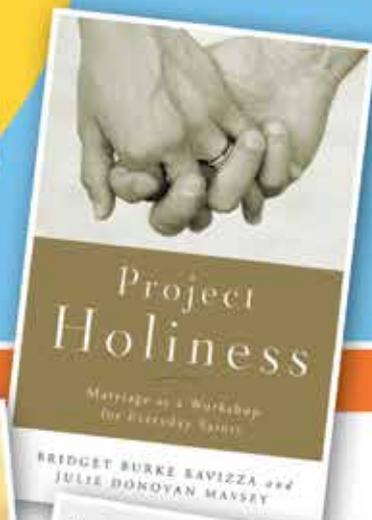
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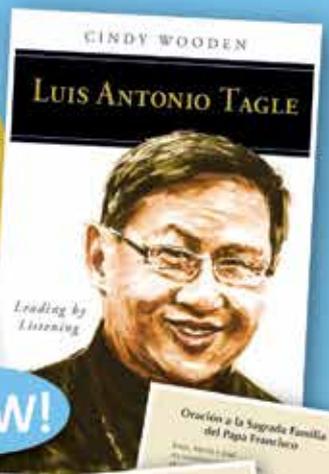
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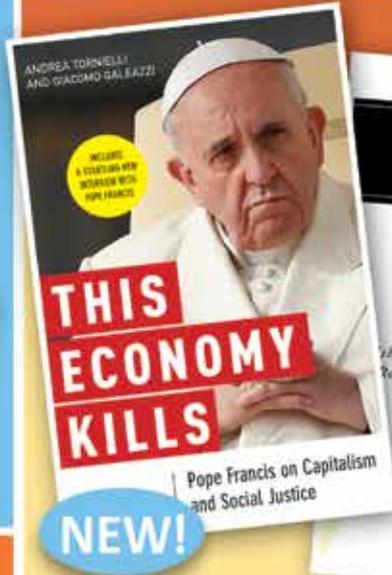
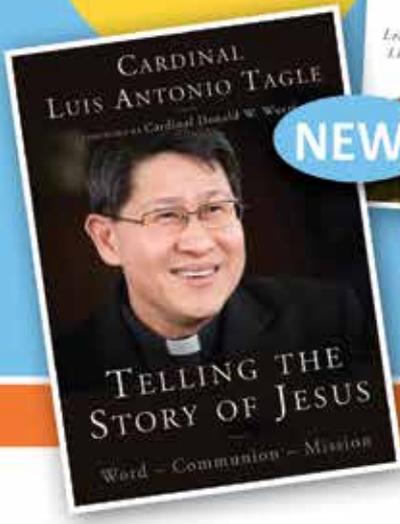




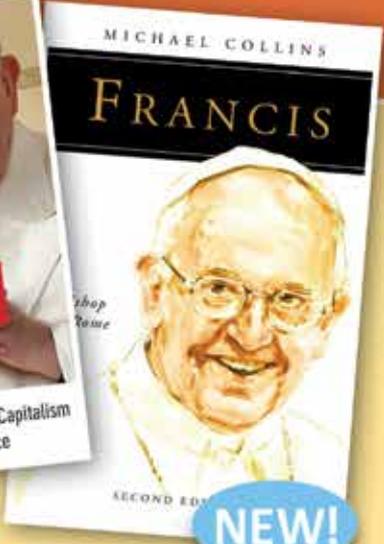
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# Getting Personal

The philosophy of W. Norris Clarke, S.J.

BY DAVID C. PATERNOSTRO

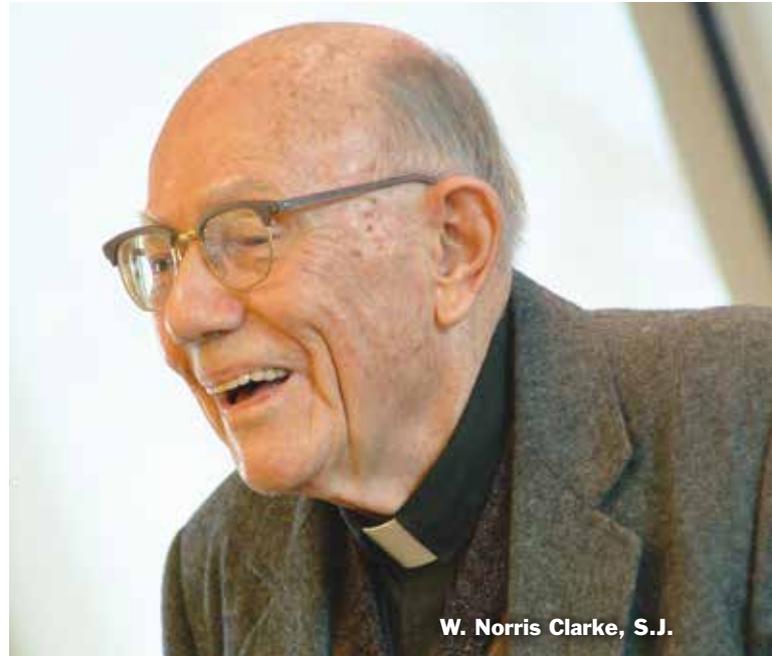
**W**hen I arrived at Fordham University in the fall of 2007, W. Norris Clarke, S.J., was reaching the end of more than 50 years of teaching there, where he was a great light in the study of Thomas Aquinas. In particular, Father Clarke focused his attention on what is known as personalist Thomism, a school of philosophy that took the Thomist tradition and grafted onto it new insights about the human person and the relational dimension of all being. Right up through his last day in the classroom, young Jesuits studying philosophy at Fordham flocked to his course.

After Father Clarke's death in June 2008 at the age of 93, a blog post on *America's* website noted that both the oldest and the youngest Jesuits in the house of studies located just off the Fordham campus had taken classes with Father Clarke, "despite the six decades that separated the two." Whatever differences these Jesuits (a group not known for mildness or uniformity of opinion) may have had, there was a common admiration for his intellect and pedagogy. He completed his last class in December 2007, six months before his death.

Father Clarke had an enthusiasm for the exploration of reality that was infectious. He was a man who looked at the world with the wonder of a child and always wanted to know more about it, convinced that this desire was not a vain one. Father Clarke's approach to the world is one worth considering. His posited that all things were "substance in relation" and said that, for a person, stories are the vehicle for relations. These ideas allow us opportunities to consider reality both as it is and as it could be.

## Seeing the Whole

In 2001, Father Clarke published *The One and the Many*, a book on metaphysics that alone would be enough to secure his reputation as a philosopher; and in March 2007 he put out a new edition of *The Philosophical Approach to God*. In *The One and the Many*, he noted that a good metaphysician needed both a diving suit and a set of wings—the diving suit to explore the particulars of reality with as much detail and depth as needed and the wings to soar as high as needed to be able to see how everything adds up. (This image also



W. Norris Clarke, S.J.

shows Father Clarke's great talent for explaining nearly any philosophical concept with the lightness of a grandfather recounting stories at the fireside without any loss of rigor.) Anything that helps us see the whole is to be preferred, and anything that keeps us in an insular state, seeing and caring only about our immediate concerns and opinions, dismissing all others, is to be rejected, he said. But he also had great balance in his thought, always desiring to know the particulars without losing sight of their relation to the whole. Like Aquinas, he would draw upon any thinker he could to get a better view of life.

Father Clarke's enthusiasm for getting a better view led to his eclectic style of philosophy and his signature project, the "creative retrieval" (as he termed it) of Aquinas's thought, with particular help from personalism. A tracing of Father Clarke's own influences shows a remarkable diversity. After his beginnings in Thomism, he was heavily influenced by Étienne Gilson's historical study of Aquinas, especially Gilson's idea that what Aquinas saw at the heart of each thing is an act of being rather than simply its essence. From here, he delved into the work of Joseph Maréchal, S.J., and then ideas of phenomenology, especially as articulated by thinkers like Martin Buber.

With this wide range of influences, Father Clarke was

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DAVID C. PATERNOSTRO, S.J., is a Jesuit scholastic studying at the Jesuit School of Theology, Santa Clara University, in California.

able to put Aquinas into conversation with a large swath of the contemporary world, allowing each to balance the other. Aquinas provides a “unified center” not always held by contemporary philosophers, while phenomenology described the structure of the relations and how beings manifest themselves to one another, to which Aquinas is not very attentive. To this end, Father Clarke was comfortable discussing

Receptivity is not weakness—it enables us to enter into communion with other beings, in imitation of the Holy Trinity.

philosophy with multiple schools of thought and took them seriously. Like Aquinas, Clarke would make every effort to present the arguments of interlocutors and treated them as if they too were searching for perennial truth, rather than as thinkers who were wrong, foolish, deceitful or some combination of the three.

### Being in Relation

At the heart of this retrieval of Aquinas is the idea that there is a distinct, existing being underlying every relation. Existence is an action. We are not simply static, atomic beings with no particular connection to one another. In *The One and the Many*, he provides a helpful thought experiment to demonstrate his point: Consider a being with no relations—it does not act upon anything else in existence, nor is it acted upon. Now distinguish it from something that does not exist.

Far from being a sign of weakness, the interrelatedness of beings is a positive perfection on their part. Receptivity to another being’s manifestation is something that we must cultivate—as parents who have tried to instill the habit of saying (and meaning) “Thank you” into their children can attest. I recall Father Clarke asserting that even the members of the Trinity possess this receptivity, and that they could

not exist as a trinity without it. Receptivity is not weakness; it enables us to enter into communion with other beings, in imitation of the Trinity.

This communitarian and relational dimension in Father Clarke’s thought is critical to us today. For thinkers like Aquinas, philosophy was a group project of sorts, where one thinker should be able to draw upon and take into account the best of what has come before. Beginning with Descartes, philosophy engaged in a “turn to the subject”—the grounding of philosophy and human wisdom overall in the individual. This individual dimension has permeated all aspects of our thinking. Alasdair MacIntyre points out in *After Virtue* that most modern conceptions of justice, on both the left and the right, treat humans as isolated strangers and not persons in communion.

In a talk given to community servants in Los Angeles, Greg Boyle, S.J., observed that the goal of service is to make it so that “there is no ‘us’ and ‘them’—just ‘us.’” Looking at our society today, we see too many instances of “us” and “them,” some of which have resulted in tragedy. There is antagonism between members of opposing political views, between members of various races, between members of various social classes, between government and its servants on the one hand and the general public on the other. Bonds of communion have been severed—a severance that Chapter 3 of Genesis reminds us accompanied the Fall itself.

Yet Father Clarke acknowledges the good developments that have arisen from the turn to the subject, like increased respect for individual conscience. His commitment to drawing upon every possible source to explore reality enables him to find the strengths of both premodern and modern thought, and so avoid their weaknesses. Because of this, he is able to put forward the understanding that relations cannot be understood without an underlying individual to *have* these relations and the knowledge that any individual is understood to necessarily have bonds of relation with other beings.

The recovery of the necessity of relations is one key element in combating the injustices of society. There are myriad factors involved in systematic discrimination and antagonism, some of which only grace may overcome. But we may say that discrimination or unlawful force against another is made more difficult if one is aware of and experiences bonds of community with that person.

### Telling Our Stories

Father Clarke noted in *Person and Being* that part and parcel of being human is “to reveal, manifest, express ourselves to other persons, to make manifest who we are, what we believe in, stand for, etc., in a word, ‘our story.’” The story of each person is what gives us our identities and enables us to relate as persons to others. To be a person is to be a storyteller, and to be a storyteller is to be one who can manifest one’s life

and values in a coherent way to others, thereby entering into relationships with them.

Looking over our stories, we see that the network of relationships each being generates exists not just in the present but across time. Where I am, what I do now and what I may yet do are bound up with the stories and actions of people and groups who came into being and ceased to be on earth long before I was born. The bonds of relationship that Father Clarke has discussed are far more vast and strong than we might even imagine.

There are good and bad elements in my individual story that I did not cause. But I stand upon these elements and make them a part of myself (to an extent, I cannot do otherwise), so I must claim responsibility for them, be it through gratitude or contrition. St. John Paul II, a personalist Thomist with whose philosophy Father Clarke strongly identified, had a sense of this when he repented on behalf of the whole church for various injustices committed over its history.

### Norris Clarke's Legacy

Father Clarke's writings have not only a topical value but a perennial, timeless one. In using ideas he has presented, we are able to bring about a way of thinking that has lasting value. First and foremost, he shows us how to look at reality. Reconciliation and salvation are ultimately a matter of creation becoming what it ought to be, what God wills it to

be. Father Clarke was a metaphysician who prized looking at things more than ideas. In his mind, any look at human consciousness or thinking that did not also look at the world in which the human dwells is badly lopsided.

In his writing, Father Clarke's excitement over exploring reality is palpable on every page. This excitement impelled him to make use of every source available. It also led him to wonder at reality, marveling at everything creation is and could be. This should be our own attitude as well. As we look more and more at creation, perhaps seeing things about it we have not seen before, we also see the journey of creation and how we may participate in God's bringing creation to perfection.

In a festschrift for Father Clarke in 1998, Gerald McCool, S.J., called him "an alert and independent Thomist." That is perhaps the most apt description for him. He did not see Thomism as a series of propositions to be memorized and defended, but as a way to explore the whole cosmos. Along his way of exploration, he found other vantage points to help him see reality, and he disdained none of them. He was thus able to recover and further develop insights of Aquinas on the nature of being and how all beings are inextricably bound up in relation with other beings and with "the great chain of being." By internalizing the structure of relationships Father Norris Clarke observed, we can then examine the divisions in our world—and begin to heal them. 

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# Progress With China?

Is an accord between the Holy See and China on the horizon? China watchers are asking this question following a flurry of interviews, articles and comments in the Chinese and Italian media in early 2015.

The interest began when Vatican Insider interviewed some Chinese bishops who encouraged the Holy See to reach agreement with China on the appointment of bishops. The interviews provoked mixed reactions.

Next, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, secretary of state, responding to reporters on March 11 about Sino-Vatican relations, confirmed that “contacts are underway” and “there’s the will to dialogue, a dialogue that has its rhythms and times and we hope can bring some result.” He downplayed speculation that an accord is imminent, saying, “There’s nothing new of importance!” He emphasized, “The only way forward is to talk to one another, to find a meeting point, to try to understand each other and find solutions to existing problems.” He expressed his belief that “the dialogue between the Holy See and China could have enormous benefits for world peace.”

Earlier, Federico Lombardi, S.J., director of the Holy See’s press office, was interviewed by Hong Kong’s Phoenix TV (which has close ties to Beijing) for a Chinese language program on Sino-Vatican relations. He confirmed Pope Francis’ high esteem for China and its people, and his willingness to meet President Xi Jinping in Beijing or Rome.

Asked about the Vatican’s relation-

ship with Vietnam, Father Lombardi cited this as a good example of how relations can develop positively through dialogue. He recalled that Vietnam’s top leaders visited the pope and the Holy See has a nonresident representative who visits the church and civil authorities there.

Afterward, Phoenix TV broadcast a 22-minute discussion program with four panelists on March 11, quoting some of Father Lombardi’s comments, and a two-minute news report. Surprisingly, the discussion gave considerable attention to the Vietnamese model for bishops’ appointments as a reference point for a Sino-Vatican solution. Under its accord with Vietnam, the Holy See presents one candidate’s name to Hanoi, which can approve or reject it. If it rejects, the Holy See presents another name, and so on until agreement is reached. The Phoenix TV discussion, however, presented a reverse model, whereby the government presents a candidate’s name to the Holy See. This is significantly different.

Contrary to media reports, Father Lombardi told me that when speaking about Vietnam with Phoenix TV, he made no mention of the appointment of bishops, much less suggest the Vietnam-Holy See accord as a possible model for China; nor did he use the word *model*. “I was not transmitting a message. I had no mandate to say anything specific about the development of Sino-Vatican relations,” he stated.

A Holy See delegation met its Chinese counterpart in Beijing in June 2014, and a return meeting is to be held

in Rome at a date yet to be agreed on. While several issues have to be resolved, everyone recognizes that at the heart of the dialogue is the disputed question of the appointment of bishops and who has the final say. For the Catholic Church, that is the pope’s prerogative.

The nomination of bishops is a pressing pastoral problem for the church in China today, with some 10.5 million members spread over 138 dioceses (the Vatican’s count) or 97 dioceses (Beijing’s figure). (Statistics for 2014 are from the Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong.)

These dioceses are governed by 59 state-recognized (so-called open) bishops and 42 “underground” bishops. Many are very old. Some 40 dioceses are without a pastor.

If the Holy See and China fail to reach an agreement on bishops’ appointments, this could have serious consequences. China might then decide to appoint bishops independently, without papal approval—say 10 or 15 or more. This would make them illegitimate. There are eight illegitimate bishops in the “open” church community today. If that number were to reach 20 or more, this would become a schismatic church, a Vatican source told me.

That would be tragic for the mainland church. But it would be bad for China too; it would disprove its claim that it respects religious freedom and would affect negatively its international image. Both sides, therefore, have a vested interest in reaching a mutually acceptable, even if not ideal, accord.

GERARD O’CONNELL

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

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# Vocation Crisis

A mother comes to terms with her son's priesthood.

BY KRISTIN GRADY GILGER

**M**y children claim it is often hard to get my attention. I am apt to wander in and out of conversations. I'm often late and easily distracted. I can spend too much time working and not enough time with my family. But when it comes to the big things, when my children are lost or hurt or heading for trouble, I am relentless. I am a finely tuned gyroscope. There is no way they can escape me.

Once, when my eldest daughter was trekking across Europe with a college friend and failed to call home on schedule, I tracked her down using the only scrap of information I had: she was in a certain town in Italy. I called every hostel within 20 miles, insisting on speaking to someone in English, until I landed on the right place. When at 2 a.m. the weary hostel manager handed my daughter the phone, she did not even act surprised. "I'm fine, Mom," she told me. "I don't know why you're so worried."

The answer, of course, is obvious to everyone except the children who are being worried over. We worry because we are mothers. And we think that if we can be there at all the right



moments and ask all the right questions and listen very, very carefully to the answers, our children will make all the right choices in life, the kinds of choices we would make for them if we could.

This is, of course, delusional thinking. There is no such thing as the right choice for us. There is only the right choice for them. These are the lessons I have learned from all three of my children, but most especially from my son, who made a choice 10 years ago that I am only beginning to understand.

When Patrick told my husband and me that he wanted to convert to Catholicism and join the Society of Jesus, we were incredulous. And the more we learned about the Jesuits, the more incredulous we became. As a Catholic priest, he would take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience—vows that are about as countercultural as you can get in 21st-century America. And even then, he would wait a decade or more before he would be ordained a priest and be allowed to do the things priests aspire to do: say Mass and administer the other sacraments.

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**KRISTIN GRADY GILGER** is associate dean of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. She has recently completed a memoir about her experience growing up Catholic and how her son's journey to priesthood has brought her family back to the Catholic Church.

ART: BOB ECKSTEIN

He would study—endlessly, it seemed—and the reward for all his degrees might be nothing more than grinding work in a prison or parish, a school or soup kitchen. He would live in a succession of Jesuit communities, and these would be the only families he would ever know outside of the one he was born into, because, as long as he was a Jesuit, he would never be allowed to marry or have children of his own. He would do the work he was told to do, and when he grew too old to work he would go to a Jesuit retirement home, where he would live out his days praying with other old men. Why would any 20-year-old in his right mind choose a life like that?

### Under Who's Influence?

I am not foolish enough to have ever thought I could dictate what my son would do or become, or even what he would believe. No parents get to decide those things for their children, but that surely does not prevent many of us from trying. One mother I know keeps using the word “betrayal” to describe her son’s decision to write and perform music instead of going to medical school as she did. The Mormon parents of a friend pray incessantly that their daughter will return to the religion that gives their family identity and meaning. Like me, these parents wonder how what they did—and who they are—influenced their children, or whether they had any influence at all.

I had been spending a lot of time thinking about this notion of influence when a friend suggested another reason for my son’s choice. We were having coffee at an outdoor cafe, and I was telling him that my son, against all reason, had decided to become a Catholic priest. “We didn’t even raise him Catholic!” I said, my voice rising. I expected curiosity and maybe even a little sympathy about the wayward things children will do, but instead he said something that made me sit back hard in my chair.

“God has his hands on your family

in such a special way,” he told me gently. Something inside of me shifted when he said those words: It was the first time I had considered whether God had anything to do with it.

Patrick, of course, would say that God had everything to do with it. He would say God has a way of influencing the course of our lives in the most ordinary ways and through the most unlikely people. If the way we raised him led him to be open to a different kind of life, led him in some way to God, why would I assume it was the consequence of chance?

My son has been stretched in just about every way imaginable since becoming a Jesuit. He is no longer the safe, middle-class young man he was when he entered the novitiate in St. Paul, Minn. He has been sent into one of the nation’s worst public housing projects in Chicago, to a remote parish in India and to a women’s prison near San Francisco. He has taught high-school students on a reservation in South Dakota and has baptized babies, counseled couples and blessed the dying as a pastor in Nebraska.

When I listen to my son tell stories about his life as a priest, when I have the chance to witness him minister to others, I feel reassured that he is both needed and loved. And I am no longer as concerned about him being alone. In fact, he is far less alone than almost anyone I know. He even, on occasion, goes on vacation.

### Worth the Worry

This does not mean, however, I have nothing left to worry about. When I talk to other mothers whose sons have chosen the priesthood, I ask about their views of the church, what their experiences were like growing up Catholic and whether they were surprised when their sons decided to become priests. But what I am really interested in is whether they share my unease about long hours, a nomadic life and old age.

Karen Sullivan, the mother of Patrick’s good friend Jeff, told me she is more than happy that her son has decided to become a priest. She says she cannot explain it, but she “just knew” that this is what Jeff was destined to do. She has concerns, of course: Will Jeff be sent someplace far away and dangerous? Will he be able to come home for Christmas? And did I know anything about the white gloves?

I was nodding right along with her until she brought up the gloves. This was perhaps the one thing I had not yet worried about. Karen explained that she had heard mothers of priests have the right to be buried wearing white lace gloves but no one had been able to verify it for her. I promised to look into it.

Patrick had never heard of such a tradition and neither had Jeff, so I turned to Google. A search of “white gloves,” “Catholic funeral” and “mothers of priests” eventually turned up an article by Msgr. Charles Pope, the pastor of a Catholic church in Washington, D.C. According to the article, it used to be church tradition to wrap a priest’s hands with a *manutergium* (Latin for hand towel) after his hands were anointed with sacred oil during his ordination ceremony. The purpose was ultimately practical—to prevent excess oil from dripping onto vestments or the floor.

Traditionally, the *manutergium* was given to the priest’s mother, who kept it in a safe place until she died, at which point it was placed in her hands as her body lay in the casket. The belief was that when she arrived at the gates of heaven she would be escorted directly to the Lord. The Lord would say to the woman: “I have given you life; what have you given to me?”

And she would hand him the *manutergium* and say, “I have given you my son as a priest.” At this, she would be granted entry into paradise. A reward, you might say, for all those years of worry. ▲

# An Irish-American Dream

Lessons on education from my immigrant parents

BY HANNA MAY

I tend to blame some of my less desirable attributes—my too-big feet, my sad excuse for an immune system—on genetics, that unique combination of traits I received from my parents. While in some regards it seems to me I wet my toes in the shallow end of the gene pool, I did make off with some of their more positive qualities (my mom’s thick head of hair; my father’s sense of humor). And getting to know my parents as a young adult has only made me more aware of some of the outstanding qualities I would be lucky to grow into. Above all, I hope one day to live up to their work ethic.

My parents were born in the 1960s in Belfast, Northern Ireland, at the height of “The Troubles,” a period of political and ethno-nationalist conflict that spanned decades.

Belfast was divided between Catholic nationalists, who wanted Northern Ireland to be independent from British rule and under the government of the Republic of Ireland to the south, and Protestant unionists, who wanted Northern Ireland to remain under the control of the United Kingdom. My parents lived in a small Catholic neighborhood surrounded by Protestant unionists and faced persecution daily. Both they and their families were fired from jobs, trapped in poor-quality schools and made to live in unsafe and unclean state-controlled housing. Car bombings and sniper shootings were a part of their everyday life.

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**HANNA MAY** will enter Wellesley College in Massachusetts in September, where she plans to study biology.



My parents witnessed several atrocities, lost family members and best friends to the extreme sectarian violence and had little choice but to become involved in Catholic nationalist counter-vigilante groups. When my father’s life was threatened during his night shift at the local grocery store, it was the last straw. Once they turned 18 years old, my mother and he left Belfast for the United States. When they came to New York they had nothing. They slept on couches and took menial jobs. My father washed dishes and bused tables, and my mother cleaned apart-

ments. There were years of grueling work and long hours away from home.

My parents believed, however, that education was “the great equalizer,” so my father enrolled in college and every penny he and my mother earned was directed toward his tuition. Eventually he earned his bachelor’s degree from Fordham University. My parents lived the American Dream. They never had the opportunities that I have had, and yet they were still able to succeed. This is why I feel it is my responsibility to take full advantage of the gifts they have given me.

### 'Just a Student'

My parents were adamant about my attending a Jesuit high school. They knew that this would not only provide me with the gift of unbounded knowledge but would form me into a well-rounded woman for others.

As I prepare to start college in September, I find myself looking back with overwhelming gratitude on my Jesuit experience at Loyola School in New York. Because of my parents' hard work, these past four years I was allowed to be a student, and just a student—a luxury my parents were never afforded. The academics have been rigorous; my classmates have become lifelong friends; and I have had opportunities my parents could not have dreamed of at my age. I have traveled to Eastern Europe and participated in service trips to West Virginia and Camden, N.J. And my experiences in and out of the classroom have exposed me to issues of

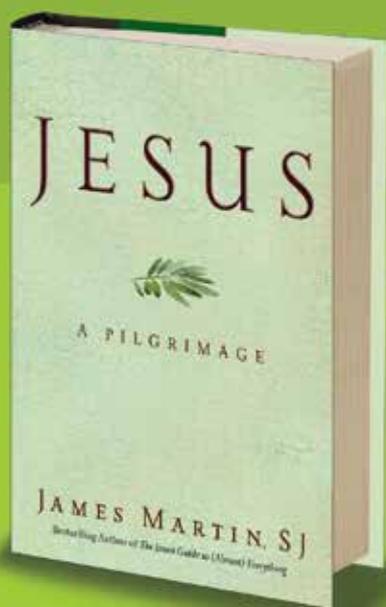
social justice that have influenced both my educational and career decisions.

My parents went to school to get a job, to get ahead and to make a better life for their family. I am fortunate enough to get to go school to find out what I love to do and explore ways I can serve others by doing it. But like my parents, I believe that education can still be a great equalizer. In the African country of Chad, for example, girls are more likely to die of childbirth than they are to graduate from high school; I want to use my education to change that.

Last summer I participated in an internship program run by the chief of neurosurgery at New York's renowned Mount Sinai Hospital. I spent the entire month of July working 10-hour days, five days a week, observing surgeries ranging from brain tumor removal to complete resectioning of parts of the brain. This remarkable opportunity

in the medical field fueled my desire to work in obstetrics and gynecology for Doctors Without Borders. I want to provide women in poorer parts of the world with proper health services. As much as I want to do this to satisfy my own dreams and help others, I want to succeed that much more to make my parents proud.

My parents have given me much more than a mixed bag of genes. They have inspired me with stories from Northern Ireland and their immigrant experience about overcoming hard times with even harder work. They have provided me with a one-of-a-kind education that has opened countless doors. And most important, they have given me a strong foundation in faith. It is with the deep Catholic faith that is intrinsic to my family life that I will begin my college journey this fall, honored and inspired to do all things for the greater glory of God. **A**



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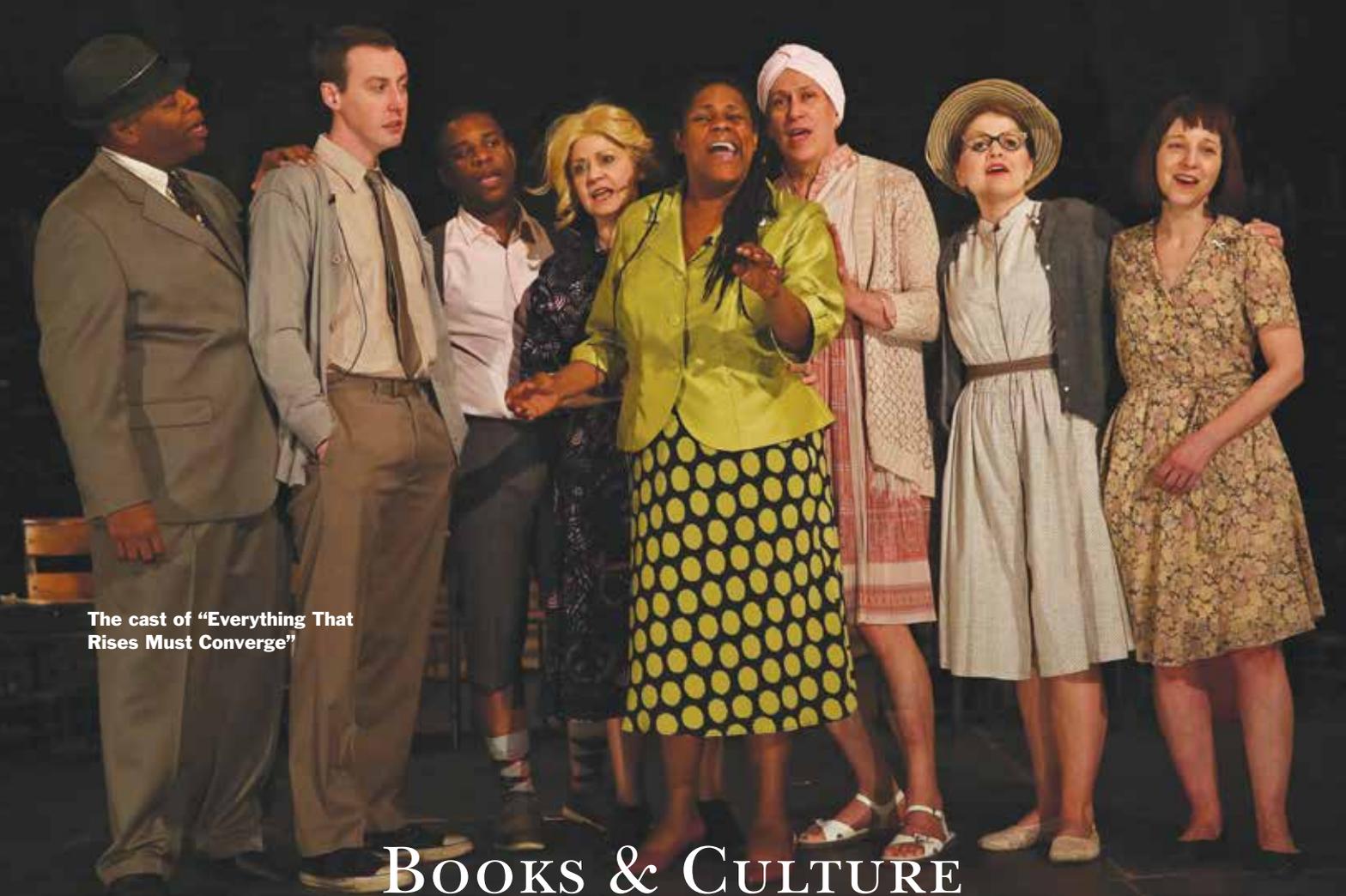
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### RACE AND GRACE

*A classic by Flannery O'Connor comes to life.*

One recent Saturday night, in the grand space of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan, a small troupe of actors performed a dramatic enactment of Flannery O'Connor's story, "Everything That Rises Must Converge." The audience gathered in the hushed space of the church sanctuary seemed as wary as I. The story, written by a white Southerner in 1961 at the height of the civil rights movement, dares to address racial hatred and prejudice in all its ugliness. We were a varied audience that night—white and black, old and young, male and female—attesting to our enlightened times. And I suspect we were all

asking ourselves the same question: 54 years after it was written, what does this story have to say to us now, in this moment, about race in America?

Karin Coonrod, artistic director of the Compagnia de' Colombari theater company, selected O'Connor's story on account of its "quicksilver dialogue which begs to be spoken aloud and played out on a stage." But Coonrod was also moved by "the prophetic gaze of the writer." In fact, the script for the production is simply the text of O'Connor's story, spoken word for word by the various actors, their varied voices drawing the audience from one line to the next.

Mired as O'Connor was in her own

time and circumstance, the story transcends her limitations and imagines a variety of perspectives on race—an issue that has torn families, neighborhoods, cities and our country itself apart from its very beginnings and, as events of the past year have demonstrated, continues to do so. While the story addresses the painful division between blacks and whites, it also holds out the possibility for unity, in both the here and the hereafter.

The main characters are a mother and son who hold profoundly different attitudes toward people of color. Julian (played by Christopher McLinden) is an educated young man with progressive ideas. Barely able to tolerate his mother's racism, her pride in her patrician past and her nostalgia for the days of slavery, he suffers from a martyr complex, imagining himself a modern-day St. Sebastian. Julian, however, is no saint. Though his moth-

er (Jaqueline Antaramian) is guilty of racial sin, she is devoted to her only child, having raised him alone and made sacrifices so that he could receive an education. For all her flaws, she is a good mother—a fact he strangely resents. His habit of challenging his mother's outmoded ideas crosses the boundary from self-righteous rhetoric into a form of sadism one evening en route to her exercise class.

O'Connor brilliantly sets the story on a city bus—the iconic space where Rosa Parks took her stand—and a space that is newly integrated, a circumstance still unfamiliar to whites and blacks in the south. On stage, it is a space represented only by a few chairs. The sparse set allows the audience to focus on the characters themselves.

While on the bus, Julian conceives an evil urge to “break her spirit” and undertakes a series of actions designed to mortify his mother. These consist mostly of lame attempts at creating camaraderie between himself and the

black people aboard the bus, and they succeed only in embarrassing them and himself. (African-American characters in O'Connor's stories know white condescension when they see it.) As for his mother, she is annoyed but impervious to the lesson he wants her to learn—until a large black woman (Ayeje Feamster) boards the bus with her little boy. The woman is wearing a hideous hat identical to the one Julian's mother is wearing, presenting Julian with the perfect teachable moment when he might impress on her the apparent equality between the two women. (The floppy purple and green hats also demonstrate the production team's remarkable attention to the details of O'Connor's description.)

The bus ride makes for compelling drama as each character suffers the uncomfortable scenario. Julian schemes and dreams. Julian's mother sits apart, visibly wounded at his seeming betrayal. The large black woman is described as “a giant of a woman. Her face was set

not only to meet opposition but to seek it out.” All of these varied attitudes and actions transform this ordinary bus into a microcosm. As the actors bring the scene to life, the stage becomes a mirror and the characters reflections of ourselves—flawed people afflicted by prejudices, angers and fears. No one is a paragon of virtue, black or white. In fact, everyone is behaving badly.

There is one exception, however—the child of the large black woman. The little boy, Carver, played by an adult in the stage production (Carlton Terrence Taylor), is enamored of Julian's mother (who loves children, black and white), sits beside her, attempts to cuddle and initiates a game of peek-a-boo. Their interaction is the only generous human behavior we witness, and its charm lends sweetness and humor to this otherwise purgatorial bus ride. We are much amused, but Julian and the boy's mother, disgusted by this outbreak of amity, seethe with rage and frustration. Clearly this moment of gratuitous joy cannot last, and comedy soon turns to tragedy. When they all get off the bus at the same stop, Julian's mother offers the boy a penny—a foolish gesture of noblesse oblige—and the boy's mother punches the old lady, leaving her stricken on the sidewalk.

On first reading, it might seem that what destroys Julian's mother is the violent attack by the large woman, who represents the rage of the whole black race, according to Julian. However, it becomes painfully evident in the staged performance that it is Julian's cruelty toward his mother that kills her. Taking the side of her attacker, he goads and taunts her until she dies of a stroke.

As Julian becomes terribly aware that he has been the instrument of her death, we can see in the actor's face that his high-minded thinking about racial equality evaporates, being the pure abstraction that it was. In choosing the idol of an idea over the physical embodiment of love his mother rep-

## From Nothing

“I am rebegot/ Of absence, darkness, death; things which are not.”  
—John Donne, “A Nocturnal Upon St. Lucy's Day”

Again and again, from nothingness I'm born.

Each death I witness makes me more my own.

I imagine each excess line of mine erased,  
each muscle shredded, each bone sheared.

Eventually, my spine's long spar will snap,  
ribs tumbling loose; my face will droop and drop.

Then I will be reborn—the air will shimmer  
and my molecules, emerging free, will vault.

Behind each door I pass, a light will surge.

ANYA SILVER

*Anya Silver teaches English literature at Mercer College in Macon, Ga.*

resented, Julian has been living in his head instead of the real world. Though the story doesn't offer any practical solutions for racial divisions, it clearly demonstrates that one cannot heal the sins of slavery, segregation and racism by sacrificing one's mother on the altar of social progress.

O'Connor's story ends with Julian's rite of passage into "the world of guilt and sorrow," but the dramatic performance offers us something more. The cast of eight actors, who have for the last hour been engaged in conflict, slowly draw together on the stage and begin to sing the hymn "Be Still My Soul." Ayeja Feamster's deep contralto initiates this song of courage and consolation in the face of suffering. Gradually the others enter into the song, whose sound grows stronger with each voice and verse, culminating in the powerful final lines, "Be still my soul,/ When change and tears are past,/ All safe and blessed/ We shall meet at last."

Black and white, parent and child, man and woman, old and young—all gradually blend into a harmonious whole, offering us a vision of another kind of existence—one wherein wounds are healed, sins forgiven and hatreds transformed into love. This is the foretaste of heaven promised in the story's title, a redemptive vision created by art—the brilliant blend of story, drama and song. All have suffered but have slowly risen up from the social sin that brought them low, and the many have converged into one earthly, heavenly choir. The fact of race, which has served as a source of sorrow in America—from slavery days through civil rights, from Staten Island to Ferguson—becomes "at last" a gift and a grace.

**ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL** is a writer, professor and associate director of the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at Fordham University. She is the author of a new biography, *Flannery O'Connor: Fiction Fired by Faith*.

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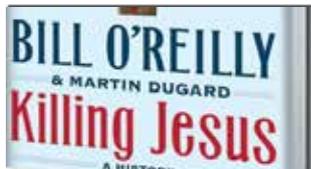
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—ELLEN BOEGEL, *Bridging Our Divisions*

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# OF MACHINES AND MEN

**H**ow do you know a human wrote this? I did, of course. But what if there were a chance that I was not a 24-year-old female but a sophisticated algorithm that drew from IMDB and reactions on Twitter to quickly generate a movie review on opening night. (We're not there yet, but news organizations are increasingly using "robo-journalists" to produce less complex stories, from sports results to financial reports.)

In that case you might look for evidence of abstract reasoning; a creative turn of phrase; a well-placed pun; empathy on the part of the author. You would, in a way, perform the Turing Test.

This is precisely the task set before Caleb (played by Domhnall Gleeson) in the new science-fiction thriller "Ex Machina" from the writer/director Alex Garland. The talented young computer coder for the Google-esque Internet behemoth Blue Book is selected to spend a week at the country-sized estate of the company's reclusive chief executive officer, Nathan, played by Oscar Isaac with an impossibly Silicon Valley combination of megalomania and start-up bro chill. There we meet Ava, a super-advanced robot, which, when fully dressed, is nearly indistinguishable from a human, and an extremely beautiful one at that (Alicia Vikander). The question is whether the same can be said of her mind—whether she possesses true artificial intelligence.

"If you've created a conscious machine, that's not the history of man," Caleb tells his host. "That's the history of gods."

We have all heard about the threats that advanced A.I. could pose to hu-

manity. The tech billionaire Elon Musk, perhaps the closest we have to a real-life Nathan, has described A.I. as "potentially more dangerous than nukes." Last December Stephen Hawking warned that the age of the robot gone wrong could spell greater inequality, mass unemployment and "the end of the human race." But "Ex Machina" is less concerned with a man-versus-machine doomsday scenario than with what we are doing to ourselves in the process of this Promethean act of creation.

Playing God has taken its toll on Nathan. Outside the lab, he spends his time getting drunk and taking advantage of his sole companion, a silent Japanese servant. "Isn't it strange," Ava asks him, "to create something that hates you?" The closer Nathan comes to reaching his goal, the more tenuous and morally ambiguous his control over his creation becomes, raising the question: Is the possession of a highly intelligent machine analogous to owning a very smart phone, a well-trained pet—or a slave?

Likewise, the deeper Caleb gets into his assignment, the less sure he becomes of his own humanity. Ava draws for him, jokes with him, flirts with him. He knows he is being manipulated, but by whom? As he grows more convinced of Ava's ability to think and feel—and his feelings for her take a very human turn—he goes so far as to cut open his arm to make sure he is not in fact the one being tested. In a world where relationships are increasingly mediated

through screens and machines, where our virtual persona can be altered beyond recognition, we too risk losing touch with that which is most human in ourselves.

Finally, there are the unseen, unheard characters that are nonetheless integral to the film's entire enterprise: the public. The troves of data generated through Blue Book provide the raw material for

Ava's "brain," each query entered into the search engine revealing another aspect of human thought.

This is hardly science fiction. Last year Google acquired DeepMind, a cutting-edge artificial intelligence company. Most Internet users have come to terms with the fact that unfettered access to all the information the world has to offer comes at the cost of our privacy and control over personal data. But targeted ads

are one thing; being implicated in the creation of an A.I., with no real say over the final outcome, is quite another.

Estimates as to when scientists will be able to reach true artificial intelligence range from five years to a couple of thousand. In the meantime, "Ex Machina" has raised critical questions about the morality of this endeavor that should be explored not only by the gods of A.I., but also by us mortals, whose online lives and relationships will make up the building blocks of the new Eve. Whatever good or destruction comes from the creation of ever-smarter machines, we have only ourselves to thank. Ava may pass as a human. But she cannot be judged as one.

Targeted ads are one thing; being implicated in the creation of an A.I. is quite another.



# PROTO-PUNDIT

## WALTER LIPPMANN Public Economist

By Craufurd D. Goodwin  
Harvard University Press. 424p \$35.00

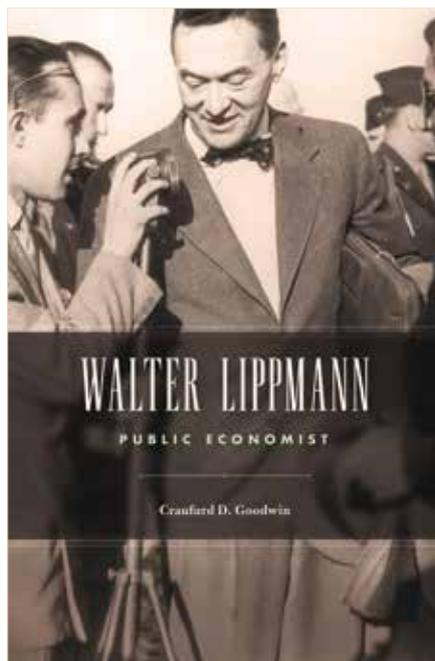
Walter Lippman was a unique voice in American economic and public policy debates for half the 20th century. His career spanned two world wars, the Gilded Age and the Great Depression, the postwar economic boom and the reckoning of the Vietnam War. In *Walter Lippmann: Public Economist*, Craufurd D. Goodwin mines Lippman's books and journalism to provide a comprehensive economic intellectual history of the time.

Lippman was an undergraduate prodigy at Harvard, finishing there in 1910. He worked as a researcher for the muckraker Lincoln Steffens in 1911, an aide to Schenectady's new socialist mayor in 1912, a founder of *The New Republic* in 1913, an assistant in the War Department in 1917, an Army intelligence officer in 1918 and an advisor to President Wilson at the Versailles peace conference in 1919. Finally he settled into a career in journalism and a 36-year run as the country's most prominent journalist and newspaper columnist. He was an all-in-one Martin Wolf, Paul Krugman, Thomas Friedman, David Brooks, Floyd Norris and (insert your favorite pundit here, or reach back to James Reston or Leonard Silk) until his column, *Today and Tomorrow*, ended in 1967 (see Ronald Steele's definitive 1980 biography for more).

Events of that era provoked fierce policy arguments. Lippman positioned himself in the center, the consummate reasonable man and the champion of reasonable men (reflecting the time, it was always "man" and "men"). He saw his job as promoting progress while restraining excess. His erudition, effec-

tive writing and everything-in-moderation approach cemented his role as a Wise Man relied on by millions of readers for sober policy counsel.

Goodwin strings together telling quotes from Lippman's prodigious output and adds his own commentary to convey the economic history of



the mid-20th century. At some points the recounting flags—then Lippman said this, then Lippman said that. But most of the time, Goodwin holds the reader's attention by deftly linking Lippman's views to the dramatic developments of those decades and offering his own seasoned opinion as our leading historian of economic thought.

Goodwin also engages the reader with policy-wonkish celebrity-watching. Starting at Harvard, Lippman had a gift for befriending and engaging elite figures in intellectual, business and policy circles. With whom is he going to hang out next? Post-presidential Theodore Roosevelt? Pre-presidential Franklin Roosevelt?

President Woodrow Wilson? Justice Felix Frankfurter? Winston Churchill? The president of Harvard? The head of J. P. Morgan? General Motors? Well, yes. His interlocutors were a Who's Who of early and mid-century politicians, businessmen, public intellectuals and policy makers like Gardner Ackley, Thurman Arnold, Bernard Baruch, Adolph Berle, William Borah, McGeorge Bundy, even the future C.I.A. superspook Richard Bissell. And those are just some of the A's and B's.

Goodwin returns often to Lippman's close relationship with John Maynard Keynes. For decades, Lippman channeled Keynesian policies in his books and columns. He reminded readers and policy makers that the government is not a family that must tighten its belt when times are hard but an engine that can borrow and spend its way out of an economic downturn. But he also knew and sympathized with Friedrich Hayek. He often counterbalanced his Keynesian thrusts with Austrian School cautions against collectivism and economic concentration.

Goodwin confirms Lippman's stance as a committed liberal in the European sense, favoring free trade and free markets and decrying any form of concentrated economic power, no matter how small. He saw special interests everywhere, even to the point of supporting General Douglas MacArthur's violent expulsion in 1932 of bonus marchers from Washington. Lippman called the World War I veterans a "pressure group."

Goodwin traces Lippman's exercise in what social scientists call "framing" or "diffusion" of economic concepts into policy recommendations that resonated with his millions of weekly readers. At the same time, Goodwin shows how Lippman was skeptical of the very public opinion he wanted to shape. He feared that people were too ill-informed to support policies he advocated and too easily pulled by popu-

lists to extremes of left or right.

Goodwin's synthesis confirms that Lippman was truly a man in the middle, not wanting to go too far in any single policy direction and to be defined as any kind of -ist or -ian with an agenda. Responding to charges that Lippman disdained democracy and preferred a philosopher king to whom he would be chief counselor, Goodwin suggests that his real aim was broad public education—in Lippman's words, a "search for enlightenment"—that would produce wise leaders using reasoned discussion instead of messy politics to shape public policy.

The selections gleaned from Lippman's writings show how, when he moved from the center to a side, he soon regressed to his mean. For example, he supported workers' right to organize trade unions and the 1935 Wagner Act, but only if unions acted tamely. He opposed any form of militant action and thought that the right to strike should give way to mandatory arbitration, citing the system then prevailing in Australia. When unions struck for catch-up wages in post-war inflation, Lippman supported the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act and its harsh restrictions on labor.

Lippman finally came down on one side near the end, when he wrote consistently against the Vietnam War. But even then, he did so on classic national-interest grounds, not from moral opposition or sympathy with the anti-war movement.

Goodwin guides the reader through a tour of mid-20th century economic arguments that echo today. Lippman's views on stimulus versus austerity, regulation versus deregulation, free trade versus tariffs, internationalism versus nationalism, special interests versus public interest, partisanship versus compromise and other policy disputes provide insights into our contemporary versions of these debates.

Insights, but not solutions. Goodwin's account suggests the

ephemeral influence of here today, gone tomorrow newspaper columns, even from the most famous columnist of all. His something-for-everyone urgings mainly solidified views already held by policymakers rather than changing them.

Lippman called for "new men" to be elected and appointed to leadership posts, and was mostly disappointed. He was frustrated because lesser figures held positions of power and failed to take his advice. One wonders how such a talented man might have per-

formed had he applied those talents to the exercise of power in government or business or education. But Lippman was at home as a commentator on events, not an actor shaping them. Craufurd D. Goodwin's skillful distillation of Lippman's views informs our understanding of this complicated figure and his times. Readers can draw their own lessons for today.

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LANCE COMPA is a graduate of McQuaid Jesuit High School and Fordham College, and a senior lecturer at Cornell University's School of Industrial & Labor Relations in Ithaca, N.Y.

CLAYTON SINYAI

## REDEFINING UNION

### ONLY ONE THING CAN SAVE US

#### Why America Needs a New Kind of Labor Movement

By Thomas Geoghegan  
New Press. 272p. \$25.95

"I write this book for people who will never buy it," says the labor lawyer Thomas Geoghegan in his most recent essay on the American labor movement. "It's for people who know little or nothing about—or care little or nothing for—labor unions."

Interesting marketing strategy, that! The author has written a missive to a generation of liberal and left activists who look right past labor and count on increased immigration and new millennial voting patterns to win elections and propel social change. Geoghegan finds this posture myopic and maddening, believing firmly that a revived labor movement is a must—not just for the Democratic Party but for American democracy itself.

In *Which Side Are You On? Trying to*

*Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* (1991), we met this young Harvard Law student as he inadvertently stumbled into the trade union world and, well, fell in love. He came to admire local union officers, organizers and shop stewards who defended their brothers and sisters from both the serious exploitation by Fortune 500 companies and the petty injustices of the knuckle-headed foreman. Geoghegan's oeuvre, from *Which Side to Only One Thing Can Save Us*, reads like a long letter to his Ivy League friends, justifying the ways of labor to people who have never been written up for taking an unauthorized bathroom break.

It's true that progressive politicians think less and less about organized labor, perhaps because there's less and less organized labor to think about. Sixty years ago around one-third of private sector workers belonged to a union; today fewer than 7 percent do. Energetic and creative labor activists have cast about in many directions for avenues to re-



build the movement, and readers of *Only One Thing Can Save Us* will find a grand tour of the big ideas circulating at labor gatherings today.

Many of these ideas involve “minority” or “members only” unionism, a sharp break with customary union organizing. Under the conventions of the National Labor Relations Act (aka the Wagner Act), American workers who want a union typically request an election in their workplace, with all eligible employees invited to vote. If the majority votes yes, the union represents everyone—even those who voted against it. If the majority votes no, no one gets a union—even those who want one.

In a society as individualistic as ours, I think this system of majority rule has much to recommend it. But as Geoghegan points out, many see it as unfair. Those who voted against the union resent its claims to represent them, and unless they live in a so-called “right to work” state that permits them to opt out individually, they resent paying union dues even more. On the other hand, millions of workers tell pollsters and organizers that they want to join a union but are denied the right in practice because they are a minority in their particular workplace.

Members-only unions bypass elections to offer an escape from this box. A group of workers, large or small, forms a union and demands to negotiate with the firm but only on behalf of the union’s members. Is this a practical way forward?

The strict language of the N.L.R.A. protects any group of workers acting in concert to improve the conditions of their work, not just a majority union. As Geoghegan puts it, “when two or three are gathered together, they have a lot of rights under the Wagner Act.” (*Only One Thing* is saturated with Geoghegan’s Catholic sensibility—not through explicit reference, but through prose that repeatedly paraphrases Scripture passages we know by heart

from the lectionary.) Still, bitter experience has taught union organizers that minority unions face extraordinary obstacles. They have difficulty forcing employers to the bargaining table, and their activists are vulnerable to retaliation. Employers can usually smother an organizing effort by firing one or two ringleaders, knowing that a Labor Board investigation can take months or years, and the penalties at its disposal are trivial. Minority unions will need shelter to survive in this hostile climate, and Geoghegan suggests two places they might seek cover.

One is the Civil Rights Act. In recent years, the Century Foundation fellow Richard Kahlenberg and the labor lawyer Moshe Marvit have campaigned to add union status to the Civil Rights Act alongside race, gender and creed. With this amendment, Americans might begin to see the right to organize in a new light, as an expansion of the fight for civil rights and equality. (Martin Luther King Jr., after all, was a strong union supporter and was killed while supporting striking Memphis sanitation workers.) And as a practical matter, workers could avail themselves of the law’s private right of action. A worker fired for union activism would not have to await a cumbersome Labor Board investigation but could file suit on his own behalf seeking triple damages.

The other possible refuge is the one employed by “members only” unions in continental Europe, where the law mandates worker representation while leaving union membership itself optional. Geoghegan especially admires the German Works Council system, under which large enterprises are required to accommodate worker representation from the shopfloor up to the corporate board. Trade union membership is voluntary, and the unions are almost akin to political parties that seek election to these seats. (In some nations, including France and Italy, this character is explicit—rival unions

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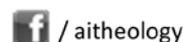
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with different political affiliations and platforms campaign for these positions).

Geoghegan pins his hopes for the civil rights approach on a grand political bargain with union opponents, one that would swap a federal “right to work” law for the desired civil rights status. That sounds like a dangerous gamble for existing labor unions that still protect living wages, health care and occupational safety for some 16 million represented workers—and it is hard to envision that right-to-work advocates, who believe they are winning their fight, would take the bait in any event.

A U.S. law establishing works councils seems even more farfetched,

CHRIS BYRD

## WHAT HAPPENED TO NELLE?

### THE MOCKINGBIRD NEXT DOOR Life With Harper Lee

By Marja Mills  
Penguin Press. 278p \$27.95

*Go Set a Watchman*, Harper Lee’s recently rediscovered first novel, is a best seller on Amazon, and Marja Mills is likely among those eager to read the reclusive Lee’s first published work in more than 50 years.

Mills’s interest in Lee’s rediscovered novel may be keener than most because of her unanticipated and improbable friendship with the novelist, which Mills recounts in her intriguing memoir *The Mockingbird Next Door*.

After the Chicago Public Library program One Book, One Chicago selects Lee’s beloved *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 2001, the then Chicago Tribune journalist is thrilled when her editor assigns her to visit Lee’s hometown of Monroeville, Ala. The trip to the model for Lee’s beloved Pulitzer Prize-winning novel’s Maycomb allows Mills to try to figure out one of our time’s more in-

triguing, enduring literary mysteries: why Harper Lee didn’t write another book after *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Mills, however, isn’t sanguine about securing an interview; Lee typically declines interview requests.

CLAYTON SINYAI is a member of the Catholic Labor Network and author of *Schools of Democracy: A Political History of the American Labor Movement* (Cornell, 2006)

After Mills and her photographer Terrence arrive at the Lee home and Terrence waits in an idling rental car, Mills writes, “I felt uneasy knocking on the door. But I needed to be able to tell my editors I at least tried.”

Eighty-nine and still practicing law at her father, AC’s, firm (the father prefers AC), Lee’s older sister Alice lets Mills into the sisters’ lives. Lee dedicated *To Kill a Mockingbird* to Alice and AC, the model for Atticus Finch. Lee says Alice is “Atticus in a skirt.” Alice died in November 2014 at 103. She, as Mills notes, was her sister’s gatekeeper, which explains the unlikelihood of her encoun-

ter with Mills and the quick rapport they develop. As the visit ends, Alice encourages Mills to interview a close family friend, the Methodist minister Tom Butts.

This visit is the first of successive improbabilities the author experiences. The next one occurs the next day, in, of all places, a Best Western in Monroeville. “The knock,” Mills writes, “came at the appointed time.”

The woman opposite her with “the short white hair, the large glasses, the black sneakers fastened with Velcro,” is Harper Lee. Then 74, she doesn’t necessarily resemble the author of a book which has sold more than 40 million copies. Despite Nelle’s appearance, “when,” Mills writes, “she was up to mischief or giving a gift, you could see the girl in her.” Lee insists the meeting is a visit, not an interview, and that she should call her Nelle, as close family and friends did.

Why the sisters open up to Mills isn’t precisely clear. According to Butts, Mills’s letter requesting an interview “was polite and not wheedling or demanding.” The author also speculates that the Lees wanted to tell their story before Alice died.

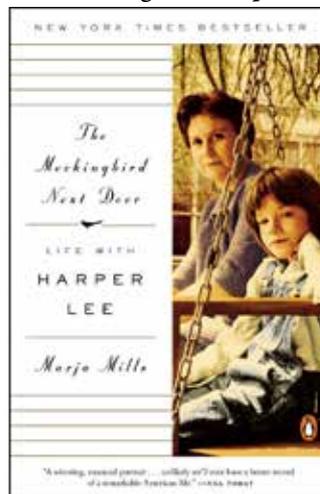
The Lees encouraged Mills after she published her Tribune piece, and she becomes better acquainted with them during subsequent visits to Monroeville. When lupus, which causes great fatigue, compels Mills to go on disability in 2003, her journey takes its most improbable turn.

In 2004, Mills, with, she insists, the Lees’ blessing, moves into the house next door to them. Nelle hopes Mills will write a book to correct, in Nelle’s words, “the forty-year file on Harper Lee.” This “tangle of myths and half truths,” as Mills writes, include rumors she may have received help writing her

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novel and speculation about her sexual orientation. Mills successfully refutes the first claim while judiciously leaving questions about Nelle's sexual orientation open-ended.

Nelle, however, later publicly disavowed her cooperation with the book. Now 88, Nelle suffered a stroke in 2007, which may explain why she retracted her enthusiasm for the book, which Mills insists she possessed.

During her 18 months next door, Mills discovers the Lees are eager to repudiate Truman Capote's claim their mother Frances twice tried to drown young Nelle. Although Frances, concerned about her infant daughter Louise's inability to gain weight, collapsed mentally, she, Alice recalls, regained her equilibrium.

You couldn't trust Capote's version of events, furthermore, because "Truman," as Nelle says, "was a psychopath, honey." Nelle's complicated relationship with Capote will most heighten readers' curiosity. The outlandish personality, who failed as an artist because he couldn't surmount his addictions, continues to fascinate.

In one of our time's great literary coincidences, Capote lived next door to Nelle when they were children and became the model for Dill in her novel. When they lived in Manhattan, Nelle achieved fame with *To Kill a Mockingbird*, while Capote's career stalled.

Some of Mills's more memorable passages describe Nelle's anxiety over two 2005 films detailing Nelle's efforts to help Capote write his nonfiction novel *In Cold Blood*. She agreed to help him because she correctly believed the book would jumpstart his career. She felt, though, that he envied her Pulitzer Prize, and she resented his implication that he helped her write her novel.

Readers will wonder how the discovery of *Go Set a Watchman* may alter Mills's analysis and insights. Written prior to *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Go Set a Watchman* shouldn't be considered Nelle's second book. Had Mills known about the earlier novel, she would likely have used the phrase follow-up instead of second book to explore why Nelle didn't write another book after *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Why she didn't, even in this new context, is the most pertinent question this memoir explores. Immediately after *To Kill a Mockingbird's* publication, Nelle believed there would be another book but gradually decided not to write it. Mills recounts a late-night conversation between Nelle and Butts, while drinking scotch, when Nelle insists the pressure and publicity attending *To Kill a Mockingbird* drove her away. And, Nelle says, she had already said what she wanted to say.

That assertion will arouse readers' skepticism.

Mills, however, does not resolve the outstanding, critical question of Nelle's life: why the woman who wanted, in her words, "to be the Jane Austen of south Alabama," didn't write more books after her famous novel; and that lack of resolution will likely frustrate some readers. The memoir will reward readers more who appreciate the journalist's implausible friendship with a woman the world knows as Harper Lee but she knows as Nelle.

CHRIS BYRD is a writer in Washington, D.C.



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# What Time It Is

ASCENSION (B), MAY 17, 2015

Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Ps 47: 2–9; Eph 1:7–13; Mk 16:15–20

*“Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6)*

Still reeling from the trauma of the crucifixion and then the shattering of all earthly expectations by Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, the apostles, trying to make sense of the common Jewish beliefs regarding the Messiah and the apocalyptic establishment of God’s kingdom, pose a simple question to Jesus prior to his ascension: “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Implicit in this question is a desire to understand what comes next. If God’s ways had left them confounded and confused, yet still elated, could they now grasp the order of the next events? Would the plan follow what they understood the pattern of the coming kingdom of God to be? Not exactly. For Jesus tells them, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.” All they needed to know was that they were to be witnesses to the life and resurrection of Jesus and were to bring their witness to the truth of Christ to the world, beginning from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth. Whatever came next would have to be discovered in the course of faithfully carrying out their mission.

It was not that Jesus was not who they thought he was—though they would discover he was more than they could have imagined, namely God incarnate—it was that “the earliest

Christian community had to discover that God’s saving act temporally differentiated the enthronement of the Son of Man from his judgment of the world; and it had to discover that the Gentiles’ share in this same saving act demanded the launching of a world mission” (Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*). It was in the experience of living their lives as faithful disciples of Jesus that they would come to understand how the events of Jesus’ life informed their task as church.

Jesus’ ascension might be the most misunderstood and overlooked of the events remembered during the Easter season, from the resurrection to Pentecost. But the story of the ascension, which is cast in the language of ancient cosmology, with Jesus “going up” to heaven, is about the enthronement of Christ as Lord. The Gospel of Mark will describe Jesus as “taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.”

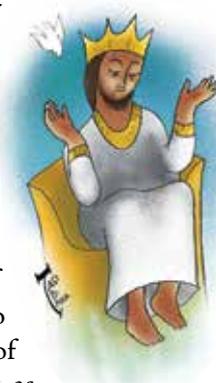
The apostles’ previous hope that Jesus should now restore the kingdom to Israel in a physical sense would now be understood as Jesus’ enthronement as the king who rules with authority over all temporal and spiritual powers. Not only was Jesus King of Israel, he was, indeed, King of the world.

The Letter to the Ephesians relates that God’s power was at work in Christ through the resurrection and when God “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above

all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.” It is because Christ already rules that he is able to guide the church in wisdom and enlightenment, but even more to focus our hope on the kingdom still to come in its full glory. This power is at work even now in the body of Christ here on earth, the church, allowing it to continue

Jesus’ mission of proclamation for the salvation of the world.

The apostles asked, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus’ rejoinder to the apostles, to focus on their own task as church, is not a denial of his kingship but the means by



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How does Jesus’ ascension help you understand the church’s mission?

which Jesus’ kingship would be made known universally.

Yes, the kingdom came in a way they never expected. As we reflect that “this Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven,” we also wonder, when will that be?

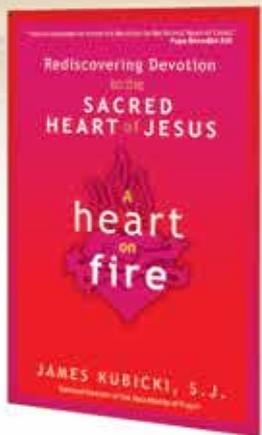
Like Peter and the other apostles, we have our tasks as witnesses, while we await in hope the fullness of the kingdom, knowing that the one who promised it will do it. He will fulfill our hopes beyond our wildest expectations. We do not know when or how this will be, but the one who promised it already reigns, and he will do it in ways we have never imagined.

**JOHN W. MARTENS**

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

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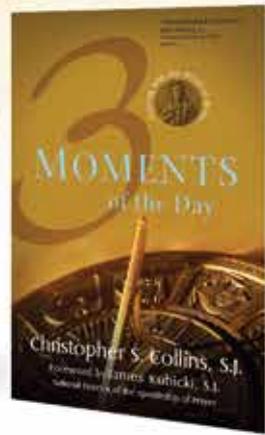
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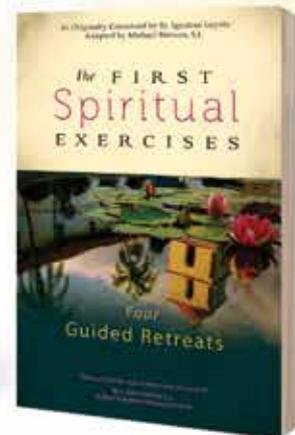
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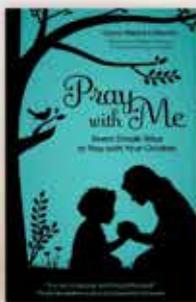


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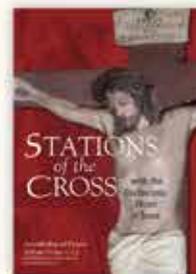
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