America

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Pursuing the Truth in Love

America's Mission for the 21st Century

MATT MALONE

OF MANY THINGS

This December marks the 50th anniversary of "Inter Mirifica," the "Decree on the Means of Social Communication" promulgated by the Second Vatican Council. The decree is one of the guiding lights for **America**. The reflections on our mission and identity in this issue are heavily indebted to the insights contained in that landmark decree. The following are excerpts.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

Among the wonderful technological discoveries which men of talent, especially in the present era, have made with God's help, the Church welcomes and promotes with special interest those which have a most direct relation to men's minds and which have uncovered new avenues of communicating most readily news, views and teachings of every sort. The most important of these inventions are those media, which...can, of their very nature, reach and influence, not only individuals, but the very masses and the whole of human society, and thus can rightly be called the media of social communication....

The Catholic Church, since it was founded by Christ our Lord to bear salvation to all men and thus is obliged to preach the Gospel, considers it one of its duties to announce the Good News of salvation also with the help of the media of social communication and to instruct men in their proper use. It is, therefore, an inherent right of the Church to have at its disposal and to employ any of these media insofar as they are necessary or useful for the instruction of Christians and all its efforts for the welfare of souls…. [T]he laity especially must strive to instill a human and Christian spirit into these media, so that they may fully measure up to the great expectations of mankind and to God's design....

[I]n society men have a right to information, in accord with the circumstances in each case, about matters concerning individuals or the community. The proper exercise of this right demands, however, that the news itself that is communicated should always be true and complete, within the bounds of justice and charity. In addition, the manner in which the news is communicated should be proper and decent. This means that in both the search for news and in reporting it, there must be full respect for the laws of morality and for the legitimate rights and dignity of the individual. For not all knowledge is helpful, but "it is charity that edifies...."

Since public opinion exercises the greatest power and authority today in every sphere of life, both private and public, every member of society must fulfill the demands of justice and charity in this area. As a result, all must strive, through these media as well, to form and spread sound public opinion.... The principle moral responsibility for the proper use of the media of social communication falls on newsmen, writers, actors, designers, producers, displayers, distributors, operators and sellers, as well as critics and all others who play any part in the production and transmission of mass presentations....

All the children of the Church should join, without delay and with the greatest effort in a common work to make effective use of the media of social communication in various apostolic endeavors, as circumstances and conditions demand....

The Synod invites all men of good will, especially those who have charge of these media, to strive to turn them solely to the good of society, whose fate depends more and more on their proper use. Thus, as was the case with ancient works of art, the name of the Lord may be glorified by these new discoveries in accordance with those words of the Apostle: "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, and the same forever."

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Big and Little Wars

A Congolese battalion trained by the U.S. military committed mass rapes and other atrocities last year, according to a newly released United Nations report. Soldiers from the unit joined with other Congolese soldiers to rape 97 women and 33 girls in eastern Congo. This represents a setback for the U.S. military's little-known efforts to train troops in third-world countries.

Consider another story from two years ago. In October 2011 the United States sent a small combat unit of 100 special forces troops to Central Africa to track down and "remove" Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, which has murdered and raped tens of thousands of men, women and children in Uganda and the surrounding countries over two decades.

If you were not aware of U.S. military action against Mr. Kony, then perhaps you have not read *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2013*, published on May 3 by the Congressional Research Service. The report describes every deployment of the U.S. military, from the undeclared naval war with France in the Dominican Republic in 1798 to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's deployment of up to 200 additional troops to Jordan on April 17 of this year. The list includes five declared wars, eight undeclared wars and recent deployments as part of NATO or the United Nations.

The sheer volume of interventions comes as something of a shock. Just zoom in on the 21st century. The United States deployed troops 70 times in 23 countries, including Niger, the Philippines, Libya, East Timor, Kosovo, Haiti, Liberia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of these interventions seem warranted—peace missions, disaster responses, assisting the still unsuccessful pursuit of Joseph Kony, saving a U.S. citizen from Somali pirates. Some appear less justifiable, and a handful have proved disastrous. But they all suggest how grave the responsibility and how well-measured the decision must be before U.S. troops are sent into harm's way.

¡Justicia en Guatemala!

Guatemala made history in April, when a national tribunal became the first ever to try a former head of state for genocide and crimes against humanity. Now they can claim the first conviction, too. On May 10 Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, 86, was sentenced to 80 years in prison for attempting to destroy the Maya Ixil ethnic group during Guatemala's decades-long civil war. General Ríos Montt ruled for 17 months in 1982-83, one of the bloodiest periods in the war. The director of intelligence who worked under General Ríos Montt was acquitted of the same charges.

International human rights organizations lauded the landmark conviction. This time, it is not just the poor and powerless held accountable for criminal activity, but a former head of state—whose friends are still in power. No one should be above the law. While **America** has supported forums like the International Criminal Court for trying such cases, this unprecedented case shows there are additional options for bringing about long-delayed justice. Other countries could follow Guatemala's example, providing a warning to the powerful everywhere: If you commit genocide or torture or other serious crimes, you will be held accountable.

In delivering the verdict and sentence, Judge Yasmín Barrios mandated the attorney general to investigate and prosecute all others implicated in these crimes. Some wonder whether Otto Pérez Molina, the current president of Guatemala, could be subject to prosecution once he leaves office. President Molina served as a military field commander under General Ríos Montt. Questions also remain about whether U.S. officials might face accountability for supporting General Ríos Montt. The United States provided the Guatemalan military, as an ally in the fight against Communism, with money, weapons and intelligence. This kind of support carries with it a moral responsibility to understand its consequences. As Guatemala has exemplified, it must also involve accountability for crimes committed.

Last Words

The graduation ceremonies at universities in the United States are more and more in danger of becoming battlegrounds. The administrations, faculties and student bodies are split on what commencement means and how to celebrate it. At Swarthmore College near Philadelphia the students opposed as a speaker the former president of the World Bank, an alumnus, who had supported the invasion of Iraq.

Meanwhile, some alternatives to "controversial" speakers are poor substitutes: sitcom stars, celebrities, television anchorpersons, comedians or sports "heroes," who allegedly make graduation memorable. Some make the circuit, pick up stipends and deliver the same bromide on every campus. Mark Schwartz, a Swarthmore alumnus, says it best: "This isn't about tolerance or intolerance. It's about whether or not you honor someone within the highest ideals of Swarthmore's Quaker tradition." Catholic universities should follow the same rule. The commencement is the university's last opportunity to teach. It should carefully choose a person who embodies the school's ideals.

Food Aid for Whom?

Through its signature Food for Peace Program, each year the United States sends about $1.4 billion in emergency food aid to hungry people around the world. The United States has saved the lives of millions of people with such assistance, and it could save millions more. Unfortunately, much-needed reforms in the way food aid is delivered that would reduce costs and improve effectiveness may be thwarted in Congress.

Under current law, practically all the food distributed as aid through the U.S. Agency for International Development is produced in the United States and then shipped overseas. The current process is deeply wasteful. According to a study done by the American Jewish World Service and Oxfam, nearly 55 percent of the program's total expenditure goes not to acquire foodstuffs but to ship them. Resources that could be devoted to more anti-hunger efforts are being spent on transporting tons of U.S.-produced commodities. This enriches transport companies but shortchanges the hungry. One is tempted to ask: Who is "aided" the most when food is delivered in this manner, the victims of hunger crises or U.S. shipping and agricultural concerns?

In his proposed 2014 budget, President Obama hopes to introduce changes that have long been sought by advocates on the front lines of hunger disasters, including Catholic Relief Services. The president has called for creating greater flexibility and alacrity in the way food for aid is acquired by allowing as much as 45 percent of future aid to be sourced locally—that is, in or near the nation for which the aid is intended. According to a U.S.A.I.D. study, local procurement could allow the agency to reach as many as two to four million more hungry people each year without increasing expenditures.

The president's reforms also seek to end another controversial practice, known as food aid "monetization." According to that process, commodities produced in the United States—rice, vegetable oil, flour, dry beans and more—are acquired by U.S.A.I.D., donated or sold at reduced cost to relief and development agencies, shipped overseas and then sold by these agencies as a way to relieve hunger and to raise funds for their development efforts. That model has frustrated aid experts for years. It is plainly wasteful. The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported in 2011 that U.S.A.I.D. squanders by monetization about 24 cents of each dollar it spends. Worse, when relief agencies monetize aid, some worry that they are participating in a process that risks weakening or obliterating local food production systems. This diminishes local and regional food self-sustainability and, perversely, sets the stage for the next hunger crisis.

The roster of supporters of the president's proposals reads like a Who's Who of the nation's leading disaster and development organizations. In addition to C.R.S., the list includes Mercy Corps, CARE, Oxfam America, Bread for the World and more. C.R.S. has long advocated cash funding of food aid programs and local procurement. While supporting these reforms, C.R.S. officials also stress the importance of authorizing legislation that sets these reforms in congressional stone. These experts in hunger relief do not want programmatic reforms to become a political football each year when the federal budget comes up for review. They advocate reforms that will eliminate uncertainty and allow relief and development specialists to develop dependable, long-term strategies to reduce global hunger.

At a time when deficit hawks presumably intend to squeeze as much waste and inefficiency out of the federal budget as possible, this restructuring of food aid would seem to be a no-brainer, but the proposal has already drawn determined resistance from major agricultural states, where corporate lobbyists have long nurtured fields of influence. Worth noting is the budgetary size of the issue. Food aid represents about a quarter of 1 percent of the U.S. budget, and the total dollar value of all aid is approximately 0.75 percent of total annual U.S. agricultural sales. The Book of Leviticus calls us to leave the edges and gleanings of the fields for those in need (19:9–10), yet even this tiny percentage of wealth and sustenance intended for the world's poorest people is being vigorously pursued by U.S. agricultural and shipping interests.

Only a few lawmakers have gone on the record supporting the president's proposals, and various campaigns to water them down or spike them completely have begun in Congress. It would be a tragedy if these eminently reasonable improvements are unable to survive the lobbyists' gauntlet in Washington. It is up to the American people, in solidarity with the truly needy people in the world, to urge Congress to find a way to implement these fiscally and morally responsible reforms.

GLOBAL FINANCE

Pope Calls for Ethics Reforms, End to 'Cult of Money'

In his strongest remarks yet concerning the world's economic and financial crises, the pope said, "Money has to serve, not to rule.

"We have created new idols," Pope Francis told a group of diplomats gathered at the Vatican on May 16, and the "golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly humane goal." According to Pope Francis, a major reason behind the increase in social and economic woes worldwide "is in our relationship with money and our acceptance of its power over ourselves and our society." He called for global financial reform that respects human dignity, helps the poor, promotes the common good and allows states to regulate markets.

The Vatican spokesman, Federico Lombardi, S.J., told journalists it was the pope's "first forceful speech on the economic and financial crisis," social justice and the attention needed to the world's poor. Father Lombardi described the speech as "in continuity with his previous talks on these subjects" as Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina. "But as pope it is his first powerful and explicit speech," touching on such themes in-depth, he said. The pope made his remarks during a speech welcoming four new ambassadors as they presented their credentials to the Vatican.

The pope highlighted the root causes of today's economic and social troubles, pointing to policies and actions that stem from a "gravely deficient human perspective, which reduces man to one of his needs alone, namely, consumption.

"We have begun this culture of disposal," he said, where "human beings themselves are nowadays considered as consumer goods which can be used and thrown away."

The wealth of a minority "is increasing exponentially," while the income of the majority "is crumbling," he said. This economic inequality is caused by "ideologies which uphold the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation and thus deny the right of control to states, which are themselves charged with providing for the common good."

The lack of adequate economic regulation or oversight means "a new, invisible and at times virtual, tyranny is established, one which unilaterally and irremediably imposes its own laws and rules," Pope Francis said. Ethical principles and policies of solidarity are "often considered counterproductive, opposed to the logic of finance and economy" and "ethics, like solidarity, is a nuisance," and so they are rejected along with God. "These financiers, economists and politicians consider God to be unmanageable, even dangerous," he added, "because he calls human beings to their full realization and to independence from any kind of slavery."

Pope Francis called on the world's political and financial leaders to consider the words of St. John Chrysostom: "Not to share one's goods with the poor is to rob them and to deprive them of life. It is not our goods that we possess, but theirs."

The pope said he "loves everyone, rich and poor alike," but that as pope he "has the duty, in Christ's name, to remind the rich to help the poor, to respect them, to promote them." Why shouldn't world leaders "turn to God to draw inspiration," the pope asked. Looking to God and "his designs," he said, would help create "a new political and economic mindset" that would bring economics and social concerns back together in a healthy and harmonious relationship.

CATHOLIC DEMOGRAPHICS

Church Enjoys Fastest Growth in Asia, Africa

The number of Catholics in the world and the number of bishops, priests, religious men and seminarians all increased in 2011, while the number of women in reli-

BAD TRADE? Pope Francis calls for ethical and moral reorientation of the economy.

gious orders continued to decline, according to Vatican statistics. The number of permanent deacons is showing "strong expansion" globally, but especially in Europe and the Americas, the Vatican press office reported.

At the end of 2011, the Catholic population worldwide reached 1.214 billion, an increase of 18 million or 1.5 percent, slightly outpacing the global population growth rate, which was estimated at 1.23 percent. Catholics as a percentage of the global population remained "essentially unchanged" at around 17.5 percent.

The numbers represent just a handful of the statistics contained in the *Statistical Yearbook of the Church*, which reports worldwide church figures as of Dec. 31, 2011. According to the statistical yearbook, the increase in the number of Catholics in Africa (4.3 percent) and Asia (2 percent) greatly outpaced their regions' population growth, which was 2.3 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively.

The growth of the Catholic community in Europe and the Americas was even with regional population growth, which was about 0.3 percent for both, the yearbook said. At the end of 2011, most of the world's Catholics (48.8 percent) were living in the Americas, followed by Europe with 23.5 percent, Africa with 16 percent, 10.9 percent in Asia and 0.8 percent in Oceania.

The Vatican said the number of bishops in the world increased from 5,104 to 5,132. The total number of priests—diocesan and religious order—around the world grew from 412,236 to 413,418, increasing everywhere except the Americas where numbers stayed mostly the same, and Europe, where the number of priests has gone down more than 9 percent over the past decade.

The number of permanent deacons reported—about 41,000—was an increase of more than 1,400 over the previous year and a 40 percent increase over the past decade. The vast majority—97.4 percent—of the world's permanent deacons live in the Americas or in Europe.

The number of men joining a religious order showed substantial growth over the past decade in both Asia (up 44.9 percent since 2001) and Africa (up 18.5 percent since 2001); in contrast, their numbers fell in Oceania by 21.9 percent over the past 10 years, in Europe by 18 percent and in the Americas by 3.6 percent over the past decade.

The number of women in religious orders has shown "a sharp downward trend," with a 10 percent decrease in the numbers of women religious worldwide since 2001. Increases in Africa and Asia were not enough to offset the reductions seen in Europe, the Americas and Oceania. Catholic women's orders went from having a total of more than 792,000 members in 2001 to just over 713,000 women at the end of 2011.

The number of candidates for the priesthood—both diocesan seminarians and members of religious orders—showed continued growth worldwide, rising from 118,990 at the end of 2010 to 120,616 at the end of 2011. The yearbook reports that the number of men preparing for the priesthood rose more than 30.9 percent in Africa and 29.4 percent in Asia between 2001 and 2011. Numbers decreased in other regions of the world, particularly Europe, which saw a 21.7 percent drop in priesthood candidates during the same period.

RISE UP SINGING: Mass at St. Mary's Parish in Nairobi, Kenya. The Catholic population in Africa is growing at almost twice the rate of the continent's general population.

Despite Truce, Violence Plagues El Salvador

A year-long truce among El Salvador's street gangs has resulted in a dramatic reduction in homicides, but it "has not produced the [other] benefits that the…population was expecting," said Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chávez, auxiliary bishop of San Salvador, reading a statement on behalf of El Salvador's bishops. "Robbery, extortion and other illegal activities carried out by gang members continue; for this reason, the population does not perceive the benefits of the truce," said the bishops' statement. At a press conference the next day, gang leaders countered that they were engaged in a process of peace, "not just a truce," pointing out that the problem of social violence in El Salvador had deep structural roots after more than two decades of gang war. "We regret that the statement of the church does not speak of the positive results achieved so far, as well as more than 3,000 lives saved," gang leaders added.

Gosnell and the 'Ugliness of Abortion'

Dr. Kermit Gosnell was convicted on May 13 of murder at his Philadelphia abortion clinic, but "nothing can bring back the innocent children he killed, or make up for the vulnerable women he exploited," said Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M.Cap., of Philadelphia. In a statement on May 14, the archbishop said: "Gosnell is not an exception. Others just like him run abortion mills throughout our country." A Philadelphia jury on May 13 found Gosnell guilty of murder in the deaths of three babies born alive during abortions and of involuntary manslaughter in the death of an adult patient. Gosnell, 72, was charged with snipping the spines of babies born alive during illegal late-term abortions. Pennsylvania law prohibits abortions after 24 weeks of gestation. "We need to stop cloaking the ugliness of abortion with misnomers like 'proper medical coverage' or 'choice,'" Archbishop Chaput said. "It's violence of the most intimate sort, and it needs to end."

Uniting Against Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is so widespread that U.S. congregations of women religious are uniting in a nationwide effort to limit its reach. For years individual congregations have run human trafficking awareness programs regionally. Sister Margaret Nacke, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kan., said it was time for congregations to come together to make better use of the resources and programs they had developed. The combined effort will focus on broader education about sex and labor trafficking, legislative advocacy for stricter laws and penalties for traffickers and improved social services and employment support for victims. Jeanne Christensen, S.M., the justice advocate for the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community in Kansas City, Mo., said, "Coming together in one group helps to concentrate the voice and the power in a good sense." The collaborative campaign was formalized during a three-day meeting of representatives of a dozen congregations active in antitrafficking programs in local communities and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in mid-April in Washington.

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Timothy P. Kesicki

In Rome on May 9, **Sally Hodgdon** of the United States, superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery, was elected vice president of the International Union of Superiors General, a body that includes 1,900 religious orders of women worldwide. ✦ Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York on May 13 warned Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to **prepare for "vociferous" and "rigorous" opposition** if he attempts to expand New York abortion-rights. ✦ Marking 40 years of ecumenical dialogue on May 10, Pope Francis told **Pope Tawadros II**, leader of 10 million Coptic Orthodox, that Copts and Catholics are united by an "ecumenism of suffering." ✦ The Rev. George Kloster, of the Diocese of Charlotte, N.C., was named Catholic Charities USA's 2013 **Volunteer of the Year** on April 25. ✦ The Obama administration said on May 3 that it would not seek to block **a federal court injunction** that allows Tyndale House Publishers, an Illinois-based Christian book publisher, not to comply with the contraceptive-coverage mandate for new health insurance plans. ✦ The Society of Jesus in the United States announced on May 10 that **Timothy P. Kesicki, S.J.**, will be the next president of the Jesuit Conference, beginning Aug. 1, 2014.

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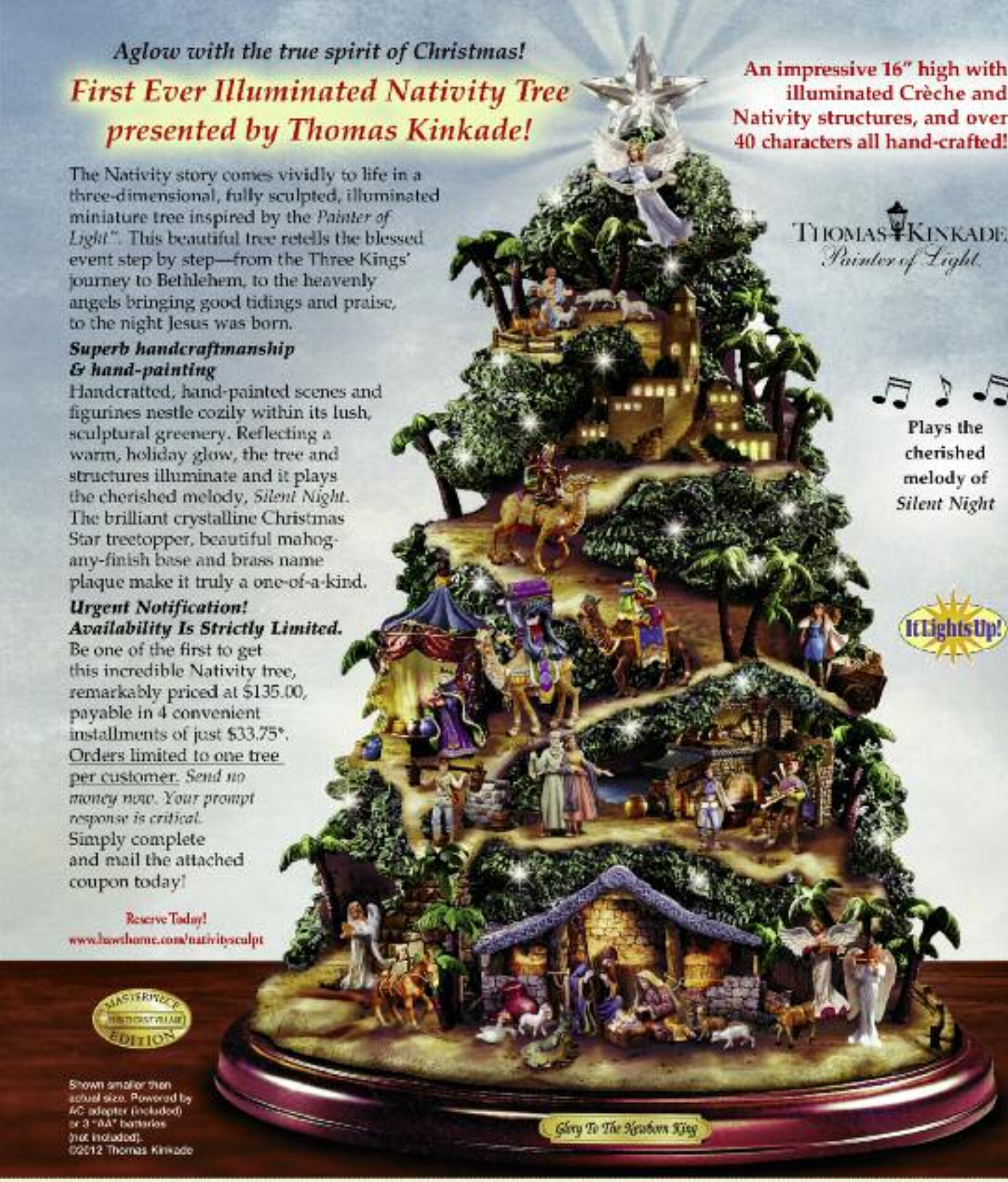

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Dear Prudence

Beware those in Washington who minimize moral dimensions of issues by insisting that public choices are simply matters of "prudential judgment" and that therefore religious teaching and moral arguments are really not important. They emphasize the distinction between fundamental moral principles that have compelling moral claims (like the duty to protect innocent human life) and prudential judgments that are matters for debate (like how to overcome poverty).

The distinction is valid, but neither stands alone. We have a duty both to reject policies that violate fundamental principles and to pursue positive actions to carry out moral obligations. When advocates overemphasize these distinctions, they often ignore the moral urgency and ethical criteria for action that come with the principles they claim to respect.

The war in Iraq, a tragic "war of choice," was a prudential judgment. President George W. Bush and Congress ignored the appeals of Pope John Paul II and the moral questions of the U.S. bishops with horrible costs for our nation and the people of Iraq. How best to protect human life also involves prudential judgments. What measures are achievable? What exceptions, if any, are permissible (e.g., should a ban on federal abortion funding allow exceptions for the life of the mother, rape or incest)?

The duty to care for the "least of these" is essential Catholic teaching. We should be debating how to give priority to the poor, practice solidarity and subsidiarity. We should not be debating whether we are obliged to protect their lives and respond to their needs. Indifference and inaction are not prudential judgments, but violations of a core Catholic principle.

"Prudential judgment" can become a mistaken rationale for ignoring Catholic teaching that conflicts with our partisan or ideological preferences or to act on some principles and ignore others. Some resist racism or other denials of human rights but fail to protect the foundational rights to life and religious freedom. Others deeply committed to unborn human life resist the Catholic condemnation of torture or the church's call to end use of the death penalty. Pope Francis is challenging us to embrace the fullness of the Gospel, to resist isolation and ideology to protect the lives and dignity of all.

The duty to care for the 'least of these' is essential Catholic teaching.

In the budget debate, elected leaders of the bishops' conference outlined Catholic moral principles and applied them to key budget choices. The bishops then shared the judgment that the House budget failed to meet the conference's criteria. (It included $36 billion in reductions for hungry families but no cuts for agricultural subsidies.)

Some mistakenly said the bishops were not speaking for the conference, that they ignored needed fiscal restraint or were advancing a partisan agenda. Others overplayed the statements, turning them into partisan talking points or attacks on the faith of individual legislators. Despite these distortions, the conference has chosen this wise path on immigration: outlining moral principles, offering applications on key policy choices and then assessing various proposals. They have made clear that inaction or just a bigger, longer fence or linking immigration to same-sex unions may be prudential judgments, but they are inconsistent with Catholic moral principles.

Catholic teaching is a coherent whole—not a menu of compelling moral absolutes, a set of fundamental ethical principles and a collection of optional positions. Bishops are not just another interest group, and their statements are not just another set of talking points. They deserve serious attention and action.

But they are not the whole church. Lay women and men need to become more informed and engaged in their vocation to be "salt, light and leaven" in public life. This is the mission of the new Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University.

The recognition that public choices require prudence is not a way of escaping ethical responsibility; it is a call to principled discernment and decision-making. It is a beginning of moral discussion, not the end. Budget priorities and immigration reform are matters of both moral principle and prudence that reflect who we are as a people and shape what we will become as a nation. **JOHN CARR**

JOHN CARR *is the director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, soon to be launched at Georgetown University. He served for many years as a leader of the justice and peace efforts of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

Pursuing the Truth i

The mission of 'America' in a 21st-century church

BY MATT MALONE

IMAGES FROM SHUTTERSTOCK.COM AND CNS

n Love

The mission of **America,** wrote its first editor in chief, is not only to "chronicle events of the day and the progress of the church" but also to "stimulate effort and originate movements for the betterment of the masses." When John Wynne, S.J., penned those words in 1909, he was expressing one of the venerable teachings of St. Ignatius Loyola: "Love manifests itself more in deeds than in words." **America** has never been content to play the role of the aloof interpreter of events. We aspire to something more: to be contemplatives in action at the intersection of the church and the world. Thurston N. Davis, S.J., editor in chief from 1955 to 1968, put it this way: **America** is "a weekly raid on the City of God in order to publish, in the City of Man, a journal that talks common Christian sense about the world of human events."

Yet while **America**'s mission remains constant, the challenges we face today are unprecedented. It is no secret that the vanguard of the digital revolution has toppled the ancien régime: a billion tweets, for example, will be sent in the five days it takes to process and print this issue of the magazine; more than 10 billion pieces of content will be added to Facebook in that same period. Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report, once rightly regarded as the Ford and Chrysler of news magazines, have virtually disappeared.

America will not meet a similar fate. Like most magazines, we will probably stop publishing an edition in print someday, but that day is not anytime soon. For a variety of reasons, **America** is better positioned than most to meet the challenges of the digital age; we also have a talented staff and the most loyal readers in publishing.

The most important challenge we face, moreover, is neither technical nor financial; it is existential. It is also the most important challenge facing the Catholic media at large. In fact, if the Catholic media are to have any reasonable hope of meeting the serious technical and financial challenges we face, then we must first reckon with a more fundamental question: Who are we?

For **America,** indeed for all Catholic media, questions of mission and identity were more easily answered in times gone by. Throughout much of American history, when the church in the United States was relegated to a social, cultural and sometimes a literal ghetto, the need for a uniquely Catholic press was obvious. Today, thanks be to God, Catholics are no longer second-class citizens. At the same time, however, the public square has less space for overtly religious perspectives than at any previous time in American history. The last two decades have also seen the emergence of an increasingly moralistic and dogmatic secularism among the nation's political class. The twin scandals of sexual abuse and ecclesiastical

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MATT MALONE *is editor in chief of* ***America.*** *This article is based on a talk given at the American Bible Society in New York on Feb. 27, 2013.*

mismanagement have further enfeebled the church's public witness.

The complex problem is simply put: While we may have solved the problem of the relationship between the church and the state, the problem of the relationship between the church and the political remains. Solving that problem, or at least presenting credible solutions to it, is the pre-eminent task of the Catholic media in the United States.

The View From Here

Another of my predecessors, Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., editor in chief from 1975 to 1984, bequeathed a warning to his successors: "Beware of metaphysical traps!" So I will not attempt to answer the question "Who are we?" on behalf of the entire Catholic media; that would be futile as well as presumptuous. My aim is more modest: to answer the question on behalf of **America,** to state simply what we believe. Yet while "we are a people who respect belief," Father Wynne wrote, "we value action more." Any discussion, then, of **America**'s identity and mission necessarily involves some analysis of the contemporary social and political context.

From our window overlooking the public square we see many of the same things you see. Chief among them we see a body politic sickened by the toxin of ideological partisanship. As the theologian William T. Cavanaugh has observed, American political discourse is dyadic; it oscillates between certain dualisms: left and right, liberal and conservative, public and private, secular and religious. These dyads structure and sustain conflict. While this kind of thinking may or may not be helpful in our secular, civic discourse, it is a mortal threat to the ecclesiastical discourse for it reduces the one to the many. When we conceive of the church in predominantly secular, political terms, then it is no longer in principle the church; it is no longer a communion but a *polis* composed of factions. As a result, the terms and the tenor of the ecclesiastical conversation become increasingly indistinguishable from those of the larger culture. For our part, the Catholic media become the ecclesiastical equivalent of the cable news lineup: everybody has a favorite outlet, and more often than not it is the one that caters best to our pre-existing views.

If the Catholic media are to make a meaningful contribution to solving the problem of the church and the political, then we must first reckon with how we have been complicit in this subtle secularization of the church in the United States. **America** is no exception. We too must return to the basic question: Who are we?

Who Are We?

America is not a magazine, though we publish one; nor is **America** a Web site, though we have one of those as well. **America** is a Catholic ministry, and both of those words—*Catholic* and *ministry*—are carefully chosen. We are not journalists who happen to be Catholic, but Catholics who happen to be journalists. That is not to denigrate or neglect the good and valuable work that the non-Catholics on our staff do every day; it is simply to express our fundamental commitment. **America** does not labor in the service of mere speech, words with a lower case *w;* nor are we in pursuit of some idealized, dreamy, Platonic-style discourse. Rather, we labor in the service of the Word with an upper case *W,* the self-communication of God in Jesus Christ.

Admittedly, these words "might sound a bit pretentious," as Father Davis once said about a similar statement of his own. Journals of opinion are constantly at risk of taking themselves too seriously. **America** is no exception here either; we freely admit that some of our opinions can have a preachy, eat-your-peas quality. Still, it is nonetheless true that **America**'s fundamental commitment is to God in Jesus Christ. This must be so if we are to fulfill the purpose envisioned for **America** by its founders: to furnish "a discussion of actual questions and a study of vital problems from the Christian viewpoint."

The Christian viewpoint involves a constitutive element that a Catholic media ministry like ours must constantly bear in mind: "Communication is more than the expression of ideas and the indication of emotion," says "Communio et Progressio," the 1971 pastoral instruction on the means of

Next Steps

"Love manifests itself more in deeds than in words." **America** makes the following commitments:

1. *Church.* The church in the United States must overcome the problem of factionalism. This begins by re-examining our language. **America** will no longer use the terms "liberal," "conservative" or "moderate" when referring to our fellow Catholics in an ecclesiastical context.

2. *Charity.* How we say things is as important as what we say. **America** seeks to provide a model for a public discourse that is intelligent and charitable. In the next few months, **America** will announce a new set of policies for the public commentary on our various platforms.

3. *Community.* **America** will appoint a community editor who will moderate our public conversation, ensuring that it rises to the standards we set for thoughtfulness and charity. We will continue to provide a forum for a diverse range of faithful, Catholic voices.

social communication. "At its most profound level, it is the giving of the self in love. Christ's communication was, in fact, spirit and life." This sentiment is also expressed in **America**'s motto: V*eritatem facientes in caritate* (which we loosely translate, "Pursuing the truth in love"). **America,** then, is also a ministry in the service of the truth. In the Catholic tradition, truth is ultimately a person, whose name is Jesus Christ, the one who is both the mediator and the content of revelation, "the way and the truth and the life." Without this personal dimension, truth becomes strictly propositional and therefore incapable of sustaining an authentically human moral framework.

It is now possible to see better how **America'**s fundamental mission and identity—who we are—relate to the question of the church and the political in the 21st-century United States. For they suggest certain political positions, not in a partisan or policy sense, but in the sense of our basic orientation to American political life.

First, since our principal point of reference is Jesus Christ and his body, the church, then our principal point of reference is not civil society, and it is not the state. We are not, moreover, by any stretch of the imagination, disinterested observers of civil society and the state. **America,** Father Davis once wrote, is "deeply committed…to the moral law of God as this is promulgated through the universal forum of human conscience," and, "on a wide and varied field of subjects, to the principles enunciated by the Popes, the Vicars of Christ, and in the major statements of the American hierarchy." Further, while we may incorporate the insights of the secular sciences and secular culture into our analyses of ecclesial events (in fact, the integrity of our work requires it), we understand these events first and most importantly in terms that are proper to the church herself. In other words, **America** seeks to understand and interpret the church principally through theology, not politics.

Second, **America** examines secular politics through theology. When we analyze the church in categories that belong more to secular politics than to theology, then we inevitably debase the church's intrinsic identity. Similarly, when we neglect theological categories in our analyses of secular politics, then the church's prophetic mission is further removed from its source. The solution to the problem of the church and the political, therefore, is not for the church to retreat from the public square, but to assume a more robust presence there. The church is not merely one more private actor organized for public action. The church makes truth claims that are per se public claims. While the church and state must remain separate, then, the separation of the church and the political is inconceivable.

Third, **America** understands the church as the body of Christ, not as the body politic. *Liberal, conservative, moderate* are words that describe factions in a *polis*, not members of a

communion. It stands to reason, moreover, that **America**'s fundamental commitment precludes certain self-conceptions. Since the word of God is incoherent when it is separated from the church and its living teaching office, **America** could never envision itself as "the Loyal Opposition." Nor do we understand the phrase "people of God" as a theological justification for setting one part of the body of Christ against another. The people of God are not a proletariat engaged in some perpetual conflict with a clerical bourgeoisie. It is obvious to us, moreover, that a preoccupation with episcopal action, whether it bears an ultramontane or a Marxist character, is nevertheless a form of clericalism. None of this is to say that **America** cannot bring a critical eye to ecclesiastical events; this is, in fact, our very purpose.

Fourth, as St. Paul reminds us, "There is neither Jew nor gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Accordingly, there is no faithful Catholic voice—"liberal," "conservative," "moderate," male, female, gay, straight, young, old, clerical or lay, American or not—that is not welcome in the pages of **America.** There is no quarter of the church, moreover, in which **America** is not at home. The prevailing notion that Catholics cannot work together, worship together or reason together, simply because we hold different worldly philosophies or vote differently or have different habits of dress or liturgical tastes—such a notion has no place in the body of Christ. Partisanship is the stuff of parliamentary politics, not sacramental life.

Fifth, **America**'s fundamental commitment means that we view ideology as largely inimical to Christian discipleship. Revelation is humanity's true story. Ideologies, which are alternative metanarratives, invariably involve an "other," a conceptual scapegoat, some oppressor who must be overthrown by the oppressed. Only the Gospel's radical call to peace and reconciliation justifies a radical politics. Catholic social teaching is not the Republican Party plus economic justice, nor is it the Democratic Party minus abortion rights. Yet neither is it some amalgamation of the two. Catholic social teaching is far more radical than our secular politics precisely because it is inspired by the Gospel, which is itself a radical call to discipleship, one that is subversive of every creaturely notion of power. There is more to Christian political witness than the tired, quadrennial debate about which presidential candidate represents the lesser of two evils.

Sixth, our fundamental commitment means that we are not beholden to any political party or any special interest. "**America** will aim," wrote Father Wynne, "at becoming a representative exponent of Catholic thought and activity without bias or plea for special interest." Admittedly, we do harbor one bias: a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. "The poor," however, "are not 'special parties' and they usually have no 'special parties' to speak for them," wrote Father Davis in 1959. **America** believes that the work of social justice is a constitutive element of Christian discipleship. We also share with the Society of Jesus the conviction that "the faith that does justice is, inseparably, the faith that engages other traditions in dialogue, and the faith that evangelizes culture."

Seventh, **America**'s fundamental commitment means that what we communicate is inseparable from how we communicate it, since both are inseparable in the one we seek to serve. We must not be afraid to speak the truth. But if truth is ultimately a person, who is love, then no statement, however factually accurate, can ultimately be called truthful if it is not spoken in charity. This is precisely what it means to say, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal"(1 Cor 13:1).

We Are Christians

Every Christian ministry, as a participation in the one ministry of Christ, is necessarily a ministry of reconciliation. Through our media ministry we seek to address the problem of the church and the political by generating content that bridges the divides created by faction. That means we must generate content that applies the insights of the Second Vatican Council to the 21st-century church, that bridges the generational divide between those who came of

age with the council and those who have come of age with the Internet. It means generating content that is nonideological, that bridges the partisan divide, that finds its dynamism and credibility in the scandal of the Gospel rather than in some self-affirming worldview. It means generating content that is postmodern, being unafraid to proclaim the final inadequacy of every metanarrative except for revelation. It means generating content that builds on the work of John Courtney Murray, S.J., respecting the distinction between church and state, as well as the relative autonomy of culture, but also building bridges between public and private and religious and secular.

ON THE WEB
More on **America**'s history and mission.
americamagazine.org/aboutus

Addressing the problem of the church and the political is critically important not only for the credibility of the church's public witness but also for our spiritual well-being. If the church is to find its distinctly American voice and the Catholic media are to survive and prosper in the digital age, then we must remember who we are: members of the body of Christ, the truest *res publica*. We love our country. We cherish our country's freedoms, and we are grateful to share in its abundance. The United States is our home, and "the object, scope and character of this review," as Father Wynne wrote, "are sufficiently indicated in its name." Still, a Christian's true home is the city of God. Our hope lies not in worldly utopian dreams, but in the saving love of Christ; our communion is revealed and realized anew in the Eucharist, not in the paraliturgies of the nation-state. We are disciples of Jesus Christ, not subjects of any Leviathan.

America aspires to nothing more than to live up to the fullest meaning of our motto, to pursue the truth in love, for as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has written, "The only strength with which Christianity can make its influence felt publicly is ultimately the strength of its intrinsic truth." The fundamental truth of Christianity is personal, the person of Jesus Christ, the one for whom love and forgiveness and justice are the only standards of human action. The political witness of Christians, then, is the witness of sinners who are loved and forgiven and are ever ready to love and to forgive in turn. Only in this way is Christianity "credible."

If you ask us, therefore, whether **America** is a philosophical or theological journal, we will answer: "We are Christians." If you ask us whether **America** is modern or postmodern, we will answer: "We are Christians." If you ask whether we are liberal or conservative, Democrat or Republican, we will answer: "We are Christians." If you ask whether we have really said anything at all, we will answer: "We have said everything." A

Love Aflame

Recovering an old devotion

BY SILAS HENDERSON

One of the strongest images I have of my paternal grandparents' home in east Tennessee is of a rather large print of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that hung at the far end of their hallway. My grandmother told me that she and Grandpa had received it as a wedding gift in 1946. It had been hanging in the same spot since the early 1950s and, as far as I could tell, it was probably forgotten about as soon as the job of hanging it was finished. As with so many things in our lives, those that are familiar and comfortable eventually become invisible. I don't quite know if the old expression, "familiarity breeds contempt," is always true, but in this case familiarity had bred benign neglect.

For most of us, the church's annual celebration of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is like that print in my grandparents' house. If we are aware of it at all, it is probably little more than a point of nostalgia, a connection with a past that is both comfortable and familiar, but also disconnected from day-to-day life. And yet, the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has, over the centuries, become an undeniable part of our Catholic identity. Just like that picture hanging in my grandparents' hallway, this feast (and the devotions associated with it) tells us something about ourselves and our "family's" story.

Every age produces its own particular expressions of Christian truth. Although we might be embarrassed by some of the sweet and unsophisticated devotions of the past, including highly sentimentalized devotions associated with the Sacred Heart, we should also remember that the theological truths behind these "family traditions" are quite important.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus first developed in the late Middle Ages. This was a time when Christ was most often depicted as the Divine Judge, ready to pour out wrath and retribution on the unrepentant sinner. It was the great women mystics, like St. Hildegard of Bingen and St. Gertrude the Great, who were among the first to imagine a new way of understanding who and what Christ is and could be for us.

The church's solemn celebration of the mystery of the Sacred Heart is not really about any artistic representation of Jesus or even about private revelations to mystics, like St. Margaret Mary Alacoque or the Jesuit priest Blessed Bernardo Francisco de Hoyos, who were among the great promoters of this devotion. The celebration invites us to rejoice in the way divine love was made human and vulnerable in Jesus of Nazareth. The reality of this love in Jesus was what drew so many to him during his earthly life. Romano Guardini, a 20th-century theologian, wrote:

> The children must have loved coming to Him, otherwise their mothers would never have brought them.... Anyone with whom children like to be, who understands how to get along with them, knows what to say to them; anyone good with children and animals—for He used to love animals too, it showed in the metaphors He used—is a

TOP: "SACRED HEART OF JESUS," BY STEPHEN B WHATLEY. CNS PHOTO/ARTIST
BOTTOM: "SACRO CUORE DI JESU," BY POMPEO BATONI, 1740. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/PETER KUIPER.

SILAS HENDERSON, O.S.B., *a Benedictine monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana, is the author of* From Season to Season: A Book of Saintly Wisdom.

person with the breath of Paradise hovering over him.

The sick came streaming to Him. It reveals a great deal about a man if the suffering press themselves upon Him because they feel they are welcome to do so.... They kept coming to Jesus, from every corner. From the side streets and hovels. From all sides, this dark, embittered army pressed upon Him. He laid His hands upon them, raised them up, touched them, cleansed them, made them whole.

Jesus' reaction to the nine ungrateful lepers, his weeping over Jerusalem, his grief at the death of Lazarus, his love for Martha and Mary and his reaction to the betrayal by Judas and the fear of the other apostles all reveal the love and vulnerability of Jesus.

In Jesus, God became a human being who was able to touch, support, comfort and heal all those he met, regardless of their place in the world, their moral standing or how attractive they were. As the late Cardinal Basil Hume observed, this tells us something about God: "God has this individual concern for me, irrespective of my weakness, and irrespective of my shortcomings."

Love is always giving of itself; it requires self-sacrifice. This is why the Sacred Heart of Jesus is so often depicted as a heart on fire, burning itself out with love. That was the great lesson of Jesus as he hung upon the Cross. John's well-known teaching is a reflection on this great gift: "In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him" (1 Jn 4:9). God's heart calls to our hearts, inviting us to come out of ourselves, to trust in him and, following the example of Jesus, to offer our love, our lives, as a gift: "This is my commandment, love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). A

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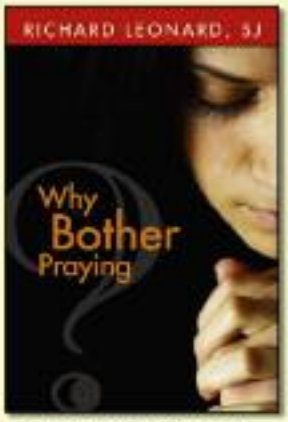

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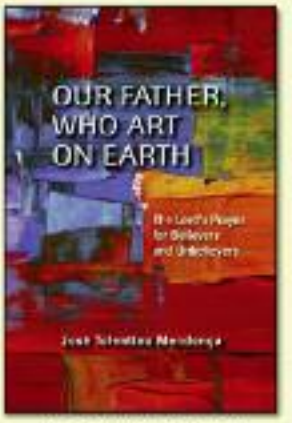

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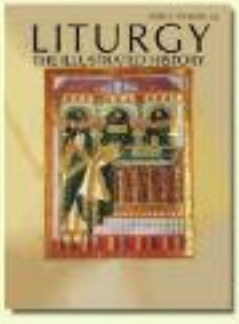

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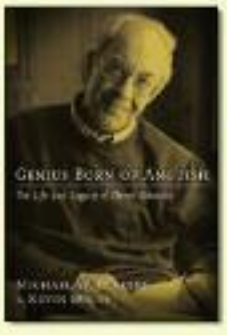

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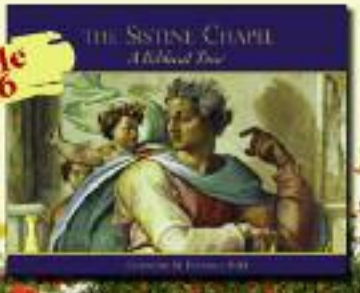

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FILM | JOHN ANDERSON

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Baz Luhrmann's overwrought 'Gatsby' for the digital age

Having rendered some of the more majestic prose in American fiction, F. Scott Fitzgerald is often cited for a line that has always seemed to me to make very little sense: "There are no second acts in American lives." What? Of course there are. Second chances are the stuff American dreams are made of. Let's not forget Richard Nixon. Redemption may not be American. But America, by definition, is all about redemption.

The line is not from *The Great Gatsby*. (It's from Fitzgerald's notes for *The Last Tycoon*). But any confusion is understandable. After all, Jay Gatsby—the wealthy, polished, slightly shadowy Horatio Alger-ish centerpiece of what well may be the finest American (and the most American) novel ever written—believes he can change the past with money. It's the key to the whole novel. And that he fails to pull it off makes the book the glorious thing it is.

Director Baz Luhrmann fails, too, in his shiny new, absurdist, big-screen 3D adaptation of **The Great Gatsby,** and there's nothing glorious about it. Luhrmann seems to regard Fitzgerald's book the way hardcore martini drinkers regard vermouth: its inclusion is necessary, one supposes, if one is going to make this thing one calls a martini. But less, to Luhrmann's mind, is certainly more.

Unfortunately, Fitzgerald is the only thing Luhrmann provides less of. In telling a tale that found its transcendence in the holy place between the author's nuanced prose and Gatsby's blinkered dream, Luhrmann's use of computer-generated stimuli is like a pneumatic hammer that has gone out of control and is manically pinging the brain-pans of everyone in the audience. Nothing ever stops moving, racing, cutting, twitching—save for when Luhrmann suddenly shifts into slo-mo, for no apparent reason, or for reasons that betray his malformed feel for drama itself.

Do they still read *Gatsby* in high school? That might explain the strategy of the movie, which seems a fairly contemptuous pandering to short attention spans, a disinterest in subtle storytelling, a primal response to something shiny being thrust before one's eyes. It is, admittedly, a story, like *Huck Finn* or Fitzgerald-pal Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, that requires some sophistication; it can be read and re-read again and again, not because the book changes but because the reader does. Luhrmann's version is not made for the mutable.

In what must have been a major concession by the director, for whom characters and context seem unnecessary impediments to manufacturing more and more computer-generated images, Luhrmann retains Nick Carraway (Tobey Maguire), the narrator of the story, and the character through whose eyes we view the not-entirely-knowable Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio). In a specious alteration of the original, Nick is recovering from "morbid alcoholism" and—as prescribed therapy—writes the story we're seeing from the confines of the Perkins Sanitarium (a clever enough insertion: Maxwell Perkins was Fitzgerald's editor, and editors are often, rightly, considered cogs in a correctional institution). What is being written will ultimately be called "*The Great Gatsby* by Nick Carraway," which is inane, but hardly out of character for the film.

From his lonely room, Nick flashes back to 1922, the delirious postwar period of Prohibition booze and Wall Street gone go-go. Even Nick, a writer by avocation, has gotten into the bond business and winds up renting a house in West Egg across the bay from the more fashionable East Egg (think Hamptons). Directly across the water from Nick—and his next-door neighbor, Gatsby—lives Nick's cousin Daisy (Carey Mulligan), her unseen 3-year-old daughter and her brutish husband Tom Buchanan, who, as played by Joel Edgerton, seems ready to huff and puff and blow Gatsby's house down, maybe from across the bay.

Edgerton is Australian, as is Luhrmann, who faithfully casts his films with fellow countrymen—see Nicole Kidman in "Moulin Rouge" or, much worse, Kidman and Hugh Jackman in "Australia." It hardly matters in "Gatsby," since actors hardly matter.

What matters is the excess. Luhrmann apparently thought to mirror with it the giddy tenor of the times he was recreating, but it comes off more like World War I—senseless and unending. It is this critic's contention

ON THE WEB
The Catholic Book Club discusses *The Violent Bear It Away.*
americamagazine.org/cbc

THE TITANIC IT AIN'T: Leonardo DiCaprio and Carey Mulligan in "The Great Gatsby."

CNS PHOTO/WARNER BROS.

that the "spectacle" of computerized movies and 3D technology have taken all the awe out of cinema. If those technicians we refer to as studio filmmakers can do anything, then what difference does it make whether Gatsby's parties are attended by hundreds or thousands? They're just ones and zeros anyway. (The party scenes and their wretched excess are given a shot of energy by hip-hop maestro Jay-Z, one of the film's producers, whose music in the film is an anachronism, but far from the only one). In fact, it would be surprising if there were one real-life surface in the entire movie; and unless another "Hobbit" is released this year, Gatsby would seem a shoo-in as a nominee for Best Animated Picture.

But the soullessness of the movie is not a result of those surfaces but of a profound lack of emotional depth, a decision on the part of Luhrmann to stimulate his audience rather than make them feel, based in a lack of faith in their sympathy or understanding.

The casting is certainly questionable: Edgerton, as said, is ridiculous, and it therefore figures that Tom would be given much more prominence than he possesses in the book. Carey Mulligan may not be the type that most romantic obsessions are made of—but then, it's not our romantic obsession. It belongs to Gatsby, who was made a cipher by Fitzgerald for a reason: If you get to know him too well, his compulsion begins to look pathetic. The reason he made his millions, reinventing his poverty-stricken, North Dakota self, just like any immigrant stumbling onto the American shores, was Daisy, and neither can stand up to much objective scrutiny. The reasons that Fitzgerald's Gatsby became a bootlegger, allied himself with the likes of Meyer Wolfsheim and bought his castle on the shores of West Egg were all illusions.

No director hires Leonardo DiCaprio to have him occupy the margins of a story, but in subjecting both Gatsby and DiCaprio to the hard focus of conventional Hollywood, he strips both of their dignity. He strips the viewers, too, for that matter, because they are being told throughout how deeply they should be feeling toward the story and its characters, while being provided no emotional basis to feel any such thing.

It has been argued by some scholars that when Fitzgerald talked about second acts, he was not talking about second lives. He was referring to the American experience in terms of dramatic structure—that the first act always led to the third, with no development in between. Or as an "act," a routine, a well-practiced series of techniques and stunts, maybe even sleight-of-hand, all reflecting the artistic limitations and imagination of the performer in question. In other words, shtick.

As he has already proved in the past, Lurhmann's shtick is about filling the screen with the kind of vastness and flash that distracts from a lack of heart. If "The Great Gatsby" is any indication, there are no second acts in the life of Baz Luhrmann.

JOHN ANDERSON *is a film critic for Variety and The Wall Street Journal and a regular contributor to the Arts & Leisure section of The New York Times.*

FORAYS OF THE IMAGINATION

This year's Foley poetry contest

By the time of March Madness, entries were pouring in for the Foley poetry contest, with its $1,000 prize. We heard from Ljubljana, Slovenia; Alicante, Spain; Lagos, Nigeria; and Vatican City; plus Dijon, Edmonton, Queensland and Kerala State.

Forty entries came to us from the seventh grade at Lakeside Junior High in Ashtabula, Ohio. In "Lovely Lass," Nicholas Enos says, "My heart never beat/ Without a piece to complete/ Life's most challenging puzzle." Starting early! A number of the students dealt with bullying, the nagging concern of today. Thanks to their teachers, Mrs. Marple and Miss Neely.

About 60 entries arrived from women religious. Those in retirement like to contemplate the seasons, the outdoor works of the Lord. In her poem "Wake Up," Sister Phyllis Tousignant writes: "Artist is at work!/ Sky is on fire!/ Crimson red covers the blue." "Seek the Mother of the Desert if you are searching for God," says Maria Vera del Grande, O.S.J. On another note, Joan Mitchell, C.S.J., laments "the new inquisition," reminding those who "jab at reformation" of women religious that "the world is round now." "Alpha to Omega," by Maris Stella Leonard, P.B.V.M., deceased at 96, was sent in "post-humorously." We hope she can savor that.

As poetry editor, tempted to read quickly over poems more soulful than artful, I have often had to pause and think: "That's beautiful! Too bad I can't give the writer some feedback." In one nice touch, the members of a writing workshop in Cocoa Beach, Fla., sent in "Firefly," by Russell Jennings, a member just deceased. Jennings tells how a firefly is caught in one's "cupped hand" and says, "My time is now a light/ I carry carefully,/ Like a child's gift." That's the poetic spark! W. F. Lantry writes of a mournful all-night watch at a deathbed. Near dawn a woman enters, bringing daylight. "She crossed herself and then began to sing" ("Music Vigil").

We value poetry as a foray of the imagination into the prosaic. I myself value it as the incursion of music into prose, however elusive that music may be. Take these few lines about the true face of Ireland by Marian O'Shea Wernicke, from "Cycling on Inishmore," the largest of the Aran Islands:

> *The waves of history beat against you,*
> *erosion of time and sorrow,*
> *yet your bluegreen luminous gaze*
> *lights up the storm dark western sky of*
> *the world.*

The lines are palpable music. A half dozen villanelles arrived, with more complex music. They reminded me how devilishly hard that form is to do well. As for making music amid cacophony, a sprinkling of poems came from the incarcerated and were very welcome.

Once again we are proud of this year's winning poem, "Citrus Paradisi," by Chelsea Wagenaar. The comparison she makes is so inventive, the wording so exact and the couplets so well formed that it stood out. Our three runners-up will appear later in the year: "Pomp," by Muriel Nelson; "Missile Silos, North Dakota," by Kathleen Spivack; and "Ignored Woodwork in Old Churches," by John Poch. My fellow judges again this year are William Rewak, S.J., chancellor of Santa Clara University, and Claudia MonPere McIsaac, professor of English at Santa Clara.

Since I am retiring as poetry editor on July 1 to allow for a much younger replacement, Joseph Hoover, S.J., this essay is my swan song in that role. Poetry will continue to be my life's blood, but it will be a relief not to have to say no so often to aspiring writers, and sometimes to very accomplished ones. I have tried to add notes of encouragement to my form letter, but that is a far remove from acceptance.

In the course of reading regular submissions, I have enjoyed picking out poems that have some clear merit but also noticeable flaws and pointing out the flaws so that the poem sooner or later can dare show itself in print. If this sounds a bit like a poetry workshop, the old teacher in me is behind it.

For the good of future submissions, I encourage the wider reading and study of poetry by those who are moved to write it. Poetry is an art. We need examples of what the best looks like so as to widen our choice of poetic forms, sharpen our wording and stimulate our imagination. And dear poets, attend a little more to the music of your words (that does not necessarily mean rhyming).

May the appreciative reader more and more turn to **America** for poems of quality and substance—to be found weekly, please God. Of course may those who submit poems outside the structure of the Foley Contest always remember to include the stamped, self-addressed envelope! And God bless Dr. Foley, whose generosity has underwritten the contest I have been privileged to oversee.

JAMES S. TORRENS *is* ***America****'s poetry editor.*

The editors of **America** are pleased to present the winner of the 2013 Foley Poetry Award, given in honor of William T. Foley, M.D.

Citrus Paradisi for Anna

I came to grapefruits late in life.
Their juiced heft in the hand,

the exact weight and girth
of a small head one has waited

a long time to see. This morning
I slice one in half for us

even as I hear you twist in your sheets,
your cheek pillow-printed no doubt,

my son who came to me
late in life. My incisions are surgical,

practiced. There it is, the placental
pink inside, the perfect, evenly

spoked wheel I turn onto
a porcelain plate. Sugar for you,

salt for me. And why is it grapefruits
are always compared to tumors?—

it was swollen the size of a grapefruit,
right there on her fallopian tubes,

as though the body were a reluctant
vine, a branch in need of pluck.

You are in the doorway, shirt
carefully misbuttoned, five years

burgeoning into six. I know
what you will say. It is what you say

first every morning. My love
for you is halved on the table,

granulated bitter and sweet. You know
I know what you will say. But still

we wait in the momentary quiet
for the hungry words to come.

CHELSEA WAGENAAR

CHELSEA WAGENAAR, *a doctoral fellow at the University of North Texas, is the 2012 winner of the Pablo Neruda Poetry Prize for poems published in Nimrod.*

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Thumbs Way Up!

When I taught critical journalism I never offered Roger Ebert as a writer's role model. Our guide was William Zinsser, whose *On Writing Well* distinguished between the reviewer, seen as part of the marketing game, and the critic, who was a literary artist. We turned to H. L. Mencken, for whom the novel or play was like the swimming pool's diving board, from which the critic would soar into space and show off his style. Finally, there was the critics' critic, the merciless John Simon, for whom the critic's job was to kill off bad books, plays and films so the good ones would have space to breathe.

Nevertheless, because I had been a moviegoer since grammar school, taking in two films a week during the 1940s, I watched Siskel and Ebert religiously for years. I needed their advice. When Siskel died, I stuck with Ebert as he moved through several replacements until I lost him when he moved his time and network; then he too began to die.

For Ebert the all-time great film was "Citizen Kane," because every time he watched it he discovered something new. Great films may confuse the intellect, he said, but never lie to the emotions. I tested him, and myself, on my own favorite: Alexander Korda's "Four Feathers" (1939), about a disgraced British officer who in 1875 proves his courage by traveling in disguise to a battlefield in Sudan in order to return white feathers that had been given him as symbols of cowardice by his officer comrades. Alas, Ebert had reviewed only the version by Heath Ledger in 2002, the sixth remake. He disses it for its incredible plot and sinks it with two stars.

Only after his death did I discover that Ebert had "died"—and lived—three times.

A journalist from his birth in Chicago in 1942, as a child Roger Ebert published his own neighborhood newspaper. He edited his high school and college papers and was named film critic of The Chicago Sun-Times at the age of 24. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1975, the same year he teamed with the Chicago Tribune's Gene Siskel on public television, with their "thumbs up/thumbs down" verdicts, which annoyed established critics but delighted ordinary viewers. Less profound, perhaps, than some critics, he was nevertheless the most influential.

> Roger Ebert told Esquire in 2010: 'All is well. I am as I should be.'

All this changed in 2002 when thyroid cancer devastated him. Portly, he became gaunt; his jaw was gone. Fed through a tube for years, he could not eat, drink or speak, but he kept writing and blogging for nearly a million followers on Facebook and Twitter.

He knew how he looked, but he told Esquire in 2010: "All is well. I am as I should be." Weeks after his death I came across him in a panel discussion on late night television. His appearance was shocking. With no jaw, his chin dangled, his mouth hung open, his eyes blazed with light as he typed comments into his laptop and a mechanical voice proclaimed his words. Only courage could enable him to carry on believing this was how he "should be."

Meanwhile he struggled with how to believe in God. From first grade he gazed at the midnight sky and asked how God could be infinite. He loved his nuns and in the winter mornings rode his bike to serve Mass. Catholicism made him a "humanist" but left questions unanswered. He said his belief in evolution enriched his search, opening him to symbolism, literature and the arts. Though never an atheist, he could not accept zealots "more Catholic than the pope." Refusing to be categorized, in the week before he died he wrote on his blog "I consider myself Catholic, lock, stock and barrel, with this technical loophole: I cannot believe in God."

A week ago I saw Terrence Malick's "To the Wonder" because that was the last film Ebert reviewed. Two lovers lose their love, and a priest cares for the most needy and unlovable persons, who are incapable of returning his affection. Ebert reports he is overwhelmed by the priest's loneliness. He does not criticize the director for not explaining himself. It is enough to "reach beneath the surface and find a soul in need."

In his homily at Ebert's funeral, John Costello, S.J., compared Ebert's acceptance of suffering to that of the Jesuit in Shusaku Endo's novel *The Silence*, in which God is silent as martyrs die. Apparently Chicago's Cardinal Francis George saw no need to label Roger Ebert's pilgrimage. In a letter read at the funeral, he declared: "He was a believer, he has always been a believer, and I welcome him into this church."

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., *is* ***America****'s literary editor.*

BOOKS | JON M. SWEENEY

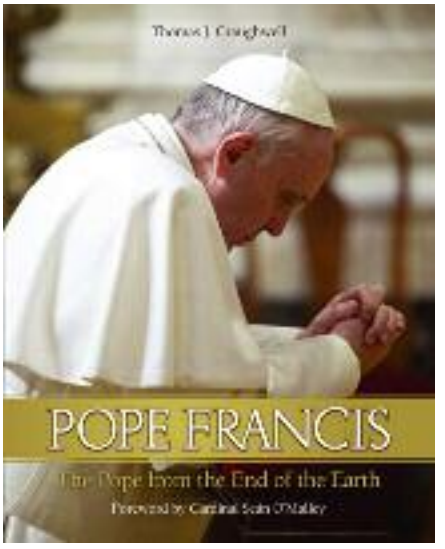
BACKGROUND CHECK

POPE FRANCIS
The Pope From The End of the Earth

By Thomas J. Craughwell
Saint Benedict Press. 176p $22.95

POPE FRANCIS
From the End of The Earth to Rome

By The Staff of The Wall Street Journal
HarperCollins. $4.99 eBook only



America's former editor in chief, Thomas J. Reese, S.J., described our new pope recently in The National Catholic Reporter as one who had previously been "a little-published, low-profile Latin American archbishop." In other words, we know relatively little about him, even though he has had a long career in the church.

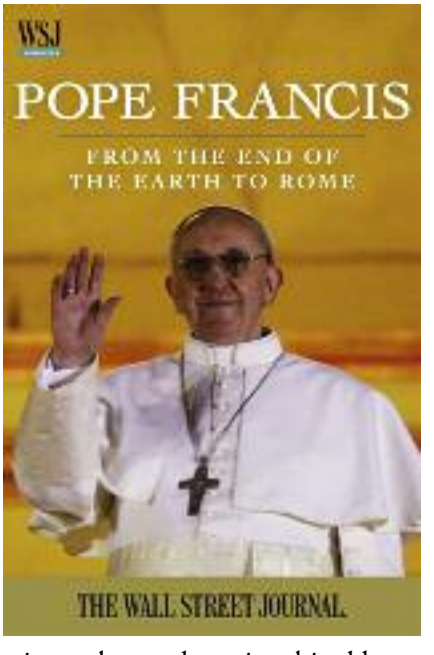
There are several quickly published Pope Francis books on the market right now that attempt to tell the story of how we came to have the first Hispanic, Jesuit, Southern Hemisphere pope. None are of the scholarly sort; none could be called biographies. But Thomas J. Craughwell's does a great job presenting what we know so far. He quotes most of the Vatican reporters, expert commentators, papal-watching blogs and past papal biographers, including John Allen Jr., Father Reese, Margaret Hebblethwaite and George Weigel. Nearly 70 photographs, including a rare shot of the pope's parents, Mario and Regina, on their Dec. 17, 1936, wedding day, tell the story as well.

Craughwell's book opens with a timeline that offers a broad overview of the events from 1936 to the 2013 election. Two contentious issues are addressed right up front in the annotations. Under "1976," Craughwell reveals the conclusion to come later in more detail: "During Argentina's Dirty War, two Jesuit priests, Fathers Franz Jalics and Orlando Yorio, are seized by the military. Working behind the scenes, Father Bergoglio manages to win their release." Meanwhile, at "2005" the author leaves this curiosity unresolved: "Took part in the conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI and is widely believed to have finished second in the balloting."

A foreword by Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., then offers a helpful firsthand chronological account of the election of Pope Francis. O'Malley and the other cardinal-electors knew many things before we did. They heard Cardinal Bergoglio explain his choice of the name Francis; then each greeted and congratulated him; together they all sang the Te Deum; and then the new pope went off to dress and pray privately—all before the ballots were sent up as white smoke.

Craughwell himself then proceeds to retell the story that many of us have already read and heard in varying accounts, while emphasizing interesting facts and underappreciated nuances. He points, for instance, to the prescient and immediate grasp of the situation from St. Peter's Square as white smoke rose, of the Argentine journalist Sergio Rubin, who said: "It is the first time a pope has taken this name. That means he wants to give a message: the message of Saint Francis, a man who arrived to the church in a great moment of opulence, bringing with him humility and love for the poor to revitalize the church, to give some fresh air." This was before Pope Francis ever emerged at the balcony.

Some of the first 75 pages in Craughwell's account are not about Pope Francis. One chapter, devoted to the resignation of Benedict XVI, could have been excluded in favor of more fresh word from Argentina. But that is a small quibble. Using accounts from media around the globe, the author finds occasional backstories that even the most devoted pope-watchers may have missed. There is, for instance, more to the story of jettisoning the red shoes of his predecessor. Pope Francis' black ones, it turns out, were purchased by friends just



prior to the conclave, since his old ones were embarrassingly shabby.

We learn that Jorge Bergoglio was an exceedingly happy child, interested

in soccer, tango, girls and chemistry. Craughwell's research into the published reports is thorough, and his curating of them is inspired. For example, a single long paragraph on a youthful Bergoglio love interest is just enough. At 12, he developed a crush on a neighbor girl, writing her a love letter that included a drawing of the house they might live in, one day, when they marry.

Similarly, we heard often and early of Cardinal Bergoglio's understanding and appreciation of Jews and Judaism, beginning the day after his election as pontiff—Orthodox Christians and Muslims, too. But his respect for evangelical Protestants and evangelical Protestantism has been reported much less, and their challenge to the Catholic Church in Latin America is of the greatest importance to many Catholics. Craughwell does a good job telling this story.

Meanwhile, the reporters at The Wall Street Journal have written a book with almost the same title as Craughwell's. The Journal's work takes a decidedly more journalistic approach and, as their team included four reporters in Argentina, they were able to interview several of the pope's friends, ordained and lay, including even the archdiocesan handyman. Pictures they paint in the slums walked by Cardinal Bergoglio are valuable to inform what we see now in Rome: "The new pope forged his ethos at the bottom of the pyramid of life and faith, in the slums of Argentina, where entering a Catholic parish is often as much about getting a warm meal and sanctuary from drug dealers as it is about prayer and reflection."

We also learn more about Pope Francis' life as a Jesuit. The Journal describes how he was drawn to the missionary rigor of the order, but when a lung infection at 21 halted his plans to go abroad, he turned his full attention to the missionary needs in Argentina. Then, as several interviewed subjects reveal, as Jesuit provincial superior Father Bergoglio steered his priests clear of political involvement, cut back on funding of a liberal Jesuit-run think tank and chided priests who refused to baptize children of unwed mothers. He attempted to counter the perception that priests were a threat to the government by instructing members of the Province of Argentina to disassociate themselves from unions and political organizations, without wavering in their commitment to the poor.

The Journal offers accounts from several of the pope's detractors, all from Argentina. They relay a message we haven't heard in the media, yet: Pope Francis is adept at politics. They quote one journalist who says, "Everybody is talking peace and love, and that's all right, but he's a real tough son of a [expletive]. He's a Jesuit. He doesn't move directly on an objective. He will surround it and when it is the right moment, he will pulverize it." The Journal's writers also refer to problems in the Holy See like "a leaks scandal of cinematic proportions" and an "entrenched culture of secrecy." For his part, Craughwell seems to try to avoid taking sides as he describes contentious issues, whether it is the need for reform of the Roman Curia or Father Bergoglio's activities during the so-called Dirty War. He usually succeeds, but there are times when Craughwell seems to embody the perspective of his subject. For instance, when he writes, "Liberation theology is a theology with a political agenda," it feels like we are hearing Bergoglio's own words.

We are all waiting to see how the new pope, who opposed liberation theology and yet champions the poor and oppressed so vigorously, will speak on political issues when faced with them. In Argentina he most often avoided the political. As pope, such silence would be a radical departure from the recent past, as well as deeply disappointing.

Craughwell pays Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI more respect than the Journal does, while pointing to the near crisis caused by his resignation, as well as the broad opportunities for reform that are possible in the church that Pope Francis has inherited. Toward the end of the book Craughwell intriguingly refers to the emeritus pope as Pope Francis' "great helper and model." Unpacking that phrase alone would make for an intriguing, quick sequel. But perhaps it cannot be written—not yet.

JON M. SWEENEY *'s new book is* Francis of Assisi in His Own Words: The Essential Writings *(Paraclete Press).*

ANDREW J. BACEVICH

PILGRIMS WITHOUT PROGRESS

THE UNWINDING
An Inner History Of The New America

By George Packer
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 448p $27

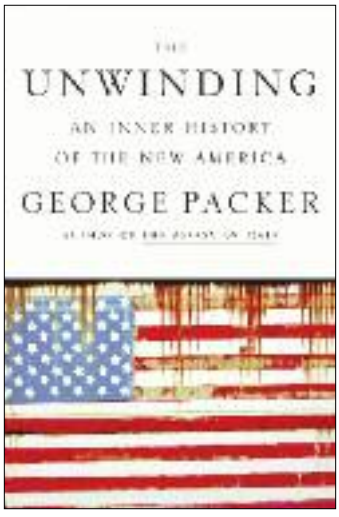
"I have the right to be unlimited." So asserts a commercial currently running on network television, the "I" referring to the U.S. citizen-consumer. Nominally, the ad touts the benefits of subscribing to a particular provider of "information services." Yet however inadvertently, the pitch captures something essential about the state of contemporary culture, where rights continuously expand even as obligations dwindle and where "us" takes a backseat to "me" and "mine." In *The Unwinding,* a grim if often moving

book, the New Yorker staff writer George Packer examines what happens to a society that privileges unencumbered individual autonomy over all other values. The result is anything but a pretty picture.

Surveying the last several decades of life in the United States, the author recounts the demise of what Packer calls the Roosevelt Republic, the arrangements dating from the New Deal and World War II that had provided the foundation for the postwar era. However imperfectly, those arrangements had benefited ordinary Americans, most notably in the realm of economic life. A steady job that paid enough for your average working stiff to buy a house and raise a family—this defined the signature of the Roosevelt Republic. As long as the norms governing that republic prevailed, the leaders of basic institutions, public and private alike, displayed a modicum of responsibility and self-restraint. It wasn't utopia, but for tens of millions of beneficiaries, it wasn't half bad.

Those norms have now collapsed, the resulting void being filled by a predatory combine of Big Money partnering with Big Government, with doleful consequences for society as a whole. To illustrate those consequences, Packer charts in sympathetic detail the struggles of ordinary people hammered by bewildering economic upheaval, social dislocation and moral anomie. His principal protagonists—a single mom in a dying Rust Belt city determined to do right by her kids, the son of a tobacco grower vainly pursuing up-by-your-own-bootstraps dreams of entrepreneurial success, a college kid fired by a determination to redeem politics who ends up a self-loathing K Street lobbyist, a newspaper reporter clinging to the belief that blowing the whistle on wrongdoers ought to generate outrage and action—demonstrate a sort of stubborn gallantry. But faced with a system rigged in favor of those who already wield the power and have the money, their heroics prove futile.

Interspersed in this bleak chronicle are shorter profiles of those who preside over and sustain the new order. Although Packer adds little to what we already know about these figures—among them, Newt Gingrich, Colin Powell, Robert Rubin and Oprah Winfrey—his account affirms the mediocrity, shallowness and mendacity of what passes today for an American elite. Once admitted to its ranks, members of this elite play by a different set of rules. "The establishment," writes Packer, "could fail and fail and still survive, even thrive. It was rigged to win, like a casino." To the game's beneficiaries, the rules—and the protective provisos they enshrine—make perfect sense.



An exception of sorts is Peter Thiel, a gay libertarian from the Bay Area with a Midas touch for making money (without actually producing anything). In Packer's depiction, Thiel comes across as someone with an inkling of the spiritual dead-end toward which the United States is hurtling. Having made billions profiteering from the potential of the so-called Information Age, Thiel feels nothing but contempt for his countrymen, who are "beguiled by mere gadgetry" that purports to "empower" while serving chiefly to enforce a bland conformity or to provide an outlet for escapism.

Religion per se does not loom large in Packer's America, even though a sort of a faux religiosity lingers among those hoping to see the Roosevelt Republic make a comeback. For believers (as rendered by Packer at least), God represents a sort of higher Oprah, handing down bits of wisdom that can ostensibly pry open those doors to earthly limitlessness. For the downtrodden, Scripture serves as a hoary but still serviceable 12-step program.

Packer has modeled *The Unwinding* after John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* trilogy, the Great Recession of our own day standing in for the Great Depression of the 1930s as interpretive prism. For an earlier generation, *U.S.A.* seemed like the real stuff—literature likely to stand the test of time. Today, few apart from Packer himself are likely to share that judgment. In retrospect, Dos Passos' achievement—a very honorable one at that—was to give voice to the voiceless. *U.S.A.* tapped into and helped to revalidate a strain of American radicalism that had lain largely dormant since the demise of late 19th-century populism. Along with others writing in a similar vein, Dos Passos thereby helped foster a political climate conducive to the social democracy of the Roosevelt era, with its emphasis on solidarity and at least nodding attention to the common good. Out of literary radicalism came progressive political reform.

As successor to Dos Passos, Packer charts the transformation of that social democracy into the oligarchy that defines our system today. Like Dos Passos, he invites us to acknowledge the plight of those marginalized or silenced. In the present moment, the Occupy movement on the left and the Tea Party movement on the right (Packer casts a favorable light on the former while treating the latter dismissively) are only the most obvious manifestations of a resurgent populism. Yet whether the disenchantment and anger of the dispossessed can provide the basis for genuinely

effective political action remains to be seen. The odds, not to mention the interests of the moneyed classes, are against it.

Whether one should entrust proponents of radical change with the nation's fate is likewise a large question. The catastrophic spawn of political revolutionaries from 18th-century France to 20th-century Russia, Germany and China remind us that those who would overthrow the established order on behalf of "the people" may well unleash evils that ultimately do the people harm. Distinguishing between the prophet and the demagogue calls for considerable judgment.

Still, whatever one's reservations about radical politics, any critique of the existing American order informed by radical sensibilities offers cause for celebration. This is what Packer, writing with insight and no small amount of eloquence, provides in *The Unwinding*. His too is an honorable achievement.

ANDREW J. BACEVICH *is a professor of history and international relations at Boston University. His book* Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed Their Soldiers and Their Country *will be published later this year by Metropolitan Books.*

TIMOTHY WADKINS

A LEGEND UNRAVELED

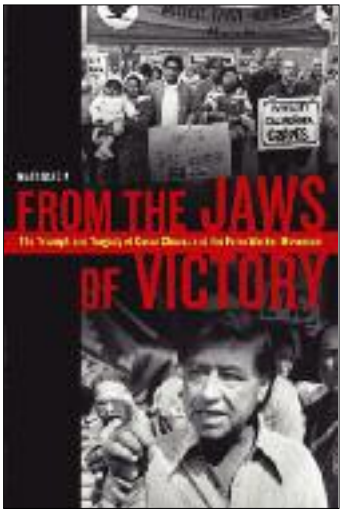
FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY

The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement

By Matt Garcia
University of California Press. 368p
$34.95

In the Epilogue to his *From the Jaws of Victory*, a narrative about Cesar Chavez and the farm workers movement, the labor historian Matt Garcia repeats a line from John Ford's classic western, "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence." Although Ransome Stoddard (played by Jimmy Stewart), received credit for killing the notorious criminal Valence, he did not actually kill him. This unearned and undeserved notoriety nevertheless enabled Stoddard to leverage his way from small town Shinbone, Ariz., into fame, fortune and a seat in the United States Senate. Years later, after Valence's real killer had died, Stoddard tried to set the record straight for a newspaper editor, who refused to print the confession. Believing that the public would prefer the myth, he explained to Stoddard, "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

Cesar Chavez is widely considered a great American hero. Since his death in 1993, some 52 schools, 37 parks, 57 libraries and 82 streets have been given his name. Bill Clinton posthumously presented him the Medal of Freedom, and across the nation, his birthday, March 31, is designated as Cesar Chavez Day. Chavez was certainly not a fraud. As Garcia explains in this somewhat dense and plodding chronological narrative of the movement's organizational dynamics and leadership, Chavez's leadership was sincere, often virtuous, and the movement as a whole demonstrates "the capacity of consumers and volunteers to take action in the interest of people far removed from them." Nevertheless, Chavez was also a deeply flawed autocrat, and these flaws were instrumental in dismantling the immense gains of the movement at its height, raising important questions about the American obsession to prefer legend to truth when anointing national heroes.



This work can be read as a three-act tragedy that homes in on how power and its abuse can corrupt individuals and institutions. First we encounter the young former farm worker and navy man Chavez, who, in the late 1960s emerges as a master of community organizing in the tradition of Saul Alinsky. Motivated by Franciscan spirituality, the more progressive side of Catholic social teachings and the nonviolent example of Ghandi, Chavez has charisma, dedication and the flexible leadership skills that help him recruit and empower a talented group of student volunteers and dedicated social activists. We are introduced to a cadre of very diverse, often quirky personalities, including Delores Huerta, Gilbert Padilla, the Protestant clergymen Chris Hartmire and Larry Drake, Larry Itliong and Elaine Elinson, among many others, who manage to work together in the tedious trench warfare of creative nonviolence that characterized the early days of the movement that came to be known as *la Causa*.

Beginning with the successful Tulare rent strike in 1965, through the Delano grape boycott and secondary boycott that finally brought the growers to the bargaining table, the movement became a force to reckon with. By the time California's Agricultural Labor Relations Act was passed in 1975, giving agricultural workers the right to negotiate conditions of their employment, Chavez's United Farm Workers of

America, now designated a union, was already representing a significant segment of the farm labor work force. The future seemed very bright.

Both internal and external forces almost immediately began to rip apart the movement's successes, however. In this second phase of the drama, we see the pro-Nixon teamsters trying to nudge the farm workers movement aside to take over and weaken farm worker contracts; huge Filipino-Mexican rivalries within the leadership of the union; conflicts over boycott strategies; and, most important, the crushing defeat of Proposition 14, the bill introduced to California voters to revive the A.L.R.A., which by 1976 had all but died due to legislative enemies cutting off funding. As Garcia explains it, the defeat of the proposition dramatically changed Chavez, and he began a downward spiral into psychological paranoia and erratic behavior.

As the final phase of the tragedy unfolds, Garcia introduces a very different leader who begins to balk at the increasing bureaucratization necessary for building a union and yearns for the days of marches, fasts and boycotts. Chavez closes ranks with an inner circle of devotees at La Paz, the union's community-based headquarters and organizing training facility in Keene, Calif., and accuses many of his associates of being spies seeking to undermine his authority. Most significantly, he becomes enamored with Charles Deterich, known as Chuck, founder of the controversial and radical communal movement Synanon. Chavez implemented Deterich's encounter group method, known as "the game"—a meeting in which one person is targeted by the rest of the group and repeatedly verbally assaulted to get him to break down and examine his life. Even after Synanon became a religious and personality cult and Deterich was arrested for attempted murder and kidnapping, Chavez continued his friendship with Deterich and began to purge the union of anyone at La Paz who refused to play the game. Like Deterich, Chavez also began to see himself as a leader of a religious movement. With Catholic overtones, he implemented high holy days, martyr days and, most important, Founder's Day, which coincided with Chavez's birthday. On that day, Chavez was serenaded by mariachis and residents with the Mexican birthday song, followed by a special breakfast, Mass and an all-day celebration. He expressed the belief that eventually he and some of the movement's leaders would be honored as saints.

With such bizarre activities, it did not take long for the gains of the union to unravel. Chavez became increasingly isolated from the union representatives working directly with the field workers and from union lawyers who represented them in Sacramento. After a few devastating investigative exposés of the activities at La Paz, Chavez began to lose the support of union leaders and friends, leading eventually to the U.F.W.'s joining the A.F.L.-C.I.O. in 1972 and the official ending of the grape boycott in 1978.

The immense gains achieved over a very short time by a group of dedicated organizers and a very charismatic leader tell us much about the plight of farm workers and the power of community organizing. At the height of the movement in 1975 field workers were able to negotiate double the minimum wage, vacations, unemployment insurance and a modest pension plan. But these gains were localized and short-lived. Today's U.F.W. has very little power. In our postmodern version of *The Grapes of Wrath*, most field workers come from Mexico and Guatemala; most of them are illegal; and there is no federal program to protect them. They labor for $3 less than minimum wage and not one of them is under a labor contract. At present consumer attention is directed toward green living and healthy eating, and few consumers care about the farm workers who harvest what is eaten. Meanwhile, the legend lives on. Last October, in the middle of his campaign to get the Hispanic vote, President Obama dedicated a national monument to Cesar Chavez at La Paz.

TIMOTHY WADKINS *is a theology professor at Canisius College, Buffalo, N.Y.*

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Positions

MERCY HIGH SCHOOL, Baltimore, Md. PRESIDENT. July 1, 2014. Mercy High School, a private Catholic college preparatory school educating young women in grades 9-12 and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, is seeking applicants for the position of President. With a student body of approximately 350, Mercy is a member of the Network for Mercy Education and the Association of Independent Maryland Schools.

Accountable to the Board of Trustees, the President provides overall institutional leadership. The President is appointed by the Board, with the approval of the Sisters of Mercy South Central Community. Primary responsibilities include: representing Mercy High to the educational, civic, religious and business communities; advancing the school's fundraising profile in growing nontuition revenue; providing sound financial management; inspiring the academic excellence that marks the history of Mercy's graduates and the educational mission of the Sisters of Mercy.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate a strong commitment to the educational and religious values of the Sisters of Mercy; have, at a minimum, a graduate degree in a relevant field; be an accomplished administrator; have a proven record of successful fund-raising; exemplify personal integrity and exceptional leadership skills; be a practicing Catholic.

Interested candidates should electronically submit a letter of application, résumé and three references to Sister Patricia Smith, R.S.M., Ph.D., Chair of the Search Committee, at Search@mercyhighschool.com by the application deadline of June 28, 2013. Please visit for additional information about the school and a complete position description. Click on President Search.

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REPLY ALL

Tears of Joy

As the grandparent of a Providence College student, I saw the "Papal Embrace" before it became viral on the Web. But, in looking at it anew on the cover of the April 29 issue, I gained a new appreciation of the sanctity of the moment caught not by the central characters, but rather by tears of joy shed by the "supporting cast" struggling to provide the spontaneous lift to assist a true child of God to rise to the moment of grace we all witnessed.

Scripture does not record it, but it is hard not to imagine that similar tears of joy were shed by the apostles in the Upper Room when they beheld the risen Christ. Surely, Pope Francis must be giving thanks that he had the opportunity to meet the risen Christ once again so early in his papacy on the streets of Rome.

PAUL LOATMAN JR.
Mechanicville, N.Y.

For Next Time

In "A New Consistent Ethic?" John J. Conley, S.J., (4/29) speculates (inconclusively, it seemed to me) whether a consistent ethic of life linking the violence of abortion and war has "sagged under the weight of its own inclusiveness" and should be replaced by a new, narrower consistent ethic focused more inwardly on institutional conscience and health care.

There are many individuals and groups in the more than 25-year-old Consistent Life Network who are, unsaggingly and robustly, committed to the consistent ethic promulgated by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin and others. By 2010 the network had over 250 member organizations, and many prominent peace activists have linked the violence of war and abortion.

A consistent ethic of life is marginal to popular opinion largely because its radically challenging principle of nonviolence is hard to embody in American politics and culture. But this is a variation on an old story. Indeed, the early and strong biblical traditions showing that Christ and his followers taught nonviolence have been cautiously (not prudently) marginalized in the mainstream preaching of Christian churches. Now that classical concern—"Why Prophecy Sags"—might be a good topic for Father Conley's next Philosopher's Notebook.

JIM KELLY
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Compassion Missing

Re "A New Consistent Ethic?": I do not have a biological child, as it would have required "extraordinary" measures. I walked with my husband daily as his dying was significantly prolonged by a feeding tube. I rejoice with my stepgranddaughter in her loving relationship with her gay partner. No one has ever had an abortion in my name, but the state executes and goes to a "just" war, killing many innocents in my name.

Each morning I awake, place my feet on the ground, breathing in the breath of "Who Is." I trust a God who is more merciful than the institutional church. Am I the only one in the crucible of living who has not found that much "self-evident"? Consistent ethic, questions of conscience and moral vision may or may not be robust. What I found missing in Father

STATUS UPDATE

Dr. Kermit Gosnell was convicted on May 13 of first-degree murder in the deaths of three babies he killed with scissors after they were born alive in his abortion clinic in Philadelphia. In "Life, Not Death" (5/20), the editors argued that Dr. Gosnell as well as Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, if convicted for the Boston Marathon bombings, should not receive the death penalty. You responded:

The 47 countries and 800 million people of the Council of Europe get along without the death penalty. Why do we Americans act as though we were unique in the world? Our neighbors in Canada and Mexico manage criminal justice without the modern equivalent of crucifixion. *Russell Sveda*

I struggle with the death penalty. If there are no societal repercussions for evil, then what deters evil behavior? Is not a greater good served by deterring future evil, if possible?

And who says they can't repent before the penalty is enforced? The penalty itself does not determine the final disposition of their souls; their contrition does. *David Roney*

About the only pragmatic rationale for the death penalty nowadays would be for a heinous criminal whose behavior in custody continues to pose a real threat to the lives and safety of custodial personnel. *Carol Voss*

Abolishing the death penalty is not enough. It is even more important to integrate the concept of reconciliation into criminal justice. Only forgiveness can repair broken relationships among victims, criminals, their family and friends and the entire society. Jesus himself demonstrated this.

CY Kao

I agree that the death penalty devalues human life. I would add that the implementation of the death penalty in the United States devalues some lives more than others—for example, poor males of color, particularly African-American men who kill whites. *Adria Gallup-Black*

I struggle with this, but life imprisonment could be a stiffer punishment than an easy death. They will suffer for a prolonged time for their deeds.

Dee Magee

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Conley's "requiem" is compassion for each of us in our struggle.

DIANE GREENAWAY
Buffalo, N.Y.

Roots of Evangelization

Along with other recent articles on evangelization, I found "Mass Evangelization," by Scott W. Hahn (4/22), stimulating and helpful. My problem, however, with all I have read is that there seems to be a general presumption that evangelization finds its roots in biblical times. I find this to be too narrow a starting point.

Did not the proclamation of the good news begin at the beginning of creation some 14 billion years ago, and does it not continue on into the present time? Creation proclaims the good news that the Creator values differences; everywhere we look in God's universe we find differentiation. Creation also shouts out the good news that the Creator values communion; everywhere we look we find everything and everyone caught up in relationships, in mutuality.

Our important search into the true meaning of evangelization needs to be nurtured within this wider context.

JOHN SURETTE, S.J.
La Grange Park, Ill.

'Sacrifice' Offensive

Thank you for running the articles by Professor Scott W. Hahn and the Rev. Robert P. Imbelli (4/22). Although they were written independently of each other, in effect they offer contrasting approaches to the new evangelization.

Father Imbelli, drawing on a recurring presence of Jesus in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, offers a broad and rich portrait of Jesus most suitable to be the content of a new evangelization. Professor Hahn, after a long and fine summary presentation of writings on the new evangelization, concludes with a section that repeatedly uses the expressions "sacrifice" and "sacrifice of the Mass." I find that disappointing.

In using these terms so often, he leaves untouched a notion that many of us were brought up with that may need re-evaluation—namely the tendency to associate "sacrifice" with Jesus' suffering and death as paying God back for human sin. Perhaps the new evangelization could become a re-evangelization for the growing number of Catholics who find the implied image of God offensive.

GEORGE TRAUB, S.J.
Clarkston, Mich.

Disheartening Oversight

Re "Welcome, Stranger" (Editorial, 4/8): I was astounded by the absence of any mention of African-Americans, who suffer many of the same difficulties as undocumented immigrants. White American culture, customs and legal institutions continue to exclude the descendants of slaves from full participation in the mainstream, as if they were still strangers rather than free and equal citizens of this nation.

While I recognize the timing of the editorial to coincide with the immigration debate in Congress, the oversight is disheartening. That the plight of African-American citizens is so invisible, even as we call for justice for the stranger, supports the Rev. Bryan Massingale's observation in *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* that our church has not yet come to understand the radical evil festering in plain sight in American life.

Perhaps it is time to create a pathway for people of all backgrounds and histories to move into the mainstream.

ALISON M. BENDERS
Cleveland, Ohio

Lay Cardinals

Since Pope Francis first stepped out on the balcony to meet the world, one word has continued to pop into my mind: astounded—a word repeated in the Gospels to describe the reaction of people to Jesus' words and actions. Francis has certainly caught the attention of the world with his personal style and simplicity.

Now we await fresh policy decisions and structural changes so needed in the church. One change many have called for is to put in place a true functioning structure of collegiality. One first prophetic step in this direction: name 12 new cardinals, six Catholic men and six Catholic women, the majority of them married, with proven track records of a holistic spirituality, a strong theological foundation and a commitment to service, especially to the most needy.

This is not so radical a proposal that affects doctrinal teachings, but the symbolism of naming 12 would be strong and would open once more a window of fresh air at the highest levels of the church.

GENE TOLAND, M.M.
Cochabamba, Bolivia

BLOG TALK

I encourage Rock and Theology readers to check out "Post-Christian Rock," by Bill McGarvey (5/6) about the band Mumford & Sons. While I can't say I am a huge fan of this band (more my fault than theirs), I do appreciate their musicianship, and I believe McGarvey highlights an important point: that popular music can hold a spiritual significance without being relegated to the label of "Christian rock."

Mumford & Sons does connect with listeners in a spiritually important way—I've observed this with students on the University of Detroit Mercy campus, where I work. In fact, a student suggested that my campus ministry team use a Mumford & Sons track for a midnight Ash Wednesday prayer service. I often feel a tension between wanting to know exactly what it is about a particular song or band that connects deeply with someone, on the one hand, and just accepting that there is something special there that I do not need to understand in order to respect and believe it.

Dave Nantais
rockandtheology.com

Rise Up!

10TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), JUNE 9, 2013

Readings: 1 Kgs 17:17– 24; Ps 30:2– 13; Gal 1:11– 19; Lk 7:11– 17

"When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her" (Lk 7:13)

The prophet Elijah "went to Zarephath of Sidon to the house of a widow." While Elijah was at the widow's home, her son died. Already bereft of a husband, which itself often led women into poverty in the ancient world, she has now lost her son, the remaining source of her emotional and economic sustenance. She turns on Elijah, "Why have you done this to me, O man of God? Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt and to kill my son?" Elijah does not defend himself or declare his innocence, but responds directly to the pain and loss underlying her accusation. He responds, that is, with compassion.

Surprisingly, perhaps, Elijah aligns himself with the widow as he cries out to God, "O Lord, my God, will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying by killing her son?" He continues to pray, "O Lord, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child." God hears Elijah's prayer, and life returns to the boy. When Elijah returned the child alive to his widowed mother, she said to him, "Now indeed I know that you are a man of God. The word of the Lord comes truly from your mouth."

This act of mercy and compassion, returning a child to his mother, becomes a model for Jesus in his own teaching and healing. Jesus referred to this scene when he spoke in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4). The needs of the suffering outsider were a model for Jesus' own ministry, and not just in speech and archetype. In today's Gospel Jesus comes across a situation very similar in character to that which Elijah faced.

In the town of Nain, Jesus witnessed a funeral procession, with a widow mourning her only son. Jesus is moved with compassion by her suffering, a compassion expressed with the Greek verb *splanchnizomai*. The verb evokes Jesus' emotional response by expressing the kind of deep physical experience that often accompanies empathy. He is moved "in his bowels," thought then to be the location of the emotions of pity and love. He instructs her, "Do not cry!" This command becomes Jesus' word that he will bring relief to the bereaved widow. Jesus goes directly to the coffin and, touching it, speaks: "Young man, I tell you, arise!" When the young man sat up, "Jesus gave him to his mother."

Just as the widow at Zarephath recognized God at work through Elijah, the people who witnessed Jesus' action declare that "God has visited his people." God's power at work in Jesus' action also points beyond itself and foreshadows another mother and only son, who in his death would leave her bereft but in his return would increase the joy not only of her but of all his followers, no longer bearers in a mournful funeral procession but brought to new life. But as with Elijah's act, what Jesus performs is also concrete help for those who are weak and vulnerable. Jesus' action at this level is not so much the fulfillment of a Messianic type, but a copy of how God has always acted on behalf of those most in need. God brings unexpected life to the sons of widows because God is for the least among us.

It is certainly the case, though, that unlike Elijah and Jesus, we do not bring to life the dead sons of mourning widows. Still, these stories point us to the type of person Christians are called to be. Like Jesus, we are all capable of performing acts of mercy and compassion for those in need. Our culture might hold up as ideals power, control and strength, especially for men, but at the heart of Jesus' strength is compassion for weakness, mercy for the helpless. The person who acts against the victimization of women, the proliferation of pornography, the scourge of human trafficking and slavery is acting like Elijah and Jesus with compassion and mercy. Those women and children released from poverty and sufferings share in some part the resurrection of Jesus in the world. This is a model for us, the type of people Jesus calls us to be for those in need.

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Reflect on the mercy and compassion of Jesus. Where am I witnessing the sufferings of our world and how can I best respond to those in need?

ART: TAD DUNNE

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

A Woman Beloved by God

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), JUNE 16, 2013

Readings: 2 Sm 12:7– 13; Ps 32:1– 11; Gal 2:16– 21; Lk 7:36– 8:3

"Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Lk 7:50)

Jesus' love for the weak and marginalized is made manifest in a powerful account in Luke's Gospel, as is the human willingness to label and disenfranchise people we consider less worthy. In today's narrative, Jesus suggests that we start to identify who we truly are in relationship not to social standards but to God's overwhelming love. Jesus is invited to eat at the home of a Pharisee named Simon. His identity is clear: Simon, the Pharisee. But a woman, who remains nameless, operating on the assumption that well-behaved women rarely meet the Messiah, hears of Jesus' presence in the house and crashes the dinner party. Her identity is also clear: "a woman in the city, who was a sinner."

When this woman found Jesus, she treated him with honor and love: "She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment." Simon's response to these demonstrations of affection and love emerge in the context of his understanding of how people should act: "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." A prophet, clearly, should not allow a "sinner," especially a woman, to touch him; and a woman, a notorious sinner, should not touch a prophet. Everyone knows that.

Jesus responds by telling Simon a story of two debtors, one of whom owed the creditor 500 denarii and the other 50. Seeing that they were unable to pay their debts, the creditor decided to cancel the debts of both debtors. Jesus asks Simon, "now which of them will love him more?" Simon answers by saying that the one with the greater debt will love the creditor more, and Jesus agrees with him. The meaning of this simple story for Simon, the woman and Jesus will soon become clear. It depends upon identifying the creditor and the two debtors.

Jesus explains the story by describing the love the unnamed woman poured out on Jesus, by washing and kissing his feet and anointing his head with oil, which stands in stark contrast to Simon's diffidence to Jesus. Jesus says, "I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little. Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.'" It is with Jesus' claim that her sins were forgiven that Simon's friends began to question Jesus and to ask each other, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

It is the answer to this question, however, that allows the proper identification of all parties in this scenario. Jesus does not deny that the woman is a sinner—she is the one with the greater debt than Simon in Jesus' parable—but she has correctly identified Jesus as the one who is able to forgive her sins. That is, Jesus is her creditor. She pours out her love on Jesus in thanksgiving for the forgiveness of her sins and in acknowledgment, expressed especially through the anointing with oil, of his messiahship, that he is the one with the authority to wipe away her debt. As a result, Jesus can say to her, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

But Simon is unable either to see himself as a debtor—that is, a sinner—or Jesus as the one who is willing and able to forgive sins. Jesus agrees with the identification of the woman as a sinner, but what Simon does not recognize is that he too is a sinner, even if his debt is lighter. Unless Simon can see himself as "the sinful man" and acknowledge his debt, he cannot be forgiven. Unless he identifies Jesus as the one who can forgive his debt, he cannot turn to him in love and repent.

Yes, the woman is a sinner, but so are we all. Simon judges her on human terms, but we need the ability to identify her as God sees her, known by name and beloved by God, and to recognize in ourselves the need for God's healing forgiveness regardless of our names or positions.

JOHN W. MARTENS

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

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Rev. Richard Fragomeni

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