



# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

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## Longing for Communion

CATHOLICS AND LUTHERANS 500 YEARS AFTER THE REFORMATION

TIMOTHY P. O'MALLEY

A NEW VATICAN APPROACH  
TO PROTECTING CHILDREN  
BLASE CUPICH

# OF MANY THINGS

The late Justice Louis Brandeis was famously suspicious of bigness. As his biographer Jeffrey Rosen recently observed, for Justice Brandeis a truly democratic government “was only possible on a human scale.” Big, impersonal government bureaucracies, said Brandeis, tend to serve themselves rather than the people who are their titular sovereign and can be just as dangerous as the antitrust monopolies Brandeis battled in the business world.

It would appear that a majority of the British electorate agrees with Mr. Brandeis. Britain’s decision to exit the European Union is in large measure a justifiable reaction to the inhuman scale of the European project in its contemporary incarnation and to the Leviathan-like bureaucracy that has grown up to support it. As the editors observe in this issue, Brussels’s “sprawling and opaque bureaucratic institutions” have inspired a fatal distrust in the project of “ever closer union.” Brexit is also one part of a larger trend in the West away from consolidation and toward a small-is-beautiful approach to governance.

Some of those who voted for Brexit had other motivations. As the editors also note, xenophobia, fear and nationalist fantasies played a part as well. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that Brexit was driven entirely by such wayward motives. One of the more disturbing trends in contemporary politics is the persistent belief that those who disagree with me about contestable public issues are not principled and reasonable human beings who have reached different conclusions but are, rather, stupid or hateful or both.

This patronizing tendency is particularly pronounced among Western governing elites, here in New York and elsewhere, who appear unable to acknowledge that there might be a reasonable argument for Brexit that is not derived only from nationalist or xenophobic paranoia. It is also worth

remembering the genetic fallacy of informal logic: You have not necessarily proven or disproven a belief simply because you have accounted for how it came to be held. Paranoid people can be victims of real conspiracies.

But the Western elites (among whom I surely count myself) would do well to look more closely at the Brexit result for another reason. It reveals the radical shift that is taking place in our politics, one we ignore at our peril.

Increasingly, our political battles are being waged not by the traditional forces of left and right but by the elites or the establishment on the one hand, and those who feel disempowered and disenfranchised on the other. “That dislocation may not lead to a repeat of Europe in the 1930s,” The New York Times recently observed, “but it has fueled a debate about global political trends. There is a tendency at times to try to fit current movements into understandable constructs,” one we should resist if we are going to accurately measure and respond to this phenomenon.

As one Wall Street Journal columnist observed, never had “there been a greater coalition of the establishment than that assembled by Prime Minister David Cameron for his referendum campaign to keep the U.K. in the European Union. There was almost every Westminster party leader, most of their troops and almost every trade union and employers’ federation.” In other words, the elites went one way and the masses went the other. Members of the political classes will need to keep this shift in mind if they are going to successfully navigate the currents of our contemporary politics. The first step is to make an honest attempt to understand the real grievances that lay behind Brexit and the emerging populist movements here at home.

As Justice Brandeis once observed, “the greatest dangers to liberty lurk in the insidious encroachment of men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding.” **MATT MALONE, S.J.**

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*Cover:* Pope Francis is welcomed as he arrives to visit the Lutheran church in Rome on Nov. 15, 2015. Reuters/Tony Gentile

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## ON THE WEB

Dan Barry, right, discusses his new book, *The Boys in the Bunkhouse*, and Kory Stamper, a lexicographer, exposes the roots of the word "mercy." Full digital highlights on page 30 and at [americamagazine.org/webfeatures](http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures).



### The Parties Brace for Protest

Television news channels are betting on big audiences for the Republican National Convention, which begins in Cleveland on July 18, and the Democratic convention in Philadelphia, which begins two weeks later. “They will be two of the most interesting conventions in modern political history,” Sam Feist, CNN’s Washington bureau chief, told Crain’s Cleveland Business—which reports that CNN is charging \$40,000 to \$100,000 for a 30-second ad during the conventions, compared with its usual prime-time rate of about \$5,000.

The parties, and their host cities, may have mixed feelings about the new interest in what had become fusty events where spontaneity went to die. Even if Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton can manage comity inside their respective convention halls, the TV cameras may find conflict outside, where groups opposed to the nominees have vowed protests and civil disobedience. Cleveland originally imposed a 3.3-mile “no protest” zone around the arena where the Republican convention will be held. After a federal judge rightly ruled that plan unconstitutional, the city shrank the heightened-security area, but protesters will still be kept out of sight of convention attendees.

The host cities should allow nonviolent but visible demonstrations as close as possible to the convention halls. Protest is an indispensable part of democracy, and it serves as a safety valve for those who do not feel represented in the halls of power. The presidential election itself is not sufficient as an opportunity to be heard. We need vigorous debate now in order to make an informed choice in November.

### Governance, Not Guns

The United States has a long history of arming its enemies. From Afghanistan and Somalia to Haiti and Panama, U.S.-made weapons supplied to former allies have a nasty tendency to turn on their maker. The Obama administration thought Jordan, a close partner in the U.S. fight against terrorism, would be different. But a recent investigation by The New York Times and Al-Jazeera reveals that arms shipped by the Central Intelligence Agency to train rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad of Syria were systematically stolen and sold on the black market by Jordanian intelligence operatives.

It is not clear whether those arms have ended up in the hands of the Islamic State or other militants, but some of the stolen weapons have been tied to the killing of two Americans and three others at a police training facility in Amman in November.

Yet the United States seems determined to learn nothing

from even its recent history. In May, Secretary of State John Kerry and top officials from the four other permanent U.N. Security Council member countries announced they were ready to make exceptions to the arms embargo on Libya and ship weapons to prop up its fledgling government in the fight against the Islamic State and other militant groups. Just a month later, without a hint of irony, the U.N. Security Council, “expressing deep concern at the threat posed by unsecured arms and ammunition in Libya and their proliferation,” voted to allow E.U. maritime forces to seize illegal weapons off Libya’s coast. Instead of fueling the arms trade, the United States should be making every effort to stop the trafficking of refugees that has proliferated there in the post-Arab Spring power vacuum. That means supporting governance, not simply supplying guns.

### The Pro-Life Agenda

A major Supreme Court decision handed down in June invalidated a Texas law that required abortion clinics to meet the same health standards as ambulatory surgical centers. Whether the ruling in the case, *Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt*, marks a turning point in abortion jurisprudence is still being debated, but there is little doubt that it will embolden pro-choice lobbyists to target other abortion restrictions in other states. Meanwhile, Donald J. Trump is being held up as the only candidate who will appoint strictly pro-life judges, a bargain that even some Republican loyalists are unwilling to make.

For a generation the pro-life movement has focused on undermining *Roe v. Wade*. Now that Justice Antonin Scalia—perhaps the decision’s most powerful critic—is dead, and his conservative colleagues are in the minority on the court, it may be time for the movement to consider other ways to advance its cause. Hillary Clinton has proposed an ambitious child care plan that would cap this expense at 10 percent of a household’s income. Mr. Trump has suggested employers could take over some of the costs of health care. Either proposal would go a long way to support young parents who fear they cannot afford to raise a child. The pro-life movement could also increase its support of crisis pregnancy centers, which are under fire in some states for refusing to provide information on abortion services. The Hyde Amendment will also need defending if, as promised in the new Democratic Party platform, a Democratic president pursues its repeal.

The courts are not the only place to pursue the pro-life agenda. Muscular lobbying as well as willingness to cross the aisle will be necessary to resist the latest pro-choice surge.

# After Brexit

The Brexit referendum revealed some deep divisions in British society: between Scotland and England, between London and the rest of England, between young and old; the economically well-off and those the economy has left behind; and, perhaps most alarmingly, between those ready to welcome immigrants and those fearful of more immigration. It also revealed a fundamental divide between the political, financial and journalistic leaders of the United Kingdom and the society they putatively lead. Despite warnings from experts that withdrawing from the European Union would weaken Britain's economy, 52 percent of the electorate voted Leave anyway.

At this juncture, it is natural to focus on the shape Brexit might take or on the possibility that a new prime minister or Parliament might be unable or unwilling to carry out the decision of the voters. Historic as they may be, however, those next steps will not resolve the fundamental socioeconomic divisions the referendum has finally placed front and center.

These divisions require sustained attention, and not just within Britain. It would be a tragedy if the principal response of the European Union to Brexit were to stubbornly insist that Britain cannot enjoy any of the privileges of membership in the common market without full participation in the European project. Much more important now is an examination of institutional conscience: How have Europe's opaque bureaucratic institutions, which many voters perceived to be practically undemocratic, inspired such fatal distrust in the project of "ever closer union"? Likewise, it would be a mistake for the main economic lesson of the referendum to be that nativism and xenophobia pose a risk to free markets and free trade, rather than the recognition that contemporary neoliberal economics creates clear winners and losers.

The questions Brexit raises echo across the Atlantic as well. The current presidential campaign in the United States is revealing similar divisions. In Britain, both campaigns were guilty of cynical overreach. The Leave campaign stoked fears of immigration and new arrivals "stealing" jobs and burdening social services; the Remain campaign responded by playing to the fears of an apocalyptic economic collapse. Visceral fears turned out to be more effective than accurate warnings in motivating voters.

One interpretation of the outcome is to focus on the

bad motivations—xenophobia and racism—that drove some voters. A more charitable and instructive interpretation might be that such voters, given a choice between fears, chose the fear they felt they could identify with. The diagnosis, then, is not just that "they" have bad motivations but that no one they trusted offered them anything better.

The problem may be that the current social and economic order works well for the elite who wield political and economic power. Politicians, economists, corporate leaders and journalists (including, of course, *America's* editorial board) are members of the educated, mobile, urban population for whom globalism, by and large, is a win. No matter how accurate, any advice the elites offer sounds like the wolf counseling the sheep about the benefits of natural selection. It may be true, but it is also self-interested.

Pope Francis made this observation in "Laudato Si," writing that "many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centres of power, being located in affluent urban areas, are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems." He warns that "this lack of physical contact and encounter...can lead to a numbing of conscience" (No. 49). This critique of inequality and indifference applies equally well within developed countries as it does from a global perspective.

The recognition that we suffer from a "numbing of conscience" should and does make us reluctant to propose solutions and policies as if we had a clear answer to the problems our society faces. The first order of business must be an examination of conscience and an attempt to wake it, to feel not only the pain and suffering but also the frustration and lack of hope that are often the experience of people who have been left behind by neoliberal economic policies.

It is also time to go "back to the well" of Catholic social teaching—which significantly inspired the European project at its origins. Politicians and economists need to make concrete and credible proposals that prioritize subsidiarity and put the common good at the center of policies to promote and govern global economic growth. The fact that we struggle even to imagine what such policies might look like only sharpens the need for them.



## REPLY ALL

### Church Walls

I could not agree more with Matt Malone, S.J., when he writes, “It will also be useful to have in Washington a diplomat who represents the vicar of Christ, the one who breaks down walls” (Of Many Things, 6/20). I only wish the church had not built so many during its long tenure. It has been a very divisive force at times. I am thankful Pope Francis was elected since, in my view, he has made the church more pastoral than any pope since St. John XXIII. Community, with an emphasis on respect, diversity and equality, is a commitment the church has ignored or forgotten too many times through the centuries.

RICHARD BOOTH  
*Online Comment*

### No Commission Needed

Re “Studying Women Deacons” (Current Comment, 6/6): Since commissions have already addressed this issue several times since Vatican II, and the historical situation has been examined each time and further study is unlikely to reveal anything substantially new, it seems to me these commissions are mostly busywork distracting the Christian community from the good news.

Men and women are being martyred at greater numbers than at any time in history, and the secular nations are moving further and further away from Christ, the natural law and the family. Surely, there are more important things to consider than another commission that will no doubt (just like the last two synods and “The Joy of Love”) just reaffirm the faith? And if clericalism is as much of a temptation as the pope seems to think it is, surely expanding the role of faithful lay men and women in the administration of

the church is a much better use of his and our time and study.

TIM O’LEARY  
*Online Comment*

### The Clerical Trap

I am as liberal as one can get on Catholic issues, and I definitely want to see a woman on the altar, but I still have one question that I have yet to see addressed: What is going to keep women from falling into the same trap of clericalism as men?

From what I see in Catholic parishes, it is still “Father this, and Father that.” The men who serve as priests are given extraordinary deference just because they are the priests. Will the clergy change just because women are in the role? Or will it be more “Mother this, Mother that,” and before you know it they will be infected?

BETH CIOFFOLETTI  
*Online Comment*

### Sinners and Stones

Re Of Many Things, by Matt Malone, S.J. (5/23): I disagree with the idea that living our faith out loud and calling evil what it is is somehow smug self-righteousness. Authentic Catholics who take tough stands on issues no one else will touch are constantly told that we should stop alienating others, being intolerant, causing offense by being who we are. We are called to do nothing less than to offer ourselves up and to suffer the violence of others’ shame and guilt and fear to expose the truth in love. We are not called to refrain from “throwing stones from glass houses” because of our own sinfulness; we are called to openly acknowledge our sinfulness while standing for the ideal.

There are a lot of good people sitting at home living in self-pity and in fear of reprisal for speaking out. This is the easy way out. We need to get comfortable with the idea that there is a God and we are not Him! His will be done, in spite of our sins, but

we need to get out of our glass houses and evangelize.

CHARLOTTE ANTAL  
*Online Comment*

### Black Lives and the Church

Bishop Edward Braxton’s article “Bridging a Racial Divide” (5/16) was quite engaging. Most people I work with and go to church with think Black Lives Matter is another case of “give me something for nothing.” If protesters were working, they wouldn’t get in trouble. Full disclosure: My coworkers are mostly white. But they look at black coworkers and say, “Anyone, black or white, can apply for my job and get it.” I am not sure how I personally feel about all this. I tend to feel a bit more sympathetic because I have been downsized, laid off and had a 23-year job move away. Economic forces are real.

I also understand Bishop Braxton’s observation that “the church was not a major force in the opposition to human slavery.” They did not seem very aggressive in opposing the war in Vietnam either, an explosively divisive issue (not to mention all those wars since). And though the church might have been working in the background, it seems to us on the front lines that they might have been passively complicit. I’m certain this is how Black Lives Matter feels about the church.

JACK GOODWIN  
*Bradley, Ill.*

### Punishing Women

There is a perplexing problem that recurs each time the subject of abortion is mentioned, as in Bishop Braxton’s article on the Black Lives Matter movement. Those of us who oppose criminalizing abortion are thrown into a category of favoring abortion or being pro-abortion. When discussing women’s reproductive rights, we who are against criminalizing abortion do

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not see making abortion illegal as solving the issue. When abortion becomes illegal, someone who commits the crime suffers a penalty, usually a fine or jail sentence with a criminal record that makes future life difficult.

I can understand why the Black Lives Matter movement feels that once again they have become targets of laws that penalize women who seek an abortion and who may be choosing between feeding the children they have and losing a job that won't give them time off for the necessary time needed for delivery and recovery. Often these women are the main breadwinners at day jobs or low-paying jobs.

Many women, black or white, need help, not condemnation and punishment. I believe birth is a gift of a mother to her child, at least until the fetus is able to live outside her womb. Beautiful birth! Gift or obligation under penalty of law?

ELAINE BERNINGER  
*Cleves, Ohio*

## No Enemies

Re "Daniel Berrigan (1921-2016)" (Current Comment, 5/16): One did not need to know Father Berrigan for long to be touched by his warmth and insight. Many years ago, in a particularly nervous time during the Cold War, and in the midst of a tiredness and sense of loss, he, no longer in prison, gave a small group of us a weekend retreat. Some denounced him as a traitor to America or a disobedient, bad priest and Jesuit. He was clearly their enemy. Later, seeing him alone for a moment, I asked him "How do you respond to your enemies?" He said with warm eyes: "I don't have any enemies."

LEO CLEARY  
*Online Comment*

## The Other Catholics

Re "The Compromise That Binds," by Nathan Schneider (5/16): Thanks to Nathan Schneider and to Teri Harroun, the woman priest who presided at Light of Christ on the day Mr. Schneider was a part of the wonderful congregation. It is, from the other side of the altar, in the mystery of bread and word, very hard to describe the humble gladness that we women experience as we know that we are safely where we are called to be. Women at the altar bring a parallel and varied understanding of how Jesus, Spirit and Creator are experienced in prayer and celebration.

We at Light of Christ bring perspectives and uncover understandings that have been in the past (and in most places, in the present) unavailable from the pulpit. Not better, just different, and sacred, too. Light of Christ, as well as the dozens of other Ecumenical Catholic Communion parishes, are safe havens for Catholics who have found it difficult or impossible to worship elsewhere. We have opened our doors to those who are sacramentally and spiritually homeless. It is an honor to be a

part of the "other Catholics," with exploration and experimentation to call us forth and liturgy to bind us together with those in the pew as well as all people in prayer and thankfulness.

SHEILA DIERKS  
*Online Comment*

## Outside the Tent

Thanks to Nathan Schneider for a thoughtful article. The Catholic Church is a big tent, and it is often easiest to stay in the section that is most comfortable. Perhaps the experimentation necessary for progress can take place only outside the confines of the church.

LISA WEBER  
*Online Comment*

## Faithful Physicians

Re "An Educator's Influence," by J. Joseph Marr, M.D. (5/9): In 1961, I was a student in the introductory zoology class of Joseph J. Peters, S.J., for first year pre-med students at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was fortunate that the cornerstone for my nascent career in medicine was laid by such an eloquent and learned priest. Dr. Marr accurately described the unique teaching environment created by Father Peters, which was enriched and deepened with each subsequent course in his department. Much is written today about education in Catholic institutions—what exists and what should be. Dr. Marr articulated the "what should be" very clearly with the example of Father Peters, whose expertise in blending his faith, knowledge and wonder grounded several generations of physicians with both information and perspective. I am privileged and appreciative of having been among them.

JOHN L. WILHELM, M.D.  
*Chicago, Ill.*



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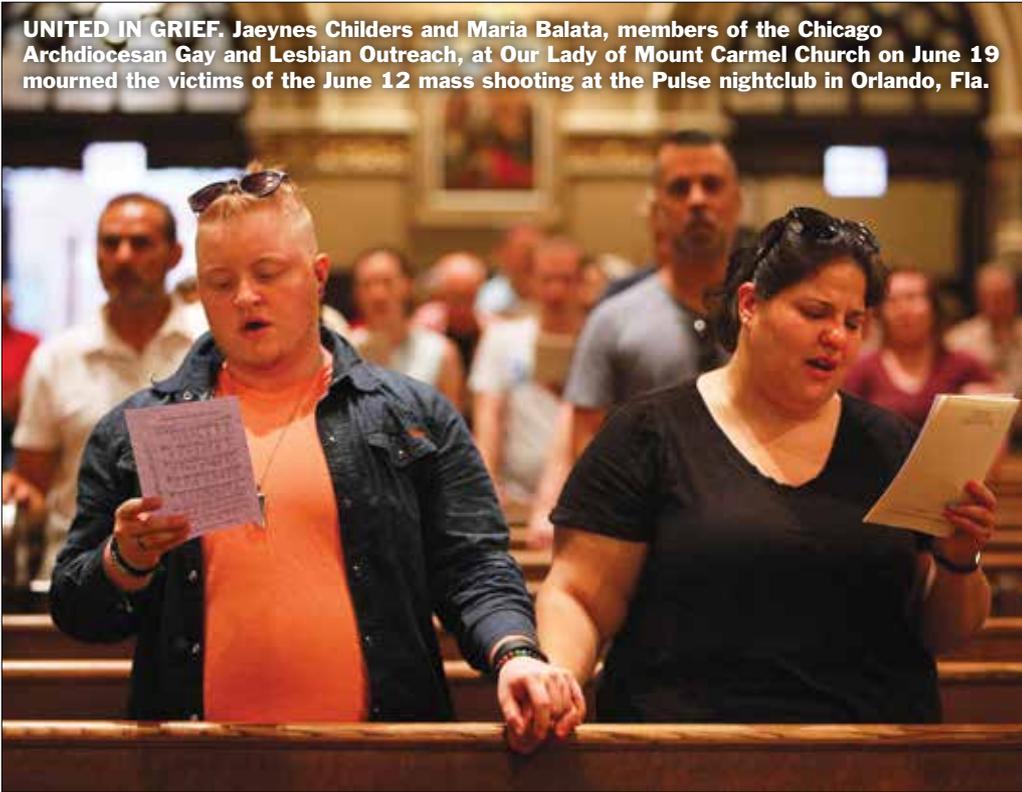
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# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

MINISTRY

## Bishop McElroy Calls for a Practical ‘Apology’ to L.G.B.T. Catholics

**UNITED IN GRIEF.** Jaeynes Childers and Maria Balata, members of the Chicago Archdiocesan Gay and Lesbian Outreach, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on June 19 mourned the victims of the June 12 mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Fla.



**T**he pope’s call for Christians to offer an apology to gay and lesbian people, issued during his flight back to Rome from Armenia on June 26, was carefully welcomed by Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego. “I think it opens up a very helpful pathway to dialogue and, hopefully, healing,” he told *America* on June 28. Pope Francis, Bishop McElroy said, brings to this dialogue with L.G.B.T. Catholics who feel marginalized by or alienated from the church a “renewed and deepened focus on the questions of accompaniment and the mercy of God for all of us.”

“We all walk together in a life of virtue and discipleship,” Bishop McElroy said, “and all of us fail at times.”

He added: “We have to begin to incorporate that mercy into the depths of our hearts and souls in ways that are going to be uncomfortable for us.... We all need to be shown mercy; it is something that binds us together, not differentiates us.”

“What we need to project in the life of the church is ‘You are part of us and we are part of you.’ [L.G.B.T. Catholics] are part of our families.”

That is not going to be an easy process, he acknowledged. It is one that will require preparation and “a lot of discussion and accompaniment and reflection in the church.” In the past, he argues, diocesan and parish leaders have struggled with two tendencies regarding L.G.B.T. people: “whether you had to sacrifice fidelity to the teaching of the church or sacrifice effective outreach to the L.G.B.T. community.”

“My own view,” the bishop said, “is that much of the destructive attitude of many Catholics to the gay and lesbian community is motivated by a failure to comprehend the totality of the church’s teaching on homosexuality.”

That teaching includes the conviction that “moral sexual activity only takes place within the context of marriage between a man and a woman.” But “that’s not a teaching which applies just to gay men,” Bishop McElroy said. “It is teaching across the board, and there is massive failure on that.”

Bishop McElroy argues that all Christians are called to a life of virtue, in emulation of Christ. Chastity is among the virtues of that life—others include self-sacrifice, service and piety—and it is an important one, “but it does not have the uniquely pre-eminent role in determining the character of

a disciple of Christ, nor one’s relationship with the church” that some may believe, according to Bishop McElroy.

Finally, and most poignantly in light of the recent attack in Orlando on a gay nightclub that claimed 49 lives, the totality of the church’s teaching includes the understanding that all Christians are “called to build a society in which people are not victimized or violence visited upon them or unjustly discriminated against because of their sexual orientation.”

A practical expression of the apology encouraged by the pope, Bishop McElroy thought, might be a re-evaluation of the language the church uses even in talking about L.G.B.T. Catholics. “We are not talking about some group or person who is the ‘oth-

er,” he said. “It has to be language that is inclusive, embracing, it has to be pastoral.”

While the Catechism of the Catholic Church on homosexuality and other teaching on pastoral care for L.G.B.T. Catholics deplores violence or unjust discrimination against people who are gay or lesbian, it also describes homosexual acts as “intrinsically disordered.” Bishop McElroy thinks that phrasing ought to be reconsidered.

“The word ‘disordered’ to most people is a psychological term,” he explains. “In Catholic moral theology it is a philosophical term that is automatically misunderstood in our society as a psychological judgment.” He thought the term is an example of “very destructive language that I think we should not use pastorally.”

Another relatively easy step for most dioceses to take by way of institutional apology would be “to seek to

collaborate with those in society who are working to banish discrimination and violence leveled against people because of their sexual orientation.”

Some church leaders may worry that the pope, in his recent comments on outreach and apology to gay and lesbian Catholics, may be moving too quickly, too far ahead of his flock. Bishop McElroy is not so sure, noting the many Catholic families he has met with have been longing to hear something positive about the church and its pastoral relationship with L.G.B.T. Catholics. “When I go out and meet with laypeople,” he said, “so many of them have family members, brother and sisters and sons and daughters, mothers and fathers who are gay or lesbian.... For them it is a great and painful thing to feel excluded from the life of the church, and for that element... we are not moving fast enough.”

**KEVIN CLARKE**

terrorist recruitment. As if to punctuate the severity of that concern, reports emerged the day of his visit of suicide bombing attacks against Christian villagers in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley that left five people dead (in addition to the bombers themselves) and about 30 people wounded.

Archbishop Paul Sayah, vicar general of the patriarchate, attempted to put the nation’s crisis of destabilization into perspective. Pointing out that the United States is home to more than 300 million people, he asked how well it might fare with the sudden arrival within its borders of more than 150 million refugees.

“I don’t know how Lebanon is surviving,” the archbishop said. “It’s a miracle it’s still functioning.” But beyond Lebanon’s trials, he added, the refugees themselves are living in misery. “No human should be subjected to such misery,” he said.

Cardinal Rai warned that the continuing crisis is “making refugees of the Lebanese,” particularly its Christians, explaining that Lebanese are leaving the country because of economic stress. The loss of Christians from the Middle East, he said, impoverishes both Christian and Muslim communities and “harms the culture of dialogue

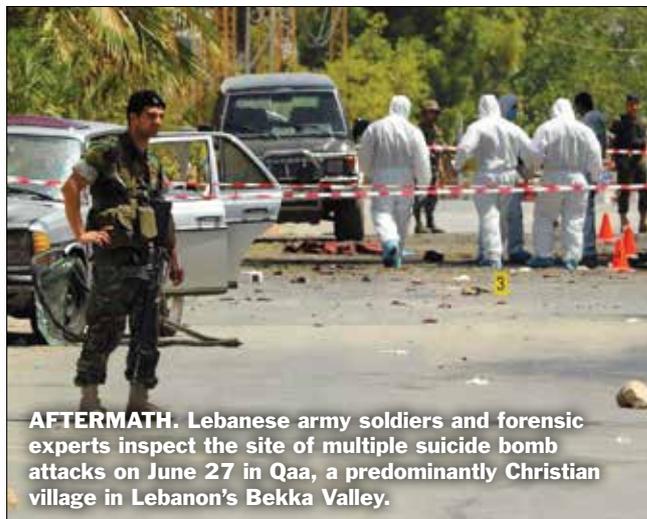
## MIDDLE EAST

### Syria Refugee Crisis Presses Lebanon

**T**he plight and vulnerability of Lebanon, surrounded by the chaos of Syria on the north and east and threatened by the tensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the south, were brought into sharp focus during a visit to the United States by Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church. During his cross-country pastoral visit, Cardinal Rai stopped in New York on June 27, where he implored reporters to remain mindful of the precarious state of Lebanon as it grapples with the region’s various crises.

Perhaps most acutely, Lebanon—a multifaith nation of just four million people—continues to shoulder the burden of more than two million ref-

ugees within its borders. More than 500,000 are Palestinians who have been residents in Lebanon for generations, but 1.5 million more fled into Lebanon in recent years to escape the bloody and interminable civil war in Syria. Their presence has been an economic drain and a source of deep political and social instability. The cardinal added that increasingly destitute and desperate refugees have become targets for



**AFTERMATH.** Lebanese army soldiers and forensic experts inspect the site of multiple suicide bomb attacks on June 27 in Qaa, a predominantly Christian village in Lebanon’s Bekka Valley.

and coexistence so desperately needed in the world today.”

Cardinal Rai is the leader of the Lebanon-based Maronite Catholic Church, the largest of six Eastern Catholic patriarchal churches with more than three million members worldwide, approximately 85,000 of whom live in the United States.

In a prepared statement to the press, he said the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at the origin of the Middle Eastern problems and could be solved through “the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside an Israeli state, the return of Palestinian refugees, and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories of Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.” The patriarch warned, “You cannot really come to agreement or establish peace without justice.”

Now that the United States has made efforts to restore its relationship with Iran, the cardinal urged the Obama administration to go further, to help establish a dialogue between Saudi Arabia (a Sunni power) and Iran (the region’s Shiite power), suggesting that tensions between those regional neighbors was at the heart of conflict throughout the Middle East. He said regional Islamic powers were obligated to take a stronger rhetorical and practical hand against Muslim extremism.

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## One Pope at a Time

A Vatican ceremony on June 28 marked the 65th anniversary of the priestly ordination of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. It featured a rare joint appearance by Pope Francis and his predecessor that seemed aimed at tamping down speculation prompted by the unusual circumstance that there are two living popes. In recent weeks debate has erupted over whether the two popes are sharing authority in the church or whether Francis is the sole successor of St. Peter.

## NEWS BRIEFS

Rodrigo Duterte, a controversial town mayor dubbed “Dirty Harry” and “The Punisher” for his tough stance on crime—and against the Philippine Catholic Church—was sworn in as the 16th president of the Philippines on June 30. + Thousands of Syrians **stranded on the Jordanian border** face starvation and dehydration, the aid group Doctors Without Borders reported on June 30, calling for an immediate resumption of aid deliveries. + Relics of Blessed Oscar Romero, including a handkerchief with blood from the day he was assassinated, were part of the U.S. Catholic Church’s **Fortnight for Freedom** observance on July 1 in Los Angeles, Calif. + Introducing “**Angelus News**” on June 29, the new multimedia platform created by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Editor in Chief John David Long-Garcia said, “We hope that we can help people enter into a better relationship with God and also with their neighbor.” + During his trip to Poland for World Youth Day, Pope Francis will go to the **Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi death camp** on July 29, but intends “to go to that place of horror without speeches, without crowds.... Alone, enter, pray. And may the Lord give me the grace to cry.”



**J.D. Long-Garcia**

But Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is “clearly” a retired pope, Francis said during an in-flight press conference on his return to Rome on June 26 from Armenia, adding, “There is one single pope.” Francis recounted how Benedict has shooed away conservative supporters who come complaining about his reformist papacy. His predecessor reinforced that dynamic at the celebration, offering an endorsement of the course Francis has charted for the church. “We hope that you can go forward with all of us on this path of divine mercy, showing us the path of Jesus toward God,” said the retired pope.

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## Attacks on Muslims in the United Kingdom

A new report dedicated to a British politician assassinated after promoting religious diversity finds a sharp rise in anti-Muslim attacks in the United

Kingdom. There were 437 incidents of anti-Muslim hatred recorded in 2015, up from 146 the year before. They included assault and verbal abuse, according to data from the organization Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks). The report, released on June 29, was dedicated to the memory of Jo Cox, a member of Parliament who was killed on June 16. Her death came just days ahead of a British vote to leave the European Union, following a campaign fueled by anti-immigrant sentiment that Tell MAMA said has had a negative impact on Muslims. Tell MAMA recorded a spike in incidents against Muslims after the terrorist attacks in Paris on Nov. 13. Overall, Muslim women were more likely than men to be attacked, while white men were most often identified as the perpetrators of abuse.

From America Media, CNS, RNS, AP and other sources.

DISPATCH | CHICAGO

## Two Communities, One Conversation

Chicago has long been a center of gay pride. Along a half-mile stretch in the city's Lakeview neighborhood known as the Legacy Walk, pedestrians can view a series of plaques celebrating the contributions of gay men and women throughout history to politics, science, world affairs, the arts and entertainment.

Acceptance often has come harder in other parts of Illinois. Dave Bentlin is chairman of the Prairie Pride Coalition, a group based in the more conservative, agricultural central part of the state. Even as recently as the late 1990s, Bentlin recalls, only the Unitarian-Universalist Church was willing to openly support the local L.G.B.T. community.

That has changed somewhat over the years. A local Lutheran church swiftly organized an interfaith prayer vigil in the wake of the mass shooting on June 12 at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla. When Bentlin stepped inside the sanctuary, he saw something unexpected. In front of an altar lined with candles memorializing the dead about a dozen representatives of the city's Islamic community had come to pay their respects. For most of the Muslims at the service, it was the first time they had stepped inside a Christian church or attended an event supporting the gay community.

A few days later, Bentlin and Sheheryar Muftee of the Islamic Center of Bloomington—two men who had previously been strangers—agreed to

engage in a recorded dialogue at the National Public Radio affiliate I work for in central Illinois. It was a rare opportunity for two communities that traditionally have had few interpersonal contacts to engage with one another.

"I'll be perfectly honest, I know very little about the Islamic faith," Bentlin began the conversation, "and what I do know is mostly negative."

"We are often segregated in our own

For the most of the Muslims, it was the first time they had stepped inside a Christian church.

pockets," Muftee acknowledged.

Both men spoke of belonging to communities frequently viewed with suspicion. Bentlin said members of the L.G.B.T. community can feel "invisible" in a culture that prizes "heteronormality."

Muftee said many American Muslims walk around fearing the broader society might turn against them at any moment. "The first thing I think about when I see something tragic like the Orlando shootings is 'I hope it's not a Muslim [who is responsible],' even though I know Islam does not allow those type of actions," Muftee said.

Like Catholicism, Islam teaches that sexual relations are appropriate only within the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman. Bentlin wanted to know if a gay or transgender person showed up at the local mosque, would he or she feel comfortable and safe? "I grew up in the Christian faith, as a Methodist," Bentlin told Muftee.

"I was spoon-fed verses from the Old Testament that condemn homosexuality and over the years I had to reconcile those verses with my own sexual orientation."

"We don't have a checklist that says, if you were found on some L.B.G.T.Q. forum, you cannot come into the mosque," Muftee told Bentlin. "Muslims, especially in the United States, have their moral beliefs and verses and commandments, but they don't really put them on other people. That's one of the good things about Muslims in the United States, and I hope the rest of the Muslim world will learn from us."

The conversation ended with Muftee inviting Bentlin to break the Ramadan fast with him and his family the following weekend. He promised the Islamic Center would hold an open house soon for members of the L.G.B.T. community.

Pope Francis, speaking about the Orlando shootings, suggested that the Catholic Church should seek forgiveness from members of the L.G.B.T. community who have felt marginalized. Bentlin and Muftee said their conversation was not so much about seeking forgiveness as finding a way forward for both communities through friendship.

"Just in the conversation we've had, I feel ever more strongly that there are areas of commonalities between our two communities. That happens whenever people talk," Bentlin said.

"Regardless of what the religion says in Islam...we can come closer together based on our humanity, based on being Americans, based on being part of the same community, based on being friends," Muftee said. "And we can find ways to address some of the things that may be uncomfortable for each other." The world, Muftee mused, "is not really either black or white. It's really a shade of gray."

JUDITH VALENTE, *America's Chicago correspondent*, is a regular contributor to NPR and *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*. Twitter: @JudithValente.

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# Staying Consistent

For “Consistent Ethic of Life Catholics,” these are good times ecclesiastically and bad times politically. Within our church, Pope Francis is making clear by word and deed that a consistent and comprehensive commitment to protect human life is morally right, theologically sound and pastorally powerful. With his haunting metaphor of a “throw-away culture,” Francis calls us to protect “innocent victims of abortion, children who die of hunger or from bombings, immigrants...the elderly or the sick who are considered a burden, the victims of terrorism, wars, violence and drug trafficking, the environment....”

In his historic address to Congress, Pope Francis brought some Republicans to their feet, insisting on “our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development.” But many stopped clapping and some Democrats rose when he continued, “This conviction has led me...to advocate...for the global abolition of the death penalty.... Every life is sacred; every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity.” This congressional confusion and polarization are signs of the difficult days for the consistent ethic of life in American politics. Its place seems to be threatened in both parties.

The Republican Party is about to nominate Donald J. Trump, who previously said he was very pro-choice and supported late-term abortions. He now claims to be pro-life, but his conversion seems incomplete since he simultaneously called for jail

time for women who have abortions and defended the work of Planned Parenthood and now has reversed himself on both. He also promises to defend marriage, but critics point out inconsistency here as well.

His support for torture, killing the families of suspected terrorists and greater use of the death penalty are not in question. He opposes limits on military force to protect innocent civilians. He talks glibly of using nuclear weapons and abandoning nonproliferation efforts. He demonizes immigrants and promises to deport millions who have fled violence and oppression. He has fanned the flames of racism and nativism. There is hardly an “intrinsic evil” listed in the U.S. bishops’ document “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” that he has not supported at one time or another.

A group of Catholic leaders offered a damning case in the primaries: “Donald Trump is manifestly unfit to be president of the United States.... Nothing in his campaign or record gives confidence that he genuinely shares our commitments to the right to life, to religious freedom and the rights of conscience.”

The Democratic Party is about to nominate Hillary Clinton, who used to say abortion should be “safe, legal and rare, and by rare, I mean rare.” She no longer says abortions should be “rare” and apparently opposes any restrictions on them. When she became the presumptive nominee, she did not go to a union hall or shelter for homeless women but to a Planned Parenthood rally, where she declared, “There is no

place I would rather be.”

At the federal level, the status quo has been that abortion is legal with some restrictions, but no one is forced to pay for other people’s abortions. Now Secretary Clinton makes a priority of repealing longstanding restrictions on federal funding of abortion, which would require pro-life Americans to pay for the destruction of unborn human life. Clinton’s continuing support for the death penalty in some cases and her vote for the Iraq war also trouble consistent-ethic voters.

**Catholics who support a consistent ethic of life can’t avoid hard choices.**

The Democratic governor and legislature of California enacted “physician assisted suicide” and now insist, with the approval of the Obama administration, that Catholic institutions must provide and pay for abortion as part of health care coverage. About a third of Democratic voters call themselves pro-life, but pro-life candidates and officeholders rarely get support or have a future in the party. Who has a decisive voice in progressive politics? Planned Parenthood or the A.F.L.-C.I.O.? Emily’s List or immigrant groups?

Being politically homeless does not mean that Catholics who support a consistent ethic of life can avoid hard choices or engage in simplistic moral equivalency on either issues or candidates in this election. Homelessness is not a virtue but a sign that we need to find new ways, allies and arguments to make a persuasive case for the protection of the life and dignity of all—in both parties and in a “throwaway culture.”

**JOHN CARR**

JOHN CARR is director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

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# Longing for Communion

Catholics and Lutherans 500 years after Wittenberg

BY TIMOTHY P. O'MALLEY

In 1999, as a senior in a public high school abiding within the buckle of the Bible Belt, I attended my local parish's Catholic-Lutheran celebration of the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification." In the context of common prayer, the clergy signed a copy of this document, in which Catholics and Lutherans articulated "a common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ" (No. 5). One of the theological bugaboos of the Reformation was no longer an insurmountable obstacle to the unity of the church.

Recently, the two religious bodies have once again released a highly significant document, "From Conflict to Communion," this time discussing how Lutherans and Catholics might commonly commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Pope Francis has also announced that he will attend an ecumenical gathering to remember the Reformation in Sweden on Oct. 31, 2016, the anniversary of Martin Luther's posting of the 95 theses on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. To those with even a basic grasp of Reformation history, attendance by a Roman Catholic pope (once depicted in Lutheran Bibles as the Whore of Babylon) at an event connected with the 500th anniversary of Luther's protest against ecclesiastical corruption is certainly notable.

This is not the first unanticipated ecumenical moment in the pope's recent biography. At the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rome, a woman asked the pope about the sorrow that she experienced because she could not receive the Eucharist with her Roman Catholic husband. Pope Francis' response was that of a pastor, observing that among Lutherans and Catholics there is first and foremost a mutual baptismal identity. And between husband and wife there is a sharing in the sacramental life of marriage such that the graces enjoyed by husband and wife alike in their religious traditions overflow into family dynamics. Pope Francis then addressed the question of eucharistic presence, seemingly advising (although careful to note that he had no competence to change doctrine or discipline in this regard) the woman to look into her conscience and determine whether she saw Christ really present in the eucharistic species. From there, the Holy Father said that he would say no more.

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TIMOTHY P. O'MALLEY is director of the Center for Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.

One of the gifts of Pope Francis' pastoral interviews is that he is genuinely answering the questions of those before him. But in this case there is a possibility for confusion that requires some theological assessment. Is the pope really saying that there are no restrictions on eucharistic intercommunion as long as one believes in the real presence?

Significant ecclesiastical figures, including Cardinal Robert Sarah (the head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments) rejected Pope Francis' implicit opening for intercommunion among Catholics and Lutherans. The cardinal also stated that among Anglicans (and thus also Lutherans) there is no "real" presence of Christ because priestly orders are null and void after a church is separated from Rome. This argument, quite common among Catholics, is not entirely true. Cardinal Ratzinger argued in a Lutheran-Catholic dialogue that among the Christian churches there is a real yet imperfect *koinonia*, or communion. This imperfect communion allows for the possibility that ministers ordained outside the Catholic sacramental system can nonetheless celebrate the Eucharist in a way that makes available the salvific presence of the Lord. Validity, as Ratzinger notes, is not the only category for assessing the presence of divine grace.

## 'From Conflict to Communion'

The recent document "From Conflict to Communion" takes up where then-Cardinal Ratzinger left off: seeking what is common in eucharistic understanding among Catholics and Lutherans. The document unambiguously affirms that Martin Luther did not object to the real presence of Christ in the eucharistic celebration but that he denied the church's understanding about how this transformation took place (No. 141). Rejecting transubstantiation, the Catholic doctrine in which the accidents (or sensory properties) of bread and wine remain but the substance (the what-ness) is transformed into the body and blood of Christ, Luther instead proposed what he considered to be a less philosophical account of how Christ is present "in, with, and under" the specifics of bread and wine" (No. 143). His own doctrine, called consubstantiation, was explained using the metaphor of an iron placed in a fire; the bread remains bread but the presence of Christ has created a sacramental union between bread and body, wine and blood.

Lutherans and Catholics have drawn significantly clos-



**CLOSER TOGETHER** Pope Francis receives a gift from children during a visit to Christuskirche, a parish of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rome, on Nov. 15, 2015

er to a common understanding of Christ's presence in the Eucharist since the Reformation. Although Lutherans still do not accept the term transubstantiation, both religious groups can proclaim that "the exalted Lord is present in the Lord's Supper in the body and blood he gave with his divinity and his humanity through the word of promise in the gifts of bread and wine in the power of the Holy Spirit for reception through the congregation" (No. 154). As Roman Catholic theologians and philosophers reread St. Thomas Aquinas, they continue to discern an account of transubstantiation functioning less as a philosophical justification and more as a guarding of the mystery of a divine presence that is wholly given by Christ. Here the work of Herbert McCabe, O.P., David Power, O.M.I., and Jean-Luc Marion remains invaluable for future dialogues.

Of course, Christ's presence was not the only eucharistic controversy during the Reformation. Luther also protested against what he saw as an inadequate view of eucharistic sacrifice, one in which at every Mass there was a re-doing of Christ's once and for all sacrifice upon Calvary. The Mass, for Luther, was still a "sacrifice," but not one in which Christ himself was offered but "the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise...in that by giving thanks a person acknowledges that he or she is in need of the gift and that his or her situation will change only by receiving the gift" (No. 148). Catholics

acknowledge in the document that they lacked the necessary theological vocabulary to respond to Luther's concern in a sufficient way. Still, Catholics "did not want to abandon the identification of the eucharistic sacrifice with the unique sacrifice of Christ" (No. 151). In the 20th century, through the sacramental and liturgical theology of the Second Vatican Council, Catholics and Lutherans both agreed that if they have a high theology of presence, then "not only the effect of the event on the cross but also the event itself is present in the Lord's Supper without the meal being a repetition or completion of the cross event" (No. 159). Eucharistic sacrifice is the presence of Christ's sacrificial love made manifest to the church, and therefore Lutherans acknowledge that it is a genuine participation in the full paschal mystery. While differences remain, "From Conflict to Communion" sees these differences as tolerable disagreements rather than serious impediments to unity.

Yet, as Cardinal Sarah noted, the real problem in eucharistic dialogue in the present is the sacramental status of the minister. The document recognizes this, clearly stating, "For Catholics, Lutheran ordinations lack a fullness of sacramental sign" (No. 191). Ordinations take place in Catholicism through apostolic succession: the college of Catholic bishops alone has the power to ordain. Still, as the work of an "ecclesial community," Lutheran eucharistic liturgies celebrated

by those lacking the fullness of the sacramental sign of ordination can nonetheless function as a means of salvation (No. 194). Much work remains to be done relative to ministry, but the document is nonetheless hopeful that if we can agree on justification and eucharistic presence, the question of ministry can be dealt with in time.

## A Response to Pope Francis

This reading of “From Conflict to Communion” is not simply a way to avoid asking whether Pope Francis’ implicit allowance for Lutheran Communion in Catholic liturgical contexts (out of a sense of shared understandings of eucharistic presence) is acceptable. Instead, the purpose is first to make clear that Pope Francis is not wrong to say that Catholics and Lutherans share much in common relative to eucharistic faith. There is a mutual vocabulary relative to eucharistic presence and sacrifice that is undeniable. And this shared vocabulary

was implicit even in the earliest days of the Reformation, although historical polemics made it impossible for either side to perceive this. The Lutheran tradition develops this shared discourse, and from the perspective of Catholics it has a value that must be acknowledged.

This brief survey also requires us to admit that Pope Francis may not have been exact enough in describing the very real differences that still exist among Catholics and Lutherans, especially regarding ministry and thus ecclesiology. A Catholic participation in the Eucharist is never simply a matter of believing in the real presence. It is also a deeper union with the church, which is one: “Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body—the church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1396). Communion implies union with the whole church, and the effects of disunity brought about through the Reformation (an event caused by both Catholics and Protestants) are still among us. The catechism notes that this disunity should be a real source of pain for Christians: “The more painful the experience of the divisions in the Church which break the common participation in the table of the Lord, the more urgent are our prayers to the Lord that the time of complete unity among all who believe in him may return” (No. 1398). In this sense, Catholics should mourn the fact that Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists and Catholics themselves are not receiving at

the eucharistic altar.

In light of the serious agreements and disagreements that remain among Catholics and Lutherans relative to intercommunion, if I had been in the position of Pope Francis and had been asked this question, I would have acknowledged the very real sorrow that should be felt that such a couple cannot commune together at the table of the eucharistic Lord. Yet, because of this noncommunion, the couple serves to the entire world as a eucharistic sign of a unity that is not yet here. There is a ministry that this couple offers in their baptized and married priesthood to the churches. We cannot remain complacent in our desire for the totality of unity that would

## There is a mutual vocabulary relative to eucharistic presence and sacrifice that is undeniable.

make possible intercommunion. The couple invites the churches to conversion of heart, to see possibilities for communion where seemingly there are none. For as “From Conflict and Communion” describes the present situation: “Lutherans and Catholics are invited to think from the perspective of the unity of Christ’s body

and to seek whatever will bring this unity to expression and serve the community of the body of Christ. Through baptism they recognize each other mutually as Christians. This orientation requires a continual conversion of heart” (No. 239). Though we cannot eat the body and blood of the Lord together, we must pray psalms of lament and praise together. We must commune in one another’s homes around meals of fellowship. We must represent to the world in deeds of justice and mutual love the eucharistic consequences of our particular communions, bringing all of humanity into the love of Christ. We must manifest the unity that we do share.

Lastly, there should be caution against taking every interview by Pope Francis (or for that matter Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II or Pope Benedict XVI) as a development of church doctrine. He was encountering this particular Lutheran woman, who was longing for union with her husband in the eucharistic banquet. He was not providing a catechesis on the Eucharist but expressing sympathy for her longing. It is the work of theologians to understand what is necessary for eucharistic intercommunion. But it is the pastoral requirement of all of us to take seriously the questions asked by our interlocutors. I see a real need for theological clarification in Pope Francis’ response. But I also see a pope who took this woman’s desire seriously, who took her Lutheran faith as an authentic expression of Christian life and who invited her to think about what this desire for Communion might mean. That, to me, is a fine way to start our common commemoration of the Reformation. 

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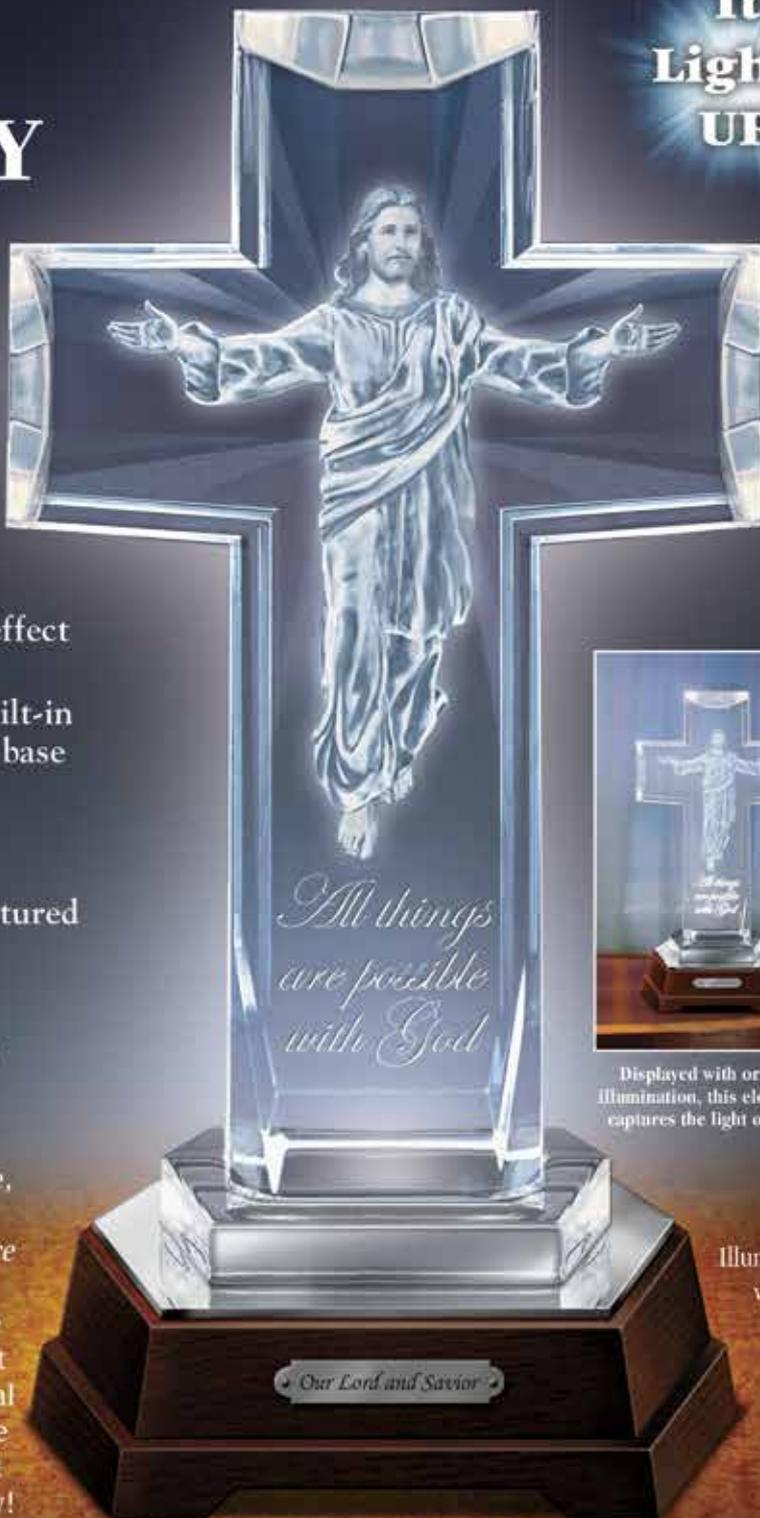
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# A Pastoral Vision

A cliché, a council and, finally, Pope Francis

BY JOHN W. O'MALLEY

**F**rom the moment the Second Vatican Council opened, it has consistently been described as a pastoral council, sometimes so insistently and unthinkingly that the expression has become a cliché. The word cliché implies that while the description might well express a truth, it at the same time trivializes the council and produces yawns.

The basis for describing the council as pastoral is unassailable. On the day the council opened, Oct. 11, 1962, Pope John XXIII characterized it as such. In his address that day, "Gaudet Mater Ecclesia," he told the assembled prelates that

the council was to be "predominantly pastoral in character." The prelates heard the message. From that point forward, speaker after speaker at the council, especially those from the so-called majority, insisted on the council's pastoral character, implicitly contrasting it with a doctrinal council, which presumably was more serious.

So where is the cliché? What is wrong with designating Vatican II a pastoral council? In response I say that there is nothing wrong with it. In fact, I want to vindicate it. But before it can be vindicated, it must be deconstructed. Once deconstructed, it can be reconstructed and then emerge with greater force and deeper meaning.

The cliché as currently understood tends to trivialize the council, principally by implying, at least for some commentators, that the council's decrees are less substantial, more

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**JOHN W. O'MALLEY, S.J.**, holds the title of university professor in the theology department at Georgetown University and is the author of *What Happened at Vatican II*.

**HEART TO HEART.** Pope Francis greets a Muslim woman as he meets residents at the Morja refugee camp on the island of Lesbos, Greece, on April 16.



contingent, more subject to reform or even dismissal than those from the supposedly great doctrinal councils of the past. Vatican II, like certain beers and soft drinks, is council lite—no heavy calories!

Even more important, the cliché misdirects our attention from what is utterly unique about the council's pastoral character. Vatican II was pastoral in such a radically new mode when compared with previous councils that before we can correctly use the expression we must purify it of the conventional understanding, reconstitute it in its proper breadth and depth, and only then let it return to its rightful place in the world with its head held high.

But if we judge a council's dignity and gravitas by the number and importance of its doctrinal decrees, does not Vatican II really qualify as a council lite or council not-so-serious? After all, Vatican II did not define a single doctrine. In Vatican II there are no dogmas in the sense of solemn definitions, like the definition of papal infallibility of Vatican I. Yes, that is true. Vatican II did not define a single doctrine, but that does not mean it was not a teaching or doctrinal council. (Every dogma is a doctrine, but not every doctrine is a dogma.) The council did not define any doctrines because it adopted a mode of discourse different from that operative in councils that produced definitions, most notably Vatican I.

Not defining certainly does not necessarily mean that the council's more important teachings are less binding or less central to the Christian religion, solemnly approved as they were the largest and most diverse gathering of prelates by far in the entire history of the Catholic Church and then solemnly ratified by the supreme pontiff, Paul VI. We must remember, moreover, that the "Constitution on the Church" and the "Constitution on Divine Revelation" are specifically designated as "dogmatic constitutions." If, indeed, we look at the number and importance of Vatican II's teachings, the council is not council lite but the very opposite.

Here are some of those teachings. I list them in no particular order, but certainly toward the top is the council's teaching that what God has revealed to us in Jesus Christ is not a set of propositions but his very person. In the same document on revelation, the council taught that the Bible is truly inerrant but only in what "serves to make the people of God live their lives in holiness and increase their faith." The repercussions of that teaching are momentous. Taken seriously, the teaching significantly reshapes how we henceforth must think about doctrine, as I try to show below.

That teaching highlights and bestows great gravity on

another of the council's teachings, repeated again and again after it first appeared in the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church": that the purpose of the church is to promote the holiness of its members. No previous council took the trouble to tell us that. Holiness became a leitmotif in the council's teaching, appearing again and again in subsequent documents. That is not a trivial teaching.

The constitution on the church also taught that the church is constituted by the people in it, so that the term "people of God" is a valid, crucially important and, moreover, traditional expression of the reality of the church. Since the people of God are everywhere on the face of the earth, the council therefore taught that the church is at home in every culture and needs to incarnate itself in each of them. Because the council also taught that the sacred liturgy is

an act of the whole community at worship and is therefore essentially a participatory action, the liturgy has to admit into itself symbols and customs of every culture.

Lex orandi, lex credendi—the norm for worship is the norm for belief. The council therefore taught that, while the structure of the church is hierarchical, it is also collegial—that is, participatory, as is the liturgy. In particular it taught the traditional but formerly unexpressed doctrine that bishops when acting as a body with and under the Roman Pontiff have responsibility not only for their own dioceses but also for the church at large. It taught that just as the Roman Pontiff has, therefore, a collegial relationship with other bishops, bishops are to foster a collegial relationship with their priests and priests with their people.

Vatican II taught that while the church has the heavy responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel to the world, it also has the responsibility of exerting itself for the well-being of the world as such, or to exert itself for the well-being of the so-called temporal order—to be concerned about social justice, about the heinousness of modern war, about the blessings of peace and about the advance of every aspect of human culture. It taught that it is incumbent upon Catholics to work with others, even nonbelievers, to promote such goals. It at the same time taught that this is not a one-way street but that just as the church benefits the world, the world benefits the church. The church must therefore listen to the world and learn from it—a remarkable and utterly unprecedented teaching.

The council taught that it is the duty of the church and of every Catholic to respect the religious beliefs of others and to work for reconciliation among the Christian churches. It taught that the church has the further and more difficult

## Vatican II did not define a single doctrine, but that does not mean it was not a teaching or doctrinal council.

mission to seek reconciliation even with other religions, a mission desperately needed in the world today. In that regard it taught that although proclamation is the privileged Christian form of discourse, dialogue is also a legitimate form and in some instances a more appropriate one.

In the temporal order, the council taught the dignity and excellence of political freedom. It taught the right of persons to follow their consciences in the choice of religion, and, more generally, it taught in some of its most moving words the dignity of conscience, “that most secret core and the sanctuary of the human person, where they are alone with God, whose voice echoes in their depths” (“Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” No. 16).

The council explicitly taught that grace and the Holy Spirit are operative outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church and that salvation is therefore possible outside those visible confines. Finally, the council taught that “The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well” (No. 1).

These and other teachings of the council are not trivial. They are not of a secondary level of importance. They are not platitudes or pious palaver. True, they are not of the same constitutive level of Christian belief as are the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, but they are nonetheless truths of the utmost importance for understanding the practical implications of those doctrines for our lives as Christians. If we understand them in that sense, they become pastoral truths and pastoral teachings.

“Pastoral teachings.” As opposed to what? What is the alternative to pastoral teachings? Is it doctrinal teachings, which is a tautology? Is it academic teachings? Did God reveal academic teachings or academic truths? I find it difficult to name an alternative to the term pastoral teachings, especially if we agree with “*Dei Verbum*” that what God revealed was “what serves to make the people of God live their lives in holiness and increase their faith.” Does this not mean, then, that by definition all truly Christian truths are pastoral truths? Are we then saying that Vatican II is a pastoral council by means of its teaching, by means of its doctrine? I think we are.

When in the document on divine revelation the council determined that Christian truth, that is Christian doctrine, is what helps people be holy, it dismantled whatever might have been valid in the classic distinction between a doctrinal and a pastoral council. Vatican II was pastoral through its teachings, that is through its doctrine. So the cliché that Vatican II was a pastoral council has returned to us vindicated—vindicated but radically redefined. Deconstructed, it now returns reconstructed.

When during the first year of the council Cardinal Alfredo

Ottaviani introduced the now infamous draft document “On the Sources of Revelation,” he spoke for only five minutes, less as presenting a text for consideration than as defending it even before discussion began. He said, in part: “You have heard many people speak about the lack of a pastoral tone in this document. Well, I say that the first and most fundamental pastoral task is to provide correct doctrine.... Teaching correctly is what is fundamental to being pastoral.”

I could not agree more strongly, and that brings us to the present. It is clear by now that Pope Francis’ blueprint for the initiatives of his pontificate has from the very first instant been the teachings of Vatican II. In his initiatives he has been teaching us by word and deed. These initiatives have consistently been described by both his friends and his foes as pastoral, or, especially by the latter, as “only pastoral.” Here the cliché returns, but in its unreconstructed form.

When in mid-April this year Francis brought back with him to the Vatican 12 Muslim refugees from the island of Lesbos, was he only performing a compassionate act, in the hope that others, especially governments, would be inspired to go and do likewise? Or was he not also proclaiming by a deed more powerful than the words of any encyclical a doctrine central to the Christian message, a doctrine on whose observance St. Matthew tells us in Chapter 25 our very salvation depends? “I was a stranger, and you took me in.” ■

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# To Love and Protect

## Pope Francis' systemic approach to safeguarding children

BY BLASE CUPICH

A year ago this July, as Pope Francis apologized to a group of victims of sexual abuse by members of the clergy, he said the church must ask for “the grace to weep before the execrable acts of abuse which have left life-long scars.” He told them that his heart weeps in anguish when he recognizes that what was done to victims was “something more than despicable actions. It is like a sacrilegious cult, because these boys and girls had been entrusted to the priestly charism in order to be brought to God.” He also pledged decisive action that would bring this sense of horror, utter violation and sacrilege to the structure of church leadership by issuing policies that would hold bishops and religious superiors accountable. This spring, Pope Francis did just that, with the publication of “Like a Loving Mother.”

This decree has received wide coverage by the media and commentators. The major part of the decree outlines a process for the removal of church leaders for acts that do grave damage to the church. As a result, most reports and comments (whether favorable or not) have framed this decree as a tool to punish church leaders.

Those who applaud it note that finally church leaders will be held accountable. Those who criticize it object that nothing has changed. They decry that there is no tribunal as originally announced, and they question if handing this task off to four different Vatican offices will dilute the resolve to dismiss bishops for negligence, as the new document promises.

My reading of this decree leads me to believe that the pope has a much more inclusive agenda than the punishment of bishops, convinced as he is that church leaders should be held accountable and punished as a matter of justice if they are negligent. There is ample evidence throughout the document that the Holy Father is more concerned with ensuring within the church the protection of the young and the vulnerable in a sustainable way. In other words, while a process of accountability that holds church leadership personally responsible at all times is an important first step, the pope is saying that the church also must approach the task of safeguarding the little ones in a systemic and holistic way. This is to happen on a number of levels.

### Christ's Call

Pope Francis sets the stage in calling for a new comprehen-

---

MOST REV. BLASE CUPICH *is the archbishop of Chicago.*

sive approach by providing a theological underpinning, announced in the very title of the document. Like a “Loving Mother,” he observes, the church protects with a special affection the small and weak because Christ has entrusted this task to the whole church. This task is not just the pope’s will, or a pragmatic response to a crisis. Rather, it is what Christ wants his church to do day in and day out. Protecting these little ones is a matter of our faith in Christ.

As a matter of faith, it is up to pastors, those who oversee particular churches, bishops and eparchs to see that this is done with care and diligence. What the pope is really saying to us bishops is that protecting children and vulnerable adults is at the core of our ministry. It is not to be an aside or an afterthought. The pope is telling us to expand our vision of what our ministry entails and embrace the fact that the safety of children and the vulnerable is integral to our servant leadership. Just as a bishop exercises his office of teaching, sanctifying and leading, the care of the young and the weak must also be woven into each of these three ministries. Just as a bishop organizes his diocese to ensure that the teachings of Christ are faithfully transmitted, that the sacraments are celebrated with the mind of the church and that his episcopal leadership reflects Christ, the head of the body, so too he must lead and organize his local church to ensure that the safety of children and the vulnerable is an unconditional priority for the entire church.

Article 2 of the document drives home this point by stating that even if the bishop is not subjectively morally culpable, he can be removed if he has “objectively failed in a very serious way in the diligence that is required of him by his pastoral office.” The removal of the bishop in such cases is less about punishment and more about correcting the breakdown in the system when it comes to keeping the weak and the small safe. That is the priority.

Since religious orders are very much a part of the church’s organizational structure and life, their superiors also share in this duty and in this regard are “equivalent to the diocesan bishop and the eparch” (Article 4). They, too, are accountable for keeping children safe and for contributing to a systemic approach to insure child safety.

Additionally, while some, even within the church, have attempted to portray child abuse by clerics as a problem unique to the Anglophone world or the West, the pope makes it clear that the systemic transformation he is calling

for is meant for the universal church. As such, bishops and superiors around the world will now need to take a serious look at how they will respond to this decree. This is especially true for those parts of the world where the state does not protect children through legislation or where society is indifferent to such measures. In many cases this may require bishops and superiors to offer a prophetic witness, going beyond social mores and legal practice, as they conform to the norm of the universal church. The status quo in a given country cannot be a defense, nor can ignorance of the church's norm or its meaning. An objective violation is done at the risk of dismissal.

Finally, by involving four congregations in addition to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in this process (Bishops, Evangelization of Peoples, Oriental Churches, and Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life), the pope is asking for a systemic change within the offices of the Holy See as well. Some critics object that the involvement of so many dicasteries will delay or impede action. But by including all of these Vatican offices in a system of accountability, Pope Francis is making clear that every leader in the Catholic Church has responsibility for child protection—those in missionary lands, religious superiors, eparchs and all diocesan bishops as well as Vatican officials. The intention is to bring about a systemic transformation throughout the entire church in order to respond to the will of Christ.

## A Place of Safety

Having ministered to many victim survivors of clerical sexual abuse, I believe this development can be a source of healing and reconciliation. It also should give parents confidence that their children are safe in the church, as no one is exempt from accountability. Victims and so many others have complained repeatedly, and rightly so, that the lack of accountability on the part of bishops has added to the suffering they have already endured as a result of abuse. Victims now know that not only will bishops and superiors be held accountable, but that they risk their office through neglect. Moreover,

priests have long complained that all penalties were directed against priests, and bishops were not held responsible. That is no longer the case: this loophole has now been closed.

But even beyond the issues of accountability and justice, Pope Francis has taken a historic step to ensure the protection of the young and weak in a sustainable way. Touched in the depth of his heart by the sufferings of victims, the pope in this decree outlines an inclusive system of accountability that begins with holding church leadership personally re-



**A SURVIVOR'S COMMITMENT.** The tattoo on the forearm of Paul Levely of Australia reads, "No more silence." Levely had traveled to Rome on Feb. 28 to witness Cardinal George Pell of Australia testifying by video link to Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Sydney.

sponsible, but does not end there. It provides a comprehensive plan for integrating the protection of the young and vulnerable into the very mission Christ has given to the church, so that this great tragedy never happens again.

The caution, of course, is that the details of this decree must be effectively implemented. That must involve, as Pope Francis told the group of victims he visited with last July, "the training of church personnel in implementing (these) policies and procedures." It will require all of us in the church to do our part. The pope's program, in its very breadth and structured internalization, entrusts the mission of protection not only to those in episcopal leadership, but instead points to a sense of needed vigilance within the whole community of the church, which makes up for episcopal leadership when it fails. He is reminding all of us who we claim to be, a church the little ones should always be able to count on, like a loving mother. 

# In Their Shoes

Empathy is the key to the church's ministry to families.

BY JOHN STRYKOWSKI

**T**here is only one mention of empathy in Pope Francis' recent apostolic exhortation on the family: "A mother who watches over her child with tenderness and compassion helps him or her... to grow in self-esteem and, in turn, to develop a capacity for intimacy and empathy" (No. 175). The idea, however, is found in other passages throughout "The Joy of Love." Pope Francis writes, for example, that in communication with another person, "we have to put ourselves in their shoes and try to peer into their hearts, to perceive their deepest concerns and to take them as a point of departure for further dialogue" (No. 138).

Indeed, I would suggest that empathy, although mentioned only once, underlies the entire document and is a key to its implementation. It is not farfetched to imagine that the pope's many gestures of compassion—the affection he shows to people at general audiences, his visits to prisons and refugee camps—are driven by empathy, by an ability to enter into and resonate with the joys and sorrows of others, especially the poor and marginalized. Likewise, this same empathy could explain his decision to place the challenging situations of families today at the center of the church's conversations and the two recent synods.

Certainly his pastoral service in Buenos Aires allowed Pope Francis to experience and empathize with the vast array of marital and family situations that are discussed in the exhortation itself. But the cultivation of empathy has another profound and irreplaceable source found over and over again in Christians who embark on visible or even hidden journeys of generous service of others. It is contemplation of Christ crucified. Entering into the sufferings of Christ schools the human spirit in sensitivity to the sufferings of others.

In his public ministry Jesus demonstrated empathy, either indirectly or directly. For example, when he tells the parable of the shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep, does he do so simply with the detachment of a teacher, or does he enter into the frantic and anxious mind and heart of the shepherd? Does he not make his own the urgency of the shepherd's search and thereby express the urgency of his mission to gather to the Father even those who are most lost in the community of Israel? Or when he is told of the death of John

the Baptist and withdraws "to a deserted place by himself" (Mt 14:13), is he not filled with empathy for John's suffering, recognizing in it his own destiny?

## Pastoral Sensitivity

In the exhortation Pope Francis is encouraging the church to embrace empathy as the necessary source of compassion and mercy. His frequent call for more effective ministries to couples and families on the parish level makes it especially incumbent upon priests and other pastoral ministers to embark on the way of empathy. For priests this has to begin with their seminary formation. But empathy is not learned as an academic discipline. That is why the pope calls for an interdisciplinary formation "in the areas of engagement and marriage" and urges the participation of families and especially women in priestly formation (No. 203).

Empathy, as the pope's own frequent references to novelists and poets demonstrate, is also learned through literature and the arts. Empathy is cultivated through imagination. The lack of exposure to the humanities in much of higher education today has to be a serious concern for the church and especially seminaries.

The pope's exhortation caused some controversy by seeming to leave open the door for certain divorced and remarried Catholics to receive the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist. He writes (No. 305): "Because of forms of conditioning and mitigating factors, it is possible that in an objective situation of sin...a person can be living in God's grace, can love and can also grow in the life of grace and charity, while receiving the Church's help to this end."

The footnote adds, "In certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments" (No. 351). This, critics of the document assert, is a threat to the church's doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage. This opening, however, is in accord with a centuries-old tradition of applying doctrines with a pastoral sensitivity born of empathy. The Greek Orthodox tradition of allowing admission to the Eucharist after divorce and remarriage was not an invention of theologians in an academic setting but an on-the-ground response to the life experiences of Christians caught in irremediable situations.

A helpful example of applying doctrine with pastoral sensitivity is the principle of integrity in confession. The Council of Trent placed an anathema on those who would affirm that "it is not necessary by divine law to confess each and all mortal

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REV. MSGR. JOHN J. STRYKOWSKI is a priest of the Diocese of Brooklyn.

sins...as also the circumstances that change the species of a sin." It is by divine law, the council teaches, that the penitent must confess all mortal sins. Over the centuries, however, moral theologians and canonists have recognized with pastoral realism that this principle cannot always be observed. They have described situations of physical and moral impossibility restricting the ability of a penitent to confess all mortal sins. Examples of physical impossibility would be soldiers rushing into battle or persons with the beginnings of dementia. The most common example of moral impossibility would be a person who suffers from scrupulosity, in which case the confessor would insist on only a generic confession of sin. A principle declared by the Council of Trent to be of divine law is applied with pastoral sensitivity.

### Widening the Circle

In the exhortation, Pope Francis, following the final report of the 2015 synod, quotes the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in recognizing that "imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors" (No. 302; catechism No. 1735). This, too, is a pastoral realism born of empathy. Many Christians are hindered from achieving an ever more faithful following of Christ because of the factors mentioned above. Some struggle; others give up. But all must be treated with empathy.

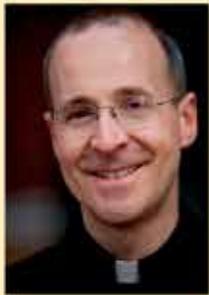
There has been criticism that the pope and some bishops are no longer upholding the demands of the Gospel in the ardent pursuit of virtue, especially chastity. It is an unfair criticism, especially in light of the pope's relentless demands for authentic Christian living in his preaching. But pastoral realism acknowledges the limitations of Christians. In the Office of Readings for Dec. 12, there is a text from St. Jane Frances de Chantal, whose feast day it is, about the martyrdom of love that her sisters must embrace. But, she adds: "Our Lord does not intend this martyrdom for those who are weak in love and perseverance. Such people he lets continue on their mediocre way, so that they will not be lost to him; he never does violence to our free will." This is empathy.



Every person has empathy toward those who are closest. The challenge is to rise from having empathy for a few to having empathy for many. Our distracted society often does not allow the time for the cultivation of reflection and imagination so that we can put ourselves into the shoes of others distant or different from ourselves, especially those who suffer most. And perhaps we are protecting our hearts and minds as well. Empathy will move us to compassion, and compassion will move us to conversion of thought and deed. Empathy makes us vulnerable. But it must be the way of the church today—and most especially of its ministers. **A**

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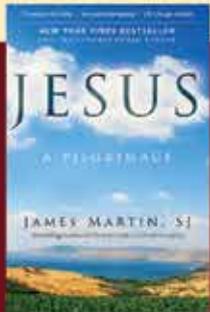
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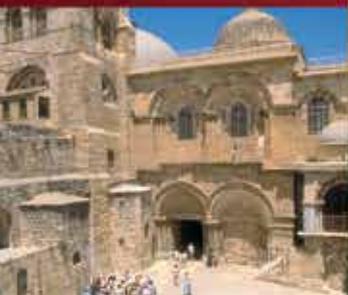
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# L'Arche Lessons

From the home that Pope Francis visited

BY DANI CLARK

**T**his past May, as part of his ongoing Fridays of Mercy ministry, Pope Francis paid a surprise visit to the Il Chicco L'Arche community in Ciampino, Italy, just outside of Rome.

In each of the 147 L'Arche communities around the world, people with and without intellectual disabilities share life together. During his visit the pope “sat with residents and shared a snack with them and the volunteers who live with them,” Vatican radio reported. In the photos from the visit, the characteristic joy and spontaneity of L'Arche are on full display.

In my favorite photo, Giorgio, an intellectually disabled community member, smiles from ear to ear, hugging the white-capped pontiff, who hugs him back with equal enthusiasm.

I knew Giorgio well. In the late 1990s, just out of college, I lived and volunteered for a year at Il Chicco. I remember how Roman Giorgio was, in looks and disposition: the aquiline nose and dark eyebrows, his penchant for making espressos. I remember how he greeted each person with such glee, as if he or she were the most fa-



**TABLE SERVICE.** Pope Francis visits the Il Chicco community, part of the L'Arche movement, in Ciampino, Italy.

ONS PHOTO/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO



**Fabio, core member of the Il Chicco L'Arche Community.**

mous person in the world—an enthusiasm, I am not surprised to know, he would also bestow on the man who may actually be the most famous person in the world.

That was L'Arche. Amid the challenges of disability, there was total acceptance. Behind the veil of life's toil, joy abided in the smallest things: a hug, a good meal shared, a song sung together, a walk to the market to buy bread. The spiritual reverberations of living at Il Chicco still throb quietly in my life today. One experience remains emblematic.

It was a summer evening, and through a rare set of circumstances,

Fabio, a core member of the community (as they are known), and I were the only two in the house. Normally there were eight of us, four core members and four assistants.

Each evening after dinner, we would light a candle, sit down and pray together in the living room. It was a short affair. We would sing, offer intentions and end with the song of L'Arche, a slow and tuneful prayer to Mary.

But that would not work if only Fabio and I were there. Besides his intellectual disability, Fabio was deaf and mute.

Housemates for 10 months by then, Fabio and I were friends. We were born the same year, 1975. We knew things about each other. For breakfast he would eat sweet biscuits drenched in milk while I sipped a café latte. He loved hugging people and I loved re-

CREDIT: FACEBOOK PAGE OF ASSOCIAZIONE ARCA COMUNITÀ "IL CHICCO"

**DANI CLARK** is a writer and editor at an international development organization in Washington, D.C., and a member of the Community of Sant'Egidio.

ceiving those hugs. His sign language was his own, and we all became fluent. Twisting an index finger on your cheek meant you liked the pasta and wanted more.

Fabio also shouldered another, very visible, burden. His face and body were marked by bone disfigurement. From furtive glances to overt avoidance, many people had a reflexive response to seeing Fabio that I witnessed many times. They were instinctively repelled, at least at first. I did not hold it too much against them. Our eyes may be for judging, but our hearts are for knowing. To know Fabio was to love him.

After our dinner together, I motioned to Fabio to follow me into our small basement chapel. I figured that quiet prayer was probably best.

We sat together silently in the candle-lit chapel facing the altar. Above it hung a replica of the San Damiano cross. St. Francis, so the story goes, was praying before the 12th-century origi-

nal in the Church of San Damiano in Assisi when God told him to repair the church. At first Francis believed it was the physical church that needed rebuilding, but later came to understand his broader mission. The church was broken by power and greed and Francis was called to change hearts. He lived to bring the church back to the simplicity of the Gospel.

I sat there with Fabio, before that cross, feeling lost in my own thoughts and brokenness, as I often am when I set myself to quiet prayer. At a certain point, I looked over at him. Something was going on.

Fabio was rapt, his eyes afire. He was staring intently at the cross and smiling. His expression, his whole being in fact, indicated he was communicating. But there was only the cross. I wondered what he saw. I got goosebumps.

Then it happened. Still smiling and still staring at the cross, Fabio opened his arms wide, imitating Jesus or trying

to embrace him, I could not decide.

I think about it both ways because in both ways it is true.

Fabio remained that way for a while: one broken man embracing another. Then he turned his body toward me, his arms still held out wide, like a cross, his face still beaming. He was inviting me in—into his brokenness, into the brokenness of the cross and into a paradox: I never felt so whole as I did at that moment. I opened my arms wide too and smiled back.

So much of life seems broken—from our inner lives of quiet desperation to the outer, conflict-ridden world. The church is also wounded and needs repair. Pope Francis knows this and his saintly namesake did too. But there is a beauty in this brokenness that Fabio taught me and that Pope Francis reminded me of with his visit to L'Arche. And the beauty is this: It is our brokenness that leads us into the embrace. We only have to recognize this and mercy will be ours. **A**

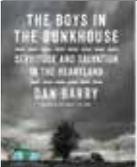
DIGITAL HIGHLIGHTS

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

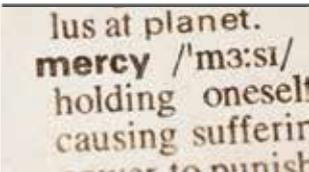
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**RADIO**  
New York Times columnist Dan Barry discusses his new book, *The Boys in the Bunkhouse*, on “America This Week.”

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**WEB EXCLUSIVE**  
Kory Stamper, a lexicographer at Merriam-Webster, talks about the meaning and the roots of the word “mercy.”

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**ART**  
Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., reviews “Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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**WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT:**

“It would be better if, instead of apologizing, he made actual changes in church policy.”  
—“POPE FRANCIS SAYS THE CHURCH SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO GAYS,” CRYSTAL WATSON

**FROM OUR BLOGS**

**After Brexit, Ireland Faces Partition Once Again**  
Rhona Tarrant

**Pope Francis Prays for Full Unity with the Armenian Apostolic Church**, Gerard O'Connell

**Bob Dylan's Church(es)**  
James T. Keane

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**WHAT YOU'RE READING**

*Reflections on Pride*, James Martin, S.J.

*What a Difference a Word Makes*  
Gerard O'Connell

*Pope Francis Says the Church Should Apologize to Gays*, Gerard O'Connell

*Shanghai's Bishop Ma in Surprise Reversal on 'Official' Church Group*, Gerard O'Connell

*After Orlando Chicago Archbishop Urges LGBT Outreach, Gun Control*  
Kevin Clarke




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# A History of Violence

Gun control in America

BY KEVIN CLARKE AND JAMES MARTIN



**A GRIM TALLY.** Gun control activists rally in front of the White House in Washington on Jan. 4. The next day, President Barack Obama announced executive actions to reduce gun violence.

**D**uring the 20th century, the United States consistently took a reactive stance on gun control, pushing for stronger controls and greater restraints on gun sales based on perceived social crises or acts of violence that shocked the nation. In 1934 that meant restricting access to “gangster weapons” through exorbitant excise taxes, and in 1968 it meant clamping down on inexpensive handguns and mail-order weapons sales because of rising urban crime rates and in response to the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, his brother Senator Robert F. Kennedy and the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

**KEVIN CLARKE** is a senior editor and chief correspondent of *America*. **JAMES MARTIN, S.J.**, is editor at large of *America*.

In both instances, the National Rifle Association helped craft the gun control measures that passed into law.

It took five years for Congress to pass the Gun Control Act of 1968. It would take the next significant gun control measure much longer to get through Congress after the initial public outrage over the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981. By then the N.R.A., under new leadership, had transformed itself from a hunting, hobbyist and gun safety organization into an ardent defender of Second Amendment rights. The group fiercely resisted the Brady Bill, which set higher hurdles to gun ownership by means of stricter background checks and limitations on interstate and overseas commerce in guns. But the bill was supported by President Reagan,

who had been wounded during the attempt on his life, and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1993.

The 1994 assault weapons ban, which held until 2004, was similarly inspired by public outrage after a schoolyard shooting in Stockton, Calif., in January 1989. The gunman, Patrick Purdy, had a long criminal history, white supremacist views and hostility toward Southeast Asians. He used a Chinese imitation of the AK-47 assault rifle to kill five schoolchildren at Cleveland Elementary School and wounded 32 others before taking his own life.

Two critical and related pivots are particularly important in this short history: the N.R.A.’s turn away from cooperation on gun control legislation after the passage of the Gun Control

Act in 1968 and the breakdown of a connection between public outrage over especially terrible incidents of gun violence and successful legislative campaigns. Since the Stockton shooting, no gun rampage, not even one as horrific as the murder of schoolchildren, teachers and administrators at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., in 2012, has provoked enough public outrage to overcome N.R.A. resistance and sustain a successful gun control campaign at the federal level.

For decades, the U.S. Catholic bishops have advocated stronger regulations on gun sales and, on occasion, even suggested a preference for a gun-free society in press releases and congressional testimony. But there has been no pastoral letter and few formal statements specifically on gun control, and the topic has mainly been mentioned in the context of broader indictments of American society like “Confronting a Culture of Violence” (1994).

The most direct statement on guns from the Catholic hierarchy can be found in “Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice” of November 2000: “As bishops, we support measures that control the sale and use of firearms and make them safer—especially efforts that prevent their unsupervised use by children or anyone other than the owner—and we reiterate our call for sensible regulation of handguns.”

### **A Heated Issue**

From as early as the 1960s, the editorial board of *America*, as well as a variety of authors writing in print and online, have taken up the heated issue of gun control. In 1971 the editors, reacting to a spate of homicides in major American cities, offered a sensible proposition: “Why not back two very reasonable legislative proposals: regis-

tration of all firearms and a ban on the private possession of all handguns?” It would have been difficult for the editors of 40 years ago to imagine that the United States would one day face an entirely new type of scourge: the semi-automatic rifle, of the type that was responsible for the worst recent

## **If one is called to be a defender of life from natural birth to natural death, how can one ignore something that so easily ends a life?**

mass public shooting in American history, the massacre of dozens of people at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla.

But *America* was not simply concerned with public policy—that is, tackling the complicated political issues around gun control (particularly Second Amendment rights) as a way of lessening the violence. The magazine has also approached the issue from what might be called a spiritual point of view. In January of this year, Judith Valente, writing about the spiraling violence in Chicago, touched upon the anger that victims’ families often feel toward God and outlined responses to the violence from churches and other religious institutions across the city. And in the past few years in particular, gun control has been increasingly framed for Catholics as a “pro-life” issue. If one is called to be a defender of life from natural birth to natural death, how can one ignore something that so easily ends a life?

Here are brief excerpts from articles published in *America* over the last several decades, in which the editorial board and other contributors stake out a position on a topic that is, sadly, always in the news. Additional archive material can be found at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).

### **‘The Armed Society,’ May 20, 1967, The Editors**

In the event of urban rioting such as major American cities have witnessed in recent summers, what factor might serve as a “potential community stabilizer”? Why, private ownership of guns. Who makes this constructive suggestion? An editorialist writing in the May issue of that impartial, humanitarian and tranquilizing organization, the National Rifle Association....

So, by the advice of the National Rifle Association, American urban society reverts paradoxically to the condition of the gun-toting, lead-slinging, corpse-making frontier. This review stands very far from entering a plea for street rioting of any kind for any reason, but it has little stomach for the monstrous prescription of the N.R.A.

### **‘America the Violent,’ The Editors, 1971**

Although, statistically, most homicides occur in private situations—where the parties involved know one another—we live more and more on the brink of public violence: dynamitings, sniping incidents, race riots, campus disorders.

Other nations look on in disbelief. The homicide count for England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Luxembourg—with combined populations 16 times that of New York City—is surpassed by that for New York alone. Granting the problems caused by population density, and other social factors, the disparity suggests that those countries are doing something right, we something wrong.

### **‘The Enigma of Public Violence,’ The Editors, 1981**

As the nation searches its soul in the wake of the seventh assassination attempt on a President in this century, ad-

vocates of stricter gun-control laws will once again urge their case. They will be right; the absence of laws prohibiting the casual purchase of handguns is a national disgrace. Yet the opponents of gun-control laws, including ironically many in the Reagan Administration, will also be right when they respond that such laws would not, by themselves, protect the President from any future assaults.

The crisis lies deeper in American life, and its sources are not easy to identify. Surely, though, one source is the unhealthy fascination with violence that runs through American culture. It is reflected in the fixation of millions with the programmed brutalities of professional boxing, hockey and football and the increasingly graphic crime dramas of film and television. It can even be recognized in the toy guns we put in the hands of children. Vicarious violence is so accepted in the American imagination that it sounds like moralizing to even call attention to it. But those

bodies lying on a rainswept sidewalk in Washington, the center of our national dignity and power, offered one more warning that the fantasies of violence which we so often indulge are not just harmless entertainment.

**'Gun Control Is a Pro-Life Issue,'  
Dec. 17, 2012, James Martin, S.J.**

Religious people need to be invited to meditate on the connection between the more traditional "life issues" and the overdue need for stricter gun control. The oft-cited argument, "Guns don't kill people, people do," is unconvincing. Of course people kill people; just as people also procure abortions, decide on euthanasia and administer the death penalty. Human beings are agents in these matters. The question is not so much how lives are ended, but how to make it more difficult to end lives. Over the years the government has legislated minute instructions on safety features for automobiles, to increase their safety for the driver, passengers, and others on

the road. Surely it is not beyond us to summon up the moral courage to intelligently regulate guns and rifles.

**'Repeal the Second Amendment,'  
Feb. 25, 2013, The Editors**

Americans must ask: Is it prudent to retain a constitutionally guaranteed right to bear arms when it compels our judges to strike down reasonable, popularly supported gun regulations? Is it moral to inhibit in this way the power of the country's elected representatives to provide for the public safety? Does the threat of tyranny, a legitimate 18th-century concern but an increasingly remote, fanciful possibility in the contemporary United States, trump the grisly, daily reality of gun violence? The answer to each of these questions is no. It is time to face reality. If the American people are to confront this scourge in any meaningful way, then they must change. The Constitution must change. The American people should repeal the Second Amendment. 



**How are you being called to serve?**

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The photograph shows Pope Francis, dressed in white, leaning over a young child who is lying down. The Pope is placing his hands on the child's forehead in a gesture of blessing. A woman in a bright green shirt is also visible, looking down at the child. In the background, other people are watching, some holding up their phones to take pictures.

IDEAS | ANNA KEATING

## BEAUTIFUL AND TERRIBLE

*Roald Dahl loved children enough to leave nothing out.*

Over his decades-long career, the author Roald Dahl penned 19 books for children, including *James and the Giant Peach*, *Matilda*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. His wild, dark and fantastical stories told us the truth about life while still making us want to laugh and bounce on the bed. Children were his main characters, the heroes and heroines of his books. He valued, precisely as children, our cleverness, imagination, sense of humor and ability to endure; and so, importantly, he didn't leave out the awful bits

about death and suffering.

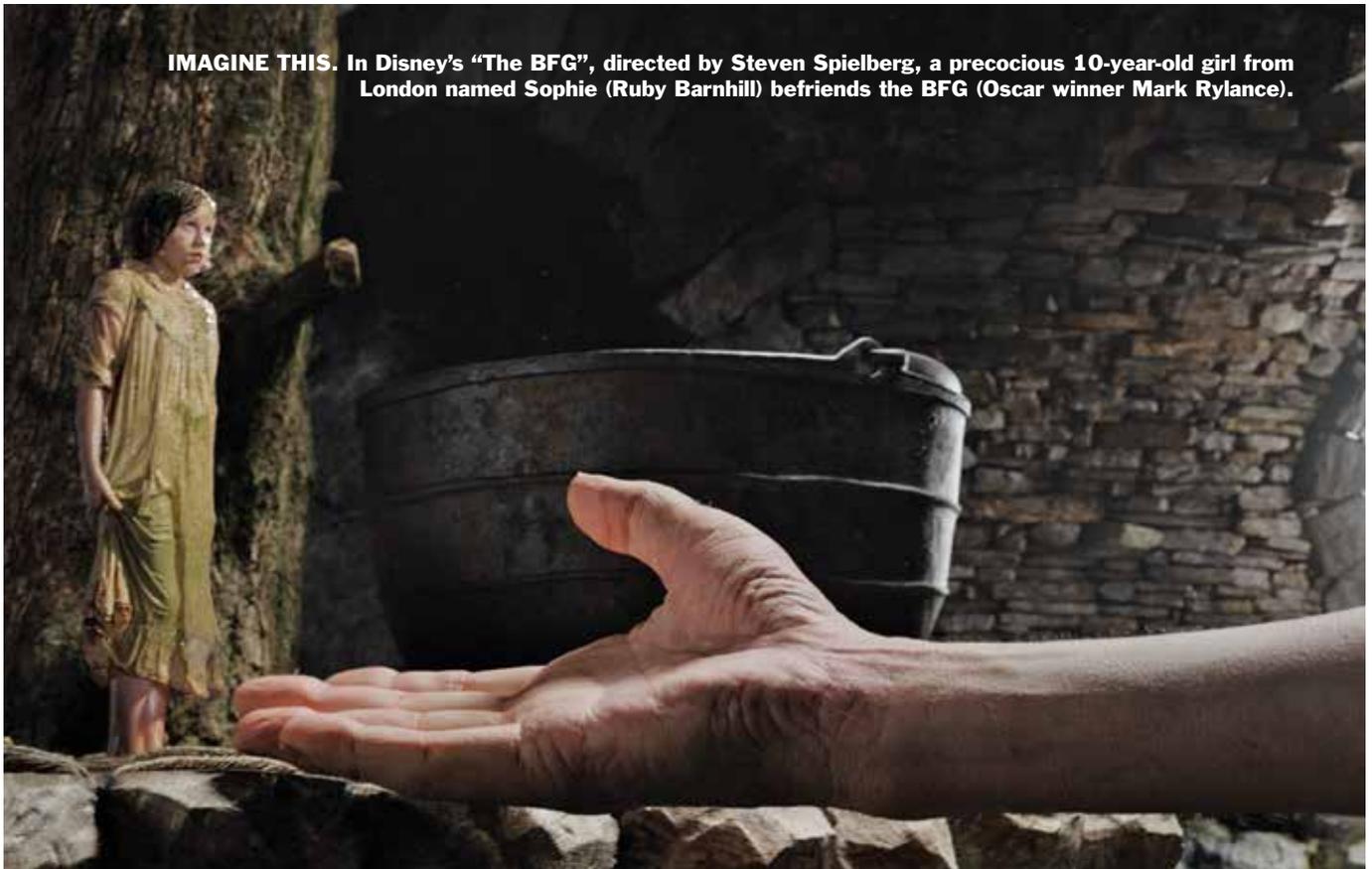
This Sept. 13 marks the 100th anniversary of Dahl's birth, and a film version of *The BFG*, directed by Steven Spielberg, was released on July 1. His stories acknowledge that evil exists but also that it can be undone. He is famous for his heroes and villains whose clever names identify them: Miss Honey versus Miss Trunchbull (*Matilda*); James Henry Trotter versus Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker (*James and the Giant Peach*); Fantastic Mr. Fox versus Bogis, Bunce and Bean; the Big Friendly Giant versus Bonecruncher

(*The BFG*); Charlie Bucket versus Mike Teavee (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*).

His stories tell children about the harsh realities of life, just as fables, Bible stories and the lives of the saints do, but they also acknowledge that good has the power to overcome evil. Dahl seems to say, along with the American theologian Frederick Buechner, "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid." Or as Dahl put it in *Matilda*, "If you are good life is good," even if it isn't easy.

Like J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series or the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, Dahl's books have often been banned from school libraries by parents and educators who think they are inappropriate or too scary for kids. (Remember Oompa-Loompas taken

**IMAGINE THIS.** In Disney's "The BFG", directed by Steven Spielberg, a precocious 10-year-old girl from London named Sophie (Ruby Barnhill) befriends the BFG (Oscar winner Mark Rylance).



from their homeland to work in a factory, or people-eating giants in *The BFG*.) And yet most children are grappling with more than we know. They have not yet mastered turning their expressions into masks in order to disguise their true emotions. Nor have they become numb to the silliness, the tragedy or the glory of it all.

My young children scream and laugh when someone makes a funny noise or startles them, and they sob when something breaks their heart. They do this not only in response to small things, like the pranks

and pratfalls Dahl so aptly describes in his books, but also in response to the big things.

I once discovered my 4-year-old in tears at the breakfast table. When I asked him what was wrong, he said he had just realized that all of the members of his family would not die on the same day—that he could be left alone. “Daddy and I won’t die for a long, long time,” I said. But it was no use. He was right. It was horrible, the thought of ever parting, so we just sat there pushing around our oatmeal for a while, my hand on his back.

Another day he tried his hand at dark humor, likely as a way to deal with his fear. “When I am old you’ll be dead,” he sang to me at the park. “That’s not very nice,” I said. “But it’s true,” he replied.

When I read him Dahl’s books, I changed nothing but the occasional insult. (Dahl was Welsh and apparently a fan of calling someone an “ass,” which I’m sure plays differently on British ears but probably wouldn’t go over well at my son’s preschool.) Of course, he was in heaven, asking questions, looking at the illustrations and trying to guess what would happen next. He looked at those books in his room when no was reading them aloud. He talked

about them at dinner and before falling asleep. “How will Sophie stop the bad guys?” he wondered about *The BFG*.

I suppose children, like adults, learn more from messy stories of scoundrels and saints (think *Les Misérables*) than books full of bromides without much plot. “Share your toys. Use your words.” I know. I know. I know.

My children want to read what Dahl called, in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, “fine, fantastic tales, of dragons, gypsies, queens, and whales.” They want books about sly foxes and little boys who

steer giant peaches across the sky. They want to hear about people-eating giants, but mostly about the little girl named Sophie who took those giants down. They love humor and adventure, wordplay and rhyme. And I suppose I do too, as reading these books to my kids has often been the highlight of my day.

Perhaps Dahl understood his readers so well because he first wrote these stories as entertainment for his own five children, often slipping in fatherly advice like the list of books Matilda checks out from the library (Dickens, Hemingway, Kipling). His books were odes to literature and wonder, and though many have been successfully turned into movies, I am certain he would prefer you read them first. As the Oompa-Loompas sing in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, “So please, oh please, we beg, we pray/ Go throw your TV set away/ And in its place you can install/ A lovely bookshelf on the wall.... And later, each and every kid/ Will love you more for what you did.”

Human suffering may have been present in Dahl’s children’s books because it played an outsize role in his own life. Dahl’s father died when he was 4 years old. In his 20s he was a fighter pilot during World War II; he started writing literature after his plane

crashed in Libya. Of the 16 men in his unit, only Dahl and two others survived. Most horrible of all, Dahl’s eldest daughter, Olivia, to whom he dedicated *The BFG*, died at the age of 7 from measles encephalitis, her father by her side.

As Joan Didion once wrote, “We tell ourselves stories in order to live.” We need to make sense of the “phantasmagoria that is our actual experience.” We need to turn our sense memories into something meaningful that can be shared. The stories we tell are imperfect and messy at best, and if they’re true, reflect something of our fears, sufferings and shortcomings, but telling stories is infinitely better than pretending that those things don’t matter, regardless of how old we are.



Roald Dahl in 1954

**ANNA KEATING** is the co-author of *The Catholic Catalogue: A Field Guide to The Daily Acts That Make Up a Catholic Life*. She also runs a website on Catholic practice and culture by the same name, [www.thecatholiccatalogue.com](http://www.thecatholiccatalogue.com).

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## A RITE OF SERVICE

It happened 10 years ago while I was stuck in traffic in Jaffa, an ancient district of modern-day Tel Aviv. I was part of a study mission to Israel made up primarily of U.S. women religious from nongovernmental organizations at the United Nations. A number of the sisters were blowing off some steam after an exhausting week of travel and began launching into songs. After a slightly off-key rendition of the “Star-Spangled Banner,” they asked our bus driver, Haim—a good-natured 50-something Israeli—to sing Israel’s national anthem, “Hatikvah.” He demurred when the sisters pleaded with him. “I’m sorry I cannot do this now. It is not allowed,” he said to their surprise and disappointment. When the traffic jam became a standstill a few minutes later, Haim quietly opened the door, stepped off the bus, stood at attention and sang the anthem in the middle of the street for us all.

It was a stark contrast to my own experience in the United States, where many of us struggle to stop stuffing our faces for a few seconds before a ballgame so we can fake our way through our own national anthem. Haim had completed years of mandatory national service in a country perpetually in conflict; this was connected to something much more immediate and solemn.

The complex political/military/religious reality of Israel raised many difficult questions, but there was no doubt that for nearly every person I encountered, Israeli citizenship was not a passive experience. They were passionate stakeholders regardless of where they stood on the political spectrum.

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**BILL MCGARVEY**, a musician and writer, is the author of *The Freshman Survival Guide*, owner of *CathNewsUSA.com*. Twitter: @billmcgarvey.

I’ve been reminded of that episode numerous times during this election season. The anger and disaffection among our electorate has become so extreme that the Republicans seem about to nominate a candidate whose campaign, just a year ago, appeared to be a surreal bit of political performance art. And on the Democratic side, a recent poll found that nearly half of Senator Bernie Sanders’s supporters don’t plan to vote for their own party’s nominee.

Clearly something is broken in our politics. There is a disconnectedness in our body politic that politicians alone can’t fix; we must confront it ourselves.

Let’s do a brief experiment: How many active members of the military do you know personally? If my own anecdotal evidence is any indication, the number is vanishingly small.

Approximately 0.43 percent of Americans are in uniform, but according to a 2015 Los Angeles Times report, our military is “gradually becoming a separate warrior class...that is becoming increasingly distinct from the public it is charged with protecting.” The report makes the case that service is almost becoming a family business: “as many as 80% of those who serve come from a family in which a parent or sibling is also in the military.” According to Rorke Denver, author of *Worth Dying For: A Navy SEAL’s Call to a Nation*, “It can feel like military America is a separate country within a country, with civilian America existing someplace else.”

Our nation, like Haim’s, is engaged in a protracted conflict, but except for a tiny fraction of Americans, that conflict is an abstraction. The truth is, we’ve become abstractions to one

We have become abstractions to one another, living highly curated lives.



another as citizens, living highly curated lives that minimize our chances of intersecting with anyone who differs from us. This divide does not bode well, but connecting us through some form of universal national service could bridge it. Opportunities for service include the military but also areas of national need like education, poverty, the environment, etc. Given the cost of college and job training, service could be tied to some

sort of tuition credit.

Numerous bipartisan voices are already advocating some form of this. Retired General Stanley McChrystal proposed creating a million full-time civilian service positions for Americans ages 18 to 28. “Universal national service would surely face obstacles. But America is too big, and our challenges too expansive, for small ideas,” he wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*. “The objective must be a cultural shift that makes service an expected rite of citizenship.”

When meaningful national service falls on the shoulders of so few, it can’t be healthy for a democracy. It is time we asked ourselves a difficult question about whether the platitude “Thank you for your service” unconsciously submerges our nation’s uglier truth: “Thanks for serving so I [or my child] won’t have to.”

# WHAT'S ON YOUR CHILD'S READING LIST?

**W**hen my brother Dave and I were very young our father, a journalist who, probably because he couldn't afford college, had gone right into newspaper work when he returned from World War I, would grow agitated when he saw us reading comic books. I remember him saying he had read all of Dickens and James Fenimore Cooper when he was young. He may have exaggerated on "all" of Dickens, but his library attested that he read voluminously. I keep a dozen of his own books from the turn of the century—including *Jane Eyre*, *The Cloister and the Hearth* and *The Brothers Karamazov*—in my own library for inspiration. When I was in first grade, the nun kept a big box of books in front of the class and every day we had a reading hour in which I worked my way through several volumes of the Tom Swift series. The following years I moved into the Tarzan series, the Hardy Boys and eventually *David Copperfield*.

As the evidence accumulates that today's children are reading less and less, I have invited a cross section of our writers and staff who have raised children to share their wisdom on what today's children should read.

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

## America's Original Sin

Children's books are like little paw prints in the virgin snow. The titles aren't particularly memorable, yet they leave their indelible imprint. In first grade I remember my genuine pride in conquering *Tip*, our introductory reader about an erstwhile terrier, and its not-too-inventive sequel, *Tip and Mitten*, co-starring a kitten. My sensibilities as a third-grade traditionalist were shocked by *Green Eggs and Ham*, with its absurdist rhymes and almost Dalí-like illustrations by Dr. Seuss. As a young Yankees fan, I devoutly studied Mickey Mantle's heroic *The Quality of Courage*, a tome that I realized years later was written by a ghostwriter while the Mick was probably out having a beer with the boys. Nevertheless, it's always good for young people to have a hero or two.

Then there were books that truly made an impact and I think should be read by all youngsters. Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* can be appreciated on many levels, including as a morality tale about America's original sin of race. It first appealed to me

as an eye-opening journey on the Mississippi River with irrepressible Huck, his pal Tom Sawyer and Jim, the slave on the run who joins him on the raft going down the river. (Nothing like a book with a lot of active verbs for the young mind!) Lastly, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a hauntingly beautiful novel about race, justice and adult life seen through the eyes of a little girl. It reflects America in so many ways and leaves us with an internal voice by author Harper Lee that can last a lifetime.

THOMAS MAIER, an investigative reporter for *Newsday*, is the author of five books. The most recent is *When Lions Roar: The Churchills and the Kennedys*, excerpted in the Oct. 27, 2014, issue of *America*.

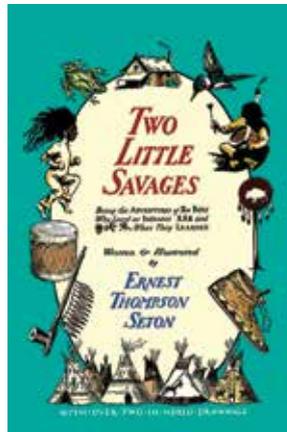
## A Lesson in Savage Realism

I was 12 when I got my hands on Ernest Thompson Seton's *Two Little Savages*. My copy was in tatters but all the pages

were there and I read all of them in a week. Then I read them again; and after that I reread my favorite pages, thinking all the while, as I did with many books when I was 12, that this was the best book I had ever read. Here's what I liked about it. It was about Indians, and about two boys interested in Indians, and it was filled with drawings and instructions for how to make teepees and moccasins. It was crammed with odd knowledge, like the fact that Indians walked with their toes pointed in. One of the characters was a witch woman who knew how to poison people with plants. But the very best thing about the book was the savage realism

of the author about life. Yan, the principal little savage, had younger and older brothers who were unredeemed monsters. Yan was not his mother's favorite, and in addition she was a religious bully. I sensed immediately and later understood more clearly that Seton was oddly incapable of telling a phony story to a child.

THOMAS POWERS, a Pulitzer Prize-winner, has written several books, including *The Death of Crazy Horse*.



## The Ghosts of History

Growing up, I never entertained the idea of running away from home. Yet one of my favorite books was a tale of two siblings catching a train from their home in Greenwich, Conn., to hide out in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* is now a children's classic, but I did not know that when I first picked it up in, I think, fifth grade.

What attracted me was the exotic notion of spending the night at the Met, a place I had been to many times before, but always amid throngs of people and never on my own. Sleeping in antique beds, trolling the Met's fountains for loose change, spending each day in a new gallery—the adventures of Claudia Kincaid and her brother Jaime made learning seem fun and just a little bit dangerous. Would they get caught? Would they have enough money to survive? And just who was this Mrs. Frankweiler, who kept inserting herself into the story? Long before “A Night at the Museum” became a movie franchise (and a lucrative fundraising opportunity), E. L. Konigsburg introduced us to the thrills of camping out with the ghosts of history.

---

**MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY** is an executive editor of *America*.

### Where Christmas Never Comes

Before there was J. K. Rowling, an English writer whose imagination ap-

peals to children of all ages, there was C. S. Lewis.

And while American children may need some explanations of mid-20th-century British language and furniture, they can still become immersed in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

For starters, it's about children. The youngest, Lucy, wanders into a wardrobe during a game of hide-and-seek and ends up in Narnia, a world where it is always winter and Christmas never comes.

Her brother Edmund goes through the wardrobe, where he meets the White Witch, who is responsible for all the bad things in Narnia. She seduces Edmund with sweets, taking advantage of his character flaws to turn him to her side in a war between good and evil. The good is incarnate in Aslan, the mystical Lion whose sacrifice gives the other children a symbol to fight for.

When our daughters were small, my wife read this and the other Narnia books to them. Both girls, now grown,

recall reading them themselves before they were 10. They were captivated by the story, the characters and the lessons. It's no surprise they are both huge Harry Potter fans.

---

**TOM CURRAN** is a former associate editor of *The Newark Star Ledger*.

### King Arthur's Magic Childhood

In this retelling of the Arthurian legend, T. H. White's *The Sword in the Stone*, young Arthur grows up a foster son on the estate of Sir Ector, a minor nobleman, and is educated by the wise and eccentric Merlyn. To adult eyes, the book is an account of the future king's empathetic education and an exploration of the structure of societies, authority and justice. To a child it is a series of adventures, narrated with a certain ironic detachment, full of very funny asides. Arthur gets lost in a forest, meets Robin Hood and his band, frees prisoners of a wicked sorceress and is transformed into various animals. Arthur, as enchanted by

## Visiting Day at Morningside

Come, let me strain the raspberries

tonight, stir the sauce—glassy the sugar,

not too tart—pour it, wipe up the crimson

islands and return

to where I learned the revenue

of taste. Taste that's acquired an appetite

for place, rich with accrued mobilities:

sun on the slender sill at early day,

sun on the orange brick—mid-morn—

sun in the cordons of a slingshot noon,

that settles on our dinner bell at dusk.

A man's mind hovers

over brews and blends and recipes he

stored in sturdy, lifelong cabinets;

his lips keep company with old assorting

hands. How quickly he becomes, once

more, the hungry boy, perplexed by thick

and simple sweeteners. For him

someone has stirred, all day, all night—

long spoon along an earthen jar—this fruit.

**S O F I A M . S T A R N E S**

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**SOFIA M. STARNES** is the author of five poetry collections, including *A Commerce of Moments*, which was a *Library of Virginia Honor Book in Poetry* in the year of its publication. In 2012 she was appointed *Poet Laureate of Virginia*. She is currently the poetry editor and poetry book review editor for the *Anglican Theological Review*.

tales of brave knights and dramatic battles as any 6-year-old gazing up at the mounted knights in armor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is eager to go on his own quest and of course ultimately does, pulling the sword from the stone. But Merlyn, who lives backward through time and has seen the horror and folly of militaristic societies and the transience of power, is skeptical. He sends Arthur to meet a knight, but he is a slapstick fool, locked in a futile and endless contest.

The most affecting episodes in the book are Arthur's education by experience, as he becomes a small fish, a hawk and a badger and understands power, fear and community in new ways. The psychologically complex and finely drawn relationships between Arthur, Kay, Merlyn and Sir Ector resonate with compassion. I read it aloud to my sons. I'd press it into the hands of another 10- or 12-year-old as an antidote to education that quests for the predetermined right answer and as protection against a world that honors might over right.

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**EILEEN MARKEY** has just completed a biography of Maura Clarke, M.M., who was martyred in El Salvador.

### The Secret of the Hole

In Louis Sachar's novel *Holes*, Stanley is thrust into the cold, cruel, arbitrary adult world away from the warmth and protection of parents and home. Arrested for stealing a pair of used sneakers, a crime he did not commit, the judge gives Stanley a choice: jail or camp. Stanley chooses camp. But Camp Green Lake, in Texas, bears no resemblance to the camp of Stanley's teenage imagination, a place of swimming lessons, water-skiing and rock climbing. Instead, Stanley and the juvenile delinquents must dig holes all day long, five feet wide and five feet deep, under the relentless hot sun. The boys are the prey of rattlesnakes, scorpions and poisonous lizards, as well as of administrators who withhold

drinking water.

Stanley's bad luck begins to change after teaching another teenage boy at the camp to read. While digging a hole at the camp, Stanley finds a box of treasure that had been stolen from his great-great grandfather. He learns much about himself and others. He also learns the real reason—besides punishment—that the boys had to dig holes.

Louis Sachar weaves humor throughout the tragedy. The novel reads like a fast-paced mystery, with careful foreshadowing and many surprises. "That was such a cool book," said my son, Andrew, who read it in middle school. "Make sure you write about them running away and how the adults realized he was innocent."

*Holes* is the story of life's accidents and tests of character, and the promise of ample rewards for developing strength, both physical and emotional. First published in 1998, the novel won a Newbery Medal, a National Book Award and many other awards.

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**LORETTA TOFANI** won a Pulitzer Prize while reporting for *The Washington Post* and served as the China correspondent for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

### Torches in Three Minds

Choosing one book every child should read is a little like choosing one food every child should eat. Through extensive bedtime reading, I've nourished my children, ages 7 and 9, on several. They include *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*, both of which stir a sense of adventure. Last summer we finished *St. Patrick's Summer* by Marigold Hunt, a theological tour de force that should be required reading for every Catholic child in the English-speaking world.

Right now we're on *The Hobbit*, the overture to J. R. R. Tolkien's great

symphony *The Lord of the Rings*. I'm reading them *The Hobbit* first because, as a hobbit would have it, that keeps everything in its right order. Tolkien has been praised to the heavens—and thoroughly by Boston College's Peter Kreeft in *The Philosophy of Tolkien: The Worldview Behind The Lord of the Rings*. Also, quite fittingly I think, he has been scoffed at by modern literary sophisticates who seem to find beauty and morality threatening.

None of that matters as I lie in the bottom bunk with my son, reading by mini-light up toward my daughter in the top bunk. I am transported to a particular time in my childhood, when an uncle lent me his Tolkien books, as each paragraph lights torches in our three minds. In this age of dull materialism and high-tech chatter, it seems to me that children need quiet, imaginative nights with a hobbit more than ever.

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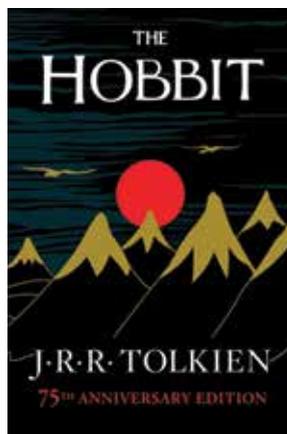
**PETER REICHARD** is a political journalist in New Orleans.

### The Prince and the Pilot

I met *Le Petit Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, in a freshman-year French class, gave it to my wife as our first Christmas gift, and then 40 years later gave it to our granddaughter. "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

Saint-Exupéry's downed pilot meets a curious child, come to earth from his original home among the stars. An efficient caretaker of his planet, he tended especially to a one and only rose. "It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important."

Before our strange land, he journeyed to six asteroids with eccentric characters. "I have not much time. I



have friends to discover, and a great many things to understand.”

The pilot and prince’s friendship, narrated in lovely prose and illustrated by the author’s original watercolors, will stir misplaced zest in the adult reader and laughter, furrowed brows and joyful delight in the child listener.

My granddaughter told me last week: “Pop Pop, I think it is just as important to care about other people and to be very smart.” At nine, she gets it and the prince smiles appreciatively.

---

THOMAS MCGOVERN is a professor emeritus at Arizona State University.

### Why Does the Mouse Wear Clothes?

I am going to start off by admitting that I failed, so there will be no unnecessary suspense to this story. As my kids grew into their early reading years, I couldn’t wait to introduce them to a couple of books I remember absolutely loving as a child, perhaps the first books I ever loved. I thought my darling children would love these books in more or less precisely the same way I did. They were *Stuart Little*, by E. B. White, and Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*.

Certainly the wonderful illustrations by Garth Williams and E. H. Shepard respectively were a part of their appeal to me as a child. They made Stuart’s nobility, Toad’s near mortal conceit, Badger’s steadiness and Mole and Rat’s kindly companionableness palpable things. I remember how desolate I felt as a child coming to the wistful conclusion of Stuart’s adventures, and the mournful realization that the book was over and I would hear no more of Stuart Little, nor discover if he ever would find his Margalo. I learned about the value of adventure and friendship, marveled at the great battle to recover Toad Hall, applauded what must be the first depiction of an “intervention” in 20th-century literature as Toad’s friends attempted to dissuade him from his vainglorious

ways...but my boys just did not “get” my affection for these books.

Skeptical, skinny things, afflicted by iPhones and habitually thumbing through Calvin and Hobbes collections and one of the various Diary of a Wimpy Kids kicking around the house, they admit to maybe “kinda” liking *Wind in the Willows*, but *Stuart Little*? Come on. “It was boring; it was stupid...why does the mouse wear clothes?”

Sigh.

There is always *The Lord of the Rings* and *Dune* ahead of me. *Master and Commander*?

Better luck to us all.

---

KEVIN CLARKE is America’s senior editor and chief correspondent.

### Trapdoors and Friendship

“Frank and Joe Hardy clutched the grips of their motorcycles and stared in horror at the oncoming car.” So begins *The Tower Treasure*, the first in the Hardy Boys series, a lead sentence knowingly crafted to deter its young reader from putting the book down anytime soon. Horror! Motorcycles! Who was that spooky figure on the front cover?

Adventure and clues—the red wig, the yellow jalopy—came and went before Hobo Johnny locked the heroes in a water tower. By then, the reader had learned quite a bit, and not just about disguises and trap doors. The stories are steeped in the rewards of hard work, cooperation, diligence, problem solving and, most of all, friendship and brotherhood. And those plot twists! The first book I read in a single weekend, something I had never heard of anyone doing before, was a Hardy Boys novel. I was almost 12.

*The Tower Treasure* and its first four

sequels are high up on the bookcase in the bedroom of my two young sons. They’re not quite ready yet, but I look forward to the day when they meet Frank and Joe and stare, like so many before them, in horror at that oncoming car.

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MIKE WILSON writes a much-admired column on crime for *The New York Times*.

### Rikki, Nag and Baloo

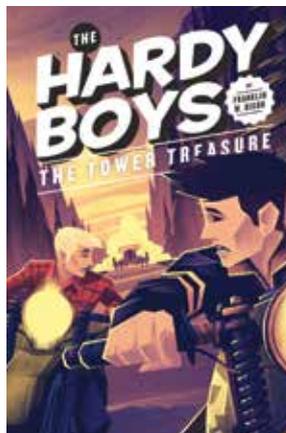
Good reading should be a pleasure, not a chore. Books were my comfort on sick days or during childhood pneumonia and a refuge from my father’s absences. I resembled the girl in *Jane Eyre* who hid behind a curtain to lose herself in stories, hardly aware the afternoon was waning until it was too dark to read. Some books I loved: *Tom Sawyer*, *Lassie*, *Heidi*, *Treasure Island* and, most of all, *The Jungle Book*.

Rudyard Kipling fired my imagination with “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi,” about a mongoose (the location was India). I had to learn new vocabulary. What was a mongoose, anyway? I loved Rikki for his fierce protective streak. He defended mother, father and son from the wily cobra Nag and his mate Nagaina. In contrast to Rikki was the muskrat Chuchundra, who clung to the wall. Animal characters fascinated me: a bear named Baloo, a panther named Bagheera,

a tiger named Shere Khan, as real as anyone I met in daily life. These stories were about love, loyalty and character. Tales and authors that helped me pass into adult reading were: *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Dickens, Jane Austen, D. H. Lawrence, Robert Frost and Anne Sexton. A blessing for life, in good times and bad. I’m grateful.

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EMILIE GRIFFIN is a writer and poet in New Orleans.



## Life's Lessons on the Frontier

What a torture to choose a book or books that children under 12 should read—or equally appealing, have read to them! An ever-growing amount of high quality children's literature is out there, and the classics don't disappear. So with feet firmly held to the fire I'll cast my vote for the **Little House** series by Laura Ingalls Wilder. These autobiographical books describe the 1880s pioneering movements of the Ingalls family from the Wisconsin woods to the Kansas prairie, to the banks of Plum Creek Minnesota, before finally taking up a land claim near the new town of DeSmet in Dakota territory.

In each place Ma, Pa and the growing children face the arduous challenges of survival and subsistence farming. The daily tasks, the animals, the land, the weather, the neighbors and social gatherings are described in loving detail—in case you ever need to build a log cabin, plant a garden, churn butter or give a barn dance. Hard work and skilled self-reliance are the order of the day, as well as keeping an eye out for new opportunities. But all the while, Ma and Pa steadily embody their traditional values: mutual help, integrity, resilience, perseverance. Joy comes from family affection, playfulness, music and nature's beauty.

As in real life, an individual has to be able to cope with setbacks and suffering. Disease, accidents and natural disasters take their toll. No person or place is ever perfect, although assuredly in the end, goodness and virtue prevail. Children do well to hear this news early on.

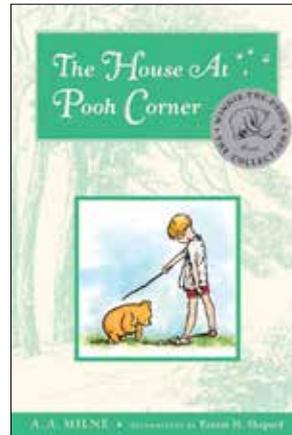
**SIDNEY CALLAHAN** and her husband, Daniel, are recipients of *America's Matteo Ricci Award*.

## Hilariously Impervious To Adult-eration

I recommend A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner* because they are profoundly adult-resistant. The world of Pooh Bear, him of very little brain, fussy Piglet, gloomy Eeyore and the rest is forever protect-

ed in the Hundred Acre Wood of Christopher Robin's imagination. Why else would Frederick Crews write *The Pooh Perplex* and Postmodern Pooh, in which wacky fictional critics like Woodbine Meadowlark subject Pooh to literary deconstruction? Then there are *Pooh and the Philosophers* and *What Pooh Might Have Said to Dante* or *The Tao of Pooh* and *Tē of Piglet* to reinforce my point. It is because Pooh and all are so impervious to adult-eration that the works cited are so hilarious or so revelatory.

It is essential to read the books in editions with the original illustrations



by E. H. Shepard. His black-and-white sketches floating in blank spaces throughout the text embody the real but fragile life of the stuffed animals in Robin's toy chest. Milne was so pleased with Shepard's drawings that he suggested that he sketch Pooh and Piglet on his tombstone, so that St. Peter would immediately open the heavenly gates. "Unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3).

**GEORGE DENNIS O'BRIEN** is a former president of the University of Rochester, as well as an author and critic.

## CLASSIFIED

### Positions

**THE DIOCESE OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS**, Mont., seeks a Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry to provide vision and direction for those whose efforts are directed to ministry with youth and young adults of the diocese. The Director implements and promotes the vision, goals and objectives, principles and components of diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry guidelines at the diocese and parish levels in cooperation with the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. The director provides direct outreach, support and development to the 101 churches of Eastern Montana as well as overseeing diocesan, regional and national gatherings. The successful candidate must have a master's degree in pastoral ministry or equivalent training or experience. A minimum five years of full-time parish/diocesan youth ministry or related ministry required. Must be a practicing Roman Catholic in good standing. Send résumé and a cover letter that briefly describes applicant's vision of youth and young adult ministry by email to: Darren Eultgen, Chancellor, chancellor@diocesegfb.org, or by postal mail to: P.O. Box 1399, Great Falls, MT 59403.

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# Asking Always

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), JULY 24, 2016

Readings: Gen 18:20-32; Ps 138:1-8; Col 2:12-14; Lk 11:1-13

*“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you” (Lk 11:9)*

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* outlines five different forms of prayer: prayer of blessing and adoration, prayer of petition, prayer of thanksgiving, prayer of praise and prayer of intercession (No. 2625-43). These forms of prayer, in their biblical exemplars and elsewhere, often intermingle more than one form of prayer, so that one sees together, for example, prayer of praise and petition, thanksgiving and blessing, intercession and petition. And this is what we find in Luke’s Gospel. Chapter 11 offers forms of petitionary prayer, but there are also aspects of intercession, praise and thanksgiving.

Prior to the Lord’s Prayer in Luke, Jesus himself is found in prayer, which leads his disciples to ask that he “teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” This is the first request made of Jesus, who answers by offering them the Lord’s Prayer. Luke’s version is more concise than that found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, but it maintains the same reverence for God’s holiness and offers petitions for the establishment of God’s kingdom, our daily needs and the forgiveness of our sins, as well as our forgiveness of others and the ability to withstand the trials of evil. This petitionary prayer is also a prayer of intercession, since “intercession is a

prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did” (No. 2634).

That Jesus was in prayer is the first lesson, which the disciples took to heart when they asked him to teach them. The second lesson is the Lord’s Prayer itself, which focuses on the petitioner’s need, as we see also in Old Testament prayers, to be in right relationship with God. In prayer, God comes first. We need to approach God in humility, which is encapsulated by our appeal for forgiveness so that we can approach God’s holiness. Then we pray for God’s kingdom to come in glory in order to transform us. “There is a hierarchy in these petitions: we pray first for the Kingdom, then for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming” (No. 2632).

But as Jesus’ parable of the importunate friend, which follows the Lord’s Prayer, reminds us, humility in prayer need not lead us to hold back with reserved and measured requests. The parable encourages us; if we have something to ask of God, we need to ask boldly. “The importunate friend,” as the catechism calls him, is persistent, unrelenting, annoying, demanding, forceful, overeager and harassing, as a quick check of a thesaurus suggests. Think of all these synonyms for importunate in the context of prayer! I will offer my own choice of description: the brazen friend.

The prayer of the brazen friend is a prayer of petition, and it is indeed unrelenting and annoying. This is what Jesus’ parable proposes as the sort of prayer

we ought to offer: ceaseless, demanding, forceful. The man in the parable who responds to his annoying friend does so not out of friendship but “because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.” Given grudgingly, it is still the response that the annoying friend seeks.

We are not friends who annoy God, but persistence in prayer must become our practice. Persistence in prayer indicates that we know to petition God without ceasing because only God can meet our



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Contemplate the Lord’s Prayer and the parable of the “importunate” friend. How do you pray now? How do these passages help you to understand the nature of prayer? In what way do you need to orient or reorient your prayer life?

deepest needs. What Jesus describes as “evil” parents, in contrast to God, know how to give their child good gifts. How much more does God, who is goodness, desire to give us what we need? And what we need is more than earthly gifts. The one who persists in prayer knows “how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” The Holy Spirit provides all spiritual gifts, each attuned to our and the church’s needs. God wants to hear from us, for when we are asking always for all the things we need from God, it means we desire the gift of God’s goodness above all else.

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



CATHOLIC INITIATIVES

# Soul Satisfaction

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), JULY 31, 2016

Readings: Eccl 1:2, 2:21-22; Ps 90:3-17; Col 3:1-11; Lk 11:13-21

*“Be on your guard against all kinds of greed” (Lk 11:15)*

Jesus’ parable of the rich fool is simple—so simple to understand that it’s a wonder we fall for the conceit, not of the parable, but of riches. The parable, at root, has to do with a confusion of categories. At the center of this parable is a rich man, who believes his wealth has made him great—perhaps it will even make Judea great again—and this has led to satisfaction with himself and with his life. But he has confused earthly goods for heavenly goods, a good harvest with a good soul; and in the midst of his bad interpretation of the state of his soul, he has been called to account for his life.

The parable begins with what seems like a reasonable request of Jesus: “Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.’” What might seem like a matter of justice, a division of inheritance, turns out to be an opportunity for Jesus to warn the inquirer to “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” Jesus suggests that a desire for possessions, which might initially seem to be about fairness, can smolder into an all-consuming longing for “things.”

Jesus tells the parable of the rich man to express his concern about how wealth can be opposed to a good life. A rich man had land that “produced abundantly,” in itself a good thing, so he decides to expand his buildings and construct bigger barns. This seems rea-

sonable. Besides, a good harvest could mean food for many. The focus of the rich man, though, seems to be only on his material needs, for he thinks to himself that when his big barns are built, his life will be settled: “I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”

The interpretive key to this parable is the rich man’s use of “soul” (*psyche*) and his stated belief that when his goods are stored away and he has enough to “relax, eat, drink, be merry,” his psyche will be satisfied. This is the category confusion. Earthly goods are necessary and give essential pleasures and even great joy, but in themselves they offer nothing to our souls, especially not when they are hoarded, not distributed to others, and when one substitutes wealth and physical contentment for spiritual wholeness. To think that the “soul” is satisfied when the body has abundant goods is simply wrong.

In the parable, Jesus tells us: “God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.” Death is the beginning of the evening-out process, which reveals earthly treasure for what it is in light of eternity. When used for one’s basic needs and to aid others, it is a proper but limited good; when used to orient one’s whole

life, it is, as Ecclesiastes says, “vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” The preacher, Koheleth, asks, “What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun?”

Certainly we leave behind all our material goods, as well as the people we know and the wisdom we have accumulated, but Jesus clearly has a different answer to Koheleth’s question, “What do mortals get?” There is a reality to which God has called us that is not dependent upon our goods but on the preparation of our souls. Jesus tells

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Imagine yourself with great wealth and goods. What is the attraction of this wealth for you? How do you want to use this wealth for yourself and others? What might you do to create richness toward God and others in order to care for your soul?

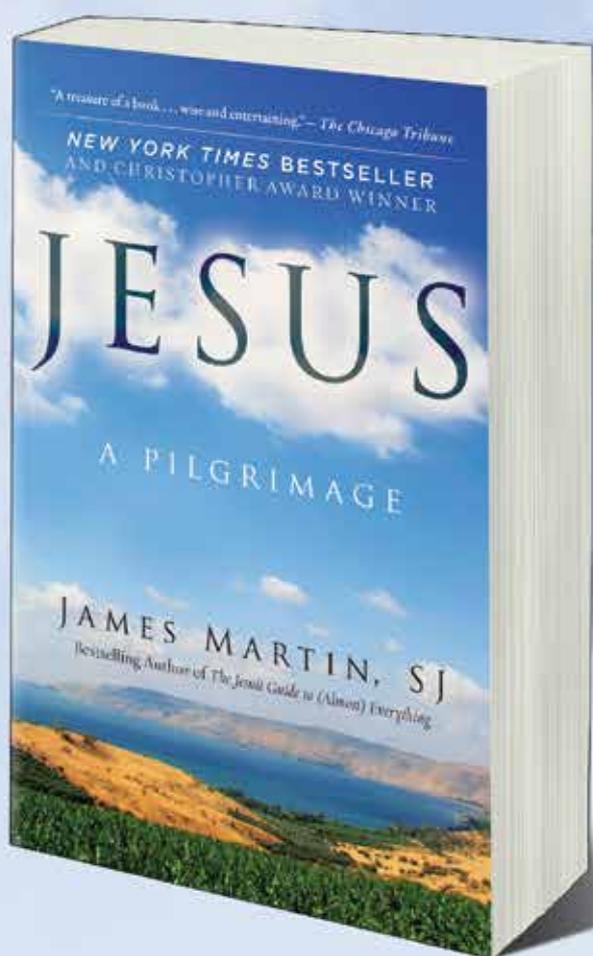
us throughout the Gospel of Luke of the dangers of wealth for our life of eternity; but more than wealth itself; it is our attachment to wealth and our belief that our things will save us or prove us wise or count us clever. The proper use of our goods, for ourselves and others, indicates that we must have the proper orientation—namely, generosity toward others and toward God. It is only when we are rich toward God that we can say to our souls: Relax, all is in order.

**JOHN W. MARTENS**

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