America

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THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

Bishop Samuel Ruiz Mexican Prophet

p18

The Problem With Meaningless Work

p26

U2's Everlasting Love

David Dark

p38

Disability and Freedom at Camp

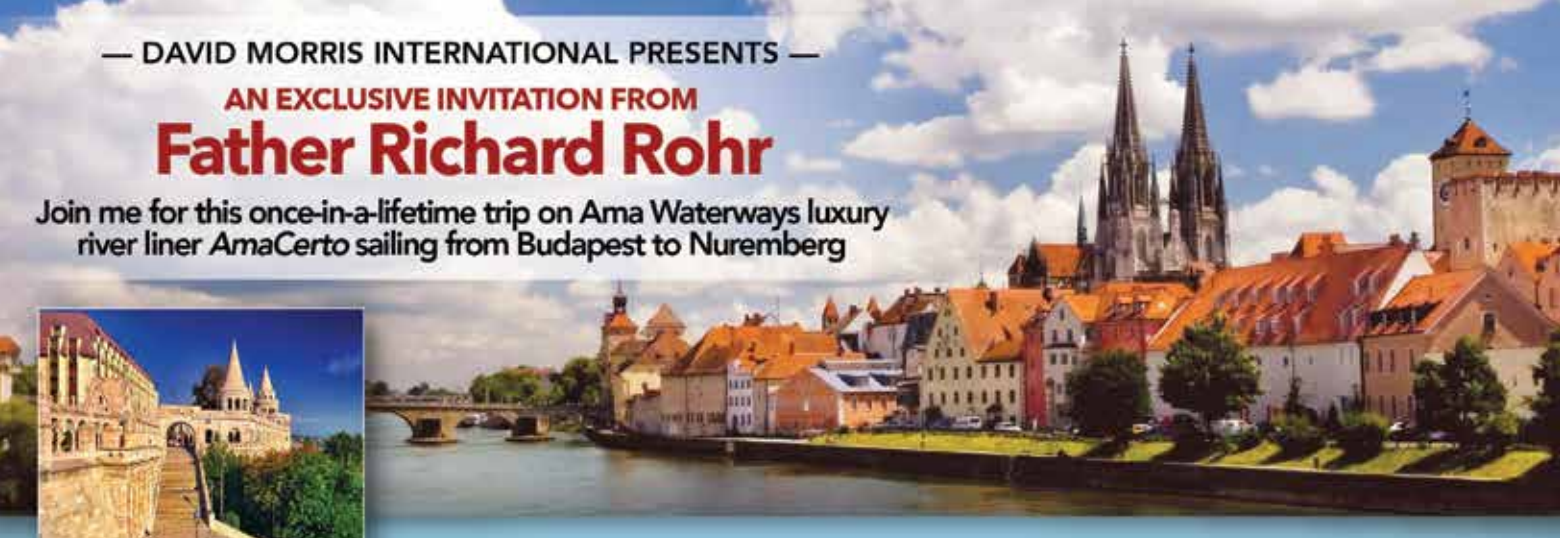
p34

— DAVID MORRIS INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS —

AN EXCLUSIVE INVITATION FROM

Father Richard Rohr

Join me for this once-in-a-lifetime trip on Ama Waterways luxury river liner *AmaCerto* sailing from Budapest to Nuremberg



Dear Fellow Travelers,

I am delighted to invite you to join me on the AmaCerto July 7th sailing from Budapest to Nuremberg. Along the way I will be giving a series of life inspiring lectures and private tours. I am particularly delighted that we will be overnighting in Nuremberg a city that I had the pleasure of living in for several years. Information on the lectures and special tours will follow shortly. Ama Waterways was awarded the worlds best river cruise company for cuisine, service and onboard features. That being said, we are hoping to be able to have the entire ship of 160 passengers just for our group so please book early!
I Look forward to seeing you next July!

JULY 7, 2018 – 7 NIGHTS

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DAY 4	Durnstein
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DAY 5	Linz
	Passau
DAY 6	Regensburg
DAY 7	Nuremberg
DAY 8	Nuremberg

Remembering 9/11

When I was living in London, each year on the anniversary of 9/11, I would encounter one or two sympathetic Englishmen who assumed that, as an American, I might have something special to say about the event. I didn't then, nor do I now. I suppose I have some memories that are peculiar to me as a U.S. citizen; and I did, in fact, know someone who died on that awful morning. Yet when I call to mind those anxious hours, I do not remember as an American but as a Christian. "Think of the Commandments," the Scriptures say, "hate not your neighbor; remember the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults."

Overlook faults? How is that possible? How is it possible to forgive those who with cruel intention and without regret committed the mass murder of thousands of innocents? Frankly, the how of forgiveness is not so clear to me. What is clear, however, is that Jesus Christ himself asks me, no, he commands me, to forgive them. Time after time Jesus calls on his followers to forgive, not just the people we love, but especially those we do not. Why? As Sirach reminds us, "Wrath and anger are hateful things." In other words, at a minimum, we forgive to free our souls from the wrath and anger that lead to death. To choose forgiveness is to choose life.

We forgive also because it is the ultimate act of justice. Jesuits like to say that the Catholic faith is "a faith that does justice." That is true, but in isolation that phrase fails to capture fully the truly radical nature of our Christian calling. The ultimate reason for our hope is that our faith is the faith that does forgiveness, the faith that reconciles, even in the face of the most ferocious injustice. The work of social justice is an important dimension of Christian living, but forgiveness is our distinctive calling, the unique way in which we are invited to co-create with God, to create new possibilities of conversion and justice. Even if those who have offended us do not ask for our forgiveness, forgiveness is still powerful enough to transform our own hearts, to convert us from hatred to love, from fear to faith. Jesus himself pointed the way when he exclaimed from his cross, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do."

Still it seems impossible, doesn't it, this radical life-changing forgiveness? Yet it only "seems" impossible. It must be possible. "The Lord is kind and merciful and rich in compassion," the psalmist tells us. In other words, God does not ask us to do what is impossible. That would be cruel. Yet he also knows that we cannot do the difficult work of forgiveness without his help, without the aid of grace. And so we pray. We pray to see our enemies as our neighbors; we pray to see them as God sees them. We pray for the grace of understanding, of compassion; we pray, we plead if we must, for some share in just a tiny bit of God's infinite love and mercy.

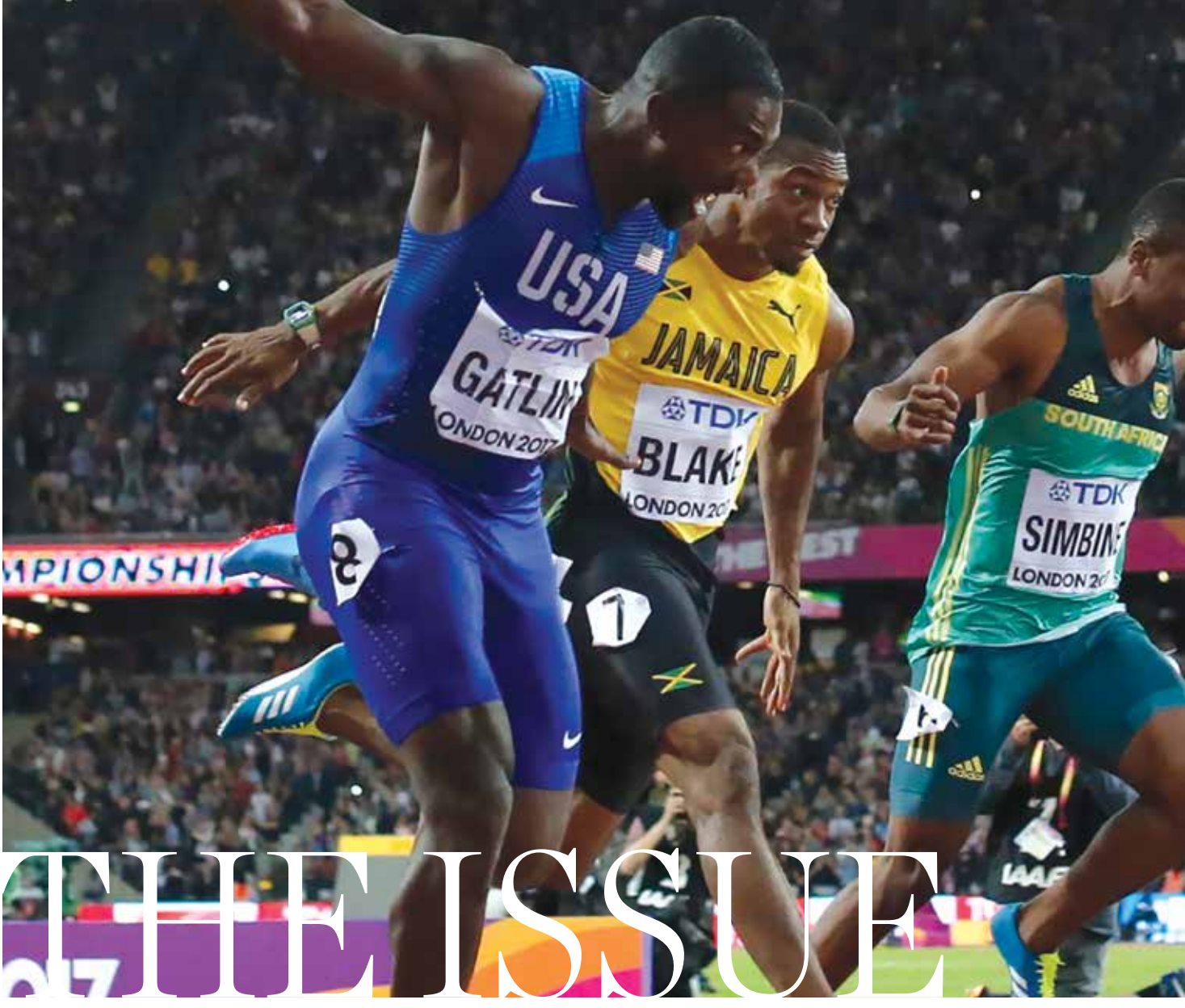
This much we also know: Forgiveness—for the perpetrators of 9/11, for the perpetrators of all violence whether global or local, in word or in deed—in the end, forgiveness is our only hope. I mean that literally. Forgiveness is the only way out. For 9/11, in all its horror, was just one day in history's long rampage of war and destruction. The Gospel is clear: if we believe that we will escape this vicious cycle of violence without the radical acts of love and forgiveness to which the Gospel testifies and Christ commands us, then we are simply fooling ourselves.

I do not know what justice was or might have been for the 9/11 hijackers. Only God knows that now. Yet during these many years of grief, in which I have moved from sadness to rage to resignation and back again, I have learned anew that forgiveness is the final measure of our love for one another. I have learned anew the meaning of that favorite hymn, as familiar to you, I'm sure, as it is to me: "Let there be peace on earth; and let it begin with me."

O.K., so be it. I speak for myself and for no one else: To Mohamed Atta and your 18 fellow 9/11 hijackers, wherever you are according to the judgment of God: For the sake of the world's peace and for the sake of my own, I forgive you. I pray for those you killed and for their loved ones, that they may know the peace that comes to us through Christ, the peace that you denied them.

And finally, to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, I ask for your forgiveness "for what I have done and for what I have failed to do. And I ask the blessed Mary, ever virgin, and all the angels and saints to pray for me—to pray for us— to the Lord our God."

Matt Malone, S.J., *editor in chief; Twitter: @Americaeditor.*

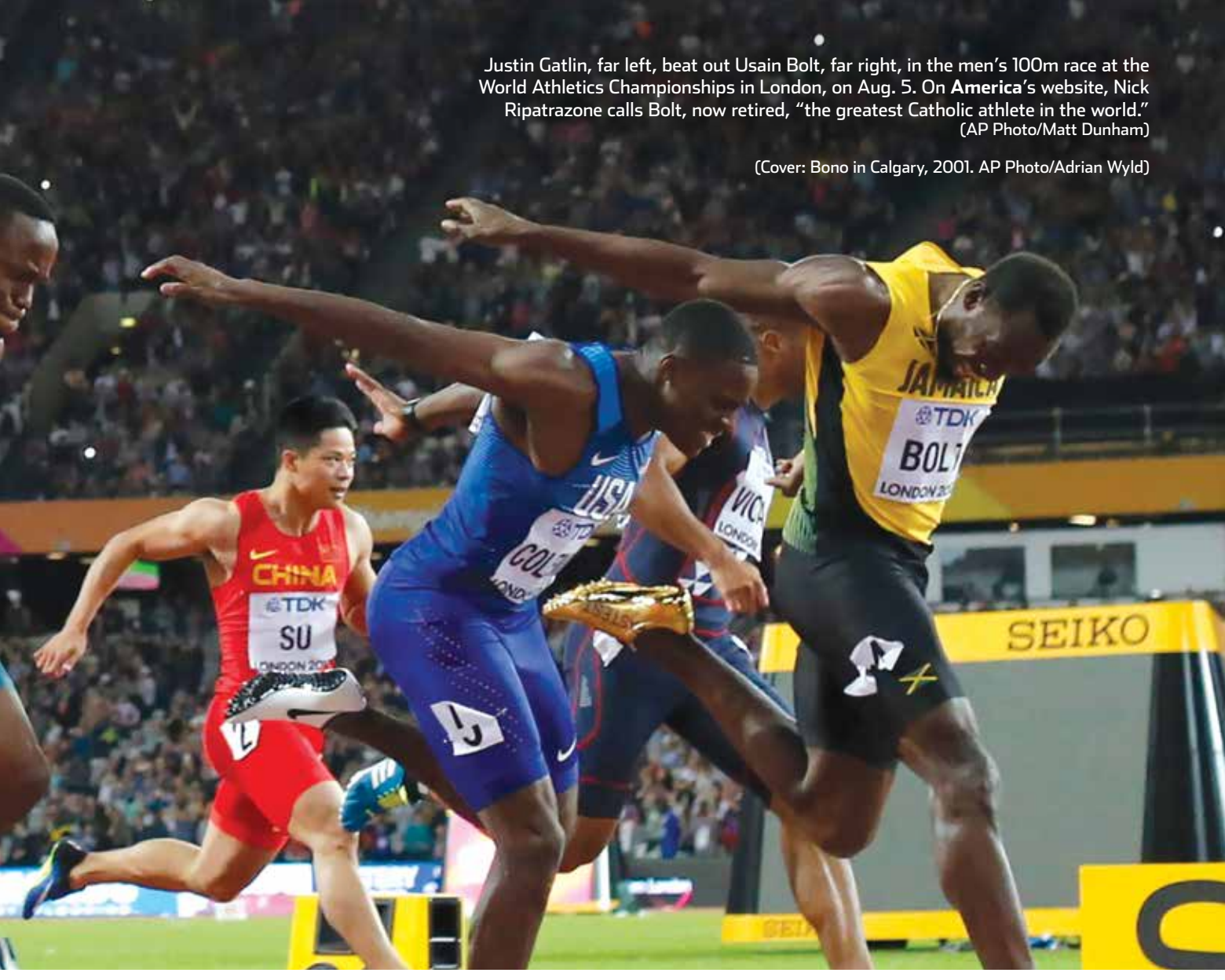


THE ISSUE

GIVE AND TAKE

DISPATCHES

FEATURES



Justin Gatlin, far left, beat out Usain Bolt, far right, in the men's 100m race at the World Athletics Championships in London, on Aug. 5. On **America**'s website, Nick Ripatrazone calls Bolt, now retired, "the greatest Catholic athlete in the world." (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

(Cover: Bono in Calgary, 2001. AP Photo/Adrian Wyld)

FAITH IN FOCUS

POETRY

IDEAS IN REVIEW

THE WORD

LAST TAKE

How did your faith change in college?

In response to our most popular reader poll to date, only 31 percent of readers told us that their faith was not strengthened in college. Thirteen percent said their faith stayed the same, 12 percent said their faith was weakened in some way and 6 percent lost their faith completely at this time. James, of Illinois, described how his faith diminished due to isolation. "I had to reckon with being the only Catholic in my dorm in the midst of the aftermath of the sex abuse crisis.... I gave up for a while, but I thank God for my education from before."

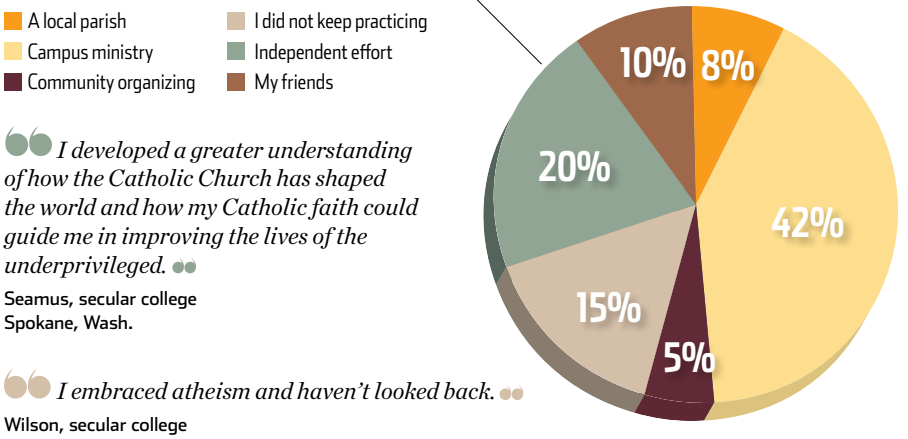
A striking majority of **America** readers (69 percent) told us that their faith was strengthened in college. This figure was even higher if readers attended a Catholic college (78 percent). Gregory Ned Blevins, of South Carolina, wrote: "I actually became Roman Catholic from a Pentecostal background, thanks to campus ministry, charismatic renewal, and friends at Marquette University, the school I attended." Anthony Burke of New York also described his Catholic college setting as a crucial factor in the strengthening of his faith. "College was the first time I was on my own, away from my parents. I found myself at a point where I had to take personal responsibility for my faith life. Catholic University was the perfect place to do just that."

At 62 percent, readers who attended secular colleges were less likely than others to report that their faith was strengthened in college. While Catholic university graduates often cited campus ministry as a reason for their stronger faith, secular college graduates relied more on independent efforts to deepen their faith life. From Massachusetts, Elizabeth Killorin explained: "[I took] classes on my faith that challenged me, and persevered through difficult periods.... After an initial crisis of faith, I found a new way of understanding and living in my faith that fit me."

HOW DID YOUR FAITH CHANGE IN COLLEGE?

I lost my faith completely	6%
My faith got stronger	69%
My faith stayed the same	13%
My faith weakened	12%

WHAT KEPT YOU PRACTICING CATHOLICISM IN COLLEGE?



I was a lapsed Catholic entering college after negative experiences as a youth in Catholic school. Campus ministry and my friends involved there never pressed but were always supportive and kind. Jesuit professors answered my questions and preached in a way I'd never heard. I felt at home in a way I hadn't realized I was missing.

Michele, Catholic college
Spokane, Wash.

I developed a greater understanding of how the Catholic Church has shaped the world and how my Catholic faith could guide me in improving the lives of the underprivileged.

Seamus, secular college
Spokane, Wash.

I suddenly had a very small support system. [Before, I] had to keep the faith myself.

Emily, unknown college
St. Louis, Mo.

My faith was enriched by experiencing the sacraments in a different setting from my home parish. My heart was already open; the new setting opened my eyes to the universality of the church.

Santi, Catholic college
New Hartford, Conn.

I embraced atheism and haven't looked back.

Wilson, secular college
New York, N.Y.

I was challenged to think of my faith as an adult and live out the call to serve the poor in very literal ways. I went on to do two years of missionary work in Central America after graduation.

Rachel, Catholic college
Boston, Mass.

My dad had cancer when I started college, I prayed my brains out and haven't stopped. A chapel was close to my dorm and I found great consolation in daily Mass. We had dynamic priests, great music. I love being Catholic still—37 years later!

Barbara, secular college
Iowa

These results are based on reader responses to a poll promoted on Facebook, Twitter and in our email newsletter.

Proactive Peace

Re: "Preventive Strikes on North Korea Fail Just War Criteria," by Kevin Clarke (8/7): These strikes also fail just war criteria by the most important reason: Just war is not just about avoiding war but also proactively building peace. When we are backed into a corner and have to think in terms of short-term tactical measures, it is a little late to be talking about just or unjust. Some may argue that the United States has done all it can, but I would like to see a comprehensive discussion on that before I'm satisfied. Until we've had an exhaustive discussion, we haven't fulfilled our duties according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

Frank Lesko
Online Comment

Stop Blaming Doctors

Re "The Charlie Gard Case Reveals a Persistent Bias Against Disability," by Jana Bennett (8/7): As a palliative care physician in London for the past 22 years, please allow me to disagree. Having frequently been in situations in which one has to decide whether or not to intervene in a situation that is not at all clear cut and from which considerable harm may ensue from getting it wrong, the pediatricians have my every sympathy. They are not insensitive to the parents' suffering, whom they face every day. Of course, their suffering is not as intense as the parents', but it is intense and suffered deeply nonetheless. They are struggling with a very deep dilemma that is too easy for someone who has not sat in the hot seat to reduce to black and white. We owe it to these doctors and to the parents not to reduce them to slogans.

Victor Pace
Online Comment

A Heart-Breaking Situation

I once cared for an infant with a mitochondrial disorder, and I was shocked by how little quality of life remained for this child. She was breathing on her own, but continual seizures robbed her of consciousness in the usual sense. Purposeful movement was absent. Her condition was expected to deteriorate until death came while she was still an infant. Until people see this kind of condition with their own eyes, it is hard to fathom. To assume that those treating Charlie Gard are biased in their decision-making is unfair. It is a heartbreaking situation for all involved, including the doctors and other caregivers.

Lisa Weber
Online Comment

Grounded in Faith

Re "Ever Ancient, Ever New," by Elizabeth Bruenig (8/7): I continue to appreciate those who through study, prayer and contemplation have converted to Roman Catholicism. As a cradle Catholic who principally kept his head down and did what he was told—the norm for us pre-Vatican II Catholics—I find myself wanting more with respect to the role of the church. Now that I am relatively old (73), becoming enlightened means becoming more grounded in my faith and in its practice.

Peter Connor
Online Comment

A Restless Heart

St. Augustine was the one who turned me back to the church. When I came out, I assumed the church would not welcome me. But Augustine, the wild child, the sacrilegious, adulterous scholar God called to be a shepherd and a saint spoke to me. He recognized that "my heart is restless until it rests in You," and "You were always within me, but I was always without." This helped me turn back, and through a compassionate reconciliation, I returned to the church. Augustine will always have a special place in my heart.

Thien Tran
Online Comment

Catholic Education Inequality

Re "Land O' Lakes 50 Years On," by John I. Jenkins, C.S.C (7/24): My support of Catholic education has been a core belief, having been a teacher in a K-8 Catholic school in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for 36 years. When I read "Land O' Lakes 50 Years On," memories of seminars for teachers at Notre Dame came flooding back to me. While most were quite educational seminars, I confess to feeling anger and frustration that I was among the privileged few who could go to Notre Dame. I appreciate and understand the importance of academic freedom in Catholic universities, but what about the Catholic K-12 schools that are disappearing in the United States?

Jean Hahn
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Student Debt Blamed For Falling Homeownership

Colleges do not seem to obey the classic rules of economics. New research from the Federal Reserve Bank indicates that raising the price of a diploma does not reduce demand: An 81 percent rise in tuition and fees at public colleges between 2001 and 2009 had no discernible effect on college enrollment or completion rates. But it did result in much higher debt for college graduates, with student debt per capita for 24-year-olds rising by $5,700 between 2003 and 2011. That increase, the researchers argue, is a major cause of low rates of homeownership among millennials—fewer than one-third of adults under 35 own homes, a significantly lower percentage than in previous generations. Using the Fed's numbers, the Bloomberg reporter Shahien Nasiripour estimates that about 360,000 fewer young Americans owned a home in 2015 because of student debt.

This is worrying, because homeownership often coincides with starting a family. The median age at which Americans first get married is at a record high (30 for men, 27 for women), and the average age at which a woman has her first child is similarly climbing. Heavy debt from a college education can only make it more difficult for young adults to undertake the commitments of marriage and parenthood.

The Federal Reserve researchers criticize state governments for cutting funding for higher education and shifting more costs onto students themselves. This may seem like a low-risk strategy, they write: Many young people feel a college education is a necessity no matter how much debt they must assume, and so the states are not seeing "a decline in workforce skills." But, they add, "the de-funding of higher education has not been costless," pointing to "weaker spending and wealth accumulation among young consumers." It would be ironic if excessive debt is also causing young adults to postpone family formation, given that marriage is associated with economic stability and better mental and physical health.

Reducing the cost of college is one way to tackle rising student debt, especially if employers continue to raise educational requirements. Bringing down housing prices, and the additional debt incurred in buying a home, should be another policy objective, and that means increasing the housing supply. On both fronts, we need to lower the barriers to moving into full adulthood.

A Vocation to Protect And Serve

President Trump has managed what few others could achieve, giving activists on both sides of the Black Lives Matter-Blue Lives Matter divide something to agree on. In his remarks to law enforcement officers gathered at the Suffolk County Community College in Brentwood, N.Y., on July 28, Mr. Trump encouraged police not to worry about roughing up "thugs" when getting them into a squad car. While several officers could be seen laughing and clapping behind the president, there has been near universal condemnation of Mr. Trump's comments by the law enforcement community as well as civil rights groups.

Mr. Trump's remarks come at a critical time for police-community relations. A recent Gallup poll showed a return to a 25-year average of confidence in the police after several years of unrest and declining approval in the wake of high-profile police shootings in Ferguson, Mo., North Charleston, S.C., and Cleveland, Ohio. Today, 57 percent of Americans say they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in law enforcement. But those gains mask continued mistrust of the police among minority communities. Since 2014, confidence in law enforcement officials has dropped 5 percentage points among African-Americans (to 30 percent) and 14 percentage points among Latinos (to 45 percent).

Whether or not the president was joking, as his spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders has claimed, police chiefs from California to Florida said that Mr. Trump's tacit approval of breaking the law did them no favors in their work to rebuild community trust. Charlie Beck, the Los Angeles police chief, tweeted in response that police misconduct "serves only to undermine the hard work and sacrifice they make to keep this city safe."

The police know better than politicians that repairing relationships with the neighborhoods they serve will do much more to improve public safety than roughing up a few suspects. But there are less utilitarian reasons to fight police brutality as well. Brutality, corruption and an "us-versus-them" mentality in the ranks undermine what is for many officers a sincere vocation to protect and serve.

Pope Francis recognized the importance of that vocation in a speech marking the 200th anniversary of

the Italian police force in 2014. The vocation of police officers, the pope said, "is expressed in service to others and commits you to correspond every day to the confidence and esteem that the people place in you." A vocation of service can never simply be against criminals; it must be on behalf of communities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 5 | 6:30 P.M.
Building a Bridge: The Catholic Church and the LGBT Community
A discussion between James Martin, S.J., and Dr. Patrick Hornbeck, on Father Martin's new book: ***Building a Bridge***

Where: Fordham University, McNally Amphitheatre, 140 West 62nd Street, New York, NY 10023
RSVP: americamag.org/events/lgbt
Livestream: americamagazine.org

SEPTEMBER 21 | 6 P.M.
George W. Hunt, S.J., Prize Ceremony
Celebrate with America Media and Saint Thomas More Chapel & Center at Yale University as we award the third annual Hunt Prize to Liam R. Callanan

Where: Yale Club of NYC, 50 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, N.Y.
RSVP: events@americamedia.org or (212) 515-0153
Livestream: americamagazine.org

SEPTEMBER 25-26 | 6 P.M.
Reformation Commemoration
Join us in commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The panel discussions will be followed by Vespers and a reception.

First night
"What Have We Learned in 500 Years?"
Where: Concordia College, Sommer Center, 171 White Plains Rd, Bronxville, NY 10708
RSVP: events@americamedia.org or (212) 515-0153

Second night
"How Do We Move Forward From Here?"
Where: Fordham University Church, 441 E. Fordham Rd., Bronx, NY 10458
RSVP: events@americamedia.org or (212) 515-0153

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Catholic campuses should look outward to the larger church

It starts with glossy brochures and gauzy admissions videos: Feeling at home. Being part of the family.

What graduating senior wouldn't want that sense of belonging at a college or university? The sentiment tugs at applicants' hearts and parents' wallets, promising an enriching, unforgettable four years. With the average cost of $72,050 for one year at Georgetown, for example, making "community" a key value proposition may be understandable. But where is that community centered, and where does it look? Back at itself or outward?

Catholic colleges may not have a monopoly on strong communities for young adults, but they should have an advantage. Any liberal arts school can offer small classes and late-night discourses in the dining hall. Catholic colleges certainly offer that, along with open discussions of faith inside and out of classrooms, and they ground often-amorphous definitions of values in the tradition of the universal church.

But the rising number of unchurched high school graduates means that our baseline assumptions need to be updated. Roughly one in seven freshmen arriving at a Catholic campus self-identify as having no religious affiliation. Incoming students cannot be presumed to be familiar with the basic concepts of Catholicism, or even Christianity.

The authentic community of a Catholic university must expand beyond the dorms, classrooms and chapels. A Catholic school must build bonds not just among classmates and alumni but between students and parishioners in whatever the host town.

Embracing the distinctiveness of being a Catholic university could include expanding town-gown joint volunteer opportunities and scheduling Mass times to complement nearby parishes. Most important, Catholic colleges should make a vocation to family life more recognizable to students, breaking down the oppressive age-based segregation of collegiate life by encouraging students to get to know young Catholic married couples and families at nearby parish events. (A more puckish observer might suggest campus ministry-sponsored speed dating.)

With our current political polarization, socioeconomic self-sorting and uncertainty about the social utility of religion, colleges and universities need to broaden their call to discipleship to stretch beyond the campus. The greenhouse must become a garden.

Amid the demographic challenges of a shrinking number of high school seniors and an amenities arms race that undermines both financial sustainability and affordability, this effort will help Catholic colleges stand out. A campus that commits itself to a broad understanding of community and the education of the whole person might make the cost of attending a Catholic college a little easier for parents to swallow.

Students who see themselves as part of a little platoon, rather than an elite squadron, would find their home on campus to be a fundamentally more hopeful place. Seniors would not shed tears dreading a future without the supportive community of friends and peers at the institution they have grown to love. Instead of an irreplicable four-year experiment, college would be seen as a community-building boot camp for their future vocations. A campus environment oriented toward membership in the universal church, rather than terminating in its own unique identity, would challenge those students to bring about that kind of authentic community after graduation.

In *How Dante Can Save Your Life,* the columnist Rod Dreher of The American Conservative distinguishes between an idol and an icon. An idol is something to be worshiped in and of itself, whereas an icon points toward a deeper reality. Too many Catholics (myself included) graduate with the community of their alma mater as an idol, with thoughts of brick buildings, beloved teachers and Frisbees on the quad. The challenge is to turn our collegiate love of patria into a philia, a sense of belonging with our brothers and sisters in the universal church.

A campus environment can be an idol wrapped up in school colors, late-night traditions and sporting events, or it can be an icon that points to the larger church—and ultimately, our hoped-for eternal campus. One is self-enclosed and interchangeable; the other goes out to the margins and is irreplaceable. For Catholic colleges to thrive, the choice is obvious.

Patrick T. Brown *is a former government relations staffer for Catholic Charities USA and a graduate student in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. Twitter: @PTBwrites.*

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WAIT ON TRUMP SCHOOL CHOICE PROMISES

By Michael O'Loughlin

Students from schools in the Diocese of Nashville, Tenn., sing out during Mass in celebration of Catholic Schools Week on Feb. 1, 2017.

(CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register)

As he campaigned for president, Donald J. Trump promised repeatedly that should he be elected, he would push for a massive $20 billion investment in charter and private schools, including Catholic schools, through a federal scholarship tax credit program. But eight months into his presidency, advocates of "school choice" wonder if the president will be able to deliver on his promise.

"Right now, I'm cautiously optimistic," Dale McDonald, P.B.V.M., the director of public policy for the National Catholic Education Association, told **America**. Still, Sister McDonald pointed to past efforts at implementing school choice programs that have fallen short and acknowledged the pathway is littered with obstacles.

In March, the Trump administration proposed a budget that included $1 billion for an unspecified school choice program, along with $250 million in grants meant to help families pay for private school. (The president's budget also axed the Department of Education's budget by more than $9 billion.)

Betsy DeVos, the secretary of education and a school choice proponent, praised the president's proposals about expanding scholarship programs at the federal level back in May—but she said states must take the lead.

"When it comes to education, no solution, not even ones we like, should be dictated or run from Washington, D.C.," Ms. DeVos said in a speech to the American Federation for Children in May, promising the audience of school choice advocates that the president would deliver "the most ambitious expansion of education choice in our nation's history."

Her speech drew quick condemnation from Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, who called the president's proposals "a reverse Robin Hood strategy of robbing schools of investments that work for kids, like after-school programs, to pay for [Ms. DeVos's] pet privatization and voucher programs."

The House of Representatives seemed to take the wind out of the president's sails, responding in July with its own budget blueprint, which both chopped school choice provisions and softened education-related budget cuts. Now school choice advocates say the best bet for action could come with Republican-backed proposals for tax reform, which congressional and White House leaders hope to begin crafting in September and pass before the end of the year.

"The fact that the House took it out of the budget is not encouraging," Sister McDonald said. But "if they get around to tax reform, it could be part of the tax program."

Many Catholic school systems have been searching for new funding opportunities in recent years. The nation's 6,400 Catholic schools educate nearly 1.9 million students, but since 2006, about 20 percent of Catholic schools across the United States have been shuttered, according to the N.C.E.A.

Tax credit scholarship programs currently operate in 17 states, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Though each state has its own rules, the programs are usually structured to allow individuals or businesses to donate to nonprofit scholarship organizations. In return, the donors can then deduct part of the donation, or sometimes the full amount, from their state tax obligation.

Tax credit scholarship programs differ from voucher programs, which funnel government dollars to parents to use at private or religious schools.

Public school supporters point to recent studies that show some students regressed in math after using vouchers to attend private schools, while other critics argue that they violate the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution. Thirty-seven states prohibit government support for faith-based schools, with state constitutional amendments tracing their roots to the 19th century, when James G. Blaine, a Republican speaker of the House, fought at the federal level to prevent government funding of Catholic schools.

A recent Supreme Court decision, Trinity Lutheran v. Comer, which ruled that government money could be used to construct a playground at a church, was celebrated by some voucher advocates. They hope that state Blaine Amendments can now be successfully challenged in court. That could be important to school choice advocates, as the expansion of tax credit scholarship programs at the state level has proven difficult in recent years, even in states controlled by Republicans, who have been more receptive to school choice programs.

Greg Abbott, the Republican governor of Texas, proposed creating a tax credit scholarship program in his state but met overwhelming opposition from members of his party who control both houses of the state legislature. In Illinois, Gov. Bruce Rauner, also a Republican, has been unsuccessful in his push to create a tax credit scholarship program as the state legislature considers how to fund schools. The Chicago Sun-Times reported that Cardinal Blase Cupich met with Mr. Rauner to offer support for the scholarship program.

"Unfortunately, over time this has become a Re-

publican issue," Sister McDonald said. "We tried to keep it apolitical, and we look at it as helping all parents as the primary educators of their children."

But even when Democratic leaders back tax credit scholarship programs, there is no guarantee that bills will become laws. In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, has failed to rally enough support to implement a program, even with vocal support from Catholic leaders in the state.

Earlier this year, President Trump called on Congress "to pass an education bill that funds school choice for disadvantaged youth" that would allow parents "to choose the public, private, charter, magnet, religious, or home school that is right for them."

Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York responded to the speech in a Wall Street Journal op-ed article, pointing to unsuccessful efforts in New York and arguing that "a national solution is needed to bring relief to families who need it."

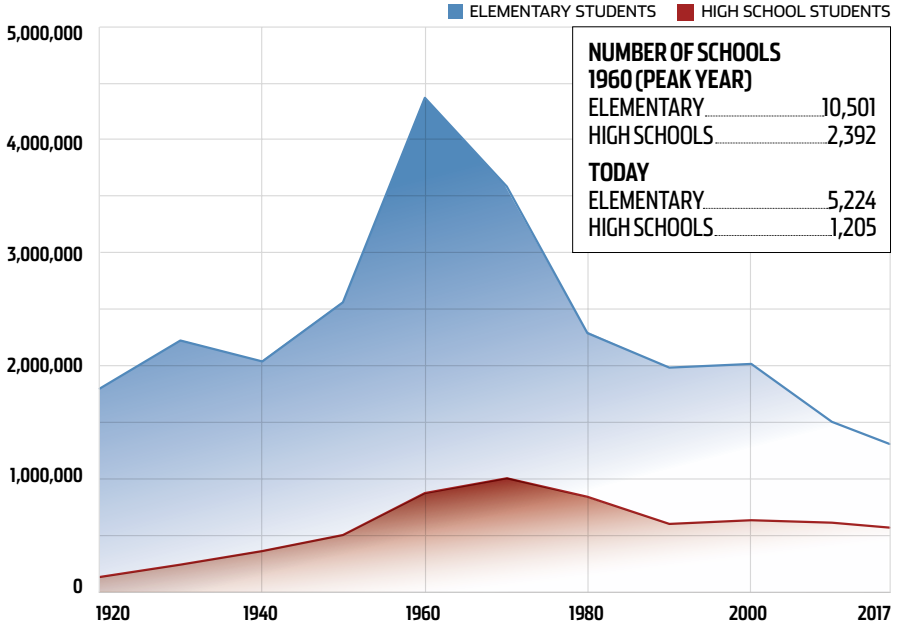
"I have seen firsthand why Catholic families and leaders support scholarship tax credits. They help advance educational and economic justice. They strengthen society by creating opportunity for those who might not otherwise have it," he wrote.

For her part, Sister McDonald says she wants "to see the president keep his promise" on school choice by creating "a program that is available in all 50 states."

"We want to support parents on what's best for their kids," she continued. "Hopefully that's Catholic school, but if that's not their choice, we'd still support it."

Michael O'Loughlin, *national correspondent.*
Twitter: @MikeOLoughlin.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OVER THE PAST CENTURY

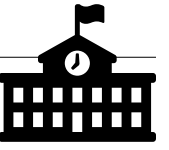


29 STATES & THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARENTS FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

61 PUBLICLY FINANCED PROGRAMS ASSIST MORE THAN **1.5 MILLION FAMILIES**

18% OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE **NOT CATHOLIC**

OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS



2016-2017
20 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OPENED
96 SCHOOLS CLOSED OR CONSOLIDATED

2008-2017
297 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OPENED
1,395 CLOSED OR CONSOLIDATED

CATHOLIC VS. OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS

SHARE OF GRADUATES ATTENDING 4-YEAR COLLEGES

CATHOLIC	85%
OTHER RELIGIOUS	63%
NON-RELIGIOUS PRIVATE	56%
PUBLIC	44%

DIVERSITY AT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

U.S. TOTAL ENROLLMENT

WHITE	73%
HISPANIC*	17%
MULTIRACIAL/UNKNOWN	12%
BLACK	8%
ASIAN	6%

*Hispanics can be of any race and are counted separately.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL % OF ALL STUDENTS

HIGHEST SHARES:

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	31%
LOUISIANA	11%
NEBRASKA	9%
RHODE ISLAND	8%
OHIO	7%

Sources: estimated overall public and private school enrollment from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics; all other data from *United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2016-2017*, National Catholic Educational Association.

Canada's indigenous peoples are crashing its 150th birthday

A tepee rises in a protest outside Parliament in Ottawa. Photo by Ashley Courchene.

Canada is celebrating its 150th birthday this year, and with free national park access, hundreds of events and a large media campaign by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the country is pulling out all the stops. But while Canadians revel in a long year of national pride, indigenous communities are crashing the parties and challenging the narrative.

Canada's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, highlighted the nation's diversity and unity in a statement on Canada Day, July 1, but he also acknowledged wrongdoings in Canadian history. "As we mark Canada 150, we also recognize that for many, today is not an occasion for celebration. Indigenous Peoples in this country have faced oppression for centuries," Mr. Trudeau wrote. The statement included a call for more efforts at reconciliation and mutual dialogue between the Canadian government and indigenous peoples.

Good multicultural intentions, however, are not enough, says Tanya Kappo, a Cree organizer behind Idle No More, a grassroots movement started in 2012 that presses for indigenous sovereignty, environmental concerns and more. Those in government, she says, are "not listening to indigenous people and saying, 'You're right, how do we fix this?' They say, 'You're right; you've been excluded; and this is how we are going to fix this.' "

Ashley Courchene, a member of Sagkeeng First Nation and a political science student at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada's capital, describes the celebratory year as "a form of mental abuse," with daily reminders of the persisting problems faced by indigenous communities juxtaposed against the Canadian government's rhetorical endorsements of nation-to-nation dialogue.

During four days of protest in June on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Mr. Courchene joined a group of fellow students from Carleton University and the Bawaating Water Protectors, an indigenous-led environmental group from Ontario. After clashing with police, the group erected a tepee where Canada Day celebrations were scheduled to take place on what organizers called unceded indigenous land. Amid the tensions, Mr. Trudeau and his wife, Sophie, were invited inside the tepee to listen to the organizers' frustrations.

While the Trudeaus remained in the tepee for more than 30 minutes, Mr. Courchene says Mr. Trudeau "didn't really hear anything." Protesters inside the tepee expressed their concerns, and Mr. Courchene focused on inadequate nation-to-nation dialogue. "I said the only reason we're on the Hill today is because of our ancestors. And [Mr. Trudeau] says, 'But I'm the first prime minister to come see you guys.'

"It was very self-congratulatory. Then he left; then the media shows up." Mr. Courchene says many interviews with the protesters after the meeting were misrepresented "to show the great Canadian benevolence between the citizens and the prime minister."

Indigenous frustrations in 2017 have been expressed in a variety of protests like the one on Parliament Hill, but Ms. Kappo says resistance to Canada's colonial structures and mind-set has to include more than protest. She and others are behind Resistance 150, a campaign to help indigenous people think about what resistance means to them as individuals and to indigenous people as a collective. For Ms. Kappo, part of that means connecting with and asserting her identity.

"It's not specifically against a state action or decision or anything, but I'm getting myself back as a Cree person by learning one [Cree] word a day," she says. Indigenous people are unable to celebrate Canada 150, according to Ms. Kappo, but they can celebrate that their communities are still here.

Dean Dettloff, *Toronto correspondent. Twitter: @DeanDettloff.*

AP Photo/ Esther Htusan

Cardinal Bo on Myanmar's 'delicate' path to democracy

"The political situation is delicate" is an understatement offered by Cardinal Charles Maung Bo about conditions in Myanmar. In an interview during a visit to Rome in June, the cardinal-archbishop of Yangon said that Myanmar is "on the road to democracy" under the de facto leadership of the state counsellor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. But "it has still not reached that goal."

"Since coming to power, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi and her party have brought lots of improvement in the country," Cardinal Bo said.

"There is freedom of speech in the press, and there are many free television channels, whereas in the past there was just the government and the military channels. Now people feel free to comment on the situation in the country. Over 70 percent of the population have smartphones.

"This is a major change," the cardinal said.

"We are very happy with all that," the cardinal continued, "but the fact remains that constitutionally Aung San Suu Kyi's administration still has no power over the military, especially in relation to the civil war with the Kachin and the plight of the Rohingya."

The fact that the military still holds the balance of power "is a big obstacle to what Aung San Suu Kyi wants to achieve," he said. He believes Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi herself could be in danger "because she is the only one with the leadership skills and experience to keep the country on the road to democracy. If she were no more, there would be upheaval in the country."

Cardinal Bo emphasized that "the dialogue with the military is critical."

According to the cardinal, the establishment of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and the Holy See on May 4 not only helps the Catholic Church's relationship with this majority Buddhist country in Southeast Asia but could also "help build up Myanmar as a democracy and contribute to peacebuilding in the country."

The civil war with the Kachin—most of whom are Christian—continues to be fought over minority rights and control of the state's resources. "Aung San Suu Kyi wants a federal system," he said. "She wants to stop the war; she wants peace."

He identified the nation's "second big problem" as "the plight of the Rohingya." The Rohingya are Muslims who have been living for centuries in Myanmar's Rakhine State. "They've been moving back and forth, so neither the Myanmar government nor the Bangladesh government has given them citizenship. So, in a sense they're

Myanmar's Border Guard patrols a village shared by both Buddhists and Rohingya in northern Rakhine State on July 14.

stateless people," Cardinal Bo explained.

Following the outbreak of more violence between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in 2012, more than 120,000 of the Rohingya were displaced. Many now live in refugee camps near the border with Bangladesh. They live in "a very poor place that has no facilities," said Cardinal Bo.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi has come under much international criticism for the treatment of the Rohingya. But, he said, "I agree with her: There is no genocide here; ethnic cleansing is not happening." Nevertheless, he believes her government made a mistake when it refused to let an international team investigate the human rights situation in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State.

Citizenship for the Rohingya is a controversial proposal in Myanmar. According to the cardinal, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi "would say that we have to go case by case, rather than give it to them all."

He believes "the solution should come together with Bangladesh and a nearby country, Thailand, that could support us in resolving their situation."

Gerard O'Connell, *Vatican correspondent.*
Twitter: @gerryorome.

Catholic hospitals' C.E.O. ready to fix health care after G.O.P. 'skinny repeal' fails

A last-ditch Republican effort to pass a "skinny repeal" of the Affordable Care Act failed in the U.S. Senate on July 27. "We are relieved and delighted that the A.C.A. remains intact," Carol Keehan, D.C., C.E.O. and president of the Catholic Health Association, said. "We think that this is really an important moment now to hear the people on both sides of the aisle that have said we need to come together and work on making this better."

Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., chair of the bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, likewise suggested it was time for members of Congress to put the repeal effort behind them and roll up their sleeves. "The task of reforming the healthcare system still remains," he said, in a statement released on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on July 28.

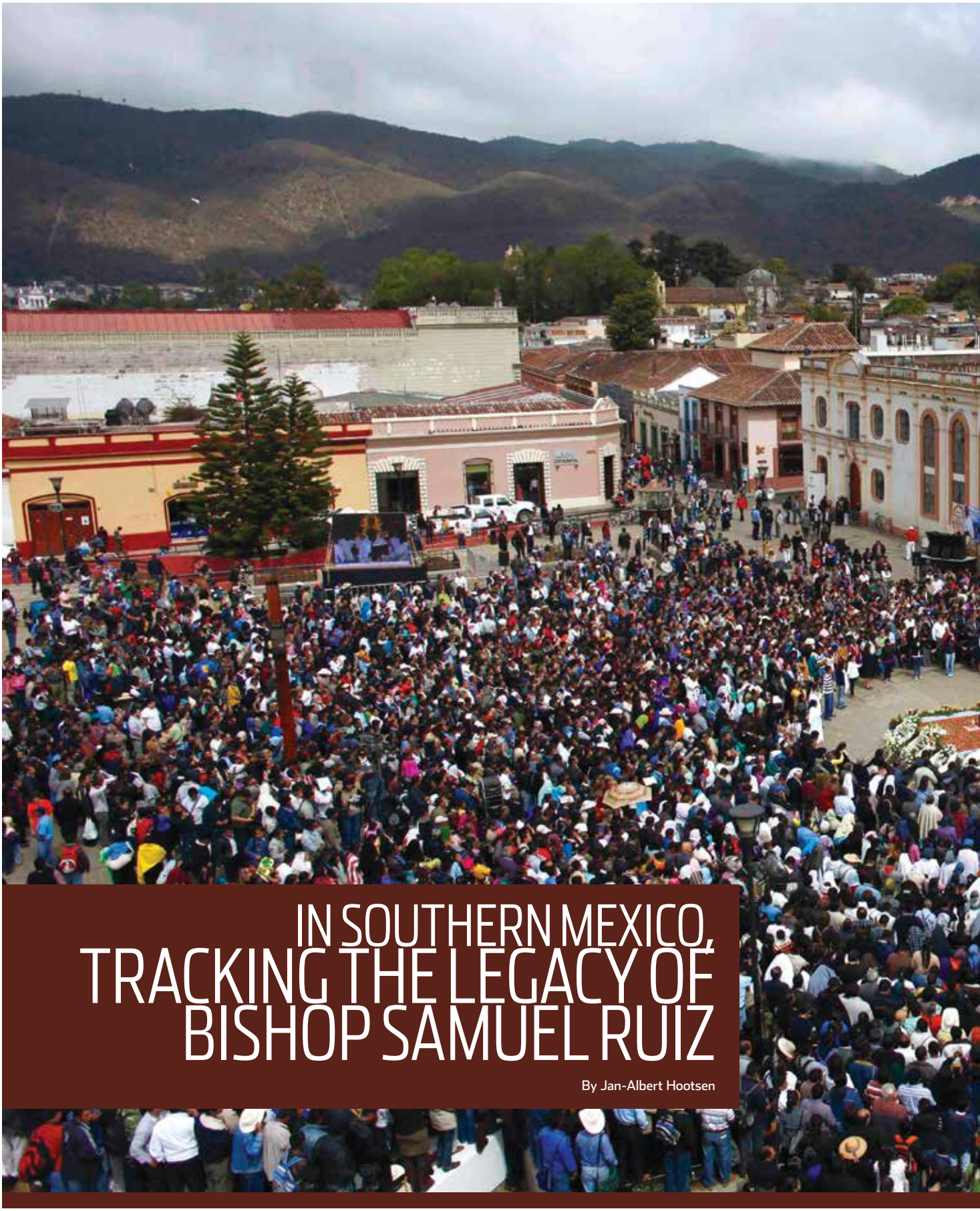
"The current healthcare system," he said, "is not financially sustainable, lacks full Hyde protections and conscience rights and is inaccessible to many immigrants. Inaction will result in harm for too many people."

Sister Keehan agrees that the Republican failure could be a pivot point on further progress toward the universal coverage that most other industrialized nations have taken for granted for decades. "The American genius," she said, "can make [the A.C.A.] so much better. We need to marshal that genius, to use everybody's input and gifts to make this bill so much more of service to the American people and the American economy."

Kevin Clarke, *chief correspondent. Twitter: @clarkeatamerica.*

CNS photo/Aaron P. Bernstein, Reuters

Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, speaks with reporters ahead of the 'skinny repeal' vote on July 27 on Capitol Hill in Washington.



IN SOUTHERN MEXICO, TRACKING THE LEGACY OF BISHOP SAMUEL RUIZ

By Jan-Albert Hootsen

The funeral service for Bishop Samuel Ruiz in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico, on Jan. 26, 2011

AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo

> Bishop Ruiz's social and religious struggle in Chiapas placed him at odds with figures of authority in Mexican politics.

For a place where history was made less than a quarter of a century ago, the room in the offices of the Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas is an unassuming one. Tucked away next to a dark hallway and a quiet courtyard, it features just a coffee table, a few chairs and a sofa.

"The furniture here was bought specifically for the negotiations in 1994," Gonzalo Ituarte Verduzco, a Dominican friar, says. He smiles fondly. "This is where the diocesan negotiators spoke with representatives of the government and the Zapatistas, trying to broker a peace agreement." The humble space is dominated by a large portrait of Samuel Ruiz García—between 1959 and 1999 the bishop of a diocese that spans the highlands of Mexico's southernmost Chiapas State and the man who changed Chiapas and the diocese forever.

On Jan. 1, 1994, hundreds of masked and armed soldiers of the indigenous Zapatista Army of National Liberation (E.Z.L.N.), named after the famed agrarian revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, marched into San Cristóbal. It was supposed to be a festive day for Mexico's political and business elites and President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the day Mexico entered the North American Free Trade Agreement. Instead, it became the day indigenous Mexicans rose up in arms after centuries of extreme poverty and marginalization.

As Mexican armed forces moved in and conflict began, the warring parties looked for a mediator. They knew there was only one man with the moral authority to broker a peace deal: Samuel Ruiz García. With the bishop heading negotiations, a cease-fire was reached 12 days later, ultimately resulting in the San Andrés peace agreement of 1996.

"The government knew there was no one more trustworthy than Don Samuel, and the Zapatistas could not confide in anyone else," recalls Father Ituarte, a close friend and collaborator of Bishop Ruiz. "It was a convergence that started the peace process."

A PASTOR'S LEGACY

Outside Mexico, Samuel Ruiz is mostly known for his role in the 1994 conflict. Here in Chiapas, however, his legacy is far broader and deeper. Six years after his death, he remains a towering figure in the political and spiritual imagination of Mexico's poorest state.

During his 40 years as bishop of San Cristóbal, he transformed the diocese into Latin America's first real "autochthonous church," true to the principles of the Second Vatican Council and the Second General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops at Medellín, Colombia, in 1968, two events in contemporary church history that influenced him deeply. He preached "evangelization by the poor," instructed his priests to study local indigenous languages and trained hundreds of catechists and deacons.

In his practice, being an autochthonous church meant incorporating indigenous traditions in the church and welcoming the participation of indigenous people in a region whose inhabitants had never been treated as equals by European colonizers and their descendants. Bishop Ruiz ordained hundreds of indigenous deacons and translated the Bible into Tzeltal, one of the many local Mayan dialects.

Beyond church reform, Bishop Ruiz became one of Chiapas's and Mexico's principal advocates of social justice and equality. Championing indigenous rights and the struggle against poverty and racism, indigenous *chiapanecos* came to lovingly nickname him "Tatic," which means "father" in Tzeltal, a local dialect. Others called him "El Caminante," "the walker," because of his constant travels through Chiapas. After he was ordained, he famously visited every community of the diocese riding a mule.

Bishop Ruiz's social and religious struggle in Chiapas placed him at odds with figures of authority in Mexican politics. Mexico's federal government accused him of espousing Marxism and fomenting the revolutionary thought that ultimately led to the E.Z.L.N.'s uprising. Landowners and the rich elites of Chiapas accused him of Communist sympathies and confronted him, sometimes violently.

He was also often at odds with members of the Mexican church hierarchy, who acted as defenders of the political and cultural status quo, and with the Vatican, which did not approve of his ordinations of indigenous deacons. In 1993, he was asked to step down. After he wrote a pastoral letter defending his reforms and his pastoral approach, Mexican bishops rallied behind him, and he

The faithful lined the roads of San Cristóbal de las Casas during Pope Francis' visit in 2016, during which Francis prayed at the tomb of Bishop Ruiz.

Photo: Kevin Clarke

would stay on for another six years.

Bishop Ruiz died in 2011 in Querétaro, near Mexico City, after leaving the Chiapas Diocese in 2000. Some of his most important reforms were contested; the Vatican banned the ordination of indigenous deacons soon after his resignation. In a February 2002 letter to Bishop Ruiz's successor, Felipe Arizmendi, the Vatican stated it feared indigenous deacons would deviate too far from traditional church doctrine and that the liberal interpretation of the responsibilities of deacons and their wives would be a poor example to other indigenous dioceses across the globe. Some feared the married deacons were a first step toward a married priesthood.

But in death, Bishop Ruiz found a powerful ally in Pope Francis, who not only overturned the ban, but last year prayed at Bishop Ruiz's tomb and celebrated Mass in San Cristóbal with thousands of *chiapanecos*.

Bishop Ruiz's legacy looms large in Chiapas. The state has seen some success in relieving poverty and reducing inequality, but in 2017 it still remains one of Mexico's poorest states. Contemporary disciples like Raúl Vera, now bishop of Saltillo, in northern Mexico, apply similar pastoral methods for combating poverty and defending human rights. And in the recent Nobel Peace Prize nomination of Alejandro Solalinde, a priest famed for fighting for the rights of migrants, the spirit of Bishop Ruiz lives on.

EXTRAORDINARY JOY

"Don Samuel was a leader who walked amidst other people, not in front of them," recalls Father Ituarte. The current provincial of the Dominican order in Mexico, Father Ituarte had worked closely with Bishop Ruiz since he first arrived in Chiapas in 1977, at that time traveling to the state as a tourist. He still fondly remembers his first impressions of the bishop.

"I was a traveling to Ocosingo, a town in the highlands of Chiapas, to the house of the Dominicans. Don Samuel happened to be [going] there at the same time, and I flew with him to Ocosingo in a small airplane," he says. "There was a great number of people waiting for him, more than a thousand, if I recall, and they received him with extraordinary joy. He was very close to the people there. He was the first bishop I ever met, and he appeared to be a man of the people. I was very surprised, because in 1977 he was still not as visible as he would later be."

Father Ituarte decided to stay in Chiapas and was ordained a priest soon afterward. From 1989 onward, he would collaborate closely with Bishop Ruiz as the diocese's general vicar and later the vicar for justice and peace. The two men became good friends.

"I remember him mostly for his clarity of thought and his simplicity," Father Ituarte says. "He was a man of horizontal relations, never claiming any kind of superiority. What I found astounding was the amount of respect he

Pope Francis' visit to Chiapas in 2016 was considered a sign of support for the continuing influence of Bishop Ruiz on the church's approach to Mexico's indigenous communities.

had for everyone, including those who opposed him. As bishop, he was slandered, insulted, attacked, but he could never bring himself to talk badly about anyone, not even in private."

When he first arrived in Chiapas, Bishop Ruiz was was not yet the towering figure of social justice he would later become. The first-born son of poor parents in the central Mexican state of Guanajuato, he grew up in a staunchly conservative Catholic family environment during a period of turmoil, when devout Catholics engaged in open warfare with Mexico's then revolutionary and radically anticlerical government, a period known as the Cristero Wars. Enrique Krauze, one of Mexico's foremost historians, described Bishop Ruiz's father as sympathetic to the *sinarquista* movement, a far-right social and political campaign he deemed "deeply Catholic, but [one that] can also legitimately be described, in its racism and exclusivism, as fascist."

Growing up and studying at the seminary in León, Guanajuato's largest city, Bishop Ruiz espoused conservative Catholic thought; that continued when he entered the Colegio Pio Latinoamericano in Rome. León was one of the core regions of the *sinarquista* movement, which carried significant influence in the local seminary because of its strong opposition to social Catholicism and the separation of church and state (and later to liberation theology).

According to Mr. Krauze, Bishop Ruiz saw *sinarquista* initially as "a movement that shook things up, a necessary step in the civic and political education of society." Less than 15 years later, however, much in his thinking had changed. After a five-year stint as the rector of the Seminary of León, he moved to Chiapas as its new bishop, and his conversion to social justice activist and church reformer began.

"When he first came to Chiapas, he saw the servitude of the indigenous to the owners of coffee plantations, who only allowed the peons to work on small patches that were originally indigenous [land]. There was already a movement towards indigenous workers occupying farms in rebellion against the elites," Father Ituarte says. "Don Samuel saw from the beginning that the conditions of the indigenous wasn't the will of God, but that it was an effect of injustice."

The awakened social consciousness of Bishop Ruiz was further encouraged by documents emerging from the Second Vatican Council and the Medellín conference, where issues raised during the council were further discussed.

"I always tell people that Don Samuel took the Second Vatican Council seriously, that he believed in it," Father Ituarte says. "Translating Bibles into indigenous languages and placing them in the center of evangelization was an instruction of the council. He wasn't the first to do so; Protestants here already worked on translations, but he immediately assumed it as his responsibility."

Photo: Kevin Clarke

'INDIAN DOG'

Father Ituarte speaks from his office at the diocesan chancery, a striking, colonial building next to the city's cathedral, one of southern Mexico's most iconic colonial structures. The colonial center of San Cristóbal, visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists each year, still retains much of its old charm despite European-style coffee houses that now line the ancient colonial plazas and the ubiquitous smartphone shops and internet hotspots.

The city also barely conceals a vast, centuries-old gap between rich and poor. Barefoot indigenous Mayan women dressed in colorful traditional garb roam the streets begging for change while European tourists and white and mestizo Mexicans relax in the traditional community's modern restaurants and coffee shops.

In the late 1950s the state was still a semi-feudal region, divided among powerful landowners who ruled their coffee plantations as fiefs, much as their colonial ancestors had done in the centuries before Mexico's independence. The Mexican Revolution of 1910-20, with its agrarian reform and redistribution of land from the powerful ruling elites to the rural poor, had largely missed Chiapas. In the 1950s, indigenous Mayans in San Cristóbal would still step from the sidewalk when they saw a white man, and the racial slur *perro indio* ("Indian dog") was commonly used.

On the large coffee plantations on the countryside, most indigenous workers lived as peons in semi-slavery for the ruling elite. Basic services like health care and education were completely out of reach for the state's poorest, as was participation as equals with the white and mestizo population in the church. Baptism would often be the only real contact the Mayan communities had with Catholicism.

"Ruiz was shocked to see the extreme poverty of the indigenous population here," says Pedro Arriaga, a Jesuit priest who is the spokesperson for the San Cristóbal diocese. "The first thing he thought when he came here was that all indigenous *chiapanecos* should wear shoes and should speak Spanish, but that was before he realized how deeply rooted slavery was here."

Bishop Ruiz almost immediately clashed with the state's elites, especially local political bosses and plantation owners. When previous bishops visited the diocese's rural communities, they would spend the night at one of the large estates. Bishop Ruiz broke with that tradition and stayed at the homes of indigenous workers.

"He would tell the *finca* owners when they offered him coffee, that the coffee was paid for with blood," says Father Arriaga. Father Arriaga heads the Jesuit mission in Bachajón, a small town with a significant Tzeltal Mayan population. A rural community of approximately 5,000 inhabitants in the northern jungle region of the state, it is now a three-hour drive from San Cristóbal, but that connection between the state's major cities is relatively a recent luxury; in the 1970s, a trip to Bachajón from San Cristóbal would take two days on foot.

It was here, in towns like Bachajón, that Bishop Ruiz undertook a massive effort to train thousands of catechists and deacons to serve areas that had few priests. Bishop Ruiz was not satisfied with just translating the Bible into the local languages, he set out to master the languages himself, placing the indigenous traditions squarely at the top of church priorities.

"In terms of his pastoral and liturgical influence, the central theme was how he approached the diaconate," David Fernández Dávalos, the Jesuit rector of the prestigious Iberoamerican University in Mexico City says. "He began educating married people, men as well as women, in the San Cristóbal diocese to become permanent deacons in local churches. It was a long process, which probably took up to 15 years before the first few deacons could be ordained."

According to Father Fernández Dávalos, the indigenous deacons became the backbone of the San Cristóbal Diocese. "Nowadays, you can't understand the workings of the San Cristóbal Diocese without understanding the work of the permanent married deacons, of deacons accompanied by their wives."

"When I first arrived here in 1967, the training of catechists was already well on its way," says Father Arriaga. "Students were given courses to read and understand the Bible and reflect on it by a method of questions and answers. The system of catechists and deacons fit in well with the indigenous cultures here."

Many catechists would later become permanent deacons. That was the experience of 60-year-old Matteo Pérez. An indigenous Mayan whose mother tongue is Tzeltal, he remembers Bishop Ruiz fondly as "Tatic Samuel."

"Everyone here of my generation still talks about him. He invited us into the church and trained us to take part in the process of evangelization," he says. "But his influence went much further than teaching us the word of God."

Indeed, Bishop Ruiz almost instantly set out to create awareness of the extreme poverty and marginalization of the indigenous *chiapanecos,* but he also took steps to im-

prove their own self-worth. Celebrating Mass in their own languages empowered the state's impoverished farmers.

"Before Tatic Samuel came, we were never proud of who we were," Mr. Pérez says. "Many of us didn't know how to read or write. He promoted education and told us we had to improve our lives."

Mr. Pérez became a deacon in 1975, one year after Bishop Ruiz organized the first Gathering of the Indigenous in San Cristóbal, the first grassroots conference by and for indigenous people since Europeans arrived in Mexico almost 500 years before. The event is considered an awakening of indigenous conscience in Chiapas, and historians suggest it helped pave the way for the Zapatista uprising 20 years later.

THE ZAPATISTAS AND DON SAMUEL

There is no longer an official dialogue between the Zapatistas and the diocese, priests in Chiapas say, but contact with the so-called *caracoles* ("snails," so named in reference to the cochlea as a community center that "hears" the pleas of the people), the administrative centers of the E.Z.L.N., continues. Priests often celebrate Mass and provide spiritual services at *caracoles*. Attempts by **America** to speak with Zapatista representatives about Bishop Ruiz's legacy were unsuccessful, but signs of his influence among the members of the former guerrilla army are hard to miss.

In the north of San Cristóbal, the Zapatistas founded the Universidad de la Tierra ("University of the Earth"), which provides so-called revolutionary education, focused on the environment, indigenous emancipation and the relationship between people and the land they inhabit, with the indigenous *chiapaneco* culture and traditions at its teaching core. In one of the buildings, a shrine is dedicated to the bishop, and his image is often featured in Zapatista mural paintings.

"You can't talk about the Zapatistas without talking about Don Samuel," Father Ituarte explains. "He created a degree of consciousness that made the existence of the E.Z.L.N. possible. We didn't start or support them as an armed group, but we're conscious that those who started the movement touch upon the same issues as we did."

The Zapatista uprising ultimately ended in the San Andrés agreements of 1996. The Mexican government and the insurgents agreed upon indigenous autonomy, respect for indigenous heritage and care for the Mayans' ancestral lands. The conflict was far from over, however, and violence between the army and indigenous groups continued, culminating in the 1997 Acteal massacre.

The massacre, named after the small town of Acteal, took place on Dec. 22, 1997, when a paramilitary group armed by a local political boss killed 45 people. Police refused to intervene. Many describe it as the saddest moment of Bishop Ruiz's life, as he spent Christmas of that year burying the victims.

The Zapatista uprising forced the Mexican government to pay more attention to its most impoverished state. In the wake of the armed conflict, new roads were built and most major cities, like the state capital Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Tapachula and San Cristóbal, are now well connected with smaller towns like Bachajón.

Basic services are without a doubt more available now throughout the state, even in harder to reach rural areas and highlands. Moreover, according to the latest yearly "Poverty and Social Neglect" report of Mexico's federal Social Development Secretariat (Sedesol), Chiapas is no longer the nation's poorest state, overtaken by Guerrero and neighboring Oaxaca.

Positive as those numbers may be, they are also a bit deceiving. More than 75 percent of *chiapanecos* still live in poverty, more than 30 percent in extreme poverty. Land disputes and political violence are still rampant and are now joined by a new, potentially far graver problem: drug trafficking and organized crime, often in collusion with local political strongmen.

"We are now facing drug trafficking and far higher levels of corruption," says the Rev. Marcelo Pérez. A parish priest based in the town of Simojovel, Father Perez also heads the diocese's social ministry. "Poverty levels haven't dropped," and government statements that report otherwise are lies, he says bluntly.

Father Pérez would know; his social work in Bishop Ruiz's tradition brought him into direct conflict with local strongmen and criminals in 2015. Unknown individuals placed a price on his head, a threat not to be taken lightly in a state where almost 1,500 people were murdered last year.

He attributes many of the problems the state faces now to political corruption and government aid programs. "The communities nowadays are very fragmented, very divided because of politics," he says. "It's an economic attack of sorts. Corruption has increased. The politically well-connected hand out fertilizer, T-shirts, water tanks as a way to create dependence, which they try to sell as success. But they're paternalistic projects; they create people who are dependent on the government and [who] work less."

Bishop Ruiz's legacy looms large in Chiapas. Bishop Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel, right, replaced Ruiz (center) in 2000.

AP Photo/ Eduardo Verdugo

Father Ituarte agrees. "There are now social classes in the indigenous communities that reflect the social classes of capitalism," he says. "There are now great indigenous capitalists, who have their own workers. Poverty is still what marks Chiapas, but it no longer encompasses all indigenous people. There are now rich and poor Indian; there are indigenous drug traffickers and indigenous politicians associated with organized crime. Many of them now live in the cities; they no longer work the land."

SENSIBILITY FOR THE POOR

One thing has changed: By now Bishop Ruiz is a figure universally accepted as one the most important in Chiapas's history, even by the elites. By the closing years of his tenure, political candidates would visit him to boost their images. Few now question his influence or accuse him of being a leftist instigator, as many did in the past.

But according to Pedro Arriaga, there are still signs that Mexico's political elite are not entirely comfortable with the legacy of Bishop Ruiz. When Pope Francis visited his tomb last year, Father Arriaga was in charge of media relations. He recalls how Televisa, Mexico's largest broadcaster and generally considered to be pro-government, refused to place cameras showing the pope praying at the bishop's tomb. It refused to broadcast images of a choir composed of survivors of the Acteal massacre.

"That's how the media in Mexico still work. They wouldn't give the survivors of Acteal a chance to denounce the violence. They wouldn't show Don Samuel as part of the visit," he says.

But such subtle obliterations did little to diminish the significance of Pope Francis' visit to Chiapas last year, generally considered a show of support to the continuing influence of Bishop Ruiz on the church's approach to Mexico's indigenous communities.

"It was very clear to me that the visit of Pope Francis, the fact that he came here to pray at the tomb, was a way of acknowledging the legacy of Don Samuel," says Father Ituarte. "Like Don Samuel, the pope has an enormous sensibility for the poor, based on his experiences with the poor in Buenos Aires. He could not have come to Mexico without visiting Chiapas."

Jan-Albert Hootsen *is* ***America****'s Mexico City correspondent.*

A GOOD JOB IS HARD TO FIND

CAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING HELP SOLVE THE LABOR CRISIS?

By Rachel Lu

Photo: istockphoto.com/chinaface

Rudy Limas had had a lot of jobs when the manufacturing industry that employed him finally folded. He'd driven tractors and trucks, picked produce and been an owner-operator for a small company. He's never been afraid of hard work.

When his manufacturing job finally folded, he started collecting unemployment and zealously looking for a new job. At 61, he found it difficult to persuade people that he had the energy and drive for hard work. "They look at your age and think 'he can't handle it,' even though I can," he related sadly to the multimedia project "Over 50 and Out of Work." He worries that his family might soon end up on the streets.

A few decades from now, the United States may have a new crop of ghost towns. Across the nation, many cities and small towns are literally shrinking as people pack up and look elsewhere for opportunity. There is not much left in cities like Galesburg, Ill., Flint, Mich., or Fossil, Ore. Falling wages and disappearing jobs have led to falling populations. Some small cities are on the verge of extinction. Some larger cities are now sporting entire neighborhoods where houses and shops are mostly empty, falling slowly into ruin.

What happened to these once-thriving U.S. towns? It is easy to disregard such a crisis when the jobless are, for the most part, out of sight and mind. They are not standing in bread lines or marching on Washington. They are at home, watching television or playing video games. Many have mental health problems, disabilities or illnesses; many more are addicted to alcohol or drugs. The opioid crisis has especially ravaged areas where unemployment is high, thereby perpetuating the problem. As of December of last year, a record-breaking 95 million American adults (a startling number of prime-age men) were neither employed nor in a period of career transition, since they were not looking for new jobs. The United States in this century has seen the most severe falloff in employment rates since before World War II.

Human beings were made for work. Although human dignity is innate, it is natural and fitting for us as rational beings to develop our gifts and potentialities, using them to help unfold God's creation. Some people have a limited capacity to do this for physiological reasons, and Christians should never forget that the very young, the very old, the sick and the disabled bless us by reflecting Christ's own image in a unique way.

Work need not entail monetary compensation in order to be valuable. Many caregivers, for example, do great work for which they are not paid. But when the capable are unable to find paid work that they need for economic reasons, widespread frustration and despair results. In both of his labor encyclicals, St. John Paul II discusses joblessness as one of the most crippling ailments of modern life, and Pope Francis has also returned many times to this theme. According to Francis, "[Work] makes us similar to God, who has worked and still works, who always acts."

The unemployment crisis could get worse, but not for the reasons that we repeatedly hear blaring from news channels and talk radio. It is true that immigration can create wage pressure in low-skill industries, and outsourcing has taken a harsh toll on particular U.S. towns where the economy was once heavily dependent on a single factory or industry. But those losses are offset by a number of gains, including more-affordable consumer goods and job growth in other areas. In the end, this debate is a noisy sideshow to a much more significant issue: For most working Americans, foreigners are not the main competition—machines are the ones gunning for jobs.

Technology has long been a major driver of unemployment. Even in manufacturing, a recent study from Ball State University suggests that only 13 percent of job loss since the 1960s is attributable to trade and outsourcing, with technological advances explaining the rest. As sobering as that is, we are likely on the verge of another wave of layoffs. Breakthroughs in automation and information technology may soon turn millions of productive U.S. workers into buggy-makers. Driverless cars (already being piloted on our city streets) threaten to consume millions of jobs in the coming years. Sales clerks, cashiers and accountants are already hard-pressed to compete with computers, but even once-prestigious jobs like law and medicine are starting to swap humans for machines. Machines will work overtime without a paycheck, but that is not the only issue. In many cases, they simply do the work better.

One study in 2013 found that 47 percent of Americans were at high risk of losing their jobs to automation in the foreseeable future. Another study, released just this year, suggested that as many as 38 percent of currently existing U.S. jobs might disappear over just the next 15 years. In labor terms, this is a much bigger issue than immigration.

From the comfort of an armchair, we can see many ironies in our present situation. How strange that humanity perfected the "labor-saving device" to the point where there is no longer enough labor to go around. How interesting that alienation theory began in the 19th century with concern about the dehumanizing effects of repetitive,

low-skill factory jobs, only to find us two centuries later, still alienated but now pining for more low-skill factory jobs. It feels like a kind of cosmic joke.

The unemployed are not laughing though, and neither should we. We can understand that the United States's poor and marginalized yearn to be full participants in their own societies. As Catholics, with our rich body of social teachings, we need to stay engaged in the conversation, helping people find work that is meaningful. Of course that means encouraging job growth. But we may also need to reject some of the quickest and most obvious solutions to the employment problem, in the interests of realizing an economy built around service and the common good.

WORK AS SERVICE

Our ancestors might well have been perplexed by the modern demand for work. For many of them, work was a heavy cross indeed, and in the day-to-day of modern life we often experience work as drudgery. Nevertheless, St. John Paul II reminds us that work is "a fundamental dimension of human existence on earth." In Genesis, God commands Adam and Eve to work, and responding to that command is our way of answering the divine call to "multiply and subdue the Earth." Most of us, perhaps, would choose leisure over work on any given day, but we do want to be contributing members of society and to fill our lives with meaningful projects and activities. Those involve work, and people who are capable and willing to work, but unable to find it, are less happy, less healthy and more likely to engage in self-destructive behaviors.

Catholic social teaching has always placed a heavy emphasis on the personal or subjective dimension of work. In "Rerum Novarum" (1891), Pope Leo XIII suggests that "the personal element in a man's work" can be considered independently from the objective ends. Continuing on this theme, Catholic social teaching has steadfastly affirmed that a worker is a human being, with his own needs and personal motivations. He cannot be treated as merely a means to a utilitarian end.

It can be difficult to keep sight of this truth in an industrialized world. Technology has enabled us to build trade networks that crisscross the planet, generating wealth and opportunity that our ancestors could hardly have imagined. This is a stunning achievement, with many wonderful ramifications: a billion people have been lifted out of grinding poverty in the last few decades alone; global illiteracy rates have fallen dramatically; heinous diseases like polio and smallpox have been effectively eradicated. Ordinary people

overfiftyandoutofwork.com

OVER 50 AND **OUTOFWORK.**

These images and narratives have been excerpted with permission from the video interview project "Over 50 and Out of Work." The interviews were conducted in the aftermath of the great recession, between 2010 and 2012. The aim of the project is to"help people who are over fifty and out of work to rejoin the labor force by improving the cultural perception of older workers and by influencing public policy."

RUDY LIMAS is a migrant worker who worked a variety of jobs before being unemployed.

"Me and my family, we will probably find ourselves in the streets in a month or two."

KIMBERLY GILEK is a lab technician and phlebotomist in Nevada who has been looking for a job for four years.

"The media says that things are getting a little better. It's not. The economy's not turning around. The job situation isn't turning around."

today have untold educational and spiritual resources at their fingertips. With these benefits come new challenges, however. Market forces have transformed societies and cultures, leaving a legacy of alienation, social fragmentation and environmental degradation.

Among the many intense challenges modern societies face, labor issues may be among the most difficult. Partly, this is just a consequence of the labor market's size and pace of change. Historically it was normal for people to take up the same professions as their parents; today it can be difficult to sustain a career even across a single lifetime. In a massive corporation, an employer cannot possibly get to know all of his workers personally, so it is easy to start viewing them as mere "assets."

The challenges posed by market forces do not easily lend themselves to magic-bullet solutions. That is partly because, as St. John Paul argues in "On Human Work," work is the natural point of intersection between individuals, families and society as a whole. On a personal level, people need jobs with humane hours and tolerable working conditions, ideally with opportunities for advancement and personal growth. On the level of the family, breadwinners need salaries adequate for the frugal support of their dependents.

Underlying all of this, however, it remains true that work derives its objective significance from its meaningful contribution to the common good. It does not matter, to this end, if the involved tasks are menial. Waiters, filing clerks and sanitation workers can all serve the common good in their various ways. Meaningful work needs to contain a real element of service. This is the magical ingredient that can convert even a dreary task into something ennobling, humanizing and salutary for our souls.

Of course, it is difficult to provide any service if you not supported in your work, or if your inherent dignity is overlooked. A "good job" needs to combine a great many factors. That may explain why Western nations enjoy abundant wealth but find stability and social inclusion to be far more elusive.

THE PROBLEM WITH MEANINGLESS WORK

Catholic social teaching offers a rich storehouse of insights that can be applied to our labor crisis. Catholics have spent more than a century discussing the subjective dimension of labor, so we should be gratified to see a sudden surge of interest in this topic. Over the past few years, unlikely politicians have risen to prominence with the promise of good jobs, while a quick glance through the daily paper may reveal anxious pieces on the "gig economy," the "Fight for Fifteen" or the collapse of labor unions. Labor issues

OVER 50 AND **OUT OF WORK**

CRAIG BEAUMONT worked as a music director before he became unemployed.

"I really don't have a great deal of realistic hope, except that every day, I'm thinking about what else can I do to make some more money."

LOU ANGARAN worked in customer service in South Carolina before she became unemployed.

"My credit reports all say: 'Never been late. Never skipped a payment....' That means a lot to me."

are moving to the forefront of our political discourse as we grapple with the ramifications of our shifting economy.

As participants in this national (and global) debate, what insights should Catholics press? It is a difficult question, precisely because the relevant concerns are so numerous. Of course, we should want workers to have reasonable wages, healthy working conditions and job stability.

Catholics have long served as advocates for workers—stressing these points comes naturally to us. However, as the political pressures mount, we may need to broaden our focus. Political leaders will be tempted to prioritize the subjective dimension of labor to the exclusion of any deep concern about the objective value of the work. If workers complain of depressed wages, just raise the minimum wage. If a company threatens to outsource, offer them special subsidies or tax breaks as an incentive to keep jobs at home. If a technological advance threatens jobs, pass regulations designed to slow or halt its introduction into the workforce. These are obvious measures that bring immediate relief to suffering people, and for a politician that may be incentive enough.

Taking the long view, though, there are serious drawbacks to this Band-Aid approach. Stimulating new markets is much more difficult than generating or protecting make-work jobs, but the former is much better if we want people to spend their lives engaged in meaningful activities. And we do want that. Beyond the wages, hours and other job-related minutiae, workers deserve the opportunity to apply their talents and abilities toward some form of genuine service. Meaningful work should further the common good in some way.

Empty, make-work jobs generally are not advertised as such, but they can be created indirectly. Governments have many methods of protecting jobs from ordinary market pressure. By assessing tariffs on foreign goods, we can give U.S. companies a competitive advantage in home markets. Tax breaks and subsidies can buoy up companies that are lagging behind their competitors. (When President Trump makes headlines by "saving" a factory from outsourcing, we can safely presume that he has offered advantages of this kind.) Regulations and laws provide another means of protecting particular industries or professions—for instance, by banning self-pumped gas, New Jersey keeps gas station attendants in a job.

Free market economists are quick to point out the economic and political costs of these measures. Goods and services are more expensive when we are paying for planned inefficiency. Subsidies and tax breaks can be manipulated by the already-wealthy, fueling political corruption and cronyism. It is also important to understand that anything we

JESUS ANGLERO
is a geophysicist who has been unemployed since 2009.

"The church that I go, there's a lot of people the same way.... Many of them don't even have jobs. They are just helping each other."

DEBORAH SALIM
worked as a grant writer until she lost her job.

"I have family, my children. They would take me in temporarily...if I should lose my home."

EDWARD WALKER
is a cook who has been out of a job since 2010.

"[I live in] a casino town.... I feel there should be plenty of jobs here, but they aren't hiring anybody."

Innovation sounds good on paper, but the social cost of rapid change may not always be worth it.

do to prop up existing industries will tend to deter innovation and entrepreneurship. There is no good way to protect jobs from foreign (or technological) competition without also "protecting" ourselves from start-up companies that might eventually create more and better jobs.

Sometimes, as a response to catastrophic job loss, we may decide that these costs are worth paying. Innovation sounds good on paper, but the social cost of rapid change may not always be worth it. Still, in calculating the tradeoffs, we should try to tally the costs as accurately as we can. Among those costs, there may be subjective losses of meaning for the worker himself, as his job ceases to represent a real contribution to the common good.

That sounds harsh, but the possibility naturally arises once we start asking society to make sacrifices just to keep jobs in existence. And there are sacrifices. Protectionist policies inevitably have consequences both for workers and for consumers. In the 1990s, George H. W. Bush's steel tariffs probably depressed job growth in Rust Belt states. When Barack Obama used tariffs to protect U.S. tire manufacturers from Chinese competition, Princeton economists estimated that this cost Americans about $900,000 per job, per year. Those are significant costs, which do not even account for potential losses in entrepreneurship. Even if these measures are occasionally needed as a stop-gap, we need to generate more effective long-term solutions.

Work is about more than just money, of course. Some of society's most crucial work is done for menial wages or none at all. That is because personal, direct service (especially to the poorest and weakest) is hard to monetize; the people who most benefit often are not in a position to pay. To a child, his mother is irreplaceable, but he or she does not have any money, so she serves him for free. A healthy civil society has many such "laborers of love" whose contributions are motivated by the awareness that human beings are precious regardless of their ability to work. In these cases, human concern takes precedence over material profit.

Seeing the pain that job loss causes, we might be tempted to justify protectionist policies because they take immediate human concern into account before long-term market value. The problem here is that protectionist measures typically are not implemented to protect "love labor" and its thick human dimension. They target the sorts of jobs that were created by the vicissitudes of global markets. Trade barriers are implemented to protect factory workers, not social workers, and it is difficult to assess the value of a tire factory without considering the worth of the tires. Chinese-manufactured wheels serve our needs just as well as those made here in the United States, so it is possible to identify a point at which society as a whole is accepting losses to the common good, for the sake of maintaining the illusion of productivity on the part of the individual worker.

It is all right to exercise that kind of paternalism with children. Can rational adults be satisfied with that sort of patronizing facade? A desperate man will take whatever job will enable him to feed his children, but is it fair to deprive honest workers of the opportunity to make a genuine social contribution through their labor? By undermining the objective value of work, protectionist policies can drain labor of its subjective value also.

MORE JOBS, MORE MEANING

Communities reeling from job loss need to be stabilized. Over the long term, though, we also need an economy that enables people to apply their energies to meaningful work that advances the common good. A balanced policy approach needs to address both concerns, and we already have some ideas about how to do this.

For those who truly need material assistance, it is better to subsidize directly than to distort the labor market. As far as possible, antipoverty programs should be targeted to supplement incomes without miring people in benefit dependency, and some programs (like the Earned Income Tax Credit) have shown reasonable success in doing this. Some have suggested that a universal basic income (a modest sum paid annually to every American, regardless of whether he is working) might provide citizens just enough stability to keep them afloat while they look for meaningful work. These programs aim to provide some

"safety net" while still giving people an incentive to look for work. Ideally, they would enable the labor market to shift into a more sustainable model while also providing some cushion to protect the most vulnerable.

What sort of "new economy" might emerge? Our goal should be to build an economy in which people work for genuinely valuable ends. Considering the matter from that perspective, we might note that there is lots of valuable work that needs doing. Our nation is full of dirty houses, litter-filled streets and sick and elderly people who receive grossly inadequate care. We could also benefit from more artists, musicians, scholars, pastors, spiritual directors and gardeners. Instead of spending $900,000 so a factory worker can make tires here in the United States, what if we could spend that money on personal chefs, personal tutors or home care workers? What if it could go to support scholarship, medical research or an embrace of sustainable agriculture?

It is natural for people in need to want to work. It is wrong to meet this need through a glut of empty busywork. Wouldn't it be better in the long run if machines did the most mundane tasks related to creating our material goods, leaving humans more free for personal service and cultural pursuits?

As we move through this period of labor anxiety, we should make every effort to stand in solidarity with the unemployed and the marginalized. At the same time, we must keep our eyes fixed on the horizon, where we can spy a worthy goal: a truly humane economy that enables people to offer their real talents and abilities in service of the common good.

Rachel Lu, *a freelance writer and instructor of philosophy, lives in St. Paul, Minn.*

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OVER 50 AND **OUTOFWORK.**

DEBORAH DENENFELD is a teaching artist who has been unemployed since 2009.

"In this country, it seems like you need to be either very rich or very poor and not in the middle."

JOEL NITZBERG worked as a community educator before being laid off.

"One of the things that I'm involved in...is meeting with other people to talk about job development."

To learn more about the "Over 50 and Out of Work" project, visit the website overfiftyandoutofwork.com.

THE BOYS OF SUMMER

At a camp for children with disabilities, I met the freest people I have ever known.

By Brian Daley

I first saw him across the parking lot through the haze of the summer sun, and as I walked toward him I could feel the fear rising. He didn't so much move as writhe beneath the straps that held him in his large power wheelchair, and all I could think was how good it would feel for him to be dipped in cool water.

"Hi, I'm Jace's mom," the woman standing next to him said.

"Hi, I'm Brian," I said shaking her hand. Should I shake his? Could I? It was shriveled into a knot. I looked at him and tried to act natural—not shocked or surprised or any of the things you didn't want to look when encountering a person with a severe handicap.

"And this is Jace," she said.

"Hi Jace," I said, bending down to be on his eye level. I kept my hands on my knees.

His mouth stretched and his head swung back violently so you could see the tendons and veins straining in his neck. A deep groan came out and spittle ran down his chin.

Art: Andrew Zbihlyj

Wiping his mouth with a cloth, his mother said, "It's all right, honey. You're going to love camp."

I smiled, but there was a voice screaming inside my head. "What have you gotten yourself into? How could you ever care for this child?" Looking at him, you could tell he would need help with everything: eating, dressing, washing, having his diaper changed. I was not ready for this. I felt like pleading with his mother, telling her no, she couldn't leave.

Instead, I smiled and walked them to the cabin he would be calling home for the next few weeks.

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I had come to Bradford Woods, a summer camp for people with disabilities in Indiana, during a project rotation with AmeriCorps. My team comprised about a dozen 20-somethings, and each of us was assigned to assist in a cabin.

I was responsible for an assortment of characters. Many of them, like Jace, were confined to wheelchairs, though Jace was the least mobile. Ryan could speak through a heavy lisp, and when he became excited would laugh hysterically and shake his arms. Billy could speak quite clearly. He loved chatting with the fellows and flirting with the girls at camp; he was a self-described "good ol' farm boy" who insisted on wearing camouflage and referred to me as Little Buddy. Kelley, like Jace, had minimal mobility, but he could speak, though only in a whisper. Eric was in a chair but mobile; he pushed himself and had the muscular arms and shoulders to prove it. He had a Scandinavian last name, so I referred to him as Eric the Red.

Andrew was a rugged kid and a good athlete, and even though his left arm was short and gimpy, he could do almost anything with his right, including throwing a football in a beautiful spiral. He loved professional wrestling, and during our time together he led what became the cabin rallying cry. It resembled a deep dog bark—"Ow! Ow! Ow!"—only instead of a pen full of dogs, picture a pack of adolescent boys.

The last two boys in our cabin were Jon and Justin. Each of them had Down syndrome. Jon was a real live wire, very social, and loved attention. Justin often seemed wrapped up in his own world. He carried with him a little book that he would not part with. It hung from his neck by a string. He had had it so long and it had been repaired so many times by duct tape that there was no way to tell what the original book was. It was difficult to converse with him; but often he would often admonish us in a husky voice while wagging his finger, "Be careful!"

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There were activities we did with the campers that I never knew were possible for people with severe handicaps, like swimming and exploring caves and intense games of basketball. The schedule was filled with arts and crafts and nature walks, campfires and sing-alongs, but a lot of our fun was more spontaneous, like mimicking "Royal Rumble" wrestling matches before bed and having Billy pull us in a wagon with his high-powered wheelchair. One night I got on the P.A. at dinner and used my Scooby-Doo voice. Some of the campers laughed so hard milk came out of their noses.

My job was to assist wherever needed. Usually that meant helping the boys move from place to place. Sometimes it meant lifting them in or out of their chairs, cleaning them or changing a feeding tube. Most of my tasks were things I never thought I could or would do until I had to that summer. Suddenly, changing a diaper was not an impossible task, when it was one of my guys who needed it done. They would have a good sense of humor about the whole thing, laughing at my amateurish diaper-fastening skills.

When I think back about Jace and the other boys I worked with at Bradford Woods, I think of how much fun we had and how much they gave me. Judging by worldly standards, they had little to offer; some of them could barely move or speak or ended up saying the same thing over and over again. And yet they taught me with eloquence. They showed me the paradox of the Cross and the truth of St. Paul's words, "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength."

As dependent as these boys were, they had a certain freedom. And as all truly free people do, their presence invited you to discover your own. I used to think that relying upon others somehow betrayed weakness. That changed when I worked at this camp. When you live alongside people with disabilities, the cloud of confusion that surrounds trust is fairly quickly eradicated, because their dependence on others is so naked. We who do not have visible physical handicaps can hide our dependencies. The boys I worked with trusted as a matter of course; they understood trust implicitly, and to work with them was to be invited into a

world where we could do the same. By being at peace with their dependencies they did not have to expend needless energy asserting or defending themselves. In this way, they were the freest people I have ever met.

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Because central Indiana in the middle of the summer is a very warm, humid place, one of the most popular activities at camp was swimming in the lake. For weeks, every afternoon we would venture down the long, winding path that led to the waterfront. And every day for weeks I would ask Jace if he would like to go swimming. By then I could understand him just by watching him, but I could also understand him when he said yes or no. You had to listen for it within what sounded like a groan or a yawn, but once you had the ear for it, you knew what he was saying. I would ask him if he wanted to go in, telling him that he would have a life vest and that I was a trained lifeguard and would stay with him the whole time.

He looked so uncomfortable in his chair, his back never seeing the sun or catching a cool breeze. But he would decline, and so would remain on the beach under the shade of a tree with another counselor as the rest of us splashed around, practicing our strokes and wrestling moves.

And then one day after I asked the question and was waiting for the no, he said yes.

I asked again, and he said yes again. We brought him down to the beach and laid him on some towels. The other boys began to notice. After lifting off his shirt, I could see that his back was bleach white and bent at a severe curve. Even the light breeze must have felt good against his skin. We fitted a life jacket over him and then slowly brought him to the water's edge, accompanied by Justin, who followed us to the water, repeating, "Be careful!"

Jace began shaking as we approached, and we assured him that we had him and that it would feel good. As we eased him in, he shivered and tightened up even more than in his normal, palsied state. His skin was all dimpled, and I began having doubts if this was the wisest move. Who was I to push this? This wasn't the River Jordan, and I sure wasn't John the Baptist. Why not just let him be, to relax in the shade and enjoy the soft breezes?

But as we went deeper and he eased in and felt our support, he relaxed, lifting his eyes and tilting back his head. He even laughed when I made a motorboat sound

Everything he had he was putting in my arms; and I knew there was nothing I would not do to keep him safe.

as I pulled him around. Eventually, he began to get used to letting himself be supported by just me and the water. It struck me then that he was trusting me with his life. Everything he had he was putting in my arms; and I knew there was nothing I would not do to keep him safe. I felt what parents must feel for their child: I would die for him.

As we waded out, he closed his eyes, feeling a sensation that must have been so foreign and thrilling. As I swam on my back, holding him, in his ear I told him that I had him, that he was safe and was doing a great job. He laughed at the splash from my kick. After a brief tour, we came in to where it was more shallow. He jerked when I separated from him, but I assured him he was O.K. The water was up to my waist, and I held him in a firm cradle. I tried to speak in steady tones, and as I did I lightened my grip. I slid my hands under his back, holding him up so he could still feel my touch even if it was just my fingers.

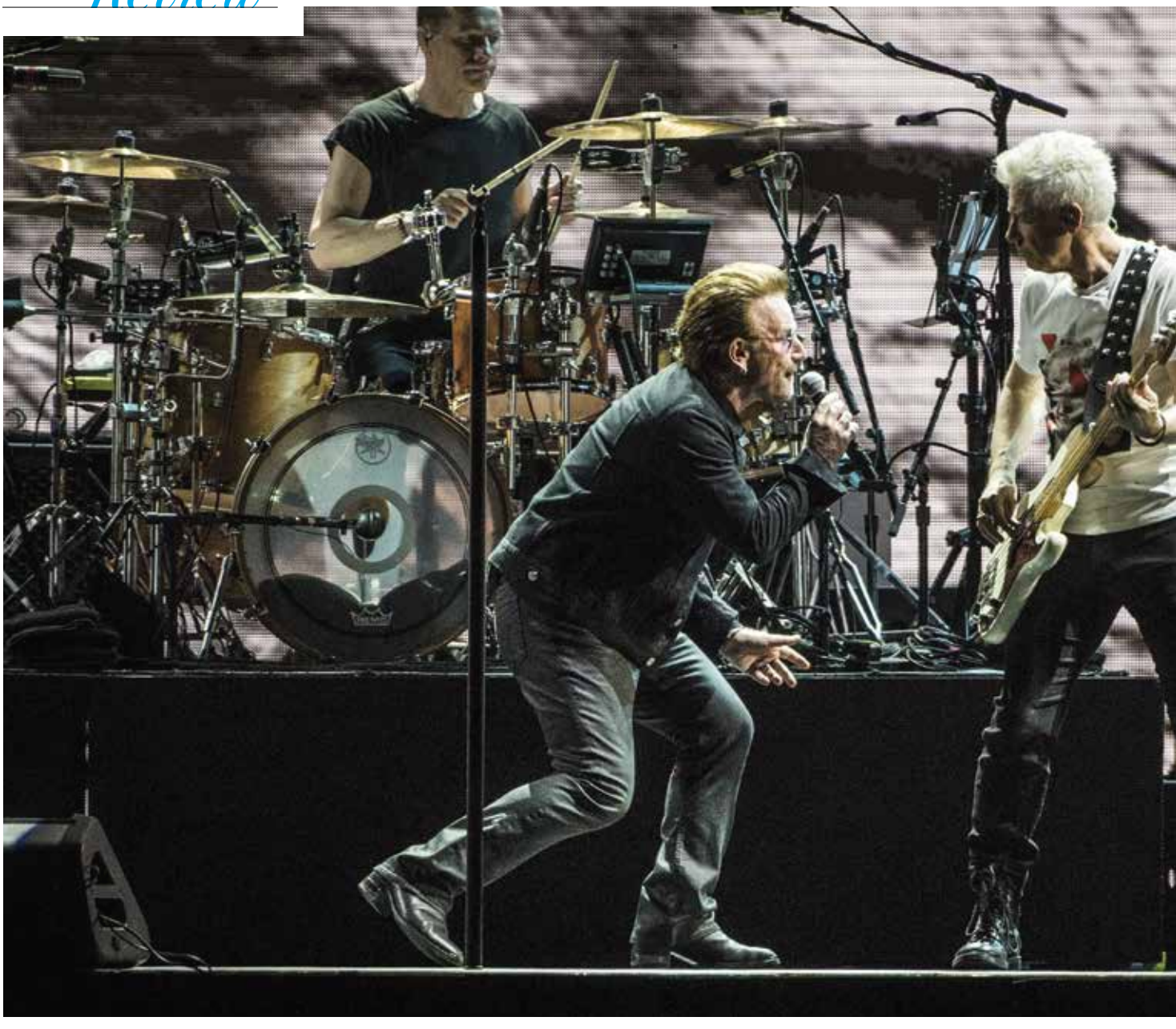
His eyes were like deep pools, deeper and darker than the water that surrounded us, and I looked into them, keeping his focus, letting him know that I was there. I smiled and assured him: You're O.K.; you're safe. "I got you, Jace," I kept saying, nice and easy, and as I did, I slowly removed my hands. I raised my arms to let him know. The others took notice.

"Brian, he's floating!" they shouted. "Jace is floating!"

"Yes," I said. "He is."

I was, too.

Brian Daley *lives in New York City, where he teaches theology at Loyola School.*



The Unbearable Lightness Of Being U2

By David Dark

Photo: Rex Features via AP Images

In U2's vision, the false distinction between love of neighbor and love of self is collapsed.

"Three things are needed for beauty: wholeness, harmony, and radiance"
—Thomas Aquinas,
James Joyce's translation

"They only want you to be the one thing," Mick Jagger once told the novelist William Gibson. He was referring to his own acting career. It is odd to imagine a celebrity icon millionaire presumably so close to the heart of rock and roll speaking so wistfully of thwarted ambition, as if he once had a dream and is now resigned to the reigning system that forbids its fulfillment because these are the rules, so to speak. What's to stop the lead singer of the Rolling Stones from auditioning for a role in a play somewhere remote or funding a production of "King Lear," casting himself, and putting it on Youtube? And who are "they" exactly? Are "they" real or an abstraction, a phantom, a dagger of the mind?

Housed within our sacred traditions we find many a healing mantra of redirection for this neurosis: *The true jihad is the inner jihad. Consider whether the light in you is not darkness. Everything seen by the eyes is burning.* But the one I hear in my head when I get to worrying over who might not be on my side comes as a tune: "There is no them." It's a sneakily straightforward four-word phrase that could easily be a bit of graffiti, harmless-seeming enough, but if we apply it to the partisan divide relentlessly asserted by a split screen in a 24-hour news cycle, it's about as countercultural as it gets.

Bring "There is no them" to bear upon the concept of international borders or, say, the difference between an American soldier and an Afghan civilian, or a police officer and a black human being suddenly declared a suspect, and you might upset someone. Express this article of faith out loud in certain contexts, and you might even discover a degree of aggression projected upon yourself. As is the case with so many other lyrical one-liners ("We get to carry each other"; "What you thought was freedom was just greed"; "Can't you see what love has done?"; "Dream up the world you want to live in"), "There is no them" arises in my mind unbidden out of the everlasting opus of U2, those four alarmingly thoughtful Irishmen who have banded together to create, record and perform music for over 40 years.

What to do with U2? They are admittedly millionaires. From the very beginning, there have been those who find them insufferable, as if their earnestness were an embarrassment to us all. What's that about? Well, Jagger's observation might prove helpful here. We like to know where to put people. The placeholders are mind-numbingly familiar. Keep religion out of politics (or vice versa). Are you an artist or an activist? Sacred or secular? These divisions doubtless serve someone's marketing scheme quite well, but we know—our hearts and minds tell us—that it does not really work this way. We love what we love. One revelation speaks to another. Our alleged boundaries dissolve upon contact with the way our consciousness really operates.

I know this feelingly. As a native of Nashville, I would like to pretend that the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and the beloved community that fostered him entered my radar through my judicious study of civil rights history and culture. This would be a lie. It was MTV and U2's decision to craft and promote what proved to be a radio hit called "Pride (In the Name of

Love)," commemorating King as one more pioneer of human seriousness (one more in the name of love) along a trajectory of individuals who chose to give their lives as gifts to others, an international parade of conscience. At 14 I still loved Duran Duran, but now I would stand in a grocery aisle reading Rolling Stone and learning about Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy as Bono dropped their names in an interview. Something new was getting through by way of this Irish arts collective. My own country was coming alive to me. In time, U2 would turn me on to Leonard Peltier and Desmond Tutu and Edna O'Brien and, in no small way, the fact of the rest of the world.

They are indeed aging rock stars. But they are also a mass media movement of thoughtfulness, artfulness, candor and curation. In the pop music of the 1980s, there was a moral alertness afoot concerning mass starvation, the environment and nuclear proliferation, and the members of U2 were inarguably at the heart of it. I wonder if the fact that they are still at it is too much to bear for some, that they are still wrestling out loud with and awash in the contradictions of wealth and consciousness. It is as if their urgency is an embarrassment to the rest of us somehow, an indictment of how much we have given up on the conspiracy of hope, or worse, consigned ourselves to the realm of naïveté or nostalgia.

This tension was on display when I watched the band headline the Bonn-

AP Photo/Joe Schaber

In the pop music of the 1980s, there was moral alertness concerning mass starvation, the environment and nuclear proliferation, and the members of U2 were inarguably at the heart of it.

aroo festival this year. Like no other popular act, it is as if U2 auditions anew with every performance, making an argument—a sales pitch—for the value of the exchange it is entering into ("Even Better Than the Real Thing" is like a mission statement in this regard), but the stakes felt higher this time. This was a younger crowd who likely knew some of the hits and for whom "The Joshua Tree" qualifies as a classic; but most of them did not know the words, and the customary call-and-response upon which U2's operation often depends was in no way guaranteed.

Despite the risk, U2 overcame resistance from the moment they took the stage. With no images or flashiness to accompany them, they opened with "Sunday Bloody Sunday," enlisting the crowd in their communal conjuring ("We can be as one tonight...") and inviting the thousands, in view of armed violence in London and Kabul, to cry, "No more! No war!" And when they followed it with "New Year's Day," it occurred to me that these two songs alone, released in 1983 and Pete Seeger-like in their prophetic heft, would be enough to confirm their status as a sacred act among us, worth celebrating and studying from then on out.

But this is the thing. U2 never stopped. Is it possible to seek total global pop domination for decades on end, to really believe your work is worthy of it and to remain somehow soulful, sane and socially righteous all the while? Definitely, maybe. Either way, they are determined to find out for themselves. They refuse to think of themselves as a nostalgia act. Do we wish they would? Would we prefer that they stop standing up for their loves and shelve their creative selves?

I sure don't. They have gone before me my whole life long, championing and amplifying thoughtfulness at every turn. I think of them as a celebrity cheerleading section—a pep band, if you like—of freedom movements the world over, celebrating those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, those among us (Lord, I want to be in that number) they occasionally refer to as "comedy people."

A word of explanation: This vision of comedy—divine comedy—is behind a healing truism that Bono has offered in words of appreciation for opponents of fascism everywhere, both structural and that fascism of the heart Bruce Cockburn refers to as "fascist architecture of my own design," the self-seriousness that can't and won't see. Only comedy of the deepest and relentless kind can overcome it. We might recall here that the title of the album "Achtung Baby" is drawn from Mel Brooks's "The Producers," which featured the attempt to tickle the catastrophe of totalitarianism with theater. "Ze Führer has never said baby!" the Nazi playwright in the film protests. Too true, because death and denial can't afford to.

Speaking for the more excellent way of comedy, Bono posits this: "Laughter is the evidence of freedom." In his praise of doctors, nurses, teachers and aid-givers, alongside poets, playwrights and other artisans of hopefulness, he often resorts to that ancient sense of unexpected play, that life-giving spirit of an imagination that speaks truth to power. U2 accesses and transmits it again and again. Bono saw it in Nelson Mandela, a man who spent years of incarceration not giving in to the script he had been given. Upon meeting him, he observed, "There's comedy in those eyes."

But amid the laughter, U2 is also a band that mourns, that offers prophetic critique, a band that asks us to look hard at what we are doing. All of this is

At concerts, Bono offers commentary that challenges all manner of dualistic identity on the part of the audience.

Photo: AP Photo/Ron Edmonds

on offer in "The Joshua Tree" as a love letter to the United States, celebrating its promise ("God's Country") while skewering its foreign policy ("Bullet the Blue Sky"). Like all their songs, they have contexts out of which they originate, but they take on new significance with every news cycle. When I beheld them in Louisville recently, "Red Hill Mining Town" seemed to become a kind of refugee song, the cry of an asylum seeker ("You're all that's left to hold onto.... I'm still waiting").

Interspersed among the songs, Bono offered commentary that challenged all manner of dualistic identity on the part of the audience. Given the strides the United States made in bringing lifesaving medicine to the African continent during the George W. Bush administration, he argued that anyone who pays taxes should view themselves as an AIDS activist. Most interesting, the song "Exit," a meditation on love and murder, had Bono assuming a character who was equal parts Hazel Motes of *Wise Blood* and Robert Mitchum's character in "Night of the Hunter." As the band transitioned into "Mothers of the Disappeared," it was if the character were waking up to himself, no longer lost in a shame spiral of death and destruction, knowing himself to be a part of the human whole.

This returns us to "There is no *them*." This doctrine of no sides was on my mind in Louisville that evening because Louisville was itself the host to one of Thomas Merton's most famous realizations. On the corner of Fourth and Muhammad Ali Blvd. (formerly Walnut Street) he experienced a laugh-out-loud epiphany. Without warning, he suddenly found it strangely impossible to view passing strangers as at all random, beneath him or in any meaningful way separate from himself: "I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that

we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation." He knew at once with deep certainty that "the whole illusion of a separate holy existence is a dream."

I think something like this is the gift of vision ("Vision over visibility," as their song "Moment of Surrender" puts it) that U2 brings to our world. Because I saw them on June 16, I can't help but mention that this vision is also deeply akin to that of their Irish compatriot James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* also seeks to sacramentalize every day by way of that one day—the 16th of June, Bloomsday. It is through that day that we are invited to imagine every day, every beautiful day, as a gift that we must not let slip away through lack of due reverence.

With great reverence, we might say, comes great responsibility. And to call it social responsibility would be a redundancy, because in U2's vision, like that of the great commandment, the false distinction between love of neighbor and love of self is collapsed. It can be glimpsed, this essential self, this divine image within everyone, this soul. But it will not be proven or preached. It can only be shown and sung—testified to, witnessed and proffered as a way of seeing. Or as Merton puts it: "I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere."

David Dark *teaches at the Tennessee Prison for Women and at Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn. His work has appeared on MTV News, and he is the author of* Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious.

On a Discharged Firework

By James Matthew Wilson

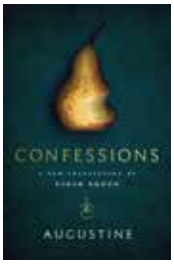
Only the next day could
The mystery begin,
Its shocking fount of sparks
In darkness now a memory,
And the cooled cylinder
Drowsing on the charred smear
Of driveway. To approach
In the abandoned silence
And lift it up—which has,
You think, by someone been
Forbidden—and to smell
The singed gunpowder, rich
And sweet upon the nose.
The colored wrapper brittle,
Peels back and flakes away.
To strip with thumb and finger
The first and second layer
Of cardboard inlaid circles,
Their leading somewhere deep,
The ashen edges sifting
Down, powdering your knees,
In search of what ingenious
Center that caused it all,
Just hours ago, to flare
Up the obscurity
With brilliance and power
But seldom seen, and never
In that bare heat of daylight.

James Matthew Wilson *was a runner-up in the 2015 Foley Poetry contest. His most recent books include* The Vision of the Soul: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in the Western Tradition *and* Some Permanent Things*, a collection of poems.*

Sarah Ruden does not like the title *Confessions*; she would prefer to call Augustine's classic something like *The Testimonies*.

Augustine gets a makeover

By Elizabeth Bruenig



Confessions
By Augustine
Translated by
Sarah Ruden
Modern Library. 528p
$28

Augustine's *Confessions* is not an under-translated book. A reader limiting herself to modern translations could avail herself of the English vicar J. G. Pilkington's late 19th-century effort; the Methodist theologian Albert Outler's; the Anglican priest and Cambridge theologian Henry Chadwick's; the Oxford professor E. B. Pusey's; the poet, author and lawyer Frank Sheed's (my personal favorite); or any number of others. Translating the *Confessions* at this point is not a matter of lending a hand to stranded students with poor Latin but rather a critical intervention. In the case of the classicist Sarah Ruden, it is a rescue mission.

"I would rather fail openly, fall while going out on a limb for [Augustine], than leave him up there with no chance," Ruden writes in the introduction to her new translation of the gracious doctor's *Confessions*.

It might come as a surprise to inheritors of the Western tradition that Augustine is in trouble. A perennial favorite on college reading lists, Augustine is credited by thinkers like Charles Taylor and Larry Siedentop with having laid the intellectual foundations for our modern age. Meanwhile, religious readers know him as a revered saint in the Catholic Church and a beloved theologian among many Protestants, with the rare honor of being a favorite of both pious followers of the Vatican and diehard reformists. If one progenitor of both theological masterworks and workaday spiritual autobiographies—of both high and low Christian literature—must be chosen, it is easily the renowned bishop of Hippo.

But Ruden is having none of that. To start with, she does not like the title *Confessions*; she would prefer, she writes, to call Augustine's classic something like *The Testimonies*. After all, "the Early Christians had procedures for penitence (though nothing like the Catholic rite in its later form), but that is not what Augustine is doing in his book." Heaven forbid that someone miss the distinction.

By Ruden's lights, centuries of doctrinal, orthodox Christian interpretation of Augustine's *Confessions* have rendered traditional English

"Saint Augustine," by Antonio Rodríguez. Photo: Wikimedia Commons/Google Art Project/Museo Nacional de Arte

translations plodding, dry and distant from both the poetic whimsy and rudimentary faith of their author. Translators taking an approach centered on consistency and discipline "are really talking about a top-down, academically elaborated and enforced ideological and doctrinal consistency and discipline, which are much later than Augustine," she writes, adding: "Would not Augustine have wanted flexibility?" She is quick to remind readers that the man himself "had nothing in common with modern fundamentalists who conflate the truth of the Bible with scientific accuracy," and that translating *firmamentum* as "firmament," which, prior to its use in the King James Bible, had no widespread English usage, "suggests that Augustine is reciting Bible verses in Sunday school." Perish the thought.

Instead of the fusty old churchman we all know or, perhaps even worse, a contemporary Christian (Ruden states that she rejects the word *abstinence* in her translation due to its "distracting reminder of a long-running American public education controversy"), Ruden's Augustine is a dreamer, an artist, a poet. "I maintain that the Augustine of the *Confessions* was a feeling man more than a thinking one," she writes; the weight of so many centuries of Christian admirers, scholars and clerics has obscured his beautiful spirit, and with her volume she seeks to restore it.

Ruden's translation is at times just as jarring as her mission statement. Prior readers of Augustine will immediately notice that she renders *dominus* as "Master" instead of "Lord." Early Christians certainly imagined themselves as slaves of Christ, and there is perhaps a useful spiritual lesson in that tradition, though Ruden admits her own personal "distaste" for it. Her reasoning is that in praying to God, Augustine could not have been imagining a "political ruler," which is implied by "Lord," but rather must have imagined the master of a household. For Ruden, "Master" is meant to convey this apolitical sense of ownership.

Is it really the case that Augustine could not have been imagining both a lord and a master? In Book 19 of *City of God*, Augustine provides the equitable rule of the *paterfamilias* over his household as an element of a properly functioning city. Well-ordered and peaceful homes, he argues, have a relation to well-ordered and peaceful polities. The line between the political and the domestic blurs. Must Augustine really have preferred one to the exclusion of the other?

One can ask the same of Ruden's insistence that, in the *Confessions* at least, Augustine was "feeling" rather than "thinking."

Even in Ruden's quest to recover the bishop's emotional prose from his allegedly boring traditional translators, some of his more famously poetic passages receive a rather infelicitous treatment. In R. G. Pine-Coffin's translation, Augustine asks God: "Why do you mean so much to me? Help me find words to explain.... Tell me why you mean so much to me. Whisper into my heart, *I am here to save you*." Anyone who has ever pined for a lover can feel the echo of his longing and its aching immediacy. In Ruden's rendering, on the other hand, the first clause is dropped altogether, and the next reads: "Have pity on me and let me speak.... Tell me, in the name of your mercies, you, Master, who are my God, what you are to me. Say to my soul, 'I myself am your rescue.'"

There are aesthetic costs, too, to eschewing tradition in favor of strict originalism. In the famous opening of Book 3, wherein Augustine arrives in the licentious city of Carthage, the infamous polis is usually described as a cauldron, from the Latin *sartago*. It is no accident that *sartago*, a kind of shallow stew pan often used for dishes composed of unlike ingredients, bears a sonic resemblance to Carthage (in Latin, Carthago). There is no way to retain the rhyme in English, unfortunately, so most translators have gone for capturing the sense of roiling, bubbling and jostling that one takes away from Augustine's culinary metaphor; a cauldron must suffice where no better pot is available. Ruden, on the other hand, opts for "skillet," which captures the flatness of the pan better than the chaotic, vaguely witchy character of a cauldron's contents—but it is the latter Augustine appears to have been aiming at. Ruden's translation may tell us more about Roman cookery than we would have known otherwise, but in famous and formative passages like these, one is often left wishing for more care for Augustine's intentions.

Augustine was a poet, yes, but also an intellectual; he was an imaginative dreamer, but also a Christian. All of those facets were united in one man, and it is difficult to see what, if anything, might be gained by trying to split them up.

Elizabeth Bruenig, *a contributing writer for* ***America****, writes about Christianity and politics.*

CHRISTIAN POETRY VS "CHRISTIAN POETRY"

By Joe Hoover

It is the devastating curse of all latter-day Christian poets to be two wildly unfortunate things: a) Christians and b) poets.

The problem with being a poet is clear and perennial, captured perfectly in an onscreen quotation in the movie "The Big Short": "The truth is like poetry. And most people [deleted] hate poetry."

(I think only some people hate poetry, not most, and that many of those who claim to despise it, or to "not get it," are not being entirely honest with themselves. But still. It is an uphill battle.)

The trouble with the "Christian" part is also clear. There is an assumption that Christian poetry will be freighted with unlovely writing, a fog of generalities, lyric observations that cut straight to the Big Answer—*just love God*—without clipping into any of the harrowing crags of that climb. The straight line of faith that seamlessly blasts through all the rocks of doubt, trial, hurt, oddity, epiphany—it doesn't necessarily make for great art. It can be as foreign to life as plastic to cavemen.

I think people secretly want to read literature that *just destroys their souls* in the finest possible way. And if it is *good*—if it destroys, resurrects, ascends in any hearty fashion—they generally do not care much what creed or confession it springs from.

But to some people, what faith a work springs from really does matter. Conferences and periodicals like this one have been taking up for the past few years the question of whether, for instance, "Catholic" has anything unique to add to literature. Is there any kind of special metaphysics in Catholic writing? Is there even such a thing as Catholic literature, and if so why does it matter? One thing is clear though: One's religion is not necessarily a death sentence to creating good literature.

The following reviews look at books of Christian poetry—regardless of what exactly that phrase means—that have come out over the past three or four years. The reviews have been written not only by me, but also by two **America** interns, Emma Winters and Anna Marchese, and an O'Hare fellow, Teresa Donnellan.

•••

Joseph Bathanti sets **The 13th Sunday After Pentecost** (LSU Press, 2016) in an Italian-American, working-class neighborhood with crisp, clear details about life as a growing boy. The narrator recalls baseball games, the "delicate" cookie he "always chose and ate ceremonially," and Mass in Latin. As he moves through adolescence in the second section of the book, the subject mat-

ter becomes more complicated as the narrator explosres his sexuality and confusion amid social upheaval. The title poem is a tour de force of the 1960s, hitting issues from the abortion debate to Martin Luther King Jr. to Vietnam, all while situated in the living room of a working class family that is "bewitched by Vatican II."

—Emma Winters

I wonder if David Craig was a little disturbed that his publisher, Wipf and Stock, begins his bio on the back flap of **Mercy Wears a Red Dress** (2016) with "David Craig, who's been called the best Christian poet writing today...."

The best Christian poet. My God, the pressure! Who can deal? You read a line like: "My Parents Bought Me a tall cardboard store one Christmas" and you think: Wow. This is not the best Christian line of Christian poetry being written today. Nor the next line, nor the next! And not that they aren't good. But the best? Who can measure? The bio is plain unfair to Mr. Craig, because it sets him up to be debunked, rightly or wrongly, at every turn.

Regardless of all this, the book bears in heavy doses wisdom, truth and humor. In "So Much Light Green Encroaches": "Where there is no need, there is no God.... We are a cry for Him." And: "We invented Chocolate Milk/ and air hockey. So anything is possible." "Mary Receiving The Pierced Body" begins, "In this version, His last wound is a comma, no/ boundary: a bloodless mouth, closing, opening its hole." Craig is at turns wry, critical, observant and devout, with many of his poems intermingling all of these qualities with a grounded flair.

—Joe Hoover

While **The Needle's Eye: Passing Through Youth,** by Fanny Howe (Graywolf, 2016), is a collection on adolescence, the work here embodies the ecstasies of old and young age alike. Howe intertwines dissimilar lives, from the infamous Tsarnaev brothers (the Boston Marathon bombers) to Saints Francis and Clare, to nomads from 14th-century folklore. It is a mysterious mixture that places half of the reader in the realm of the mystical and the other in the reality of suffering.

"A Thought" is one snapshot of the faith and confusion accompanying every aging being:

"We try to domesticate our spirits like children./ We chase and chastise them until they change./ We spend our lives trying to release them again."

Howe's admiration of Simone Weil rings throughout the work, which could double for a biography of the philosopher. "Like Grown-ups" presents the reader with Weil's rejection of the Spanish anti-fascist movement she once embraced: "One day, seeing a child deliberately killed by a member of her own brigade, she renounced war for good and returned to her pacifist position. When a child is killed for someone else's idea, the idea is finished."

—Anna Marchese

The poems in Marie Howe's **Magdalene** (W. W. Norton and Company, 2017) place the "woman with the 7 demons" everywhere from biblical passages (the woman caught in adultery), to modern life (a mother driving children to pre-school.) While Howe undoubtedly knows that Magdalene's reputation as an adulteress or prostitute is a long-standing misreading of Scripture, she nonetheless dwells on her sexualized reputation. The poems speak of a woman isolated in her own body, watching things unfold, always searching for her identity. In "The Affliction": "When I walked across a room I saw myself walking/ as if I were someone else..../ So when I looked at you, I didn't see you/ I saw the me you thought you saw, as if I were someone else." Nothing can fill what she wants, because what she ultimately wants is not even a thing. "I was driven toward desire by desire./ believing that the fulfillment of that desire was an end./ There was no end."

"Magdalene Afterwards" lists all the women that she might inhabit, the descriptions cascading down both brutal and lovely. "Remember the woman in the blue burka forced to kneel in the stadium/ then shot in the head? That was me./ And I was the woman who secretly filmed it. // I was hung as a witch by the people in my own town/ I was sent to the asylum at sixteen."

In the same poem she also evokes a poignant scene so simply: "When I enter the classroom, all the children call my name at once." In this collection, Howe manages a delicate trick. She writes with truth and devastating clarity about, among other things, women in "a man's world" and, you could say, a "man's religion." But the truths nonetheless still fall on the side of love and devotion for the founder of men and religion, Christ.

—Joe Hoover

When Catholic writers talk about their poetry or fiction, they often declare their intention to stay away from anything "gauzy," "sentimental" or "pious." (Piety is especially loathed in some cir-

cles. Apparently, being "pious" is the worst thing in the world a Christian can be.) In **Heresies,** by Orlando Ricardo Menes (University of New Mexico Press, 2015), the poet all but carpet bombs holy sentimentality, but without, for my money, destroying the holy.

The heresies, I think, are the way he upends the old stories. In "St. Lazarus the African Instructs Those Who Seek His Healing," we witness a hardened Lazarus calling out Jesus: "Where was Jesus to whip those slavers to the bone/ Where was Jesus to walk my people home across the swells?/ I will not abandon you with paradoxes, false hope, hollow blessings."

His poems crackle; they are alive. In "St. Primitivo, Patron of Heretics, Exhorts His Catechumens," Menes demonstrates that he knows his Catholic game: "Utility is holier than ritual/ Put those fonts to good use as bird baths,/ those missals as mulch, those catafalques as oxcarts./ You want to be pious?/ Hang laundry from the paschal cross./ Grow basil in a pyx."

This raises a question: Is the pyx made more holy by holding the basil, or the basil more holy by residing in a pyx? Either answer works.

—Joe Hoover

Written by Angela Alaimo O'Donnell, **Still Pilgrim: Poems** (Paraclete Press, 2017)—sonnets on faith, family and life—presents the female gaze from the get-go, in the first two lines of the prologue poem: "To be a pilgrim is to ring the stones/ with the clean music of your best black heels."

The poems focus on the "still pilgrim," a woman of faith navigating the secular world. Religious phrases and ideas dispersed throughout the collection convey the pilgrim's careful consideration of herself and her surroundings.

"The Still Pilgrim Makes Dinner" examines grief, memory and tradition as the writer contemplates the absence of her mother while making a meal she learned from her. "For ashes, flour upon my head./ For prayers, the rise of scented smoke./ My mother, who is five years dead,/ Lives in this meat, these eggs I broke,/ This dish she taught me how to make,/ This wine I drink, this bread I break."

Another compelling idea, unconscious bodily prayer, appears in "The Still Pilgrim in Love": "A sweet and subtle kind of praying/ the body does, the lungs; fine art/ of taking in and letting go."

Still Pilgrim offers a striking glimpse inside the mind of a wholly spiritual woman, who finds the sacred in the ordinary. *—Teresa Donnellan*

Requiem for David, by Patrick T. Reardon (Silver Birch Press, 2017), centers on the author's relationship with his brother David, who killed himself later in life. Many of the poems fall between old black-and-white photos of David and Patrick growing up. The book leads off with the telling "1951... foreign" "a mother who had kids and then couldn't deal with it." His mother in fact had 14 children, which fact sums up almost perfectly the bewildering mystery of the Catholic faith. The church that justly blesses and defends the birth of each one of those 14 is the same church that will glory in the very fact that *14 children* are born of one distressed womb. It is no surprise that from this family wrenching literature like this was also born.

The poems are so raw, simple and direct as they grapple with broken lives that many of them are difficult to read. Reardon's writing is spare and not rooted in images so much as a cascade of feelings. He describes two kinds of communion he had with his brother: "We were skin of blood, blood of blood./ We were the same raw slash." And, later, "Your death/

CHRISTIAN POETRY COLLECTIONS AND PERIODICALS THAT FEATURE POETRY

America

Christian Century

Commonweal

Dappled Things: A Quarterly of Ideas, Art, & Faith

First Things

Image: Art, Faith, Mystery

The Paraclete Poetry Anthology (Paraclete Press, 2016)

Pilgrim: A Journal of Catholic Experience

Plough Quarterly

Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry

St. Peter's B List: Contemporary Poems Inspired by the Saints (Ave Maria, 2014)

Your death/ Tore me/ Open like/ The baby/ Was coming/ Out."

—Joe Hoover

Paul Totah's **The Gospel of Everyone** (Resource Publications, 2017) allows readers to experience revelation in real time. Based on Luke's Gospel, the book gives voice to the main players of the Gospel, but it also tells stories from the perspectives of minor characters—people Jesus healed and those who watched his ministry. Totah bases his writing on the imaginative practices of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, and this shows in the richly detailed scenes Totah presents. All those in the narrative, including Jesus, come off feeling fully human. The paralytic, who was lowered before Jesus by his friends, says that this allowed him to see himself as "a man loved, still able to love."

—Emma Winters

Regina Walton's gift in **The Yearning Life** (Paraclete Press, 2017, winner of the Phyllis Tickle Prize in Poetry) is to take simple objects and moments and describe them without trying to spiritualize them: "The privilege of holding a pencil—/ Light embrace, circumscribed choreography/ as the tangled boughs sway and sigh into winter."

The poems are light and clean, the images live as if they have always been there. In "Sleight": "Before it was a card trick, a disappeared/ quarter reborn from an unsuspecting ear,/ sleight meant skill." The poem goes on to trace how "Craft turns crafty, art sours/ to artifice, tricks and cleverness,/ To beguiled applause instead of/ A shaft through the heart."

Her lines have a way of gently easing onto the page and into the soul. Their grace and wisdom (and sly humor) are simple and truthful. "Happy Accident" asks, "Was it a set-up,/ All the way up?// The serpent has no comment, now."

—Joe Hoover

(For more poetry reviews, see the online version of this article at americamedia.org.)

A necessary evil?

In chapters on the history of war, its causes and effects and the effort to control war through ethics and law, it becomes clear why the author of this very useful volume wishes he were a pacifist but is not. A cursory review of the history of warfare and its effects is enough to demonstrate that war is a great evil, even if at times a necessary one. We should work to end war, and knowing its history, what causes it and how we might mitigate the harm war does are important parts of that work.

Grayling's three chapters on the history of war lead to the question of what causes war, an exploration not of the causes of this or that war but of war as a phenomenon. He explores two main answers to this question: 1) Humans are innately violent, or 2) human societies are organized so that war becomes more likely than not. The *or* in the last sentence should be an *and,* because Grayling recognizes that even if humans are instinctively violent, war—as opposed to conflict—is only possible where political and social structures create the capacity to conduct a war.

This insight is probably the most important in the book, and it is twin to another: Once political and social structures provide the framework for war, they create institutions that make war likely. I write these words the day after Memorial Day in the United States, and no more evidence is needed for Grayling's claim that the idea of war is carried in the DNA of American society and the economy. One has only to see the sentimentalism and commercialization so prominently on display.

There are points to quibble with in this volume, but in the end Grayling's call for an "aversion therapy of truth" that does not romanticize war but shows us war's "mangled bodies, blown apart children, blood running into gutters"—not to mention the pain and suffering of those whose family members are fighting the war—is compelling.

Paul Lauritzen *is a professor of religious ethics at John Carroll University in Ohio.*

A friar turned detective

They met at Saint Justyn's Orphanage in Warsaw in 1943. He was Otto Brack, 15, the son of devoted Communists deported by the Nazis. She was Roza, an orphan who never knew her parents. She found Otto one Sunday afternoon in her secret place at the orphanage, an attic full of broken furniture and a window overlooking Warsaw. He was gazing out the window smoking a homemade cigarette.

The two fled the orphanage as the Red Army was closing in on the Nazis. They descended into the sewers for shelter. Dead bodies floated by "like sleeping watchmen." They separated at a junction in the sewer.

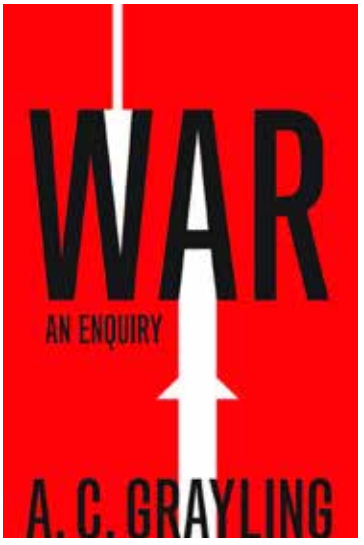
Years later she married a resistance fighter. The couple supported a journalist code-named the "Shoemaker," who was publishing a resistance newspaper. Otto became a devoted Communist officer dedicated to capturing the "Shoemaker."

In 1951, Roza was arrested and sent to Mokotow Prison. There, she met Otto again. She refused to reveal "Shoemaker's" identity so he shot her husband and an associate. Later in England, John Fielding, a friend, receives a call from Roza—she is on the verge of testifying against Otto. Fielding calls his best friend, Father Anselm Duffy, "jazzman, beekeeper and brooder on life's conundrums." Father Anselm investigates the mystery, focusing on the mind of Otto Brack. He concludes Otto is simply an "evil man." Otto justifies himself: Strong men must take difficult action.

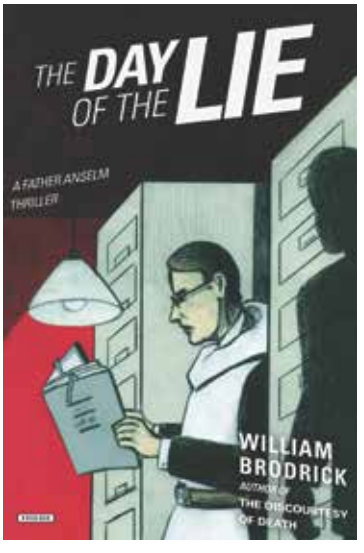
In telling the story of Roza and Otto, author William Brodrick tells the story of Poland itself, from Hitler's attempt to annihilate the Polish people to the totalitarian killing fields created by the Soviets. By a miracle, Poland passes through horrid times to triumph.

The book is complex since the plot is not laid out chronologically, but told as a series of flashbacks. There is no sense of loss at the Soviets' failure to create a communitarian world—a problem worthy of Father Anselm. Brodrick says he will give his friar lawyer a rest for now, but there are five other novels in the Anselm Series.

Michael J. Sweeney *is a former newspaper reporter turned trial lawyer.*



War
An Enquiry
By A. C. Grayling
Yale University Press. 288p $26



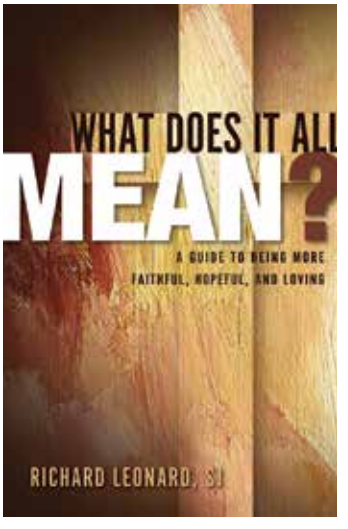
The Day of the Lie
A Father Anselm Thriller
By William Brodrick
The Overlook Press, 377p $27.95

A God worthy of belief

Since his election, Pope Francis has attempted to give the church a friendlier, more welcoming face—sometimes despite opposition from within. Now a Jesuit from Australia, Richard Leonard, has written a book that aims to present basic Catholic teaching in a credibly humane way—to justify not only the church and religion but the true God of Christian faith. He notes that both the New Atheists and some earnest evangelicals have distorted images of God. Some devout Christians seem to pray to Zeus rather than the loving Father revealed by Jesus. Leonard presents an image of a God truly worthy of belief—consistent with the Gospels and modern knowledge and experience. "I have a deep and searching faith in and about God," he writes, and he wants to share that faith (and that search) with his readers.

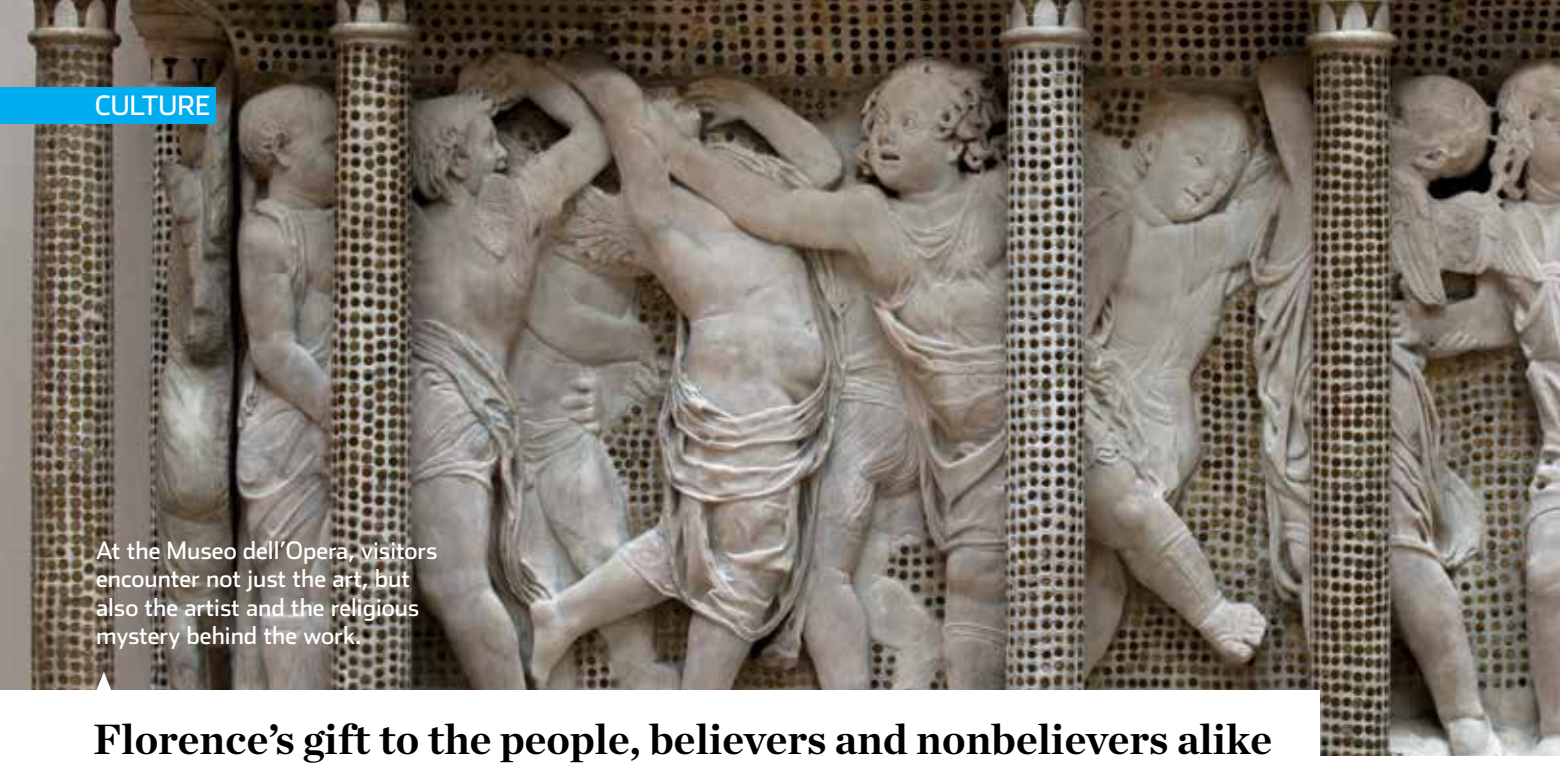
As the book's title promises, it grapples with the biggest of issues: the meaning of life, the problem of evil and the value of praying to a God who seems rarely to intervene in human affairs. The author goes about this ambitious task in a way that is primarily pastoral rather than scholarly, drawing on his own priestly experience and events in the life of his family. In one of the most moving parts of the book he recounts the aftermath of an accident that left his sister a quadriplegic, unable to feed or bathe herself or even turn over in bed. Here Leonard wrestles with the mystery of suffering in a very concrete and personal way. Rejecting various well-meant forms of religious consolation, he opts for a vision of God present in all human suffering, not only that of Jesus. This section could provide fine material for parish discussion groups and religion classes. The book as a whole is written with humor and brio, touching on many current issues besides the big metaphysical questions listed above—among them the scandal of sexual abuse by members of the clergy and the role of women in the church. It is provocative and insightful.

Justin Kelly, S.J., *is an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Detroit Mercy.*



What Does It All Mean?
A Guide to Being More Faithful, Hoping, and Loving
By Richard Leonard, S.J.
Paulist Press. 209p $19.95

Full book reviews at americamagazine.org/books



At the Museo dell'Opera, visitors encounter not just the art, but also the artist and the religious mystery behind the work.

Florence's gift to the people, believers and nonbelievers alike

In Florence art is everywhere, part of everyday life. Masterpieces are gathered in a couple of large palaces but also concentrated in smaller spaces that draw crowds that are both curious and reverent, on piazzas and bridges. Among these spaces is the newly conceived and renovated Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, which reopened in fall 2015 after years of planning and work.

The Opera del Duomo, the Cathedral Foundation, oversees the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore and Giotto's bell tower and the baptistery of S. Giovanni nearby. The foundation's museum preserves art from the past from these three Florentine monuments.

Twenty years ago, the bishops of Tuscany issued a document about how the church should use the immense artistic treasures it possesses for evangelization. The bishops were anticipating a surge in the number of visitors at the turn of the millennium, and they wanted them to experience more than artistic insight. The bishops' statement took the bold step of expecting that even nonbelievers who encounter this great art find something in their deeper selves.

This vision animated the work of the jubilee of 2000, and it was fundamental to the renewal of the Museo in Florence. Msgr. Timothy Verdon, an American, oversaw the work of renewal and now directs the Museo.

The museum resides in a building across a narrow street at the back of Santa Maria del Fiore. Passing from the museum's entrance area into the display galleries, one walks along a marble-clad wall. Here the names of humanists and musicians, architects, sculptors and painters and craftsmen who over seven centuries worked to create the artistic treasures of this sacred complex are inscribed.

A series of 54 panels that originally adorned Giotto's bell tower are now in the museum for protection; carefully made duplicates now surround the tower. Among the images are a series that depicts the the work of everyday life, including agriculture, weaving, metal-working, herding, lawmaking and navigation. The early Florentines easily saw themselves and their work, set among saints and prophets.

Another gallery positions two balconies for musicians across from each other as they were originally situated in the center of the cathedral. Two master artists, Luca della Robbia and Donatello, carved marble reliefs of children playing instruments and dancing. In an era of high infant mortality, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers could take consolation looking up and seeing that the children are happy and safe.

Three masterworks are especially positioned to evoke prayer and contemplation. One gallery displays Donatello's "Penitent Mary Magdalene." Behind the Magdalene is a 14th-century crucifix placed so that one who gazes directly at the Magdalene sees the crucified Jesus in the background—a profound theological statement. In a room just to the right is a Pietà by Michelangelo, one of three that he carved. The sculpture is raised above the floor to a level Michelangelo originally intended to give the proper perspective. The setting evokes the connection between the crucifixion and Mary Magdalene's presence there.

There are clear indications that

Photo: Antonio Quattrone

the renewal of the museum is working. The number of visitors has increased fourfold. And, most telling, Monsignor Verdon reports that the average length of a visit has increased from 40 minutes to an hour and a half.

Does he see any conflict in the concept of using art for evangelization, I asked him. What about *ars gratia artis*, art for its own sake?

"Hollywood nonsense," Monsignor Verdon answers. Art is used to decorate, sure, but also to make a statement about the patron's wealth or faith or good taste. It is used for politics. It can be misused, of course, turned to lesser goals. But it also inspires, builds and bonds. The Museo dell'Opera del Duomo is Florence's gift to the public, offering spiritual and artistic nourishment. The visitors here linger, learn, dream and pray, attempting to encounter great art and a greater part of themselves.

Edward W. Schmidt, S.J., *is a senior editor at* ***America.***

The 'Al Franken moment'

"While nobody could have prepared for the grim reality of a Trump presidency," writes Senator Al Franken in his new memoir *Al Franken, Giant of the Senate*, "when I look back at my own political journey, I can't help but feel like I'm as prepared as anyone could be for this moment."

The senator's point is hard to argue. Mr. Franken's circuitous path to the "world's greatest deliberative body" started in the mid-1970s at "Saturday Night Live," where he spent 15 years as a writer and performer before going on to become a best-selling author of political satire and a radio talk show host targeting right-wing media and politics. The junior senator from Minnesota combines the rigorous instincts of a policy wonk with a deep understanding of media that enables him to detect the difference between manipulating an audience in the service of laughter versus a far more cynical agenda.

Mr. Franken's unique background presented challenges to getting elected to his first term in 2008, and a good deal of the book recounts how he balanced his need to be taken seriously with his natural comedic impulses. Dialing back the humor "wasn't that hard; I wanted to win, you know?" he explained to me with a chuckle in a recent interview. During his first term, he decided to be a "work horse instead of a show horse." Winning his second term in 2014 by a comfortable margin helped free him.

But while *Giant of the Senate* resurrects Mr. Franken's humor, it is also a window into something deeper. Whether it is his wife's struggle with addiction in the late '80s, the plight of military veterans today or even his many friendships with Republican senators (with the hilarious exception of Ted Cruz), Senator Franken's depth of feeling is very much in evidence. "I never thought the funny was in conflict with anything in terms of being human," he said.

The lessons he learned from his deceased friend and political hero Paul Wellstone—whose Senate seat Mr. Franken now occupies—serve as his compass. "Politics is not about power," Wellstone said. "Politics is not about money. Politics is not about winning for the sake of winning. Politics is about the improvement of people's lives."

Bill McGarvey, *a musician and writer, is the author of* The Freshman Survival Guide.

Photo Wikimedia Commons

Al Franken may be as ready as anyone for this political moment.

‘You Are the One!’

Readings: Is 22:19-23, Ps 138, Rom 11:33-36, Mt 16:13-20

In this week’s Gospel, Matthew makes the important point that faith comes before insight, not after. Most people probably would prefer to have it the other way around. They would like to collect a number of solid insights that support their leap of faith. Unfortunately, in the spiritual life, insight is the result of faith, not its cause.

This week’s Gospel reading is a complicated theological dialogue that requires some explanation. The setting, Caesarea Philippi, was a Greek colony in northern Galilee. Next to the city was a shrine called the Panion, dedicated to Pan, the Greek god of the wild, of fertility and of the reversal of ill fortune. The shrine was popular with the Greco-Roman settlers of Palestine, not least because its environs roared with springs and were heavily wooded. The Panion provided a refreshing place to rest for travelers on the busy highway nearby. It is easy to imagine Jesus and his disciples pausing there and watching the throngs carry their prayers and offerings before the god. Such a setting might well have inspired theological discussion.

The “Son of Man” to whom Jesus refers was a mighty warrior many believed to be coming soon. The title comes from Dn 7:13-14, which prophecies a mysterious being who looks “like a son of a man” (Aramaic, *kebar enosh*) and who will receive divine power to rescue Israel from foreign oppression. Later writings, like the First Book of Enoch, an ancient Jewish text not included in the scriptural canon, merge this prophecy with other mystical speculation, resulting in a description in 1 Enoch 48 of a being who is more divine son than anointed warrior: “All those who dwell upon the earth shall fall and worship before him; they shall glorify, bless and sing the name of the Lord of the Spirits. For this purpose [the Son of Man] became the chosen one; he was concealed in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits prior to the creation of the world, and for eternity.”

Many believed that this chosen one had already come once and would soon return to fulfill Daniel’s vision. Speculation centered on Elijah, but as Peter notes, some suggested other prophets instead. Peter’s intimacy with Jesus and his faith in the Father open his mind in a flash of insight to the real nature of Jesus. “*You* are the Christ, the son of the living God!”

‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.’ (Mt 16:17)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

What insights has your faith provided?

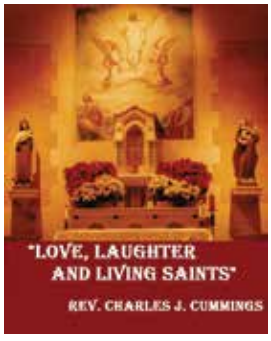
Who relies on you for a firm foundation?

Our second reading today asks rhetorically who can know the mind of God. The answer, clearly, is “only the Son,” but those who place their faith in the Son can receive a flash of insight, as Peter did today. Jesus, responding to the depth of Peter’s faith revealed in that flash, recognized in him a stable foundation for the Christian community. As our first reading shows, faith-filled individuals offered critical support to God’s people throughout salvation history.

Individuals who can find Christ amid the world’s tumult provide a solid foundation for the community of faith. This is our call: to wait in faith for that moment when we can catch sight of Christ still at work in the world. Holding him in view, we can become a secure foundation for many others whom Christ calls to be his own.

Michael Simone, S.J., *teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry*

BOOKS



***LOVE, LAUGHTER & LIVING SAINTS**: Childhood Memories & Parish Happenings,* by the Rev. Charles J. Cummings (P.O. Box 3271, Williamsport, Pa. 17701), retired priest, Diocese of Scranton, Pa. Book and preview available: Amazon paperback, $12.95; Nook or Kindle e-book device, $4.99.

Take Lord, Receive

Readings: Jer 20:7-9, Ps 63, Rom 12:1-2, Mt 16:21-27

Who gets to write your life story? This is the question our readings pose today. The freedom to make meaning out of our existence is one of the deepest cravings of the soul. This freedom, according to Viktor Frankl, is the essence of life itself.

That freedom is a gift from God. We are truly free only when we seek from God the way to live it out. When we follow God's dream for us, we will definitely encounter struggles, but we will also find joy, and our life story will become a means for others to find freedom.

This is the lesson of our first reading and our Gospel this week. Jeremiah is famous for resisting God's call when it first came to him: "I am too young!" He eventually surrendered his life to God, but his message aroused immediate hostility. Jeremiah complains of this to God in our first reading today, saying, "You duped me, O Lord, and I let myself be duped." His passion for serving God outweighed even the taunts of family and friends: "It becomes like a fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones." And this is not the end of his story. In his own day, supporters of his ministry preserved his words and kept them alive during a time of national disaster. Long after his death, Jeremiah's prophecies became a blueprint for a reborn Judaism that served God with vigor. He allowed God to write his life story, and the result was freedom for a nation not yet born.

Jesus speaks of the same surrender in the Gospel today. When we try to control our life story, we actually lose our freedom. When we obsess over trivia, we lose sight of the richness of our existence. The stories of such lives are cluttered with petty grudges, vain indulgences and small-potato dreams.

It can be just as dangerous to avoid risk. This was Peter's mistake today. Jesus' commitment to nonviolence closed off most of the avenues by which he could evade the rising hostility to his mission. He knew that his mission would most likely end with his death as a criminal. He had surrendered completely into the hands of his Father, who had composed for his Son the greatest story ever made of a human life. Jesus trusted in the Father's wisdom, but Peter tried to grab the pen out of the Father's hands and write an ending he thought more suitable. Jesus' response was clear, "You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

In our second reading, St. Paul counsels, "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." If we surrender our lives to the author of life itself, we can break free of the ego-driven trivia and fear that consume so many of our days. When God writes our life story, though we may encounter struggles as Jesus and Jeremiah did, we will likewise discover the joy of sharing God's dreams and making our lives beacons of freedom.

'Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.' (Mt 16:25)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

What life story are you writing?

How much of your story have you surrendered to God?

Michael Simone, S.J. *teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry*

A Pope for the (Media) Masses

Francis has created a bridge between the press and the church

By Raymond A. Schroth

My mother was a teacher in both public and Catholic high schools in Trenton, N.J., and my father, a World War I veteran, was a journalist. His career included stints at The Trenton Times, The Brooklyn Eagle, The Philadelphia Record and The New York Herald Tribune.

At Fordham University, I followed in my father's footsteps. I served as editorial editor and columnist for The Fordham Ram. After joining the Jesuits, for 40 years I taught journalism at five Jesuit and two secular universities. I was a summer editor and columnist for **America** in the late 1960s, joined Commonweal as book editor in the 1970s, served as a writer and media critic at The National Catholic Reporter for about 30 years and returned to **America** as its literary editor full time almost six years ago.

Growing up in a family of Catholic journalists, I have always been aware of the tension between the church and the press. I recall one day when I attended Mass with my father. The pastor spent much of his sermon complaining about the secular press and the ways in which it portrayed the Catholic Church. The media itself is not perfect; it can abuse the privilege it has to talk to the public it is also supposed to represent.

The relationship between the church and the press has become less strained in recent years, thanks in large part to Pope Francis. Within three days of his election, Francis addressed correspondents in Rome. "Christ is the church's pastor," he said," but "his presence in history passes through the freedom of human beings." He praised their important work and added, "You have at your disposal the means to hear and to give voice to the people's expectations and demands, and to provide for an analysis and interpretation of current events." This calls for appreciation of what is "true, good and beautiful."

In four years, Francis has shown not just an eagerness to engage with journalists, but an understanding of how the media has evolved. In an address for the 50th World Day of Social Communications, he spoke about the power of social media. The internet and social networks were a "gift from God," he said, and can be "fully human forms of communication." His official English-language Twitter page—one of several—has over 10 million followers, and one Catholic journalist told me that a single tweet from Francis will reach over 30 million people. Thomas Rosica, C.S.B., founder of the Salt and Light Media Foundation, Canada's first national Catholic television network, says in The Catholic Journalist that Francis has "rebranded" Catholicism.

For many, he has made it fun to be a religion journalist again. As The Washington Post columnist Hank Stuever describes it, reporters who knew only John Paul II and Benedict XVI are seeing with Francis a church that is much more open to dialogue, one that encourages a culture of listening and compassion. Many reporters have known Jorge Bergoglio from his pre-papal years, a man who was always serious and rarely smiled. Now, however, Francis is different, known for walking up and down the aisle during a papal flight. He often jokes with reporters while allowing them to snap pictures with him.

Newsday's Bart Jones has spent 10 years reporting from Venezuela and interviewing individuals like the former president, Hugo Chávez. Covering Pope Francis, however, is different. During one papal flight, he shows Francis a picture of his Venezuelan immigrant wife and two children, which the pope signs and blesses. Mr. Jones tells Pope Francis how grateful he is for the Fordham Jesuits who educated him, and he reaches out and touches the pope's arm. Francis lets out a small smile and says in Spanish, "Now you have the virus"—of having studied with the Jesuits. He reaches out and moves his hand across Mr. Jones's forehead, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," then moves on.

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., *is an emeritus editor of* ***America.***

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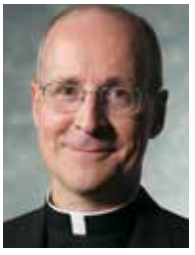
BUILDING A BRIDGE:

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE LGBT COMMUNITY



JAMES MARTIN, S.J.

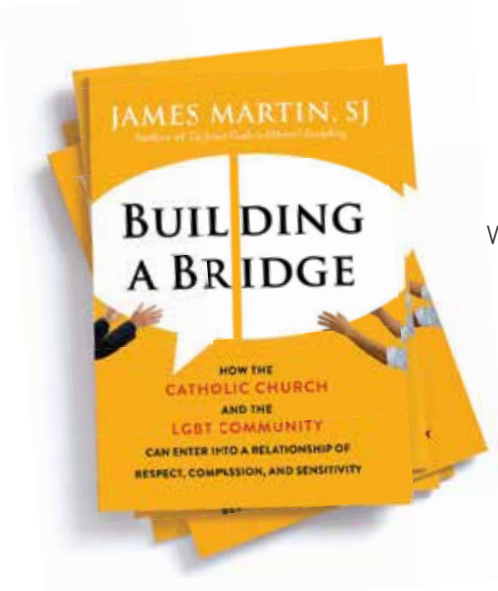
NATALIA IMPERATORI-LEE

PATRICK HORNBECK

A conversation between **Fr. James Martin, S.J.**, editor at large of *America* magazine, and **Dr. Patrick Hornbeck**, of Fordham University's Theology Department on Fr. Martin's new book: *Building a Bridge*

MODERATOR:

Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Ph.D., Manhattan College



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