

MINISTRY ISSUE

America

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Foreign Policy Déjà Vu

WHERE THE CANDIDATES
STAND ON WORLD
AFFAIRS

MARYANN
CUSIMANO
LOVE



T. HOWLAND SANKS
ON CUSTOMIZING
SEMINARY EDUCATION

OF MANY THINGS

Deconstructionists, those intellectuals who make it their job to ask critical questions about our long-cherished collective stories, like to ask, among other things, who or what cause is best served by a given narrative. They might ask, for example, whose interests are served by a story that tells of the triumph of capitalism over the broken promises of collectivism? Answer: the capitalists' interests, of course. In this way, the deconstructionists see every story as inherently political, with clear winners and losers depending on who is doing the storytelling.

This critical method can be useful if not taken too far. It can easily descend into cynicism, leaving us concerned with only the price of events rather than their value, to borrow an idea from Oscar Wilde. But the question, whose interests are served by a given narrative, is one that is worth asking, not least because the stories we tell do inevitably impart the values we hold dear in some fundamental way.

It seems to me that the time has come to ask this particular question of a narrative that has proven popular and perduring in the contemporary American church. The story, which I've heard told dozens of times, goes something like this: Once there was a very "progressive" German theologian named Joseph Ratzinger. He was a champion of the new theology and a leading reform-minded expert at the Second Vatican Council. In 1968, his university classroom, like colleges everywhere in the West, was convulsed by a student revolution. This destabilizing event, so the story goes, sent Father Ratzinger into the arms of the forces of reaction; and the rest of his life, as archbishop, Vatican prefect and pope has been a long rightward march.

Now it is perfectly clear that the opponents of Father Ratzinger's theological projects are the ones who are best served by this narrative, which casts

them as the ones who were presumably not beset by fear and trembling and were thus able to carry on the project of reform. The problem here is that this is a far too facile and barely credible story. To be sure, Father Ratzinger's thinking and positions did evolve. In a soon-to-be-published interview, the pope emeritus tells Peter Seewald that he grew increasingly concerned about the direction of theology in the wake of the council. "In this respect one could soon see that what was originally desired was being driven in a different direction," he says. "Since 1965 I have felt it to be a mission, to make clear what [the council] genuinely wanted and what we did not want."

One of the ways the future pope did that was by publishing his *Introduction to Christianity*, which sets forth many of the theological themes he would pursue throughout his journey from professor to pope. It is important to note that this book was based on a series of lectures he gave at least two years prior to the events of 1968. So the protests of that year, though not irrelevant, were hardly a decisive event.

All this would be just an arcane historical tidbit if it weren't for the fact that this questionable narrative is still operative, especially among those who see Pope Francis' pontificate as a radical departure from that of his predecessors. Yet neither Benedict nor Francis see it that way: "If one isolates things, takes them out of context," the pope emeritus tells Seewald, "one can construct opposites, but not if one looks at the whole. There may be a different emphasis, of course, but no opposition."

There's a lesson in this. Catholics of every stripe would do well to take a moment to question the stories that inform our actions and judgments. And if we can let go of our cherished myths and ideologies for long enough, we might even create enough space for the Holy Spirit to narrate our story anew.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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106 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019-3803
Ph: (212) 581-4640; Fax: (212) 399-3596
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EDITOR, THE JESUIT POST Michael Rossmann, S.J.

EDITORIAL E-MAIL
america@americamedia.org

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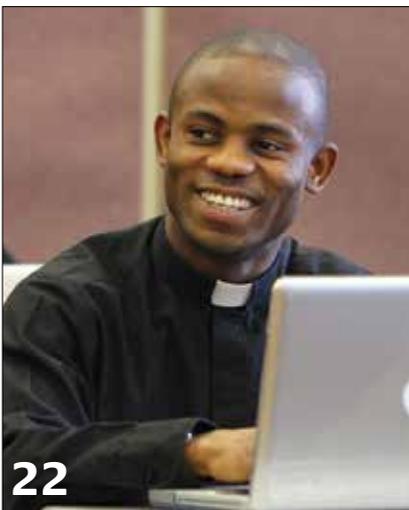
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ON THE WEB

America Media launched "**La Palabra**," a weekly Spanish-language column on Scripture. Plus, a new report on the misconceptions Americans have about **Catholic sisters**. More digital highlights on page 18 and at americamagazine.org/webfeatures.



Remember Hiroshima

Readers of John Hersey's 31,000-word article "Hiroshima," which was published in the Aug. 31, 1946, issue of *The New Yorker*, will never forget the horrible effects of the first atomic bombs that the United States dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, especially the faces of those who had looked into the blast and whose melting eyeballs were dripping down their cheeks. Our first use of the weapon killed an estimated 200,000 human beings. Today, a single nuclear weapon dropped on a major city would immediately kill hundreds of thousands and injure many more.

In June 1998, 75 U.S. Catholic bishops declared, "Nuclear weapons must never be used, no matter what the provocation, no matter what the military objective." In Prague in 2009, President Obama announced his drive to reduce the role—even rid the world—of nuclear weapons. But recently Mr. Obama dropped his consideration of a no-first-use policy, by which the United States would use the weapon only in response to an enemy's nuclear attack, in the face of heavy resistance to the idea. Reportedly, key advisers have warned the president that to men like Russia's President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong-un, our reluctance to annihilate several hundred thousand innocent people makes the United States look weak.

In his visit last May to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, President Obama reaffirmed his vision of a nuclear-free world. "We must have the courage to escape the logic of fear.... We may not realize this goal in my lifetime. But persistent effort can roll back the possibility of catastrophe." President Obama must muster the courage of his original commitment to a disarmed peace.

Judgment Versus Opinion

Angela Merkel is currently the longest-serving European head of government, having been Germany's chancellor since 2005. If the results of recent local elections are any indication, her days in office could be numbered.

The results in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the chancellor's home state, do not bode well for Ms. Merkel's party. In the voting on Sept. 4, the center-left Social Democrats polled first with 31 percent; and the anti-immigrant party, Alternative for Germany, polled second, with 21 percent, leaving Ms. Merkel's center-right Christian Democrats a distant third, with 19 percent. Her migration policies were probably a factor in the outcome. How Ms. Merkel has dealt with this issue will not only affect her politically in the short term but may well define her record and legacy as the first female leader of modern Germany.

Migrants and migration have bedeviled every European leader since a refugee crisis exploded in 2015. That year, a record 1.3 million people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia applied for asylum in Europe, seeking refuge from violence, poverty and oppression. Most notable has been the number of Muslims trying to escape the protracted civil war in Syria. By accepting large numbers of migrants into Germany, Ms. Merkel offered a humane response to an unprecedented crisis—with mixed results. Problems of assimilation, fearmongering and voter dissatisfaction have proven to be stubborn roadblocks, all of which have exacted a political price for Ms. Merkel. Like any leader, she knows how hard it is for officials to faithfully follow Edmund Burke's dictum about adhering to one's judgment instead of following popular "opinion." To do right is never easy.

Lonely Planet

In today's tech-savvy, app-happy world, "friends" or "connections" are often only a few clicks away. Yet even as our global society is more interconnected than ever before, loneliness, especially among older people, not only persists but can be the cause of a host of other physical and mental challenges. This year neuroscientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology published findings identifying a part of the brain that generates feelings of loneliness and is linked to depression, but researchers had already known that loneliness can cause physical pain, wreak havoc on one's sleep and even increase one's risk of dying. Recently, Great Britain has devoted increased public health resources to programs intended to ease the effects of loneliness, including a helpline for lonely seniors.

Studies show that feelings of loneliness may have evolved to motivate us to survive by reaching out to our communities. Yet they also show that those suffering from loneliness also can feel more averse to meeting new people, in part out of fear of rejection. Helplines and screenings can help alleviate this pain, but government programs cannot be the only solution. Catholic parishes must play a role in countering what some have termed an "epidemic of loneliness." Creating groups to visit nursing homes or to organize transportation to and from parish events can be a big help to parishioners who may otherwise be unable or not comfortable enough to attend. Personal invitations often go a long way toward making people feel welcome. And taking the time to stop and talk with new faces at Mass can help to affirm for those who have made the effort to reach out that they are in the right place, one where all are welcome at the table.

Georgetown Repents

On Sept. 1, John J. DeGioia, the president of Georgetown University, announced that the school would formally ask for forgiveness and seek to make restitution for the institution's involvement in the sin of slavery. By doing so the Georgetown community engaged in a process in which all Catholics are called to participate, one that the church has used to dramatic effect as it sought to redress wrongs in its own history. The journey of reconciliation is usually told from the point of view of the individual sinner. But sometimes institutions, and even nations, must set out on the path of repentance.

No sin is more worthy of attention and prayer than this country's original sin of slavery. Georgetown is seeking to address a morally shocking episode at the center of its history. In 1838, the head of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, Thomas F. Mulledy, S.J., decided to sell 272 slaves to help provide financial support to Georgetown University. He did so against the explicit orders of his superiors in Rome. The history of this sale—and the Jesuits' larger involvement in the slave trade in the United States—was widely known within Jesuit circles and has been the subject of extensive scholarship at Georgetown and elsewhere.

The episode drew renewed scrutiny last year as students protested the fact that two university buildings carried the names of individuals at the center of the scandal: Father Mulledy and William McSherry, S.J., both of whom also served as presidents of the university. A working group made up of Jesuits, students and faculty was assigned to study the issue. In addition to celebrating a Mass of forgiveness and reconciliation, Georgetown will rename the two buildings in question: one in honor of Isaac Hawkins, the first slave listed among those who were sold, and another for Anne Marie Becraft, an African-American woman religious who opened a school for black girls in Washington, D.C. Meanwhile, descendants of the slaves who were sold who apply to Georgetown will receive the same treatment as legacy applicants.

These steps may be thought of as Georgetown's penance or perhaps, in secular terms, as reparations. But before receiving absolution, sinners must give an account of their sins. In a penitential service in St. Peter's Basilica presided over by St. John Paul II in 2000 to address the church's historical sins, the rite began with a listing of wrongs that had been committed in the church's name. For Georgetown, the journey to reconciliation began when it unveiled the Jesuit

Plantation Project several years ago, now called the Georgetown Slavery Archive. These records shine a clear light on the facts. Though Father Mulledy attached specific instructions to the sale of the slaves—families were not to be separated, for example, and were to be allowed to practice their Catholic faith—these instructions were ignored. The slaves were clearly sold to help finance the university. Evidence of institutional complicity in the U.S. slave trade is rarely so cut and dried. Other institutions that seek to account for their own participation in the slave trade may find it more difficult to render historical judgments.

A few other lessons can be learned from Georgetown's journey. First, sometimes institutions, like individuals, must be called to repentance. At Georgetown, the Working Group on Slavery, Memory and Reconciliation was formed after student journalists reported on the university's history and protests roiled the campus. The Working Group is to be strongly commended for undertaking a rigorous process of examination, but the process might not have begun without the efforts of these young journalists and student protesters.

Second, the process was aided by the diversity of the commission, lay and Jesuit, students and faculty. Perhaps a descendant of one of the slaves who were sold should have been included, but Mr. DeGioia pledges that these individuals will be consulted as the university implements the Working Group's recommendations. (These voices might argue for more financial support for slave descendants applying to Georgetown.) Third, actual penance is important. The work of reparation is one of the ways Christians cooperate with grace.

Finally, the sin of slavery still haunts us. Few American institutions, whether Georgetown or an Ivy League university, the church or the U.S. government, can declare themselves untainted by the sin of racism or claim that slavery is a painful historical episode but no more than that. Reflecting on the discussions at Georgetown, the Maryland Province of the Jesuits recommitted itself to examine "our own generation's" moral blind spots. Surely this is one of them: A century and a half after the Civil War, the legacy of racism still surrounds us, visible in the poverty of our cities, the inequality of the criminal justice system, the segregation of schools and suburbs and the avoidable deaths of too many black men, women and children. As our nation sets out to atone for the sins of the past, how will we account for the signs of sin we encounter today?



REMEMBRANCE HALL, LEFT, FORMERLY NAMED MCSHERRY HALL, ON THE GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. AP PHOTO/JACQUELYN MARTIN

REPLY ALL

An Open Invitation

Superintendents and the National Catholic Educational Association respond to “Reinventing Catholic Schools,” by Charles Zech (8/29).

Charles Zech fails to mention the incredible work being done in Catholic schools across the country today. As the superintendents of Catholic schools and the head of the National Catholic Educational Association, we work each and every day in schools that look nothing like what the author describes.

Professor Zech writes, “It is no longer good stewardship on the part of Catholic dioceses and parishes to continue supporting the old model of Catholic parochial schools.” This implies that those dedicated servants who sacrifice and work daily in these institutions, along with students and families, are wasting church resources. We see funds spent on Catholic schools as an investment in children and the future of the church. The idea of stewardship is to return with increase to the Lord, and research consistently demonstrates that graduates of Catholic schools are among the most academically prepared, generous and civically engaged.

Professor Zech writes that “over time the Catholic population has migrated to the suburbs and increasingly to the South and West.... But the parishes and parochial school buildings still tend to be located in urban areas in the Northeast and Midwest.” In fact, there are already many thriving Catholic schools and parishes in the South and West. Their growth is driven by young, mostly immigrant families who desire a Catholic school education.

To give up on these vital institutions would be akin to eliminating Catholic schools in the Northeast 100 years ago, when they provided the foundation that allowed Irish, Italian, Polish and other immigrant populations to work their way up in American society. The same work, with the same goal, continues today.

The true story of Catholic schools in the United States is their continued success, despite difficulties, and their ability to overcome challenges. Catholic schools continue to outperform public and private schools and do a particularly effective job with low-income, minority students. Professor Zech writes that “many urban parochial schools find themselves serving a population that struggles to afford parochial school tuition. Many of these students are not Catholic.” This indicates a lack of understanding of Catholic schools, especially in the West, where the urban population is largely Catholic. Shutting schools that serve low-income populations contradicts our vital mission to provide a “preferential option for the poor.” Affordability of our schools is a substantial challenge, even while our

schools attempt to maintain a relatively low cost of tuition. The momentum of the school choice movement has greatly assisted our families; to date, 27 states and the District of Columbia have some form of parental choice program, and the trend is toward greater levels of public funding support.

To further provide assistance to those low-income families, there are tremendous philanthropic support and great partnerships, from the Catholic Education Foundation in Los Angeles to the Catholic School Foundation in Boston and so many more. The value of our schools is perhaps most evident in weekly giving from our Catholic parishioners, many of whom do not have school-age children of their own, who give selflessly to their local parishes knowing that they are supporting Catholic school education, which brings life and vitality to our parishes.

If, as Professor Zech states, the issue of a lack of Catholic giving is such a significant limitation, we should focus on that cause rather than the effect of reduced funds for ministries. Catholic schools are a ministry and continue to be one of the church’s most effective instruments for passing on the faith from one generation to the next.

That might be the best argument against what Professor Zech proposes. Converting Catholic schools, which infuse the faith throughout the curriculum and the school day, to charter schools would change the essential character of the institutions. There is no such thing as a Catholic charter school. Surely, public charter schools try to mimic Catholic schools with character education and uniforms, but there is not a character education program or a values-based curriculum that compares



to teaching the faith. If Catholic schools disappear in great numbers, parishes will not be far behind.

Every day the 150,000 Catholic school educators in the country, supported by pastors, superintendents, bishops and the National Catholic Educational Association, teach and form students because they believe in Catholic education. We welcome Professor Zech and his colleagues from the Villanova Church Leadership Roundtable to visit with us and any of our Catholic schools to see the great work being done.

KEVIN BAXTER, Ed.D.
*Senior Director and
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Los Angeles*

DEBRA BRILLANTE
*Superintendent for Elementary Schools
Archdiocese of Philadelphia*

THOMAS W. BURNFORD, D.Min.
*President/C.E.O.
National Catholic Educational Association*

SUSAN M. GIBBONS
*Director of Educational Services,
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Cincinnati*

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Education/Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Cleveland*

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*Chief Operating Officer and Secretary for Education
Archdiocese of Philadelphia*

KURT NELSON, Ph.D.
*Superintendent of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of St. Louis*

JIM RIGG, Ph.D.
*Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Chicago*

Faith and Action

Re: "Saint of Darkness" by James Martin, S.J. (8/29): Thank you for this great in-

terview with with Brian Kolodiejchuk, the promoter of Mother Teresa's cause. I was privileged to know Mother Teresa through her lay association, the Co-workers. My time with Mother Teresa, from my first visit to Calcutta in 1981 to my last encounter with her at a meeting in Antwerp in 1993, made such a huge impact on my life. At the age of 24, I learned from Mother Teresa how faith and action have to work together. Even in her darkness, she was a bright light to so many of us. I, too, am confident that in her death she will touch many more people—not just the hungry and homeless—but those who lack kindness in their lives. She will be the saint for all people who struggle with loneliness.

VICTORIA SCHMIDT
Online Comment

Informed Consciences

In "The Demands of Love" (8/15), Cardinal Christoph Schönborn expresses an important message and interpretation of "The Joy of Love." That is, for the divorced and remarried, the rigidity of doctrine does not automatically trump the existential reality of concrete circumstances, mercy and discernment consistent with God's love. Equally important is Pope Francis' call for a greater integration of a properly informed conscience in the praxis of the church.

While we have seen some bishops publicly declare that Communion is forbidden for all divorced and remarried Catholics without an annulment, it is clear that this is not the message of a careful reading of the papal exhortation. Other bishops believe that under certain circumstances and through a properly informed conscience, under the guidance of a priest, the divorced and remarried may be able to receive Communion. For this reason, it is not surprising that Pope Francis chose Cardinal Schönborn as the church's official interpreter of "The Joy of Love."

MICHAEL BARBERI
Online Comment

Prioritize Love and Respect

In "Faith Remains a Motivating Factor For V.P. Picks Pence and Kaine" (8/15), Michael O'Loughlin asserts that Mike Pence supports various issues that are of importance to Catholics. The first example listed was his intention to shut down the federal government in 2011 over the much attempted, never achieved goal of shutting down Planned Parenthood. The second example refers to his push for a bill that allowed business owners to refuse service to L.G.B.T. people for religious reasons.

As an educated, female Catholic struggling to maintain my connection with the church, I balked at these characterizations of what Catholics view as important. I would prioritize the functioning of our federal government over a foot-stomping technique that stalls any compromise. I would also prioritize Jesus' teachings to love and respect each other over passing laws looking to ostracize and demean our fellow humans in the name of "religious reasons."

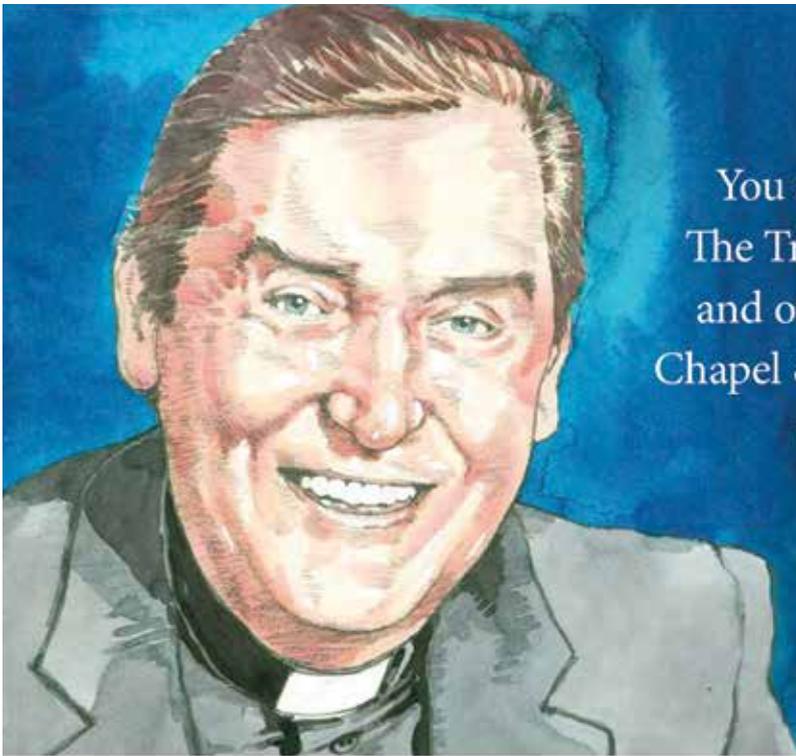
CAROLINE TIERNEY
Chevy Chase, Md.

The Good Fight

Re "A History of Violence" by Kevin Clarke and James Martin, S.J. (7/18): I appreciated the chronology of America's efforts to inject some sanity into the gun issue over the past century. Please keep repeating the conclusion of the editorial board in 2013: Repeal of the Second Amendment is essential. The incremental changes proposed by legislators have only strengthened the rabid voices in opposition, and the death toll continues to rise. I long for courage on the part of legislators but despair of seeing it in my lifetime.

Catholic leaders must confront this head on and include it as a priority in their pronouncements. Editors, please do not let up.

FRANCES GAUTIERI BROWN
Pelham, N.Y.



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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

CHICAGO

A Summer of Shootings Ends With Labor Day Toll of 65 Shot, 13 Fatally



CEASEFIRE. Residents rally in front of St. Sabina Church on Chicago's South Side, demanding an end to gun violence.

Chicago's long, hot summer of shootings came to an end over the three-day Labor Day weekend, with 65 people shot, 13 fatally, as homicides climbed toward 500 for the year. August was already on record as the city's deadliest month in more than two decades.

The wounded included a young woman, nine months pregnant, shot on the same side street in a southwest neighborhood where someone was killed less than 20 hours before. Among the dead was an 80-year-old retired pastor, shot in front of a South Side senior citizen complex.

The shooting of 65 people by a terrorist would probably make international news. In Chicago, it has become a near-weekly occurrence in which most of those who perish do so in anonymity. A bitter irony is that most visitors to Chicago—indeed most residents—can remain blissfully detached from the violence. The shootings are concentrated in a handful of police districts in poorer neighborhoods on the city's South and West Sides.

One of the casualties in August was 32-year-old Nykea Aldridge, a cousin of the Chicago Bulls basketball star Dwyane Wade. Aldridge, the mother of four, was caught in a gang-related crossfire and was hit by a stray bullet as she pushed her infant child in a stroller.

Expressing the anguish many in the city feel every day, Wade tweeted: "My cousin was killed today in Chicago. Another act of senseless gun violence. 4 kids

lost their mom for NO REASON. Unreal. #EnoughIsEnough."

Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson called the Aldridge shooting "reprehensible," and Mayor Rahm Emanuel said he will announce major new antiviolence initiatives later in September. But Chicago has been racking up shootings for the better part of a year now, and city officials seem powerless to halt the carnage.

"Every Monday morning, we pick up the newspaper to see how many shootings and homicides we had," said Eddie Bocanegra, director of the Y.M.C.A.'s Office of Youth Safety and Violence Prevention. "The narrative becomes old; it becomes normalized."

It has fallen to grassroots organizers like Bocanegra to try to make a difference. They do so by involving kids in video-making and creative writing, taking them on field trips, pairing them with mentors—anything, Bocanegra said, to show that there is an alternative to guns, drugs and clashes with police. Bocanegra blames a complex web of issues for the spike in violence, fueled in part by increasing mistrust between the police and the African-American community.

Tensions have been rising since last fall, when a Chicago police officer was captured on video shooting the teenager Laquan McDonald 16 times. A Justice Department report earlier this year was highly critical of the Chicago Police Department's treatment of minorities.

According to Bocanegra, with their department under a microscope, some officers are less willing to aggressively police neighborhoods overrun by gangs.

Bocanegra challenges clergy members to join community leaders and public officials in becoming a more visible presence in communities where violence is a nightly occurrence. Most of the shootings occur between 6 p.m.

and 2 a.m., Bocanegra said.

“What would it look like for several weeks to organize and coordinate churches, politicians, police officers, county sheriffs, law enforcement and probation officers to go into these communities and just be seen, to walk around in groups?” Bocanegra asked, suggesting they approach “the gangs

that hang out in the corners, hang out near them [and] make them feel uncomfortable.”

Any such effort would have to be sustained, Bocanegra said. “Violence prevention is not a two-hour thing, it’s an investment. It’s a long-term investment and coordinated effort.”

JUDITH VALENTE

WOMEN RELIGIOUS

Sisters Defy Outdated Perceptions By Taking Vocations ‘to the Edges’

Sister Sandy Sherman thought she would follow the traditional route of women religious, joining the ranks of the Catholic teachers who had inspired her.

“I thought I would enter and I would teach school my whole life and I would wear a habit,” said Sherman, who joined the Order of Saint Ursula in 1975. “Well, I entered and I’ve never worn a habit.”

The Ohio native did teach for several years, but she has also devoted herself to Rahab’s Heart, a street ministry program in Toledo for women involved in prostitution and sex trafficking. The group offers resources and hands out personal hygiene items, food and clothing.

Like pioneers, Catholic sisters “keep moving to the edges,” Sister Sherman said.

But most Americans are not aware of such efforts and continue to hold outdated misconceptions about Catholic sisters and the work they do. That’s according to recent research that partly inspired the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s “Sister to All” campaign to raise public awareness about women

religious.

In a nation growing more defined by skepticism of organized religion, Americans continue to see Catholic sisters in a positive light. The report notes: “Americans are twice as likely to hold

percent—said their work is important.

Despite these favorable views, Jennifer Robbins, C.E.O. and co-founder of Anderson Robbins Research, said Americans “didn’t really know much about Catholic sisters, except for old, outdated stereotypes.” The Boston-based organization conducted the 2015 study.

And Catholics did no better on the survey than other Americans in their knowledge of sisters. The research indicates that dated perceptions of Catholic sisters are shaped primarily by fictional stories and the media instead of real-world encounters. For example, 42 percent of respondents believe the majority of Catholic sisters today wear habits, 21 percent believe they live in seclusion, and 37 percent thought their work has little or no impact on non-Catholics.

Those people may not have met a woman like Sister Karen Bland, the director of Grand Valley Catholic Outreach in Grand Junction, Colo. Her organization supports local homeless people with a food and clothing pantry and soup kitchen and sponsors construction of housing for the chronically homeless, many of whom are mentally or physically disabled. Whatever folks in her community may think about the lives of Catholic sisters, Sister Bland believes Grand Valley’s efforts have been

well appreciated by the larger community.

Meeting a Catholic sister is one of the most important factors in shaping a person’s knowledge about them, the report found. And the study notes a high level of apprehension from parents about the possibility of their daughter



BEYOND EXPECTATIONS. Sister Sandy Sherman, left, and Rahab’s Heart founder, LeeAnn Campbell, center, counsel a young woman.

very favorable views toward Catholic sisters and nuns than they do for the Catholic Church and Catholic priests in general.” More than 70 percent of people surveyed reported positive feelings toward women religious, with 73 percent of respondents saying they trust Catholic sisters. Even more—83

becoming a Catholic sister. About a third of respondents said they would encourage them to rethink the decision.

Robbins said the hesitation is a byproduct of the lack of information about Catholic sisters. Parents think joining a religious order means sacrifice, she said.

“If someone chooses to enter a religious life, it’s not about choosing to live this closed life,” she said. “These women have these very strong communities. They are out there pursuing their dreams.”

**TERESA DONNELLAN
AND WYATT MASSEY**

Prayer for Peace

Catholics throughout the United States were urged to pray for racial justice on Sept. 9 to mark the Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities. “We hope to highlight the importance of prayer as a reasonable and efficacious response to the violence that has touched too many communities in our nation,” Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta said on Sept. 8, explaining the effort on a call with reporters. “We also hope that through this prayer, local dialogues will take place in parishes and in small communities to highlight the root causes of this tension that obviously is still very much a part of too many of our lives.” Archbishop Gregory is leading a task force of the U.S. bishops’ conference charged with assessing diocesan resources on racial justice and promoting dialogue in communities affected by violence. The group is expected to present a final report during the conference’s semi-annual meeting in November.

Bishop Removed

AsiaNews, the Rome-based missionary news agency, reported on Sept. 8 that Chinese authorities had

NEWS BRIEFS

Honoring Star Trek’s 50th anniversary in September, the Vatican newspaper L’Osservatore Romano said the popular series gave the world a **model of peace, tolerance and cooperation** at a time of global tensions. • After a Polish immigrant was **beaten to death** by a teenage mob in Harlow, England, on Aug. 27, President Andrzej Duda of Poland wrote to Anglican and Catholic church leaders in the United Kingdom urging them to help to protect Polish migrants from xenophobic violence and abuse. • Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore was the **training home for five swimmers** who represented the United States at the Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, held from Sept. 7 to Sept. 18. • The Grammy winner and country-folk legend **Emmylou Harris** will be heading up a series of concerts this fall to benefit Jesuit Refugee Service’s Global Education Initiative. • The Democratic vice presidential hopeful Senator Tim Kaine said in a speech to the Human Rights Campaign on Sept. 10 that his **support for same-sex marriage** is driven in part by his Catholic faith and that he expects the church could change its views as he did.



Paralympians in Baltimore

taken Coadjutor Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou, China, out of the diocese to northwest China “on a trip.” Local faithful said it was to prevent him from taking possession of the diocese after the death of Bishop Vincent Zhu Weifang. The diocesan chancellor, the Rev. Paul Jian Sunian, was escorted by police to Yunnan, and another priest was held in a hotel. Local Chinese police also restricted the number of people at Bishop Zhu’s funeral on Sept. 13 to 400, insisting that participants needed a permit to attend.

Mining Warning

Large-scale mining and extractive operations are failing to deliver economic benefits while causing environmental damage and human suffering throughout Latin America, according to a co-

alition of church organizations and environmental groups. The Churches and Mining Network, which includes Catholic bishops, priests and laypeople and leaders of Christian churches and environmentalists, said in a statement that governments, church leaders and civil society organizations need to find alternatives to so-called megamining operations. “We are aware that defending Creation, in a predatory system whose highest purpose is profit and money, is an action that involves danger and the risk of death. But we are encouraged by the Gospel of Jesus, the encyclical ‘Laudato Si,’ and by the strength of the many communities affected by mining and other extractive industries,” the network said in the statement released on Sept. 4, following a meeting in Colombia.

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

DISPATCH | DUBLIN

A Gang War Revival

In the closing scene of the movie “Veronica Guerin,” moviegoers learn how the film’s eponymous journalist’s work turned the tide in Ireland’s drug war. Based on the true story of her work as a reporter for Ireland’s *Sunday Independent*, the film follows Guerin as she exposes the extravagance and ruthlessness of Ireland’s criminal gangs, linking their fortunes to the heroin epidemic in inner-city Dublin.

She interviewed and investigated notorious drug lords and criminals, giving them colorful nicknames: “the Coach,” “the Monk,” “the Boxer,” “the Maradona.” She was threatened, beaten by a gang leader and shot in the leg by an intruder in her home. Finally on June 26, 1996, while her car was stopped in traffic in north Dublin, she was shot five times by a hired killer on a motorcycle. She died at the scene, leaving behind a husband and a young son.

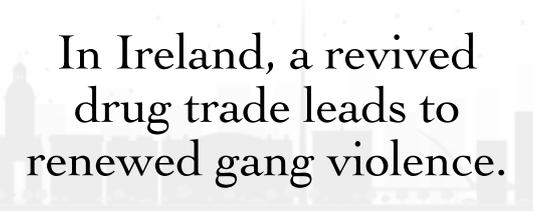
Her writing had already had a significant impact, but her death proved pivotal. Flowers piled up outside the gates of Ireland’s Parliament, and public anger jolted government into action. Within a week, the government altered the Constitution to allow the high court to freeze the assets of suspected drug barons.

The Criminal Assets Bureau was formed and given the power to access and seize unexplained wealth from suspected criminals. Since then, the agency has taken multimillion-euro settlements from leading criminals who were previously untouchable.

RHONA TARRANT is *America’s Dublin correspondent*.

Guerin’s death led to arrests of more than 150 people and a serious crackdown on crime. The residents of the inner city, who had long protested their neglect and marginalization, were given community schemes to tackle the vicious cycle of poverty and drug abuse.

But the last two decades have not borne out the cautiously hopeful note offered by the movie version of



In Ireland, a revived drug trade leads to renewed gang violence.

Veronica Guerin’s life. The next generation of criminal gangs learned to adapt and thrive, moving their business and assets abroad to places like Spain and Amsterdam—out of reach of the CAB. They resupplied the Irish drug market, benefiting from the rise of recreational drug use during the Celtic Tiger era and the continuing drug problems in some working-class neighborhoods.

Today Dublin is in the midst of another gang feud, this time led by the Christy Kinahan gang, based in Spain, the epitome of this new generation. The gang’s net worth is estimated at almost \$500 million, a scale never seen before in the Irish underworld.

In the past year, the gang has waged war on members of the Hutch family, some of whom were associated with large-scale robberies. A member of the family, Gary Hutch, got on the wrong side of the Kinahans and was shot dead. A retaliation killing followed;

since then, 10 people have died in total, with nine of the murders believed to have been carried out by the Kinahans. Most of the victims were murdered on Dublin’s streets; many were not linked to crime.

The audacity of the killings in broad daylight has shaken Ireland and cast fresh light on problems in its inner-city areas. In the media circus that followed, the local councillor Gary Gannon drew a connection to civic response after Guerin’s death, when he was only 8 years old and living in the inner city. He remembers the social programs and new office buildings that came from regeneration efforts, as well as the tenacity of drug addiction, which persisted despite such efforts.

He has called for youth initiatives to address unemployment and marginalization rather than an increased police presence. The Rev. Peter McVerry, a Jesuit priest who has spent his life working with homeless and drug-addicted young people, says the drug crisis is now worse than ever.

The boldness and brutality of the latest murders are particularly frightening, he says. “It’s not about money, it’s not about territory, and there doesn’t seem to be any way of stopping it.”

Getting witnesses to give evidence against the gangs could have some effect, Father McVerry suggests. “But it comes at a terrible price,” he says, “because people die.”

During Veronica Guerin’s funeral in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church, a place she attended every Sunday, the Rev. Declan Doyle asked, “Where is Irish society headed? What forces are vying for power? What is the future of our country?” Through all that has changed in the last 20 years, those questions remain worth asking.

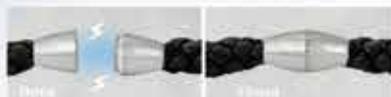
RHONA TARRANT

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Free to Serve

Popular media in the United States continue to approve the Catholic Church's social justice voice on poverty or the environment, but they dismiss its voice on sex, marriage and parenting. This is intensified by the contemporary framing of the latter issues in terms of "equality," "freedom" and scientific rationality. In other words, social justice categories are applied to sex and family questions, and the church is found wanting.

Nothing motivates me to try to bridge this divide more than mothering young adults. I want them to have the good life, the free life, the Catholic life in the *whole* sense.

So first I touch on freedom, as it overlaps with the justice value of caring for the vulnerable. Temporary sexual relationships undercut freedom. They often communicate (especially to women) that their value lies in their appearance, their sexual performance and their willingness to use contraception affecting their hormones, their mood and their health. These relationships are shadowed, too, by fears: of children and sexually transmitted diseases. To the inevitable objection that freedom lies rather in the domains of "choice" and "variety," I cite the most definitive science on American sexual practices, showing that both women and men report finding their freedom and joy within long-horizon commitments.

I also touch on freedom as service, as relation. Catholic social teaching rejects the idea that freedom means

everyone grabbing as much property as possible. Similarly, Catholic family teaching rejects the notion of freedom as maximizing individual sexual and emotional self-satisfaction. Our "freedom" is rather the "freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21), grounded upon the Father's unending, sacrificial love. The freedom of children we conceive likewise rests on our providing a solid floor beneath their feet, built by a stably united mother and father.

The category of inequality is also fruitful for linking Catholic social and family teachings. (How I wish "The Joy of Love" had highlighted this!) It is well accepted that the retreats from marriage and marital childbearing are largely driving economic inequality in the United States. In short, the contexts in which adults have sex, get pregnant, give birth and raise children matter enormously for equality.

Inequality between men and women is also at stake. The Israeli sociologist Eva Illouz brilliantly observes that while many are willing to acknowledge how the West's "cult of freedom" produces economic inequalities, they are blind to its creating inequalities in the personal and sexual realms because of the "social conditions which make possible the emotional domination of men over women" (*Why Love Hurts*). To specify, today's "free" sexual marketplace is shaped by the severance of sex from children by contraception and abortion. It is also shaped by its focus on choice (through apps like Tinder), "testing" (cohabitation) and

finding one's "soulmate." It is shaped by corporations placing excessive value on youth and beauty and sex as products for consumption, and by men's tendency to play the field longer, unconstrained by limitations imposed by fertility. As summarized by Professor Illouz: Middle-class heterosexual women have "never been so sovereign in terms of their body and emotions" but "emotionally dominated by men in new and unprecedented ways."

As for poor women, an entirely different set of preferences and constraints shapes how they experience the "cult of freedom." Between high rates of incarceration and joblessness, and a perennial dearth of jobs that pay a living wage, lower-income men do not appear "marriageable" in their eyes. Furthermore, the choice to become a single mother does not foreclose realistic opportunities for college and a good career. Some freedom. Some choice.

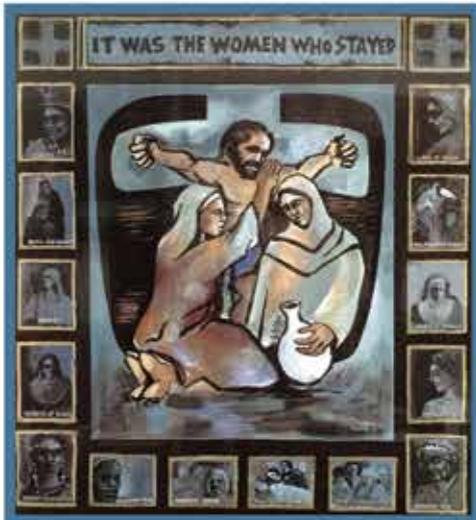
Ecological justice is another bridge. It encompasses our objection to what many forms of birth control do to women's minds and bodies. It refers to the mistake of obscuring or fracturing the deep-down meanings and natures of things, whether in the natural or human environment, anywhere we risk forgetting that nature is mother and creation and not just matter.

My attempt to link social, sexual and family justice remains a work in progress. But I have every inspiration (read: children) to improve it continually.

Temporary sexual relationships undercut freedom.

HELEN ALVARÉ is a professor of law at George Mason University, where she teaches law and religion and family law. She is also a consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Reading the Scriptures with the Mind, Eyes, and Heart of a Woman



Presented by

Barbara E. Reid, OP

Professor of New Testament Studies,
Catholic Theological Union

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About the Presenter

Barbara E. Reid, OP, holds a master's degree from Aquinas College in religious studies and a doctorate in biblical studies from the Catholic University of America. She is the author of the books *Abiding Word: Sunday Reflections for Year B*; *Taking Up the Cross: New Testament Interpretations Through Latina and Feminist Eyes*; *The Gospel According to Matthew* (New Collegeville Bible Commentary series); *Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke*; and numerous articles. Her forthcoming book is titled *Wisdom's Feast: An Introduction to Feminist Interpretation of the Scriptures*.



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Foreign Policy Déjà Vu

Where the candidates stand on world affairs

BY MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE

Americans are used to variety, to 500 television channels and millions of YouTube selections. Yet Americans often complain that presidential elections lack variety, that the candidates are too similar, particularly with regard to foreign policy. That complaint is not valid in the 2016 presidential election. The Republican candidate, Donald J. Trump, and the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, vary considerably in their approaches to foreign policy—from alliances to Zika.

Yet despite the many pronouncements that the 2016 presidential election cycle is something completely different and unprecedented, the biggest foreign policy debates in which this year's candidates are engaged are actually very old.

Mr. Trump's slogan of "America First" was used in 1939, when many Republicans and isolationists argued that the United States should remain neutral in response to the rise of fascism and Hitler in Europe and that it should reject immigrants and refugees. The "America First" movement chose a celebrity, the aviator Charles Lindbergh, as their leader. These nativist views were popular until the United States was bombed at Pearl Harbor and entered World War II. After the Allied victory, intent on preventing a third world war and deterring further expansion by the Soviet Union, Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a Republican, suggested, and both parties supported, a military alliance with Western Europe. The North Atlantic Treaty, signed in 1949, created

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE is a professor of international relations at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and a contributing editor to *America*.



SLOW AND STEADY?
Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at a rally at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla., on Sept. 6.

NATO, including the Article 5 mutual defense commitment that "an attack against one is an attack against all." General Dwight D. Eisenhower's support sealed bipartisan backing of NATO, until this year's campaign.

The foreign policy positions advocated by Mr. Trump were most clearly articulated in 1992, not by the Republican candidate but by two independent presidential candidates. The billionaire businessman Ross Perot argued against the North American Free Trade Agreement, against foreign alliances and against immigration, particularly from Mexico, arguing these policies would hurt jobs in the United States. David Duke, white supremacist and former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, ran in the Republican presidential primaries in 1992 on an "America First" platform that he still advocates, arguing that the rights of European American citizens are being trampled and advocating for immigration restrictions. When Mr. Duke endorsed him earlier this year, Mr. Trump was at first unwilling to disavow the support; later, he distanced himself from Mr. Duke and white nationalists.

AP PHOTO/ANDREW HARNIK

Usually, both major political party candidates agree on supporting free trade, NATO obligations, current refugee policy, cooperative relations with Mexico and efforts to oppose Russian expansion and influence; recently, they have differed only on how they would continue to execute the “long wars” in Afghanistan and Iraq and how to counter terrorism. This year the foreign policy differences between the major party candidates are much greater.

Migration and Refugees

The hallmark initiative of the Trump campaign is his pledge to build a wall on the Mexico-U.S. border, which he claims he would get Mexico to pay for using his “superior deal-making skills,” and also by using executive orders to change the provisions in the Patriot Act intended to stop terrorist financing to instead stop remittances to Mexico. Mr. Trump vows he would also end birthright citizenship. He claims



MEXICO GAMBIT. Republican presidential candidate Donald J. Trump speaks during a joint statement with Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto in Mexico City on Aug. 31.

Alliances

Mr. Trump has announced that he may not uphold NATO treaty commitments to European countries that fear Russian expansion, and he argues that the U.S. share of NATO's cost is too large. Mr. Trump is correct to note that the share of NATO's costs borne by the United States is greater than that of any other NATO ally; the treaty was designed that way to prevent another arms race and war in Europe. Mrs. Clinton (and both the Republican and Democratic party national committees) firmly favors NATO, as has every Democratic and Republican presidential candidate since it was created in 1949 by President Harry Truman, a Democrat, with the support of General Eisenhower, the supreme commander of European forces and later a Republican president. Mr. Trump openly admires the Russian strongman President Vladimir Putin, wants to work with him and is not concerned about Mr. Putin's forces in Ukraine.

Mrs. Clinton wants to contain Mr. Putin and decries his human rights violations and war in Ukraine.

a simple congressional majority could change the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, which grants birthright citizenship. Almost all constitutional scholars disagree, noting that only changing the Constitution can change birthright citizenship. The “lawlessness” of Latino immigrants is a repeated theme of Trump's campaign, and he has promised to deport an estimated 11 million immigrants currently living and working in the United States without documents. Mr. Trump proposes tripling the size of the U.S. government devoted to border control (the Immigration, Customs and Enforcement Bureau) in order to implement his plan. Conservative think tanks estimate the cost of this deportation to be about half a trillion dollars.

In contrast, Mrs. Clinton pledges to continue to work for immigration reform, including a path to citizenship for undocumented migrants living and working in the United States. Mrs. Clinton argues that immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy and community. Donald Trump has said that Muslims should not be permitted entry into the United States, that people from any country that has been com-

promised by terrorism should be banned from the United States and that he would bar refugees from the Syrian civil war (including Christians) from entering the United States. Mrs. Clinton argues that religious freedom was and is key to the American experiment and that it would be unconstitutional to bar people based on their religious affiliation. She seeks an increase in the number of Syrian refugees accepted into the United States.

There are over 65 million refugees and displaced persons in the world today, the highest number since World War II, including nearly five million Syrians who have fled the civil war and nearly seven million more displaced within Syria. The United States accepts a maximum of 85,000 total refugees per year, after extensive vetting that takes 18 months to two years. President Obama has proposed an increase to 100,000 total refugees from all regions, including an expansion to 10,000 Syrian refugees (two-thirds of Syrian refugees are women and children under 11 years old). Mrs. Clinton proposes thorough vetting to increase the number of admitted Syrian refugees from the 10,000 currently allowed to up to 65,000, starting with the most vulnerable: women and religious and ethnic minorities, like the Christians and Yazidis persecuted by the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. This number would be small compared to the Syrian refugees accepted by Germany, Canada, Jordan, Turkey and others.

Trade and the Environment

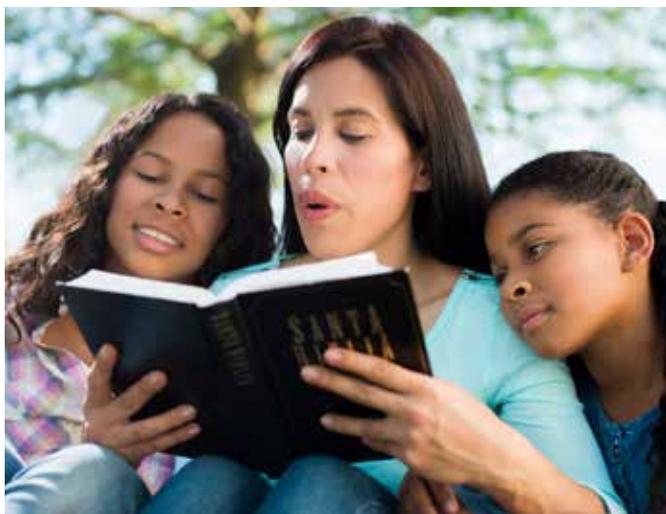
Both Mr. Trump and Mrs. Clinton have vowed to make trade agreements more favorable to U.S. workers, and both oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Both candidates argue that the T.P.P. (and the North American Free Trade Agreement, the free trade treaty between the United States, Canada and Mexico passed by Congress with bipartisan support) are not favorable enough to U.S. workers, and both have vowed to be tougher toward China in trade. Mrs. Clinton says she will improve Nafta, including environmental protections; Mr. Trump says he may pull out of Nafta altogether. Both candidates propose greater investments in infrastructure and manufacturing in the United States.

Mr. Trump argues that climate change is a hoax and promises to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement, as well as to scrap the Environmental Protection Agency. Nafta is an international treaty ratified by the U.S. Senate, and the Environmental Protection Agency is created by law. Neither candidate can deliver on any of these promises without congressional support. Mrs. Clinton knows this and argues she will persuade Congress and foreign allies to change the current Nafta treaty and to invest in American manufacturing. Mr. Trump does not acknowledge constitutional limits to presidential power. Both candidates previously supported free trade.

DIGITAL HIGHLIGHTS

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WEB ONLY

Most Americans admire Catholic sisters but do not know much about them, according to a new report from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.

PODCAST

Christopher Pramuk, a professor of theology at Xavier University, talks about raising his young son in a post-9/11 world.

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War and Peace

Mr. Trump has on numerous occasions said that he might use nuclear weapons as president, and he has said that nuclear proliferation to more countries (Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia) is inevitable and might be in the interest of the United States. Why pay for and stockpile nuclear weapons, he asks, if we are not willing to use them? As secretary of state, Mrs. Clinton worked to reduce the size of nuclear arsenals, although critics such as George Schultz, the Republican secretary of state under Ronald Reagan, have argued nuclear arsenals were not cut quickly or deeply enough.

Mr. Trump favors the use of torture against people accused of terrorism, and the use of violence against the families of suspected terrorists. Mrs. Clinton supports upholding the current domestic and international laws banning the use of torture and the targeted killing of civilians. Both candidates initially favored the U.S. interventions into Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan in 2001 and later expressed reservations about those wars, and both argue for extensive bombings of ISIS. Mrs. Clinton has supported the Obama administration policy of bombing ISIS in Iraq and Syria, arming and training Iraqi government forces and some Syrian opposition forces to fight ISIS and sending military advisors but not large contingents of U.S. ground forces to fight ISIS in Syria. Mrs. Clinton differs from Mr. Obama's policies in proposing a "no-fly zone" to stop the bombings by Syria's President Bashar al-Assad of his own people and the creation of humanitarian corridors to allow relief aid in to starving civilians.

Mr. Trump has argued instead that we should work with Russia to keep President Assad in place, expand the bombings against ISIS (including the possible use of nuclear weapons) and send 20,000 to 30,000 U.S. Army ground troops into Syria. He also urges other Middle Eastern countries to send in their own ground troops and suggests embargoing oil from Saudi Arabia and other states unless they provide ground troops against ISIS. He calls for shutting down the internet in Syria and Iraq so that ISIS could not recruit online and for seizing oil fields from ISIS and turning them over to U.S. companies. Mr. Trump says he has more plans for "defeating ISIS really quickly," but he must keep his ideas secret so as to take ISIS off guard. Neither candidate has offered any specific plans for building peace in the region after the defeat of ISIS.

The Zika Virus

Mrs. Clinton sent advisors to study the impact of the Zika virus in Puerto Rico, read the reports of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other research, and issued a policy for increased public education (particularly for women), the development of a rapid diagnostic test for Zika and greater investments in creating a Zika vaccine and Zika



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— Henry David Thoreau

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treatment. Mr. Trump has not studied the Zika virus or issued a policy on fighting it, despite requests from many endorsers such as Florida Senator Marco Rubio. At first, Mr. Trump joked about it, saying: “I hate mosquitoes. Speaking of mosquitoes, ‘Hello, Hillary?’” One of his advisors disparaged reporters for asking what Mr. Trump’s policy on Zika is: “He has more important things to worry about than mosquitoes.” When pressed on the issue while giving speeches in Florida, Mr. Trump said Governor Rick Scott “probably had it all under control,” even though Mr. Scott was asking for increased federal resources and coordination on the public health issue. Recently, Mr. Trump said he supported increasing congressional funding to combat Zika, but he offered no specifics on the debate over the level of funding and the types of activities included.

This exemplifies the differences between the candidates on foreign policy. Like her or not, Mrs. Clinton has decades of experience representing the U.S. government and conducting foreign policy. Mr. Trump has none, but he argues that this inexperience will be a strength as he will not be tied to previous policy and will bring his businessman’s sense to the area. Mrs. Clinton does her homework, consults top experts and gives foreign policy talks laden with specific details, which sometimes earns her criticism for failing to connect with voters.

Mr. Trump mobilizes his base, tweets his foreign policy thoughts in very simple 140-character messages, advis-

es that you should never hire anyone who is smarter than you and has a great deal of turnover among his advisors, who are more focused on domestic than foreign policy issues. His team describes the process as one in which Mr. Trump tweets his views on foreign policy, and then the advisors scramble to create background materials justifying his new position for the press and the public. Mr. Trump’s ghostwriter on the best-selling book *The Art of the Deal* describes the candidate as having “no attention span.” Mr. Trump’s supporters see this as attractive—he “speaks from his heart,” as his vice-presidential candidate Mike Pence puts it—and they argue to “let Trump be Trump.” Like it or not, Mr. Trump’s process is very different from his predecessors in both political parties.

A New Game

Despite the importance of the candidates’ differences in this area, research shows that people rarely vote based on foreign policy. President George H. W. Bush, a Republican, predicted that his popularity after the Persian Gulf War in 1991 would not translate to votes for his re-election to a second term, saying: “The common wisdom today is that I’ll win in a runaway, but I don’t believe that. I think it’s going to be the economy.”

In the 1990s, political scientists were concerned that real-time media coverage, the introduction of the internet and increasingly negative political campaigns would polarize politics and discourage citizen participation. In the book *Going Negative*, the political scientists Shanto Iyengar and Stephan Stephen Ansolabehere presciently predicted much of what we witness today, writing that negative campaigning “makes the public disenchanted with both candidates.” The authors predicted: “The electorate may curse a ‘plague on both houses’... [N]egative campaigning may diminish the power of civic duty and may undermine the legitimacy of the entire electoral process. Campaigns that generate more negative than positive messages may leave voters embittered toward the candidates and the rules of the game.”

Events this year bear out many of these concerns. People often say their vote is a choice between the lesser of two evils, but usually the percentage of voters with “highly favorable” and “highly unfavorable” views of the major party candidates come close to canceling each other out. Not this year. There are record-breaking “highly unfavorable” polling numbers for both candidates. The authors of *Going Negative* did not anticipate that things would get this bad.

In a foreign policy déjà vu, the issues of 1992 are again center stage. Both candidates learned from that election and believe that their economic positions will be more important to voters than their foreign policy stances. Will voters turn out despite the negative campaign? If they do, they have some real choices in policies and process between the major-party candidates. **A**

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Voting Blights

The right to vote is the foundation of democracy, but determining who is entitled to vote and in which district is complicated. The states are empowered to determine election districts and voter eligibility, but Congress also may “make and alter” election laws. Legislatures and election officials have numerous tools to either promote or deter citizens’ participation in the democratic process. The 2016 presidential election is the first since the Supreme Court invalidated part of the Voting Rights Act. Several states, including those that previously needed federal approval to change their voting laws, are being sued over redistricting and voting restrictions.

Electoral districts. Race may be considered as a factor in determining election districts, but only to foster rather than undermine the ability of racial minorities to elect candidates of their choice. Gerrymandering to preserve political power is permitted to a certain degree, but extreme “fencing” designed to defeat voter preference may violate the equal protection clause. Important cases from North Carolina, Virginia and Wisconsin are pending in the Supreme Court and other federal courts.

Voter registration. The states set voter registration deadlines as well as identification requirements. Unless states receive federal approval, however, they must permit voters to prove their citizenship by signed affirmation. Approvals given to Alabama, Georgia

and Kansas to require documentation of citizenship are being challenged as improperly granted. Federal law encourages states to update voter registration lists, but the automatic culling of registrants and the dispatchment of law enforcement officers to voters’ homes may be unlawful and is being challenged in Kansas and Georgia. States may ban convicted felons from voting. Most states restore voting rights after a sentence is served, but a few require a court or governor’s order. Since July, when the Virginia Supreme Court held that a blanket executive order restoring voting rights violated state law, the Democratic governor and Republican legislature have battled over the re-enfranchisement of eligible Virginians.

Voter ID challenges. Proof of eligibility to register differs from proof of identity required to cast a ballot. Requirements for voter identification that are costly, difficult or impossible to obtain have been deemed unlawful. North Dakota and Texas have agreed to accept additional forms of identification for the 2016 election, but litigation from those states as well as Virginia, Wisconsin and North Carolina will not be finally determined until after the election.

Polling locations and voting methods. Voter participation increases when states establish convenient polling locations and hours, and allow early voting, mail-in balloting and provisional and out-of-precinct voting. Nevertheless, several states rescinded

these popular voting options. Courts have blocked some changes, but others may be in effect for the November election. Every state permits poll monitors, but laws vary regarding their number, appointment and authority. Voter intimidation by partisan monitors is illegal but difficult to prevent. Election results may be affected by poorly formatted ballots, human and

computer error, hacking and other deliberate tampering. Federal, state and local officials have tried since the 2000 debacle to improve voting methods, but no system is foolproof. Pre- and post-Election Day litigation is likely.

Electoral College.

Every vote for president is actually a vote for a slate of electors assigned

to the candidate. State laws and party rules determine whether electors are bound to vote for their party’s candidate when the Electoral College meets in December. Lawsuits undoubtedly will be filed if electors do not abide by the popular vote in their states.

The judiciary is the least democratic branch of government, but it stands as democracy’s last and worst guardian. The first and best guardians are the people themselves. Suffrage is not just a right; it is a responsibility that must be exercised lest it be lost. As the Catholic bishops and Pope Francis remind us, “Responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”

ELLEN K. BOEGEL

ELLEN K. BOEGEL, who teaches legal studies at St. John’s University in New York, clerked for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Fully Formed

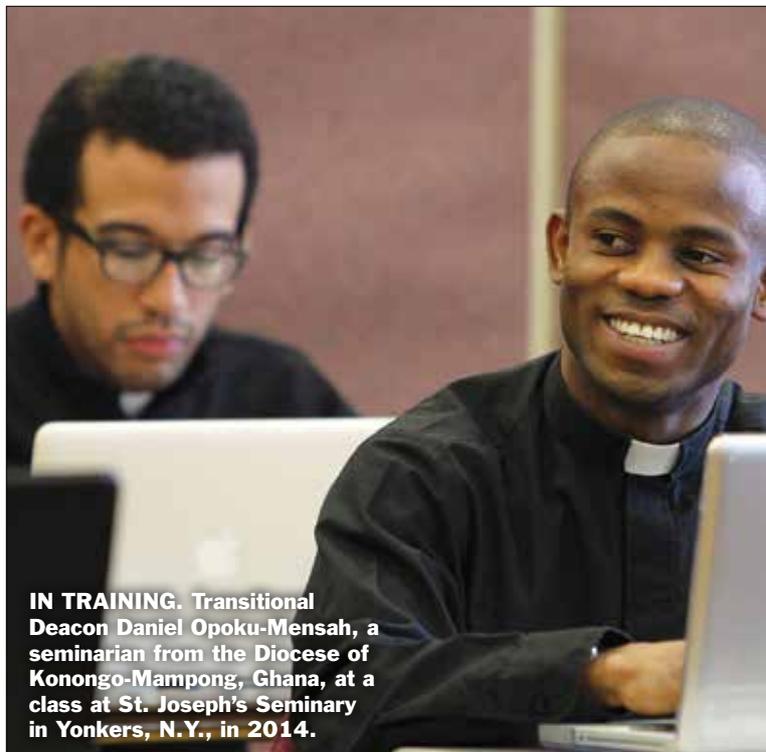
A customized approach to seminary education

BY T. HOWLAND SANKS

Currently, the Society of Jesus in the United States is reviewing its program for training young Jesuits. This provides an occasion for some questions and reflections on ministerial education in general. After being involved in theological education and after listening to the comments of young Jesuits and other candidates for ordination, both Catholic and Protestant, for over 30 years at the Jesuit School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, I offer here some reflections on that training that may help answer the following question: Are we in fact preparing our priestly candidates for the globalized world of the 21st-century?

My basic assumption is that all priests are in service to the church and that the church, in turn, is in service to all humanity (“Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” No. 3). Since the Second Vatican Council, however, the role of the ordained among the people of God has been changing. In recent years, the Holy Spirit has inspired many lay men and women to take up leadership roles in the church. Some interpret this as the “declericalizing” of the church. The church is not the clergy nor the hierarchy; it is the whole people of God. Today’s priests need to understand themselves to be in service to the laity, not the laity in service to the clergy. Furthermore, as Pope Francis has been reminding us, the church is a church that “goes forth,” a church with “open doors”—open to all those outside its confines, the poor, the marginalized, the neglected, those without faith, the seekers amongst the young and the “nobodies” of this world (“The Joy of the Gospel,” Nos. 20-24). Are we preparing them to serve those on the periphery?

The document from the Jesuit curia in Rome that initiated the review of the Jesuit course of studies suggests that there are four fundamental elements involved: context, content, competencies and charism. (The Ignatian charism is appropriated intensely in the first two years of training, a time called the novitiate, but then continuously throughout all stages of Jesuit life.) My concern here is with the changing context and its implications for the content and competencies. My fear is that too much of the intellectual training still takes place in the abstract, prescinding from the context,



IN TRAINING. Transitional Deacon Daniel Opoku-Mensah, a seminarian from the Diocese of Konongo-Mampong, Ghana, at a class at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., in 2014.

both local and global. Although I am primarily concerned with our present context, I also think we need to attend more to the context of previous church teaching and theology. For some time now, biblical scholars have taken the context of both testaments quite seriously in the interpretation of their texts. But how seriously do we take the historical, social and cultural context in which much of our theology of the family, marriage and children was formed? For example, much of that teaching was developed in an agricultural world in which children were an economic asset and necessity, when the majority of children died before the age of 5 and when the average life expectancy was less than 45 years. And much of the doctrine on authority in the church was developed in a world that took monarchy, hierarchy and patriarchy for granted.

The ‘Other’ in Our Midst

If we focus on our present context, we can see that our knowledge and understanding of the world has changed dramatically in the last 30 years. The accelerated rate of change and the processes of globalization—variously understood as “the compression of the world in time and space,” or “com-

T. HOWLAND SANKS, S.J., is professor emeritus of theology at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University in California.

plex connectivity,” or “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”—have changed the horizon against which priestly formation takes place. Ours is a context of radical pluralism. People of another culture or religious tradition



Smaller
numbers and
wide diversity
call for
individualized
programs.

who once were thousands of miles and an ocean away are now right down the street. This has made us acutely conscious of the “other” in our midst—people of other ethnicities, other cultures and other religious traditions. This is the lived experience not only of the global elite but of the average person in the pew. Are we preparing our Christian ministers to deal with this new reality?

Further, the new, post-Hubble cosmology has changed our understanding of the age (13.8 billion years) and size (100 billion galaxies) of the universe. Yet much of the imagery depicting the power of the creator God in Scripture and tradition is drawn from the atmosphere and environment of our own tiny planet (for example, Ps. 18 and 104). Evolution is part of our mental furniture, and we are seriously expecting to find intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, yet much of our theology is still very geocentric and anthropocentric. We are much more conscious now than even 15 years ago of the ecological or environmental crisis, as Pope Francis’ latest encyclical exemplifies. As the philosopher Charles Taylor has pointed out, our “social imaginary” has changed dramatically. Has the content training of our young priests changed accordingly?

All this raises questions about what the candidates study, what tools they are given to understand our context, what competencies they need and how well they are prepared to deal with diversity, pluralism and continuing change. But first I want to question the assumption that there should be one program for all students. Smaller numbers of candidates as well as the wide diversity in age and backgrounds call for much more individualized programs, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. The Society of Jesus in the United States, for example, has had an average of 35 men entering the novitiate each year (45 last year) for the last several years. So it should not be difficult to design an individual program for each man.

There are some things, however, that every candidate for ordination needs to possess—a firm grounding in Scripture for preaching; a knowledge of tradition, how Christianity has developed and changed over the centuries as background for the present practices in liturgy, sacraments, prayer; sensitivity to the moral challenges people face today and the knowledge to help them discern their choices. Each candidate may come with some background in one of these disciplines and not in others. Some come with a background in engineering or law or business but not in the humanities or the social sciences. In addition, every priest is expected to have certain competencies—be a good preacher or homilist, a leader and presider at prayer and liturgies, a compassionate listener and spiritual guide and a servant-leader who can evoke the gifts of all the members of the community. This is a tall order for even the best-intentioned candidate.

If we take the historical, social and cultural context seriously, how would this affect what ministerial candidates study and what competencies they need to relate to our rapidly changing situation? First, it is not necessary to spend so much time studying academic philosophy, which has become highly specialized and no longer gives a broad understanding of the human condition.

They should have an understanding of the whole humanistic tradition, not only the Western tradition but also the wisdom traditions of Asia and Africa. Depending on the background with which they enter, one year of study of the Western tradition and one year of study of a non-Western tradition should be sufficient.

They should prepare for inculturating Christianity in the United States by studying the history and culture of this country. Given the religious pluralism of our time, they should be prepared for dialogue with other Christian and non-Christian traditions. An open, ecumenical and collaborative approach to pastoral situations is expected today. Are we preparing them for this? Further, given that our social imaginary is highly scientific and technological, some study of contemporary cosmology and the biological sciences should be included. And the ability to do social and cultural

analysis requires some study of sociology and cultural anthropology.

What Every Priest Needs to Know

All of the above recommendations are designed to help ministerial candidates communicate the Gospel in our current context. But what of the more specifically theological disciplines? We need to continue to emphasize the study of Scripture, which is the soul of theology and homiletics. More time and emphasis should be given to Catholic social teaching. Globalization and technological advances mentioned earlier have made the issues of poverty and inequality both within and between nations more urgent, as Pope Francis in “Laudato Si” has made clear. Students also need to be better prepared to confront the moral aspects of environmental degradation and the problems posed by advances in communication technologies. Less time could be spent on some doctrinal questions that were once urgent but no longer are (the relationship between grace and free will, for example, or eucharistic controversies of the 11th century), and the historical context of all theology should be stressed. Issues about globalization and inculturation are more pertinent now than even 40 years ago, especially regarding liturgy and spirituality. In the area of ecclesiology, collegiality and synodal governance remain the unfinished agenda of Vatican II.

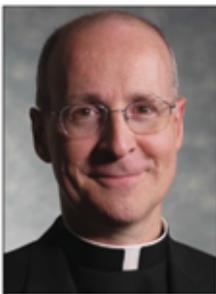
Finally, two recommendations more specific to Jesuit for-

mation, concerning sequence and place. Regency, the time young Jesuits spend in full-time apostolic work, should come right after novitiate. Although it is true that some will need more academic preparation for teaching in regency, that is increasingly less the case. I have heard some say that they left novitiate full of energy and enthusiasm to set the world on fire only to find themselves studying something whose point or purpose they did not see. Nothing is worse than dampening zeal and studying something for which you see no point. A regency experience can teach a candidate what he does and does not know and what questions he needs to pursue. And after hearing continuing complaints about the lack of coordination between first studies and theology, I would suggest that first studies should take place at the same physical location as theology to better integrate the two, and together they should not take more than five years. Again, these suggestions are made on the assumption that the program will be tailored to each individual.

All of the above recommendations can apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to ministerial candidates other than Jesuits. Finally, one of the motivations for publishing this article is the hope that it will evoke some comments and input from the people of God, the people we serve in our parishes, schools and other apostolic works. They certainly should play a role in shaping what they expect and would like to see in the future ministers in the church. ▲

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Instruments of Peace

At the height of the Cold War, on Oct. 27, 1986, Pope John Paul II invited the leaders of the world's main religions to Assisi for "a day of prayer and fasting for peace." Thirty years later, there is an even greater need to pray for peace because, as Pope Francis says, "a third world war is being fought piecemeal," and blind violence and hatred are spreading across the globe.

It is therefore significant that leaders of the different religions have agreed to come together again in Assisi on Sept. 20 to pray for peace and to renew their commitment to work together for peace. They do so as bitter conflicts are being fought not only in countries that hit the headlines, like Syria and Libya, but also in others that get little media attention, like Yemen and Sudan; these conflicts are causing a refugee crisis of a dimension not seen since World War II, involving some 60 million people.

Convened under the banner "Thirst for Peace: Religions and Cultures in Dialogue," this three-day event (Sept. 18 to 20) is organized by the Sant'Egidio Community, together with the Franciscan Families and the Diocese of Assisi. It brings together leading representatives from Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and traditional religions. They will participate in roundtable discussions regarding peace on the first two days, and on the third they will pray for it.

Pope Francis will come for that final day and join Ecumenical Patriarch

Bartholomew; the archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby; the Syro-Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, Efreem II; the Israeli chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, Meir Lau; and the head of Japan's Tendai Buddhism. There will also be a strong Muslim representation from 17 Islamic states, including Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Iman of Al-Azhar, the most authoritative Sunni Muslim center in the world.

On that day, Christians will pray at the tomb of St. Francis, while members of other religions will pray at other sites across the town. In the afternoon, they will come together in a powerful witness to the world of their joint commitment to peace.

As in Assisi in 1986, this event will highlight the vital contributions all religions are called upon to make for the promotion, building and safeguarding of peace. Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria, former president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, highlighted this call in his book *Religions for Peace* (Doubleday), published soon after the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center, by drawing attention to the fact that all religions "with admirable unanimity, teach the Golden Rule: Love your neighbor as yourself." "This," he underlined, "is a key foundation for peace."

Introducing that book, the French cardinal Paul Poupard affirmed that "each of us is either a peace maker or a peace breaker." But, he added, "fanatics and fundamentalists have no doubt given religion a bad name. Politicians, having their own hidden agendas, at times

exploit religion to fan the flames of intolerance and hatred. Such unwholesome propaganda can only boomerang, causing a spiraling effect of violence."

His words have found strong verification since then not only in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Sudan but also in European countries and even the United States, where Islamophobia is being stoked and exploited by politicians in an anti-immigrant key.

The origin of much of the violence, though not all of it, in recent years can be traced back to March 19, 2003, when, rejecting appeals from people across the globe, including John Paul II, President George W. Bush, supported by Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, launched

the war on Iraq. Immediately after handing over the pope's appeal to the president on March 5, 2003, Cardinal Pio Laghi, speaking to the press in the name of the Holy See, warned that such a war would bring "grave consequences," including "the suffering of the people of Iraq and those involved in the military operation, a further instability in the region and a new gulf between Islam and Christianity." Prophetic words! The world is still reaping the bitter fruits of that war.

Pope Francis is well aware of all this, and by coming to Assisi he is affirming yet again the urgent need for all religions to work together for peace through dialogue and to reject the use of God's name to justify violence.

GERARD O'CONNELL

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

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Finding My Anchor

In college, no longer adrift

BY MICHAELA McCLOSKEY



I have always felt connected to water. I come from a line of recreational sailors and boaters, and the anchor has often served as a symbol of my life's journey. Throughout this journey, there have been moments where I have been broken, and it is during these moments when I learned to ground myself in my spiritual anchor, God.

During my freshman year of college at the University of Michigan, the best advice I received was from my oldest brother when he dropped me off on my first day. He simply told me, "Go to church." He knew I hadn't set foot in a church since my father passed away; and he also knew that before my father's death I had attended on holidays only out of a sense of obligation. He told me that even if I didn't know where I was spiritually, taking an hour for myself once a week to sit in a quiet space would be good for my mind. So, in my first week of college I looked for a church—but not just any church, a non-Catholic church. My heart wasn't ready for Catholicism yet.

I stumbled into a worship night at Cru, an Evangelical Christian organization formerly known as Campus

MICHAELA McCLOSKEY is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan and a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Portland, Me. She spent her last year of college as an intern at her student parish and co-leader of the family faith formation program. She was a runner-up in the Generation Faith essay contest.

Crusade for Christ International. I listened as the songs kept saying, "Father," "Abba," some even referring to God as "Daddy." I hadn't said these words in months and found myself in a puddle of tears. I left the room to be in a quiet space in the hallway to let the wave of anxiety pass. One of the program leaders found me and prayed over me and asked if it was the Holy Spirit moving through me. To this day, I still haven't been able to answer that question. Was it the anxiety of dealing with issues I wanted to avoid, or was there truly a greater power revealing my heart's true desires?

Despite my inability to answer, I found myself turning to Cru's teachings as a way to start rebuilding my faith once again.

Finding My Faith

But Cru is not a church; it didn't meet the qualifications my brother asked me to fulfill on my first day. So I asked around to see where people were attending services. I wanted something uplifting that showed me my faith in a way I hadn't experienced before. So I started going to New Life regularly on Sunday mornings; their unique service times had an element of quirkiness that I identified with. I then signed up for a New Life women-only small group. There I learned to begin opening up. In this space I was able to listen earnestly and learned to talk about what was

in my heart. But despite feeling more vulnerable and open, I still could not talk about my father. I still felt it was my unique experience and pain that no one would understand. Instead I talked about ex-boyfriends, which made me more relatable; a part of me wanted to feel like less of an outsider in a group that I badly wanted to be a part of. Another part of me felt that becoming a permanent part of this group was not the best thing for me. I was not ready to "drop anchor." This would have meant that my sail was over, that I had found the friends and relationship with God I wanted. I hadn't.

Simultaneously, I was being "disciplined" by a core member of Cru who would meet me at Panera once a week to have a conversation with me about what it's like to live as a Christian and guide me through a workbook about what Christians are called to know and do. For example, the first chapter was on the "Bridge Diagram," a common tool to explain to non-Christians how Jesus is our bridge to God. These meetings always lacked something for me, as I still felt at the end of the seven weeks that I was still a "Christian fraud." I could talk and pray like the people around me, but I didn't really feel that I was living a God-centered life. I had accepted Jesus as my savior, yet I didn't truly believe this or understand what it meant.

Although I was working through these feelings, there was a gnawing feel-

ing that I had to be “fixed” to receive God’s grace. No one said God’s grace was just the beginning. Yet I stayed because the music was loud, the room was dark, and I had finally found a place I could say father again and not cry.

Hearing God’s Music

My time with Cru eventually came to an end. I completed my workbook and purchased my first Bible, which I still carry around, hoping to absorb its stories through some kind of spiritual osmosis. I began attending a small group with New Life that I had chosen because of some friendships with seniors at Michigan that developed. As classes and involvement in other organizations began to pick up, my attendance at small groups and church was declining. By the end of fall semester in my second year, I decided to give up on finding a solid group of friends I could “secure” myself to, the way an anchor secures a boat in water. I thought, Maybe I wasn’t hearing God’s call to me; maybe I’m holding other Christians back. I felt as though I was lying through my teeth with every prayer.

The winter break of 2013 gave me some time to think. I had lost sight of what was important to me; I had forgotten the importance of being anchored to God. While at home over the break I reconnected with some friends from high school; we had all been in choir together. Something about connecting with those who knew me longest and had seen my darkest moments brought me back to a familiar place. We chatted and sang songs, one of which was “Requiem” by John Rutter. The only song I could remember word for word was “The Lord Is My Shepherd.” Its marked depth and hopefulness resonated, painting a beautiful scene in my head. The line “He leads me beside still waters” draws me back in everytime. It is as if God knows what I need to hear to reconnect me to my watery roots. Imagining myself lying near a lazy river on a sunny day knowing that God is

ever present, how could I fear evil?

On New Year’s, before returning to school, I had vowed that my resolution would be to attend church every Sunday. I wanted to be intentional in doing this; I wanted something to meditate on for the week that was relevant and meaningful to my life. Again I returned to New Life, not knowing where else to go to hear God, but I was feeling anxious once again, confined in that space. My spirituality wasn’t growing any more, and I finally recognized that my spiritual waters had grown stagnant. No wind, no land, no healthy challenge to persuade me to seek out God. But this recognition provided me with the next steps.

Around this time I started dating my current boyfriend, Alex. He has been a practicing Catholic all his life. When I would visit him at Wayne State, we would attend Mass at the Newman Center. Going to Mass with him for the first time in years revealed to me that my notions about being Catholic were badly misguided. I wasn’t really angry at the church, I was angry at circumstances. The prayers, the traditions and the symbolism that I had once considered irrelevant and forgotten began flooding back. “And also with you.... I mean also with your spirit.... I mean and with your spirit”.... Oh that’s new.... Have I really been away from the Catholic Church this long? I left that first Mass and told Alex on the way back, “We should do that again.” In Ann Arbor, we were still attending New Life, but I was eager to move on. The tides were turning within me. I knew the inevitable was coming.

By my junior year at Michigan, I had seldom broken my resolution; I had only missed Sunday Mass five times. As the tides turned within me, as the sails guided me toward the faith-filled life I desired, I soon realized I had spent so much time ignoring the obvious: God, my anchor, surrounded me, everyday. He does not just exist in church, at Mass.

This became most evident to me

when I was in Kenya, when I felt the true power of God’s presence. I was never more challenged spiritually than when I was in Kakamega. Everyone praised God before they introduced themselves. I was blessed and welcomed by all, and my host mother would pray over us every dinner, uttering, “With God in my heart I can smile through the storm.”

By the time I returned to the United States, I was ready. I had asked God to prepare my heart for whatever he had in store for me. I prayed for him to meet me where I was spiritually and guide me to grow in love with him. On a breezy fall afternoon, as I innocently sought out free things from the different tables at Northfest (a collection of clubs on campus looking for new recruits), I intentionally passed by the St. Mary’s Student Parish table. Although I had reconciled with my Catholic identity, I wasn’t Catholic enough to make it part of my life on campus. But I was compelled to turn around and ask about Mass times. In that moment, my words and my body were not my own. Someone believed in me and trusted me to teach children about their own Catholic faith when I felt so infantile myself.

My faith is my own, it is authentic and growing. It is rooted in the tradition of my family, a line of Irish Catholics. It is the faith of my father and my Father. My faith does not ask me to come to the altar whole. On the contrary, it compels me to share my brokenness and be vulnerable just in this way. Life’s roughest storms prove the strength of our anchor, and I choose to anchor myself to God. I place my trust in knowing he will sail alongside me and wait patiently for me to call to him if I steer off course. He will share his love for me through genuine friendships. He will make his presence known through music. He will call on me to share my faith with others with all my imperfections. Anchor cast, I fear no storm. 

THEATER | JOE HOOVER

THROWING STONES

Lessons from 'Sinners' on a culture of repression

In the searing and timely play **Sinners**, by the Israeli playwright Joshua Sobol, a man piles up rocks for the stoning of a woman. She was convicted of adultery. He was her lover. She is next to him, covered in a white cloth and buried in the ground up to her chest.

The setting is an unnamed Muslim country; both characters are punished for their affair. She is sentenced to execution. He is condemned with preparing the means.

For the director, Brian Cox, the Scottish film and theater actor renowned for his roles ranging from King Lear to Ward Abbott in the Jason Bourne movies, the plot uncovers the roots of a host of social issues that continue to trouble humanity. They all can be traced in some basic, tectonic way to our inability to integrate our sexuality.

The social fracture within the play converges, in a certain light, with the heart of Catholic teaching on sexuality. But what the church in doctrinal fashion struggles to preach (chastity), a story can address with raw vitality. One could say there is a singular kind of magisterium inherent in a truthful work of art.

Staged in August in Hardwick, Vt., in an old wooden opera house, "Sinners" revolves around the horrific consequences of the forbidden relationship between a man and woman, Nur and Layla. Each has been trapped since a young age in an arranged marriage. Their entire lives have been controlled by other people and by their totalitarian country.

As Nur gathers the stones, the two of them argue and rage, dream of reconciliation and escape and confront the reality of her death. Both the actors (Nicole Ansari and Arash Mokhtar) and the play received strong reviews from the local press. Plans are in the making to remount the production in Boston next spring.

I spoke with Mr. Cox at his temporary residence a few miles outside of Hardwick. (I was there performing in "To Kill a Mockingbird.") The home is a converted red barn overlooking green cornfields and a hilly cow pasture, with a windmill planted at the bottom. It is like a charged particle of an element called "Vermont."

Sitting on the back patio, having recently arrived in the United States from the set of the film "Churchill," in which he plays the title role, Mr. Cox

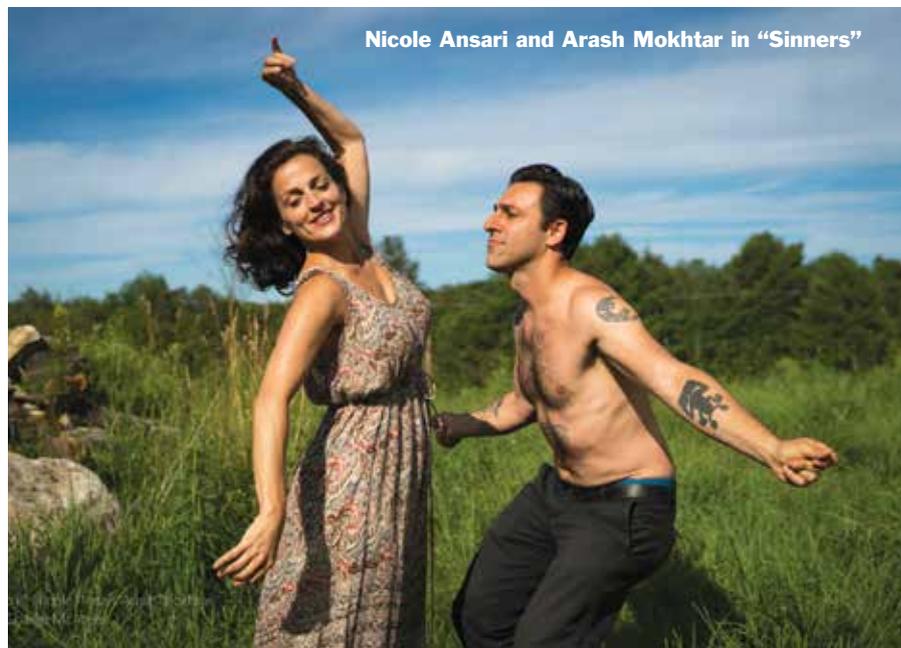
said that the core conflict in "Sinners" was the repression of sexuality in a culture. "To me it's the real root of the tragedy of the play. It's the culture, being a real hostage to the culture.... So in a way you can't be a celebrant anymore [of sexuality.] You haven't got that openness; you're damaged goods."

Sexual repression leads to sexual acting out leads to punishment by death. Tragedy begets sin begets tragedy.

In a talkback after the opening night performance, Mr. Cox described the punishment of Layla as symptomatic of the "failure of patriarchy throughout the world, where the notion of what it is to be a man is called into question."

He addressed the patriarchy in our conversation as well. "Man doesn't know who he is and what he is intended to be, and so he takes it out on women," he told me. "The reason we demonize women is because we're afraid of their sexuality. Men want it, but they fear it."

A permissive secular culture can make one a hostage to sexuality as much as a theocracy can. One society



Nicole Ansari and Arash Mokhtar in "Sinners"

possesses its women by bundling them up in burqas. Another dominates women by stripping them down and selling Axe body spray off them.

Hardwick is in northern Vermont, an hour from the Canadian border. Mr. Cox described Vermont, where half of all homicides are related to domestic violence, as the perfect place for the American premiere of the play.

Correlations are often made between sexual acting out and violence. In the arena of war-making they sometimes go hand in glove. The investigation by Army Major General Antonio M. Taguba into the Abu Ghraib prison scandal reported that the sexual abuse, torture, rape, sodomy and murder of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers was “systemic.” After Osama bin Laden was killed, his computer was found to be filled with porn.

“The culture we are in, East or West, is not an aid to any of us coming to our senses,” said Mr. Cox. “We’re so seedy about [sexuality]. We don’t examine it.”

In the play, Layla describes their nation as “a castrated giant.” The young Islamic men have been held down politically, spiritually and in their very manhood.

These men, Mr. Cox said, “are neutered, and their sense of being neutered has made them so angry that they’ve actually turned in on something.”

At this point it is worth asking a basic question: Why should we care what an actor thinks about all of these devilishly complex matters? Jihad, political repression, the catastrophe of poisoned sexuality. The very tinder to the chaos and viciousness ripping through the world. Why do we always crane our necks to hear what entertainers think?

When I met him for our interview, Mr. Cox had just come from a workout. At 70 years of age, he is a presence in any space, stout in a black T-shirt and shorts, with unkempt reddish hair and an actorly voice that could sell out

the Old Vic theater for the reading of a cake box.

Though he no longer practices the faith, he told me his Catholic upbringing and schooling by the Marist Brothers is a bedrock of his life. “I remember benediction, and I loved that. I loved all the ritual. I think that’s where my theatrical thing came from, that sense of ritual.” (Catholics always take this kind of admission as a minor victory for their side. *You left the pitch, but don’t kid yourself, you’re still wearing the uniform.*)

A Pathetic Story

Mr. Cox shared one of those pathetic stories about the Roman church that have you anxiously glancing around the room to make sure no impressionable teens or Protestants are listening. When his oldest son was born, he told me, he went to great lengths to get him baptized and was denied.

“They kept talking about my sins, and I’m going, ‘I’m not talking about me. I’m still in the middle of my dilemma, but I want to give my son a context,’” he said. “I had a wonderful context for my own life.”

Mr. Cox has been on a roll in his career, playing the lead in four movies over the past year, including “Churchill,” and in the play “Waiting for Godot.” Playing the prime minister is the kind of part one can get awards buzz for, and he hinted that he is already receiving it. He then quickly dismissed the whole concept—and not with false modesty. “It’s about practicing and...just trying to make it better. The awards ceremony, the criteria, it’s all wrong. It’s about the work. It’s always about the work.”

His work had already led him to the pinnacle of acting in 1990, when he played to acclaim King Lear at Britain’s National Theatre. Two years earlier he received an Olivier Award for his performance in the title role in “Titus Andronicus.”

A lifetime of serving as a vehicle for

Shakespeare and Beckett, or playing a figure like Churchill, gives an actor credibility when speaking on the turbulent matters of state and society. Someone like Brian Cox is worth listening to because he has embodied the most complex characters in the most beautiful and socially relevant stories ever told.

“Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws,” wrote 17th-century Scottish politician Andrew Fletcher (or Damon of Athens, depending on your source). Well-crafted stories like “Sinners” and “King Lear” can convince us of how we ought to live with greater effectiveness than any linear moral doctrine. As the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard put it, “Trust in the ability of narratives to persuade and to generate new beliefs.”

Good theology can also affirm what great stories reveal. The papal encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*,” for instance, points out the same dominating tendency in man that Mr. Cox critiques. Of all human progress, declares the document, “the most remarkable development of all is to be seen in man’s stupendous progress in the domination and rational organization of the forces of nature... over his body, over his mind and emotions, over his social life...”

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.” (Ironically enough, in “Sinners” it is the “chastity guards” who are responsible for handing down the death penalty for Layla.) It entails “the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.”

The catechism goes on to address the larger social issues at stake in human sexuality: “Chastity...also involves a cultural effort, for there is ‘an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society.’”

There are radiant truths within

these Catholic documents. And then, it seems, the darker shroud of Rome is thrown down and ruins it all.

"*Humanae Vitae*," for instance, goes on to describe why the use of artificial birth control is immoral. And virtually no one is having it. A host of church positions on gender and sexuality, in fact, are gloriously unpopular. For some, they read like a rap sheet of ecclesial crimes: the all-male priesthood, the celibate priesthood, prohibition against gay sex, condemnation of gay marriage, prohibition against divorce, against cohabitation, against birth control and so on. (And, at least in some quarters, a prohibition against baptizing Brian Cox's son.)

Arguing as to whether or not all these teachings are, in fact, somewhat heinous is beyond the scope of this article. Personally, I would rather translate the *Summa Theologiae* into Elvish than engage in a breathless debate over, say, the priestly ordination of women. I am less interested in declaring how

things should be than in reporting how they are—namely, that the very sexual repression and domination that Brian Cox and "Sinners" address, and that the Catholic Church in its doctrine speaks against, is viewed by many as reaching one of its most precise incarnations in the Catholic Church.

If you are Catholic, you know all this. The church today has little credibility to speak out on sexual issues. Fairly or not, this is the charge. What else is new? And none of this even mentions the actual, legal rap sheet against the church: the scandal of sexual abuse of children by priests.

It is worth stating again, though. Catholics believe that Christ is the very air of the universe. He is the actual matter of all that lives, the creator of the bodies we inhabit and the purest form of love ever to inhabit a body. And the church of Christ is helpless to preach about the fundamental aspect of the body, its sexuality. The irony is almost tragic.

Until the church regains its voice, perhaps it will be artists like Brian Cox and stories such as "Sinners" that, for better or worse, tell us who we are and suggest who we might be.

Then again, there is another story making the rounds, having to do with church and women and sexuality. It is a short video of Pope Francis speaking with former prostitutes. "Today," he says, standing before these women forced into sexual slavery, their bodies treated as little more than coarse playing fields, "I ask for forgiveness from all of you, for all the Christians and Catholics who abused you. And I ask forgiveness for me, for not having prayed enough for you and for this slavery."

The two-minute scene is like an old Gospel play no one has put on for years, for centuries even, so rare that you wonder if it is even real.

JOE HOOVER, S.J., an actor and playwright, is *America's* poetry editor.

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HELP YOUR BROTHERS

It was an interesting first date. A few months back, I got together for dinner with a woman I'd met at a party. She was an attractive, intelligent, successful 36-year-old, and we had a lot in common. As our entrees arrived, she asked how I had gotten involved in writing about the intersection of secular culture and faith. I cheekily told her that I'd been immersed in the former my whole life and that my connection to the latter had been formed by a deep commitment to an esoteric school of thought I had developed called "Life's Fist, My Face."

I explained a little more seriously that, in my experience, evolving beyond the religion we are taught as children to a more mature faith as adults is intimately tied to how we deal with the suffering that all of us inevitably encounter in our lives. "I completely disagree," she told me. "I don't think suffering is inevitable." I tried to clarify that this wasn't a Western, Judeo-Christian bias or a masochistic, Irish-Catholic predisposition; Buddhism also discusses suffering at great length. But she held firm to her conviction, and the debate that followed over the next 45 minutes was one of the strangest conversations I'd had in a long time. It was as if she were allergic to the notion of suffering.

I heard a similar resonance when the Gold Star father Khizr Khan rebuked Donald Trump, saying at the Democratic convention in late July, "You have sacrificed nothing." When Trump later responded, "I think I've made a lot of sacrifices. I work very, very hard," it sounded as though the

nominee did not fully understand the concept.

Have we become tone deaf to the concept of sacrifice and suffering? We live in an age in which helicopter parents measure their love in direct proportion to their ability to insulate their child from pain. That insularity can be self-imposed as well; we are all capable of endlessly distracting ourselves with our screens and getting our nourishment through highly personalized "feeds." In this ephemeral reality, I wonder if the language of suffering has become as remote and dead as Aramaic, buried under mountains of diversion and cheaply bought self-esteem.

If so, it is a tremendous loss that robs us of an essential aspect of our humanity: our ability to empathize.

It is through suffering that we are broken down and made to confront our own weakness and vulnerability. This can be a transformative moment, in which we recognize at some deeper level that we are not the center of the universe. It is a moment that either opens us up to a journey in which we move beyond ourselves to see a profound connection between our suffering and the suffering of others, or it marks the beginning of a desperate attempt to reclaim our centrality in the universe.

In light of the harshness, suspicion and demonization of our current national discourse, could it be that we are experiencing a crisis of empathy on

some level?

"In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice," wrote Viktor Frankl in *Man's Search for Meaning*. Frankl, a Viennese psychiatrist, wrote movingly about his time in Nazi concentration camps, out of which grew his own theory of psychotherapy that posits that human beings' primary motivational force in life is not pleasure (Freud) or power (Adler) but the striving to find meaning. "The true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though

it were a closed system," he wrote. For Frankl, the meaning of life is found in "the self-transcendence of human existence," which is focused outside the self. "The more one forgets himself... the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself."

The lesson that suffering was not an end in itself but that it came imbued with a sense of responsibility was brought home to me during a particularly dark time in my own life. "Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat," a Jesuit spiritual director read back to me from Luke's Gospel, "but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail." Jesus does not tell Peter that he will be spared suffering, only that he will not be alone in it. But once the tests are over, Jesus' admonition is simple and direct: "Go back and help your brothers."

Have we become tone deaf to the concept of sacrifice and suffering?



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

DEATH DEFIED

ZERO K

By Don DeLillo
Scribner. 288p \$27

Amid the apocalyptic wreckage of Nazi-occupied Warsaw in 1944, Czesław Miłosz composed “A Song of the End of the World,” a poem that poses the disappointment of “those who expected signs and archangels’ trumps” against the quiet resolve of a wise old man, diligently tying up his tomato plants and calmly repeating: “There will be no other end of the world./ There will be no other end of the world.” In *Zero K*, which takes place in contemporary Manhattan and in a seemingly timeless, state-of-the-art bunker facility in Kazakhstan, acclaimed novelist Don DeLillo highlights a similar dissonance: on the one hand, a robust embrace of violent cataclysm; on the other, a principled resistance to apocalypticism’s considerable allure. This story of a father and son drawn to the contemplation of natural and manmade conflagration—along with their own bodily degeneration and that of their loved ones—strikes a ruminative mood that contrasts their variant characters and perspectives without drawing distinctions too quickly or too starkly.

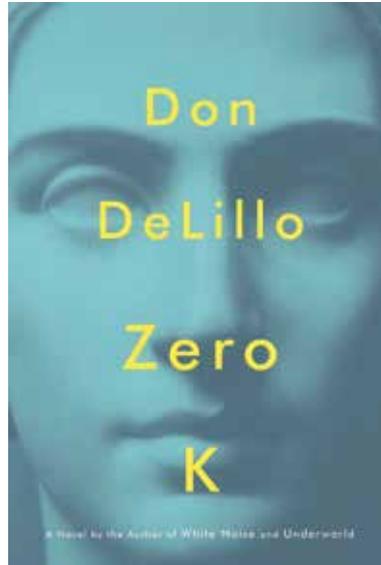
Ross Lockhart, the alpha-male father whose calibrated speculation on global disasters made him a billionaire, has invested a fortune, along with his profoundest hopes, in a cryogenics initiative promising to resurrect him and his second wife, Artis, in a distant age when humanity has transcended its violent instincts and science has overcome the effects of aging and disease. Jeffrey Lockhart, the underemployed 30-something son and narrator, grapples to understand his father and stepmother’s eccentric notions, as well as his own attitude toward the apocalyptic mindset

and the limitations of human mortality. We meet them in a remote Kazakh destination known as the Convergence, a mysterious secular monastery from which a new, post-apocalyptic humanity is to be raised up. There, a desperately ill Artis prepares to surrender to the cryogenic process, as father and son weigh scenarios of earthly calamity and consider the promise of everlasting life for once-and-future titans whose super-cooled remains lie suspended in individualized underground pods.

Whether in the sterile cocoon of the Convergence or along the animated streets of the Lockharts’ native New York, Jeffrey drives the dialogue, which is frequently an interior one. Since childhood, he has been a latter-day Descartes, impelled to a distrustful interrogation of the world around him, persistently applying his own clear and distinct definitions to each separate object he encounters. “Define tennis racket,” he commands himself. “Define rock.” This habit, along with the practice of secretly renaming the people who enter into his life, has a pathological dimension that parallels Ross’s compulsive determination to control things through his vast wealth. Yet father and son ultimately orient toward different horizons: for Ross, the impulse to exercise power leads into a comically bizarre science-fiction world constructed out of an overwrought fear of catastrophe and death, while Jeffrey’s practice of defining and renaming becomes an unexpected

route to his understanding of a mystical, “prelinguistic” sense of wonder.

This is a heady book that smartly confuses categories and distinctions. Despite a life of unsurpassed security and privilege, Ross is terrorized by a sense of insecurity and an overwhelming fear of loss—a word that tellingly rhymes with the name, we learn, he adopted for himself as a young man. At



various points, too, distinctions between art and science or representation and reality melt away. When Jeffrey surveys the meticulously shaved human bodies that resemble so many milky-white sculptures, each suspended in its own cryogenic tube, he might as well be strolling through the Greek and Roman galleries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Despite quirks and shortcomings, Jeffrey Lockhart remains firm against the fear propelling his father’s desire to end his life prematurely in the sure hope of rising up in a body glorified by scientific engineering. More than once, we return to Jeffrey’s memory of himself attending the deathbed of his mother, Madeline, lovingly lingering over the details of the scene as she succumbs to the devastating effects of a stroke. What Jeffrey learned from her, he says, is that “ordinary moments make the life,” not the catastrophe that we humans experience—or imagine we will one day experience.

With its strong attraction to the apocalyptic, our own contemporary cultural moment could benefit from this point of view.

JAMES P. McCARTIN is director of the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture in New York City.

LUKE HANSEN

AMERICAN JUSTICE?

GUANTÁNAMO DIARY

By Mohamedou Ould Slahi

Edited by Larry Siems

Little, Brown and Company. 381p \$29

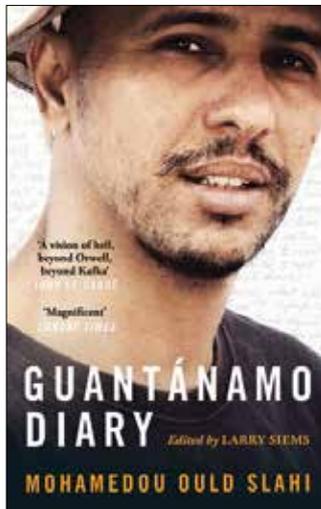
In February, when President Barack Obama submitted his plan to Congress to finally shutter the military prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, he reiterated his basic motivation: national security. He said the prison is used as a recruiting tool for terrorists, harms our relationships with allies and “drains military resources.” Based on the 2015 expenses of running the prison camps, the current cost to imprison a man for one year in Guantánamo Bay is \$5.6 million. By transferring the remaining 76 prisoners to either other countries or a maximum-security facility on U.S. soil, the Obama administration predicts savings of \$1.7 billion over 20 years.

These factors, no doubt, are compelling and urgent. But they notably overlook the human rights abuses of torture and indefinite detention and the human beings most immediately affected by these policies and practices. *Guantánamo Diary*, an unprecedented and historic book, the first written by a current prisoner in Guantánamo Bay, is an essential contribution to the debate over the legacy of the prison—and its future. The author, Mohamedou Ould Slahi, from the North African country of Mauritania, arrived at the prison in 2002, has never been charged with a crime and won a federal court

decision in 2010 but remains imprisoned to this day.

Each prisoner’s story is unique. Mr. Slahi’s, like many others, might surprise the reader as it challenges the popular notion about who is held in Guantánamo. This book provides an exemplary case study in how a network of connections, associations and accusations as well as torture and weak evidence could land a man in Guantánamo Bay who had no connection to the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and never had any interest in fighting against the United States. It is an inside story of one of the ugliest chapters in post-Sept. 11 America—a chapter still being written today.

Mr. Slahi became the first in his fam-



At the Edge of the Mississippi

After years of watching a brick-lined horizon,
I returned to the river’s tattered body, listened
for a murmur to surface, to remind me
that hope once abandoned can be regained.

There were no flowers along the riverbank,
no ducks resting in the mud, only a shadow
cast by the highway overpass and some crows
scurrying about the sidewalk for crumbs.

What might have been a prayer
was a boat gurgling in the distance,
and the murky water veiled those pleas
the history books obscure as when numbers

steal prisoners’ names. I waited to see
if spirits would make themselves known

ANNA ELIZABETH SCHMIDT

Anna Elizabeth Schmidt is a doctoral candidate in American studies at Saint Louis University and also has an M.F.A. in poetry from Eastern Washington University. Her poems have appeared in Dappled Things, Penumbra and Pilgrimage and elsewhere.

in the metronome of water carving land,
but the river remained a river, nothing more.

I scooped a handful of sand, rubbed it
between my palms until they chafed.
I held a stone like ice to my lips and sank
my feet into the silt until they numbed.

I wish I could say the gestures changed me,
or that the city was made whole for a moment
by this act of veneration, in my willingness to hold
the river as a sacramental in a penitent’s hand.

Turning from the water, I saw a police caravan
block several downtown streets without fanfare.
The silence spread its smoke between buildings
and clung to my skin a stench I could not shake.

ily to attend college when he received a scholarship to study in Germany. He momentarily left his studies to join the U.S.-supported fight against the communist government in Afghanistan, which forbade the practice of Islam. Once the government fell, Mr. Slahi returned to Germany, as he had no interest in fighting other Muslims. Later, when Al Qaeda wanted to wage war against the United States, he said he had “nothing to do” with that effort. “I didn’t join them in this idea,” he said.

In 2000, when Mr. Slahi lived in Toronto, U.S. authorities questioned him twice about the so-called Millennium Plot to bomb the Los Angeles International Airport. Just 18 days after Sept. 11, back in Mauritania, he was detained and questioned by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and again released. In November 2001, he drove to the local police station for further questioning. This time he never returned home. The United States rendered him to Jordan for nearly eight months, Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan for two weeks and finally Guantánamo Bay, where he has been held since Aug. 5, 2002.

Larry Siems, the writer and human rights activist who edited the memoirs, writes, “I have, I believe, read everything that has been made public about his case, and I do not understand why he was ever in Guantánamo in the first place.”

Mr. Slahi’s memoirs, 466 pages handwritten in the summer of 2005, detail the “special projects interrogation” that he endured from 2002 to 2004. The diaries are presented in three sections: rendition, pre-torture and post-torture. Mr. Slahi experienced months of extreme isolation, threats to his family, death threats to himself, a mock kidnapping and a host of other physical and psychological abuses and sexual humiliations. John Le Carré, author of *A Delicate Truth*, has called *Guantánamo Diary* “a vision of hell, beyond Orwell, beyond Kafka.”

Americans are constantly told that these men are trained to lie, especially about their treatment in U.S. custody, but Mr. Slahi’s detailed claims about his brutal torture were later verified by the U.S. Justice Department and a U.S. Senate committee. Repeatedly in *Guantánamo Diary* the editor footnotes the documentary evidence that corroborates the story told by Mr. Slahi. A military prosecutor, Lt. Col. V. Stuart Couch, found the evidence of torture in this case so problematic and conflicting with his deeply held Christian convictions that he withdrew from the case and refused to cooperate with any effort to prosecute him.

Everything Mr. Slahi wrote during that summer was immediately classified. It took six years for attorneys to litigate and negotiate the declassification of the memoirs. One unique feature of *Guantánamo Diary* is the presence of more than 2,600 black-bar redactions. On two occasions, more than five pages of text are entirely blacked

out. Mr. Siems, the editor, helps the reader through footnotes that explain redacted information when it is available elsewhere in the manuscript or in another public record. The best-selling book has now appeared in 22 languages in 25 countries.

Guantánamo Diary belongs in a canon of great social justice memoirs not only for the unique context in which the story was written but also for its power and eloquence. Consider the circumstances. A man from Mauritania wins a prize to study in Germany, becomes an electrical engineer, knows four languages, is a gifted writer and he is rendered, tortured and held for years. The writing has color, texture, vivid description and emotional vulnerability. At one point, Mr. Slahi admits: “I cried from the pain. Yes, a man my age cried silently. I just couldn’t bear the agony.” He showed desperation for signs of hope, human contact and relationships, for some relief to the abuse and pain.

The story consistently defies any

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simplistic, monolithic view of the men in Guantánamo. It reveals their humanity and complexity. In this way, it adds to the legacy of *Guantánamo Poems* (University of Iowa Press, 2007).

"I have only written what I experienced, what I saw, and what I learned first-hand," Mr. Slahi writes. "I have tried not to exaggerate, nor to understate. I have tried to be as fair as possible, to the U.S. government, to my brothers, and to myself." The fact that he seeks fairness—and achieves it—for a government that has unjustly imprisoned him for more than 14 years is a testament to his character and commitment.

Will Mr. Slahi ever leave Guantánamo? That day could be imminent. On July 14, a board of senior security officials determined by consensus that continuing to detain Mr. Slahi "is no longer necessary to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States." The board cited his "highly compliant behavior in detention," "candid responses to the Board's questions" and his "robust and realistic plan for the future."

At the hearing in early June, a former guard in Guantánamo Bay submitted a letter on behalf of Mr. Slahi that supported his release. The guard writes that he expected to find the "worst of the worst," "angry and brutal men" in Guantánamo Bay, but his experience with Mr. Slahi was "nothing of the sort." The guard described him as "polite, friendly, and respectful" and able to "maintain a good sense of humor despite his surroundings." Most significantly, the U.S. soldier testified, "Based on my interactions with Mr. Slahi while in Guantánamo, I would be pleased to welcome him into my home."

Guantánamo Diary is an opportunity to welcome his story into your home.

LUKE HANSEN, S.J., a former associate editor of *America*, is a student at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, Berkeley, Calif. Twitter: @lukehansensj.

FRANK FREEMAN

THE EYE OF LOVE

POLITICS OF THE PERSON AS THE POLITICS OF BEING

by David Walsh
Notre Dame Press. 312p \$39

The central insight of David Walsh's book is that "...the person is transcendence, not only as an aspiration, but also as his or her very reality. Nothing is higher. That is what this book strives to acknowledge." Walsh, professor of politics at Catholic University of America, proposes that the change that overcame philosophy around the time Descartes declared his "I think therefore I am"—the shift from metaphysics, or the study of being as being, to epistemology, the study of knowledge or how we know—is, overall, a good thing that has veered off course by focusing on the autonomy of persons rather than their ultimate value.

Walsh admires the work of Kant, along with that of Martin Buber, Nietzsche and Heidegger, among many others. Which is what makes this book a surprise for one trained in scholastic philosophy. After all, hasn't personalism been done before? Mounier, Marcel and Maritain, led the way after World War I. Yet, Walsh maintains, they never managed "to engage the intellectual mainstream" because they mistook "the wish for the fulfillment" and never dove into a "more sustained reflection on the philosophical transformation that was sought."

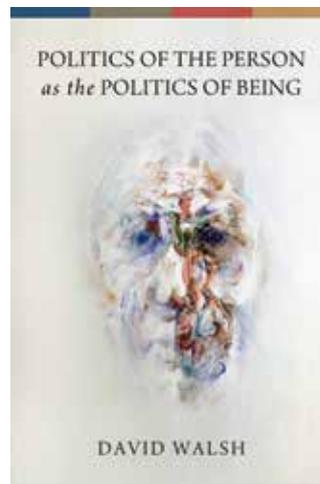
Thus the idea of autonomy stole the show and led to philosophers like Peter Singer saying that persons, espe-

cially infants, are expendable. Echoing Buber, Walsh responds, "The other must always be a Thou if he or she is to escape being an It." And so he endeavors to push personalism past mere advocacy into the realm of development and discovery.

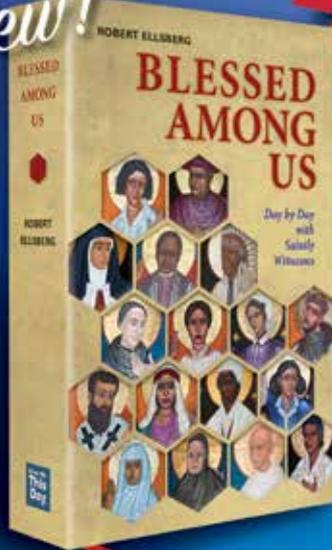
He does this by describing his vision of personalism in chapters devoted to personalism itself, morality, reality and science, God, art, history and politics. In these chapters Walsh reiterates his definition of the person as something transcendental—"transparent" like God, but not God.

The two chapters that stood out for this reader were on morality and art. The chapter on morality is titled, in Nietzschean parlance, "Persons as Beyond Good and Evil." Walsh admires "the great iconoclast" because "Nietzsche's critique of conventional morality was at root a moral critique." Also: "Nietzsche has an unflinching ear for the humbug that crept into the most well-meaning exhortations to goodness. And he never failed to expose it." Nietzsche reminds us that life is "an unending struggle" and that truth should be "integral to moral discourse." Persons, Walsh says, are beyond good and evil because they are always struggling to move toward one or the other, not because good and evil don't exist.

Kant described "this dynamic as a mysterious unfathomability that has not been well served through its identification with the notion of autonomy," for since we have labeled what it is to be human as autonomy, then "the vitality of the moral life is arrested." In other words, "Autonomy overflows into



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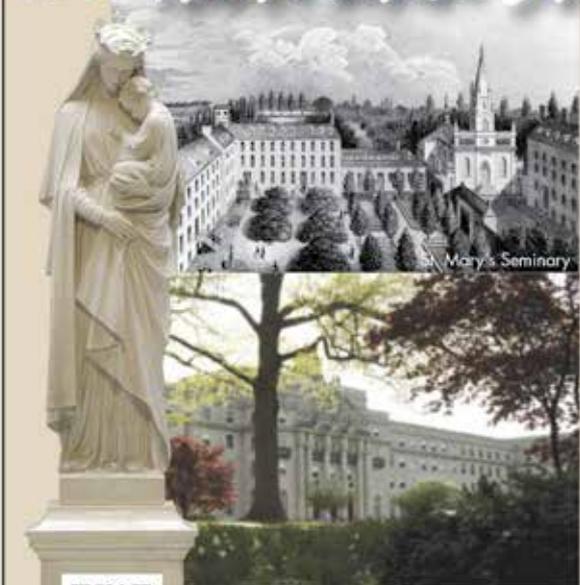


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a metaphysics of the person...autonomy is itself overturned in the direction of the personal horizon with which it unfolds." Everything must be looked at remembering who is doing the looking.

The chapter on art is titled, "Art as the Radiance of Persons in Reality" and is itself a radiant exposition. Walsh begins by noting that the category of "art" did not really exist until modern times; previously, art was always in service of something else, usually "religion and power." Because of the decline of religion, "art and science have been released from all oversight but their own." This has led to advances in both, yet also "a decline in accessibility." Walsh describes how art should be radiant with truth and ends the chapter with his own philosophical paean:

All of reality is therefore one gigantic metaphor of the person, the disclosure of what cannot be disclosed that can nevertheless be glimpsed with the eye of love. The astonishment before the cosmos is the same as the astonishment before the human heart, for they are continuous as the astonishment within which the person dwells. Art lives within that irruption. It attests to the life beyond life that is the source of life.

Politics of the Person as the Politics of Being is a dense and difficult read, but also very rewarding. In trying to describe the indescribable astonishment that each person is, Walsh keeps alive the idea of philosophy not only as linguistic analysis but also as the seeking of wisdom and truth.

FRANK FREEMAN writes from Saco, Me.
Twitter: @FrankBFreeman.

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What Disciples Do

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), OCT. 2, 2016

Readings: Hb 1:2-3, 2:2-4; Ps 95:1-9; 2 Tm 1: 6-14; Lk 17:5-10

“We have done only what we ought to have done” (Lk 17:10)

There are two parts to today’s Gospel reading from Luke, which readers sometimes struggle to connect. In one, the apostles ask for faith from Jesus (17:5-6); the other is a parable about a master and slaves that is found only in Luke’s Gospel. They are connected by more than just proximity, but understanding each of these passages on its own terms allows us to understand how the two parts fit together.

In Luke’s Gospel, much of Jesus’ teaching of the apostles takes place while they are on their way to Jerusalem to fulfill a destiny the disciples struggle to comprehend. As they are on the road, the apostles grasp that they are lacking something, and they ask the Lord, “Increase our faith!” At least that is one possible rendering of their request. The Greek (*prosthes hēmin pistin*) can be translated literally “add faith to us,” which could indeed mean “give us more faith than we already have” or “give us faith, since we are lacking it.”

Jesus’ answer implies they lack faith, since he says that all they need is a little faith, a mustard seed-sized amount, to perform astounding feats. But François Bovon, the late Swiss biblical scholar, says in his commentary (*Gospel of Luke*, Vol. II, pg. 496 ff.) that what Jesus wants is a “living and active faith (resulting from faith),” for “to have faith

is tantamount to entering into God’s domain—and everything is possible for God. What is more, when divine power is given to human beings, it is always tied to a mission.” What is at issue is not so much “a little” faith or “a lot” of faith but a genuine faith that is in tune with the mission of God’s kingdom. If the disciples would allow their faith to grow, the things that could be done for the kingdom would be miraculous, momentous and mind-blowing.

What seems like a sudden shift from a discussion of the nature of faith to the parable of the master and slaves actually makes sense. If Jesus’ disciples have faith, it will grow to do miraculous things, and this faith is enacted in God’s kingdom by what the disciples do. What they do seems far from miraculous, but Bovon sees this parable as having “allegorical coloration” grounded in the life of the church.

Bovon notes that the verb *diakoneō* (“to serve”) calls to mind table service, while the verb *poimainō* (“to tend sheep”) describes a major function of Christian ministers from antiquity to today. The word *agros* (“field”) denotes the world, the missionary field of the disciples, and plowing “refers to the spreading of the word of God.” The “allegorical coloration” does not stop there, for Bovon sees the tasks of the slaves in the house, who care for the food and the drink, as suggestive of the Eucharist and service within the church.

“The tasks carried out inside the house (for the edification of the community) are, moreover, the indispensable complement to activity on the outside, in the fields (the evangelization of the world).” Their service to the church and the world is modeled on the service that their master Jesus offers to them and to the world. The apostles are expected to carry out their tasks, plowing and serving, without expecting admiration or adulation. Yet even when this service has been completed, Jesus calls the slaves in this parable “worthless” (*achreios*). This Greek adjective can also be translated as “useless,” “unusable,” “good for nothing” or “dispensable.” How can this be?

The shocking language of “worthless” disciples—I



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Ponder the Gospel passage. Have you asked for your faith to increase? How have you experienced your faith growing? How have you responded to faith by working for the kingdom in the house and in the field?

find it shocking every time I read it—might indicate that performing one’s duty does not guarantee salvation. But it is more likely that we are being instructed that we cannot save ourselves; regardless of what we do and accomplish, it is God who saves us. Faith is essential to enter into “God’s domain,” as Bovon puts it, but it is God who graces us with faith. Once we enter the kingdom, we respond to that faith through the work that we do, but it is God who has empowered us to accomplish our tasks. Boasting is excluded: “We have done only what we ought to have done!”

JOHN W. MARTENS

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



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