

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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**Pope Francis**

THE EXCLUSIVE  
INTERVIEW

# OF MANY THINGS

Organizations as old as **America** rarely do anything completely unprecedented. For every “new” idea, there’s a pretty good chance that it’s been done before, in one way or another, during the course of 104 years of weekly publishing. This issue of **America**, however, is truly a first.

While we have always been committed, “on a wide and varied field of subjects,” as one of my predecessors put it, “to the principles enunciated by the Popes, the Vicars of Christ, and in the major statements of the American hierarchy,” **America** has never before been primarily responsible for conveying the words of a pope to an American audience. The fact that the current pope is a Jesuit is not irrelevant, of course, and neither is the fact that this interview is being simultaneously published by our fellow Jesuit journals in the world’s other major languages.

The situation is so unusual, however, that it might be helpful to know how it came about. As with a lot of things, it began with an innocent, offhand remark. James Martin, S.J., **America**’s editor at large, and I were catching up in my office a few weeks after the election of Pope Francis. We were talking generally about our editorial approach to the new papacy when Father Martin said, “Why don’t we try to interview the pope?” I gave it three seconds of thought and said, “Yes, why not?”

An interview seemed unlikely and would be unprecedented, but we had just lived through six weeks of unlikely and unprecedented events. We briefly discussed how to approach the matter and started to ask around, conferring with Jesuit colleagues in Washington, D.C., and Rome. They all suggested that we contact Federico Lombardi, S.J., the pope’s spokesperson. Father Lombardi responded with his customary alacrity and aplomb and told us that in general the pope doesn’t like to do interviews, but that perhaps he could ask the pope our questions during a press conference

and that could be a kind of “interview.”

Around this time, we learned that our colleagues at *Civiltà Cattolica*, the Jesuit journal edited in Rome, were now also interested in conducting an interview. We concluded that their proximity to the pope, as well as the fact that all content in *Civiltà* must be pre-approved by the Vatican, made them the ideal partner. Antonio Spadaro, S.J., of *Civiltà*, then approached Father Lombardi on behalf of both of our journals, and Pope Francis consented to the interview.

At the annual meeting of the editors of major Jesuit journals in Lisbon in late spring, the decision was made to include the Jesuit journals from the other major language groups. We also settled on a format. The editors of each of the journals would submit questions to Father Spadaro, who would collate and organize them and then pose them to the pope in an in-person interview. Once Father Spadaro had transcribed the interview and edited it for clarity and length, he personally reviewed the text with the pope, who approved it for publication. **America** then commissioned a team to translate the text into English. And the rest, as they say, is history.

I leave it to you to judge the pope’s remarks in these pages, but I’d like to suggest one way of reading the interview. Other popes have given interviews, of course, and while they have been insightful and often spirited, they have also been didactic and formal. I suspect that this interview, along with the pope’s extended remarks on the return trip from Rio de Janeiro last July, represent a new genre of papal communication, one that is fraternal rather than paternal. A spirit of generosity, humility and, dare I say, deep affection is evident in these pages. To put it another way, there is no hint here of the monarchical, preconciliar papacy. Pope Francis speaks to us as our brother; his *we* actually means “we,” not “I.”

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

# America

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*Cover:* Pope Francis at a meeting with the Vatican diplomatic corps in the Apostolic Palace’s Sala Regia on March 22. CNS photo/Tony Gentile, Reuters.

# CONTENTS



## MINISTRY

### 15 A BIG HEART OPEN TO GOD

A conversation with Pope Francis

*Antonio Spadaro*

### 39 IS REFORM POSSIBLE?

Historical and theological perspectives on the Roman Curia

*John W. O'Malley*

## COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

### 4 Current Comment

### 5 Editorial The Pope's Progress

### 6 Reply All

### 8 Signs of the Times

### 12 Column Trouble in Tanzania *Michael Rossmann*

### 54 The Word A Little Faith

*John W. Martens*



## BOOKS & CULTURE

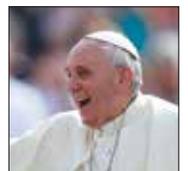
### 43 **FILM** Catching up with Tim Burton's "Big Fish"

**OPINION** "Who Am I to Judge?" **BOOKS** *The Catholic Labyrinth; The Powers; A Disease in the Public Mind*



## ON THE WEB

Jesuit editors talk about the interview with **Pope Francis** on our podcast. Plus, links to the original **Italian text** and the interview in **e-book format**. All at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).



### Solidarity 101

You may have heard about Fight for 15, an effort to raise minimum wages for fast-food restaurant workers. But there is another class of worker, located in a perhaps unexpected labor sector, that has also recently been agitating for better treatment and union recognition: adjunct professors.

Forty years ago more than 70 percent of college and university classes were taught by full-time academics who enjoyed good pay, benefits and, most coveted of all, tenure or at least a shot at it. Only about 30 percent of classes were led by adjuncts. Now those percentages have flipped, and there is little indication that the nation's universities and colleges are interested in reversing that trend. It is not hard to figure out why. The wages and treatment of adjuncts vary widely, but many string together classes at one or more institutions without a hope of tenure track, job benefits or adequate pay. Compensation can be shockingly low, as little as \$2,000 per course, though one survey reports a national average of \$2,987.

The upsurge in union activism offers institutions of higher learning an opportunity to reconsider their reliance on adjuncts and the ethics of their working conditions.

In May, Georgetown University accepted the establishment of a union for its adjuncts. Unfortunately, other Catholic colleges have taken a course of resistance, even hiding behind religious liberty arguments when investigators from the National Labor Relations Board have come knocking. They might rather review their copies of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* and reread what Popes Leo XIII, John Paul II and Benedict XVI had to say about the treatment of workers and the important role of unions and collective bargaining. This is a test Catholic institutions especially should not fail.

### A Tragi-Comic Opera

"They are treating me like a common criminal," Silvio Berlusconi, 77, the four-time prime minister of Italy, raged earlier this month. In August Italy's highest court had found Il Cavaliere (the Knight) guilty of tax evasion and imposed a four-year sentence. But that conviction was not the end of the enduring comic opera of Italian politics throughout the Berlusconi era.

Even though his sentence may be reduced to one year of house arrest or community service, Mr. Berlusconi must give up his Senate seat, and with it his immunity, as a result of the Severino law, passed in 2012. The new law, supported originally by Mr. Berlusconi's party, states that anyone holding political office who has been sentenced to

more than two years of jail loses his or her position. Until now Mr. Berlusconi has appeared to be immune from sexual scandals, business fraud and "attempted political assassination," as he put it. His smile, wiliness and savvy sufficiently charmed the electorate.

The Italian reality, however, is that Mr. Berlusconi's party is threatening to leave the coalition government if some exception is not made for the lead actor in this melodrama. A parliamentary committee of 23 lawmakers will decide Mr. Berlusconi's future.

This potential crisis has drawn consternation from the European Union, which fears that a political collapse in Italy could trigger another round of economic crises. Concerns about a political collapse of the current Italian government are misplaced. Italy is resilient. It has had 46 governments since 1945. If the last act of this comic opera results in the departure from the stage of Il Cavaliere, Italy can move forward with genuine political, social and economic reform.

### Understanding the Poor

Individuals mired in poverty face many challenges as they seek to better their lives. Failing public transit systems make it difficult for them to travel to work. A scarcity of affordable child care leads many to stay home rather than look for a job. Deteriorating public housing pushes young people out of their homes and onto the streets.

Now new evidence points to another challenge for people who are poor: the cognitive demands of poverty itself. According to a study published in the journal *Science*, individuals who are poor are constantly thinking about how to make the most of a dollar; as a result, other decisions they make in their lives—whether about parenting or diet—are impaired. Farmers, for example, performed better on cognitive tests after a harvest than before a harvest because the profits provided a financial and mental cushion.

These findings are detailed for the lay reader in the new book *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much*, by Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir. Their research should finally put to rest the misguided notion that people are poor mainly because of low intelligence or a poor work ethic rather than the conditions in which they live. Their work should also help advance public policy. The more we know about the conditions and stresses that poor people face, the better positioned we will be to lend them a hand. Christian ministers have long held that helping the poor must begin as an exercise in empathy. It is encouraging to see the behavioral sciences build upon this moral insight.

# The Pope's Progress

It is with both caution and charity that we set out to assess the first months of the papacy of Pope Francis. Six months is not a long time in the church, and it seems unfair to evaluate an individual's achievements after so short a period. We are also aware that as a Jesuit journal we have a special relationship to the first Jesuit pope, who kindly agreed to allow **America** to print in this issue the English translation of his interview with Jesuit journals from around the world. Yet St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, calls us to look back over our lives to discern the fruits of the Spirit. In this spirit, we look at the gifts Pope Francis has bestowed upon the church.

We begin, as St. Ignatius recommends, with gratitude. We are thankful to Pope Francis for embracing his role as pope with a "big heart open to God." The joy he takes in his ministry is abundantly evident. Called by his brother cardinals to the Petrine office, he took up his new role with surprising energy. His heart was open to the workings of the Spirit, and he has in many ways been transformed. The pope offers a lesson to Christians of all ages: always be free enough to answer God's call, as the fishermen did by the Sea of Galilee.

Pope Francis' style has proved to be both simple and profound. By riding in a modest car and living in an unadorned apartment, he sends a clear message: material possessions are fleeting. Choose to attach yourself to God, not the things of this world. By reaching out to workers at the Vatican and calling upon ordinary Catholics in moments of crisis, he lives out the Lord's command to love our neighbor. These have always been the messages of Jesus Christ, but they need to be presented again in every generation. Pope Francis has been wonderfully adept at calling us to these Christian principles. He has won over many disaffected Catholics, and his words of compassion for the suffering, for gays and lesbians, and for unbelievers have already reshaped the image of the church in the world.

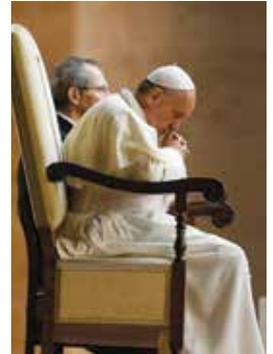
The pope has also embodied a refreshingly collegial style. By publicly seeking the counsel of eight cardinals, whose report on church reform is due in October, Pope Francis put his trust in the wisdom of his brother bishops. He seems to know where his gifts lie and where he can profit from the assistance of his colleagues in ministry. He is, to use a term from St. Ignatius, "indifferent," "poised like a scale at equilibrium" as he considers his options. Whether the issue at hand is the viability of the Vatican Bank or the workings

of various Curial offices, the pope does not come across as attached to any one plan of action, but to what best advances the work of Christ in today's world.

Pope Francis has not shrunk from assuming an international profile as the world debates the morality of war. His vigil for peace in Syria drew an estimated 100,000 people to St. Peter's Square, where the pope sat with them in prayer for hours. "Is it possible to walk the path of peace?" the pope asked. "Can we get out of this spiral of sorrow and death? Can we learn once again to walk and live in the ways of peace? Invoking the help of God, under the maternal gaze of the *Salus Populi Romani*, Queen of Peace, I say: Yes, it is possible for everyone!" At a time of increased militarism around the world, the pope is putting the church forward as an unwavering advocate for peace. Today, when violence tears at the fabric of so many societies, this is the prophetic role the church is called upon to play.

Finally, the pope has displayed a steadfast commitment to the poor. He has reached out to families in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro and migrants on the Italian island of Lampedusa. While built on such personal encounters, his witness extends to a substantive critique of the economic and social structures that divide our society into rich and poor. The pope's bracing words that the "golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money" made many people uncomfortable. That is as it should be. It is clear from his interview elsewhere in these pages that Pope Francis has developed a deep spirituality over many years in ministry, learning from his mistakes and seeking counsel from his brothers and sisters in Christ. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his radical embrace of the poor.

Pope Francis has been subject to mostly gentle criticism thus far. Some had hoped for more lay involvement in a reform process that now includes only eight prelates. Others have noted that Pope Francis' winning style and instinct for collaboration may not be enough, on their own, to bring about necessary changes in the Curia. These questions are worth exploring, but we should be careful not to burden the pope by placing in him all of our hopes for the flourishing of the church in the world. He would be the first to remind us that the work of Christ begins with us and that our hope rests in God alone.



POPE FRANCIS PRAYS AS HE LEADS VIGIL FOR PEACE IN SYRIA ON SEPT. 7 IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE. ONE'S PHOTO/PAUL HARRING

## REPLY ALL

### Letters Versus Articles

Re “Of Many Things,” by Matt Malone, S.J. (8/12): It seems clear enough that publications like **America** must find new ways of sustaining themselves in this age of digitized information and opinion, but Father Malone’s suggestion that readers can now be “active co-creators of content” in some revolutionary new way carries dangerous overtones to me.

For most publications, and certainly for **America**, readers have always been “content” providers by their letters. But we understood that such material was rawer than that of the content acquired and edited through the careful processes of the staff. Readers trust that a better quality of both information and opinion will come through the authors listed on the contents page than in the letters section. We may be stimulated, even enriched, by new insights, passion

and contrasting viewpoints from reader letters, but all of that is serendipitous. What we depend upon is the vision and the respect for truth and informed opinion that the publication’s editorial staff provides issue after issue. That is the bedrock experience we pay for.

I realize that these are very difficult times in journalism. Everyone is struggling to find new business models for a new world of communication. Let’s not panic and forget the fundamental task of helping people make sense of the world, day by day, week by week. Certainly continue to give readers a voice, but please keep us a secondary chorus in the professionally vetted stream of “content” provided by the editors.

FRANK WESSLING  
*Davenport, Iowa*

### A Peaceful Iran

Thank you for “Making Peace With Iran” (Editorial, 8/12). A war with Iran is absolutely unnecessary, for every piece of evidence indicates that

Iran will not engage in a first-strike attack on its neighbors, Israel or the United States.

First, Iran has not attacked any country for centuries, including the last 34 years of Islamic rule. Second, the Iranian government is not that radical, as evidenced by the fact that today’s Iran is a vibrant modern state with a highly educated public, including women. Third, Iranian people have no appetite for foreign adventures by their government. That’s why in the last election the candidate who promoted peaceful coexistence got by far the largest percentage of votes. Finally, the Iranian government is neither stupid nor suicidal. It knows well that an attack on its neighbors, Israel or the United States will bring its own destruction.

So let’s build on the common ground that exists between Iran and the United States and avoid a destructive war.

NEEMA NOURIAN  
*Fairfield, Ohio*

### Protecting the Innocent

Re “A Protected Rite?” by Helen Costigane, S.H.C.J. (8/12): While I believe the vast majority of Catholics and even the general public respect the seal of confession, the revelations of these past dozen years on sexual abuse by priests have torn away at this.

I respect the seal immensely. As a young and naïve priest, I even stopped testifying in a custody hearing because I wanted to preserve that integrity. I surely had definite thoughts about who would be the better parent, but was conscious I had heard the confessions of both parties.

Now as a parent, and having counseled victims of abuse by priests, I surely believe that “what would Jesus do” would not allow an innocent to suffer in order to uphold some false integrity imputed to this ritual. “Choose where you allow yourself to tremble,” but I would rather face God

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knowing that a disclosure protected an innocent person rather than shielded a guilty person whose “contrition” may be accepted by God. The person should not be abetted by upholding the sacrament.

DAVID E. PASINSKI  
Fayetteville, NY

### **Priestly Obligation**

Cardinal George Pell, the archbishop of Sydney, reportedly said: “If the priest knows beforehand about such a situation [of child abuse], the priest should refuse to hear the confession; that would be my advice. I would never hear the confession of a priest who was suspected of such a thing.”

Cardinal Pell recognizes that an unjust law that violates religious freedom should not be obeyed. He should also recognize and tell his priests that the law should be disobeyed by hearing such a confession regardless of the possible consequences, including criminal prosecution of the confessors. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: “Priests must encourage the faithful to come to the sacrament of Penance and must make themselves available to celebrate this sacrament each time Christians reasonably ask for it” (No. 1464).

T. GAVIN KING  
Claremore, Okla.

### **Confession in Mass**

I am a semi-retired Lutheran pastor. I read with great interest “A Protected Rite?” We Lutherans sometimes minimize the importance of individual confession to a pastor, but Martin Luther advocated it and even wrote liturgies to be used in its celebration. The “Word” of absolution spoken by the pastor is considered more important than the completeness of the confession and is in fact recognized as one of the means of grace. And we fully respect the confidentiality of the confession. Lutheran pastors would be just as upset as Catholic priests about having to report what is said to them.

But we Lutherans also acknowledge that the pastor’s collective absolution following the people’s collective general confession at the beginning of the liturgy also has the status of “Word” and is also a means of grace.

Perhaps the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church should consider conferring full sacramental status upon the collective confession and absolution that occurs during the Penitential Rite of the Mass. That way, there would be nothing for the priest to report. The confessing people would be fully absolved. And of course those who wished would still have the option of individual confession and absolution to meet their spiritual needs.

ROGER NEWTON  
Philadelphia, Pa.

### **‘America’ and Justice**

In addressing a critical issue, “Kerry’s Mideast Gamble” (Web-only article), Kevin Clarke correctly notes the increasing isolation of Israel on the international stage, the need to include the people of Gaza in negotiations and the harm to Israel from its continuing occupation and building of settlements in the West Bank.

Missing are any references to justice, international law and the need to change the framework of failed peace talks over the past two decades. Also missing is a discussion of Palestinian suffering under occupation, in the siege of Gaza and in diaspora refugee camps.

**America** should stand on the side of justice. It should ask why the United States should act as broker for these talks when it starts from a position of bias for one side. The United States invariably takes the side of Israel in United Nations votes (often in opposition to the vast majority of member states), and it provides Israel with some \$8 mil-

lion in aid daily, even as our government cuts social programs for Americans.

As talks continue and as Israel continues to announce more settlement plans, America will have many opportunities to address this issue again. I hope you will use these to speak for justice and to provide a fuller context for readers.

ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER  
Portland, Ore.

*The writer is on the board of trustees for Friends of Sabeel—North America.*

### **Prayerful Intervention**

Re “Peaceful Intervention” (Editorial, 7/15): Powerful and effective peaceful intervention for Syria, Egypt and the world begins with each of us in humble prayer on our knees. This is the least (or perhaps the most important thing) we can do for our sisters and brothers who share our faith but not our freedom.

By joining our hearts in prayer with them we help them to have hope and rejoice that God is in control even though it may not appear that way. Let us be faithful to remember to pray with them and for them.

CAMILLE SCHARDON  
New Braunfels, Tex.

### **Manhattan Declaration**

Many thanks to **America** for publishing “Beyond the Fortnight,” by Archbishop William E. Lori (7/1). My copy arrived in plenty of time for it to be used in my homily on July Fourth and distributed to parishioners.

One thing puzzles me, though: the silence regarding the Manhattan Declaration, so relevant and inspiring in this matter. This remarkable statement seems to have vanished as far as **America**, our archdiocesan newspaper and others are concerned.

HARRY E. WINTER, O.M.I.  
St. Paul, Minn.

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SYRIA

## U.S. Bishops Join Pope in Peace Campaign, Urge More Dialogue

**U**.S. and Russian negotiators hammered out a deal on the cataloging, securing and disposal of Syria's 1,000 tons of chemical weapons on Sept. 14, side-stepping a confrontation with the regime of President Bashar al-Assad that could have ended with a U.S. missile strike. The question now is whether or not the impromptu breakthrough over chemical weapons can lead to more meaningful discussion toward a resolution of a two-year-old conflict, which has claimed more than 110,000 lives.

At a press conference on Sept. 19, Bishop Richard E. Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, chairman of the bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, expressed hope that a proposal by Russian leaders to place Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles under international control could be used as "leverage" to negotiations to end the civil war.

"It is critical that recent international proposals to secure and destroy Syria's chemical weapons get serious attention, evaluation and encouragement," he said. "As Pope Francis has said repeatedly, dialogue and negotiation are the paths to peace, not military attacks and arms shipments," Bishop Pates said.

He noted that the Assad regime is one of the remaining few that maintain chemical weapons munitions. Removing them, Bishop Pates added, is "not just President Obama's problem, not just an American problem," but "a Russian problem, a Chinese problem, a French problem, an English problem. All of us acting together sends a much clearer message to the world than just our acting alone."

Continuing a peace offensive initiated by Pope Francis with his call for a worldwide day of fasting and prayer for Syria, U.S. Catholic bishops had released a statement urging the Obama administration to abandon plans for a punitive missile strike against forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in mid-September. The president had been seeking congressional authorization for a limited strike aimed at "degrading" Assad's forces after the regime's apparent use of chemical weapons on Aug. 21.

That chemical assault on the rebel-held outskirts of Damascus claimed as many as 1,400 lives, according to the administration, including more than 420 children. The New York-based Human Rights Watch charged on Sept. 10 that available evidence "strongly suggests" that Syrian government forces

were responsible for a sarin attack.

Meeting in Washington on Sept. 10, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' administrative committee had issued a statement arguing that a political solution, rather than a military response, was needed to resolve Syria's 30-month civil war. More than two million Syrians are refugees; another 4.25 million are internally displaced, and many remained trapped in the line of fire between combating forces.

"We have heard the urgent calls of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and our suffering brother bishops of the venerable ancient Christian churches of the Middle East," the statement said. "As one, they beg the international community not to resort to military intervention in Syria. They have made it clear that a military attack will be counterproductive, will exacerbate an already deadly situation and will have unintended negative consequences." Committee



members also decried the use of chemical weapons in the conflict and said that the use of such weapons in Syria "was a heinous crime against humanity."

The next day, during a news conference, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, U.S.C.C.B. president, pressed the case for peace. A Syrian intervention, said Cardinal Dolan, is "not going to be good for us as Americans" and "certainly not going to be good for us as people who believe in a God of peace." American Catholics, "extraordinarily united with their pastor, Pope Francis," he said, have told the president and Congress, "we accomplish a lot more with hands folded in prayer than in a hand clenched in a fist, with hands out-reaching to people to try to help them."

Acknowledging that church leaders are often perceived as "pie in the sky" or naïve in matters related to war and peace and that "earthly leaders are usually thought of as kind of the practical,



**'NEVER AGAIN WAR'. Lebanese and Syrian Christian Maronites pray for peace in Jounieh, Lebanon, on Sept. 7.**

realistic people," Cardinal Dolan said, in the Syrian crisis, the "tables are turned." The cardinal noted that Pope John Paul II's repeated but ignored warnings to U.S. leaders before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 must now be acknowledged to have been painfully prescient.

## ABORTION

### 'It's a girl!' Joyful, Dangerous Words

In the United States, hearing the words "it's a girl," is a cause for enormous joy and celebration for most people, said Rep. Chris Smith, Republican of New Jersey. "Today, the three most dangerous words in China and India are: It's a girl," Smith told a congressional hearing on Sept. 10.

Smith, the father of two boys and

two girls, addressed the issues of sex-selective abortion, lopsided gender ratios and malnutrition among young females in India during a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations. Smith, the subcommittee chairperson, said tens of millions of women are missing in India as a result of sex-selective abortion and female infanticide. He said that in parts of India, 126 boys are born for every 100 girls.

"Women have been systematically exterminated through sex-selection abortion," Smith said. "It's a deliberate and premeditated assault on women."

Smith said India also has 37 million more men than women, according to the 2011 census. He said malnutrition of young girls is also common. According to Smith, girls below the age of 5 have a mortality rate that is 75 percent higher than boys of the same age. Smith said more than 160 million females, a figure higher than the current population of U.S. females, are missing from Asia's population because of sex-selective abortions, but the problem is not limited to the Asian continent.

"In Azerbaijan and Armenia, in Eastern Europe, and even among some groups in the United States, couples are making sure at least one of their children is a son," he said.

Matthew J. Connelly, professor of international and global history at Columbia University, said that by the 1960s India had long been a testing ground for population control. Connelly told the hearing that General Electric promoted the use of ultrasound machines in India and China.

But Sabu George, an independent researcher from the Indian state of Kerala, said sex

selection has become genocide in the Indian context, despite a law prohibiting the use of ultrasound technology to determine a baby's gender. George said the misuse of technology and lack of respect for Indian law led to high rates of abortion of female fetuses. He said that rate has increased in the past 30 years, and that doctors often are not prosecuted for administering illegal ultrasounds. "What is tragic is that people accept it," he said.

Jill McElya, vice president of the Invisible Girl Project, based in Indianapolis, said she and her husband first became aware of infanticide in 2009, when they lived in a rural village in South India. She said in one village her husband visited, boys outnumbered girls eight to one.

McElya said the gender imbalance between men and women in India has resulted in problems like human trafficking, child marriage and violence toward women and girls. "When millions of men go unmarried because millions of potential brides have been killed, these single men are more inclined to purchase sex," McElya said. "Because of the demand for sex workers and because large amounts of money can be made by brothel owners, girls and women are trafficked into the sex industry."



**FIGHTING 'FEMICIDE'. An estimated 600,000 fetuses are aborted in India every year because they are female.**

## Catholic Colleges Ranked at Top

Avid readers of U.S. News & World Report's annual rankings of colleges and universities will find the names of dozens of Catholic schools on the lists. The University of Notre Dame, in South Bend, Ind., is the top-ranked national Catholic institution, placing 18th. Georgetown University, in Washington, D.C., was close behind in a three-way tie for the 20th spot, and Boston College placed 31st. In the regional North rankings, Villanova University, in Pennsylvania, Providence College, in Rhode Island and Fairfield University, in Connecticut, swept the top three spots. In the Midwest, Creighton University, in Omaha, Neb., topped the list. Santa Clara University, in California, Loyola Marymount University, in Los Angeles, and Gonzaga University, in Spokane, Wash., finished second, third and fourth in the West. The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities noted that all 28 of its member schools had been ranked in the survey, including Wheeling Jesuit College in West Virginia, rated sixth of 118 southern colleges.

## Francis: Mercy of God Is Unlimited

Writing in one of Italy's major secular newspapers, Pope Francis called for a "sincere and rigorous dialogue" between the church and nonbelievers as an "intimate and indispensable expression" of Christian love. An "open and unprejudiced dialogue" between Christians and those of no religious faith is "rightful and precious" today, Pope Francis wrote. Such a dialogue could "open doors for a serious and fertile encounter" between secular culture and Christian culture, which have lost the ability to communicate

## NEWS BRIEFS

An international panel of cardinals charged in April with preparing recommendations for the pope on reforming the Curia will issue their report and meet with Pope Francis on Oct. 1-3. + According to reports from the Sudan Catholic Radio Network in September, the **Sudanese air force continues to bomb** villages in the Nuba Mountains in spite of a cease-fire. + After a 10-week suspension of his public ministry, the Coptic Orthodox **Patriarch Tawadros II** on Sept. 11 made an appearance to urge his followers not to allow "hatred and hostility to penetrate our hearts." + Pope Francis **prayed at the tomb of Pedro Arrupe**, superior general of the Jesuits from 1965 to 1983, in the Church of the Gesù in Rome on Sept. 10. + Bishop Willy Ngumbi Ngengele of Kindu in the Democratic Republic of Congo reported on Sept. 2 that many communities in the **Goma area continued to suffer from attacks** committed by M23 rebels + Death penalty abolitionist Helen Prejean, C.S.J., and Kevin Doyle, New York State's last capital defender, are expected among the guests celebrating the 20th **anniversary of the Cherish Life Circle** on Oct. 6 in Brooklyn, N.Y.



Fleeing Congo violence

due largely to modern views of faith as the "darkness of superstition opposed to the light of reason." Asked whether the church condemns those who lack and do not seek religious faith, the pope replied that the "mercy of God is unlimited if directed to someone with a sincere and contrite heart." He wrote, "The question for someone who does not believe in God lies in obeying one's own conscience."

## Stockton Diocese Considers Bankruptcy

Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., described in detail the financial situation of the diocese in two recent letters to parishioners that were read during weekend Masses. The most recent letter, read during weekend Masses on Sept. 7 and 8, announced the diocese's plans to consider filing

for bankruptcy. The diocese has been making payments stemming from multiple lawsuits over sexual abuse by members of the clergy and is running out of funds for future settlements. By 2010, it had settled 22 sexual abuse lawsuits at a cost of \$18.7 million. Currently, the diocese is making payments on three lawsuits and has one suit pending. The decision facing Stockton comes on the heels of the announcement on Aug. 31 of plans to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the Diocese of Gallup, N.M. If the Stockton Diocese goes through with declaring bankruptcy, it will be the 10th diocese to do so as a result of the costs of lawsuits over sexual abuse by clergy. In 2004 the Archdiocese of Portland, Ore., was the first to file for bankruptcy.

From CNS and other sources.

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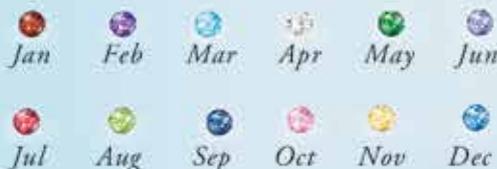
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# Trouble in Tanzania

A coworker of mine was struggling to get her students to understand the concept of tolerance during a discussion in her sophomore English class. Seeing in class a pair of best friends, one Christian and the other Muslim, she used them as an example of people who showed tolerance towards each other. “I’m sorry, madam,” the Christian student said, “but I still don’t understand.”

Though he is one of the top students in the class, he struggled to grasp the concept. He couldn’t fathom the idea of intolerance. Having a best friend who happened to be Muslim was as normal for him as putting on his school uniform. He was not trying to be tolerant; he simply enjoyed being with his friend.

I teach in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The city’s name means “haven of peace,” and despite many outsiders’ perceptions of Africa, Tanzania has been for the most part a peaceful refuge. Several bordering countries, like Rwanda, have experienced significant ethnic tensions, but Tanzania has been a model for different people getting along together smoothly—until recently.

In May a bomb exploded during the inaugural Mass of a Catholic church in Arusha, Tanzania, killing three people and injuring 60 others. Earlier in the year, a Catholic priest was shot and killed on the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar, one of several recent attacks on religious leaders on this island that is approximately 97 percent Muslim. A Muslim cleric was attacked with acid in November, and

a different Catholic priest was shot on Christmas.

Last year, five Christian churches were burned in Dar es Salaam by a mob after a 14-year-old Christian boy allegedly urinated on a Koran. Earlier this year, about 200 Christian rioters attempted to set fire to a mosque in southern Tanzania.

One hopes these are isolated incidents that will not expand into something larger. After each of them, life mostly returned to normal. Even President Obama visited Tanzania in July, seeming to give his imprimatur to the direction the country is taking.

People do fear, however, that like those churches, it would not take much for the political-religious situation to catch fire and that Tanzania will no longer be a haven of peace.

Government leaders have responded to recent incidents with strong statements condemning the violence, though many say they have heard similar words before but have not seen action.

Tensions between political parties have also increased and will likely be high before the next presidential election in 2015. While in reality there are both Christians and Muslims in all the major parties, some see the primary opposition party as mostly Christian, and a bomb attack at a political rally of the party in June killed three more people.

Tanzania has a young and booming population. Many have fled from rural areas dreaming of success in the cities, only to see their hopes dashed. A large

population of young men frustrated with a lack of opportunities is a potential breeding ground for extremist ideologies.

Many people here have expressed to me their frustration with media from outside that focus solely on what is bad in Africa, without showing the beauty.

Just as extremists are not representative of most believers of a religion, recent violent events have grabbed headlines, but they fail to capture the thousands of beautiful, peaceful interactions that take place daily among neighbors, coworkers and classmates of different faiths.

When people come to a microphone here, they often first exchange a call-and-response religious greeting with their audience:

“Praise Jesus Christ!” “Forever, amen!” In order to be inclusive, however, as they are often addressing a religiously mixed group, many will also offer the Arabic greeting of peace: *Assalamu alaykum*.

During Ramadan this year, I often took an evening walk and was invited to break the fast and share life with Muslim neighbors. These sacred encounters are far more representative of my experience of the country than any incidents of violence.

At the same time, the recent bombings and shootings that seem to be religiously motivated make clear that things could get really ugly.

I pray that the future looks like what I see daily and not what I read in the headlines.

Tanzania has been a model for different people getting along together.



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THE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

WITH POPE FRANCIS

# A Big Heart Open to God

*Editor's Note: This interview with Pope Francis took place over the course of three meetings during August 2013 in Rome. The interview was conducted in person by Antonio Spadaro, S.J., editor in chief of La Civiltà Cattolica, the Italian Jesuit journal. Father Spadaro conducted the interview on behalf of La Civiltà Cattolica, America and several other major Jesuit journals around the world. The editorial teams at each of the journals prepared questions and sent them to Father Spadaro, who then consolidated and organized them. The interview was conducted in Italian. After the Italian text was officially approved, America commissioned a team of five independent experts to translate it into English. America is solely responsible for the accuracy of this translation.*

*Father Spadaro met the pope at the Vatican in the pope's apartments in the Casa Santa Marta, where he has chosen to live since his election. Father Spadaro begins his account of the interview with a description of the pope's living quarters.*

**T**he setting is simple, austere. The workspace occupied by the desk is small. I am impressed not only by the simplicity of the furniture, but also by the objects in the room. There are only a few. These include an icon of St. Francis, a statue of Our Lady of Luján, patron saint of Argentina, a crucifix and a statue of St. Joseph sleeping. The spirituality of Jorge Mario Bergoglio is not made of "harmonized energies," as he would call them, but of human faces: Christ, St. Francis, St. Joseph and Mary.

The pope speaks of his trip to Brazil. He considers it a true grace, that World Youth Day was for him a "mystery." He says that he is not used to talking to so many people: "I can look at individual persons, one at a time, to come into contact in a personal way with the person I have before me. I am not used to the masses," the pope remarks. He also speaks about the moment during the conclave when he began to realize that he might

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**ANTONIO SPADARO, S.J.**, is the editor in chief of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, a journal published in Rome by the Society of Jesus since 1850. The translators were: Massimo Faggioli, Sarah Christopher Faggioli, Dominic Robinson, S.J., Patrick J. Howell, S.J., and Griffin Oleynick.

be elected pope. At lunch on Wednesday, March 13, he felt a deep and inexplicable inner peace and comfort come over him, he said, along with a great darkness. And those feelings accompanied him until his election later that day.

The pope had spoken earlier about his great difficulty in giving interviews. He said that he prefers to think rather than provide answers on the spot in interviews. In this interview the pope interrupted what he was saying in response to a question several times, in order to add something to an earlier response. Talking with Pope Francis is a kind of volcanic flow of ideas that are bound up with each other. Even taking notes gives me an uncomfortable feeling, as if I were trying to suppress a surging spring of dialogue.

### Who Is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?

I ask Pope Francis point-blank: “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?” He stares at me in silence. I ask him if I may ask him this question. He nods and replies: “I do not know what might be the most fitting description.... I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner.”

The pope continues to reflect and concentrate, as if he did not expect this question, as if he were forced to reflect

further. “Yes, perhaps I can say that I am a bit astute, that I can adapt to circumstances, but it is also true that I am a bit naïve. Yes, but the best summary, the one that comes more from the inside and I feel most true is this: I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon.” And he repeats: “I am one who is looked upon by the Lord. I always felt my motto,

*Miserando atque Eligendo* [By Having Mercy and by Choosing Him], was very true for me.”

The motto is taken from the *Homilies of Bede the Venerable*, who writes in his comments on the Gospel story of the calling of Matthew: “Jesus saw a publican, and since he looked

at him with feelings of love and chose him, he said to him, ‘Follow me.’” The pope adds: “I think the Latin gerund *miserando* is impossible to translate in both Italian and Spanish. I like to translate it with another gerund that does not exist: *misericiandi* [“mercy-ing”].

Pope Francis continues his reflection and says, jumping to another topic: “I do not know Rome well. I know a few things. These include the Basilica of St. Mary Major; I always used to go there. I know St. Mary Major, St. Peter’s... but when I had to come to Rome, I always stayed in [the neighborhood of] Via della Scrofa. From there I often visited the Church of St. Louis of France, and I went there to contemplate the painting of ‘The Calling of St. Matthew,’ by Caravaggio.

“That finger of Jesus, pointing at Matthew. That’s me. I feel like him. Like Matthew.” Here the pope becomes determined, as if he had finally found the image he was looking for: “It is the gesture of Matthew that strikes me: he holds on to his money as if to say, ‘No, not me! No, this money is mine.’ Here, this is me, a sinner on whom the Lord has turned his gaze. And this is what I said when they asked me if I would accept my election as pontiff.” Then the pope whispers in Latin: “I am a sinner, but I trust in the infinite mercy and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I accept in a spirit of penance.”

### Why Did You Become a Jesuit?

I continue: “Holy Father, what made you choose to enter the Society of Jesus? What struck you about the Jesuit order?”

“I wanted something more. But I did not know what. I entered the diocesan seminary. I liked the Dominicans and I had Dominican friends. But then I chose the Society of Jesus, which I knew well because

I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner.



“The Calling of Saint Matthew,” by Caravaggio

the seminary was entrusted to the Jesuits. Three things in particular struck me about the Society: the missionary spirit, community and discipline. And this is strange, because I am a really, really undisciplined person. But their discipline, the way they manage their time—these things struck me so much.

“And then a thing that is really important for me: community. I was always looking for a community. I did not see myself as a priest on my own. I need a community. And you can tell this by the fact that I am here in Santa Marta. At the time of the conclave I lived in Room 207. (The rooms were assigned by drawing lots.) This room where we are now was a guest room. I chose to live here, in Room 201, because when I took possession of the papal apartment, inside myself I distinctly heard a ‘no.’ The papal apartment in the Apostolic Palace is not luxurious. It is old, tastefully decorated and large, but not luxurious. But in the end it is like an inverted funnel. It is big and spacious, but the entrance is really tight. People can come only in dribs and drabs, and I cannot live without people. I need to live my life with others.”

### What Does It Mean for a Jesuit to Be Bishop of Rome?

I ask Pope Francis about the fact that he is the first Jesuit to be elected bishop of Rome: “How do you understand the role of service to the universal church that you have been called to play in the light of Ignatian spirituality? What does it mean for a Jesuit to be elected pope? What element of Ignatian spirituality helps you live your ministry?”

“Discernment,” he replies. “Discernment is one of the things that worked inside St. Ignatius. For him it is an instrument of struggle in order to know the Lord and follow him more closely. I was always struck by a saying that describes the vision of Ignatius:

*non coerceri a maximo, sed contineri a minimo divinum est* (“not to be limited by the greatest and yet to be contained in the tiniest—this is the divine”). I thought a lot about this phrase in connection with the issue of different roles in the government of the church, about becoming the superior of somebody else: it is important not to be restricted by a larger space, and it is important to be able to stay in restricted spaces. This virtue of the large and small is magnanimity.

Thanks to magnanimity, we can always look at the horizon from the position where we are. That means being able to do the little things of every day with a big heart open to God and to others. That means being able to appreciate the small things inside large horizons, those of the kingdom of God.

“This motto,” the pope continues, “offers parameters to assume a correct position for discernment, in order to hear the things of God from God’s ‘point of view.’ According to St. Ignatius, great principles must be embodied in the circumstances of place, time and people. In his own way, John XXIII adopted this attitude with regard to the government of the church, when he repeated the motto, ‘See everything; turn a blind eye to much; correct a little.’ John XXIII saw all things, the maximum dimension, but he chose to correct a few, the minimum dimension. You can have large projects and implement them by means of a few of the smallest things. Or you can use weak means that are more effective than strong ones, as Paul also said in his First Letter to the Corinthians.

“This discernment takes time. For example, many think that changes and reforms can take place in a short time. I believe that we always need time to lay the foundations for real, effective change. And this is the time of discernment. Sometimes discernment instead urges us to do precisely what you had at first thought you would do later. And that is what has happened to me in recent months. Discernment is always done in the presence of the Lord, looking at the signs, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the

people, especially the poor. My choices, including those related to the day-to-day aspects of life, like the use of a modest car, are related to a spiritual discernment that responds to a need that arises from looking at things, at people and from reading the signs of the times. Discernment in the Lord guides me in my way of governing.

The Society of Jesus is an institution in tension, always fundamentally in tension. A Jesuit is a person who is not centered in himself. The Society itself also looks to a center outside itself: its center is Christ and his church.

“But I am always wary of decisions made hastily. I am always wary of the first decision, that is, the first thing that comes to my mind if I have to make a decision. This is usually the wrong thing. I have to wait and assess, looking deep into myself, taking the necessary time. The wisdom of discernment redeems the necessary ambiguity of life and helps us find the most appropriate means, which do not always coincide with what looks great and strong.”

## The Society of Jesus

Discernment is therefore a pillar of the spirituality of Pope Francis. It expresses in a particular manner his Jesuit identity. I ask him then how the Society of Jesus can be of service to the church today, what are its characteristics, but also the possible challenges facing the Society of Jesus.

“The Society of Jesus is an institution in tension,” the pope replied, “always fundamentally in tension. A Jesuit is a person who is not centered in himself. The Society itself also looks to a center outside itself; its center is Christ and his church. So if the Society centers itself in Christ and the church, it has two fundamental points of reference for its balance and for being able to live on the margins, on the frontier. If it looks too much in upon itself, it puts itself at the center as a very solid, very well ‘armed’ structure, but then it runs the risk of feeling safe and self-sufficient. The Society must always have before itself the *Deus semper maior*, the always-greater God, and the pursuit of the ever greater glory of God, the church as true bride of Christ our Lord, Christ the king who conquers us and to whom we offer our whole person and all our hard work, even if we are clay pots, inadequate. This tension takes us out of ourselves continuously. The tool that makes the Society of Jesus not centered in itself, really strong, is, then, the account of conscience, which is at the same time paternal and fraternal, because it helps the Society to fulfill its mission better.”

The pope is referring to the requirement in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus that the Jesuit must “manifest his conscience,” that is, his inner spiritual situation, so that the superior can be more conscious and knowledgeable about sending a person on mission.

“But it is difficult to speak of the Society,” continues Pope Francis. “When you express too much, you run the risk of being misunderstood. The Society of Jesus can be described only in narrative form. Only in narrative form do you discern, not in a philosophical or theological explanation, which allows you rather to discuss. The style of the Society is not shaped by discussion, but by discernment, which of course presupposes discussion as part of the process. The mystical dimension of discernment never defines its edges and does not complete the thought. The Jesuit must be a person whose thought is incomplete, in the sense of open-ended thinking. There have been periods in the Society in

which Jesuits have lived in an environment of closed and rigid thought, more instructive-ascetic than mystical: this distortion of Jesuit life gave birth to the *Epitome Instituti*.”

The pope is referring to a compendium, made for practical purposes, that came to be seen as a replacement for the Constitutions. The formation of Jesuits for some time was shaped by this text, to the extent that some never read the Constitutions, the foundational text. During this period, in the pope’s view, the rules threatened to overwhelm the spirit, and the Society yielded to the temptation to explicate and define its charism too narrowly.

Pope Francis continues: “No, the Jesuit always thinks, again and again, looking at the horizon toward which he must go, with Christ at the center. This is his real strength. And that pushes the Society to be searching, creative and generous. So now, more than ever, the Society of Jesus must be contemplative in action,

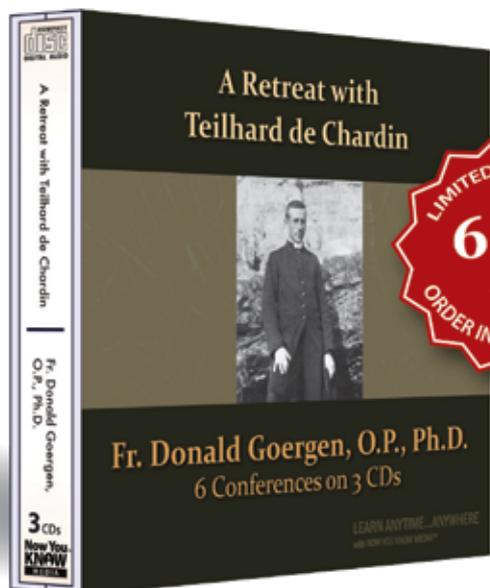
must live a profound closeness to the whole church as both the ‘people of God’ and ‘holy mother the hierarchical church.’ This requires much humility, sacrifice and courage, especially when you are misunderstood or you are the subject of misunderstandings and slanders, but that is the most fruitful attitude. Let us think of the tensions of the past history, in the previous centuries, about the Chinese rites controversy, the Malabar rites and the Reductions in Paraguay.

“I am a witness myself to the misunderstandings and problems that the Society has recently experienced. Among those there were tough times, especially when it came to the issue of extending to all Jesuits the fourth vow of obedience to the pope. What gave me confidence at the time of Father Arrupe [superior general of the Jesuits from 1965 to 1983] was the fact that he was a man of prayer, a man who spent much time in prayer. I remember him when he prayed sitting on the ground in the Japanese style. For this he had the right attitude and made the right decisions.”

## The Model: Peter Faber, ‘Reformed Priest’

I am wondering if there are figures among the Jesuits, from the origins of the Society to the present date, that have affected him in a particular way, so I ask the pope who they are and why. He begins by mentioning Ignatius Loyola [founder of the Jesuits] and Francis Xavier, but then focuses on a figure who is not as well known to the general public: Peter Faber (1506-46), from Savoy. He was one of the first

To be sure, I have never been like Blessed Imelda [a goody-goody], but I have never been a right-winger. It was my authoritarian way of making decisions that created problems.



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companions of St. Ignatius, in fact the first, with whom he shared a room when the two were students at the University of Paris. The third roommate was Francis Xavier. Pius IX declared Faber blessed on Sept. 5, 1872, and the cause for his canonization is still open.

The pope cites an edition of Faber's works, which he asked two Jesuit scholars, Miguel A. Fiorito and Jaime H. Amadeo, to edit and publish when he was provincial superior of the Jesuits in Argentina. An edition that he particularly likes is the one by Michel de Certeau. I ask the pope why he is so impressed by Faber.

"[His] dialogue with all," the pope says, "even the most remote and even with his opponents; his simple piety, a certain naïveté perhaps, his being available straightaway, his careful interior discernment, the fact that he was a man capable of great and strong decisions but also capable of being so gentle and loving."

Michel de Certeau characterized Faber simply as "the reformed priest," for whom interior experience, dogmatic expression and structural reform are inseparable. The pope then continues with a reflection on the true face of the founder of the Society.

"Ignatius is a mystic, not an ascetic," he says. "It irritates me when I hear that the Spiritual Exercises are 'Ignatian' only because they are done in silence. In fact, the Exercises can be perfectly Ignatian also in daily life and without the silence. An interpretation of the Spiritual Exercises that emphasizes asceticism, silence and penance is a distorted one that became widespread even in the Society, especially in the Society of Jesus in Spain. I am rather close to the mystical movement, that of Louis Lallement and Jean-Joseph Surin. And Faber was a mystic."

## Experience in Church Government

What kind of experience in church government, as a Jesuit superior and then as superior of a province of the Society of Jesus, helped to fully form Father Bergoglio? The style of governance of the Society of Jesus involves decisions made by the superior, but also extensive consultation with his official advisors. So I ask: "Do you think that your past government experience can serve you in governing the universal church?" After a brief pause for reflection, he responds:

"In my experience as superior in the Society, to be honest, I have not always behaved in that way—that is, I did not always do the necessary consultation. And this was not a good thing. My style of government as a Jesuit at the beginning had many faults. That was a difficult time for the Society: an entire generation of Jesuits had disappeared.

Because of this I found myself provincial when I was still very young. I was only 36 years old. That was crazy. I had to deal with difficult situations, and I made my decisions abruptly and by myself. Yes, but I must add one thing: when I entrust something to someone, I totally trust that person. He or she must make a really big mistake before I rebuke that person. But despite this, eventually people get tired of authoritarianism.

"My authoritarian and quick manner of making decisions led me to have serious problems and to be accused of being ultraconservative. I lived a time of great interior crisis when I was in Cordova. To be sure, I have never been like Blessed Imelda [a goody-goody], but I have never been a right-winger. It was my authoritarian way of making decisions that created problems.

"I say these things from life experience and because I want to make clear what the dangers are. Over time I learned many things. The Lord has allowed this growth in knowledge of government through my faults and my sins. So as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, I had a meeting with the six auxiliary bishops every two weeks, and several times a year with the council of priests. They asked questions and we opened the floor for discussion. This greatly helped me to make the best decisions. But now I hear some people tell me: 'Do not consult too much, and decide by yourself.' Instead, I believe that consultation is very important.

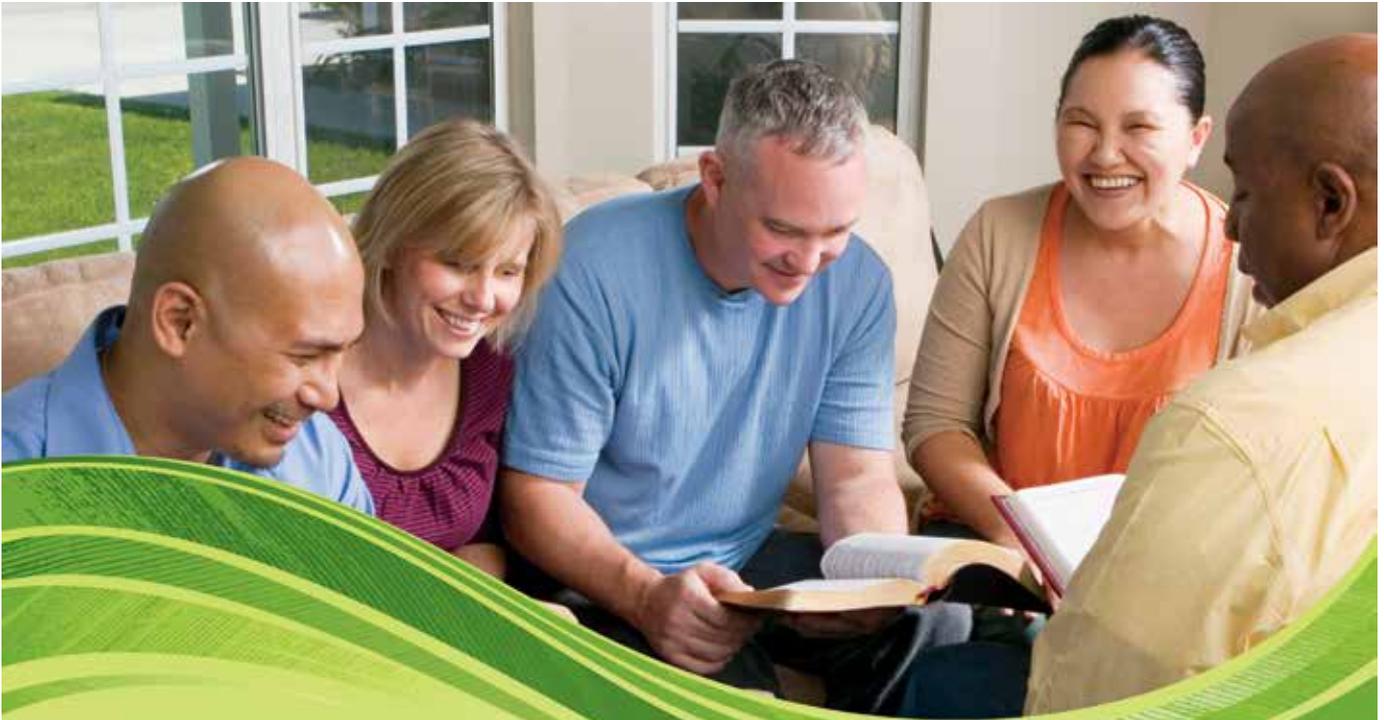
"The consistories [of cardinals], the synods [of bishops] are, for example, important places to make real and active this consultation. We must, however, give them a less rigid form. I do not want token consultations, but real consultations. The consultation group of eight cardinals, this 'outsider' advisory group, is not only my decision, but it is the result of the will of the cardinals, as it was expressed in the general congregations before the conclave. And I want to see that this is a real, not ceremonial consultation."

## Thinking With the Church

I ask Pope Francis what it means exactly for him to "think with the church," a notion St. Ignatius writes about in the Spiritual Exercises. He replies using an image.

"The image of the church I like is that of the holy, faithful people of God. This is the definition I often use, and then there is that image from the Second Vatican Council's 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church' (No. 12). Belonging to a people has a strong theological value. In the history of salvation, God has saved a people. There is no full identity without belonging to a people. No one is saved alone, as

*I* do not  
want token  
consultations, but  
real consultations.



# FAITH RENEWED

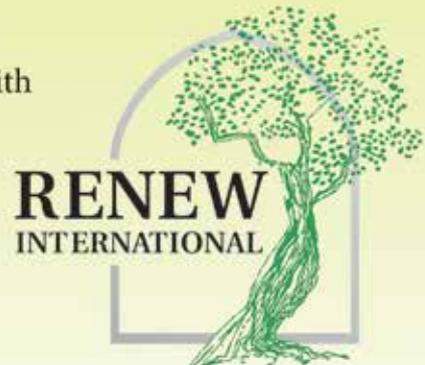
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an isolated individual, but God attracts us looking at the complex web of relationships that take place in the human community. God enters into this dynamic, this participation in the web of human relationships.

“The people itself constitutes a subject. And the church is the people of God on the journey through history, with joys and sorrows. Thinking with the church, therefore, is my way of being a part of this people. And all the faithful, considered as a whole, are infallible in matters of belief, and the people display this *infallibilitas in credendo*, this infallibility in believing, through a supernatural sense of the faith of all the people walking together.

This is what I understand today as the ‘thinking with the church’ of which St. Ignatius speaks. When the dialogue among the people and the bishops and the pope goes down this road and is genuine, then it is assisted by the Holy Spirit. So this thinking with the church does not concern theologians only.

“This is how it is with Mary: If you want to know who she is, you ask theologians; if you want to know how to love her, you have to ask the people. In turn, Mary loved Jesus with the heart of the people, as we read in the Magnificat. We should not even think, therefore, that ‘thinking with the church’ means only thinking with the hierarchy of the church.”

After a brief pause, Pope Francis emphasizes the following point, in order to avoid misunderstandings: “And, of course, we must be very careful not to think that this *infallibilitas* of all the faithful I am talking about in the light of Vatican II is a form of populism. No; it is the experience of ‘holy mother the hierarchical church,’ as St. Ignatius called it, the church as the people of God, pastors and people together. The church is the totality of God’s people.

“I see the sanctity of God’s people, this daily sanctity,” the pope continues. “There is a ‘holy middle class,’ which we can all be part of, the holiness Malègue wrote about.” The pope is referring to Joseph Malègue, a French writer (1876–1940), particularly to the unfinished trilogy *Black Stones: The Middle Classes of Salvation*.

“I see the holiness,” the pope continues, “in the patience of the people of God: a woman who is raising children, a man who works to bring home the bread, the sick, the elderly priests who have so many wounds but have a smile on their faces because they served the Lord, the sisters who work hard and live a hidden sanctity. This is for me the common sanctity. I often associate sanctity with patience:

not only patience as *hypomoné* [the New Testament Greek word], taking charge of the events and circumstances of life, but also as a constancy in going forward, day by day. This is the sanctity of the militant church also mentioned by St. Ignatius. This was the sanctity of my parents: my dad, my mom, my grandmother Rosa who loved me so much. In my breviary I have the last will of my grandmother Rosa, and I read it often. For me it is like a prayer. She is a saint who has suffered so much, also spiritually, and yet always went forward with courage.

“This church with which we should be thinking is the home of all, not a small chapel that can hold only a small group of selected people. We must not reduce the bosom of the universal church to a nest protecting our mediocrity. And the church is Mother; the church is fruitful. It must be. You see, when I perceive negative behavior in ministers of the church

or in consecrated men or women, the first thing that comes to mind is: ‘Here’s an unfruitful bachelor’ or ‘Here’s a spinster.’ They are neither fathers nor mothers, in the sense that they have not been able to give spiritual life. Instead, for example, when I read the life of the Salesian missionaries who went to Patagonia, I read a story of the fullness of life, of fruitfulness.

“Another example from recent days that I saw got the attention of newspapers: the phone call I made to a young man who wrote me a letter. I called him because that letter was so beautiful, so simple. For me this was an act of generativity. I realized that he was a young man who is growing, that he saw in me a father, and that the letter tells something of his life to that father. The father cannot say, ‘I do not care.’ This type of fruitfulness is so good for me.”

## Young Churches and Ancient Churches

Remaining with the subject of the church, I ask the pope a question in light of the recent World Youth Day. This great event has turned the spotlight on young people, but also on those “spiritual lungs” that are the Catholic churches founded in historically recent times. “What,” I ask, “are your hopes for the universal church that come from these churches?”

The pope replies: “The young Catholic churches, as they grow, develop a synthesis of faith, culture and life, and so it is a synthesis different from the one developed by the ancient churches. For me, the relationship between the ancient Catholic churches and the young ones is similar to the relationship between young and elderly people in a society. They build the future, the young ones with their

**W**e should not even think, therefore, that ‘thinking with the church’ means only thinking with the hierarchy of the church.



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### ***Making Markets Progressive: Structuring Markets So That Income Doesn't Flow Up***

Dean Baker – Center for Economic and Policy Research  
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### ***Justice in Markets: What is Required?***

Daniel Finn – College of St. Benedict / St. John's University  
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### ***What Are Economic Goods For? A Prolegomenon to the Question of Economic Justice***

Mary Hirschfeld – Villanova University  
January 30, 2014 – Driscoll Hall Auditorium – 4:30 PM

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Vincent Rougeau – Boston College  
February 6, 2014 – Villanova School of Law – Room 103 – 4:30 PM

### ***Catholic Social Teaching and Income Inequality***

Robert DeFina – Villanova University  
February 19, 2014 – St. Augustine Center – Room 300 – 4:30 PM

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Mary Jo Bane – Harvard University  
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### ***Catholic Social Thought and the Just Wage***

Susan Stabile – University of St. Thomas (MN)  
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strength and the others with their wisdom. You always run some risks, of course. The younger churches are likely to feel self-sufficient; the ancient ones are likely to want to impose on the younger churches their cultural models. But we build the future together.”

### The Church as Field Hospital

Pope Benedict XVI, in announcing his resignation, said that the contemporary world is subject to rapid change and is grappling with issues of great importance for the life of faith. Dealing with these issues requires strength of body and soul, Pope Benedict said. I ask Pope Francis: “What does the church need most at this historic moment? Do we need reforms? What are your wishes for the church in the coming years? What kind of church do you dream of?”

Pope Francis begins by showing great affection and immense respect for his predecessor: “Pope Benedict has done an act of holiness, greatness, humility. He is a man of God.

“I see clearly,” the pope continues, “that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.... And you have to start from the ground up.

“The church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules. The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you. And the ministers of the church must be ministers of mercy above all. The confessor, for example, is always in danger of being either too much of a rigorist or too lax. Neither is merciful, because neither of them really takes responsibility for the person. The rigorist washes his hands so that he leaves it to the commandment. The loose minister washes his hands by simply saying, ‘This is not a sin’ or something like that. In pastoral ministry we must accompany people, and we must heal their wounds.

“How are we treating the people of God? I dream of a church that is a mother and shepherdess. The church’s ministers must be merciful, take responsibility for the

people and accompany them like the good Samaritan, who washes, cleans and raises up his neighbor. This is pure Gospel. God is greater than sin. The structural and organizational reforms are secondary—that is, they come afterward. The first reform must be the attitude. The ministers of the Gospel must be people who can warm the hearts of the people, who walk through the dark night with them, who know how to dialogue and to descend themselves into their people’s night, into the darkness, but without getting lost. The people of God want pastors, not clergy acting like bureaucrats or government officials. The bishops, particularly, must be able to support the movements of God among their people with patience, so that

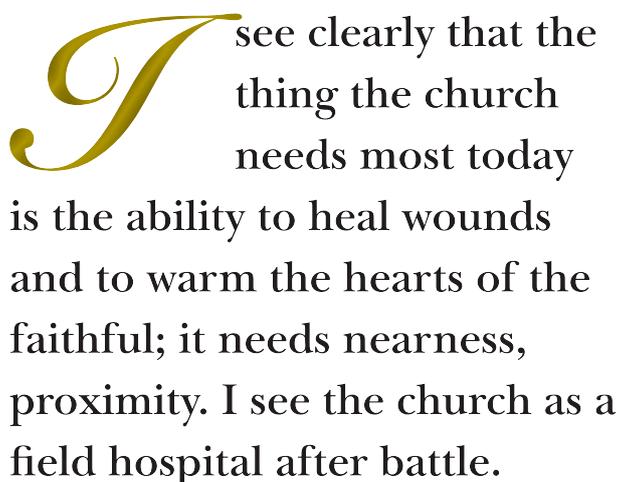
no one is left behind. But they must also be able to accompany the flock that has a flair for finding new paths.

“Instead of being just a church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent. The

ones who quit sometimes do it for reasons that, if properly understood and assessed, can lead to a return. But that takes audacity and courage.”

I mention to Pope Francis that there are Christians who live in situations that are irregular for the church or in complex situations that represent open wounds. I mention the divorced and remarried, same-sex couples and other difficult situations. What kind of pastoral work can we do in these cases? What kinds of tools can we use?

“We need to proclaim the Gospel on every street corner,” the pope says, “preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing, even with our preaching, every kind of disease and wound. In Buenos Aires I used to receive letters from homosexual persons who are ‘socially wounded’ because they tell me that they feel like the church has always condemned them. But the church does not want to do this. During the return flight from Rio de Janeiro I said that if a homosexual person is of good will and is in search of God, I am no one to judge. By saying this, I said what the catechism says. Religion has the right to express its opinion in the service of the people, but God in creation has set us free: it is not possible to interfere spiritually in the life of a person.





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relies on you and continues  
to turn to you with trust,  
particularly to reach those  
physical and spiritual places  
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"A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: 'Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?' We must always consider the person. Here we enter into the mystery of the human being. In life, God accompanies persons, and we must accompany them, starting from their situation. It is necessary to accompany them with mercy. When that happens, the Holy Spirit inspires the priest to say the right thing.

"This is also the great benefit of confession as a sacrament: evaluating case by case and discerning what is the best thing to do for a person who seeks God and grace. The confessional is not a torture chamber, but the place in which the Lord's mercy motivates us to do better. I also consider the situation of a woman with a failed marriage in her past and who also had an abortion. Then this woman remarries, and she is now happy and has five children. That abortion in her past weighs heavily on her conscience and she sincerely regrets it. She would like to move forward in her Christian life. What is the confessor to do?

"We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible. I have not spoken much about these things, and I was reprimanded for that. But when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context. The teaching of the church, for that matter, is clear and I am a son of the church, but it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time.

"The dogmatic and moral teachings of the church are not all equivalent. The church's pastoral ministry cannot be obsessed with the transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines to be imposed insistently. Proclamation in a missionary style focuses on the essentials, on the necessary things: this is also what fascinates and attracts more, what makes the heart burn, as it did for the disciples at Emmaus. We have to find a new balance; otherwise even the moral edifice of the church is likely to fall like a house of cards, losing the freshness and fragrance of the

Gospel. The proposal of the Gospel must be more simple, profound, radiant. It is from this proposition that the moral consequences then flow.

"I say this also thinking about the preaching and content of our preaching. A beautiful homily, a genuine sermon must begin with the first proclamation, with the proclamation of salvation. There is nothing more solid, deep and sure

than this proclamation. Then you have to do catechesis. Then you can draw even a moral consequence. But the proclamation of the saving love of God comes before moral and religious imperatives. Today sometimes it seems that the opposite order is prevailing. The homily is the touchstone to measure the pastor's proximity and ability to meet his people, because those who preach must recognize the heart of their community and must be able to see

where the desire for God is lively and ardent. The message of the Gospel, therefore, is not to be reduced to some aspects that, although relevant, on their own do not show the heart of the message of Jesus Christ."

### **A Religious Order Pope**

Pope Francis is the first pontiff from a religious order since the Camaldolese monk Gregory XVI, who was elected in 1831. I ask: "What is the specific place of religious men and women in the church of today?"

"Religious men and women are prophets," says the pope. "They are those who have chosen a following of Jesus that imitates his life in obedience to the Father, poverty, community life and chastity. In this sense, the vows cannot end up being caricatures; otherwise, for example, community life becomes hell, and chastity becomes a way of life for unfruitful bachelors. The vow of chastity must be a vow of fruitfulness. In the church, the religious are called to be prophets in particular by demonstrating how Jesus lived on this earth, and to proclaim how the kingdom of God will be in its perfection. A religious must never give up prophecy. This does not mean opposing the hierarchical part of the church, although the prophetic function and the hierarchical structure do not coincide. I am talking about a proposal that

*A* person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: 'Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?' We must always consider the person.



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The event happens at a crucial moment in the history of the Catholic Church under the papacy of Francis—himself a Jesuit shaped by the legacy of Vatican II. The symposium will focus on the long-term legacy of the Council in the United States and the world. The proceedings will be published in a forthcoming volume.

### PANEL 1 | FIGURES

#### Jesuits and the Second Vatican Council

**Dennis M. Doyle**  
*Professor of Religious Studies,  
University of Dayton*

**David Hollenbach, S.J.**  
*University Chair in Human Rights  
and International Justice, Department  
of Theology, Boston College*

**Jared Wicks, S.J.**  
*Scholar in Residence,  
Pontifical College Josephinum*

**Susan K. Wood, S.C.L.**  
*Chair, Theology Department,  
Marquette University*

**MODERATOR:**

**Mark Massa, S.J.**  
*Dean, School of Theology and Ministry,  
Boston College*

### PANEL 2 | THEMES

#### Continuity and Change in the Second Vatican Council

**Peter Hünemann**  
*Catholic Theological Faculty,  
University of Tübingen*

**John O'Malley, S.J.**  
*University Professor, Department of  
Theology, Georgetown University*

**Leslie Woodcock Tentler**  
*Professor, Department of History,  
The Catholic University of America*

**Christoph Theobald, S.J.**  
*Professor of Fundamental and Dogmatic  
Theology, Faculté des Jésuites de Paris,  
Centre Sévres*

**MODERATOR:**

**Andrea Vicini, S.J.**  
*Associate Professor of Moral Theology,  
Boston College*

### PANEL 3 | ENGAGEMENTS

#### The Council and the Public Arena

**John F. Baldovin, S.J.**  
*Professor of Historical and Liturgical  
Theology, Boston College*

**Lisa Sowle Cahill**  
*J. Donald Monan, S.J., Professor of Theology,  
Boston College*

**Richard R. Gaillardetz**  
*President, Catholic Theological Society of  
America, and Joseph Professor of Catholic  
Systematic Theology, Boston College*

**Bradford E. Hinze**  
*Professor and Associate Chair for  
Graduate Studies, Department of Theology,  
Fordham University*

**MODERATOR:**

**Massimo Faggioli**  
*Assistant Professor, University of St. Thomas*

## PUBLIC LECTURE

7:15–8:30 p.m.

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is always positive, but it should not cause timidity. Let us think about what so many great saints, monks and religious men and women have done, from St. Anthony the Abbot onward. Being prophets may sometimes imply making waves. I do not know how to put it.... Prophecy makes noise, uproar, some say 'a mess.' But in reality, the charism of religious people is like yeast: prophecy announces the spirit of the Gospel."

## The Roman Curia

I ask the pope what he thinks of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the various departments that assist the pope in his mission.

"The dicasteries of the Roman Curia are at the service of the pope and the bishops," he says. "They must help both the particular churches and the bishops' conferences. They are instruments of help. In some cases, however, when they are not functioning well, they run the risk of becoming institutions of censorship. It is amazing to see the denunciations for lack of orthodoxy that come to Rome. I think the cas-

es should be investigated by the local bishops' conferences, which can get valuable assistance from Rome. These cases, in fact, are much better dealt with locally. The Roman congregations are mediators; they are not middlemen or managers."

On June 29, during the ceremony of the blessing and imposition of the pallium on 34 metropolitan archbishops, Pope Francis spoke about "the path of collegiality" as the road that can lead the church to "grow in harmony with the service of primacy." So I ask: "How can we reconcile in harmony Petrine primacy and collegiality? Which roads are feasible also from an ecumenical perspective?"

The pope responds, "We must walk together: the people, the bishops and the pope. Synodality should be lived at various levels. Maybe it is time to change the methods of the Synod of Bishops, because it seems to me that the current method is not dynamic. This will also have ecumenical value, especially with our Orthodox brethren. From them we can learn more about the meaning of episcopal collegiality and the tradition of synodality. The joint effort of reflection, looking at how

the church was governed in the early centuries, before the breakup between East and West, will bear fruit in due time. In ecumenical relations it is important not only to know each other better, but also to recognize what the Spirit has sown in the other as a gift for us. I want to continue the discussion that was begun in 2007 by the joint [Catholic-Orthodox] commission on how to exercise the Petrine primacy, which led to the signing of the Ravenna Document. We must continue on this path."

I ask how Pope Francis envisions the future unity of the church in light of this response. He answers: "We must walk united with our differences: there is no other way to become one. This is the way of Jesus."

The dogmatic and moral teachings of the church are not all equivalent. The church's pastoral ministry cannot be obsessed with the transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines to be imposed insistently.

## Women in the Life of the Church

And what about the role of women in the church? The pope has made reference to this issue on several occasions. He took up the matter during the return trip from Rio de Janeiro, claiming that the church still lacks a profound theology of women. I ask: "What should be the role of women in the church? How do we

make their role more visible today?"

He answers: "I am wary of a solution that can be reduced to a kind of 'female *machismo*,' because a woman has a different make-up than a man. But what I hear about the role of women is often inspired by an ideology of *machismo*. Women are asking deep questions that must be addressed. The church cannot be herself without the woman and her role. The woman is essential for the church. Mary, a woman, is more important than the bishops. I say this because we must not confuse the

function with the dignity. We must therefore investigate further the role of women in the church. We have to work harder to develop a profound theology of the woman. Only by making this step will it be possible to better reflect on their function within the church. The

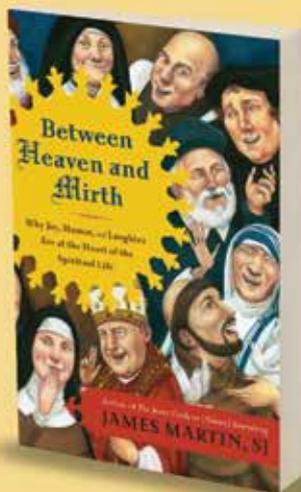
feminine genius is needed wherever we make important decisions. The challenge today is this: to think about the specific place of women also in those places where the authority of the church is exercised for various areas of the church."

### ON THE WEB

Links to the interview  
in Italian.  
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# From *New York Times* bestselling author James Martin, SJ. . .

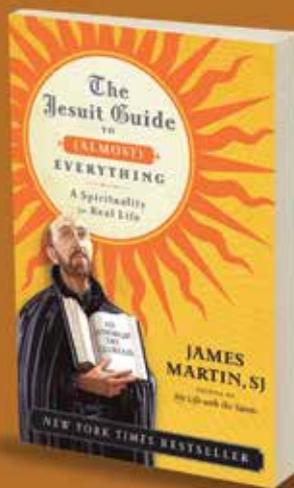
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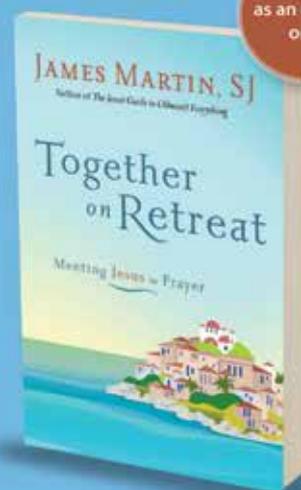
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## The Second Vatican Council

“What did the Second Vatican Council accomplish?” I ask.

“Vatican II was a re-reading of the Gospel in light of contemporary culture,” says the pope. “Vatican II produced a renewal movement that simply comes from the same Gospel. Its fruits are enormous. Just recall the liturgy. The work of liturgical reform has been a service to the people as a re-reading of the Gospel from a concrete historical situation. Yes, there are hermeneutics of continuity and discontinuity, but one thing is clear: the dynamic of reading the Gospel, actualizing its message for today—which was typical of Vatican II—is absolutely irreversible. Then there are particular issues, like the liturgy according to the *Vetus Ordo*. I think the decision of Pope Benedict [his decision of July 7, 2007, to allow a wider use of the Tridentine Mass] was prudent and motivated by the desire to help people who have this sensitivity. What is worrying, though, is the risk of the ideologization of the *Vetus Ordo*, its exploitation.”

## To Seek and Find God in All Things

At the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis repeatedly declared: “God is real. He manifests himself today. God is everywhere.” These are phrases that echo the Ignatian expression “to seek and find God in all things.” So I ask the pope: “How do you seek and find God in all things?”

“What I said in Rio referred to the time in which we seek God,” he answers. “In fact, there is a temptation to seek God in the past or in a possible future. God is certainly in the past because we can see the footprints. And God is also in the future as a promise. But the ‘concrete’ God, so to speak, is today. For this reason, complaining never helps us find God. The complaints of today about how ‘barbaric’ the world is—these complaints sometimes end up giving birth within the church to desires to establish order in the sense of pure conservation, as a defense. No: God is to be encountered in the world of today.

“God manifests himself in historical revelation, in history. Time initiates processes, and space crystallizes them. God is in history, in the processes.

“We must not focus on occupying the spaces where power is exercised, but rather on starting long-run historical processes. We must initiate processes rather than occupy spaces. God manifests himself in time and is present in the processes of history. This gives priority to actions that give birth to new historical dynamics. And it requires patience, waiting.

“Finding God in all things is not an ‘empirical *eureka*.’ When we desire to encounter God, we would like to verify him immediately by an empirical method. But you cannot meet God this way. God is found in the gentle breeze perceived by Elijah. The senses that find God are the ones St. Ignatius called spiritual senses. Ignatius asks us to open our spiritual sensitivity to encounter God beyond a purely empirical approach. A contemplative attitude is necessary: it is the feeling that you are moving along the good path of understanding and affection toward things and situations. Profound peace, spiritual consolation, love of God and love of all things in God—this is the sign that you are on this right path.”

## Certitude and Mistakes

I ask, “So if the encounter with God is not an ‘empirical *eureka*,’ and if it is a journey that sees with the eyes of history, then we can also make mistakes?”

The pope replies: “Yes, in this quest to seek and find God in all things there is still an area of uncertainty. There must be. If a person says that he met God with total certainty and is not touched by a margin of uncertainty, then this is not good. For me, this is an important key. If one has the answers to all the questions—that is the proof that God is not with him. It means that he is a false prophet using religion for himself. The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have

always left room for doubt. You must leave room for the Lord, not for our certainties; we must be humble. Uncertainty is in every true discernment that is open to finding confirmation in spiritual consolation.

“The risk in seeking and finding God in all things, then, is the willingness to explain too much, to say with human

**I**t is amazing to see the denunciations for lack of orthodoxy that come to Rome. I think the cases should be investigated by the local bishops’ conferences, which can get valuable assistance from Rome. These cases, in fact, are much better dealt with locally.

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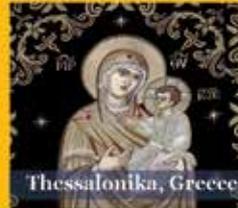


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certainty and arrogance: 'God is here.' We will find only a god that fits our measure. The correct attitude is that of St. Augustine: seek God to find him, and find God to keep searching for God forever. Often we seek as if we were blind, as one often reads in the Bible. And this is the experience of the great fathers of the faith, who are our models. We have to re-read the Letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 11. Abraham leaves his home without knowing where he was going, by faith. All of our ancestors in the faith died seeing the good that was promised, but from a distance.... Our life is not given to us like an opera libretto, in which all is written down; but it means going, walking, doing, searching, seeing.... We must enter into the adventure of the quest for meeting God; we must let God search and encounter us.

"Because God is first; God is always first and makes the first move. God is a bit like the almond flower of your Sicily, Antonio, which always blooms first. We read it in the Prophets. God is encountered walking, along the path. At this juncture, someone might say that this is relativism. Is it relativism? Yes, if it is misunderstood as a kind of indistinct pantheism. It is not relativism if it is understood in the biblical sense, that God is always a surprise, so you never know where and how you will find him. You are not setting the time and place of the encounter with him. You must, therefore, discern the encounter. Discernment is essential.

"If the Christian is a restorationist, a legalist, if he wants everything clear and safe, then he will find nothing. Tradition and memory of the past must help us to have the courage to open up new areas to God. Those who today always look for disciplinarian solutions, those who long for an exaggerated doctrinal 'security,' those who stubbornly try to recover a past that no longer exists—they have a static and inward-directed view of things. In this way, faith becomes an ideology among other ideologies. I have a dogmatic certainty: God is in every person's life. God is in everyone's life. Even if the life of a person has been a disaster, even if it is destroyed by vices, drugs or anything else—God is in this person's life. You can, you must try to seek God in every human life. Although the life of a person is a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God."

### Must We Be Optimistic?

The pope's words remind me of some of his past reflections, in which as a cardinal he wrote that God is already living in the city, in the midst of all and united to each. It is another way, in my opinion, to say what St. Ignatius wrote in the Spiritual Exercises, that God "labors and works" in

our world. So I ask: "Do we have to be optimistic? What are the signs of hope in today's world? How can I be optimistic in a world in crisis?"

"I do not like to use the word *optimism* because that is about a psychological attitude," the pope says. "I like to use the word *hope* instead, according to what we read in the Letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 11, that I mentioned before. The fathers of the faith kept walking, facing difficulties. And hope does not disappoint, as we read in the Letter to the Romans. Think instead of the first riddle of Puccini's opera 'Turandot,'" the pope suggests.

At that moment I recalled more or less by heart the verses of the riddle of the princess in that opera, to which the solution is hope: "In the gloomy night flies an iridescent ghost./ It rises and opens its wings/ on the infinite black humanity./ The whole world invokes it/ and the whole world implores it./ But the ghost disappears with the dawn/ to be reborn in the heart./ And every night it is born/ and every day it dies!"

"See," says Pope Francis, "Christian hope is not a ghost and it does not deceive. It is a theological virtue and therefore, ultimately, a gift from God that cannot be reduced to optimism, which is only human. God does not mislead hope; God cannot deny himself. God is all promise."

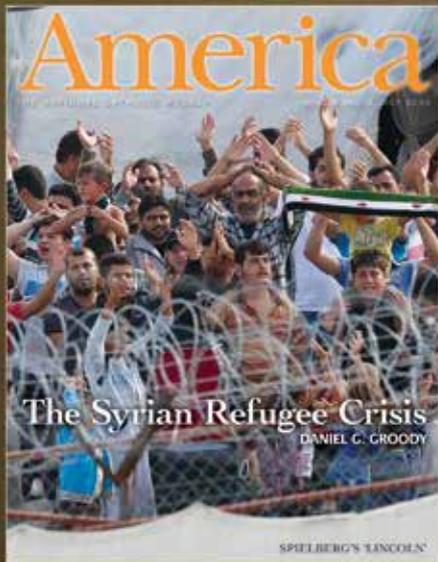
Women are asking deep questions that must be addressed.

### Art and Creativity

I am struck by the reference the pope just made to Puccini's "Turandot" while speaking of the mystery of hope. I would like to understand better his artistic and literary references. I remind him that in 2006 he said that great artists know how to present the tragic and painful realities of life with beauty. So I ask who are the artists and writers he prefers, and if they have something in common.

"I have really loved a diverse array of authors. I love very much Dostoevsky and Hölderlin. I remember Hölderlin for that poem written for the birthday of his grandmother that is very beautiful and was spiritually very enriching for me. The poem ends with the verse, 'May the man hold fast to what the child has promised.' I was also impressed because I loved my grandmother Rosa, and in that poem Hölderlin compares his grandmother to the Virgin Mary, who gave birth to Jesus, the friend of the earth who did not consider anybody a foreigner.

"I have read *The Betrothed*, by Alessandro Manzoni, three times, and I have it now on my table because I want to read it again. Manzoni gave me so much. When I was a child, my grandmother taught me by heart the beginning of *The Betrothed*: 'That branch of Lake Como that turns off to the south between two unbroken chains of mountains....' I also



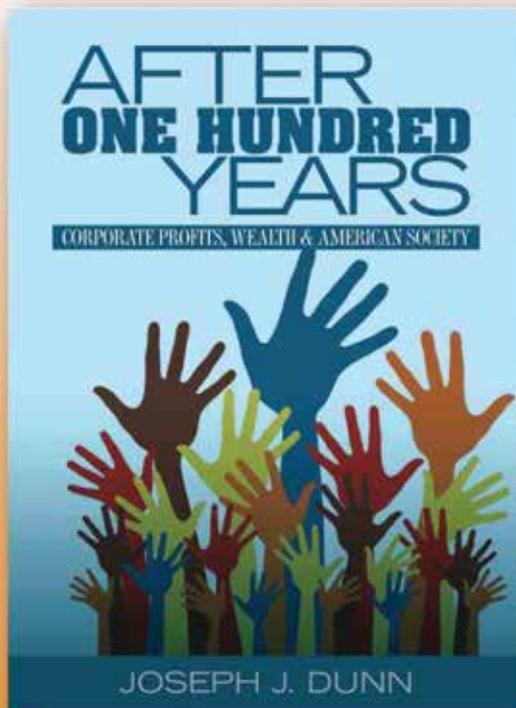
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liked Gerard Manley Hopkins very much.

“Among the great painters, I admire Caravaggio; his paintings speak to me. But also Chagall, with his ‘White Crucifixion.’ Among musicians I love Mozart, of course. The ‘Et incarnatus est’ from his Mass in C minor is matchless; it lifts you to God! I love Mozart performed by Clara Haskil. Mozart fulfills me. But I cannot think about his music; I have to listen to it. I like listening to Beethoven, but in a Promethean way, and the most Promethean interpreter for me is Furtwängler. And then Bach’s Passions. The piece by Bach that I love so much is the ‘Erbarme Dich,’ the tears of Peter in the ‘St. Matthew Passion.’ Sublime. Then, at a different level, not intimate in the same way, I love Wagner. I like to listen to him, but not all the time. The performance of Wagner’s ‘Ring’ by Furtwängler at La Scala in Milan in 1950 is for me the best. But also the ‘Parsifal’ by Knappertsbusch in 1962.

“We should also talk about the cinema. ‘La Strada,’ by Fellini, is the movie that perhaps I loved the most. I identify with this movie, in which there is an implicit reference to St. Francis. I also believe that I watched all of the Italian movies with Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi when I was between 10 and 12 years old. Another film that I loved is ‘Rome, Open City.’ I owe my film culture especially to my parents who used to take us to the movies quite often.

“Anyway, in general I love tragic artists, especially classical ones. There is a nice definition that Cervantes puts on the lips of the bachelor Carrasco to praise the story of Don Quixote: ‘Children have it in their hands, young people read it, adults understand it, the elderly praise it.’ For me this can be a good definition of the classics.”

I ask the pope about teaching literature to his secondary school students.

“It was a bit risky,” he answers. “I had to make sure that my students read *El Cid*. But the boys did not like it. They wanted to read Garcia Lorca. Then I decided that they would study *El Cid* at home and that in class I would teach the authors the boys liked the most. Of course, young people want-

ed to read more ‘racy’ literary works, like the contemporary *La Casada Infel* or classics like *La Celestina*, by Fernando de Rojas. But by reading these things they acquired a taste in literature, poetry, and we went on to other authors. And that was for me a great experience. I completed the program, but in an unstructured way—that is, not ordered according to

what we expected in the beginning, but in an order that came naturally by reading these authors. And this mode befitted me: I did not like to have a rigid schedule, but rather I liked to know where we had to go with the readings, with a rough sense of where we were headed. Then I also started to get them to write. In the end I decided to send Borges two stories written by my boys. I knew his secretary, who had been my piano teacher. And Borges liked

those stories very much. And then he set out to write the introduction to a collection of these writings.”

“Then, Holy Father, creativity is important for the life of a person?” I ask. He laughs and replies: “For a Jesuit it is extremely important! A Jesuit must be creative.”

### Frontiers and Laboratories

During a visit by the fathers and staff of La Civiltà Cattolica, the pope had spoken about the importance of the triad “dialogue, discernment, frontier.” And he insisted particularly on the last point, citing Paul VI and what he had said in a famous speech about the Jesuits: “Wherever in the church—even in the most difficult and extreme fields, in the crossroads of ideologies, in the social trenches—there has been and is now conversation between the deepest desires of human beings and the perennial message of the Gospel, Jesuits have been and are there.” I ask Pope Francis what should be the priorities of journals published by the Society of Jesus.

“The three key words that I commended to La Civiltà Cattolica can be extended to all the journals of the Society, perhaps with different emphases according to their natures and their objectives. When I insist on the frontier, I am referring in a particular way to the need for those who work in the world of culture to be inserted into the context in which they operate and on which they reflect. There is always the lurking danger of living in a laboratory. Ours is

**There are ecclesiastical rules and precepts that were once effective, but now they have lost value or meaning. The view of the church’s teaching as a monolith to defend without nuance or different understandings is wrong.**

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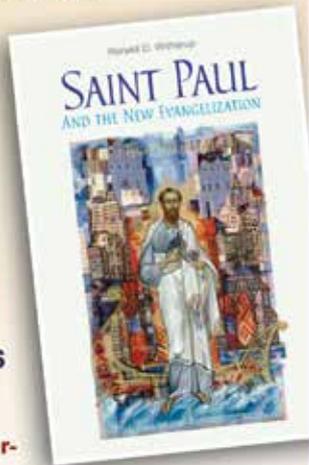
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not a 'lab faith,' but a 'journey faith,' a historical faith. God has revealed himself as history, not as a compendium of abstract truths. I am afraid of laboratories because in the laboratory you take the problems and then you bring them home to tame them, to paint them, out of their context. You cannot bring home the frontier, but you have to live on the border and be audacious."

I ask for examples from his personal experience.

"When it comes to social issues, it is one thing to have a meeting to study the problem of drugs in a slum neighborhood and quite another thing to go there, live there and understand the problem from the inside and study it. There is a brilliant letter by Father Arrupe to the Centers for Social Research and Action on poverty, in which he says clearly that one cannot speak of poverty if one does not experience poverty, with a direct connection to the places in which there is poverty. The word *insertion* is dangerous because some religious have taken it as a fad, and disasters have occurred because of a lack of discernment. But it is truly important."

"The frontiers are many. Let us think of the religious sisters living in hospitals. They live on the frontier. I am alive because of one of them. When I went through my lung disease at the hospital, the doctor gave me penicillin and streptomycin in certain doses. The sister who was on

duty tripled my doses because she was daringly astute; she knew what to do because she was with ill people all day. The doctor, who really was a good one, lived in his laboratory; the sister lived on the frontier and was in dialogue with it every day. Domesticating the frontier means just talking from a remote location, locking yourself up in a laboratory. Laboratories are useful, but reflection for us must always start from experience."

## Human Self-Understanding

I ask Pope Francis about the enormous changes occurring in society and the way human beings are reinterpreting themselves. At this point he gets up and goes to get the breviary from his desk. It is in Latin, now worn from use. He opens to the Office of Readings for Friday of the 27th Week in Ordinary Time and reads me a passage from the *Communitorium Primum* of St. Vincent of Lerins: "Even the dogma of the Christian religion must follow these laws, consolidating over the years, developing over time, deepening with age."

The pope comments: "St. Vincent of Lerins makes a comparison between the biological development of man and the transmission from one era to another of the deposit of faith, which grows and is strengthened with time. Here, human self-understanding changes with time and so also human consciousness deepens. Let us think of when slavery was accepted or the death penalty was allowed without any problem. So we grow in the understanding of the truth. Exegetes and theologians help the church to mature in her own judgment. Even the other sciences and their development help the church in its growth in understanding. There are ecclesiastical rules and precepts that were once effective, but now they have lost value or meaning. The view of the church's teaching as a monolith to defend without nuance or different understandings is wrong.

"After all, in every age of history, humans try to understand and express themselves better. So human beings in time change the way they perceive themselves. It's one thing for a man who expresses himself by carving the 'Winged Victory of Samothrace,' yet another for Caravaggio, Chagall and yet another still for Dalí. Even the forms for expressing truth can be multiform, and this is indeed

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necessary for the transmission of the Gospel in its timeless meaning.

"Humans are in search of themselves, and, of course, in this search they can also make mistakes. The church has experienced times of brilliance, like that of Thomas Aquinas. But the church has lived also times of decline in its ability to think. For example, we must not confuse the genius of Thomas Aquinas with the age of decadent Thomist commentaries. Unfortunately, I studied philosophy from textbooks that came from decadent or largely bankrupt Thomism. In thinking of the human being, therefore, the church should strive for genius and not for decadence.

"When does a formulation of thought cease to be valid? When it loses sight of the human or even when it is afraid of the human or deluded about itself. The deceived thought can be depicted as Ulysses encountering the song of the Siren, or as Tannhäuser in an orgy surrounded by satyrs and bacchantes, or as Parsifal, in the second act of Wagner's opera, in the palace of Klingsor. The thinking of the church must recover genius and better understand how human beings understand themselves today, in order to develop and deepen the church's teaching."

## Prayer

I ask Pope Francis about his preferred way to pray.

"I pray the breviary every morning. I like to pray with the psalms. Then, later, I celebrate Mass. I pray the Rosary. What I really prefer is adoration in the evening, even when I get distracted and think of other things, or even fall asleep praying. In the evening then, between seven and eight o'clock, I stay in front of the Blessed Sacrament for an hour in adoration. But I pray mentally even when I am waiting at the dentist or at other times of the day.

"Prayer for me is always a prayer full of memory, of recollection, even the memory of my own history or what the Lord has done in his church or in a particular parish. For me it is the memory of which St. Ignatius speaks in the First Week of the Exercises in the encounter with the merciful Christ crucified. And I ask myself: 'What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What should I do for Christ?' It is the memory of which Ignatius speaks in the 'Contemplation for Experiencing Divine Love,' when he asks us to recall the gifts we have received. But above all, I also know that the Lord remembers me. I can forget about him, but I know that he never, ever forgets me. Memory has a fundamental role for the heart of a Jesuit: memory of grace, the memory mentioned in Deuteronomy, the memory of God's works that are the basis of the covenant between God and the people. It is this memory that makes me his son and that makes me a father, too." 

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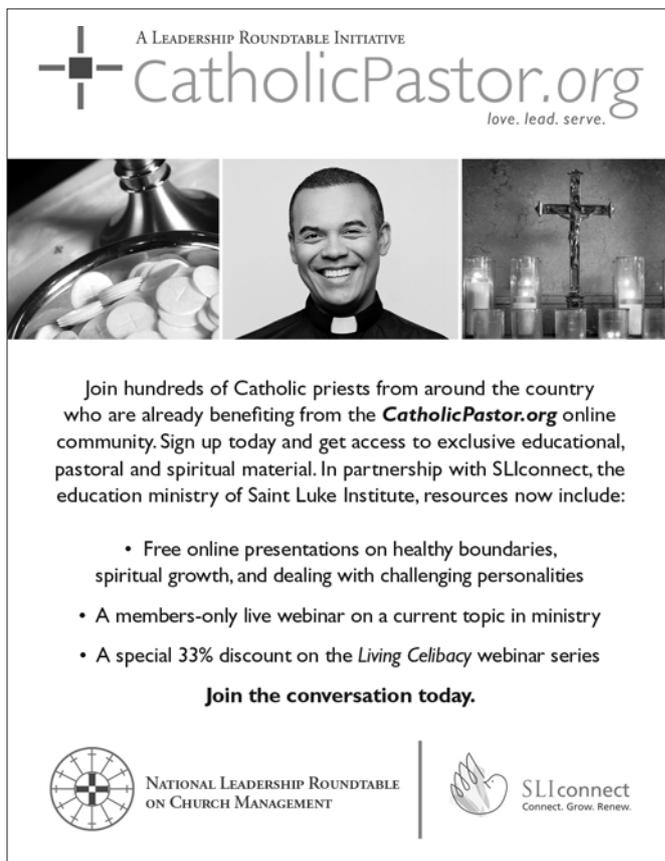
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# Is Reform Possible?

## Historical and theological perspectives on the Roman Curia

BY JOHN W. O'MALLEY

**T**he first question asked of Pope Francis in the widely reported impromptu press conference on July 28 during the flight home from World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro was, not surprisingly, related to the Roman Curia: "What type of reform do you have in mind?" In his reply, the pope first mentioned the commission of eight cardinals he appointed, which, he explained is what the cardinals asked for before the papal election. "We know that it is important to have an outside body of consultors," he said, "not the consultation bodies that already exist, but one on the outside. This is entirely in keeping—here I am making a mental abstraction, but it's the way I try to explain it—in keeping with the maturing of the relationship between synodality and primacy. In other words, having these eight cardinals will favor synodality." This means giving greater voice to the college of bishops in the governance of the church.

**JOHN W. O'MALLEY, S.J.**, is a university professor in the department of theology at Georgetown University and author of *What Happened at Vatican II* (Harvard University Press).

Later, asked specifically about scandals facing the Curia, Francis responded: "There are saints in the Curia. And there are also some who aren't so saintly, and these are those who make more noise.... I think the Curia has fallen somewhat from the level that it had some time ago, of those old Curia men, the profile of the old Curia man, faithful, who did his work. We are in need of such persons. I believe they exist, but they are not so many as there were some time ago."

Amid all the current publicity about the faults and failings of the Roman Curia and the cries for its reform, we need to step back for a moment and put the situation into a larger context. We need to remember that the reform of the Curia has been a recurring and sometimes insistent issue in the history of the church. What changed over the centuries were the problems that needed remedy. As the Curia changed, the problems changed.

The institution originated modestly in the early centuries. The bishop of Rome, like other bishops, needed assistance in keeping records, tending to correspondence and similar tasks. As he in time claimed ever more oversight and



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jurisdiction beyond Rome, the number and authority of his assistants grew. A major turning point came in 1059 with the decree establishing cardinal-bishops as the electors of the pope, which was also the point when papal claims over the church began to escalate.

Bit by bit the cardinals in the papal *famiglia*, or household, began to consider themselves the “senate” of the holy Roman church, which the pope was required to consult on important matters. Their meetings (called consistories) with the pope gradually took over the function earlier performed by the Roman synods, in which the pope met with his clergy. The cardinals’ wealth and their ability to manipulate canon law in their favor increased accordingly.

In 1588 Pope Sixtus V took the drastic step of organizing the consistorial system into 15 congregations, each with a specific area of competence. Although subsequent popes have reshuffled these bureaus or departments many times, they have not changed the bureaucratic structure Sixtus set in place. From 1588 forward, therefore, the Curia enjoyed all the advantages and suffered all the disadvantages any bureaucracy entails.

Another turning point—subtle, gradual and undeclared—occurred after the solemn declarations of papal primacy and infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870. With those declarations, not only the pope but also those who assist him in the governance of the church achieved a degree of authority and a claim to unquestionable acquiescence in their decisions never known before.

## Grievances About the Curia

What were the grievances at each stage in this development? In the 12th century St. Bernard of Clairvaux complained about the Curia’s practice of “giving judgment in the absence of the accused, simply as its members wish”; and he warned Pope Eugene III, a fellow Cistercian, about the worldliness of Rome. In the 14th century the wealth and luxury the cardinals enjoyed in Avignon during the papacy’s residence there excited calls for its reform. Only in the 15th and early 16th centuries, however, did cries against venality and corruption find urgent expression at the highest level of ecclesiastical authority—in the councils of Constance, Basel and Lateran V.

Reformers complained also about the quid-pro-quo patronage system that rewarded family and friends, who were often unworthy of the positions bestowed upon them. Even more irritating to many bishops and rulers was the growing centralization of authority in the Holy See and

the imposition by the papacy of ever more taxes and other financial exactions to fund an ever more ostentatious papal court. Reformers called for the elimination of simony in the Curia that occurred through the buying and selling of offices and services. Martin Luther’s “Appeal to the Nobility of the German Nation” in 1520 contained a long catalog of abuses perpetrated by the Curia. It was a catalog more remarkable for its stridency and comprehensiveness than for any originality in the complaints.

The decrees of the Council of Trent (1545–63) give no hint that bishops at the council found the Curia the major obstacle to the measure they felt essential for the reform of the church, namely, obliging bishops to reside in their dioceses and to perform there their traditional pastoral duties. The Curia’s

practice of granting dispensations from this obligation in return for cash to finance the court (and thus itself) had for centuries consistently undercut every attempt to change the situation.

The issue brought the council to such a crisis that for 10 months between September 1562 and July 1563, it could not pass a single decree. Only the solemn promise by Pope Pius IV to undertake the necessary reform broke the deadlock and enabled the council to conclude its business. Pius and some of his successors made changes, but they were less thorough than reformers called for. Nonetheless, the popes could not altogether ignore the Council of Trent’s decree requiring residence even of the cardinal-bishops in the Curia.

## Vatican II

After a period of relative quiescence during the long post-Trent era, reform of the Curia bounded to the surface during the first session of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. Nobody at that time accused the cardinals of the Curia of an extravagant lifestyle. The problem was rather the attempt of some of them to control the council and, indeed, to force their own agenda on the bishops. The chairman of the doctrinal commission of the council was Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, who was at the same time the head of what was called the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition, sometimes called “the Suprema.”

*Suprema!* The word not only indicated its rank among the congregations but also suggested a prerogative entitling it even to correct the council itself. Against this arrogance—which is how many bishops characterized it—the council reacted vigorously. As the first session drew to a close, reform of the Curia—indeed, a radical reform—seemed almost

# Is it unthinkable to supplement the commission of cardinals with a secular agency that is completely outside the church orbit?

certain to appear prominently on the agenda when the council reconvened the next year.

Just before it reconvened, however, Pope Paul VI, elected a few months earlier, spoke to the members of the Curia, impressed upon them the urgency of the issue and informed them that together—he and they—would take the needed steps. The pope thus diffused the tension by, in effect, removing the issue from the agenda. Even so, the issue simmered beneath the surface for the rest of the council and sometimes burst onto the floor. The intrepid Melkite patriarch, Maximos IV Saigh, for instance, at one point proposed that the Curia report directly to a rotating commission of bishops established to aid the pope in the governance of the church. The commission would be the *Suprema*.

Just as the council was ending, Paul VI published “*Integrae Servandae*” (1965), which gave the *Suprema* the new name Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; it also gave it the new task of promoting good teachings as well as condemning bad ones. He later made other adjustments, like increasing the international composition of the Curia’s personnel. The changes were far from radical.

The same can be said of Pope John Paul II’s apostolic constitution “*Pastor Bonus*” (1988). But in 1995 the pope issued the encyclical “*Ut Unum Sint*” and invited dialogue about how the successor of Peter might better perform his ministry. In so doing he at least implicitly invited dialogue on further, presumably more radical, reform of the Curia, as John R. Quinn, archbishop emeritus of San Francisco, saw and discussed so well in his book *The Reform of the Papacy* (Herder & Herder, 1999). It has been credibly reported that Pope Francis has read Archbishop Quinn’s book.

## Challenges Today

What conclusions can we draw from this history? The first is that the Curia is a fact of life; the Roman Pontiff needs assistance, and the Curia has traditionally been the instrument to provide it. (Whether he needs assistance to the degree and in the extensive and elaborate form currently at his disposal is another question altogether.) The second is that like every bureaucracy, this one needs to be monitored and from time to time undergo reforms that are more than tinkering. The saying *Ecclesia semper reformanda* means in this context specifically *Curia semper reformanda*. Reform of the Curia is a task that must be done over and over again. Third, reform will meet resistance from an entrenched system.

Who is to do the reforming? For bureaucracies, self-reform invariably means no reform. If the reform is to be effective, it must be done by a disinterested outside agency, an agency not enmeshed in the system. It must be done by

an agency, that is to say, that has a critical distance from the system and is familiar with other systems that operate more effectively. The commission of cardinals that Pope Francis has appointed for this task, as well as for broader church issues, is a step in the right direction. But the cardinals are themselves churchmen who work inside the system, even though not inside the Curia. Is it unthinkable to supplement their work with a secular agency that is completely outside the church orbit? Such an agency is much more likely to ask questions that do not even occur to church members.

What needs reform today? That is a question far beyond my competence to answer. There are in fact two problems so profound that they seem beyond almost everyone’s competence. First is the fact that men and women today do not easily accept the idea that what they perceive to be a distant and faceless elite body can claim the right to tell them what to think and how to behave. Second, there is the difficulty today of finding a theological justification for the Curia—or, put more concretely, there is the difficulty of finding a theologically credible connection between Peter the simple fisherman of Galilee and Peter, prince of the apostles, heading a large bureaucratic central office.

If we descend from the heights of those two problems to others seemingly more tractable, several things seem fairly obvious. Some remedy needs to be found for the well-publicized lack of communication among the congregations, tribunals, secretariats and other offices within the Curia, which results in their sometimes working at cross purposes and giving the impression of a system profoundly disorganized and dysfunctional.

Further, a remedy needs to be found for the process of recruiting the personnel of the Curia, which sometimes seems to function more as a system of patronage than a system based on merit—a long-standing problem in the Curia. Finally, a mechanism needs to be devised to ensure that the heads of the different bureaus are held accountable for fulfilling their duties.

There are surely other problems. But what is needed above all is a clarification of the ecclesiological framework in which the Curia functions. In the decades before

the Second Vatican Council, every textbook on ecclesiology described the governance of the church as an unqualified monarchy. The pope was the absolute head of a hierarchical pyramid, from which all authority flowed downward from him to the rest of the church. The triumph of this idea was the result of a long process that accelerated in the 19th and early 20th centuries and reached its apogee on the eve of the council. The very word *Suprema* suggests the mentality that was operative.

Vatican II tried to modify that ecclesiology by recovering the early synodal and collegial tradition of the church of

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An archive of articles

by John W. O’Malley, S.J.

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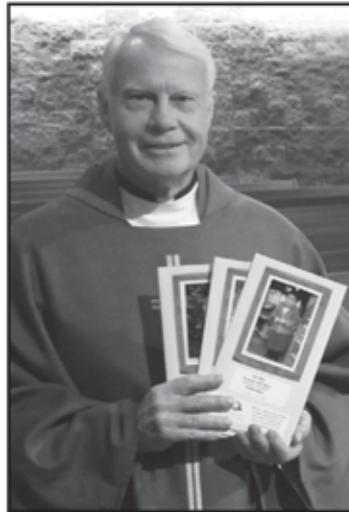
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the first millennium. The result was the doctrine of collegiality, which became the lightning rod of the council. No other doctrine met more unrelenting opposition. Its enemies grasped its radical character and implications. The council eventually ratified the doctrine, but only after “a higher authority” attached a “preliminary note” (*nota praevia*) to the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (1964) that has ever since confounded interpreters and blunted the doctrine’s sharpness. Moreover, the council’s attempts to give collegiality a form to make it operative in the church were pre-empted when at the beginning of the fourth session, Paul VI instituted the synod of bishops, which he defined as a purely consultative body.

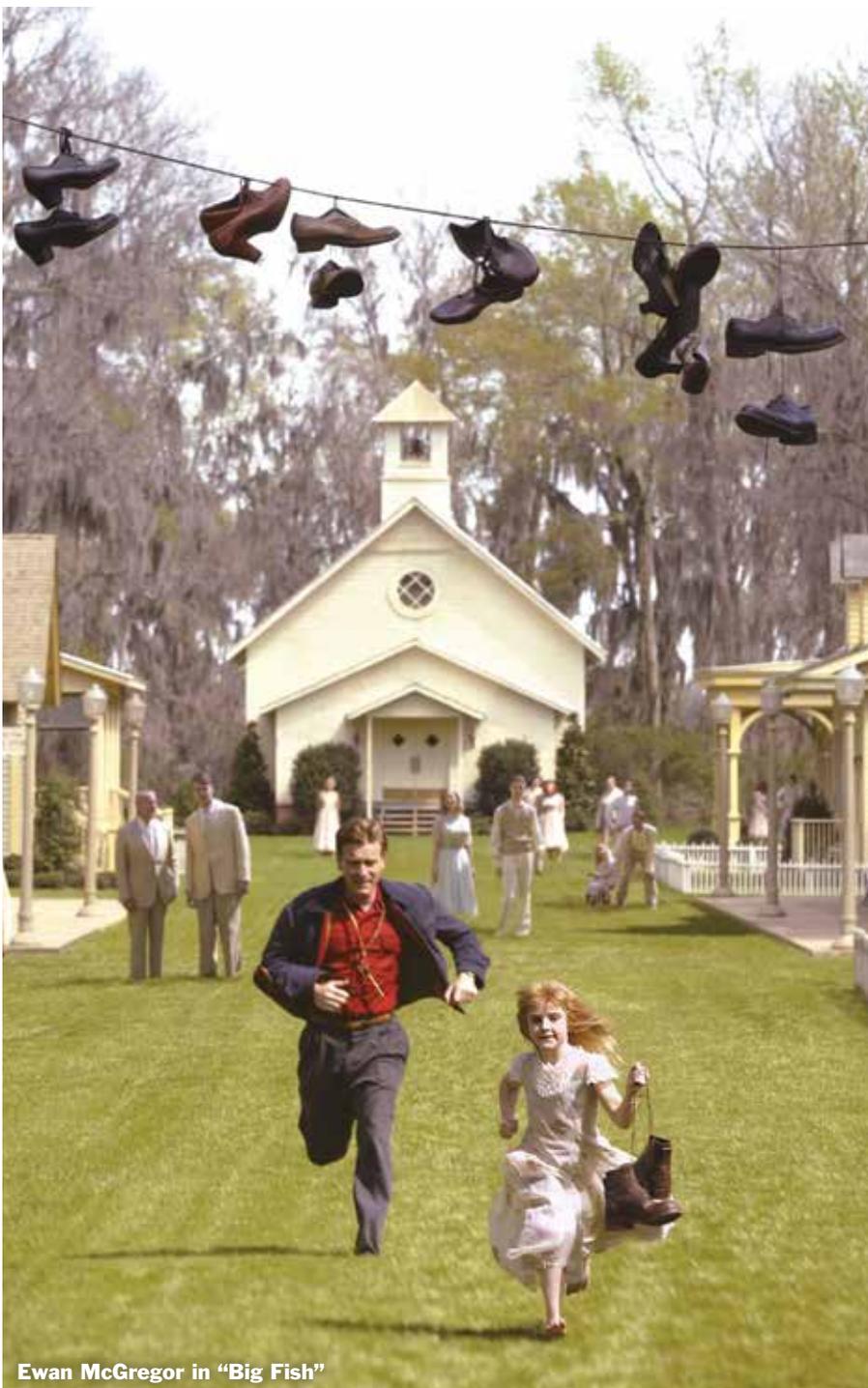
Collegiality holds immense implications for the Curia. It means the Curia should operate not as a set of agencies in charge of the church but as agencies that serve lower agencies by helping them do what they are supposed to do. It means, in other words, strictly observing the Catholic rule of subsidiarity: the higher authority intervenes only when a problem exceeds the ability of a lower authority to deal with it. More basically, it means seeing the church itself as a collegial body, which imposes even upon the *prima sedes*, the chair of Peter, the obligation to function in a collegial fashion regarding other bishops, who, as Vatican II stated, have authority in their own right and are not vicars of the pope.

Even in the few months he has been pope, Francis has given evidence that he intends to function in a collegial fashion. He has, moreover, provided a wonderful example of the servant-leader, which is another theme of the council and a corollary to the doctrine of collegiality. The challenge now is to translate that example into structural changes and then somehow to ensure that the personnel responsible for the effective functioning of the *prima sedes* subscribe to it wholeheartedly and perform their duties in accord with it. **A**

FILM | DON CLEMMER

## THE TALL TALES WE TELL

*Catching up with Tim Burton's 'Big Fish'*



An American paratrooper leaps from a plane, descends through the hazy night sky and lands, unnoticed, directly on the backstage catwalk of a large, U.S.O.-style show. Onstage an Asian ventriloquist performs an expressionless routine before a sea of unmoved military brass with a distinctly Communist feel. An emcee cuts the ventriloquist's act short, and things don't look good for performer and dummy as several soldiers with guns escort them offstage. Meanwhile, the paratrooper stealthily subdues numerous guards backstage, sneaks into a tent and covertly photographs some classified documents. Although he is far behind enemy lines and separated from his unit, he plots his escape back home aided by a canoe, performing conjoined twins and the desire to see his beloved wife again.

This outlandish tale comes from Tim Burton's 2003 film **Big Fish**, a film that on its surface has little to do with religion but easily can be viewed as a parable for faith. Largely forgotten in the decade since its release, its adaption into a musical opening in October on Broadway provides a fresh opportunity to explore its themes. This is especially valuable as the church approaches the end of its observance of the Year of Faith.

Efforts surrounding the Year of Faith seek to renew the faith of people in the pews who are on autopilot, as well as of people not in the pews who, at some point, said, "Forget it; I'm done with this" and walked away. At the start of the Year of Faith, the Vatican encouraged Catholics to perform works of charity, reflect on the lives of the saints and renew their practice of going to confession, among other things. More recently, Pope Francis has encouraged young people to "make a mess" and church leaders to be like the shepherd

Ewan McGregor in "Big Fish"

who “smells like his flock.” While neither Benedict nor Francis included “go watch a movie” on their list of recommendations for rekindling faith, it seems the efforts of the Year of Faith get a small, if unlikely assist from this quirky, colorful film.

Cinematically, “Big Fish” hails from an alternate universe of the career its director might have had. Burton’s early work told wildly inventive tales of strange loners and people struggling to make sense of the weird worlds around them. These films were usually dark, strange and sometimes off-putting and nasty, but the storytelling was generally fun, elevated by signature visuals.

Since 1999, however, Burton has specialized in applying his quirky aesthetic to superficial re-imaginings of various pop-culture commodities (“Sleepy Hollow,” “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” “Alice in Wonderland,” “Dark Shadows”), usually with Johnny Depp front and center.

“Big Fish” is the almost solitary ex-

ception. Burton attributes the film’s rare human depth to his coping with the death of his own father during production. In the film, he does something he never did with Pee Wee Herman, Batman or Edward Scissorhands. He illustrates the sometimes painful challenge of wrestling with the ramifications of trying to understand the people closest to us: family.

In this case, it’s the story of an estranged son, Will Bloom (Billy Crudup), trying to reconcile with his dying father, Edward Bloom (the older version played by Albert Finney, the younger version by Ewan McGregor). Edward has always enjoyed telling elaborate tall tales about the adventures of his early life, including a literal giant fish story. By the time Will reaches adulthood, the endless retellings have strained their relationship and convinced him that his father 1) is full of it and 2) only talks

about himself. The movie begins with Will living in Europe, about to become a father himself and frustrated that all he knows about his own father are “amusing lies.”

Edward’s tall tales, which take place in the mid-20th-century American South, have a sprawling, epic quality that, when seen in flashback, feel like something out of Greek mythology or the Old Testament.

For instance, the story of how he met, fell in love with and struggled to attain the love of his future wife, Sandra (the

older version played by Jessica Lange, the younger by Alison Lohman), involves Will befriending a giant, joining the circus, catching an elusive glimpse of the love of his life and then spending months trying to find her again. He is shot from a cannon, attacked by a werewolf and beaten to a pulp by a childhood rival who happens to be engaged to his future wife when he finally meets her.

As happens in biblical accounts of the often messy love story of God and humanity, Edward endures many trials, including the aforementioned paratrooper episode, to be with his love. It all seems fantastical, but when the viewer sees the couple in their old age and the love that still radiates between them, it is clear that such an epic backstory is apt. It is also worth noting that Edward’s tall tales have one other hallmark of faith and evangelization, as Pope Francis describes them. His adventures take him decidedly outside of himself and far and wide in the larger world. But this mythos is too much for Will to swallow. He walks away like a man renouncing his faith.

But Will cannot stay away forever. His father’s story is part of who he is, so he has to explore it and spends much of the film doing so. Will’s connection to his father grows stronger as he questions—as a person’s faith tends to do—and he comes to understand it better.

### ON THE WEB

Jim McDermott, S.J., reviews the fall TV lineup. [americamagazine.org/television](http://americamagazine.org/television)



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It culminates at his father's deathbed, when Will, surprisingly and against his own better judgment, has a conversion. He compares it to hearing a familiar joke and suddenly remembering why it was funny. In "Big Fish," the relationship between father and son is restored only when Will, still not fully understanding what he is doing, accepts the legacy, the sense of familial belonging that accompanies becoming the storyteller. As the poet Ralph Hodgson said, "Some things have to be believed to be seen."

"Big Fish" shows how people wrestle with and even reject the structures, traditions and belief systems presented to them from an early age, only to come to a deeper, more mature understanding and sense of ownership later in life. Catholics understand that we can become frustrated and even distance ourselves from the church, but that we cannot stop being part of that family. At the end of "Big Fish," Will has not only earned a renewed appreciation for his late father; he has resolved to keep his memory alive by passing the stories on to his own son. In fact, the entire movie, with wraparound narration, is an instance of Will perpetuating the stories.

If the church is going to succeed in renewing its evangelization efforts in the Year of Faith and beyond, more attention should be given to the process that occurs when an unlikely person, one who has wandered far away, returns to the faith. Maybe this is part of the reason why Pope Francis has encouraged Catholics to go to "the outskirts." This is also evident in the pope's recent appeals to nonbelievers and efforts to engage them. When people on the outskirts find their way back, they often become the most powerful agents for passing the faith to future generations and new frontiers. "Big Fish" depicts the trajectory of the journey back vividly, and thus transforms into a beautiful, if accidental, film about faith.

**DON CLEMMER** is assistant director of media relations for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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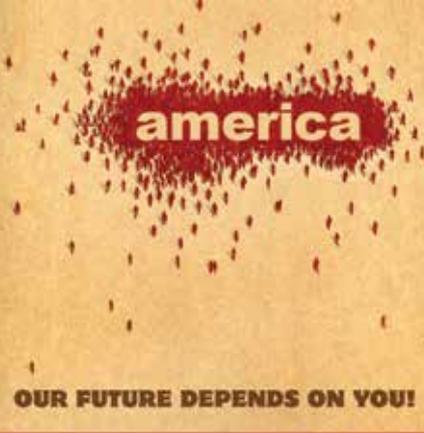
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## ‘WHO AM I TO JUDGE?’

I’m not sure if any official guidelines exist about going to a priest for spiritual direction; but if they do, I’m fairly certain that “Remember to insult your spiritual director at the first meeting” is not among them.

In my defense, it wasn’t intentional. I’d known the priest since my freshman year of high school, so I felt pretty comfortable when I first sat down with him for direction in my early 20s. The place where we met housed a lot of new seminarians, some of whom I got the chance to meet while waiting for my appointment. “Nice guys,” I commented to my director when we finally settled in. Then I cracked, “Some of them might be a little light in the loafers though, don’t you think?”

He paused for a moment. “You know, McGarvey,” he said calmly, “you’ve been ministered to by gay men your whole life; you just didn’t know it.”

To say that I was stunned would not be entirely accurate. It was more like an uncomfortable epiphany. His words weren’t hostile. This wise older priest, whose vocation had been formed as a young officer in combat, seemed to be stating a simple fact that I had been either too immature or naïve to recognize.

As I sat there, countless episodes from my life and the lives of family and friends all flooded back—from periods of darkness and personal crises, through life-threatening illnesses and deaths in my family, not to mention baptisms, confirmations, weddings and more. Was it possible that over all those years, God’s mercy and forgiveness had often been mediated to

me and my loved ones through priests who also happened to be gay?

It became clear to me that the answer to that question was undoubtedly yes. When I was growing up, I’d been fortunate to come into contact with numerous priests and brothers, who had a tremendous positive impact on my life. Upon reflection, Christ’s love looked the same regardless of whether it was filtered through a gay priest/brother or a straight one.

I felt embarrassed and slightly dense for having been so blind and thoughtless. The fact that this realization came at the prompting of a straight man also helped me to recognize that there might be an alternative model for manhood, one that moved beyond simplistic stereotypes and phobic assumptions. It was an unintended gift for which I remain grateful 20 years later.

At that time, many of my fellow Catholics would have regarded this information as “giving scandal” (to use an older generation’s term). This was a time before the Web revolutionized our ability to share information and, consequently, demand unprecedented levels of institutional transparency. It was a time before the sexual abuse crisis transformed the fear of “giving scandal” into the need to “speak honestly.”

It was also a time before Pope Francis’ now famous comments regarding gay priests. “If a person is gay and seeks the Lord and has good will,”

Francis told reporters, “well, who am I to judge them?” With a few simple words, the pope gave the entire church an unintentional gift of his own by ratcheting down the rhetoric and allowing us to speak honestly about what is real.

Whatever statistical analysis you choose to cite (23 percent? 58 percent?), according to the Rev. Donald Cozzens, a former seminary rector who has written on the topic, “it is clear that the percentage of homosexual priests and seminarians is significantly higher than it is in society at large.”

Rather than being scandalized, I would argue that Catholics are actually better situated than any group on earth to embrace our gay brothers and sisters. This is true simply because God has embraced us first through their ministry in our lives.

In his first six months, this pope has proven himself to be a master of tone—a communicator who understands that messages are conveyed in countless ways, language being just one among them. It’s as if he actually took to heart a lesson all of us learned as children: “It’s not what you say, but how you say it.”

No one has any illusions that Francis has changed any church teachings. For many of my friends and colleagues who are gay the pope’s comments were met with an enormous sigh of relief. For many others, like me, it was simply a welcome recognition of reality.

Catholics are well situated to embrace our gay brothers and sisters.



**BILL MCGARVEY**, author of *The Freshman Survival Guide*, owner of *CathNewsUSA.com* and former editor in chief of *Busted Halo* (2004–10), is a musician and writer.

## THINGS FALL TOGETHER

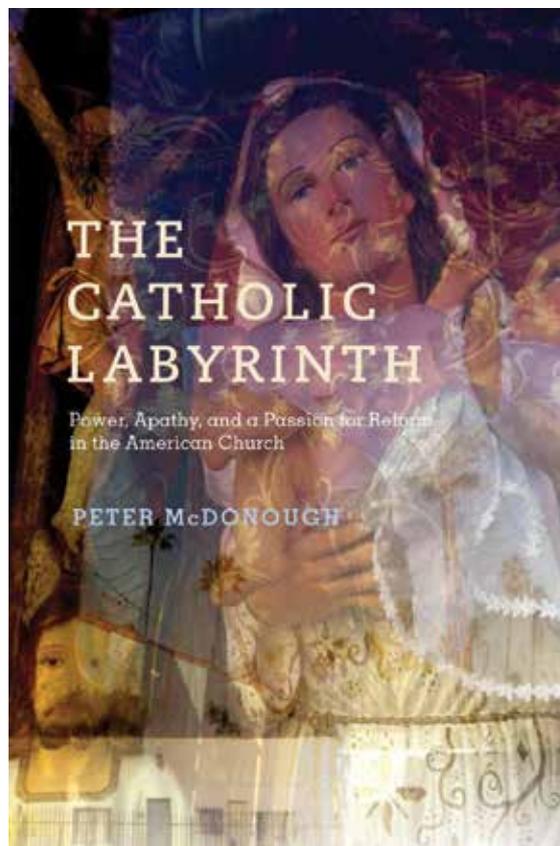
### THE CATHOLIC LABYRINTH Power, Apathy, and a Passion for Reform in the American Church

By Peter McDonough  
Oxford University Press. 408p. \$29.95

Many retreat houses feature a labyrinth; pilgrims wend their way through a circuitous though orderly route, metaphorically tracing the ever ancient, ever new challenge of cultivating union with a mysterious deity. By contrast, Peter McDonough's *The Catholic Labyrinth*, a book that sketches a spectrum of conflicting forces and divergent trends within the church in the United States, depicts American Catholicism as a bewildering maze shaped by an immeasurably diverse set of "individual decisions and pell-mell adaptations." One gets the sense of simultaneous movement in multiple directions, and at times it seems pertinent to wonder where indeed God may be amid the discord. As the subtitle asserts, this is a book largely about power and the struggle for power among a variety of competing American Catholic entities and interests.

The author of two previous studies on U.S. Jesuits, McDonough's acute understanding of institutional structure and organizational dynamics is at work throughout. Though he highlights major trends like the ongoing Latin-Americanization of U.S. Catholicism and the broad influence of individualism on the spiritual commitments of the baptized, he spends more time exploring the influence of groups and leaders, including First Things, founded by the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus; FutureChurch, headed by Sister Christine Shenk; and

the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), whose spokesman is David Clohessy. As he scans the contemporary horizon, he adverts to a familiar narrative. The perceived excesses of the long decade of the 1960s galvanized and united forces of theo-



logical and political retrenchment even as theological and political progressives splintered and diminished in influence.

Thus, McDonough concludes that though Voice of the Faithful (V.O.T.F.) may have seemed vital at its 2002 birth, the group's inchoate structure—vestiges of its grassroots origins and preference for consensus-based decision-making—ultimately enabled hierarchical authorities to ignore it and relegated the orga-

nization to a place "at the margin of the game." On the other hand, the Knights of Columbus, with its massive bankroll and robust executive leadership, could easily seize the moment last year to speak on Catholics' behalf, loudly decrying the implementation of Obamacare as a threat to religious liberty.

How influential are these organizations? As it turns out, even highly organized and monied interests seem ineffectual if measured by their impact on rank-and-file Catholics, a population decidedly apathetic about internal church affairs. But the more organized and wealthy a group is, the more likely it is to win attention and influence among leading figures in the hierarchy—a point widely intuited, but one that McDonough rightly highlights.

One of McDonough's more valuable contributions is his sketch of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, an organization founded by the business executive Geoffrey Boisi and designed to advise and support church officials in the implementation of organizational and fiscal best practices. The roundtable brings together wealthy benefactors, management experts, bishops, and leaders in a variety of ministries to identify and inculcate "standards for excellence" in church-sponsored institutions. Among the roundtable's core

principles is a commitment to prescind from what McDonough calls "theological bickering," a strategic choice designed to maximize its "solutions-oriented" impact. Nevertheless, the truth is that the church's decentralized organizational culture—each bishop a prince in his diocese, each parish a microcosm unto itself—remains a considerable challenge even for the well-structured, well-funded roundtable.

#### ON THE WEB

A discussion of the book *Herbert McCabe: Faith Within Reason*.  
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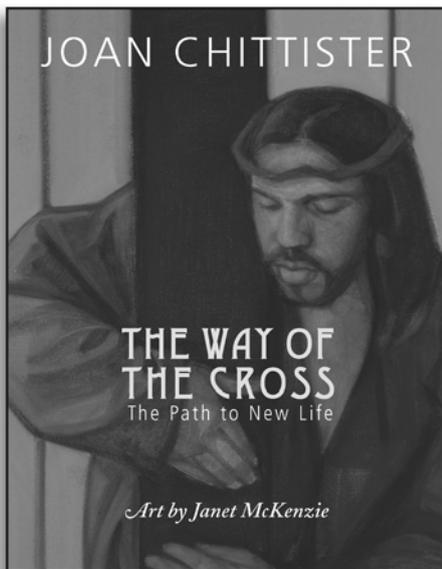
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Each organized effort to shape the church or become its public voice—think William Donohue's Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights—plays out against a backdrop of ongoing Catholic deinstitutionalization, which may mean we are headed toward some version of an American Catholic Wild West. For decades, we have witnessed the boarding up of parishes and schools that once served as the vital backbone of local communities. Where these institutions survive, whether in the cities or the suburbs, they rarely possess the kind of influence and loyalty they once had. At the same time, Catholic social service and health care initiatives, frequently dependent upon government funding for their existence, face the difficult task of maintaining a visible Catholic identity while complying with an array of state and federal requirements. Add to this the notably diminished authority that ordained leaders, especially bishops, have among the faithful. Notably, McDonough suggests that, in this context, a strategy emphasizing the distinctiveness of church teaching on sexuality and gender may have the advantage of affirming Catholic difference, but that it will ultimately fail as a compelling plan for ensuring long-term institutional vitality.

This study is itself labyrinthine and occasionally has the feel of not fully digested notes for a book. Though his endorsement of such things as a married priesthood and women's ordination seems clear, McDonough offers no comprehensive plan for the future. Yet the book has the advantage of offering a bird's-eye view that encompasses a great deal while not sparing complexity. For those invested in the American church's future, it is a sobering and valuable read, though not an especially heartening one.

**JAMES P. MCCARTIN** is director of the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture and the author of *Prayers of the Faithful: The Shifting Spiritual Life of American Catholics* (Harvard University Press).



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## A BOY GROWS IN BROOKLYN

### THE POWERS

By Valerie Sayers

Northwestern University Press. 312p  
\$24.95

It is the 1941 baseball season, and Joe DiMaggio is not content. Fans idolize him. He enjoys a record-breaking hitting streak. His wife gives birth to a son. Yet DiMaggio is moody and saturnine, besieged by guilt that he is not the hero his fans expect him to be. He consumes Superman comic books, frustrated because despite popular opinion, his own powers are limited. A tower of insecurity and self-pity, he is rattled by the drafting of Hank Greenberg, by the death of Lou Gehrig and, one evening, by the sudden apparition of some kid he doesn't know urging him to use his superpowers to help European refugees.

That kid is Joe D'Ambrosio, a fresh graduate from Xavier High School, Catholic Worker volunteer and committed pacifist in a country that seems inevitably propelled, by the moral imperative of stopping Hitler, toward war. Though icons like DiMaggio (pictured on the novel's cover) and Dorothy Day and Walker Evans appear prominently in Sayers's compelling novel, *The Powers* is at heart a coming-of-age story focusing on the idealistic Joe, his more practical friend, Bernhard Keller and, more centrally, on his sometime love interest Agnes O'Leary as they negotiate the challenges of fraught family histories and uncertain futures.

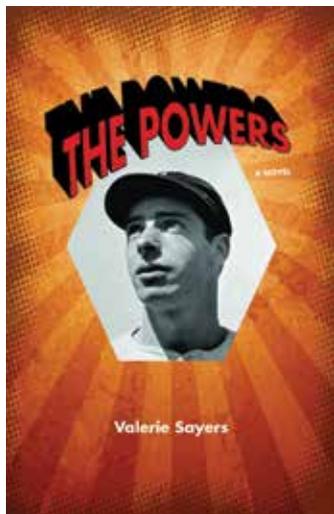
The 17-year-olds in Sayers's novel are well informed, politically aware

and passionate about their beliefs in a way that has much in common with the youth of another generation 25 years later. Joe and Bernie spend their Saturday nights debating whether or not "just this time and this time only" pacifism can be renounced "to fight a madman," as Agnes listens, enthralled. Sayers effectively evokes a Catholic response to the political climate that no doubt prevailed in the summer and fall of 1941 before Pearl Harbor settled the question of American intervention in the conflicts that were spinning the world out of control. On one hand, there is the question: "What's a pacifist to do when someone's dropping bombs?" On the other hand, "How can you read the Gospels, be a Christian and think we should go to war?"

If these positions seem reductive and oversimplified, Sayers expresses them in the voices of characters who are complex and fully realized—Joe, the pacifist, educated by Jesuits at a military school, and Bernie, self-conscious about his German-sounding name and sometimes mistaken for a Jew. It must have been a strange time when a political rally at Madison Square Garden featured Charles Lindbergh on a program with the Socialist Norman Thomas, united by an isolationist platform; a strange time when Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to stop anyone with relatives anywhere in the Reich from emigrating to America; a strange time when an innocuous pastime like baseball became charged with nationalist fervor as teams promoted I Am An American Day, advancing a patriotism that inclined to-

ward jingoism and intolerance. It is in this environment that Sayers's protagonists, Joe, Bernie and Agnes identify their values and the principles they will live by.

Agnes has the most difficult time, and as Sayers's narrative unfolds, it is Agnes, with her "view of the world that is pleasantly out of focus" whose growth is best served by Sayers's limited third person point of view. Unlike her male friends, Agnes doesn't have the benefit of a Jesuit education; the worldly Jesuits are often compared to more provincial parish priests who look with suspicion upon a woman like Dorothy Day and whose advice Agnes finds informed by a narrowness of vision that the Jesuits see beyond. The details of Agnes' situation flirt with soap opera: she lives with her three sisters and her father in a Brooklyn flat dominated by Babe, her imperious and bigoted grandmother, who, years after the fact, cannot even begin to forgive her daughter-in-law's (Agnes's mother's) suicide and who for-



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## Schedule of Talks for Fall 2013:

### Tuesday, Sept. 24 *Emergence: Systems, Organisms, Persons*

Presenter: Nancey Murphy, Ph.D., Professor of Christian Philosophy, Fuller Theological Seminary

### Thursday, Oct. 24 *Does Evolution Have a Purpose?*

Presenter: Michael Ruse, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the History and Philosophy of Science Program, Department of Philosophy, Florida State University

### Tuesday, Nov. 19 *Seeking a Theology Earth Can Live With*

Presenter: Anne M. Clifford, Ph.D., Msgr. James A. Supple Chair of Catholic Studies, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Iowa State University

These events are free and open to the public. They will begin at 7 p.m. and will be held in the Panasci Family Chapel on the Le Moyne College campus.

For more information, contact the McDevitt Center for Creativity and Innovation at (315) 445-6200 or [mcdevittcenter@lemoyne.edu](mailto:mcdevittcenter@lemoyne.edu), or visit the center online at [www.lemoyne.edu/mcdevitt](http://www.lemoyne.edu/mcdevitt).

Previous talks in the series – by Francisco Ayala, Roger Haight, Thomas Tracy, J. Matthew Ashley, and Robert John Russell – are available for viewing at the McDevitt Center website at [www.lemoyne.edu/mcdevitt](http://www.lemoyne.edu/mcdevitt).

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bids her granddaughters to have any contact with that disreputable side of the family.

Agnes, however, rebels. She re-establishes a relationship with her maternal grandfather, who becomes instrumental in her pursuit of a photography career, an ambition born of a chance meeting Agnes has with Walker Evans on the subway one evening. Her grandfather allows her to photograph the corpses in the funeral home he runs, at first only after they have been beautified by make-up and wigs and costumes, but eventually, as they are when they arrive, pale and bloated and grotesque. These dead give life to Agnes’s aspirations so that she comes to see the world, and her place in it, with clarity and precision.

Meanwhile, romance, as it often does, complicates friendship, and Agnes struggles with her feelings for both Joe and Bernie. To whom will she give her heart? To whom will she give her body? She loves both of them, to be sure, but what, exactly, is romantic love and how can Agnes be sure? To her credit, Sayers skillfully sidesteps the potential melodramatic pitfalls her plot invites; she never compromises the integrity of her characters, whose actions are thoughtful, deliberate and believable.

The scenes between Agnes and Babe are among the finest in the book as Agnes challenges Babe’s reflexive pettiness and prejudice. Babe considers herself broadminded for gathering “a pile of used clothes” for “those Jews,” but she warns Agnes that she has had quite enough of Agnes’s talk about Jewish refugees. She seems surprised that she could hardly identify Jews at the ball-park since they “look normal enough.” Her bigotry is monumental, but it is so ingrained she cannot recognize it, and accusations of it genuinely surprise and offend her.

Through Agnes and Babe, Sayers explores timeless and universal questions of intergenerational conflicts in values. Agnes’s education has opened her mind and broadened her perspective, but it

has also separated her from her family and, to a degree, from all authority, including that of her church. Agnes is no Stephen Daedalus—she doesn't have his arrogance or ambition—but aspects of her experience bring to mind Joyce's character, and, for the sake of her sanity and survival, once firm bonds of familial loyalty and gratitude grow frail.

Sayers's depiction of Babe never descends into stereotype, as it easily might have. One reason is Babe's devotion to baseball, and her particular adoration of DiMaggio, with whom she feels a singular mystical connection and for whose success she invokes her "powers." Monthly she makes the pilgrimage from Brooklyn, home of the worthless Dodgers, to the Bronx, to worship at the shrine of her beloved Yankees. She senses DiMaggio's dissatisfaction, misgivings and frustration at being "everybody's goddamned hero" and believes she has "a special gift that soothes a ballplayer." Her presence at games is an act of faith, and turns a character who, in Agnes' cynical view, becomes "a fat distorted anti-Semite, a malingering manipulator" into a baseball team's unheralded benefactor and muse.

Sayers's novel includes numerous thumb-size contemporary photographs, many of which come from the Office of War Information Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress and from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. These are not easily counted, since so many of them reappear resized or recropped throughout the novel. While they help to evoke the setting and are interesting in their own right, their connection to the narrative seems tenuous and the repetition of selected images turns out to be more distracting than enlightening. Sayers's style is generally crisp, efficient and eminently readable, despite the intrusion of the occasional cliché ("DiMaggio " breathes a sigh of relief"; Babe "stops in her tracks"), or the self-conscious attempt to justify a cliché ("The crowd, as they say, goes

wild.") or the expression that sounds a shade anachronistic ("It is what it is."). A scene in which Agnes surrenders her virginity is a rare blunder; it is explicit in a way that seems inconsistent with both the context and the character. But these stylistic missteps are minor and

infrequent. Sayers creates a cast of memorable characters, both real and imagined, and tells their stories with grace, understanding and affection.

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DENNIS VELLUCCI is an English teacher at Archbishop Molloy High School in Queens, N.Y.

ROBERT T. DAVIS

## A HOUSE DIVIDED

### A DISEASE IN THE PUBLIC MIND A New Understanding of Why We Fought the Civil War

By Thomas Fleming  
Da Capo Press. 384p \$26.99

During his long, distinguished life as historian and novelist, Thomas Fleming has focused for the most part upon 18th-century America and the Revolution. That sustained focus, however, in some surprising ways, has now led to his newest book, a highly recommended narrative history that is dominated by this provocative theme: the public mind of the United States, ever since the nation's colonial beginnings, has been infected by a damaging disease. Fleming, by diagnosing the causes, symptoms and spread of that disease, serves up controversial conclusions about why Americans fought the Civil War.

Before defining and discussing the disease, Fleming opens with a detailed description of the dramatic events at Harper's Ferry, Va., in late 1859. A small group of fanatics, led by the notorious abolitionist John Brown, raided the U.S. Armory and Arsenal in hopes of seizing rifles and ammunition with which Brown hoped to equip his imagined army of Southern slaves and sympa-

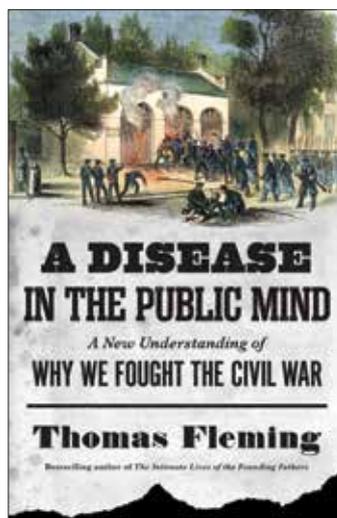
thetic Northerners. The self-anointed crusader Brown badly botched the poorly planned attack, and U.S. military authorities wasted no time in capturing or killing the inept raiders.

Not long after the Harper's Ferry incident, though, as Fleming explains, the United States found itself confronting the tragedies and triumphs of a grotesque four-year civil war, a bitter conflict that remains further tainted by some irksome questions. Here is one: With the first slaves arriving in Virginia in 1619 and more than 200 years of unabated slave trade after that, in which

both Southerners and Northerners were shamefully implicated, why did it take America so long to end the horrors of slavery? And here is another: What caused the Civil War?

As an answer to both questions, Fleming makes an interesting argument by borrowing and building upon a phrase first uttered by President James Buchanan. Using the phrase twice—in 1859 and 1860—Buchanan spoke of "an incurable disease in the public mind." But what does that mean? And how could that phrase be relevant to our improved understanding of the Civil War?

Fleming points out that the "public mind" refers not to public opinion, which can so often be illusory because



of its fluctuations, but instead—as argued by Claggett and Shafer in *The Public American Mind* (2010)—“public mind” refers to fixed, fundamental beliefs in four key public policy areas: social welfare, international relations, cultural values and civil rights. Fleming then goes on to argue—not in the abstract but through real life examples taken from history—the “disease in the public mind” occurs when twisted, subjective interpretations of political, economic or social realities seize control of large numbers of minds in the population. An early, extreme example of this “disease” would be the witch trials hysteria of 1692 in Massachusetts; other examples include attitudes that led to prohibition and McCarthyism.

Continuing, and more to the point of his thesis, Fleming argues that “the seeds of a *primary* disease of the public mind, [including New England’s perceived sense of political, economic and social isolation] would soon fuse

with antislavery [sentiments] to create hatred of the South and Southerners with tragic consequences for America’s future.” Furthermore, starting with the American Revolution and continuing with the War of 1812 and beyond, a *secondary* disease involved an early, foolish and persistent belief in the United States that wars can be won easily.

Now, by pointing back to the years preceding and following the John Brown fiasco, Fleming would have us understand that many Americans other than Brown had also vigorously campaigned against the cruelties of slavery, but many others—particularly Southern slave-owners—objected to any move toward emancipation and abolition. Even some prominent founding fathers (hypocritical slave owners among them) had begun at least to question slavery’s morality, but the paradox and cruelty of slavery continued. Then, however, with western expansion after the American Revolution, and es-

pecially with the Louisiana Purchase, slavery became an even more virulent and pernicious wedge issue.

So, by the early 19th century, the “disease”—because of polarized, intractable opinions regarding the settlement of the slavery issue, especially as that issue had been exacerbated by regional resentments and jealousies—had firmly entrenched itself in the “public mind” of American culture, making the American Civil War inevitable.

Fleming’s richly detailed and eminently readable account of events leading up to the Civil War is like a complex melodrama, populated by an intriguing assortment of heroes, villains, victims and plenty of surprises—some of which are very disturbing. Loaded with provocative insights, this book is a well-argued answer to that persistent question: Why did Americans fight the Civil War?

**ROBERT T. DAVIS** is a faculty associate at the University of West Florida.

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# A Little Faith

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), OCT. 6, 2013

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

*“The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’” (Lk 17:5)*

**T**he apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’ What’s the equation for increasing faith? “The Lord replied, ‘If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea,” and it would obey you.’” What sort of answer is this?

Jesus uses this image of the tiny mustard seed to allow us to conceive both of his kingdom and the faith required by his followers. I have always thought it a sign that we need “more” faith but only have a “little” faith, so little that we cannot produce the faith necessary for great things. The Rev. Tomas Halik, a Czech priest and intellectual, undercuts this understanding in *Night of the Confessor*:

Suddenly this text spoke to me in a way that differed from the usual interpretation. Isn’t Jesus saying to us with these words: Why are you asking me for lots of faith? Maybe your faith is “far too big”? Only if it decreases, until it is as small as a mustard seed, will it give forth its fruit and display its strength.

Faith, says Halik, might need to be little, to be unencumbered by that which seems solid, necessary and essential but is brittle, sharp and rigid, protecting our human endeavors and not our divine faith. Halik sees, at least in the West, easy certainties about religion and ide-

ology that have replaced willingness to suffer for one’s faith, a replacement of mystery with easy answers. “Big faith” offers no help against the paradoxes and complexities of life; it seeks safety in numbers and certainty from the past.

But what about what Halik calls the “impossibly absurd” promise that if we had a “little faith” we could move a mulberry tree to the sea? Halik does not believe Jesus is encouraging us to ask for and expect the equivalent of spiritual “superpowers,” which might simply play into our “covert narcissism, megalomania, Messiah complex” (25) or that Jesus is encouraging a form of “autosuggestion,” by which we replace faith in Christ with “self-affirmation, self-assertiveness, and the ‘extension of one’s potential’” (26).

Instead, he associates this radical expression of faith with behavior deemed foolish by the world, like “forgiving when I could take vengeance, and even ‘loving my neighbor,’ and ‘turning the other cheek’ when I have been done wrong to...” (26). This absurd little faith of forgiveness and turning the other cheek is in fact living out a life of love in the midst of a world that desires power and vengeance, and seeks always to protect “what’s mine.” Are not these little acts of love more absurd in our world than moving a mulberry tree into the sea? Do they not require continual little acts of faith in the face of violence, mockery, rejection and the loss of the things of this world?

So, how do we increase our faith? What Jesus says in the verses that follow comprise a surprising answer, which fits with Halik’s focus on the positive nature of “little” faith. In these enigmatic verses, Jesus speaks of master-slave relations, a key aspect of ancient society that every hearer in antiquity would have understood. The language of human slavery properly sounds harsh to modern ears, but in Jesus’ day a slave would do what his master required and would not be unduly rewarded or praised for it.

Jesus’ focus, though, is on the spiritual implications for his followers: “So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done.’”

This is not precisely the language of “self-affir-



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Think of Jesus’ faith as the size of a mustard seed. What must you do to let your faith become “small”?

mation, self-assertiveness, and the ‘extension of one’s potential.’” Faith, Jesus says, is the practice of doing what we ought to do as his followers, however bizarre and absurd it might seem to a world that demands more. It is the image of Paul in prison, “a prisoner for his sake,” bearing his “share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God.” It is the prophet Habakkuk, crying out regarding the “destruction and violence” that surround him and hearing God’s voice say, “The vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint; if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.” How do you increase your faith? Practice letting it grow small. **JOHN W. MARTENS**

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

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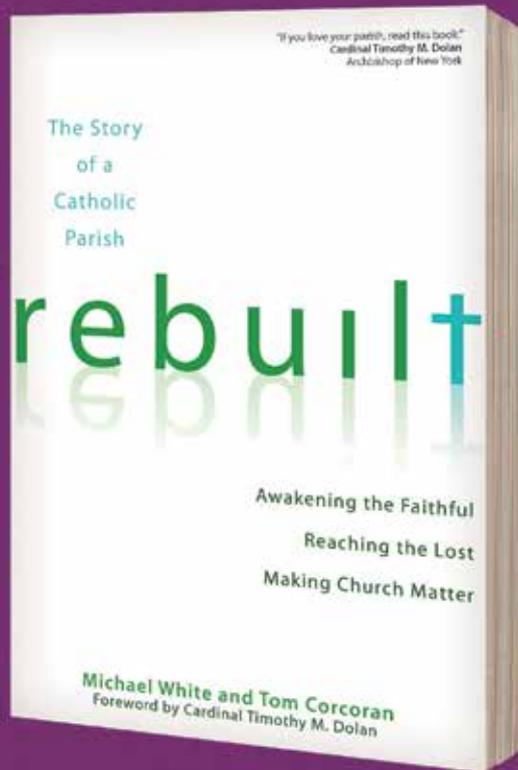
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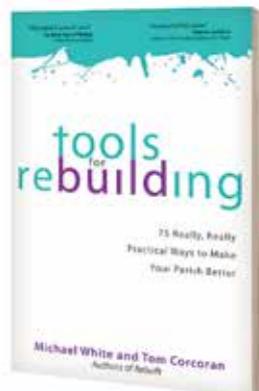
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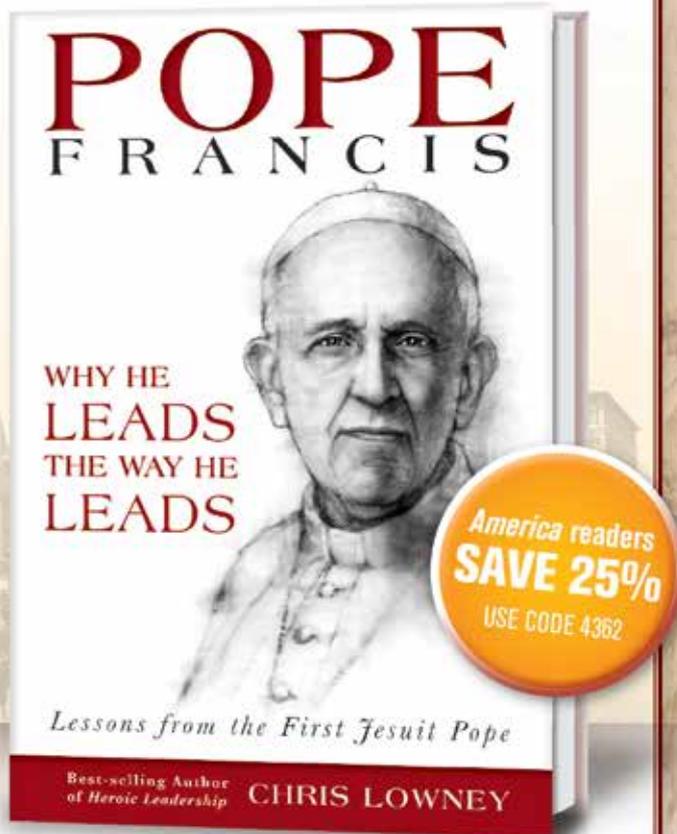
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