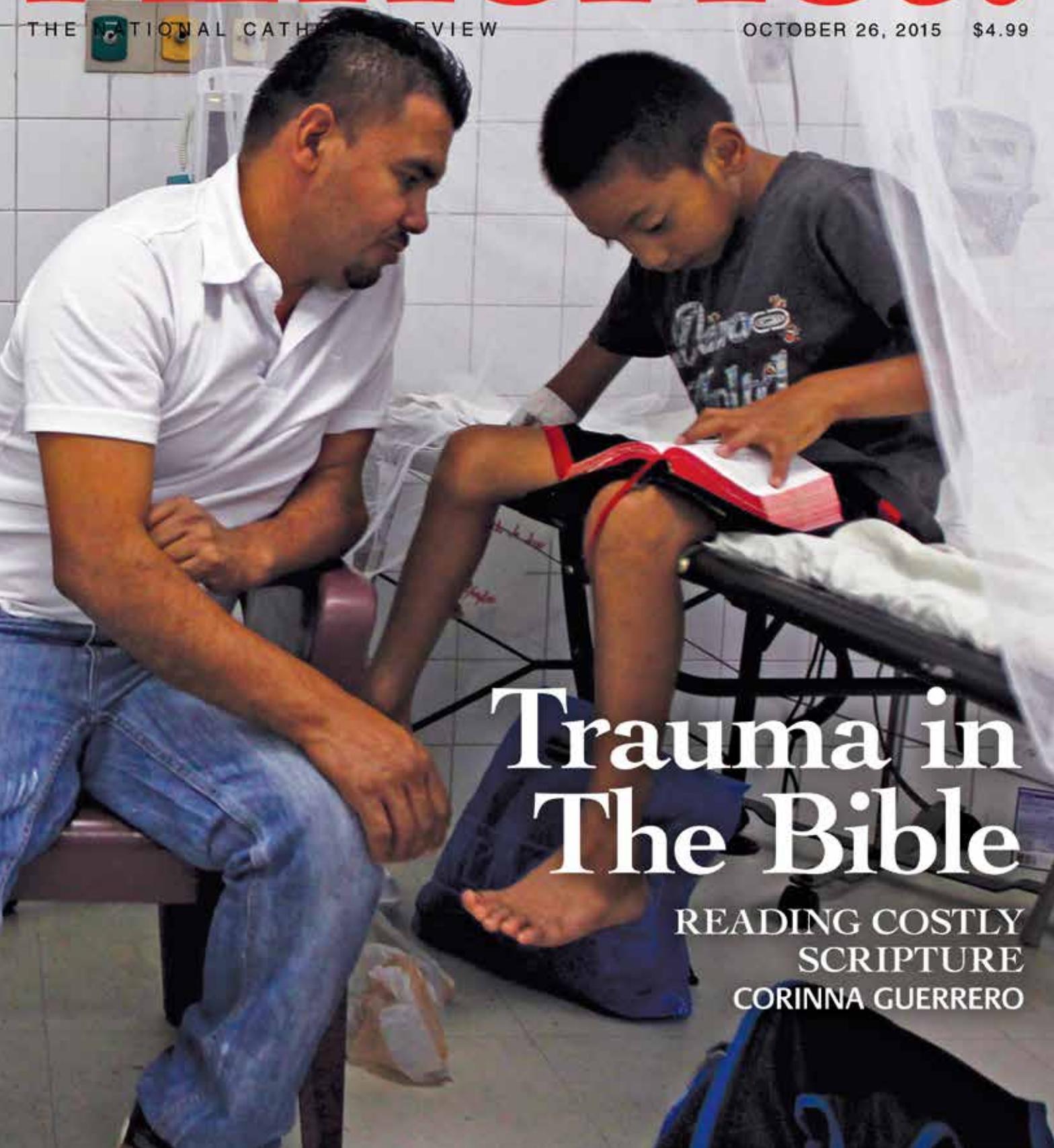


# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

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## Trauma in The Bible

READING COSTLY  
SCRIPTURE  
CORINNA GUERRERO

**T**he largest copyrighted work of art on the planet is the “Rainbow Swash,” six giant streaks of brightly colored paint on an LNG gas tank, a 140-foot tall steel container located on the eastern side of Boston’s Southeast Expressway. Completed in 1971, “Rainbow Swash” is the biggest and most famous work of the artist-cum-activist Sister Mary Corita, the “rebel nun” who “broke new artistic ground during an era when opportunities were limited for women.” As Barbara Curtain Miles rightly observes in this issue, Corita, as she was known after her departure from religious life in 1968, “deserves recognition alongside her famous secular counterpart, the pop artist Andy Warhol.”

Most of the thousands of people who drive by the tank each day make a quick, “isn’t-that-nice” nod to this now revered Boston icon, yet they are largely unaware of the controversy that has long surrounded it. For if you look carefully at the left side of its blue streak, you will see, according to not a few Bostonians, the profile of an old man with a long beard who looks too suspiciously like Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese Communist leader and *bête noire* of successive U.S. presidents. True, Corita was a pacifist who opposed the Vietnam War, but she always denied that she had embedded such an image in the work. That fact, however, has not stopped people, especially those who took a more hawkish view of the American misadventure in Vietnam, from seeing Ho in it anyway.

I drove past the LNG tank for years and never saw the image, so one morning I decided to take a closer look. I parked my car on the side of the expressway and stared, squinting and contorting my eyes, at Corita’s blue streak for the better part of 20 minutes. To my amazement, just as I was about

to give up, I did see clearly the left profile of an old man with a long beard. I saw Ho. But had I really seen him, or was I merely imposing Ho on Corita? And even if it is a profile of a man, how do we know that it’s Ho Chi Minh and not, say, Z/Z Top? More important, what if it’s just a few random strokes of the artist’s brush? It still seems incoherent that a person so committed to abstract art would make such a literal statement in her largest commission. So while I have seen Ho in the streak and I always will see him, I’m not convinced that I ever did or ever will.

Which brings me to the meeting of the Synod of Bishops underway in Rome. Pope Francis has made it clear that the synod is meeting to consider the church’s pastoral response to the graces and challenges of contemporary family life in a spirit of openness and renewal. Above all, as the pope said in this magazine two years ago, he believes 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.” Francis also warned the synod fathers this week to avoid a “hermeneutic of suspicion” that prompts one to see skullduggery and manipulation in every quarter. The pope’s words, unfortunately, have not prevented some participants on every side from seeing precisely that. As Cardinal Donald Wuerl remarked last week, “If you’re convinced this is all rigged, then you’re going to see that everywhere.” In other words, if you are looking for Ho, you’re likely to find him.

Pope Francis has made it clear: The synodal process is complex, it’s messy, but it isn’t rigged. There is no Ho there. I believe him. Then again, I think I believe Corita too.

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

106 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019-3803  
Ph: (212) 581-4640; Fax: (212) 399-3596  
Subscriptions: (800) 627-9533  
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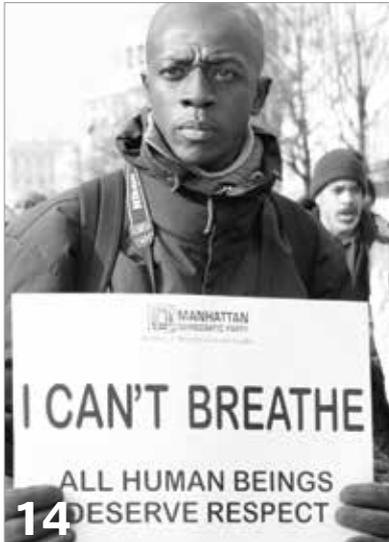
**EDITORIAL E-MAIL**  
america@americamedia.org

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*Cover:* A man reads the Bible with his son, who is showing chikungunya-like fever symptoms, at a hospital in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, July 20, 2015. Reuters/Jorge Cabrera

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## ON THE WEB

**Gerard O'Connell** reports daily on the **Synod on the Family** at "Dispatches," and **James Martin, S.J.**, talks about his first novel *The Abbey* on "America This Week." Full digital highlights on page 21 and at [americamagazine.org/webfeatures](http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures).



### Tragedy in Kunduz

The recent bombing of the Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, by an American aircraft that killed at least 10 patients and 12 staff members is another tragic moment in the United States' longest war. It occurs when countries like Syria, Libya, Yemen and Iraq are foundering despite or, in some cases, because of American military intervention.

The hospital cared for wounded Afghan citizens and Taliban soldiers alike. In the preceding week the staff of 180 had treated 400 victims of the war, and the Taliban had agreed to not enter the hospital with weapons. Nevertheless, in a series of events still being investigated, a U.S. aircraft designed for night attacks on terrorist targets, relying on visual targeting, hovered above the target at 7,000 feet, firing weapons. Whether U.S. advisers or Afghan forces called for the attack is under investigation. Survivors have told the press that there were no Taliban fighters in or near the hospital and that when officials called American headquarters and told them they were bombing the hospital, it took a half hour before the attack let up.

Doctors Without Borders has left the city and is calling for an independent investigation. What had been a model of reconciliation has been reduced to another cause for anger. Although the Taliban have caused most of the civilian deaths, events like this, because they involve foreigners, stir local rage. Under international law, to deliberately bomb a hospital is a war crime. Whatever the investigations underway conclude, this must never happen again.

### One Innocent Man?

On Nov. 6, for the fourth time in under a year, Richard Glossip will wake up ready to be executed—or at least as ready as any man can be who has maintained his innocence for 17 years on death row.

In 1997 Justin Sneed, a maintenance worker at a Best Budget Inn in Oklahoma City, admitted to killing the motel's owner. Mr. Sneed claimed that Mr. Glossip had hired him to murder their boss and was given a life sentence in exchange for his testimony against his alleged co-conspirator. After multiple trials, appeals, execution dates and last-minute stays, Mr. Glossip was again scheduled to be killed on Sept. 30. At the 11th hour, faced with an outpouring of support from people convinced of the inmate's innocence (led in large part by Helen Prejean, C.S.J., well known for her work to end the death penalty), Oklahoma's Gov. Mary Fallin delayed the execution for another 37 days to give correction officials time to review the state's lethal injection protocol, which has been closely scrutinized after a series of botched executions

across the country in 2014.

In a historic speech before Congress on Sept. 24, Pope Francis renewed his call for the abolition of the death penalty, saying, "I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred...and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes." The United States has been ranked as high as fifth in the number of executions carried out each year, behind China, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. In Oklahoma, 10 people on death row have been exonerated. Even if Mr. Glossip is guilty, Americans must ask what is to be gained from his execution. And if he is innocent, what do we as a country lose?

### Partnership Review

After years of negotiation, the Trans-Pacific Partnership is finally on its way to a last assessment in Washington. Congress members had given fast-track authority to the Obama administration to negotiate the deal; that does not mean they should rubber stamp it now.

The partnership was built off the blueprints of previous free trade agreements, whose long-term results have not lived up to their initial promises. Those previous F.T.A.'s were sold as job and wealth creators. For roughly a million U.S. workers, though, the North America Free Trade Agreement led to life on the dole or low-skilled employment at substantially reduced wages. And exports of subsidized U.S. corn drove subsistence farmers off the land in southern Mexico, contributing to the undocumented labor force now vilified by opportunistic presidential candidates.

The T.P.P. was also negotiated in secret. Advisory committees established by the Obama administration tilted heavily in favor of business interests. As a result, protectors of the environment, advocates for global health and supporters of workers' rights have good reason to be anxious about this partnership's real-world outcomes. That closed-door process repeats an unacceptable pattern of exclusion that alone should merit a congressional rebuke of the partnership in the coming weeks.

Pope Francis proposes an alternative of integral development based on full participation and dialogue, with the aim of promoting responsible and sustainable use of creation and authentic and equitable development. This "new" partnership is based on an old template of negotiated trade-offs among competing corporate interests that may once again only definitively benefit a small minority of the stakeholders in global trade. That model is not worth repeating in the 21st century if a different outcome from international trade—one that offers clear benefits to all—is the true goal.

# Opportunity for U.N. Reform?

Our world is more connected than ever before. The global community is facing crucial turning points on issues that cannot be solved by a single nation, including climate change, the refugee crisis and inequities within the international economy. While hundreds of intergovernmental organizations work toward the common good, the United Nations, now in its 71st year, is poised to take the lead in pushing for stronger global governance and a just world. In December the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change will offer perhaps the best chance for international leaders to tackle climate change, spurred on, in part, by encouragement from Pope Francis. At the same time, the United Nations is rethinking its approach to peacebuilding and human rights as well as its organizational structures. Though this state of flux brings challenges, it also offers opportunity for true change.

During his address to the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 25, Pope Francis reaffirmed the church's ongoing support for the United Nations and the unique role the organization can play today. He also urged reforms aimed at greater inclusion of all member states and emphasized that solutions to climate change and regional conflicts must center on the people, especially the marginalized, who are affected.

Earlier this month, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican's secretary for relations with states, elaborated on that call, asking for renewed attention to the more than 50 ongoing conflicts across the globe, as well as the "alternative international community" that exists among quasi-states and terrorist organizations, and to the huge number of refugees. Archbishop Gallagher also pointed to four areas of focus in which the United Nations can continue to make a positive impact on our world today: the responsibility to protect, the responsibility to observe existing international law, the need for disarmament and working to slow the ill effects of climate change.

Amid these many challenges, Archbishop Gallagher's call to recommit to the Responsibility to Protect is particularly timely. Although not an easy task, the international community is bound by the U.N. charter to do so. Failing in this, Archbishop Gallagher said, "would betray not only those who drafted the charter, but also the millions of victims whose blood was shed in the great wars of the last century." International responses to conflict in Libya and Syria have been unsuccessful for somewhat different reasons, but they should inspire the international community to recommit itself to more robust responses in the future, including not only

constabulary forces to carry out enforcement measures but appropriate funding and staffing for post-conflict rebuilding.

The United Nations, heeding the findings of the report of the Commission on Global Security, Justice and Governance, "Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance," must also work for true internal structural reforms, including making better use of the International Court of Justice and its advisory role, and urging greater willingness to dialogue among member nations.

Particular attention should be paid to the reform of the Security Council. The power of any of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to veto substantive measures has long caused tension among the member states. This has led to a lack of action on timely issues, often serving as an impediment to the secure and just world the United Nations was founded to uphold.

The council should work to include broader representation from various regions. The veto power of individual states should not be the last word on matters. Possible solutions include an override of the veto by a supermajority of the council or by the General Assembly after two successive vetoes by P5 members. Or the veto could be replaced entirely by requiring a supermajority of the council on key issues.

As these changes are discussed, leaders at the United Nations should always remember that their work must be based on respect for the dignity of every human life and the diversity of cultures. This is where the church can play a particularly important role. Over 100 Catholic nongovernmental organizations, run by both religious and lay groups, work in partnership with the United Nations and represent the needs of many marginalized people. These N.G.O.'s understand situations of conflict from a regional and political perspective, as well as on a personal level. They serve as a religious and moral force at the United Nations and as a voice for the people on the ground. There is much the United Nations can learn from these groups as it seeks stronger relationships with local communities.

Of course any reform must be sure not to value rules and regulations more than the people they protect. All work of global governance must, as Pope Francis has urged, be "guided by a perennial concept of justice and constantly conscious of the fact that, above and beyond our plans and programs, we are dealing with real men and women, who live, suffer and struggle."



## REPLY ALL

### Tribunal Changes

Re “Family Matters, Part 2,” (Editorial, 10/5): Having discussed Pope Francis’ recent reforms to the annulment process with a former member of an archdiocesan tribunal, it seems there are three major changes, not all of which, in his opinion, are for the good.

First, the removal of a second review is a good change, whose time has come. The review was essentially a time-consuming, expensive repeat of the tribunal’s work, and this priest and canon lawyer could not recall an instance during his time when the tribunal’s decision was overturned. Second, he does not support a free annulment process. An annulment process is a legal procedure, incurring the normal expenses of a law office. The church has more pressing needs than subsidizing an individual’s desire or need for an annulment.

Finally, he is very concerned that the third change, allowing a bishop to bypass the tribunal, do his own review and grant annulments, would subject the process to political and financial

pressures and concerns. Will any bishop have the time and inclination to conduct a thorough review in order to render an expedited decision?

E. PATRICK MOSMAN  
*Online Comment*

### A Difficult Welcome

Let’s hope the new process is even more streamlined for divorced and remarried non-Catholics who seek to enter the church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is difficult to welcome inquirers and then announce that they face a lengthy annulment process.

TRISH KELLER  
*Online Comment*

### Painful Division

What I most appreciate about Gregory Hillis’s article, “One in Spirit” (9/21), is the degree to which he gives painful witness to the scandal of division which continues to haunt Christianity. Too many of us for too long simply accepted the unfinished state of Christian unity as the normal state of being. Perhaps if more of us felt the degree of pain and division experienced by Mr. Hillis, more progress toward fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus, “that

all may be one” (Jn17:21), would take place.

(REV.) DAMIAN MACPHERSON  
*Toronto, Canada*

### What We Carry

Firmin DeBrander, a professor of philosophy, posed well-crafted arguments in “Our Armed Society” (9/14), but they stem from his position that the right to have guns in this country is one that should be opposed. Why should one oppose that right when the gun violence is committed by people he describes as “unbalanced” and “hate filled”? These crimes are not “what passes for normal life” in our society. They are rare exceptions that capture attention.

I am a Roman Catholic man, and I enjoy gun ownership. Guns are fun to shoot. I enjoy developing the skill of marksmanship. Some of us use them in the hope of enjoying a successful hunting season or two. They are also a means of home defense in the rare instance that I might require them for that purpose. Above all, it is a feeble argument to say that having one, even carrying one, is a “disincentive to look for Christ in others.” Seeing the face of Jesus in others is at times difficult but is more dependent on one’s relationship with Christ than with some object that one might be carrying. Policemen and soldiers, as well as sportsmen, carry guns, yet their ability to find Jesus in “a rich, open public life” is not automatically compromised by that fact. What they carry in their hearts and minds is more of a determinant of their relationship with Jesus.

GARY S. NOVOTNY  
*Nampa, Ind.*

### Waiting for the 28th

In February 2013 *America* published an issue with an unusual cover: the text of a proposed 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution. It was very brief, and I paraphrase: The Second Amendment is hereby repealed. States shall have power to regulate the possession and use of firearms.

### f STATUS UPDATE

In “Doctrinal Challenges” (10/12), Peter Folan, S.J., explores how the theological insights of Karl Rahner, S.J., could help the Synod of Bishops on the family. He writes, “Doctrine extends to members of the church a helping hand rather than a wagging finger.” Readers respond.

I wonder if “doctrine” can also lend a

helping hand to the suffering transgender Catholics who probably do not feel welcome coming to church. I would think it could.

LESLIE PHILLIPS

A wagging finger can be the beginning of a helping hand, because doctrine requires obedience to something higher than yourself, as does love.

CHARLIE JENKINS

Letters to the editor may be sent to **America’s** editorial office (address on page 2) or [letters@americamagazine.org](mailto:letters@americamagazine.org). **America** will also consider the following for print publication: comments posted below articles on **America’s** website ([americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org)) and posts on Twitter and public Facebook pages. All correspondence may be edited for length.

It is a marvelous idea whose time will come only when we have a population not mesmerized by the likes of Wayne LaPierre and not unfazed by sidearm on the hips of their “neighbor” and a Supreme Court that recognizes, along with most of the rest of the world, that we have arrived in the 21st century and no longer live in the circumstances that prevailed circa 1790.

FRANK BERGEN  
*Online Comment*

### ‘No Explanation’

In his article “Is the Shroud Genuine?” (9/14), James Martin, S.J., quotes the saying “For those without faith, no explanation is sufficient. For those with faith, no explanation is necessary.” He thought it came from either “The Song of Bernadette” or St. Thomas Aquinas. I was a teenager back in the 1940s when the movie “The Song of Bernadette” was being shown in our local theater. A non-Catholic boyfriend and I went to see it, and it began with that exact saying. It was not attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas or to someone in the movie. We looked at each other, thinking, “Should we be here?” I never forgot it.

TERESA MOTTET  
*Fairfield, Ind.*

### Forming Whole Disciples

Re “Fostering Faith,” by Msgr. Francis D. Kelly (Vantage Point, 8/31): Monsignor Kelly was ahead of his time talking about “total religious framework,” which is now referred to as life-long faith formation. It includes all the seasons—adult, youth and childhood—integrated into “comprehensive direction” that affects the whole parish community and the world. As a teacher, principal, parish catechetical leader and pastoral life coordinator for over 45 years, I have always been concerned about the whole parish community, because we have boxed the programs into silos of learning, forgetting that each has an impact on the other.

After the Second Vatican Council, the church was called to a “faith that

is living, conscious and active,” as Monsignor Kelly said. Despite all this, we still use a classroom model, and now the research shows it is failing to create lifelong Catholics. In a few areas of the United States parishes are forming disciples as a whole: in liturgy, in formation for the whole community and service in peace and justice. From my experience, when the whole parish is gathered, teaching and serving, we are one with Jesus and each other. This formation of disciples will last for a lifetime. Thinking outside the box takes us to the edge, and the risk is worth the kingdom of God.

MARY ANN RONAN  
*Glendale, Ariz.*

*The writer is a former president of the board of directors of The National Conference of Catechetical Leaders.*

### The New Normal?

Thanks to Joe Paprocki for telling it like it is in “Progress Report” (8/31). The religious education system is in dire need of major overhaul; more formation of parents and adults is absolutely crucial to stem the tide of departure of families after confirmation. But current staffing trends make reform increasingly unlikely in many parishes,

where paid professional staff is shrinking. In fact, some pastors who attempt to support adult, child and youth formation by increasing paid staff to meet parish needs are even sometimes reprimanded by auditors for doing more than what is normal. What does that say about what is considered normal?

JOYCE DONAHUE  
*Online Comment*

### Due Credit

Regarding “Killer Robots” (Current Comment, 8/17), the editors failed to mention a fundamental aspect of the autonomous lethal weapons issue, namely, that the Obama administration has used these types of weapons for some time, although presumably not fully autonomous ones. The administration has, however, let the nose of the camel into the tent. In order to preserve his legacy, President Obama has used drones instead of sending U.S. troops to fight in foreign lands. In the process, his policies have resulted in the death of hundreds, if not more, of innocent victims of war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Let’s give credit where it is due.

KEN BALASKOVITS  
*Park Ridge, Ill.*



CARTOON WRITTEN BY JAKE MARTIN, S.J.; ART BY BOB ECKSTEIN

SYNOD OF BISHOPS

## Inclusion, Confronting Poverty, Violence Emerge as Themes

**T**he 318 participants attending the meeting of the Synod of Bishops on the family have raised or discussed a wide range of topics during the first four days of this gathering. Among them are the terrible, destructive impact that war, armed conflict, poverty, unemployment, persecution and violence against women and children have on families across the globe.

Participants also gave considerable attention to the theme of inclusion and what this means in terms of the family and the church in relation to couples who are cohabiting or divorced and remarried civilly. In this context they also discussed the church's approach to homosexual persons and the great need to empower women in the church. Again and again they emphasized the urgent need for the church to develop an appropriate language with which to speak to the modern world and to communicate the Gospel message.

It was evident that the message of Pope Francis on inclusion was being warmly embraced by many bishops worldwide. One prelate criticized the synod's working document for being too focused on problems. He reminded the assembly that "the family is what people treasure most, care about most passionately."

He emphasized that "many families give a powerful witness to the church." He said families "never withdraw a loving welcome home, even if they are dismayed by certain behavior" of some members.

"The entire church must learn this pathway of 'tough love,' a love that is compassionate, honest and always seeking to find and nurture all that is good."

On the same theme, a European participant proposed that the church extend itself to "those whose marriages have broken, those who have remarried and welcomed children in a second union" as well as "homosexuals, whether chaste or celibate, or in relationships, as well as their children" because "they [all] belong to families, our families, the human family and the family of God."

He said it was important for the church "to discern the reasons for the responses it offers in the light of

the principle of inclusion." He told the assembly that "much debate has reduced the arguments involving these complicated situations to an 'either-or,' a choice between the austerity of justice and the growth offered by mercy."

"This," he said, "runs the serious risk of exclusion and missing the relation between the church and the world and the men and women of today, which is so central to Vatican II's 'Gaudium et Spes'—the document on the church in the modern world."

Many synod fathers confirm that there is consensus in the assembly that a rich, positive affirmation of the Christian family must be reflected in the final synod document. Many also said that the final text should reflect a merciful approach and openness to those who are not reaching the



Christian ideal or are in difficulties of various forms, while others are insisting on a strong affirmation of the traditional Christian teaching on marriage and the family. It is far from clear at this stage how the final document will cope with these differing emphases.

A number of the synod participants touched on the issue of violence against women. One African bishop told the plenary assembly that "in some African countries women are subjected to conditions of violence and dehumanization" due to situations of war, ethnic violence, domestic violence, situations of polygamy, separation and divorce and "the discrimination of the girl child." He urged the church to help promote women through education and other means.

**GERARD O'CONNELL**



**DISCUSSION STARTER.** Pope Francis arrives to lead a session of the Synod of Bishops on the family at the Vatican on Oct. 9.

## MIDDLE EAST

# Pope Appeals for Intervention

**P**ope Francis made a passionate appeal to the international community to find ways to resolve the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Jerusalem and the West Bank of the Jordan, where there is “an escalation of violence” that is bringing destruction and great sufferings to the peoples living there.

Speaking during the opening session of the Synod of Bishops on the family in Rome on Oct. 9, he called on the international community “to broaden its horizons beyond the immediate interests and use the instruments of international law and diplomacy to resolve the ongoing conflicts.”

The deteriorating conditions in the

Middle East and the precarious position of Christian families in Syria and Iraq and those driven by regional conflict to migrate to Europe had already been a major component of discussion during the synod. At a press briefing on Oct. 8, Syrian Patriarch Ignace Youssef III Younan spoke with passion and grief about the members of the different Christian churches “who want to get out of this hell because they are persecuted, taken hostage, by the ISIS terrorist state.”

“For us it’s a catastrophe,” he said.

Christian persecution and conflict in Syria and Iraq had been cause for concern already, but the recent acceleration of tension and violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank heightened the urgency of the pope’s appeal. He called on synod participants “to pray for reconciliation and peace in the Middle East” and told them he is “stricken with pain” and is “following with deep concern what is happening in Syria, Iraq, Jerusalem and in the West Bank, where we are assisting at an escalation of violence that is involving innocent civilians, and feeding a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions.”

Throughout September and continuing into October, Jerusalem and the West Bank have been rocked by violent outbursts involving both Palestinians and Israelis with shootings, stabbings, riots and arson attacks. Contributing to the crisis—and growing fears of the possibility of a new intifada among Palestinian youth—were the moribund peace process and tension over access to the religious site in Jerusalem known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif, or the Noble Sanctuary, and to Jews as the Temple Mount. A

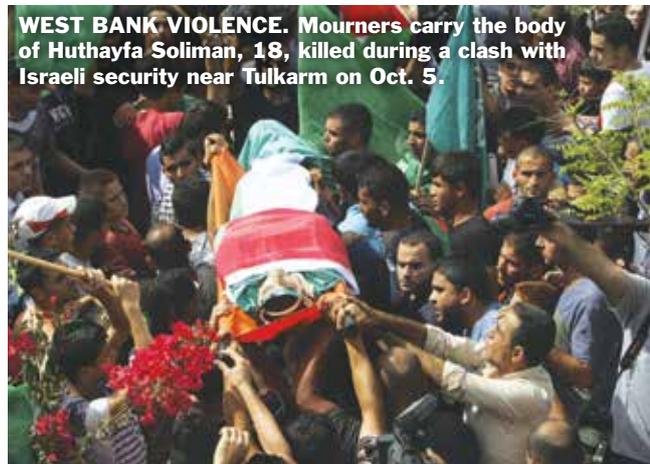
long-running campaign by some fundamentalist Jews for expanding rights to worship in the Al-Aqsa mosque compound on the Temple Mount, supported by members of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s own cabinet, has raised the suspicion that Israel intends to change the precarious status quo for the site.

Speaking just a few hours before the Nobel Committee awarded the peace prize to Tunisians working for peace and democracy, Pope Francis told synod participants, “War brings destruction and multiplies the sufferings of peoples. Hope and progress come only from choices for peace.”

The synod’s prayers for peace, he said, are intended as “an expression of solidarity” with the Middle East patriarchs and bishops, “as well as with their priests and faithful and everyone who lives there.”

The pope also drew attention to the ongoing conflicts in some African countries, which have also been discussed in the synod. “Let us pray too for those zones of the African continent that are living through similar situations of conflict.” He will no doubt repeat this plea when he visits Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic in the last week of November.

**WEST BANK VIOLENCE.** Mourners carry the body of Huthayfa Soliman, 18, killed during a clash with Israeli security near Tulkarm on Oct. 5.



## Will Bishops Consider Women Deacons?

Archbishop Paul-Andre Durocher of Gatineau, Quebec, said the Synod of Bishops on the family should reflect on the possibility of allowing female deacons as it seeks ways to open up more opportunities for women in church life. Where possible, qualified women should be given higher positions and decision-making authority within church structures and new opportunities in ministry, he said on Oct. 6. "I think we should really start looking seriously at the possibility of ordaining women deacons because the diaconate in the church's tradition has been defined as not being ordered toward priesthood but toward ministry." Archbishop Durocher also told synod participants that the World Health Organization estimates that 30 percent of women worldwide experience violence by their partner. In the apostolic exhortation "Familiaris Consortio" in 1981, he said, St. John Paul II told the church that it had to make a clear effort to end "degradation of women in our world, particularly in marriage." To address this problem the synod could clearly state "that you cannot justify the domination of men over women—certainly not violence—through biblical interpretation."

## No African Bloc

Among the many dynamics at the synod, one could note the difference of perceptions between bishops from different cultures. Some Western prelates seem to be of the view that synod fathers from Africa are impeding progress on questions that are important in their region—for example, the church's outreach to gay and lesbian people or those who are divorced and civilly remarried. Some African bishops, on the other hand, say that the synod's

## NEWS BRIEFS

**Bishop Robert E. Guglielmo** of Charleston, S.C., asked for prayers on Oct. 6 for the families of those killed or left homeless by what officials called a 1,000-year storm which deluged the state. • Church leaders in Lahore, Pakistan, on Oct. 10 demonstrated for the withdrawal of legislation that **denies voting rights** to women, religious minorities and workers in local elections. • The Mexican bishops' conference and the Vatican confirmed on Oct. 6 that Pope Francis **will visit Mexico** in 2016, marking his first trip to a heavily Catholic country still struggling with crime and corruption. • In an Oct. 7 statement Rwanda's National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide criticized a French court's dismissal of **genocide charges** against Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, a Catholic priest who fled to France after the 1994 mass killing of Rwanda's Tutsis. • Congo's Catholic bishops criticized on Sept. 25 the failure of Western governments to stop the abuse of **Africa's natural resources** and urged church groups to follow the pope's call to mobilize for justice. • Trinity Health, a Michigan-based Catholic health care system, will seek **dismissal of an A.C.L.U. lawsuit** that contends the network violates federal law by denying the full range of emergency care, including pregnancy termination when necessary.



Carolina deluge

working document reflects a too-European perspective. Asked about this alleged tension on Oct. 8, Archbishop Gabriel Palmer-Buckle of Ghana said, "[African bishops] are not here to block anybody. We are here to share what we have as a value to the greater good of the universal church." He noted that the working document speaks mostly of "the nuclear family," but in Africa there is also the reality of "the extended family." He said that whenever a church in one part of the world has a problem, it is also a concern for the whole universal church, since the church is a family.

## Conspiracy Theory

In a highly significant intervention at the synod on the family on Oct. 6, Pope Francis warned the synod fathers against giving in to "the hermeneutic of

conspiracy"—what in English might be called "the conspiracy theory"—which, he said, "is sociologically weak and spiritually unhelpful." He asked them instead to engage in "a profound discernment to seek to understand what the Lord wants of his church." The pope's comments take on particular significance in the light of some of the serious challenges that he is facing at this synod. Among them are the allegation that the synod under his leadership is somehow putting at risk the church's traditional teaching on marriage and the family and the allegation that the synod's new methodology, which he approved, is more favorable to those who want greater openness in the church's pastoral approach in this whole area.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

## Dangerous Assistance in Dying

**O**n Oct. 5 California became the fifth state to allow assisted suicide, after Gov. Jerry Brown signed State Assembly Bill ABx2-15 into law. With this decision 39 million people—roughly 12 percent of the population of the United States—gained the right to have a doctor prescribe life-ending medication for them if they are terminally ill and within six months of death.

Though assisted suicide has been debated here for decades, the movement gained considerable momentum last autumn, as Brittany Maynard, a 29-year-old native Californian, spent her final months of life advocating for the ability to die with dignity and without pain. “There is a difference,” she argued, “between a person who is dying and a person who is suicidal. I do not want to die. I am dying.”

Governor Brown, a lifelong Catholic, spent three weeks considering this decision, sifting through conversations with friends, doctors and a bishop and the arguments of different groups. “In the end,” he writes, “I was left to reflect on what I would want in the face of my own death.”

“I do not know what I would do if I were dying in prolonged and excruciating pain. I am certain, however, that it would be a comfort to consider the options afforded by this bill. And I wouldn’t deny that right to others.”

His thoughtful sentiments will no doubt resonate with many. One might choose to face one’s final days in any number of ways. But who has the right

to deny reasonable options to anyone else? His words highlight the great problem faced by many Catholic arguments against assisted suicide. They do not seem to be grounded in the mercy and compassion one expects of the church, especially at such a profound and difficult moment.

In point of fact, however, pain management is not the problem today that most of us fear it will be. In Oregon,

Assisted suicide could very easily become a cheap substitute for proper health care.

in fact, where assisted suicide has been legal for decades, only 31 percent of those who chose a medically induced death in 2014 did so because of pain. (The overwhelming reason given was a loss of autonomy.) Still, there are cases like Ms. Maynard’s in which the pain cannot be managed. And the oft-proposed Catholic solution of medicating the patient into a near or total coma seems meaningless, even cruel.

Yet church officials and others in California have tried to point out the danger this law poses to the least among us. Assisted suicide could very easily become a cheap substitute for proper health care. Indeed, the legislation just passed was introduced during a special session in which Mr. Brown had specifically asked legislators to help him brainstorm ways of dealing with rising health care costs.

As Edward Dolejsi, executive director of the California Catholic Conference, pointed out, “To its pro-

motors, ABx2-15 is about compassion and choice. Where is the compassion when Medi-Cal won’t pay for pain relief, but the Legislature responds by making physician assisted suicide ‘affordable?’”

“And where is the choice when literally millions of Californians are told there is no coverage for second opinions or their cancer care, but look, we’ve made suicide an affordable option?”

Justin Harford, a disability advocate in California, adds that Californians who live in poorer or rural communities, as he does, do not receive the same health care as elsewhere in the state. “They’re not as likely to get sufficient pain management, they’re not as likely to get sufficient testing—we see this in the disability community, too.” The obvious consequence is that there is no real choice: “If you don’t have the right to choose to get chemotherapy when you get cancer, then it’s rather a phony choice to say you can ‘choose’ assisted suicide.”

There are other concerns, too: that the terminally ill, the aged or disabled may end up feeling pressed to die; that making suicide legal for the terminally ill will encourage suicide among those who are depressed—as seems to have been the case in Oregon.

The combined population of the other four states that have legalized assisted suicide is just one-third that of California. Its bureaucracy, like its economy, is larger than most nations, and it has the largest number of uninsured in the country. The impact this new law will have is impossible to predict.

What is clear is that concern for the way a person dies without a commitment to their ability to thrive and receive proper care will not be compassion but absurdity.

**JIM McDERMOTT**

**JIM McDERMOTT, S.J.**, a screenwriter, is *America’s Los Angeles correspondent*. Twitter: @PopCulturPriest @jmcdsj.



# The Media Ministry

Try not to write too often about working with the media because it can sound like “Look at me, I’m on TV.” It is also a threat to humility, an occupational hazard for anyone who has ever appeared in print or on television. Nonetheless, part of our ministry at **America** is helping the so-called secular media. In the words of John Courtney Murray, S.J. (or Pedro Arrupe, S.J., or Daniel Lord, S.J., or St. Ignatius Loyola, depending on your “sourcing”), one way to understand the work of Jesuits and our colleagues is that we help explain the church to the world and the world to the church.

During Pope Francis’ visit to the United States last month, then, many of us at **America** spent time assisting the secular media. For me, it was a great grace to follow the pope from Washington to New York to Philadelphia, and I also had a delightful time working with the mainstream media—mainly ABC News.

At the same time, in every city I heard comments from fellow Catholics that reminded me that not everyone thinks as positively as I do about the media. So I thought I’d share with you, based on 15 years’ experience, reflections on the most common complaints.

*The media is anti-Catholic.* Now, I have occasionally run into journalists in print, online, on the radio and on television (as well as editors of newspapers, magazines and websites, and producers of news programs) who have an antipathy to our church. Nonetheless, the vast majority do not and simply want to get the story right. And when it comes to religion reporters, I can say

categorically that I’ve never met a single one who is anti-Catholic. By contrast, as a result of years of reporting, religion reporters have encountered so many inspiring bishops, priests, brothers, sisters and lay Catholics that they usually have an abiding affection for the church. Indeed, non-Catholic religion reporters may know more about the Catholic Church than the average Catholic. For they have met sisters who work in the slums, priests who spend long hours in the confessional, brothers who teach patiently in classrooms and committed lay leaders dedicated to helping others.

Also, it’s important to distinguish between attacks on the church and critiques of it. When *The Boston Globe* ran its extensive series of articles on the sexual abuse crisis in the early 2000s, for example, Cardinal Bernard Law, then archbishop of Boston, said he “called down the power of God on the Boston media...particularly *The Globe*.” But although *The National Catholic Reporter* ran a remarkable series of articles on abuse in the 1990s, and some of the pieces that ran in *The Globe* were unfair, their coverage overall was not only fair; but it is in large part because of *The Globe* that the church in the United States was forced to confront the abuse crisis. The church both deserved criticism and benefited by it.

*The media deliberately misrepresents the church.* Sometimes the media make mistakes about the church. Sometimes they are big ones: misunderstanding a papal document, misinterpreting something that the pope says or mistaking a basic piece of Catholic doc-

trine. Some of the more common examples: Everything the pope says is infallible; all priests take vows of chastity; all Jesuits are priests. (Also, it’s pronounced “pay-pul” not “pap-pul.”) But most mistakes are ascribable to ignorance rather than to attempts to misrepresent the church. Why? Because no one likes to be wrong, and no journalist likes to see letters to the editor, or Tweets or Facebook posts correcting a story. Also, religion reporters cover more than Catholic news. They have to master the theology and nomenclature of every religion, an almost impossible task. The next time you see something incorrect in the media, try to ascribe it to ignorance rather than deceit.

*The media does not care about the church.* There is an element of truth to this. When I

started helping the media, I kept a list of the reporters in this country on the religion beat. There were perhaps 50 with whom I was in regular touch. Today the list is down to a dozen. Why? Financial restrictions make it harder for editors to retain a full-time religion reporter. But as for not caring about the church? During Pope Francis’ visit I was astonished at how media outlets had reporters and cameras stationed on the “media risers” at every single event. That’s a lot of money spent on something that the media supposedly does not care about.

So the next time you’re tempted to throw your paper down in anger or punch through your computer screen, take a deep breath and tell yourself, “They’re doing their best.”

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JAMES MARTIN, S.J., is editor at large of **America** and author of the new novel *The Abbey*. Twitter: @JamesMartinSJ.

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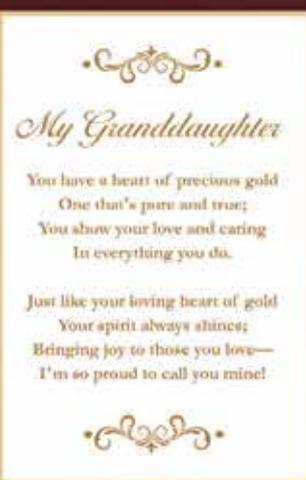
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# Breathing Space

Jesuit institutions must do more to undo racism.

BY ALEX MIKULICH

There have been, sadly, far too many protest chants of late coined to strike the public consciousness in campaigns against abuses of police authority. One now well-known chant speaks in memory of Eric Garner—"I can't breathe"—Mr. Garner's last words as he died on a Staten Island sidewalk.

Breathing is a necessity for life that represents the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God, who literally breathes the breath of life into a living being (Gn 2:7). The chant raises consciousness about the ways racism takes away an individual life as it also takes life away from all of us.

Like breathing, people of faith are called to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes 5:17). Nine members of the Charleston Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church exemplified prayer without ceasing, in intimacy with God, when they were murdered on June 17, 2015. And since Eric Garner's death in July 2014, the wound that is racism seems to bleed unceasingly.

Breathing and prayer represent the universal good of human life and dignity. They represent our divine source and direct us to our ultimate purpose. The "I can't breathe" chant is not only about an individual life; rather, it goes to the soul of Jesuit education to live the *magis*, the better course of living for the greater glory of God.

"The more universal a good, the more divine it is," wrote St. Ignatius Loyola in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus. Drawn from St. Thomas Aquinas, this was Ignatius' animating vision of education. For Ignatius, education was not primarily about an abstract value of universal knowledge; rather, it was directed at a fuller integration of faith, learning and living of persons and communities for the *magis*—the greater glory of God.

## A Glaring Disparity

Jesuit institutions of higher learning face a tension between the Ignatian mission to form men and women for others and the incessant pressure to achieve a greater academic reputation. Standing among the most elite institutions of higher education, Jesuit institutions rightfully strive for academic excellence, greater selectivity and economic success.

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ALEX MIKULICH is co-author of *The Scandal of White Complicity in U.S. Hyper-Incarceration: A Nonviolent Spirituality of White Resistance* (Palgrave).

This tension is apparent in many ways, not least in the fact that Jesuit schools are predominantly white institutions. Racial disparity in higher education is neither accidental nor an anomaly. As the Georgetown University scholars Anthony Carnevale and Jeff Stroh demonstrate in their report "Separate and Unequal: How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational Reproduction of White Racial Privilege," white students are concentrated "in the nation's 468 most well-funded, selective four-year colleges and universities."

The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities celebrates the fact that all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities rank in the top tier, according to the U.S. News and World Report rankings. Meanwhile, "African-American and Hispanic students are more and more concentrated in the 3,250 least well-funded, open-access, two- and four-year colleges."

While some may claim that our education system is "colorblind," in practice it certainly is not. Mr. Carnevale and Mr. Stroh explain that the problem is not only that our secondary education system creates a barrier to college by leaving too many students of color unprepared for college. More disturbingly, the postsecondary system does not treat equally white, African-American and Hispanic students who are similarly qualified.

White students who are just as unprepared for college as their African-American and Hispanic peers get more and better postsecondary opportunities. Conversely, African-American and Latino students who are prepared for college "are disproportionately tracked into crowded and underfunded two-year and open-access four-year colleges." This structural inequality is too often ignored in conversations about affirmative action, especially when public debate focuses on cases in which a white student was not accepted.

White parents rightfully seek the best education for their children. But white academic and economic success is not due simply to the hard work of students or their parents. Rather, as the education scholar Richard Rothstein explains in a study published by the Economic Policy Institute, "The Making of Ferguson," racial disparities are rooted in a century of deliberate governmental and business policies that created housing and educational segregation. Housing segregation is a "structural lynchpin" of economic and racial inequality. Owning a home and housing location are critical to predicting access to quality education, development of personal wealth, employment, health and safety, democratic

**MARCH FOR JUSTICE.** Protesting police shootings and racism during a rally in Washington, D.C., in December 2014.



participation, transportation and quality child care.

Jesuit institutions tend not to acknowledge that they are predominantly white institutions. There are several reasons for this, including ignorance, denial, fear of losing applicants and donors and the moral and practical conundrums such honesty presents to people shaped by a predominantly white culture. None of these constitute a good reason to ignore this reality.

Drawing upon the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in an address at Santa Clara University in 2001, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., superior general of the Jesuits, modeled how Jesuit education can articulate “a composition of our time and place” that “embraces six billion people with their faces young and old, some being born and others dying, some white and many brown, and yellow and black.”

Knowledge is pursued not only for its own sake. We must also question the ends of knowledge: “For whom? For what?” Father Kolvenbach answered these questions forthrightly, affirming that every Jesuit academy is called to live in and for a social reality—the composition of our time and place—and “to shed university intelligence upon it, and to use university influence to transform it.”

That suggests Jesuit institutions should no longer remain passive agents in the reproduction of racial inequality. Some institutions, like Fordham University, have undertaken a deliberate training process of “Undoing Racism” among ad-

ministrators, faculty, staff and students. A growing number of notable scholars at Jesuit institutions are addressing the structural and cultural dynamics at the root of this enduring historical injustice in their research, publication and teaching. Jesuit institutions, with few exceptions, however, tend not to acknowledge the larger “place and composition” of our institutions within a predominantly white society.

The point is not to inflict guilt or shame. I write from a profound sense of love for Ignatian spirituality and the education that I obtained through 14 years of Jesuit education. If I, like many of my fellow Jesuit graduates, have been able to escape the bondage of unexamined racial assumptions and become critical of them, this is due in no small measure to the superior education that opened our intellectual, moral, religious and spiritual horizons for conversion.

This is one of the basic, liberating goals of Jesuit education. The Jesuit historian John W. O’Malley describes this goal through Wittgenstein’s metaphor of “showing the fly the way out of the bottle,” that is, helping students to grow beyond, and become critical of, received bias. Yet Jesuit institutions may not be able to show students the way out of the philosophical bottle if our institutions do not seek to understand how white cultural bias may blind us. The Jesuits’ 34th General Congregation (1995) perceived this reality well when it stated that justice will flourish “only when it involves the transformation of culture, since the roots of

injustice are embedded in cultural attitudes as well as economic structures.”

The failure to address the fact that Jesuit institutions are predominantly white institutions is a major lacuna in the effort to live the *magis*. In the words of the 35th General Congregation, we are called to “engage the world through careful analysis of context, in dialogue with experience evaluated through reflection, for the sake of action, and with openness, always, to evaluation.”

### Multicultural *Magis*

The rationale for Jesuit institutions to develop bold initiatives for both diversity and racial equity are deeply rooted in Jesuit and Catholic values. Multicultural programming offers clear criteria that guide people about how to respect bodily autonomy, how to listen and validate diversity of opinion, free choice and self-determination. These principles are enshrined in a Catholic sense of respect for human dignity. This ought to be uncontroversial.

Yet respect is not enough. A common gap in multicultural programming is that it does not address the relationships between privilege and oppression that pervade society. Multicultural programs tend not to address the invisibility of white power and material dominance.

When multicultural practices avoid interrogation of white dominance, they perpetuate rather than alleviate racial hierarchies. Deep respect for human dignity in the full human diversity that reflects our common good in God’s

love demands a love that yearns for and passionately pursues the dismantling of unearned racial privilege as an integral responsibility of Gospel love, justice and equality.

Because of Jesus’ practice of compassion and healing and his critique of unjust wealth and power, he chose to suffer with the despised, the forgotten, the poor. Suffering with and for the oppressed, articulated as solidarity in Catholic social teaching, defines Jesus’

practice of compassion.

Jesus clearly did not follow the norms of piety and respectability of the elite of his day; on the contrary, his practice of compassion threatened the economic, political and religious elites. Indeed, his practice of preferential love ultimately led to his crucifixion. The church recognizes this today when it states that those who “stand up against [racial] repression by certain powers” will “face scorn and imprisonment.”

Jesus’ ministry, suffering and death witness to God’s gratuitous, preferential love for the despised and shapes the transformative heart of Catholic social teaching. The way of preferential solidarity invites intellectual, moral and religious transformation to realize flourishing for all in human community.

As the 32nd Jesuit General Congregation announced in 1975, becoming a “companion of Jesus” means engaging “under the standard of the cross, in the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes.” Constitutive of witnessing to the Gospel, then, are both denouncing unjust structures and announcing more just and life-giving ways of living together as children of one loving God. General Congregation 32 was clear that living in solidarity with the oppressed “cannot be the choice of a few Jesuits only. It should be a characteristic of the life of all of us as individuals and a characteristic of our communities and institutions as well.”

The “I can’t breathe” chant raises a critical question for Jesuit institutions: How do we claim that we celebrate the fullness of human diversity if we are not passionate advocates for racial equality? “I can’t breathe” alerts us to the individual struggle for life and the way so-

## How do we claim that we celebrate the fullness of human diversity if we are not passionate advocates for racial equality?

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cial conditions are created that prevent full human thriving. In other words, it is difficult to say that our institutions maintain a full commitment to diversity if they remain bystanders to the ways many of us participate in the reproduction of blatantly unfair outcomes in educational attainment.

Practicing diversity plus racial equity is a critical way that Jesuit institutions may more fully form men and women for others and celebrate the *magis*—the better way of proceeding—for the greater glory of God. Jesuit institutions need robust commitment to both diversity and racial equality.

### Toward Transformation

Three shared Jesuit values and goals inform this argument. First, developing a common social analysis of white privilege, power and racism in the context of U.S. history goes to the heart of understanding “our place and composition” within our culture, society and world. The depth and breadth of racism in our culture demand the cultivation of shared insight and tools about the ways we participate in and can undo the biases that deform our institutions. Developing a common analysis of racism is a way that Jesuit institutions may more fully form students in what Father Kolvenbach termed a “well-educated solidarity.”

A second goal is transformation. We cannot free our students from received bias if our institutions do not acknowledge or understand how the broader structural and cultural context of our academies reflect and reproduce white privi-

lege, power and racism. Becoming a dynamic living-learning institution open to social reality is fundamental to our mission and purpose. Some schools, like Fordham University and other institutions, have engaged in proactive, antiracist institutional training through Crossroads Ministry or the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, which offer training, resources and capacity-building to engage racial equity practices. The benefits of these practices include increasing workforce diversity; improving recruitment and retention of diverse administrators, faculty, students and staff; and developing a more healthy and dynamic climate for shared conversation and learning for all members of the community.

Liberation constitutes the third constitutive Jesuit value and goal for becoming institutions for diversity and racial equality. This is perhaps one of the most fundamental Jesuit values related to the very heart of education and the Gospel itself. Ultimately all of us are deformed intellectually, morally, humanly and spiritually from racism.

To borrow “I can’t breathe,” the clutches of racism literally take away the breath of individual life as they take life away from all of us. All of us need liberation from racism to become who we are called to be as brothers and sisters who reflect and celebrate the multicolored, multicultural face of God. All of us need to breathe the fresh air of liberation so that we may live authentically in solidarity for the *magis*—following the better way for the greater glory of God. **A**

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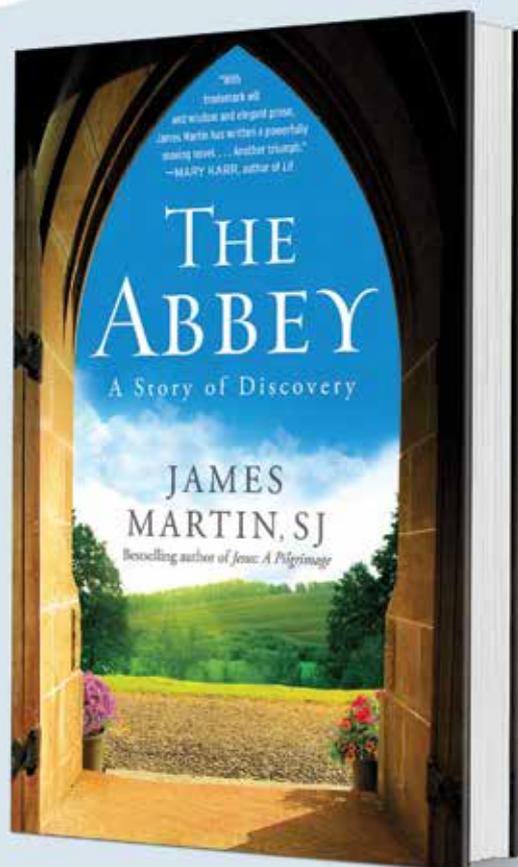
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# Costly Scripture

## Encountering trauma in the Bible

BY CORINNA GUERRERO

Anyone who can sustain reading the Bible beyond the first chapter of Genesis will notice that there are difficult passages. The Bible's stories are forged out of murder (Gn 4), rape (Gn 34), dismemberment (Jgs 19; 1 Sam 18), kidnapping and forced marriages (Jgs 21), forced migration and infanticide (Ps 137), slavery (Ex 21; Lv 25; Dt 15), genocide (Jos 1-12), cannibalism (2 Kgs 6-7), political corruption (1-2 Kgs) and social desolation (the Prophets). The metanarrative of salvation history is laced with loss.

People raised in liturgical traditions may be familiar with selected portions from these passages, but the contexts surrounding them have been cut away in compiling the Lectionary. Meanwhile, even those who have encountered these passages in Bible study or through their own reading might not have ever heard anyone preach on these passages directly. The net result is that large numbers of devout, Bible-reading,

church-going believers have not been given the opportunity to dwell with Scripture where many moments of Scripture dwell: trauma.

Biblical scholars are not the only ones deeply troubled by the violence in Scripture and the violence done in Scripture's name. Many believers—and many raised in the Christian tradition, even if they no longer practice or have parted ways with it—recoil from the frankness with which the Bible describes, and sometimes seems to endorse, these traumatic events. Simply turning on the news, accessing social media or even going about a daily routine leads to encounters with people who are suffering from intersections of religion and violence, both near and afar—if the person suffering is not you or I.

So what happens when readers, approaching the Bible with both curiosity and some internal conflict, come to Scripture and find only more agony? Some close the book and walk away convinced that the answers must be somewhere else. Some turn to preferred passages for comfort, in-



**CORINNA GUERRERO** is a lecturer in religious studies and pastoral ministry at Santa Clara University. Twitter: @cyguerrero.



**EXODUS.** A woman fleeing an attack in South Sudan reads the Bible at a border gate in Joda, April 18, 2014.

REUTERS/MOHAMED NURELDIN ABDALLAH

spiration or solace. Most people are somewhere in between. But none of these responses can erase these troubling and challenging passages. To adhere to a canon of Scripture, as Christianity does, means adhering to all of it, not just the parts that are easier to understand or that fit into our preferred theologies. In the spirit of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who argued against “cheap grace,” readers of the Bible should not be seduced by the temptation toward reading “cheap Scripture.”

As an Old Testament scholar, working currently on the Book of Judges, I have spent many an hour pointing out passages, situations and biblical figures that often go unread or read past by even the most dedicated non-academic readers. I introduce them to men and women in Scripture whose bodies have been broken open by war on the battlefield and the home front, to torturous acts committed against enemies and women in service of what the untrained reader might chalk up to an archaic past. Yet all one has to do is turn to a newspaper or Facebook to read about the rates at which women are being killed along the U.S.-Mexico border, women who have been impaled, dismembered or made to “disappear,” women caught between organized crime and the never-ending “war against drugs” being played out in the United States.

The instinct to revile these episodes and refocus attention on events to come—namely Jesus—is common. To dwell with Scripture where Scripture is takes time and deliberate effort to overcome that instinct to flip forward to the familiar and comfortable parts.

## The Bible Broken Open

The term *trauma*, meaning “wound,” comes from Greek antiquity. The range of meanings attested at the time includes being severely hurt, physical wounds, wounding, (military) defeat and psychic wounds. Over the centuries, studies of trauma have been part of various disciplines: mental health fields, literature and the arts as well as religion.

Scripture preserves an anthology of the struggle of particular communities to live out their relationship with God in their own particular eras, inevitably marked by the events of their time. As a result, older stories are preserved and reframed for later communities in light of recent events. This is very similar to what the homily experience should be at Mass. Scriptures are read, reframed in light of one another and brought to life for the living church as it exists today.

No event affected the production of the Old Testament, the theological foundation for the writers of the New Testament, like the destruction of the Temple of Solomon in 587–86 B.C. Some scholars call the era that followed the Temple-less Age. If general readers of the Bible are aware of this period, they recognize it by what happened to the religious, cultural and political elite. They call it the Exile.

During the Exile, wave after wave of the elite were ushered into diaspora. If they had the power to cause strife, conflict or rebellion, Babylon removed them from their land.

Formal Yahwism, the religion of ancient Israel, was practiced at the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. The Temple’s destruction and the exile of religious clergy eliminated its formal practice. For a modern-day practicing Catholic, imagine: 1) the destruction of all churches; 2) the exile of all priests, deacons and lay leaders; and 3) the desecration and elimination of every tabernacle containing the Eucharist. The loss would be unimaginable. It would be traumatic.

Dwell here. Do not move forward yet. Do not be seduced by the temptation to anticipate Jesus and the Jesus-event. As Catholics are often reminded in the days preceding the Easter Triduum, “Don’t be so quick to jump to Easter Sunday. There is no Easter Sunday without Good Friday.” In this case, there is plenty of time for Jesus, but dwell in the shadow of the fallen Temple first. Dwell with the traumatic loss of land, community, religious practice and how you think you relate to God.

In an academic course, this would be the point where we would break until next time, each student ending the class session on a pregnant pause. Each would be asked to reflect on what it would be like, feel like, to be confronted by events and displacement that affect one’s core theological understanding and deepest religious identity. With seminarians I go so far as to ask them to reflect for a moment on what it would feel like if events came to pass that eliminated the salvific effects of Jesus’ resurrection and thus our own hope of grace and resurrection as well. The access channel isn’t blocked. It is gone.

When students return for the next class or seek me out during office hours that week, many types of conversations emerge. Most of them are not about the class or the content but instead are personal. Most people just need to talk.

Some people raise questions about religion, theology, the Bible, politics, etc. that have not yet been answered for them. Others talk about life events that not only mark a distinct time in their lives but partially frame everything to come after it. The Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel describes this framing in his preface to *Night*: “Just as the past lingers in the present, all my writings after *Night*, including those that deal with biblical, Talmudic or Hasidic themes, profoundly bear its stamp, and cannot be understood if one has not read this very first of my works.” The same is true of the Bible.

The temptation to read with an eye toward the Jesus-event and all its theological and spiritual ramifications is great. Why shouldn’t it be? After all, Christian communities are defined by belief in a particular theology about Jesus’ salvific nature, according to the tenets and traditions of the believer’s respective denomination. To put it less formally,

Jesus is a really big deal.

As a result, there is the temptation to read the Bible, even in faith and sometimes because of faith, as consisting first of the Gospels, second the remainder of the New Testament, and third—at best—the “rest of the Bible.” The same faith that trusts the Gospels and the New Testament as Scripture ought to push us to read the Old Testament thoroughly. It is, after all, more than two-thirds of the Bible.

Reading the Old Testament within its own times and contexts is a virtue in itself. Each work was produced, edited and then arranged in relationship to other works. But if theological commitments and interpretive traditions require reading the Old Testament with attention to the New Testament, then the contexts of the Old Testament must still be read more fully. Let this type of reading generate greater appreciation and comprehension of the revelation proclaimed in the New Testament, the Jesus-event.

Reading the Bible slowly, fully and with attention to historical, cultural and theological developments allows the faithful to see that God meets people where they are. We are in process. We are at or reflecting upon critical moments. We have suffered traumas. We participate directly and indirectly in the traumatic experiences of others. We carry those traumas forward with us. We see our futures in light of the past. For some of us, the past continues to interrupt the present. We are in need of theological inspiration to help us

craft a path back toward God when our previous paths have been challenged or destroyed.

## Growing Into Scripture

The temptation to read Scripture quickly, to brush past the complicated, uncomfortable or violent parts is understandable. However, if we must be selective about which passages we read, then let us select passages that we have the ability to grow into. Let us read “costly Scripture.”

The first step toward “costly Scripture” is having our communities reading more Bible, period. We must be exposed to all of it: Old Testament, Deutero-canon/Apocrypha, New Testament. We must read beyond our Sunday school acquaintance with biblical events and figures. For some of us that means purchasing a Bible, opening the ones we have more often or attending Mass more regularly to hear the readings proclaimed Monday through Saturday. Any or all of these are good choices.

The second step is to ask questions. When we come into contact with new passages, with new people and events, especially ones that cause us to recoil, we need to ask some of the following questions: 1) Do I understand what is happening? 2) Why would someone do that? 3) Is this figure or event always portrayed the same way every time it is described, or are there distinct differences? 4) Who are the nameless people in the passage? 5) Who has power and how

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is it used? 6) Who is suffering, and why? These are not the only questions one can ask, but they serve as a starting point for many more.

The third step is to reflect upon the thoughts, concerns and experiences that emerge as we read. Where do we get lost while reading or listening to Scripture? Where are we drawn to pause and contemplate? Beginning to find answers to the set of questions from the second step should help us distinguish between questions about understanding Scripture and questions about understanding ourselves, and engage both more fully. Many times our experience of reading the Bible is consoling. We become accustomed to the notion, and expectant of the experience, that reading Scripture should bring peace or solace to our hearts and minds every time. The emotional satisfaction becomes less about engaging Scripture and more about a spiritual balm needed to soothe the rough patches of life. While Scripture can certainly offer consolation, that is not its sole or primary purpose—and costly Scripture will offer us more and different experiences than just the consolation we may have come to expect.

Taking this costlier view of biblical history—including the trauma—will point us at the resilience of the people of God. In each instance the faithful took everything they had to God. They took their anger and despair, their logic and emotion and their faithfulness and fallenness to God because they knew that no matter what befell them, they

remained in relationship to God, as close to them as they were to themselves.

Reading costly Scripture allows readers the opportunity to bring their whole selves into dialogue with God through stories and events that range from awesome to awful. God is not porcelain. God will not break because human emotions and questioning can get real.

But if we reduce Scripture to only the parts that give us comfort or relief, then we are actively disengaging from God meeting us in the broken, disjointed and complicated parts of life. We can do better.

That is the challenge I face today, in early October, preparing to walk into a university classroom yet again with a changed lecture plan, preparing to address young people trying to make sense of the death of students, very much like themselves, lost to senseless violence in Oregon. They mourn their peers at Umpqua Community College. In their young lives, they have seen this occur all too often. What kind of God lets these things happen?

Today is not a day to discuss Noah's ark, Samson's strength or Daniel in the lion's den. Today they need Scripture as real as their world. Maybe today we should talk about the massacre of the Shechemites (Gn 34) or sit in the shadow of the Temple and with the loss of life in our own midst. The Hebrew Scriptures often present questions to keep the audience talking after the story is over. Therefore, so shall we. What does God call us to do in the face of tragedy? 



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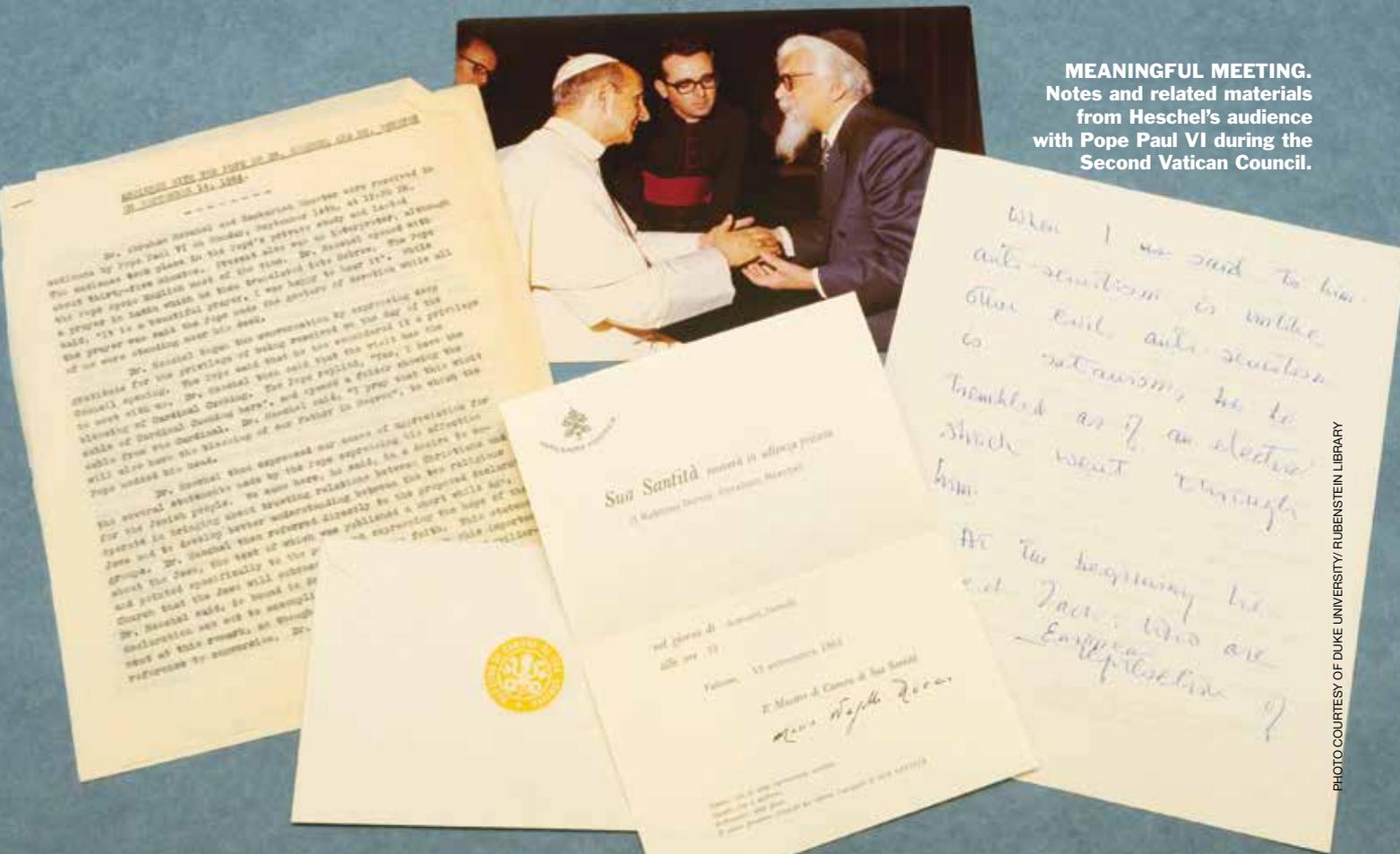


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# Understanding 'the Other'

The legacy of Abraham Joshua Heschel

BY PAOLO GAMBERINI

**T**he Catholic Church is celebrating this year the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" ("Nostra Aetate"). The document was approved on Oct. 28, 1965, after intense debate and some strong opposition. It is one of those texts in which the self-understanding of Catholic identity does not sound as a monologue but a dialogue. The category of "otherness" plays a decisive role.

At the very beginning, the declaration says that the Catholic Church acknowledges with sincere reverence (*sincera cum observantia*) and rejects nothing that is true and holy in the other religions. The declaration was initially prepared with the intent of healing relations with the Jewish

people. The approval of this document occurred just 20 years after the end of World War II and the Holocaust. Out of the smoke of the Shoah, in the spirit of repentance and commitment, Christians have understood that their relation with the Jewish people cannot be seen as an option or a transient historical element, an embellishment for the Christian identity. After the Holocaust a process began in which Christian and Catholic identity could not be understood anymore without Jewish identity. At the council, the awareness that "the other" is rooted in the core of one's own identity came to its fulfillment.

The two key figures that inspired the preparation of "Nostra Aetate" were Cardinal Augustin Bea, the Jesuit who was head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, theological consultant of the American Jewish Committee. Between them a sincere friendship began, which helped to work out the declaration, though not without difficulties. From the very beginning,

**PAOLO GAMBERINI, S.J.,** is an associate professor of at the University of San Francisco. He has previously published work on Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Rabbi Heschel worked hard to remove from the teaching of the Catholic Church any anti-Semitic words and any reference to a mission of the church for the conversion of the Jews. In May 1962 he presented a memorandum in which he asked the council fathers to eliminate once and for all any accusation of deicide on the part of the Jewish people, to acknowledge the integrity and the perpetuity of the election of Jews in the history of salvation and, lastly, to give up proselytizing Jews. The American Jewish Committee presented three memoranda; in the last of these his influence was essential. He wanted the council fathers to know that a Jew has a dignity as a Jew and not as a possible convert to Christianity. He repeated quite often: "If I were asked either to convert or to die in Auschwitz, I'd rather go to Auschwitz."

During the years of the council, Rabbi Heschel met Pope Paul VI and asked him to support Jewish requests against the accusation of deicide and against the mission to the Jews. Unfortunately these requests were not all accepted in the final Vatican document. The council's decree asserted that the death of Jesus was not to be blamed on all Jews collectively, eliminated the word *deicide* and condemned any form of anti-Semitism. The Catholic Church acknowledged the abiding validity of God's covenant with Israel. The council fostered and recommended mutual knowledge and respect between Jews and Christians. The church should not preach and teach anything that could give rise to hatred or contempt of Jews in the hearts of Christians. Pope Paul VI promulgated the text immediately as official church doctrine. A solid foundation was established for future decades of Jewish-Christian dialogue and cooperation. Even if the declaration was a document of compromise, it represents a leap forward on the path to respectful mutual relations between Christians and Jews.

Pope Paul VI was so moved by the figure of Rabbi Heschel that he encouraged the publication of his works in Italy. Abraham Heschel died on Dec. 23, 1972, in New York. During the general audience held in the Vatican on Jan. 31, 1973, Paul VI quoted from one of his books, *God in Search of Man*: "Before man searches for God, it is God who is in search of us." It was unusual for a non-Christian source to be quoted in an official discourse of a pope.

### Connected and Transformed

Abraham Heschel's contribution to Jewish-Christian dialogue has been of utmost importance and has made it pos-

sible for many Christians to rediscover the Jewish roots of their faith, which lie not only in the Old Testament but in Judaism as well. He urged Christians to be faithful to their roots and not to worry about converting Jews, leaving behind once and for all the scandal of the past centuries: "I recognize in you the presence of holiness. I see it; I perceive it; I hear it. You do not embarrass us; we want you not to be embarrassed by what we are."

Each religious identity is connected and transformed by its relationship with the identity of other religions. Dialogue consists in highlighting the singularity of each faith and not hindering or neglecting this particularity. The Jew has to be acknowledged *as a Jew* and not as a potential Christian. For Christians, Judaism is considered *preparatio evangelica*; for Jews, Christianity is considered *preparatio messianica*. Rabbi Heschel's work helped Christians to know Jewish spirituality and way of life better, especially the Hasidic tradition. "A

## The council's decree asserted that the death of Jesus was not to be blamed on all Jews collectively, eliminated the word *deicide* and condemned any form of anti-Semitism.

Christian ought to realize that a world without Israel will be a world without the God of Israel. A Jew, on the other hand, ought to acknowledge the eminent role and part of Christianity in God's design for the redemption of all men."

In dialogue with the American Jesuit Gustave Weigel, S.J., Rabbi Heschel asks: "Is it really the will of God that there be no more Judaism in the world? Would it really be the triumph of God if the scrolls of the Torah would no more be taken out of the Ark and the Torah no more read in the Synagogue, our ancient Hebrew prayers in which Jesus himself worshiped no more recited, the Passover Seder no more celebrated in our lives, the law of Moses no more observed in our homes? Would it really be *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* to have a world without Jews?" Many years later a Catholic cardinal, Roger Etchegaray, echoed his words: "Christianity cannot think of itself without Judaism, cannot stand without Judaism." Christianity and Judaism have their specific role in redemption. "While Christians rejoice for the *already*, Jews remind us of the *not yet*, and this fruitful tension is alive in the heart of the Church."

Rabbi Heschel's approach to Jewish-Christian dialogue is different from that of many other Jewish and Christian theologians involved in the dialogue between these two faiths. He was not interested in discussing controversial issues that still divide Jews and Christians, like the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity or Paul's Judaism. The aim of interreligious dialogue "is neither to flatter nor to refute one another but to help one another; to share insight and learning, to cooperate in

academic ventures on the highest scholarly level, and, what is even more important, to search in the wilderness for wellsprings of devotion, for treasures of stillness, for the power of love and care for man."

Partners in the Jewish-Christian dialogue should neither give up their own identity in order to meet and please the other partner nor put aside their own faith. Dialogue begins with and is grounded in respect for the other's commitment, for the other's faith. "The first and most important prerequisite of interfaith is faith.... Interfaith must come out of depth, not out of void absence of faith."

Rabbi Heschel's vision for the Jewish-Christian dialogue was fulfilled in the speech Cardinal Walter Kasper gave in Jerusalem in November 2001, when the former president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and the Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews made his own, on behalf of the Catholic Church, Rabbi Heschel's expectation: "The term *mission* properly refers to the conversion from idols to the one true God, to the God who revealed himself in the history of salvation of his chosen people...; therefore, one cannot speak of the mission to the Jews, because they already believe in the one true God. Therefore, there is no dialogue and there is no 'Catholic mission' towards the Jews."

## Dialogue and Identity

Interfaith dialogue never shapes religious identity without the other; the all-inclusiveness of God embraces the different religious identities without absorbing them in a vague idea of God, without enclosing the other within the framework of one's own identity. The aim of interreligious dialogue is "depth theology"—the act of believing that has the capacity to unite every believer. Rabbi Heschel repeated quite often that "theologies divide us; depth theology unites us." The heart of depth theology is neither the *halacha* for the Jews nor the church for the Christian but the idea of God's *pathos*, a divine reality concerned with the destiny of human beings. "It is God's will that in this aeon there should be diversity in our forms of devotion and commitment to Him. In this aeon diversity of religions is the will of God." From this deep and broad vision of divine concern, Rabbi Heschel could recognize that "Christianity and Islam, far from being accidents of history or purely human phenomena, are regarded as part of God's design for the redemption of all men."

His remarks on interreligious dialogue moved forward the legacy of the council document and reached its climax during the visit of Pope John Paul II to the synagogue in Rome in 1986. The pope recalled the spiritual bond between Christians and Jews. "The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism therefore we have a relationship

which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers." Rabbi Heschel has been for many Christians such an elder brother.

A later document (1994) of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, "Dialogue and Proclamation," moved further ahead the legacy of the conciliar declaration by saying that "Christians must be prepared to learn and to receive from and through others the positive values of their traditions. Through dialogue they may be moved to give up ingrained prejudices, to revise preconceived ideas, and even sometimes to allow the understanding of their faith to be purified" (No. 49). Religious humility mandates listening as a basic mode of being in an interreligious context. The golden rule of interreligious dialogue can be so formulated: Try always to understand the other, as you would like to be understood. By listening and being mutually respectful, each faith learns, as Paul Ricoeur says, "to be oneself as another" and participates in the mystery of God's self-giving (*pathos*), which alone can mend the brokenness of our interfaith relations. "One does not live without the others," wrote Michel De Certeau. In his first apostolic exhortation, "The Joy of the Gospel," Pope Francis reminded us, in the spirit of Rabbi Heschel, that "we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another. This means that we must have sincere trust in our fellow pilgrims, putting aside all suspicion or mistrust, and turn our gaze to what we are all seeking: the radiant peace of God's face" (No. 244). ▲

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# Blessed Are They

Finding happiness in the psalms

BY DANIEL POLISH

**H**ow do we find happiness? The answer to this question is very much a scriptural one, though we do not usually think of the Bible as concerned with happiness. We imagine it to be devoted to a whole different set of issues. And yet happiness—our happiness—is very much a part of what the Bible and, indeed, the psalms are about. We are pointed in this direction by no less than John Donne (1572-1631), the English poet most famous for his line “no man is an island.” In addition to being a poet, Donne was also a preacher. And in one of his sermons, Donne leads us to the subject of happiness by the indirect route of a mistranslation of Psalm 1.

The first word of Psalm 1—and thus of the entire Book of Psalms—is *ashrei*, probably the same word that Jesus used in the Beatitudes (Mk 5:3-12 and Lk 6:20-22). The translation Donne read renders this word as “blessed.” And thus Donne writes in his sermon:

How plentifully, how abundantly is the word *Beatus*, *Blessed*, multiplied in the Booke of Psalmes? Blessed, and Blessed in every Psalme, in every Verse; The Booke seems to be made out of that word *Blessed*, And the foundation raysed upon that word, *Blessed*, for it is the first word of the Booke.

Donne argues that the very character of the book as a whole is suggested in the very first word. And he might well be right. But interestingly, the correct meaning of that first word is really not “blessed” at all, with all of its theological

connotations. Today most translators would render *ashrei* as “happy.” So today we might paraphrase Donne’s words to suggest that “the book seems to be made out of that word *happy*, and the foundation raised upon that word, *happy*, for it is the first word of the book.”

John Donne is right in reminding us that *ashrei*/happy runs like a bright thread throughout the entire book. In these verses we find a wonderful image of the situation of a happy person. That person stands like a proud tree, luxuriant and abundant by a continual source of nourishment. Perhaps we hear this image amplified in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, too:

*Like a tree planted by waters, sending forth its roots by a stream:*

*It does not sense the coming of heat,  
its leaves are ever fresh;*

*It has no care in a year of drought, it does not cease to yield  
fruit.* (Jer 17:8)

We hear an evocation of a similar image elsewhere in the psalms: “But as for me, I am like a leafy olive tree in the house of God/ I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever (Ps 52:10).

Who would not want to live in such a condition? And who, living in it, would not consider themselves happy indeed? And how, according to this psalm, can we become planted by those streams of water? By walking our lives on the paths of goodness. By avoiding evil companions. By not counting ourselves among the congregation of the wicked or the destructive. Our own conduct determines our happiness, not the diversions and blandishments that are continually presented to us; not wealth nor possessions, nor even power. Only our own integrity plants us like a well-watered tree that needs not fear the time of heat. This sounds a lit-

**DANIEL POLISH**, the Rabbi of Congregation Shir Chadash of the Hudson Valley in LaGrange N.Y., is vice-chairman of the International Committee for Interreligious Consultations with international religious bodies and the author of *Bringing the Psalms to Life*. In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,” *America* has invited Rabbi Daniel Polish to reflect on the psalms. This article is the first in a four-part series.

tle like the sentiments expressed in a verse of yet another psalm. “Some trust in chariots and some in horses/ But we will make mention of the name of the Lord our God” (Ps 20: 8).

Trust in God and happiness seem closely aligned in many of the Psalms. This is the thread Donne might have us find running through the entire book. Indeed we read of *ashrei* from the beginning of the book to the end: “Happy are all they that take refuge in Him” (Ps 2:12). And “Happy is the one that hath made the Lord his trust” (Ps 40: 5). And

*Happy are they that are upright in the way  
Who walk in the law of the Lord  
Happy are they that keep His testimonies  
That seek Him with the whole heart*  
(Ps 119: 1–2)

And “Happy is the people whose God is the Lord” (Ps 144: 15). Closeness to God and happiness are aligned throughout the psalms.

And yet the state of happiness that comes from a close and trusting relationship with God, and that comes from singing God’s praise, also finds expression in the way we relate to our fellow human beings. So other instances of *ashrei* remind us: “Happy is the one that considereth the poor” (Ps 41: 2). And “Happy are they that keep justice/ That do righteousness at all times” (Ps 106: 3).

There is the happiness we experience in our own nearness to God. And then there is the happiness we find in extending ourselves to others—treating them in the way we would have God treat us. Our happiness in the presence of God is echoed in the happiness we experience when we behave in a God-like way, showing love to those around us.

Happiness is not a negligible thing in the psalms. As John Donne reminds us, it finds expression from the very beginning of the book, illumines the entire text and shines undimmed at the very end. ▲

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# Pope Looks to a New Cuba

As Pope Francis' visit to Cuba drew to a close, I asked Emeritus Bishop Luis del Castillo, a close observer of Cuban society and the church-state relationship there, for his analysis.

"The core of Pope Francis' message to the Cuban people was reconciliation, pardon and building together the future of the country," he told me. "Francis is looking to Cuba's tomorrow" and believes "the result of that pardoning and reconciliation would be the ability to work together in spite of differences."

Luis Del Castillo was born in Uruguay in 1931 and ordained a Jesuit priest in 1966; and after serving as bishop there from 1988 to 2009, he responded to a call for Jesuits to work in Cuba. He has worked in a parish in Santiago de Cuba since 2010 and witnessed St. John Paul II's visit in 1998 and Benedict XVI's in 2012.

He believes Francis' message is "pardon and reconciliation as a basis and resource for peace" and "a challenge to both young people and the Catholic laity to engage actively in the construction of a new Cuban society." It is also a reminder to the Cuban church that "we serve people, not ideas" and that Catholics should "be careful not be trapped in *conventillos*" (small cells).

During my stay I gained the impression that Cuba's church leaders are afraid the process of change will go too fast. They are concerned that once the U.S. embargo is lifted, major changes will follow rapidly in the economic, political and social fields and will push

many of the island's 11 million inhabitants to the margins, as happened in Eastern Europe after the collapse of Communism.

When I asked Bishop Luis if there is a real danger that the poorer people will suffer enormously once the embargo is removed, he replied: "It's very difficult to imagine a worse situation. And obviously we don't want an abrupt change that would produce a different type of gold rush: from Communism to consumerism overnight."

In this context, he recalled that President Raúl Castro, in a speech in 2013, "challenged all citizens, but in particular religious organizations, to work on recovering the best ethical values in order to save whatever political, economic or social changes could be introduced. He mentioned specifically the changes in the economy that started with the Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 2010 and insisted that "no matter what changes we introduce in our economic system, if we don't change the corruption that pervades Cuban society, our efforts are useless."

Bishop Luis is convinced that Cuba's church "needs to help in this preliminary process of recovering solid moral values to avoid harmful impact on the poorest that could result from the restoration of diplomatic relations and the embargo's elimination."

He said Francis "was very clear in focusing our attention on caring for the more fragile members of society and insisting that we cannot forget people, starting with the weakest, *los mas*

*pequeños*. If not, there could be some type of future heartless gold rush."

Bishop Luis hopes two things can happen in the church here over the next three years.

First, "I'd hope that the Catholic Church is more confident in being an *iglesia en salida*—a church that goes out to strengthen what is already a special feature of the church here, which is *casas de misión*—the work of the church in small suburban and rural communities. This could be developed with greater confidence."

Second, he would like to see greater "involvement and commitment of the lay Catholics in the structures of the Cuban society, working together with people who have different ideological, political or religious ideas. Their presence in the structures of Cuban society is the evangelical leaven and salt."

Pope Francis, he said, "is challenging the lay people in the church to engage in building Cuban society, and he's encouraging young people to do this together, daring to dream of a new country and overcoming the differences of any type: religious, political, social or racial."

When I recalled that this was his inspiring message to thousands of young people at Havana's Centro Felix Varela, Bishop Luis remarked: "Working together is the only way ahead. As Kipling said, 'Dream but do not make dreams your master and thoughts your aim!' So dream for a better Cuba and work for it together, starting from what we have in common, our common ground."

GERARD O'CONNELL

'We don't want a change from Communism to consumerism overnight!'

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

TELEVISION | JIM McDERMOTT

## MY INNER ZOMBIE

*Living with 'The Walking Dead'*

OUT OF THE WOODS? Walkers on "The Walking Dead"

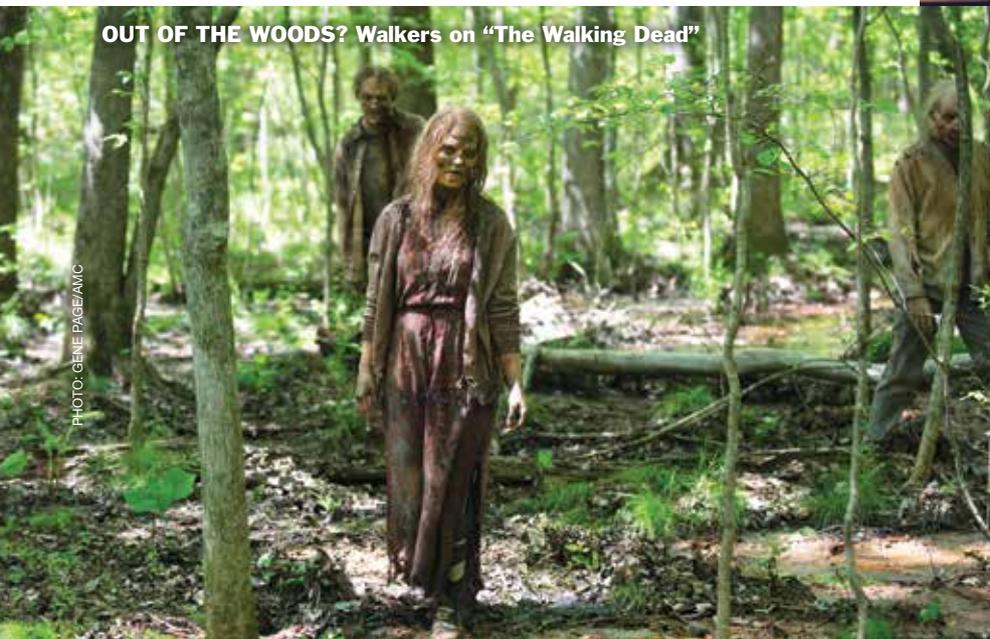
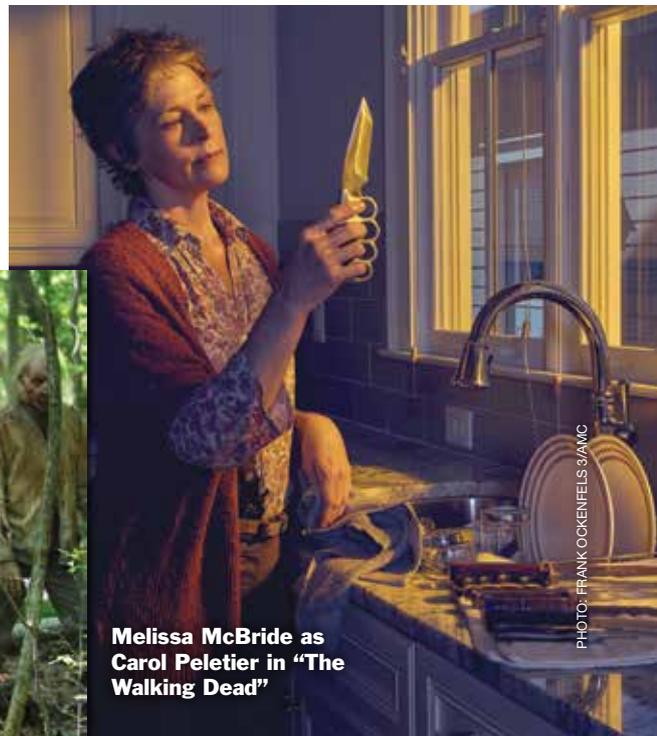


PHOTO: GENE PAGE/AMC



Melissa McBride as Carol Peletier in "The Walking Dead"

PHOTO: FRANK OCKENFELS 3/AMC

A few weeks ago *The Walking Dead* tore into its sixth season of human/zombie apocalypse. It has been a big couple of years for the show. A spinoff series debuted this summer to the biggest numbers ever for a cable program, and the mother-ship continues to beat all comers, including Monday Night Football. (Chew on that, Chris Berman.)

The series has also spawned any number of knockoffs, from the unlikely rom-com "Warm Bodies" to the BBC's "In the Flesh" and FX's vampire variation "The Strain."

But even before "The Walking Dead" lurched into our living rooms in 2010, zombies were heading into the sparkly vampire/kid-wizard heights of pop culture. The comic book upon which the series is based has been shredding hearts and wallets since 2003. Novels

about zombies have been not only popular movies but New York Times bestsellers in recent years, including the Jane Austen parody in 2009, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, which spent 50 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list (and led to what may be the best book-title suggestion I have ever made to James Martin, S.J.: *My Life With the Saints and Zombies*).

Going farther back, our society had been feeding on a steady diet of zombie themed stories since at least the 1940s. Really, no matter what the era, the undead just keep shambling on. But why?

Despite their many variations, monster movies, alien invasions and other apocalypses are almost always attempts to speak to social anxieties. Annihilation, climate change, race, sexuality, the breakdown of families—if we are afraid of it, there is an evil beast

or disaster story about it.

Many biblical stories emanate from a similar idea. Rather than attempting to describe our actual origin or predict our final future, creation stories and apocalypses were intended to address the questions and fears of the present. Is our god really God (i.e., the all-powerful one)? Why do we find ourselves battered and broken? And how are we supposed to live?

Within the genre of the horror or monster movie, zombie stories usually speak to a fear of being out of control. Zombies are us, without the guidance of our will or reason; so they become ways to express our fears of what terrible Id monster might lurk within. Contemporary films like "28 Days Later" or "The Purge" imagine us turned into beings of unquenchable fury; others offer metaphors for human greed, consumerism or the effects of unbridled ambition.

Or they can communicate anxieties about illness, our bodies against ourselves: in the 1980s becoming a

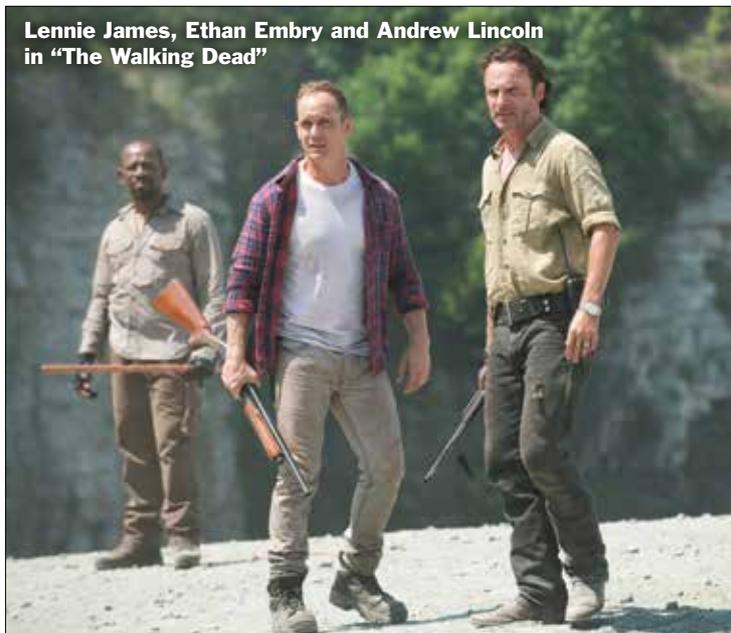
zombie was sometimes a metaphor for contracting AIDS; in the '50s and '60s for radiation poisoning. Sometimes today it is used to talk about aging or Alzheimer's.

More broadly, zombie stories express our deep fears of being overwhelmed as a society. Zombies have been used as parables of immigration or nuclear holocaust, the threat posed by younger generations or transnational corporations. They are the overpowering flood that we fear will someday soon come crashing down.

### In Fear...Hope?

"The Walking Dead" is certainly a contemplation of our fear of the monster within us. Week after week we watch all-too-ordinary people face not only the undead but the violence that they are capable of—a potent, post-9/11 anxiety.

It also speaks to that first-world anxiety of being dragged into the poverty and misery experienced by so many people. It is a spin on climate



Lennie James, Ethan Embry and Andrew Lincoln in "The Walking Dead"

change concerns or global financial threats, rich and poor all together now, trying to survive the toilet-bowl world that we have created and/or allowed.

But there is another way of thinking about the show that is particularly interesting. If you go back to movies of the '60s and '70s, you find lots of stories about people discovering that different social institutions are untrustworthy. "All the President's Men," "M\*A\*S\*H," "The Graduate"—the list is endless.

At the same time, many of those films had a childlike sense of surprise.

They are not the tales of the world-weary but of young people discovering there is no Great and Powerful Oz. The atheistic cynicism and fury follow.

In one sense "The Walking Dead" is the distillation of that fear of institutional decay. On the show there are no organizations left to rely on; even institutional affiliations among the characters become burdens that need to be stripped away.

But with that, cynicism also becomes a thing of the past. There is no longer anything beyond ourselves to point to and be disappointed in. All individ-

uals can do is put themselves together out of the rubble around and within them.

If that doesn't sound familiar, it should, because it is pretty close to the way sociologists describe young people's formation of identity today—cobbling together a sense in self and beliefs not from affiliations but experience and relationships.

Such a possibility can seem nightmarish to older generations, but it brings new possibilities as well. At its foundations cynicism can also contain

hope. The attitude consists in more than just disappointed expectations. It's not only a sense that Mommy and Daddy aren't who we thought they were but also the belief that they should or could be more.

Raised in a world where that curtain has been pulled asunder, young people may end up more able to consider institutions and elders on their own terms. Our parents, our institutions are not perfect, and they don't know everything. But they do know some things. And we can value them for that.

In society and in the church, we can look upon the present as analogous to "The Walking Dead," moral ruins through which we iPhone-undead stumble while we hashtag, comment and emoji.

But the example of our younger people also reminds us that there is life among our ruins, shoots growing up even from the stumps of what came before. Perhaps like some trees, our institutions even require the occasional decimating fire for new life to begin.

JIM McDERMOTT, S.J., a screenwriter, is America's Los Angeles correspondent. Twitter: @PopCulturPriest @jmcdsj.

## The Scary Night Owl

The scary night owl  
Flew to the moon for cheese  
To put on its pizza.  
It left the moon  
A banana.

AUREUS RUEDIGER

AUREUS RUEDIGER, now 6 years old, wrote this when she was 3. She loves to create and perform plays for her family. Aureus also loves dinosaurs, outer space, phyllo dough pastries and riding ponies.

# COMMUNAL COMBAT

Surprising fact: Yonkers is the fourth largest city in New York State, ahead of Syracuse and Albany. Covering 18 square miles and home to 200,000 people, the city exists almost literally in the shadow of the great metropolis to its south.

Yonkers is a mystery for many New Yorkers, a place they pass through on the train. HBO's "Show Me a Hero," a miniseries created by David Simon of "The Wire" and based on a book by Lisa Belkin, may not change that, but for a few weeks this summer it provided a fascinating look at a fraught moment in the city's history.

The politics of "not in my backyard" was perhaps never more virulent than in Yonkers in the 1980s. In 1980 a federal court ruled that municipal leaders had to build low-income housing in mostly white neighborhoods rather than concentrate them in the western part of the city. The series follows the fight against the plan as it unfolds during the election of Mayor Nick Wasicsko.

The campaign against the housing plan is vicious, with some residents showing up at a city hall meeting with guns. The homeowners are pretty much all white, many of them Catholic, and some of them are suspicious of the Jewish judge who handed down the order. It's not a pretty picture.

Yet it is to the show's credit that the residents of Yonkers are not wholly demonized. These are working class families who are living in probably the first houses they have ever owned. This is another sad story of class division, made tragic by the fact that the classes at war were not that far apart.

At the heart of the class combat is fear, which is made worse by the fact the black, brown and white residents

of Yonkers know very little about one another. This is the strongest argument in favor of integration. If we do not live next to people of different races or classes, or send our children to the same schools, it is far easier to demonize them as the "other."

"Show Me a Hero" gets into the weeds of late 1980s housing policy. Traditional high-rise public housing was a failure, we are told, because there were too many empty common spaces (elevators, stairwells) that no one felt ownership of; as a result, they fell into disrepair and became an incubator of violence and drug use. Learning from these mistakes, housing advocates pushed for single-unit townhouses.

"Show Me a Hero" seeks to show the people on both sides of these public policy issues. One young mother is exiled to a motel in Yorktown Heights when she first seeks public housing. She is miserable living in a place she doesn't know and lobbies successfully to be placed in a more spacious apartment in downtown Yonkers. But even there she is lonely and falls into drug use. Drugs are easy to come by in the playgrounds and hallways of public housing, and it is this proximity, the series suggests, rather than any character failing that lures vulnerable individuals into addiction.

But would living in East Yonkers be any better? Sure, there would be fewer drug dealers, but as one character says, there would be fewer people you know, too. Cleaner, safer affordable housing

may be the great dream of federal planners, but convincing people to live away from their own communities is no small matter.

In the show's final episodes families from low-income neighborhoods begin to move into the newly built townhouses. They are chosen by lottery, and most of the families we have been watching are lucky enough to land a new home. They are thrilled with their little patch

of suburbia, with green lawns out back and trees by their windows.

Of course, their new neighbors are not so thrilled and stare at them warily from their front stoops. But over time, the housing comes to resemble what the developers hoped it would—a neighborhood, with families grilling outside on the front lawn and children running up and down the sidewalks.

In a postscript, the filmmakers note that Oscar Newman, the

federal city planner who fought for the single unit townhouses, is now heralded as a visionary. Perhaps the most prominent example of this vision today is the public housing in New Orleans built after Hurricane Katrina. It doesn't seem like a coincidence that "Show Me a Hero" ended on the weekend marking the 10th anniversary of Katrina. It was that storm that brought issues of class, race and housing to the fore of the national conversation.

"Show Me a Hero" continues that conversation, reminding us that sometimes government can help push us forward, even if the motives of our leaders are not always so noble.

The politics of 'not in my backyard' was perhaps never more virulent than in Yonkers.



# VATICAN II: THE NEXT 50 YEARS

## A COUNCIL FOR THE GLOBAL CHURCH

### Receiving Vatican II History

By Massimo Faggioli  
Fortress Press. 325p \$44

## STRUGGLE, CONDEMNATION, VINDICATION

### John Courtney Murray's Journey toward Vatican II

By Barry Hudock  
Foreword by Drew Christiansen, S.J.  
Liturgical Press. 170p \$19.95

## A COUNCIL THAT WILL NEVER END

### Lumen Gentium and the Church Today

By Paul Lakeland  
Liturgical Press. 150p \$19.95

Anticipating the 50th anniversary of the completion of the Second Vatican Council (Dec. 8, 1965), theologians have ramped up their output with timely commentaries that probe, stretch and advance the event that transformed the church and boldly propelled it into the modern era. Not since the golden age of Catholic publications, 1965–75, have we seen so much interest.

Perhaps only three other ecumenical councils out of the 21 have had as much impact as Vatican II—the first, Nicaea, in 325, called by the Emperor Constantine to settle disputes in the empire about the salvific role of Christ; Chalcedon, in 453 to clarify the person and nature of Christ; and Trent, 1545–63, to reform the church, define key doctrines and respond to the Protestant Reformation.

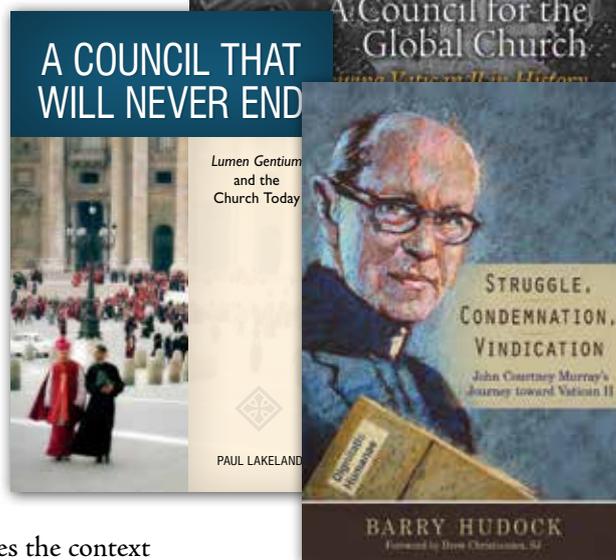
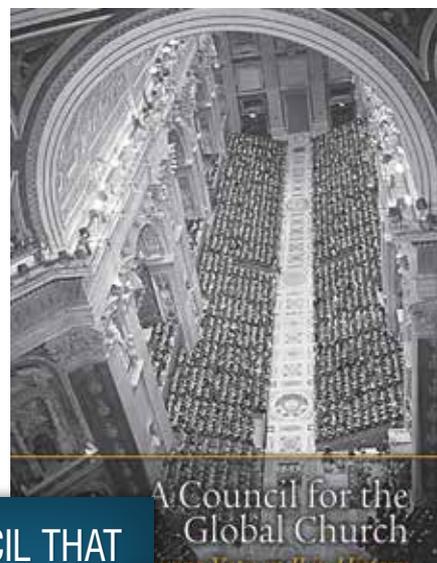
Each of these current books convincingly underscores the unfinished business of Vatican II and delves into the arguments and events that charac-

terized the intense, dynamic debates that marked the council up to and during its four sessions.

Massimo Faggioli carries a high profile as a church historian. As a scholar now located at St. Thomas University, in St. Paul, Minn., he was intimately involved with the Bologna Project, which produced the multilingual five volumes of what is likely to be the definitive history of the Second Vatican Council—all its documents, interventions, speeches and initial commentaries. The actual history, as opposed to subsequent, sometimes skewed interpretations, broadens the scope of the council beyond the seminal 16 documents to include the driving force, the spirit and the larger intent of the council. It gives the context of the debates and clearly situates the council, as an event, not simply as a collection of important documents.

Faggioli's strength is that he clearly identifies the theological issues that need to be advanced, especially as the shift from Eurocentric Catholicism to global Catholicism takes hold. He tantalizes the reader by leaving the task for others to do—or perhaps he has simply outlined his own projects for the next decade.

Barry Hudock expertly narrates the intriguing and tortured history of the arguments of John Courtney Murray, S.J., for religious liberty that led directly to the council's "Declaration on Religious Freedom." As Hudock's title, *Struggle, Condemnation, Vindication*, suggests, Murray valiantly threaded his way through the multiple obstacles posed by his theological adversaries,



primarily the American theologians Francis Connell and Joseph Fenton, and the formidable Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani of the Holy Office.

Murray's thesis ingeniously asserted that the religious liberty provided by the U.S. Bill of Rights has its roots in the Catholic natural law tradition. The American cardinals eventually brought Murray to the council as an expert (*peritus*), and the document on religious liberty became the singular American contribution to the universal church. By all accounts Murray was brilliant. Even one of his critics acknowledged Murray's "impressive erudition, remarkable dexterity, and uncommon command of language."

Hudock captures the intellectual fervor and the huge stakes in the battle. He lifts the curtain to reveal some

of the machinations during the council to derail the effort. The document on religious liberty was, after all, the clearest reversal of the teaching of Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX, who had condemned freedom of religion, freedom of the press and the separation of church and state. Murray lived to see his vindication, though he died shortly after the council in 1967. At his funeral Walter Burghardt, S.J., affirmed, “Untold Catholics will never sense that they live so gracefully in this dear land because John Murray showed so persuasively that the American proposition is quite congenial to the Catholic reality.”

The most foundational book among the three is Paul Lakeland’s thorough examination of the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (“Lumen Gentium”), in which he identifies the document’s multiple compromises and subsequent interventions by Pope Paul VI, which resulted in suspending some of the anticipated reforms of the church.

Lakeland’s book would have had a highly prophetic thrust if Pope Francis had not come on the scene just as he was finishing the manuscript. As it is, Lakeland’s theses provide a theological road map, with much of what Pope Francis has already so astutely started implementing.

Lakeland divides his treatise in three parts. The first describes in detail the council’s thrust toward episcopal collegiality, which was short-circuited by Paul VI when he abruptly established, under his own authority, a synod to gather every three years rather than a permanent structure. His successors John Paul II and Benedict XVI further undermined any authoritative leadership emerging from local churches. Under Pope Francis, however, collegiality is no longer a subject for argument. He has summoned a council of nine cardinals to assist him in major reforms. He generously incorporates insights from national conferences as integral to his own teaching. And he

# DISCOVER AN IGNATIAN MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE, 1,500 MEMBERS STRONG.

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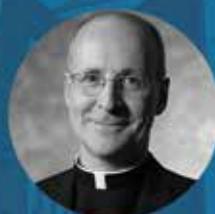
**Rudy  
López**



**Maureen  
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## IGNATIAN FAMILY TEACH-IN FOR JUSTICE

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has mandated that the meetings of the Synod of Bishops on the family be a frank, open, even messy discussion of the vital issues.

The second part of Lakeland's treatise unfolds the council's breakthrough in establishing for the first time a theology of the laity, namely that all ministries among the people of God emerge from the baptism and the priesthood of the faithful.

However, once again in the post-conciliar period, the papacy and Roman curia thwarted a vigorous lay leadership by subordinating it to clerical leadership. Lakeland rhetorically asks whether lay ecclesial ministers are a theological monster. Are they simply a stand-in for priests, or is a genuine lay vocation emerging within these times? He queries, are they "apostles of the second string" or are they "heralds of a new conception of priestly ministry?"

Lakeland deftly traces all the ambiguities within this new ministry and suggests imaginative and theologically sound avenues for its resolution.

In the third and final section, "In Search of a Humbler Church," Lakeland identifies humility as the an-

tidote to many of our ecclesial ills that are products of the sin of exclusion. These include the invidious comparisons between the holy church and the sinful world, the empty comparisons between the fullness of truth in "our" tradition and the defects of others and the marginalization of others, whether they are divorced or gays and lesbians. Lakeland identifies this puritanical thrust of self-righteous purity as a revival of the ancient and dangerous heresy of Donatism.

Lakeland concludes with an extended reflection on the church as good Samaritan with three disquieting questions: Who is my neighbor, who is holy and who is the saint?

Each of these authors helps us to ponder the future of the church: Does the church have a wide, inclusive embrace? Does it encourage religious freedom as foundational for genuine belief? And is it committed to a vigorous, wide-open discernment about how the Spirit is guiding the church?

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**PATRICK HOWELL, S.J.**, holds the title of Distinguished Professor in the Institute for Catholic Thought and Culture at Seattle University.

no one has published a comprehensive biography of the artist who was seen by some as the "rebel nun."

The California arts author April Dammann works to rectify that omission with *Corita Kent. Art and Soul. The Biography*. It stands out for its lush, high-quality reproduction of Kent's art through the decades. The illustrations alone give reason to spend time with the volume and to mourn Kent's untimely death at age 67.

However, Kent's passion for artistic experimentation seems to inspire her biographer's text. Kent might have applauded this approach, but it will frustrate the reader who seeks dates, attribution and order.

The story unfolds mostly in the present tense, with abrupt changes of scene and occasional backtracking. Type styles abound. Margins burst with quotations and scraps of research. Key details like the date of Kent's death, are missing or difficult to find.

Most discomfiting is Dammann's determination to tell the story from the nun's point of view, without explaining how the author intuits Kent's musings. For instance: "Thoughts of a walk on the beach early that morning calm and comfort her. She tries to remember details of amusing tales told by Father Berrigan at the midday meal. Hours later she is still smiling. Dan."

This is risky business even when an author interviews a living subject. But since Kent has been dead for nearly three decades, Dammann must rely on the artist's former pupils, friends and colleagues.

As Dammann explains in the introduction, "I felt, throughout the writing process, that Corita's spirit blessed my efforts to judiciously project her thoughts, my analysis supported by the truths and secrets about her emotional life that trusted sources shared with me."

The girl who would be Sister Corita, Frances Kent, was the fifth of six children in an Irish-American Catholic

BARBARA CURTIN MILES

## ART WITH HEART

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### **CORITA KENT** **Art and Soul** **The Biography**

By April Dammann  
Angel City Press. 160p. \$40

If you were a progressive Catholic during the tumultuous 1960s and '70s, Sister Corita Kent's art probably brightened your home. Her silk-screened posters and book illustrations pulsed with layers of vivid color. In breezy script, they shared quotes from her favorite thinkers—Daniel Berrigan, Thomas Merton, Dorothy

Day, Ugo Betti and others—perhaps making them your favorite thinkers as well.

In 1985, as Kent neared death from cancer, the U.S. Postal Service published her "Love" stamp, sporting six colorful swashes (and a first-class postage rate of just 22 cents). More than 700 million of the stamps were sold, scattering tiny works of modern art across the nation.

Corita Kent (1918–86) deserves recognition alongside her far more famous secular counterpart, the pop artist Andy Warhol. But remarkably,

family. Born in Fort Dodge, Iowa, she grew up in Hollywood, Calif. After a dozen years under the tutelage of nuns, Frances entered the Immaculate Heart of Mary community as a postulant in 1936. She chose the name Sister Mary Corita, "Little Heart."

Like many nuns of that era, Kent taught in crowded classrooms before completing her bachelor's degree. Her artistic talent opened doors for workshops, a faculty position at Immaculate Heart College and eventually a master's degree from the University of Southern California.

During the 1950s, her reputation grew as a gifted but demanding art teacher. She also developed in her chosen specialty, silk-screen and serigraph printmaking. Studio time took a back seat to teaching and prayer, but as ear-

ly as 1952 she earned "best in show" for printmaking at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

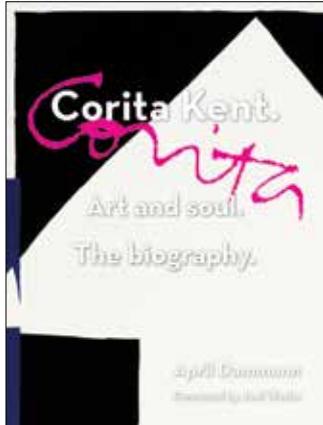
During the 1960s, Kent's fame spread. Many of her colorful prints hijacked Madison Avenue themes to convey a spiritual message. In Kent's hands, General Mills's slogan "The big G stands for goodness" suggested God. She riffed on the Wonder Bread wrapper, with its iconic dots of red, yellow and blue, so as to recall the ultimate wonder bread, the Communion host.

She was commissioned to create a 40-foot mural for the Vatican Pavilion at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. Newsweek photographed her in full habit and in secular clothes for a 1967 cover story, "The Nun: Going Modern." And as the country grew preoccupied

with war, racism, poverty and social justice, Kent's prints followed suit.

One of the book's recurring themes is that Kent accomplished this and more despite a decades-long battle with insomnia and depression. The author depicts Kent taking on commissions, travel and speeches atop an already heavy load of teaching and art production. Tensions between religious authorities and her reform-minded order exhausted the artist-nun. She fled to Cape Cod for a sabbatical, then abruptly left religious life in 1968.

The artist crafted a productive new life as Corita Kent, a single 50-year-old in Boston. She picked up corporate commissions, including a 150-foot rainbow to embellish a gas tank in Massachusetts. She donated time and talent to humanitarian efforts and collaborated on book and postcard projects. The author seems less interested in her subject's life after she left her order, and the book's final chapters feel rushed.



# Generation Faith

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BY MINISTRY

Dammann provides a five-page list of her sources, including histories of the era, articles about Kent and interviews with people who knew her. However, the biographer does not link these to her text by footnotes or less formal means. That leaves the reader wondering how much trust to put in any given story.

For instance, the author describes Kent's intense friendships with three priests: the Jesuit poet Daniel Berrigan, the Sulpician spiritual director Robert J. Giguere, and (as a newly single woman in Boston) the Rev. (later Archbishop) Humberto Sousa Medeiros. Did Kent act on the passionate language of her letters to Berrigan and Giguere? Dammann doesn't think so. The astounding story

about Kent and the bishop appears to come from one of Kent's confidantes. How much is fact, and how much fantasy? The reader cannot judge.

Despite these shortcomings, this book is a deserving tribute. (Dammann notes that the book is not endorsed by Kent's heirs or her former religious community, but it comes across as a tribute nonetheless.)

Kent broke new artistic ground during an era when opportunities were limited for women, let alone for women religious. This book should inspire a new generation to learn more about her.

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**BARBARA CURTIN MILES** *recently retired after 40 years in journalism, much of that covering the arts. She also spent four years as a religious sister in the late 1960s.*

PAUL MONOD

## THIRTY YEARS OF WAR

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### **FERDINAND II Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637**

By Robert Bireley  
Cambridge University Press. 340p \$99

The Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II was in many respects an exemplary figure: a conscientious, hard-working ruler, an earnest Catholic and a caring father and devoted husband. By his own testimony, he sought the conversion of his Protestant subjects, not because he hated them but because he was concerned for their souls. Yet posterity has not bestowed laurels on Ferdinand. In part this is because of his responsibility for the Thirty Years' War, which he did not cause but helped to prolong. In part it is because, unlike his war-mongering rival Gustav Adolph of Sweden, Ferdinand did not project personal charisma. His life was devoted to religion and the interests of the house of Habsburg. Unfortunately, he is often remembered for his greatest

mistake, the 1629 Edict of Restitution, restoring property to the Catholic Church that had been claimed by Protestant princes, and for the devastation wrought on Germany as a result.

Robert Bireley, S.J., is a leading authority on Counter-Reformation Catholicism and the author of many previous books, including a study of William Lamormaini, Ferdinand II's Jesuit confessor. Bireley's grasp of the religious politics and international diplomacy of this period in Central European history is unrivaled. His judgments on Ferdinand's actions are sensitive and generally sympathetic, but not uncritical.

Educated by Jesuits and strongly influenced by his pious Catholic parents, Ferdinand was not likely to be

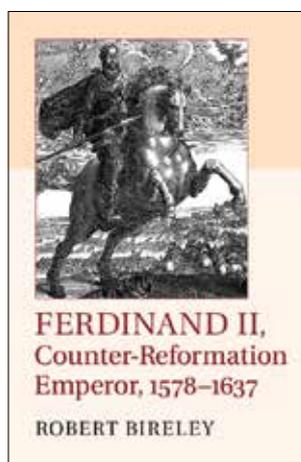
well disposed toward the Bohemian Protestants over whom he ruled as king from 1617 onward. As Bireley points out, however, Ferdinand did little to provoke the uprising of Bohemian nobles that erupted in the following year, setting off three decades of war within the Holy Roman Empire. After Ferdinand's victory at the White Mountain in 1620, 27 leading Bohemian rebels were tried and executed. This was harsh punishment but limited in scope, in spite of the reputation of the tribunal that sentenced them as a *Blutgericht*, or blood court. Ferdinand became a hereditary monarch in Bohemia and began a campaign to reconvert his subjects to Catholicism, but he did not scrap the Bohemian constitution. Indeed, he showed the same scrupulous regard for constitutional niceties within his other domains after becoming Holy Roman Emperor in 1618.

In legal terms, Ferdinand was what might be called a "strict constructionist" rather than a would-be absolutist. This was what led him into the mistake of assuming that with his main enemies defeated, he could impose on the German princes a restrictive interpretation of the 1555 Peace of

Augsburg, which had recognized Lutheranism within the empire. This mistake shaped the infamous Edict of Restitution, bluntly labeled by Bireley as "overreach." By calling for the restoration of Catholic Church property that had been confiscated since 1555 by both Lutheran and Calvinist princes, the edict strengthened Protestant

resistance to Ferdinand and encouraged a Swedish invasion.

Traumatized by the success of the Swedes, the emperor ordered the arrest of his chief general, the un-



trustworthy Wallenstein. The Privy Council's decision to sanction the killing of Wallenstein was within the boundaries of the law but was interpreted by Ferdinand's enemies as an assassination. Fortunately for him, the victory at Nördlingen in 1634 allowed the emperor to pursue peace, and he wisely sacrificed his position on church property in order to obtain the cooperation of Lutheran princes. The Peace of Prague might have ended the war but for the recalcitrance of Sweden and France, who for the next 14 years sought to establish their own permanent presence within the empire by force of arms. Ferdinand died in 1637, confident that Catholicism would be re-established at least within his hereditary Austrian and Bohemian lands, the core of the 18th-century Habsburg empire.

Ferdinand's life makes a good story, with plenty of dramatic ups and downs. Bireley's retelling of it, however, is aimed at an academic audience.

While it includes some fine anecdotes about the emperor's piety, most of them derived from Lamormaini, as well as interesting comments on subjects like court entertainments at Vienna or Ferdinand's love of hunting, the emphasis here is on the gritty details of politics and diplomacy. The author guides the reader through a confusing morass of maneuvers, negotiations, pacts and treaties with clarity and precision but little levity.

Nonetheless, Bireley's carefully documented analysis has many strengths. One of them lies in his appreciation of the differences among European Catholics in this period. There was no single Catholic position on any issue, including toleration, which in certain circumstances could be justified as "a lesser evil." Ferdinand's first Jesuit confessor, Martin Becan, took this view regarding Protestantism in Lower Austria. Lamormaini disagreed with Becan but did not always win the argument, in spite of the support of Duke

Maximilian of Bavaria, who pressed Ferdinand to adopt a more aggressive stance regarding Protestants.

Maximilian's influence was bad news for the Bohemians after the Bavarian army rescued the emperor in the crisis of 1618-20. The papacy, for its part, did not always endorse Ferdinand's decisions and held off from expressing any view at all on the Edict of Restitution, arguing that it could not publicly sanction the Peace of Augsburg. Evidently, Counter-Reformation Catholicism was far from a monolithic force, no matter what its opponents thought. Those who dream of restoring a mythical unity within the current church would do well to heed the lessons of this book.

**PAUL MONOD** is the Barton Hepburn Professor of History at Middlebury College, where he has taught since 1984. He is the author of *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (1989); *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe 1589-1714* (1999); and *Solomon's Secret Arts: The Occult in the Age of Enlightenment* (2013).



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# Calling All Sinners

SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS (B), NOV. 1, 2015

Readings: Rv 7:2–14; Ps 24:1–6; 1 Jn 3:1–3; Mt 5:1–12

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Mt 5:8)*

**A**part from brothers and sisters, the most common term the Apostle Paul uses to describe his fellow Christians is saints (*hagioi*, “holy ones”). In English, forms of the root *hagi-*, which might appear as nouns, adjectives or verbs, are translated as “holy,” “holy one,” “holiness,” “sanctification,” “sanctified” and “saints.” Christian are all saints: holy ones, set aside for God. Holiness is not something reserved for the special few followers of Christ but is the goal for every Christian, the purpose for which we have been called.

The call for Christians to live up to their baptismal call ought to be a constant reminder that not only are we called to be saints, we are saints, however imperfectly we are running the race to the heavenly goal. It is not just that we do not share in the eternal joy of heaven now. We know how often we fall short of the goal of holiness that Jesus called us to in this life, whether in purity of heart, mercy, righteousness or peacefulness.

But we have exemplars, for we live in communion with the saints, who share in the fullness of God’s life presently. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says: “At the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is” (No. 954). The feast of All Saints is a necessary re-

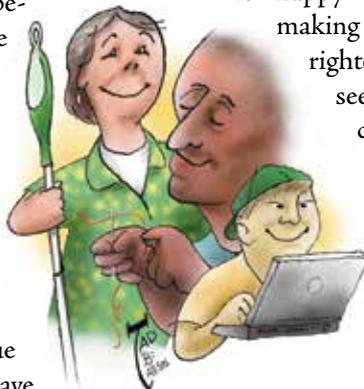
minder for us whenever we doubt that God could make a saint of you or me. Sainthood is our purpose and destiny.

Those saints in heaven share the life for which we are being prepared, but they are not simply models for us, they intercede on our behalf. The Revelation of John promises us that the saints are not just a few but a “great crowd” who worship God, calling us home. While the life of the saints is opaque to us in many ways, we have the evidence of Scripture and tradition that it is not just a call to be with God but to be like God. In 1 John, we are told that as saints, “we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.” This is the glorious future, in which some members of the family, children of God like us, already share and in which they mediate for us.

But if we are encouraged to recognize that we are saints even now, how do we make certain we will be saints also then, sharing eternal life with our brothers and sisters in the presence of God, seeing God as God is, like God, for eternity? As with so much of the Christian life, sainthood is a study in the mundane and the ordinary, done with great love of God and neighbor. Jesus, the one and only teacher, instructs us in the Beatitudes, offering us “the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations”

(*Catechism*, No. 1717). The paradox, as with so much of the kingdom, is that sainthood confounds and confuses the ways of the world, counseling behavior that others see as foolishness.

Jesus offers that his followers are “blessed” or “happy,” which is another suitable translation of *makarios*, when they walk Christ’s path of discipleship. In spite of persecution, being reviled or even mourning, the follower of Jesus is “happy” when showing mercy, making peace and thirsting for righteousness. This would seem to be a strange definition of “blessed” or “happy.” So why are the persecuted, the humble and the mourning called happy? Part of the reason must be because



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Life in the presence of God is the goal for which we have been created. How are you able to most fully grasp your sainthood now? What do you most yearn to understand about the life with God and the saints?

ART: TAD DUNNIE

God is about to reverse this situation: “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.” The “happy” are the saints who are destined for the divine reward, whose lives show that they yearn to share in communion with the saints in heaven.

But to be a saint, as Jesus encourages us, is to live the happy life now, in which virtue allows us to participate in the life of God with joy. Life in the kingdom of God is the goal, but the Beatitudes allow us to participate in that life now with God and all the saints. We are saints, called to be saints, yearning to share in life with the saints.

**JOHN W. MARTENS**

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

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