

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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## The Gift of the Word

RICHARD J. CLIFFORD

FALL BOOKS 2

# OF MANY THINGS

**T**hanks be to God, this has been an autumn of firsts for **America**. In September we published a groundbreaking interview with Pope Francis; in October, our 56-page special issue on women in the life of the church marked the first time that we published an issue written entirely by women—except for the last page, which was by John W. Martens, our regular Word columnist.

The list of firsts continues with the present issue. This week marks the start of “The Living Word: Scripture in the Life of the Church,” a two-year, multi-platform project in collaboration with the American Bible Society.

“The Living Word” is a first in two senses. It is the first time **America** has undertaken such an ambitious program of content devoted to a single subject. We will produce original content across all our platforms: in print, on the Web, through social media, through video and through person-to-person events.

“The Living Word” is also a first in that **America** is co-sponsoring this project with an interdenominational Christian ministry that has been engaging people with God’s word for nearly 200 years.

The project also marks a first for the American Bible Society: “The Living Word” is one of the largest content efforts ever undertaken by A.B.S. in partnership with a Catholic media organization.

Our collaboration with the American Bible Society is a fruit of the Second Vatican Council. The council’s “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation” revolutionized Catholic biblical studies. Much of the past half-century of Catholic biblical scholarship has focused on reconciling the council’s teachings about Scripture and tradition with the various forms of modern biblical criticism. These efforts have greatly enriched the life of the church. Still, new challenges and opportunities have emerged. Five decades after declaring “access to sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the

Christian faithful,” the council’s call for universal access and engagement has yet to be fully answered. At the same time, the opportunities afforded by new media have never been greater. It is fitting, then, that the first article in this series should examine the achievements and unfulfilled potential of the council’s vision.

In the months ahead, “The Living Word” will be organized around five themes, each of which was treated in the council document.

*Conversion through Scripture.* How is the word of God converting and sustaining today’s Catholic Christians? What are their personal stories, their joyful accounts?

*Praying with Scripture.* How can we marry the church’s rich and varied traditions of Bible-based prayer with the specific needs of 21st-century U.S. Catholics and the promise of 21st-century technologies?

*Worshiping with Scripture.* How well is Scripture used in Catholic liturgy today? How can we encourage more biblically literate churchgoers?

*Scripture and the Arts.* How is Scripture influencing and inspiring a new generation of Catholic artists, poets, writers, architects and church designers?

*Theology of Scripture.* How can we promote a more robust theological understanding of divine revelation among Catholics? How can we better convey the relationship between Scripture and tradition?

As if that weren’t enough, this week marks yet another first. **America** welcomes our brother Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., superior general of the Society of Jesus, to our pages.

If all that seems a bit boastful, please forgive me. I’m just enormously proud of my colleagues here at America House, and I am equally excited to work with my new colleagues at The Bible House, the home of the American Bible Society. And, of course, none of this would be worthwhile or even possible without you. Thank you.

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

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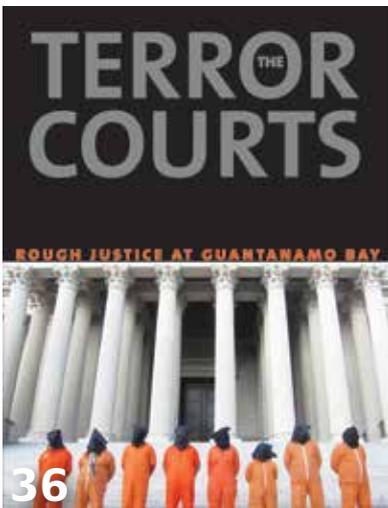
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## ON THE WEB

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### Sharing the Burden

Workers in the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh have seen more than their share of tragedy over the past year: 112 perished in a factory fire last November; the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in April took over 1,100 lives; and at least 10 more were lost in a fire on Oct. 8. Outrage over the appalling conditions in factories that supply Western brands has led to protests in Bangladesh and international commitments to improve safety. There are now signs that both movements are beginning to bear fruit.

Following a wave of strikes that hit roughly a fifth of the workshops, an independent wage board is poised to increase the minimum wage (currently \$38 a month) by between 50 and 80 percent. And on Oct. 21 the government of Bangladesh and the International Labor Organization launched a \$24 million initiative that will provide for the fire safety and structural integrity inspections of factories, as well as rehabilitation and training for victims of previous disasters and better protection for workers seeking to unionize.

Ensuring a just wage and safe working conditions is a responsibility at every step of the supply chain—from local employers to the shareholders of companies in the United States. Retailers like H&M have called for annual wage increases and expressed their willingness to defray the cost to factory owners. Major European and American brands have pledged funds for ongoing safety monitoring and repairs. It is incumbent on consumers, used to prices that hide the true cost of the clothing they buy, to reward those who live up to their obligation to put persons before profit.

### A Civil Politician

Thomas S. Foley, the eloquent former speaker of the House, died on Oct. 18 following complications from a stroke. He was 84. Mr. Foley, a Democrat, represented eastern Washington State in Congress for 30 years, from 1964 to 1994, and lost his seat when Republicans, led by Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia and fueled by the Contract With America, gained control of the House.

The well-spoken, courtly Mr. Foley attended Gonzaga Prep and Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash., where, not surprisingly, he and his debate partner won the National Debate Championship in 1948. Despite Mr. Foley's patrician bearing, he mixed well with his rural constituents. He loved riding horseback and getting his boots dirty in the rolling hills of the Palouse country, south of Spokane. Mr. Foley became speaker in 1989 after a bitter fight, led by Mr. Gingrich, to oust Representative

Jim Wright, a Democrat from Texas, for alleged ethics violations. The new speaker quickly appealed to "our friends on the Republican side to come together and put away bitterness and division and hostility." He won high praise from all sides for his common courtesy and universal fairness. He explained that he was Speaker of the whole House, not just one party or one faction.

Dan Evans, a former Republican governor of Washington, remarked, "[Tom] was an unusually civil politician in an increasingly uncivil arena." Mr. Foley's example provides a strong commentary on the unsavory divisions in Congress today and its instinct to deepen the divide rather than build bridges. He eschewed partisan advantage in order to advance the well-being not only of his own constituents but of every region of the country.

### Argentina's Future

The political reign of the Kirchners in Argentina appears to be coming to an end as President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner deals with health problems and her party faces challengers in the midterm elections. Mrs. Kirchner was elected to her second term in 2011. She followed her husband, Néstor Kirchner, who held the presidency from 2003 until 2007 and died suddenly in 2010. Last month, officials announced that President Kirchner had sustained a head injury after a fall. She underwent surgery in October and has been told to scale back her activities.

Mrs. Kirchner's Front for Victory party was widely expected to lose seats in the elections held on Oct. 27. The elections have been portrayed as a dress rehearsal for 2015, when the people of Argentina will most likely elect a new president. Sergio Massa, a former member of the Kirchner cabinet who broke with the president, and Daniel Scioli, the governor of Buenos Aires Province, are seen as top contenders for the post.

Néstor Kirchner assumed office at a time of financial turmoil, and his supporters credit him with guiding the growth of the country's economy. Critics fault him and his wife for failing to capitalize on Argentina's recovery and for presiding over a political culture that is polarized and, in some cases, corrupt. In the coming years, Argentina will need pragmatic leaders willing to work with diverse groups in order to set the country on a more promising path. Inflation remains a problem and will need to be dealt with in order to lure foreign investment. If Argentina wishes to attain the economic prosperity and international favor enjoyed by its neighbors in Brazil and Chile, the next few years will be crucial.

# Too Big to Prosecute?

The wheels of justice grind slowly indeed—perhaps slowest when they detour onto Wall Street, where generous campaign contributors, former Treasury Department officials (and future ones) and the super-wealthy operate the global finance market. Five years after a financial crisis that sent the nation and then the world into an economic tailspin, less connected citizens who watched home values plummeting or eviction notices being posted are still waiting for those wheels to grind down some careers in recompense. But despite multiple federal and state investigations, there is little to indicate today that any major figure from the world of U.S. high finance will ever be held accountable for all the turmoil and suffering endured over the last half decade.

That is not to say that some measure of justice has not been meted out. Significant cash settlements have been procured by federal and state prosecutors. In October, JPMorgan Chase agreed to an unprecedented \$13 billion penalty meant to make amends for its role in the crisis, and the roles played by Bear Stearns and Washington Mutual, two banks JPMorgan swallowed whole at the height of the credit market meltdown. Just days later, Bank of America was found liable for fraud, and the Department of Justice is seeking \$848 million to make good on losses sustained by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Presumably the historic JPMorgan settlement should sting. The figure does represent more than half the record \$21 billion the banking giant—with \$2.4 trillion in assets—earned last year, so it may take as much as two entire fiscal quarters for this way-too-big-to-fail institution to expense the fine. While cash penalties are welcome, what might better restore confidence in the rule of law would be some sign that a criminal investigation, which the Justice Department says is ongoing, will lead to actual indictments of actual perpetrators of the crimes that led to the crisis.

An investigation by the Center for Public Integrity published in September found that the top executives from the 25 biggest pre-crisis subprime lenders are back in the mortgage business. Many lenders have recreated the same executive teams who stood by or openly encouraged dubious-to-fraudulent practices that were the foundation of the crisis in 2008. How is this possible? One investment banker told the center's researchers that the absence of a "meaningful effort" by regulatory agencies to identify the industry's bad actors and hold them accountable has allowed them to quickly return to the field in new lending entities.

Regulatory and criminal justice authorities have to do better than this—not out of malice and not to avenge the thousands of families who ended up on the streets because they were talked into signing or refinancing mortgage deals that would ruin them, but as a simple matter of justice and to re-establish the best practices and ethical lines that were blurred, then obliterated in the sub-prime mortgage rush. The same standard pertains to the world of high finance. After the stampede into bundled mortgage securities and derivatives, it became clear that many of the minders of the nation's banks had no clear idea themselves of what their presumably staid institutions were selling and what risks they were taking, first on behalf of their shareholders and ultimately on the backs of U.S. taxpayers.



Some defending the government's lackluster efforts against powerful bankers emphasize that bad judgment is not a criminal offense. But fraud and obstruction surely are. Discerning which institutional missteps constitute bad decisions and which are crimes is an obligation of good government, not a problem that can be dismissed because it is difficult to resolve. The government's efforts have been underpowered and underfunded, with an eye to assisting banks—instead of to rooting out not just toxic assets but toxic actors. Time now is running short; the statute of limitations is coming into play on specific instances of possible wrongdoing.

In "Caritas in Veritate" (2009), an encyclical that in part was a response to the global economic crisis, Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "Economy and finance, as instruments, can be used badly when those at the helm are motivated by purely selfish ends. Instruments that are good in themselves can thereby be transformed into harmful ones. But it is man's darkened reason that produces these consequences, not the instrument per se. Therefore it is not the instrument that must be called to account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility."

Complex regulatory and corporate codes and structures, "investigation fatigue," slick national lobbying efforts and an understandable desire to leave all that unpleasantness behind cannot mean that the industry's willfully bad players will be allowed to slink off unpunished. Justice must be served and accountability restored or the nation will simply be resetting for the next and potentially more devastating banking breakdown.

## REPLY ALL

### Refreshing Appeal

"A Church for the Poor," by Bishop Robert W. McElroy (10/21), is an appropriate and timely complement to Pope Francis' long interview published in *America* on Sept. 30. Among the many topics the pope addressed, perhaps the one given considerable attention was his observation that the church cannot insist only on abortion, gay marriage and contraceptive methods. Then he added, "We have to find a new balance."

Bishop McElroy makes the persuasive case that in the pope's frequent messages on poverty is found the needed balance in our Catholic political conversation. In pursuing the common good, he argues that structural sins of poverty actually are more relevant than sins of intrinsic evil. In the pope's view, alleviating poverty is neither optional nor secondary but must be at the heart of the church's mission.

This acute insight into the pope's consistent teaching on poverty and its devastating effects on hunger, lack of meaningful work, health care and de-

cent housing, must be a priority that is part and parcel of the pro-life agenda. Otherwise, the pope said, there is the danger of losing the "freshness and fragrance of the Gospel."

Bishop McElroy makes a refreshing appeal to his brother bishops and the faithful in their dioceses to embrace Pope Francis' vision of a church for the poor.

(MOST REV.) JOSEPH A. FIORENZA  
*Houston, Tex.*

*The writer is archbishop emeritus of Galveston-Houston.*

### What Francis Supports

The article by Bishop McElroy calls forth the same old and tired social justice that Pope Francis does not appear to support. Personal conversion appears to be the pope's central focus. Bishop McElroy, however, continues endorsing "trickle-down charity," the notion the federal government and the Catholic Church should continue their partnership for the poor both in the United States and abroad.

Brokered deals with the government do away with what St. Francis actually did: beg directly to people,

practicing humility. Perhaps it is time to move from the halls of Congress and its surrounding opulence and actually work directly with the poor, getting our hands dirty.

Perhaps the example and fervor of Bishop McElroy in directly loving the poor will change sinful structures not by trickle-down charity but through new wheat springing forth, inspiring all Catholics and people of goodwill to do the same. It does not matter if my argument is good or not. Pope Francis' argument is spot-on and truly inspiring.

(REV.) JAMES HOLLAND  
*Russellton, Pa.*

### Morality and Politics

Thanks to Bishop McElroy for his important reflections on the transformation of the Catholic political conversation. I know from personal experience how much that conversation has been distorted by those who have given intrinsically evil acts such a priority in public life that it excludes consideration of other questions of grave wrongs.

I suggest that the root of the problem lies in the virtually exclusive role that moral philosophy has had in articulating a Catholic approach to politics. Ironically, it is similar to the Kantian principle that politics is a subdivision of ethics. Principles that may have been drawn from a Catholic political philosophy like that of Jacques Maritain or a Catholic legal philosophy developed within the Scholastic tradition (Jean Dabin, for example), have been ignored.

All of these works address the greater complexity of public order, but have no meaningful place in predominant Catholic circles of higher education and episcopal leadership. A more comprehensive and balanced intellectual framework, drawing upon diverse but orthodox ways of knowing, is necessary if we hope to bring Catholic political discourse to maturity.

CORNELIUS F. MURPHY JR.  
*Valencia, Pa.*

### BLOG TALK

*The following is an excerpt from "McElroy's Game Changer," by Michael Sean Winters, in The National Catholic Reporter (10/10). The blog post is in response to "A Church for the Poor," by Bishop Robert W. McElroy (Am. 10/21).*

If this were merely an academic discussion, Bishop McElroy's article would still be important. But because of the political use to which the notions of intrinsic evil and prudential judgment have been put, and specifically the way some conservative Catholic commentators have set the two ideas in opposition to one another, McElroy's article is a game changer.

Other prelates, most nota-

bly Cardinal Sean O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., have celebrated Pope Francis' focus on the poor and his holding up the social doctrine of the church. But so far as I know, Bishop McElroy is the first prelate to explicitly and authoritatively challenge the use, better to say misuse, of Catholic moral theology in discussions of public policy....

What we have in this essay is a bishop who "gets" Francis but who also "gets" American culture and begins a dialogue between the two. Bishop McElroy has made a significant contribution to Catholic moral and political discourse. Let's hope his brother bishops are listening.

MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS  
*NCRonline.org*

## Pastoral Sensitivity

Re “A Pastoral Invitation” (10/21): Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl appears to have been touched by the pastoral sensitivity of Pope Francis. I see this as something very positive. I hope other U.S. bishops are moved in the same way.

But I wonder: If Francis had been pope a few years ago, when Cardinal Wuerl issued the condemnation of the theological work by Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., *Quest for the Living God*, would he have done all this with greater pastoral sensitivity? Would there have even been a formal and public condemnation, which made many of us wonder about the quality of justice manifested?

I could be wrong about what Francis’ approach would be, but I believe the models for his ministry as pope will be that of John XXIII and Paul VI. I hope this is the case, and I pray that Francis will send us many pastoral bishops.

ROBERT STEWART  
*Chantilly, Va.*

## All Part of God’s Family

I’m a great admirer of Cardinal Wuerl and consider myself fortunate to have him as my archbishop. I’ve also had the honor of having brief but certainly not shallow conversations with him. I mentioned once—maybe twice—that sometimes I felt marginalized within the church, though I love the church very much.

Shortly after those conversations, Cardinal Wuerl published the cardinal’s appeal for 2012, titled, “Seek First the Kingdom of God.” I printed it out and have it tacked to the wall in my bedroom, where I see it every day, because of this: “Yet it is precisely the mission of the Church to bring the healing that says we are all a part of the kingdom, we are all a part of God’s family...no one should be left outside.” That clinched it for me, and I’ve been his biggest fan ever since.

PAUL LEDDY  
*Online comment*

## A Prophetic Letter

Thank you for publishing “A Big Heart Open to God,” by Antonio Spadaro, S.J. (9/30). Some of the pope’s comments remind me of an essay titled “A Letter From the Pope in the Year 2020,” by the distinguished Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner (1904–84), published in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. XXII, in 1991. Father Rahner expresses what a pope might say in the future.

Francis said, “I am a sinner.” Father Rahner wrote, “...authority does not suffer damage, but rather profits, when its bearer openly admits the limitations of a poor and sinful human being, and is not afraid to acknowledge them.” Francis: “I do not want token consultations, but real consultations.” Father Rahner: “I am willing to listen to public discussions in my presence, eventually to learn from others, and to admit that I have learned.”

Father Spadaro described the “simple, austere” setting of the pope’s room. Father Rahner wrote, “I have a feeling that through their grandeur these popes [of the 20th century] had

an influence in the church which they probably never intended and which had its questionable side, an influence that I will try to offset with my more modest pontificate.”

Father Rahner’s essay is somewhat prophetic. He did not know who the pope would be. Perhaps he would be surprised to learn that it would be a fellow Jesuit.

DICK CROGHAN  
*Albuquerque, N.M.*

## Speak Honestly

I would like to congratulate Bill McGarvey on the excellent column, “Who Am I to Judge?” (9/30). I have been an ordained priest for 39 years and have known dozens of priests over these years. A very significant percentage of both priests and bishops are gay. This is equally true of women religious. This is, simply, reality. We need to, as McGarvey puts it, “speak honestly about what is real.” Kudos to Mr. McGarvey, and to **America** for publishing his column.

(REV.) JUDE LUCIER  
*Santa Ana, Calif.*

## STATUS UPDATE

*A reader responds to “A Church for the Poor,” by Bishop Robert W. McElroy (10/21).*

What a great piece! One thing I would add is that Pope Francis has not only called for us to be a church for the poor, but also a church of the poor. This really changes things. As a Maryknoll lay missionary, I can remember so many times sitting in my parish in La Paz, Bolivia, surrounded by neighbors who were struggling with poverty, and listening to European priests talk about “the poor” as if they were always “other.” “We have to help the poor” and “we must not forget the poor,” etc. How might they have spoken if they had identified more closely with the parish community as “we, the poor”? After all, that’s how Jesus spoke with his disciples.

I understand that Bishop McElroy is addressing a U.S. and largely middle-class audience. It’s a challenge for those of us who are not economically impoverished to imagine ourselves as part of a church of the poor, but it’s a healthy challenge to seek new and more radical forms of solidarity. As for the kinds of ministry the church engages in in poor communities, I think Ivan Illich addressed the issue in these very pages 46 years ago (“The Seamy Side of Charity,” 1/21/1967).

Pope Francis has lived with the poor, identifies with the poor and sees himself as representative of a church of the poor. I hope the church in the United States can begin to explore more fully the implications of this call to conversion.

DAN MORIARTY  
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## INTERNATIONAL LAW

### U.S. Drone Campaign Criticized By U.N. and Human Rights Groups

American drone policy and the phenomenon of “targeted killing” came under intense scrutiny in October when critical assessments were issued by independent human rights groups and in a report issued by the United Nations.

On Oct. 22, the New York-based group Human Rights Watch flatly denounced the drone campaign in Yemen where, it charged, U.S. airstrikes against “alleged terrorists have killed civilians in violation of international law.” The group argues that the U.S. drone and missile strikes “are creating a public backlash that undermines U.S. efforts against Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.” Amnesty International went even further. It charged that new evidence indicates that the United States has carried out unlawful killings in Pakistan through drone attacks, “some of which could even amount to war crimes” or extrajudicial executions.

“We are reviewing these reports carefully,” said Jay Carney, the White House spokesperson. “To the extent these reports claim that the United States has acted contrary to international law, we would strongly disagree.”

The H.R.W. report examined six targeted killings in Yemen. The group charges that two of the strikes killed civilians indiscriminately in “clear violation

of the laws of war” and found that others may have targeted people who were not legitimate military objectives or caused disproportionate civilian deaths. “Yemenis told us that these strikes make them fear the United States as much as they fear Al Qaeda,” said Letta Taylor, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch and the author of the report.

Amnesty International reviewed all 45 known drone strikes between January 2012 and August 2013 in North Waziristan, a region in northwestern Pakistan. In October 2012, Mamana Bibi, a 68-year-old grandmother, was killed in a double strike as she picked vegetables in the family’s fields accompanied by some of her grandchildren. And in July 2012, 18 laborers, including a 14-year-old boy, were killed in multiple strikes on an impoverished village close to the border with Afghanistan as they prepared for an evening meal.

Contrary to official claims that

those killed were “terrorists,” Amnesty International’s research indicates that the victims of these attacks were not involved in fighting. “There are genuine threats to the U.S.A. and its allies in the region, and drone strikes may be lawful in some circumstances, but it is hard to believe that a group of laborers or an elderly woman surrounded by her grandchildren were endangering anyone at all, let alone posing an imminent threat to the United States,” said Mustafa Qadri, Amnesty International’s Pakistan researcher. “We cannot find any justification for these killings.”

In yet another review, the U.N. special rapporteur on human rights and countering terrorism, Ben Emmerson, issued an interim report on Oct. 17. He argued that absent an armed conflict, drone strikes would “rarely be lawful” because of the restrictive use of force rules in human rights law.

**THE AFTERMATH.** A tribesman walks past a building damaged last year by a U.S. drone strike in southeastern Yemen.



Like the other reports, the U.N. interim report faulted U.S. oversight of its drone campaign because of its lack of transparency, resistance to accountability and failure to investigate the outcomes of strikes and maintain accurate casualty records. But it also found that when used in “strict compliance” with humanitarian law, drones can reduce civilian casualties by “improving situational awareness.” In Yemen, according to the report, the United States engaged in an “apparent effort to minimize civilian loss of life.”

The “single greatest obstacle” to assessing the impact of targeted killing on civilians is the lack of transparency, leading to “an accountability vacuum” and reducing the ability of victims to seek redress, according to the report. Emmerson urged the United States to clarify its position on the legal and factual issues and to release its own data on the level of civilian casualties.



VATICAN

## No Change for Divorced, Remarried Catholics

**A**mid rising expectations that the Catholic Church might make it easier for divorced and remarried members to receive Communion, the Vatican's highest doctrinal official reaffirmed church teaching barring such persons from Communion without an annulment of their first, sacramental marriage. But Archbishop Gerhard L. Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, acknowledged that many Catholics' first marriages might be invalid, and thus eligible for annulment, if spouses had been influenced by prevailing contemporary conceptions of marriage as a temporary arrangement.

The archbishop's words appeared in a 4,600-word article published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on Oct. 22.

Speculation about a change in practice has grown since Pope Francis told reporters accompanying him on his plane back from Rio de Janeiro in July that the next Synod of Bishops would explore a "somewhat deeper pastoral care of marriage," including the question of the eligibility of divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion. Pope Francis added at the time that church law governing marriage annulments also "has to be reviewed, because ecclesiastical tribunals are not sufficient for this."

Such problems, he said, exemplified a general need for forgiveness in the church today. "The church is a mother, and she must travel this path of mercy, and find a form of mercy for all," the pope said.

The Vatican announced on Oct. 8 that an extraordinary session of the Synod of Bishops will meet from Oct. 5 to Oct. 19, 2014, to discuss the "pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization." The announcement of the synod came amid news that the Archdiocese of Freiburg, Germany, had issued new guidelines making it easier for divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion.

Archbishop Müller's article was published in a German newspaper in June. Its republication in the Vatican newspaper seemed intended to temper the expectations of change that these events have excited. The archbishop acknowledged that a "case for the admission of remarried divorcees to the sacraments is argued in terms of mercy" but wrote that such an argument "misses the mark" in regard to the sacrament. He said the "entire sacra-

mental economy is a work of divine mercy, and it cannot simply be swept aside by an appeal to the same."

The prefect's article also addressed the Eastern Orthodox practice of allowing second or third marriages even when the first is sacramentally valid, a practice Pope Francis mentioned when speaking to reporters in July. "This practice cannot be reconciled with God's will, as expressed unambiguously in Jesus' sayings about the indissolubility of marriage," the archbishop wrote, noting that it thus poses an obstacle to ecumenism.

"The church cannot respond to the growing incomprehension of the sanctity of marriage by pragmatically accommodating the supposedly inevitable," he wrote. "The Gospel of the sanctity of marriage is to be proclaimed with prophetic candor. By adapting to the spirit of the age, a weary prophet seeks his own salvation but not the salvation of the world in Jesus Christ." Archbishop Müller also ruled out the argument that "remarried divorcees should be allowed to decide for themselves, according to their conscience, whether or not to present themselves for holy Communion.

"If remarried divorcees are subjectively convinced in their conscience that a previous marriage was invalid, this must be proven objectively by the competent marriage tribunals," he wrote.



## A Growing Hispanic Presence in U.S. Church

Spanish-speaking and Latino Catholics already represent about one-third of the Catholic population in the U.S. church, and their numbers are increasing rapidly. “This growth is a blessing, but also it comes with a lot of challenges: We need to find a way to integrate the Hispanic community in fullness into the life of the church in the United States,” said Gustavo Valdez, a director of Hispanic ministry for the Diocese of Charleston, S.C. “The Hispanic community is growing in its own way, and the Anglo community is trying to maintain parishes in the United States, but we may not have that communion of communities, and sometimes we are trying to assimilate each other,” Valdez said, speaking at the 17th Southeast Regional Encuentro for Hispanic ministry hosted by the Miami-based Southeast Pastoral Institute on Oct. 17–20. “We are universal, and that means we have to work in a way that we can live together as a Christian community, as a Catholic community and accept each other as God’s gift,” said Valdez.

## Sowing Ethics

Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, came to Des Moines, Iowa, to receive the World Food Prize on Oct. 16. The cardinal urged groups on both sides of the divide on bio-engineered and genetically modified food to engage in conversation and dialogue. Cardinal Turkson expressed support for biotechnology when it is married to ethics, compassion, morality and prudence. “In Catholic thought, ‘nature’ is neither sacred nor divine, neither to be feared nor to be revered and left untouched,” he said. “Rather, it is a gift offered by the Creator...en-

## NEWS BRIEFS

The University of Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education on Oct. 5 launched a bus tour called **Fighting for Our Children’s Future**, a cross-country effort to raise awareness of the impact of primary school education and the unique contribution of Catholic schools. + Responding to persistent persecution of Christian and other religious minorities, the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation issued a joint declaration on Oct. 23 urging the United Nations to adopt a resolution for the **protection of religious minorities**. + Terrence Toland, S.J., who as president of St. Joseph’s College in Philadelphia, **welcomed the admission of women**, died of heart failure on Oct. 18 in Philadelphia. + The world is closer than ever to **eradicating polio**, the World Health Organization reported on World Polio Day, Oct. 24, warning of suspected cases in Syria and that children continue to be at risk, particularly in the Horn of Africa. + Assumption College in Worcester, Mass., planned a prayer service on Oct. 25 to **remember Colleen Ritzer**, a 2011 graduate allegedly murdered on Oct. 23 by a 14-year-old student at the Boston-area high school where Ritzer taught mathematics.



Vigil for Colleen

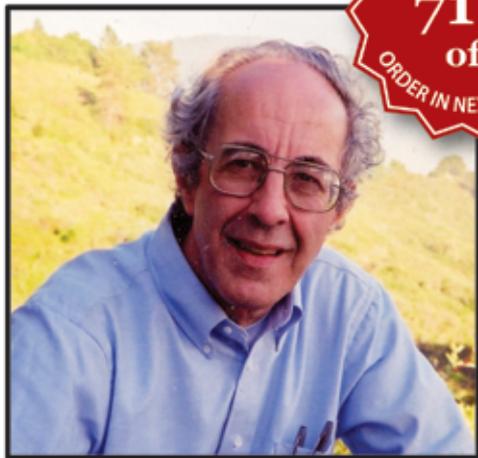
trusted to the intelligence and moral responsibility of men and women.” Agricultural practices that respect human dignity and the common good would include environmental monitoring, regulations, universal access and transparency to consumers, he said. “It is hazardous—and ultimately absurd, indeed sinful—to employ biotechnology without the guidance of deeply responsible ethics,” he said. He also warned of the consequences of denying the most impoverished segments of the population access to biotechnology.

## Cheap Fast Food?

According to a study released on Oct. 22 by the University of California’s Berkeley Labor Center and the University of Illinois, more than half the nation’s fast food workers rely on public aid because their wages are

not sufficient to support them. Fifty-two percent of families of fast food workers receive assistance from public programs like Medicaid, food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the report said, at an estimated cost to taxpayers of \$7 billion each year. A separate report criticized fast food giants McDonald’s, Yum! Brands, Subway, Burger King, Wendy’s, Dunkin’ Donuts, Dairy Queen, Little Caesar’s, Sonic and Domino’s for pushing their workers onto the public safety net. The National Employment Law Project said that these 10 largest fast food companies were responsible for more than half the total cost to taxpayers—about \$3.8 billion a year. McDonald’s alone was responsible for \$1.2 billion.

From CNS and other sources.



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# The Passing Game

I coach basketball at my school in Tanzania for many students who are just learning the game. One thing I have learned is that new players often struggle with passing the ball to a moving teammate. Their first instinct is to pass to where the person is, but if the teammate is running forward, he will be ahead of the ball by the time it gets to where he was.

This image of passing to where a person was and not where he is going seems relevant to a number of contemporary issues. The times are changing, but we can be slow to respond.

Many recent articles have highlighted how the economic situation in Mexico has greatly improved and that far fewer Mexicans are emigrating to the United States. Now the net transfer between Mexico and the United States is close to zero.

Our political discourse, however, often does not reflect such a changed situation. We still focus on supposed solutions to prevent further immigration on our southern border, even when it is now significantly reduced, but we do little to deal with the millions of undocumented immigrants who are already here.

Often, we focus on issues when they are less significant but ignore them when they are far more serious. The viral video “Kony 2012” highlighted atrocities committed by Joseph Kony in northern Uganda. By 2012, however, Kony had been chased out of Uganda and wielded far less power than when the conflict in northern Uganda was active but mostly ignored

by outside media.

On a personal level, while I am still a young teacher, I am often slow to see how what was significant during my formative years might not be the same for students today. My issues might not be their issues. Significant mediums for communicating with others like Facebook did not even exist when I was a high school student, but they play a prominent role in students’ lives now. (I recently heard that Facebook is no longer cool for many students—things continue to change.)

I don’t feel the need to follow every new and passing fad—and would fail miserably if I even tried—but I worry that I will look at others’ experiences solely through my own lens and not be sensitive to how things have changed and continue to change.

Of course, there are eternal questions and an ever-relevant Gospel, though I have sat through more than a few homilies and dinnertime pontifications that seemed more appropriate for 1973 than 2013. At the same time, I know I have unfairly treated the experience of my students in 2013 as if it were my experience in 2003 and will be tempted to continue to do this, even when it is 2053.

I hope I will have the courage to ask others when I am simply out of touch with their experience and will have the humility to listen to their answers. Fortunately, I now have a great example in Pope Francis.

Amid many interesting and inspir-

ing nuggets in his landmark interview, printed in this magazine (9/30), I was struck by his comfort with change, both on the level of the church and on a personal level.

He says, “There are ecclesiastical rules and precepts that were once effective, but now they have lost value or meaning,” and he argues that “those who stubbornly try to recover a past that no longer exists—they have a static and inward-directed view of things.”

To use a sports analogy, he’s saying that we as a church make a mistake when we try to pass the ball to where our teammates have been and fail to anticipate how they are moving and where they are going.

In looking at his own life, Pope Francis freely admits that he has made mistakes, especially in leadership, and that his most salient identity is that of a sinner. At the same time, he has learned from his past and continues to be a learner, even as he teaches the rest of us. He continues to grow and is attentive to how the world and church are changing.

As for me, a fellow Jesuit who is nearly half a century the pope’s junior, I am inspired. I’m often afraid of change and can get annoyed if I must eat something different for breakfast, let alone change something more significant. At the same time, if the pope can so readily practice openness to change while steering such a large institution, perhaps there is hope for me too.

MICHAEL ROSSMANN, S.J., teaches at Loyola High School in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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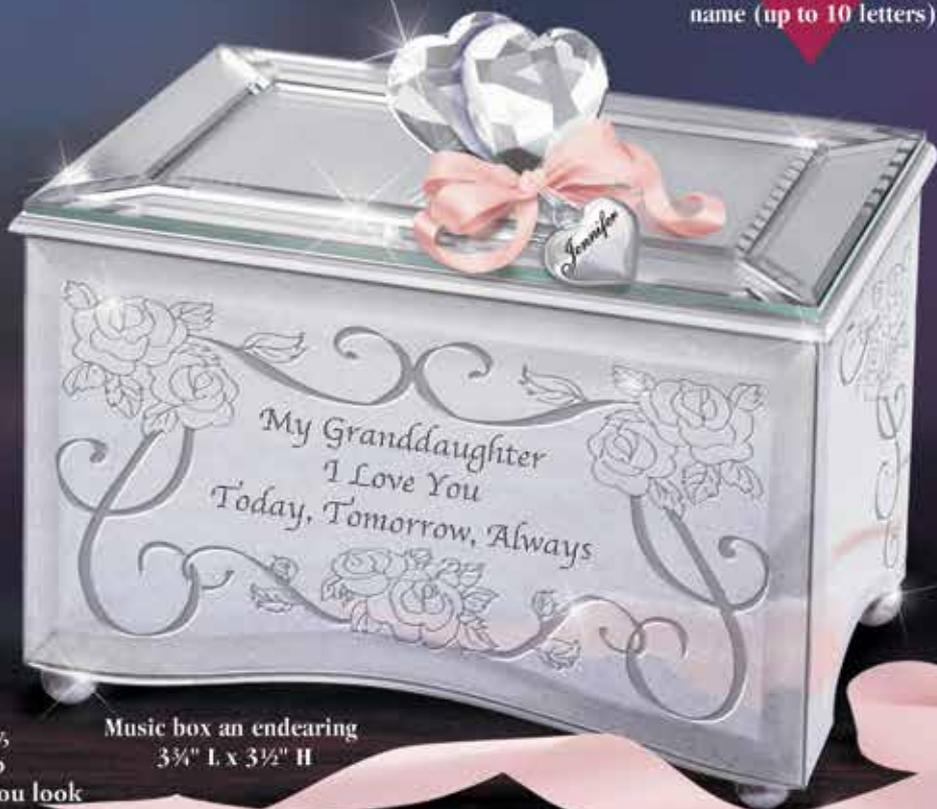
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THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF  
VATICAN II ON SCRIPTURE

# The Gift Of the Word

BY RICHARD J. CLIFFORD

**T**he 50th anniversary of the “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation” (“*Dei Verbum*”) is coming up next year on Nov. 18, 2015. This document is one of the four great constitutions produced by the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). This year, Dec. 4 marks the 50th anniversary of the first of the four, the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” and there has already been a flood of articles on the liturgy. But so far there has been surprisingly little discussion of the document on revelation, though arguably it is the most seminal of all the conciliar documents. To contribute to the discussion, I would like to point out three major achievements of “*Dei Verbum*,” and three challenges these achievements pose to the Catholic Church.

## Three Achievements

“*Dei Verbum*” sees itself in continuity with two earlier councils that dealt with the Bible: Trent (1545-63) and the First Vatican Council (1869-70), and like them devotes considerable space to the broad context of the Bible—God’s initiative in relating to humanity. God’s desire for a personal relationship with human beings on earth accounts for the self-revelation of God recorded in the Bible. That self-revelation invites a human response (“the obedience of faith”) and results in the formation of an elect people bound to God and to each other. We read in “*Dei Verbum*” (No. 2): “The invisible God (cf. Col 1:15, 1 Tm 1:17), out of the abundance of his love, addresses men and women as friends (cf. Ex 33:11; Jn 15:14-15) and moves among them (cf. Bar 3:38), in order to invite and receive them

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**RICHARD J. CLIFFORD, S.J.**, is a professor of Old Testament at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry in Brighton, Mass. A former editor of the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* and president of the Catholic Biblical Association, he also served as a translator and commentator for The New American Bible, Revised Edition. This article is part of *America*'s new series, “*The Living Word: Scripture in the Life of the Church*,” co-sponsored by the American Bible Society.

ART: L. CHAPON. PHOTO: FROM THE MUSEUM OF BIBLICAL ART'S RARE BIBLE COLLECTION BY MATTHEW MINUCCI

into fellowship with himself” (translations and citations are from *The Scripture Documents*, edited by Dean P. Bechard, S.J.). The Bible tells of that relationship in concrete detail and with an intense interest in its historical movement (“the economy of revelation”). “Dei Verbum” goes beyond previous councils, however, in underscoring the relational aspect of revelation. Revelation is more than the communication of correct propositions, for biblical deeds as well as words tell of God, with word and deed illuminating each other. Other characteristics of “Dei Verbum” are its emphasis on the assistance of the Holy Spirit to believers reading the Scriptures, and its extraordinary stress on revelation in Christ.

“Dei Verbum” insists that God’s word not only addresses individuals, but also brings into being a community, the church. Clarifying the communal or ecclesial nature of Scripture is the second achievement of “Dei Verbum.” The nature of the relationship of Bible to church became a disputed question in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. The Council of Trent responded to Martin Luther’s *Sola scriptura!* (“Scripture alone!”), which he proclaimed from the conviction that the Catholic Church had let human traditions dilute the Gospel. Trent’s clarification of the respective roles of Bible and church was subsequently misunderstood as two distinct sources of revelation (Scripture and Tradition), whereas, according to the historian John W. O’Malley, S.J., in *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, Trent actually spoke only of traditions (in the plural) of apostolic origin (not disciplinary or ecclesiastical).

The council postulated two channels of communication by which the message of Christ and the apostles was transmitted, without specifying the relationship between them. Building on Trent, “Dei Verbum” emphasizes the unity of Scripture and Tradition, though the council appears to understand tradition in two different senses: as static tradition and as process. Rather than seeing them in opposition, however, the constitution takes a “both/and” approach: “Both [Scripture and Tradition], flowing out from the divine well-spring, in a certain way come together in a single current and tend toward the same end” (No. 9). It then introduces a further element without explaining it in detail: the teaching office (magisterium) of the church, entrusted with “the task of authentically interpreting the Word of God,” is “not above the Word of God but serves it by teaching only what has been handed on” (No. 10). “Dei Verbum” thus interprets Tradition as process as well as “traditions.”

Trent also dealt with translations of the Bible, for the age of printing had dawned, flooding Europe with translations. Trent forbade only anonymous translations, passing over in silence other translations, including Protestant ones. It declared the Latin Vulgate “authentic,” a declaration that was later widely misunderstood as making the Vulgate the official version of the Bible for the Catholic Church. As Pope Pius

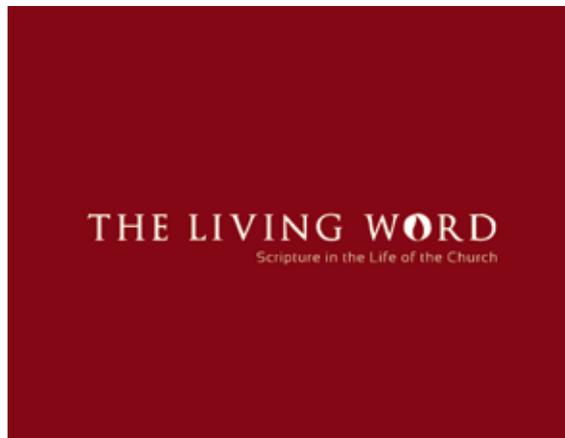
XII’s encyclical “*Divino Afflante Spiritu*” (1943) taught, and John W. O’Malley, S.J., explains in more detail in *Trent*, the word *authentic* at the Council of Trent meant only that among the welter of Bible translations of that era, the Vulgate was a reliable text for preaching and teaching, to be revered because of its long usage in the Latin church. The council fathers were well aware of the errors that had accrued to the Vulgate over the centuries, and decreed that the Vulgate not be printed again

until it was thoroughly corrected. Like Trent, “Dei Verbum” acknowledges the venerable nature of the Vulgate, but reaffirms the teaching of “*Divino Afflante Spiritu*,” which urged biblical scholars to use the original Hebrew and Greek texts for translations. In recent years, there have been attempts to impose the Vulgate as a standard for translation, but such attempts run counter to the directives of “Dei Verbum.”

A third achievement of “Dei Verbum” is its balanced upholding of both traditional and modern interpretive approaches and methods. On the one hand, it vigorously affirms the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, redefining them, adding the qualification “the truth that God wished to be recorded in the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation” (No. 11). With these words, “Dei Verbum” makes explicit what is implied in the famous definition of inspiration in 2 Tm 3:16-17. The constitution likewise affirms the traditional Christian focus on the literal sense, “what the sacred writers really intended to express and what God thought well to manifest by their words,” and urges appreciation of the literary forms used by the sacred writers (No. 12). It further exhorts modern interpreters to take account of how a text fits within the entire Christian Bible (the biblical context) and to be aware of the history of Christian reception. “Dei Verbum” is thus a model of respect for traditional approaches and for openness to new methods.

### Three Challenges

“Dei Verbum” encouraged Bible reading among Catholics and has been a major factor in unseating the neo-scholastic theology that dominated Catholic and even Protestant



thought up to the mid-20th century. But if we look at the final practical chapter of “*Dei Verbum*,” which enthusiastically encourages Bible reading among all Catholics, we are reminded all too clearly of the task that lies ahead.

First, it challenges Catholics to read the Bible regularly and hear it attentively when proclaimed in the liturgy. As expected, “*Dei Verbum*” urges priests, deacons and catechists to “diligent spiritual reading and careful study” of the Bible (No. 25). But in a significant departure from the anti-Protestant attitudes of the mid-20th century, it “strongly” (“vehementer,” in Latin) exhorts all the faithful to read and study the Bible prayerfully, confident in the Spirit’s guidance. There is a Latin phrase for such reflective reading: *lectio divina*, which means “divinely guided reading.” To be sure, Catholics practice it more than ever before, but the majority do not nourish themselves daily with the word of God, missing out on the treasures contained in the Psalms, Gospels, Pauline letters, Wisdom literature and other books of the Bible.

An unsettling reminder of how important Bible reading is to the flourishing of the Catholic Church comes from the Pew Research Religious Landscape Survey of 2008, which points out the Catholic Church in recent years has lost a third of its membership. Half of those leaving the Catholic Church have become unaffiliated, and half have joined Protestant churches. Of the half that joined Protestant churches, the most cited reason (71 percent) for leaving the Catholic Church was their “spiritual needs were not being met,” in particular their need for meaningful worship and nourishing Bible reading. After studying the data, Thomas J. Reese, S.J., arrived at strongly stated conclusions. “The church needs a massive Bible education program,” he wrote in *The National Catholic Reporter* (4/18/2011). “The church needs to acknowledge that understanding the Bible is more important than memorizing the catechism. If we could get Catholics to read the Sunday scripture readings each week before they come to Mass, it would be revolutionary. If you do not read and pray the scriptures, you are not an adult Christian. Catholics who become evangelicals understand this.”

To be fair, today there are excellent Catholic Bible resources like the Little Rock Scripture Study, the Paulist Bible Study Program, the Collegeville Bible Commentary Series, Now You Know Media, Bible-oriented homily services and the lectures and digital resources of many Catholic colleges and universities. And there are good study Bibles, including *The Catholic Study Bible* (Oxford University Press). There were hardly any resources like these before Vatican II. The problem, therefore, may not be a lack of resources, but a lack of resolve, planning and imagination.

The faith and commitment of Catholics can be deepened through regular, prayerful reading of the Bible. It is important to devise a practical strategy for bringing about changed attitudes and practices among Catholics. Perhaps a national

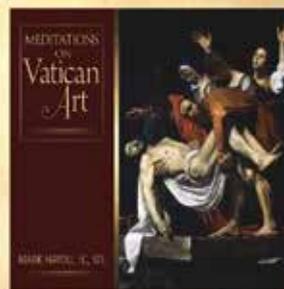


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conference can plan its first stages. One immediate step is to put even more emphasis on personal Bible reading in the new evangelization programs around the country.

A second challenge of “Dei Verbum” is to develop a theology that allows the Old Testament greater importance in the Bible. Scholars generally agree that chapter four, titled “The Old Testament,” is the weakest chapter in the constitution. Obviously, one cannot expect a conciliar document to go much beyond the scholarly consensus of the time of its composition. But the Christological perspective of “Dei Verbum,” while legitimate and important, overshadows non-messianic parts of the Old Testament, and to some extent restricts the Old Testament to its predictive function. It is important, however, to understand the entire Old Testament both on its own terms and as a constituent part of the Christian Bible.

A third challenge to the constitution’s exhortation that all Catholics read the Bible in the context of the church comes from fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a relatively modern phenomenon, originating in 19th- and 20th-century Britain and America in reaction to what its adherents viewed as the erosion of traditional Christianity from the findings of science (especially evolution), historical-critical interpretation of the Bible, and (in the United States) immigrants diluting the hitherto dominant Protestant culture. George Marsden describes fundamentalism as “a loose, diverse, and changing federation of co-belligerents united by the fierce opposition to modernist attempts to bring Christianity into line with modern thought” (*Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2006). Though there are differences in fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible, the following positions are characteristic: the Bible is the sole source God’s word; it is self-explanatory and inerrant; the prophets wrote for our time, not their own, and thus their judgments are directly applicable to contemporary life without taking into account historical context or the Bible’s literary genres. The apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation are favorite texts, authorizing major fundamentalist assumptions: the world is marked by a dualism of good versus evil with no middle ground; evil is increasing in the world; history is predetermined; and a future cosmic battle between God and Satan will usher in the kingdom of God.

“Dei Verbum” stands in sharp opposition with its insistence on the historical character of biblical revelation, ecclesial tradition and historically sensitive scholarship. The most authoritative Catholic critique is the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” (1993). By refusing “to take into account the historical character of biblical revelation, [fundamentalism] makes itself incapable of accepting the full truth of the incarnation itself,” and “in its attachment to the principle ‘Scripture alone,’ fundamentalism separates the interpretation of the Bible from the tradition.... It fails to realize that the New Testament took form within the Christian church and that it is the Holy

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Scripture of this church, the existence of which preceded the composition of the texts.” Finally, it warns: “The fundamentalist approach is dangerous, for it is attractive to people who look to the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life. It can deceive these people, offering them interpretations that are pious but illusory, instead of telling them that the Bible does not necessarily contain an immediate answer to each and every problem.”

Many Catholics, apparently unaware of anti-Catholic fundamentalist writing, regard fundamentalist approaches to the Bible as the only correct and traditional way of reading the Bible. How can we persuade such Catholics to adopt the truly traditional and correct way of “*Dei Verbum*”? Some do: read the Bible yourself and be willing to say simply what you have found nourishing in the Bible; witness rather than argue. Encourage your pastor to preach on the Bible and your fellow parishioners to engage in Bible study. Some don't: don't argue with fundamentalists or use ridicule, but take fundamentalism seriously. It is an important part of American culture.

Despite these challenges and others that lie ahead, Catholics can only rejoice in the 50th anniversary of the “*Constitution on Divine Revelation*.” The council fathers recognized the excellence of the document by approving it by a vote of 2,344 to 6. Serious readers today will similarly appreciate its positive tone, balanced approach and reverence for the word of God. Further study of it can only enrich the church in the next 50 years. May the discussion increase. **A**

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Regardless, spiritual seekers are taking a lead in shaping the future of faith. What accounts for this surge in spiritual seeking, especially among younger generations? Are institutionalized traditions to blame for these developments? What can traditional religious organizations learn from sustained engagement with spiritual seekers?

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**Nancy Tatom Ammerman**, Boston University, author of *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life*

**Peter Phan**, Ignacio Ellacuria Professor of Catholic Social Thought, Georgetown University

**Lauren Winner**, Duke Divinity School, author of *Mudhouse Sabbath: An Invitation to a Life of Spiritual Discipline*

**Serene Jones**, President, Union Theological Seminary

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# Facing Up to Torture

Uncovering a shameful, secret history

BY RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

The United States has both the oldest written constitution in the world and a long history of ignoring it in times of national crisis.

— Foreword, *The Administration of Torture*  
(Columbia Univ. Press, 2009)

**T**he use of torture during various stages of the “war on terror” has been off the front pages for years, but the issue, and the nation’s legal and ethical understanding of the use of torture, is far from resolved. The American public remains largely unaware of the full story of the nation’s interrogation practices, and those responsible for torturing detainees in U.S. custody have not been held accountable. A 6,000-page report from the Senate Intelligence Committee remains classified, but it has been described by some lawmakers as highly critical of the Central Intelligence Agency’s detention and interrogation programs and accuses the agency of misleading Congress and the White House. In late July Senator Dianne Feinstein of California, the committee chair, called for the release of at least its 300-page summary. While the public awaits the release of that document, what do we already know about the practice of torture and U.S. responsibility for it?

Let us begin with Maher Arar. He stands clinging to the wall in a dark and airless cell, seven feet high, six feet long and three feet wide. He is in Syria in a notorious prison outside Damascus known as “the grave.” He has been there for 10 months, beaten with cables, threatened with electric shocks and tortured in other ways. Cats urinate on the prisoners through grates in the ceiling, and roaches and rats share the cell. He begins to bang his head against the wall.

Mr. Arar is 43 years old, a graduate of McGill University in Montreal; he had emigrated to Canada with his family as a teenager. A dual citizen of Canada and Syria, he was on his way home from a family vacation in Tunisia. On Sept. 26, 2002, he attempted to change planes at John F. Kennedy airport in the United States when U.S. authorities, based on inaccurate and prejudicial information supplied by the Canadian Mounted Police, nabbed him and interrogated him for two weeks. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service decided he was a member of Al Qaeda and orderd

him removed from the United States.

Shackled, Mr. Arar was delivered to a small airport in New Jersey; his plane took off, making stops in Washington, D.C.; Bangor, Me.; and Rome, Italy. Suddenly guessing he was headed for prison in Syria, Mr. Arar recalled his mother’s warning about the barbaric practices of Syrian police and pleaded with his captors not to take him there. At first, Syria refused to accept him, so he landed in Amman, Jordan. After 10 days, he was driven to Syria, where he was immediately beaten and then “buried alive” in the “casket” cell. There he could hear the screaming of others, including the voice of the man who had falsely implicated him and caused his arrest. Over a year later, in October 2003, he was released without charges after his wife finally prevailed upon the Canadian government to come to his aid.

The Syrian ambassador in Washington reported that no terrorist links to Mr. Arar had been found. The Canadian government also investigated his case and found no links to terrorism. It eventually awarded him 10.5 million Canadian dollars, or \$9 million, in compensation. The United States government refused to clear his name from the terrorist watch list and blocked his attempt to sue for damages by invoking the “state secrets privilege,” a judicial rule that excludes evidence that the government says would disclose information that might endanger national security.

## The Context: ‘Gloves Off’

On Sept. 26, 2002, the same day Mr. Arar was picked up at Kennedy airport, J. Cofer Black, then director of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Counterterrorism Center, testified before Congress that the rules for rendition had changed radically from the days before Sept. 11, 2001, to the norms that applied after that fatal date. “After 9/11 the gloves come off,” Mr. Black said in Congressional testimony. The phrase exemplified the split-level morality that would justify illegal and immoral use of violence from that point forward.

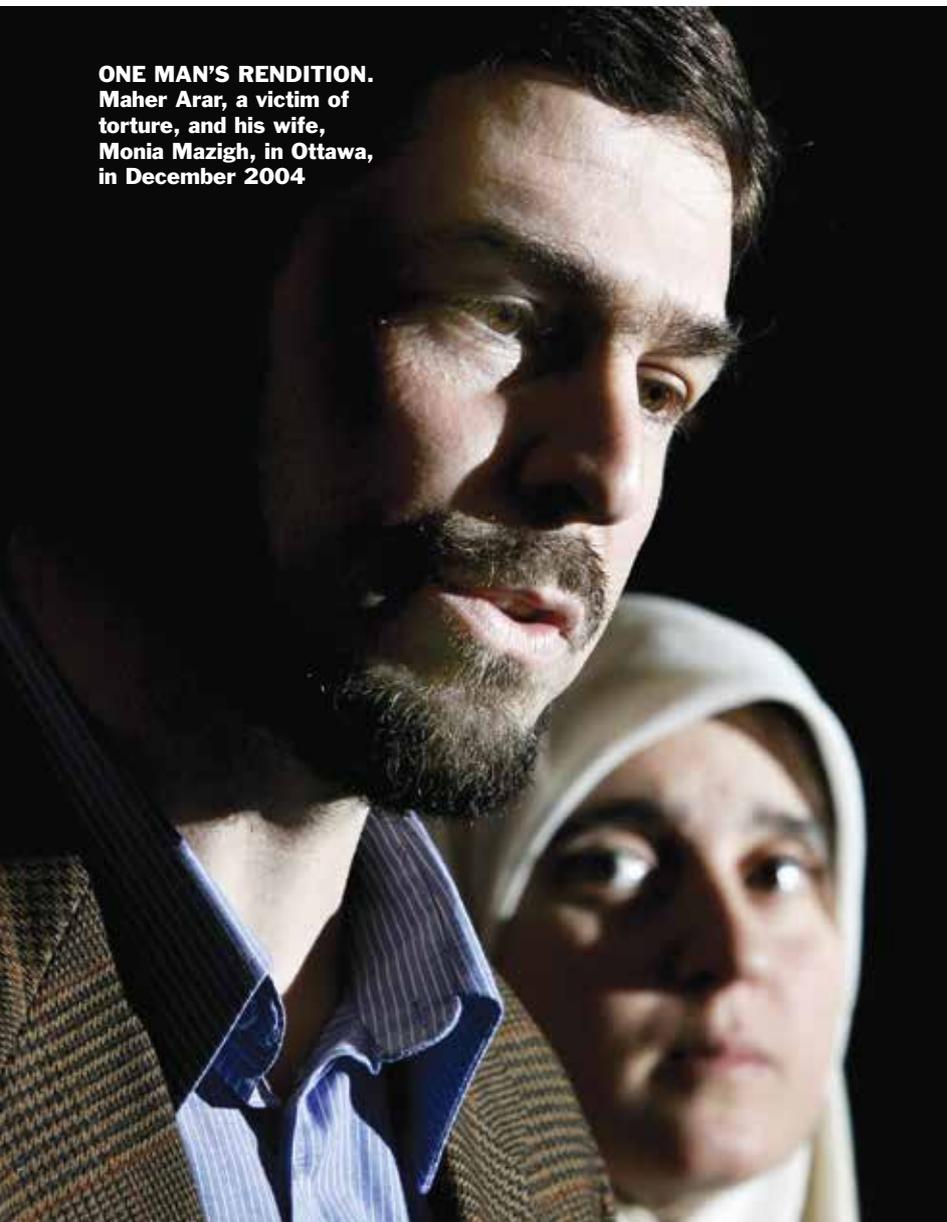
The Arar case compromised the laws and values of five countries conspiring in varying degrees to torture an innocent man. The quality of the evidence that was used to arrest and interrogate Mr. Arar would have never held up in a court of law. The State Department’s human rights report in 2003 charged that Syria tortured its detainees with electric shocks, pulling fingernails, invading the rectum and stretching the spine to the breaking point. Four months before the

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C.I.A. sent Mr. Arar to Syria, John R. Bolton, then a state department official, in a speech to the Heritage Foundation, added Syria and two other “rogue states” to the “axis of evil.” There is little doubt U.S. officials knew what awaited Mr. Arar in Syria.

**ONE MAN'S RENDITION.**  
Maher Arar, a victim of  
torture, and his wife,  
Monia Mazigh, in Ottawa,  
in December 2004



Today Mr. Arar still suffers nightmares, and he fears strangers and flying. His psychological health has been shattered. In order to gain his freedom, he had to sign false confessions. In a sense his case proves that torture “works”: a victim of torture will confess to anything his interrogators want to hear.

## The Origins of Torture

In “A Painful History,” Darius Rejali reminds us that even

democracies have been innovators of torture (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 1/25/08). The Italian republics drew on techniques from the church’s inquisitors, including the *strappado*, a method still used today, in which the victim, his hands tied behind his back, is hoisted by the wrists by a hook and pulley and dropped back to the ground. Viewers of “The Battle of Algiers” (1966) may recall how the French in the 1950s tortured suspects into naming members of their underground revolutionary group. All this was justified, of course, because of a national emergency.

The science of torture has progressed since then: Sleep deprivation increases pain, for example; and “clean” torture, like the use of electric shocks, leaves no marks, undermining the victim’s credibility to the outside community. As a result, the practice of torture acquired its own safe hold in American culture. A new book, *Kill Anything That Moves*, by Nick Turse, documents that Vietnam included many My Lai’s; one veteran said the norm was “the enemy is anything with slant eyes who lives in a village.” The film “Zero Dark Thirty” (2012) falsely insinuates that “enhanced interrogation techniques” helped lead to the killing of Osama bin Laden. Why? Perhaps that is what the audience wants to believe.

## Torture and the Law

The U.N. Convention Against Torture, the descendant of documents approved by the United Nations in 1975 and 1987 and ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1994, is part of international and U.S. law. It forbids all forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Its prohibition is absolute, without exception for war or other national emergency.

In January 2002 the White House counsel, later attorney general, Alberto Gonzales, told President George W. Bush that in his judgment the war on terror “renders obsolete [the Geneva Convention’s] strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners.” The unorthodox war had ushered in a “new paradigm,” enshrined in a legal doctrine created by Vice President Dick Cheney’s lawyer, David S. Addington, which argued that the president had the authority to disregard previous legal boundaries if national security required it. President Bush responded in February 2002 with a memo declaring that Al Qaeda and Taliban prisoners were not entitled to Geneva protections. Assuming they no longer need-

ed to follow the rules laid out in the Army Field Manual, field commanders devised new methods of interrogation based on the torture U.S. troops were trained to endure if captured by enemies. Then with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's endorsement, the new "enhanced interrogation techniques" (including waterboarding) were applied to Mohammed al-Qahtani, a detainee suspected of being the 20th hijacker in the Sept. 11 attacks. Confined for 48 days in isolation in a cell flooded with light, enduring 20-hour interrogations, sexual humiliation and harassment by military

## 'After 9/11 the gloves come off.' The phrase exemplified the split-level morality that would justify illegal and immoral use of violence from that point forward.

dogs, he cowered in the corner of his cell under a sheet as he was driven insane. Since this treatment "met the legal definition of torture," said Susan Crawford, a senior Pentagon official, she dismissed charges against Mr. al-Qahtani in the military commissions system.

The F.B.I. consistently argued that these methods were illegal, ineffective and harmful to the fight against terrorism. Alberto J. Mora, a Navy general council, opposed these interrogation techniques as torture. But John Yoo, a lawyer in the Office of Legal Counsel from 2001 to 2003, even argued that eye gouging and the crushing of the testicles of a detainee's child could be permissible.

Torture techniques were used in C.I.A. secret prisons, Guantánamo, Iraq and Afghanistan, where in December 2002 a prisoner died after he had been shackled by his wrists to the ceiling and beaten on his legs. Six days later the prison staff beat another prisoner to death. The techniques included stripping detainees naked, hooding them, tormenting them in darkness, blasting music and subjecting them to low-voltage electrocution and attacks by dogs and snakes. Between 2002 and 2006 there were nearly 100 deaths of detainees in U.S. custody, 34 marked as suicide. The White House's oft-repeated expression of "taking the gloves off," combined with ambiguous legal parameters, created an environment conducive to abusive treatment.

All this in spite of the fact that military intelligence officers cited by the Red Cross estimated that 70 to 90 percent of the prisoners retained in Iraq "had been arrested by

mistake"; and an Abu Ghraib assessment that revealed 85 to 90 percent of its detainees were innocent and had no intelligence value.

### Two Cases

A classic rendition case is that of Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi. A Libyan citizen, Mr. al-Libi, who really was connected to Al Qaeda, was arrested in Pakistan shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, and interrogated by the C.I.A. and F.B.I. He was held in custody by the C.I.A., which transferred him to a U.S. naval ship, the U.S.S. Bataan, on Jan. 9, 2002, and then he was rendered to Egypt. The C.I.A. believed he had access to information about Iraq's potential in chemical and biological weapons, so they tortured him until he finally told them what he thought they wanted to hear. On Feb. 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell relied on this information when he addressed the United Nations and made the case for war against Iraq. Within a year Mr. al-Libi admitted he had fabricated all his

testimony on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction because he was terrified of being tortured. He was then "disappeared," shipped to various countries till he ended up in a Libyan jail, where in 2009 his body was found in his cell, according to Libyans, a death by suicide.

And consider the case of Binyam Mohamed, a young Egyptian citizen and British resident, captured in Pakistan and tortured in Morocco, then shuttled to the C.I.A.'s "dark prison" (detainees there say they were held for weeks in complete darkness) in Kabul, Afghanistan. Tortured in Morocco for 18 months, interrogators beat him, put him in a room with open sewage, drugged him, blasted him with loud music, broke his bones, sliced his genitals and threatened him with rape, electrocution and death. In Kabul they chained him to the floor of a 6-by-6-foot cell in darkness for 23 hours a day. He was flown to Guantánamo in 2004. Released in February 2009, he returned to England. Mr. Mohamed attempted to sue the U.S. government over his treatment in U.S. custody, but a court rejected the suit since the evidence could compromise national security. In November 2010, however, Mr. Mohamed and several other Guantánamo detainees settled with the British government for millions of dollars—an attempt by the U.K. to prevent further public knowledge of their treatment while detained.

And

### What Is to Be Done?

I interviewed Amrit Singh, author of *Globalizing Torture* and co-author of *Administration of Torture: A Documentary*

#### ON THE WEB

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., blogs at "In All Things." [americamagazine.org/things](http://americamagazine.org/things)

*Record from Washington to Abu Ghraib and Beyond*, in the Open Society Foundation's offices in New York. A graduate of Cambridge University, Oxford University and Yale Law School, Ms. Singh is soft spoken, but she holds the strong ideals and cool temperament necessary for a lawyer who has spent a career studying barbarous behavior. I asked: Does the South African process of forgiveness and reconciliation have any relevance to resolving this moral void into which the previous administration dragged the nation, which the current administration prefers to ignore? She was not satisfied by the prospect of immunity; she demanded that the guilty parties pay for their crimes.

Her report concluded: "The time has come for the United States and its partner governments to admit to the truth of their involvement in secret detention and extraordinary rendition, repudiate these practices, and conduct effective investigations directed at holding officials accountable."

I asked how this kind of scholarship affected her emotions. She hesitated, so I shared my reaction: horror at the mystery of how one human being can deliberately make another suffer, and shame that my country would do this. She replied that her own horror makes her plunge more deeply into the terrible suffering the victim has endured. She described a lunch meeting with a victim who, after several years, has not recovered. His life is broken; he barely functions. What he wants most is just a basic acknowledgment of what happened to him, which the United States refuses to give him.

The Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment, released in April of this year, has numerous recommendations: admit that torture violates our nation's laws and values, stop the force-feeding of detainees on hunger strike in Guantánamo and swiftly free those in Guantánamo who have been cleared.

The report also calls for the Obama administration to stop keeping the details of torture and rendition from the public. This would apply particularly to the 6,000-page report of the U.S. Senate intelligence committee on black sites, which remains classified.

In *The Ethics of Interrogation*, Paul Lauritzen emphasizes that it is clear that a leader who orders torture must understand that what he or she has done is a crime and accept the moral burden of having committed a crime. Americans must also understand that torture is inherently contrary to the nation's legal system. Mr. Lauritzen calls the prohibition of torture a "legal archetype," a rule that transcends an individual law or statute in that it captures the spirit of an area of law. He counters the deceptive "ticking time bomb scenario," one favored by apologists of torture, the proposal that it would be permissible to torture someone who could disclose the location of a planned bomb attack. The scenario has been well absorbed into popular culture, rising to the surface in films like "Zero Dark Thirty" and television shows like "24."

"We cannot justify even the exceptional case of torture," Mr. Lauritzen writes. "If we accept torture, we will need torture experts, new instruments of torture, and a pedagogy of torture." In short there is no "just this one time" when a culture first caves in.

Finally, morally and religiously, torture is a life issue, one the religious leadership in this country has not faced with the vigor the problem demands. We need no better contemporary case study than what happened in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago: a man was arrested on false charges, mocked, stripped, whipped and crucified.

Whenever we turn away from, rather than face the reality that this violence continues in our own nation, we sacrifice our honor and another human being. **A**

#### FOR FURTHER READING

Jane Mayer's *The Dark Side* (Anchor, 2008) opens with Vice President Dick Cheney's panic-fed determination to save the country after Sept. 11, 2001, from terrorist threats by literally any means. As Secretary of State Colin L Powell's aide, Lawrence Wilkerson, described it, "I can't fault the man for wanting to keep America safe. But he was willing to corrupt the whole country to save it." The story tells how second-level members of the administration fought to save the nation's integrity, including one who requested to be waterboarded to prove the technique was immoral.

Jameel Jaffer and Amrit Singh's *Administration of Torture: A Documentary Record from Washington to Abu Ghraib and Beyond* (Columbia Univ. Press, 2009) is a 45-page narrative describing how torture developed in Guantánamo, Iraq and Afghanistan from 2001 to 2006, followed by 320 pages of documents obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union, in which the beatings, freezings, forced nudity and homicides of detainees are detailed by the practitioners and witnesses.

The report "Globalizing Torture" (Open Society Foundations, 2013), written by Amrit Singh for the Open Society Justice Initiative, documents the C.I.A.'s secret detention and extraordinary rendition operations from 2001 to the present, including the cases of 136 victims of rendition and reports on the 54 countries that cooperated in the program. This is the most complete account available of a secret operation that violated both international law and fundamental morality.

Most recent is "Detainee Treatment," the report of the Constitution Project's task force, a bipartisan committee of experts. In many ways it is the most broadly comprehensive picture of all the issues discussed in the other sources, but without the same details.

Paul Lauritzen's *The Ethics of Interrogation: Professional Responsibility in the Age of Terror* (Georgetown University Press, 2013) is an indispensable analysis of the need for strict and clear moral limits on what a human person may do in the so-called war against terrorism.



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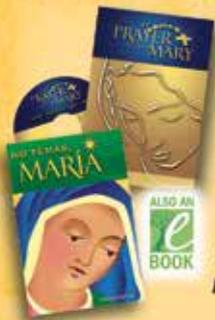
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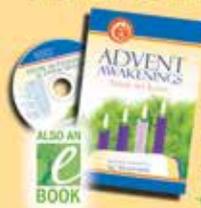


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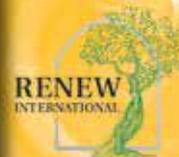
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# A Call for Spiritual Leaders

## The Jesuit superior general on higher education

*Editor's Note: Very Rev. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., superior general of the Society of Jesus, met in Chicago on Oct. 12 with the board chairs and presidents of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States. Also present at this unprecedented meeting were the superiors of the nine regional provinces of the Society of Jesus in the United States and other Jesuit officials. All the board chairs are laymen and laywomen, a common arrangement in the United States but rare in the rest of the Catholic world. America's editors have collaborated with the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities to make this official, edited text available to our readers and others interested in Jesuit Catholic higher education. Some of Father General's spontaneous asides appear in sidebars.*

**M**y goal today is to present some overall thoughts about exercising spiritual and heroic leadership, some more specific thoughts about what a leader does at a Jesuit Catholic college or university in the United States at this point in history, and a consideration of the prerequisites for good decision-making. I will close with some particular questions for you to study as the decision-makers at the schools entrusted to you in your capacities as the leaders of Jesuit higher education in the United States.

### On Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership is a crucial dimension of the service that everyone gathered here today is called to exercise. This kind of leadership is not relegated to a special clerical or religious caste. There can be no doubt that leaders at professedly religious institutions like the colleges and universities you represent and lead must exercise spiritual leadership.

First, all leaders of a Jesuit institution must reinforce and motivate their members and communities in the values and attitudes that are based in the sacred Scriptures of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Leadership at a Jesuit institution is about evangelization—for Jesuit institutions exist only because of the particular, scripturally based faith perspective that led to their establishment. Thus, the primary function of leadership is the reinforcement and animation of these perennially relevant attitudes and values:



God loves the world, God dwells among us, God empowers us to make the world worthy of God's children.

Second, service is the basic concept of understanding authority. Pope Benedict's resignation from the papacy has been the last and perhaps greatest lesson of the great teacher Josef Ratzinger, showing how the pope is in service of the church and not the other way around. The pope is not the most important person in the church. The most important

person is Christ. So when Benedict saw he could no longer serve the church as he thought he should, he stepped aside, because the church, which is the body of Christ, is much more important than a pope. The lesson for us is that the authority exercised at a Jesuit, Catholic institution is always a form of service.

And third, in the understanding of St. Ignatius, the principal function of a leader is to help the members of a community grow to become the living presence of God in the world. In the Ignatian concept of service, growth leads to transformation. If there is no transformation, then the school or the parish is not Jesuit. The ultimate objective is an individual's transformation and, through individuals, the transformation of society. There are no instantaneous transformations, even though sometimes we are attracted to the idea of sudden, painless, effortless change. We like to imagine that St. Paul was struck from his horse and immediately became an effective apostle. But in the Acts of the Apostles, there is no horse; and after his conversion Paul went to Arabia for three years of intense prayer and study before he eventually journeyed to Jerusalem to test if what he understood was in line with the apostles. Transformation is a long process that involves much hard work.

### Prerequisites for Making Decisions

Let me now say a few things about how leaders like those I have just described—that is, leaders like you—engage in decision-making. St. Ignatius organized a process so that decisions would be less subject to human whim and impulse; unhampered by human bias, partisanship and prejudice; more open to freedom; deeply rooted in the experience of dying to what is passing and ephemeral so as to enjoy greater life. Thus, seeking God's will is a process of asking ourselves what we really want, what is most important to us and what we desire most fundamentally, the pearl of great price hidden in the field that we will give everything to possess.

Leaders who make good decisions can do so only when four prerequisites are present: a community of shared values, freedom, generosity and selflessness.

The first prerequisite is a *community committed to shared values*. God's will is best found in a group of people, not inside someone's head or individual consciousness. Whether it is the church, a religious congregation or an apostolic work; whether it is a board of directors, a faculty or a group of students,

the community is a crucial ingredient. You need to have community to be able to discern. Decision-makers need to be surrounded by people who provide input, who give advice, who suggest alternatives. A single person cannot decide what is most important for an institution. A community of committed colleagues who work together is necessary. The people in this community need not all think alike, because whenever everyone easily agrees, probably not everyone is thinking. But the members of the community need to have the same fundamental values, because if they don't have the same values, they cannot arrive at the same objectives.

You are all blessed to share the terms *American*, *Catholic*, *Jesuit* and *institution of higher learning*, but many different understandings surround these key terms. Being an American, for example, is based on the pledge to embrace the abstract ideals of liberty, equality and popular sovereignty, but liberty and equality frequently conflict with each other. And both can be threatened by a popular majority. Not everything that wraps itself in an American flag is worthy of the great ideals of your nation, so having discussions about what it means to be an American institution, especially in these days of globalization, is important for you. *Catholic* is another important word that is used in all kinds of different ways. The Internet is full of examples of conflicting understandings of what it means to be Catholic. *Jesuit* is another word that gets all kinds of interpretations. Phrases like "men and women for and with others," *cura personalis* and "finding God in all things" say something about what it means to be a Jesuit school, but words like *spiritual indifference* and *detachment* need to be part of the real understanding of what it means to be Jesuit educated. We don't want to settle for a shallow understanding of what it means to be a Catholic and Jesuit institution in the United States.

The second prerequisite is *freedom*. The one responsible for the final decision cannot predetermine the outcome. The process must be open and free. Furthermore, those who contribute to a valid decision must be free to say what is on their minds without fear of recrimination or deleterious consequence. The participants in the discerning community must be committed to doing all they can to make sure that all positive and negative dimensions of a decision are carefully considered. At the same time, these people must dedicate themselves in freedom to the outcome of the process. I have seen, when I was provincial, individuals who would

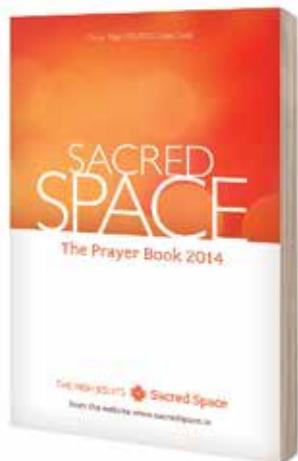
"Jesuits are weak when it comes to evaluation. If evaluation reveals any area that might be improved, they say, 'You mean I'm not doing good things?'"

"The Jesuit general has a group of counselors who are supposed to tell him if he's about to make a big mistake."

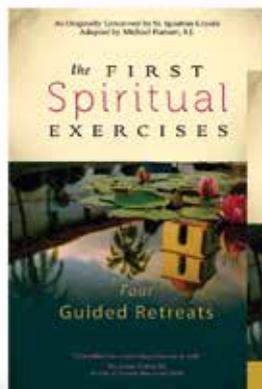
"Pope Francis likes to cite one of his favorite Jesuit founding fathers, Blessed Peter Faber: 'To dialogue with others, first you have to love them.'"

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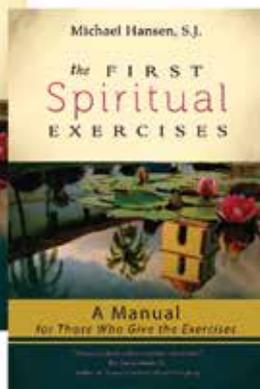
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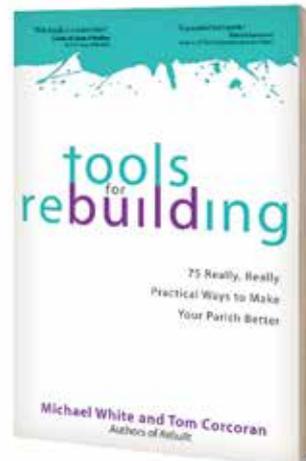
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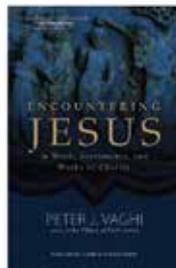
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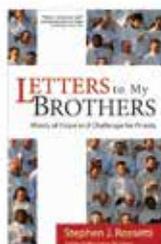
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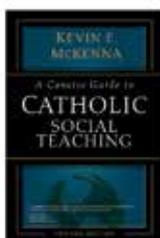
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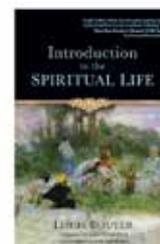
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not enter into the process of institutional discernment, for example, but later, if the vote did not favor their own plans, they would come to me to say, “As provincial, you can’t permit this.” In that moment you have to tell them, “You have had your opportunity to participate but did not want to, and now you want to use your power. This power is illegitimate.”

The third prerequisite is *generosity*. St. Ignatius wanted his followers and, in fact, anyone who made the Spiritual Exercises, to put all their gifts and talents at the service of God who has given everything. Generosity was so crucial to Ignatius, as we know from that prayer, “Lord, teach me to be generous, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to seek any reward other than knowing I am doing your will.” Generosity is necessary if a good decision is going to be made.

Finally, *selflessness* is necessary, a humble altruism that surrenders my own preferences to a greater good. For Ignatius, “the greatest need” always stands out. Surrendering what I personally think of as important to a bigger, more important transcendental value puts everything into proper perspective; it also makes possible all the smaller and less important choices that go into accomplishing a great goal.

## Request for Your Help

I want to emphasize that you are the heroic and spiritual leaders of Jesuit higher education in the United States, who are rightly placed to make important decisions. In the past there might have been a mystique that some of my predecessors had all the answers so that all they had to do was write a letter to a provincial who would write a letter to a president, who would tell everyone what was going to happen because there was an attitude that “Father knows best.” I don’t think that was ever actually true, even if some people might have acted as though it were. In any case, my purpose today is to make sure everyone knows that the future of Jesuit higher education in the United States is in the hands of boards of directors, and that I am very happy that is the case because I know, looking at you, that it is in good hands indeed.

Through what I say today, I want to initiate a long-term

discussion about a topic we do not often articulate. The 28 colleges and universities you represent have been in a close relationship with the Society of Jesus and its members since your country began. Perhaps without much realization on anyone’s part, those defining relationships have changed a great deal over time, especially in the years that followed the Second World War and the Second Vatican Council. Nearly all the institutions have grown substantially in size, complexity and wealth; budgetary pressures and the need for increased fundraising have become enormous; models of administration and leadership have changed dramatically; extracurricular and co-curricular programs have grown in importance.

At the same time, the roles of Jesuit superior and university president have been separated. Today one does not have to be a Jesuit or a priest or even a Catholic to be the president of a Jesuit college or university in the United States. In fact, universities were identified early as places where lay professionals could increasingly assume leadership positions and become their guardians in a number of important ways, for instance as trustees. Indeed, the church and the Society of Jesus have recognized and welcomed—perhaps rather begrudgingly at first but now with confidence and great enthusiasm—the role of the laity in many dimensions that were formerly reserved to clerics or vowed religious.

While extraordinarily fine things have happened in Jesuit higher education in the past 60 years, other changes have taken place that we have ignored or avoided discussing. In 1973 there were about 212 million people in the United States; today there are about 316 million, but the number of Jesuit colleges and universities has remained the same. During those same 40 years, the number of Jesuits in the United States has declined from 6,616 to 2,547. Since the supply of Jesuits is increasingly limited while the demand for more Jesuits seems to always expand, some changes are in order.

What might this demographic situation mean for the service we want to provide for those who suffer disadvantages like those that led to the establishment of the first Jesuit schools in the United States? What might it mean for the warm and familial relationship that has exist-

“We live in an era when, for many people, salary has become substituted for vocation.”

## INTERFAITH LEARNING

“We want our schools to produce a better society. Someone may say of his fellow faculty member, ‘But he’s a Protestant, a Jew.’ The right answer is, ‘That doesn’t make any difference because we are all in the same boat; we all seek a better society.’”

“Atheists are not our adversaries, so long as they are converted to humanity. And this humanity is as old as Plato. It’s what Plato called the good life.”

“A young Buddhist teacher in a Catholic high school was offended by the religious symbols, particularly the chapel. A senior Buddhist on the faculty took him aside and said, ‘You don’t understand. In this school, the moment you enter the gate, everything is chapel. But what makes the school sacred is the students. Wherever the students are is chapel.’”

ed between Jesuits and the Jesuit colleges and universities for over two centuries? We must ask ourselves how much longer the two trend lines can go in opposite directions before the traditional relationship between the Society of Jesus and A.J.C.U. institutions—a relationship that has always been based in personal, one-on-one, direct human contact—is stretched so thin that it becomes impersonal and meaningless.

*At this point Father Nicolás challenged the presidents and board chairs, along with the Jesuit provincials of the United States, to decide how they can more effectively lead their institutions in the future. He asked, "What selfless actions—based in the freedom, generosity and shared values as a community committed to Jesuit higher education—might God be asking you to lead at your particular institution?" He then asked the same question about how all 28 A.J.C.U. institutions could network and collaborate with each other.*

I have no doubt that you are the right group to consider these questions. You have the talents and temperament, the head and heart, to do what needs to be done.

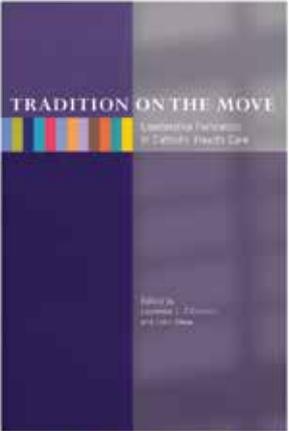
I ask that you consider these questions not just as individuals, but also as members of an important network of schools. I ask these questions knowing that it is the Lord who will show us the way if we are bold enough to ask for direction, if

we are humble enough to listen to our most fundamental desires for serving the good of his people, if we are committed to being so generous that we do not count the cost or heed the wounds or seek any reward other than knowing we have given all we can to him.

As I come to the end of what I want to say this morning, I would like to ask your help in recruiting Jesuits. I would appreciate the help of all the board chairs in the room. Could you please have a serious conversation sometime with your provincial about the kinds of resources your institution or company uses to recruit a new generation of employees? Could you talk to your president about what more could be done on campus to recruit future Jesuits? Could you please make some suggestions to the local Jesuit community about what they might do to make themselves better known and recognized as a viable and vital option for young men today? Jesuits may not always listen to superiors, but I think they will listen carefully if you call them aside!

Finally, let me return to where I began, thanking you again for all you do. Jesuit Catholic institutions of higher education would not be the important apostolic instruments they have become without you. They will not flourish in the future without your commitment and hard work. Thank you for being part of this important apostolate of the Society of Jesus. **A**

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# Marked for Christ

## The sacred symbolism of religious tattoos

BY ANNA NUSSBAUM KEATING

**G**abe Wells wears glasses and a button-down shirt, is built like a tank and has several large, Catholic-themed tattoos. He got his first when he was doing a year of service after high school. It is an angel surrounded by ivy on his upper arm, a reproduction of a 15th-century illuminated manuscript. The angel on the other arm quickly followed. He was 19, traveling the country, helping to lead confirmation retreats for students from Catholic high schools and doing a lot of thinking. College was not for him; he grew up in a blue-collar family and wanted to work with his hands, but he also loved to read and spent hours in the library learning about medieval art, the great books and the lives of the saints. Within a year he had two more Catholic tattoos: a full-color illustration of a dove on one side of his chest and the reverse of the medal of St. Benedict across his abdomen.

People of all walks of life have religious-themed tattoos. According to the Pew Research Center, 40 percent of Americans between the ages of 26 and 40 have at least one tattoo. The Catholic Church does not forbid body art. In fact, at the Catholic Council of Northumberland in 786, a Christian bearing a tattoo “for the sake of God” was deemed worthy of praise. The tradition of Christian tattoos goes back hundreds of years in the Egyptian Coptic church but is relatively new in the West, and yet, a generation of young Catholics has found that the symbols of Catholicism—crosses, icons, rosaries, paintings and medals—easily translate into tattoo art.

Wells was raised in the South and was culturally Catholic, but not religious, until he went on a retreat in high school. “I



enjoyed the experience,” he says. “I also enjoyed punk and heavy metal. It was hard to reconcile the two, but I liked the freedom among Christians, the ability to discuss faith, truth, love—things that mattered more than materialism and looking cool... and being Catholic became a priority in my life.” Over time, Wells tried to find a balance. He has worked offshore, installing pipeline for oil companies in the middle of the ocean and is now a machinist in Houston, Tex., where he is a fixture on the hardcore music scene. And he proudly wears his angel-loving heart on either sleeve.

The back side of the medal of St. Benedict is his largest tattoo. It is a black cross, surrounded by a circle. On the arms of the cross are the initial letters of a Latin prayer of exorcism, which reads: “May the holy cross be my light! May the dragon never be my guide.” Around the margin of the back of the medal, another prayer of exorcism: “Begone Satan! Never tempt me with your vanities! What you offer me is evil. Drink the poison yourself!” The tattoo took six hours and felt “like surgery” or penance. Why choose these prayers, rather than something more reassuring? “Being alive, being a human being,” he says, “is not an easy thing.”

Wells has known adversity. He fathered a child as a young man, and the subsequent marriage did not work out. He has since obtained an annulment, fallen in love and remarried. He says, “Sometimes we do bad things and we don’t even know why. I just thought it was important that I have a reminder of my own death, and who I want to be.” For him, the tattoo is a sign of devotion, a prayer of protection and an opportunity to repent. It also looks cool.

His only regret is that the sight of his tattoos occasionally distresses older



ANNA NUSSBAUM KEATING is the co-owner of Keating Woodworks in Colorado Springs, Colo.

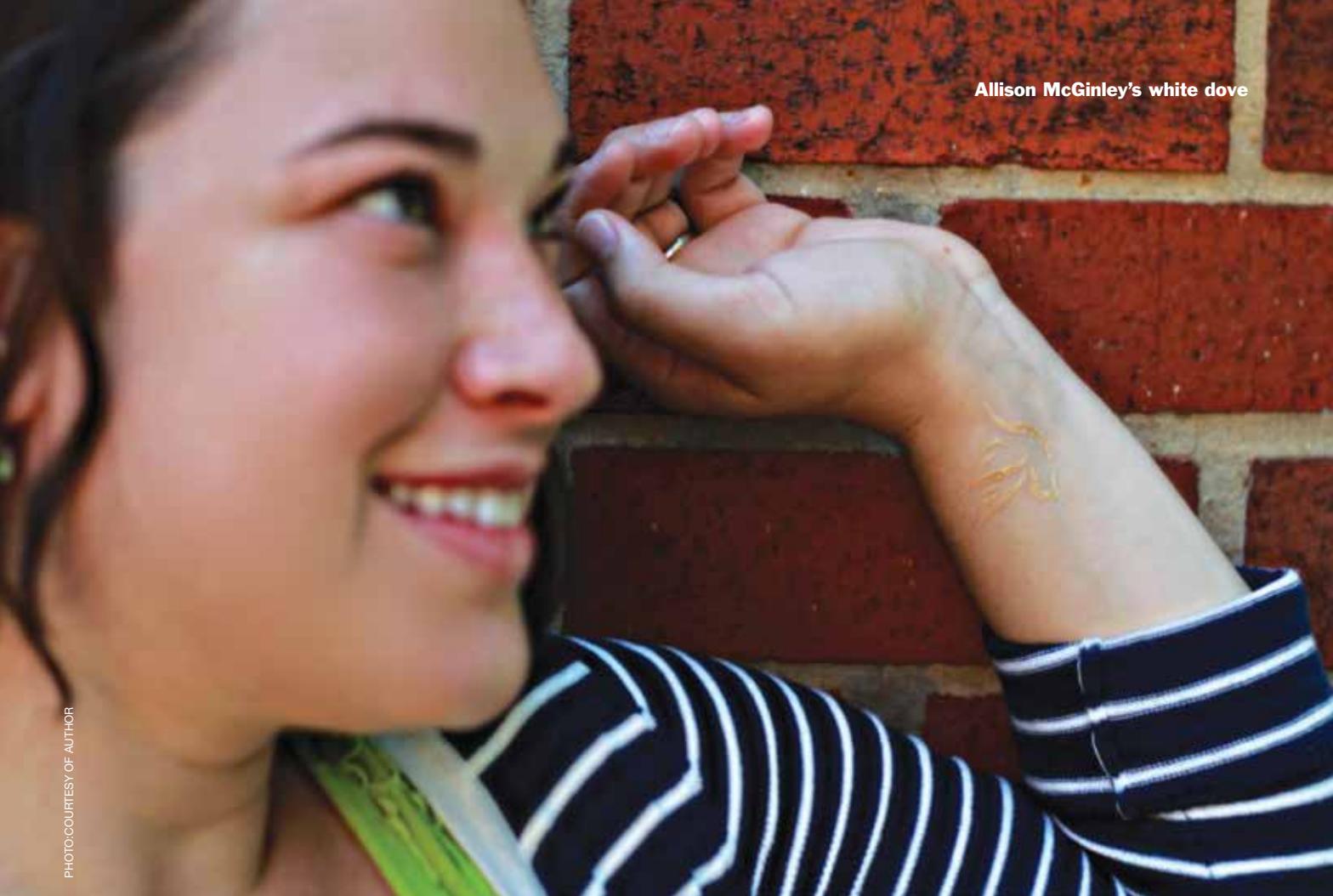


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Catholics whose sensibilities differ from his own and who “question whether it’s divinely inspired or whether my motivation was simply the glorification of self.” Gabe tells those who confront him that the tattoos are no different from a medal you never take off. The vast majority of the time, the largest tattoo is not visible. “It wasn’t for other people,” he says. “It was for me, but it is troubling when it sparks disunity within the church. That upsets me.”

### In His Image

In Flannery O’Connor’s short story “Parker’s Back,” O. E. Parker, a non-religious and chronically dissatisfied man who is covered with meaningless tattoos, has a frightening experience: He is thrown from his tractor just before it crashes into a tree and bursts into flames. O’Connor writes, “If he had known how to cross himself he would have done it.” After this experience, Parker rushes into the city to get “God” tattooed on his back.

The Rev. Dale Brown baptizes a member of his congregation in Atlanta

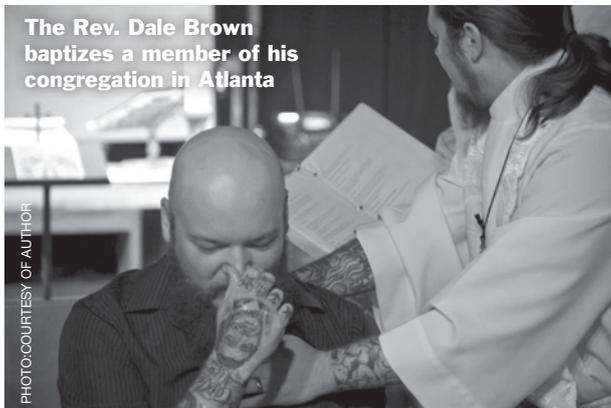


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As he flips through the pages of the religious tattoo art, he rejects the comforting images of “The Smiling Jesus” and the “Physician’s Friend” and instead chooses an image of a “Byzantine Christ with all demanding eyes.” When he goes home to his fundamentalist Christian wife to show her the tattoo, thinking she will be moved by the change in him, she instead accuses him of idolatry and beats him “until she had nearly knocked him senseless and large welts had formed on the face of the tattooed Christ.”

Many Christians still see the man with “God” tattooed on his back as a freak or an outcast, but perhaps this is, in some way, the goal. A follower of Christ ought to be a challenge to himself and others, someone difficult to classify, like Gabe Wells, a stranger in a strange land. Someone who suffers, like O. E. Parker, who at the end of “Parker’s Back” is cast out into the night alone “crying like a baby.” In one sense all Christians are O. E. Parker, claimed for the world by brand-name clothes and other status

symbols, and terrified of being claimed by God. For Parker and others like him, the religious tattoo becomes a kind of sacramental, like a crucifix or a medal. It is an outward sign of an inward reality and, because of its permanence, a life-long commitment.

## Signs of Suffering and Hope

Some religious tattoos are smaller, but no less meaningful. Allison McGinley has green eyes, a bright smile and a pink scarf around her neck. She was raised culturally Catholic but not practicing. An unhealthy relationship in high school caused her to lose completely what little faith she had. Then, during college, she went on a retreat “out of curiosity.” When she was praying on the retreat, she heard a song called “God Is,” by Danielle Rose, and started to wonder if maybe God had been there for her in high school, after all, through all the people who had helped her through it.

Years later McGinley was happily married and expecting her first child. Then, everything seemed to fall apart. She started having chest pains and feeling sick. She told multiple doctors about her symptoms, but they were dismissive. “I felt like I was going crazy,” she says. “I was close to true despair. I wrote in my journal, ‘I used to think God was real. I don’t even know what to think anymore. I feel so alone.’”

Later an X-ray showed a softball-size tumor in her chest. She was 27 years old, 32 weeks pregnant and diagnosed with cancer. She began to sob, asking the doctor, “Am I going to die? Is the baby going to die?” She said to the child in her womb, “I’m so sorry. I love you.” The doctors had to get the baby out and start McGinley’s chemotherapy as soon as possible, but the neonatal intensive care unit did not want to take the baby too soon and risk her son’s life as well.

The night before Allison was going to have an emergency C-section and start chemotherapy, she was overwhelmed with fear that either she or the baby would die. She woke her husband and said, “I need to pray with you.” They were praying to the Holy Spirit in the darkness of their hospital room when God made his presence felt. “It’s kind of hard to explain,” she says, “but we both felt this unmistakable presence in the room. We just stared at each other and then this calm came over us. I lay back down and just felt so peaceful... I just thought, ‘O.K., I get it; I’m not in control. I never have been.’” Allison’s procedures were painful. When she was taken into surgery her arms were tied down and an arterial line was put in her wrist. “I felt like I was being crucified,” she said. McGinley and her son survived the surgery. They named the baby John Paul, after the pope who often said, “Be not afraid.” Today McGinley is almost two years in remission.

**ON THE WEB**  
 Anna Nussbaum Keating  
 writes on “hook-up” culture.  
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After she beat cancer, Allison had a white dove tattooed on her wrist at the place where the arterial line had once caused her so much pain. She would like to get back to life as it was before she was sick, but she knows life will never be the same. She is not grateful she had cancer, but she is grateful that she has known the peace that surpasses understanding. “I’m the last person on earth you would expect to have a tattoo,” she says. “I wasn’t the rebel in my family.” She adds, “I wanted something that I could see everyday to say, ‘Remember what happened.’ I just want to always remember the incredible peace I found in giving everything over to God the night before John Paul’s birth. And I just want to be content with that, no matter what.”

Tattoos with religious themes remind us that there are as many different kinds of holiness as there are people and that the saints of today may look different than those of ages past. What remains the same is that the light of Christ shines through them all.

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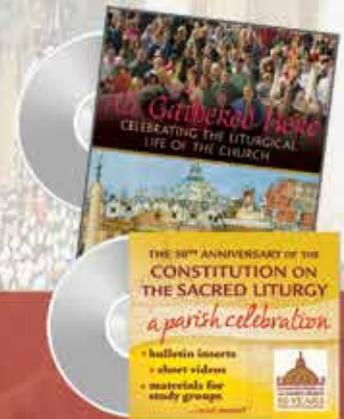
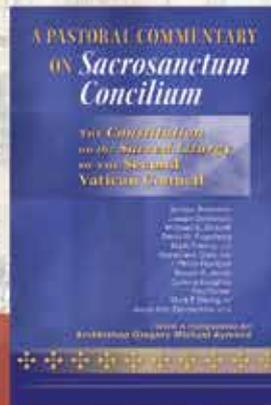
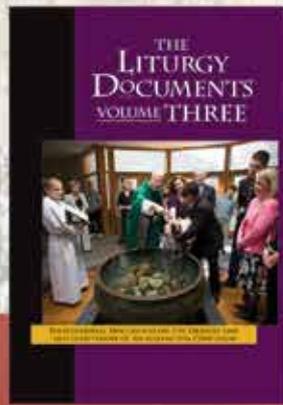
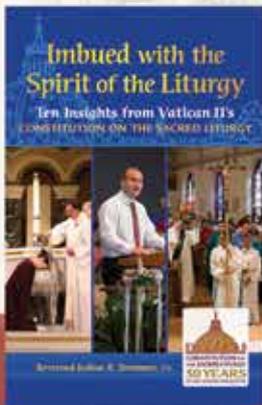
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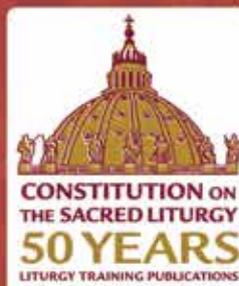
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# An Autumn Triptych

Interpreting texts of Pope Francis has become a 24/7 worldwide industry. For those accustomed to the precision of the theological treatise, interpreting the pope's thought is a challenge. His freewheeling interviews and informal sermons have permitted every commentator to construct his or her own Francis, complete with the cherry-picked quote that proves the pope endorses the commentator's particular political-theological program. Early in his pontificate Francis has given an indication of one of his central concerns. But it is neither a program nor a theory. It is an image.

Three talks Pope Francis gave during September point to the face of Jesus as central to the pope's spirituality, ethics and sense of ecclesial mission.

In the preface to his celebrated interview with Francis, published in *America* on Sept. 30, Antonio Spadaro, S.J., describes the furnishings of the pope's austere room. It is the faces on the statues and icons that capture the journalist's attention. "The spirituality of Jorge Mario Bergoglio is not made of 'harmonized energies,' as he would call them, but of human faces: Christ, St. Francis, St. Joseph and Mary." When Francis offers a spiritual self-portrait, he describes himself as standing under the gaze of Christ. "I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon." The pope illustrates this gaze of Christ by referring to Caravaggio's "The Calling of St. Matthew," a painting he had often contemplated in the Roman Church of Saint Louis of France in Rome. It is the gesture of Christ, not a simple interior movement

of grace, that leads Bergoglio to a more authentic discipleship.

In his address to the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations on Sept. 20, Pope Francis categorically condemned abortion and euthanasia. But his speech did not emphasize the customary philosophical, scientific and legal arguments. Rather, his critique appealed directly to the face of Christ. "Each one of us is invited to recognize in the fragile human being the face of the Lord, who, in his human flesh, experienced the indifference and loneliness to which we often condemn the poorest."

The condemnation of abortion drew a parallel to the infant Jesus marked for destruction by Herod even before his birth. "Each child who is unborn, but is unjustly condemned to be aborted, bears the face of Jesus Christ, bears the face of the Lord, who, even before he was born, and then as soon as he was born, experienced the rejection of the world." Similarly, the condemnation of euthanasia pointed to the face of Christ present in the elderly targeted for elimination. "Each old person, even if infirm or at the end of his or her days, bears the face of Christ. They cannot be discarded."

The homily he delivered on Sept. 21 for the feast of St. Matthew returns to the gaze of Christ that leads to conversion. "Matthew feels in his heart the gaze of the Lord who looked upon him.... It changed his life. We say he was converted." In the case of St. Peter, Christ's glance leads to remorse and repentance. "So did Peter change, who, af-

ter denying his Lord then met his gaze and wept bitterly." The countenance of Christ not only converts the sinner; it brings about a moral restoration that is nothing less than the re-establishment of human dignity. "And sinners...felt that Jesus had looked on them and that gaze of Jesus on them, I believe, was like a breath on embers.... Jesus lifted them up and gave them back their dignity."

It is the destiny of the church to live under the haunting gaze of Jesus as he summons the church to mission. "All of us find ourselves before that gaze, that marvelous gaze, and we go forward in life, in the certainty that he looks upon us. He too, however, awaits us in order to look on us definitively and that final gaze of Jesus upon our lives will be forever. It will be eternal."

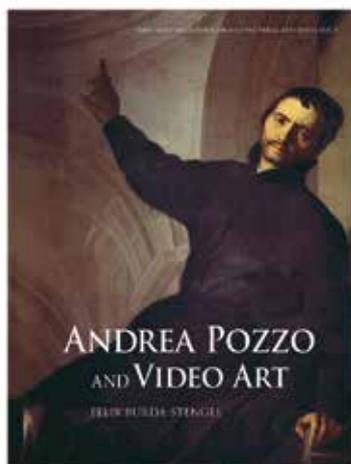
Pope Francis' September triptych on the face of Jesus bears nothing of the sentimental. Standing before the face of Christ is a call to repentance, to conversion of life and to costly solidarity with the innocents marked for death, just as it is a call to receive God's fathomless mercy. Pope Francis speaks naturally on the level of vision and intuition. His rhetoric of the image will both attract and perplex. It is neither a proof nor a refutation. There are no explanatory footnotes. It is an unvarnished call for the church and every Christian to undergo reform by standing under the gaze of Christ. In the transforming light of that face, the rest will follow.

Standing  
before the  
face of Christ  
is a call to  
repentance  
and costly  
solidarity.

JOHN J. CONLEY

JOHN J. CONLEY, S.J., holds the Knott Chair in Philosophy and Theology at Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore, Md.

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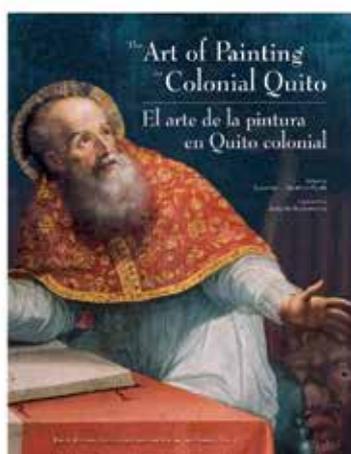
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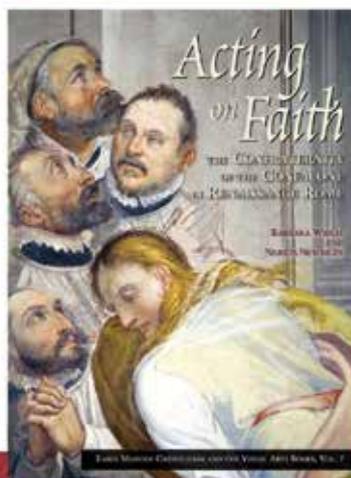
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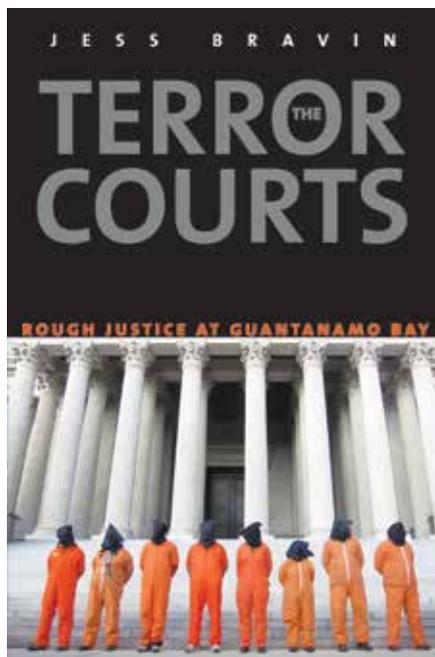
By Jess Bravin  
Yale University Press. 448p \$30

In November 2004 the first U.S. military commission hearings in more than 60 years reconvened in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, was in U.S. custody, but he did not sit in the defendant's chair. High-value detainees like Mr. Mohammed were still being interrogated and tortured by the Central Intelligence Agency in undisclosed locations. Instead, the Bush administration elected to prosecute Salim Ahmed Hamdan, the former driver for Osama bin Laden, alleging that he had committed war crimes.

Having decided that the legal protections of the Geneva Conventions did not apply, the Bush administration anticipated a swift conviction. But things changed quickly. On the first day of hearings, as defense counsel spoke, a uniformed Marine bailiff walked up to the presiding officer and handed him a note. His face went pale, and he yelled, "Court in recess." The breaking news: U.S. District Judge James Robinson invalidated the entire apparatus of the military commissions for failing to conform to the Geneva Conventions, and he ordered an immediate halt to the proceedings.

This dramatic turn of events, a stunning blow to Bush administration efforts to evade longstanding principles of international law, was the first of many to come. Jess Bravin,

the Supreme Court correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, offers the most thorough account of this history in *The Terror Courts: Rough Justice at Guantánamo Bay*. One of the first reporters to visit Guantánamo Bay when the military detention center opened in January 2002, Mr. Bravin is an expert



in the legal ramifications of U.S. counterterrorism policies after Sept. 11.

*The Terror Courts*, with its unexpected twists and turns and all the personal drama one has come to expect from politicians in Washington, could easily find itself on the "political thriller" shelf at the local library. But this is nonfiction, and the story—shockingly after 11 years—continues to unfold. In fact, publication of *The Terror Courts* was delayed for a couple of months so Mr. Bravin could include the latest major setback to the already beleaguered

commissions, again involving Salim Hamdan.

After Congress passed the Military Commissions Act of 2006, Mr. Hamdan was tried again and found guilty of providing "material support" to terrorism. In October 2012, however, the reliably conservative U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia threw out the conviction. "Material support" is a federal criminal violation, not an international war crime, the court ruled. In a separate case, and for the same reason, the court later vacated a conviction of "conspiracy" to commit terrorism. Will this prove the fatal blow for the military commissions? Of the meager seven convictions in military commissions since 2007, each has involved at least one of these now-discarded charges.

Brig. Gen. Mark S. Martins, the chief prosecutor, acknowledged on June 16 that these court rulings affect how many detainees will actually face prosecution. General Martins estimates that only 20 detainees, less than 3 percent of those detained at Guantánamo Bay since 2002, will ever face charges for war crimes. The Bush administration, fond of perpetuating the claim that Guantánamo housed "the worst of the worst" terrorists in the world, never mentioned they could prove this in only a tiny fraction of cases. What did it matter anyway? There was no incentive for the Bush administration to press charges against detainees, Mr. Bravin points out. Any trial, no matter how secret, could expose unsavory details about secret prisons and brutal interrogations, and the detainees were already serving de facto life sentences.

In *The Terror Courts*, Mr. Bravin demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the documentary history of the

commissions—news reports, court transcripts and government reports and declassified documents—but he also offers an unprecedented insider account of the political maneuvering and contentious discussions that helped shape evolving policies and strategy. Much of Mr. Bravin’s narrative relies on interviews with people with direct knowledge of conversations that happened behind closed doors and, until now, were not available to the general public. The reader, for example, is privy to deliberations among shocked prosecutors when Judge Robertson halted the first Hamdan trial in November 2004. Some prosecutors favored ignoring the order and moving ahead with the trial. Others warned against defying a federal judge. John Altemburg, appointing authority for the military commissions at the time, did not want to instigate a constitutional crisis, Mr. Bravin writes. “You don’t screw around with a federal judge,” Mr. Altemburg told prosecutors. “End of discussion.”

Few of the key players in *The Terror Courts* favor principle over political expediency, but Lt. Col. V. Stuart Couch, a military prosecutor, is a notable exception. By placing the personal journey of Colonel Couch at the center of the narrative, *The Terror Courts* serves a valuable case study of how to be a person of conscience when professional duty conflicts with ethics.

Mr. Bravin tells us that Colonel Couch, having lost a close friend on 9/11, the copilot of United 175 that flew into the South Tower of the World Trade Center, relished the opportunity to prosecute those responsible for the attacks. As the seasoned prosecutor learned more about detainee abuse, however, he feared this would complicate prosecution efforts. Mr. Bravin explains that Colonel Couch expressed his concerns to a trusted Marine judge advocate, who simply responded, “Do the right thing.” Easier said than done.

Colonel Couch was assigned the case of Mohamedou Ould Slahi, an

alleged recruiter of the 9/11 hijackers and the highest value detainee held at Guantánamo at the time. After his arrest, Mr. Slahi was rendered to Jordan and tortured, according to documents reviewed by Mr. Bravin. Later, a Bush official personally traveled to Guantánamo and told Mr. Slahi that if he did not cooperate, his mother could be transferred to the military prison and gang raped. This weighed heavily on Colonel Couch. Knowing that the Convention Against Torture prohibited any use of evidence obtained by torture, Colonel Couch questioned whether he could legally prosecute Mr. Slahi.

Mr. Bravin deftly portrays the moral anguish of Colonel Couch, a deeply religious man. The colonel’s brother-in-law, a Protestant theologian, counseled him to pray about it. Later at a Sunday church service in Falls Church, Va., during a routine renewal of baptismal promises, the questions began to take hold of him. “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?” All persons included Mr. Slahi, Colonel Couch realized. Mr. Bravin writes: “He was surrounded by people, but suddenly Couch felt very, very small. It was as if he stood alone in a dark, cavernous hall, a bright, single shaft of light illuminating him, unseen persons, or powers, awaiting his answer.” United with those around him, he responded, “I will. With God’s help.”

Colonel Couch decided to drop the case against Mr. Slahi. A 9/11 case. “I’d hate to say it, but being a Christian is gonna trump being an American,” he explained.

In 2010 Mr. Slahi finally had an opportunity to challenge his detention in federal court, where Judge James Robertson ruled that the government did not credibly establish that Mr. Slahi provided material support to terrorism and ordered his immediate release. The judge called the govern-

ment’s evidence as “so attenuated, or so tainted by coercion and mistreatment, or so classified, that it cannot support a criminal prosecution.” Later the D.C. Circuit Court remanded the case for further fact-finding. Mr. Slahi remains detained at Guantánamo to this day, even though the government no longer plans to prosecute him.

The government has elected to prosecute Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and four others for their alleged roles in the Sept. 11 attacks. In November 2009 Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. announced that the five 9/11 defendants as a group would face criminal prosecution in the federal court system, the gold standard of credibility. However, after a public outcry about alleged dangers associated with transferring the defendants to U.S. soil, the case ended back in the military commissions system.

Readers of *The Terror Courts* are likely to conclude it is unwise in the extreme for the United States to prosecute

the most important terrorism trial in the nation’s history in a disorganized, discredited and ineffective system like the military commis-

sions. *The Terror Courts* is an unrelenting, 448-page indictment of the military commissions experiment. Mr. Bravin is persuasive in describing the repeated failures of the commissions, and Stuart Couch is treated as the hero he undoubtedly is. The reader, however, might wonder whether there is more to the story. Have we heard the strongest arguments from defenders of the commissions? Is there really no compelling case in favor of continuing the commissions? For Mr. Bravin, the jury has already returned the verdict on this question.

### ON THE WEB

The Catholic Book Club discusses ‘Someone,’ by Alice McDermott. [americamagazine.org/cbc](http://americamagazine.org/cbc)

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LUKE HANSEN, S.J., an associate editor of *America*, traveled to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, in October 2012 to observe and report on military commission hearings and again in July 2013 to tour the prison camps and interview prison staff.

# CHARACTER STUDY

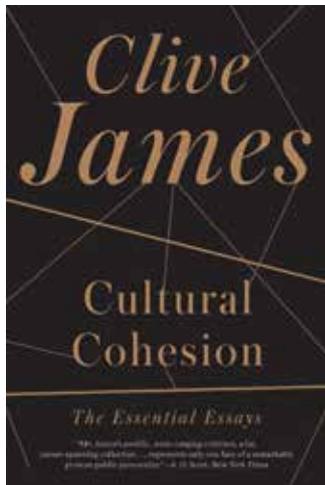
## CULTURAL COHESION The Essential Essays

By Clive James

W. W. Norton & Company. 640p \$21.95

The night before this review was being tortured into near-coherence, a musical group called the Postal Service appeared on “The Colbert Report,” promoting its new release, “Give Up”—which was actually recorded 10 years earlier, and was being re-released. The history of the music and its resurrection is irrelevant to matters here, except to say that the performance on “The Colbert Report” caused a great amount of consternation in my living room.

On one hand, here was some really engaging music, to which I had spent 10 years being oblivious. O.K., *c’est la vie*. More important, though—especially in light of my immersion in a new release by the critic Clive James, *Cultural Cohesion*—was



my favorable reaction to the Postal Service’s decade-old, post-avant-emo-alt-rock stylings. It rattled my critical cage.

Wasn’t pop music, and pop culture at large, intended to be of the moment, ephemeral, ultimately disposable? Wasn’t 10 years a bit past any pop CD’s freshness date? Wasn’t my favorable reaction, in a way, almost unseemly? Or worse—dated!? The Beatles will always be with us, as surely as Justin Bieber’s gaggle of Beliebers will be mortified well into their dotage. But, generally speaking, that which makes up the “culture,” as we commonly refer to it, evaporates by definition.

Which brings us to James, the esteemed Australia-born, London-dwelling essayist and critic, who usually concerns himself with work that promises lasting value. This elusive value does, in fact, seem to be the principal criterion for what he allows to arrest his scrutinizing eye: Auden, Hamlet, Primo Levi; criticism itself; literature broadly defined. And the vagaries of cultural journalism, whose problematic nature he addresses immediately in *Cultural Cohesion*, his latest—so to speak—collection.

“As a form in the English language, the essay had its true beginnings in the London coffee houses,” James writes, “where it depended for its energy on a seeming paradox: Contributing to a periodical meant to be thrown away, the essayist composed his piece as if it were meant to be kept.”

The hard fact, he continues, is that the subject matter addressed was, more often than not, unworthy of the effort being made to assess it. And yet, if the essayist “failed in his aim of bringing permanence to ephemerality, he could always congratulate himself on having respected his disrespectable work by devoting his best efforts to it.”

Ergo, it is a perversely Sisyphean enterprise on which the cultural critic embarks, and in acknowledging the transient nature of his trade, James achieves an earthy nobility...and then sort of doubles back around and crosses paths with the Postal Service.

That’s because the governing conceit of *Cultural Cohesion*—a collection

of pieces published by James between 1968 and 2002—involves the writer revisiting himself (so much for transience). It’s a very specific kind of self-examination to which he subjects himself, not tampering with the original text, but instead critiquing the criticism with postscripts attached to each article. “If you start updating a piece in the light of subsequent developments,” he writes, “the result is a tacit claim of a congenital infallibility of judgment: an attribute which, were one to possess it, would remove the whole point of critical journalism at a blow.” Thus, he leaves the originals alone, and attaches to each an assessment of how well he did.

The problem is, those assessments are, like the Postal Service album, 10 years old. The original *Cultural Cohesion* came out in 2003. We are looking back at a writer looking back at himself looking back at art he’d experienced sometime in the past. What the reader does not quite get is a sense of immediacy.

What he or she does get is James’s often rhapsodic prose, which is especially rich when he is in pursuit of something he truly loves and to which he is trying to do justice (and, in the case of “On Auden’s Death,” even begins to subconsciously echo his subject’s poetry). James does get a little verbose at times, although it’s part of his M.O.: Wax flowery, shift into the idiomatic and bring the point home with an uppercut: “Mrs. Krantz, having dined at Mark’s Club, insists that it is exclusive,” James writes of the novelist Judith Krantz. “An even bigger snob than she might point out that the best reason for not dining at Mark’s Club is the chance of finding Mrs. Krantz there.” The occasional swipe of cattiness maintains the readability of James’s takedowns, even when they concern a foregone conclusion like Judith Krantz, or a book like *Princess Daisy*—which many people would recognize as bad, though not as clearly as

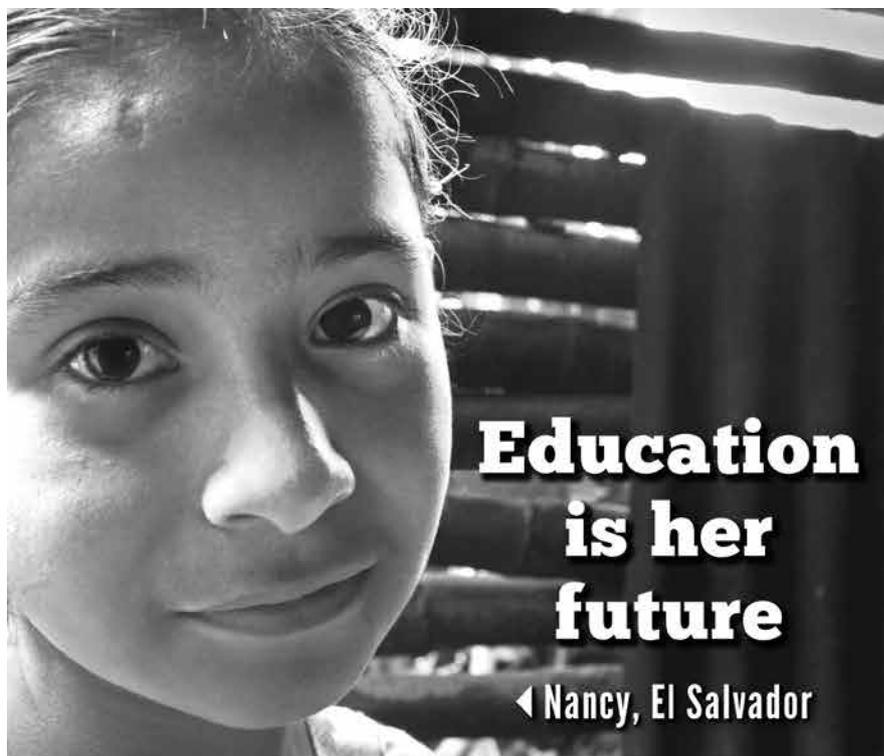
they do with the help of James's evisceration of its prose and pretensions.

Though Ms. Krantz earned James a certain surgical celebrity (the essay, "A Blizzard of Tiny Kisses," found a wide readership), he admits in his 2003 postscript that he committed overkill, if not toward an unwarranted victim. His point, he recalls, had been to counter the creeping notion that just because a book earned gargantuan sales figures it somehow assumed a larger role in the culture than it either deserved or enjoyed. What he says throughout the book is that a well-executed mugging occasionally protects us all.

*Cultural Cohesion* is as valuable for the questions it asks and settles as for what it says about the Western world's cultural character. Amid the din of the Internet, can the likes of James, with all his erudition, wit, analytical abilities and—most important—enlightened sympathies, be heard above the noise? Does anyone care? Yes, someone always will, but even in a now-10-year-old note, the writer portrays the dangers of being a cultural voice and the courage it takes to remain an independent one. The instance involves the one example in *Cultural Cohesion* where he has actually changed his original text, and he explains why.

In his essay "Hitler's Unwitting Excupator," about Daniel Goldhagen's still-notorious *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, James takes apart the author's contention that it was the German national character that led to the Holocaust, abetting the criminal work of a select group of psychopaths. Certainly there was, and is, plenty of guilt to go around about the Final Solution, but James dismantles Goldhagen's thesis, stone by stone.

The problem was, he wrote the piece for *The New Yorker* magazine as it existed under Tina Brown, and the nuance of his argument, it seems, was much too nuanced for a celebrity editor. "There is a fine line between being



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asked to say something differently and being required to say something different," he writes, "but it is a clear one. When they do ask you to say something different, of course, it is time to take the kill fee and quit." Brown wanted things differently; the piece ran; and James makes things right, to his mind, in the reissuing.

For all his jaundiced attitude, James's honesty is gentle when it should be: His piece on Peter Bogdanovich for the *New Yorker* was sweetly evasive, and James admits as much in his postscript. An essay on Gore Vidal is steeped in dignified worship. A posthumous piece on the Italian wild man Pier Paolo Pasolini ("Pier Paolo Pain

in the Neck") is raw like grappa. He lays into Lillian Hellman as if he were Mary McCarthy.

In introducing his work, James again explains his book's methodology. "Aspiring to permanence only by the measure with which it illuminates the ephemeral, such writing can be pertinent or not, but either way it has to be contingent: If it tries to cut itself free from time and chance, it removes itself from life." He tries to have it both ways, of course, but there's no lack of life in *Cultural Cohesion*. Just an amorphous sense of time.

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**JOHN ANDERSON** also writes for *Variety* and *The New York Times*.

rate stories. Each chapter spotlights one character, who tries to come to terms with daily life in Afghanistan. They include Pari, her father, her brother, stepmother, aunt, adoptive mother, uncle, niece, neighbors in Shadbagh and the tenant who years later rents her house in Kabul.

Too young to remember her past, Pari spends a year living with her wealthy adoptive parents, Suleiman and Nila Wahdate, in Kabul. Later she moves to Paris where she grows up as a privileged daughter. She believes that Nila, a talented but emotionally troubled poet, is her birth mother, although the girl never quite feels a daughterly connection to her. As Pari sees it, something is missing in her life.

Years later, when she receives a phone call from Markos Varvaris, a plastic surgeon, she begins to learn what is missing and why. A letter from her uncle confirms her suspicions about her past. But at this time, Pari is in her 60s and the mother of three grown children. She also suffers from rheumatoid arthritis, which may pre-

vent her from taking the next step and re-connecting with her family—wherever they are. Meanwhile, circumstances in Afghanistan have worsened in the years since Pari left Kabul. Her brother has moved to America; her adoptive father has died; her birth family has lost the farm to the Taliban; terrorism is rampant on the streets.

Hosseini describes those conditions through the perceptions of several characters but primarily through Idris Bashiri, a former neighbor of the Wahdati's who calls Kabul a city of a thousand tragedies per square mile. If there is one theme holding this book together, that is it. Every page brings home that statement

DIANE SCHARPER

## A THOUSAND TRAGEDIES

### AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED

By Khaled Hosseini  
Riverhead Books. 416p \$28.95

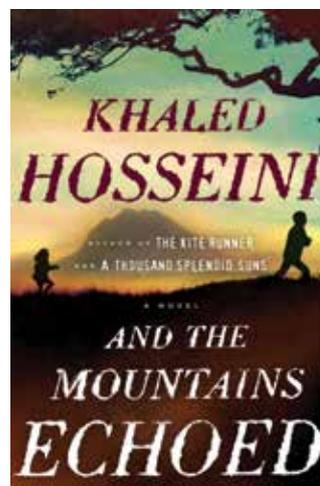
Khaled Hosseini is a bestselling author whose novels focus on Afghanistan's political, religious, social and cultural upheaval. If his aim is to evoke sympathy for the tortured lives of Afghans, he undoubtedly succeeds.

In his highly successful debut novel, *The Kite-Runner* (2004), Hosseini focused on the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent Taliban takeover as seen through the lives of two half-brothers—one poor and one rich. Hosseini's somewhat disappointing second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), features a clash between Western ways and Muslim fundamentalism as told through two Afghan women who suffer under the iron fist of their husbands. Now in his third novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, Hosseini expands his scope. He covers nearly 60 years of Afghan turmoil as depicted in the lives of a dozen or more

people who have been damaged—both physically and emotionally—by war and terrorism.

Hosseini begins his latest with a spin-off of the Old Testament story of Abraham and Isaac. But in Hosseini's version, the angel does not intervene. Abdullah (aka Abe) loses his beloved sister whom he has cared for since their mother died in childbirth. His family, friends and neighbors are devastated as 4-year-old Pari is sold to save her family from starvation and to give her a chance for a better life. The action sets off several interlocking narratives—all connected to the troubles besieging the Afghan people in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Beginning in 1952 and ending in 2010, this ambitious novel moves back and forth in time to tell several dispa-



as Hosseini provides graphic (perhaps too graphic) examples of the savagery committed in the name of religious principle.

Idris encounters more ugliness than he can tolerate. An Afghan-American physician who lives in California, he visits patients in Kabul's Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital and is moved by their suffering—especially that of Roshana. Called Roshi, the 9-year-old girl is the only member of her family to survive an attack by her uncle, who in poverty and frustration decapitates Roshi's mother, father, sisters and brother. With her brain visible from a deep wound across her skull, Roshi will need an operation if she is to survive. But with the dire conditions in war-torn Afghanistan, no one has the money.

Idris promises to fund the operation on his return to the states. But after coming home, he becomes engrossed

with his job and family. Will he forget Roshi's suffering? Will he shut out the voice of his conscience and, like the rich young man in the Gospel, choose material goods as opposed to helping the poor? (Mk 10:17-31).

While the answers may be predictable, the questions are central to the novel and to Hosseini's thinking. Also an Afghan-American physician, Hosseini is devoted to his homeland. He has established a foundation to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan and works as a goodwill envoy for the United Nations. Yet Hosseini aims to be more than just a promoter of charitable causes, as laudable as his are. And, as can be seen in this thoroughly engaging and compelling story, he is.

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**DIANE SCHARPER** is a professor of English at Towson University and a frequent contributor to *America*.

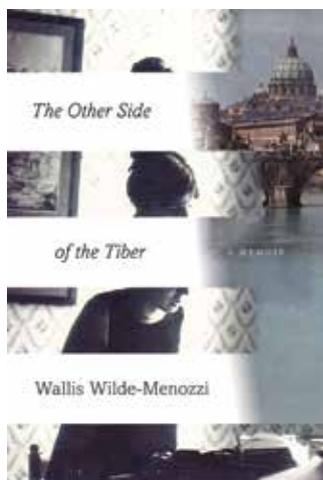
DIANA OWEN

## LA DOLCE VITA

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TIBER Reflections on Time in Italy

By Wallis Wilde-Menozzi  
Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. 384p \$27

Wallis Wilde-Menozzi's beautiful meditation on Italy takes the reader on a journey of discovery that transpired over three decades of a life richly lived. The work is at once a memoir, travelogue, history lesson and cultural excavation. The author's memories of life in Rome, where her journey begins, and ultimately Parma are the foundation for vignettes about the Italian people, art, language, media, religion, rituals, food



and landscape. Her reflections are enlivened by liberal references to works of poetry and prose, depictions of paintings and sculpture and her own photography. The book inspires spiritual contemplation, as illustrated by a powerful line that reflects its essential message: "Consciousness of the mystery of life, the existence of good and evil as well as the infinity of love, is a powerful hope."

Raised in Wisconsin, Wilde-Menozzi, the daughter of a U.S. senator, broke with societal mores that constrained women's independence to live on her own in Italy. She first encountered Rome on a hitchhiking trip during her college years in England,



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and returned four years later, giving up a secure position at the University of Oxford and a first marriage.

She settled in Rome in the mid-1960's, when the city was animated with excitement about the Second Vatican Council and the possibilities for reshaping the Catholic Church. Wilde-Menozzi worked as a translator, editor, teacher and writer, living modestly in a lively courtyard apartment, where she assimilated and took in the everyday experiences of the residents. Eventually she married an Italian, with whom she had a daughter, and moved to Parma, where her writing career took off. Her book *Mother Tongue: An American's Life in Italy* (2003) is a memoir of her life in Parma, and is an insightful companion to the present work.

A number of themes in this new book will resonate with Catholics. Wilde-Menozzi contemplates how her Midwestern Protestant upbringing shaped her experiences

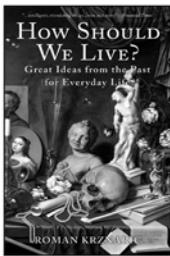
in Italy. Her preconceived notions about Catholicism shifted over time. "Although it never happened during the Rome years, the many versions of the Catholic Church as history, intellectual thought, mystical search fell on me, a bit like the spruce that receives fertilization from airborne and invisible sources, and left new seeds." She comes to understand, for example, the significance of a Catholic's devotion to the saints and to appreciate the Virgin Mary's importance for women. Her observations as she comes to terms with life in a Catholic country provide fresh insights for those raised in the religion.

Wilde-Menozzi's personal journey reveals the layered meanings of sacred spaces. Initially, she views churches, chapels and tombs as repositories of art and lessons in early Christian history. Her visits were sparked more by curiosity than faith. She shares her impressive knowledge of Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Bernini, among many

others, and provides vivid accounts of their lives, works and societal influence. Over time, she comes to experience these same places as retreats for reflection and sanctuary, as "utterly ancient shelter."

The importance of community accompanied by a sense of connectedness is a central theme of this work. The values of forgiveness, compassion and tolerance that underpin Italian laws and cultural practices foster personal connections. Strong communities emerge from shared harsh experiences, as with volcanic eruptions and their human toll. As Wilde-Menozzi notes, "Connectedness that comes from continuity and a sense of humanity takes time to establish and may include identification with suffering." She explores community life in courtyards, public squares, towns and cities, each with its cast of characters and unifying rituals.

The section titled "Restoration" is a lovely reflection about a Benedictine



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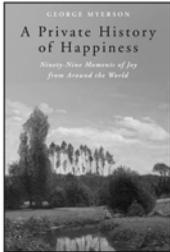
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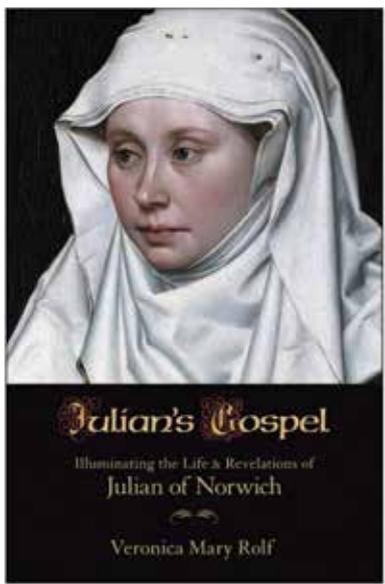
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monk, a Canadian who is out of place in Italy and sought to find meaning in his calling by restoring a dilapidated cell carefully by hand in an ancient monastery. He attempted to create community and common purpose as he struggled with the solitude of his lifestyle. Wilde-Menozzi describes the humility and sincerity he brought to this enterprise, and draws parallels to the journeys of the Trappist monk and activist Thomas Merton and the

English poet John Keats.

Wilde-Menozzi is a studied writer, whose thick prose often permits the reader to share sensually in her recalled experience. *The Other Side of the Tiber* is not a quick read; instead, much like the delicious food she describes, each chapter is meant to be savored.

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**DIANA OWEN** is an associate professor of political science in the communication, culture and technology graduate program at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

MARY MEEHAN

## UNNATURAL DISASTERS

### FAULT LINES

#### Views across Haiti's Divide

By Beverly Bell

Cornell University Press. 235p \$59.95

“Change will come when the people are engaged right at the heart of things,” said Josette Pérard, a grass-roots activist in Haiti. She spoke as that country struggled to rebuild after the disastrous earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010, that killed over 200,000 Haitians and destroyed the homes of many others. In *Fault Lines*, Beverly Bell describes the work of Pérard and other Haitian activists as they responded to the devastation of the quake. She criticizes international groups for failing to involve grass-roots Haitians in plans to rebuild their country. She offers useful suggestions for policy change.

Although her home base is New Orleans, Bell has been involved in Haiti for many years as an activist and writer. She lived there decades ago, “running a grammar school, literacy program, and

shade-tree clinic,” and has many friends there. She leads a group called Other Worlds ([otherworldsarepossible.org](http://otherworldsarepossible.org)), which reports on grass-roots action in Haiti and elsewhere. She holds to the old movement slogan, “Nothing about us without us.” With many stories and quotations, she shows how Haitian activists live that slogan as they work for homes for the homeless, fair pay for workers, food for the hungry, medical care and an end to violence against women.

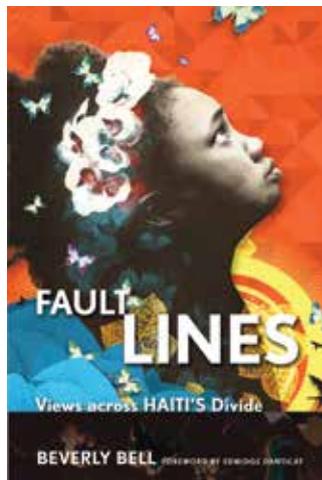
Ironically, three post-quake international donors’ forums were not held in Haiti—where donors could have seen the problems first-hand and talked to those most affected—but in Montreal, Santo Domingo and New York. A United Nations consultant on Haiti told Bell that he made \$30,000 per month. For a time after the quake, Bell says, many U.N. staff stayed “in a luxury cruise ship” in the harbor of Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince, at a reported cost to the ship of \$112,500 per day.

At the same time, and for a long

time afterward, Bell was seeing terrible conditions in the outdoor camps where huge numbers of Haitians lived because the quake had demolished their homes. They had to improvise shelter from sticks, scraps of plastic and cardboard. All-night noise made sleep impossible for many. Sanitation conditions ranged from poor to horrific, resulting in much sickness. Rape was so widespread that one mother “kept a machete under her blanket for fear that someone might pounce on her 18-year-old girl as they slept in an open-air lean-to.”

What if all international-aid staff had spent two nights in a Haitian camp soon after the earthquake? I suspect that they would have 1) radically improved sanitation and safety and 2) sped construction of replacement housing. In disaster relief, Bell stresses, a huge portion of the aid money goes to corporations in the donor countries, rather than to business in the country that needs help. She quotes excellent advice from Robert Naiman of the organization Just Foreign Policy: “If your aid dollar is used to purchase supplies produced in Haiti, it’s doing double duty. And if it’s being used to directly employ Haitians, it’s doing triple duty. Push your aid dollar as close to the ground as you can.” Haiti’s unemployment rate, estimated at 40 percent, gives added weight to Mr. Naiman’s advice.

Before the earthquake struck Haiti, economic globalization already had given that country a man-made disaster. The International Monetary Fund had pressured Haiti to reduce tariffs on rice and other crops, which leads to a “flood of cheap food from other countries.” As one farmer said, “Since foreign rice has invaded Haiti, we plant our rice but we can’t sell it.” The United States and other nations sent a huge amount of rice to Haiti as relief aid after the earthquake. A better alternative, Bell suggests, would have been using aid dollars to buy rice from



Haitian farmers—and importing rice only when domestic supply couldn't meet the need.

Globalization also has produced many garment sweatshops in the “free trade zones” of Haiti. Bell, who has interviewed many workers there over the years, reports that their wages are extremely low, working conditions are terrible and factory managers fire workers who try to organize unions. Explaining how they keep going despite all of this, workers use a Creole phrase that means “on the strength of my courage.” Bell suggests that outsiders can help them by boycotting corporations that exploit Haitians and by

working for “enforceable labor rights and living wages” in trade agreements.

The author weaves together policy issues and lively descriptions of how they affect everyday life. She clearly loves the people of Haiti and admires their spirit. Many of them say, “We are bamboo; we bend but we don't break.” One woman declared, “I'll be engaged till the day I die. And even if we don't see the changes, our kids will.” When people say goodbye, they also tell each other: “Hold strong.”

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homeland as a sleeper agent.

Saints in icons typically have distended features. Their heads are slightly larger to suggest wisdom. Their hands are elongated to evoke supernatural dexterity, and their eyes are enlarged to suggest greater powers of insight. Claire Danes was born with luminous eyes, and her ability to use her face as a scrim for emotions is preternatural. She is utterly convincing as crazy. At the end of the first season, when she undergoes electro-shock therapy, one cannot help but hope that it eases her inner combustion. Yet her piercing eyes also insist that this Cassandra's wisdom counts. We must attend to her ravings. As with Lear, we dare not turn away.

Damian Lewis, a graduate of Eton, plays Sergeant Brody. He has returned to the United States with the intention of visiting justice upon the American vice president, who ordered a morally questionable drone strike. It killed many innocents, including a child who befriended Brody in captivity. Can a U.S. Marine violate his oath—to support and defend the Constitution of

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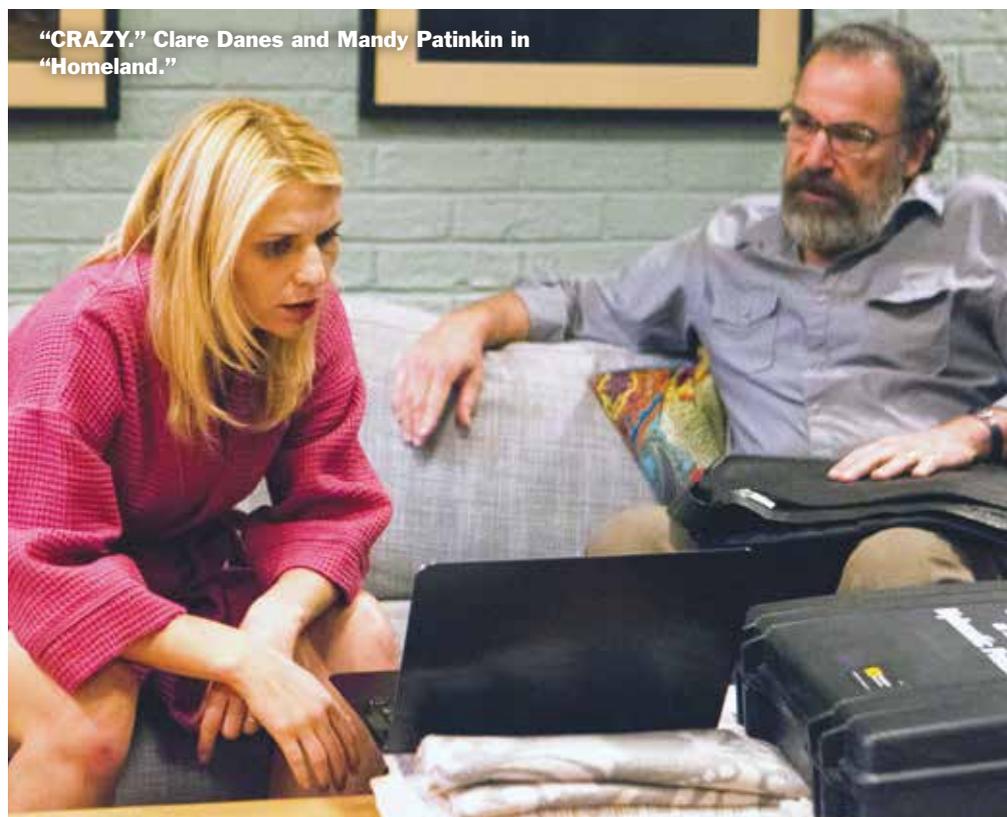
## PRISONERS OF WAR

*Showtime's 'Homeland'*

**Homeland** entered its third season showered with awards and critical acclaim. The Showtime series is considered iconic of contemporary, post-9/11 America. It is replete with terrorist cells, drone strikes, wounded veterans and covert surveillance of civilians. Yet this icon unsettles rather than soothes because it raises the same question as Shakespeare's “King Lear”: when the world turns to tempest, who is crazy and who is sane? That query is underscored by seemingly endless and exhilarating plot twists (Warning: spoilers ahead).

At the center of this icon is C.I.A. operative Carrie Mathison, a role that inducts Claire Danes into the pantheon of our most talented thespians. (She earned this year's Emmy for Lead Actress in a Drama Series.) Some of Carrie's character traits might cause viewers to cast her among the crazy, but—like so many of the saints we now honor—it is quite impossible to separate her affliction from her uncanny acumen. Her character struggles with bipolar disorder and is convinced that

U.S. Marine Sgt. Nicholas Brody, who was held captive for eight years by Al Qaeda, was successfully turned against the United States and sent back to the



the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic—in the name of a personal mission for justice? Is that crazy? Or has the United States become so paranoid about terrorism that it readily turns to the truly venal for leadership, provided only that they promise security?

In captivity, Brody embraced Islam, and he has returned to America as single-minded as any saint. Vice President William Walden, played by the firm-jawed Jamey Sheridan, is both a patriot and a shallow scoundrel. If all sin is a centrifugal dissipation, Walden is surely an illustration of this. In contrast, Brody seems almost always to act for a higher purpose; he is genuinely pained when he kills. The only clear barometer of this marine's moral disintegration is his incessant lying. We have the same difficulty as Carrie in deciding whether or not he is telling the truth. By the second season, it is no longer clear that Brody himself knows.

"Homeland" has a surfeit of excellent actors. Mandy Patinkin plays Saul Berenson, Carrie's immediate supervisor at the C.I.A. The role is not unlike the everyman of medieval dramaturgy. Saul knows that Carrie is crazy; he suspects that Brody is berserk; and he cannot help but wonder if his own country has lost any sense of sanity. He is present when a Middle Eastern drone strike is ordered from the safety of a Washington briefing room. Unfortunately, madrasa school children will be included in the strike, but "the collateral damage count" of the attack is "within the acceptable matrix parameters." Saul sadly asks, before he closes his own eyes, "Somebody actually came up with that language?"

Saints are supposed to possess a singleness of purpose. Brody thought he possessed this when he returned from captivity: kill the American vice president in the name of justice, Islamic or otherwise. But how does one execute such a mandate when surrounded by one's wife and children, all superb-

ly played, whose normal lives will be effectively ended by such an action? Soldiers are trained to kill, presumably in the name of protecting values that have been sanctioned by a higher civilian authority. "Homeland" raises the provocative moral question: What if our trained killers begin to make their own judgments on who deserves to die?

The sorrow at the heart of this series is Sergeant Brody. We see the scars of his physical torture when he removes his shirt. We watch as his inner wounds worsen. He was trained to kill. He was not taught to reason morally, to evaluate the ethical use of lethal force. His belief in Islam offers him a moral clarity his own country does not. Will the sorrowing be consoled?

And then there is Carrie, who lacks a saint's purity of heart. She falls in love with her surveillance target. In season two, she interrogates a captured Sergeant Brody, who has just been threatened with the death penalty for treason. He cannot tell if her loving, maternal ministrations are manipulations or love. Has the ultimate liar met his match? The murky truth is that Carrie does not know herself.

She loathes and loves this man, and she gains no clarity by separating him from his actions. It's all jumbled together, as it is in most lives.

There is a small but final difference between a saint and fanatic. Both are a bit crazed, in the sense that they are out of balance, excessively focused upon a sole object. Perhaps the only difference is that saints are motivated by love; fanatics, by a frenzy that is contemptuous of those who disagree.

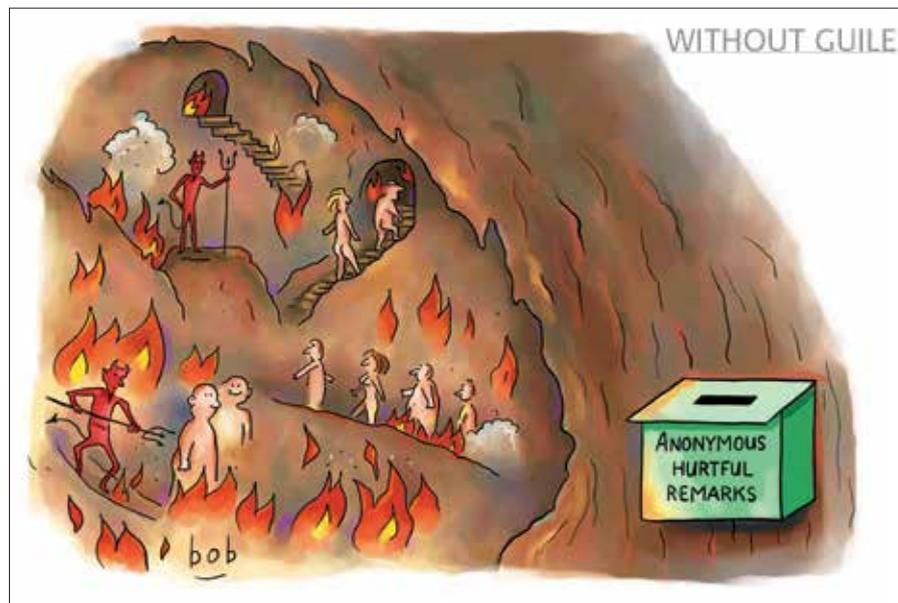
As it enters its third season, "Homeland" continues to pose a central, terrifying question.

When attacked by terrorists, can we respond with something other than our own fanaticism and paranoia? If armed forces cannot keep us safe, will covert analysts protect the homeland by monitoring every move we make? Large portions of the series consist of videos from hidden monitors, which seem to be everywhere. And when these electronic eyes, which see but cannot be seen, have done their work, is it possible to entrust the doling out of justice to anyone less than a saint?

### ON THE WEB

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**TERRANCE W. KLEIN** is a priest serving in the Diocese of Dodge City, Kan.



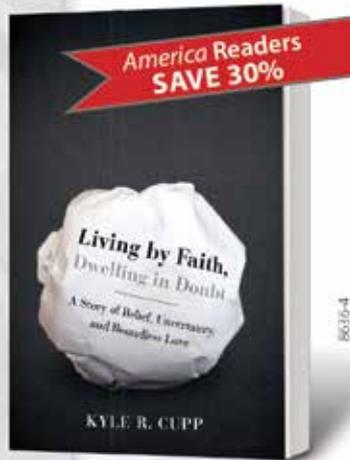
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# Life in the Balance

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), NOV. 17, 2013

Readings: Mal 3:19–20; Ps 98:5–9; 2 Thes 3:7–12; Lk 21:5–19

“Teacher, when will this be?” (Lk 21:6)

There is an inherent tension in Christianity between the indicative and the imperative, what we are and what we are intended to be, between the present and the future, the life we are now living and the world to come. If we focus only on this world or only on the world to come, the Christian life is out of balance. For most of us, our attention is on the life we live now, but the *eschaton*, the end, the apocalypse is a part of the Christian hope and essential to keep in proper perspective and not ignore.

It can be easy to ignore out of lack of interest, lack of belief, weariness or embarrassment. Some easily reject the mythic language of apocalyptic imagery. For others, the simple contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous, the one receiving an eternal reward, the other a fiery punishment, does not express their complex experience of life. And others have long tired of the cartoon representations of Christian apocalyptic thought found in popular American culture, in which pundits, politicians and preachers vie with each other as to who can best interpret the last tornado, political change or gun tragedy as the sign of the coming end.

But, to put it frankly, you cannot walk away from the end, however difficult it may be to translate it into a coherent vision of life in the 21st century. Why? Jesus will not let you. Jesus speaks of the end in all three of the Synoptic Gospels and in much less detail in the Gospel of John, describing the apocalypse in lan-

guage that is both chilling and confusing.

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus says, “When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.” Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.” Events of this kind have been seen throughout history, though, and we are not to spend our time calculating the time of the end and interpreting portents.

The best balance is to concentrate on the reality that we will all face our end, whether the world ends in our lifetime or not, and to keep in mind that how we live in this life matters. No injustice, no cup of cold water given to one in need, is hidden from God who will bring all things to completion.

Malachi 3:17 uses straightforward language that sets apart the *eschaton* from every other day. There the voice of God speaks of “the day when I act.” When we imagine the apocalyptic end apart from images of mythological forces of chaos and order, we must see the *eschaton* as the time when God will act decisively to bring about the perfect justice for which we all yearn.

In the midst of more revelations of alleged abuse of children in my archdiocese by people who have been my ministers and with whom I have worked, the crushing weight of sin seems to render

perfect justice an illusion. The pain and loss of children who have been abused cries out to God to be vindicated. These allegations will find their way through court systems and tribunals, and human justice will be rendered, imperfectly and partially. But what will bind the brokenness, what will heal the wounds, what will render them whole?

Malachi directs us to this wholeness, saying, “The day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble,” but



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Reflect on the idea of the apocalypse. Do you see Judgment as hope and promise or condemnation?

promising that “for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.”

Jesus promises that neither persecution nor betrayal by family or friends can turn one from God’s righteousness; and this is true, too, for those who have been betrayed by ministers of the church. It is not vengeance that leads me to ache for “the day” when God acts, it is the desire to see justice rendered perfectly and to see those who have been disbelieved, dishonored and dismissed rise with healing.

When will this be? The balanced answer is that the end begins now and we respond by living justly and righteously, knowing that the end could arrive at any time.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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

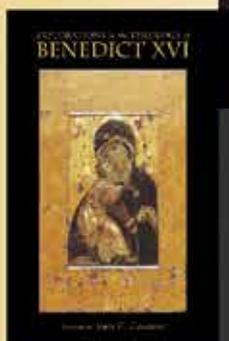
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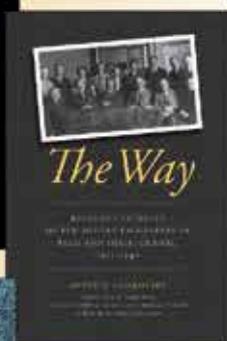
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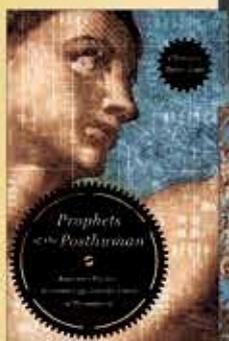
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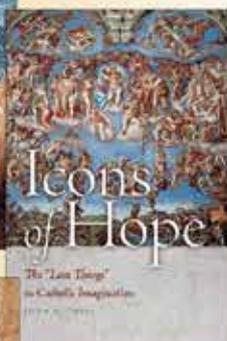
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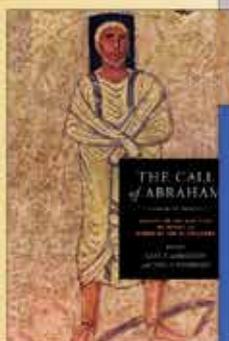
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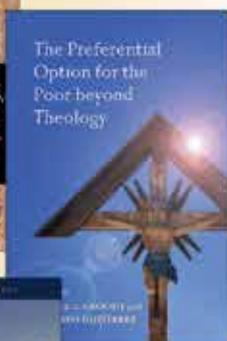
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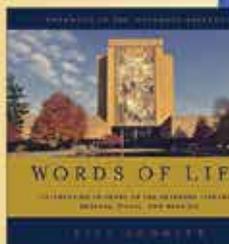
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