

America

FALL 2020

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

FALL LITERARY REVIEW 2020

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Welcome to Fall Books 2020

I spent much of my free time in the month of September preparing to move out of one New York City apartment into another. This inevitably meant getting out the tape measure and becoming more creative about storage options (the average one-bedroom apartment in my neighborhood is less than 500 square feet), but it also became an exercise in purging some prized possessions. Like many of us, I found my greatest enemy to be my closest friend: the books, the endless rows and stacks and unruly piles of books.

Have they been migrating south into my apartment for the winter? Are they breeding? Have they mastered parthenogenesis? Surely I did not buy all of these tomes, and surely I did not bring them all home from the office. But here they all are, and unless I can gin up some courage and ruthlessness, soon some movers will surely be giving me surly side-eye as they hump impossibly heavy boxes up and down the stairs.

This Fall Books literary issue is not helping matters, because right from the get-go I realized it was imperative that I own the two books mentioned in our features: *Luster*, the dazzling debut novel by Raven Leilani, who is profiled here by a former Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., fellow, Brandon Sanchez (he calls the novel "as clear as a pane of glass and as elaborate as a stained-glass window"), and *John Berryman and Robert Giroux: A Publishing Friendship*, by Patrick Samway, S.J., who recounts the fruitful collaboration between the famous poet and his erudite editor. But Berryman was not Giroux's only noted author: As Samway notes, "Giroux became a con-

summate editor with a host of notable writers—including Djuna Barnes, E. M. Forster, William Gaddis, Herman Hesse, R. W. B. Lewis, Walker Percy, Carl Sandburg, William Saroyan, Mary Lee Settle, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Susan Sontag, Derek Walcott, Robert Penn Warren and Eudora Welty, to name but a few—all of whom he granted his full attention."

The two most recent selections of the Catholic Book Club profiled within have likely long been on many of our shelves: John Kennedy Toole's comic novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, and John Howard Griffin's tale of artificially darkening his skin to try to understand what it was like to be a Black man in the American South in the 1950s, *Black Like Me*. As always, interpretive essays and challenging questions by C.B.C. moderator Kevin Spinale, S.J., helped drive our online discussion of both texts.

Several essays allow us to revisit past literary masters: Robert Rubsam on the literary corpus of Jean Giono, Eve Tushnet on the famous Parisian courtesan (and spiritual writer, of a sort) Liane de Pougy, and Mary Roche on *Year of Wonders*, a 2002 novel by Geraldine Brooks on a topic now familiar to all of us: a community's response to a deadly pandemic.

There is much more: Franklin Freeman takes us into the life and fiction of Robert Stone in his review of *Child of Light*, a biography of Stone by Madison Smartt Bell; and Maureen H. O'Connell reviews Christopher Pramuk's *The Artist Alive: Explorations in Music, Art & Theology*, in which Pramuk "translates stories germane to the human experience that illuminate paths to the transcendent when com-

municated through the arts." Elizabeth Matthew explores some of the hidden cultural assumptions found in a new novel about Hillary Rodham Clinton (albeit a fictional character, who never marries Bill and runs against him for president), *Rodham*.

We also have a contribution from Jon Sweeney, who tackles a hefty new tome on Richard Wagner and his massive influence on Western culture by Alex Ross, *Wagnerism*.

We also have two new poems selected by our poetry editor, Joseph Hoover, S.J.: "In Closing," by Kevin Pitts, and "Fall Moon," by Andrew Frisardi.

Finally, our Last Word features Sam Rocha on his "five books of summer." (They're not exactly beach reads!)

We hope you enjoy it all. We do these literary issues twice a year, and they always present us with fresh chances to introduce new authors—or revisit old ones.

We have also taken this issue to show our gratitude to our benefactors by mention of their many names in a special insert.

On second thought, I don't need to get rid of these books in my apartment.

Maybe I'll rent a storage unit.

James T. Keane, *senior editor*.



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Nakanoshima Children's Book
Forest in Osaka, Japan
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americamagazine.org 1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Fl.
 facebook.com/americamag New York, NY 10036
 twitter.com/americamag America Press Inc. d/b/a America Media ©2020

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 The Catholic intellectual tradition is
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The Catholic Book Club explores two literary classics

In August of this year, the Catholic Book Club hit a new benchmark for our Facebook discussion group. We now have over 6,000 members. Not bad, considering that three years ago at this time, the group had four members (all editors at *America*). Combined with the Catholic Book Club newsletter, which reaches almost 12,000 readers every week, we have strong evidence that despite many reports of its demise over the past decade, a culture of book reading continues to flourish.

Of course, let us be honest: Most of us have been more or less trapped in our homes for seven months. Thank God for books.

While we try to rotate among different genres in our four selections for the Catholic Book Club every year (from novels to biographies to memoirs to short story collections to poetry and more), our summer and fall selections for 2020 offered two books about the American South by men named John. How did that happen?

But that is the only thing they had in common. Over the summer we read and discussed John Kennedy Toole's darkly comic novel about New Orleans, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, and this fall we are finishing up our discussion of John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me*, a short memoir about his journey through the American South in the 1950s after artificially darkening his skin to appear as a Black man. Both books received critical acclaim upon their initial publication but seem to have lost some of their popularity in recent decades.

Our Catholic Book Club moderator, Kevin Spinale, S.J., wrote several interpretive essays about both books to spur discussion and bring up aspects of each one that might be of interest. While many Catholic Book Club members had read one or both texts in high school or college, Father Spinale was approaching them for the first time, and we benefited mightily from his fresh take and penetrating insights.

A Confederacy of Dunces

Father Spinale noted the dark times swirling around us all during the Covid-19 pandemic, and confessed that “comedy is what I need. But I bet you need some humor right now as well—instead of *The Brothers Karamazov*, instead of *Moby-Dick*.” He also promised that “if you stick with it, this novel will make you laugh spontaneously, without any self-regard and without any need of knowing precisely what is beyond

the pale at this moment in our cultural history. Everything is beyond the pale in the New Orleans of *A Confederacy of Dunces*, and that is what makes the book so darn funny.”

Catholic Book Club members tended to agree, though some found the main character of the novel, Ignatius J. Reilly, to be shot through with melancholy beneath the comedy—perhaps an unconscious reflection by Toole himself on the melancholy of his own life. Reilly's sturdy frame and absurd appearance—including a hunting cap and a bushy mustache—have been memorialized with a statue in New Orleans. “Throughout the novel, he waddles around bursting at the seams in gluttonous sloth and saturated with letters,” wrote Father Spinale, “and, by ‘letters’ I mean that he has stored up in himself words and ideas that make him a truly ‘lettered’ person.”

For some readers, Toole's novel has not aged well. “My chief reaction to the Toole book is shame,” wrote James Speer. “I am ashamed that when the book came out I would undoubtedly have been amused by Toole's mean parody of gay people and his equally mean parody of African Americans.”

For others, the novel kept its magical quality. “I finished *A Confederacy of Dunces* this morning. It was a wild read,” commented Mary Ellen Holm. “What an imagination Toole had! The ending made me wonder if he would have written a sequel if he had lived. It also seemed hopeful.”

Black Like Me

While admitting that John Howard Griffin's memoir made him deeply uncomfortable at times (in part because the notion of appearing in blackface has become unthinkable for most people six decades later), Father Spinale also praised Griffin for his passions. “He possessed some truths about justice, some facts about the furious violence enacted on Blacks in the South, and he was hungry for a fuller truth. His hunger hounded him so much that he was insistent in carrying out this project, even to the point of death,” Father Spinale wrote. “Griffin's unquestionable sincerity, sensitivity to justice and humility in the face of the truth of the experience of Blacks in the South should be enough for us to hear his story with an open mind and reflect on the profound but partial truths that he discovered in his temporary Blackness.”

Griffin's book was more than just an account of a personal journey of discovery. At the time of its release, it de-

stroyed for many readers the illusion that the American South offered a “separate but equal” society where Blacks and whites coexisted in harmony. Rather, the world Griffin reported on was one of visceral hatred of African-Americans, especially Black men, and where life was an endless repetition of insults, hassles and public reminders that African-Americans were to consider themselves second class.

Many readers commented that they had read the book decades ago and were moved once again by Griffin’s stories of the hatred and misanthropic behavior he encountered on his journey—as well as by his reflections on family and hospitality. “I just finished reading it. Supposedly I read it when I was 12 years old and I never forgot it, but rereading it was like I had never read it before. It was riveting,” wrote Beth Cioffoletti. “Even though ‘progress’ has been made with civil rights, I don’t think that we’ve dealt with the deeper problem of racism, prejudice, white supremacy. *Black Like Me* seeks to explore this in ways that few books since have.”

As with *A Confederacy of Dunces*, not all readers found that the book has aged well. “It is likely that the omission of black women from his account was due to his lack of interaction with them, which would have been in keeping with the cultural norms of the time,” wrote Liz Latorre. “However, reading it with 21st-century eyes, the lack of black female perspective and experience is glaringly noticeable.”

In his reflections, Father Spinale noted that Griffin’s Catholicism (he had converted a few years before) permeates the book:

He clearly carries the enthusiasm of his conversion into his writing. Early on in his time in New Orleans, he asks where he might find a Catholic church. He speaks of praying to St. Jude when he is threatened with violence at the hands of a menacing white stalker during his first few days posing as a Black man. He often praised a Catholic openness to desegregation in and around New Orleans, citing his relief that a Catholic bookstore in New Orleans was decent enough to cash his traveler’s checks when no other shop in the city would provide such a service to a Black man.

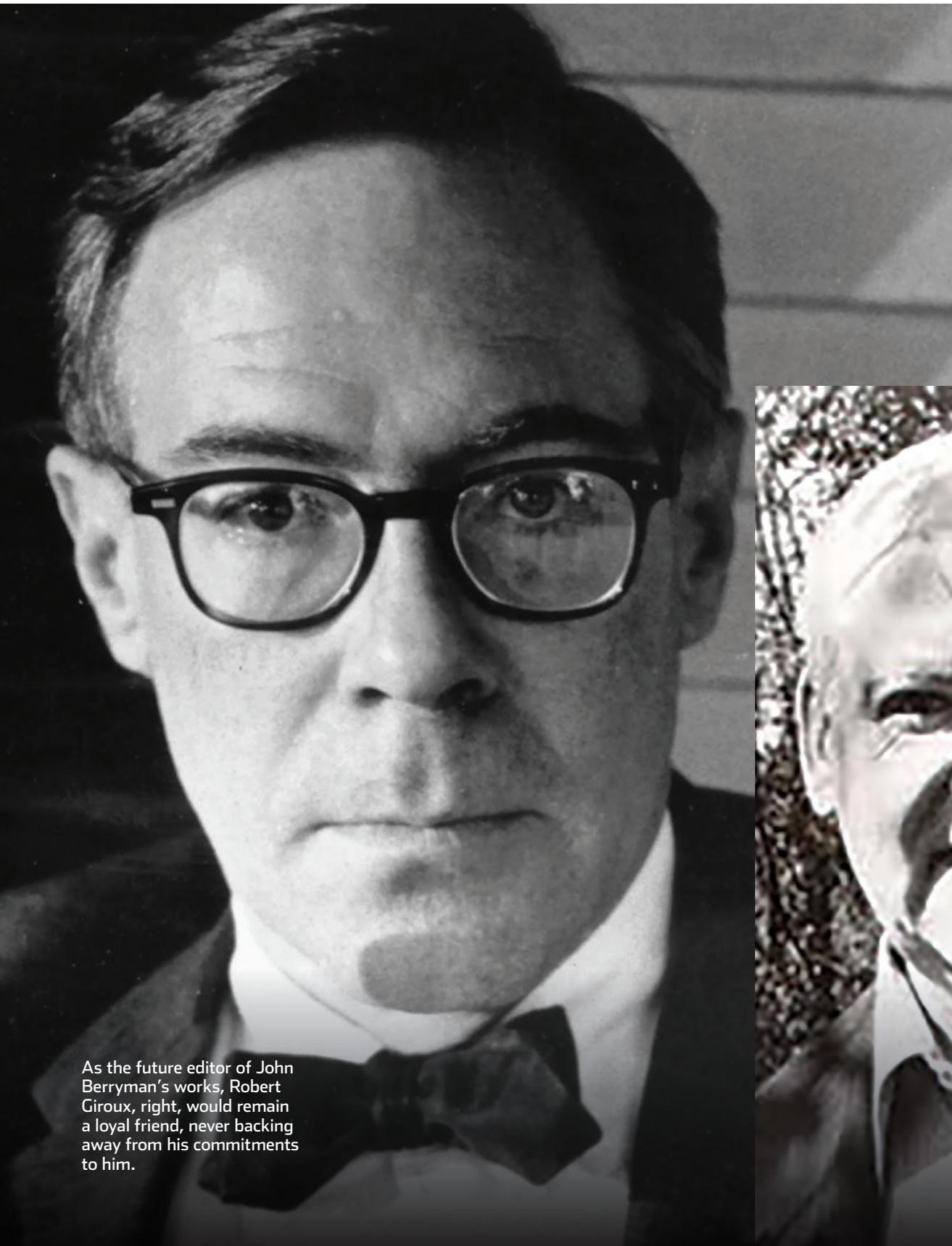
But Father Spinale follows that up with a troubling question: “Does Griffin go too easy on the Catholic Church?”

Was the Catholic Church in the South and elsewhere that tolerant and supportive of Black people and the pursuit of civil rights?”

We are now talking about what our next book should be, and we are always interested in suggestions for what to choose. (Don’t recommend your own book.) Are you interested in reading and discussing with us? Join the Catholic Book Club at americamagazine.org/catholic-book-club or on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/americabc. Happy reading!

James T. Keane, *senior editor*.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Act of Aug. 12, 1970; Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code)		
1. Publication Title: America.		
2. Publication Number: 0169-20.		
3. Filing Date: 10/1/20.		
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly, with 2 Bonus Issues (in April & October).		
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 14		
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$60.		
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10036.		
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Offices of Publisher: 1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10036.		
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor: Publisher: Rosa Del Saz, The America Press, Inc., 1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Editor: Matthew F. Malone, S.J., 1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Managing Editor: Kerry Weber, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10036.		
10. Owner: The America Press Inc., 1212 Avenue of the Americas, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10036 (non profit, non-stock corporation).		
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None.		
12. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months.		
13. Extent and Nature of Circulation:		
	Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Single issue nearest to filing date
A. Total No. Copies printed:	33,021	35,358
B. Paid Circulation		
I. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions:	32,148	32,966
C. Total Paid Circulation:	32,148	32,966
D. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free)	305	219
F. Total Distribution	32,092	35,358
G. Copies Not Distributed	29	0
H. Total	33,021	35,358
16. Electronic Copy Circulation	97.4%	93.2%
A. Paid Electronic Copies	1,666	1,625
C. Total Distribution + Paid Electronic copies	33,814	34,591
D. Percent Paid (Both print & electronic copies)	97.6%	93.5%
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As the future editor of John Berryman's works, Robert Giroux, right, would remain a loyal friend, never backing away from his commitments to him.

New Beginnings for John Berryman and Robert Giroux

By Patrick Samway

How a lifelong friendship led to literary greatness

During the final days of Herbert Hoover's Depression-ridden presidency, as millions of Americans were desperately seeking employment of any sort, John Berryman and Robert Giroux, both 18 years old in 1932, enrolled in Columbia College of Columbia University in Manhattan's Morningside Heights. A few blocks north, Harlem was suffering from a devastating unemployment rate of 50 percent.

In spite of great social and political unrest, not only in New York but throughout the entire country, Columbia found itself protected by the rectangular boundaries of 114th Street and 120th Street, and Broadway and Morningside Drive. It provided its incoming students a place of quiet refuge and heady elitism, inspired by the presence of such distinguished faculty members as Jacques Barzun, Irwin Edman, Douglas Moore, Lionel Trilling, Mark Van Doren and Raymond Weaver. Among all of them, Van Doren, known as a calm and steady mentor, stayed in touch with these two students more than did any other member of the faculty.

Poetry and the works of Shakespeare, beginning with reading and analyzing Shakespeare's plays and poetry in Van Doren's class, as well as editing and publishing essays and poetry in the *Columbia Review*, brought Berryman and Giroux

into close contact. They took every one of Van Doren's classes, including the American literature course in their junior year and the two-semester course on Shakespeare in the fall of 1935 and the spring of 1936. The class read 37 of the Bard's plays, studied in chronological order, in addition to the two major narrative poems, the sonnets and "A Lover's Complaint" and "The Phoenix and the Turtle." This course aimed to transform the lives of the students and open up to them the comic heights and tragic depths of the human spirit.

The Poet and the Editor

After graduation, Berryman and Giroux remained in contact with one another, as Berryman wrote poetry and pursued a career as an academic while Giroux slowly acquired a reputation as a distinguished editor. Neither one expected the setbacks that eventually changed their lives. In March 1955, for example, Giroux, then editor in chief of Harcourt, Brace & Company, experienced the most trying time of his editorial career, which prompted him to leave that firm to join Farrar, Straus & Cudahy as vice president, where he shortly afterward became editor in chief. Giroux's departure from Harcourt, Brace & Company caused him great personal and professional trauma, as he

John Berryman (photo: Dan Lindley) and Robert Giroux (photo: Arthur Wang)

Giroux encouraged Berryman to write poetry during both good periods and difficult ones—even when Berryman went through periods of hospitalization. 🍷🍷

mentions in a letter dated March 27, 1955, to his friend, the historian and novelist Paul Horgan. Because Giroux was Catholic, he was not considered eligible material for the Harcourt, Brace & Company board of directors. “The firm,” he wrote, “was quite content to publish Catholic authors, yes; Catholic money was acceptable, yes, but a Catholic director? No.”

Furthermore, in his three-page letter dated April 2, 1955, to Jessamyn West, another of his authors (known for her collection of stories *The Friendly Persuasion*), Giroux mentioned that he felt the need to resign because of “bigotry and religious prejudice.” He was shocked at being given 24 hours to leave the premises. When he protested that there were a good many items of unfinished business that required his attention, he was informed that others in the firm would meet and review what needed to be done. In short, as he told me in the spring of 1997, Harcourt, Brace & Company afforded him one hour for 15 years of dedicated service.

Literary Collaborations

In early April, Giroux wrote to his close friend and Columbia classmate Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O., at Gethsemani Abbey, Ky., deeply regretting the misunderstanding that occurred during his last weeks at Harcourt, Brace & Company, which resulted in the final corrections not being made in the first printing of Merton’s *No Man Is an Island*: “I am grateful to Harcourt, Brace for having released you from their contract,” he mentioned in welcoming Merton to Farrar, Straus & Cudahy.

Giroux’s unexpected, detailed letter to Berryman,

written on April 27, 1955, reveals his desire to enlarge his stable of writers:

As you may have heard, I have left Harcourt, Brace after fifteen years to join this firm. I had thought my troubles were over when [Eugene] Reynal [vice-president and director in charge of the trade department] resigned last December, but this was a miscalculation; his leaving only confirmed the ascendancy of the textbook people.... In any event, here I am loaded with honors (vice president, member of the board of directors, stockholder) and as excited as Alfred Harcourt and Donald Brace must have been when they left [Henry] Holt in 1919. I’ve known Roger Straus since we were in the Navy together; John Farrar and Sheila Cudahy are old friends.

I want to build up the American list in general (I think our European list has great distinction), and the poetry list in particular. I would like to start with *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet*. I can now sign contracts myself, and there will be none of the Harcourt, Brace ambivalence—editor proposing and management disposing. May I publish your poem.... We are going to do T. S. Eliot’s new play [“The Elder Statesman”] (he staggered me by cabling “I will come along with you”), and Cal [Robert] Lowell has agreed to publish the prose book he is working on [*Life Studies*, winner of a National Book Award].... So come on, and join your friends. Will you wire me collect and tell me we can submit a contract for the Anne Bradstreet; I’ll offer you good terms.

Berryman’s poem is an imaginary monologue by Anne Bradstreet, an important Puritan known for her volume of poetry, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650), though sometimes the narrator’s voice is heard.

In addition, Giroux looked forward to his collaboration with Roger Straus, who came from a privileged background and could count on family financial resources (his mother was a Guggenheim and his father’s family owned Macy’s department store). Straus said that Giroux’s arrival in 1955 was “the single most important thing to happen to this company,” which would eventually be called Farrar,

Straus & Giroux. Once relocated to his new office, Giroux spent a good deal of time communicating with the 17 authors who went with him to his new firm, including T. S. Eliot, Randall Jarrell, Jack Kerouac, Bernard Malamud, Jean Stafford, Peter Taylor and, eventually, Flannery O'Connor.

When Berryman wrote to Giroux on April 30, he expressed his concern about the fiasco at Harcourt, Brace & Company: "It seems to have been a combination, far from ordinary, of ingratitude and bigotry. They are bound to go straight downhill; which, if you feel vindictive, will be agreeable. It is specially pleasing that Eliot went with you. I really think you ought to be proud about this." Berryman wanted very much to sign a contract with Farrar, Straus & Cudahy for the Bradstreet poem, but he was not sure how to do this, since he believed that he was under contract to Viking to publish a book on Shakespeare he had contemplated writing.

Berryman felt discouraged that the most important work he had done to date, the aforementioned poem, which had appeared in *Partisan Review* but not in book form, was both unreviewed and unavailable. "Viking didn't refuse it," he added. "They said they wanted to wait & see (two years ago). But I don't want them to publish it and am not prepared to ask them to. I have no resentment against them anymore, but after what's passed I just can't see an amicable relation...."

As a result, Berryman felt no compulsion at that moment to deal with Viking or write the book on Shakespeare because he was uncertain what would become of it. "I can't get on with anything else with any happiness, because I am not allowed to arrange to publish it. All this is peculiarly exasperating, as owing to my very demanding work here [at the University of Minnesota] this winter, I am finally recovering my energy and peace of mind, from the chaos of the last few years, and am wild to be writing." He felt the best solution was to repay the \$1,000 advance to Viking, but he lacked the financial resources to do so and did not envision having that much money at his disposal for a year, if then.

When Giroux replied on May 2, 1955, he took Berryman's words as a renewed token of their friendship. Giroux pursued his desire to publish the Bradstreet poem as a book by offering explicit contractual considerations that would clear the way for Berryman to continue writing and having his works published by a longtime friend who was trying very hard to understand his pressures and problems. Berryman needed, above all, the discerning guidance that Giroux was offering:

First of all we will advance you one thousand dollars to obtain the release from your contract. We will advance an additional two hundred and fifty dollars so that there will be some further cash on hand. In return we should like to draw a contract for the Anne Bradstreet poem and the Shakespeare biography.... We would want to put the entire advance on general royalty, that is to say, it would be repaid by earnings from any book under the contract. I cannot recall the royalty rate which Viking offered you, but we will offer no less than they, and more if production estimates allow.

Giroux hoped his proposal would be in general agreeable. If it were, it would seem that the first step would be for Berryman to write Viking for a release. "Is it clear, beyond doubt," he added, "that they want the \$1,000 advance?"

Giroux counseled his friend to have their answer in writing. Once he had Viking's letter and Berryman's word to the foregoing agreement, then Giroux would send him a check. Giroux felt that it probably would be best that his name not appear in the negotiations for the time being. "They will doubtless ask who your publisher is to be," he continued, "and they may also ask to negotiate with that publisher directly; but it is really none of their business and, as far as I am concerned, you do not have to say that another publisher is in the picture." Giroux was glad that Berryman had recovered his energy and peace of mind. "It's deplorable that the prohibitive clause in the Viking contract has been such a frustrating matter."

'To Rappel Words from Some Inner Abyss'

A re-energized Berryman revved up, ready to pick up his career as a poet, as explained in a letter to his mother dated May 1: "Courage is what writing chiefly takes, when one has not the habit. Just jump in. Draft, without thought of detail or order.... The two great things are to be clear and short; but rhythms matter too, and unexpectedness. You lead the reader briskly in one direction, then you spin him around, or you sing him a lullaby and then hit him on the head." During these months, Berryman experienced inner peace and consolation, as evidenced in his reply to Giroux of May 5: "I am about evenly astonished and delighted. I can hardly believe it. I feel like a new man."

Later, in writing hundreds of poems for his two-vol-

ume *The Dream Songs*, Berryman did not hesitate, as he had indicated to his mother, to rattle words from some inner abyss, all the while keenly aware that ordinary speech patterns never reveal the freshness and originality of an intended idea. As mentioned in the introduction to Berryman's *Henry's Fate & Other Poems*, the poet and astute critic William Meredith suggests that the poems in *The Dream Songs* give the impression of laughter in the face of humiliation, despair and death—with a dose, one might add, of whimsy and wit that accentuates Berryman's self-indulgent, allusive, unconventional originality that often creates synergies resulting in polysemantic subjectivity.

Berryman accepted Giroux's proposal. In a follow-up letter of May 24, he shared with Giroux the letter he had received from a senior editor at Viking, Marshall Best, indicating that Viking would have been pleased to publish Berryman's books had they arrived on schedule. Because so much time had elapsed since they originally signed the contract, Best was willing to release Berryman from his contractual obligation once the advance had been returned.

Berryman went into high gear now that he understood that Giroux would give him the sure guidance he desperately needed: "So hurrah," he continued in his letter:

I have got intoxicated with the Shakespeare again, since seeing daylight, and have an entirely new view of it; I plan a much more free operation than I did, a book in fact bearing hardly any relation to those stupid old lectures and that boring piece ["Shakespeare at Thirty"] in the Hudson [Review]. I am going to document it to the hilt, at the back, but I mean in the writing, and in the intellectual & emotional design. I think now I am going to spend the whole summer producing an entirely new draft of it. I can do this in about three months I believe.

In his telegram of June 3, Giroux said that he would both repay the Viking advance and draw up a contract for the Bradstreet poem and the book on Shakespeare, which unfortunately was never published.

During those past months, the communication between Giroux and Berryman had been clear, honest and

straightforward. As the future editor of Berryman's works, Giroux would remain a loyal friend, never backing away from his commitments to Berryman; his strength of character helped him to accept Berryman's overwhelming personal difficulties of severe alcoholism and dependency on a variety of drugs. He encouraged Berryman to write poetry during both good periods and difficult ones—even when Berryman went through prolonged periods of hospitalization, which tended to become more and more frequent, creating for him a disturbing series of mentally uninhabitable spaces.

Giroux paid close attention to the unusually heavy revisions Berryman wanted in the late stages of the editorial process, realizing all the time that he was dealing with an exceptional poet.

Giroux sent Berryman the promised check and, in turn, received a signed contract. He agreed not to say anything publicly about the contract until he had received word concerning Berryman's release from Viking. He also wanted, in addition to having Ben Shahn do the illustrations, that the notes for the Bradstreet poem be considered as an appendix, since they would make the poem longer and give the type of pedantry critics all too often relish. On July 9, Berryman wrote to his mother that he had just received the canceled contract from Viking and that all the arrangements with Farrar, Straus & Cudahy were complete.

Notable Writers

Thus began a publishing friendship that lasted up to the time of Berryman's suicide on Jan. 7, 1972, when he jumped off the Washington Avenue Bridge in Minneapolis, which connects two parts of the University of Minnesota campus.

Over the ensuing years, Giroux became a consummate editor with a host of notable writers—including Djuna Barnes, E. M. Forster, William Gaddis, Herman Hesse, R. W. B. Lewis, Walker Percy, Carl Sandburg, William Saroyan, Mary Lee Settle, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Susan Sontag, Derek Walcott, Robert Penn Warren and Eudora Welty, to name but a few—to all of whom he granted his full attention. He thought in terms of the formation, rather than the education, of an editor, as exemplified in the editorial careers of Edward Garnett, who launched Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence and John Galsworthy in England, or Maxwell Perkins, who pub-

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lished F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe at Scribner's.

Giroux believed editing lines is not necessarily the same as editing a book. "A book is a much more complicated entity, the relation and portions of its parts," he wrote in his essay "The Education of an Editor," "and its total impact could escape even a conscientious editor exclusively intent on vetting the book line by line. Perhaps that is why so many books today seem not to have been edited at all.... Editors used to be known by their authors; now some of them are known by their restaurants."

During the Mass of Christian Burial for John Berryman at Saint Frances Cabrini Church in Minneapolis, with the Rev. Robert Hazel presiding, Giroux delivered a moving eulogy. Although saddened by the loss of such an original poet, the mourners could take comfort in Berryman's remarkable literary achievements, including 13 books edited and published by Giroux, including *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* (1956); *77 Dream Songs* (1964), which was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, and *His Toy, His Dream, His Rest* (1968), which won a National Book Award and a Bollingen Prize for Poetry.

To a great extent, Berryman's *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* relaunched Giroux's career, and Giroux's expertise as an editor encouraged Berryman to write and publish as he so devoutly wished. They formed a most impressive publishing friendship.

Patrick Samway, S.J., is professor emeritus of English at Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, and a former literary editor of *America*. This essay is based on material in his new book, *John Berryman and Robert Giroux: A Publishing Friendship* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2020). Robert Giroux received *America's* Edmund Campion Award in 1988.

In Closing

By Kevin Pitts

I told Tinsaye not to clean the juicer yet, she said I was
stupid,
and I said nothing, and silence is will and quiet wanting.

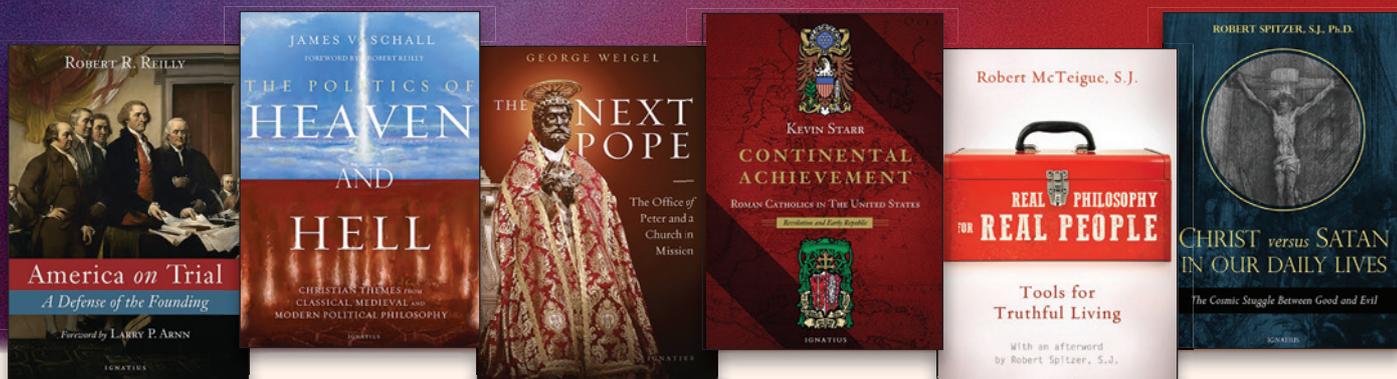
I told John she was difficult, he fired her, and quiet shuts
the door
and silence makes room

She came back to tell me Trader Joe's paid better,
that she in high school earned more per quiet hour than
me at twenty seven

I was twenty five, I didn't say anything, but I felt some
noise
like a window was open, and a car door closed outside.

Kevin Pitts is a writer living in Philadelphia and a student in the Writing Studies M.A. program at Saint Joseph's University.

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THE BARRIER OF YOU

The startling debut of Raven Leilani

By Brandon Sanchez

By her first year of college, Raven Leilani had decided not to pursue a career in painting. Still, the 30-year-old fiction writer says her freshman year in Italy was one of the most artistically influential of her life. She saw the works of the Florentine masters—da Vinci, Michelangelo—and admired their facility for creating hyper-realistic depictions on the canvas. Lines, angles, close study of human anatomy: The precision was startling and a contrast to the work she typically favored.

As a high school student in a rigorous art program, she had been drawn to Impressionism. “There’s something really beautiful to me about the skill it takes to put something on a canvas that is an approximation of a thing, but the viewer still knows what it is,” she tells me. (Leilani has continued to paint in her free time, especially throughout the coronavirus pandemic.)

This tension—between precision and subjectivity, seeing clearly and feeling deeply—marks Leilani’s fiction output. The subject comes up again and again when we speak by phone in the dog days of summer, the morning before Farrar, Straus and Giroux is set to publish her debut novel, *Luster*. Since its publication on Aug. 4, *Luster* has become a New York Times best seller.

A little over 200 pages, the novel feels as clear as a pane of glass and as elaborate as a stained-glass window. *Luster* follows a 23-year-old Black woman, Edie, as she contends with her own artistic coming of age. Edie is a painter in New York City in the 2010s who fumbles her way into a white couple’s open marriage in suburban New Jersey. Strapped for cash, she ends up living in Eric and Rebecca’s house, alongside their 12-year-old adopted

daughter, Akila, who is also Black. What ensues is a series of psychosexual mind games and meditations on art, race, relationships, politics and religion. The novel is dense with social observation and self-analysis. For example: “I believed, like a Catholic or a Tortured Artist, that the merit of a commitment correlates directly to the pain you endure in its pursuit.”

“I started writing a story about a young artist coming up against systemic barriers,” Leilani says, “but also the private barrier: the one that’s just you.”

Born on Aug. 26, 1990, Leilani was raised a Seventh-day Adventist in the Bronx and upstate New York. After leaving her parents’ house, she had a crisis of faith. She is now an atheist.

“Before I left the church was the most pious year I ever had,” she says, “because I was trying so hard. When your primary way of organizing the world—which is God—when the idea of that is gone, you’re rootless. You’re searching for the thing that will perhaps take its place. I searched wildly and everywhere for that nourishment, for that rubric to make meaning.”

To fill this God-shaped hole, Leilani turned to literature and the arts. As an undergraduate, she studied English and psychology. She tells me that she would sit in the back of her pre-med classes writing poetry.

For five years after graduating from college, she worked 9-to-5 jobs, including in publishing, as a delivery person and at the Department of Defense in Washington, D.C. (One of my favorite stories by Leilani, “Hard Water,” draws on her time working for the government.) During this period, she started to write seriously.



Raven Leilani published her first novel, *Luster*, on Aug. 4. It has since become a New York Times best seller.



LEILANI BELIEVES THAT HUMANS ARE INCLINED TO WORSHIP. IT IS SIMPLY HOW WE ARE BUILT. 🍏

“I wrote two books,” she says. “One that was a naked attempt to cash out. Smut sells, smut is great, it’s fun to write. I tried to write a body-snatching smut, and it just wasn’t good,” she laughs. Then she attempted a more serious novel about fandom and music, with which she entered the M.F.A. program at New York University in 2017. Soon she scrapped that book, too, and began to write *Luster*.

At N.Y.U., Leilani’s ear for the music of language—she cites Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl” as a major influence and has a tattoo of the Dylan Thomas line “Do not go gentle into that good night” on her wrist—came up against the need for clarity in her writing. She is a slow writer, she says, prone to tinkering with sentences until the rhythm feels just right. As an M.F.A. student, she had a lot of energy but was so concerned with creating something “original” that, in her view, the work she produced felt pretentious. Professors would point to a section of a short story and ask her to explain herself in plain words.

“And I couldn’t,” she says. “So I started writing with the intention of clarity. I wanted to have the beauty, but I also realized I wanted to write a book that people wanted to read.”

Leilani’s appreciation of beauty appears to be born, at least in part, out of her ideas about devotion. She believes that humans are inclined to worship: It is simply how we are built. Just as Leilani searched for something to sustain herself, so does Edie, who is also a former Seventh-day Adventist. More than anything, she desires to be witnessed, known and loved. But this longing can sometimes lend itself to unhealthy attachments. At one point, she realizes, “I have made gods out of feeble men.”

Toward the end of the novel, there is an exquisite sequence that takes place during Comic Con at the Javits Center in Manhattan:

At my height, the holding pen is principally a parade of armpits and old CO₂, every mage in sight regretting their cape, the city’s moisture pooling into these few dank square feet, everyone rouged and slathered in unicorn spit.

The chapter is animated by Leilani’s own experience attending the convention. In a recent personal essay for *Esquire*, she connects Comic Con and fandom to religious devotion. “My primary belief system had collapsed,” she writes in that piece, “but I missed the communion, the part of both religion and fandom that is based not in isolated practice, but in a fervor to share the good news.” In *Luster*, communion is elusive. At times it can seem impossible.

At the beginning of the novel, Edie works as an editorial assistant for the children’s imprint of a publishing house, handling projects about bullied flounders and Labrador retrievers who work as detectives.

The book’s momentum comes from Edie’s (in)ability to modulate both external threats and her own suboptimal impulses. In the first half of the novel, she sleeps with multiple people in her office, faces consequences at work and gets evicted from her apartment by her party-girl landlord. There is a tactility to Edie’s misfortune that has stayed with me. Almost halfway through the book, having turned to a gig in food delivery, she encounters the following:

A car speeds through a stop sign and I stop short and spill all the bisque. At this point in my career, I can deliver almost any bad news about soup, but when I get to the entrance, I notice that some of the lobster has gotten into my shoes.

Then the customer approaches. It is her boyfriend Eric’s wife, Rebecca. “For a moment I think maybe I can wring out my socks before she reaches me, but it is too late.” The squishy lobster, those doleful socks. Edie admits to Rebecca that she has nowhere else to go. So together they head to New Jersey, and the unraveling begins. (Leilani tells me she loves books that hinge on a psychological spiral seeded by obsession, which is more or less where *Luster* goes.)

The novelist Kaitlyn Greenidge, writing for the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, links Edie to the flâneur tradition. But unlike the middle-class, white male flâneur, who can catalog his surroundings as a detached, unobtrusive observer, Edie belongs to a “precarious class.” As observer and observed, she is usually playing defense. Only through

her art—unfinished self-portraits, paintings of household items—can she wrest autonomy from a society that would deny her such a prerequisite for flourishing.

Yet Leilani never set out to create a long-suffering moral paragon. Rebecca may conceive of Edie as a Trusty Black Spirit Guide who can teach Akila about Black womanhood, but Edie is always self-sabotaging and self-destructing (which is to say, she is a human being). Underlining that point, in one scene Edie strolls past a “Diversity Giveaway” in the lobby of the publishing house, a selection of books in which every protagonist is a flat martyr:

I go up to the table and there are a few new ones: a slave narrative about a mixed-race house girl fighting for a piece of her father’s estate; a slave narrative about a runaway’s friendship with the white schoolteacher who selflessly teaches her how to read; a slave narrative about a tragic mulatto who raises the dead with her magic chitlin pies... an “urban” romance where everybody dies by gang violence; and a book about a Cantonese restaurant, which may or may not have been written by a white woman from Utah, whose descriptions of her characters rely primarily on rice-based foods.

Oriented toward sound and reinforced by humor, Leilani’s sentences accelerate and do a loop-de-loop, like the Six Flags coaster Edie and Eric ride on their first date. That or they are clipped and spare, the circumspect syntax of someone who is watched but never seen. (“I try to be scarce,” Edie says when she fears she has overstayed her welcome at Eric and Rebecca’s.)

“You’re privy to her most private, candid thoughts,” Leilani tells me. “But ultimately, she isn’t articulating that all the time to the people who are around her. She can’t. She’s trying to survive, and surviving as a Black woman involves a not insignificant amount of calculation and curation. And I wanted to speak to the absurdity of that.”

In her review of the book for *The New York Times*, Parul Sehgal wrote that the novel’s figurative language doesn’t always land, that some of the metaphors are too vague, too purple. She cites as an example a passage in which Edie feels guilty for reading someone’s journal in the same way she would feel guilty for overindulging in fettuccini at an Olive Garden. What Sehgal seems to hint at in her critique is the Beat undercurrent that runs through Leilani’s work. When Leilani tells me that Allen Ginsberg was a formative influence on her writing, I nod, because there

is a tendency in *Luster*—thematically and linguistically—to chase moments of rapture at all costs.

“I wanted everything I wrote to have that kind of [Ginsbergian] energy,” Leilani says.

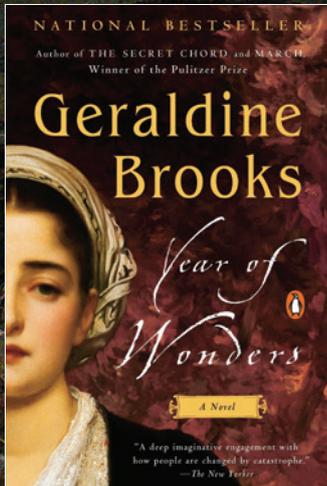
And who wants a literature that shoots for technical mastery at the expense of nutty, sublime ambition? Several months after finishing the novel, I maintain that there is much pleasure to derive from the ornate handiwork. Leilani’s imagination flutters and scintillates like a mirror ball. (Early in the book, at a ’70s-themed club night, Edie observes that “the beauty of disco is the too much.”) Most of the time, her language does succeed. Run-on sentences are interspersed with quiet staccato palate cleansers. And as this is a debut, excesses are forgivable.

“There’s a part of art that is failing, and that’s what Impressionism is,” Leilani says. “An artist’s interpretation is what you see on a canvas. You get to see the fingerprints of an artist.” The fingerprints are what I most enjoy about *Luster*: Even when some of her bits go too far, I am still fascinated by the mind that invented them. Example: the goofy subplot in which Edie interviews for an administrative position with a professional clown who launches into a monologue about “the historic model of the Italian buffoon.”

Ever the Impressionist, Edie wants to leave a trace: to witness and be witnessed, to remember and be remembered. “I wanted to write a young Black woman who is seeking connection and seeking affirmation, like everyone is, of her personhood and her artistry,” Leilani says. “And the weirdness, the jaggedness, of the things we do in service of that.”

Leilani’s Herculean attention to detail—vanilla Juul pods, a nightclub smoke machine producing puffy “orange convex knives,” “Band-Aids and crushed Dixie cups” at a metal concert—is about more than verisimilitude. As Leilani implies at the novel’s end, it is about recording all the world’s beauty and ugliness while one still can. Each clear-eyed observation and lyrical digression is offered up as a salvaged token, evidence that you saw and loved and suffered and felt deeply. To quote Edie: “Proof that I was here.”

Brandon Sanchez is a writer from California and former Joseph A. O’Hare Fellow at America Media. His work has also appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*.



OF PLAGUES AND POSSIBILITY

By Mary Doyle Roche

In a cruel twist of fate, Geraldine Brooks's *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague* had been in my stack of books crying out to be read for months. I had added it to my list of preparations for developing a course on outbreaks, epidemics and ethics. I was not in search of a new case study, but one arrived anyway in spectacular fashion, in the form of Covid-19, and now I am merely on the epidemic bandwagon.

For the first few weeks of the stay-at-home orders, I thought to myself, "Now is not the time for reading about a plague. Bring on the escapist thriller!" Yet I couldn't bring myself to move it to the bottom of the pile. Finally, I decided that there might be no better time—and I was right. This brilliant first novel by Brooks, who would later win a Pulitzer Prize for *March*, gave my imagination a place to go with the fear and anxiety and allowed me to return, empowered and hopeful, to the world in which one crisis seems to follow on another.

Published in 2002, *Year of Wonders* is set in a 17th-century English plague town. Readers experience the villagers' grief and perseverance through the eyes of Anna Frith, a young woman whose losses are almost unimaginable but who nevertheless finds strength not only to serve her neighbors, but also to lead a community through a devastating crisis.

There are obvious resonances with our current context of quarantine and social distancing, though Brooks was even more prescient than I had anticipated from the title. The surprise was the way in which the novel also tapped into the feelings of desolation aroused by scandals of authority in the church and by my longing for women's leadership among the people of God.

The people in the village are unsure about where the plague comes from, how and why it spreads and what they might do to remedy it. Anna, a domestic servant in the local rectory, visits the sick with the local minister's wife. Equally important, she pays attention, observing patterns

of illness and keeping track of the remedies that bring some relief. These two women find themselves learning nursing care and midwifery, and they become intrepid researchers.

At the direction of the minister, the town enters a self-imposed quarantine. Finally conceding that “wealth and connection are no shield against Plague,” only the rich, landowning family makes an escape, leaving their estate empty and all who had faithfully served them without food or shelter. Anna remarks, “And so, as generally happens, those who have most give least, and those with less somehow make shrift to share.”

As the death toll mounts, even the town church must be abandoned for the sake of social distancing. “Do not despair!” says the minister. “For a church is not a building, merely! We shall still have our church, but we will have it in the midst of God’s own creation. We will meet under the ceiling of Heaven.” The fields become the place of worship, and one of the consequences is that what we might now call denominational differences fall away, or at the very least are relativized in their significance.

Some characters in the novel prey on people’s fear and desperation. Charlatans peddle trinkets and spells to protect against the plague that not only fail in their promise but also add to the pain, suffering and ill health. A price-gouging gravedigger becomes ever more ruthless in his theft. Those who have wealth manipulate the rules in order to take more. Those who were always living in poverty and on the brink of ruin do what they need to do to survive.

Anna must also confront betrayal at nearly every turn. Those who should have cared for her and exercised responsibility for the common good of the town instead choose to be self-serving. Some who see so clearly what the Gospel requires in the care of the sick can, at the same time, find no mercy in their hearts to relieve other forms of anguish and instead heap shame upon those in need of consolation. As is the case in our own time, vigilance with respect to “sexual sins” in the context of gross gender inequality borders on the pathological.

In the midst of all the suffering and grief, the signs of heroic compassion and perseverance, and the depravity too, the villagers confront existential questions about the forces that might lie behind the plague. Twenty-first century Christians also ask whether a virus is a sign from God, and if so, a sign of what? For Anna, the questions are unanswerable:

Why, I wondered, did we, all of us, both the rector

in his pulpit and simple Lottie in her croft, seek to put the Plague in unseen hands? Why should this thing be either a test of faith sent by God, or the evil working of the Devil in the world? One of these beliefs we embraced, the other we scorned as superstition. But perhaps each was false, equally. Perhaps the Plague was neither of God nor the Devil, but simply a thing in Nature, as the stone on which we stub a toe.

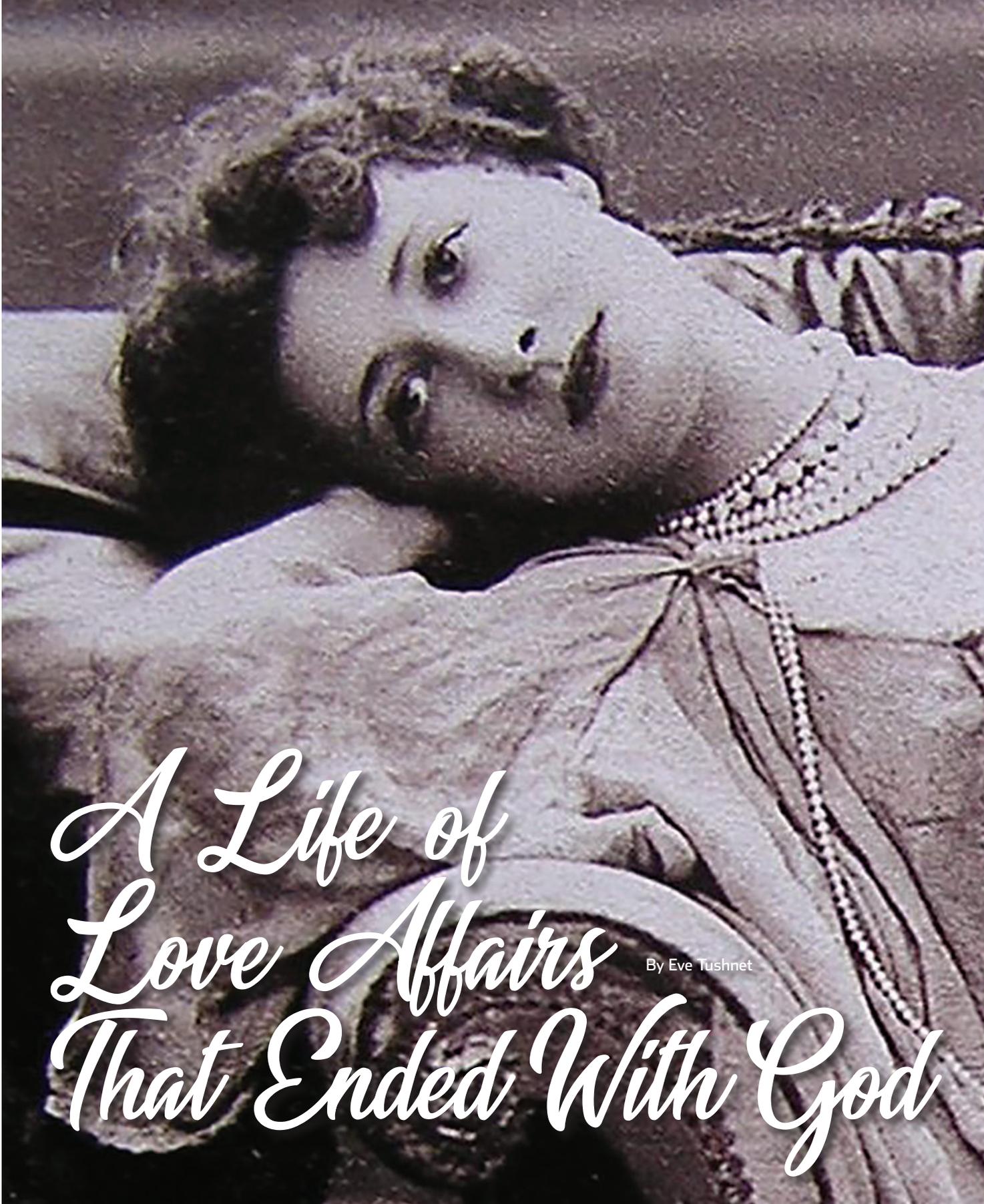
The current epidemic strains faith to the limit, but it also asks us to shift our gaze away from theodicies that frequently comfort the powerful and toward our moral obligations in this moment, which include supporting the best science we have available to us. *Year of Wonders* also prompted me to attend to God’s steadfast presence with those who suffer and ask, “How can I bring the Spirit’s breath of life to those struggling for air?”

This novel is indeed a story of wonder in the sense that the triumphs and the tragedies evoke awe. But it is also a story about wondering, about thinking imaginatively about the problem at hand. Like many women whose leadership is called upon in a crisis, Anna is both empowered and empowering. She will not go back to the old way. And neither can we go “back to normal.” The way things were before may not be possible, and not even entirely desirable. Too many inequalities and systemic vulnerabilities have been laid bare. Anna chooses something radically new. That possibility is open to us today as well.

When we gradually emerge from stay-at-home orders and social distancing requirements, this book can speak powerfully to how many of us might feel—eager and exhausted all at once. It calls us to acknowledge the toll that these events have taken and to be gentle with ourselves, our families, neighbors and coworkers:

At day’s end, when I leave the rectory for home, I prefer to walk through the orchard on the hill rather than go by the road and risk meeting people. After all we’ve been through together, it’s just not possible to pass with a polite, “Good night t’ye.” And yet I haven’t the strength for more.

Mary Doyle Roche is an associate professor of religious studies at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass.



*A Life of
Love Affairs
That Ended With God*

By Eve Tushnet



For Liane de Pougy, life was a banquet, and she took seconds of every dish.

One of the best spiritual books I have read this year is mostly gossip.

Liane de Pougy was born in 1869 as Anne-Marie Chassaigne in a provincial French town, but she longed early for the high life. She married young (and pregnant) but fled her unhappy marriage, leaving her son Marc with her husband. She changed her name, got a job dancing at the Folies Bergère and quickly became the most famous courtesan of the fin-de-siècle—another Helen, conquering a different Paris.

For Lianon (as she called herself), life was a banquet, and she took seconds of every dish. Men poured jewels in her lap and women threw themselves at her feet—de Pougy's 1901 novel, *Idylle Saphique*, is a roman à clef about her affair with Natalie Barney, then the empress of lesbian Paris. At last she was swept away from the glittering world in the only manner that could have been more glamorous than her immorality: Prince Georges Ghika of Romania married her, winning the prize so many men had sought and changing her name yet again—to Princess Ghika.

By 1919, when de Pougy started to keep the diaries that became *My Blue Notebooks*, the height of her fame had passed. De Pougy's diaries are full of drama and scandal, swirling gowns and opium dealers; but another note is creeping in. De Pougy writes with élan about her friends, her lovers and her foes (who are often also friends and lovers). But these anecdotes are punctuated by brief, sincere arias on an unexpected subject: her love of Jesus Christ. Slowly it becomes clear that de Pougy's most intimate relationship was, is and will be with her Lord. In the last decade of her life she became a Dominican tertiary. She was buried, in 1950, in her religious habit.

In her final notebook, de Pougy wrote, "If

anyone thinks that [my diaries] ought to be destroyed, I approve. If anyone wants to publish them, make a selection of these memories which crush my repentant heart—if their publication...in all their horror might benefit some straying soul, I approve." She offers them, she says, "ONLY in the spirit of humiliation." This is a showy self-abasement—and yet when de Pougy writes it, I believe it, because of the glimpses of her heart the diaries reveal.

For most of the diaries' pages, her most characteristic attitude is insouciance. She is erratic and materialistic—she knows this herself, but that doesn't stop her from enjoying it. Her complaints are exaggerated to the point of delight: "My 'Maintenon' dress exhausted me, I was the slave of that white collar which crushes so easily. Lianon! Organdy's victim!" Even as faith begins to soak into her life like blood on a ballgown, she doesn't seem to feel the weight of it. She can do a topless photo shoot in the morning and then pick up her well-worn copy of *The Imitation of Christ* to read a chapter before bed. In an early entry she regales her diary with the story of the confession she made before her marriage to Ghika: "For Liane de Pougy to make her confession must have been quite awkward, don't you think? She polished it off like this: 'Father, except for murder and robbery I've done everything.'"

This is a soufflé faith, and there was no chance it would remain aloft forever. De Pougy's savvy wit—and her awareness of her own dancing intelligence—may have kept her from acknowledging the sins that did not fit her self-image. She cheerfully confesses (and deliciously details) her flightiness, her melodrama, her pleasure in tempting and conquering both men and women, her lax faith, her love of pretty, fancy things. She talks herself out of repentance. After she spends an evening

with two women friends in “delicate, tentative caresses, like inhaling the perfume of a flower,” she writes, “I love my friends. Surely, dear Lord, it can’t be a great sin?” (Two weeks later she records her appreciation for St. Teresa of Ávila’s *Meditations on the Father*.) Any cruelties she cannot confess charmingly do not get acknowledged. She does not notice that her fights with her friend Max Jacob are colored by her distaste for his Jewishness. That disdain only wears away—if it did wear away, and they didn’t simply get sick of fighting with each other—after a long and painful education in suffering.

As early as 1920, de Pougy writes, with the rapt, suffering piety of the French Catholic revival, “I draw my consoling faith from the vanquishing of my strength.” The beads on Lianon’s rosary are carved with familiar scenes: childhood prayers, a devotion to St. Anne, a lost child. Her son Marc Pourpe died a hero in World War I, and de Pougy mourned him all her life. She watched her friends develop drug habits, watched the world forget her and move on without a thought. Her affair with Barney had a tumultuous aftermath; and although the two women continued to see and care for one another for a long time, they grew further and further apart until at last their relationship suffered a decisive break.

Still, the hardest lessons in her catechism came not from her illicit delights but from her Catholic marriage. Georges Ghika was even more tempestuous than his wife—especially later in life, when his drinking damaged his mental abilities. The most painful blow came when Ghika ran off with a friend of de Pougy (with whom de Pougy herself was enthralled), leaving her alone and devastated.

De Pougy begins the process of divorce—a fact reported in *The New York Times*, a testament to her old notoriety. Then the diary skips two months, and when she picks up her pen again, Ghika is back. De Pougy writes that a woman religious to whom she turned for counsel told her to renounce self, do her duty and take back her husband, but what passed between the couple remains private. (Although she does note that they reunited with pleasure in the bedroom!) De Pougy’s depiction of her husband is not flattering. As his mind deteriorates, he spends days in incoherent, cruel ranting; he makes failed attempts at sex that his wife endures rather than welcomes. She is anguished and prays that God will let her die. And yet she is surprisingly tender. She sees her husband as ill and accepts him as a part of her, and so she cares for him. He depends on her. They manage.

In 1928, in the middle of their suffering, they traveled together in the Alps near Grenoble. Here she received not so much “a twitch upon the thread” of faith as a good hard yank. Stopping on a whim at the Asylum of St. Agnes, a home for children with physical and mental disabilities, de Pougy “left that place shaken to the quick, vanquished by the Mother Superior.” After pouring her heart out to the nun, de Pougy visited many times and devoted herself to raising money for the children’s care. Her own suffering and others’ Christianized her, as fossils may turn to opal.

Light-hearted Lianon still shows her face here and there. One late diary entry is a funny, touching, ambivalent tribute to her old lesbian friends: “We were...voluptuous and cerebral little apostles, rather poetical, full of illusions and dreams.” But in 1940 she writes: “The sinner has disappeared, Liane de Pougy of the forty blue notebooks full of iniquity and scandal, lightness, frivolity, intrigue and lies—Liane de Pougy is no more. ‘My God, my suffering at having offended You is extreme.’”

After that, there are only a handful of entries. Ghika at last becomes gentle: “my friend, my devoted companion, my unhappy child.” She gains a confidant, R. P. Rzewuski, O.P., to whom she entrusted her diaries; he wrote the preface to the 1979 edition. And then she puts down her pen. She signs her last entry “Anne-Marie Ghika...the last of the last.” She would die in 1950, after nine years of no writing.

One of the reasons I believe de Pougy when she says she is not eager for these diaries to become public is that she stopped writing them. She had already written less and less as her life grew harder. The long silences that punctuate her reports should be a structural failure in the diaries’ narrative. It should make readers feel that the point of de Pougy’s life lay in the things she wrote about most fluently, the earlier things: the fun. Instead, the silences seem mysterious and protective, indicating a kind of truth that can only be experienced rather than described.

The diaries represented to their author her life as a sinner; when that life no longer interested her, she had no reason to write. But the diaries also show Lianon the seeker. While you are looking for something, you have to write down all the places where you tried to find it. But once you have found it, you don’t need to keep maintaining the list.

Eve Tushnet is the author of *Gay and Catholic: Accepting My Sexuality, Finding Community, Living My Faith and Punishment: A Love Story*.



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The Art of Political Fiction

By Elizabeth Grace Matthew



CNS photo/Larry Nicholson, Reuters/AP Photo/Matt Slocum

Curtis Sittenfeld has written novels about Laura Bush, left, and Hillary Clinton. *Rodham*, her latest, imagines a life without Bill Clinton.

Curtis Sittenfeld’s novel *Rodham* is based on the life of Hillary Rodham Clinton—except that in Sittenfeld’s reimagining, she remains Hillary Rodham.

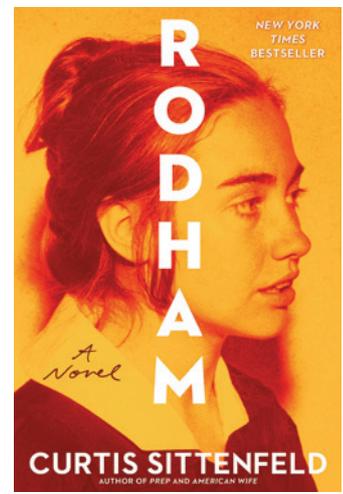
Published in May 2020, *Rodham* is based in its early parts on Hillary’s real life: her modest childhood, her spell-binding speech at her Wellesley graduation and her exciting dalliance during law school with a fellow law student and aspiring Southern politician named Bill Clinton. But in Sittenfeld’s retelling, Hillary refuses to marry Bill because of his chronic cheating and goes on to run against him for the presidency. And (spoiler alert) she wins, becoming the first female president of the United States.

Rodham is engaging, full of the evocative language and keen wit that power all of Sittenfeld’s novels. And it is cre-

ative, rife with the titillation of viewing these most public of public figures in the private lives that Sittenfeld creates for them. But despite all of *Rodham*’s strengths, the book is inseparable from its revealing—and, in my view, depressing—premise: that the imagined Hillary (forever “Rodham”) is a more inspiring and worthwhile protagonist than the real-life Hillary (“Clinton,” going on 45 years, or nearly two thirds of her life).

Rodham’s dust jacket asks, “What would have happened if Hillary Rodham never married Bill Clinton?” In truth, of course, the likely answer is: Hillary would have been a very successful lawyer, law school dean or judge, and most of us would never have heard of her. But the fantasy answer that Sittenfeld offers is that without the baggage

Rodham
By Curtis Sittenfeld
Random House
432p \$28



of public association with an ostensibly regressive and undeniably sleazy Bill Clinton, Hillary Rodham would have been the president of the United States.

In *Rodham*, moral clarity eschews complication. Hence, the Hillary of *Rodham* is boring.

Of course she is, because she has been reduced to the sum of her most oversimplified virtues and permitted only the most ubiquitous and tiresome of 21st-century white-lady vices (she doesn't always check her white privilege). And the Bill of *Rodham* is boring, too. Of course he is, because he has been reduced to the sum of his most oversimplified vices and permitted only the crudest and most timeless of ex-boyfriend virtues (he has extraordinary sex appeal).

But for 40 years, the real-life Clintons of U.S. politics have been anything but boring. That is partly because both Hillary and Bill are unique, brilliant, flawed people in ways that are complicated and confounded by the times in which they have lived. Bill's sexual misdeeds, for example—both known and alleged—are unremarkable when judged against the long sweep of history, in which powerful men have always used and abused less powerful women with relative impunity. It is the changing contexts of Hillary's and Bill's lifespan—the entrance of massive numbers of women into the workforce, the public reckoning over sexual harassment, the “Me Too” movement—which (rightfully!) casts Bill's sexual conduct in a light that is further from “boys will be boys” and closer to “this man is probably a sexual predator.”

It would have been interesting if Sittenfeld had looked at Hillary and Bill through the complex lens of these changing times, if she had imagined and embellished a private life for Hillary to go alongside a Bill that was, as the real Bill has been, simultaneously riveting and enraging. But to turn Bill into a simple villain, a bloviating boor who was “never good enough for [Hillary],” is to undervalue not only Bill's intellectual and political merit, but Hillary's as well.

Sittenfeld has said that people are always asking her whether she thinks the real-life Hillary has read *Rodham*. People seem to think that Hillary would be gratified by the heroic portrayal she is given in Sittenfeld's novel. This leads me to conclude that what always seemed like an unfounded criticism of Hillary for seeming too robotic and not human enough as a presidential candidate was even further off base than I realized. Apparently, she actually wasn't robotic or inhuman enough for us.

After all, in wondering whether Hillary has read and enjoyed *Rodham*, we are imagining her not as a human being, but as a fictional construction who would somehow appreciate the reduction of her life to less than the sum of its parts. We are imagining that she would feel gratified that a sympathetic novelist imagines that she would be a truly great leader. That is, if she had made different decisions, lived a different life, married a different person or no one at all, and not had her daughter or her grandchildren. In short, if she had been a different person.

We seem not to understand that after we have stripped Hillary of what we see as her liabilities, there would be no Hillary left. Human beings are not buffets from which you can take what is least problematic and most convenient, leave the rest and find what you took unchanged. We are more like cakes. You can't extract the flour or the butter after the thing is baked and still call it a cake. Therefore, I am perplexed by the implication that the best we can do is to imagine that Hillary would have been great—if she were simpler for us to understand and explain.

It seems that because of our political and cultural polarization (and because of the self-selected news and social media that make this polarization part of almost our every waking moment), we have created a false and overinflated understanding of ourselves and of those on “our side” as purely virtuous. Simultaneously, we have created a false and overinflated understanding of those on the “other side” as lacking all virtue.

This insistence on purity makes figures like Hillary and Bill impossible to classify reasonably. But if we want Hillary as a pure heroine, we cannot have a human being, full of both unique virtue and sordid vice, giving the keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention at which Hillary was nominated as the first female major party candidate for president (as Bill did in 2016). Instead, we want Bill recast as Hillary's antagonist. Indeed, we need him to be that if we are going to continue to cheer Hillary on. Because anyone who is not purely good by our increasingly extreme and religious understanding of partisan politics must be purely bad.

But reality, like the realistic fiction that Sittenfeld usually produces, is messier than that.

In 2008, Sittenfeld (who has been exploring the human condition in all its confounding complication since 2005's *Prep*) published *American Wife*, a fictionalized account of Laura Bush's life. In the novel, George and Laura Bush are dubbed Charlie and Alice Blackwell, and the storyline of their 30-year marriage is embellished and altered in many ways, even as it follows its real-life timeline and has Charlie serve as president of the United States.

Like *Rodham's* Hillary, *American Wife's* Alice is mostly virtuous and vanilla. But instead of being unsubtly cast as such opposite an unworthy ex-boyfriend who is ultimately vacuous and villainous, she is paired with a husband who is profoundly imperfect yet ultimately lovable. In *American Wife*, Sittenfeld gives us a conflicted interiority for Alice; she is both highly critical of and unwaveringly loving toward Charlie.

Most of Sittenfeld's readers probably disagree with George W. Bush politically (and far more fiercely so in 2008 than now, given the ways in which Bush's popular image has been softened among progressives by time, friendship with the Obamas and the inevitable favorable comparison with Donald J. Trump). And yet Sittenfeld gives us a Charlie Blackwell based on a George W. Bush who is sometimes foolish, yet other times wise; sometimes thoughtless, yet other times insightful; sometimes maddening, yet other times tender.

It was deemed possible, in 2008, to consider Bush a disappointing if well-meaning president and a loving if imperfect man at the same time. After all, for any character to be based on the actual human being that is Laura Bush, rather than on some nonexistent fiction of her, the person with whom Laura spent 30 years would have to be a human being, too.

In 2020, by contrast, our greatest fantasy is to inhabit a world so simple that there is no use for fantasy.

Thus, Sittenfeld was more willing to portray and engage the confounding complexity of George W. Bush in 2008 than she is to do the same for Bill Clinton today. I would wager that this says less about Sittenfeld's understanding of the Bushes or the Clintons than it does about her keen observation of our cultural context, to which popular fiction ultimately answers. Today we do not want to consider popular figures with the kind of insight and sophistication that Sittenfeld masterfully wielded in her

earlier novels. We want to reimagine them as convenient examples of the reductionism and oversimplification that we now insist constitutes reality.

We cannot allow Bill Clinton to be a political genius and also acknowledge that he is an alleged sexual predator, because recognizing that these two things are true at the same time feels unfair. We cannot allow Hillary Clinton to be an extraordinarily competent, accomplished and prepared presidential candidate running against someone who was none of these things and also acknowledge that she ran a poor presidential campaign, because recognizing that these two things are true at the same time feels unfair. We want to live in a fairy tale, in which the good guys are right in every way and the bad guys are wrong in every way, so that we never need to think too hard about anything.

But as every well-adjusted person must learn, human life in this fallen world is not and never will be fair. It is not and never will be a narrowly construed meritocracy. That is why the ability to navigate complexity and resist reductionism is arguably one of the most underappreciated democratic virtues. This is especially true in the realm of art, where politics and pragmatism should always take a backseat to the exploration of and appeal to our humanity.

Of course, both of the real-life Clintons have been around too long and too successfully not to embrace complexity and resist reductionism. Perhaps this is why they are so widely viewed as politically—and now, it seems, even artistically—*passé*.

Elizabeth Grace Matthew works in online education at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

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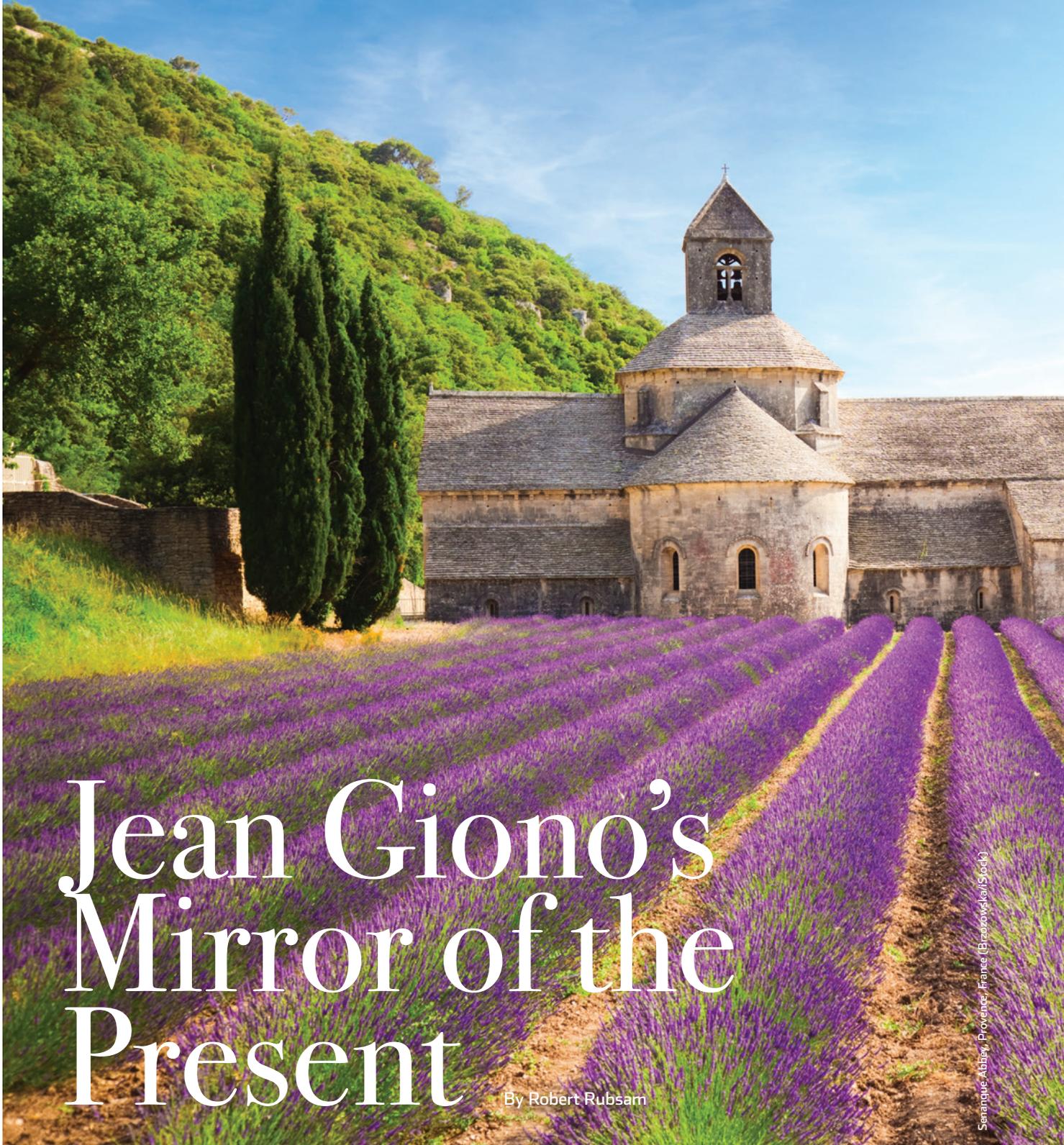
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Jean Giono's Mirror of the Present

By Robert Rubsam

Senanque Abbey, Provence, France (Brazzaville/istock)



Jean Giono was born in 1895, the son of a laundress and an artisan cobbler in the southern French town of Manosque. Though his grandfather had once worked with the father of no less a literary figure than Émile Zola, Giono's was a largely cash-strapped household, and his literary education came from the bargain-priced Garnier Classics editions of Virgil, Homer and Aeschylus, which he would carry with him on walks through the Provençal countryside. As the genesis of Giono's sensibility, the image is almost too perfect: the earthy fused with the epic, imbuing the peasant landscape with high poetry.

But this is the lesser half of the story. In 1915 Jean Giono was drafted into the French army's 159th Infantry Regiment and served four years on the Western Front, fighting in the bloodbaths at Kemmel, the Somme and Verdun, from which only 11 members of his company survived. As depicted in his bitter, fragmented 1931 novel, *To The Slaughterhouse*, Giono's service was defined by repeated and seemingly random violence, a headlong flight from the ravenous jaws of modernity.

Late in the novel, his characters come upon the remains of an English battery: "All around were wheels, fragments of tubes, empty cartridge cases, shells like caterpillar cocoons, disemboweled horses with twisted necks, men with their faces in the earth, black faces biting the sky, a leg, flesh in pulp, the brains of a man on the rim of a wheel."

And through it all, he notes, one cannon continues to fire, oblivious to the carnage surrounding it, its operators walking "over the corpse of the[ir] officer, crushing his face with their boots in order to pick up the shell." His only decoration came from the English, for saving a blinded British soldier from the burning hospital where they were both being treated for poison gas.

Retreat From the World

Giono returned to Manosque a dedicated pacifist, declaring the modern world a cruel joke. He married, had two daughters and retook his position at the Manosque branch of the Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris, a bank where he had first worked before the war. Giono also began to write, first a book of prose poems published by his lifelong friend Lucien Jacques; and then, in 1928, the periodical *Commerce* published his first novel, *Hill*, where it was discovered by André Gide and republished in 1929 by Éditions Grasset.

The novel is set in the remains of a tiny village, "four

houses, orchids flowering up to the eaves," which lies halfway up the slope of the southern Alpine plateau, in "the wind's domain." It is an isolated place, already half-emptied by the brutality of its environment and rendered all the more precarious once its well runs dry and a drought spreads across the landscape. This is a place in which much happens without explanation; and its handful of residents, including the superstitious Gondran and the fool Gagou, contemplate every excuse: a black cat, the evil eye, even a curse from the local paralytic, Janet.

In the story's visceral climax, a torrent of wildfire scourges the countryside, described by Giono as a living organism, a consciousness against which the villagers struggle with all their knowledge of the landscape. By sheer luck they survive, the well begins to bubble, and the perilous existence of the village Bastides Blanches returns to normal.

Hill is a coiled novel, told in pointed, present-tense prose, and is in many ways the prototypical Giono work. Nature is bountiful but unsparing, and only vaguely understood by the sunburned and unlearned characters who inhabit it. There is a push and pull among animal, vegetable and human life that can achieve a kind of pastoral splendor—as in Giono's 1930 work *Harvest*—but more often sparks profound fear in observers. Early in *Hill*, Gondran heads out to clear an overgrown orchard. After waking from a nap, he kills a lizard with his spade. Immediately, nature seems to revolt: "And there: there it is. The wind comes rushing./ The trees confer in low voices."

"While he digs," Giono continues, "it occurs to him for the first time that there's a kind of blood rising inside bark, just like his own blood; that fierce will to live makes the tree branches twist and propels these sprays of grasses into the sky." Gondran's thoughts spiral:

So all around him, on this earth, does every action have to lead to suffering?

Is he directly to blame for the suffering of plants and animals?

Can he not even cut down a tree without committing murder?

It's true, when he cuts down a tree, he does kill.

Suddenly and unavoidably, he imagines the earth as a vast body, alive and capable of crushing him as easily as he crushed the lizard. He recalls an earthquake, and as he prefigures the conflagration that will close out the novel, he can no longer bear it:

The idea rises in him like a storm.
It wipes out all his reason.
It's overwhelming.
It's hallucinatory.
[...]
Earth breathes haltingly.

And, taking up his spade, Gondran flees back to the Bastides, “not even daring to whistle for his dog.”

Interwar Novelist

Over the next decade, Giono wrote a series of similarly pastoral novels, short stories, plays and hybrid works like *The Serpent of Stars*, many of which were very successful—including their film adaptations by Marcel Pagnol—allowing him to dedicate all his time to writing. Several of them were translated into English, gaining Giono a reputation as one of France's leading interwar novelists.

This is perhaps appropriate, as many of Giono's greatest influences came from English, and particularly from the United States. Traces of Walt Whitman's vast, sensual nature can be found in Giono's writings all throughout this period, as can Herman Melville's mythical mysticism. In fact, he and Lucien Jacques collaborated on the first French translation of *Moby-Dick*, a work Giono first came to love in English. He shares a sense of scale with Melville, equally attentive to animal movement and fine shifts of light as he is to the vast sweep of the seasons or of the decades. His narrators are often grounded in a kind of eternal present, where the coach will always run and a certain tree will always stand, moving us by degrees into the uneasy past of narrative.

A King Alone, published in 1947, begins with Frédéric, “who owns the sawmill on the road to Avers,” the same owned “by all the Frédéric's” from his great-grandfather on down. One might almost expect to find yet another Frédéric sawing and planing in Provence today. “There's a beech tree there,” he promises, before dropping us into the 19th century.

In so doing, Giono gives his fictional Provençal countryside a sense of heightened reality, as full of life as William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County and just as fictional. The problems of the past and present intermingle, as do the movements of the seasons with the lives of his characters. This fluid relationship—between the natural and the human—could be considered the crux of Giono's unique-

ly pastoral environmentalism. His characters never exist apart from nature, and the environment is never indifferent to their actions, resulting in a give-and-take that can be rejuvenating but also reactive, even violent.

Harvest centers around the character of Panturle, “a huge man” who is “like a piece of wood walking along.” Panturle's life in a denuded village is transformed by his taking of a wife, as well as his choice to replant the dried-out fields with good Provençal wheat. By the end, life has begun to return to the “small wasps' nest” of Aubignan, but in measure. Nature is not rejected but accommodated.

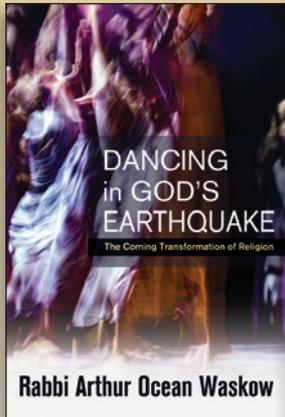
Strikingly Antimodern

This interaction goes both ways. Nature has a way of striking back. The wildfire that closes out *Hill*, or the perverse bacchanal of “Prelude to Pan,” in which a community's harvest festival, and its attendant pride and waste, are deformed by a man whose connection to nature has rendered him almost animalistic.

Giono's environmental outlook could be described as strikingly antimodern. He highly values shepherds and farmers, and scorns officials and representatives of the state. His vision of modernity is clear in his writing about World War I, which he depicts as deeply deranged, a chaos that upends and destroys everything on the front as well as back at home. He rejects all political associations and programs, as if the solutions can grow from the land itself. His faith rests with individuals, often heroic in their lonely pursuit.

Writing in his diary in 1943, Giono remarks on a friend's daughter who studies pottery with a group of artisans in the countryside: “She lives a magnificent life, making her passion her occupation, tracking down the artisans' secrets, the mystery of the glaze, the good—or bad—fortunes of the kiln.... This is exactly the opposite of Industry and the Commune. It belongs to Art and to Individuality.”

In 1939 Giono was imprisoned by the Vichy government for his pacifism—“defeatism,” in their terminology—and again in 1945 for collaboration, though on what grounds was never entirely clear. Giono maintained his strongly antipolitical stance during the war, and his return-to-nature vision certainly found its counterpart in Vichy's own agricultural ideals; but throughout the occupation, Giono maintained a kind of quiet resistance, advocating on behalf of persecuted left-wing intellectuals. In October 1943, he traveled to the concentration camp at Mées to free a Protestant prisoner by the name of Meyerowitz, who had



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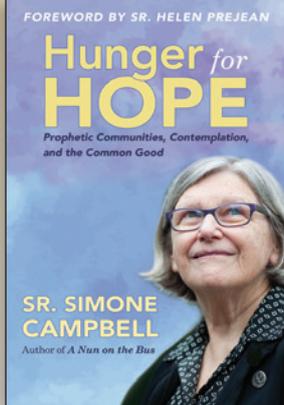
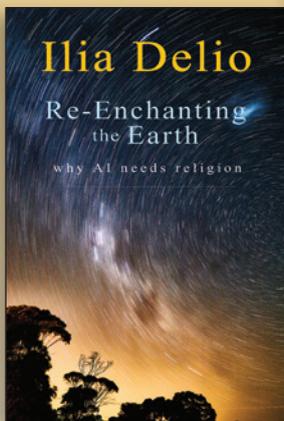
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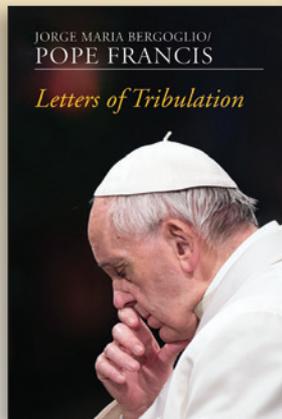
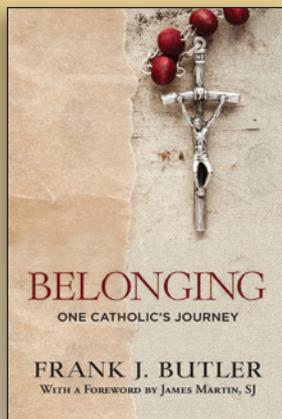
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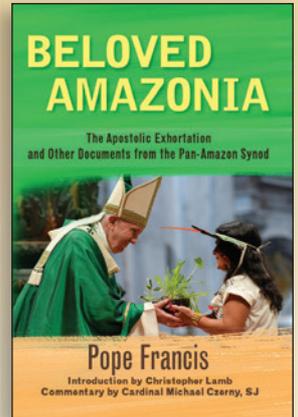
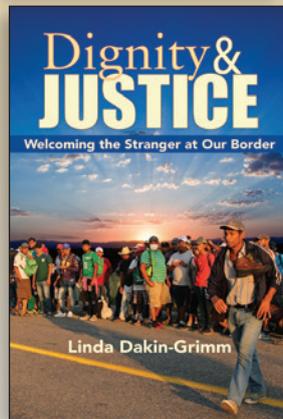
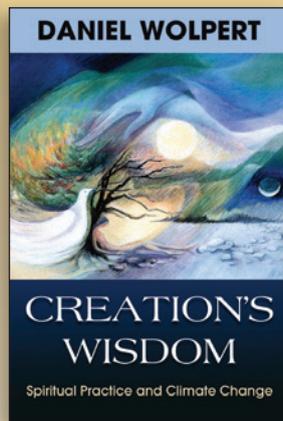
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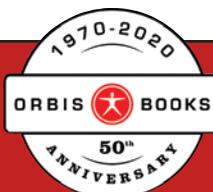
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converted from Judaism, whom he sheltered at his farm in Forcalquier. This has not prevented scholars like Richard J. Golsan from declaring him “ideologically complicit” with the regime, and perhaps they are right.

Giono was profoundly dispirited by the failure of his return-to-nature movement, not to mention the continent’s descent into what he viewed as yet another “religious war.” His views remained stubbornly antipolitical, as if he could refuse to engage with the conflict. “In our modern mechanical world,” he wrote in his *Occupation Journal* (published earlier this year by Archipelago Books), “it’s clearly very tempting to embrace the cause of religious war. It must give one the impression, despite everything, that he is a thinking being.”

After his release from prison, Giono was prevented from publishing until 1947. His first postwar novel, *A King Alone*, was written between Sept. 1 and Oct. 10, 1946, and tells a deliberately fractured story of a serial killer and the gendarme who comes first to stop him, and then to do great damage to the valley, and finally to himself. It is pessimistic in a way that sharply diverges from Giono’s works of the 1930s, giving voice to a kind of communal despair at the beginning of the Cold War. Man destroys first the community, then the world, and then, finally, himself.

A Mirror of the Present

All of which makes Giono’s interwar writings feel like a striking mirror of the present, when continents burn and storms grow stronger and the warming of the earth produces “a new kind of cascading violence, waterfalls and avalanches of devastation,” as the journalist David Wallace-Wells put it in his recent book *The Uninhabitable Earth*. In contrast to writers like Cormac McCarthy, whom Charles Taylor calls “anti-humanists,” Giono finds not indifference but a kind of reaction from the natural world, which is fully capable of rejecting the humans who live in it. Though frequently beautiful, his Provence is a denuded landscape, full of ghost villages and failed settlements, scarred by human hands but frequently without humans to fill it. Take care of the world, he warns, or it might no longer want to take care of you.

Giono belongs to that generation of artists whose experience in World War I led them to re-evaluate the worth of human civilization. But unlike Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Robert Graves, who retreated into reactionary ideology and remote geography, respectively, Giono was not in

search of escape and remained deeply committed for all of his life. Constancy is Giono’s currency, reflected as much in his daily life—as in his 35-year affair with the married Blanche Meyer—as in his fiction.

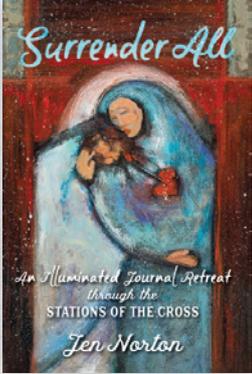
Though his novels frequently star peasants, their wisest characters are invariably shepherds, whose deep familiarity with animal and plant life rarely translates into domination. Their love of the high mountain landscape is not one of possession, but mutual understanding. It is a shepherd whose blessing of a newborn child signals a return from the slaughterhouse of World War I, and their creation play sets the narrator of Giono’s *The Serpent of Stars* back on his way.

And it is Elzéard Bouffier, the herding protagonist of *The Man Who Planted Trees*—arguably Giono’s most famous work—whose slow, steady, intimate labor, those many decades “imperturbably continuing to plant” tree after tree, transforms the “unparalleled devastation” of the Provençal Alps into a green and inviting place, capable of sustaining not only plant and animal life but human life too, villages and fields and families drawn by this one shepherd’s invisible work.

Bouffier defies the drift of nature, the vagaries of politics and the devastation of two world wars and emerges an unassuming hero. When considering this kind of work, Giono writes, “I am convinced that in spite of everything, humanity is admirable.” If we come to know the world, to take care of it on its terms, then it will know and take care of us.

Robert Rubsam is a writer and critic whose work has been published in the *New York Times Magazine*, *The Baffler* and *Commonweal*. He is currently an M.F.A. student at Columbia University.

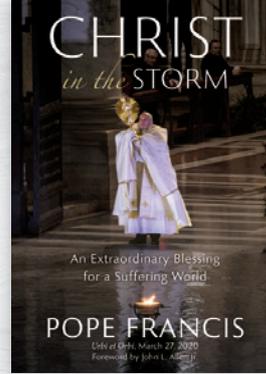
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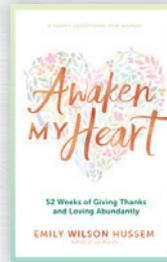
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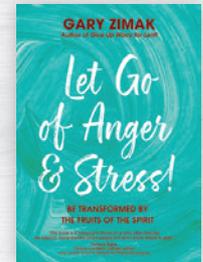
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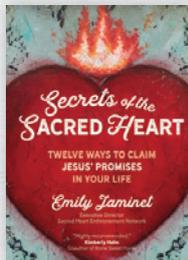
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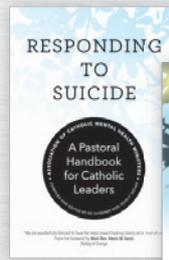
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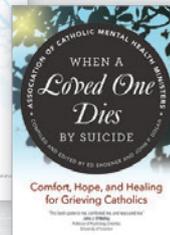
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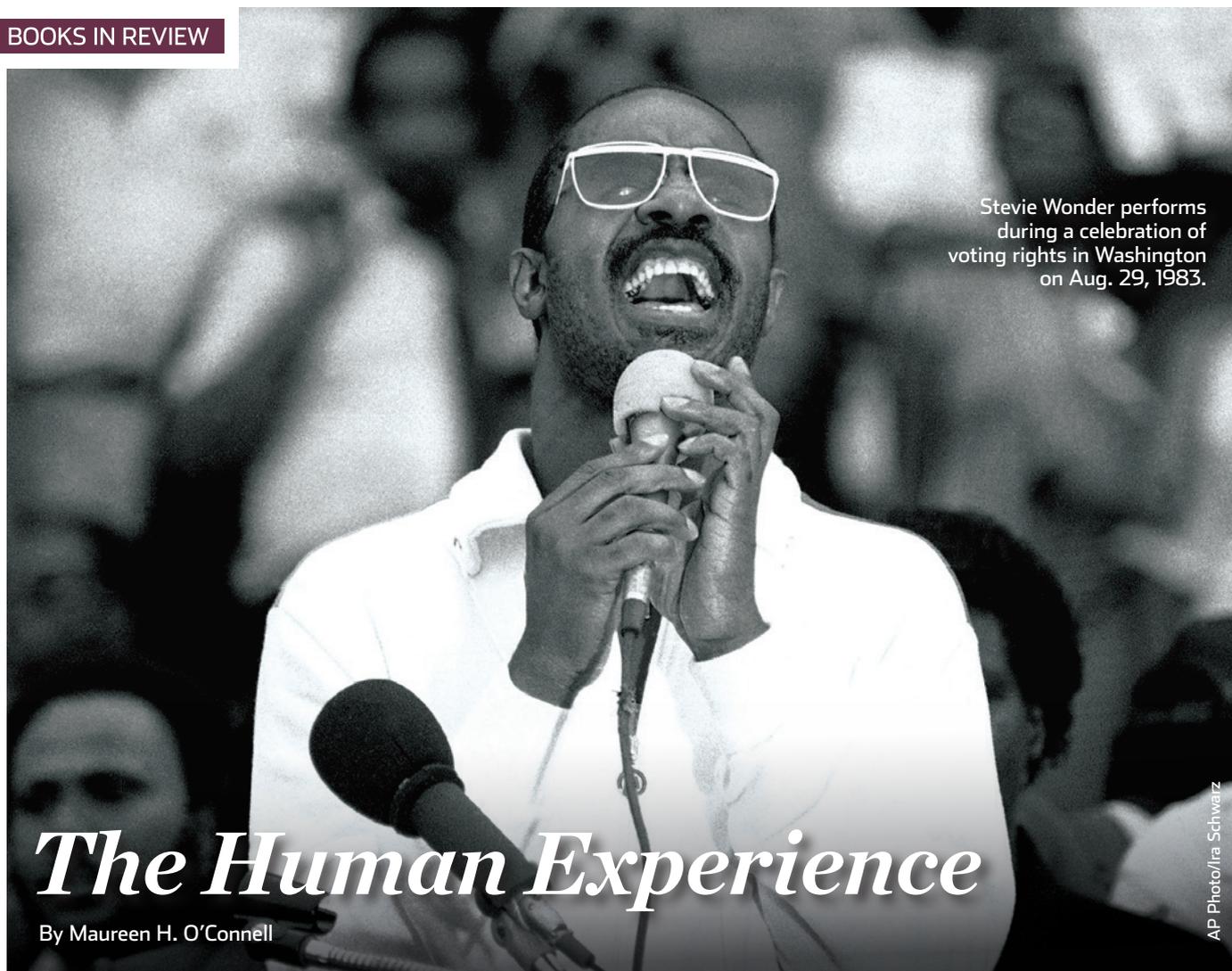
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Stevie Wonder performs during a celebration of voting rights in Washington on Aug. 29, 1983.

AP Photo/Ira Schwarz

The Human Experience

By Maureen H. O'Connell

Christopher Pramuk's stated objective in *The Artist Alive* is to explore the significant questions of life in the creative musings and self-expression of a variety of artists in order to offer "tools for critical and contemplative appreciation." Of course, this is not necessarily new, especially not to him. Given how I reveled in his 2013 book, *Hope Sings So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line*, I anticipated a deliberate and even prayerful approach to the subject at hand. He brings to this monograph that inviting disposition as well as several new strategies of exploration which lend an air of discovery to the subject matter.

Right away, Pramuk identifies himself as a translator. Using familiar methods of interpretation—whether David Tracy's "classic" or Abraham Heschel's notion of wonder or Charles Taylor's notion of the social imaginary—he translates stories germane to the human experience that illuminate paths to the transcendent when communicated through the arts. He features the lives of artists (the world *behind* the text) as well as their creative self-expression (the world *within* the text) in order to summon the reader to consider musical, visual and literary muses for their own journeys of self-discovery and self-expression (the world *in front* of the

text). He translates the biographies of Pink Floyd, Joni Mitchell and Bruce Springsteen in the haunting intonations of their arrangements, songs and voices; or the historical context of apartheid South Africa or pre-civil rights America; or post-9/11 America into the anthems of Peter Gabriel's "Biko" or Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit." To that end, he succeeds in making the book something that stirs the heart and piques the intellect.

Pramuk is also effective as a translator when he weaves autobiographical details about his own encounters with the works he studies into his reverence for them, all of which have affected his own wrestling with ques-

The Artist Alive
Explorations in Music, Art & Theology
By Christopher Pramuk
Anselm Academic
324p \$29.95

tions about being human. He tells us about different points in his life journey when the arts provided critical moments of consciousness-raising, whether as an adolescent or a father of adolescents, as a disciple of Jesus or one who teaches about him, as an adoring consumer of the arts or a reverent participant in the responses they evoke. This imbues the book with the intimacy of spiritual memoir. This was particularly evident in my favorite chapter, on Stevie Wonder's "Songs in the Key of Life."

In his translations of several songs from that album in the key of his own life, Pramuk opened up much-needed space for my own self-critical wonder about the dynamics of racism in my own story. In fact, Pramuk nudged me toward the album with his disquieting observation that "one cannot listen to Stevie Wonder or Kanye West records in the suburbs, pray for peace 'down there' in the city, and consider oneself sanctified." So I wrote this review with Stevie Wonder playing in the background.

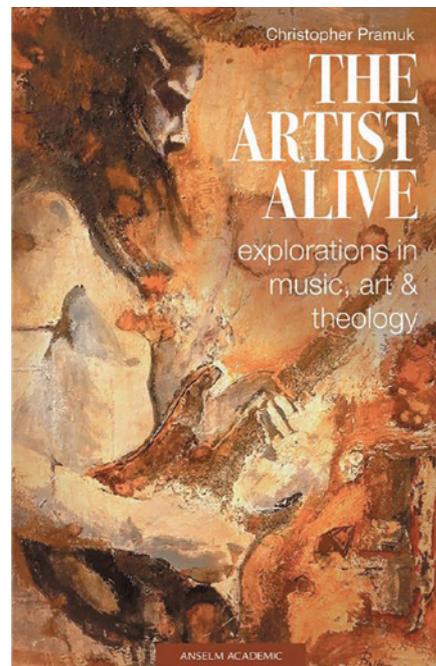
Initially, songs like "Village Ghetto Land" revealed to Pramuk a world "largely hidden" from the "suburban, middle-class, white America" of his youth. He returns to them as an adult for Wonder's implicit critique of "the racially unconscious white listener embedded in his music" in order to see more clearly how perception can limit our capacity for love. Pramuk amplifies this conundrum with anecdotes from Wonder's own coming to terms with his role in naming and condemning racism and with the limits of human love, even while insisting it was the path to a different way of being hu-

man together. And Pramuk shares his encounters with the world to which Wonder summons his listeners. "I've often wondered," Pramuk says, "how strange, sad, and beautiful, that Stevie Wonder, a blind mind, would be teaching me how to see."

Last, and perhaps as a reflection of his pedagogical expertise, Pramuk structures the book around what I like to call the "spoonful of sugar" approach to theological reflection. He arranges the chapters thematically, with the artistic piece—its story and the story of its creator, both told from a variety of perspectives—at the center. I found myself lured into familiar and often dense theological concepts in a wide range of theological genres: aesthetics, liturgy, political theology, ethics. He pairs artists, musicians, poets and filmmakers with theologians: the musician Bruce Cockburn with Walter Burghardt, S.J.; the novelist Jean Giono with Pope Francis; the iconographer William Hart McNichols with Henri Nouwen; the singer Bono with Walter Benjamin.

He also looks beyond the Christian tradition—to Jewish mysticism and the beginner's mind of Buddhism—to help deepen encounters with this creativity. He implicitly defends this method with frequent references to theological insights his students have shared, often directly quoting them. He models for educators how to invite and then reverence the process of consciousness-raising and purposefulness that the arts can evoke and how to make space for it in our lives or in those of others.

For example, in his engagement



with the Indigo Girls and the biblical Song of Songs in Chapter 7, he demonstrates the ways in which the arts are essential for liberating biblical interpretation for people who too often are wounded by narrow interpretations of the same. As an educator who often struggles to find Catholic resources that unequivocally affirm the lived experiences of L.G.B.T. students and consider both their suffering and visions of the "kin-dom" of God through the lens of justice, I found this chapter particularly helpful for doing what Pramuk prescribes at its end. "Perhaps the time has come for straight people of faith like myself to sit humbly and quietly before LGBTQ persons and ask them to share with us, face to face, stories from their own 'book of experience.'"

At times, there were just too many theological luminaries (and not enough women among them). But when I found myself awash in the insight and intonations, I just surrendered to that sensation, because Pramuk is indeed a trustworthy curator and guide. Whole paragraphs read like meditations. And while his selections

also reflect his generational self-understanding, he unapologetically acknowledges as much. I did wonder if the book might resonate a bit less with readers who are older or younger. But Pramuk's appendices give readers, especially those who are educators, the confidence to invite and guide students through critical reflection on artistic expression that speaks to them, if not to us.

In short, Pramuk achieves the goals he sets out for himself in this book. The very act of reading it increased my capability to "linger long and lovingly with the real," his articulation of spirituality. Given the overwhelming uncertainties these days that make figuring out the real—much less lingering with it lovingly—so difficult, this book is right on time.

Maureen H. O'Connell is an associate professor at La Salle University and a board member of Cranaleith Spiritual Center, both in Philadelphia, Pa.

Larger Than Life

"This is a book about a musician's influence on non-musicians," Alex Ross says. That's good, because I am a non-musician.

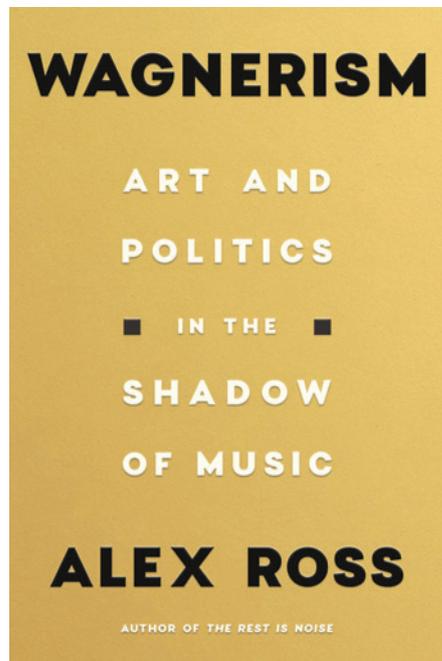
Ross is the premier music critic in the United States, and *Wagnerism* often includes detailed descriptions of compositions and performances. About "Das Rheingold," the opening prelude to the "Ring" cycle, he writes: "Only after 136 bars—four to five minutes in performance—does the harmony change, tilting toward A-flat." I have heard listeners to "Das Rheingold" say the sound is what God was hearing before the Creation. Others, more accurately to Wagner's intentions, say they hear evo-

lutionary forces at work. "It is an emanation of primordial nature, the hum of the cosmos at rest," explains Ross.

Can we comprehend today how a composer's music might fuel anarchy? It did. One of the many illustrations in *Wagnerism* shows the Dresden uprising of 1849 with the famous soprano, Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, a "Ring" performer, exhorting the crowd from a window above the street. Wagner personally fueled revolution, as well. Ross writes: "In a fiery speech...he demanded the obliteration of the aristocracy, the imposition of universal suffrage, the elimination of usury, an enlightened German colonization of the world and, somehow, the self-reform of the king of Saxony." He was arrested in the Dresden uprising and narrowly escaped prison by decamping to Zurich.

Wagner's focus on usury, opposition to capitalism, declarations of evil in the world and his extolling of the virtue of art were done in ways that appealed to many Christians, targeted many Jews and led almost inevitably to fascism. He was also afraid of modernity: urbanization, multiculturalism, the media. When Nazism arose four decades after his death, Wagner's sense of "holy German art" came frighteningly into view. The passion of complex music that had long brought Germans to tears became the soundtrack for violence and barbarity.

Ross shows the effect that philosophers like Schiller, Hegel and Schopenhauer had on Wagner, and then the influence that Wagner had upon Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche served as propagandist for Wagner's ideas in his early published work. He also helped to raise funds to build Bayreuth, a theater-festival venue meant to incor-

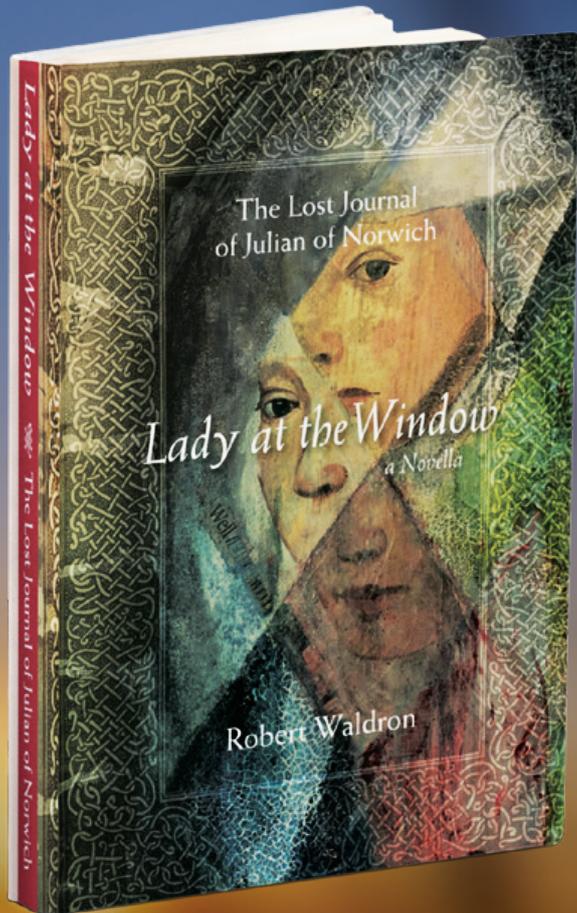


Wagnerism
Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music
By Alex Ross
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
784p \$40

porate the religious ritual of Oberammergau's famous Passion Play and the performances of gods in the ancient Athenian Great Dionysia.

In France, Wagner shed his light upon Charles Baudelaire and the Symbolists, and Paris itself, in the 1860s. Napoleon III commanded a performance of the mythic opera "Tannhäuser," a work that Baudelaire praised using traditional religious language. Other Parisian enthusiasts included Paul Verlaine, Émile Zola and the painter Paul Cézanne. They were all interested in the ritualistic, post-Christian implications of Wagner's work.

In England, Wagner was at the heart of the revival of all things Arthurian. The sword in the stone is one of the motifs in the "Ring." Also, his impact on novelist George Eliot as well



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as upon the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is traced by Ross. Wagner later influenced T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and the work of the Inklings C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien.

Meanwhile, that first Bayreuth Festival, championed by Nietzsche before he rejected the master, was a financial failure, so Wagner contemplated a flight to the New World. What would have happened to his "holy German longings" of rebirth had Wagner landed in New York Harbor? "The image of Wagner in America...might make for a lively historical novel" someday, Ross muses provocatively.

Anyone interested in the Victorian era, the collapse of bourgeois Europe in the early 20th century, the Russian Revolution, World War I, the rise of Nazism and every notion of culture during that time will find much to ponder here. From the chapters on the United States, I found the discussion of Hollywood figures Alfred Hitchcock and Charlie Chaplin fascinating, and on Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now," "captur[ing] an empire in its decadence," an enduring Wagnerian theme, utterly convincing. "There is no path into the twentieth century—for good or evil—that bypasses Wagner," Ross quotes another historian saying.

In the 21st century, Wagnerism lives on in what the author calls "fantasy culture: the increasingly vast body of novels, stories, comic books, films, television series and video games presenting alternative worlds of mythological or legendary character." Think of the "Game of Thrones" books and television series, and the ongoing "Star Wars," DC Comics and Marvel Comics franchises. In them all there is a power of place, mythical

force, unsuspecting novices, questions of lineage and gnostic ways of knowledge that can be traced back to Wagner's epics. Nietzsche declared: "Wagner sums up modernity. It can't be helped, one must first become a Wagnerian." May we survive it. The choice of "Shadow" in Ross's subtitle was right on, for the effects of Wagnerism can be dark, mysterious and ominous.

Ross does not shy away from the legacy of racism and anti-Semitism long connected to Wagner and his devotees. There are hundreds of references, some running for many pages, of Wagnerian anti-Semites and racists. But Ross does not grapple enough with why many Jewish thinkers and artists have appreciated Wagner's art despite the hatred toward them in it. Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism, for instance, found inspiration in Wagner. Great musicians in Israel such as Zubin Mehta and Daniel Barenboim have fought passionately against public opinion for the right to perform Wagner in concert. Ross is himself Jewish, and says he was in college when he too fell in love with Wagner.

This is an interesting time for this book to appear. "Cancel culture" now has a name. I may even be one of its defenders, in that we're at a point when I believe certain issues no longer deserve debate. Shall we deny basic rights to L.G.B.T.Q. people? There are not two sides to this. Are Jews and Blacks less than human, and should they be excluded from society? This is not an "issue" to be discussed. We can pull that statue down. So how could W. E. B. Du Bois, the great Black writer, say of Wagner's musical dramas that "no human being, white or black, can afford not to know them, if he would know life"?

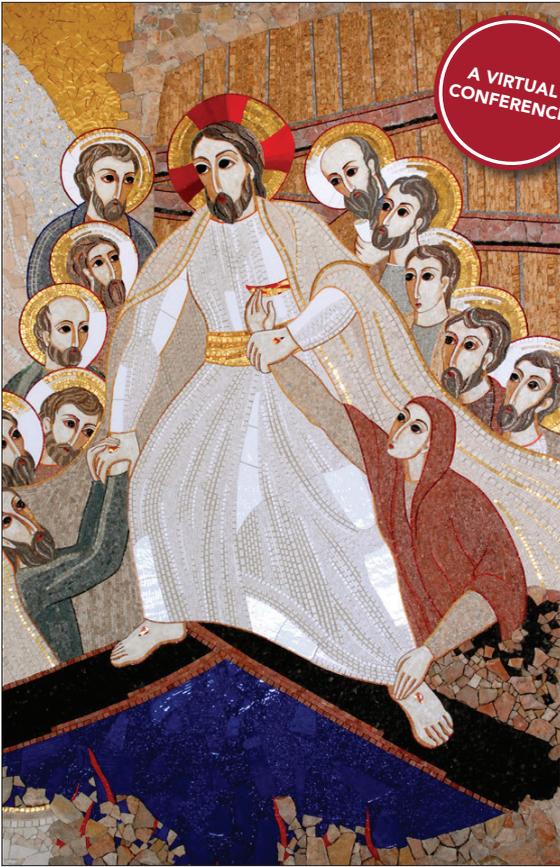
Ross's final chapter, "The Wound," includes this statement: "In the minds of many, Wagner still poses a palpable threat. Could the composer somehow stoke new horrors or rouse some future Hitler? In an age when classical music has a marginal role in mainstream culture, the possibility seems remote." He probably wrote that a year or more ago. I wonder if he would rebuff the suggestion so easily today.

Finally, it is astonishing to read the accounts of the first audiences of "Tannhäuser" or "The Valkyrie" (part two of the four-part cycle, "The Ring") weeping with joy or crying aloud in outrage. "Rapture" was also a common descriptor of what those who were there experienced. What an artist would give today to have an audience care so deeply for what they have created! I suspect it is unlikely to happen in our lifetime, but I also suspect the very possibility is what continues to fascinate many about Wagner's life and work.

Jon M. Sweeney is a frequent contributor to *America* and the author of many books.

Prophetic Writings

"Nothing is free" was Robert Stone's motto in life and work, according to Madison Smartt Bell in *Child of Light*, his new biography of one of America's best but perhaps least-known writers. Stone's motto reflects his and his characters' personal experience of alcoholism and drug addiction. Having read all of Stone's books to prepare for this review, I have to admit that I sometimes had the feeling one gets reading Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees*, when you lose count of how many bottles of wine the



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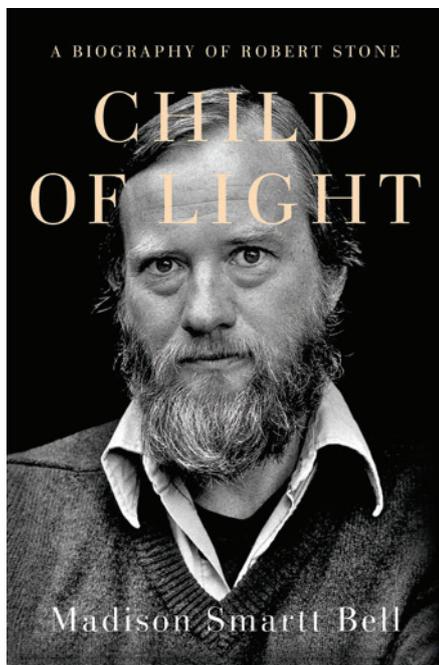


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Child of Light
A Biography of Robert Stone
By Madison Smartt Bell
Doubleday
608p \$35

hero has drunk in the course of the day but don't really care.

The comparison of Stone with Hemingway is not totally out of place. They both wrote about men of action (Stone wrote also, and very well, about women) doing actual things in the real world with real consequences. But Stone was thematically a much deeper writer—deep in the sense of Herman Melville, who said, “I like men who dive.” Robert Stone dove deep in all his literary thrillers.

After reading Bell's masterly biography, one tends to think Stone was compelled to be a deep diver from childhood (both literally and literarily). Born in 1937, he was raised by his mother, a functioning schizophrenic and a New York City public school teacher. Stone never knew his father,

C. Homer Stone, whom Bell calls “a cipher.” His mother told him conflicting stories about his father, but she took care of her son well enough and sent him to a Catholic school in Queens, N.Y., run by the Marists. Stone's memories of St. Ann's, which later became Archbishop Molloy High School, are riven by terror, with an undercurrent of strained gratitude.

The terror was for the beatings he received—including razor strop lashes across the palms. Later he would say in an interview: “The Marists were savage, but in those days I don't know where they stood in terms of savagery—you were always hearing about some order of Irish troglodytes down the road who were actually permitted to use flails.” The gratitude was for their teaching him, to a certain extent, how to write, and for giving him a “realistic” view of the world. In his contribution to a collection of essays titled *Once a Catholic*, he wrote: “It's very hard to escape that take on the world. And when you come right down to it, the world is like that, after all.” Not exactly a stellar recommendation for Catholicism, but Stone's view of the world was pretty grim. His St. Ann's days are portrayed vividly in his story “Absence of Mercy.”

Stone, a top student in spite of his rebelliousness—he stopped going to Mass during adolescence—never finished high school. He joined the Navy, earned his G.E.D., and was able to attend New York University, where he studied under the legendary writer-teacher M. L. “Mack” Rosenthal and met his soon-to-be-wife, Janice. Rosenthal recommended that Stone apply for the Stegner Fellowship at Stanford.

At Stanford, Stone became part of a social group that included Ken Kesey, of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and

“The Merry Pranksters” fame, and he experimented with LSD. He and Janice were very good friends with Kesey and his wife, Faye; and the couples continued to see one another until Kesey's death. But Stone, even at the height of his involvement, was still something of an outsider. Applying W. B. Yeats's dictum that “the intellect of man is forced to choose perfection of the life, or of the work,” I think Kesey chose life and Stone chose art.

Janice, who was described by a friend as “the patron saint of writers' wives,” shopped a portion of Stone's first novel, *A Hall of Mirrors* (1966), to Candida Donadio, who liked what she saw, and Stone's literary career was launched. He and Janice had two children, Deirdre and Ian, and lived in London for four years, from which Stone flew to Vietnam for two months. The experience would help him finish his second novel, *Dog Soldiers* (1974), which co-won the National Book Award in 1975. Stone took a long time to write his novels, usually five to seven years, because, he said, he was a “slothful perfectionist.” He was always working, but it was hard for him to commit to a long-term project. And he was always teaching and traveling (he was a very restless man) and churning out journalistic pieces and the occasional short story, one of which, “Bear and His Daughter,” Ann Beattie considers a classic.

But it was in his novels that he wrote best. *A Hall of Mirrors* is set in New Orleans and involves right-wing politics, civil rights and a tragic love story. *Dog Soldiers* (1974) explores the American experience in Vietnam; *A Flag for Sunrise* (1981) does the same for Central America and is one of the most harrowing novels I have ever read. *Children of Light* (1985), a Hollywood novel, in-

cludes one of Stone's mordant, well-lubricated dinner scenes during which all hell breaks loose. (Stone has a wicked sense of humor that made me laugh out loud more than once.) *Outerbridge Reach* (1992) is his most Melvillean novel, while *Damascus Gate* (1998), set in Israel, is his most overtly religious work. His last two novels, *Bay of Souls* (2003) and *Death of the Black-Haired Girl* (2013), are well worth reading but lesser works.

Bell's biography, as Stone's work did, dives deep itself. Although he and Stone were friends, you never feel that he is pulling his punches. He is honest about Stone's alcoholism, his addictions to painkillers, his acerbic wit and speechifying cruelty. He writes of the work with verve and insight, though the major focus is on the life. My only complaint is that the longish quotes from Janice and other friends often blend with Bell's own words, making for an occasionally confusing reading experience.

That criticism aside, Bell's is a very enjoyable biography. Just as one should read Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* to understand terrorism, one should read the works of Robert Stone to understand "America and Americans" (his self-declared theme), especially the three novels recently published together by Library of America: *Dog Soldiers*, *A Flag for Sunrise* and *Outerbridge Reach*.

Stone's novels are prophetic. He felt in his bones that race and class, war and peace, and America's oscillation between imperialism and isolationism were not going away. Bell argues that Stone's career involves both the American dream and the search for meaning: "The tattered veil of the American dream engaged him in practically everything he wrote. In his engagement with suffering is an echo of his lapsed Catholicism."

He did what he could with what he had, and we are both blessed and warned by it: "Nothing is free."

Franklin Freeman, a frequent contributor to *America*, lives in Maine.

Fall Moon

By Andrew Frisardi

Another winter coming and I'm talking to myself.
I'm setting up my wine and oil on the cellar shelf
In demijohns and jars as relics of my lucky stars.
It's getting late. The more time flows the icier its scars.
I can't tell if I pass through seasons or they pass through me.
I'm pulpy as the ripened fruit on my persimmon tree,
Whose leaves have fallen. In the distance, Mount Soratte's cone
Is floating like an island where the tide of clouds has blown.
A raven grouches past defoliated pylon wire
Across the valley toward the setting sun's sputtering fire,
Which the moon, a hooded vagabond, wields blood-red on a
sickle:
A reaper not as grim as death, or fate, but just as fickle.

Andrew Frisardi's poems have appeared lately or are forthcoming in the *Alabama Literary Review*, *Dappled Things*, *First Things*, *Hudson Review* and in a chapbook, *Death of a Dissembler*. As a translator-editor, he has published *Dante: Convivio: A Dual-Language Critical Edition* and *Vita Nova*.

America

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

What an unprecedented year it has been for all of us! When I left to go to the Holy Land with our 100 pilgrims at the end of February, I could have never imagined not returning to our New York City headquarters and in-person meetings with our hardworking staff.

Despite these uncertain times, there have been many graces and successes for which I am very grateful. Above all, your ongoing support, prayers and engagement with our content across all of our platforms give me tremendous hope!

When we closed our offices in March because of the coronavirus, our dedicated staff members reinvented their workspaces at home so they could continue to work even harder than ever to provide the news, analysis and spiritual resources you needed and wanted. You may have heard additional episodes of the podcasts "Inside the Vatican" and "Jesuitical," while our editors published content to nourish your spiritual needs.

During some of those dark days, my spirits were buoyed by subscribers, listeners and viewers like you, who wrote to tell us that **America** has been an anchor of stability and consolation in their lives, to let us know that they regularly shared our content on social media and among their communities, subscribed to our newsletters and podcasts and continued to read our flagship magazine faithfully.

I was also humbled by the more than 800 donors from 47 states and 20 countries from around the world who gave more than \$120,000 on our anniversary in April to continue to make it possible for us to tell the stories that matter most. We know that our pursuit of the truth is recognized by many, as shown by the 53 Catholic Press Association awards we won in June, which was a record number for us at **America**.

I invite you to flip through the following pages of donor names from this past fiscal year. Many thanks to the 3,500+ donors who made a gift. If you have not yet made your gift to **America**, I invite you to consider supporting our vital work, in whatever way you're able.

Thank you for your generosity and encouragement, and most of all, thank you for believing in our staff this year and always. Your support of our work reaffirms our commitment to you. We could not do this without you. Nor would we choose to.

Be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones, now and always. May there be brighter days ahead.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew F. Malone S.J." in a cursive script.

Rev. Matthew F. Malone, S.J.
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Jose and Maria de Lasa

Reading *America*, copies of which we share with family and friends, helps us understand the Catholic Church of the 21st century, with all its achievements, failings and challenges. A must read for us in every issue is Fr. Malone's column *Of Many Things*. 🍷🍷

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Glenda Castro
America Media Staff

As a longtime employee of *America* I truly believe in what, and who, the magazine represents. I admire the amazing writers who are able to share their faith with our readers, and of course, everyone that I work with.

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America Media's group photo at the Jordan River during the 2020 pilgrimage to the Holy Land, led by Father Martin and Father Malone.

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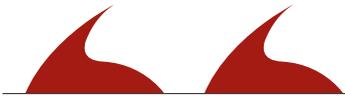
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Mr. and Mrs. Digan • 2014 Indiana

Ms. Sara Diogo Mateus • 2020 London, England

Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Mary Jo DiRe • 2020 Ill.

Mr. James J. Divita and Mrs. Mary Divita • 2014 Indiana

Mr. Philip Doell • 2018 Ohio

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Doherty • 2010 Ohio

Ms. Elisabeth Doherty • 2019 Australia

Ms. Beth Doherty • 2019 Australia

Dominican Fathers Holy Rosary Church • 2020 Texas

Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Donahue • 1998 Mass.

Mr. Jack Donahue • 2019 Wisconsin

Mr. Steve J. Donaldson • 1997 Washington

Ms. Kathy Donnermeyer • 2018 Kentucky

Mr. Douglas Donohue • 2018 New York

Eileen Donovan • 2020 N/A

Ms. Anne Donze • 2019 Missouri

Mrs. Mary Doody • 1993 Pennsylvania

Ms. Nora Doody • 2020 N/A

Mr. John E. Dooley • 2009 Washington

Mr. Peter C. Dooley • 2018 New York

James Dooley and Elizabeth Dooley • 2020 Pa.

Mr. and Mrs. James P. Dougherty • 2010 Indiana

Ms. Cecilia Dougherty • 2018 New Jersey

Pat Dougherty • 2019 Missouri

Ms. Emily Douglass • 2016 Texas

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald E. Dower • 1989 Connecticut

Miyuki Downes • 2020 Hawaii

Ms. Joan Doyle • 2016 California

Dr. Maureen B. Doyle • 2020 New York

Mr. Tom Doyle • 2020 Connecticut

Gerald Dreher • 2019 Texas

Janet and Leo Dressel • 2018 Arizona

Ms. Roberta Drewiske • 2019 Virginia

Rosemarie Driessen • 2020 Oregon

Mr. Michael E. Driscoll • 1994 Connecticut

Mr. F. Paul Driscoll • 2016 New York

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Droste • 2000 Connecticut

Mr. Joseph A. Dubanowich • 2006 North Carolina

Ms. Constance L. Dubick • 2000 Ohio

Jeanne Duell • 2018 Ohio

Mr. Christopher A. Duenas • 2008 California

Rev. Jose Dueno, S.J. • 2018 Massachusetts

Ms. Maureen Duffy • 2016 Ohio

Mr. Terrence J. Dugan and Mrs. Diane C. Dugan • 2014 California

Ms. Barbara Dugan • 2020 California

Catherine M. Duggan and Mary K. Thompson • 2018 Massachusetts

Rachel Duke • 2020 N/A

Mr. Joseph Dulany • 2015 Maryland

Ms. Caroline M. Dulle • 2013 Texas

Mr. Steve Duncan • 2018 California

Sofia G. Dunifon and Teresa Corral • 2019 Indiana

Richard Dunks • 2018 N/A

John Dunlap and Marie Coronel Dunlop • 2020 N/A

Ms. Louise Dunn • 2018 Connecticut

Daniel Dunn and Patricia Dunn • 2019 N.H.

Mrs. Robert C. Durbin • 1995 Indiana

Mrs. Rosemary C. Durkin • 2007 Connecticut

Ms. Sara S. Dwyer • 2019 District of Columbia

Ms. Eleanor G. Dyett • 2016 Vermont

Gigi Jean Eakins • 2019 Washington

Mr. Paul Eason • 2016 Maryland

Ms. Joan Easton • 2019 Minnesota

Christopher and Elizabeth Eckl • 2015 Virginia

Ms. Patricia Edmisten • 2018 Florida

Mr. and Mrs. Laura and Sean Egan • 2019 N.C.

Mr. Brian Egan • 2019 Massachusetts

Mr. Dennis Ehling • 2018 California

Mr. Harry A. Eick • 2007 Texas

Stephen and Jane Eimers • 2018 California

Mr. and Mrs. Kathy & Stephen Elliot • 2015 Iowa

Ms. Susan Elliott • 2017 Alaska

Dr. Edward A. Ellis • 1991 Florida

Mr. William Elsbree • 2014 Massachusetts

Ms. Jane Engelke • 2016 Connecticut

Rev. Paul P. Enke • 1991 Ohio

Mr. Joseph G. Ennis • 2018 New York

Ms. Suzanne Ensminger, C.S.J. • 2018 California

Ms. Kelly Epstein • 2020 N/A

Jim Eraci • 2018 Pennsylvania

Mr. and Mrs. Donald L. Eremin • 2001 New York

Mrs. C.M. Erickson • 2020 Michigan

Ms. Sharon Erkman • 2016 New York

Col. Charles R. Erlinger • 2014 Texas

Mr. and Mrs. William C. Ertmer • 2018 Colorado

Ms. Ana Espina • 2019 New York

Albert Essa Jr. • 2020 Connecticut

Ms. Emily Eubanks • 2018 Texas

Mr. and Mrs. Rod Evans • 2018 California

Mr. Jeffrey Evon • 2017 Washington

Mr. and Mrs. Edward P. Evert Jr. • 2017 Illinois

Eileen Faas • 2018 South Carolina

Brian Fagan • 2020 Pennsylvania

Susan L Faggiani • 2019 New York

Ms. Kelly S. Fairweather • 2012 New York

Mr. and Mrs. John J. Falkowski Jr. • 2019 Delaware

Ms. Patricia Fallon • 2019 Massachusetts

Malachy Fallon • 2019 New York

Ms. Marilyn Falvey • 2017 New York

Ms. Ellen H. Fanjoy • 2019 Delaware

Mr. Roy Fanthome • 2019 Virgin Islands

Mr. Anthony K. Farina • 2010 New York

Mr. Nicholas H. Farnham • 2017 New York

Melati Baybars Farnsworth • 2020..... N/A
 Vincent Farozic • 2019.....Connecticut
 Mr. and Mrs. Mike and Kathy Farrell • 2018.....Ga.
 Kathrine Faulise • 2018.....California
 Mr. Dan Fixel • 2019.....Illinois
 Mr. Bernard Fensterwald • 2018.....Florida
 Rev. Robert J. Fenzl • 2000..... Wisconsin
 Mr. Gary J. and Diane M. Fernandez • 2014.....Illinois
 Deacon Dismas Fernandez • 2014.....Illinois
 Ms. Pilar Ferrer • 2018..... Quezon City, Philippines
 Ms. Ellen Ferrone • 2013.....North Carolina
 Mr. David K. Ficca • 2019.....Maryland
 Eileen M. Figueroa and Dolores A. Verdeur • 2019.....
 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Bruce M. Filak • 1997.....New Jersey
 Joseph Filakovsky • 2019.....Connecticut
 Ms. Deborah Filipi • 2019..... Pennsylvania
 Mr. Howard L. Fink • 2019.....Illinois
 Ms. Josephine Fink • 2019.....New Jersey
 Ms. Catherine S. Finn • 2002.....Texas
 Ms. Maureen Finnegan • 2018.....New Jersey
 Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza • 2010.....Texas
 Colonel Robert and Deliane Firman • 2020.....
Tokyo, Japan
 Mr. Stanley G. Fitzgerald • 1990.....California
 Mr. and Mrs. Edmund J. FitzGerald • 1997.....S. C.
 Rev. J. Terrence Fitzgerald • 1999.....Utah
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Fitzgerald Sr. • 2012..... Md.
 Ms. Eileen F. Fitzgerald • 2019..... Delaware
 Michael David Fitzgerald • 2020..... N/A
 Ms. Mary Ann Fitzgibbon • 2012..... New York
 Ms. Kathryn Fitzsimmons • 2013.....Maryland
 Mr. David Flagor • 2019..... Missouri
 Ms. Norajeane Flanagan • 2020..... Pennsylvania
 Mr. Matthew Flatley • 2020..... Missouri
 Sr. Mary P. Flattery • 2015.....New York
 Mr. Edward J. Fleege and Mrs. Mary C. Fleege • 2012
Minnesota
 Sister Carol T. Fleming, O.P. • 2008..... Michigan
 Mr. Michael Fleming • 2020..... N/A
 Ms. Judi Flisakowski • 2019..... Washington
 Karen Florance • 2019.....New Jersey
 Mr. Jacob Flores • 2019.....Texas
 Joseph Flynn • 2014..... Pennsylvania
 Ms. Cathryn Flynn • 2017..... New York
 Ms. Laurie Flynn • 2019.....Virginia
 Mr. Patrick M. Folan • 2019.....Massachusetts
 Mr. Kevin Foley • 2018.....Ontario, Canada
 Mr. Robert A. Fontenot • 2015..... Washington
 Mr. Joseph M. Formica • 1991.....New Jersey
 Joan M. and Joseph A. Formisano • 2016..... New York
 Rev. R. Adam Forno • 2020..... N/A
 Dr. Eve R. Forrest • 2016.....California
 Mr. George Forsythe • 2020.....Maryland
 Dr. Mary Fox, Ph.D. • 2013.....Minnesota
 Ms. Carol Fox • 2018.....Rhode Island
 Ms. Mary Ann Fox • 2018.....Florida

Melvin Fox • 2019..... Michigan
 Ms. Michelle Franel-Donnay • 2018..... Pennsylvania
 Cynthia Franklin • 2020.....N/A
 Ms. Beth Franzosa • 2019..... N/A
 Mr. Joseph P. Fredrick & Mrs. Barbara B. Fredrick •
 2010.....California
 Ms. Patricia Freeburg • 2018..... Washington
 Mr. Forrest Freeman • 2019.....Colorado
 Ms. Mary R. Freeman • 2020.....Rhode Island
 Ms. Elizabeth A. French • 2018.....Minnesota
 Mr. Brian Frey • 2020.....Maryland
 Ms. Nichole Fromm • 2019..... Wisconsin
 Dr. and Mrs. Frank Frost • 2015.....Virginia
 Lara Fu • 2020.....N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Fueyo • 2002.....Florida
 Mr. and Mrs. Dante P. Fuligni • 2000... Pennsylvania
 Rev. Hugh Fullmer • 1994..... Wisconsin
 Ms. Sandra Fulmer • 2019..... Pennsylvania
 Lewis Gaetano • 2020..... N/A
 Mr. John P. Galbreath • 2020.....Illinois
 Mr. Edward J. Gallagher III • 2014.....Iowa
 Martin D. Gallagher and Ann P. Gallagher • 2019.....
California
 Ms. Suzanne Gallagher • 2020..... Pennsylvania
 Mr. Jacob Gallerano • 2019.....Texas
 Mr. Andrew A. Galligan • 2003.....California
 Thomas J. Galvin and Margaret M. Galvin • 2020.....
New York
 Dr. and Mrs. Efrain Garcia • 1997.....Texas
 Mr. Michael Garland • 2018.....Oregon
 Msgr. Paul V. Garrity • 2017.....Massachusetts
 Mr. and Mrs. Tess and Elizabeth Garvey • 2006.....
Massachusetts
 Ms. Tess Garvey • 2018.....Ohio
 Ms. Lynn Garvey • 2020.....California
 Ms. Maureen Garvey • 2020.....N/A
 Mrs. Dorothy E. Garvin • 2010.....New York
 Ms. Donna Gates • 2018.....Maryland
 Rev. J. Duane Gavitt • 2018..... Pennsylvania
 George Gaydos and Claire Heyndrick Gaydos • 2020
Florida
 Ms. Ruth Gear • 2019.....New York
 Mr. Carey Geghan • 2017.....Florida
 Ms. Mary Gehres • 2018.....Maryland
 Matthew and Martha Geiger • 2004...Massachusetts
 Mr. Eric Geiser and Mrs. Leslie Geiser • 2015...Mich.
 Mr. Christopher Gelke • 2018..... N/A
 Mrs. Muriel Gennari • 2019.....North Carolina
 Mr. Dale Gentry • 2019.....Canada
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul Geraghty • 2017..... Pennsylvania
 Ms. Agnes S. Gerard • 1988.....California
 Ms. Margaret Gerba • 2018.....California
 Ms. Janelle Gerber • 2020.....California
 Br. Thomas P. Gerchak • 2019.....Ohio
 Daniel and Marianna Gergen • 2019..... South Dakota
 Deacon Chris Germak • 2020.....Ohio
 Mr. Paul Gerosky • 2018..... Pennsylvania



Ms. Mary Gerrish • 2019.....Vermont
 Mary Anne Geskie, Ph.D. • 2020..... N/A
 Ms. Dorothy Giammona • 2016.....California
 Catherine Gibbons • 2019.....New Jersey
 Wes Gibson • 2018.....Texas
 Mr. Louis R. Gigante • 2018.....New York
 Monte Giles • 2019.....Washington
 Ms. Dorothy Gillan • 2009.....California
 Ms. Hope Gillespie • 2019.....Illinois
 Mary E. Gillespie • 2020.....New Jersey
 Mr. George B. Gilmore • 2009.....Alabama
 Mr. Thomas J. Ginella • 2016.....Hawaii
 Ms. Jane Giordano • 2016.....Massachusetts
 Mr. Peter Girardot • 2020.....California
 Mr. and Mrs. James Gleason • 2015.....New York
 George Gleeson and Janice Gleeson • 2019.....Pa.
 Ms. Wendy Walker Glen • 2002.....North Carolina
 Dr. and Mrs. Michael Gliatto, M.D. • 2010..... Pa.
 Ms. Nina G. Glorioso • 2008..... Louisiana
 Ms. Mary Monahan Glynn • 2018..... Pennsylvania
 Bishop Dayton Gnau • 2019..... Michigan
 Mr. Michael R. L. Go • 2018..... Washington
 Ms. Paula Godar • 2018..... Missouri
 Ms. Elizabeth J. Goeke • 1987..... N/A
 Mr. Michael Goergen • 2019..... Michigan
 Mr. John Goltz • 2013.....Maryland
 Father Ralph Goman • 2020.....Minnesota
 Mr. Sebastian Gomes • 2020.....New York



This image was one of the promotional elements during our partnered fundraiser - our "Dream Bigger" campaign - with Brooklyn Jesuit Prep on Giving Tuesday last December. The students at BJP are amazing!

Ms. Maria Gonzales • 2018.....Ontario, Canada
 Ms. Lauren Gonzalez • 2018Connecticut
 Mr. Geoffrey Goodale • 2016.....Massachusetts
 Mr. Michael R. Goonan • 2003 New York
 Ms. Vyvian Gorbea-Oppliger • 2020 Michigan
 Ms. Nancy Gordon • 2014New Jersey
 Mr. Bob S. Gorman • 2018.....Ohio
 Michael P. Gorman and Anne N. Goorman • 2019
Maryland
 Ms. Maryann Gormley-O'Connor • 2018 Pa.
 Mr. Jim Graf • 2020..... Kentucky
 Mr. Todd A. Graff • 2009.....Minnesota
 Mr. and Mrs. Arthur E. Graham • 1983..... Kentucky
 Ms. Carolyn Graham • 2019.....Connecticut
 Mr. Michael Grainey • 2019Oregon
 Ms. Sarah Granger • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Jo Marie Grather • 2019.....New Jersey
 Ms. Sheila Gray • 2018 New York
 Ms. Lynn Graybeal • 2017.....Hawaii
 Mr. William J. Green • 2013..... Pennsylvania
 William H. Green and Amanda C. Green • 2020
Massachusetts
 Ms. Diane D. Greenberg • 2018California

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Greene • 2020.....N/A
 Ms. Katherine Greene • 2020..... N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. E. James Greiner • 2012..... New York
 Ms. Elizabeth Griffith • 2018Maryland
 Mr. Thomas Griffith • 2018..... Nebraska
 Mr. and Mrs. Mark Grilli • 2017.....New Jersey
 Ms. Susan M. Grimes • 2014 New York
 Johanna Grimm • 2020..... Alzenau, Germany
 Ms. Maria Grimminger • 2015 Michigan
 Ms. Jaqueline Griswold • 2019.....Indiana
 Mr. and Mrs. Jon Groulx • 2018..... Michigan
 Rev. Wayne Gubbels • 2007Iowa
 Mr. William Guglielmi • 2018.....Florida
 Ms. Mary Ann Guillinger • 2020..... N/A
 Mr. Joseph Gultinan • 2018 Michigan
 Amy Guldner • 2020..... N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. Dennis E. Gullo • 2020.....Florida
 James L. Gumnick and Jean L. Gumnick • 2019.....
 Tennessee
 Ms. Mary Gunelson • 2018 Missouri
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Gunther Jr. • 2018 ...Maryland
 Daniel Gunther • 2019Ohio
 Mr. Amado Gutierrez • 2016.....New Mexico

Ms. Barbara Gutzler • 2018 New York
 Michael Haas and Kathleen Haas • 2019.... California
 Mr. Howard G. Haase • 2018..... Wisconsin
 Mrs. Karen M. Habersky • 2015..... Pennsylvania
 Rev. James A. Hablewitz • 2007 Wisconsin
 Ms. Lauren Hackman-Brooks • 2020..... Washington
 Mr. William J. Hahn • 1997..... Michigan
 Joe Hall and Cindy Hall • 2018..... Nebraska
 Ms. Alice Hallinan • 2018Florida
 Hallisey and Johnson • 2013.....California
 Ms. Anita Hall Anderson • 2020..... N/A
 Ms. Melanie J. Halvorson • 2009..... Illinois
 Dr. and Mrs. Richard Ham • 2018 New York
 Mr. Thomas Hannan • 2019 Missouri
 Mr. Thomas Hanrahan • 2015.....California
 Mr. John Hansen • 2018..... Delaware
 Victor Harbuchak Jr. • 2020..... N/A
 Ms. Jennifer Hardee • 2019..... N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. Stephen U. Harders • 1989.....Maryland
 Ms. Marilyn Hark • 2020..... N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. William A. Harkins • 2006..... N.J.
 Ms. Sharon Harrington • 2006..... Michigan
 Mr. John Harrington • 2019 New York

Mr. Joseph S. Harrington • 2019 Illinois
 Ms. Brenda Harris • 2018 California
 Ms. Brigid Hart • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Kathleen D. Hartley • 2016 California
 Mr. and Mrs. Norton Hatlie • 2016 Iowa
 Ms. Rita L. Haugh • 2008 Minnesota
 Mr. Kevin Haworth • 2018 Ohio
 Stephen T. Hayes and Jude D. Hayes • 2020... Florida
 Ms. Roberta Head • 2019 California
 William Healey • 2019 Massachusetts
 Rev. J. Marc L. Hebert • 1988 Massachusetts
 Mr. and Mrs. Dan and Hebert • 2020 Kansas

Mr. Frank J. Hoffert and Mrs. Geraldine J. Hoffert • 2019 Ohio
 Sr. Mary P. Hogan • 2012 New Jersey
 Mr. and Mrs. David Hogan • 2014 New York
 Mr. Timothy Hogan • 2019 Missouri
 Mr. Thomas Christopher Hogan • 2020 N/A
 Deacon Dennis and Patricia Holley • 2020 N/A
 Rev. David Holloway • 2013 Missouri
 Mr. Ronald Holman • 2017 Massachusetts
 Ms. Judy M. Holmes • 2006 Michigan
 Mr. Bob Holstein • 2020 Iowa
 Jeffrey Holt and Mary S. Holt • 2020 New York

Ms. Emilee Hunter-Maguire • 2018 Nebraska
 Ms. Meghan Hussey • 2018 District of Columbia
 John Huston • 2019 California
 Ms. Christine Hyland • 2019 Virginia
 Rev. John M. Hynes • 1995 Delaware
 Mr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Iannacone • 2018 Pa.
 Mr. Daniel Ilich • 2015 California
 Dorothy and Joseph Infosino • 2018 New Jersey
 Mrs. LouAnne Insprucker • 2017 California
 Ms. Donna Ioppolo • 2018 Illinois
 Ms. Mary Margaret Bea Isaak • 2018 Minnesota
 Dr. and Mrs. Ed Ivancic • 2015 Mississippi



Beth Marren

I was inspired to support *America's* ministry after making the 2020 pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Under Fr. Malone's leadership, the pilgrimage was spiritual and intellectual nourishment for my mind, body and soul and one of the most memorable experiences of my life! 🍷🍷

Ms. Sheila Hegar • 2019 Pennsylvania
 Julia Hegge • 2019 Wisconsin
 Ms. Martha M. Heidkamp • 2014 Ohio
 Mr. and Mrs. Clovis Heimsath • 2016 Texas
 Ms. Margaret P. Heino • 2018 New York
 Mr. G. Matthew Heitker • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Joann Held • 1989 New Jersey
 Robert Hellen • 2019 Minnesota
 Mr. Don G. Hellkamp • 2020 Florida
 Ms. Patricia Helsley • 2019 Virginia
 Rev. Douglas J. Hennessy • 1995 Illinois
 Katie Hennessy and Tim Hennessy • 2016 Oregon
 Ms. Jessica Hensler • 2020 Ohio
 Mr. Eugene Herbert • 2020 California
 Mr. Thomas Herchline • 2020 Ohio
 Mike and Mary Herman • 2019 New York
 Ms. Meghan Hermes • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Lillian N. Hess • 2015 Arkansas
 Mr. and Mrs. James R. Hickey • 2018 Ohio
 Mr. and Mrs. Joe Hicks • 2017 Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. James F. Higgins • 1998 .. Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Higgins • 2014 Colorado
 Mr. and Mrs. William Higgins • 2016 Connecticut
 Mr. Jerome Hill • 2019 New Jersey
 Ms. Marilou Hitt • 2019 Ohio
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hitter • 2019 Massachusetts
 Mr. John G. Hodgson Jr. • 2017 South Carolina

Ms. Janet M. Holzer • 2017 Florida
 Kenneth Homan • 2019 Massachusetts
 Mr. William J. Hopkins • 2006 Pennsylvania
 Sybil Hopkins • 2019 North Dakota
 Rev. William Hoppe • 1993 New York
 George M. Horey and Kathleen M. Horey • 2018.. Va.
 Ms. Patricia Horgan • 2019 New York
 George L. Horishny and Lorna Lee Horishny • 2020 Tennessee
 Ms. Lucille M. Hornby • 2019 Massachusetts
 Dr. Robert and Karen Hostoffer • 2016 Ohio
 Ms. Stephanie Hotard • 2020 N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Houlihan • 2012 Pa.
 Ms. Anne Marie Housel • 2016 Massachusetts
 Deacon Joseph F. Houser • 2012 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Ivan J. Houston • 2006 California
 Dr. and Mrs. James H. Howard • 2002 Nebraska
 Mr. and Mrs. John S. Howell • 2017 California
 Mr. George F. Howlett Jr. • 2006 Wisconsin
 Ms. Ruth Hroncich • 2019 Illinois
 Mr. James D. Huber and Mrs. Mary M. Huber • 2014 Missouri
 Mr. Scott Huizenga • 2016 Michigan
 Samuel and Judith Hull • 2015 Texas
 Ms. Kimberly Humphrey • 2020 Massachusetts
 Mr. Robert Humphreys • 2019 New York
 Ms. Ann D. Hungerman • 2006 Michigan

Ms. Fay R. Jackson • 2018 Texas
 Ms. Courtney C. Jackson • 2019 Louisiana
 Rev. Joseph A. Jacobi • 1993 Oklahoma
 Mr. Robert Jacobs • 2018 Wisconsin
 Ms. Mary Jaeger • 2020 Illinois
 Mr. Timothy P. James and Mrs. Maureen E. James • 2018 Maryland
 Jan Jans, S.T.D. • 2020 Belgium
 Mrs. Patilynn Jansen • 1999 Illinois
 Ms. Joan Jarosek • 2015 Texas
 Miss Christine A. Jarvis • 2007 California
 Paul F. Jenkins Jr. • 2020 South Carolina
 Ms. Joanne Jenovic • 2020 N/A
 Mr. Raymond Jereza • 2019 Nevada
 Mr. John Jerpe • 2019 N/A
 Hye Jin Moon • 2019 N/A
 Katherine M. Johnson and Joan C. Johnson • 2002.. Minnesota
 Mr. and Mrs. James T. Johnson • 2008 California
 Ms. Jennifer Johnson • 2016 Michigan
 Mr. Eric Johnson • 2019 Washington
 Ms. Anita Vela Johnson • 2020 N/A
 Mr. Jeff Johnson • 2020 Florida
 Ms. Gabrielle Johnston • 2020 California
 Dr. Mary Beth Johnston • 2020 N/A
 Mrs. Gerry U. Jones • 1996 Ohio
 Mr. Robert Jones • 2015 Arkansas

Dr. Janice M. Jordan • 2016 North Carolina
Ms. Janet S. Jorgensen • 2020 California
Fr. Methanath J. Joseph • 2018 Texas
Mr. J. Joseph • 2018 Texas
Ms. Natasha Joseph • 2019 Clapton, England
Deacon Dana and Hon. Pat Joyce • 2020 Missouri
Mr. Patrick C. Joyce • 1987 Maryland
Mr. and Mrs. Michael P. Joyce • 2003 Georgia
Gerald P. Joyce and Cheryl A. Joyce • 2020 Calif.
Mr. Tony Judge • 2018 N/A
Ms. Mary Juliano • 2019 New York
Ms. Claire-Marie Kahn • 2019 Oregon
Patricia Kakalec • 2019 New York
Mr. Peter P. Kalac • 2003 New Jersey
Ms. Mary Beth Kamp • 2008 Michigan
Mr. Thomas Kane • 2018 Florida
Mr. John J. Kapp • 2019 New Jersey
Jean Katarincic • 2019 Florida
Gene and Helen Katz • 2020 North Carolina
Mr. Francis P. Kayatta • 2014 Rhode Island
Marieanne and Joseph Keane • 1997 New York
Mr. James Keane • 2017 New York
Mr. Harry A. Kearney • 2018 Florida
Mr. Timothy Keating • 2019 District of Columbia
Constance Keavney • 2019 Connecticut
Rev. Msgr. Patrick J. Keenan • 2006 New York
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Keffer • 2015 N.C.
Karen Kelley • 2019 Colorado
Ms. Claire M. Kelly and Ms. Mary Anne MacDonnell
• 2018 Florida
Mr. Michael Kelly • 2018 Illinois
Mr. James P. Kelly • 2018 Ontario, Canada
Sheila Kelly • 2019 Minnesota
E. Francis Kelly • 2020 Pennsylvania
Ms. Donna Kelly • 2020 N/A
Raymond Kemp • 2020 N/A
John Kendrick and Teresa A. Kendrick • 2020
..... Minnesota
Ms. Beth Kennedy • 2018 North Carolina
Ms. Sheila Kenny • 2020 New Jersey
Rev. Daniel R. Kent • 2004 Florida
Ms. Maria Del P L Kent and Mr. Paul Kent • 2020
..... Virginia
Ms. Janet M. Keogan • 2012 New York
Kristine Keough • 2018 N/A
Mr. Kenn Kern • 2015 New York
Mo Kerr • 2019 London, England
Sr. Marie Kerwin, S.S.J. • 2020 New York
Ms. Ellen L. Kiel • 2018 Maryland
Ms. Ann E. Kiely • 2020 Connecticut
Mr. James S. Kieras • 2018 Massachusetts
Helen Kiernan and Melanie Hannigan • 2020
..... Connecticut
Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Kilduff • 2012 Virginia
Rev. John C. Killen • 2012 New Jersey
Sr. Mary Magdalen Kim, O.C.D. • 2020 Louisiana
Ms. Miriam Kimpo • 2019 Singapore
Mr. Joseph King • 2019 Maryland
Mr. and Mrs. Mary Jo King • 2020 N/A
Mr. Paul E. Kintziger • 2016 Wisconsin
Mr. Anthony Kirby • 2018 Quebec, Canada
Sr. Anne Marie Kirmse • 2019 New York
Mr. Justin Kischefsky • 2015 Maryland
Ms. Mary Kisner • 2019 Pennsylvania
Mrs. Maureen Kizer • 2010 Nebraska
Mr. and Mrs. John and Mary Klaus • 2015 Illinois
Paul and Janice Klaus • 2019 Minnesota
Wilhelmus Klaver • 2019 New York
John P. Klein and Mary K. Klein • 2020 Wash.
Fr. Daniel Klem • 2020 Virginia
Rev. Marvin J. Klemmer • 2001 North Dakota
Ms. Julianne Klesel • 2020 N/A
Mr. James Kline • 2019 Maryland
Ms. Mary E. Klink • 1989 Wisconsin
Mr. Michael Klinker • 2019 Wisconsin
Ms. Ann M. Klocke • 1997 Illinois
Robert and Barbara Klocke • 2018 New York
Ms. Katherine D. Klykylo • 2018 Michigan
Mr. Tom Knauer • 2020 N/A
Mrs. Thomas S. Knight Jr. • 1990 Connecticut
Mr. Peter Knippel • 2018 Illinois
Mr. Joseph Kobos • 2013 Texas
James F. Koenigsfeld • 2020 Colorado
Ms. Annie Kohart • 2018 N/A
Mr. and Mrs. John W. Kopff • 2016 Missouri
Ms. Mary Korchak • 2020 N/A
Rev. Rudolph J. Koser • 2015 Nevada
Ms. Patricia Kossmann • 2019 New York
Ms. Mary Koszarek • 2018 Minnesota
Mr. Edward Kotz • 2018 Florida
Dr. George Kovacs • 2006 Florida
Mr. Walter Kowalski • 2018 Virginia
Mr. Robert Kowalsky • 2018 Wisconsin
Rev. Richard J. Kozak • 2018 Indiana
Mr. Ronald Krajewski • 2020 Ohio
Anne Kravitz • 2020 Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. Roger and Sandra Kreml • 2014
..... Oregon
Sr. Beth Kress, PBVM • 2020 N/A
Mrs. Katherine J. Kresser • 2014 Maine
Rev. Henry Kriegel • 1989 Pennsylvania
Mrs. Debbie Krohn • 2018 Georgia
Mr. Michaelen Kruger • 2020 N/A
Ms. Sandra F. Kuhn, Au.D. • 2014 New Jersey
Mr. Joseph Kulik • 2018 Colorado
Mr. Franz Kuo • 2015 District of Columbia
Dr. A. Peter Kurtz • 2003 Massachusetts
Mr. Scott Kurz • 2018 New York
Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig L. Kuttner • 2006 Arizona
Mr. Gregory Kveberg and Mrs. Mary Kveberg • 2018
..... Wisconsin
Matthew Kyriash • 2018 N/A
La Salette of Enfield Inc. • 2019 New Hampshire
Carl Labbadia • 2019 Connecticut
Mr. and Mrs. Richard R. LaBelle • 2016 Wash.
Shayne Labudda • 2018 Wisconsin
Mr. Gerald Ladouceur • 2020 New York
Hon. James E. LaFave • 2012 Minnesota
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Landfield • 2017 Maryland
Eliav Langbaum • 2019 New York
Jeanne Langdon and Laura E. Strecker • 2018 Mo.
Mr. and Mrs. James T. Langford • 2008 Georgia
Mr. Terence Langley • 2017 Wisconsin
Frances LaNoce • 2019 Pennsylvania
Ms. Mary Ann Lanzetta • 2020 N/A
Ms. Nancy Laskowski • 2020 Pennsylvania
Ms. Janet Lathan • 2020 Maryland
Ms. Elizabeth Lauer • 2020 Kentucky
Ms. Florence Laureira • 2012 Florida
Lt. Col. Bruce B. Lavell • 2012 Virginia
Ms. Mary S. Laver • 2012 Pennsylvania
Ms. Cathy Lavin • 2020 Florida
Mr. Thomas Lawrence • 2019 New York
Dr. John W. Lawrow • 200 Minnesota
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Lawton • 2017 Pa.
Ms. Tawnya Layne • 2019 Oregon
Ms. Margaret M. LeBlanc • 2009 Texas
Ms. Rosa Lee • 2018 Texas
Ms. Theresa Legner • 2019 Wisconsin
Mr. Eric Leis • 2019 Pennsylvania
Ms. Melinda Leising • 2018 New York
Mr. Jeffrey T. Leitch • 2016 Ohio
Ms. Rita Leland • 2018 Oklahoma
Mr. Harold Lenfesty • 2020 N/A
Ms. Anne Marie Leofanti • 2015 Illinois
Rev. Thomas Lequin • 1995 Maine
Sviatoslav Lesko • 2019 New Jersey
Mr. Michael Levins • 2018 N/A
Ms. Rosalie Lewis • 2019 Ohio
Deacon and Mrs. Jack M. Ligon • 2009 Virginia
Ms. Juanita C. Lim • 2013 Michigan
Felipe and Elizabeth Lima • 2018 N/A
Ms. Judith A. Lindbom • 1999 Wisconsin
Ms. Judith A. Linden • 2015 New York
Rev. Frank E. Lioi • 2008 New York
Anne Lippert • 2019 Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Liszkay • 2014 Ohio
Ms. Sandra R. Lizza • 2018 New Jersey
Mr. Louis F. Lobenhofer • 2018 Virginia
Mr. Bob Loftus and Mrs. Mary Jo Loftus • 2014
..... Minnesota
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald V. Long • 2010 Colorado
Ms. Margaret Lonzetta • 2020 N/A
Dr. Nuria Lopez-Pajares • 2009 Pennsylvania
Mr. Tish L. Lorenzana • 2018 Massachusetts
Ms. Judith Lorrig • 2017 Minnesota
Mr. and Mrs. Francis and Mary Lostumbo • 2013
..... Maryland
Ms. Jane Loughlin • 2017 New York
Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lounibos Jr. • 1969 New York
Mrs. Joanne Love • 2014 Georgia
Mr. B. Benjamin Lowry • 2019 Maine
Mr. Guillermo Loyola • 2017 California
Karen Lucas • 2020 N/A

Dr. Thomas J. Ludlum, J.W.C. • 2015.....New Jersey
 Rev. John P. Ludwig • 2005.....Iowa
 Mr. Mark Lukasiewicz • 2018.....Maryland
 Mr. Waltar Lundin • 2019.....California
 Mr. Eric Lundquist • 2018.....Massachusetts
 Mr. Thomas R. Lundstrom • 2012.....Colorado
 Mr. Philip J. Lyman • 2013.....New York
 Mr. James Lynch • 2014.....New York
 Rev. Patrick Lynch, S.J. • 2020.....N/A
 Ms. Brianna Lynn • 2019.....N/A
 Mrs. Dianne E. Lyon • 2001.....Maryland
 Ms. Laura LyonsKarrh • 2019.....South Carolina
 Mr. Matt M • 2018.....N/A
 Ms. Claudia Macaluso • 2018.....Virginia
 Mrs. Ann S. Mack • 2018.....Maryland
 Mr. Kelvin L. MacKavanagh • 1998.....New Jersey
 Ms. Kristina Mackenzie • 2020.....N/A
 Mr. Paul F. Mackey • 1993.....Nevada
 A. Maureen MacLean • 2020.....British Columbia
 Mr. Tracey MacLennan • 2018.....N/A
 Rev. James Macnew • 2020.....Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. Stephen C. and Patricia J. Macy • 2016
Texas
 Mr. and Mrs. John Madden Jr. • 1990.....Illinois
 Mr. Edward Madden • 1993.....Pennsylvania
 Mr. Samir Madden • 2018.....Arizona
 Thomas Mader • 2019.....California
 Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Madigan • 2017.....Colorado
 Liz Magallanes • 2020.....Texas
 Ms. Elise Magatova • 2018.....NSW
 Mr. Emanuel Magro • 2017.....Maryland
 Mr. and Mrs. James V. Maher • 1993.....Pennsylvania
 Ms. Anne D. Mahoney • 2018.....N/A
 Catherine Mais and Larry Mais • 2020.....Illinois
 Dr. Gabriel M. Makhlof • 2016.....Virginia
 Ms. Cathleen Makley • 2019.....Georgia
 Mr. Kim Makuch • 2018.....N/A
 Mr. Delbert J. Malin • 2012.....Wisconsin
 Ed Malley and Lisa Raacke, M.D. • 2020.....N/A
 Timothy John Malloy and Martha Anne Malloy •
 2020.....Wisconsin
 Ms. Kay L. Mally • 2019.....Wisconsin
 Ms. Caroline Maloney • 2018.....Alberta, Canada
 Ms. Helen Manaras • 1990.....Montana
 Ms. Eileen Mangiacapre • 2019.....New York
 Margaret M. Mangieri and Louis Mangieri • 2020.....
New York
 Mr. Stephen Mango • 2019.....Virginia
 Ms. Ann Mangone • 2020.....New York
 Ms. Lisa Manico • 2018.....New York
 Sr. Margaret Manion • 2018.....Ohio
 Ms. Amanda Manning • 2018.....South Carolina
 Ms. Helen S. Manogue • 2019.....California
 Mary Mantelli • 2019.....New York
 Ms. Janaan Manternach • 2013.....Iowa
 Ms. Melissa Marchese • 2019.....California
 Ms. Caroline D. Marcotte • 2018.....Maryland
 Brad and Margaret Marcouiller • 2020.....N/A
 Mr. Jay Marduck • 2019.....Cebu, Philippines
 Mr. James Maresca • 2019.....New York
 Mr. Ken Mark • 2018.....Kansas
 Mrs. Joseph Marnett Jr • 2020.....Kansas
 Rev. James T. Marsh • 2018.....New York
 Ann and Dennis Marvin • 2020.....New Jersey
 Mr. James J. Marshall • 2003.....Rhode Island
 Mr. Joseph G. L. Marston and Martha T. Marston •
 2018.....Alabama
 Mr. Richard Marth • 2018.....Michigan
 Mr. Rick Martija • 2018.....Maryland
 Victor and Katherine Martin • 2008.....S.C.
 Ms. Marilyn Martin • 2015.....Arizona
 Ms. Kathleen Martin • 2019.....California
 Mr. Victor Martin • 2019.....Massachusetts
 Ms. Susan Martin • 2019.....Missouri
 Ms. Rosemary Marto • 2020.....Washington
 Rosemary Marusak • 2019.....Wisconsin
 Andrew Weigert and Kathleen Mass Weigert • 2020
N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. Eugene & Dorothy Matern • 2015.....
Illinois
 Ms. Mary Mattingly • 2019.....Nebraska
 Mr. and Mrs. Jan P. Matusak • 2020.....N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. John W. Maulhardt • 2020.....California
 Mr. and Mrs. Arthur W. Maurer • 2010.....New York
 Mr. Paul Max • 2018.....Colorado
 Ms. Elizabeth Mayr • 2018.....Maryland
 Ms. Patricia Mazzeo • 2018.....California
 Mr. Robert McAdams Jr. • 2003.....California
 Ms. Mildred McCafferty • 2019.....Oregon
 Mr. Jonathan McCallum • 2020.....N/A
 Mr. Kevin W. McCanna • 2017.....Illinois
 Ms. Mary E. McCarthy • 2018.....New Jersey
 Mr. Robert McCarthy • 2019.....Texas
 Ms. Mary McCarthy • 2019.....New York
 Ms. Lori McClelland • 2020.....N/A
 Mr. James J. McConnell • 2003.....New York
 Ms. Marie McConnell • 2012.....New York
 Mr. Jim McConnell • 2020.....N/A
 Ms. Catherine McCordick • 2019.....New York
 Ms. Frances McCormick • 1997.....New York
 Ms. Mary Ann McCoy • 2020.....N/A
 Susan Mccracken • 2019.....Missouri
 Rev. Justin McCreedy • 2018.....Washington
 Mr. John McDermott • 2005.....Illinois
 Mr. Philip McDermott • 2017.....Ohio
 Mr. Robert N. McDonald • 1987.....Maryland
 Ms. Anne McDonald • 2017.....Pennsylvania
 Ms. Nancy McDonald • 2020.....N/A
 Ms. Mary McDonough • 2019.....Illinois
 Ms. Marissa McDowell • 2020.....Oregon
 Mary Ellen F. McEvily • 2014.....New York
 Mr. Arthur McFadden • 2018.....New Jersey
 Jacqueline McGee • 2019.....Florida
 Renee L. McGill and Patrick R. McGill • 2019.....Neb.
 Mr. and Mrs. Timothy and Kathleen McGillicuddy •
 2014.....Massachusetts
 Mrs. Mary E. McGinley • 2015.....Connecticut
 Gregory and Allyson McGinn • 2020.....
New Hampshire
 Ms. Patricia McGivney • 2018.....New York
 Mr. John McGlynn • 2014.....Florida
 Mr. Charles McGroddy • 2020.....Washington
 Rev. Anthony E. McGuire and John P. McGuire • 2020
California
 Mr. Daniel McHale • 2020.....N/A
 Mr. James R. McHenry II • 2018.....Iowa
 Sr. Kathleen McHugh • 2019.....New York
 Ms. Valerie McIntyre • 2019.....Illinois
 Ms. Christina McKay • 2019.....New York
 Mr. Donald McKay • 2020.....Illinois
 Rev. Henry McKee • 2002.....Pennsylvania
 Deacon Kevin J. McKeever, M.S.T., D.M.D. • 2019.....
New Jersey
 Jeffrey B. McKeever • 2020.....Illinois
 Bill and Debbie McKenna • 2013.....Missouri
 Mrs. Mary A. McKenna • 2014.....Pennsylvania
 Mr. John McKenna • 2019.....New York
 Sheila McKenna • 2020.....New York
 Robin McKenzie • 2019.....Michigan
 Ms. Kerry A. McKeon • 2007.....Maryland
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Kathy McKinless • 2018....
Virginia
 Ms. Mary J. McLaughlin • 2005.....Pennsylvania
 Ms. Mary C. McManus • 1991.....Oregon
 Mr. James M. McNamara • 2019.....Connecticut
 Fr. Pat McNamara, C.Ss.P. • 2020.....Brazil
 Mr. Kevin McNeill • 2018.....Pennsylvania
 Rev. William J. McNulty • 2014.....Illinois
 Lorin and Rosemary Meade • 2017.....Illinois
 Mr. Andy Mears • 2018.....Montana
 Mr. and Mrs. Philip Medeiros • 2017.....Connecticut
 Ms. Silvia Medrano • 2019.....Florida
 Yuen Mee Mary • 2019.....Hong Kong, China
 James P. Meehan and Jean M. Meehan • 2019.....Pa.
 Mr. and Mrs. Dale R. Meers • 2009.....D.C.
 Philip and Laurine Megna • 2020.....New Jersey
 Ms. Frances Melendez • 2018.....New York
 Ms. Cynthia Melitz • 2019.....Michigan
 William G. Melville • 2019.....Pennsylvania
 Ms. Danila Mendoza • 2019.....New York
 Ms. Samantha M. Mercanti-Anthony • 2016.....N. J.
 Mr. Joseph A. Mercier • 2003.....New York
 Ms. Carlos Mesquita • 2018.....Connecticut
 Mr. John E. Metzler • 2000.....Virginia
 Mr. Harry J. Meyer • 2012.....Ohio
 James R. Michalec and Frances L. Michalec • 2019...
Ohio
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald N. Mickells • 2003.....Mass.
 Ms. Evalée Mickey • 2019.....Iowa
 Frances Mika • 2019.....Michigan
 Mr. Paul Miki • 2014.....Ontario, Canada

Rev. Msgr. Joseph J. Milani • 1987.....California
 Ms. Judith Miller • 2018.....Florida
 Ms. Gwendolyn Miller • 2019.....Ohio
 Ms. Kathy Miller • 2020..... Washington
 Eugene J. Miller and Rosemary A. Miller • 2020
 Wisconsin
 Ms. Marilou Mills • 2018.....California
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Millus • 2012 S.C.
 Ms. Dianne Misko • 2019 Wisconsin
 Mr. Michael Mitchell • 2016..... Michigan
 Dr. James Mitchell • 2017 New York
 Ms. Annmarie Mitchell • 2018..... California
 Mr. Michael and Betty J. Mocek • 2012..... Texas
 Ms. Christian Mocek • 2018..... N/A

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas P. Mortell • 2016..... Colorado
 Mr. Michael Motil • 2019Ohio
 Mr. Robert Motley • 2019.....New Jersey
 Dr. Patrick Mowery, Ph.D. • 2016 California
 Mr. Octavio Mugerza • 2009.....Texas
 Ms. Marie M. Mulcahy • 2007.....New Jersey
 Rev. Roger P. Mullaney • 1988 Arizona
 Ms. Katherine Mullen • 2018..... New York
 Mr. Jack Muller • 2019..... New York
 Joseph and Sharon Mullin • 1999Massachusetts
 Ms. Helena Mullin • 2010New Mexico
 Mr. Michael Mullin • 2020..... N/A
 Ms. Silvia Munoz • 2019Florida
 Marilyn Muriello • 2020..... N/A

Mr. Nicholas J. Nastasi • 1986 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Michael J. Naughton • 1989.....California
 Ms. Virginia Navarro • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Mary Naylor • 2016.....New Jersey
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Xiomara Neary • 2020
 N/A
 Ms. Margaret Neckles • 2019..... New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Needham • 1993..California
 Ms. Patricia A. Needham • 2020 Missouri
 Mr. Randall Neff • 2013Ohio
 Mr. John F. Neill • 2016Maryland
 Mr. Sigrid Nelson • 2019.....Florida
 Mr. Peter Nerone • 2018 Kentucky
 Ms. Suzanne Neumann • 2015Ohio



Anne Jenkins

I rely on *America* for the historical and cultural insights from a faith perspective. The scripture review in *The Word*, variety of timely articles and film and book critiques all demonstrate how Jesuit and lay writers struggle right along with the rest of us to understand, deepen and live our faith. 🍷🍷

Rev. Bernard N. Mohan • 2003.....New Jersey
 Mr. Nicholas M. Mohr • 1983.....Kansas
 Mrs. Judith E. Molseed • 2012 Virginia
 Mr. Frank Monahan • 2018.....Maryland
 Mr. Marc Montalbaine • 2018.....North Carolina
 Mr. Joseph A. Monte • 2019Maryland
 Mr. George J. Monteverdi • 2018.....California
 Ms. Christina Montgomery • 2019 Georgia
 Mr. Robert Montoya • 2019.....Texas
 Ms Sarah Moon • 2017 New York
 Ms. Margaret Mooney • 2005 New York
 Mr. John J. Moore • 2014.....Connecticut
 Prof. Sean D. Moore • 2020..... N/A
 Mr. and Mrs. G. T. Morahan • 2019.....Alaska
 Patrick T. Moran and Kathryn Moran • 2020.....
 Connecticut
 Mr. Ryan Morden • 2020 Pennsylvania
 Mr. Luke Morgan • 2018..... Kentucky
 Ms. Sara L. Morrison • 1980Iowa
 Joseph P. and L. Kay Morrissey • 1998..... Missouri

Sr. Catherine V. Murphy, S.C. • 1987 New York
 Rev. Daniel W. Murphy • 2015.....New Jersey
 Mr. Hugh P. Murphy • 2017New Jersey
 Ms. Teresa Murphy • 2018.....Ontario, Canada
 Br. Mark Murphy, FSC • 2018.....California
 Fr. George Murphy • 2019Mississippi
 James A. Murphy and Jeanne M. Murphy • 2019
 Missouri
 Ms. Mariangeles Murphy-Herd • 2018.....Kansas
 Mr. Robert Murray • 2014.....Massachusetts
 Mr. Robert Murray • 2018.....New Jersey
 Ms. Jean G. Murray • 2019Massachusetts
 Ms. Megan Murray • 2020..... N/A
 Ms. Katherine Murtaugh • 2017New Jersey
 Mr. John J. Muth • 2002Maryland
 Kayla Myers • 2018.....Texas
 Ms. Kathy Myers • 2018.....California
 Ms. Christine Nadeau • 2018California
 Ms. Liza Nahajski • 2018Winchester, England
 Mr. Richard Narramore • 2018New Jersey

Evelyn M. Nevaras and Joseph V. Nevaras • 2020
 Massachusetts
 Ms. Sarah Neville Jimenez • 2018..... N/A
 Mr. Brendan Nicholls • 2020..... N/A
 Dr. Diarmuid Nicholson • 2015.....Texas
 G. Michael Nidiffer, M.D. • 2010 Michigan
 Mr. David Niedermaier • 2020.....North Carolina
 Edda Aixa Nieves • 2020..... N/A
 Rev. Kerry R. Ninemire • 1989Kansas
 Mr. Joseph Nix • 2019Minnesota
 Patrick Nocerino and Christine Nocerino • 2020.....
 Florida
 Mrs. Mary Nolan • 2019 Rhode Island
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank and Lois Noonan • 2014 Calif.
 Mr. James Noonan • 2019.....Ontario, Canada
 Ms. Mary Ellen Norpel • 2004..... Pennsylvania
 Ms. Mary Ellen Novakoski • 2019 Michigan
 Mr. Mike Nowland • 2019California
 Mr. Eric R. Noyes and Ms. Mimi M. Gendreau • 2015
 Arizona



I struggle with the politics of many religious people and organizations today, and I seek out media that offers serious political discussion rather than propagandistic sound bites for one “side” or the other. Your group [at *America*] seems genuine.

David Delle Monache

Mr. Anthony Nuccio • 2018	N/A	Mr. Frank Oleksy • 2018.....	New York	Ms. Mary Pearlman • 2018.....	California
Mr. William Nugent Jr. • 2000	California	Mr. William Oliver • 2019.....	Colorado	Mr. Andrew Pecoraro • 2018.....	Florida
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Nugent • 2014	Maryland	Mr. and Mrs. Joseph D. Olivieri • 2018.....	New Jersey	Mr. and Mrs. David M. Pedersen • 1993.....	Nebraska
Ms. Norma V. Nunag • 2015.....	Massachusetts	Mr. Eric R. Olsen • 2019	Nevada	Mr. Steven Pelak • 2020	Virginia
Ms. Ana Nunez • 2018	New York	Mr. James Olson • 2015	West Virginia	Mr. Michel Pelosse • 2018.....	France
Mr. Eugene L. Nunziati • 2017.....	California	Randy and Kellie Onxley • 2016	Louisiana	Mr. and Mrs. John and Fran Pelrine • 2018.....	Illinois
Mr. Christopher Nwoye • 2019.....	New York	Catherine Orellana and Mauricio Orellana • 2019 .....	.....	Mr. Antonio Pena • 2018	Mexico
Mr. Jim Nyhan • 2019	Nevada	.....	Massachusetts	Ms. Raquel B. Perez • 2015	Illinois
Mr. Lorcan O’Brien • 2019.....	Dublin, Ireland	Rev. Robert E. Osborne • 2009	Kentucky	Ms. Diana Perez • 2018	New York
Mr. Stuart O’Brien • 2020	Massachusetts	Mr. and Mrs. Bob Osdieck • 2020	Missouri	Mr. George Perkins • 2015.....	Massachusetts
Rev. Paul T. O’Connell • 2012.....	Massachusetts	Ms. Sara Oswald • 2018	North Carolina	Lissa and Gerry Perrone • 2014	Oregon
Mr. John P. O’Connell • 2013.....	Delaware	Ms. Mary D. Ott • 2017.....	Maryland	Mr. Richard Perry • 2015	Washington
Mr. John E. O’Connell • 2013.....	Wisconsin	Ms. Suzanne Overbeck • 2013.....	Illinois	Mr. and Mrs. Hal Perry • 2015.....	South Carolina
Ms. Bernadette O’Connell • 2017.....	Pennsylvania	Fr. Bernard J. Owens, S.J. • 2019	Ohio	Ms. Lisa Persons • 2019	N/A
Mr. Gerard O’Connell • 2018.....	Rome, Italy	Ms. Diane Owens • 2019.....	Arizona	Mr. John M. Peters • 2015.....	Connecticut
Ms. Mary M. O’Connell • 2018.....	South Carolina	Ms. Sue Pablovich • 2018.....	Louisiana	Rev. Kevin Peters • 2020.....	Ohio
Mr. John J. O’Connor • 2006.....	New Jersey	Mr. and Mrs. and Mrs. Kenneth M. Padgett • 2001.....	.....	Ms. Patricia Peterson • 2019.....	Texas
Bryan D. O’Connor and Susan R. O’Connor • 2009.....	.....	.....	New York	Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pettit • 1992.....	Virginia
.....	Virginia	Carol Padgett • 2019	Washington	Pastor Mark Peyton • 2020.....	Ohio
Ms. Mary O’Connor • 2018.....	Maryland	Mr. Stephen Paesani • 2009.....	Pennsylvania	Ms. Danielle Pfister • 2018	Texas
Ms. Betty O’Connor • 2019.....	Maryland	Ms. Sandra J. Paige • 2020	Virginia	Kathy and Ed Pfister • 2019	Florida
Mr. Thomas L.P. O’Donnell • 1996	Massachusetts	Ms. Nancy Paino • 2019.....	New York	Dr. and Mrs. James J. Phelan • 2007.....	California
Rev. William J. O’Donnell • 1996.....	Pennsylvania	Ms. Janet Paist • 2020	N/A	Katherine Philipp • 2020.....	Virginia
Shannon O’Donnell • 2020	N/A	Mr. Rob Palmer • 2020	N/A	Ms. Lisa Phillips • 2019	Connecticut
Mrs. Dierdre M. O’Donnell-Griswold • 2007.....	Mass.	Hali Panciello • 2019	New Jersey	Ms. Beth Phillips • 2020	N/A
Ms. Barbara O’Keefe • 2014	New York	Ms. Kathleen Pancoast • 2018.....	Pennsylvania	Ms. Linda Piccinich • 2018	New Jersey
Rev. John J. O’Keefe • 2014.....	Michigan	Ms. Dolores Pap • 2018	New Jersey	Ms. Katherine Piderman • 2020	Minnesota
Mr. Michael O’Leary • 2018	New York	Ms. Bernadette Paradise • 2019.....	Indiana	MaryLou and Ralph Pieranunzi • 2020.....	Maryland
Mr. Michael O’loughlin • 2017	New York	Dr. and Mrs. William P. Pare • 2000.....	Maryland	Mary J. Pigza and John M. Pigza • 2018	W.Va.
Mr. Raymond K. O’Neil • 2018	Arizona	Ms. Elizabeth-Anne Paroli • 2015	Rhode Island	Ms. Mary Pike • 2019	Maryland
Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas P. O’Neill • 2003.....	New York	Ms. Hatha Parrish • 2018.....	California	Ms. Mary E. Piniella • 2002.....	California
Ms. Sheila O’Neill • 2017.....	Massachusetts	Mr. Nick A. Patricca • 2018.....	Illinois	Mr. Tom Pival • 2016	Colorado
Ms. Maureen E. O’Reilly • 1993.....	Michigan	Mr. and Mrs. Hugh J. & Carole A. Patty • 2015..	Calif.	Mr. Kevin Pitts • 2019.....	Pennsylvania
Mr. and Mrs. Mary Jo & Thomas J. O’Rourke • 2015	Pennsylvania	Mr. Antony Paul • 2018.....	New York	Mr. John Polanin Jr. • 2002.....	New Jersey
.....	.....	Mrs. Susan M. Pauly • 2018.....	Virginia	Rev. David J. Polich • 2012.....	Iowa
Mr. Michael O’Rourke • 2019	New Hampshire	Mr. and Mrs. Louis F. Pauzano Sr. • 2003	Pa.	Mr. Bruce Pomeroy • 2020	N/A
Dr. Arthur O’Shea • 2016	Massachusetts	Maureen Pavy • 2020.....	N/A	Mrs. Margarita M. Pond • 2013.....	California
Fr. Daniel O’Sullivan • 2014.....	Michigan	Mr. John Paxton • 2017	Florida	Carol and Tom Poole • 2020.....	N/A
Kevin L. Ogle and Carol Ann Siciliano • 2020.....	Va.	Teresa Payne • 2018.....	N/A	Ms. Mary Popeo • 2019.....	Hiroshima, Japan

Ms. Judith Poquette • 2020Minnesota
 Rev. John F. Porter • 1998 Michigan
 Mr. Robert Porter • 2020 Illinois
 Mr. James Potoczek • 2019 Florida
 Jack Povlock • 2019 Minnesota
 Mr. and Mrs. Leonard F. Powell • 1992 Minnesota
 Rev. Bruce Powers • 2013 New York
 Ms. Patricia Powers • 2019 Michigan
 Dr. Blanche Premo Hopkins • 2017 South Carolina
 Presentation Sisters • 2020 South Dakota
 Mr. Steven Presutti • 2018 New York
 Mr. Jonathan Price • 2018 Ohio
 Mr. William A. Prince • 2016 Virginia
 Dr. Mary Procidano • 2020 N/A
 Mr. Paolo Puccini • 2015 District of Columbia
 Ms. Kathy Quaranta • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Adelaide Queeney • 2017 Massachusetts
 Mr. Peter Quelch • 2019 British Columbia
 Mr. and Mrs. Mary Quinlin • 2018 Iowa
 Ms. Florence E. Quinn • 2004 Virginia
 Mr. and Mrs. William J. Quinn • 2012 Montana
 Mr. Frederick Quinn • 2018 Georgia
 Ms. Maureen Quinn Olsen • 2019 Illinois
 Mr. and Mrs. Leo Racine • 2015 Massachusetts
 Mr. Alain Ragueneau • 2019 New Brunswick
 Ms. Jill Raitt • 2002 Missouri
 Bishop Ricardo Ramirez • 2004 New Mexico
 Ms. Marianne Ramussen • 2020 N/A
 Mr. Stanley K. Rashid • 2019 Vermont
 William Rau • 2020 N/A
 Mr. Francis Gerald Ray • 2015 Washington
 Ms. Mary Andrew Ray • 2019 North Carolina
 Mr. Jack Rayers • 2019 Maine
 Frances Reavis • 2019 New York
 Susana Reck • 2018 N/A
 Mr. Nicholas Redchuk • 2019 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Jeff and Teresa Redder • 2015 N.J.
 Mr. Dennis Reeder • 2007 Virginia
 Ms. Kathleen Reehil • 2018 New York
 Mary Anne Rees • 2020 Maryland
 Ms. Mary Anne Reese • 2016 Ohio
 Ms. Marilyn Regan • 2018 California
 Joan and Bill Rehbock • 2020 N/A
 Mr. A. Paul Reicher • 2012 Illinois
 Mr. and Mrs. Griffin Reidy • 2001 Connecticut
 Br. Joseph P. Reilly, F.S.C. • 2016 New York
 Mr. Joseph F. Reilly • 2018 California
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Reilly • 2019 New York
 Ms. Jeanette Reilly • 2019 Florida
 Ms. Bridgette F. Reilly • 2019 Virginia
 Mr. Thomas Reilly • 2019 N/A
 Ms. Anne M. Reimel • 2014 Pennsylvania
 C.M. Reimer • 2020 California
 L.A. Reinhart • 2018 Nevada
 Religious of Jesus & Mary • 2020 Rhode Island
 Mr. Alan Renninger • 2018 California
 Rev. Patrick J. Reuse, S.J. • 2010 Utah
 Mr. Raymond Reyes • 2013 Minnesota
 Mr. Justin Reyes • 2020 N/A
 Mrs. Rinna Reyes Lin • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Judy Reynolds • 2018 North Carolina
 Mr. and Mrs. John F. Reynolds • 2018 Michigan
 Mr. and Mrs. Leroi H. Rice • 2004 Washington
 Mr. William Rice • 2013 North Carolina
 Mary C. Richardson and Robert J. Sexton • 2020 Oregon
 Sr. Mary Helen Richstatter, S.C.L. • 2002 Kansas
 Mr. Daniel H. Riddick • 2016 Virginia
 Ray and Ann Riddle • 2019 Georgia
 Mr. Frank A. Rieger • 2019 Missouri
 Ms. Victoria Ries • 2019 Washington
 Ms. Patricia Riestenberg • 2020 Ohio
 Ms. June S. Rietz • 2018 Ohio
 Ms. Marie Rinaudo • 2002 Louisiana
 Mr. Alex Rinehart • 2018 Illinois
 Reverend Joseph Ring • 2020 Illinois
 Ms. Kathie Ring • 2018 New York
 Ms. Mary K. Ring • 2019 Wisconsin
 Maggie Ring • 2019 New York
 Ms. Kathryn E. Ringgold • 2016 California
 Herminio and Rosa Rios • 2019 California
 Mr. Timothy Ripinger • 2020 Illinois
 Ms. Angelina Rispoli • 2018 New Jersey
 Mr. Keith D. Ritson • 2015 Illinois
 Rev. Charles F. Ritter • 2019 Ohio
 Mr. David Rivero • 2019 Virginia
 Irene and Joseph Roach • 1991 New York
 Ms. Mary Roberts • 2018 Minnesota
 Dr. Edward Robinson & Mrs. Marlene Talley • 2020 North Carolina
 Ms. Kerry Robinson • 2009 Connecticut
 Sr. Joan Roccasalvo, C.S.J. • 2018 New York
 Catherine Rocco • 2019 New York
 Ms. Mary C. Rocks • 1994 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Dolores Roddy • 2018 New York
 Mr. Hugo A. Rodriguez • 2019 Michigan
 Ms. Theresa Rodriguez • 2020 California
 Mr. Miguel Rodriguez • 2020 Alabama
 Mr. and Mrs. Ricardo R. Rodriguiz • 2007 Mich.
 Mr. John S. Rogers • 2014 Connecticut
 Ms. Teresa Rogers • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Donna Y. Rohne • 2015 New York
 Ms. Joanna Rojek-Giffin • 2020 California
 Victor L. Rollandi and Karen D. Rollandi • 2019 California
 Mr. James Romer • 2019 New Jersey
 Ms. Ann Romero • 2010 Louisiana
 Mr. Mauro C. Romita • 2017 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. Edwin A. Rommel III • 2020 Md.
 Mr. Sean Rooney • 2018 Arizona
 Mr. John Roppolo • 2015 Mississippi
 Ms. Madonna Rose • 2013 California
 Ms. Alexandra Rosenthal • 2015 Connecticut
 Ms. Mary Jo Roser • 2020 Illinois
 Mr. James Rosetti • 2018 Georgia
 Dr. Wilma C. Rossi • 2012 New Jersey
 Paul J. Rossi and Craig W. Forner • 2018 California
 Michael and Laura Rosswurm • 1991 Indiana
 Ms. Sharon Roth • 2014 Illinois
 Antonio and Marcia Rottino • 1998 Wisconsin
 Ms. Sharon Roy • 2019 Michigan
 Rev. Charles Rubey • 2017 Illinois
 Mr. James W. Ruck • 2012 Pennsylvania
 Mr. John Rudser • 2015 Florida
 Ms. Sandra Rueb • 2018 Connecticut
 Ms. Rosa María Ruiz • 2019 California
 Mrs. Dorothy Runft • 2019 Illinois
 Ms. Patricia Rush • 2013 New Jersey
 Rev. James D. Russell • 2005 Minnesota
 Ms. Janice Russell • 2015 California
 Ms. Lisa Rutledge • 2019 N/A
 Ellen Ruzick • 2020 N/A
 John and Suzanne Ryan • 2002 Connecticut
 Mr. Barry F. Ryan • 2003 Connecticut
 Mr. John C. Ryan • 2006 Michigan
 Mary and Terrence Ryan • 2013 South Dakota
 Deacon James A. Ryan • 2014 Maryland
 Ms. Kathleen A. Ryan • 2016 California
 Mr. Dick Ryan • 2018 Pennsylvania
 Ms. Lisa Ryan • 2019 New York
 Ms. Sarah Ryan • 2019 Connecticut
 Gaynor Ryan • 2020 N/A
 Ms. Diane J. Sabehe • 2015 Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul H. Saint-Antoine • 2018 Pa.
 Steph Salazar • 2020 N/A
 Margaret Saliga • 2019 Indiana
 Col. and Mrs. John Salomone • 2014 Rhode Island
 Mr. John V. Salvati • 2012 Massachusetts
 Mr. John Salvati • 2019 Colorado
 Aurora Santiago • 2019 District of Columbia
 P. P. Sapienza • 2020 Colorado
 Rev. Dennia Saran • 2020 Wisconsin
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Sarmo • 2016 Colorado
 Mrs. Dale F. Sartor • 2014 Connecticut
 Andrew W. Saul • 2020 Pennsylvania
 Rev. Ronald Sayes • 2019 Michigan
 Ms. Charlotte Sbalchiero • 2019 Michigan
 Robert C. Scherger and Polly E. Scherger • 2020 Ohio
 Ms. Judith R. Schiavo • 2012 New York
 Mr. David Schiferl • 2003 Oregon
 Mr. Bernard L. Schiml • 2012 Ohio
 Mr. Stephen E. Schindel • 2002 Illinois
 Mr. H. Joseph Schineller • 2000 New York
 Mr. and Mrs. William E. Schirger • 2003 Illinois
 Ms. Mary A. Schlichting • 2016 Nebraska
 Mr. Philip Schmidt • 2019 Ontario, Canada
 Mr. Mike Schmitt • 2020 Ohio
 Ms. Joan Schmitz • 2014 Minnesota
 Ms. Kathleen Schmitz • 2020 Pennsylvania
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Schneider • 2015 Texas



Sebastian Gomes, executive editor for audio and video, in the William J. Loschert Studio during a recording of our newest podcast series, "Voting Catholic."

Mr. James E. Schrader • 2014.....	Maryland
Rev. Donald C. Schramm • 1998.....	Missouri
Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Schreiber Jr. • 2014.....	Mo.
Ms. Christine Schroder • 2009.....	Ohio
Dr. Clayton Schroer • 2018.....	Colorado
Ms. Mary Margaret Schuck • 2019.....	New Zealand
Mrs. Frances Schueler • 2020.....	Maryland
Ms. Stephanie Schuler • 2019.....	Washington
Fr. John Schultz • 2013.....	Wisconsin
Karen Dolores Schwaneberg • 2020.....	New Jersey
Ms. Marianne Sciolino • 2019.....	New York
James Sciolto • 2019.....	New York
Ms. Jack Scissons • 2020.....	N/A
Andrew J. Scoma, M.D., P.A. • 2000.....	Florida
Risteard Seanachain • 2019.....	Dublin, Ireland
Ms. Michaela Seeger • 2019.....	N/A
Ms. Maribel Selby • 2018.....	Indiana
Ms. Margaret Selby • 2020.....	N/A
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel P. Selmi • 2018.....	California
Rev. Richard E. Senghas • 1994.....	Maine
Ms. Carol Serafin • 2019.....	Pennsylvania
Doroteja-Dorica Sever • 2019.....	Nunavut, Canada
Mr. Charles Sevik • 2015.....	Louisiana
Mr. Nick Sgammato • 2017.....	New York
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Shannon • 2008.....	Pa.
Mr. Charles Shaw • 2019.....	Massachusetts
Vincent and Adela Shay • 2020.....	Illinois
John Shay • 2019.....	New York
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Shea • 1984.....	California
Mr. James Sheerin • 2019.....	Georgia
Ms. Elizabeth Sher • 2020.....	Pennsylvania
Mr. Thomas P. Sheridan • 2003.....	North Carolina
Ms. Christine O. Shestak • 2018.....	New Mexico
Ms. Jeanne Shevlin • 2020.....	California
Mr. James F. Shields • 2014.....	Pennsylvania
Mr. James Shields • 2018.....	Kentucky
Mr. William Shields • 2018.....	Arizona
Scott & Lisa Shirley • 2020.....	Texas
Ms. Helena Shoplik • 2019.....	Maryland
Sr. Catherine Shoulberg, R.S.M. • 2018.....	Pa.
Rev. Paul R. Shuda • 2014.....	Pennsylvania
Mr. Thomas Shults • 2016.....	California
Mr. Henry Sienkiewicz • 2018.....	Virginia
John Sier • 2020.....	Michigan
Mrs. Mary J. Silva • 2001.....	California
Ricardo B. Silva and Amelia W. Silva • 2019.....	Conn.
Mr. Jeff Simon • 2020.....	N/A
Ms. Cecilia Sindoni • 2019.....	New York
Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary • 2016.....	Pennsylvania
Sisters of Charity BVM • 2013.....	Iowa
Ms. Elizabeth J. Skerl • 2006.....	Ohio
Christine & Michael Way Skinner • 2020.....	.....
.....	Ontario, Canada
Mr. and Mrs. William Slavick • 2019.....	Maine
Mr. David V. Smalley • 2016.....	New York
Ms. Helen L. Smith • 2012.....	Illinois

Ms. Donna Smith • 2017 North Carolina
Ms. Melinda K. Smith • 2018 Ohio
Ms. Mary Smith • 2019 Virginia
Mr. Kevin John Smith • 2019 Arizona
Barbara Smith • 2020 Maine
Mr. and Mrs. Chester P. Smolenski • 2019 Pa.
Ms. Ethelyn L. Smyley • 2019 New York
Mrs. Joyce Tianello Snodgrass • 2020 N/A
Mrs. Frances and Dennis Solano • 2015 New York
Ms. Betty Song • 2020 California
Mr. Anthony E. Sorrentino and Mr. John R. Sorrentino
• 2018 New York
Mr. Brian Spadora • 2019 New Jersey
Rev. Matthew D. Spahr • 2009 California
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick T. Spahr • 2012 Maryland
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Spaniol, III • 2015 Maryland
Mr. Joseph K. Speicher • 1989 Maryland
Ms. Carmel Ann Sperti • 2018 New York
Mr. John D. Spiegel • 2015 Iowa
Rev. Joseph C. Spina • 2019 Florida
Mr. Shawn Spooner • 2018 Massachusetts
Richard and Joanne Spotswood • 2013 California
Robert and Carol Sprengard • 2018 Ohio
Thomas Spring and Mary O. Spring • 2020 Calif.
Rev. P. D. Staigers • 2018 Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. Jon M. Stark • 2014 California
Mr. Michael Starks • 2018 Indiana
Mr. John Staude • 2020 N/A
Ms. Erica Stavola • 2019 New York
Mrs. Stechschulte • 2010 Kansas
Mr. David L. Steeno • 2006 Michigan
Mr. William G. Stefany • 2006 New Jersey
Ms. Susan Stein • 2016 Nebraska
Ms. Nansiatta Stein • 2019 Oregon
Rev. Msgr. John M. Steiner • 2014 Washington
Sam Steiner • 2020 N/A
Kristi Steinmann • 2018 North Dakota
Karen Steinmetz and Gregory J. Steinmetz • 2019
..... Rhode Island
Ms. Samantha Stephenson • 2020 N/A
Barbara Z. Stickford and Charles J. Stickford • 2020
..... North Carolina
Mr. Franklin B. Stith • 2020 Kentucky
Paul R. Stockhausen and Jane L. Stockhausen • 2018
..... Pennsylvania
Mr. Brian D. Stokes • 2017 Florida
Mr. Neil Story • 2019 Michigan
Thomas P. Stoy and Brigid M. Fitzgerald • 2018
..... Minnesota
Mr. Harry R. Strack and Mrs. Eleanor F. Strack • 2003
..... Pennsylvania
Dr. and Mrs. John P. Straetmans • 2017 Georgia
Ms. Carole Stuart • 2020 California
Rev. Msgr. Gregory J. Studerus • 2014 New Jersey
Mr. Leo Stueve • 2005 Kansas
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph A. Sturges III • 2015 Conn.
Sandy Sturr • 2020 Washington

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A Living Legacy

The Catholic intellectual tradition is not a thing of the past

By Sam Rocha



It is common to hear rumors that the Catholic academy has gone missing. This is better understood as a generational anthem of nostalgic discontent, projecting willful and often cynical ignorance. This past summer, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, I spent most of my time between two academic book projects for Routledge and Bloomsbury. In August, I read three recent books, published by M.I.T., Oxford and Princeton (all academic presses), during a short vacation.

These five books of my summer, while diverse, are united by a common biographical Catholicism, a trait all but one of the authors carries confessionally. These books are written for general and academic secular audiences and carry the peer-reviewed expertise of various fields of study, above all from philosophy. Nonetheless, each book carries real and even intimate signs of the church alive and at work. Together, they form a resounding counterfactual rebuke of the cottage industry reporting the doom of Catholic academia.

In *The Syllabus as Curriculum*, my latest book, I note that modern educational theories focus on the subject, the student and teacher, and often miss the object: the fruits of the teacher's labor. In the syllabus, I claim, we encounter a powerful object that can take on different forms: a pedagogical or pastoral letter, a memorandum, an essay or an outline. One of the outcomes of this claim is a critique of the

social sciences that have overrun educational research and a proposal for a revolution of the humanities.

I also edited and translated the forthcoming *Paulo Freire: A Biography*, Walter Kohan's philosophical study of Freire, originally published in Portuguese and soon translated into Spanish. Freire was a Brazilian philosopher and theologian with a foundational and lasting influence on traditions like liberation theology. We also find in Freire a deeply Catholic thinker, steeped in Roman Catholic theology and personalism.

Chad Engelland exuberantly proclaims the gospel of a complex intellectual tradition in *Phenomenology*, which he calls "an investigation into the experience of experience." Engelland's accessible introduction to phenomenology includes Catholic sources like Karol Wojtyła's *The Acting Person* and Jean-Luc Marion's *The Erotic Phenomenon*. *Phenomenology*, Engelland shows us, seeks a wondrous love that forces us to part from the disenchanting natural attitude without losing the interiority of our own experience and lifeworld.

Jason Blakely's *We Built Reality* tells a story hiding in plain sight. This book is about the negative influence of the social sciences, which Blakely carefully contrasts from the natural sciences. Blakely shows how social science has become a common sense that is neither common nor sensible. In his convincing analysis, it is an ideology unchecked by

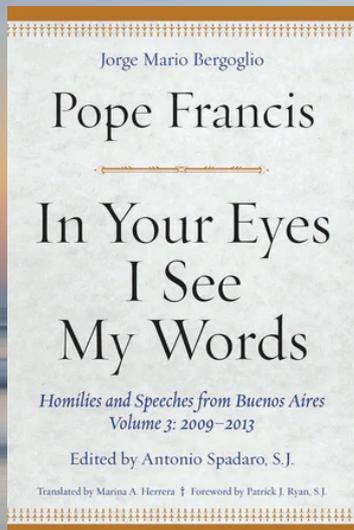
reason, not entirely unlike the worst forms of religious fundamentalism. He ends with a provocative final question: "Where are the new humanists?"

In *Lost in Thought*, Zena Hitz begins in a testimonial register that seems headed into a personal account of the transformative power of ideas in the life that yearns for something more, something different, something greater. Soon, however, Hitz drops the direct testimonial voice and turns more directly to texts that she reads with an accessible rigor and passion. We witness fresh readings of classics like Aristophanes's "The Clouds" and Augustine's *Confessions*, culminating in a forceful critique of the university that is neither cynical nor romantic and calls for the primacy of the intellectual *life* over and above the intellectual or academic *institution*.

The Catholic academy has a present and future, continuous to its rich past. It is especially notable that Catholic academic expression ranges well beyond its rightful place in sacred writings; these books are to be found in the world of secular thought as sacred and secular Catholic letters have always been and always will be.

Sam Rocha is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. His most recent book is The Syllabus as Curriculum: A Reconceptualist Approach.

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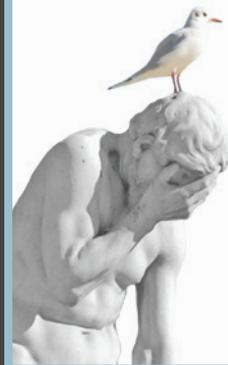


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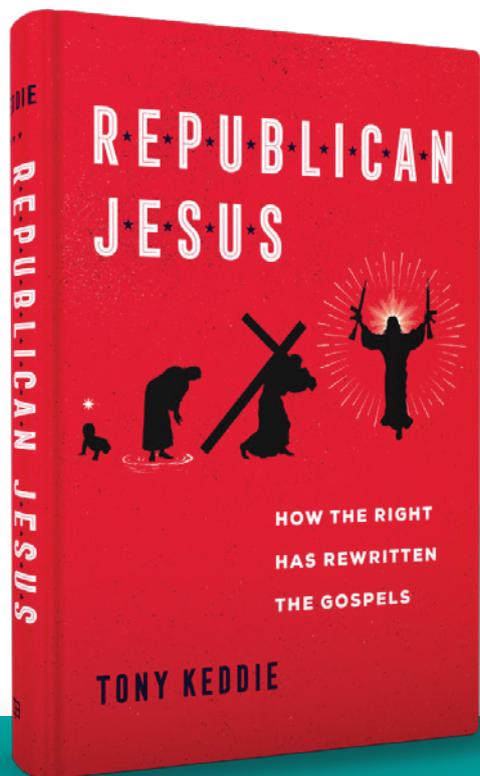


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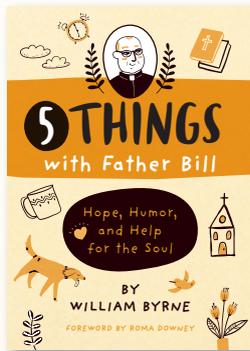


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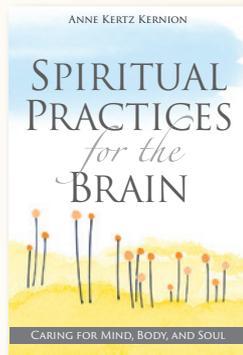
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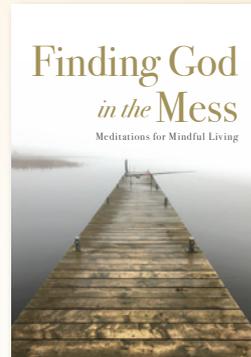
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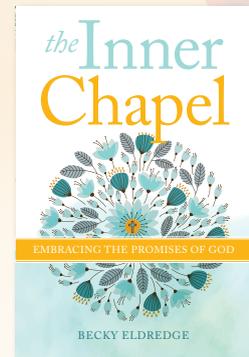
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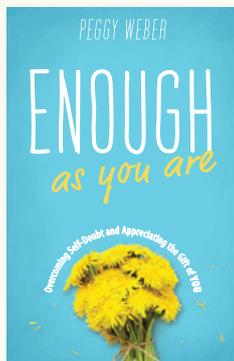
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