



America

APRIL 2021

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

PRIVACY: OUR LEAST UNDERSTOOD VIRTUE

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take it for granted?**

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A Family in Crisis

In the summer of 1999, after a hot and stuffy train trip from London, I boarded a hovercraft and crossed the Solent, the strait that separates Great Britain from the Isle of Wight. From the dock in the island's small town, I walked a half-mile to the River Medina, which I crossed on one of the world's few remaining chain ferries. I then grabbed a cab for the two-mile ride to a visitors' station, where I climbed into a horse-drawn cart and clip-clopped up a long, winding drive until Osborne House came fully into view.

I then realized why this was Queen Victoria's favorite home, and it has a lot to do with the great lengths I had taken to get there. In the 19th century, it would have been even more difficult for the public or the press to travel to Osborne, and that privacy is what made the house a home. Until that day, I had not really thought of the royal family as, well, a family.

That visit was on my mind as I watched Oprah Winfrey's interview with Queen Victoria's great-great-great-great grandson, Prince Harry, and his wife, Meghan Markle. More than 17 million people watched as Harry and Meghan dropped bombshell after bombshell, including serious yet vague charges of racism among the royal family and their entourage.

The interview also yielded some seeming contradictions. There was the claim, for example, that the couple felt tortured by their press coverage and also the claim that they don't follow their press coverage. They also said that they had been silenced during their brief royal life together and that this was why they were now speaking out. But they are speaking out about people—the royal family—whom

Meghan and Harry claim have themselves been silenced. Just how they expect those people to respond is murky. And while Harry and Meghan's stated intention to repair their relationships with the family seems sincere, this interview seemed like a strange way to go about it. Did it widen the breach?

The most shocking and painful part of the interview was the duchess's account of her struggle with anxiety and depression and how these drove her to contemplate suicide. One can only imagine the hopelessness that must have driven her to such depths. Our hearts quite rightly go out to her, and we can thank God that the couple appear to have found some peace in their new home.

It was a dramatic and moving account. But talk of the interview as the force that will destroy the institution misses the mark. The British monarchy isn't going anywhere. As difficult as it is to imagine in the press of the present news cycle, scandal and drama in the royal family are nothing new. There was Princess Diana's agonizing Panorama interview, as well as other televised tell-alls by Prince Charles and Sarah, Duchess of York, in the 1990s. And the content would be familiar to students of history.

Queen Victoria spent many sleepless nights at Osborne, worried about press intrusions and public charges leveled against her family. Her son, the future Edward VII, was almost named as an accomplice in an adultery and divorce trial that was the talk of Britain. Her grandson, Prince Albert Victor, was implicated in a scandal involving a homosexual brothel in London and was even rumored to be the notorious Jack the Ripper. There was only a

scintilla of truth in the former charge and none in the latter.

The lasting damage from this latest sad affair will not be to the queen and the British monarchy, but to Elizabeth Windsor and her children and grandchildren. Can the obviously strained and seemingly severed ties among these brothers, fathers, sons and daughters be repaired? Here I would like to think that the British people will be patient, even sympathetic. After all, everyone has a family that has had some painful history, and few of us would want to tell Oprah and the whole world about it.

At the moment, of course, reconciliation appears pretty unlikely unless the very human people involved are able to summon the courage to forgive, to extend their mercy, to seek to understand one another. Let us pray that God gives them the grace they will surely need to do that difficult work. For apart from the consolation that reconciliation would bring to these people who purportedly love one another, imagine how powerful a witness it would be—a living model of a family who, through their love, tenderness and mercy, were able to overcome their divisions—to transform their wounded hearts into hearts of wounded healers.

"I long for our cheerful and unpalace-like rooms at Osborne," Queen Victoria wrote to her daughter during one of the queen's long stays at Windsor Castle. For her family, Victoria wrote, "It is impossible to imagine a prettier spot."

 Matt Malone, S.J.
 Twitter: @americaeditor.



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CNS photo/Paul Haring

Children wave Iraqi flags before Pope Francis' arrival for a memorial prayer for the victims of the war at Hosh al-Bieaa in Mosul, Iraq, March 7.

Cover: iStock

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JEREMY McLELLAN
When Lent meets Ramadan

Lessons from a year of pandemic; women in parish ministry

‘What the Coronavirus Taught Us About Parish Life’

As a Catholic in his 70’s, I very much miss going to Mass. I don’t miss working or commuting to work or many other activities reserved for the young. But Mass is a place where you meet fellow travelers. We look forward to the liturgical year, the sacraments and greeting people we know. Afterwards we have our Knights’ pancake breakfast and other times coffee and donuts. For many of us raised in the Catholic Church, our oldest memories go back to childhood, when our parents first took us to church. Our bishop has given us a dispensation for a while longer. We will experience great joy to be vaccinated and reunited with our fellow adherents.

Richard VandenBrul

‘What the Coronavirus Taught Us About the American Family’

Women are oftentimes caregivers, and their labor is not valued and even frequently denigrated in structural ways by society’s outdated system of metrics. Gross Domestic Product is a metric for a nation’s cumulative production of goods and services. How will all the services alluded to in this article (which are fairly tangible) be included in GDP? GDP is only one lens to use here. More than the tangibles, how does society recognize the intangibles, the values touched on?

Andrew Di Liddo

‘What the Coronavirus Taught Us About Technology’

The availability of online church is a mixed blessing. I’m eager to return to my parish every Sunday, and I tend to stream its Mass on Sundays rather than another. Being able to stream a Mass on weekdays is a treasure. A parish in Massachusetts puts its daily Mass on YouTube very early in the morning and I’ve begun to spend my “coffee time” virtually participating in this 20 minute Mass. No worries about snow, running late for work, etc., and much better than browsing Facebook.

E. McLain

‘A Day in the Life of a Lay Catholic Woman Who Runs a Parish’

I too am a parish life coordinator and must say you well described a typical day for us, including the priest’s

comment, “This is why I am glad you are in charge.” I had no idea of the stress and strain my previous pastor endured until I was appointed to this position. I must say, my days are full and packed with everything from A to Z, but I wouldn’t trade it for the world.

Cheryl Archibald

Elizabeth Simcoe’s simple story of just one day in her life as a lay ecclesial minister running the Church of St. Vincent in the Albany Diocese warms my heart. I find it hard to imagine that the Holy Spirit is not trying to speak to us Catholics in these unsettled times through people like Elizabeth, and I hope we will eventually be able to decipher the message.

Sharon Koch

This is a good example of what parishes can do in the face of the shortage of priests. May Elizabeth Simcoe’s work inspire others.

Marian Chua

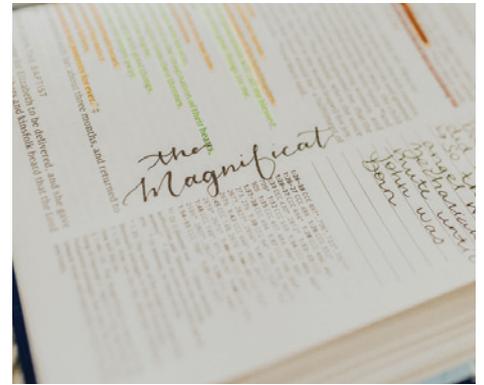
Elizabeth is one of about 200 people serving parishes in this role around the country. It’s a good model that meets a need—perhaps in the future more bishops will be open to using this model.

Michael Taylor

This parish shimmers and shines with the vibrant light of Christ. Elizabeth is incredible, and the people of this parish are a testament to living faith. I am privileged to know Elizabeth and many parishioners past and present. We could all take a lesson from what happens here. I have been praying with this Scripture a lot recently and it seems appropriate here: “See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the wilderness I make a way...” (Is 43:19).

Fran Rossi Szpylczyn

The Catholic Bible You've Been Waiting For

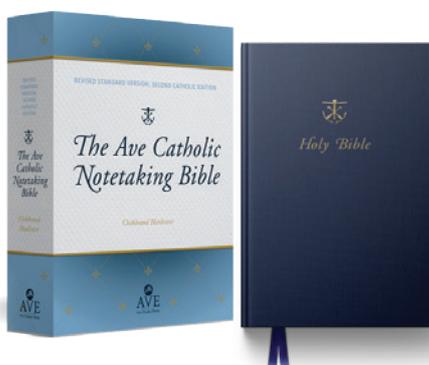


We all know that the Bible is the Word of God. But did you know that each time you open it, you enter into a personal conversation with the Lord?

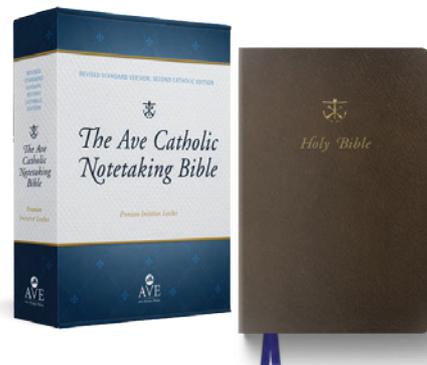
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Signs of Resurrection, Signs of Hope

More than a year ago, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the lives of every human being on earth. The virus has claimed more than 2.6 million lives, including more than 500,000 in the United States. The U.S. unemployment rate hit nearly 15 percent last spring, the highest since the Great Depression.

Many Covid victims died alone, denied the presence of their loved ones at their side, and their funerals were sparsely attended or not held at all. Many families are still waiting for permission to have funerals. The pandemic taught us the phrase “social distancing” and created a physical and often emotional distance in our society.

Grandparents have gone without hugs and kisses from their grandchildren for months on end. Travel restrictions and safety precautions put dampers on family gatherings. Weddings and baptisms have been small. A growing distrust of information and authority figures has spawned heated divisions among loved ones on a range of pandemic-related issues, from the need for mask-wearing to the efficacy and morality of Covid vaccinations.

Social isolation has taken its toll on everyone. Countless Catholics across the country have gone a year without attending Mass in person. A number of crucial church outreach initiatives, like prison ministry, have been on hiatus. The pandemic has inflicted a mental toll on health workers, children and young adults.

Many children are still attending school virtually. From the onset of the pandemic, teachers had to adapt quickly to online learning. Today, many are charged with essentially teaching two classes simultaneously, one for in-person students and the

other for virtual learners. Many students, particularly from lower-income communities, have struggled. Educators and government leaders scrambled to provide internet connections and devices suitable to the new learning environment.

Yet Christians, despite death and suffering, know there is always reason to hope. Easter reminds the faithful of our obligation to maintain hope in the darkest of times. And while our long Lent may seem far from over, there are nevertheless signs of resurrection.

The speed at which researchers developed Covid-19 vaccines is a testament to the creative ingenuity that is possible when society works together for the common good. As of this writing, more than 60 million Americans have received at least one dose of a Covid vaccine, as the nation quickly approaches immunizing 20 percent of the population.

Hundreds of millions of vaccine doses are expected to be available within the next few months. On average, more than two million doses are being administered each day, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. President Biden has vowed to deliver enough vaccinations for every U.S. adult by the end of May. Most high school students could be vaccinated this fall.

With immunization will come a return to many of the things society has gone without during the pandemic. For believers of all faiths, it will mean a return to in-person religious services for the first time in more than a year; for many Catholics, it will also mark the return to access of the sacraments. Some couples who have waited until it would be possible to have a large gathering will finally celebrate

their weddings. Others will finally get to make that long-planned pilgrimage to the Holy Land or visit their relatives in other countries where travel restrictions have been prohibited.

It has been a long battle, but the pandemic will end eventually. Some economists are projecting a boom in jobs this year based on businesses reopening, a federal stimulus package providing a financial boost to struggling families and consumers spending the savings they accumulated during lockdown. They project the unemployment rate could drop below 4 percent.

Many of us are now experiencing a greater appreciation of things we previously took for granted—especially essential workers. We are grateful for doctors, nurses, police and firefighters, but have also discovered the essential work of those overlooked in the past. We now recognize the irreplaceable labor of food service workers, agricultural laborers, maintenance personnel and child care providers, many of whom are part of our immigrant underclass.

Despite social distancing measures, there is a growing sense of connectedness among fellow Americans in lockdown. We now cherish simply being in public spaces, from parks and beaches to grocery stores and movie theaters. In March, for example, spring training baseball games welcomed small crowds that observed social distance guidelines, a welcome return to what has been an American rite of passage for 150 years.

The pandemic has called forth society’s generosity. People have stepped forward to help those in need, including many who have never needed help before. Many have reorganized their

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Founded in 1909

priorities, placing social connection at the top. In a country that has always celebrated individualism, we are newly appreciating the value of community.

Indeed, the suffering of the pandemic has perhaps begun to dismantle the American mirage of rugged individualism. As the disciples supported each other in the early days of Christianity, so too has the world joined together to face this common threat. We now see how truly interdependent we are. Humanity shares a common destiny. Our health and survival is interconnected with the health and survival of our neighbors. Our success in struggling against the pandemic has been possible only because we have fought this battle together.

Easter is also a time when new Christians are welcomed into the church. Let us rejoice with them as they profess their new faith in Christ, who overcame death. And despite the death and suffering that we have endured, let us stand together in the sure and certain hope of better things to come—the hope so well expressed by Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.: “Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us.”

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The Equality Act could be devastating for pregnant women in the workplace

The Equality Act, a bill that would ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, passed the U.S. House of Representatives in February and is now before the Senate. There has been much discussion of its requirement that the word *sex* be understood throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include “sexual orientation and gender identity,” which would invite those born as male but now identifying as women onto women’s sports teams and other female-only spaces. Perhaps less noticed, the Equality Act’s sponsors also seem to be trying to retool the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, added to the Civil Rights Act in 1978, so that it is construed to require health care providers to perform abortions and states to fund them.

The P.D.A. prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or “related medical conditions.” Since the 1980s, the final clause has been understood to include abortion: An employee cannot be dismissed for obtaining one. But the text itself ensures that it not be interpreted to require employers to fund abortions (nor to prohibit them from doing so). Such abortion neutrality held together the P.D.A.’s diverse coalition of supporters, but protecting pregnant employees so they might carry their pregnancies to term provided the *raison d’être* for the law in the first place.

The expansive new abortion right that *Roe v. Wade* had created in 1973, coupled with a 1976 Supreme Court decision that permitted employers to exclude pregnancy from insurance coverage, had amounted, for some women, to economic coercion in favor of abortion. Then-Senator Joe Biden understood this, saying in testimony

in support of the P.D.A.: “Many women...may be discouraged from carrying their pregnancy to term. To put it bluntly, they will be encouraged to choose abortion as a means of surviving economically.”

The P.D.A. was passed to protect pregnant women from this sad fate. The ill-named Equality Act that President Biden now enthusiastically supports would invite it.

Let me explain. In the wake of *Roe*, pro-choice legal thinkers—sensitive to the poor legal reasoning of the 1973 decision based on “privacy”—sought to recharacterize abortion as necessary for women’s equality and, thus, abortion restrictions as akin to sex discrimination. The Supreme Court decision *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* got advocates a bit closer to this goal, as the 1992 decision was grounded in “equality” reasoning. But *Casey* is no equality right: It allows a great deal more state regulation of abortion than *Roe* did and also permits states to prefer childbirth to abortion, as long as the “ultimate decision” remains the woman’s.

Since the high court is unlikely to protect abortion rights via the equal protection clause, amending federal sex discrimination law is the next best thing for pro-choice advocates. Thus, the drafters of the Equality Act have written into the bill a new, free-standing prohibition on pregnancy discrimination (shorn of the neutral language found in the original P.D.A.) that would require abortion to be treated no differently than other physical conditions.

The section reads: “pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition shall not receive less favorable treatment than other physical conditions.” Interpreting “related medical condition” to include abortion would

mean that an institution or individual that provides health care but not abortion would be discriminating on the basis of sex. And because religious exemptions generally afforded by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act are expressly disallowed, Catholic doctors and hospitals would have no recourse to federal conscience protections.

Requiring abortion to be funded by states and covered by insurers as “health care” would only further incentivize employers to prefer abortion for their pregnant employees over more costly accommodations for parenting. Again, correcting the unyielding logic of the market was the whole purpose of the original P.D.A.

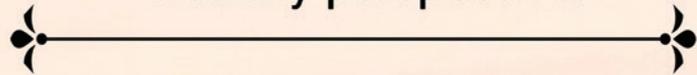
Clearly, those with caregiving responsibilities are far more costly to their employers than the unencumbered, and big business is increasingly transparent about its economic incentives. As Doreen Denny of Concerned Women for America noted last year, of the 100-plus chief executive officers who took out a full-page ad in *The New York Times* “stand[ing] up for reproductive health care,” only two of them are included among the top companies offering paid maternity leave.

More than anti-discrimination law is needed to support pregnant women and their families today. But the Equality Act takes us in exactly the wrong direction. It may be good for businesses’ bottom line, but it would be devastating for women and their families.

Erika Bachiochi is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. Her new book, The Rights of Women: Reclaiming a Lost Vision, is scheduled for publication in July.

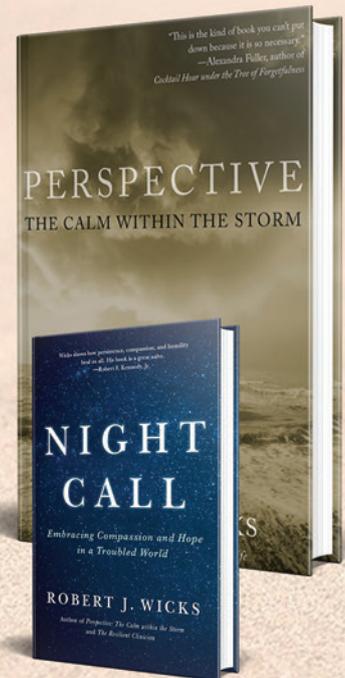
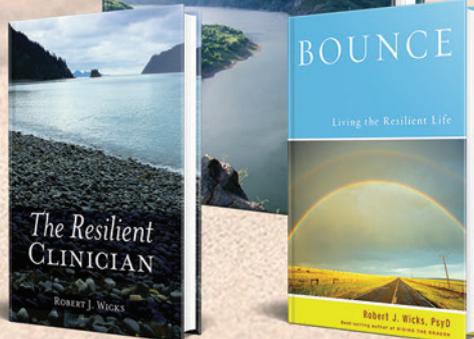
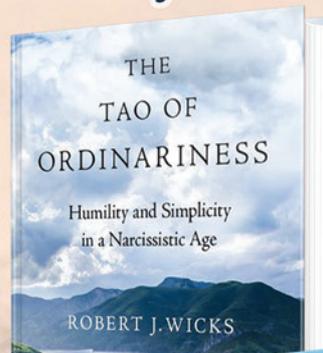
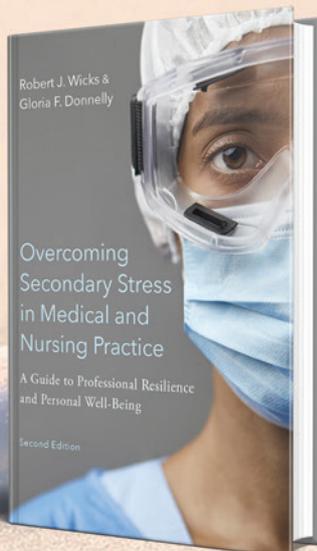


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Photos courtesy of St. Joseph's School

Catholic school in the Bible Belt nearly doubles enrollment, bucking national trend

By J.D. Long-García

St. Joseph, a small Catholic school in Anderson, S.C., nearly doubled its enrollment in 2020, leaping to 97 students from 56.

“A lot of people from the public schools came because we [opened in-person classes] back in August, and [public schools] were not going to be back until later,” Haymée Giuliani, the school’s principal, told *America*. “The parents were working, so they just came over. Some of them thought it was just going to be for a few months, but they’re staying the full year. And it was a good experience for them to see the school.”

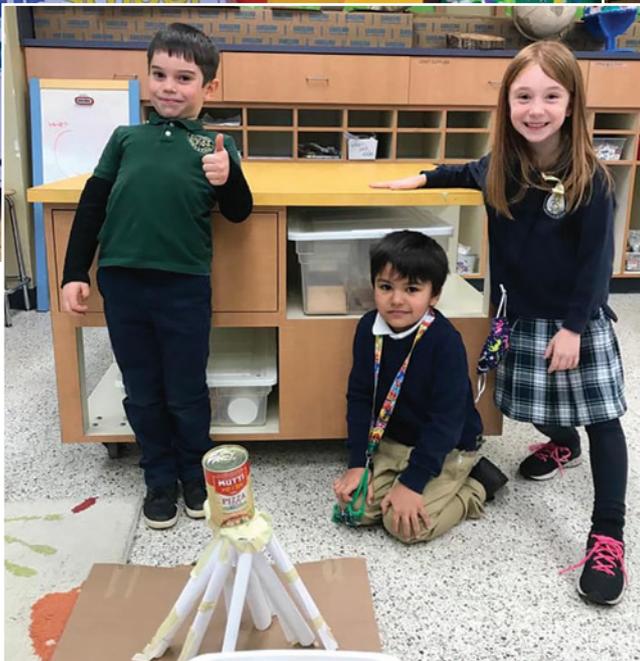
St. Joseph’s success bucks a discouraging national trend. The National Catholic Education Association reported that U.S. Catholic school enrollment dropped by 111,000 students last year, a 6.4 percent downturn, the largest decrease in 50 years. More than 200 Catholic schools closed last year, compared with about 100 the year before. According to the N.C.E.A., the Covid-19 pandemic was a

contributing factor.

But at St. Joseph, Ms. Giuliani said, the pandemic became an opportunity to reintroduce itself to its small community. The population in Anderson is less than 27,000 people.

Nationally, Catholic preschool enrollment dropped by around 45,000, making up about 40 percent of the overall decline in Catholic school enrollment. At St. Joseph’s, 10 preschool students were accepted through the state’s First Steps program, which supports children’s learning through age 5. St. Joseph now has a waiting list for preschool.

Annie Smith, N.C.E.A.’s director of data analysis, said a number of Catholic schools in the United States also had wait lists, but that was owing to social distancing standards that required reduced class sizes. She conducted a study with 1,400 families who joined Catholic schools for the first time. As at St. Joseph, many families said in-person learning was a factor in their decision. “Families who have transferred have loved their experience,” she added.



Joseph is on science, technology, religion, engineering, art and math (or STREAM). Gardening is another key part of the curriculum, with students growing vegetables and maintaining an herb garden.

“Where we are, we have a large Hispanic population. St. Joseph is so much more diverse and has a smaller class size,” said Ms. Torres-Green, who is Puerto Rican. “Even my 5-year-old, you know, he was like, ‘A little boy came in, he can’t speak English.’ And so he’s asking me, ‘How do I say this in Spanish?’ Because he wants to be able to communicate with this new child that came into class, versus, you know, he kind of gets drowned out in a large setting.”

Ms. Giuliani, who immigrated from Mexico, teaches the Spanish class. And a number of staff members at the school also speak Spanish. She became a principal, in part, because she wanted to reach out to the Latino community.

Some of the new students, Ms. Giuliani said, had disciplinary issues in their previous school. But some of their problems had to do with language and cultural differences, she said. Now their Spanish-speaking parents have a direct relationship with the principal.

“They know better now because before, the kids would be the ones translating for the parents to tell them what was going on,” she said.

The local Knights of Columbus council is affiliated with the two Catholic parishes in Anderson—St. Joseph and St. Mary of the Angels, which is also a small parish. The two communities have come together to support the school, Ms. Giuliani said.

Another ingredient in their success, according to Ms. Giuliani, is prayer. “It might sound clichéd, but we had prayers from the parish and many people. When we needed something, we would pray for it,” she said. The students pray together in English, Spanish and Latin every morning.

For Christmas, she wanted to give her teachers a bonus, rewarding them for their hard work managing school during the pandemic. That had often meant teaching two

María Torres-Green’s two boys are now at St. Joseph. Her family has been at the parish for a while, but before that the kids were in public school. Ms. Torres-Green, who works as an advocate for victims of human trafficking, invited Ms. Giuliani to give the opening prayer at a local Martin Luther King breakfast last year.

“I just fell in love with her and her spirit and her passion,” Ms. Torres-Green said. “She invited me to see the school, and it brought back those memories of when I went to Catholic school.” She thought, “Yeah, this is what school is.”

Her husband visited St. Joseph the next month and also fell in love with it. Ms. Giuliani helped them find financial assistance—most students at the school get some kind of tuition help—and the couple volunteer at the school.

“Everything fell into place,” she said. “We thought [our kids] were doing great in public school, but then we realized they weren’t doing all these other things, like—this is going to sound silly—but science projects. We started noticing our oldest son was basically [just] preparing for the standardized test.”

Where their previous school focused on science, technology, engineering and math (or STEM), the focus at St.

classes at once—one for those there in-person and another for those online. Since she did not have the funds to offer a bonus, she prayed about it.

“And someone just called us and told us she wanted to donate money for the teachers,” Ms. Giuliani said. “It was over \$11,000. It was somebody that used to be a Catholic teacher up North.”

The school’s faith component was the motivating factor for Heather Slaughter, who sends three of her four children to St. Joseph. She said her children lost the personal connection of Christian schools when the family chose public school for financial reasons.

“There was nothing to be involved in at the [public] school,” she said. “Our kids slowly just stopped being inquisitive about God, and they stopped singing their cute little Bible songs they used to learn in school.”

Her daughter was falling behind and not getting the specialized attention in the public school’s larger classroom setting, Ms. Slaughter said. She spoke with Ms. Giuliani, who told her they would do anything they could to have her kids at the school, including offering financial assistance. Both Ms. Slaughter and her husband had been quite involved at St. Joseph Church, including in its youth group, before they had kids.

The discipline and the education offered by St. Joseph were compelling, but what really confirmed her decision was a desire for her children “to know and love God,” Ms. Slaughter said.

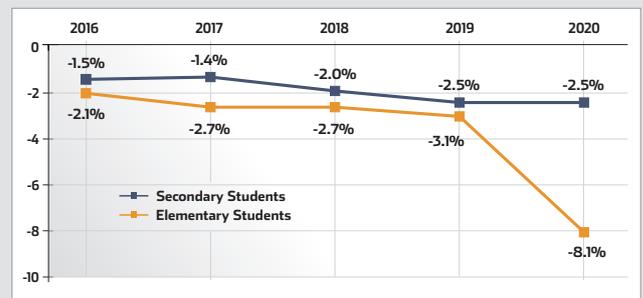
After the pandemic lockdown last spring, the school used the summer to reset, according to Ms. Slaughter. School leaders figured out what St. Joseph needed to change to make classrooms safe, so parents felt comfortable sending their kids. A new outdoor deck area was built for gatherings, and benches were set up outside for music lessons. An outdoor prayer area was remodeled. Hand sanitizing stations were installed and a regular, thorough cleaning process became part of the school’s routine.

“They added to the outside playground some swings and those things. So I mean, my kids absolutely love it,” she said. “Oh my goodness, I can’t even describe it. It just feels so amazing that my kids are learning about a different saint each week. They start the day with prayer; they learn prayer throughout the day; they have religion class; they do prayers before lunch; they do prayer before they leave the school. Praying to God is very much being instilled in them at school outside of our house, which is so invaluable.”

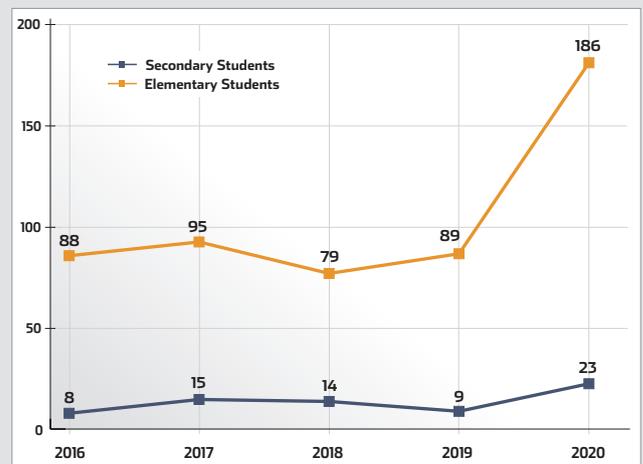
J.D. Long-Garcia, senior editor.
Twitter: @JDLongGarcia.

Covid takes a toll on Catholic school enrollment

- ▶ Nationally, Catholic school enrollment dropped **6.4 percent** in 2019-20—more than 111,000 students. The largest single-year decline in almost 50 years, it was greater than the drop during the clergy sex abuse crisis (2003, **2.7 percent**), the late 2000s economic crisis (2008, **3.5 percent**) and a **5.8 percent** decline in 1971.
- ▶ Catholic elementary school students declined by **8.1 percent**, while Catholic secondary schools enrollment fell **2.5 percent**. The elementary school drop could affect secondary-school numbers within the next five to 10 years.
- ▶ The sharpest enrollment decline was for prekindergarten enrollment at Catholic schools, which was down almost **27 percent**.



- ▶ Only 10 of the 174 dioceses with Catholic schools experienced an increase of **1 percent** or more in student enrollment.
- ▶ **Two hundred and nine** Catholic schools closed or consolidated at the end of the 2019-20 school year, **186** elementary and **23** secondary.



- ▶ Black families, urban communities and non-Catholics were overrepresented in the demographic sample of closed schools. These underserved groups were **twice as likely** to have lost their Catholic school.

Sources: National Catholic Educational Association.

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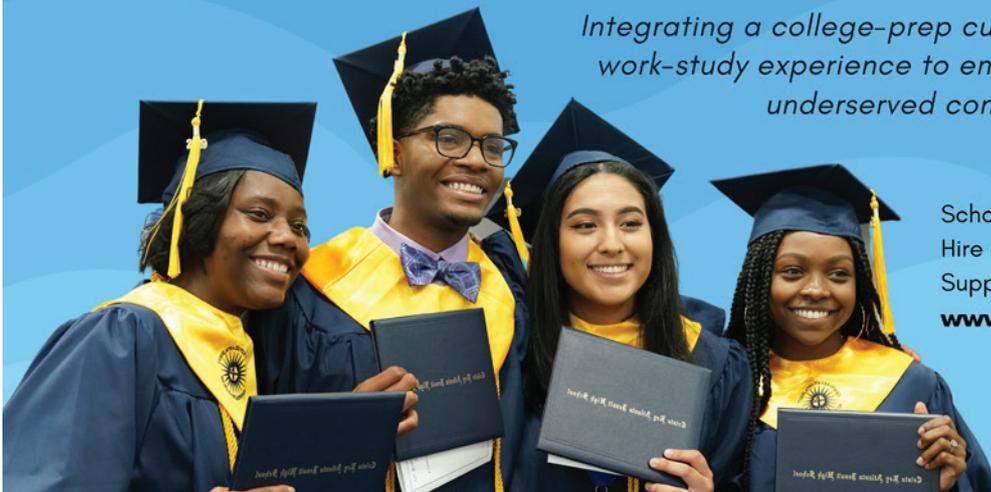
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Can its new missionary status create a Catholic revival for the church in Quebec?

Sts. Paul and Peter Catholic Church in Baie-Saint-Paul, near Quebec City.

Faced with declining resources and a diminishing cohort of weekly Mass attendees, Cardinal Gerald Lacroix of the Archdiocese of Quebec called on Catholics in the Canadian province to begin a dramatic transformation. “We must reorient our pastoral teams toward a more intensely missionary activity, turned toward the people and groups that we join too little,” the cardinal said in a pastoral message released in December.

“Cardinal Lacroix’s decision is fully in tune with what the Quebec bishops have called the missionary turnabout, following Francis’s ‘Joy of the Gospel,’” said Frédéric Barriault, a researcher at the Jesuit-run Center for Justice and Faith in Montreal, in an email. “For years, there were too many churches and too few priests and faithful to tend them,” he said. “They needed to dispose of many of these aging and sometimes crumbling churches to kickstart the real church, the one that is not made of concrete, brick and mortar, but of flesh, blood and faith.”

In recent years, hundreds of churches in Quebec have been slated for demolition or conversion into mixed-use facilities—homes, theaters and more—reflecting the waning presence of institutional Catholicism. The number of baptisms in the province has sharply declined, and the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have exacerbated the budget challenges of already struggling parishes. Still, 64 percent of people in Quebec identify as Catholic, even if weekly Mass attendance is no longer the norm.

Mr. Barriault suggests that out of such challenges may emerge new expressions of authentic Catholicism. “It means less parochial churches, priests and Sunday Masses,” he said, “and more smaller meeting rooms where laypersons would animate the liturgy of the Word and be a sign of God’s love for humanity by their personal and collective [action] for the common good.”

It is an opportunity “to become the ‘field hospital

church’ that Francis so often speaks about.”

While the missionary direction may be new, Mr. Barriault insists that the church has a long tradition of engaging people in Quebec, especially through efforts in pursuit of social justice. Young people in Quebec, he said, born after the Second Vatican Council and the so-called Quiet Revolution, when civic institutions in the province experienced rapid secularization, have never known the ultramontane and Tridentine church of the past. They are “rediscovering the prophetic heritage of Catholic social activists involved in labor, feminist, ecological and decolonial struggles,” he said. “The church would be wise to tap into that vein, with the hopes and dreams of Quebec’s youth.”

Rev. Claude Lacaille worked as a missionary with the Société des Missions-Étrangères in some of the most difficult political contexts in Haiti, Ecuador and Chile. Though he had to navigate dictatorships and violence abroad, he says his return to Quebec in 1986, after the province had secularized, “was my most difficult mission of all.”

“We have to become a prophetic church, dedicated to making the world better,” Father Lacaille said. “This is what Jesus wants: to take care of the poor, but also to change society so that it will be according to the will of God. We don’t have to take out a new rabbit from our hat. Joseph Cardijn, Dorothy Day, these are prophets that we have known before. We have to go on that path, I think.”

Mr. Barriault agrees. “A prophetic church like [the one sought by Pope Francis], highlighting social justice and solidarity with the destitute and the persecuted, has the potential of closing the chasm between the church and the modern, secular culture of Quebec.”

Dean Dettloff, *Toronto correspondent.*
 Twitter: @DeanDettloff.

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Participants:

Stanislaus Alla SJ, Vidyajyoti College of Theology, New Delhi

Agnes Brazal, De La Salle University, Manila

Lisa Sowle Cahill, Boston College

Julie Clague, University of Glasgow

David Cloutier, Catholic University of America

Elmice Cuda, Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina

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Nigeria's priests endure wave of kidnappings and attacks

The Rev. John Gbakaan was abducted on Jan. 15 near Tufa village in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. He had been traveling that evening with his brother to visit their mother in Benue State in north-central Nigeria. A ransom was demanded, but Father Gbakaan, the pastor of St. Anthony Catholic Church, was found dead the next day with machete cuts all over his body. No arrests have been made, and his brother's fate is unknown.

The same day Father Gbakaan was found, the Rev. Michael Mbari, a parish priest in southern Nigeria, was released after he had been held hostage for six days. On Jan. 1, Auxiliary Bishop Moses Chikwe of Owerri, a city in southeast Nigeria, was released with his driver. They had been abducted a week earlier. At least 20 priests in Nigeria have been abducted over the past five years.

"The attacks on priests by bandits or armed men...may simply be a manifestation of growing criminality," said the Rev. Evaristus Bassey, a parish priest in southern Nigeria and head of the Justice Development and Peace Commission in the Archdiocese of Calabar. "Priests are seen as part of the privileged group, and so the attacks may come as [an expression of] a form of anti-clericalism."

But, Father Bassey warns, the possibility that Islamic militant groups are behind some of the crimes cannot be ruled out.

In September 2019, hundreds of priests from the diocese of Enugu, a city in Nigeria's southeast region, marched in a protest against the abduction and killing of priests. Their demonstration followed the killing of the Rev. Paul Offu, a priest of the diocese, who had been returning to his parish when he was ambushed by armed men suspected to be cattle herders from the Fulani ethnic group. Some herdsmen seem to be working in collaboration with Islamist extremists associated with Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa.

"The Nigerian state has become so weak that non-state militias have arisen," said Father Bassey. "It leaves those of us from minority groups quite vulnerable because we cannot defend ourselves, and the government is either incapable or deliberately cannot defend us."

The attacks on priests and their ministries has left many living in fear. "You want to hurry to get back home," said Father Bassey. "You don't want to be in a lonely place; you can't step out and take a stroll."

Many attacks are orchestrated by members of the Fulani people, mostly Muslim pastoralists who have been in conflict with Christian farming communities over land rights. President Muhammadu Buhari, who is from the Fulani ethnic group, has been accused of protecting his kinsmen.

On Christmas Eve last year, Boko Haram insurgents



Prelates lead a march in Abuja, Nigeria, protesting insecurity and violence against Christians in March 2020.

CNS photo/Afolabi Sotunde, Reuters



Kevin Bourgeois with Archbishop Gregory Aymond

GOODNEWS: New Orleans Archdiocese revises response to abuse allegations

Ongoing discussions between Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond, of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and Kevin Bourgeois, the leader of the New Orleans chapter of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, have led to a significant broadening and restructuring of the archdiocese's response to abuse survivors.

Archbishop Aymond announced on Feb. 11 that Joey Pistorius, director of the archdiocesan Catholic Counseling Service, will become the new victims assistance coordinator in April. Mr. Bourgeois, who is a licensed clinical social worker, will serve as a volunteer and will offer training to the counseling team when there are disclosures of sexual abuse trauma.

And the archbishop, on the recommendation of Mr. Bourgeois and other victim advocates, plans to appoint a sexual abuse survivor to the Independent Review Board, a body primarily composed of lay professionals, which reviews allegations of abuse to determine their credibility and makes recommendations to the archbishop.

"There's no need for us to be at odds," Archbishop Aymond said of the relationship between the archdiocese and SNAP. "We want the same thing, and reconciliation has happened," he said. "We will work together. Independently, the archdiocese can do many things well, and independently, SNAP can do many things well. We can do more together."

The archbishop first met with Mr. Bourgeois on Dec. 15, initiating "some very open and frank discussions about the strengths and weaknesses of what we're doing."

"It really opened up the question: Let's start from scratch. Let's start from the very beginning and see what we can do, what we can do better," Archbishop Aymond said.

The new victims assistance response team will work together to address the individual needs of each survivor.

Peter Finney Jr., *Catholic News Service*.

stormed Pemi, a Christian town in the northeast, killing seven people and abducting a priest. In a scathing homily on Christmas Day, the Most Rev. Matthew Kukah of the Diocese of Sokoto deplored the "endless bloodletting, a collapsing economy, social anomie, domestic and community violence, kidnappings [and] armed robberies" afflicting Nigeria.

"Ours has become a nation wrapped in desolation," he said.

The Muslim Solidarity Forum, a group of Islamic organizations, condemned Bishop Kukah for attributing terrorism and growing attacks by bandits and herders to Islam and for what they understood to be the bishop's call for a military coup over growing insecurity, maladministration and nepotism.

"I will not be surprised if more priests become targets of attacks," said Father Bassey, suggesting that angry members of more militant Islamic groups could commit further violent attacks on Christians, "as a means of avenging their honor," he said, "which they seem to think has been mocked."

Patrick Egwu contributes from South Africa.
Twitter: @PatrickEgwu.

INSIDE AMERICA

America Media is more than a media resource. We also bring our community what they need now more than ever via events and leading life-changing pilgrimages.

HIGHLIGHTING WHAT IS HAPPENING INSIDE AMERICA MEDIA. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

PILGRIMAGE

After the Holy Land trip in February 2020, we had to suspend our travel program because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was a huge disappointment because our pilgrimages are deep experiences of faith, as we visit places like the Holy Land, Lourdes, Rome and Ireland.

In an effort to evoke the many graces of our pilgrimages, we invited past pilgrims to participate in a photo contest by submitting a picture that best represents an America Media pilgrimage.

With more than 40 photo submissions, it was a difficult task for our judges—Matt Malone, S.J., Jim Martin, S.J., Susan Braddock, chair of the Board of Directors, and Mary Rutherford, a board member and pilgrim liaison—to choose the following three winning photos:

1. Mary Freeman: “Sunrise Over Mount of Beatitudes, Holy Land 2019”
2. Grace Gregory: “Galway Bay, Ireland 2019”
3. Lisa and Jim Woodall: “Via Dolorosa, Holy Land 2019”

Special thanks to all pilgrims who submitted their photos!

Looking Ahead: Restarting the Pilgrimage Program

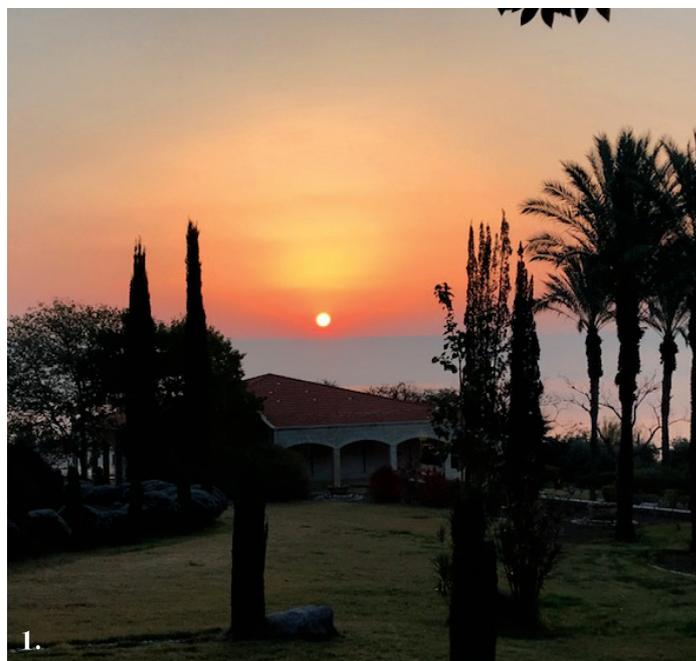
All of us are looking forward to a brighter 2022 and to formally restarting our pilgrimage and travel program in the months to come. In consultation with Catholic Travel Centre, we are planning the following pilgrimages:

Holy Land: February 24- March 6, 2022

We walk in the footsteps of Jesus and visit Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Bethany, Jerusalem and many other sites.

Ignatian Spain: April 24-May 2, 2022

We will visit Bilbao in northwestern Spain, traverse Pamplona to Javier (Xavier), the castle that was home to Francis Xavier, and continue to Montserrat, Manresa and then end in Barcelona.



Lourdes and Paris: Fall 2022

During America Media's inaugural trip to Lourdes and Paris we will walk with our Lady in Lourdes, where the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous, and then explore the Paris of St. Ignatius, with visits to Sainte-Chapelle and Montmartre.

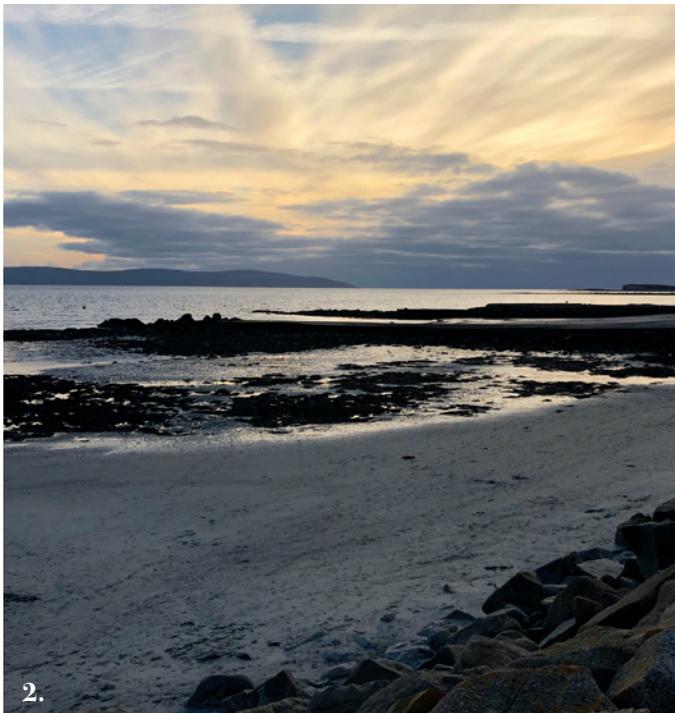
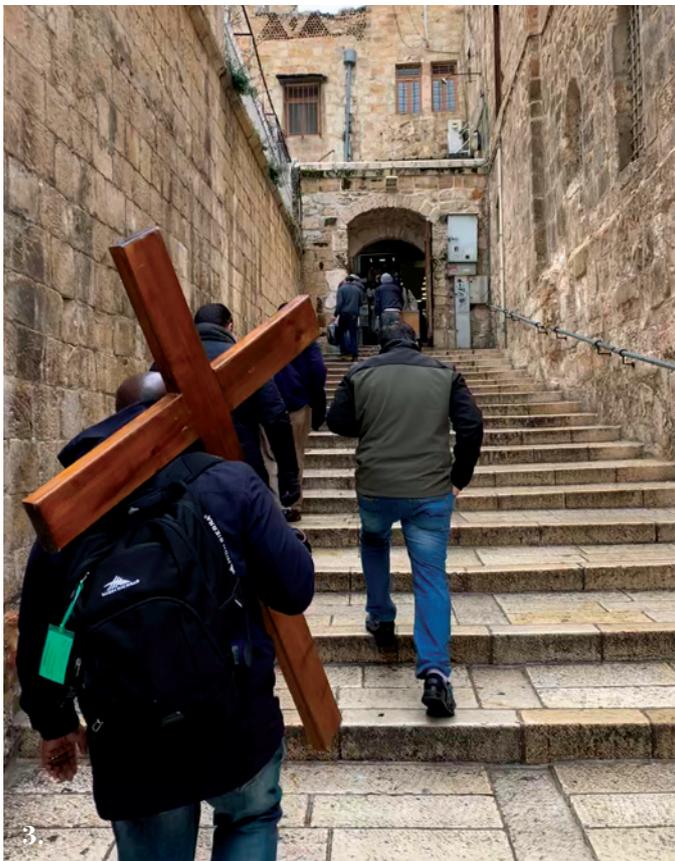
We know that travel in the post-Covid world is going to require greater flexibility in terms of airlines, hotels and daily itinerary. But America Media is committed to coordinating meaningful and spiritually fulfilling experiences.

To learn more about one or all of these pilgrimages, please contact Michelle Smith, Advancement Associate, at msmith@americamedia.org or at 212- 515-0153.



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SEBASTIAN GOMES EXECUTIVE EDITOR AUDIO & VIDEO

After completing a master's degree in church history, Sebastian seemed to be on the path to a career in teaching. Instead, he found himself in Catholic media, covering church events around the world and creating documentary films. "It's another form of teaching," he says. He joined **America** in 2019 as the executive editor for audio and video and believes creative, human storytelling is essential to the church's mission today. That's why he spearheaded **America's** new documentary: "A Day in the Life of a Lay Catholic Woman Who Runs a Parish."

'A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LAY CATHOLIC WOMAN WHO RUNS A PARISH'

Meet Elizabeth Simcoe, a lay woman appointed by her bishop to lead St. Vincent de Paul parish in Albany, N.Y. With a growing shortage of priests, the diocese had to consider alternative models of pastoral ministry. "Strong leadership, administrative skills and being pastoral at heart are not exclusive to ordained priests," says Sebastian Gomes, who directed the film, "Elizabeth is a powerful witness to what the Holy Spirit can do when Catholics think outside-the-box."

**Watch the documentary at
[YouTube.com/americamedia](https://www.youtube.com/americamedia).**



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STUDENTS TOGETHER, LEADERS TOGETHER

A new vision of pastoral leadership is slowly taking root in the U.S. church

By Don Clemmer

Victoria Mastrangelo knew the priest who had started coming to say Mass at the all-girls Catholic school in Houston where she teaches theology. He was a friend of her husband from their time at Holy Trinity Seminary at the University of Dallas. So one day during the 2018-19 school year, when Ms. Mastrangelo greeted the priest upon his arrival before Mass, he had a request. After Mass, he wanted her thoughts on his homily.

“He wasn’t sure how it was going to come off, and he admitted that he’d come up with the idea kind of late, so he was hoping to get some feedback on how it went,” Ms. Mastrangelo recalled. “I know that it was a genuine ask and that he was actually interested in my perspective. It was also encouraging that we were able to have a quick but honest conversation about it and that he seemed to take my feedback well.”

This encounter was not a foreign one for Ms. Mastrangelo. The 32-year-old mother of three girls has numerous friendships with priests that date from before the men’s ordinations. She pursued her undergraduate degree at the

University of Dallas—where Holy Trinity Seminary educates college seminarians from over a dozen U.S. dioceses—and her master’s degree in theological studies at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, where her classes took place entirely at nearby St. Mary’s Seminary. (The program at St. Thomas is no longer offered jointly.)

“It’s good to have these relationships,” Ms. Mastrangelo told **America**. The realization that she was studying alongside future members of the local presbyterate, she said, only made her investment in friendship more intentional.

“They need those friendships too,” she said. “Relationality is really huge, and I’ve just seen the fruits of it...how it plays into their ministry.”

Ms. Mastrangelo’s experience received a high-profile endorsement last April, when Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for Bishops, called for the involvement of more women in the process of priestly formation. The cardinal called for “radical change” in how priests and seminarians interact with women.



Photos provided to America

The 2018 class of the master of divinity program at Notre Dame's Moreau Seminary is pictured here. The program, similar to ones found at Boston College and the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University, forms priests and lay ministers alike to be collaborators in their future ministries.

though the document has not yet been promulgated.)

Institutions that embrace integrated models of formation represent a major postconciliar development in the wider church. The human formation provided in their programs, the leaders of these institutions assert, results not only in healthier, more well-rounded priests but also helps advance the vision of Vatican II. They also lead to greater empowerment of women and laypeople more generally and can even help root out sicknesses in the culture of the church that ultimately manifest themselves in abuse.

Healthy Development

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight of the Diocese of Jefferson City, Mo., sees a “better benefit to having a more robust theological education if you have everyone mixed.” The 52-year-old bishop told **America** it is “so much” healthier to have men studying around other people, men and women alike.

Before being named a bishop in 2018, then-Father McKnight served on the faculty and administration of the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio (2003-8) and as executive director of the Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (2010-15), where he collaborated with church leaders from around the country on questions of priestly formation.

Bishop McKnight notes a key distinction: Integrated formation is much more common at the college seminary level than at the graduate level. According to Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, of the 452 U.S. seminarians enrolled in some kind of pre-theology program in the 2018-19 academic year, 114 were at either collaborative college seminaries or formation houses on college campuses.

At 18 years of age, “you're still trying to figure out life. You're trying to figure out who God's calling you to be,” said Brian Ching, C.S.C., the director of the Old College Undergraduate Seminary and rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame.

Father Ching notes that college is a normal time for young people to integrate healthy behaviors into all aspects of life: sleep, diet, relationships and other life lessons. He adds that the experience of an actual college campus breaks the illusion of some kind of Catholic utopia. The goal, he notes, is not to inoculate men from the world, but

“There is awkwardness because there is fear—more on the part of the man toward the woman than the woman toward the man,” he said. He said the increased presence of women “would help a candidate interact with women in a natural way.”

Integrated formation models—which most often take the form of men preparing for the priesthood sharing classrooms and even degree programs with men and women pursuing vocations in lay ministry—are one way to foster such encounters. Part of the larger trend of greater lay involvement and leadership in the church following the Second Vatican Council, such programming is not new in the United States. In fact, a visitation of seminaries in the United States conducted under Vatican supervision in the early 2000s cited U.S. seminaries for too much commingling, saying that problems arise “when the seminary aims at offering a theological education to all—seminarians and laity—for, unless proper safeguards are put in place, the seminary can lose much of its finality, which is to offer a specifically *priestly* formation to men chosen by the Church to embark on the path to Holy Orders.”

The guiding U.S. document, the “Program of Priestly Formation, Fifth Edition,” promulgated in 2006, also stresses the specific character and goal of forming priests, as opposed to lay ministers. But proponents of integrated formation programs see these models as in keeping with the document's call for priestly formation to prepare men to serve a pastoral role in the wider church. (The U.S. bishops voted to approve a sixth edition of the program in 2019,

The cardinal called for ‘radical change’ in how priests and seminarians interact with women.



The 2019 class of the master of divinity program at Notre Dame's Moreau Seminary, which is open to both lay students and seminarians, pictured at a Mass with Bishop Kevin Rhodes of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind.

to condition them.

“It’s easier to be merciful,” said Father Ching, “when you’re the kid who made the mistake.”

Father Ching is also a graduate of the master of divinity program at Moreau Seminary at Notre Dame, where he studied alongside laypeople.

“There’s a richness that comes from having our guys study in a university,” said John Herman, C.S.C., the superior and rector of Moreau Seminary. “They’re hearing what men and women, lay men and women, who will be serving in the church as a whole—what they’re thinking, what they’re feeling.”

Some 150 miles south of Notre Dame, the Rev. Joe Moriarty, rector of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary at Marian University in Indianapolis, Ind., embraces the milieu a college campus provides, especially activities sponsored by campus ministry, which include mission trips that provide students the opportunity to encounter those at the peripheries.

“Those opportunities abound,” Father Moriarty said. “I let them do as much as they want, because they’re choosing to do it.”

Father Ching notes that 40 years ago, the prevailing mentality in seminary formation would have been to “protect the formation,” that is, to keep a seminarian away from women so that “he doesn’t know what he’s missing” or feel temptation. “That’s not the way to protect the vocation,” Father Ching said; rather, the process should involve “allowing [a] seminarian to know himself, to understand himself” and know that what celibacy demands is achievable.

One former seminarian who discovered his vocation on a college campus is Victoria Mastrangelo’s husband, Joseph. Now the owner of a coffee roasting business that helps farmers become more financially sustainable, Mr. Mastrangelo initially discerned a possible vocation to the

priesthood at Holy Spirit Seminary at the University of Dallas. There he realized that his extroverted nature, which thrived in a campus setting, would never adjust to the relative isolation of administering a parish or even multiple parishes.

“My leaving diocesan seminary definitely shocked a lot of people,” he recalled. “I mean, it shocked me.”

He eventually moved back to Houston and entered parish ministry, where he met his future wife.

Conversely, Nick Rivelli, a seminarian of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, discovered his vocation to the priesthood as a student on the campus of Marian University. Father Moriarty was transitioning from chaplain to seminary rector during Mr. Rivelli’s first year. “Being at daily Mass with him kind of planted the seeds of the call,” Mr. Rivelli recalled. He started to discern his vocation as a sophomore and switched over to seminary studies as a junior.

“They really just seemed like normal guys,” Mr. Rivelli recalled of the seminarians he had encountered prior to pursuing his call. “I was able to thrive and advance in my formation by being connected at the university,” he said, and since that time has “maintained those relationships that were important to me.”

Championing Co-responsibility

According to CARA, in the United States only five theologates—that is, seminary schools of theology—enrolled at least one seminarian and one lay candidate in a pontifical degree program in the 2019-20 academic year. When the list was widened to include all institutions providing priestly and lay ministry formation, the number grew closer to 20.

Stacey Noem and her husband were the first married couple to complete the master of divinity program at Moreau together. A few more have done so since. Ms. Noem



Photos provided to America

oversees the human and spiritual formation for lay students in the program, a position she has held for eight years.

“There are universal human truths.... We have a bedrock to stand on,” Ms. Noem said of her work in formation and the principles she draws from even as the Catholic Church figures out how roles and titles are supposed to work as more lay people move into ministry. “That’s real collegueship that’s happening.... There’s no second-class citizenship here.”

One person Ms. Noem has reached out to in order to understand lay formation is Jacqueline Regan, associate dean for student affairs at the School of Theology and Ministry of Boston College

“I think that people naturally, when they think of Catholic ministers, think of priests,” Ms. Regan said of her work, even though the school is about 70 percent lay in its enrollment. “While we don’t want to diminish the role of the priest, we recognize that that’s not the only role that matters.”

The School of Theology and Ministry serves Jesuits, Capuchins, Basilians, Redemptorists and other religious orders. Its students are also 25 percent to 30 percent international, an attribute of other integrated programs, including those at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and the College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minn.

“Our model...is the fruit of a 50-year commitment by the Jesuits,” she said, growing out of Vatican II, to bring ordained, religious and lay ministers together as collabora-

Nick Rivelli, top center, a seminarian of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, attends a 2019 retreat in Solsberry, Ind., with students from Marian University. Mr. Rivelli discovered his vocation to the priesthood due to the presence of seminarians at Marian.

Joseph and Victoria Mastrangelo, pictured upper right and lower left, both experienced integrated formation models during their studies at Catholic universities in Texas. Now married with children, the couple have found that friendships with priests dating back to those years are one fruit of that experience.

Lower right: Nick Rivelli attends a March 2020 mission trip to Guatemala with students from Marian University.

tors in ministry.

At the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley, Calif., Christopher Hadley, S.J., director of the master of divinity program, said lay students are “able to reflect in a safe spot with other lay students and with Jesuits and with lay professors on their experiences” on field placements and other issues as they discern their ministry vocations. Ultimately, they find that differences in the church exist “for relationship, not power.”

Ms. Noem at Notre Dame points to the development of the church’s language when describing the mission of laypeople, from Vatican II’s use of *collaborator* and later *coworker* to the present *co-responsibility*.

“Lumen Gentium” included several paragraphs on laypeople, and Pope John Paul II’s 1992 exhortation “Pastores Dabo Vobis” talks about professional lay collaborators with ordained ministers for the first time. And the U.S.C.C.B.’s



While we don't want to diminish the role of the priest, we recognize that that's not the only role that matters.

2005 "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord" uses the noun *minister* to refer to laypeople for the first time.

"It takes much more maturity and skill to share power," Ms. Noem said, noting that her students "get to practice what it looks like to share power.... They get to be in class together. They get to learn and grow in shift together. They build trust."

"Vatican II was a culturally transformative council.... Seminary cultures haven't integrated [it] completely," Bishop McKnight acknowledged. "We just need to keep moving forward, but very carefully," he added, noting that teaching co-responsibility at the parish level will require catechesis.

Kathleen Mitchell, F.S.P.A., has witnessed these growing pains firsthand through her work in formation at Chicago's Mundelein Seminary. In recent years, the seminary has instituted the Tolton Teaching Parish Program, in which seminarians are assigned to parishes in the area and even receive feedback from parishioners on how they are doing.

"They couldn't believe they were being asked to do this," Sister Mitchell recalled. "It was such an honor for these people to be able to support in some way these seminarians."

Sometimes institutions are slow to foster encounters between seminarians and other students not because of internal resistance but because of logistics. "It's not as simple as it sounds," said Father Ching on his experiences at Notre Dame, noting that stand-alone seminaries face the prospect of having to start a whole new school in order to bring lay people on campus.

This is magnified in a space like the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh, Pa., which welcomes laypeople and Christians of other denominations. "We're very small in number," said Father Robert Pipta, the rector of the seminary. "We're only going to have so much of an audience." But this does not mean the seminary overlooks the value of having women in the formation process. "Women are considered a very valuable

component of formation—both in consecrated life and laywomen," said Father Pipta.

The Impact of Women

People who witness the role of women in priestly formation believe strongly in the benefits. "Women bring a whole other sense. I don't think it's healthy to be in a male-only world," said Sister Mitchell at Mundelein. "God willing, these men are going to spend their lives serving women and working with women." She cites the efforts of the rector, the Rev. John Kartje, to hire more women.

At the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, Julie Hanlon Rubio, a professor of Christian ethics, sees her role not only as a woman in authority but someone who has a positive impact because of the feminist theologians she uses in her teaching. She explains how these theologians have questioned the church's stress on the sin of pride.

"I want priests in the confessional to know that for some women, sin may lie more in a failure of self-care and self-realization than in undue focus on the self," Ms. Rubio said. On questions of family life, she added, "like many married theologians, I approach family with a much broader set of questions, including how families can live out the values of Catholic social thought in their daily lives. My students have told me that this approach was very helpful for their future ministry."

Patricia Parachini, S.N.J.M., who has spent 40 years in seminary formation work, noted that "[s]eminarians who are gay, in my experience, were very open about it with the women...but were not open with their male spiritual directors." One reason for this, she said, is that "the women who are spiritual directors are trained to be spiritual directors," as opposed to male directors, for whom ordination is often presumed to be sufficient training.

Nick Rivelli, who has completed his undergraduate work at Bruté and is continuing his studies at St. Meinrad School of Theology in southern Indiana, calls one of the campus ministry staff at Marian University, Krista Chinchilla, "one of the most formational and empowering mentors for me these past two years." He credits her with awakening him to social justice issues to a degree he would not have appreciated otherwise. "That flame has been stoked and nourished through that mentor relationship," he said.

"It was just fun to work with Nick and hear and have challenging conversations with him about issues of justice, about vocation, about church, about faith, about leadership," said Ms. Chinchilla. "All of that is empowering, being able to have a voice and be able to dialogue and be valued."

She sees her influence on Mr. Rivelli as an unpacking of the unique nature of laypeople as articulated in "Lumen



Gentium.” She notes that this has implications for priests too. “They’re the ones who will be shepherding people like me, in communication with people like me,” she said, adding that Jesus was “deeply entrenched in the people,” including women.

“We’re giving them the ability to talk to different people and have different kinds of relationships,” said Ms. Mastrangelo in Houston, Tex.

Into the Light

Proponents of integrated formation models not only see them as helpful for bringing future priests into encounter with the wider church and the world beyond it; they also see their value in helping move the church out of the shadow of the abuse crisis. Father Ching at Notre Dame has seen a renewed push for it in the wake of the horrific revelations of 2018.

Ms. Noem at Notre Dame said that “a community that has a personal and professional stake in one another” has license to speak into one another’s lives; nobody gets to be quiet. She added, “This is a bridge of trust that stays intact,” that church authorities do not have to over-program to affect transformation. “Train people together.... It will fix things from the inside.”

“There’s no shortage of vocations,” Ms. Regan said of her energized lay students at Boston College. “Some of the structures just aren’t quite there yet.” However, she added, after an explosion of growth in the 1990s, lay ministry fell back after the crisis in 2002 because many parishes could not afford to employ them. “The growth of lay ministry was kind of collateral damage,” she said. “The focus became on the ordained.”

That is not to say focusing on ordination is without value. Msgr. Michael Heintz, seminary academic dean at Mount St. Mary’s University in Emmitsburg, Md., sees the practical side of focusing on seminarians by themselves.

“Their needs and priorities are going to look a little different,” said Monsignor Heintz, citing examples of pre-

paring them to give homilies and to live celibate chastity. “I wouldn’t advocate that we need to radically transform seminary formation in that regard.”

Stacey Noem and her husband, Josh, far right, stand with three seminarian classmates during their time together in the master of divinity program at Notre Dame’s Moreau Seminary. Noem now oversees human and spiritual formation for lay students in that program.

Mount St. Mary’s is an integrated university environment, with the seminary offering a master’s program open to lay students. Monsignor Heintz previously worked as director of the M.Div. program at Notre Dame, so he recognizes that priests need to be men who are comfortable with the gifts of laypeople. “They need to realize that the life that they don’t lead is good and beautiful,” he said.

Clericalism “has been in the walls of seminaries,” Bishop McKnight said. “Like racism, you’re not aware of it.... We don’t always recognize it.”

Father Hadley in Berkeley notes that a defining moment for him occurred when laywomen in his program asked to take his theology and spirituality of priesthood course, which had been reserved only to seminarians. “If we’re going to be working alongside priests professionally, we need this knowledge,” they argued.

“It was tense and embarrassing,” Father Hadley said of the pain of seeing his own clericalism. “I had to fight against that within myself.” However, he notes, it was a great success. “It really enriched the conversation.... Everybody got a sense of how ordained ministry fits within the baptismal priesthood.”

Don Clemmer is a writer and editor based in Indiana. He edits *Cross Roads* magazine for the Catholic Diocese of Lexington. Twitter: @clemmer_don.



Livestream Lifeline

The surprising benefits of attending Mass online

By Colleen Dulle

Even though there is no congregation at Sunday Mass, the community at St. Benedict the African Parish in Chicago has never been so close.

As Chicago entered a strict lockdown in March 2020, young members of the community helped the parish transition to broadcasting its liturgies and some of its weekly offerings, like Bible studies, on Zoom. One young man even visited the home of an elderly parishioner to help her connect to the parish's livestream.

When the pastor of the historically Black Catholic church, the Rev. David Jones, saw how the Zoom liturgies and Bible studies were helping older members of the community overcome their isolation, he challenged the parish team to come up with online programming for every day of the week.

"The beauty that I witnessed was the community that was formed," said Father Jones. Around 20 people, or 10 percent of the parish's virtual Sunday Massgoers, tune in every day at noon for discussion groups or weekly to pray the rosary. They also have special events like a highlighting of local entrepreneurs, holding Bible studies, a speaker series or a hush harbor, a service featuring spirituals and speeches that dates to slave gatherings in antebellum America.

The daily Zoom group is made up of parishioners who were not well acquainted before the pandemic, but who have become close thanks to daily conversations. Now, when one person is unable to call in by Zoom, as happened recently when a member was sick, the group works together to make sure the missing member is all right. "They've gone from not knowing each other's names to knowing each other's medical histories," Father Jones joked.

The parish, like many I contacted for this article, has not seen a significant decrease in Sunday attendance since switching to online liturgies. In fact, at St. Benedict, some Massgoers who previously attended occasionally now attend online every Sunday, Father Jones said. The parish also sees new possibilities in using online connections not just for evangelization but for fostering

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Livestream



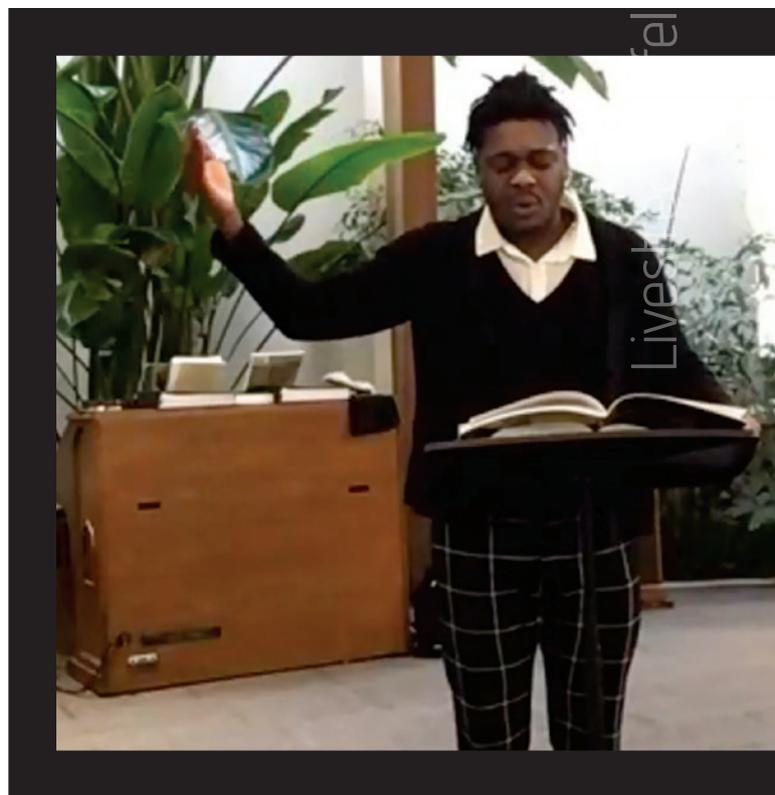
Most people expressed a deep desire to return to in-person Mass but hoped that online offerings would continue indefinitely.

greater involvement of young people, stabilizing parish finances with online giving and creating accessible communities for isolated parishioners.

In dioceses where the coronavirus pandemic forced the suspension of in-person Masses, livestreamed Masses became the de facto replacement for many parishes. Although no comprehensive data exists on the number of churches that have adopted livestreaming, Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate found that almost nine in every 10 dioceses in the United States have helped their churches set up online giving during the pandemic. This could indicate that churches understand the need to reach out virtually now—both in terms of donations and community-building to keep their doors open in the future. And Catholics are seeking out spiritual resources. Google search traffic for “Catholic Mass livestream” and similar terms skyrocketed in mid-March 2020, reaching a peak last Easter. In Italy, Pope Francis' televised daily Masses reached a million viewers on cable TV.

In the early days of the pandemic, the widespread embrace of streaming liturgies led theologians to publicly debate a number of questions. Among them were: Do livestreamed Masses really allow for the active participation of the laity? Does filming Masses hurt decorum? Is it clericalist for only priests to be receiving Communion during the pandemic? Considering the shortcomings, should we be livestreaming Masses at all?

These were and still are questions worth asking, but one year later, the vast majority of more than 70 Catholics I spoke with by phone, email and social media agreed that they had benefited from the experience of worshipping through a livestream Mass—and hoped to continue to do so. In particular, individuals who are homebound, have a disability or are immunocompromised, along with their



families, expressed gratitude for the services. Most people I spoke to expressed a deep desire to return to in-person Mass but hoped that online offerings would continue indefinitely for those who are unable to attend even in normal times. Others found solace in watching livestreamed liturgies from parishes around the country or from organizing their own liturgies of the word in their homes or online.

These Catholics' stories of resilience are a testament to what Archbishop Arthur Roche, secretary of the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship, told me in a podcast interview during Holy Week last year. When I asked what he had learned about worship during the pandemic, he said, “Our Catholics are as creative as our priests are, and they won't let this time pass without celebrating what is the certainty of their faith.”

Talking Tech

Early in the pandemic, in those last weeks of March 2020, the parish livestream landscape was fairly barren. A handful of tech-savvy priests set up Facebook Live broadcasts, but most parishes went dark, assuming the suspension on public Masses would soon be lifted. As Easter drew closer, more and more churches hurried to implement livestream Mass in time for the most important day of the church year.

Many of those parishes ran into two main challenges: the cost of the equipment required for livestreaming and a lack of technical expertise. Nicole Bazis, director of parish services at St. Margaret of Antioch Parish in Narberth, Pa.,



Phillip Armstrong, left, and Eric Rutherford, above, serve as music ministers during a livestreamed Mass at St. Benedict the African Parish in Chicago. Parishioners have grown closer to one another through their participation in the parish's Zoom liturgies and discussion groups.

said her parish was lucky to have adequate funding and a young staff member to help with the parish's new online Masses. Nearby parishes, she said, had not been so lucky. Some set up GoFundMe pages to raise money for livestreaming equipment.

At wealthier parishes, the transition was seamless, according to those with whom I spoke. But parishes operating on shoestring budgets exacerbated by the pandemic—many of whom could not afford to extend the range of internet coverage in order to reach their church buildings, much less purchase cameras or broadcasting equipment—settled for streaming private Masses from the rectory on the priest's smartphone.

Financial issues aside, many parishes struggled to find someone who could run their livestream. Bill Trentel, a parishioner at St. Clement and St. James Parishes in Lakewood, Ohio, learned quickly how to set up a livestream with almost no previous experience. Each Sunday, he alternates between the two parishes, which share a pastor. He is one of four people working on the broadcasts. "I embraced the challenge of helping bring our parish Mass to our entire community," Mr. Trentel said. "It has given me purpose during these difficult times."

One important consideration for parishes setting up livestream Masses is whether to create a videoconference, in which parishioners can see one another, or only show the sanctuary area. At St. Benedict the African in Chicago, choosing the former helped lead to a strong sense of com-

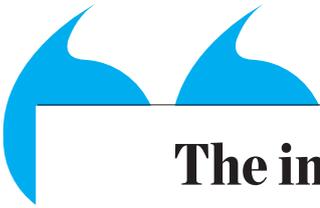
munity among those in attendance. The Catholics I spoke to for this story generally agreed that the Zoom format was more intimate, even if they typically attended the more usual livestream.

Marcus Mescher, a professor at Xavier University in Columbus, Ohio, and a parishioner at Bellarmine Chapel on the university campus, said his family switched from their parish's livestream to a Zoom Mass on Christmas. "I felt more like a participant than a spectator and felt more solidarity with all those gathered (because I could see their faces) than seeing the viewer count on YouTube if it had been a Bellarmine Mass," Dr. Mescher wrote in an email. But a Zoom Pro account, which is required for video conferences over 40 minutes long, costs \$150 per year for calls with up to 100 participants and more for larger crowds. That can be cost-prohibitive for some parishes.

Leaving No One Out

The group that perhaps has benefited most from livestreamed Masses is made up of those who had difficulty going to Mass in person even in pre-pandemic times: the homebound, those with disabilities or disabled family members and those whose work schedules prevent them from attending Mass regularly. Now many of them find themselves connected to parish communities in ways that previously were impossible.

Ashley Ann Red, a parishioner at St. Thomas à Becket in Montreal, Canada, said her mother had been immobile



The innovation begun during the pandemic is only the beginning of the creativity needed for the church to reach people who are often overlooked.

for a year awaiting a hip surgery and could not come to Mass. “When Covid started, our parish started to stream Mass,” Ms. Red said. “It was very comforting.”

Katie Corkern, a parishioner at St. Helena Catholic Church in Amite, La., said her sons were also comforted by livestreamed Masses. Her middle son, Connor, 14, is blind, nonverbal, uses a wheelchair and has a weak immune system. Connor loved going to Mass in pre-pandemic days, she said, and now enjoys listening to it on television. Ms. Corkern’s other sons “thought Mass on TV was awesome and so cool” at first, Ms. Corkern said, but now they feel left out seeing their friends go back to Mass in person. The Corkerns will not be able to go back to Sunday Mass until they can be certain it is safe for Connor, which may take months, as some people at her parish do not wear masks. In the meantime, Ms. Corkern said she hopes her parish will continue livestreaming, but she is not sure if they will.

Like Ms. Corkern, Donnie Smith of St. Joseph’s parish in Marietta, Ga., is concerned about the safety of going back to Mass. He converted to Catholicism on Easter 2019 but has rarely been able to go to Mass in the last year because he suffers from a heart condition that puts him at high risk of complications from the coronavirus. In the meantime, he has been following his parish’s livestream.

“I can’t wait for my first week back at Mass,” Mr. Smith said, although he is also nervous that other parishioners will judge him for not coming to Mass during the pandemic. “There are just a lot of Catholics out there who think if you aren’t going to Mass every week, risking your life or others’ around you, then you must not have real faith. But with my condition, I would have gone straight to the I.C.U. if I’d caught Covid. I don’t know what else I could have done.”

Risk assessments like Mr. Smith’s and Ms. Corkern’s are common even for Catholics with strong immune systems. Many people I spoke to who live in areas where

Masses have reopened said they have observed that the majority of people returning to in-person Mass are elderly, which has led some young Catholics to avoid returning to Mass so as not to inadvertently infect the elderly.

For Catholics who are permanently homebound or disabled, livestreamed Masses are only one part of the outreach they need, especially as home visits have been suspended in many places.

Laurie Mehta, a parishioner at All Saints in Cincinnati, is blind and has been advocating for Catholics with disabilities in her diocese for years. Ms. Mehta hopes that Catholic churches will continue livestreaming for the sake of the homebound and disabled, but she has set her expectations even higher: She hopes parishes will begin organizing a ministry to give people with disabilities rides to Mass when the pandemic is under control.

“I truly hope and pray that bishops and local priests take the blind more into account when they make plans for the future,” she said. “We often are left out and simply cannot get to church. Mass online is a blessing; a ministry to get us to church would be even better!”

The Road Ahead

For some Catholics looking for a sense of community in a time of isolation, the wide array of livestreamed Masses available has provided an opportunity to reconnect with old parishes or explore new ones.

Priests and parishioners at Xavier University’s Belarmine Chapel, St. Benedict the African in Chicago and Dolores Mission in Los Angeles all said people who lived far away from their parishes had begun joining their online communities. Adrienne Alexander, a parishioner at St. Benedict the African in Chicago, said one woman from Seattle joins her parish’s Zoom group daily. “She’s never been to our church, just found us on the internet and loves it,” she said. “She’s part of the community now.”

For others, though, the dispensation from Sunday Mass has been a chance to gather in small “house churches” with one or two families or to organize online liturgies of the word with other lay people.

Andrew Staron, a theology teacher at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver, has a small liturgy each Sunday with his wife and children. Dr. Staron and his wife had been worried that a livestreamed Mass would be “more passive than anything else, just like watching TV.”

Instead, the family lights candles and sits in the living room, prays an opening prayer and has “some kind of penitential moment.” They take turns reading that Sunday’s

Susan Rashad, a parishioner at St. Benedict the African Parish in Chicago, waves to other parishioners on Zoom during the Sign of Peace. When the pastor of the historically Black Catholic church, the Rev. David Jones, saw how the Zoom liturgies and Bible studies were helping older members of the community overcome their isolation, he challenged the parish team to come up with online programming for every day of the week.



Scriptures, then reflect on them together. Dr. Staron said his children told him they liked being able to ask their questions during the liturgy instead of waiting until after Mass.

Next comes the prayers of the faithful (“My youngest often just prays ‘for everything and everyone,’” Dr. Staron said with a laugh), an “Our Father” and a prayer of spiritual Communion that is usually made up on the spot.

While Dr. Staron hopes to return to Mass soon, he wants to keep some parts of his family’s new tradition going. “I’ve seen my kids grow in confidence and enjoyment in participating, asking questions, getting to say things like ‘That’s weird, what is that about?’ and seeing their faces when they see the connections between the prophet Isaiah and John the Baptist.... I think it would be beneficial to set aside a little time for that conversation” later on, he said.

Indeed, the innovation begun during this time of the pandemic is, as Ms. Mehta said, only the beginning of the

creativity needed for the church to reach people who are often overlooked. Emily Strand, a parishioner at Immaculate Conception in Columbus, Ohio, said, “Our parish very painfully learned to livestream, and now the plan is to continue as a means of evangelization.” What began out of tragic necessity might well play a key role in the church’s growth and development in the future.

Colleen Dulle is an assistant producer at **America**.

AMERICA'S VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

When I wrapped up my undergraduate studies almost two years ago, I had a choice between two general career options: make money, or don't. Why on earth would I, or anyone, pick the latter?

Our culture convinces us that the only way to be successful is to hop on the corporate fast track at a young age, work relentlessly for several years and then comfortably reap the benefits of financial stability later in life. I think our faith gives us a different definition of success. "Love one another, as I have loved you." The volunteer opportunities in this brochure are invitations to fulfill that commandment in some particular way. Where is God calling us to love as he loves?

I chose to accept a year-long fellowship at America Media in New York City. No, it was not the most financially profitable path I could have taken, but for me, it was the right one. God invites me to love, to learn, to explore each day. That's enough for me.

Kevin Jackson, 2019-2020 O'Hare Fellow



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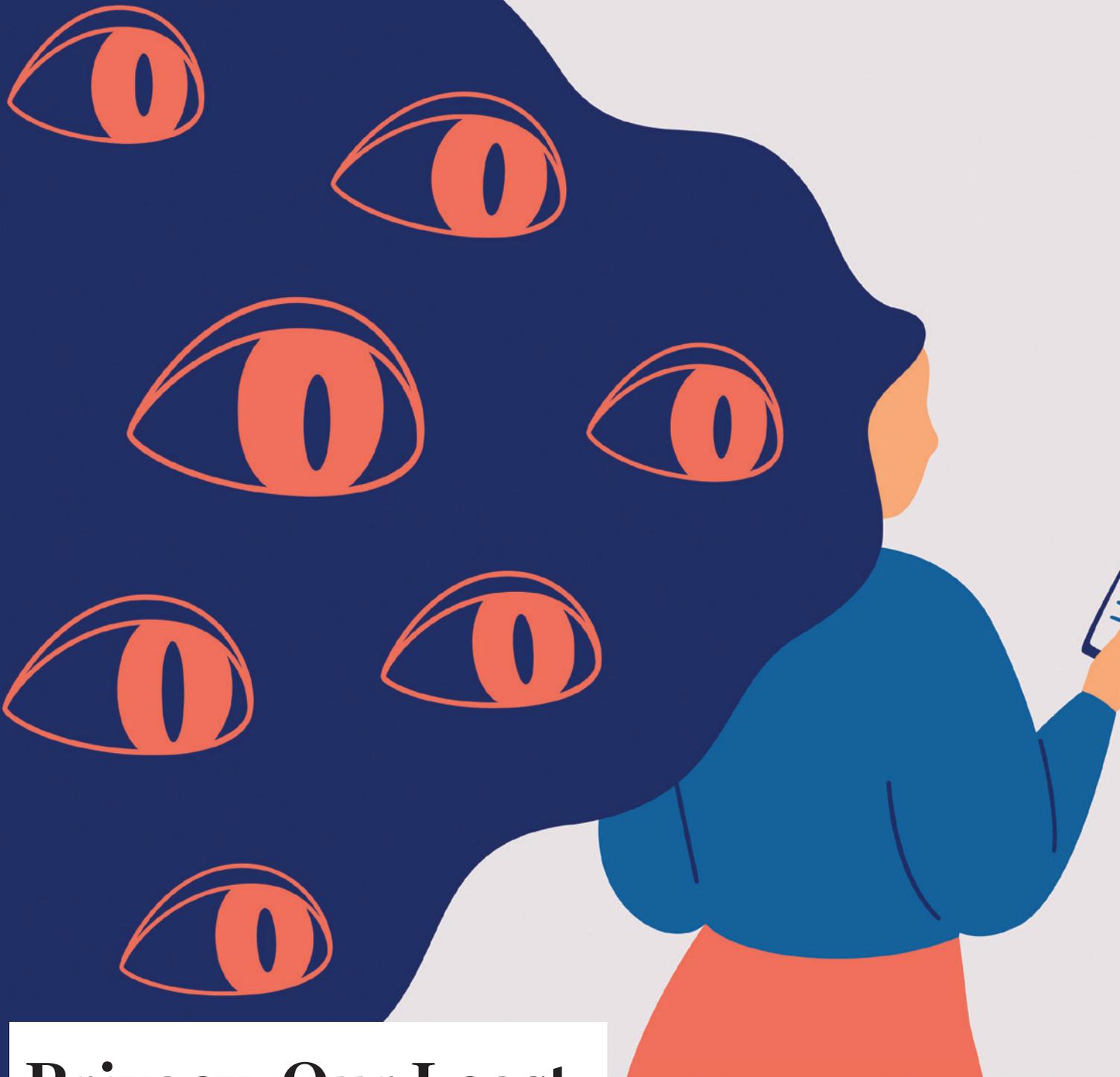
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Privacy: Our Least Understood Virtue

By Firmin DeBrabander

Examining our curious relationship to personal space

Privacy is greatly endangered today. Is there any doubt? A host of hungry spies devour our digital trails and seek everything there is to know about us. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated and deepened our reliance on digital media that make our private information vulnerable as a matter of course.

Are we concerned? Are we worried? It is often hard to tell.

Many of us will say we care about privacy, and we register concern over invasive surveillance programs. Americans in particular value respect for privacy; it is arguably a quintessential American value. Our behavior suggests otherwise, however. We seem all too willing to sacrifice our personal data to take advantage of the wondrous conveniences of the digital economy. Indeed, many are willing to share intimate information for no obvious trade-off, divulging embarrassing details on social media.

Privacy is at once the best-known and least-known virtue. Our curious and conflicted relationship to it—our tenuous grasp of it, and poor appreciation—is a prime reason privacy is in crisis today. It is easy to take it for granted in the digital age and to see little reason to protect it.

“The history of America is the history of privacy,” the historian Frederick Lane affirms. He sees the

American Revolution as motivated in no small part by privacy concerns. The colonists objected, for example, to British troops occupying their homes and invading their warehouses and workplaces. If privacy has been an important value from the start, however, people might be surprised to know that the term is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution.

The Importance of Privacy

A right to privacy was articulated a century later, in an influential essay co-written by the future U.S. Supreme Court justice Louis D. Brandeis. Not until the 1960s, when Chief Justice Earl Warren presided over the Supreme Court, did the right to privacy receive the full legal recognition and sanction that Brandeis had anticipated. Justice William O. Douglas was its most passionate defender; he argued that though a right to privacy is not spelled out in the Constitution, it is implied by several articles in the Bill of Rights.

What is more, the implicit importance of privacy is communicated across American society. Our absurdly popular gun culture, an outlier among liberal democracies, affirms an especially virulent form of individualism. Gun rights advocates support “castle doctrine” laws that protect a person who shoots an intruder in that person’s home; they also preach the virtues of “open carry” laws that allow a person to ward off would-be criminals at the sight of a weapon. Guns keep unwanted people away—including, supposedly, the government. Guns preserve individual peace, security and freedom.

The structure of suburbia, where most Americans live, seems to affirm the dominance of privacy concerns as well. Indeed, privacy seems to be its central organizing principle. Suburban homes sit on generous lawns, spaced far from the street; sidewalks are often rare in subdivisions—so as not to invite wandering strangers. Socializing takes place in fenced-in backyards or spacious basements. Everyone has their own bedroom—sharing is less necessary now that house sizes have grown by a third since the 1970s, while the number of residents per household has fallen.

Objecting to Privacy Invasions

American suburbanites are swimming in private space. In our digital lives, however, we care little about it. We retreat to private physical spaces but then go online and expose ourselves—or willfully, knowingly, share data.

When we muster an objection to privacy invasions, we call them “creepy.” One commentator ascribes a high “creepiness” factor to the imminent networking of digital devices in your home—when your “heater or clothes dryer monitor how much power you’re using, or ...your fridge [alerts] you that you’re low on milk.” Another journalist deems a new start-up company “creepy” for producing detailed tenant reports for landlords, culled from the tenants’



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American suburbanites are swimming in private space. In our digital lives, however, we care little about it. 🔥

social media use. When the reporter saw her own tenant report, she was dismayed to find that it included a “percentage breakdown of my personality traits, a list of every time I’ve tweeted the words ‘loan’ and ‘pregnant,’ and the algorithm’s confidence that I’ll pay rent consistently.”

The word “creepy,” however, is a particularly useless descriptor. It suggests you detect something is wrong but can’t say what exactly. It is wholly ambiguous, uncertain, unclear.

Our strange relationship to privacy, which is at once familiar and unknown, evokes a deeper problem at the heart of this notion: It is deeply incoherent.

Censorship and Privacy

Consider John Stuart Mill’s influential defense of privacy, which is a touchstone for civil libertarians and a foundational formula for liberal democracies. In a free society, Mill argues, citizens must be allowed to say and think what they will, even if it is offensive or noxious to some. In cases of censorship, it is not principally the censored who suffer, but the rest of us—the whole of a free society. Censorship has a chilling effect; it dissuades brave and courageous deliberation, from which expansions of liberty come. New civil rights claims, for example, are always offensive to some, or many, at the start. They require privacy in which to germinate.

Isaiah Berlin sums up Mill’s argument thus: “The wider the area of non-interference, the wider my freedom.” In Berlin’s view, this immediately raises troubling questions. For example, what exactly constitutes “interference”? And when exactly am I interfered with, in such a way that my courage to think freely has been hindered? What leads me to feel I am coerced—and am I sure? In short, the boundary between interference and non-interference, or between interference that is acceptable and not, is more than a little vague.

Furthermore, won’t it vary from person to person whether they feel interfered with or not? What seems like

an intrusion to me may not seem so to others. What I judge to be coercion may be due to my unique sensitivities; if I repel or ignore this coercion, this may be due to inner resources that are largely beyond my control, such as character, which is cultivated and instilled by the community.

Community as the Solution

When our spies know much about us, privacy advocates warn, they will use that information to prod us, influence and manipulate us, and undermine our free will. This loss of autonomy, the surrender of free will, is the greatest threat posed by our surveillance society, they argue. Researchers have discovered that people are more able to withstand efforts at manipulation when they take time to premeditate and mull over their options and decisions. But a habit of reflection is something our digital economy, moving at light speed, assiduously roots out. This habit is a matter of character, however; and as Aristotle argued, character is the fruit of community support and nourishment. Community, it turns out, offers a solution to pervasive surveillance and its attendant threat to freedom.

Privacy advocates campaign for stronger regulations, which might give consumers greater control over their data. The European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation is an important model. It requires companies to explain why they are collecting and processing your data, how long they will hold it and how they will protect it. The general idea is that consumers will have more power to decide who they want to share data with, and when and how much.

But how shall we be expected to use this power effectively or responsibly—or at all—given the ambiguities inherent to privacy? What’s more, since people manifestly care so little about privacy, it seems odd to give them more power to control it. Civil libertarians, following Mill, claim that privacy is important to our freedom. Their case is made problematic, however, by the unavoidable ambiguity of privacy. Luckily, American history offers clear lessons about the proper ingredients of liberty; its foundation is in the public, not the private sphere.

Civil rights activists in the 1950s and ’60s never enjoyed the kind of privacy Mill lauds, in which they might carefully sow and cultivate the germ of dissent. That did not, however, prevent them from overturning legal segregation. Though persecuted from the start, civil rights activists were able to overcome this by coordinating efforts in bold and creative demonstrations in the public realm. Consider, for example,

when civil rights activists occupied segregated lunch counters; or the “children’s crusade” that Martin Luther King Jr. orchestrated in Birmingham, Ala., where singing children poured out of churches in peaceful, exuberant marches to occupy the downtown area.

Consider also the long and prominent history of the labor movement in the United States. Union members were perennially hounded and often oppressed. Many corporate bosses operated like General Motors, which ruled Flint, Mich., in the 1930s with an iron fist. One worker said that G.M. officials “so completely run this town and have it so well propagandized to their own good that one doesn’t even talk here. You have no liberties at all. You couldn’t even belong to a union and breathe it to a soul. That soul would probably be a spy.” This did not prevent G.M. workers from orchestrating one of the most remarkable strikes in U.S. history, when they sat down on the job and occupied factories for over a month. They endured withering assaults from G.M. but, thanks to solidarity, persisted—and prevailed.

Privacy might seem like an important American institution and enduring value borne through history and advertised across the cultural landscape. But public organizing and coordinated protest have repeatedly displayed their own power in sustaining and expanding our liberty.

We should recall this older tradition. It alone may help us endure the mounting threats to privacy, our growing vulnerability in the digital sphere and the ferocious hunger of myriad spies who would co-opt and compel us.

Firmin DeBrabander *has taught philosophy at the Maryland Institute College of Art since 2005. This essay is inspired by his recent book, Life After Privacy (Cambridge University Press, 2020).*

chicks

By Devon Balwit

dirty their water immediately
so refrain from judging the farmer
if you see filth where they dip

the rocks prevent drowning
for they still long for the salt sea
of the unbroken egg

that they run from your peering
is because you blot out the lamp
like a hawk does the sun

give them any good thing and
they cannot help dashing and cheeping
a fanfare which invites robbery

where one goes all follow
and when they drop with their heads
in their feed they are not dead

only exhausted from being
like any of us
awaiting our fledging

Devon Balwit’s *most recent chapbook is Rubbing Shoulders With the Greats (Seven Kitchens Press, 2020). Her most recent collection, Dog-Walking in the Shadow of Pyongyang, is forthcoming (Nixes Mate Press, 2021).*

What Does It Mean to Know a Garden?

Lessons From Gethsemane

By Stephanie Saldaña

What does it mean to know a garden? To understand its seasons, to recognize the branches where birds rest? What does it teach us when we return to the same garden time and time again, to listen and learn from the trees?

I have found myself asking these questions this year in Jerusalem, where I live. In this fraught time, I read the Gospels differently, and lines I used to overlook now emerge from the page. This month, it has been a phrase from the Gospel of Luke: “Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called.”

Such a simple line, and yet I can’t stop thinking of it. Jesus had a place that he loved, and he returned there.

The line calls me. So in this year, with the pilgrims gone and the holy places nearly empty, I set out to spend some time on the Mount of Olives to see what I can learn from the ancient trees.

•••

On a morning in late February, I walk through the entrance to Gethsemane to find the garden empty, save for a gardener pulling weeds away from the stone paths. In front of me stand the massive, gnarled trunks of the oldest olive trees—protected by a fence—eight of which tradition says were witnesses to Jesus’ passion. Birds sing, flitting from branch to branch. The space has briefly returned to what it is: a garden. I take a seat. I try to stay awake.

Wally Hawa, a Palestinian who works there, sees me and says hello. “Usually there are 80 tour buses a day here,” he remarks. “Enjoy the quiet.”

Slowly, I focus, noticing that within the old trees, newer growth appears. The sun rising over the mountain begins to cast light on the leaves, making them glimmer almost silver. Wind breathes through the branches.

In my second hour, I study creases on bark. Pigeons lazily pecking at the soil. As the heart softens, I become grateful even for cars on the nearby road, reminders that the world remains hectic but that a garden grows, even in this.

In the third hour, I watch bees gathering in the purple flowers of rosemary bushes, their almost translucent wings fluttering.

I circle the garden, smiling at the olive tree that Pope Francis planted during his visit in 2014, barely visible among the surrounding giants. In his encyclical “Laudato Si’,” he reminded us that “Jesus lived in full harmony with nature,” quoting the passage from the Gospel of Matthew: “What man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”

Yes, surely Jesus knew the trees on this mountain and recognized them. The trees, hidden characters in the story I have walked through many times before but never really noticed until now.

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When I return to the garden the next morning, my heart leaps up at the sight of it, at the trees, still there. Otherwise, I am exhausted. The familiar birds and fading almond blossoms of February remind me that a year has passed since the pandemic began here.

A bird calls. Another. I take my place in front of the trees and wonder what a garden remembers.

In 2012, a study carried out by Italian researchers at the National Research Council of Italy Trees and Timber Institute determined that the oldest trees in the garden were at least 900 years old. This does not answer the question of whether or not these were the same trees that Jesus prayed beneath—they might have grown back from still older trees—but to me none of this seems important. The fact that such ancient trees have remained, cared for and quiet, in the heart of a city that has weathered so much conflict, comforts me. Somehow, in a world so busy and so fragile, a garden has survived.

This morning, I am thinking of the events of Holy Thursday after the Last Supper, when Jesus came to this site to pray before his betrayal. I enter the Church of All Nations beside the garden, consecrated in 1924 over the site of the stone where tradition says Jesus prayed. On the pews, black stains remain from an arson attack carried out in December, another reminder of the site's fragility. Above the altar, a mosaic depicts Jesus collapsed, praying in ago-

ny at night. The sky seems almost to embrace him, and two olive trees, one on either side, appear to lean in.

When I return to the garden, I meet Father Jozo Sarcevic, a young Franciscan priest who has been living at Gethsemane for two years. In a period with almost no tourists, he goes into the garden nearly every afternoon now to read.

I admit to him that until now I have always pictured Jesus alone in the garden praying, with the disciples asleep. But now, I picture the trees with him. How might spending time among the trees, I ask him, change the way in which we read the story?

The garden, he says, has something important to teach us about the humanity of Jesus. "Jesus is in a common situation: to be alone in front of the most important decision of your life," he says. "And Jesus is surrounded by trees, in the middle of nature. Nature is God's creation. In this context, there is a connection to God—but Jesus is also a man. He is passing through a very tremendous moment."

I can picture Jesus now, praying beneath the trees. I cannot help but think of this year we have also passed, full of so many agonies, such difficulties for so many, so much loss and so many choices. I ask Father Jozo what we might learn from Jesus asking his disciples to stay awake and pray with him.

"I don't know for others, but I am trying to understand it for myself," he tells me quietly. "Jesus doesn't want to

resolve our problems as problems but to guide the direction of our lives.” He suggests that Jesus’ reminder to “stay awake” can help us to listen to God’s voice, even when the world causes us to doubt our choices.

I’m reminded of the chant sung by the monks at the French monastery of Taizé, based on Jesus’ words in the Gospel of Matthew: “*Stay with me. Remain here with me. Watch and pray.*”

This story also reminds us, Father Jozo says, that we should stay with our friends when they need us the most.

•••

Later that evening I climb the road behind the church and ring at the door of the hermitage of Gethsemane, where I will be sleeping for the next two nights. Set among olive trees and run by the Franciscans, the hermitage welcomes those who wish to pray on the Mount of Olives in silent retreat.

Father Diego Dalla Casa, the young Italian Franciscan who runs it, opens the door wearing his gardening clothes. He is joyful, and as he leads me along the path through the olive trees to my hermitage, he points across the valley to the view of the Old City.

“We like to say that this is the place where Jesus liked to pray,” he tells me of the garden. “On Holy Thursday, he ate with the disciples and then crossed the Kidron valley to come here.”

He charts with his finger the path from the valley to the garden.

“Of course, we don’t know exactly where he came to pray,” he admits. “And many things have changed today. But many things are also the same. The stars are the same. The sky is the same.”

“The birds are the same.” I chime in.

He smiles. “Jesus is the same.”

We arrive at the small hermitage named Nazareth, and he hands me my keys, together with those to the chapel.

“You can pray in the chapel at night or down in the church during the day,” he tells me, then smiles. “But the best is to pray outside, among the trees.”

I settle into my room. A few minutes after I arrive, rain begins falling.

To the surprise of no one, least of all me, I almost immediately fall asleep.

•••

The next morning, I awaken to bells ringing from the church below. The olive trees alive with birds. For the first time in many months, I breathe in the silence. I walk among paths to find carob trees, a mandarin tree, two types of jasmine. I

pause to rub the leaves of a lemon tree between my fingers.

In the afternoon, Father Diego speaks with me about the garden. He has been here for 11 years, welcoming pilgrims on retreat, a life he never imagined when he grew up in Italy.

“The garden is very special for us,” he says. “The pilgrims who come to the Holy Land can visit many holy places. But it’s not in all places that you can *pray*. In all four Gospels, this is the only place in which Jesus says: ‘Stay here with me while I pray.’ For us this is special.”

For Father Diego, the garden is a place among places on the Mount of Olives dear to the heart of Jesus. Bethany would have been just two and a half kilometers up the road, a half hour’s walk, where he would stop to visit Mary, Martha and Lazarus—his friends. Here, he visited to be among the trees. These were two places where Jesus returned, one “because he loved the place, and the second because he was loved by the people in that place,” Father Diego tells me.

A place of returning. The garden, it seems, also has something to teach about fidelity.

“I’ve received so many teachings from the trees,” Father Diego says. “We don’t have to take care of them too much. They are growing and live by the care of the creator. We perhaps need to take care of a few branches or to move the dirt beneath the roots or put some fertilizer. But that’s all.” He smiles, gesturing to the trees. “The trees teach me to wait. To stay. To have patience. Because we have to wait one year for the fruit! And when it comes, it doesn’t come because of me. But I can welcome it, like a gift.”

•••

When I leave Gethsemane the next morning, I take the garden with me. I’ll keep returning there in prayer, too, at the end of long days, when I need to rest, to remember the cyclamen blooming, the smell of rain, the ancient trees. Maybe that’s what I’ve learned; that all of us carry a garden within us, that all of us might retreat there to reconnect. The garden stays. In our trials, we, too, might find our place among the trees, to speak to God. To hear the birds. To be near friends. To say *thank you*. To make our choices. To wait for the fruit that comes, if only we just give it time.

Stephanie Saldaña is the author, most recently, of *A Country Between and the founder of the website MosaicStories. She lives in Jerusalem.*

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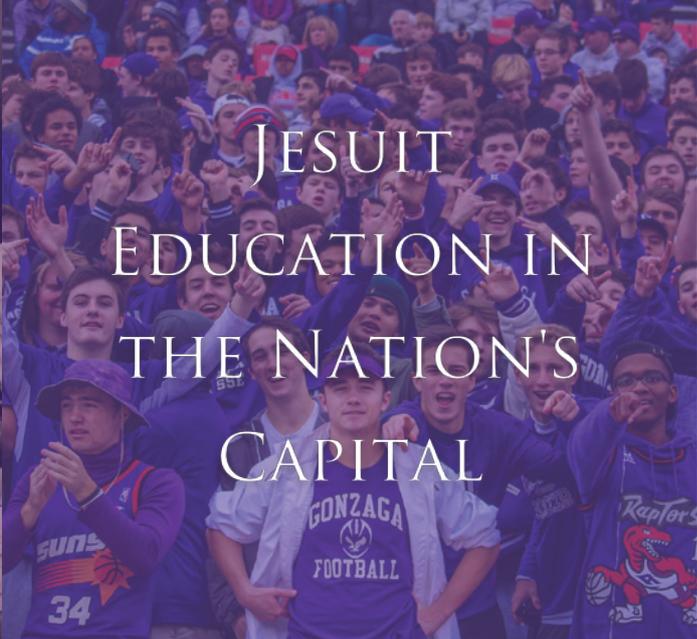
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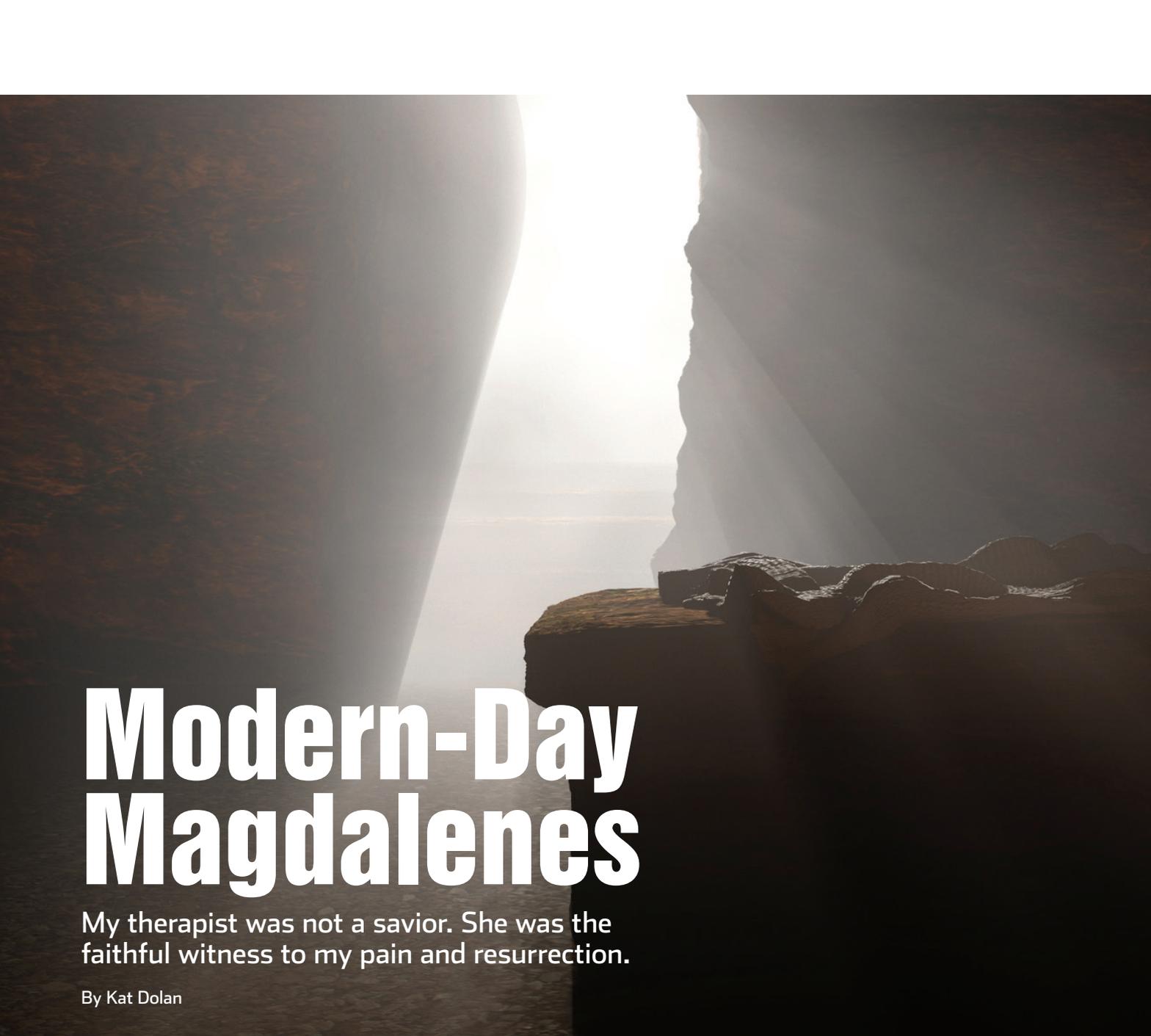


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Modern-Day Magdalenes

My therapist was not a savior. She was the faithful witness to my pain and resurrection.

By Kat Dolan

In kitchens, there are always fresh culinary school graduates appearing at the front door because they don't know yet that cooks come in through the back. They are eager and think they are prepared for what comes next. They know *ciseler* (to chop finely) from *emincer* (to slice finely), can list you the five mother sauces (*béchamel*, *velouté*, *espagnole*, *hollandaise* and *tomate*) and can even list some of their endless derivatives (*Suprême*, *Demi-glace*, *Mornay*, *Soubise*, *Béarnaise*, etc.). If they are overachievers, they will have studied some pastry and know the differing tempering points of chocolate or the varying gluten content of flours.

But while they may know about cooking, they know nothing about cooking professionally. This is, of course, the way of the world. School can give you the vocabulary for a profession, but fluency comes through actions performed day in and day out for years.

Last summer, for the first time in a very long time, I did not know what door to enter. After nearly a dozen years working throughout North America as a cook and pastry chef, I returned to my hometown for a job. I had met a young man and decided it was time to settle down and attempt to start a family. The 80-hour work weeks of restaurant life tend to inhibit such efforts. For this and many oth-

er reasons, in the fall of 2019, I left my career to return to school and complete my long abandoned bachelor's degree. By June 2020, I had one semester left on a B.A. in psychology and a summer internship counseling at-risk adolescents.

I arrived the first day feeling unsure but lucky to have the opportunity despite the pandemic. Within moments, faculty and social workers quickly pushed past introductions to procedures. I attempted to keep up while not screwing up. By the second day, I was performing the six-month evaluations of students on my own.

At-risk is a vague term that I sometimes think could refer to any adolescent. At the internship it referred to kids who lived with learning or developmental disorders, delinquency, drug abuse, custody issues, family violence, chemical imbalances, depression, bullying and everything in between. Such circumstances arise among people of every race and income status in America.

So it was to a varied and diverse student body that I was assigned to pose a series of incredibly personal county-approved questions: Who did they live with? Were they able to maintain the same address for over 12 months? Were they safe there? Was their drug usage consistent or escalating? What drugs were they using? Had they experienced thoughts of suicide or made attempts at suicide in the last six months? And so on.

As an outsider, I was universally disdained by the students. In one session, the student almost walked out when I asked if she liked living with her uncle. While biologically he was her uncle, he was the person who raised her. By not referring to him as her father, I had disrespected her.

I had entered a world where I did not speak the language. And yet the students and I had no option but to engage—I because I could not bear to fail within the first 36 hours, and the students because they needed to comply with these evaluations to remain enrolled in the program. It was exhausting and humiliating. But gradually—mostly because I showed up every day and was not a cop—they ac-

cepted my voice and presence into the rhythm and routine of their day.

In the third week, there was a breakthrough. I made a birthday cake for a girl who did not get to celebrate her Sweet 16 with friends and family. I, romantically, like to think that with food I spoke to them in the language I knew, that was authentic to me, and this authenticity earned trust. Or maybe it was simply sugar coercion. Either way, bribery didn't make the list of venial sins we memorized at age 9 for confession, so anything achieved by it must retain some grace.

This breaking of bread by means of cake seemed to dull their hypervigilance toward me. In the following weeks, I would hear stories that ranged from the financial fears of aging out of foster care to exhilaration about embarking on their first same-sex relationship to the hopes of owning a hair salon. In between begging them to focus because kickball was not for another hour and laughing from delight at the honesty of their humor, I listened.

•••

While my Hispanic mother and my father, a former Jesuit seminarian, decided to place my primary education in the hands of Episcopalians, that school's daily chapel service was fortified with weekly religious education classes and Catholic Mass. The routine lessons of childhood catechism often maintain a perfunctory position in our consciousness. I certainly absorbed the phrases "Catholic charity" and "Jesuit tradition of service." To work for the benefit of others was honorable and sanctified, but I am not sure I thought much about the conviction requisite to such efforts.

On one afternoon midway through the internship, a situation arose involving a former student. He was struggling with addiction, unemployed and facing homelessness. He was also difficult, unmotivated and, since he was an adult, had fewer available options. I cannot tell you the ultimate outcome for this young man because I do not know it. I only know that the counselor was still making an endless string of calls on his behalf when I took my doubts and went home for the day. I had begun to understand that successful mental health providers are a zealous tribe, and effort alone does not guarantee membership. Faith does.

At any moment of the day, any member of staff could list all the reasons why a child would succeed, would be the exception, and they believed them. They believed in these children despite the fact that the odds were nearly impossible and the exceptions rare. Regardless of outcomes, the faith of the staff was unmitigated. And in their faith, many of these children will find salvation. I know this because it

is how I found my own.

At 21, in the spring semester of my junior year, I left a prestigious East Coast Jesuit university for the second time due to a severe eating disorder—at least that is the most succinct summation. Eating disorders tend to be single hornets from a very large nest.

It feels simultaneously humiliating and self-aggrandizing to speak about personal trauma publicly, and bulimia and anorexia are subjects whose written treatment I disdain. The genre seems to alternate between memoirs that function as how-to manuals and romanticized odes to sacrificial martyrdom by the thin and beautiful. I occasionally stomach the aspects of the latter characterization, if only because there is a fine line between martyrdom and terrorism. An eating disorder is a sober, daily act of violence. To have an acute eating disorder is to be fluent in that annihilating violence, and it was in the resulting devastation that I would meet the woman who would become my therapist.

Prior to my academic exit, in one of my theology courses, the professor pointed out that our collective image of Christ levitating while enrobed in an orb of light comes from the Ascension portraits of Renaissance art. Such images have become muddled in our minds with the Resurrection; but in the Bible, Christ dies and then is risen. What happens in between is never described in the Gospels. I have obsessed over this exclusion. How is it that the apotheosis of a faith system does not appear in Scripture? All I have come up with is that we only retain the stories people can bear to tell. We do not say out loud that healing is an act of horror. By transitioning from death to salvation, we avoid our terror of the pain that is an inescapable part of transformation, and we ignore the fact that miracles require a witness.

It is in this same way that we miss the work of therapy. My psychologist did not arrive as a savior in my life. She arrived at a crypt in anticipation of a distinct and certain miracle. She arrived a believer. Without Mary Magdalene choosing to ignore fear for faith, there is no good news to spread. I am alive because a woman spent years watching me emerge from the dead and refused to be afraid. I am alive because of a woman's unrelenting faith.

There is a successive reflection about the power of nourishment and the camaraderie of discipleship forged in the barbarism of professional cooking, but it is not this one. Know that I spent years enrobed in the obsessive and laborious cocoon of kitchens, so when I did make the decision to return to university at 36, it was numbing to feel how quickly my identity slipped from my shoulders. With-

in a few weeks, a career I took over a decade to build was gone. No longer would a cadre of people call "Chef!" every time I entered a room. Instead, I spent my day sitting in the molded plastic chairs of my youth, but this time the students in the room were half my age. There are moments when it is critical you do not pause to consider the terrain, or doubt will loot all mobility. Instead of panicking about the unknown future, I went to the dean's office to switch my major from Spanish to psychology.

The decision came from a simple place: I had known pain, and through psychology I had healed. I believed. It is a sentiment similar to evangelical pronouncements that through God you will be redeemed. But it is one thing to hear the word of the Lord and another thing entirely to go out and spread the Gospel.

This past summer I found inspiration in the audacity and tenacity of the adolescent heart. Every day I ached for the students to have access to resources that would make a difference. I worried endlessly for their future. But was my belief in them greater than my fear for them? I now constantly wonder about how our concern for those we love competes with our faith in them.

Trauma and pain should kill us, but mostly they do not. Instead, we loom our lives into a huipil of scars, each embroidered petal marking a miracle. An instance where we halted decay. The children I met during my internship have performed more miracles than most their age. In this my faith is fearless.

I completed my final semester in December. I am a recent college graduate in the résumé limbo that accompanies that status. At 37, I am searching for a new professional vernacular, a new tongue to speak an identity into existence. I do not know what will happen next. I know only that it will be informed by the lives of 13 teenagers I spent a summer with, the duty to bear witness and the grace of birthday cake.

Kat Dolan spent nearly a dozen years working as a pastry chef in the United States and Canada before returning to make a home in her birthplace, Kansas City, Mo. This past December, she received a bachelor's degree from Rockhurst University.

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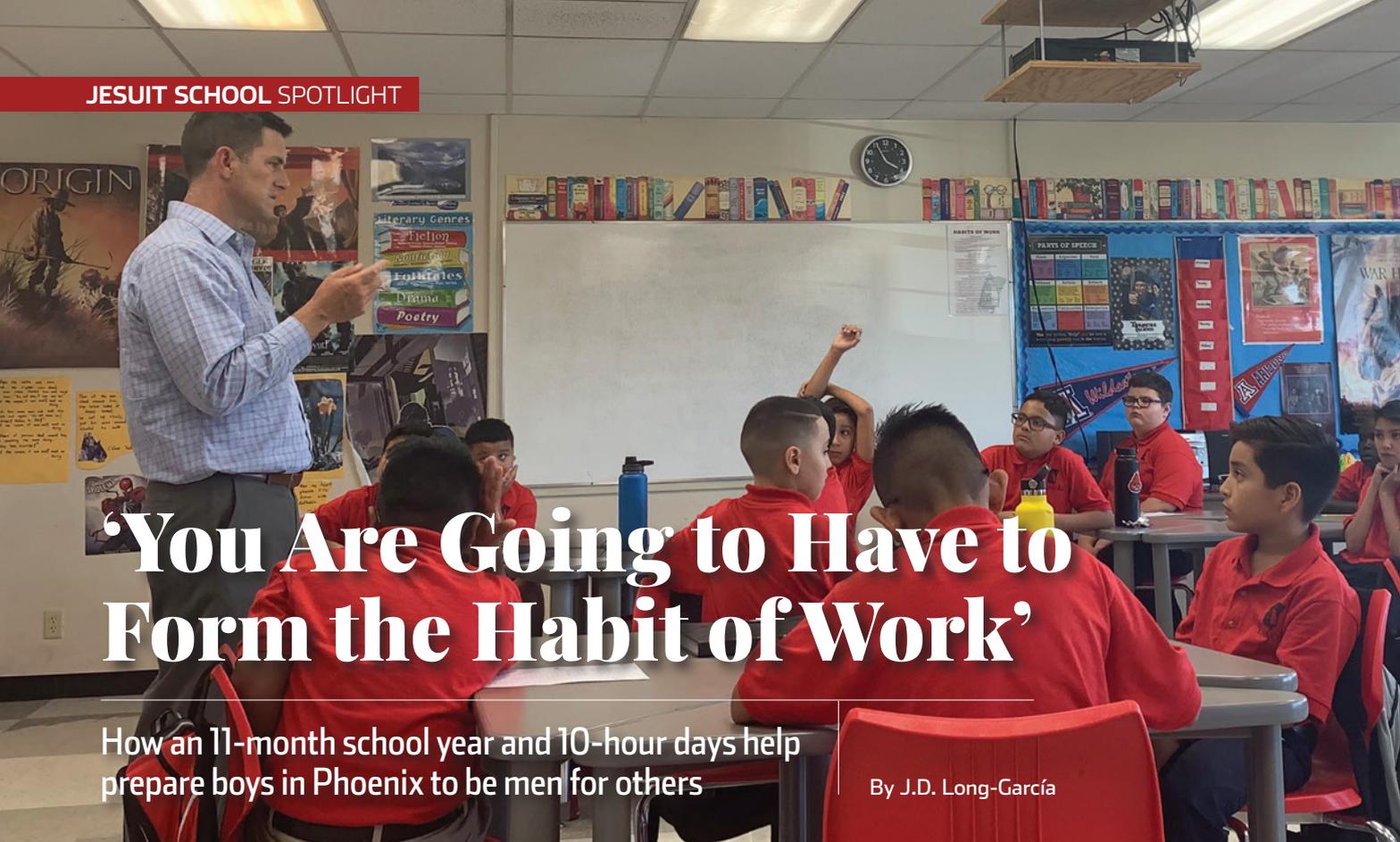
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'You Are Going to Have to Form the Habit of Work'

How an 11-month school year and 10-hour days help prepare boys in Phoenix to be men for others

By J.D. Long-García

When Sandra Soto's sons started at Loyola Academy, she told them they had to rise to the occasion.

"This is going to be a harder school," she said. "You are going to have to form the habit of work, you know; it's not playing around. You're going to have to be focused on what you're doing."

Loyola Academy at Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix is a program for incoming sixth grade boys who demonstrate academic gifts and financial need. Loyola students attend sixth, seventh and eighth grade in preparation for their education at Brophy, which is also all-male. The average yearly income for a student's family is \$22,500.

In 1928, Brophy was founded as a Catholic high school in the Jesuit tradition. Like Jesuit schools throughout the United States, Loyola Academy and Brophy seek to form "men and women for others." The Brophy community supports Loyola students' education by providing tuition, meals at school and transportation at no cost to their parents.

Ms. Soto immigrated from Chihuahua, Mexico, 27 years ago. At first, she went to school to learn English but had to drop out after four months. She needed a job, so Ms. Soto decided to work in a Japanese restaurant where only a few employees spoke Spanish in the hopes of improving her English. It worked.

Today, the mother of five works for a towing company

that impounds cars for local police departments. While her own formal education stopped after sixth grade, she made school a priority for her family. Her two oldest daughters graduated from public high school, and one of them went on to graduate from Arizona State University. Her oldest son is currently doing well at a local public high school.

Still, she always hoped to give her children something extra through Catholic education. That is happening now at Loyola, where her two youngest children are currently enrolled. Ulises is in the sixth grade; Leonardo is in eighth.

Ulises, who is 12, said starting at Loyola during the Covid-19 pandemic has been tough, but nevertheless he has enjoyed his classes and likes his teachers. He said he is particularly enjoying his humanities class, where he has been studying World War I.

"Actually, almost, like, everything is a really big change," he said of his experience this year at Loyola. "Not in a bad way, but in a positive way. [Teachers] help you understand subjects a lot more clearly." He says that in math, his teacher will take the time to explain a problem more clearly when he is confused. Ulises also said that the teachers stress discipline.

His older brother, Leo, is 14 and has been at Loyola for the last three years. Leo said he has found it much more challenging than his experience in public school. "I've definitely learned more," he said.

Bob Ryan, principal of Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix, greets Loyola Academy's Brophy Class of 2026 in August 2019 on their first day of school.



Leo's favorite subject is math because he excels at it. Next year, he moves on to Brophy.

"I'm pretty nervous, to be honest," he said of making the transition. "I can tell it's going to be a lot more challenging."

Leo said he has a great deal of homework and he is anxious about going to a bigger school but has found camaraderie with his Loyola classmates. "Going with the same class for three years, you always have friends," he said. "You can always have a good time there without being too worried about your social life."

Ms. Soto said most of the students at Loyola come from minority communities. Though it has been a challenge this year, she said the families at Loyola form relationships with each other. She misses the regular in-person get togethers, where all the families would gather to celebrate Christmas or Easter.

The mothers will drop off their sons at the bus stop, she said, and if one mom cannot make it in time for pickup, another will cover for her. "We are all very friendly, willing to take care of our kids and help each other," she said, though Covid has hampered that a bit. "That's one of the things that they do at the school is help form this community. It really, really helped us as parents, because we interact with each other and help each other."

They have online meetings now, Ms. Soto said, but the parents do not have the kind of conversations they would during in-person gatherings.

"It's really good here because everyone is living under the same circumstances," Leo said of the community he has formed with other classmates from low-income families. "That helps us get along better. We can relate to each other a lot more."

In addition to working on homework together, eighth graders also play video games as a community.

Since 2011, the rigorous program at Loyola has prepared students for the challenging curriculum at Brophy. Loyola describes its program as an 11-month school year with 10-hour days, but Kendra Krause, the director of the program, explained that the 11 months include summer school programs and campouts. The 10-hour days include flex time, when students can seek out tutoring and extra-curricular activities, like chess club, robotics and drama. These mandatory hours after school prepare them for the

typical life of a Brophy student.

"I think for the most part for kids, the day feels pretty fun," Ms. Krause said. "They feel challenged and rewarded and a part of a community. For some of the kids, this is the first time they've been someplace where it's cool to be smart. They like that."

Not all students who begin studying at Loyola in sixth grade make it through graduation from Brophy, Ms. Krause said. The struggles usually start in seventh grade, after the newness of the program wears off a bit and students start to think about doing six more years at the same exacting pace, she said.

"They're 10 when they apply," Ms. Krause said. "Brophy is a great place, but it's not for everybody. It's a grind. It's a lot of hard work. And they look at kids in high school, and sometimes they think it's not necessarily their bag."

In a typical year, Loyola receives at least 50 applications to the program and accepts just over half. Administrators prioritize incoming sixth graders who would not be able to get into Brophy academically without the help of the program, Ms. Krause said. Loyola strives to close the gaps in students' education before they enter high school.

The first Loyola class graduated from Brophy in 2018. Of the 18 graduates, 17 went on to become first-generation college students. The other graduate enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

The vast majority of those who graduate go on to four-year college programs. Of the 45 who have graduated in the last three years, 44 immediately enrolled in college.

"Without this program, I would not be able to put my kids into that kind of school so that they receive that kind of education," Ms. Soto said. "I'm so happy with the school. They're doing so good. I don't even have to tell them, 'Hey, are you doing your homework?'" They just do it. It's a very, very good program."

J.D. Long-García is a senior editor at *America*.

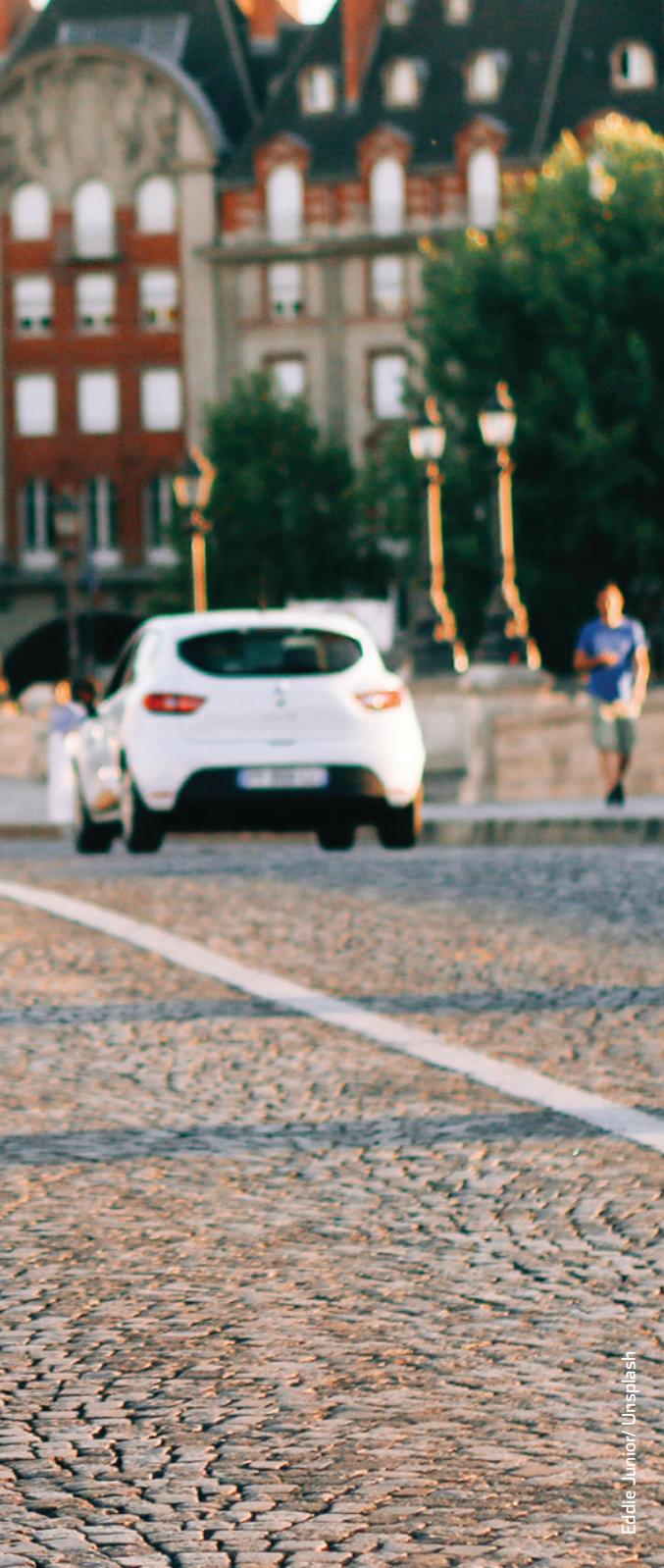
Jesuit School Spotlight is a new monthly feature focusing on Jesuit middle and secondary schools from around the country. It is underwritten in part by Jesuit high schools of the Northeast Province of the Society of Jesus.



The humble bicycle stands alone as the only tool that can simultaneously fight climate change, segregation, poverty, illiteracy and disease.

Ride for Your Life

By John W. Miller



Eddie Junior/Unsplash

What would Jesus ride? For this pilgrim, the answer is obvious. The technological incarnation of love—for yourself, for your neighbor and for the planet—is a sleek aluminum frame, mounted by a human rider, propelled by two wheels, powered by pedals, crank and chain.

Like a Lycra-clad gearhead grunting up Alpe d’Huez, the bicycle is slowly but surely winning over American cities. Bike lanes are proliferating. Around 50 million Americans ride regularly. The percentage is lower than in many other countries, but it has been steadily increasing.

We need to get there faster. Think on it. It is the humble bicycle that stands alone as the only tool that can simultaneously fight climate change, pollution, segregation, poverty, illiteracy, disease and the daily slaughter of 100 Americans a day in car accidents.

In fact, the bicycle may be the only way we eight billion humans stop burning off so many pieces of the planet that we might soon torch the whole thing. Transportation, by car, bus, plane and trains, is the biggest carbon emitter, surpassing industry, agriculture and homes. If cars were animals, they would be the second most populous big species in the world. There are more than a billion of them, roaring, belching and smoking.

A dramatic increase in cycling could save the world \$24 trillion by 2050 and cut carbon

dioxide emissions from urban passenger transport by 11 percent, according to a paper published in 2015 by the University of California, Davis.

Not only are bicycles clean for the world outside the body, they fortify the inside too. They are the apple-a-day-keeps-the-doctor-away-of commuting. Cycling to work decreases mortality by 40 percent, according to one study in Denmark quoted by Peter Walker in his book *How Cycling Can Save the World*.

Meanwhile, a sedentary lifestyle is killing two million people a year, according to the World Health Organization. “Study after study has shown that people who cycle regularly are less prone to obesity, diabetes, strokes, heart disease and various cancers,” writes Walker. “Cyclists don’t just get extra life years, they’re more likely to remain mobile and independent into older age.”

Bicycles are social. A bicycle in every home would expand networks, relationships and job opportunities, and bring people closer together. In fact, when bicycles were first invented in the 19th century, gene pools expanded as people started going on dates in the next village over.

It is hard to name a societal ill that cannot be addressed by societies choosing bikes over cars *en masse*. And this engine of peace is already invented, perfected and mass-produced. There are an estimated two billion bicycles in the world. In 30 years, there could be as

The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a mini-bicycle boom. U.S. bicycle imports soared by more than 16 percent in 2020. 🌊

many as five billion. It can't happen soon enough.

Kid-Tested, Pope-Approved

Bicycles are theologically sound and simpatico with Catholic social teaching. Bicycles open you to neighbors instead of enclosing you in glass, rubber and steel. They are a way to respect the environment and conserve resources. And they have the blessing of popes. "I'm telling you, truly, it hurts me when I see a priest or a sister with a brand new car," Pope Francis said in a 2013 speech. "Now, you're thinking, 'but then, Father, must we go by bike?'" Yes, he concluded, "bikes are nice."

In 1949 Pope Pius XII named the Madonna del Ghisallo, a medieval apparition of the Virgin Mary, as the patron saint of cyclists. There is a shrine to her, and a bicycle museum, overlooking Italy's Lake Como. The Tour de France regularly makes a stop in Lourdes, home of the world's most fa-

mous Catholic shrine. And the village priest riding around on a bicycle is a popular character in 20th century European fiction, featured in the Italian novels and films involving Don Camillo, the priest protagonist of the stories of Giovannino Guareschi.

As millions of people lose income because of the decline of manufacturing jobs, and millions more lose employment because of Covid-19, the cost of owning a car has become prohibitive for many. "Simply being able to opt out of the cost of car ownership or reliance on largely dismantled transit systems is a tremendous thing," writes Elly Blue in *Bikenomics*, a defense of the economics of cycling. "In that cost I include not just money, but time, health, stress, and community."

The highest percentage of cyclists is found among people who earn less than \$10,000 a year, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. And, as Ms. Blue points out, "because bicycles are

simpler machines [than cars], a good quality one can hold its value for decades, and it isn't uncommon to see them passed down from parent to adult child 40 years after the fact."

The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a mini-bicycle boom as people avoided public transit. U.S. bicycle imports soared by more than 16 percent in 2020. The main sources were Asian countries: China, Taiwan, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia.

When the bicycle was invented in the mid-19th century, "the vision was that it would be the poor man's horse," David Herlihy, author of *Bicycle: The History*, told me. "I think it's finally there now."

A Bike for Everyone

To be sure, bicycles might not be for everybody. You might not feel comfortable riding on the street. You might struggle up hills. However, the recent development of new fleets of electric bicycles should expand the number of people able and willing to ride bicycles in cities. And, of course, there are fears about safety, although less than 1,000 people a year in the United States die from bicycle accidents, compared to over 30,000 in cars.

Although America embraced cycling in the 1890s, it spent the 20th spinning steel and concrete into cars, highways and suburbs. A fitness craze in the 1970s resurrected the bike, but it wasn't until this century that Americans once again embraced commuting by pedal and that cities began to build bike lanes, install bike share programs and enact laws that protect cyclists on the road. Led by places like Portland, Chicago and Minneapolis, U.S. cities are racing to accommodate cyclists

as a way of stimulating development. Since I moved to Pittsburgh in 2011, for instance, the city has installed bike lanes or trails that can take you from downtown to almost any neighborhood in the city.

The redevelopment of American cities for cyclists has been accompanied by a burgeoning movement, led by thousands of new programs to give bicycles to people who cannot afford them and to offer free maintenance and service.

An awareness of the bicycle's importance to low-income communities inspired this article. In the spring of 2017, I spent two months volunteering at the Jubilee soup kitchen in Pittsburgh. One day, a 70-year-old Black man named Rupert showed up with a nasty bruise over his eye. A bicycle accident because of faulty brakes, he explained. When another volunteer and I interviewed people who came to the kitchen for meals, we found two men (out of a half dozen or so) who had suffered life-changing accidents on bicycles. After asking around, I was stunned by how many people rode bicycles to come get their meals.

Their reliance on the bicycle was simple economics. It costs thousands of dollars a year to maintain and operate a car, compared to hundreds for a bicycle. The accidents made me wish for a world where everybody had access to good bicycles and proper maintenance. That made me go looking for charities and nonprofits that give people bicycles.

In Towson, Md., I found a program sponsored by the Knights of Columbus that has won an award for crime prevention from the Maryland state government for giving thousands of free bicycles to parolees. "If you have

transportation to a job, you're less likely to commit crimes to get money," said Carl Lenhoff, who helps run the program. It has given away over 2,500 bikes since it started in 2004.

The bicycle "is a transformative tool," said Amy Carver, program and development manager for Trips for Kids, an organization that has given away over 200,000 bicycles a year to children in low-income communities. "We're not a racing organization; we want every kid to be a lifelong rider." The organization was founded in the 1980s in San Rafael, Calif., when its founder, Marilyn Price, was working at a soup kitchen and noticed how many people were cycling in to get their meals.

Expanding Horizons

A few years ago, Michael White, a basketball coach at Imani Christian Academy in Pittsburgh, invited players on the middle school basketball team he coached for a ride in Pittsburgh's Frick Park. He had grown up in Homewood, one of the city's main Black neighborhoods. "I always used the bike to get around," he said. It was how he discovered far-flung parts of the city, riding his bike to play basketball.

Mr. White was surprised when a cluster of children didn't show up because they didn't own bicycles. He bought bikes for all the players and resolved to start giving away bicycles to more children in Pittsburgh.

But then Mr. White got some more ideas. First, he began to use bicycles to teach children about science, technology, engineering and math. Second, he formed the Ruach Bicycle Club, which invites children to ride and race BMX bicycles at a suburban race track and

in the winter at a local urban indoor bike park called the Wheel Mill.

Once you start reporting on one benefit of bicycling, others you had not thought of pop out of nowhere. Cycling is the only sport that is also a commuting device, a delivery truck and messenger app. It's the only widely-available means of transportation that can cover long distances without emitting carbon. "What's great about bicycles is that they're healthy for kids, and they're not even paying attention to it," Mr. White told me. "They're getting fit, they're burning calories, it really touches on everything that's needed."

The bicycle offers "a different view of life," said 13-year-old Ayo Emmanuel, who is part of Mr. White's program. He enjoys riding to the local grocery store to buy "chips and snacks" and racing in suburban races Mr. White takes him to. "I like going outside the city," Ayo told me. "I get to experience different places and different people." Ayo, who is Black, said he has made more white friends with the bicycle.

In 2018 the I Promise school, founded by LeBron James in Akron, Ohio, announced it would give a free bicycle to every child who enrolled. "A bicycle, for me, was the only way to get around the city," Mr. James told Jason Gay of *The Wall Street Journal*. "If I wanted to meet some of my friends, travel across the city, go to school, play basketball—anything—the bicycle was the way I got around." What his bicycle meant, James added, was freedom.

Akron, a city of 200,000 in eastern Ohio, was built for and by cars. The so-called Rubber City was part of a supply chain that shipped tires to carmakers in Detroit. LeBron's is not

the only bike show in town. In 2003 a neighborhood activist named Joe Tucker started the Bike Shop, which gives away bicycles to children as long as they fix them up first.

“Every kid in the neighborhood under age 12 wants a bicycle,” said Mr. Tucker. Last summer, the program, operated by South Street Ministries, gave away 200 bicycles. Even in Akron, bicycle culture is slowly taking root. Commuter buses now include bike racks. There are now a handful of small bike shops in the city, where there used to be none. “It’s an underrated means of transportation for low-income people,” said Mr. Tucker. “It can take you more places than the bus, and it’s cheaper.”

History Repeats Itself

We are a long way from bikes becoming ubiquitous in the United States the way they are in Denmark or the Netherlands, where there are more bicycles than people and over a quarter of trips are cycled, compared with less than 2 percent in the United States. This country is built for cars, trains and planes.

And yet, here was a brief shining moment in our history when it seemed like America might be a country built on bicycles. After the Civil War, the development of new bicycle prototypes got people as excited for cycling as they were about baseball. In 1869, a newspaper in Cincinnati described people flocking to a demonstration of an early bicycle prototype, “all agog to fathom the mysteries of the wondrous bicycle.” In the 1860s, blacksmiths in villages made bicycles by hand.

The development of bicycle technology inspired other inventions. In the 1890s, bicycle making became one

of the biggest industries in the country. Tool companies invented the sophisticated machinery needed to mass-produce bicycles. At that time, a Black cyclist named Marshall Taylor, known as Major, captured the imagination of the nation just as Babe Ruth and Michael Jordan would in the next century. A former bicycle mechanic named Glenn Curtis developed motorcycles, seaplanes and combat planes for use in World War I.

Even Orville and Wilbur Wright, writes Herlihy in *Bicycle*, were “experienced bicycle mechanics who built the first successful airplane using the metal- and wood-working skills they had developed in the cycle trade.”

In the 1880s and 1890s, the League of American Wheelmen became one of the country’s principal lobby groups, launching the first successful campaigns for “good roads” that could accommodate new technology like bicycles and cars, both considered miracles of the future. Ingloriously, the league also banned people of color for a time.

In 1896 The New York Times declared that “the bicycle promises a splendid extension of personal power and freedom, scarcely inferior to what wings would give.” In the early 1900s, Western Union bought 5,000 bicycles a year and resold them at a discount to messenger boys. Some were as young as 10 years old. Post offices bought fleets of bicycles to deliver the mail. For a while, it seemed as if bicycles might actually become the poor man’s horse.

“At the end of the 19th century America had the world’s best cycle infrastructure,” writes Carlton Reid in *Roads Were Not Built for Cars: How Cyclists Were the First to Push*

for Good Roads & Became the Pioneers of Motoring.

But in the meantime, Americans were building homes farther and farther outside cities. Ford made the world’s first mass-produced cars. President Dwight Eisenhower’s 1950s-era interstate highway system dropped the hammer. The car won. Trains and bicycles got whacked.

We live in a different world now. Entire continents have converted to America’s model of postwar consumer capitalism. The world is burning, in large part because of the way we consume fuels to move around. We have another chance to change that. We have another chance to incarnate the love we claim to believe in. And given where we are, we might not have another choice. In the end, it might be all about the bike.

John W. Miller is a Pittsburgh-based former *Wall Street Journal* staff reporter and co-director of the PBS film “Moundsville.”

Death of Metaphor

By Mary Callistas

No bells tolled the death of Metaphor,
which happened—witnesses say—when
hammer met nail at Calvary.
They saw him (Metaphor) swoon and close
his eyes;
finding no mate in all creation,
seeing himself in no reality,
he vanished, embodying nothing,
when the Nazorean died.

If Metaphor had lived,
I might have, too.
Might have grown grey by the hearth,
arms full of progeny;
might have laid down in my plot
at the elbows of ancestors,
dusting decades from my shoulders,
settling to sleep.

If Metaphor had held through Crucifixion,
I, too, would have had my eighty years,
would have smiled in startling ignorance
of swords,
eaten my fill of approximate truths,
evaded mobs and monsters.

But if it had lived—
then Death would not have died;
I would have shrunk, unpersecuted wretch,
decades crushed beneath an empty infinite.
If nails were real, and iron, fire real,
Death too strong to be tamed by rhetoric—
then light, tomb, dawn were real,
and Death a dead reality—
and peace no longer simile.

So I will take you, Metaphor,
with me to the depths of the arena,
I'll take you to the place where they lay crouched
with spears,
I'll take you to the hour they'll recount for years,
and you will die a martyr, too—
there's no more room in Life
for half a truth.

Mary Callistas is the pen name of a middle school
English teacher and graduate of a Jesuit university.

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Expert Mercy

By James F. Keenan



Yabom Koroma, an Ebola survivor, with her family at their home in the Mountain Court section of Freet, Sierra Leone.

Rebecca E. Rollins/Partners In Health

In 2002, while I was teaching a course on “HIV/AIDS and Ethics” with the Jesuit AIDS physician, Jon Fuller, at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Paul Farmer came to my class. He brought along Tracy Kidder, who was then writing *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*. Since then, I have thought of Farmer as remarkably familiar; he slips in without any need of recognition, a bit of an approachable everyman, completely interested and accessible to the other.

Two years later in Bangkok, at the XV International World AIDS Conference, I ran into any number of people whom I knew only by their name tags. Invariably they asked me, “Have you seen Paul?” I was struck by the question; I didn’t know these people, but I immediately knew whom they wanted. I remember thinking, “Who is known by their first name at a meeting of 25,000 public health experts?”

For years I have taught Farmer’s books in my courses. I have also intro-

duced many of my undergraduate and graduate students to him and have brought him frequently to Boston College, where I teach. Where Paul is, others gather. They trust him.

In *Fevers, Feuds, and Diamonds: Ebola and the Ravages of History*, we follow Farmer as he goes in October 2014 with others from Partners in Health, the nonprofit global health organization he co-founded that is dedicated to providing a preferential option for the poor in health care, to West Africa—specifically to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Farmer and his team went there to respond to the longest and largest Ebola epidemic in recorded history, one threatening to hemorrhage beyond the borders of the “Kissi triangle,” as the region is known. “To nurse the sick and to introduce supportive and critical care,” writes Farmer, “was what led us there in the first place.”

These are fighting words.

In this astonishing book, Farmer reveals that he and his colleagues were fighting a public health battle against

“sanitarians,” the term he uses to refer to those who were promoting a “control-over-care response,” one that emphasized containing the virus rather than caring for its victims. “There was too little T in the ETU,” he writes, describing the Ebola Treatment Unit in the region. Because of quarantine and isolation, Africans were again being denied care, and he stood with others in realizing that unless safe and effective care were added to the equation, their response would be a failure.

Slavery, resource extraction, colonialism and warfare, writes Farmer, have left the people of the Kissi triangle “with a public health desert, which is why Ebola spread, and a clinical desert, which is why Ebola killed.” Into that desert, Farmer went to bring care.

To help us realize what was at stake, Farmer introduces us to the actors. An anthropologist as well as a physician and a global health expert, he wants us to appreciate that with care, every American but one survived the virus. While Americans and Euro-

Fever, Feuds, and Diamonds
Ebola and the Ravages of History
By Paul Farmer
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
688p \$35

peans were medevaced to safety and taken home for treatment and eventual recovery, in Sierra Leone, physicians like Humarr Khan and surgeons like Martin Salia struggled to provide care to those infected. Inevitably they too were brought low and killed by Ebola. The difference between those who lived and came home and those who died there was sufficient care. That care was needed in the desert.

The decision to go to the triangle is described in the second chapter, “Tough Calls.” In June 2014, while attending a surgery conference in Sierra Leone’s capital, Freetown, Farmer’s student, Dr. Bailor Barrie, desperately tries to draw Partners in Health into the emerging Ebola epidemic. Farmer resists and leaves, but he discovers in his eventual resolve to return that the matter-of-fact struggle on the horizon had no time for his anxiety. Instead, he resonates with the conviction of Dr. Rieux from Albert Camus’s *The Plague*: “The essential thing was to save the greatest possible number of persons from dying and being doomed to unending separation.”

To help us understand the magnitude of the epidemic, Farmer gives us not numbers but names. In “Ibrahim’s Second Chance,” he introduces us to Ibrahim Kamara, who “by the age of twenty-six had survived Ebola and the loss of more than twenty members of his family.” Kamara wants Farmer to hear his story. In listening, Farmer realizes that he must write this book as a witness to Kamara’s struggle to care, to provide, as he later writes, a lesson in “expert mercy.”

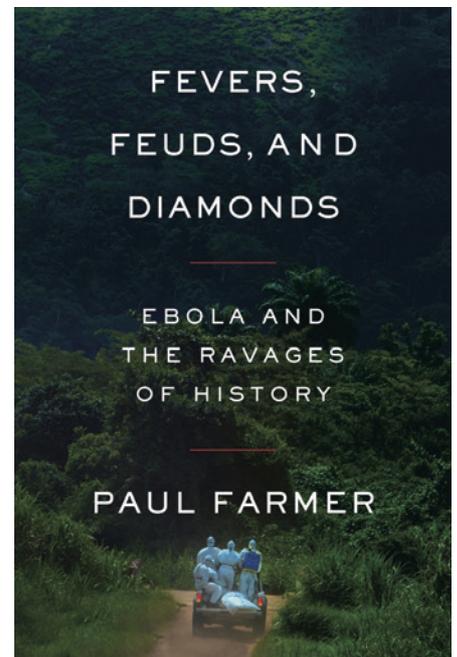
Kamara’s narrative of care and

survival is the story of Sierra Leone. The spectacular epiphany of his resilient compassion is revealed in his interactions with 9-year-old Mariatu. Weighing only 29 pounds and after watching her mother and sister die of Ebola, she had battled Ebola herself in fragile silence for days. Finally, she whispers into Kamara’s ear. Once Farmer lets you hear what she said, you will be hooked forever.

“The Two Ordeals of Yabom” introduces us to Yabom Koroma. Her first ordeal is confronting the civil war in Sierra Leone; her second is surviving Ebola herself but losing her husband and sons and a dozen other family members. We meet the gaunt Koroma as she begins her recovery. Around the same time, the survivors program finds her a job as manager of an interim care center, where she ends up mothering 84 orphans. Yet again, the survivors become the needed caregivers.

In the middle of the book, Farmer goes deep into history to explain how colonial control suffocated the natural life out of the once enormously prosperous triangle of nations, leaving it a clinical desert. His account of slavery, resource-extraction, subjugation, social theft, the breakdown of local society and the resulting civil wars helps us see why Ebola had a chance to thrive in the triangle.

Throughout, Farmer narrates the pervasive colonial disinterest in the health of and care for the local people. No matter his rage, he rarely vilifies by name the sanitarians he opposes, but he does offer the reader some exam-



ples from history of people who have gone against the grain and insisted on care as part of civilization, like Albert Schweitzer, W. E. B. Du Bois and Graham Greene.

There is much wisdom throughout this magisterial work, but the penultimate chapter, “How Ebola Kills” is a tour de force. There, in seven steps, Farmer indicts the sanitarians: After taking everything away from the people of the triangle, the withholding of care in the epidemic was the last move of racist colonialism.

Buy three copies of this book. Give the first to someone who wants to become a health care worker, to keep him or her from ever adopting the neoliberal call to emphasize controlling pandemics without caring for victims. Give the second to thank a Covid-19 health care worker who learned “expert mercy” in the face of mortal contagion. Keep the third copy for yourself. It is unforgettable.

James F. Keenan, S.J., a moral theologian, is the Canisius Professor at Boston College.



Shahed Reza W / Wikimedia Commons

The violence of modern economies

By Thomas P. Rausch

Workers in a garment factory in Bangladesh

One of my favorite churchmen was Dom Hélder Câmara, the cardinal archbishop of Recife in Brazil. Very much a friend of the poor, he is famous for saying, “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint; when I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.”

Two recent books go a long way toward explaining what lay behind Dom Hélder’s remark. Benjamin McKean’s *Disorienting Neoliberalism* analyzes the nature of the neoliberal political theory that dominates so much of the global economy today. Vincent Bevins’s *The Jakarta Method* traces the efforts of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Cold War to ensure that developing nations did not stray from an American-dominated capitalist model.

McKean, an associate professor of political science at Ohio State University, begins his study with stories about two tragedies. The first was a fire in December 2012 in a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in which some 125 people died because there were no emergency exits and the

regular exit was locked. The second occurred a few months later, when another garment factory nine miles away collapsed, killing 1,132 and injuring another 2,500 workers—some of whom had pointed out cracks in the structure but were forced to enter and work under threat of dismissal.

Because the garment industry represents 80 percent of Bangladesh’s exports, factory owners and politicians routinely ignored or violently repressed workers’ demands for better wages and safer conditions. What mattered were the demands of the markets, sustained by global supply chains that delivered inexpensive clothing to U.S. corporations like Walmart, Disney and Sears. Coordinated by multinational companies that easily cross borders to avoid state efforts to regulate corporations, these global supply chains have increased corporate profits but also exacerbated income inequality, even in developed countries.

Though the meaning of the term “neoliberalism” is often contested, there is wide agreement that it em-

braces various market-oriented views associated with free-market capitalism and economic libertarianism. It sees the market as the highest value. The role of the state is to enforce contracts, protect property rights and free trade. In such a vision political freedom is limited, and there is a rejection of state policies that might endanger the freedom of the market. “Even when an injustice is involved, the neoliberal view rules out action to end it,” McKean writes.

Seeking alternative “orientations” to neoliberalism, McKean develops John Rawls’s egalitarian liberalism. Rawls includes solidarity among the requirements of justice and sees this as the way to orient our actions and political responsibilities, working for justice in an unjust world. For many egalitarian liberals who follow him, the way to resist economic injustice is to re-politicize the economy by emphasizing the state’s sovereignty over the market. But the coercion this involves can violate freedom. This is not a solution for McKean. Nor is an ori-

The Jakarta Method
Washington's Anticommunist Crusade
and the Mass Murder Program That
Shaped Our World
By Vincent Bevins
Public Affairs
320p \$18.99

Disorienting Neoliberalism
Global Justice and the Outer Limit
of Freedom
By Benjamin L. McKean
Oxford University Press
310p \$74

entation to reactionary resentment or to humanitarian engagement.

McKean insists that there are always going to be winners and losers, and if one group is losing, it must be because others are cheating. Further, stressing the political agency of the privileged tends to emphasize the differences between them and the disadvantaged, frequently giving rise to resentment. The solution McKean recommends is to ally oneself with social movements that create networks of commitment and accountability, a process that can transform our self-understanding from being entrepreneurs in competition with one another to being partners in political action.

Bevins, an award-winning journalist for *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*, opens his book with the story of a young girl who fled Indonesia with her family during the growing violence in the struggle between communism and capitalism that would lead to the slaughter of close to a million people, only to arrive in Brazil two years before the military replaced its young democracy with a violent dictatorship.

The story of these events, in which the C.I.A. played a major role, is the story of the struggle for independence of largely non-white, third world nations against a resurgent colonialism. Their leaders associated the United States with its mostly imperialist Western European allies, while the Soviet Union was seen as a friend against colonialism. The Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955

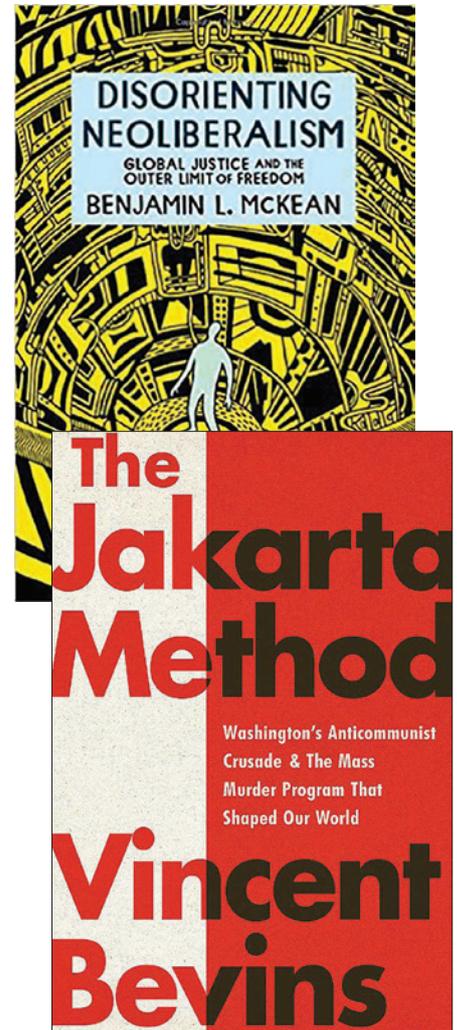
brought many of them together.

In his opening address at that conference, Indonesia's charismatic first president, Sukarno, described the event as the "first intercontinental conference of colored people in the history of mankind!" At the time, Indonesia had the world's largest Communist Party after the Soviet Union and China, but it was independent and unarmed. The strongest anticommunist force was the army, as well as the radical Islamists. As Sukarno moved to the left, pushing a moderate land reform program, a rebellion broke out in some parts of the country, and Washington began supporting the rebels, hoping to destroy the government or divide the country.

By October 1965, the right-wing General Suharto, considered by the C.I.A. to be anticommunist and "friendly" to Washington, had seized power.

By 1969, both Indonesia and Brazil had become anticommunist military dictatorships. When Salvador Allende was elected in Chile in 1970 despite C.I.A. efforts to the contrary, the Brazilian government began working with right-wing elements in Chile to overthrow him. In a military coup, General Augusto Pinochet became dictator. Pinochet quickly brought in several Chilean economists who had studied at the University of Chicago; they made Chile a test case for neoliberal economics. And so the subjects of our two books come together in a new imperialism.

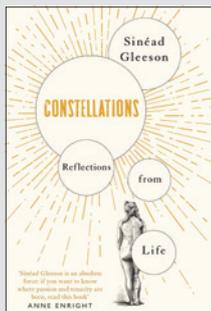
Some of the opposition to Pope Francis is in response to his opposition to neoliberalism. In his encyclical "Fratelli Tutti," the pope says: "Neo-



liberalism simply reproduces itself by resorting to the magic theories of 'spillover' or 'trickle'—without using the name—as the only solution to societal problems" (No. 168).

The two books are well researched and documented, though their styles are quite different. McKean's language is that of the academy, while Bevins writes as a journalist. But both help us better understand our world today.

Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., is the emeritus T. Marie Chilton professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. His latest book is *Global Catholicism: Profiles and Polarities*.



Constellations
By Sinead Gleeson
Picador Books
184p \$15.99

Heavenly bodies

A body is the source of pleasure, pain and decomposition. A woman's body can be both a political battleground and a vessel for new life. Bodies, in all their complexity, are the subject of the Irish writer Sinead Gleeson's new collection of essays, *Constellations*, in which she examines the treatment and experiences of her own body as it has withstood life-threatening illness and injury since she was a young teenager. "The body is an afterthought," she writes. "We don't stop to think of how the heart beats its steady rhythm; or watch our metatarsals fan out with every step."

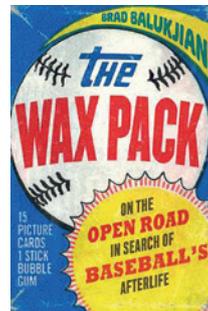
Gleeson's collection opens with an intriguing essay that sets the stage for her reflections on both the body's materiality and its mysticism. "The synovial fluid in my left hip began to evaporate like rain," she writes of the year she turned 13. "The bones ground together, literally turning to dust." She missed school and had biopsies, surgery and an eventual diagnosis of monoarticular arthritis. The essay hops from the biblical story of Jacob wrestling with an angel to Ireland's Catholicism before various abuses were exposed to a school trip to the hills of Lourdes, where Gleeson becomes her school's chance at a miracle—

her healing the prayer her teachers and classmates place at the Virgin's feet. "Our bodies propel us through life," she concludes, "with their own holiness."

It is this very holiness that serves as the inspiration for the collection. "Without those experiences," she writes of her various pains and surgeries, "I would not be a person who picks up those shards and attempts to reshape them on the page." Her body's shapes—molded by aggressive leukemia, a hip replacement, complicated childbirths—provide the most memorable and fully realized essays in *Constellations*. She finds particular interest in women's bodies, which have long been a locus of political controversy in Ireland. (Gleeson includes a thought-provoking essay about the Irish referendum in 2018 to legalize access to abortion.)

Gleeson's own constellations are the women writers and artists who made their bodies into their subjects, including Frida Kahlo, Lucy Grealy, Jo Spence and the author's Aunt Terry. Her engagement with the subjects of some essays merely flits across the surface without really shedding new light on medical, cultural and political sexism. This book, however, is a fascinating perspective from a writer who has long been a patient and who marvels at the miracle of her human body. Look at "all the pieces of the self," she writes, "there is a rearrangement: making wounds the source of inspiration, not the end of it."

Ellen O'Connell Whittet teaches in the writing program at U.C. Santa Barbara. Her ballet memoir, *What You Become in Flight*, was published in 2020.



The Wax Pack
On the Open Road
in Search of
Baseball's Afterlife
By Brad Balukjian
University of
Nebraska Press
280p \$27.95

Fields of dreams

Brad Balukjian is a scientist who teaches natural history at Merritt College in Oakland, Calif. He is also a lifelong lover of baseball and a gifted writer, who, after a moment of inspiration while attending a game in Oakland, decided to open a pack of 1986 Topps baseball cards and visit each of the players whose cards were in that pack. His pack of 14 cards included players ranging from the mediocre to the great, and Balukjian was determined to meet as many of them as he could. He was going on pilgrimage.

Baseball lends itself to pilgrimage. Some people, like myself, try to see games at all 30 Major League ballparks (I'm up to nine); and in normal years, hundreds of thousands of people go to Cooperstown, N.Y., to visit the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, baseball's shrine.

But Balukjian's pilgrimage was of a different sort. Instead of searching out only the greats, he was going on pilgrimage in search of the underdogs—those players who were good enough to make the Major Leagues but not good enough to find immortality in the Hall of Fame—to talk to them about life after baseball.

The Wax Pack: On the Open Road in Search of Baseball's Afterlife is the product of this pilgrimage, and what

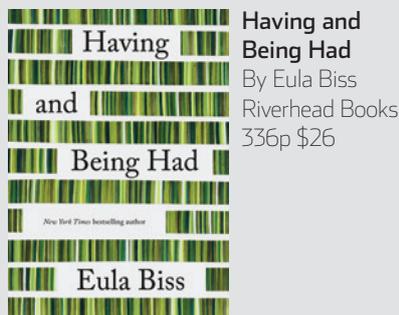
resulted from Balukjian's conversation with the "Wax Packers" is a series of stories that are strikingly intimate and revelatory. Most of the players Balukjian met struggled in some way with the shock of having to leave the game after giving their entire lives to it up to that point.

But the most prominent and moving theme that emerged out of Balukjian's conversations with these players is the role fathers play in shaping the lives of their children, for good or for ill. While some players had reliable fathers, most of the dads "ranged from alcoholics to virtual strangers, with plenty of neglect and abuse in between." Perhaps because I am myself a father of three boys, these stories of failed fatherhood hit home.

There is no hagiography in this book, no attempt to make these ex-players something they are not. What we get, therefore, is a book that is bracingly honest in its portrayal of human failure but equally powerful in its account of the possibility of redemption. *The Wax Pack* is one of the most enjoyable and moving pieces of baseball writing I have read in recent years. It may even come to be recognized as a classic of the genre.

Gregory Hillis is an associate professor of theology at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Ky.

 Full book reviews at americamagazine.org/books



Understanding privilege

"Nobody understands privilege as well as those who don't have it." Eula Biss makes this astute observation in *Having and Being Had*, her new collection of pithy essays examining capitalism, consumption and their (im)moral undercurrents. She offers thoughtful reflections on the exploitation of human labor endemic to our globalized economy, though she can sometimes come across as disconnected from the worst characteristics of the system she is criticizing.

Biss begins with a quote from the late anthropologist David Graeber: "If we really want to understand the moral grounds of economic life and, by extension, human life, it seems to me that we must start instead with the very small things." She uses the very small things—linguistic choices in an IKEA catalogue, syrup bottles, paint colors—to examine her own compliance with a system she suspects to be fundamentally unjust, telling of her misgivings when purchasing items to furnish her house, and tries to figure out what capitalism is while waiting for her son's skating lesson. That house is in a neighborhood that was once filled with poor Black people, and Biss writes about the discriminatory forces that led to their displacement.

Biss is aware of her privilege but can be tone-deaf. Lines like: "What does it say about capitalism...that we have money and want to spend it but we can't find anything worth buying?" are interspersed with impressive distillations of Marxist concepts.

While at the laundromat, Biss ruminates on her life's division: the time before and after owning a washing machine. "Not having money is time-consuming," she writes. "There are hours spent at laundromats, hours at bus stops, hours at free clinics, hours at thrift stores, hours on the phone with the bank or the credit card company or the phone company over some fee, some little charge, some mistake."

This excerpt exemplifies the main discomfort I experienced with the book. At times it seemed unclear just whom it was written for. *Having and Being Had* reads like a primer on racial and economic privilege for those who currently have some degree of both.

Maybe there is an important place for this perspective. After all, Marx wrote that the spiritual destruction wrought by capitalism affects even people who are (seemingly) the system's biggest beneficiaries. But readers already acquainted with social injustice might be better off listening to the voices of marginalized people, who, as Biss herself suggests, understand privilege best.

Nicole-Ann Lobo is a writer and critic based in London.

Christian Witness

EASTER (B), APRIL 4, 2021

READINGS: ACTS 10:34-43; PS 118; COL 3:1-4 OR 1 COR 5:6-8; JN 20:1-9

Happy Easter! Today we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The first reading and the Gospel offer insights into early Christian witnesses that can inform us as witnesses for Christ today.

In the first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter speaks to a group of Jews and Gentiles about God's impartiality and openness to all people. Highlighting Jesus' preaching and healing ministry, Peter affirms that Jesus' followers were witnesses to Christ. Peter also emphasizes prophetic witness, saying, "To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name." This affirmation connects Jesus with the Jewish prophetic traditions while also inviting Gentiles to be believers, drawing both groups into the new Christian movement. Soon after this speech, the Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit, demonstrating the power of Christian witness for inspiring belief.

Today's Gospel, from John, focuses on the first three Christian witnesses—Mary of Magdala, the beloved disciple and Simon Peter—and their encounter at the empty tomb. Their actions could be read as creating a hierarchy of roles and responsibilities within the tradition, although this should be avoided. For instance, Mary (and perhaps other women with her) does not enter the tomb but informs the male disciples of the discovery. The beloved disciple allows Peter to enter first, even though he arrives before him, possibly as a sign of deference to Peter's authority. This type of reading creates unnecessary competition and power dynamics between the

first witnesses, perhaps to subordinate women (Mary) and elevate clergy (Peter) above the laity (beloved disciple). Instead, their actions reveal different reactions to the mystery of the resurrection; each reaction is important.

Mary discovers the empty tomb probably because she and other women were going to anoint Jesus' body, according to the Synoptic tradition. Mary's presence at the tomb reveals her commitment to Christ, even in death. When she sees the stone removed from the tomb, she is concerned about potential foul play, understanding that the people who orchestrated Christ's death might do additional harm by desecrating his body. Alarmed, she informs two other disciples that the tomb is empty, becoming the first to proclaim the resurrection, even before she fully recognizes it, which comes later in the narrative.

The second witness is the beloved disciple, not one of the Twelve Apostles but an unnamed follower sometimes thought of as the evangelist John. Hearing Mary's word, the beloved disciple runs to the tomb, becoming the first to respond to the proclamation of the resurrection. Rather than enter the tomb, the beloved disciple bends down to look, changing his posture to see within the tomb and perhaps metaphorically changing his posture in recognition of the sanctity of what has occurred in the tomb. When the beloved disciple enters after Peter, "he saw and believed," becoming the first to believe in the resurrection.

Peter arrives eager to understand and encounters the empty tomb. He enters and investigates the area, observing the linen wrappings and head

For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead. (Jn 20:9)

Praying With Scripture

How has the Lenten season prepared you to encounter Christ in the resurrection?

What can you do to be a witness to Christ?

What do you do to strengthen your faith and share it with others?

covering that were on Jesus' body. Peter's actions show his desire to learn, becoming the first to encounter the empty tomb and attempt to understand the resurrection.

These early Christian witnesses struggled with the mystery of the resurrection. Their reactions are a mixture of fear, faith, confusion and understanding. Throughout the Easter season, we will hear more about these reactions and encounters with the risen Christ and the mission to spread belief, as we heard in the first reading. These texts remind us that Christian witness is not just about recognizing the empty tomb; it is a call to action. When Mary encounters the empty tomb, she tells others who come to believe (beloved disciple) and seek to understand (Peter). As we enter this Easter season, we should be mindful of how our lives reflect our witness to the risen Christ. Our actions should reveal faith in Christ and understanding of the Gospel, which can inspire others to believe.

Be Merciful

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (B), APRIL 11, 2021
READINGS: ACTS 4:32-35; PS 118; 1 JN 5:1-6; JN 20:19-31

“Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbors’ souls and come to their rescue” (*Diary, No. 163*). This is an excerpt from St. Faustina’s “Prayer to be Merciful.” Today is Divine Mercy Sunday, a day that reminds us to pray for God’s compassion and forgiveness and to afford the same to one another. The first reading offers an early Christian perspective on mercy and compassion that can inspire us today. The second reading and the Gospel remind us of the power of the Holy Spirit to help propel the church forward.

The first reading, from Acts, describes early Christians living cooperatively, sharing money and possessions with members of the community. “There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.” Luke’s vision of the early church reflects an intense level of cooperation, a kind of egalitarian society that eliminates poverty. The early Christians take care of one another financially, show-

ing mercy and sharing wealth so that no one is impoverished. Many people today might think that it would be difficult if not impossible to replicate this biblical model, particularly in capitalist societies. However, the principle of the reading is powerful and should inform how we think about wealth accumulation, economic justice and governance today.

In the second reading and the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is referenced in important ways. First, John speaks of faith in Christ, love of God and the importance of keeping the commandments. These acts can be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit, who affirms each of these things as true. The Gospel also expresses the role of the Holy Spirit as God’s power and presence within us.

After Mary, the beloved disciple and Peter encounter the empty tomb, Jesus makes his first post-resurrection appearance to Mary. Then he visits the other disciples, wishing them peace and showing the stigmata, the physical signs of the crucifixion on his body. Jesus then breathes on them, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” John beautifully alludes to one of the creation accounts, in which God, after making the first human, “blew into his nostrils the breath of life”

There was no needy person among them. (Acts 4:34)

Praying With Scripture

What can you do to be more kind and merciful?

How does the Holy Spirit inspire your life?

Are you open to granting forgiveness to people who have wronged you?

(Gn 2:7). The divine breath animates humanity, and Jesus’ breathing the Holy Spirit onto the apostles animates the church. Importantly, Jesus simultaneously commissions the apostles, sending them out to begin to spread the good news. They are also given the authority to forgive sins, as Jesus infuses compassion and mercy into the heart of the church right at its beginning. Divine compassion and mercy are foundational in the church and must remain so in our hearts as well.

On this Sunday of Divine Mercy, we should pray for God’s continued mercy on us all. Moreover, we should be inspired to act mercifully toward one another, sharing resources and gifts and asking for and granting forgiveness to one another.

Sharing the Gospel

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (B), APRIL 18, 2021
READINGS: ACTS 3:13-19; PS 4; 1 JN 2:1-5; LK 24:35-48

Today’s Gospel is the end of the story of the walk to Emmaus, and it also recounts Jesus’ first appearance to the remaining 11 apostles. The Gospel offers reactions to the resurrection and insights into what it means to be a witness to Christ. It also sets up the

continuation of Luke’s narrative in the Acts of the Apostles.

Jesus’ resurrection in Luke includes a few unique elements. When Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary and other women tell the apostles of their encounter with angels at the empty

tomb, the apostles did not believe them, although Peter goes to visit the tomb (Lk 24:6-12). The women also told other followers, including two disciples who encountered Jesus on the way to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-27). Jesus speaks to them as they mourn his death, not fully under-

standing that he had risen. At the end of the encounter, Jesus breaks bread, which helps them to recognize him (Lk 24:28-32). The beginning of today's Gospel is the ending of that story, when the disciples share their experience with the 11 apostles.

Following their report, Jesus appears to the apostles, which frightens them. At this point in the narrative, the apostles have heard two different accounts of the resurrection, yet they are still surprised and terrified at the sight of Jesus. Jesus questions their reaction and offers evidence through the stigmata on his hands and feet. Jesus even eats fish with them as another sign that he is physically present with them and not a ghost.

After giving the physical proof, Jesus provides a theological explanation for his suffering, death and resurrection. He teaches the apostles by opening "their minds to understand the Scriptures," connecting his mission and work with the Old Testament laws, prophets and psalms.

Jesus also proclaims that his suffer-

ing, death and resurrection happened for the sake of repentance. In teaching about Scripture, Jesus says to his followers, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations." Hearing this message during the Easter season should remind us of the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday began with a reminder of our mortality and a call to repent from sin. Today's Gospel reiterates that message, explaining why it is foundational to understanding Jesus' death and resurrection.

Importantly, the end of Luke is only the halfway point. The Acts of the Apostles builds on Luke's Gospel, describing the beginning of the Christian movement and its spread to Jews and Gentiles. At the end of the narrative, Jesus commissions the apostles, sending them out to share the good news through the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49, see Acts 1:8).

In each of the post-resurrection appearances in Luke, something is

'You are witnesses of these things.' (Lk 24:48)

Praying With Scripture

Did Lent prepare you to celebrate Christ's resurrection?

What can you do to share the good news with others?

In what ways do you live out your faith in Christ?

revealed and then shared with others. The women tell the apostles and disciples about the resurrection. The disciples on the road to Emmaus share their experience of the risen Christ with the apostles. Jesus teaches the apostles the meaning of the resurrection, and they are sent (Gk. *apostolos* means "one who is sent") to tell others. These are all examples of what it means to be a Christian witness. It is not simply having faith in Christ's death and resurrection and understanding its connection to the forgiveness of sins; rather, it is sharing the good news with others.

Understanding Christ

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (B), APRIL 25, 2021
READINGS: ACTS 4:8-12; PS 118; 1 JN 3:1-2; JN 10:11-18

In each of today's readings, we are invited to recognize Christ's resurrection not only as the guarantee of our salvation, but also as a reality that transforms how we live and how we serve others every day.

In the first reading, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit. References to the Holy Spirit in Acts are noteworthy, as the Spirit guides, empowers and propels the Christian movement forward. Peter speaks boldly and directly to rul-

ers, elders and scribes in Jerusalem.

The context for Peter's speech is the day after his arrest. Peter had been arrested for healing a disabled person at the temple gate and for preaching that it happened on account of Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 3:1-10, 4:1-3). In today's reading, we hear Peter's public statement on the matter. He reaffirms that his power to heal was not from himself; rather, it came from Jesus Christ: "In his name this man

stands before you healed." Peter likewise proclaims that salvation is because of Christ's resurrection. In his speech, Peter shows a clarity of insight that he often lacked in the Gospels. He more fully understands and is now able to teach others about Christ.

The second reading, from 1 John, builds on the idea of knowledge and understanding. The sermon talks about what it means to be children of God, who might have to contend with

a world that lacks understanding. The sermon offers a reminder that echoes Peter's speech, that the world did not know Christ, so it might not recognize his followers. Despite this, 1 John offers consolation, noting that understanding and revelation will come that will help more people to know Christ.

In the Gospel reading, from John, Jesus teaches his followers to understand his forthcoming death using the story of the good shepherd. Jesus says that unlike a person hired to watch over flocks, a good shepherd watches *and* is willing to give his life to protect his sheep from wolves. The shepherd is personally invested in the safety and well-being of the flock because they belong to him. In the story, the shepherd represents Jesus, and the sheep are his followers.

Notably, Jesus emphasizes the

selflessness of the shepherd, insisting that he volunteers to protect his flock: "No one takes it [life] from me, but I lay it down on my own." Jesus uses the story to teach truths that might be difficult for his followers to accept, expressing his willingness to die and declaring his connection to the Father.

Jesus' sacrifice is a sign of his love and devotion to the world, and it is a revelation of his relationship to the Father: "This is why the Father loves me.... I have the power to lay it [life] down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."

As we continue through the Easter season and near the feast of Pentecost, we can draw on today's readings for important insights about the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the life of the church. Likewise, we can reflect on what belief in the res-

'A good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.'
(Jn 10:11)

Praying With Scripture

What are the implications of belief in salvation through Christ?

How can you help people to know Christ?

How do you deal with rejections or misunderstandings?

urrection means in our lives and the importance of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all.

Jaime L. Waters teaches Scripture at DePaul University in Chicago. She is an associate professor of Catholic studies.

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Fast Times

Observations of a Catholic Comedian

By Jeremy McLellan



We are in the middle of Lent, also known as the Christian Ramadan. Or maybe Ramadan is the Muslim Lent? As a Catholic convert whose Muslim friends are often trying to win my soul for Islam, I have had to learn a lot to keep all this straight.

Let's start with Lent. It is the Christian season of fasting, penance, prayer and good deeds observed by Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Protestants who are pretending to be Catholic or Orthodox. It lasts for 40 days, leading to Easter Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection and return to our bad habits until next year.

The observance of Lent goes back to an ancient Catholic document known as "the Bible," which tells the story of Jesus fasting for 40 days in the wilderness while being tempted by Satan to run for president. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, so named because we receive ashes on our forehead to remind us that "you are dust, and to dust you shall return." If you forget this message, you can just turn on the news.

Traditionally, Catholics were to abstain from meat and eat only one normal meal and two small meals per day during Lent, which for Americans comes out to around 4,000 calories. If this sounds stricter than you are used to, it might be because the U.S. bishops decided to apply these rules only to Ash Wednesday and the Fridays during Lent. This seems reasonable to me, as making things easier is why Ca-

tholicism is doing so well in America.

A common devotion is to pick something personal to give up during Lent, like chocolate, coffee or faith in democracy. But be creative! For example, Judas gave up Jesus. And I gave up being Protestant.

Now on to the Muslims. The first thing to remember is that Muslims don't like reading phrases like "now on to the Muslims" in Catholic publications, so please try to avoid that.

Muslims have Ramadan, the holy month marking when the Quran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad. Ramadan begins at the start of the ninth month in the Islamic calendar, the date of which depends on physical observance of the moon. This means it begins on a different day each year (this year it is April 12), often moving one week earlier so that Muslims will show up on time.

Muslims do not receive ashes on their foreheads. Instead, they have to earn the mark praying *salat* five times a day for decades. The end result is a prayer bump known as a *zabiba*, which looks identical to the ashes we Catholics receive. And when you think about it, isn't it beautiful that despite our differences we have a shared way of showing off how pious we are?

Unlike Catholics, Muslim define fasting by time, not amount. Every day Muslims have a pre-dawn meal called *suhur*; then don't have any food or water all day until *iftar*, the evening feast.

They also abstain from cigarettes, foul language and talking about people behind their backs, which is something my friend Sultan always does. Muslims are also expected to abstain from sex during Ramadan to give Christian birth rates some time to catch up.

As with Christians, not every Muslim is required to fast. There are exceptions for health, age and other physical conditions, which is why during Lent and Ramadan smart people observe an ancient practice known as "minding your own business."

Of course, if you're not Muslim, you can do what I do: Skip all the fasting and join your Muslim friends for *iftar*. But make sure you say it's because you're "being a good ally" or "doing interfaith work," even if it's really all about the *biryani*, *chapli kabob*, *samosas*, *kanafa* and *gulab jaman*.

Whatever your religion, remember this: Five years from now, in 2026, the beginning of Lent falls on the same day as the beginning of Ramadan. Who will fast the most? Who will say the most prayers? Who will give the most to the poor? Start practicing now because the winner gets my soul.

Jeremy McLellan is a Catholic convert and comedian who has completed sold-out tours in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Pakistan.

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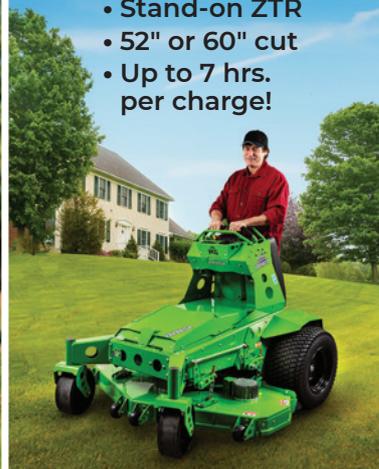
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KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



Thursday, September 9, 2021 – 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. (EDT)

Father Dan Horan, OFM, Chicago Theological Union
"The Future Church is Now: Exploring the Joys and Hopes, Grievs and Anxieties' of Young Adult Catholics Today"



Friday, September 10, 2021 – 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. (EDT)

Kaya Oakes, University of California, Berkeley
"Beyond the Boundaries: How the Pandemic and Online Life are Changing Our Spiritual Lives"



Friday, September 10, 2021 – 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. (EDT)

Kerry A. Robinson, National Leadership Roundtable
"Co-Responsibility: Toward a New Culture of Leadership in the Church"



Saturday, September 11, 2021 – 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. (EDT)

Sebastian Gomes, America Magazine
"I Can't Believe It! How Contemporary Catholicism Repels and Attracts"



Friday, September 10, 2021 – 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Christine Gebhardt, PhD, University of Notre Dame
"Intergenerational Dialogue in, and Moral Development with, Young Adults"

Additional workshops include:

- Evangelization to Young Adults
- What the Top Campuses Know about Reaching College Students
- The State of Religion and Young People 2021: Navigating Uncertain Times
- New Education Models for Reaching College-Age Students
- Tweeting for Jesus: How Parish Communities Can Utilize Social Media to Reach the Faithful
- How can Parishes Engage with the Young Adult Community? What Comes Next?

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