

# America

JUNE 2021

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

## The Crisis in Catholic Theology

**HOW IT DEVELOPED,  
HOW IT CAN BE ADDRESSED**

Grant Kaplan and respondents

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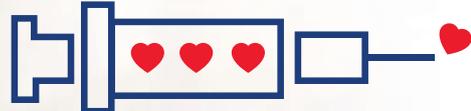
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## The Conversation

The British government announced in May a new initiative aimed at protecting free speech on university campuses, a move that follows several high-profile instances of de-platforming and cancellation of controversial speakers and opinions. Predictably, the political left and right disagree, not only about the nature and scope of the threat, but whether it is even real. Mercifully, we are not likely to address this sort of problem in the United States through national legislation. But that doesn't mean that the same social forces—polarization and ideological partisanship—are not at work here.

**America** has attempted to meet the challenge by publishing diverse opinions, an approach we have formalized in a new editorial initiative, “The Conversation.” (The conversation we initiate in this issue centers on the future of Catholic theology.) The choice to showcase diverse viewpoints stems not only from the fact that ideological partisanship is this editor in chief's well-known bugbear, but also that this has been **America's** approach from the start. “True to its name and to its character as a Catholic review,” the editors wrote in our first editorial in 1909, “**America** will be cosmopolitan not only in contents but also in spirit.” Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., the tenth editor in chief, put it this way: “A Catholic journal of opinion should be reasonably catholic in the opinions it is willing to consider. Which is not to say that catholic means indiscriminate. It does mean, however, that we will publish views contrary to our own, as long as we think they deserve the attention of thoughtful Catholics.”

Accordingly, over the last several

years we have hosted a wide range of authors across our platforms. In the area of economics, for example, we have published capitalists, communists, social democrats, libertarians, even a communist. In the area of theology, just this month, **America** published an article by one Catholic bishop who argued that pro-choice politicians should not be admitted to Communion—we then published an article by a different Catholic bishop saying just the opposite. And in between, we published hundreds of your comments about this important question.

**America's** answers to such questions, of course, are contained in our unsigned editorials. But offering you our corporate opinion is but one, relatively small part of what we do. Our main task is to host opinions, to expose you to a variety of individuals and groups, all within the broad spectrum of Catholic opinion.

That inclusive approach is not, admittedly, a widely popular choice. In the present polarized climate, voicing contrary opinions requires courage, which is sometimes described as “speaking truth to power.” But context counts for a lot here. The most powerful force in the public, ecclesial discourse isn't the secular media or the U.S. bishops, but the elite foot soldiers on social media and elsewhere who police the boundaries of ideological orthodoxy, both left and right, often with cynical, brute force.

It doesn't take a lot of courage, for example, for us to publish someone who is denouncing racism. Our audience wholeheartedly agrees. It doesn't take courage to publish an editorial criticizing the U.S. bishops—they are not that popular to start with, ranking

down there near lawyers in terms of popularity. What does take some courage is defending the bishops when we think they're right. And it does take some courage to buck the prevailing establishment ethos on matters of human sexuality or economics. And it took courage for **America** to say, on the precious few occasions when it was true, that Donald Trump was right.

**America** should have the courage to pay less attention to the mob and more attention to you. Here, Pope Francis is showing us the way. The pope believes in God, but he dialogues with atheists; he believes in a communitarian approach to economics, but he meets with capitalists; he has spoken out against “ideologies of gender,” but he has known and met with transgender people. You should hold us to a standard that requires that kind of courage.

Some people say that this editorial approach is nothing but an idealist's fantasy. But those who think that do not know you as I have come to know you. For nearly nine years, I have traveled the length and breadth of this country, meeting thousands of you. I trust you. I trust the education most of you received from the Society of Jesus. I know that you are not afraid of argument, not afraid of different viewpoints; that you are suspicious of dogmas not thought through to their consequences; that you value intelligence, diversity and charity.

For which I say: Thanks be to God.

Once again, welcome to the conversation.

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



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AP Photo/Amit Sharma

A man runs to escape the heat from multiple funeral pyres of Covid-19 victims at a crematorium in the outskirts of New Delhi, India, April 29.

Cover: America

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## Forum: *The conviction of Derek Chauvin*

The day former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted on all charges for the killing of George Floyd, **America** reached out to seven prominent public intellectuals and commentators on race and the Catholic Church to invite their reactions to the verdict. Below are excerpts from their remarks.

We still have more work to do to convert the United States of America and help it understand what proper policing looks like—one that cares for and respects the human person. How is it possible that any Catholic who says they believe the church’s teaching about human dignity would find Chauvin’s behavior justifiable?

I am hoping that any clergy who did not defend the humanity of George Floyd will take that to prayer.

**Gloria Purvis, Catholic commentator and host of “The Gloria Purvis Podcast” at America Media.**

While the guilty verdict in the Chauvin trial is a welcome change from the injustices of the judicial system with regard to police killings, we should not consider this a victory. Rather, it is a brief respite. This unending cycle of violence by law enforcement in America feels like a war in which there is no end in sight, nor an answer from God.

**Anthea Butler, interim chair of religious studies and associate professor of religion and Africana studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.**

Finally, a jury in America decided that Black people were telling the truth about our experience of police officers and policing in America. Finally, America was beginning to hear what Black people have been saying: that something is radically wrong with the culture of policing. I hope this will be a watershed moment in the country’s engagement with its tragic history of racism and in examining police behavior and calling for better training of our police officers.

**The Rev. Bryan N. Massingale, professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University, New York.**

There was never a possibility of justice in this case, only accountability. If we lived in a just society, George Floyd would still be alive and the witnesses to his murder, like Darnella Frazier, would be able to sleep comfortably at night. If we lived in a truly just society, we would not have been worried about the verdict in a trial of a man who murdered another human being on camera. If we lived in a just society, Daunte Wright, Adam Toledo, Ma’Khia

Bryant, Breonna Taylor, Rekia Boyd, Ahmaud Arbery and so many more would be alive today.

**Shannon Dee Williams, assistant professor of history at Villanova University, Villanova, Pa.**

Justice is about right relationships, and we have a long way to go to right relationships. But this is a beginning, because we can’t even start unless we have some kind of accountability. We need to examine our individual consciences, but we also have to examine, collectively, our church conscience. We have to continue to think about how our church has been complicit in slavery and white supremacy up until this day, then think about the cultural and ecclesial kinds of racism and white supremacy that we have to deal with.

**Kim Harris, assistant professor of theological studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Calif.**

The Catholic Church has this right-to-life mentality, this right-to-life slogan, but we use it quite selectively and only when certain key issues come up in the public square. And I think we can maybe take it and subvert it and talk about the right to life of our youth, the right to life of Black and Brown youth who are right now in many places the majority of students in elementary Catholic schools.

**María Teresa (MT) Dávila, visiting associate professor of the practice in religious and theological studies at Merrimack College, North Andover, Mass.**

In the face of such despair, I find hope in young Darnella Frazier’s courageous video recording of Chauvin’s murderous actions and in her testimony. Without her bravery, the details surrounding George Floyd’s murder would have likely been buried by police department narratives and ruling-class media priorities. Frazier stepped forward bravely and responsibly to answer the question: “Who polices the police?”

**Jeremy V. Cruz, associate professor of theology and religious studies at St. John’s University, New York.**



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## President Biden and the Politics of Refugee Resettlement

The Biden administration announced in early May that it will raise the historically low cap on refugee settlement set by former President Donald J. Trump to 62,500 refugees from 15,000. Under Mr. Trump's draconian policy, the refugee resettlement process ground almost to a halt; the applications of over 100,000 people were put on hold indefinitely. Refugees from a number of Muslim-majority countries, including Somalia, Syria and Yemen, were blocked almost entirely, despite the devastation caused by war in all three countries. Besides allowing more applicants from these mostly Muslim nations, Mr. Biden's ruling also provides more slots for refugees from other nations in Africa, the Middle East and Central America.

This is welcome news and a needed recognition that the United States has an obligation to ease the suffering of these people. We are not only the wealthiest nation in the world; we are a major instigator of the violence and political turmoil that has spurred refugees to abandon their desperate living situations worldwide. And despite heated rhetoric to the contrary, refugee resettlement does not have a significant negative impact on the U.S. economy. In fact, like most immigrants to the United States, refugees have historically proven to be significant contributors to the American economy within a generation of resettlement. It should also go without saying that the American people have a moral obligation to welcome the stranger, the orphan and the widow—a mandate present in the Bible and shared by almost every religious tradition.

The Biden administration at first

made the surprise announcement in April that it would not raise the refugee cap despite the president's promises to do so. Mr. Biden had vowed during his 2020 presidential campaign to admit 125,000 refugees in the current fiscal year, and in February he signed an executive order to that effect, making his April decision to keep Mr. Trump's policy in place a baffling one. But after an outcry from refugee advocacy groups and many political allies of the current administration, that decision was reversed the same day it was announced.

It was a clumsy about-face for the administration and an unsettling moment for those who expected the Biden presidency would bring about a new day for many refugees and asylum seekers. By the end of the day, refugee advocates had won a small victory but found their confidence in Mr. Biden shaken.

Why the initial decision to keep Mr. Trump's policy in place? Two reasons seem most likely. First, Mr. Biden and his staff may have assumed that they would get a free pass on immigration issues because nothing could possibly match the cruelty of Mr. Trump's policies and racist comments about refugees and immigrants. Even a minimal change in direction would be better than what happened over the past four years.

Second, there seems to be a political calculus at work, one acknowledged by Mr. Biden's opponents. A significant portion of the electorate is opposed to any increase in refugee resettlement and indeed to immigration in general from poorer nations, and Mr. Trump benefited handsomely from his rhetorical stance against both. Mr. Biden's presidency is only five months old, but members of Congress never really stop

campaigning; on both the local and national levels, immigration and its echo effects remain prominent issues. Stephen Miller, the Svengali of Mr. Trump's immigration policies, commented on Twitter that the initial decision to keep the policy intact "reflects Team Biden's awareness that the border flood will cause record midterm losses."

A significant loss of seats in the House or the Senate would, of course, be a serious setback for Mr. Biden's more humane immigration policies and an impediment to his efforts toward passing immigration reform legislation, something he obviously cannot ignore. At the same time, a potential backlash is a risk of ethically sound action in every political realm, a cost that must be weighed against other costs. Choosing the politically expedient path presents no profile in courage, nor does it reflect well on the priorities of the politicians choosing it. There are times when political capital must be risked for the common good; there are times when political capital must be expended to do the moral and ethical thing.

An ancillary issue that bears on this conversation is the way we perceive political motives. After four long years of Mr. Trump's presidency, many of us automatically seek out the nefarious motive behind any policy announcement: What is the president really after?

This is perhaps why Mr. Biden's first attempt to continue Mr. Trump's refugee restrictions backfired almost immediately; it seemed that "the right thing to do" was important in the run-up to the 2020 elections but was replaced almost immediately with the politically cautious thing to do. Mr. Biden has also reminded us that

Founded in 1909

Democratic presidents are capable of neglecting vulnerable populations once in office. Remember that two of the more shortsighted policies in recent decades were President Bill Clinton's 1996 welfare reform and his 1994 crime bill. Mr. Biden drafted the Senate version of the latter legislation.

On the topic of political expediency, it is also necessary at times to take the long view. The release of 2020 Census results makes it clear that the United States is in no way being overwhelmed by an influx of foreigners; further, even meeting Mr. Biden's original goal of 125,000 resettled refugees this year would not reverse the recent slowdown in immigration to the United States.

The birthrate among American citizens continues to decrease, and the Census reports the weakest population growth since the 1930s. Economists and social scientists see declining rates as ill omens for the future. Both the U.S. social safety net and its economic effectiveness rely on population growth, especially as the entire baby boom generation begins to draw on entitlement programs and health care systems.

In the long run, refugee resettlement may turn out to be a "minor" issue for the Biden administration, both economically and politically. But it is not one easily dismissed—and not just because of the fate of the refugees in question. A peek into the process by which the sausage gets made points again to the question of political and ethical calculus: How much political capital is worth expending to fulfill one's promises made on behalf of people no one else will fight for? When is doing the right thing not the smart thing but the courageous stand?

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## Vaccine equity is not only just; it can also protect the world.

The Catholic Medical Mission Board recently joined a coalition of over 40 Catholic organizations to promote vaccine equity as what the coalition calls an “act of charity and solidarity.” The Catholic Cares Coalition is calling for the equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines among nations and among those Americans who have been hard to reach. It is echoing the message of Pope Francis in his remarks to the World Bank on April 7, when he said, “We cannot allow the law of the marketplace to take precedence over the law of love and the health of all.”

The reality of vaccine delivery has been anything but equitable, with higher-income countries pursuing advance-purchasing arrangements for candidate vaccines with a speed that rivaled the hoarding of paper goods by households early in the pandemic—but with more dire consequences. According to the Duke Global Health Innovation Center, Canada led the pack by ordering enough doses to vaccinate 434 percent of its population. The United Kingdom was not far behind, with enough doses for 364 percent of its people, and the European Union and the United States captured enough doses to vaccinate 233 percent and 200 percent of their populations, respectively. (Not knowing which vaccines would be approved for use, these countries were also hedging their bets.)

By late April, 6.2 billion of the 8.9 billion vaccine doses purchased so far had been earmarked for high- and upper-middle-income countries. Just 1.1 billion doses had been purchased by Covax, an international initiative to help secure doses for 92 low- and middle-income countries. Even after

adding the direct purchases of 1.5 billion doses by the same nations, only a small fraction of the population in these countries will be reached—far below what it would take to slow the spread and thwart the development of new variants.

Still, it is heartening that public calls for vaccine sharing, including the work of the Catholic Cares Coalition, helped persuade the Biden administration to promise 60 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to India and other countries in desperate need. And there is public support for vaccine sharing. One survey of residents of the United States and six other high-income countries found that between 48 percent and 56 percent supported some vaccine donations, with 70 percent of those supporters agreeing that at least 10 percent of their country’s doses could be donated.

Even if the first goal of the United States is to achieve herd immunity, we have passed the point where inventory is a concern. Given that the United States committed to purchase vaccines that would cover twice our own population, and recognizing that some Americans are hesitant to get the vaccine or determined not to get it, we could shift more resources sooner to slow the spread of Covid-19 in parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Current estimates suggest that, at best, 20 percent of the population in these areas might be reached by the end of 2021. This is nowhere near the levels needed to approach herd immunity and prevent the emergence of new variants that threaten the entire world.

It is time to persuade the wealthier countries to release some of their existing vaccine supplies and future orders through country-level agree-

ments (or to Covax) to slow the spread and the development of coronavirus variants in countries that are just beginning to vaccinate. If the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and the European Union—all of which have a portion of their population who are vaccine-hesitant—could release just 20 percent of their surplus purchases, that would put hundreds of millions more doses of existing and new vaccines into the pipeline for low- and middle-income countries.

If we look at Covid-19’s devastating effects in India as just one example, the faster we can get the world vaccinated, the greater chance we have to reduce the risks of the coronavirus mutating into new variants that may eventually evade the current vaccines. In addition, we need to create technology transfer, licensing and manufacturing agreements that will allow for increased capacity for manufacturing vaccine supplies globally, both to complete Covid-19 vaccination and to be better prepared for the next pandemic.

We cannot tame the pandemic by waiting for market forces to dictate where vaccination coverage levels can be improved. Whether as an act of solidarity and charity or as an act of self-protection, initiating and accelerating coverage in those countries that have not yet vaccinated even 1 percent of their populations should be a priority for the United States.

---

*Mary Beth Powers is the chief executive officer of the Catholic Medical Mission Board. Twitter: @MaryBeth\_CMMB.*

*Editor’s note: Matt Malone, S.J., president of America Media, serves on the board of directors of the Catholic Medical Mission Board.*

A portrait of Gloria Purvis, a Black woman with curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a grey blazer over a black top, a large white beaded necklace, and a large white flower-shaped earring. The background is dark with faint, repeating 'A' logos.

# America

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## Rebuilding relationships

*After resolving bishops' concerns, Canada's Development and Peace has work to do with partners in Global South*

In 2018, 12 bishops across Canada announced they would withhold funds from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the official international solidarity organization of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. The bishops charged that Development and Peace was working with partner organizations in the Global South that had associations or positions that did not reflect Catholic teaching, specifically on abortion.

The C.C.C.B. and D&P began a lengthy and controversial process, over the next three years reviewing 63 partners whose projects had received funding. On Feb. 25, a joint summary of the results reported that funding for projects related to 24 of those partnerships would not be renewed.

That decision “was not an easy one to make,” the conference said in an e-mailed statement to **America**, though it described the suspensions as “appropriate,” given “the serious questions identified and following conversations held with the partners themselves and others.”

According to the statement, the conference remains committed to the success of D&P “as a Canadian, Catholic organization in communion with the Bishops and the universal Church” and believes that its new management policies “will strengthen Development and Peace’s work and mission to accompany the most vulnerable populations in the Global South.”

While the outcome of the review appears to have satisfied the concerns of Canadian bishops, D&P now has to face up to repairing relationships with partners overseas and supporters at home.

“The bishops’ concern was disproportionate and misplaced,” Ismael Moreno, S.J., said of the inquiry he received from D&P. Father Moreno is the director of Radio Progreso/Fundación-E.R.I.C., a media and human rights ministry in Honduras.

Father Moreno had been asked to clarify content found on Radio Progreso/Fundación-E.R.I.C. websites. In a fiery reply, he said the ministry does not promote abortion or other issues contrary to Catholic teaching, but he acknowledged that some posts may have caused confusion. He argues, however, that it is essential to listen to people with different views.

Radio Progreso/Fundación-E.R.I.C. was cleared by the end of the review process, but its relationship with D&P has been damaged. “I am left with a strong burden of uncertainty,” Father Moreno said, “as if I have a sword on top of me that will fall at any moment.”

Father Moreno said that D&P has supported the work of Radio Progreso/Fundación-E.R.I.C. for more than five years. “Its officers have been close, kind and have understood the Honduran problem,” he said. “That is why we were surprised to receive a letter with suspicions and threats, precisely from someone we believed was a close and trusted donor.”

Romain Duguay, the deputy executive director of D&P, said that it had been in contact with Father Moreno through a project officer throughout the process, adding that the agency is a supporter of Father Moreno’s work. He said he regrets the way the process was handled.



Photo by Kevin Clarke

Ismael Moreno, S.J., (center) the director of Radio Progreso/Fundación Eric, joins demonstrators in El Progreso, Honduras, protesting the election of President Juan Orlando Hernandez in January 2018. Funding from Canada's Development and Peace agency for his media and human rights ministry had been in doubt.

"I can understand that receiving a letter like that out of the blue, without some discussion prior to this, is like you receiving a subpoena," Mr. Duguay said.

Although the precise source of some bishops' initial disquiet with some D&P partners has not been acknowledged, many laid the blame on bishops and lay Catholics provoked by LifeSiteNews, a socially and politically conservative media outlet that has regularly targeted Development and Peace. (Representatives from LifeSiteNews did not respond to requests for comment.)

Mr. Duguay said that media scrutiny, however, was just part of the reason for the reassessment of processes at D&P. He said the review of both partners and organizational structures at D&P was the result of a long breakdown of trust between the C.C.C.B. and D&P.

"We didn't communicate enough, or strongly enough, so that the bishops would know exactly what we were doing," he said. "That gap created misunderstanding or doubt."

At the conclusion of the three-year review, D&P changed its organizational structure. It now includes four bishops on its national council. Adding those bishops, said Mr. Duguay, should diminish the influence of tabloid journalism because the bishops will be more familiar with the work of D&P and its partners.

Mr. Duguay insisted that although the review was prompted by a desire to satisfy skeptical bishops, D&P's institutional self-reflection remained important, calling it an ongoing process. Since the February summary was released, two more D&P partners have had their project funding renewed after satisfying the review inquiries, reducing the number of partners with unrenewed projects to 22.

"The idea is to get back to zero," said Mr. Duguay. "Maybe there will be one or two where we won't be able to find a common space because some partners grow, they take on new responsibilities and projects, and sometimes they don't align with our values or what we can promote. So it is a natural process."

Joe Gunn, the executive director of Centre Oblate-A Voice for Justice, said the length and lack of transparency of the review process raised concerns among the religious communities he works with and people in the pews.

"There's great disappointment with the leadership of the bishops, and the pressure of the bishops on D&P, the fact that the process has taken so long... People feel like they've been treated like mushrooms, kept in the dark. This has not helped," said Mr. Gunn.

Jenny Cafiso, director of Canadian Jesuits International, said the strength of D&P's model is that its partnerships are based on mutual relationships, cultivated over long periods of time. She feels the review did not proceed in the same spirit.

"It just goes counter to that whole concept of partnership, of wanting to break down a lot of the colonial structures and mentality that was also guiding, and sometimes continues to guide, North-South relations. And I think it's a very worrisome trend," Ms. Cafiso said.

In its statement to **America**, the conference defended the process: "Every Catholic organization derives its 'catholicity' from its adherence to the Gospel and insertion into the Church's community of faith and structures, and in communion with its pastors," it said.

"A closer sharing in Development and Peace's governance by the Bishops of Canada therefore does not take away the primarily 'lay' nature of the organization or its work, but further guarantees its Catholicity and continuing existence as a developmental and charitable organization at the heart of the Church's pastoral outreach."

Despite their concerns, Ms. Cafiso and Mr. Gunn, who have both worked closely with D&P over the years, believe that it is an essential voice for Catholic solidarity in Canada, and they want to find a path forward together.

Mr. Gunn wants to know what D&P has learned as an organization through this process and what it plans to do differently moving forward: "Everyone feels there's been a lack of transparency, and that has to change."

Mr. Duguay agrees that communication and transparency are important for moving forward, and in the end he believes that the review will lead to a democratization of processes at D&P, allowing internal conversations to be more visible.

The first priority of all parties remains the poor, said Mr. Duguay, "so the first issue is whether a partner is the best partner to help people in need right now."

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Dean Dettloff, Toronto correspondent.  
Twitter: @DeanDettloff.

## After India, what are the next potential Covid-19 hotspots?

With each passing day the Covid-19 outbreak in India seems to produce a new horror, as images of overwhelmed hospitals and fields of funeral pyres emerge from this latest pandemic hotspot. The speed and virulence of the outbreak have been among its most shocking aspects. Could an outbreak as ferocious happen somewhere else?

Sadly, “the next India could be in so many different places,” said Emily Doogue, a public health specialist for Catholic Relief Services.

How to tamp down the virus before the next outbreak?

“We’ve got to ramp up [vaccine] production by sharing the materials and also really working on how to make this technology transfer happen,” Ms. Doogue said.

Ms. Doogue suggested the United States and other wealthy nations, accused of hoarding vaccines, have an important role to play. “It’s our responsibility to get those vaccines in-country and do something about this horrible inequity that we have right now,” she said.

The Biden administration announced on May 5 that the United States would support a waiver of intellectual property rights related to coronavirus vaccines and vaccine manufacturing technology first proposed in October by World Trade Organization representatives from India and South Africa. The decision has been hailed by public health advocates, but it will take months before that policy shift results in new supplies of vaccines in poorer nations locked out of the vaccine rush in 2020.

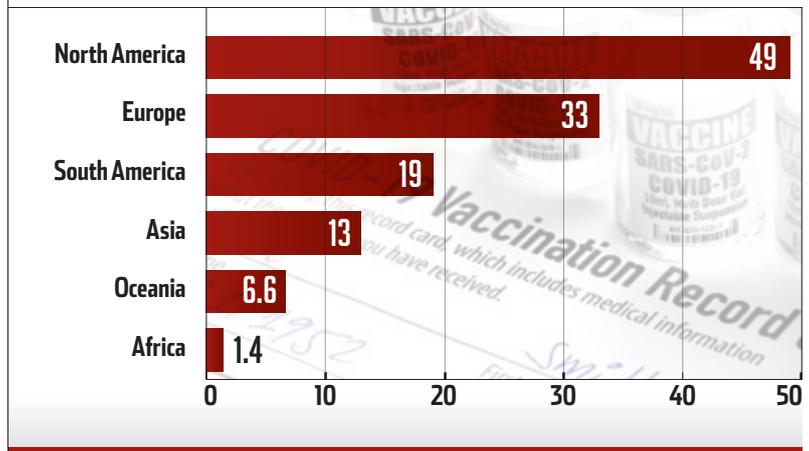
That means current reserves have to be better distributed. In May a few high-income countries held nearly five billion vaccine doses, while scores of low-income countries had secured just 770 million.

Ms. Doogue is especially concerned that southern Africa—where the B.1.351 coronavirus variant is “showing the most resistance toward existing technology”—could prove the next hotspot. “That’s a place where we feel like we’ve got to speed it up; we’ve got to make sure that we’re using the [vaccine] technology right now, while it remains as effective as it’s going to be.”

Kevin Clarke, *chief correspondent*.  
Twitter: @ClarkeAtAmerica.

### VACCINATION RATES BY CONTINENT

Doses administered per 100 people



#### INDIA

Vaccine doses administered: 163 million  
Fully vaccinated: 31.5 million—2.3%  
**12 doses given per 100 people**

#### SOUTH AFRICA

Vaccine doses administered: 366,000  
Fully vaccinated: 366,000—0.6%  
**0.6 doses given per 100 people**

#### WORLDWIDE

Vaccine doses administered: 1.24 billion  
Fully vaccinated: 298 million—3.8%  
**16 doses given per 100 people**

#### CANADA

Vaccine doses administered: 16 million  
Fully vaccinated: 1.3 million—3.3%  
**42 doses given per 100 people**

#### UNITED STATES

Vaccine doses administered: 252 million  
Fully vaccinated: 109 million—33.2%  
**76 doses given per 100 people**  
(Vaccine numbers recorded on May 6)

Sources: Duke Global Health Innovation Center; Our World in Data; The New York Times.

#### THE TOP 10

#### VACCINE HOARDERS

Number of vaccine doses procured per inhabitant

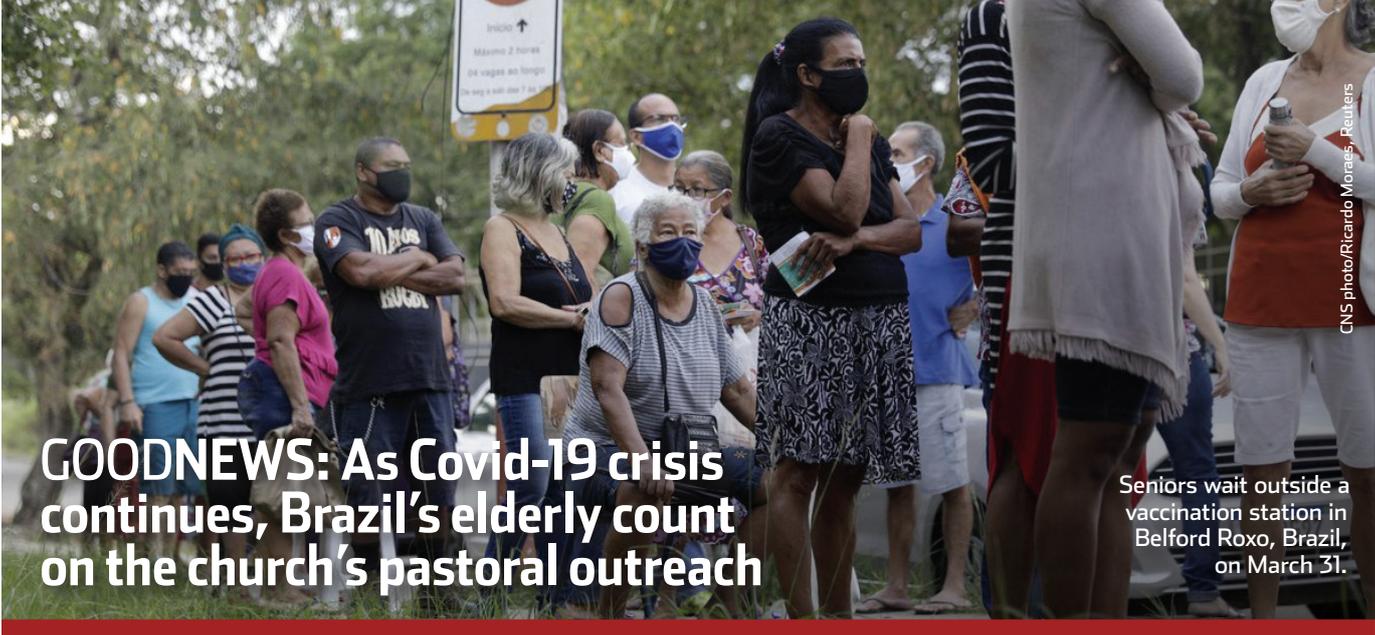
Canada	10.40
United Kingdom	8.18
New Zealand	6.57
Australia	5.71
Chile	5.07
European Union	4.66
Israel	4.53
United States	3.99
Switzerland	2.80
South Korea	2.55

#### THE VACCINE BEREFT

Number of vaccine doses procured per inhabitant

*African Union	0.73
Oman	0.07
Uzbekistan	0.06
Iran	0.03
Benin	0.02
Somalia	0.01
Senegal	0.01
Pakistan	0.01
Armenia	0.01
Belarus	0.00

\*The African Union includes all African nations with the exception of Morocco.



## GOODNEWS: As Covid-19 crisis continues, Brazil's elderly count on the church's pastoral outreach

Seniors wait outside a vaccination station in Belford Roxo, Brazil, on March 31.

CNS photo/Ricardo Moraes, Reuters

When the Covid-19 pandemic started, Leila, a pastoral worker in Brazil, was prevented from visiting the senior citizens she used to see on a monthly basis. But one day, an elderly woman called her and said she had an urgent question. Leila went to her home and met the woman and her husband just outside their house gate.

She discreetly passed Leila a folded note, pretending to share a cake recipe. Arriving home, Leila read: “If Covid comes for me, all of my papers are in the closet, first door on the left. I want to be buried in the cemetery. Please have them use the picture that is on my dining-room table.”

(The name of the pastoral agent quoted in this article has been changed to protect her relationship with the seniors she serves.)

Later “I called the lady and told her I would keep the ‘recipe’ safely until the right moment,” Leila said. “This is how the elderly are feeling here: anxious, afraid, worried. Vaccines are slowly bringing them some hope.”

That is the level of trust that agents of Pastoral da Pessoa Idosa (“Pastoral Care for Elderly Persons”) achieve with the 170,000 people they accompany all over Brazil. The church’s service ministry to the elderly began in 2004, growing out of its Pastoral Care for Children commission as church workers realized that Brazil’s elderly were vulnerable in much the same way as its children.

According to Sister Maria Lúcia Rodrigues, the national coordinator for the Brazilian bishops’ commission for the elderly, the interventions of the ministry are built around monthly home visits. “We visit the most vulnerable, the weakened, those who have health problems caused by aging, those who are abandoned, lonely or depressed,” she said.

Covid-19 restrictions created a challenge, of course. In March 2020, as enforcement of social distancing protocols began, pastoral workers started a campaign, Call an Elderly Person. Instead of visiting seniors, agents now keep

in touch by phone or video calls, and they encourage other Catholics to do the same.

Sister Rodrigues said that the ministry cannot solve all the problems of the people it reaches, but it does build bridges between the elderly and the community around them. “We do not take the problems as our own. We encourage the elderly to be active, seek their rights and get in touch with the competent bodies,” she said. “Otherwise we respect their autonomy.” In cases where elders are less independent, pastoral agents keep close contact with family and friends.

Brazil is a predominantly young country, but it is aging. In 1950, the elderly represented only 2.6 million people. By 2019, there were more than 30 million elderly people in Brazil—13 percent of the population.

As has been the case around the world, in Brazil Covid-19 has been hardest on the elderly. Henrique Salmazo, a gerontologist and professor at the Catholic University of Brasília, reports that seven out of 10 deaths caused by Covid-19 in Brazil have been among older adults.

“There has been a huge impact on the lifestyle of these people,” he said. Under Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, elderly people in Brazil now have fewer social interactions and have been forced to change eating habits and do less physical activity, Dr. Salmazo said.

“There is great psychological overload [on seniors],” he said.

Dr. Salmazo considers the work of the ministry to the elderly to be essential during the current crisis. “They build a network of solidarity that provides not only direct support, but also emotional, affective [support],” he said.

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Filipe Domingues reports on religion, the environment and economics from Brazil.  
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## U.S. sisters head to the border to respond to surge of asylum seekers

Before Covid-19 put the kibosh on such things as performing before live audiences, Nancy Murray, O.P., made a ministry out of dramatizing the life of St. Catherine of Siena. But in April in McAllen, Tex., she assumed a new role, helping families coming across the border transition to life in the United States.

Sister Murray, whose brother Bill has had some acting success of his own, said that with her usual work on standby, it was “a good time” to answer a call for assistance issued on behalf of Catholic Charities by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. “And I wanted to be working with the families,” she added.

Asylum seekers are again being allowed into the United States while their claims are heard in U.S. immigration courts. But this policy reversal threatened to overwhelm Catholic Charities USA sites in Texas and Arizona.

Explaining her decision to leave Adrian, Mich., and to risk travel during the pandemic, Sister Murray said, “I felt that these are people who have been living in tents for a year, and they have been through storms and hurricanes and snow and Covid, and they needed to be treated with some respect...and I wanted to be part of that.”

Kristan Schlichte, senior director of membership at Catholic Charities USA, said that during other migration

increases, C.C.U.S.A. had been able to move additional staff into the border area. That was just not possible this year, as most offices were already working at capacity dealing with Covid-19 and related hunger and housing crises and were unable to pitch in this time.

The executive director of L.C.W.R., Carol Zinn, S.S.J., contacted Catholic Charities USA to find out how members of her organization could help, a conversation that prompted a letter to L.C.W.R. members appealing for volunteers.

Ms. Schlichte reports that each center will be handling asylum seekers for 24 to 48 hours. They will need rest and a chance to clean up, get something to eat and find new clothes. Many will be moving rapidly on to the homes of their sponsors throughout the United States.

After seven years in a leadership position with the Adrian Dominicans in Michigan, Mary Jane Lubinski, O.P., was happy to answer the call to help out in San Antonio. “I wanted to roll up my sleeves, so here I am.”

She is part of a team of volunteers working with more than 2,000 teen boys who are being temporarily housed at the Freeman Coliseum. “I’m right where I belong,” she said. The 14- to 17-year-old “unaccompanied minors” she is now accompanying will take longer to transition into more permanent status. Many fled Central America’s Northern Tri-

Photos courtesy of Catholic Charities USA



Joyce Bates, S.N.D., and Rosalie Anderson, S.N.J.M., at Catholic Charities' La Frontera Migrant Shelter in Laredo, Tex., on April 27.

angle region, where they were prime targets for gang recruitment. Catholic Charities has to connect the boys with family in the United States and confirm their ability to sponsor the boys before they can be released “to their future,” Sister Lubinski said.

Sister Murray knows that some Americans feel anxious about the migrants and asylum seekers coming across the border. All she can say to allay such fears is, “Come and see.”

“When you hear the stories and see the people yourself, they are not just a nameless bunch of people in a crowd from a 10-second news report,” Sister Murray said. “They would rather be in their home countries safe and raising their children there. It is fear and violence that’s forcing them to come here.”

Kevin Clarke, chief correspondent.  
Twitter: @ClarkeAtAmerica.



Preparing for an injection with the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine at Ndirande Health Centre in Blantyre, Malawi, on March 29.

## Hard hit by Covid-19, rural priests in Africa turn to unorthodox fundraising

As lockdown restrictions and shuttered churches cut off typical parish revenue streams, Catholic priests in rural Africa have had to improvise, often resorting to unorthodox means to sustain themselves and their parish communities and churches.

In normal times, churches that produce agriculture products, like the Don Bosco Mission in Zimbabwe's Mberengwa District in the Midlands Province, rely on sales at their local markets. But under lockdown, the Rev. Joaquim Chukucha had to think outside the box or, in this case, the bottle. He opened a small brewery.

Father Chukucha turned to a dark sorghum brew favored by locals, known as “opaque” beer “because it is not as clear as lager beers.”

“This supported us very much,” Father Chukucha told local media. “Selling opaque beer is a lucrative business here because *makorokoza*,” as the region’s gold panners are called, “like it very much.”

Parishioners from Don Bosco said they endorsed the unusual venture in light of the difficult circumstances that Covid-19 had thrust upon the community and the church.

In neighboring Malawi, the Rev. Alfred Genesis Kalumbi from the Holy Angels-Matumba Parish in rural Dedza, about 50 miles south of Blantyre, that he had “to resort to unusual and unorthodox means of survival.”

“As priests we have had to do lots of things by ourselves, like working in [small groceries] and maize mills, laundry, cooking, guarding, etc. We had also to auction all the parish pigs to keep the parish going,” Father Kalumbi said.

Amid these challenges, sub-Saharan Africa’s rural priests are heaving a sigh of relief now that vaccines are becoming available. Medical experts warn, however, that a third Covid-19 wave could still wash over the region.

Tawanda Karombo reports from Zimbabwe.  
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## EDITORS' PICKS

**“Sharing Covid vaccines with the world is not only a matter of the common good. It’s also self-protection,”** *Mary Beth Powers*

**“Covid-19 has exposed serious problems with how we train doctors to value the elderly—and all human life,”** *Kristin M. Collier*

**“Nursing homes were broken long before Covid-19,”** *John W. Miller*

**“Why do white Catholics have such a high vaccination rate? Is it faith or education?”** *Robert David Sullivan*

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Photo: Joseph Gloor, Word on Fire

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Have you listened to one of **America**’s podcasts? Maggi Van Dorn is **America** Media’s podcast producer. It all started with “**Deliver Us**,” a podcast about the Catholic sexual abuse crisis that she made in collaboration with **America** in

2019. In 2020, Maggi joined the staff full-time, where she now produces “**Jesuitical**,” “**Inside the Vatican**” and “**Church Meets World**.” Maggi loves to bring the written word into the theater of sound with narrative deep dives. She believes that audio is uniquely capable of drawing listeners into an intimate world of story, character and place that cultivates deeper understanding and connection. Maggi is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School and Santa Clara University, and served in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

# A Crisis in Catholic Theology

The uncertain future of theology in the U.S. academy

By Grant Kaplan

Over 30 years ago, *America* published articles by Thomas O'Meara, O.P., and the Rev. Matthew Lamb questioning whether theology departments at Catholic universities would be able to sustain the theological renewal underway since the Second Vatican Council. The situation was dire. Father O'Meara declared in 1990, "We are nearing a state of emergency in Catholic theological life in the United States." If theology departments could not train the next generation of the theological guild, it would threaten the future of Catholic universities, for, as Father Lamb declared that same year, "Catholic theology is central to the *Catholic* identity of any Catholic college or university."

Today, although concern for the future of Catholic universities remains high, relatively little attention has been given to how the current crisis in Catholic theology endangers the viability of the institutions that house them. Revisiting these two articles not only sheds light on the current crisis, but also suggests that the issue cannot remain an intra-theological debate, but must be on the front burner for university administrators.

Instructors of theology, like almost all university educators, sense that something deeply troubling is afoot at the roughly 226 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. The pandemic has increased the likelihood of an almost certain future: Dozens of our Catholic colleges and universities

find themselves in financial peril, with some already shutting their doors and more on the brink of doing so. Cost-cutting measures have made reliance on adjunct professors and non-tenured faculty members the norm. Today's students, often with a firm nudge from university marketers, increasingly choose a major in disciplines outside the humanities. As publications like the *Chronicle of Higher Education* remind us almost weekly, the humanities face continued marginalization despite increasing evidence of the broad civic and social harm that results from neglecting them.

These wider contextual elements present unfortunate consequences for theology in particular. Compared with the 1990s, fewer Catholic parents encourage their children to pursue Catholic higher education at all, let alone a theology major. With decreasing numbers of students majoring in the humanities, the discipline of theology struggles to find footing.

## The Current Crisis

The gravitational pull away from theology at the undergraduate level has had direct, negative consequences for renewing faculty positions reserved for theologians. Since I began working in the theology department at St. Louis University in 2007, it has witnessed a drop to 22 from 32 full-time faculty positions, with most of the reduction coming



Credit: iStockk/tridland

from the pool of tenured positions. These trends are widespread at all but the most prosperous Catholic universities. Despite these alarming trends, there seems to be little concerted effort in the network of Catholic schools, and more particularly among the 28 members of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, to collaborate and strategize about how to renew and invigorate theology on their campuses. At the very least, the roughly 215 non-doctorate-producing departments should engage in conversation with the dozen doctorate-granting Catholic universities about future hiring needs.

Within departments of theology and religious studies there looms a related crisis. What is theology for and how should a department be constructed? After the Second Vatican Council, many departments defaulted to instructional categories inherited from seminary faculties—Scripture, history, ethics or practical theology, and systematic theology. During the 1980s and 1990s, certain departments saw the need for religious diversity sooner than others, but now almost all departments offer the majority of their courses outside of the older categories and have hired faculty with proper expertise in these areas. Larger departments that provided advanced degrees felt compelled to maintain a faculty able to equip future catechists, teachers and professors with what were understood, in the broadest sense, as the necessary tools to perform the craft and to convey something of the mission of the Catholic tradition with integrity. These presuppositions are not a



# TOO MANY FACULTY MEMBERS AND CHAIRS ARE CONTENT TO FOLLOW TRENDS THAT CURRENTLY PREVAIL IN THE ACADEMY.

For all their differences, Father Lamb and Father O'Meara shared common characteristics. Both were clerics born in the 1930s who entered religious life before Vatican II and went on to study with leading theologians in northern Europe after the council. This may explain the significant agreement expressed in their pieces. Their point of departure was the sudden theological and institutional transformation instigated by the council. These changes can be best summarized by the term *laicization*. With fewer men and women religious and fewer clergy as faculty, Catholic universities lacked the financial and human resources necessary to provide competitive salaries for laypeople and to fund additional intellectual and spiritual formation hitherto provided by religious communities.

## Challenges and Opportunities

These challenges, to speak “administrator-ese,” also brought bountiful opportunities. The center of theological scholarship shifted from the seminary—such lions of mid-century Catholic scholarship as John Courtney Murray, S.J., and Raymond Brown, S.S., were members of seminary faculties—to the university, where the money and (more vitally) the best students were to be found. There was now a larger pool of potential theologians, as well as a recognition that one could study more than Thomistic or manualist theology. Biblical studies, ecumenism and the study of other religions were now fair game and drew many eager students. The face of theological scholarship became decidedly less clerical, and also less male, although

it remained overwhelmingly white.

Surveying a massive, incomplete reconception of theology a quarter century after the council, Father Lamb and Father O'Meara feared that theology would go adrift. There was a danger that administrators would simply ignore the consequences of these demographic shifts. For Catholic theology to survive, let alone thrive, according to these two observers, Catholic universities needed to provide more than lip service and a place in the core curriculum for theology. Money was needed to allow working theologians the time and resources to engage the tradition more deeply. Only by this means could the new generation transmit a deep and lively understanding of the theological tradition to a future generation of students.

In large part, Catholic universities have stepped up over the last three decades. Doctoral programs as a rule now cover tuition costs, offer health insurance and provide stipends that make it possible to study theology as a full-time job. In addition, numerous institutes have arisen to promote Catholic scholarship, some of which are attached to universities (like the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Advanced Study, modeled on an institute in Princeton, N.J., or the Institute of Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California). Others are independent or have only a loose affiliation, like the Lumen Christi Institute in Chicago. At Saint Louis University, generous benefactors and administrative prioritization have made it possible for faculty members in the humanities to receive funds and course reductions for ongoing scholarship. Such initiatives are mirrored at some of the other better-funded Catholic universities.

## Safeguarding the Tradition

Beyond money, however, theology departments require a corresponding commitment to Catholic identity. Father O'Meara was quick to explain that one cannot equate that identity “with orthodox catechisms and papal control,” but with “the general principles of Catholic interpretation of Christianity” and “the fields and traditions of a millennium of reflection upon faith.” Lamb, meanwhile, advocated the preservation of “Catholic memory” and found it imperative that “serious, long-term research projects into Catholic theological traditions, and their significance for our American culture, be more intensely fostered at Catholic universities.”

Father Lamb and Father O'Meara had been formed before the council and rejected a return to theology's pre-Vatican II state. They had in mind a deep, wide re-



trieval that could be conversant with the pressing matters of the day. Something like this would require real and continuous cultivation.

The very mechanisms that led to the boom in lay theology also created unanticipated problems, including one that both mention in their discussion of graduate training. Father Lamb and Father O'Meara worried that the lack of first-rate programs at Catholic universities would lead the most promising theologians to Protestant or secular universities for study. "The trend," Father Lamb wrote, "is for Catholic theology departments to hire more and more of their faculty from Protestant and state programs," even when hiring in the opposite direction did not happen at the same rate.

Father Lamb aptly describes this situation as "one-way ecumenism." Father O'Meara notes the same trend, writing that denominational, nominally Protestant and public universities "are more or less closed to Catholics in any numbers." Father O'Meara asked, if the best Catholic students are trained in Ivy or para-Ivy schools, will they "be introduced adequately either to the central theological areas or to the important theologians of Catholicism"? And if the future generation of Catholic theologians does not gain a deep understanding and vision of the task of theology, will they care whether that tradition is transmitted?

### **The Common Labor of a World Church**

For Father Lamb, the crisis was already manifest in 1990. The wider Enlightenment milieu of American culture disparages theological discourse, and in the Enlightenment's wake, public discussion of religion offers only a stultified contrast of "conservatives versus liberals, progressives versus reactionaries." Without a deeper engagement with the tradition, and without formation in practices that join the spiritual and the intellectual, departments of theology risk "producing more theological journalists than theological scholars," whose arguments are "as predictable as some Catholic papers, known for their routine conservative or liberal stances."

The generation of Father O'Meara and Father Lamb both experienced and broke free from waves of narrowness. In the old system, Catholicism was Roman Catholicism, theology was Thomism, and patristics was Western. Creating a new framework meant discovering a tradition deeper than what had been on offer. The story of 20th-century Catholic theology can largely be told as the story of this discovery, whose fruits were manifested in the liturgical, ecclesiological and ecumenical triumphs of Vatican

II. Despite occupying very different locations on the landscape of theological and ecclesial politics, Father O'Meara and Father Lamb shared this story and wanted to ensure its next chapter.

The project succeeded in part because it did not just make the project of Catholic theology, memory and engagement with the modern world compelling to a range of future theologians, clergy and laypeople. There were also those on the outside looking in—a multitude of formerly Protestant theologians and graduate students who sensed something living and real in the Catholic tradition. The number of North American theologians and aspirants being received into the Catholic Church is inconceivable in most of Europe, and gives evidence of the renewal aspired to by Fathers Lamb and O'Meara.

The narrative was also shared by my mentor in Tübingen, Germany: Peter Hünemann (b. 1929), who was trained in the old "Roman system" and was intent on finding a new path forward in modern theology. He took seriously the claim (both empirical and normative) made by Karl Rahner, S.J., that the church was no longer European, and he spent significant time teaching in South America. When I was allowed to participate in his doctoral colloquium roughly 20 years ago, I sat around a table with students not only from Europe, but also from Africa and South America. They presented their research in German and English, but also in Spanish and French. They were writing dissertations about whether Europeans had brought salvation or merely religion to Africa, in addition to working out the implications of liberation theology and feminist theology for different doctrines.

I understood my own project on retrieving the 19th-century Catholic Tübingen School to be part of a common labor of a world church, made possible by the very best theologians and a longstanding financial commitment that enabled this. In the university town of Tübingen in southwest Germany, I got a sense of a global Catholicism, an experience that James Keenan, S.J., has fostered among ethicists in recent years. Yet despite the increasingly international network of Catholic theology, there has been little effort to make departments of theology in the United States look more like the worldwide Catholic Church, sub-equatorial and in contact with the poor.

What are the forces shaping the guild today, and what will their impact be on Catholic theology? Before treating the thorny matter of hiring, it is helpful to take up Father Lamb's worry about theological journalism. The proliferation of outlets of theological opinion, many of them online,



# THE PROBLEM, THEN AND NOW, IS CONFUSING JOURNALISM WITH SCHOLARSHIP.

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offers a greater number of platforms to discuss the pressing issues of the day. These days one can hear President Biden cite Augustine at noon and read about his application of the *City of God* later that evening. Given the poor state of religious literacy and the harm done by non-credentialed theologians, good public theology is a service to the church and reflects well on the guild.

The problem, then and now, is confusing journalism with scholarship. Theology departments desperate for prestige have given endowed chairs and offered honoraria for prestigious lectureships to figures who traffic primarily in theological journalism. These decisions send the message that Catholic universities value what is of the moment more than what is deep and lasting. Theological journalism, even when done expertly, cannot replace the long and sustained scholarly pursuit needed to train students in the craft. Those entering the guild can be given the impression that one should make one's mark with journalism, rather than scholarship, and such a conclusion can hardly be a harbinger of serious theological renewal to come.

## **Taking Catholic Diversity Seriously**

The opportunities lost by favoring theological journalism pale in comparison, however, to the negative consequences of poor hiring. Departments beset by the aforementioned reductions face additional pressures, including the nebulous imperative to “diversify.” Hiring with an eye toward diversity helped make departments less clerical and less male, so that they would more closely mirror the demographics of society rather than of most seminary faculty, and this obvious step often took too long.

Diversity also applied to specialization and denomination; departments learned the benefits of having not

just non-Catholic Christians, but non-Christians on their faculty. On the level of graduate education, the ecumenical turn allowed departments to offer the possibility of comparative theology, while providing expertise on figures like Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth, who were mostly absent from Catholic seminary syllabi and textbooks in the 1950s. Diversification was also a necessary response to changing student demographics and desires. Among deans, chairs and other stakeholders, however, there was a shared understanding that these faculty positions designated for theologians would supplement rather than supplant the central role of Catholic theology at a Catholic university.

This consensus concerning the central role of Catholic theology has no doubt been lost. In the current political and academic climate, strong pressures and deeply felt ethical imperatives compel particular kinds of diversity hiring. Greater gender and racial diversity among the faculty is a good demanded by justice. The Catholic Church claims over 1.3 billion members worldwide, and roughly 70 percent of them live outside of Europe and North America. Surely if Catholic universities take Catholic diversity seriously, they should look at long-term strategies to recruit the brightest graduate students and to hire the most promising faculty members, who can both convey and embody the present state and future course of global Catholicism. Yet few Catholic universities are deliberately seeking collaboration with institutions in places like Brazil, China, Nigeria and the Philippines.

## **Theology's Raison D'être**

Father Lamb and Father O'Meara worried that the new generation of lay students would lack training in basic theology and the languages needed for serious theological

work. Today, the crisis seems to pivot on whether one really needs to spend time with basic sources and questions. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., spent years “reaching up to the mind of Aquinas,” and one senses that Hans Urs von Balthasar, Henri de Lubac, S.J., Karl Rahner, S.J., and Edith Stein felt a comparable sense of having really discovered something when they read early Christian sources. Many students today, however, receive the impression, often conveyed intentionally, that one survey course on pre-modern theology suffices.

Students are encouraged, explicitly or by suggestion, to integrate theological questions with methods (critical theory, ethnography) or fields (trauma studies, disability studies, environmental studies) adjacent to theology. In practice this is nothing new, and integrating these methods can have real theological payoff, much as did the application of philology and history to theological disciplines for previous generations. But two problems arise. First, doing this well requires time that cannot come at the expense of theological coursework. Otherwise the impression is given that the tradition can be had cheaply, or, even worse, that it is not worth the effort. Second, one needs to reconceive theology for the 21st century, as Johann Sebastian Drey of Tübingen did for his time in his *Brief Introduction to the Study of Theology* (1819), when the understanding of theology in relation to other disciplines was going through an analogous transformation.

If good philosophy and good history made for better theology, the same can be true for the impact on theology from fields like ethnography and disability studies. For theology to maintain identity and coherence, the application of supplementary disciplines and methods needs to be paired with an appreciation for theology’s historical achievements, which the faculty should embody and articulate through a palpable love of theology. Otherwise, departments risk losing their *raison d’être*.

It is hard to disentangle what departments should look like from how they should hire. In my experience, however, there is almost no coordination among Catholic universities on this matter. If an international collaboration can help realize greater catholicity, national collaboration would help answer the ethical question about whether Catholic theology departments should be granting doctorates at all. If the dozen U.S. Catholic universities that grant doctorates in theology knew that the remaining universities were committed to hiring practices that would reward departments who trained students to retrieve and reimagine Catholic theology in creative and dynamic ways, it would be easier to justify



Grant Kaplan

continuing these programs.

To be clear, what is needed is not a renewed call for “Catholic hiring,” but for deliberate strategies to seek theologians and scholars of religion interested in continuing to think, remember and imagine with a broadly Catholic pattern of doing theology. The cohesion of a department relies on a coalition of members engaging in a common activity that can be recognized and named. The vitality of the common endeavor requires new colleagues who stretch and expand a vision of theology that claims to be Catholic. The schools most concerned with Catholic identity too often settle for a parochial identity instead of a vitally Catholic one. Such negative examples, however, should not dissuade more mainstream departments from taking steps to imagine their Catholicity in thoughtful and serious ways.

The practice of Catholic theology done largely by lay theologians at institutions outside of ecclesiastical control is relatively new, yet too many upper administrators treat the discipline of academic theology as if it were safeguarded from harm in today’s environment. Too many faculty members and chairs are content to follow trends that currently prevail in the academy, as if Catholic institutions have the same needs and ends as their secular counterparts. If theology departments are winnowed down to a variant of cultural studies, in which the discipline of theology is replaced by a medley of methods and fields, there is a real question whether lay theology will continue. Catholic theology may retreat to its traditional place, in the seminary, to be done by (mostly) clergy for (mostly) clergy. Such a move would be a great loss for the study of theology, for the life of our Catholic universities and for the Catholic Church as a whole.

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## At Home With the Old and the New

Our theology departments need to move past the parochial

By Ligita Ryliskyte

Grant Kaplan suggests that his real question does not so much regard Catholic theology's future in the United States *per se*, but the survival of its laicized forms. In a pessimistic scenario, he warns us that Catholic theology in the United States could retreat to seminaries, virtually overturning theology's postconciliar clericalization and central place in Catholic university life. Universities may well continue offering programs in Catholic theology, but such programs will be Catholic in name only. Lacking appreciation for thinking, remembering and imagining in a Catholic way, they will fail to contribute meaningfully to the education of future Catholics and so will lose their *raison d'être*.

Thus, Dr. Kaplan's major concern is the fragility of the Catholic identity of theology departments in the United States. His proposed solution goes beyond the earlier insights of Father O'Meara and Father Lamb, in that he suggests that commitment to Catholic identity calls for "taking Catholic diversity seriously" and embracing global Catholicism. Dr. Kaplan advocates a "globalized" understanding of Catholicism and advises that faculty diversification should include an internationalization, so that departments of theology in this country would "look more like the world-wide Catholic Church."

His further exhortation—"to recruit the brightest graduate students and to hire the most promising faculty members" representative of global Catholicism—might be taken to carry imperialist overtones. (Is he calling for "the best scholars of the world for the best country in the world"?)

But the truly valuable aspect of Dr. Kaplan's insight should not be overlooked. Transcending the parochial is vital for retaining Catholic identity, whether this is manifested in a theology department's faculty-hiring strategies, national and international collaboration, exchange programs, investments in scholarship or curricula of studies.

Though largely concurring with Dr. Kaplan's concerns, I wonder if what needs to be transcended is not just a parochial identity but also an ideological polarization. The latter is perhaps of even greater importance for the future vitality of Catholic theology in the United States. Though the liberal/conservative dialectic in Catholic theology is far from new, it seems that a growing polarization along the same lines is now only one step removed from what Walter Burghardt, S.J., called an "intramural internecine hos-



tility." The liberal tendency to reject the old in favor of the new and the conservative dismissal of new questions, ethical concerns and interdisciplinarity are equally disconcerting.

What is needed, I think, is the cultivation of the capacity to be at home with both the old and the new. As Bernard Lonergan, S.J., once suggested, this entails claiming one's place in the "not numerous center" that is ready to work patiently through the necessary transitions and refuses any half-measures. Entering this center space is not likely to make one popular. But acquiring a capacity for doing so seems necessary for remaining Catholic, at least if *kata holon* also means "both-and": both old and new, grace and nature, faith and reason.

Theology departments could foster this capacity by strategically creating occasions for conversations across dividing lines and, even more important, by integrating rigorous intellectual training with new forms of spiritual formation. No doubt reclaiming scholarly excellence over against "theological journalism," focusing on "a broadly Catholic pattern of doing theology" and addressing the methodological disarray in theology will play an important role. But the key to fostering a vibrant Catholic theology seems to lie in a creative reintegration of intellectual and spiritual formation. After all, the unity of minds and hearts is a matter of not only intellectual but also moral and religious conversion. Though challenged by the laicization of Catholic theology, this integration seems to be re-emerging in at least some of the theology departments in the United States, such as my own at Boston College.

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## A Question of Priorities

Theology departments need support to thrive

By Ty Monroe

“Stay away!” That is the perennial advice of many theology professors to each new pool of applicants to graduate theology studies. It is a warning to avoid the rivalrous acrimony of online forums where applicants commiserate. Yet challenges continue to mount for those fortunate enough to be admitted, perhaps to the point where one wonders whether applicants would be wise to stay away from graduate programs altogether. Grant Kaplan’s analysis of the broader situation seems to me mostly accurate, though I wish to raise further concerns.

Dr. Kaplan’s measured optimism about funding is not groundless. I fear, however, that the situation remains more dire than he lets on. True, it seems that here in the United States many unfunded and partially funded Ph.D. positions have been eliminated in recent years, and in many places students can now receive health care coverage. But none of this remedies the fact that stipends have not kept pace with the cost of living—and not by a long shot in many metropolitan areas.

Moreover, when Catholic institutions deny health care coverage for families or paid family leave and tell students they have no right to organize, one struggles to reconcile this with the church’s social teaching. Reports suggest that recent organizing efforts at Loyola University of Chicago did lead to stipends increasing from \$18,000 to \$28,000. Administrators often like to argue that being a Ph.D. student is not a full-time job; however, even if one’s duties could be managed in a 20-hour work week *and* one could secure equitable supplementary income, the underlying message is that these exceptionally talented, credentialed students are only worth roughly \$60,000 per year.

Whether this hypothetical income is a living wage in Chicago (let alone in Boston, Washington or New York) is something worth asking of those who have tried to live on it, either alone or with their families. Amid these challenges, the number of casualties steadily increases. Students struggle to immerse themselves in their studies and maintain their physical and mental health. Doing gig work or low- to moderately paid university internships hardly closes the gap. The explicit message is, “Come, devote yourself to your academic formation!” But the material conditions within programs often suggest otherwise.



If and when graduates secure jobs—and, increasingly, many do not—the prospects do not necessarily brighten. As Dr. Kaplan notes, the trend is not toward hiring more full-time, tenure-track faculty. The reasons are complex, but the simple logic of supply and demand looms large as each hiring cycle yields a surfeit of unemployed or underemployed Ph.D.s. Institutions feel little pressure to staff a decisive majority of classes with faculty members who have a legitimate opportunity to commit wholly to their students, their research and their institutions.

On the demand end, recent curriculum battles in the upper echelon of Catholic higher education expose just how nervous we are to affirm unequivocally to prospective students that *we* know just how important theology is to their personal formation, even if *they* don’t (yet). Even if the message to students is not exactly to “stay away” from theology, the situation requires a strong and reasoned argument in favor of the discipline. It is an odd message when, in fact, theology plays an important role in how Catholic institutions differentiate themselves from their numerous competitors.

I remain hopeful, following Dr. Kaplan’s methodological advice, that American Catholic theology can make such a strong, reasoned argument by inviting students into a discipline that eschews the facile methodological dichotomies Dr. Kaplan bemoans, especially between historically grounded *ressourcement* and critically engaged contextual work. But that can only happen if conditions within graduate programs make it possible for doctoral students to thrive and if smaller Catholic institutions can affirm theology’s place within their students’ academic formation by means of concrete hiring practices.

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## Forming for Identity

How can we develop scholarship within lives of prayer and service?

By Carolyn Weir Herman

Reflecting on the current crisis of Catholic theology in U.S. Catholic colleges and universities and a related crisis in their theology departments, Grant Kaplan largely focuses on the Catholic identity of theology departments, presuming that if departments foster this Catholicity, then the Catholic identity of these colleges and universities will be upheld. Dr. Kaplan correctly emphasizes the need to prioritize Catholic theology, and I would add that theology departments could enhance Catholic identity through continued engagement with the Christian tradition and other disciplines, more integrated formation of students and scholars and service to the global ecclesial and human communities.

Catholic theology departments must ensure that students and faculty delve into the Christian tradition and bring this research into dialogue with contemporary methods and fields of study. Through investigation of fundamental sources and essential questions, Catholic theology must not simply transmit doctrines but interpret the tradition anew for each century. Such work requires the use of diverse methods and fields of study available in a given time. Theology thereby brings faith and reason into dialogue with one another to address the present world. According to Dr. Kaplan, integrating theology with other methods and disciplines has contributed to the loss of Catholic identity in theology departments. While Dr. Kaplan is right to be concerned about upholding Catholic theology's primary place, theology departments also have a responsibility to take seriously the methods, fields of study and questions of today.

Theology departments could recenter on Catholic theology by giving greater attention to more integrated intellectual, spiritual and moral formation of students and faculty. Since theological study has moved from the seminary to the university, departments of theology must find creative ways to develop intellectual scholarship *within* lives of prayer and service. Among other things, more robust spiritual and moral formation teaches students and scholars practices of discernment, enabling them to reflect more deeply on their own experience and that of others. As Father Michael Himes said in his "Last Lecture" at Boston College, "theology involves allowing experience to give new



insight into the tradition and allowing the tradition to give coherence and intelligibility to our experiences." Forming students' and faculty's intellectual pursuits within the presence of the mystery of God will give Catholic theology the spiritual and moral depth necessary to be lasting and vital today.

Additionally, Catholic theology departments have a responsibility to serve the global ecclesial and human communities through both scholarship and theological journalism. Dr. Kaplan claims that "without deeper engagement with the tradition, and without formation in practices that join the spiritual and the intellectual, departments of theology risk 'producing more theological journalists than theological scholars.'" Theologians have the task of advancing scholarship and contributing to discussions with their colleagues in the theological guild; yet they also have a responsibility to bring the Christian tradition to bear on contemporary issues for a wider audience on various media platforms.

In the end, theology departments can enrich the central role of Catholic theology by continually engaging with the tradition, more intentionally forming students and faculty, and serving the worldwide community through theological journalism and scholarship. By adopting these practices, departments of theology will advance their own Catholic identity and that of U.S. Catholic colleges and universities.

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# The Living Word of God

Theology must work to elicit surprise and wonder

By Christopher R. Mooney

In the Book of Job, the friends of Job attempt to soothe his suffering and agonized questions with wisdom about God. Eliphaz asks, “Now think: Who that was innocent ever perished?” (4:7). Zophar tells him, “If you prepare your heart... you will forget your misery!” (11:13, 16). Elihu even offers to speak “on God’s behalf” (36:2).

All five speak and reason (*logos*) about God (*theos*). Mustering the most venerable wisdom of their traditions, they do theology with natural prowess. Then God appears. His arrival is jarring. Their confidence withers. With piercing irony, their venerable theology is overturned: Now God (*theos*) speaks (*logos*).

This scene offers an image of the peculiar, twofold nature of theology. It is, of course, reasoning about God and all things in relationship to God. But it is also reasoning informed by—and ever seeking—God’s speech.

This image came to mind as I read Grant Kaplan’s stimulating assessment of the state of Catholic theology in the United States. Among other proposals, he rightly calls for the greater integration of theology with other disciplines to “reconceive theology for the 21st century.” He names several areas—critical theory, disability studies and environmental studies—to which one could also add the sciences, like cognitive science or physics. This engagement is imperative, but theology must also have a vision of itself first.

Dr. Kaplan cites the origins of historical theology—an integration of history and theology. In the 19th century, when the study of history was en vogue, integration of history into Catholic theology faced serious obstacles. In some cases, any attempts to integrate history into theology were met with suspicion, even toward Cardinal Newman’s groundbreaking account of doctrinal development. Today, the historical dimension of the church and revelation has become indispensable to Catholic thought and occupies its best theologians. But some historical theology was genuinely irreconcilable, or even a vehicle for patently anti-Catholic theology, as with the brilliant Lutheran historian Adolf von Harnack. Newman’s thought, by contrast, was animated primarily by a Catholic theological vision of God’s speech reverberating through history.

The development of historical theology highlights a risk in interdisciplinary theology: If it loses the spirit of



theology, it takes on the shape of another discipline. In research today, the theological reality can become ever more historically bracketed and distanced by respectable qualifiers—“well, according to Aquinas”; “for Irenaeus, of course”—until it has receded beyond our mental horizon. The theologian becomes instead an archivist or a museum curator, dedicated to preservation but not animation. This is why a vision for theology is vital.

The questions that faced historical theology are still relevant; to raise them is not to denigrate other disciplines. It is to remember to ask, “Is this theology? If not, what is?” This disciplinary question may seem pedantic, but the “crisis” facing the future and justifiability of theology classes, departments, funding and majors indicates that it is not.

Graduate students need to learn how to do this work of integration, but they first need to know how they will introduce undergraduates to theology as its own vibrant discipline. This opportunity is irreplaceable in Catholic universities, and Catholic theology will have no future without it. Undergraduate courses cannot become introductions to religiosity or historical surveys of Ancient Near Eastern religion. They must introduce students to the unsettling nature of Catholic theology captured in Job, as a discipline in which the object of study—God—is simultaneously its speaking subject. This is the origin of theology’s capacity to elicit surprise and wonder in new students. This proposes the awkward, discomfiting reality of a living word of God. But if any discipline is going to make this proposal a first principle, shouldn’t Catholic theology be the one to do it?

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# Catholics and Conversion Therapy

*A controversial  
practice and how it  
shapes what many  
L.G.B.T. Catholics  
hear from the  
church*

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By Eve Tushnet

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J. Frank Pate had one of the easier experiences. Mr. Pate, 50, is a Catholic “revert,” who spent his young adulthood as an evangelical experiencing what he called “unwanted same-sex attraction.” When he returned to the Catholic Church at age 36, his experience with conversion therapy began.

Mr. Pate said his Catholic therapist, like many who attempt to help patients change their sexual orientation, believed that homosexuality was caused by childhood sexual abuse or alienation from one’s parents: what Mr. Pate described as “a simple checklist” of traumas. At the time, Mr. Pate thought this explanation might fit, especially since he had struggled with sexually addictive behaviors. The therapist offered a tantalizing prospect: “He believed in complete healing of wounds and traumas,” Mr. Pate recalled, and that “it’s possible to be free of pain, whether it’s emotional or physical.”

“Conversion therapy” is an umbrella term, now used mainly by opponents of the practice, to cover many approaches intended to create a heterosexual identity for someone who experiences same-sex attraction. The Williams Institute, a research center on L.G.B.T. concerns based at the U.C.L.A. School of Law, estimates that 698,000 L.G.B.T. American adults under the age of 60 have received conversion therapy. This is a small minority of L.G.B.T.-identified people, but that minority likely includes a dispro-



# Therapy did not make them straight—and neither did it offer guidance in living as a Catholic who is gay.

tionate share of the devout and people who are most active in their churches.

It is obviously hard to study something as intimate as sexual orientation. Most such studies have small sample sizes, and all face the difficulty of recruiting participants without biasing the results. But one larger study of current or former members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints found that “sexual orientation is highly resistant to explicit attempts at change”; even one of the studies most positive toward the possibility of orientation change found that fewer than a quarter of the highly motivated participants actually “converted” to heterosexuality.

In 2009 the American Psychological Association adopted a resolution discouraging therapists from “promoting or promising change in sexual orientation.” Since then, 20 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have banned conversion therapy for minors; the ban in Washington, D.C., also covers adults. Six countries ban the practice either entirely or for minors.

The nonprofit world is also taking action. The Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives, an initiative whose founders include James Martin, S.J., recently issued a call to abolish conversion therapy. The Trevor Project, which works to prevent suicide in L.G.B.T. youth, partnered with Q Christian Fellowship to launch the Good Fruit Project with the same goal.

In order to understand the inner experience of conversion therapy, I interviewed nine people who sought or were pressed into therapy to change their sexual orientation under Catholic auspices, several of whom received this therapy within the past 20 years. Although only a small minority of L.G.B.T. Catholics will ever seek conversion therapy, the assumptions underlying that therapy often influence the message many gay Catholics hear at home, in the confessional and from friends and mentors. And it can have a

devastating impact on their understanding of their identity and their self worth.

## Leaving Space for the Cross

Mr. Pate was 38 when he began working with his therapist in an attempt to change his sexual orientation. In the next year, Mr. Pate said, he “courted a woman” in his parish. When the relationship ended, he recalled, “there was certainly a sense of failure, because I ended my first and only dating relationship with a woman, but also...there was a kind of absence of empathy [from his therapist] for her—or for me that I had added to her wounds.”

Mr. Pate said that he did not experience orientation change, but that his therapist turned him into “a poster child” for conversion therapy. “By the time I got into his private practice, I had already been invited to be the [same-sex attraction] witness at some of his seminars.” This hunger for “success stories”—and the paucity Mr. Pate found when he looked around for people who had been “cured” by his therapist—is a recurring theme among those I spoke to about conversion therapy.

Like several interviewees, Mr. Pate was also involved with Journey Into Manhood, an experience described on the organization’s website as “a 48-hour immersion in intensive self-discovery and personal-growth work” run by the organization Brothers Road. Brothers Road describes itself as “a non-profit, multi-faith, international fellowship primarily of men from bisexual or same-sex-attracted backgrounds who—for our own, deeply personal reasons—typically do not accept or identify with the label ‘gay’ and prefer instead to explore and address underlying issues and embrace our authentic masculinity.” The website states that the weekend experience “is designed specifically for men who are self-motivated to address unresolved issues” and “distress” about their attractions. It is not therapy, but it offers exercises ranging from journaling to “psychodrama,” intended to process emotions.

Mr. Pate said that the ongoing support group provided by Journey Into Manhood offered him brotherhood and acceptance—but he added, “The problem is that there’s still this undercurrent that [same-sex attraction] is a problem to be rid of, and that I’m not whole, healthy, good, complete as long as I still have it.”

Rich Wyler, founder of Brothers Road, said by email that he was saddened to hear this and wrote, “[W]e emphasize... ‘If you gain nothing else from this weekend, we want you to know that you are GOOD AND VALUABLE JUST AS YOU ARE [sic], right now, unchanged, and even if you



never change.” He wrote, “[o]nly 90 minutes of the 20- to 25-hour program is focused more or less directly on sexual orientation” and that the organization “emphasize[s] that not everyone is called to marriage and marriage cannot be seen as evidence of having achieved ‘success’ in this work.” (Several interviewees recalled otherwise.)

Mr. Pate was quick to note: “I hear a lot of our [gay] siblings say, ‘I’m a survivor of conversion therapy,’ and I don’t put myself in that category. I don’t see it as something that was entirely or even mostly detrimental.” Even so, he described feeling pressured to accept reductive theories of homosexuality from a therapist who he felt was so eager for Mr. Pate to get married that he could spare no empathy for a potential partner, a sentiment echoed by several interviewees about their respective therapists.

Mr. Pate now thinks his therapist did not leave enough space for the Cross—and for the possibility that he, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* suggests, might experience his sexuality as “a trial” or cross to be borne rather than an illness to be cured. He also found communities of openly gay people living the Catholic sexual ethic. He cited Revoice, an annual conference founded in 2018 to “support and encourage” L.G.B.T. and same-sex-attracted Christians who embrace “the historic Christian doctrine of marriage and sexuality,” and Eden Invitation, a Catholic community for people exploring issues of sexuality. He also cited the “Side B Community,” a term originating in the Gay Christian Network to describe L.G.B.T. believers who practice a traditional sexual ethic.

Mr. Pate now considers himself a celibate gay man. What he most wants to show people about the church now is: “Everybody’s welcome here. Everybody belongs.” His story is the gentlest version of what I heard from my interviewees. But one factor was the same in virtually every interview. I asked Mr. Pate if his therapist ever talked with him about what his future could be like

if he did not become straight.

After a long pause he said, simply, “No.”

### **Catholic Influences**

The Catholic media personality Milo Yiannopoulos recently began calling himself “ex-gay” and announced plans to open a “reparative therapy” clinic in Florida. The response of many Catholics is likely to be: *That’s just fringe stuff. Catholics don’t push conversion therapy.* But several interviewees described Catholic institutions promoting and practicing orientation-change therapy.

In fact, Catholics helped to develop the theories used by many proponents of orientation change. Richard Fitzgibbons, a Catholic doctor who is the director of the Institute for Marital Healing, promotes treatment for what he calls “same-sex attraction disorder.” He was a confidant of Father John Harvey, who died in 2010 and who founded Courage, a group described on its website as a Catholic apostolate “for men and women who experience same-sex attraction.” Although Courage does not promote orientation-change therapy as an official part of its mission, Dr. Fitzgibbons maintained close ties with Courage and influenced Father Harvey’s view of homosexuality. In 1999, Father Harvey and Dr. Fitzgibbons co-authored *Homosexuality and Hope*, a pamphlet published by the Catholic Medical Association, which advocates therapeutic “prevention and treatment” of same-sex attraction.

Another Catholic, Joseph Nicolosi, who died in 2017, was a co-founder of the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, a secular group formed in 1992 that is now called the Alliance for Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity. Dr. Nicolosi and the association heavily influenced Catholic approaches to homosexuality. He appeared on the Catholic television station EWTN and the popular radio show “Catholic Answers Live,” and he spoke at Courage conferences.

Attempts at conversion therapy in mi-



# Feeling that there is no future if you cannot ‘fix’ your sexuality can lead to tragedy.

nors seem to have particularly harmful results. A 2020 survey by the Trevor Project, found that “LGBTQ youth who had undergone conversion therapy were more than twice as likely to have attempted suicide in the past 12 months.” But in a 2009 interview with the Catholic news site Zenit, Dr. Nicolosi said of young people experiencing same-sex attraction: “So when a 15-year-old boy goes to a priest and says, ‘Father, I have these feelings, I have these temptations,’ that priest should say, ‘You have a choice; if you don’t want to be gay, there are things that you can do.’ The boy should not to be told [sic], ‘God made you this way.’”

In 2001 Father Harvey wrote: “For those who really want it, reparative growth is a possibility and happens regularly. Men and women leave behind not only the homosexual lifestyle but also the very feelings of same-sex attraction. While all can investigate this option, teens and young adults are especially invited to consult competent therapists.”

Dr. Nicolosi distinguished his reparative therapy from conversion therapy, in part citing client-defined objectives. Mr. Wyler of Brothers Road spent two years in reparative therapy with a therapist at Dr. Nicolosi’s clinic in Los Angeles, and said he was able to “de-eroticize [his] same-sex attractions, both in feelings and behaviors.” He is now married to a woman. In response to being told of the experiences of my interviewees, he said Brothers Road avoids talking about same-sex attractions using terms like “healing,” as it implies a sickness, and also “avoids talking about causation, because it is unprovable and may be unique to different individuals.” Mr. Wyler said that the “real goal is peace, not sexual-orientation change,” but that “sexuality can be fluid,” and “many [men] experience changes in their identity or sexual behaviors” that help to bring their actions in line with their beliefs.

But for all those I interviewed, their experience was very different. Some of the people I interviewed had walked away from attempts at changing their attractions deeply

traumatized. Several left the church; at least one was driven to the brink of suicide. Others simply found that therapy did not make them straight—and neither did it offer guidance in living as a Catholic who is gay. Each was left wondering if they had a future in a church where all the saints seem to be straight.

## Finding a ‘Fix’

Feeling that there is no future if you cannot “fix” your sexuality can lead to tragedy. In 2019, 24-year-old Alana Chen took her own life. Ms. Chen came out as a lesbian in high school—after which, The Denver Post reported, “she was shamed and told she would go to hell by clergy and church counselors.” Another article in The Denver Post reported that Ms. Chen had increasingly struggled with self-harm and thoughts of suicide. After a psychiatric hospitalization in 2016, she attributed her suffering to the shame caused by the counseling she received in Catholic settings.

Mark Haas, spokesperson for the Archdiocese of Denver, told The Denver Post that Ms. Chen was “never once” directed to conversion therapy by the archdiocese. However, earlier that same year, the archdiocese co-hosted a conference with Desert Stream/Living Waters, a group that, among other things, attempts to “restor[e] persons with unwanted same-sex attraction.” The archdiocese advertised for the conference with a banner that read, in part, “There is no such thing as a ‘gay’ person...That is a popular myth.”

The people I interviewed said Catholic institutions may not widely promote conversion therapy, but the messages gay believers hear in Catholic spaces help promote the idea that conversion is possible. Many gay Catholics have heard, over and over, that nobody is “born gay”; that homosexuality is typically caused by trauma; that being gay is a purely negative experience from which they have nothing to learn, and from which the broader church has nothing to learn. Many have been told that there is “hope” for them if they can manage to marry someone of the opposite sex. These beliefs are not, in themselves, conversion therapy. But they provide theoretical grounding and urgent motivation for the quest to become heterosexual.

A journal entry from shortly before Ms. Chen’s death, written as a letter to herself and read aloud by her mother at Ms. Chen’s funeral, echoes the fears expressed by many of my interviewees: “I know you don’t understand how you can be loved or redeemed. I wish you could see that the people that love you...don’t see you as someone that needs to be fixed or different than who you are.”

In researching this story, I remembered a gay Catho-



lic friend describing a girl he liked as “my last hope”—his last chance at heterosexuality. I also remembered a Catholic mother whose child had just come out asking a support group, “What did I do wrong?” My friends have had priests in the confessional urge them to seek conversion therapy. They have tried sports to become more masculine. They have learned a deep, reflexive suspicion of their longings for intimacy, friendship and love. They have dealt with parents’ guilt over their orientation and their fear that being gay separates them from God. The specific theories and practices of conversion therapy draw on a deep well of silence and shame that affects all gay Catholics, including those who never step inside a therapist’s office.

### ‘A Highly Compliant Patient’

Tristan is a tomboyish professional in her late 20s, from an orthodox Catholic family. (Like several interviewees, she was reluctant to use her real name because she works for a Catholic institution.) Her family would pray for gay people—but only as sinners and political opponents. Just admitting that she might be gay, she said, “felt like I was giving in to a temptation.”

As she began to sort things through, she “was going to Mass multiple times a day most days, and just feeling like

the crazy church lady,” she said with a small laugh. The stress and anxiety led to insomnia and eventually to a mental breakdown. Still, she said, she wasn’t seeking conversion therapy. However, the Catholic psychologist from whom she sought help would not listen.

Tristan did not think of her sexuality as the only issue she was dealing with, but when she raised other concerns, she said, her therapist seemed to think being gay was the central problem. Therapy itself became a source of pain. She spent months suicidal, wishing for death.

Tristan said her therapist assured her that he was not a “reparative therapist.” But she later learned that he had trained under Joseph Nicolosi, and much of what he told her showed Dr. Nicolosi’s influence. She said her therapist scolded her for “dressing like a boy”; he praised her for being “a highly compliant patient.” Even when some of her closest friends argued that her therapy experience did not sound healthy, she said, “I remember thinking anybody attacking him and his work with me was because they were attacking [Catholic] orthodoxy.”

Tristan applied to join an order of women religious and was turned down. She dated men. Her therapist and her spiritual director both seemed to think that marriage was her only “shot at happiness.” So when her relation-

ship with a man ended, she said, “I think something in me snapped. I was just like, ‘I’ve been trying so hard. And playing within all of the rules I know how,’” and yet she was left without hope.

She recalls that her spiritual director and therapist both said that the pain she was feeling was good, because it meant she really loved her ex-boyfriend. But in reality she was on the edge of suicide because she saw “no way that I could live and be happy.”

She decided to live, even if that meant “embracing [her] identity.” She confronted her therapist and said, “I feel like you don’t think I can be happy and healthy if I’m gay.” In her recollection, he said: “Yes, that’s what I think. I think you need to sort through this and try again with a guy.” Instead, she left his practice.

Tristan is not sure yet where her life will go. She has explored relationships with women, even though she still is figuring out “the moral piece” and how her sexuality and faith might find harmony. Instead of a therapist who told her not to talk to anyone (including her boyfriend) about her orientation, she has a protective community.

And instead of constantly wanting to die, she is now exploring what life might have to offer.

### Grieving a Community

Some of my interviewees had conversion therapy imposed on them by parents, therapists or religious superiors. But some Catholics actively seek out orientation-change therapy. For people like Christopher Dowling, a Texan in his early 30s, it can feel like the only way to stay a part of the church community.

“The church was my family,” he said, because of an unstable home life. At his Catholic college he began considering himself “same-sex-attracted” and found his desires “coming out sideways in all these addictive behaviors,” from pornography to hookups, driven by shame.

He tried therapy. An early therapist “was very progressive and L.G.B.T.-affirming, and said I should come out and date,” but Mr. Dowling rejected that idea out of hand in favor of more conservative approaches. For most of his 20s Mr. Dowling did therapy once a week—including trying cognitive behavioral therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy, and In-

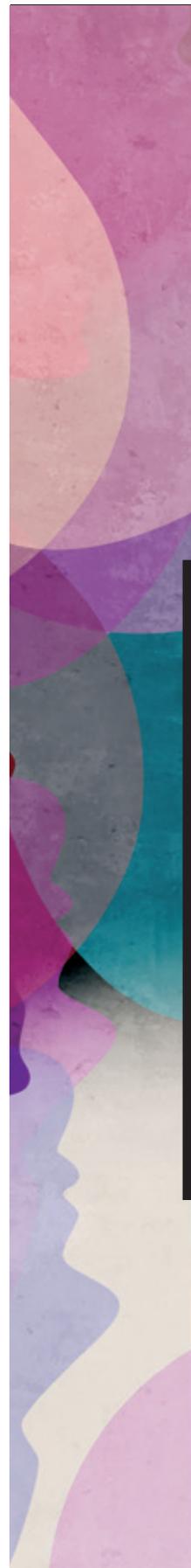
ternal Family Systems therapy.

Mr. Dowling found the common orientation-change narratives—that same-sex attractions are the product of parental behaviors and/or trauma—plausible because they did describe his situation: “I did have a distant father and an overbearing mother, and I was a victim of sexual abuse.” He hadn’t encountered any Catholic discussions of what it means to be gay led by people who didn’t have these traumas. So he poured out tens of thousands of dollars on books, therapy sessions, retreats, courses with the Theology of the Body Institute and several retreats at the John Paul II Healing Center in Tallahassee, Fla.

The Theology of the Body Institute did not practice orientation-change therapy, but Mr. Dowling said that in his counseling and confessions there, he found that his orientation was always discussed as “something that was a result of wounding that happened in my formation” and that could be changed. The four 30-hour courses he took at the institute reinforced his belief “that I would be healed by learning about [homosexuality] enough and praying enough.” (The institute did not respond to multiple requests for comment.)

Mr. Dowling cited Dr. Bob Schuchts, founder of the Healing Center, as particularly influential, both on his own thinking and in the church. He described “Dr. Bob, as we all lovingly call him” as “an amazing, loving man,” who nonetheless convinced him of what he now sees as “misinformation” about the nature and origin of homosexuality, attributing a “homosexual inclination” to problems in family relationships, sexual trauma including use of pornography, the lack of a proper development of masculinity and other “wounds”—ideas he later heard from priests in the confessional.

Dr. Schuchts, author of the upcoming book *Be Restored: Healing Our Sexual Wounds Through Jesus’ Merciful Love*, disagreed with the labeling of his work as of “misinformation,” stating that all of the materials from the John Paul II Healing Center have approval from the local bishop and his books have obtained an imprimatur. In a phone interview, he said he hopes to help people to gain an understanding of the “integrality of the gift [of one’s sexuality],” asking “what is God’s intention for the gift and how is the gift being expressed?” He said that often the work can be





emotionally difficult and when people “react against that, they’re reacting against those areas of abuse or trauma that they haven’t yet faced, and then it becomes politicized rather than what the intent [is], which is for people to be loved and accepted and healed, healed in their person, healed in their chastity, healed in their integrity.”

Today, Mr. Dowling believes he has found his path. He said, “I’m living with a man and want to pursue gay marriage.” Still, he said it was a “huge grief to ‘break up with’ being an orthodox Catholic,” adding that the Catholic Church had provided “every job I’ve ever had, every friend I’ve ever had.”

Mr. Dowling noted that the therapists who tried to help him change his sexuality were “well-respected [and] well-trained...using proven therapeutic models,” like cognitive behavioral therapy. What made conversion therapy damaging for him was not lack of credentials or unsophisticated methods, but what he now believes was a faulty end goal: orientation change. “The finish line never came,” he said.

### **A Sea of Mixed Messages**

Many men I spoke with said that orientation-change efforts included pressure to become more “masculine.” Kent (a pseudonym), speaks deliberately, with long pauses and many qualifiers, as his Canadian accent peeks out here and there. He began conversion therapy in New York City in the late 2000s. Kent was raised Catholic and said, “The first people I came out to were priests whom I trusted.” In college, Kent said, he became “one of those self-radicalized conservative Catholics,” reading contemporary apologetics and traditional Catholic websites. Kent said that subculture provided a certainty to which he aspired. Its emphasis on avoiding near occasions of sin also meant he avoided exploring the meaning of his orientation. He “wanted really badly to be good, to be worthy,” he said, adding with a deep sigh that he believed in what he was being taught.

He also began to feel a call to the priesthood, which “made the stakes [of his sexual orientation] that much higher.” When a Catholic spiritual director suggested that some people might be “called to” gay relationships, Kent “ran in the opposite direction of that. That was scary for me.” He was first introduced to orientation-change literature by a priest who turned out to be gay himself. In this sea of mixed messages, Kent said, the orientation-change

approach “coincided with my own unreadiness to explore this part of myself...[a] combination of religious fervor and wishful thinking.”

Hoping to “toughen up” and build “those male bonds that I believed I was missing,” he lived with several other Catholic men. But living with men who didn’t know he was gay, and who often expressed homophobia (at which Kent tried to laugh in response), proved so grueling that he became physically ill. After he moved out, he began therapy with Philip Mango, whom he described as “the de facto trusted Catholic orthodox therapist in New York at the time.” At his recommendation, Kent attended a Journey into Manhood weekend, followed by two years in a Journey Into Manhood weekly support group consisting mainly of Conservative and Orthodox Jewish men. (Dr. Mango did not respond to multiple requests for comment.)

Kent said a common activity was to “deconstruct” a recent experience of sexual attraction, identifying aspects of the attractive man that represented something the support group member felt himself to be lacking. Then the men would seek out activities that could fill what they believed to be gaps in their masculinity or self-confidence. Kent, for example, was encouraged to learn a sport. (Mr. Wyler said that J.I.M. does not recommend sports as a part of its program.) Kent tried judo for a year and a half. He recalled being “really, really bad” at it. “I would be afraid, I would get the runs before every class because I was so scared of it, but I was so determined,” he said. “I showed up every week in Long Island City, [N.Y.] and [got] thrown on the mat over and over again.”

He moved to San Francisco, a change he described with a laugh as “very jarring!” Then “in 2015 I hit this wall,” Kent said. “I’m really lonely and depressed; this isn’t working. The thought crossed my mind, ‘Hey, what if I died without having really investigated and explored this part of my life?’” He found a Catholic church that he described as “very affirming,” where he met Catholics without his “hangups” around homosexuality. “That’s been really healing,” he said, “and it’s been the help that I needed to stay practicing.” He is in a relationship with a man now but finds that because he spent so long interpreting his emotions as expressions of something lacking in himself, he still struggles to connect with his own emotions, “to feel pleasure.”

As he began to leave conversion therapy behind,

# Health Care is a Right, Not a Privilege

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BY MARIO J. PAREDES

**'HEALTH CARE IS A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE.'** With these words, President Joseph Biden began an important speech on March 3, 2021, whose main objective was to raise the morale of advocates for the poor and the under-insured around the country—not to mention the close to 30 million Americans who currently do not have health insurance. The President has given new life to the Affordable Care Act by opening, on February 15, HealthCare.gov, which offers Americans three months to sign up for affordable health care, which he called a "national imperative," especially "in the midst of a deadly pandemic that has infected nearly 30 million Americans."

The President vowed that his Administration "can't slow down until every American has the peace of mind that quality, affordable health benefits provides." What's more, the President's American Rescue Plan, just passed by the House of Representatives, not only "expands access to care for all Americans" but also "includes big steps to drive down people's premiums." Beneficiaries will include the long-time uninsured and the millions of Americans who lost their employer-funded health-care benefits due to the pandemic's economic impact.

The Plan, hinging on federal subsidies, aims to "ensure that no one will ever pay more than 8.5 percent of their income on health coverage," and "most Americans," the President promises, "will pay far less." The American Rescue Plan, insists President Biden, is "essential to defeating the pandemic, boosting "the national vaccination program to get shots into as many arms as possible as quickly as we can."

New York City-based SOMOS Community Care warmly applauds the President's initiatives. A network of some 2,500 independent physicians—the great majority being primary care providers—SOMOS serves close to a million of New York City's poorest and most vulnerable Medicaid patients living in communities of color: Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans. These communities stand to benefit significantly from the extension and re-invigorating of Obamacare, with its expansion of Medicaid coverage.

Key to the success of the President's health-care vision is the effective, innovative use of health-care funding. Funded by the New York State Department of Health in its start-up phase and now independent, SOMOS has demonstrated its ability to make optimal use of limited budgets while achieving outstanding results. In fact, SOMOS is the only independent network of doctors in New York State to be given the Innovator designation.

That recognition is due to SOMOS's success in its execution of the Value-Based Payment (VBP) formula, which is poised to make obsolete the fraud-prone and wasteful fee-for service model of traditional Medicaid compensation for providers. That model risks providing patients with a poorly coordinated package of services. By contrast, VBP incentivizes doctors by compensating them according to the longer-term health outcomes of their patients—and this prompts greater attention for patients on the part of physicians and a carefully coordinated treatment plan.



In fact, SOMOS primary care physicians are functioning much like family doctors of old, trusted figures who intimately know their patients as well as their families. Through a concept known as Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), the primary care office becomes a point of access to a full spectrum of care, including behavioral health care and the services of specialists. The primary care doctor and his or her staff track patients' progress and ensure that they get the right kind of attention when they need it.

Thanks to a team of Community Health Workers who visit family homes, SOMOS doctors also know about their patients' living and social conditions. These include housing, employment, education, and criminal justice issues—the social determinants of health (SDH) that have a critical impact on patients' health and overall well-being. Considering SDH is an essential part of Value-Based Care and its provision of comprehensive, holistic health care.

In fact, SDH has an enormous impact on people's health, yet they receive but little attention in US health-care policy, in contrast to European countries. It is to be expected that the President's health-care initiatives take SDH into account, which would be vital to making health care more affordable and optimally effective.

Another crucial dimension of the SOMOS approach to VBP is cultural competence and compatibility. Most SOMOS doctors share the same ethnic background as their patients and speak the same language. This cultural affinity greatly contributes to creating a bond between doctor and patient and is a critical factor in enhancing the

efficacy of the patients' treatment, including their commitment to keeping their medical appointments and sticking to their medical regime at home.

Value-Based Care holds the key to affordable, quality health care. And access to such care is indeed a human right, as the President has proclaimed. It is a principle that takes on great urgency during the devastating crisis triggered by the pandemic, which has disproportionately claimed victims in poor and colored communities. Indeed the Catholic Church agrees with the need to give dignified care to all people, and is firm in its posture that human life is sacred and the right to life and physical integrity must be respected and protected from the moment of conception until death.

It also should be a bipartisan principle. It should not have a particular political color but reflect the commitment of both parties—a commitment to the entire nation. As the President put it, "the American people have united in historic numbers around this plan—Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike. Now, it is up to the Senate to them, and act quickly to pass the bill." That is precisely how it should be.

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**Mario J. Paredes** is CEO of SOMOS Community Care, a network of 2,500 independent physicians—most of them primary care providers—serving close to a million of New York City's most vulnerable Medicaid patients.





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# He is learning to view being gay as a gift.

Kent read gay narratives like *The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up Gay in a Straight Man's World*, by the psychologist Alan Downs. To his surprise, these authors' work reflected some of the same elements of orientation-change literature: "shame and feeling alone and disconnected from your peers." But the secular psychologists arranged these elements in a different order, he said: "You are born gay. That results in a feeling of shame because of the way society has been discriminatory against gay people, and that shame further pushes you to isolation." He added, "This is what makes the...conversion therapy narrative so compelling: It takes seriously those experiences that we're ashamed of. But it doesn't necessarily mean that you will be able to change your sexuality—or that that is a healthy thing to try to do."

## Walking Together

Many of the people I spoke with had to rebuild the most basic aspects of their faith after they left orientation-change behind. Some turned to Protestant churches where they found more emphasis on grace. Some, like J. Frank Pate, rediscovered a connection to the Cross instead of being ashamed of the sacrifices and difficulties associated with their sexuality. Others turned to Eastern Christianity for its emphasis on God's work of resurrection in the soul. Each has had to find new communities and new models for relationship. And they have discovered that the experiences that once caused only shame are sources of wisdom, which they hope to share with the broader church.

John (a pseudonym) is the music director for a Catholic church. He went to a Journey Into Manhood weekend shortly after graduating from a Catholic college, on his parents' urging, and then did weekly therapy. Like many of my interviewees, he remembers the J.I.M. community warmly but feels that both J.I.M. and his Christian therapist pressured him to focus on his sexual orientation instead of addressing his real concerns. John felt an unspoken belief within J.I.M. that "success" meant marriage to a woman—an ideal he found "damaging." As for conversion therapy, he said it left him feeling "broken," and "eventually I came

to the conclusion that it was trying to fix something that couldn't be fixed."

When John first found gay Catholics sharing their faith (for example, in the writings of the lawyer and blogger Chris Damian), he said, "I *wept*." He slowly began to explore a positive vision of his sexuality within Catholic teaching. He found other gay Catholics and formed a small community of support. Eventually he also found a partner. John was clear that he was committed to a Catholic sexual ethic: "We almost broke up because I said, 'I'm never gonna be able to give you what you want.' And he said, 'I don't care about that. I want to be with you.'" When we spoke, John's partner was preparing to be received into the church; he is now a Catholic.

John described a journey out of darkness, isolated hookups and porn and shame, into light. He is learning to view being gay as a gift. "I may not fully understand it," he said of his current life and his partner, "but we both have found a lot of healing and beautiful joy that we've never found before, taking this walk together."

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

 Listen to Eve Tushnet discuss this article on the Jesuitical podcast: [americamagazine.org/jesuiticalshow](http://americamagazine.org/jesuiticalshow).



# A “Neighbor in Need” Appeals to American Catholics for Help During Serious Food Crisis

In the department of Suchitepéquez, Guatemala, poor families typically rely on farming for survival, and because their remote villages are isolated, many become very dependent on the success of their local harvest. This becomes a very dangerous gamble in years when nature does not cooperate.

“When harvests are poor, work opportunities and crop yields literally dry up, leading to low household incomes and a critical shortage of food,” explained James Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a respected Catholic charity working in the region. “That’s the kind of situation the people are facing now. Their access to food has become very limited and families are suffering as a result.”

When Cavnar encountered this crisis on a visit to Guatemala, it immediately reminded him of a passage in Chapter 16 of the Gospel of Luke, he said.

“There in Luke, Jesus tells a parable about a poor man living on the doorstep of a man with plenty. The poor man’s needs are ignored, though he longs for something simple — just the scraps from the rich man’s table. When both die, the affluent man is rebuked for turning away from a situation he could easily have helped solve. Simply put, he ignores a neighbor in need. I believe we are faced with a modern-day example of that parable today in Guatemala, a country so close to our own.”

Statistics certainly back up Cavnar’s view. Guatemala — less than a three-hour flight from Houston or Miami — has the highest levels of extreme hunger in Latin America or the Caribbean, and the fourth-highest level in the world. With their limited access to employment and educational opportunities, many of the country’s remote indigenous people have begun feeling hopeless. Some have resigned themselves to eating one small meal of tortillas each day, and they are in anguish, seeing their children languishing on the brink of starvation as a result.

Thankfully, Bishop Pablo Vizcaíno and Caritas of the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu have developed a strategic plan to rescue these children and set their families on the path to long-term health through improved nutrition. In partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach, major food

shipments will be secured and distributed to those who need help most.

“The story of Lazarus and the rich man taught us an important lesson about helping a neighbor in need, and we should take it to heart as we consider the suffering going on at our doorstep, there in Guatemala,” Cavnar said. “My team is committed to providing the food these desperate families need, and I’m confident Catholics throughout the U.S. will join our cause by helping to sponsor those shipments. This suffering must end.”

To combat Guatemala’s hunger crisis, Cross Catholic Outreach has a simple but effective plan to deliver scientifically formulated food packets they call Vitafood. This fortified rice product, specifically designed to reverse the effects of child malnutrition, can be packed in large shipping containers and cost-effectively sent to Catholic programs capable of bringing them through customs and effectively delivering them to the families with the greatest need. A single container of Vitafood can make a big impact, according to Cavnar.

“Vitafood is extremely flexible. It is rice or lentil based, and it comes in several different varieties. It can be prepared straight from the package or flavored with additional ingredients to suit local tastes,” he explained. “No matter how it is prepared, its nutritional value remains the same, providing the optimal balance of vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, fat and carbohydrates that a child’s hungry body needs. What’s more, because these Vitafood meals are donated to us, we only need to cover shipping costs to deliver the food to our diocese partner in Guatemala. That means every \$0.15 cents donated can help put 6 nutritious meals in the hands of a family in need.”



*The men and women in Guatemala work very hard to provide for their children, but bad weather can destroy their crops and strip away their earnings. At those times, the Church must step in and help.*

Cavnar’s current goal, he said, is to secure the support of American Catholics to fund the effort.

“The diocese is eager for the help, and we have the logistics settled. What we need now is the support of compassionate Catholics willing to help a neighbor in need.”

## How to Help

**To fund Cross Catholic Outreach’s effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01603, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.**

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



# Don't Weaponize the Eucharist

*The Eucharist is being used for political ends. This must not happen.*

By Robert W. McElroy

*Editor's note: This article is part of The Conversation, a new initiative of America Media offering diverse perspectives on important and contested issues in the life of the church. Read other essays at [americamagazine.org/conversation](http://americamagazine.org/conversation).*

In the six months since the 2020 election, a growing movement has emerged in the church in the United States that calls upon the bishops of our nation to publicly exclude President Joseph R. Biden and other Catholic public officials from the Eucharist. Those who support this action make a concise, three-part argument: The president supports positions on abortion that clearly depart from the teaching of the church on an extremely grave moral issue; the long tradition of the church requires personal worthiness to receive the Eucharist; and the persistent rejection of clear Catholic teaching extinguishes that worthiness.

It is understandable how numerous Catholic leaders have come to this moment. It is almost 50 years since the Supreme Court decision in the case *Roe v. Wade*. While progress in reducing abortions has occurred in some jurisdictions and the number of abortions nationwide has fallen, the United States still rejects the legal structures and policies that can bring meaningful protection to the unborn. The election of President Biden and a Democratic Congress are a sign that, outside of the courts, federal progress on the pivotal moral issue of abortion will not

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A priest elevates the host during a Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City in 2020.



CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

occur in the immediate future. This is an immense sadness for every bishop in our country and for the church as a whole, and leaders of the church are ardently seeking a step that will advance the protection of the unborn.

But the proposal to exclude pro-choice Catholic political leaders from the Eucharist is the wrong step. It will bring tremendously destructive consequences—not because of what it says about abortion, but because of what it says about the Eucharist.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God’s action sanctifying the world in Christ and the worship men offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit.” Because of this sacred nature and identity, the Eucharist must never be instrumentalized for a political end, no matter how important. But that is precisely what is being done in the effort to exclude Catholic political leaders who oppose the church’s teaching on abortion and civil law. The Eucharist is being weaponized and deployed as a tool in political warfare. This must not happen.

The substantial damage that will take place within the eucharistic community as a result of this instrumentalization will be broad and deep. The *Catechism* further proclaims:

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet.

A national policy of excluding pro-choice political leaders from the Eucharist will constitute an assault on that unity, on that charity. Fully half the Catholics in the United States will see this action as partisan in nature, and it will bring the terrible partisan divisions that have plagued our nation into the very act of worship that is intended by God to cause and signify our oneness.

### **A Theology of Unworthiness**

Advocates for the proposal to adopt a national policy of excluding pro-choice political leaders from the Eucharist need a rationale to support this unprecedented

action. They have proposed that it lies in the theology of worthiness to receive the Eucharist that has existed since the early life of the church. Rooted in the exhortation of St. Paul not to eat or drink unworthily at the table of the Lord, the traditional theology of eucharistic worthiness is simultaneously an exhortation, a recognition of human weakness and a discipline. This traditional theology is an exhortation because it reminds us that the Eucharist constitutes the reception of the Lord himself, and thus all believers approaching the altar should in reverence attempt to conform their lives more fully to the person of Jesus Christ. Second, the traditional theology of worthiness incorporates into its presentation of the Eucharist the recognition that human failing is deep and broad and that the grace and mercy of God abound. Finally, the theology of worthiness in the church teaches that Catholics conscious of grave sin should receive forgiveness in the sacrament of penance before receiving the Eucharist.

The particular theology of worthiness that proponents for a national policy of eucharistic exclusion have advanced dramatically de-emphasizes the first two elements of the traditional theology and focuses on the third element: discipline. Thus it would best be labeled “a theology of unworthiness.”

Two specific dimensions of this theology of unworthiness deserve particular scrutiny.

The first is the extremely expansive notion of what triggers unworthiness to receive the Eucharist: Any Catholic who continually rejects a significant teaching of the church is automatically unworthy to receive the Eucharist. Advocates propose that because President Biden rejects the moral obligation to seek laws protecting the unborn, he should be excluded from the Eucharist. For worthiness requires integral union with all of the major teachings of Catholic faith.

How many Catholic political leaders of either party could pass that test? And because any notion of eucharistic unworthiness in the theology of the church must apply not just to political leaders but to all Catholics, how many of the faithful will be eligible for the Eucharist by this criterion? It is the moral obligation of Catholics to embrace all the teachings of the church in their entirety. But failure in fulfilling that obligation in its fullness cannot be the measure of eucharistic worthiness in a church of sinners and questioners, who must face intense pressures and complexities in their daily lives.

A second problematic dimension of this theology of

unworthiness is that while it is expansive in its notion of unworthiness, it applies sanctions very selectively and inconsistently. Proposals to exclude pro-choice Catholic political leaders from the Eucharist have focused on abortion, and at times euthanasia, as the imperative issues for which the bishops should adopt a national policy of eucharistic exclusion. Their logic is that abortion and euthanasia are particularly grave evils, they are intrinsically evil and they involve threats to human life.

But why hasn't racism been included in the call for eucharistic sanctions against political leaders? Racism was enumerated as a compelling intrinsic evil by St. John Paul II in "Veritatis Splendor" and by the Second Vatican Council. Our own conference of bishops has proclaimed that "racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world." As to whether racism is a sin that threatens human life, anyone with doubts should talk with the families of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Trayvon Martin.

Racism is tearing at the heart of our nation with intense fury at this very moment, yet the intrinsic evil of racism is not a grounds for eucharistic exclusion in the proposals that have been brought this year to our conference of bishops for action. It will be impossible to convince large numbers of Catholics in our nation that this omission does not spring from a desire to limit the impact of exclusion to Democratic public leaders and a desire to avoid detracting from the focus on abortion.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his "Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life," warned bishops against just such a pathway. "The Christian faith is an integral unity, and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine." The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will be dealing a great blow to that integral unity if it passes a national policy of eucharistic exclusion aimed at abortion but not at racism.

### **Christ's Invitation in the Eucharist**

The traditional Catholic teaching on worthiness for reception of the Eucharist is an important one in the life of the church. But it is not the centerpiece of the church's understanding of Christ's invitation to receive the Eucharist. As Pope Francis made so clear in "Evangelii Gaudium," the Eucharist is "not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak" (No. 47).

The newly emerging American theology of unworthiness is a direct challenge to this teaching and poses great dangers to Catholic faith, spirituality and practice. It constitutes a significant departure from the emphases of the Second Vatican Council.

In the decision that the conference of bishops must face in the coming months lies a monumental choice: Is the central identity of the invitation of Christ to the Eucharist a sign of personal worthiness or the graced call of the God of mercy? At a time when we are emerging from a pandemic and seeking to rebuild the eucharistic community, it would be particularly wounding to embrace and emphasize a theology of unworthiness and exclusion rather than a theology that emphasizes Christ's unrelenting invitation to all. And it would undermine the tremendous work that our priests and lay leaders are doing in emphasizing the importance of every Catholic returning to full and active participation in the liturgy of God.

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The Most Rev. Robert W. McElroy, named an auxiliary bishop of San Francisco in 2010, became bishop of San Diego in March 2015. Bishop McElroy is author of *The Search for an American Public Theology: The Contributions of John Courtney Murray* (Paulist Press, 1989) and *Morality and American Foreign Policy: The Role of Ethics in International Affairs* (Princeton University Press, 1992).



# WORKING TOGETHER TO SAVE OUR COMMON HOME

*The environmental crisis is an opportunity for a new beginning.* By Albert II

For over a year, our world and our lives have been radically and brutally turned upside down by the Covid-19 pandemic. In our contemporary society, never has the need for a return to life in harmony with nature been as strong as it is today. And during the pandemic, we have seen that changes to our lifestyles can have an immediate impact on the state of our planet.

However, this progress is likely to be quickly forgotten if we return to the same patterns of behavior as before the pandemic and if we go back to the selfish and destructive paradigms that damaged our environment so badly. At a time when our world is becoming aware of its profound frailties, when everyone is wondering how we can reinvent our economy and society, we all need to take action.



Reuters/Eric Gaillard

Hoesung Lee, left, chairperson of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, presents Prince Albert II with a special report on the environment during the 51st Session of the I.P.C.C., as former French Ecology Minister Ségolène Royal looks on, in Monaco, Sept. 25, 2019.

During these particularly challenging times, it has become obvious that human health is intrinsically linked to the health of our planet; no future for humanity can be viewed with equanimity if we make no efforts to prevent further degradation of our common home. Climate change, the depletion of natural resources and the loss of biodiversity are all threats that require us to make profound changes if we want to end the major ecological crisis we face.

We need to open our eyes, with courage and lucidity, to the extremely precarious situation in which our planet finds itself. Over the course of my own numerous travels, I have been able to see the damage that our human activities have inflicted on our planet. Pollution, loss of species, desertification, deforestation and overexploitation of natural resources are scourges we need to eradicate. The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation (PA2F) has been committed

to these goals for 15 years through initiatives and projects supported at local and global levels, in order to promote sustainable development and to protect our environment.

Alongside the scientists and nongovernmental agencies with whom my foundation collaborates, we have noticed the negative impact of the irrational and abusive use of our land and ocean resources. There is no place left in the world unmarked by human presence. In our industrial progress, we have disrupted the major ecological balances that allow our world to maintain long-term stability. Our greenhouse gas emissions, related to our production, transportation and consumption patterns, have led to a significant increase in temperatures both on land and offshore, creating dangerous imbalances in climate.

The time is past when there might have been reason to doubt this terrible truth: We are indeed responsible for the

# The crisis we are going through should not only be seen as a risk, but should be considered a new beginning. ●●

imbalances that are now having genuine repercussions in our lives. The multiplication over the last few years of extreme climate events like extensive forest fires, droughts, floods and hurricanes, all resulting in large-scale human disasters whose social and economic costs continue to rise, are clear pieces of evidence of this phenomenon. These climate risks, which remind us how vulnerable we are when confronted with nature's fury, are likely to intensify even further if we do not take action rapidly, using measures that respond to the urgency of the situation. The health risks we are experiencing (including the Covid-19 crisis) will also increase if large-scale deforestation continues and results in new, unforeseen contacts between humans and wildlife.

Achieving a new balance between humanity and nature should therefore be our priority. As painful as it may be, the crisis we are going through should not only be seen as a risk, but should be considered a new beginning. We are currently standing at a crossroad of possibilities, with two potential horizons before us. One is quite bleak if we pursue our destructive course; the other is full of hope if we promote ecological resilience by maintaining complex and diversified ecosystems, ones that are more able to resist global warming.

Together we can rise to the greatest challenge of our time: preserving our one and only planet and allowing humanity to continue to live on Earth. We have a very clear sense of the direction we need to take thanks to scientific explanations of the mechanisms underway. We need to listen with even greater attention to the recommendations provided by scientists, especially the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (I.P.C.C.), which since its inception in 1988 has been studying the causes and repercussions of climate change as well as potential intervention strategies to be implemented. The latest reports released, including some that assess the impact of global warming on land surfaces, on soil degradation and on the ocean and the cryosphere (the frozen world), are resources we now have to help implement effective mitigation and adaptation measures.

When the I.P.C.C., with the support of the Principality of Monaco and my foundation, published its special report in 2019 on the ocean and cryosphere within the context of climate change, we could better assess the acceleration of ocean warming, acidification, deoxygenation and rising sea levels and make forecasts regarding their impact on the population.

This global vision of the various disruptions that will affect our human society in the future is a fundamental basis for action. Over a quarter of the planet's population is directly threatened by the consequences of climate change on the ocean and sea ice areas, polar regions and mountains. With the knowledge that coastal areas are home to 28 percent of the global population, 11 percent of whom live less than 10 meters above sea level, it is not hard to imagine the disastrous consequences of rising sea levels, including the disappearance of some islands and countries, that would send millions more people into forced exile. This situation is very likely to exacerbate inequality and tensions in an already divided world.

In 2015, within the framework of the Paris Agreement on climate change, many governments set national climate goals; these need to be firmly upheld and strengthened. The agreement, adopted by 194 countries including the Principality of Monaco, commits countries to drastically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit the rise in temperatures to below 2 degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the increase in temperature even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We are still far from our goals: If we continue current trends, we may well cross the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold within the next two decades. But we still have time to do something about it if we put the necessary measures into practice with force and conviction. Recent estimates by the Climate Action Tracker seem to suggest that we could maintain global warming at 2.1 degrees Celsius by 2100 if all the carbon neutrality commitments are firmly kept.

In this respect, the return of the United States to the Paris Agreement provides hope for increasing our chances of containing global warming. The proposal made by President Biden that the United States reach carbon neutrality by 2050 is certainly a positive signal to the international community. So too is his desire to move away from fossil fuels in favor of renewable energies. This is another fundamental issue that is important to address more effectively in order to facilitate the transition toward a carbon-free economy.

For too long we have been driven by the unfounded

fear that changing our production and consumption methods could cause us to lose our quality of life. But how can we continue to benefit from an acceptable quality of life on a polluted and overexploited planet? If the planet suffocates, our economies will also suffocate. We are experiencing that now with the pandemic. In addition to scientists, we need to listen to economists, who show us that land and ocean preservation is a genuine driver of economic growth, capable of generating thousands of jobs. We have the opportunity to reinvent ourselves, to stimulate the creation of new activities, thanks to innovative and sustainable solutions, both for nature and for humankind.

Promoting the development of a sustainable economy based on the solutions nature provides would also offer a financial boost to markets. In 2020, according to an analysis by Bloomberg New Energy Finance, over \$500 billion was invested on a global scale in energy transition sectors like renewable energies, sustainable transport and carbon capture and storage. In Europe, these investments have more than doubled since 2019. This newly sustainable economy will generate value and jobs but will also help us to refocus on common values in an environmentally acceptable way. Among these fundamental values, we cannot forget our duty to support the world's poorest people, because the least developed countries are the first affected by the dev-

astating effects of climate change, even though they are the ones least responsible. We must make sure that nobody is left by the wayside.

While we seem to be gaining momentum on these fronts, we need to remain vigilant and keep in mind that everyone's involvement is crucial if we are going to succeed. Civil society has an important role to play, along with governments and economic entrepreneurs.

The younger generations, who are interested in the climate issue and enthusiastic for change, should also not be excluded from discussions on how best to save our planet. On the contrary, we need to support them in their journey through education and awareness so we can pass on to them the keys to a more inclusive and sustainable world. We also need to learn to listen to them.

In our quest for a renewed Earth and a more responsible humanity, let us be guided by our sense of solidarity toward the most vulnerable, our sense of responsibility toward the younger generations and our respect toward the species that inhabit our planet. All are crucial as we move forward to reach sustainability as well as the ecological and human health to which we all aspire.

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Albert II is sovereign prince of Monaco.



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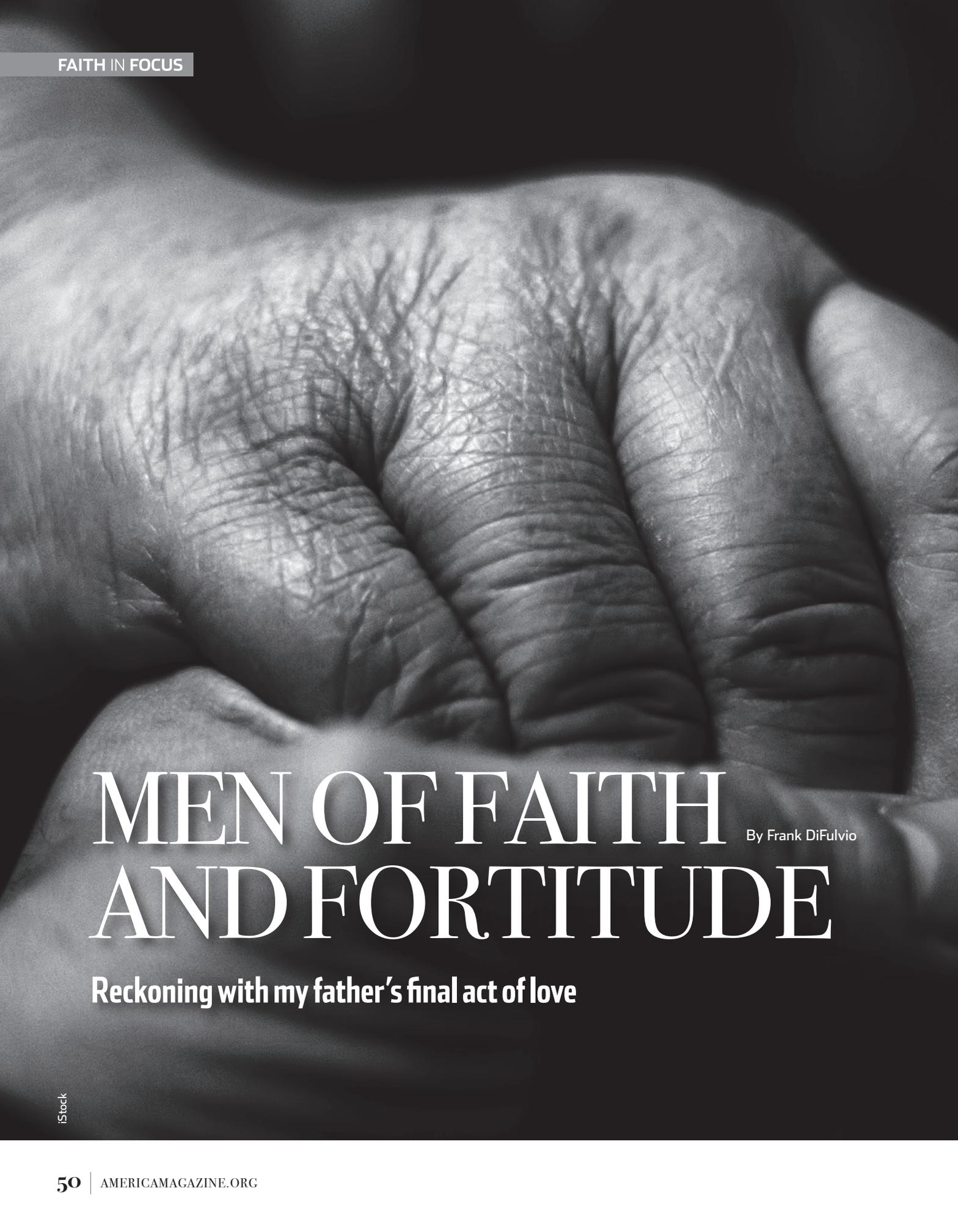


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# MEN OF FAITH AND FORTITUDE

By Frank DiFulvio

Reckoning with my father's final act of love

I lived with my dad during the last six months of his life in our home state of New Jersey. He had been suffering from Stage 4 kidney failure, which was made progressively worse by complications from open-heart surgery two years earlier. During that time he did a lot of talking, and I did an equal amount of listening. When you know you're dying, and there is very little time left, the honesty in those conversations is as sharp, uncompromising and liberating as any you will ever experience in your life.

My dad had always been a God-like figure to me, never failing to pass on his honest wisdom, beliefs, Christian faith and final wishes to a son who never quite lived up to the expectations of either of us. He never blamed the people he loved for their own failings in life. He always blamed himself.

"I should have done things differently; and if I did, things may have turned out much better for you Frankie," insisted my dad.

That's not true, but it was a way for my dad to absolve me of any personal responsibility or guilt for not being the man we both thought that I would one day become. That was my dad, offering himself up to protect those he loved the most.

•••

The last time I would take him to the hospital we were met by an emergency room doctor who quickly examined him. After some blood tests, the doctors confirmed he had had a heart attack, and he was admitted for more tests.

I stayed by my dad's side all night, but we didn't speak much. He was exhausted, and I was so sad I could hardly say a word to anyone. Just before falling asleep, my dad whispered to me, "Did you say August 16th is Isabella's birthday, Frankie?" Isabella is my eldest daughter, who was living with my younger daughter Sofia and my ex-wife Jackie in northern Virginia. I was puzzled by his sudden interest in my daughter's birthday, still several days away, but confirmed the date.

The next morning when the doctor arrived, he asked me to step outside. "Your dad is dying, Mr. DiFulvio," he said, putting a hand on my shoulder. My dad's kidneys were failing, which was causing fluid to build up in his body. All they could do now was make him as comfortable as possible.

•••

I spoke with the nurse about transitioning Dad into hospice care the following day. It was then that she told me that he had rejected hospice care at this time. I didn't know what to say. I immediately asked the nurse if I could talk to the doctor and, I hoped, get an explanation. I

know that my dad privately discussed something with the doctor the day before when I was running some errands, but I assumed it was about his upcoming hospice care.

"I decided to give dialysis a try, which might give me an extra few weeks of life, Frankie," my dad told me. "It probably won't work in my current condition, but I want to give it a try. I have nothing to lose," he insisted.

I was stunned, as the doctor had told me that this was not an option for my dad at his age and in his condition. My dad had just turned 86 years old the previous month.

When the doctor arrived that evening, I forcefully asked for an explanation. I didn't want him to suffer or be kept alive by artificial means. My dad had often told me that was his wish, too.

The doctor told me my father had insisted on dialysis despite the risks after learning that he might live for another two or three weeks if he survived the treatment. "I did everything I could to change his mind; but he is an adult, his mind is lucid, and he has the right to decide what type of medical care he receives in his last days of life," the doctor said. "I'm sorry, Mr. DiFulvio, but unless you can change your dad's mind, we will begin dialysis for him tomorrow morning." It would be Aug. 13.

Later that night, in a quiet voice, my dad spoke to me again. "Frankie, if I die tomorrow morning during dialysis or never regain consciousness, place the Bible over there on the table in my two hands and play the Gospel hymn, 'Precious Lord, Take My Hand.' The Bible is the one I shared with your mother for a lifetime," my dad said.

"I promise I will do that for you, Dad," I said, tears rolling down my cheeks.

•••

Aug. 13 would be one of the longest days of my life. Five hours after my dad was wheeled into the dialysis room on his bed, the doors to the room slowly opened, and he was wheeled out, still conscious. I could tell that he was happy to see me waiting for him. When he returned to his room, I held his hand and leaned over, as I could tell he wanted to say something to me but didn't have much strength left in his voice.

"My next dialysis treatment will be in two days. What date will that be Frankie?" he asked in a soft voice.

I didn't understand why he cared about such things, but I answered his question anyway. This was not the time to judge or question him.

"It will be the 15th of August, Dad," I responded.

Dad didn't wake up again until almost midnight. The

nurse told me that this was common for people when they first go on dialysis. When my dad woke up, I was there to greet him with some applesauce and a cup of water. But when I tried to feed him the applesauce, he could hardly swallow even a small spoonful. Taking a drink of water was equally difficult. Life was quickly coming to an end for him, so I couldn't see the point of putting him through another dialysis session in two days. I pleaded with him to go to hospice care now.

"I will get one more dialysis treatment on the 15th of August; and if things don't improve, I will go into hospice care, Frankie," he promised quietly.

That night, I was able to feed him a few tablespoons of applesauce, but the last spoonful caused him to gag. I knew that this would probably be the final day that he would be able to eat food or drink water. It broke my heart, but I would keep that to myself while he was still with me.

"I need to sleep well tonight so I'm strong for my dialysis treatment tomorrow morning. Pray for me, Frankie," said Dad.

"I pray for you all the time, Dad," I told him.

He just smiled. He always had a beautiful smile.

•••

The next morning, I once again held my dad's hand as we made the trip to the dialysis waiting area. We exchanged a big hug and kiss, and he was immediately wheeled into the dialysis room for what I prayed would be his last treatment before entering hospice care. The long wait had begun for me once again. It wore me out not knowing what the outcome would be for my dad, so I prayed and never stopped praying until he emerged from the dialysis room about five hours later. He was still conscious and alert. He had beaten the odds once again, making it through dialysis for a second time.

The energy my dad displayed before this dialysis treatment left him by the time we returned to his hospital room. He could barely open his eyes, and even whispering to me was not going to happen anytime soon. I held his hand, gave him a kiss and told him to close his eyes and get some rest. I then put the palm of my hand on his heart, just to make sure that it was still beating. It was, so I combed his hair back, dabbed his lips with some cold water and cleaned his face with a warm washcloth. I then sat down on the edge of his bed and laid my head on my dad's shoulder as we fell asleep together. I woke up around dinner time, but my dad continued to sleep until late in the evening. I kept checking his heart and looking at the heart monitor on the side of his bed just to make sure that he was still with me. He was.

At around midnight, the doctor came into my dad's

room and asked to see me. He said my dad had received his last dialysis treatment, and he would need to transition to hospice. "I still don't understand why he decided to take this path. I just hope that we can make him as comfortable as possible. He is a good man," the doctor concluded, with tears in his eyes.

I once again broke down and cried, gave the doctor a hug and thanked him for being so understanding and compassionate with my father. I went back to my dad and held his hand for the entire evening and prayed that he would wake up one more time before he entered hospice care.

When he woke up on the morning of Aug. 16, the nurses entered my dad's room and with my help moved him into the hospice care unit one floor up from intensive care. My dad had his own place, which looked more like an upscale efficiency apartment than a cold hospital room. The bed was also much larger, which allowed me to sit on the edge and get closer to him in his final days of life. He was still conscious and could whisper to me when he wanted to talk. I could tell that he was now rationing his voice, not knowing how long he would have enough breath or strength to speak to me.

The nurses used a complex intravenous therapy designed to deliver a little nutrition and lots of morphine to ease my dad's pain as his organs began to shut down. I stayed with my dad through the night, never once leaving his bedside. From the morning of Aug. 17, I stayed with my dad night and day, only leaving to get some fast food and coffee from the hospital cafeteria.

•••

For the next three days my routine, and my dad's health, remained the same. Then everything changed on the evening of Aug. 20. I was combing his hair and washing his face with a washcloth when he suddenly began to shake violently, and his eyes opened so wide it looked as if he had seen the devil himself. It was terrifying, so I called to a nurse I saw in the hallway to help. She immediately ran to his bedside. The first thing she did was put her hand over his eyes to slowly close them and held his body in place until he stopped shaking.

I didn't know what to think. Was this death? Had my dad just died before my eyes? No, this was an end-of-life stroke, which was probably very painful for him to silently endure. I cursed God out loud for allowing this to happen and yes, I was very upset that my dad had chosen dialysis instead of hospice care when he entered the hospital. Why, Dad? Just to live a few more days? I was furious. I felt like I had let him down. This was the tragic and inevitable result the doctor had warned my dad about before he chose dial-

ysis. Now the nightmare I had feared had come true. The doctor said he might live only a few hours.

It was still difficult to both hear and comprehend that my dad would pass from this world to the next in a matter of hours. It was now time for me to be a good son, the man I always wanted to be. I got the Bible my dad shared with my mom for their entire marriage, placed it in his two hands and quietly played the hymn, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," on my phone. It would be our background music, played softly, for the remainder of my dad's life.

I then decided to put on a pair of my dad's pajamas that were in a bag in his room and get into bed with my dad. I would hold him in my arms until God called him home. I would not let my dad leave this world alone. The son who never quite lived up to his expectations in life would not let him down in death.

For the next few hours, I reminisced with my dad about our life together. This time, all he could do was listen. I ended each conversation with, "I love you, Dad." By 7 a.m. his breathing had become more labored, and the time between deep breaths grew noticeably longer. Then suddenly, at 8:12 a.m. on Aug. 21, 2017, my dad stopped breathing and the heart monitor went silent.

The nurse came into the room, disconnected the heart monitor and whispered to me through her own tears that the doctor would come in to confirm my dad's death in about half an hour. She told me that I could stay with him during that time. After the nurse left the room, I burst into tears and hugged my dad, never letting him go until the doctor arrived.

After the doctor examined my dad's body for the last time, the nurse arrived and opened the blinds to al-

low bright sunshine into the room. She then asked to see me outside. I said the Lord's Prayer over my dad's body and followed her. She seemed anxious.

"I have to tell you something, Mr. DiFulvio," she blurted out. "Your dad told me that there was only one reason he decided to try dialysis rather than go immediately into hospice care. He told me never to tell you, but I just have to do it. You need to know," she insisted.

She said that my dad had declared that he would not die on his granddaughter's birthday, which had been a possibility if he entered hospice care. "He told us that he wanted you and your younger daughter Sofia to celebrate Isabella's birthday with her without having to think about his death," she emotionally confided.

I fell to my knees and burst into tears once again. I now understood his recent interest in the calendar days. I struggled to my feet, thanked the nurse for telling me, gave her a big hug and returned to my dad's room. I promised him I would tell my daughters this story when the time was right.

I then walked toward the hospice care exit. As I got halfway down the hall, the nurse shouted for me to return.

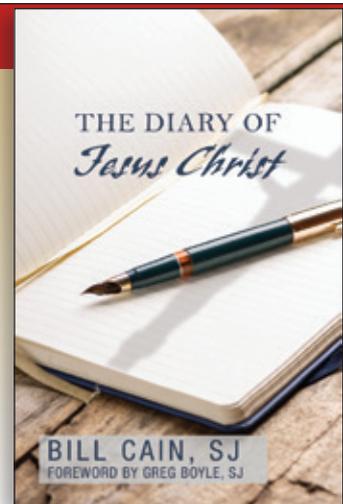
"Mr. DiFulvio, please come and see this before you go!" she insisted. I returned with her to my dad's room, the sunshine now covering his body in bright and beautiful light.

"In my 20 years as a nurse, I have never seen this before," she told me in tears as she pointed to my dad's face.

My dad was smiling once again. He always had a beautiful smile.

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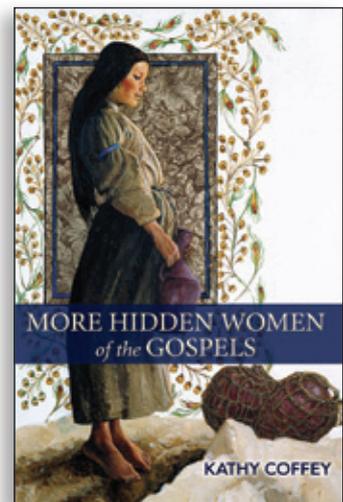
Frank DiFulvio is a writer who lives in northern Virginia.



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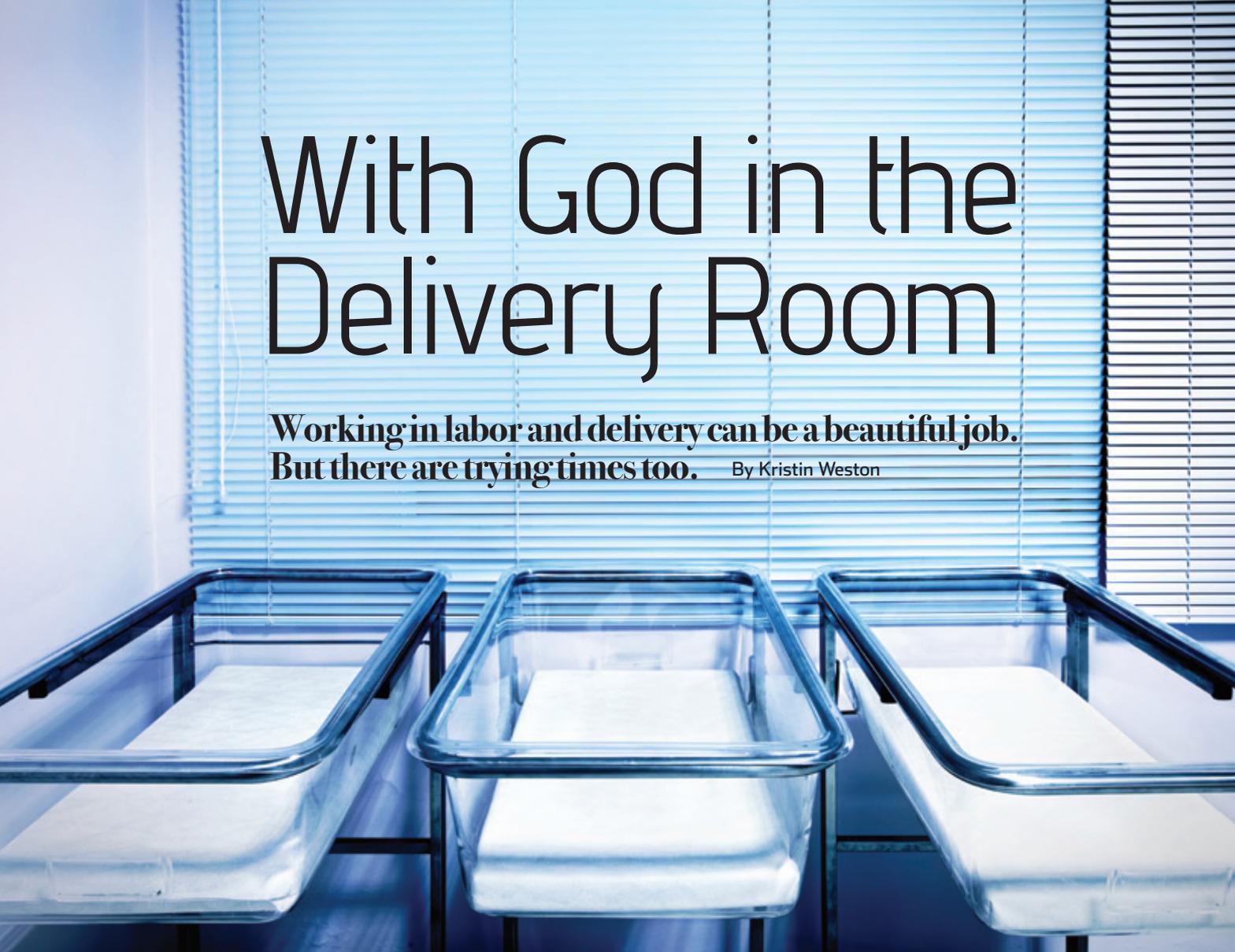
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# With God in the Delivery Room

**Working in labor and delivery can be a beautiful job. But there are trying times too.** By Kristin Weston

After a few trial runs at choosing a path in life, I had to take a step back and reflect on what was most important to me. I turned to my faith and what I had learned from my Jesuit education, the Ignatian values I had stored away, never knowing I would need to call on them again.

In what career could I find God in all things, embrace *cura personalis* (care for the whole person), live up to the ideal of being “men and women for and with others” and serve a faith that does justice? I began to pray, asking God, “How can I best serve you? How can I do my best to do your work?” The answer became clear: Pursue a vocation as a nurse. Serve God by caring for his people—not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well.

After finishing nursing school, I began work in labor and delivery at the Pine Ridge Hospital in Pine Ridge, S.D. I was fortunate to be able to serve my Lakota people and share life back home with family as I found my way through this new voyage in my life. As the years went on, I became

more comfortable in my role as a nurse through the guidance of people God brought into my life. Each of them taught me lessons and skills that have helped me out in difficult situations. One night, though, all of the Ignatian values, the spiritual wisdom, the answers to my prayers were put to what seemed like a near-impossible test.

Working in labor and delivery can be a beautiful job—you are welcoming new life into the world, transporting a being from the spiritual world to the human world. Welcoming God’s creation into this world is probably the most satisfying feeling a soul could ever experience. What I didn’t realize is that there are trying and challenging times too, like when life ends all too soon.

One night, I was assigned to care for a family that would not be experiencing the joy of having a new life placed in their arms. A moment that should be filled with smiles, joy and even awe would be replaced with heartbreak and questions of “why?” The expectant mother would be delivering

a stillborn baby, and I was the nurse assigned to their care.

As delivery nurses, we are responsible for monitoring the progression of a mother's labor, part of which is making sure the fetal heart tones are tolerating the process. In this case, there was no fetal heart tone to monitor. I was only monitoring the mother, attempting to be supportive while also giving her and her husband time to grieve.

Once labor has progressed to the stage of delivery, we call in the obstetrician and begin the delivery of a child that had lived only in the womb. After all the necessary documentation is complete—along with the time of delivery and time of death, the baby's weight and measurements are still taken—the family starts the long journey of mourning their loss.

This was the first time I would be taking care of a patient like this. Nothing I had been taught in nursing school and no prior experience had prepared me for it. I was filled with so many conflicting emotions and thoughts that I was not sure I was ready to take on this task. I was sure I did not have enough experience and knowledge to give this family what they needed in this devastating time. There I was, with this seemingly impossible assignment, and I was contemplating turning it down.

I didn't. I went on with what I had been called to do. Before entering the patient's room and introducing myself, probably as a person they would never want to remember, I found myself in a deserted corner of our floor, turning to my faith yet again. I knew my coworkers would always be available should I need any assistance, but

spiritually I was so alone.

I began to pray silently but felt that I was more begging God than praying. "God, I know you guided me here to do your work, but I don't know what to do. I know you have put me here for a reason, but please be with me while I do my best to take care of this family."

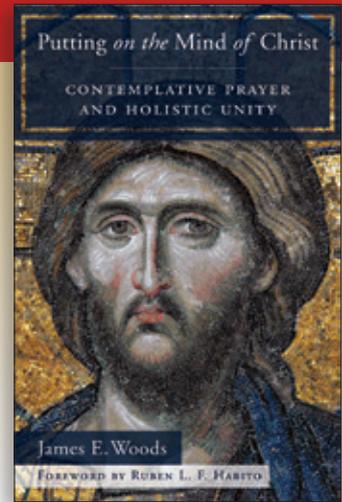
I then took a deep breath, walked into the room, and at that moment felt I had God at my side. The feeling in the room was thick with sorrowful emotions, and I was still unsure of how to begin our interaction. As soon as I opened my mouth, I felt God take over and lead me to find just the right words. "My name is Kristin, and I'll be with you tonight." That was it. With the few words I was guided toward, I felt peace in my heart.

I would not say I knew exactly what to do in the delivery room at that moment, but I felt that I was not alone in the care I was giving the mother. I felt that I had someone by my side, aiding my actions and helping me find words to attempt to comfort a grieving family. Through that experience, I realized something that has played a big role in my nursing career ever since. I have found that, in my work, I am never alone. I have God with me, even when I feel like I have no clue of what to do. I do not have to be afraid of going through trying situations with patients by myself.

I can trust that God will not lead me astray because he was the one that helped me find the best way to serve him. It is not unlike the passage from Joshua: "Be strong and courageous, do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh 1:9). His words could not be more fitting for my work.

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*Kristin Weston is a graduate of Red Cloud Indian School, Oglala Lakota College and Creighton University. She works as a nurse in Loveland, Col.*



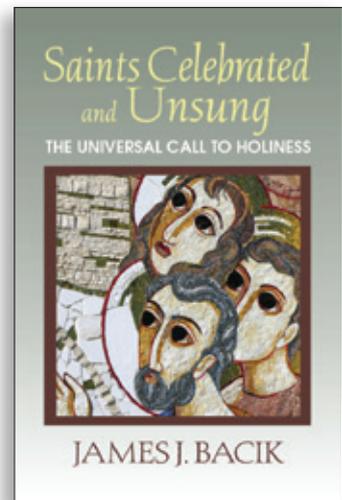
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# The Power of an Invitation

## Jesuit High School Tampa welcomes 22 students into the Catholic Church

By Sean Salai

Who says teenagers are not interested in religion anymore?

Certainly not very many people at the all-male Jesuit High School of Tampa, Fla., where 22 students, including boys from every grade level, received the sacraments of initiation into the Catholic Church. The group included 14 students who were baptized after growing up with no religion, as well as eight students who were already baptized in other Christian communities and received first reconciliation, confirmation and first Communion. The sacraments took place within two socially distanced school Masses on May 13 and 14.

One of the Generation Z “nones” who were baptized is Luke Knight, a freshman. “It means a lot to me because most of my dad’s side of the family is baptized,” Mr. Knight said in a telephone interview. Many of his family members traveled from Indiana for the occasion.

Mr. Knight says his baptism, in the midst of pandemic restrictions, was one of two big personal events that shaped his first year of high school. The second big event was that Mr. Knight became the new starting quarterback of the Jesuit Tigers football team at their first spring game the very next day. “I’m excited to see what comes as I get to know Christ better, to be a happier and healthier person in the coming football season,” Mr. Knight said. His aunt, whom he describes as “really faithful,” served as his godmother

and sponsor.

Remarkably, none of the 22 students were holdovers from last year. After coronavirus quarantines shut down the campus in spring 2020 and the Easter season Masses were canceled, five students became Catholic at a smaller liturgy on campus late last June.

An on-campus celebration of the sacraments of initiation is unusual for Jesuit schools both nationally and locally, as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is most often conducted in local parishes. Jesuit Tampa’s program has averaged between five and seven students per year since it began 10 years ago.

Pete Young, the high school’s communications director since 2013, said Jesuit Tampa has gradually built a culture of actively inviting students to share the Catholic faith. Mr. Young also credits the school’s new campus minister, Jimmy Mitchell, with helping to energize this year’s process. Mr. Mitchell, hired last summer, came from a decade-long career of traveling as a Catholic youth conference speaker and organizer based in Tennessee. During that time, Mr. Young said Mr. Mitchell built a connection to Jesuit Tampa, serving as a volunteer retreat chaperone and leader.

In a telephone interview, Mr. Mitchell said it is particularly remarkable that so many Jesuit Tampa students wish to enter the Catholic Church during this difficult year,



Photo courtesy of Jesuit High School

Jimmy Mitchell, campus minister at Jesuit High School in Tampa, Fla., leads a group of students and faculty in praying a walking rosary for racial healing and reconciliation. Mr. Mitchell said he has tried to create a "culture of conversion" on campus.

given that the school has not been able to host its usual mission and service trips nor any of the major overnight retreats. Students have felt heightened levels of anxiety, frustration and sadness over canceled activities both secular and spiritual.

Paradoxically, Mr. Mitchell said he thinks the pandemic may have actually spurred this year's large number of students seeking the sacraments of initiation.

"These limits have inspired a lot of creativity and generosity among our students," Mr. Mitchell said. "Given that we were still reeling from Covid-19, we didn't want to wait for retreats and international pilgrimages to come back before we started helping students encounter the love of God for them. We wanted to bring the spirit of those retreats and pilgrimages to campus in a new way: the spirit of brotherhood, vulnerability and conversion."

Mr. Mitchell praised Jesuit Tampa's peer ministry culture of identifying and encouraging students who are respected by their peers to take on leadership roles in religious programming, thus empowering natural leaders. This framework proved useful for meeting the needs of students seeking deeper connections with God, others and themselves during the anxieties of the present time.

"We have a ton of upperclassmen who take their faith seriously and are very zealous," Mr. Mitchell said. "They've been pretty profound witnesses as peer ministers for these underclassmen."

According to Mr. Mitchell, the other big factor feeding the R.C.I.A. program this year has been the school's discipleship groups. He said Jesuit Tampa currently has 12 small groups of eight to 12 students who meet every week during their lunch period to explore in depth about their struggles with various vices and personal issues, challenging each other in their prayerful conversations to go deeper.

Mindful of the prevalence of addiction to internet pornography among their peers, he said the students challenge each other in particular to be pure and chaste.

"I call it a culture of conversion," Mr. Mitchell said. "Right now it is a cool thing on campus to be into your faith. Living a virtuous life, engaging in a consistent personal prayer life and participating in the sacraments are not fringe ideas here."

Mr. Knight echoed Mr. Mitchell by saying how much his theology teachers and older peers helped him make the decision this year to become a Catholic. Although his father grew up Catholic and his family occasionally attended Mass when visiting relatives, Mr. Knight had not felt any connection to God or religion before this year. Then, late last November, he heard during homeroom about the school's blossoming R.C.I.A. program and decided to attend a meeting.

"Most of those kids at the meeting were already Catholic, but I didn't consider myself Catholic," he said. "I never had that connection, never understood how to pray or how to connect with God."

In conversation with a close friend who was also going through the process, and who also joined the Catholic Church in the school Mass on May 13, Mr. Knight decided to come back for more classes. The two students soon found themselves attending adoration together and discussing their faith.

"Every time we went to adoration, we would look at each other and say: They seem like such great people, so happy and full of faith," Mr. Knight said. "My buddy Wade and I wanted to be like that, to have that connection with faith."

Mr. Knight said developing a prayer routine has been the most valuable part of the R.C.I.A. process for him. At their meeting each Thursday, the students in the program eat a meal together, say a prayer, check in about how their prayer is going and discuss some readings in the Bible to process what Jesus said and what they think he meant. They have also been discussing what baptism will mean for them.

Mr. Knight concluded: "I would say Jesuit [Tampa] has put Catholicism in front of us in an easy-access manner, to the point where it makes you say, 'Why not?' Meeting so many great people of faith at Jesuit has really made a difference for me."

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Sean Salai, S.J., is a special contributor to *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.

Daniel Ellsberg, center, testified about the Pentagon Papers to a House panel on July 28, 1971.

# *My Father, the Pentagon Papers and Me*

By Robert Ellsberg

AP Photo

I clearly remember the first time I handled classified documents. That day in October 1969 stands out for other reasons, as it was also the first time I was allowed to handle a Xerox machine, back then an exotic novelty in its own right for a 13-year-old. I can't say I had much conception that this day would prove historically significant in other ways. The frisson of handling documents marked "Top Secret" quickly faded, and with it the wonder of feeding hundreds of pages into a slow, clunky machine while waiting for the mysterious green light to complete its circuit.

The documents were part of a highly classified history of the Vietnam War, commissioned by former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Only a few people knew of the existence of the study; even fewer had actually read it. One of these was my father, Daniel Ellsberg, a 38-year-old defense analyst at the RAND Corporation, a government-sponsored think tank in Santa Monica, Calif. He himself had worked on the study, following his return from a two-year assignment in Vietnam, which in turn had followed a stint working under McNamara in the Pentagon. What he read—a history of lies and secrets that served to hide the true origins, purpose and prospects of success of a murderous war—convinced him to cross the line from strong disagreement with our Vietnam policy to active resistance.

Two particular factors had influenced the timing of his decision to copy these documents. He had recently learned from contacts in the National Security Council that President Richard Nixon, contrary to public belief, was committed to winning the war through escalation. My father believed that getting these documents into the hands of Congress, and perhaps sparking public hearings, might prevent Nixon from re-

peating the policies of his predecessors.

The second factor was his encounter with young draft resisters, who had no access to "top secret" information and yet were willing to sacrifice their freedom to oppose the war. A moment of epiphany occurred for him while attending a gathering of War Resisters' International in Haverford, Pa., when he heard a young man named Randy Kehler calmly mention that he was about to begin a prison term for resisting the draft. After recovering from the impact of this news, my father felt a new question arise: "What could I do to help end this war if I were willing to go to jail?" He said later that it was as if an axe had come down, dividing his life in two.

I had been watching this slow process of my father's conversion from Cold War insider to committed truth-teller. He had returned from that conference with books by Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., along with Thoreau's famous essay on civil disobedience. Over lunch one day at an outdoor restaurant, he described what he planned to do. In the spirit of civil disobedience, he intended to copy these documents from his safe at RAND and provide them to Congress. It would certainly involve some risk, but he felt it was necessary. Would I help him?

That is how I happened to find myself, later that day, standing over the primitive Xerox machine in a borrowed office. I didn't suppose that this might entail any personal risk for me—though it did later cause me to be subpoenaed before a federal grand jury and thus implicated me in a case for which my father would ultimately face 115 years in prison. But that was in the future. On that fall day in 1969, the most exciting moment occurred soon after we arrived—when police officers knocked on the door, my father having neglected to

turn off the burglar alarm.

I never imagined that my father actually needed my help, or that of my younger sister, who joined us on another occasion. But as he later explained, he had assumed that he might go to prison for a long time, if not the rest of his life. Imagining that people might call him crazy or a traitor, he wanted us to see for ourselves that he was acting in a calm and deliberate fashion. In the future we might see him behind a plexiglass window in prison. But he could pass along to us the lesson he had learned: that there were circumstances in which one might be called to make sacrifices for the sake of a higher truth. That would be his legacy.

For some time, I was unaware of any consequences for our activities that day. It turned out that nobody in Congress would take the risk of accepting the documents. And so, unbeknownst to me, my father turned to *The New York Times*. On June 13, 1971—50 years ago—the first installment of the papers appeared in the *Sunday New York Times* under a deceptively innocuous headline: "Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces 3 Decades of Growing U.S. Involvement." Inside, the story included actual classified documents, and it promised continuing installments.

The official name of this study was "Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force," but the media quickly dubbed it the "Pentagon Papers." This breaking news was as surprising to me as to anyone else, although I was unusually prepared to guess its backstory. "He did it! He did it!" I shouted aloud (to no one). My father had immediately gone "underground"; and after a Justice Department injunction temporarily stopped publication of the stories, he began providing copies of the documents to other newspapers. When

# What my father read convinced him to cross the line from strong disagreement with our Vietnam policy to active resistance. 💧💧

he eventually surrendered himself for arrest and arraignment in Boston, a reporter asked him, “Aren’t you afraid of going to jail?” He replied, “Wouldn’t you go to jail if it would help end the war?”

As installments of the Pentagon Papers appeared, they revealed just how little the American people knew about the truth of our engagement in the war. For instance, they showed that our intervention in Vietnam had grown out of our support for the French colonial war in Indochina; rather than coming to the defense of an ally in South Vietnam, it had been “our” war from the beginning. Among other revelations: that Lyndon Johnson had lied during the 1964 election about his actual plans to escalate; that the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the pretext for congressional support for the war, was based on lies; and that we had continued to escalate with no actual expectation of victory, but mainly with the intention of delaying a politically costly defeat.

As H. R. Haldeman, known as Bob, Nixon’s chief of staff, summa-

rized for his boss: The documents were confusing, “but out of the gobbledygook comes a very clear thing: You can’t trust the government; you can’t believe what they say; and you can’t rely on their judgment.... And the president can be wrong.”

My father had volunteered to go to Vietnam in 1965 as part of an inter-agency task force, studying the conduct of the war and the prospects for “success.” He had originally seen the war as a “problem to be solved.” Traveling throughout the country, and even accompanying Marines on hazardous night patrols, his view of that problem changed. The people of Vietnam, he said, had become “as familiar as my own hands.” By the time he returned to the United States in 1967, he believed the war was a “mistake to be ended.” But it was his reading of the Pentagon Papers that inspired the next stage of his conversion, leading him to see the war as “a crime to be resisted.”

Amazingly, the copying of the Pentagon Papers did in fact help end the war, though not the way my father had imagined. While their publication

generated enormous coverage, they didn’t seem to have much impact on public opinion. Despite four years of escalation, massive bombing and the invasion of Cambodia and Laos, most people still believed Nixon was ending the war, and he was re-elected in 1972 in a landslide. And the war continued.

Then came Watergate. There was no direct link between the White House and the break-in at the Democratic Party headquarters. And yet the break-in at the Watergate Hotel was carried out by the same “Plumbers” team that had earlier operated out of the White House to carry out illegal acts against my father. This made it essential that Nixon keep the Watergate burglars quiet. And so he interfered with the Watergate investigation and authorized the payment of hush money.

The crimes of the Plumbers had begun soon after my father’s arrest for sharing the Pentagon Papers. Terrified that my father would leak other documents about the administration’s secret plans for escalation, including nuclear threats, Henry Kissinger had called him “the most dangerous man in America.” This set in motion an array of illegal actions to stop him from making further leaks. Revelations of these measures—including the burglary of my father’s psychiatrist’s office and an offer to the judge in his case to become director of the F.B.I.—led to the dismissal of the charges against him in April 1973. Nixon’s resignation, ahead of his impending impeachment, followed in August. With the cutoff of congressional spending under the Ford administration, the Vietnam War ended in April 1975.

My father went on to spend the following decades in tireless work for peace, striving in particular to raise

awareness of the peril of nuclear war. I later helped him edit two volumes of his memoirs, *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* (2002) and *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner* (2017). He has been arrested close to 100 times in acts of civil disobedience. April 7 marked his 90th birthday.

Now, 50 years after their publication, the *Pentagon Papers* are remembered as a landmark in the history of the First Amendment and freedom of the press, and a milestone in the annals of “whistleblowing.” My father’s story has inspired other whistleblowers, including Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden.

And no doubt his actions and the lessons he tried to convey have borne fruit in my own life. Among other things, they prompted my decision to leave college in 1975 to work for five years with Dorothy Day at the Catholic Worker in New York City. In my own writing life I have concentrated on telling the stories of saints, prophets and moral heroes, believing in the power of such stories to enlarge our moral imagination and our sense of personal responsibility. Like my father, many of those I have written about saw something that needed to be done and decided that they should do it. And their

example inspired others to take one more step themselves.

That is how it was in my father’s case. When Randy Kehler stood up and spoke about facing prison, he had no idea who was in the audience that day, what seeds he might be planting and how his own action might play a significant role in ending the war. Randy Kehler’s action, in turn, was inspired by the example of others who went before him.

My father could not have foreseen all the consequences of his unusual version of “Take your children to work day.” To be sure, the years that followed involved stress and anxiety for my family. Yet I know his action changed history. And it changed my own life, setting me on the mission of casting other seeds. My father was inspired in part by the words of Thoreau: “Cast your whole vote; not a slip of paper merely, but your whole influence.” For me, it is another familiar line from the Gospel of John, 8:32, that sums up the meaning of his witness: “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

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**Robert Ellsberg is the publisher of Orbis Books. His most recent books are *Lead, Kindly Light: Gandhi on Christianity and an edition of Dorothy Day’s On Pilgrimage: The Sixties.***



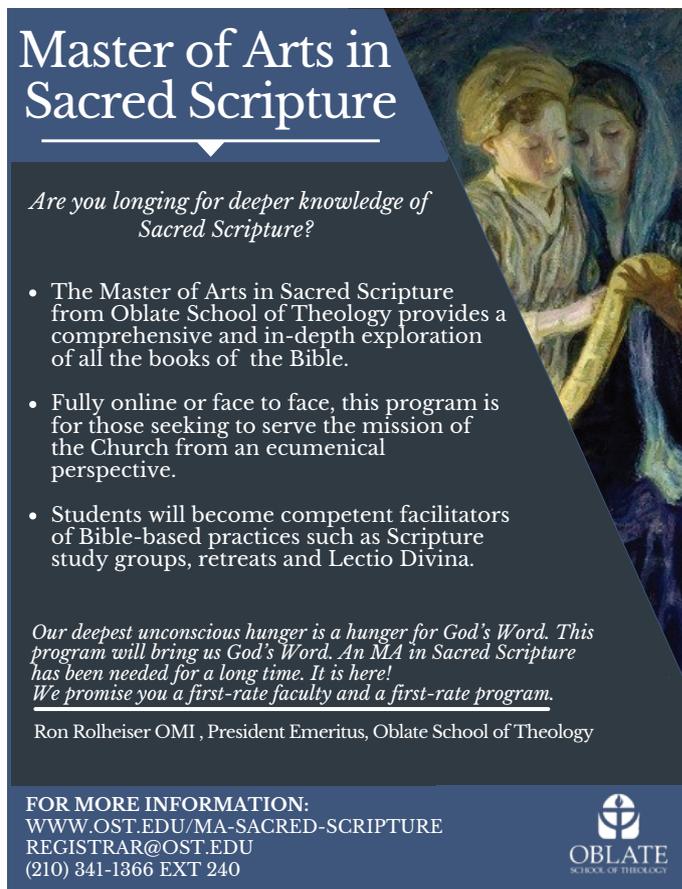
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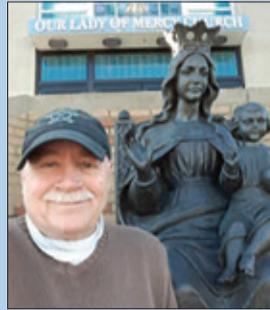
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### Raising Mothers

By Preeti Vangani

This morning she came undone into my arthritic fingers  
in the form of an easy tear perforation on the milk carton,  
that was a very small kind of mother, smaller than the mother  
I encountered in myself, waiving late fees working at the library  
when the nursing student in finals week eating Oreos  
for dinner came begging, no fret, I said, my register lackluster  
compared to the mother I found in the purposeful banter  
the buck-toothed guy in 12B on LHR-BOM engaged me in  
to distract me from pain, cramps coiling under my knees,  
every nerve sharp as teeth—grinding down a prayer  
for the prednisone to usher in, the pill also a mother, dissolving  
my aches invisible as the grace I trace in the blanks  
between my friend's fingers chopping walnuts cooking me  
aji da gallina, seasoning the chicken with mother-  
like accuracy, the sense of her knowing I have long been  
motherless itself a mother to me, a gold virgin mary  
on her pointer, how it birthed rainbows in the sun-drenched  
women's clinic as we waited for her to get an IUD, an option  
our mothers would perhaps unapprove of, and this option  
too, a kind of mother. And the ghost of my own mother  
my father conjures pointing to the corner table in  
Kailash Parbat,  
a restaurant by a cowshed where they first met, sipping  
filter coffee amid bovine groans, chaperones at arm's length  
and it is hard to not be amused when my father, now motherless  
and wifeless, having brought doctors and priests to both women  
in vain, still finds it in him to be a mother to himself—wide-  
grinned, he whistles combing his balding head before bed,  
ask him why and he'll say, what if Julia Roberts comes  
in my dreams tonight, what is to mother if not to suspend  
moonlike faith in the face of a stubborn night like the milky  
plainness with which my stepmother confided in me  
while shelling peas—your father, he hit me—her admission  
not only because it is a transference of trust but also  
a repeating of history, making her more my mother  
than I allowed her to be—her, who I thought a linear erasure  
of my one mother, now my mother's kin, the two sharing a skin-  
memory, look, how she pendulums her feet at the sewing machine,  
altering a paisley dress for me, says, try it now. And I try,  
mother, to have you returned to me, in flesh and in breath,  
to keep you alive.

---

Preeti Vangani is the author of *Mother Tongue Apologize*, winner of the RL Poetry Prize. Her work has been published in *BOAAT*, *Gulf Coast*, *Threepenny Review* and elsewhere. She is the poetry editor for *Glass: A Journal of Poetry* and holds an M.F.A. from the University of Sand. She has an M.F.A. from the University of San Francisco.

# Learning love from a robot

By Isabelle Senechal

In *Klara and the Sun*, toy companies manufacture “Artificial Friends” to accompany lonely children.

When I was a senior in high school, I decided on a whim to pick up Kazuo Ishiguro’s science fiction masterpiece *Never Let Me Go*. At the time, I had no idea what utter misery was waiting for me in Kathy, Tommy and Ruth’s boarding school adventures—nor could I have predicted the many months *Never Let Me Go* would spend in my mind after I finished reading it.

That first encounter with Ishiguro’s writing cemented his place as one of my favorite authors. Now I find myself gravitating toward his titles whenever I can browse in libraries or bookstores, eagerly losing myself in his engrossing stories and lovely prose. Still, nothing quite haunted me as relentlessly as *Never Let Me Go* did—until I picked up *Klara and the Sun*.

In March, Ishiguro released *Klara and the Sun*, his eighth novel and first literary work since winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017. *Klara and the Sun* also represents the first return to science fiction for the acclaimed

author since *Never Let Me Go* in 2005. The book not only lives up to its predecessor’s legacy, but in some respects surpasses it.

The novel is set in a dystopian United States encumbered by surging social inequality, fascist terrorism and controversial scientific advancements. In this bleak future, parents may “opt in” their children for a risky genetic modification treatment called “lifting” that boosts their social standing and academic prospects. “Lifted” children follow a strict home education and socialization regimen. “Unlifted” children are ostracized by their peers, essentially left to their own devices.

In addition to the “lifting” process, the society of *Klara and the Sun* also features highly advanced artificial intelligence so sophisticated in its programming that its mere existence blurs the boundary between human and machine. The anxiety this causes is exacerbated by the gradual elimination of the country’s

white-collar workforce. The artificial intelligence functions so effectively and accurately that it ultimately proves more desirable than human efforts—at least where the economy is concerned. Even companionship and intimacy are no longer exclusive to living persons, as toy companies manufacture Artificial Friends (AFs), solar-powered robotic dolls with exceptional learning capabilities who accompany lonely children throughout their adolescence.

We experience this precarious world through the perspective of Klara, a remarkably observant, inquisitive robot who is fascinated by human behavior. Unlike other AFs, who simply wish to be paired with a human child, Klara yearns to understand the subtleties and nuances she detects in people’s interactions with one another. From her position in a toy store’s display window, our attentive narrator loves nothing more than to watch people pass by and imagine what is going on in their heads.

## Klara and the Sun

By Kazuo Ishiguro

Knopf

320p \$28

One day, Klara is sold to a kind-hearted 14-year-old girl named Josie. Klara's world grows significantly more complicated. She learns that Josie is dying from a serious illness; suddenly, Klara's purpose changes. Her objective no longer involves looking after a developing child. Instead, Klara must comfort a girl resigned to die.

What follows is a deeply moving story about love, sacrifice and faith as Klara learns to grapple with the anticipatory grief of losing a loved one. Ishiguro strikes a tender, affecting tone, inviting us to dwell in the darkness that can envelop someone approaching death. We experience the characters' suffering, their pain and desolation, their resentment and resignation, their quiet hope, their desperate longing for a miracle. Josie's ordeal is devastating and—for many of us—achingly familiar.

There is a lot to admire in Ishiguro's new book, from its premise and execution to its pathos and thought-provoking themes. The novel's crowning achievement, however, is Klara's narration.

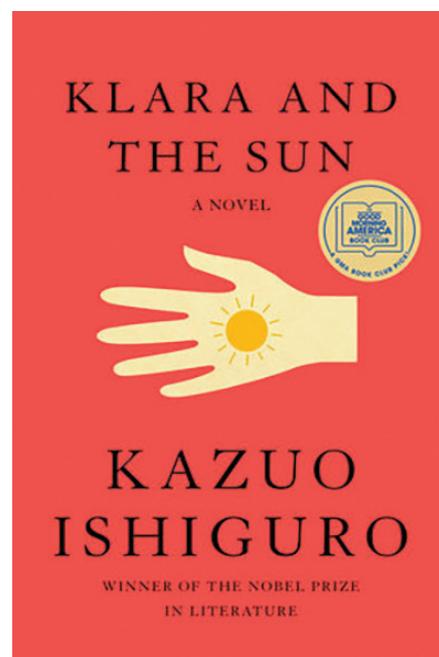
Ishiguro is a master of first-person storytelling in modern literature. His narratives are known for pulling readers directly into a character's consciousness, for obscuring his authorial presence and for giving narrators complete control over their story's unraveling. His writing excels not only in capturing a character's authentic voice, but in using that voice to propel the narrative forward. Ishiguro's narrators rarely deal in exposition or try to hold the reader's hand. Rather, it is up to the reader to pay close atten-

tion to the important details hidden in characters' passing comments, and to notice the narrator's purposeful omissions in order to see the story's bigger picture. The result is prose that feels both beautifully natural and intellectually stimulating.

*Klara and the Sun* maintains the same transcendent narrative quality one would expect from Ishiguro. Klara's perspective is one of an almost childlike naïveté about the world around her. At the same time, her narration straddles the line between personable and algorithmic, allowing readers to interpret how much of Klara's worldview is informed by her programming.

What is truly brilliant about Klara is that she operates as an unreliable narrator despite her unflinching honesty. She does not conceal her observations or motivations from us, and though her "duty to assist Josie" is an innate part of her digital makeup, Klara does seem to exhibit true affection for the girl. Still, we cannot ignore the reality that Klara is not human. She can observe, but she cannot fully comprehend the human heart; her algorithm is too limited. Klara's storytelling may be factually accurate, but is it emotionally true?

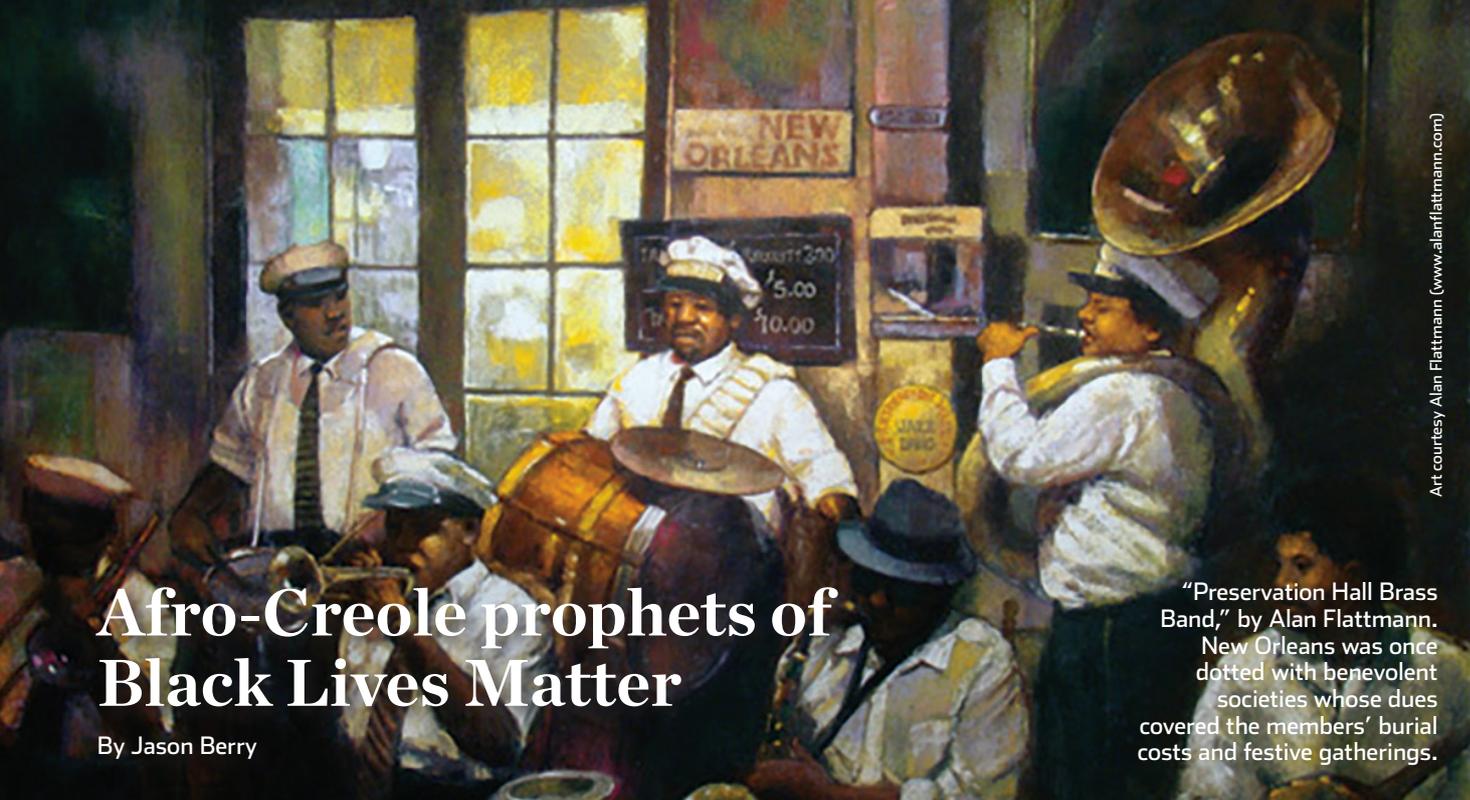
A perfect example of the narrator's limitations can be found early on in the novel, when Klara witnesses a fist fight between two taxi drivers outside the toy store. While she can successfully identify the men's emotions based on their facial expressions and body language, Klara realizes she cannot feel empathy for them. In fact, empathy is such a for-



eign concept for her that she deprecates it as a ridiculous notion: "I tried to find the beginnings of such a feeling in my own mind. It was useless though, and I'd always end up laughing at my own thoughts." (This inability to empathize takes a more sinister turn later, but I would not dare spoil the novel's bombshell twist.)

Despite Klara's limited perspective, Ishiguro ingeniously uses her distinctly unhuman character to illuminate universal human experiences. Klara allows us to see ourselves more clearly, to be reminded of the "special something" that makes us human. We are not replaceable. We do not belong solely to ourselves. Ultimately, we are created, nourished and shaped by love.

Isabelle Senechal is a writer and a former Joseph A. O'Hare fellow at America Media.



Art courtesy Alan Flattmann (www.alanflattmann.com)

# Afro-Creole prophets of Black Lives Matter

By Jason Berry

“Preservation Hall Brass Band,” by Alan Flattmann. New Orleans was once dotted with benevolent societies whose dues covered the members’ burial costs and festive gatherings.

In 1857, in a decree that flouted Louisiana case law that allowed white men to free their enslaved children, paramours and common-law wives, the Louisiana legislature voted that slavery could no longer be reversed. It was one more tightening of the screws by plantation interests against Blacks as the legislature grew more polarized over the slave economy.

In 1858, New Orleans closed an African Methodist Episcopal church after police raids for “unlawful assembly” of enslaved and free Blacks. The city of 116,000, the nation’s largest market in the sale of human beings, had nearly 10,000 free people of color. Leaders of this population voiced French Revolution ideals of liberty in challenging white supremacy.

Free Black militiamen had fought in the 1815 Battle of New Orleans, defeating the British in the War of 1812. Many Creoles of color came from French-speaking Catholic families with slaveholding backgrounds and ancestral roots in Haiti. Blacks who secured their freedom gained status

with Creoles in a caste beneath the white elite.

With its recurrent yellow fever epidemics, New Orleans was dotted with benevolent societies whose dues covered the members’ burial costs and festive gatherings. The Société d’Économie et d’Assistance Mutuelle erected a three-story building that became known as Economy Hall. Dance orchestras performed there; mourners held post-funeral repasts there. During the Civil War, the hall secretly stored weapons for Blacks in the Louisiana Native Guard as they fought Confederate troops.

Economy Hall is better known as a popular venue in the early 1900s for seminal jazz musicians like Kid Ory and Louis Armstrong. “Most of the people who wrote about the hall never entered the building and probably knew none of the Économie members,” writes Fatima Shaik. “The audience heard the rough and spontaneous harmony without understanding that the songs came from the history of slavery and the struggle for suffrage,

the irrationality of race prejudice and the violence of its application.”

This stunning book stems from the author’s tenacity in excavating the contours of a culture and a keen eye for the people who sustained it. Shaik grew up in the 1950s in the Seventh Ward, a hearth of the Creole culture. When Economy Hall closed, her father, an educator named Mohammed Shaik, rescued its ledgers from a dumpster, “some with marbled paper covers and spines that were two inches wide. The oldest books had thick, ochre-colored pages made of rag paper. The later ones contained smooth, blue-lined stock. Crammed between thin margins was French script as elegant as a satin-stitched monogram on a linen handkerchief.”

The internal records spanned a century and for several decades sat on a shelf in the family home. Fatima Shaik became a professor, publishing novels and short stories along the way. On a trip home in 1997, she began reading the documents her father had saved and immersed herself in a long

**Economy Hall  
The Hidden History of a Free Black  
Brotherhood**

By Fatima Shaik  
The Historic New Orleans Collection  
525p \$34.95

**Afro-Creole Poetry in French From  
Louisiana's Radical Civil War-Era  
Newspapers**

Translated and edited by Clint Bruce  
The Historic New Orleans Collection  
364p \$40

search for information on the men quoted in the meeting minutes.

Pierre Casanave, a wealthy undertaker who sent marching bands behind buggy hearses and advertised his mortuary in white newspapers, was Economy Hall president in 1858. His words to fraternal members were stark: "We know our oppressors clap hands and are fortified in their opinions that we are incapable of anything good, we are born to be their slaves, that the passion of degradation is insinuated in our hearts."

Another hall leader, Henry Louis Rey, was an influential member of the much smaller Cercle Harmonique, a group of Spiritualists who transcribed voices of the dead channeled at seances held near Economy Hall—a range of voices from St. Vincent de Paul to the martyred Abraham Lincoln, urging the Cercle believers to keep faith in the pursuit of freedom. The Cercle's detailed records of 1857 to 1877 are housed at the archives of the University of New Orleans. In this section of her book, Shaik builds on the groundbreaking works of Carolyn Cossé Bell, Emily Suzanne Clark and Melissa Taggett.

Rey also wrote for *L'Union*, the crusading newspaper launched in 1862, impressively chronicled in Clint Bruce's *Afro-Creole Poetry*. "Consisting of one sheet, front and back, in French, the paper featured a lengthy denunciation of slavery in Louisiana," writes Bruce, and "letters between Victor Hugo and the Haitian newspaper editor Eugène Heurtelou, situating [slavery] within the revolutionary Atlantic context." In 1864, the

publisher met with President Lincoln, presenting a petition with thousands of signatures of free citizens of color seeking freedom and rights for all Blacks. *L'Union* folded later that year; but its publisher, the Parisian-trained Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez, launched a sequel, *La Tribune*. A contributor to both papers, the Spiritualist Henry Louis Rey published a poem in 1865 faithful to their vision:

*What matters it that cannons  
roar,  
That all around an open tomb  
yawns;  
For 'tis the end of one bad  
world  
As another, much more  
beautiful dawns!*

In the postwar city, Creole leaders won elections and oversaw the desegregation of public schools, a short-lived experiment destroyed by the war after the war—Reconstruction, bringing with it lynching as the tool for restoring white supremacy.

As full justice lost out to white mobs and resurgent segregation laws, Economy Hall carried a memory that Fatima Shaik began absorbing after its closure, "on porch steps, in corner groceries, during baptism breakfasts, and especially at the dinner table. At some point in every gathering, family members and friends would bring up their disappeared and deceased relatives, then launch into their history. Each spoke of the past with the passion of a man wrongfully accused of a crime who repeats over and over his account of the moment that proves his



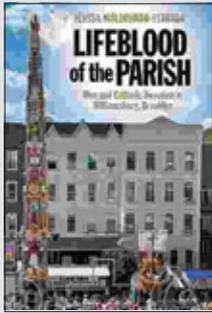
innocence."

"I nodded and smiled," she continues, as the ledger books sat on a shelf. "But I was a skeptic. I thought my family was just trying to give me hope because almost everything I read said that all Negroes were slaves and anyone who mixed with them was inferior."

With *Economy Hall*, the author illuminates her ancestral world, giving voice to a freedom quest with powerful echoes today.

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Jason Berry is the author, most recently, of *City of a Million Dreams: A History of New Orleans at Year 300*, the subject of a new documentary film.



**Lifeblood of the Parish**  
Men and Catholic Devotion in Williamsburg, Brooklyn  
By Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada  
NYU Press  
296p \$32

### A feast grows in Brooklyn

There is good news as well as some less cheerful tidings in *Lifeblood of the Parish: Men and Catholic Devotion in Williamsburg, Brooklyn*, an ethnographic look at Italian-American communal rituals in New York. The author conducted years of fieldwork at the Shrine Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Brooklyn, and the book focuses on the men who are central to the production of the parish's annual Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and San Paolino (St. Paulinus, the patron saint of Nola, Italy).

The feast's most eye-catching ritual is the Dance of the Giglio, during which volunteers carry a 70-foot tall, four-ton tower through the streets. Never a liturgical event, the Giglio has nevertheless united the community for over a century.

Maldonado-Estrada asserts that male bonding to support the parish marks a positive development for an otherwise fragmented neighborhood. Yet she also acknowledges that the precise amount of spirituality found in this version of muscular Christianity is difficult to pinpoint. Negative side effects include drunken rowdiness and incidents where participants accost pedestrians to demand donations to the church.

The ethnographer's tone here is generally approving of the macho goings-on as the "making of masculinity" and a celebration of the "Catholic male body." Some of the brashness may be more redolent of the neighborhood than of Italian-American Catholicism. Archaic gender divisions prevail, so women work in subsidiary roles during the feast, and gay men are shunned. A longtime volunteer was forced to resign in 2014 from directing the shrine because he had legally married his male partner, and the pastor of the parish could no longer "pretend he did not know about [the volunteer's] sexuality, now that he was married."

A Coney Island fairground element is present. Devotion, instead of being expressed by study or prayer, is shown by lifting weights, getting tattooed and other activities befitting the annual Fourth of July hot dog eating contest and other crowd-pleasing spectacles.

The French medieval legends of The Juggler of Notre Dame and its close cousin, Our Lady's Tumbler, are relevant to this story. As the literary historian Jan Ziolkowski noted in *The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity*, all gifts offered in devotion are acceptable, although it should be recalled that the juggler Barnabe had taken holy orders before demonstrating his skills in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary, and is nowhere described as drunk, tattooed or homophobic.

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Benjamin Ivry has written biographies of Francis Poulenc, Maurice Ravel and Arthur Rimbaud and has translated many books from French.



**The Last Brahmin**  
Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. and the Making of the Cold War  
By Luke A. Nichter  
Yale University Press  
544p \$37.50

### A Victorian in the nuclear age

"Hydrogen Chloride" may not be the most endearing of nicknames. It is especially not what one would expect for a pre-eminent member of America's upper crust, a New England blue-blood with 200 years of civic service in his genes. But such was the moniker bestowed by the diplomatic staff at the U.S. embassy in Saigon on Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. The moniker, derived from his famous initials "H.C.L.," had very little to do with his personality.

In his new biography of Lodge, *The Last Brahmin*, Luke Nichter paints the picture of a man who seems to be temporally misplaced but at the same time very much of the moment. Raised primarily by U.S. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, his grandfather and a famed isolationist, the junior Lodge had all the genteel mannerisms of a Victorian aristocrat operating in the nuclear age. His sense of comportment and dedication to public service drove Lodge to perform his duty—sometimes at a great personal loss.

Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1937, he resigned to fight in the Second World War. Lodge regained his Senate seat in 1947 and became a committed internationalist, resisting isolationist tendencies. As part of this effort, Lodge drafted

then-General Dwight D. Eisenhower to be the Republican presidential candidate in 1952. His total focus on Eisenhower's campaign resulted in Lodge, outgunned and outspent, losing his own Senate seat to a young Irish Catholic politician in Massachusetts: John F. Kennedy.

Lodge spent the better part of the 1950s as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, with the chief aim of countering Soviet narratives. Lodge was the Republican vice presidential candidate in 1960, but President Kennedy reached across the aisle to call on Lodge to take over operations in South Vietnam in 1963. This is perhaps the most contentious part of Lodge's life, given his perceived role in the death of the president of South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem. In *The Last Brahmin*, Nichter presents an expanded narrative with new information on just how much President Kennedy was involved in the affair.

Despite the harshness of the post in South Vietnam, Lodge continued on to two more diplomatic postings: first as ambassador to West Germany under President Johnson, and then as personal representative of Presidents Nixon and Ford to the Holy See.

Nichter presents Lodge as a man who, from cradle to grave, loved his family and his country, the ideals of both of which he tried to live up to his entire life.

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Nicholas D. Sawicki is special assistant to the president and editor in chief of *America Media*.



### From Confrontation to Covenantal Partnership

Ed. by Jehoshua Ahrens, Irving Greenberg and Eugene Korn  
Urim Publications  
302p \$27.95

#### Providential partnership

For Catholics, “Nostra Aetate,” the “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” of the Second Vatican Council, opened an entirely new era in Catholic-Jewish relations. Many Orthodox Jews, however, regarded it warily as a temptation to apostatize. Their skepticism grew out of a newspaper leak.

In 1963, two years before the appearance of “Nostra Aetate,” The New York Times reported on a very early draft of the declaration, then titled “On the Jews,” and indicated a continuing hope among Catholics for Jewish conversion to Christianity. A prominent Jewish rabbi and philosopher, Joseph Soloveitchik, then warned his fellow Jews against engaging in interfaith dialogue. He argued that genuinely religious explorations might be had only among the adherents of a given religious tradition, but not with outsiders.

For decades, Soloveitchik's watchfulness became the rule for Orthodox Jews in encounters with Catholics.

At the time of the 50th anniversary of “Nostra Aetate,” however, Orthodox rabbis in Israel, Europe and the United States undertook a reassessment of their encounters with the Catholic Church that led to a reconsideration of Soloveitchik's cave-

at. They entitled their statement “To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven” and offered a theological affirmation of the religious value of Christianity. Earlier this year, Jewish and Christian scholars reflected on that statement in *From Confrontation to Covenantal Partnership*.

The spiritual kinship between Jews and Catholics, the rabbis observe, consists in a set of faith convictions and biblical narratives not shared by other religious gentiles, like Buddhists or Sikhs. Eugene Korn points out that in both traditions, ethics “are founded on the Bible's insistence that human beings are created in the Image of God.” Finally, the rabbis affirm that Jews and Christians also share “the values of life, family, compassionate righteousness, justice, inalienable freedom, universal love and ultimate world peace.” That shared commitment to life and family has frequently been the basis for collaboration between the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Orthodox Jews in the public square.

None of this is surprising. What is remarkable, however, is the rabbis' affirmation that on their reading, the emergence and spread of Christianity is integral to a providential design for the revelation of the one God to all humanity: “We acknowledge that the emergence of Christianity in human history is neither an accident nor an error, but the willed divine outcome and [a] gift to the nations.”

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Drew Christiansen, S.J., a former editor in chief of *America*, is distinguished professor of ethics and human development at Georgetown University.

## New Covenant

**BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (B), JUNE 6, 2021**

READINGS: EX 24:3-8; PS 116; HEB 9:11-15; MK 14:12-26

Today we celebrate the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, also known as Corpus Christi. The readings and feast echo Holy Thursday, which commemorates the institution of the Eucharist. Why do we have another holy day devoted largely to the same feast? We can thank the Norbertine nun St. Juliana of Liège (1192-1285), among others, for recognizing the power of eucharistic adoration. St. Juliana actively engaged in prayer and devotion to the Eucharist, and she received mystical visions that inspired the development of the feast. As we examine today's readings, we should be mindful of the significance of the Eucharist as a means to encounter God.

The first reading offers insights into the significance and power attributed to blood in ancient Israel. The blood of an animal was considered its life force belonging to God, and for this reason humans were forbidden from eating it. Animal blood was used in rituals to atone for sin and to cleanse, purify and sanctify spaces and people. Notably, the blood of a lamb is used as a protective marker during the Passover. In today's reading from Exodus, animal blood is sprinkled on an altar and on the Israelites to ratify the covenant made between God and the Israelites through Moses.

In the second reading, from the

Letter to the Hebrews, the images of blood and covenant are reframed in light of Christ's sacrificial death: "For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God." Hebrews uses the imagery associated with the Mosaic covenant to affirm that Christ mediates a new covenant through his death.

Bringing together the language of covenant and sacrifice, the Gospel reading from Mark affirms that the Last Supper of Jesus and the disciples was a Passover meal, which recalls the saving power of the blood of the lamb before the Exodus. Jesus instructs the disciples to make arrangements for their Passover feast; and during the meal Jesus takes bread, prays over it, breaks the bread and shares it, proclaiming it as his body. When he takes the cup of wine, Jesus also prays and shares it. Jesus provides additional information, proclaiming, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many."

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke build on their source material from Mark. Matthew states that the blood that is shed is "for the forgiveness of sins" (26:28). Luke uses language of a "new covenant," and he includes the

*He is mediator of a new covenant. (Heb 9:15)*

### *Praying With Scripture*

How does today's feast inspire your prayer life?

How can you connect to the body and blood of Christ if you cannot receive the Eucharist?

How has distance from the Blessed Sacrament helped or hindered your spiritual life?

injunction "Do this in remembrance of me" (22:19-20). These Synoptic traditions are reflected in the words of institution that are said during the Consecration at Mass.

Last year, many people were unable to receive the Eucharist due to lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, more people have been able to return to Mass, but many are still waiting to be able to encounter God regularly through the body and blood of Christ. Fortunately, we also encounter God through Scripture. On this feast, we can be inspired by the language and imagery of today's readings, reflect on Christ's sacrifice and remain hopeful to encounter God in the Eucharist in the future.

## Growing the Kingdom

**ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JUNE 13, 2021**

READINGS: EZ 17:22-24; PS 92; 2 COR 5:6-10; MK 4:26-34

Today's Gospel, from Mark, offers details about Jesus the teacher. We witness how Jesus shares knowledge, shifts worldviews, inspires action and

foretells consequences. We also get a behind-the-scenes perspective of Jesus' interaction with the disciples.

In the Synoptic tradition, Jesus

teaches with multilayered short stories, often to help people understand the kingdom of God by comparing it to relatable things. In the parable of

the growing seed, Jesus compares the kingdom to someone scattering seeds. The seeds sprout and grow, although the person is unaware of how this happens; and when the grain is ripe, the person harvests the crops.

One interpretive possibility is to understand God as the one who scatters the seeds and completes the harvest. The seeds would represent the development of Jesus' followers. Sickle and harvest imagery is sometimes associated with God's judgment (Jl 4:13, Rv 14:15), so this parable might serve to remind people to grow and mature so that they are ready for final judgment. This reading poses some difficulties, however, since the one who scattered the seeds is unaware of how they grow.

Another possibility is that the person represents Jesus' followers collectively and that the seeds are their words and actions that they plant in the world, where their growth is nurtured by the land. Nestled within this parable is the role of the earth in sustaining life: "Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

This parable offers an example of the ecological principle of mutual dependency and affirms the interconnectedness of all of creation.

In the following parable, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, highlighting how small it begins and how large it grows. Again, the earth is vibrant and supports life. If the tree represents the kingdom of God on earth, then this parable affirms that the kingdom is large, welcoming and protective, expressing this with birds sheltering in its lush branches.

The last two verses of today's Gospel reveal Jesus' strategy and vision for his followers. To the large crowds who follow him, he taught with parables because they were effective. "He spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it." Like a good teacher, Jesus was mindful of how well his audience received the lesson, and he used styles and images that would inspire discourse and action. The image of seeds becoming crops and trees is meant to encourage personal and collective growth, as these actions help to grow the kingdom of God on earth.

*He spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. (Mk 4:33)*

### *Praying With Scripture*

What can you do to increase your understanding?

How can you better meet people where they are?

How do you teach the kingdom of God to others?

In addition, Jesus explained "everything in private" to the disciples. He trained the select group so that they could teach, offering them additional preparation to serve the large community. Rather than focus on the exclusive nature of these private lessons, we should recognize that Jesus values education, and he forms his disciples so that they can provide it to others. Jesus' practices and methods remind everyone, especially teachers and preachers, to communicate effectively, speaking so that people can understand and appreciate the Gospel.

## Experiential Learning

**TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JUNE 20, 2021**

READINGS: JB 38:1-11; PS 107; 2 COR 5:14-17; MK 4:35-41

Last week we encountered Jesus' teaching style in the Synoptic Gospels; he often uses storytelling and conversation to enlighten and inspire faith and action. In today's Gospel, Jesus offers a visual demonstration, giving the apostles a physical experience as a way to increase their understanding.

Jesus and the apostles leave the crowds and take a boat across the Sea of Galilee. While Jesus sleeps, a tumultuous windstorm develops, compromising the boat and endangering the group's survival. Concerned for their safety, the apostles wake Jesus and question why he sleeps, asking, "Do you not care that we are perish-

ing?" Rather than answer them directly, Jesus demonstrates his care by manifesting power to calm the wind and sea.

The story could end there, but the lesson is not over. Jesus criticizes the apostles with questions of his own: "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" Jesus' questions

challenge the apostles in their limited understanding and invite them to a more advanced way of thinking. Stunned, in awe and not fully understanding Jesus' power, they again have no answers, only questions about who Jesus is.

This short narrative is packed with Old Testament allusions. In Jonah, for instance, the prophet falls asleep on a boat that is out to sea in a great storm. Similar to the apostles, Jonah's companions question how he is able to sleep through the storm. Likewise, the exchange between Jesus and the apostles echoes today's responsorial psalm: "In their distress they cried to the Lord, who brought them out of their peril; He hushed the storm to silence, the waves of the sea were stilled" (Ps 107:28). Psalm 107 is a prayer about difficult experiences in life—being lost in the desert, imprisonment, sickness, sinfulness and facing a storm while on a ship—and the psalmist offers thanksgiving for divine

power and deliverance.

In today's Gospel, Jesus' calming the storm manifests divine power on earth. Divine control over the waters is prominent in the creation narrative, with God ordering and separating the waters (Gn 1:2), and in the flood story, in which divine power creates and then calms the flood (Gn 7:6-8:5). Jesus' actions towards the storm also share parallels with his first healing story in Mark. When Jesus encountered a man with an unclean spirit, he rebuked the spirit and told it to be silent and leave (Mk 1:25), just as he rebukes the wind and storm.

Experiencing divine power in their lives, the apostles are understandably in awe but also uncertain of what this means. Like a good teacher, Jesus knows where he wants his followers to arrive. Yet he does not answer their questions explicitly, but instead gives them information and more questions that will help them continue to formulate their own un-

*The wind ceased and there was great calm. (Mk 4:39)*

### *Praying With Scripture*

What can you do to increase your faith?

What do you do when you are uncertain?

How do you respond to signs of God's presence in your life?

derstanding.

At this point in Mark, Jesus has just begun his teaching ministry. He has offered a mix of healings, conversations and parables for the apostles to witness; and his calming of the storm allows them to experience his power in a tangible, meaningful way. This story reminds us of God's power, and it can inspire us to be attentive to God's presence in our lives, especially during the most difficult moments.

## Faith in Healing

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JUNE 27, 2021

READINGS: WIS 1:13-24; PS 30; 2 COR 8:7-15; MK 5:21-43

The Lectionary offers shorter and longer readings for today's Gospel from Mark. The shorter reading focuses on the healing of a young girl. If the long option is read, the healing of a woman is also proclaimed. Given the interconnection of the two healings, the longer option should be preferred.

Mark frequently uses a literary technique in which he starts one story, inserts another within it and then finishes the first story. This method of storytelling alerts readers to see a relationship between the two narratives and to

allow them to inform one another.

The initial narrative deals with the daughter of a leader in the synagogue. Jairus tells Jesus of his ailing daughter, who we later find out is 12 years old, and he requests Jesus to lay hands on her in order to heal her. While Jesus is on the way to the girl, a woman who has suffered from hemorrhages for 12 years touches Jesus' clothes in hopes of finding relief. Her act is effective, as her illness is cured immediately. When Jesus arrives at Jairus's home, he hears that the girl

has already died, but nonetheless, he enters her room with Peter, James, John and the child's father and mother. Jesus restores the girl's life by touching her hand and commanding her to arise.

Why does Mark combine these two healings so that they are read together? One of the similarities is that they both involve women who have physical ailments. The girl is healed because of the faith of her parents, and the woman is healed by her own faith. Another shared detail is time.

The woman has suffered with excessive bleeding for as long as the young girl has been alive, highlighting the severity of the woman's suffering. Details about the girl's ailments are less precise, although she is in grave condition, on the brink of death.

Jesus' method of healing is also noteworthy. When Jairus makes his plea, he asks Jesus to lay his hands on her, and when Jesus heals, he takes her by the hand (which is slightly different), and he proclaims by voice that she should arise. The girl's healing is completely out of her control, as her parents initiate the act on her behalf. The woman's healing occurs in the opposite manner. She initiates it saying, "If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured," which happens immediately. Jesus does not touch her, and he appears not even to know what happened, as he asks who touched him.

When he realizes her action, Jesus praises her, attributing her healing not only to his own power, but also to the boldness of her own faith.

Healing stories in the Gospels serve multiple purposes. They demonstrate Jesus' power visibly and explicitly. Prophets in the Old Testament like Elijah and Elisha were often depicted doing similar wondrous acts as signs of their powerful divine connections. Beyond this function, healing stories also teach truths that are essential to understanding the Gospel.

In these dual healings, Jesus reiterates the importance of faith. He commends the woman's faith. Similarly, when the crowd tells Jairus that his daughter has died, Jesus replies, "Do not be afraid; just have faith." Recall also last Sunday's Gospel. When the apostles were terrified while sailing in a storm, Jesus asks them: "Why are you

*She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. (Mk 5:29)*

### *Praying With Scripture*

Do you trust in God, even during difficult moments?

What needs healing in your life?

How do you help others to increase their faith?

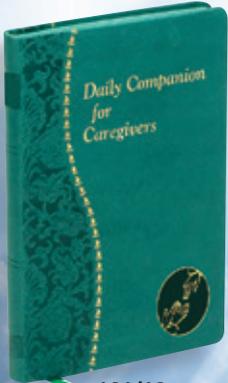
terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" (Mk 4:40). These stories that reveal Jesus' power also reveal actions that his followers must possess. Today's stories offer important reminders of the power of faith to overcome even the most difficult of circumstances.

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



# HEALING BODY, MIND, AND SOUL

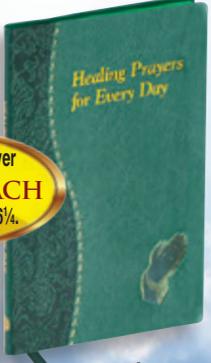
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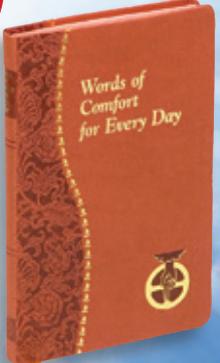
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# A Jesuit for the Long Haul

## Remembering Daniel Berrigan

By James Martin



Daniel Berrigan, S.J., who died five years ago, was always a presence in my Jesuit life, which began in the late 1980s. In those days, all the Jesuits in formation knew of his work on behalf of social justice, even if not all of us knew him personally. I read about Dan in the novitiate, and later came upon his books as I moved through my formation, being particularly taken with his autobiography, *To Dwell in Peace*, and his writings on figures from the Old Testament, like Job, Isaiah and Ezekiel. His voice always captivated me: clear, distinct, quirky, oblique, poetic.

But I didn't come to know him personally until I moved to New York City to begin my work with **America** in 1998. After that, Dan became more of a presence in my life, and from time to time I visited his Jesuit community in Manhattan and saw his surprisingly cluttered room, with cartoons, protest posters and newspaper clippings covering seemingly every inch of the walls.

A few years into my time at **America**, I wrote a book on the saints and needed some advice. My Jesuit provincial superior was concerned about something controversial that was included in the original manuscript, about L.G.B.T. people. So he asked me to delete it. I agreed, of course; all Jesuits must seek permission for any books that they publish and I had taken a vow of obedience, after all. But I

wanted some perspective on the experience, a bit of spiritual advice on how to move forward with peace.

So I turned to two of the Jesuits I most admired and who I thought would probably have different perspectives: Avery Dulles, S.J., who was then just a few years a cardinal, and Dan.

Avery read what I wrote and responded that it certainly wasn't against "faith or morals," but that of course I needed to follow what the provincial requested and, moreover, see it as God's will. Just so there wouldn't be any doubt about what he thought, he told me, he would also endorse the book. "After all," he told me in a later phone call in his gravelly voice, "I've already *read* it. I might as well *endorse* it!" Avery was nothing if not efficient.

I expected Dan to say something more in the line of lament or even protest or resistance. Which shows how little I understood him at the time. Instead he wrote a note, counseling me to remember that I was "in this for the long haul," and, as Avery suggested, to see the provincial's decision as God's will. Dan also told me that Thomas Merton had said something similar to him when faced with a similar situation. I've always remembered that expression—"the long haul"—and have shared it with younger Jesuits who are struggling with their vocations. Live your life in a way that makes sense for the long haul. Later on, as Dan grew ill, I heard from his close friends how pre-

cious his Jesuit vocation had always been to him.

It all fit. And it was at odds with the public perception of him as "disobedient." Dan may have been a "radical," but he was also a man committed to his Jesuit vows, at least as far as I could see.

When I saw Dan lying in his casket the night before his funeral at St. Francis Xavier Church in New York, I was shocked. He was dressed in his priestly vestments: alb, stole and chasuble. That wasn't a surprise, since all priests are dressed like that for their funeral. Rather, since I had usually spent time with him over meals, I had never seen him vested for Mass. There he was: a Jesuit priest surrounded by the wood of the casket.

I remembered Merton's line about the monastery being the "four walls of my freedom." And I remembered Dan's words to me, and was so grateful that he had been in it for the long haul.

James Martin, S.J., is editor at large of **America**. He is the author of several books including, most recently, *Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone*.



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The Y21 Center and the office of mission integration, ministry & multicultural affairs at Sacred Heart University invite you to a virtual multigenerational, transdisciplinary gathering to prayerfully ask questions about, and with, young adults on a 21st century journey of faith.

### 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?

To register and learn more visit: [www.sacredheart.edu/youngadults](http://www.sacredheart.edu/youngadults)

# A BETTER WAY TO WORK

## POPE FRANCIS, THE CARE ECONOMY, AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

A Conversation with Sister Alessandra Smerilli, F.M.A. (Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development), Maria Floro (American University), Christine Firer Hinze (Fordham University), and Jennifer Nedelsky (University of Toronto)

In the aftermath of the global pandemic, the economic value of care reemerges as what it has always been: a matter of human dignity and justice. Re-prioritizing care requires new mindsets—from building a world that is socially and environmentally just, to reevaluating the meaning of decent work in contemporary life, to developing feasible economic and public policies that place care of people and care of environment at the center of life.

JUNE 22, 2021 • 11:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. CDT • ZOOM FORUM

Registration is free and open to the public.  
Visit [www.luc.edu/ccih](http://www.luc.edu/ccih) to register and learn about our panel.



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